

development overnight, many Kragur villagers would be unpleasantly surprised by the attenuation of the ties of kin and community, the regimentation of daily life, and the class divisions that separate rich and poor in the developed world. . . . prosperity suddenly achieved at the expense of a radical social transformation would be a mixed blessing" (12). But Kragur villagers, like most others in Papua New Guinea, remain eager to pursue "development." At the same time, as these villagers adapt their Catholicism to changing conditions, affirm many of their precolonial traditions, and attempt to achieve development without losing their moral virtues, they emerge as figures with whom almost anyone can empathize. As Smith puts it, "They work to remain good people in their own eyes, even as they struggle to understand what it is to be good in a difficult and confusing new world" (236).

For theoretical inspiration, Smith draws mainly on anthropological writings, particularly those of his mentor, Ted Schwartz. Yet the book seems to be written as much for those who seek to understand what anthropologists have learned about the mixed blessings of development as for anthropologists themselves. Smith's prose is excellent, his images even better. This is an enjoyable if somewhat troubling book that anthropologists will appreciate and social and economic developers should be required to read.

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Last Virgin In Paradise: A Serious Comedy, by Vilsoni Hereniko and Teresia Teaiwa. Suva: Mana Publications, 1993. ISBN 982-02-0084-9, xii + 70 pages, photographs, notes. Paper, US\$8.

Writing from the Pacific Islands, edited by Vilsoni Hereniko. Special feature in *Mānoa: A Pacific Journal of International Writing* 5(1), edited by Robert Shapard and Frank Stewart. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993. ISSN 1045-7909, ix + 270 pages, illustrations, index. Paper, US\$9.

The heart of this issue of *Mānoa*, featuring representative Pacific Island writers, includes a short introduction to Pacific Island literature by Vilsoni Hereniko as well as an interview he conducted with Albert Wendt. To meditate on these two superb pieces is to gain entry to what Wendt calls "the newest literature in the world," which is of course "the written literature of the Pacific" (*Mānoa*, 56).

Hereniko divides Pacific Island literature into three groups of writers. A first group includes writers, like Wendt, the late John Kneubuhl (also represented by an interview in this issue of *Mānoa*), Witi Ihimaera, Patricia Grace, and Keri Hulme, who have achieved international acclaim and become the standard-bearers to the world for a specific cultural identification as well as a voice for the larger Pacific milieu. The second and third groups consist of writers who are regional favorites and deserve a much wider audience. Writers from all three groups are included in this issue of *Mānoa*. The selections share an

aesthetic that highlights particular Pacific Island roots, but moves to universalize them, so that the writers speak finally for the global human who grows from these roots.

In the short story *An Inner Glimpse*, Joseph Veramu provides an unnerving psychological portrait of a friendly buffoon with a shocking and invisible malice of heart and intent that is only too recognizable, while Subramani, in a piece called *Dear Primitive*, evokes the environs of contemporary Suva as he gives an artful, ambiguous spin to the discovery of self as the postcolonial colonizer is at last sent packing. Konai Thaman's poem, "Your Words," vividly portrays the scars left by the act of possessing another, whether that other be person or colony. And Pio Manoa's "A Letter to My Storyteller," yields a taste of oral Fijian lore that an outsider can never fully take in,

And I know we have this heritage that
many
full of other traditions (borrowed,
swallowed
whole or freely negotiated), deny.
(*Mānoa*, 65)

And yet, there in that very exclusion, Manoa evokes a universal longing that is our common call for stories,

for a tale that we can all acknowledge,
that we
must all grow into.

And I want an earnest return to our tale
to bring me home . . .

to gaze at the piper god, Ramacake, flat
on his back

in the bright sand, playing his flute
to the blue sky. (*Mānoa*, 66)

In *Last Virgin in Paradise*, a portion of which is included in *Mānoa*, but which also appears under separate cover, co-authors Vilsoni Hereniko

and Teresia Teaiwa (according to the acknowledgments section that precedes the play, the story is one told by Teresia Teaiwa and scripted by Vilsoni Hereniko) present a stirring and comic drama of paradise lost and freedom found in response to this ancient call for a story to grow into. The plot takes the turn of a classic, complex farce in which the myth of an expatriate's paradisaical South Pacific island is both debunked and then raised to a new level of authenticity through the coming-of-age experience of Hina, a young woman of the islands, in this case the fictional setting of Marawa. Getting their just share of debunking are the well-intentioned, terminally left-brained anthropologist (Jean), the exploitative, pseudoromantic expatriate (Helmut), the western-educated island daughter about to discover her roots (Temanu), and the "native" island Cinderella (Hina) awaiting her prince.

The power of this extraordinary play is the compelling fist of assertive political and psychological insight within the velvet glove of farce and clowning. The compelling fist says that Pacific Islanders have been the least noticed and the most dehumanized of marginalized groups by a misplaced Eurocentric romanticism that has made the region virtually invisible, both to itself and to others. Becoming visible is the task and achievement of everyone in this play, especially the two island daughters (cousins), Temanu and Hina, who discover their reflections in opposite mirrors. Temanu returns to her home after being raised and educated in Australia; Hina leaves home in order to experi-

ence the outside world. As she says to Temanu toward the end of the play, "I know my roots. You come to find roots, that fine, but I . . . I want to find wings too!" (*Virgin*, 52). Then she flies off on that redoubtable, velvet-gloved carrier "Pathetic Air" to rainy Puva, but the fist is there in the stunning stage directions:

the sound of the plane taking off is heard, and becomes louder and louder. A spotlight on the image of the frigate bird on the backdrop. Hina appears in modern dancing costume (wearing the *lavalava* her cousin had given her) and stands in the spotlight. The sound of the aeroplane fades out to be replaced by Polynesian drumming. . . . Hina dances unrestrainedly, using the whole stage. (*Virgin*, 55-56)

I saw the play in Suva and again more recently in Honolulu. The beauty, fragility, and power of human freedom still haunt me in the image of Hina, who in that moment is each of us, become the frigate bird.

Supplementary materials included in the text provide helpful contextual information. Hereniko writes about "Pacific Clowning" and Robert Nicole, of the Literature and Language Department at the University of the South Pacific, writes the best essay I've seen on "Images of Paradise" in the Pacific.

From his academic post at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Vilsoni Hereniko has emerged in the past three years as a leading voice in the writing and promotion of Pacific Island literature and the critical contexts surrounding it. Like his mentor Albert Wendt, he is one of those excep-

tional, profoundly reflective artists who integrates contraries and transmutes anguish as he portrays a human comedy where we are clowning into painful insight even as we discover resilience, laughter, and hope. He wears the different robes of artist and critic and editor and teacher as though they were tailored from the same cloth. In fact his comedic sensibility, his navigator's sense of direction, weave the cloth that underlies the different roles he plays. Hereniko's particularly humane and inclusive vision of the Pacific Islanders' experience informs both his creative work and his scholarship. Whether reading the diverse editorial selections in *Mānoa* or feeling the universal, seriously comic tug of Hina's longing to travel beyond her own shores in *The Last Virgin in Paradise* (subtitled, after all, *A Serious Comedy*), we have the confidence of sailors inspired by one who knows how to navigate by the stars and the waves, one who will bring us home.

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Alms For Oblivion, by Fata Sano Malifa. New York: Vantage Press, 1993. ISBN 0-533-104661, xi + 258 pages. US\$17.95.

When Pasikale Piso'o sees "two horny horses making fierce love" one day in a kuava field he experiences a spontaneous orgasm and has his mind "properly . . . rearranged." Subsequently, his unbridled passion has women fighting over him. (The reader's ear is certainly grabbed when