that were identified by our island colleagues as important in the determination of long-term strategies to cater for the next generations. So far, five studies that focus on Melanesia have been completed, and the results published in the case of three: urbanization, women and education, and agriculture. Publications on health and the environment will follow. Overarching all five studies is an issues paper that identifies the principal matters seen by the authors and our island colleagues as requiring attention. To a very limited degree are policy prescriptions offered, not because of a reluctance to "stand up and be counted" insofar as confidence in the results of the studies are concerned, but in recognition of the strongly expressed views of our island colleagues that "these are our problems and while we welcome help in their identification it is we who must find the proper solutions and we, with the help of our friends, must see to their implementation or our children will suffer."

In their summing up the reviewers reached quite differing conclusions. Levin came nearest to our own objectives when he wrote "as a source for discussion this book succeeds," a sentiment we believe is echoed by regional leaders. Pirie, too, echoes our hopes when he suggests that "Rowan Callick's nightmare is not about to come true," and then goes on to say that failure to achieve status at the "top end of the 'development world' or out of it altogether" will call for head-hanging on the part of national and international leaders. Would that he is correct, and that hanging of any sort will be uncalled for. Finally, Hayes agrees that population growth will present challenges for governments of Pacific countries, but "whether this book provides the right policy tools to assist them in their important task is doubtful." To that I echo "Amen," as the book makes no pretence at offering policy formulations; it offers no solutions to the challenge of population growth because this is a matter for those with direct responsibility. What we sought to do in Pacific 2010 and companion volumes—and with a degree of satisfaction we believe we have done—was to draw to the attention of those who matter in the Pacific, the people, and their leaders, the need to at least give some thought to the future and the sort of Pacific they might bequeath to their children and grandchildren.

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Subscribers to The Contemporary Pacific will enjoy this book and ought to buy it. An introduction by Donna Merwick (Greg's partner in a life-long liaison) is followed by an interview and eighteen essays. These traverse most of his geographic reach (Tahiti and other Pacific islands, England, the United States, and Victoria) and many of his enthusiasms. "This volume is a gift to Greg from his colleagues and
friends," says Merwick, and they contribute a variety of offerings from brief research reports to substantial pieces written specially for the occasion of Dening's retirement in 1991 as Max Crawford Professor of History at Melbourne University. Dening is rich in personal friendships and professional associations. He has adversaries but few enemies (an anti-Dening festchrift would be very short). His benign and diffuse influence is not the basis of a "school," just as his quirkily cerebral prose defies imitation. The liaisons of the title are not interpersonal. They refer to Dening's interdisciplinary passions for the anthropology of history, ethnographic history, the politics of theatre, poetics, and "reflective history." These ponderous terms do not capture the playful quality of his best writing, and his interview with Ivan Brady sensibly denies the utility of all such labels.

Liaisons that do not seem problematic to Dening are his relations with Australian academia, and the place of Pacific Island studies in Australia. In his interview he traces his path through the priesthood, and through anthropology at Harvard, leaving readers to draw whatever conclusions they like from these exalting but isolating experiences and this unusual training for an academic historian. This festchrift throws a great deal of light on Dening himself. It also breathes a peculiarly Melbourne spirit, so it may be worth sketching Melbourne's ethos for readers remote from that sombre "Athens of the South." Melbourne is one of the oldest universities in Australia, with a reputation (like the city itself) as the most serious. In the eyes of Melburnians the city is not frivolous (like sun-drenched Sydney), nor a mere creature of government (like Canberra and the Australian National University).

Two Melbourne traditions—cosmopolitanism and theoretical adventure—are well represented, from Dipesh Chakrabarty's moving multiple readings of Bengali widows' testimonies of suffering, and Marshall Sahlins's inspired search for the True (Charlie) Savage of Fiji, to Graeme Davison's reflections on the trajectories and textures of Australian family histories. Ron Adams demonstrates both his empirical training and the profound influence of Dening. His narrative begins (like Dening's Bounty narratives) with the terrifying ritual of a Royal Naval execution of a Tannese man, Nokwai, in 1877, and concludes with the opaque observation that the Tannese "by neither producing nor consuming any knowledge of their Nokwais, have been able to evade unwelcome discourses and to stand outside their power" (37). A parallel intellectual odyssey by Bronwen Douglas informs her discourse on death in a Melanesian world (New Caledonia, also in the nineteenth century).

Every contributor would claim friendship with Dening, but some resist his approaches: some passively, like Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, who traces the fate of those Tongan customary landholders who were neither ennobled nor acknowledged in the 1875 constitution; others assertively, like Dening's early mentor Douglas Oliver, who describes (in alarming detail) some Tahitian excretory rituals, partly for
the sheer pleasure of deriding such test-flights of "exegetical vehicles" into "the empyrean skies of hermeneutics" (194-195) where speculation leads otherwise sensible scholars. Alan Frost embarks on the quixotic pursuit of rumors (recirculated in Mr Bligh's Bad Language) of Fletcher Christian's return to England after the Bounty mutiny, but his non-empyrean search is securely grounded in the poetry and letters of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey.

Melbourne historians, products of a very European cosmopolitan city, more often commit themselves to British, European, and Australian research than to Pacific studies. In Melbourne especially, Australia feels European, sharing Europe's remoteness from the Pacific Islands. Max Crawford, widely respected as the leading historian of his generation, was the dominant intellectual influence in the 1940s and 1950s. His brother John, the most influential economist of his generation, became director of the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, but relations between the academies have been more guarded than fraternal. A Canberra-based school committed to area studies and useful information, and mandated to advise government, developed a strongly empiricist tradition. Pacific studies in Melbourne therefore owe a great deal to Dening and the infectious excitement (rather than the utility) he always finds in the reading of Pacific texts. This quality helps to explain the geographic and disciplinary diversity of the essays. Glyndwr Williams considers the rivalries and uneasy relations between eighteenth-century European explorers and geographers; Donna Merwick takes us to Dutch encounters with New Netherland; Chris Healey evokes and reflects on the smell of Melbourne; and David Hanlon analyzes some of the many ways in which Micronesia has been constructed, hinting at Islanders' strategies for developing countercolonial discourses.

Contributions focused on Australia are few: more essays confront problems of theory than questions of purely national interest. Dening is always curious about the qualities and quiddities of place—especially the role of each particular place in shaping encounters that have much wider resonances. Tom Griffiths observes that "in Islands and Beaches Dening is there . . . as a puzzled outsider, dismayed by the limitations of his knowledge and moved by the silence of the people he studies" (397). This quality, which typifies so much of Dening's Pacific writings, also infuses many of the essays, and invisibly connects topics that have no obvious connections. Few readers share Dening's breadth, and most will read only those essays that impinge on their immediate research interests. That would be a pity. Many individual chapters are brilliant, but only in their cumulative effect do they do something like justice to an inspiring teacher and an exemplary outsider.

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