the urban bureaucracy, and the need for resolution of customary land ownership with the needs of urban development are fundamental. Too little attention has been paid to the implementation of plans, and at the core of planning in Polynesia is politics.

Connell and Lea offer some practical suggestions for change, including the funding of urban local government, the issues of town boundaries, community participation, environmental management, and human resource development. Now that urban issues are apparently on the political agenda of Polynesian towns (although in reality they seem to be at the bottom of that agenda when it comes to implementation), it is to be hoped that nationally devised means of effective urban management can be developed.

Overall the book is welcome and provides a great deal of information not previously readily available to the wider audience. It should be distributed throughout the region to provoke comment from the countries studied, and will hopefully stimulate planners to seek practical, appropriate, and logical solutions for the issues facing their countries.

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*Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth? Perspectives of Pacific Island Women,* edited by 'Atu Emberson-Bain. Suva: Marama Publications, 1994. ISBN 982–326–001–X, 290 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography. Paper, F$18.

This collection of essays and poetry by Pacific Island women researchers and writers raises issues that should be of concern to everyone, but which seem most frequently to have been raised by women since 1975. Its inspiration lies in the work of the international third world feminist network DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), which in 1985, at the Women's NGO Forum at Nairobi, called for "a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country and from relationships among countries . . . where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated . . . and where the massive resources now used as a means of destruction will be diverted to areas where they will help to relieve oppression both inside and outside the home."

The theme encapsulated in the book's title is summarized in the introduction by the editor, 'Atu Emberson-Bain, who points out that small island states are "being sucked ever more deeply into the whirlpool of the global market-driven economy, our natural resources and environment being plundered on a scale like never before, and the social consequences of continuing down what is essentially the old colonial road are making themselves felt."

Most of the contributors directly or indirectly criticize the current remedies

for the economic problems of the Pacific Islands proposed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and many aid donors. These institutions define the key problem facing most of the Pacific Islands in terms of slow economic growth, noting that throughout the region populations are growing faster than economies. The Pacific paradox, as articulated by the World Bank in an influential paper (1993), is that despite high levels of aid since 1980, the region has experienced low growth and economic stagnation.

The proposed solution is for governments to adopt policy reforms leading to decreased public expenditure and a reduction of the role of government in the economy, and increased private-sector and export-based development. Such advice, argues Emberson-Bain, is far from infallible and ignores the likely negative consequences for poor and vulnerable groups in society—particularly women—and on the environment. She makes the notable point that over the past century traditional socioeconomic systems in the Pacific have cushioned the impacts of the market economy through the subsidies (unquantified and thus invisible from a macroeconomist's perspective) provided by subsistence production and kinship systems. These traditional institutions serve as odd security and social welfare mechanisms but are frequently treated as "irrational" elements in orthodox economic analyses, and as oppressive remnants of the past by neo-Marxist political economists. Both approaches have failed to understand their historical role in modifying social and economic inequality throughout the Pacific Islands. Traditional systems are still expected to serve as social "safety nets" in the face of economic and social policies that are rapidly and severely weakening and undermining them, while increasing the dependence of the Pacific Islands on external commodity and labor markets (see my *Sociocultural Issues and Economic Development in the Pacific Islands,* Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1996).

Emberson-Bain and eighteen other contributors to the book draw attention to the underlying politics of the global development-environment debate and the deemphasis of social justice and the needs and rights of human beings and communities. This theme is elaborated in twenty-six essays that critically address aspects of regional and national development agendas: the call for population reduction coupled with economic growth; and conflicts of interest between the international economy and local needs with regard to mining, forestry, and marine resource use, community rights, gender disparities, tourism, migration, and the political systems of the region. These are interspersed with thematic poems that provide a moving integration of "head" and "heart" issues within the overall feminist-humanist and social justice orientation of the book.

In the final section, the alternative of "sustainable development," which contributors advocate but do not explicitly define, is discussed. Vanessa Griffin argues that the concept is in danger of becoming an international cliché, co-opted by governments and international institutions that have no

motivation to change orthodox definitions and approaches to development. She observes that governments in the region are far more likely to criticize damage or threats to people and the environment when caused by forces outside the control of regional governments (such as driftnet fishing, nuclear testing, or global warming), than when caused by forces sanctioned by these governments (such as idle pillage of forestry and mineral resources). As Griffin sees it, the primary element of sustainable development is a people-centered and participatory decision-making political process. Within such a democratic framework the voices of advocacy groups for women, the poor, communities, the environment, social justice, employees, and critical thinkers are given a central or at least an equal place. At present such voices are ignored or even suppressed by governments in many countries of the region, including those with independent political status.

Although it raises more issues than it offers answers, the book is highly recommended to development agencies; for teaching economics, social sciences, Pacific studies, and development studies; as well as for general readers with an interest in the Pacific Islands region. It provides a critical guide to the key development issues in the Pacific region, and to a wide range of scholarly, activist, and literary perspectives on Pacific Islands women.

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*Speaking to Power: Gender and Politics in the Western Pacific,* by Lynn B Wilson. New York and London: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 0–415–90924–4 (paper), xii + 218 pp, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, $49.95; paper, $18.95.

Lynn Wilson is currently director of a US government program for health services among low-income families in Hawai'i. Prior to the fieldwork in Belau that resulted in *Speaking to Power: Gender and Politics in the Western Pacific,* Wilson had conducted ethnographic research at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in England. *Speaking to Power* is the revision for publication of Wilson's University of Massachusetts PhD dissertation on women, culture, and politics in Belau. (For readers who are more familiar with a British Commonwealth geography of the Pacific, which located the heart of the "Western Pacific" in colonial Fiji, the title of this publication is somewhat misleading as it refers to gender and politics only in Belau.) It is an interdisciplinary work engaged with issues of power and authority that have been raised in anthropology, politics, and women's studies.

Wilson clearly sees her work as a necessary critique and development beyond the work done on gender in Belau by anthropologists like Augustine Kramer in the early twentieth century, Homer Barnett and Arthur Vidich in the early post–World War Two period, and more contemporary anthropologists like DeVerne Smith, Richard Parmentier, and Karen Nero. Wilson's main contention with the