government. While, as Lal notes, Patel's opponents acknowledged the virtue of his vision, their quarrel was with the uncompromising urgency of the demands, for they feared that in a common franchise the Indians' demographic majority would result in their political control.

In particular, Lal has missed the strength of popular Fijian distrust and antagonism toward Patel and the Federation Party. Although the challenge to European power and prejudice held some appeal, the common roll demand and the criticisms of Fijian chiefs and the Fijian Administration did far more to alienate Fijians than to encourage their interest in reforms. In fact, Patel admitted to me after the 1966 elections that his first strategic aim was not to forge interethnic unity but to demonstrate to influential authorities outside Fiji (the UK Government and the United Nations) that Indians, then 51 percent of the population, were united in his party.

The strident militancy provoked the crisis of 1968—a Fijian protest movement that came close to violence. The episode induced Patel to begin to replace intransigence with conciliation. But many observers familiar with the period would argue that it was most of all Patel's death a year later, and the passing of leadership to his more pragmatic Fiji-born lieutenant, Siddiq Koya, that facilitated the rapprochement with Fijian leaders that led remarkably quickly to independence. It might thus be argued, against Lal's theme, that in the achievement of self-government and independence, Patel's final campaign was redundant if not obstructive, for all its brilliance and drama.

Nonetheless, many who knew Patel, including some of his staunchest political opponents, were moved by the power of his intelligence and vision, and by his simple humanity. Lal succeeds admirably in conveying these qualities to the reader. I highly recommend the book, as a lucid, informative, and stimulating contribution to scholarship on Fiji's political history. It is a fine complement to Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's recently published memoirs, and maintains the energetic engagement and eloquence that we have come to expect in Brij Lal's work.

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Griffen's *With Heart and Nerve and Sinew* is a collection of poems, stories, essays, letters, speeches, excerpts from diaries, copies of newspaper and journal articles and letters to the editor, photographs, color reprints of oil paintings, a play, personal reflections, an editorial cartoon, an editorial, and a transcript of a taped conversation among a panel prompted by the question “Where were you on the day of
the coup?” Griffen says in the preface that the entire collection represents an attempt to bear witness to changes in the lives of the contributors that have occurred following the first military coup in the Fiji Islands on 14 May 1987. In Griffen’s words, the book aims to put “heart, nerve, and sinew into facts so that change is presented as felt human experience and response” (7).

Griffen comes from Fiji; she completed a graduate degree at the University of London, and at present serves as lecturer specializing in post-colonial and feminist literature in the Department of Literature and Language at University of the South Pacific. Together with Raymond Pillai, Griffen published what is part 1 of the present volume of With Heart and Nerve and Sinew in 1990 as a memorial to Dr Timoci Bavadra (prime minister-elect of Fiji at the time of the first coup), who died on 3 November 1989. The present edition commemorates the tenth anniversary of the coup, and includes submissions that speak from a perspective of ten years after.

Perhaps the contribution that most clearly presents the dilemmas facing Fiji and its people and the continuing struggle for resolution and reconciliation is historian Brij Lal’s piece entitled “Submissions.” Lal was born in Labasa and grew up in Fiji. He is on the faculty at the Australian National University in Canberra and was chosen to represent Indo-Fijian concerns in a three-person commission established by presidential decree in 1990. The commission was charged with engaging public debate and consultation throughout the country and making recommendations for a new constitution that would replace the one promulgated in 1990, when the constitution that had been established in 1970 (at the time of independence) was abrogated. The commission was charged to ensure that the new constitution would promote national unity, racial harmony, and social and economic development as well as guarantee the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous Fijian and Rotuman communities. Lal’s piece charts the journey both physically and psychically of that commission. The three members of the commission (Sir Paul Reeves, chairman, Dr Brij Lal, and Mr Tomasi Vakatora) traveled extensively to all major centers of the two main islands. They heard from farmers, local representatives of Methodist congregations, and representatives of Arya Samaj, a reformist branch of Hinduism. They heard from high chiefs, students, parliamentarians, lawyers, and representatives of a women’s association. Most Indo-Fijian submissions voiced similar concerns. They emphasized the importance of the multiethnic character of the country and said that power should be shared by all communities. They named as important issues the solving of social and economic problems such as land ownership, unemployment, poverty, and homelessness. They requested security of agricultural leases, a permanent place for Indo-Fijians, adequate racial representation for Indo-Fijians in the army, equal treatment for men and women, a nonracial electoral system, and processes to ensure open, effective government administration. The Fijian submissions were less formally
structured and generally shorter; they spoke for “a less confrontational type of democracy in Fiji” (333), greater power being vested in the provinces, and an emphasis placed on reinvigorating the Fijian traditional system to protect indigenous rights. The commissioners received more than eight hundred oral and written submissions. They spent more than six months discussing submissions and preparing their report. The final outcome of the commission and its success or failure cannot yet be assessed, but Lal’s account of the process from his position as a member is a fascinating and insightful one that reveals again how much the basis for political and ethnic divisions in Fiji is shifting ground.

Several stories are memorable. Griffen’s “The Mind is a Fearful Place” creates a fictional world in which the main character, Athene, named for the goddess of wisdom, industry, and war (perhaps inviting an archetypal reading), hears that someone has reported she had been involved in an accident. She is disturbed because there has been no accident. At the end of the day, however, during a welcome deluge of rain that has finally broken the oppressive heat, Athene twists her ankle and falls from a landing at the top of some steep steps onto the soapstone below. The story is set in Suva some two years following the coup. It is an intriguing narrative of people struggling to maintain coherent and meaningful lives in a context of disempowerment and a changed society.

Jane Ricketts’s snippets from her diary—in the form of dated statements or comments or questions attributed to individuals and followed by her own response to each quotation—reveal the anguish of a woman who has lived in Fiji for thirty years, has been married to a Fiji citizen for most of that time, and who must on the occasion of the coup work through disillusionment, rejection, and a consciousness that what had seemed solid and secure was in truth shifting sand. The honesty in this submission and its homely detail create in the imagination of one who was not there, a real sense of what it must have been like.

The reminiscence of Krishna Datt, “Lunch with Dr Bavadra,” animates the image of the man at the center of the deposed government in Fiji in 1987, affectionately called Buniwai. Datt’s recollection dates from a political campaign trip he took with Buniwai in 1985. Datt remembers that lunch invitations in those days were sparse, that he and Dr Bavadra ate sugarcane, wild guava, mango, and papaya—whatever was in season. However, on one occasion an old man invited them home. Datt recalls his own efforts to be polite to their host as he declined to eat a star apple peeled, torn apart, and offered in the old man’s dusty hands; Buniwai ate the star apple. Datt remembers that when the old man offered the same towel for drying that he had used to wipe the plates; Buniwai accepted the towel. When the old man gleefully brought homemade ghee to add to their meal of rice and dhal, Datt covered his plate with both hands to prevent the old man from adding more of the liquid butter to his food. Buniwai told the old man that the
ghee smelled good and that he would have “just a little more . . . , thanks” (225). The vivid image of a Fijian man paying the tribute of gracious acceptance to the old Indian man’s offers of hospitality remains an oasis, a striking expression of love and humility in the desert of political machinations and betrayal.

Konai Thaman’s poem “Letter to the Colonel” creates the image of a cup of kava that is offered to the army colonel, who—with his troops—had arrested the prime minister-elect and his cabinet. The cup contains the mildly intoxicating ceremonial drink made from the root of the kava plant that is virtually ubiquitous in Fiji. In addition to kava, the poem’s cup contains tears of workers, farmers, miners, and fishers; it becomes a symbol of suffering and sorrow, but it also represents hope because all that it contains comes from the roots of the land—the people’s pride and their confidence that the land will bloom again in the dawn of a new day that cannot be shut out.

Seona Smiles’s story “No Free Lunches” is lively, and, as told from the point of view of ten years after the first coup, is full of hope. The story looks back to the final days of the narrator’s pregnancy and the birth of her child, which occurred in 1987 in the aftermath of the coup. The story focuses on the meal of curried red fish that the narrator’s family shared to celebrate her homecoming from the hospital after she gave birth. But the meal gave them all the tell-tale symptoms of fish-poisoning: sore legs, aching joints, and pins-and-needles tingling in the extremities. From the perspective of ten years later, the poisoning is seen merely as a distraction for them from the country’s political woes. The story concludes with the narrator’s husband, Babu, buying a haunch of goat and a string of fresh fish on the very same street where the poisoned fish had been purchased ten years earlier and exclaiming, “[N]ew political developments are perfectly splendid. . . . But the real heart of the matter is—in what other country could you get a good leg of goat, and fine fresh fish, both in the same street? Aaaah, there’s no place like Fiji!”

Other contributions deserve mention. Subramani’s story “Captive in Liberated Bush” ironically depicts the captivity and torture of a man that resulted from the first coup of “liberation.” David Anderson’s poem “Vuda Road” sketches the scene of Dr Bavadra’s reguregu (funeral) and memorializes it. The reprints of Jane Ricketts’s oil paintings (executed from photographs taken at the scene on Vuda Road as the country farewelled Dr Bavadra) provide rich visual details of the country’s outpouring of grief.

Griffen dedicated this book to the memory of Dr Timoci Bavadra. It stands as a vivid expression of the power the human spirit has to transcend radical change, political dislocation, and physical suffering through the imagination. The book testifies to a renewed sense of hope for pluralism in Fiji that would truly embody Dr Bavadra’s legacy.

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