

texts are really being incorporated into Pacific Islander cultures. He also poses the dilemma raised earlier in this review about what historians should do when Islander worldviews clash with their own professional views and agendas as historians.

This is a valuable volume, containing a variety of approaches to biography, personal reflection, and history. The contributors are knowledgeable and often display great flair and insights. But the collection is also frustrating in that it often reads more like a conversation between a generation of friends remembering the good old days than a work designed to appeal and offer guidance to other generations to follow. Despite acknowledging that new lines are being drawn based on new boundaries (4), few new voices speak here. There is even a hint of smugness in the assertion, “The founding figures of the field of Pacific history as it developed in the southwest Pacific are, quite uniquely, all present together in this volume, as subjects or authors” (5). Several of my more senior colleagues might disagree with this assessment. This volume tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive and looks back to the days of comfort rather than forward to the challenges that lie ahead. In so doing, it may inadvertently have narrowed its appeal. This would be unfortunate, as it is precisely in times of academic and political uncertainty that the considerable collective wisdom of these contributors is most needed.

PAUL D'ARCY

Victoria University of Wellington

* * *

Exploration & Exchange: A South Seas Anthology, 1680–1900, edited by Jonathan Lamb, Vanessa Smith, and Nicholas Thomas. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. ISBN cloth 0-226-46845-3; paper 0-226-46846-1; xxv + 359 pages, figures, maps, photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$49.00; paper, US\$18.00.

Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680–1840, by Jonathan Lamb. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. ISBN cloth 0-226-46848-8; paper 0-226-46849-6; xii + 345 pages, photographs, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$52.00; paper, US\$18.00.

Exploration & Exchange brings together twenty-eight extracts from selected European or American authors writing about their encounters in the Pacific Ocean. The book is organized thematically and chronologically into three sections: the first contains explorer and adventurer narratives written between 1680 and 1783; the second comprises texts by beachcomber and missionary authors from the 1790s to the 1850s; the third concerns the writings of literary travelers from the 1860s to the 1890s. Each section begins with an introduction contextualizing the extracts and defining particular terms, such as the Pacific coinage “beachcomber.” In addition, each extract is introduced by one of the three editors, who provides biographical, textual, and historical information about the author and his or her works and discusses the selected narrative, noting particularly the ways individual authors describe their subject matter.

The chapter about William Ellis, one of the earlier members of the London Missionary Society (LMS), illustrates the editorial method and formatting employed throughout the volume. As with all the other chapters, this one carries a subtitle drawn from the narrative extract and representing a sense of the whole—in this case, the “unutterable practices” or aspects of indigenous Tahitian culture on which Ellis felt he could not elaborate. In a three-page introduction, distinguished from Ellis’s text by its smaller font size, editor Vanessa Smith details Ellis’s missionary work. In particular she notes his role as the LMS printer in the Pacific (“the literal bearer of the biblical Word to the Pacific islands”), and his reflections on the ways the printing press became involved in indigenous chiefly politics, as well as “the capacity for mnemonics and mimicry displayed by islanders eager to acquire knowledge of reading” (205). Much of Smith’s introduction is devoted to Ellis’s book, *Polynesian Researches* (first published in 1829), from which the chapter’s extract is taken (at nearly ten pages long, this extract is representative of the usual length of such texts). Smith cites recent writings about the significance of this book, long recognized by Pacific scholars as an important example of missionary ethnography. For example, in *Culture and Anomie: Ethnographic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century* (1991), Christopher Herbert cited *Polynesian Researches* “as demonstrating an intricate awareness of the systematic interconnection of Tahitian material culture, social practices, and religious belief, which nonetheless produces an unresolved contest between rejection

and identification, repulsion and desire, in describing the operation of these systems” (206). The particular passage from *Polynesian Researches* selected for *Exploration & Exchange* concerns the Arioi cult, a famous institution in Tahitian society. Here the typical tensions found in the writings of Ellis (and many other ethnographically inclined missionaries of that era, such as William Wyatt Gill) are highlighted. As Smith observes, in Ellis’s criticisms of the Arioi, “the carefully maintained tension between the voices of missionary and ethnographer, destroyer and preserver of traditional Tahitian practices, breaks down” (207). This chapter, like all the other chapters, closes with a short bibliographic essay on further reading.

The editors’ preface and introduction to the volume as a whole make clear that *Exploration & Exchange* is part of a noticeable global trend among scholars in fields such as literary studies, anthropology, art history, and parts of the historical profession: to reread older Euro-American literature by explorers, travelers, and early residents such as missionaries and beachcombers, in the light of contemporary literary theory. The editors intend the book as a collection of primary sources to provide teachers and students “with a set of readings that might open a fresh theoretical perspective upon the problems these texts raise” (xv). In their introductory notes, the editors reflect some important intellectual orientations. They are careful to highlight their affinity with scholars in postcolonial fields who have moved away from generalizations about an omnipotent and omniscient imperialism to focus instead on particular occasions when representa-

tives of the European or American powers encountered indigenous peoples and their cultures in the Pacific. Sometimes these agents of imperialism looked decidedly incompetent or vacillating. The beach is a powerful metaphor for these contact episodes in the Pacific, and the editors give this image due attention; in particular, they echo Greg Dening's stress on the improvisational aspects of these beachside meetings. However, they emphasize that this liminal space does not contain the entirety of the literature of European encounters in the Pacific, where a number of authors sought to settle and in some way transform the people and their land. Here the anthology reaches the moment when many islands experienced varying forms of colonization by the dominant powers (notably Great Britain, France, and the United States).

Exploration & Exchange reflects a major contradiction in scholarly studies today. True, the editors are more informed about the indigenous communities and their cultures, and they are more aware of the politics of colonization being described than the anthologized writings could ever have been, since the latter are historically located at or near the beginnings of these processes. While more sensitive to the politics concerning indigenous peoples, the editors' intellectual orientations remain Eurocentric, as indeed does the larger body of theoretical work they reflect. Thus the indigenous people who were the objects of this collection's texts continue to be distanced from a reader of *Exploration & Exchange*, as if the moment of encounter as described by European and American visitors still marks the

parameters of what a reader can legitimately know about indigenous Pacific peoples. A more equitable exchange might have been achieved in an anthology of the Pacific if narratives of indigenous explorers, beachcombers, missionaries, and travelers had been included. This would have provided the intended student and teacher readership with a more comprehensive series of Pacific readings to reflect on. As it is, this useful collection presents indigenous peoples who are talked about and sympathized with, but not heard in their own words; it is as if they were mutes, confined and immobilized on their beaches and in their villages.

The companion volume, *Preserving the Self*, written by one of the editors of *Exploration & Exchange*, shares many elements in terms of theory, sources, as well as book design. Jonathan Lamb has ambitiously organized his book around the modern European idea of the unique and sovereign self and its ambiguous relation to society, the public good, and the external world. Following John Locke, Lamb defines the self as "that bundle of immediate and remembered impressions acquired by an embodied mind on which a sense of personal identity depends," or again, "the inheritor of all those rights and duties that flow toward human beings capable of asserting that they are who they are, and articulating their own story in the first person singular" (5). The progress of this idea of self is tracked through the Euro-American literature located in real or imagined places in the "South Seas."

The book is divided into two parts. In the first half ("The Romancing of the Civil Self"), Lamb establishes a

genealogy for the emergence of the self during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. He investigates various political theories about the relationships between the individual and civil society that emerged in Britain during this early modern period, notably those of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and their intellectual successors, Mandeville and Shaftesbury, with their differing emphases on the priority of the personal over a public good. The following chapters go offshore with the growth of exploration and the enlargement of the European world to the Americas and ultimately the Pacific. Rather than interpret these developments in terms of a confident expansion of empire, the development of navigational skills, or a scientific, rational, and enlightened view of the new world, Lamb emphasizes moments when the European narratives stress the fantastic, the heroic, the wonderful, the delusional, or the plain contrary and unknowable dimensions of these new places, peoples, and oceans. Even scurvy produced among its victims an intense nostalgia for home and a paradisiacal view of islands and people, particularly women. In a notable conceit, Lamb inverts this complex of responses and applies it to the landward side of the beach, by arguing that the effect of this encounter on the indigenous peoples was to shift their communal and social sense of self toward one that emphasized the personal and the self-aggrandizing (in breach of all Polynesian protocols); this was especially notable among the chiefs and was countered by the exaggerated cultic responses of

shamans and cargo cults. As scurvy was to European explorers, so, according to Lamb, was leprosy to Pacific Islanders: a disease inducing nostalgic and utopian responses among its victims.

The second half of the book (“From Juan Fernandez to New Zealand”) examines a series of connections between eighteenth-century European ideas and the islands and peoples of the Pacific and elsewhere: from the pretensions of self-created societies of marooned sailors (such as Robinson Crusoe) to reflections on wilderness and civilized order in the gardens of stately England and in the bush of Aotearoa New Zealand; from the sympathetic encounters between Europeans and Pacific Islanders on the beaches of the South Seas to meetings in Europe; from the utopian settlement theories worked out in early nineteenth century New Zealand to the equal and opposite millenarian responses by indigenous Māori in search of a new order amid the destruction wrought by the application of these European ideals. As Lamb observes, in such places the ideas of eighteenth-century writers continue to influence the culture and society of today.

While the back covers of both these books advertise the wonder and adulation with which the quoted academics have received them, I experienced a quite different response, marked by an emotional and intellectual ambivalence. Clearly, these works highlight the flourishing interest among scholars in the writings about places like the Pacific and, in particular, the entanglement of European (or western) ideas with these foreign

worlds and their peoples. In *Preservation of Self*, Lamb especially presents a kind of intellectual tour of European ideas and the transformations they effected among the indigenous peoples. But I felt giddy from the profusion of his quotations of western writers and intellectuals, and confused by the wordy assemblage of terms that only a dictionary could explain to me. Was I in the Pacific, or a “simulacrum” of it—an idea-world created and represented to me by Euro-American writers interested in exploring the genealogies of their own intellectual history and how it ramified out to other countries and customs? What was being said about the worlds of Pacific peoples and the very real destruction wrought on them by sometimes well-meaning explorers and settlers?

In these two books, Lamb as well as the other editors of *Exploration & Exchange* manifest their awareness of the consequences of these encounters for the indigenous peoples, and point to the ambiguities in indigenous societies that such encounters aggravated. Yet their perspective remains limited, with its intellectual affiliations clearly rooted in that same western world from which the explorers, missionaries, and settlers embarked (as did my own ancestors, a century or so ago, to settle in New Zealand). In order for Euro-American readers of these volumes to obtain a rounder, more complex understanding, they will have to engage with the full range of Pacific scholarship (some of which is alluded

to in the further readings recommended in *Exploration & Exchange*), and especially with contemporary indigenous scholars working throughout the Pacific, such as Ranginui Walker in Aotearoa, or Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa in Hawai‘i, to name only two. Then such readers will realize that the life of Pacific peoples, while transformed at some levels by their encounters with Europeans, sustains a worldview at odds with much that the West has to offer. As a young Māori scholar once observed to me, for her, Māori remain distinguished by their practice of manaaki (communal-based respect and hospitality), a cultural value clearly contrary to the sovereignty of the self that is still highly rated by many Pākehā (New Zealand-born Europeans). Such observations, filled with culturally specific metaphors and ideas, are not sufficiently acknowledged in the theoretically informed writings represented by the two books reviewed here. Despite the awareness of indigenous peoples these volumes demonstrate, these sorts of works are too often in danger of imitating the Eurocentrisms of an earlier era, and with much less justification. Must the voices of the Māori and other indigenous peoples continue to be lost in the wind, as they were so often in an earlier century?

MICHAEL P J REILLY
University of Otago

* * *