

a Hawaiian spear-support figure; and Phyllis S Herda ("Cook Islands Tivae-vae") on Polynesian quilts—analyze how art endows with social value the construction of cultural identity. Nick Stanley ("Museums and Indigenous Identity") puts Asmat art in a global context, surveying the participants, indigenous and alien, whose expectations mold modern creativity and regulate its eventual display.

Each essay in part 5, "Negotiating Change in Contemporary Pacific Art," weighs "the tension between 'traditional' and 'contemporary' art, as well as 'insider' and 'outsider' perception of art" (11). The first two essays complement each other: Victor Totu ("The Impact of the Commercial Development of Art on Traditional Culture in the Solomon Islands") focuses on artistic appreciation for traditional indigenous purposes, and Marcus Schindlbeck ("Contemporary Maori Art and Berlin's Ethnological Museum") reveals how the display of Māori objects in Germany affects German perceptions of Pacific art. The next three essays take this theme to Australia: Eric Kjellgren ("Painting for Corroboree, Painting for Katiya") concentrates on art in the East Kimberley area of Western Australia; J V S Megaw ("Transformations"), on indigenous Australian urban art; and Philippe Peltier ("Beyond All Limits"), on art in the central desert. The concluding essays turn toward Polynesia: Carol S Ivory ("Marquesan Art at the Millennium") surveys the range of art forms influential in the Marquesas Islands, and Karen Stevenson ("The Island in the Urban") regards present-day Pacific art as a movement in the modernist genre, one in which artists'

"traditions become icons bridging the worlds of their ancestors and their children" (414).

Earnestly conceived and carefully edited, the book is accessible to readers in all fields and from all backgrounds. Numerous color and black-and-white illustrations vividly enhance the text. Though published in the United States, the book flaunts instances of non-American style, especially in spelling and punctuation.

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*The Time at Darwin's Reef: Poetic Explorations in Anthropology and History*, by Ivan Brady. Ethnographic Alternatives Book Series 12. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003. ISBN cloth, 0-7591-0335-6; paper, 0-7591-0336-4; xxv + 134 pages, figures, map, appendixes. Cloth, US\$75.00; paper, US\$32.95.

All good ethnography and all good history are potentially good literature. *The Argonauts of the Western Pacific* is still in print not simply because its author pioneered fieldwork-based anthropology but because it is immensely readable. Since anthropology's self-reflexive turn, practitioners of the discipline have scrutinized the discursive strategies employed by writers like Malinowski. Attention has been drawn to how the reporting of research may reflect the research process in the field.

Such awareness, however, has neither prevented anthropologists from writing literary ethnographies nor detracted from their appreciation.

Texts that are a pleasure to read because of their poetic qualities—in the field of Melanesian anthropology, books such as Michael Young's *The Magicians of Manumanua* (1984) and Steven Feld's *Sound and Sentiment* (1990) spring to mind—are still more likely to stand the test of time than books that are noteworthy only because of the findings their authors report.

The self-reflexive turn may have prompted anthropologists and historians to be distrustful of ethnographies and histories modeled on the nineteenth-century novel, the travelogue, or the lab report. In the past twenty years or so, an increasing number of anthropologists (and historians, for that matter) have combined a commitment to poetic explorations of and engagements with their subjects with a willingness to experiment with unconventional formats and genres. Ivan Brady is one such author.

I have no hesitation to recommend Brady's poems and short prose pieces in *The Time at Darwin's Reef*. I was seduced by the lyricism of his language and the rhythm of his writing. While these gems will be appreciated by many a connoisseur of fine literature, some of them have particular appeal for those intrigued by the dynamics of the colonial encounter in the Pacific and elsewhere. Brady's writing is political without laboring the obvious. He is analytical without having to take recourse to jargon. Some of his poems are deeply unsettling and have the capacity to remain with the reader for a long time.

Brady dedicates his book to Greg Denning ("History's anthropologist")

and to Stanley Diamond ("Anthropology's poet"), but his poetry has little in common with the writings of either. Some of his preoccupations reminded me of much earlier exoticist writings, such as those of Victor Segalen. But while Brady's writings lack the lightness of Denning's, they are less personal than Segalen's in the sense that the author does not put himself as much on the line, as it were.

The book's six sections are in themselves fairly coherent. Those looking for a narrative connecting those sections, however, will be disappointed. But all poems and short prose pieces have their place on a map and on a time line. Brady thereby challenges his readers to draw connections between places and dates. He also allows them to imagine autobiographical threads.

While I was much taken by Brady's poetic engagements with history and with other worlds, I was not convinced by the collection as a book. The poems and prose pieces are interspersed with short commentaries. These tell the reader about texts or moments that inspired particular poems. But they also offer interpretative clues. Such clues would be redundant in a book of poetry. Or rather, they would probably be perceived to be unnecessary (if not irritating, because of their didactic tone) by readers who picked up Brady's book mainly out of an interest in his poetry. The commentaries suggest that Brady anticipated an audience interested in anthropology and history, and expecting a more conventional text from a professor of anthropology. In such a reading, Brady offers commentaries on his own creative

texts in order to satisfy expectations that his poetry cannot meet, and in order to make allowances for readers unaccustomed to appreciate a poetic interpretation and critique of the world. Did he not trust his readers' ability to formulate their own responses without his guidance and prompting?

Or are the commentaries essential because on their own, Brady's creative writings would constitute poetic explorations *by an anthropologist*, rather than *in anthropology*, as the book's subtitle claims? Be that as it may, I wish Brady had paid more heed to his own conclusion that "[i]t is possible to destroy a poetic reading completely by analyzing it to death" (xvii).

Not all poems are preceded by commentaries, and in the overall context of the book, Brady's offers to assist the readers with interpreting his creative work are comparatively minor irritations. The introduction is a far more heavy-handed attempt at influencing the readers' responses. More so than the commentaries, it seems to betray Brady's (or his publisher's?) anxiety that his creative work could be dismissed as lightweight and not befitting a professor of anthropology. So does the bracket at the book's other end, which consists of two pages of praise—by six distinguished professors—for *The Time at Darwin's Reef*. Some of these laudatory comments are also excerpted on the book's back cover.

Brady's project is highly unusual, the pioneering work of Denis Tedlock, Peter Jackson, Richard and Sally Price, and others notwithstanding.

The defensive mode in which Brady frames his poems—as if the commentaries and the introduction were intended to satisfy readers who would not be won over by Brady's poetry—says much about the state of the disciplines of anthropology and history. Even more revealing are the endorsements by Dan Rose, Miles Richardson, Dell Hymes, Robert Borofsky, Lola Romanucci-Ross, and George Marcus, which appear designed to validate Brady's project.

Marcus claims that Brady's book is "a virtuoso performance of all those tendencies in the aftermath of the 1980s 'Writing Culture' critique that have come to define the preoccupations of anthropology" (133). Even a very cursory look at the most recent issues of a cross section of anthropological journals would demonstrate that anthropology as a discipline is by no means preoccupied with projects related to that undertaken by Brady. The overwhelming majority of academic dissertations submitted and books and articles published in 2004 could still be classified under the rubric of conventional ethnography: footnoted texts produced by academically trained author(itie)s about an other that is clearly demarcated from the writing self, and informed by curiosities determined by disciplinary discourses rather than by the anthropological encounter.

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