

irrigation-context examples were entirely consistent with the artifactual evidence from the open site excavations. There is absolutely no basis for Anderson's claim that "many of the house sites, and the irrigation systems, were first occupied or constructed prehistorically by people of undocumented identity." The only sites within the study area occupied prehistorically were the rockshelters, and the chronology and sequence of their use is thoroughly documented in Chapter 2 (vol. 2).

Beyond having to expend valuable journal space on such a detailed refutation of Anderson's unjustified criticisms, we are deeply disappointed that Anderson's review accords no mention at all of several broad anthropological themes resulting from this collaborative engagement of archaeology and historical ethnography. For example, the analysis of levels of surplus production, and of the sociology of canal hydraulics deriving from the irrigation system study (wrongly attributed by Kame'eleihiwa's review to sole authorship by Spriggs—it was a collaboration by Spriggs and Kirch), are matters of some significance for Hawaiian and Polynesian prehistory. The radical transformation of land use in the upper valley following Kamehameha's 1804 occupation is a matter that Kirch subsequently relates to other settlement transformations throughout the archipelago in late prehistory (2:53–56). A further theme is that of architectural changes in Hawaiian housing during the early nineteenth century, an issue largely ignored by archaeologists until recently. The restructuring of burial patterns during the prehistoric and

historic periods is also an important finding, not without relevance to contemporary Hawaiian cultural practices. Yet none of these or other major themes receive the slightest comment from Anderson. Too bad. We are left with the impression that an obsession with radiocarbon dating, as demonstrated by Anderson's work on New Zealand moa-hunting sites, is the organizing general perspective of Pacific archaeology.

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History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology, edited by James G. Carrier. Studies in Melanesian Anthropology 10. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992. ISBN 0-520-07523-4, ix + 257 pp, notes, bibliography, index. US\$38.

A critique of the ethnographic enterprise, which may be dated for convenience as beginning in 1986 with the publication of Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture*, has now spread to works about Melanesia. (Make no mistake: the "anthropology" in this book's title really means "ethnography." No serious attention is paid to archaeology, much less biological anthropology, though these subdisciplines might tell us something useful about "history.") However, although the criticisms in the collection under review are sometimes phrased in such trendy terms as "historicism," "essentialization," and "Orientalism," the

book's underlying argument is modest and cogent, to "challenge an . . . idea that anthropology in Melanesia can offer us the study of alien societies that are fairly untouched by social forces" (3).

This argument is developed in Carrier's "Introduction" in terms both general (11–18) and specific to the book's contents. To foreshadow a point elaborated later in this review, I would note that he is careful not to make claims for earth-shaking revelations, but rather admits (viii, 3, 7, 22) that *some* ethnographers of Melanesia have consistently paid attention to history and change. He further, and wisely, distances himself from the most wretched excesses of "New Model Anthropology" (read, "postmodernism"), emphasizing that an exclusive concern with rhetoric and discourse not only fails to engage real issues of oppression but "merely parasitizes villagers in order to provide . . . ethnographic texts" (17).

Margaret Jolly's chapter then sets a high standard for those that follow. Using a severely critical reading (softened in the footnotes) of Annette Weiner's Trobriand ethnography as her starting point, she not only advances the general argument of the book, but has extraordinarily valuable things to say about the necessity to incorporate change into feminist anthropology, the debates about "gifts versus commodities," and the current "invention of tradition" controversy. She brings to this, as to all her work, the sensitivity that "Melanesia" can mean more than the Highlands, the Sepik, or even all of Papua New Guinea.

The ponderous title of Nicholas

Thomas's chapter—"Substantivization and Anthropological Discourse: The Transformation of Practices into Institutions in Neotraditional Pacific Societies"—is explicated in only slightly less ponderous text. However, he does make an important point: the role of colonialism in producing "essentialized constructs of selves and others within which particular customs and practices are emblematic" (82). He ably illustrates this by drawing on historical documents from Fiji, with special reference to the practice of *kerekere*; his additional examples, recycling his reviews of Linnekin's Hawaiian and Kahn's Wamiran materials, are perforce somewhat less compelling. Ethnographers who worked in Papua New Guinea may well be reminded of the "Anthropology" section that young patrol officers were required to include in their reports. Did their inquiries heighten or transform villagers' notions of *kastom* that subsequently became part of modern rhetoric in Papua New Guinea?

It is salutary to have a contribution from a thoughtful historian like Bronwen Douglas in a book of this kind. In "Doing Ethnographic History," she warns that "the tyranny of the ethnographic present in anthropology is at least matched by the tyranny of outcomes in history" (109). Thus none of those, French or Melanesian, fighting in New Caledonia in 1868–1869 could know of the ultimate French conquest, yet histories are written that interpret not only events but motivations in terms of that outcome. Douglas's chapter is one of the more narrowly focused in the book, emphasizing local detail over broader theoret-

ical considerations, and probably strengthens the volume's overall impact for that very reason.

Carrier's concern in "Approaches to Articulation" could hardly be more fundamental: to illuminate "the way that village societies are linked to and interact with the larger social, political, and economic orders in which they are embedded" (117). He has written ethnographic accounts of this interaction for the Ponam of Manus Province, Papua New Guinea. Here he mounts criticisms of a number of anthropologists (eg, Finney, Gregory, Meillasoux) who have written about economic change before he briefly (131-136) recapitulates the Ponam material. These criticisms are well taken, but one wonders whether he has underestimated the general difficulty of simultaneously paying adequate attention to *both* the macro- and microcosmic levels of modern Melanesian political economies, in a single, manageable, and readable ethnography. (Compare the varied approaches taken in Robillard's 1992 *Social Change in the Pacific Islands*.) None of the examples he provides has as complex a history of colonialism in varied forms as, for example, Bougainville. None has felt the impact of multinational, high-technology enterprise. If Carrier does not provide any neat answers to the problem of dealing with these more complicated cases, he has certainly alerted future writers to the importance of the general issue of articulation.

John Barker here continues an argument he has made elsewhere, most notably in the introduction to his edited volume, *Christianity in Oceania* (1990). His point is that ethnographers

have consistently ignored the role that Christianity (in some form) has played and continues to play in Melanesian lives. Much of the existing literature thereby seriously distorts the lived reality of the people described. While Barker's approach is perhaps not so "ideologically disinterested" as the dust jacket describes this entire book, his criticism seems undeniable. Max Weber is reputed to have said that, in matters of religion, he was the equivalent of tone deaf. When it comes to perceiving the profound effects of Christianity in Melanesia, too many ethnographers seem deaf, blind, and mute. Barker's otherwise lucid chapter is not always clear in his distinction between "syncretism" and "religious pluralism," but this is more than compensated for by other valuable services he performs (eg, in directing attention to the work of those, like Michael French Smith, who *have* written with great insight about Melanesian Christianity).

Roger Keesing's discussion of "Kwaisulia as Culture Hero" is another chapter rather narrowly focused, in this case on Malaita. By effectively combining his own research with that of Peter Corris and other historical documentation, however, he is able to use this case study to raise more general questions about the constitution of leadership in Melanesia. His point that "Modes of leadership and arenas for power were historically constituted and changing . . . in Melanesia as everywhere else, political processes were characterized by flexibility and opportunism" (187) should help to put aside sterile debates about ideal types like "big men" and "paramount chiefs,"

which obscure, rather than illuminate, the workings of Melanesian societies.

Michael Young's wonderful essay "Gone Native in Isles of Illusion . . ." fits rather uncomfortably in this collection. Indeed, in its emphasis on reflexivity, "the duplicitous nature of fieldwork practice" (193), and the ambiguities of genre writing, it comes perilously close to the "lit-crit-biz" side of the "New Model Anthropology" the editor deplored in his introduction. Nonetheless, this wide-ranging exploration of the published work of Robert Fletcher, an English writer and sometime planter in what was once the New Hebrides, made me vow to read *Isles of Illusion* and *Gone Native* at the earliest opportunity. The impact of Young's chapter is, of course, enhanced by his graceful prose (but see footnote 8!), all too rare in ethnographic writing.

Keesing and Jolly's "Epilogue" does much more than merely recapitulate what has gone before. It raises searching questions about the audience to whom ethnography is addressed and the problems of an anthropological history (233–235) and is especially clear about the political vacuity into which postmodernist modes of representation too easily fall (237–239). It puts the issues that have been discussed for Melanesia into a larger context, citing the subaltern literature from India, and the important work of Jean Comaroff on South Africa. This "Epilogue" thus rounds off most effectively a book that merits serious study.

Of course, many who have written about Melanesian societies might ask, "So, what's new?" They might argue that even Said's "Orientalist" critique of anthropology was anticipated by a

Melanesian, the Trobriand Islander John Kasaipwalova, who said in a 1972 Waigani Seminar, "if we are going to depend on anthropological studies to define our history and our culture and our 'future', then we are *lost*." They could point to E. W. P. Chinnery's complaint, made sixty years ago, that anthropologists in New Guinea consistently ignored change in favor of describing "more spectacular and [allegedly] untouched" groups. They might voice their own complaint that, although some of the book's contributors are careful to say (eg, 22) that they are only reminding anthropologists of what has already been done and needs to be continued, the book has overlooked as many contributions to the study of change in Melanesia as it cites. Thus one seeks in vain for any mention of the work of Ron Crocombe, who for years maintained a critical discussion of "development" in Papua New Guinea, and it does seem strange that a book with "History" in the title ignores Gewertz and Schieffelin's *History and Ethnohistory in Papua New Guinea* (1985). As Carrier himself asks (viii), is the reminder to make Melanesian ethnography sensitive to history necessary? What has this book done to advance that cause?

My answer to the first question is loudly affirmative. To take just one recent example, Chris Healey in *Maring Hunters and Traders* (1990) states that, in the 1980s, change among the people he describes "has been slight" (xvi). Yet coffee had been grown as a cash crop in the area since the late 1960s (26). Should the reader suspect some "ahistoricism" in this work? More disturbing are the radical differ-

ences regularly imputed to Melanesian thought processes by anthropologists. For example, we are told these people have "partible selves" that are qualitatively different from the self-concept of Westerners. But these same people regularly participate in a cash economy like Westerners, go to church on Sunday like many Westerners (though perhaps not many anthropologists), and often use pidgin and even English terms (hence concepts) to communicate with each other. Don't these circumstances, as the book under review forcefully argues, demand more explanation than the anthropologist usually provides when attributing completely alien worldviews—"radical alterity" in trendy discourse—to the people under study?

But another question is implicit in this discussion. If in fact a concern with history and change *has* been present in a body of ethnographic writing about Melanesia for decades, why has this corpus gone unrecognized (22), why has it been "subordinate" (242), why has it been relegated to less prestigious publication outlets (13)? To refer to Thomas Kuhn's notion of "paradigm" in science (cf, 21) is to invest the practice of academic anthropology with too much dignity. The notion of paradigm implies, among other things, a free market of thought, in which ideas are regularly subjected to critical examination. But anthropology in general and recent Melanesian ethnography in particular more often resembles—to put it tactfully—a set of mutual admiration societies.

Thus we find groups of practitioners defining problems (eg, what societies should be included in "Oceania") less

on intellectual grounds than on what interests of each group member must be represented in a publication. In recent years, scholars no longer see contradictions in reviewing their collaborators' books, or even books that began as theses under the reviewer's supervision. It is hardly surprising that such reviews are characteristically fulsome in their praise. Clearly, book review editors must take some responsibility for this state of affairs, and there is something to be said for media features like "Book Review Forum" in the journal *Pacific Studies*.

The point is, in such a world, it becomes too easy for significant bodies of work to be ignored, simply because the authors attend the wrong social events. Final accountability to maintain critical scholarship rests with each researcher and writer, whether working individually or collectively. Institutions like Australian National University's Research School of Pacific Studies, University of Hawai'i's Center for Pacific Islands Studies, and the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania need at least as much self-reflexivity as has recently been enjoined to ethnographers, if they are to use their resources to advance knowledge rather than to become cozy havens for mutual backscratching and career grooming.

So the reasons for neglect of history and change in Melanesian ethnography are to be found less in the analysis of abstract ideas than in a sociology of knowledge that honestly assesses roles, social networks, institutional affiliation, and power structures among the ethnographers. This is not the task that the book under review set out to

accomplish. Rather the editor and authors should be praised for what they *have* done: pointing ways for others to join them in the effort (in Barker's felicitous phrase, 145) "to situate ethnography in a shared world of historical experience rather than the romanticized and divided universe of Them and Us."

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Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts: Representing the Chambri in a World System, by Deborah B. Gewertz and Frederick K. Errington. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-521-40012-0, xiv + 264 pp, maps, appendix, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$44.50; paper, US\$14.95.

Anthropologists, especially American ones, have been studying change throughout most of this century. Only recently have we begun to understand the experience of change as people struggle to construct their lives and make sense of them as they negotiate the almost overwhelming encounter with a system that encompasses the world. In this wonderful book, Gewertz and Errington bring their long and extensive research experience in Melanesia to bear on the ways in which the Chambri of the Sepik region of Papua New Guinea encounter, engage, and make sense of their lives in the contemporary world.

The Chambri have never been isolated; indeed, a main point of Gewertz's first monograph, *Sepik*

River Societies (1983), was that the Chambri have always been a part of a regional system and that "external" factors, threats, and peoples have always been an element in the Chambri world. However, as Gewertz and Errington ably illustrate in this volume, the encounter with the world system of today is significantly different from the interactions with, for example, the Iatmul of two hundred years ago. Although the Chambri attempt to exploit the new circumstances and are not passive recipients of change, there is little, if any, opportunity for equitable relations and mutual entailments between the Chambri and those that now impinge on them from outside.

The body of *Twisted Histories* is composed of a series of case studies, each of which illustrates how the Chambri engage the contemporary world and attempt to make it work for them. These are almost told as stories—Gewertz and Errington rightly suggest that this is a relatively unconventional ethnography because it is told through this series of narrative cases. The goal is a simple one: "to make Chambri lives *as accessible as possible to as many as possible*" (21). This goal is admirably achieved.

The first case explores the meaning and effects of tourism on the Chambri. (It is ironic that they are of interest to tourists because of their lack of development, and yet the Chambri see tourism and its benefits as a road to development.) The second case continues with tourism but examines a male initiation ritual to which tourists were invited (and charged admission). The third case concerns Chambri people