

Like People You See in a Dream: First Contact in Six Papuan Societies, edited by Edward L. Schieffelin and Robert Crittenden, with contributions by Bryant Allen and Stephen Frankel, Paul Sillitoe, and Lisette Josephides and Marc Schiltz. Stanford University Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8047-1662-5 cloth, xix + 325 pp, maps, photographs, appendixes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$39.50; paper, US\$12.95.

Explorations into Highland New Guinea, 1930-1935, by Michael J. Leahy, edited by Douglas E. Jones with foreword by Jane C. Goodale. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8173-0446, xiii + 254 pp, map, photographs, index. Paper, US\$19.95.

I first read Michael Leahy's book (written with Maurice Crain), *The Land That Time Forgot*, in 1963, shortly before myself first going out to do research in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Leahy died in 1979 and his younger brother Danny died only in 1991, having spent most of his life in the Hagen area of the Western Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea. It is an interesting experience now to read this posthumous work, *Explorations into Highland Papua New Guinea*, which covers not only much of the ground dealt with in the earlier one but also the story as retold by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson in their book *First Contact* and their film of the same title, and to place these testimonies alongside the very different ones fashioned by the editors of and contributors to *Like People You See in a Dream* and dedicated to the reverse of

Leahy's perspective: not how it looked to the explorer but how it appeared to the people themselves.

In Schieffelin and Crittenden's book the explorer is different also, not Michael Leahy and his brothers, but Jack Hides, whose explorations in Papua were in some ways a counterpart to those of the Leahys in New Guinea. Hides's endeavors, however, came to an early and tragic end with his death while still in his thirties. Part of the purpose of Schieffelin and Crittenden's book is to examine the reasons for Hides's various "failures." The main intent, though, is to see it all "from the native point of view," at least insofar as this could be recovered by anthropologists working a generation or more after the expeditions themselves took place in the late 1920s and 1930s.

What can one make of this point-counterpoint reading experience? What emerges strongly is a picture of the contrasting worldviews and aims of all those involved. Leahy and Hides, for example, were both obsessional bush-walkers and tough men, tending to see themselves as somewhat superhuman; yet their attitudes and visions were rather different. Leahy sought gold, and only secondarily concerned himself with other matters. Hides was one of Sir Hubert Murray's officers, imbued with a desire both to discover new peoples and to "civilize" them. Both men were at one, however, in seeing the Highlanders they encountered as "primitives," albeit vigorous, talented, and politically self-seeking. From the people's side (not told so much by Leahy), what impressed them was the wealth and power of the

intruders, or *per contra* their lack of these vital advantages, as at certain stages of Hides's exploration, when he was attacked and harried, for example.

Leahy's account is much in tune with such a *realpolitik* approach, whether it be in his observations on the brutalities of indigenous warfare or on emergent practices of sexual commerce between his male camp workers and local females (particularly in the Western Highlands). His bluff, "no-nonsense" way of writing about these things reveals him as a pragmatist, interested in all manner of ethnographic details but with an eye always to his own entrepreneurial affairs. For all that, as his explorations continued, it became obvious that he was *not* finding much gold, and yet he still pursued them with unflagging enthusiasm, bargaining, shooting when necessary, bluffing, and strategizing his way through innumerable encounters, as though with a charmed life.

He notes the awe in which the newly arrived whites were held at first, and is swift to point out that after one or two more times the people's thoughts generally turned to overpowering the whites and seizing their wealth, apparently unaware of the lethal power of the firearms the intruders carried. A vital factor for the explorers was their possession of highly valued shells obtained cheaply on the coast and exchanged for pigs, labor, and large amounts of food in the interior. It was a major drawback for Hides in Papua, by contrast, that he chose to stock up mostly with steel axes, whereas in these early stages of contact shells were much more sought after by the people. While both Leahy and Hides had gun-

power, only Leahy had shell-power, an advantage that helped to give his patrols value in the people's own eyes. Hides records the imploring looks of old men who showed him pearl shells, or precious pieces of these, and how at times the buttons were pulled from his shirts as a substitute.

Leahy's reflections on his encounters, on the people in general, on violence and cannibalism, and on political and economic change come across as a curious mixture of accuracy and bias. He is sure of the white man's superiority. "Natives" are fierce warriors who can be coerced into accepting the white man's law and then make good and sometimes loyal servants. Beyond this, he does not trust the future. If one removes his colonial bias, though, his suggestion that violence would not easily be expunged from the social scene in the highlands has certainly returned to haunt the 1980s and 1990s in this part of the world.

Were there major differences among the Highlanders themselves, shown in their responses to first contact? Schiefelin and Crittenden's volume shows there were, and that local cosmologies and ideas of time and space, or history, lay behind the different responses. Everywhere, there was a cosmological dimension involved in the reactions, and of this Hides was mostly unaware. Some groups saw his arrival as presaging the end of their world or threatening it: naturally they were not too keen to have much to do with him or to help his party with food and information. More than once, leaders attempted to steer him away from populated areas; whereas he, bent on precisely the "discovery" of peoples as well as obtaining

food supplies, resented this behavior as a trick, personalizing events that were largely of a cultural kind. As often, the "structure of the conjuncture," as envisaged by Marshall Sahlins, contained more "disjuncture" than "conjuncture" of viewpoints on the two sides.

Schieffelin and Crittenden's book is, of course, a more scholarly contribution. Its eleven chapters are written by specialists on segments of Hides's 1935 journey to the Strickland and Purari rivers, ethnographers who have all made detailed studies in these areas. As a result, one can compare Hides's accounts with those of their informants, and can understand the fear and misunderstandings that existed on both sides, as well as being able to follow the curious alternations of friendship and hostility which Hides's expedition met with along the way. An awkward turning point came with Hides's entry into the Huli area (which he called Tari Furoro). His experience with Papuan coastal peoples began to tell against him here, and while he himself delighted in having come across the Huli, after some hostile encounters and killings his luck turned against him. One wonders what would have happened in reverse, if the Leahys had attempted to apply "highland models" to an exploration of Papua.

These two books tell comparable stories from very different perspectives. Leahy's text in some ways appears itself rather frozen in time, and reading it one travels not only into the depths of the interior of New Guinea but also into the mind-set of an older generation of Australian explorers: shrewd and brave, but never regarding the "native" as an existential equal or contemporary. Schieffelin and Crittenden's

volume amply rectifies such deficiencies, and gives scholarly and thoughtful reconstructions and interpretations of events from indigenous testimony as well as archival and published sources.

One impression emerges overall: whereas cosmologies differed, attitudes to violence were rather similar throughout this wide region. Leahy managed to make his way through these attitudes, while Hides's enterprise was more and more entangled in them, issuing in progressive misunderstandings and disasters. Strikingly, however, both of these explorers were also writers and in their own way ethnographers, a fact that has led to the enrichment of testimony regarding "first contacts" as well as bringing with it the challenge to reinterpretation so ably and charmingly encompassed by the editors and all the contributors to the volume.

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Two Worlds: First Meetings between Maori and Europeans, 1642-1772, by Anne Salmond. Auckland: Penguin Books (NZ) and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991. ISBN 0-8248-1467-3, 477 pp, maps, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. NZ\$69.95; US\$38.00.

Early meetings in New Zealand between local Maori peoples and the first explorers to step ashore were invariably eventful. Such encounters have spawned a far-reaching primary and reflective record. *Two Worlds* synthesizes much of this vast record, and is itself an extensive primary study