

*des années 1990* simply provides a necessary baseline for measuring subsequent change.

Will the policies implemented by the Matignon Accords result in a successful redistribution of wealth between regions and between ethnic groups in New Caledonia? In a brief concluding section the authors avow their skepticism. The spatial and ethnic structures that characterize the territory are extremely resilient. Time is incredibly short. The Kanak community has won the battle for external recognition, but achieving major and lasting social, economic, and political gains is another matter.

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*Human Biology in Papua New Guinea: The Small Cosmos*, edited by Robert D Attenborough and Michael P Alpers. Research Monographs on Human Population Biology 10. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-857, xiii + 427 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, bibliography, index. US\$98.

This is a partial review. Partial in the sense that I read this volume with the intense interest of someone already fascinated by the diversity of “the small cosmos,” Papua New Guinea. But it must also be inadequate, as the broad range of subjects encompassed means that some of the disciplinary fields are utterly foreign to me, as they will be to any particular reader. Lest this be interpreted as a criticism, I stress that while this collection is clearly at one

level a reference book—encyclopedic in scope if not dimension—it is also a volume of interrelated essays that can be read as a complex regional study of human biology. The correlation of themes, the meticulous cross-referencing, and the clear editorial direction ensure that anyone can read this as an integrated study.

The most immediately impressive achievement of the collection is its demonstration of the value of interdisciplinary research in developing an understanding of the lives of people in Papua New Guinea. In the introductory chapter by the editors, the central themes of human biology and health are contextualized in space and history, with acknowledgment of the implications of linguistic, social, and cultural variation. The second chapter, by Bryant Allen, modestly entitled “The Geography of Papua New Guinea,” introduces the issue of diversity in its basic aspects—the physical, environmental, and climatic diversity of the country—but these are elaborated in their historical dimensions. Regional differences are made comprehensible in terms of the interplay of human forces—social, political, and economic—within the material universe. Issues of demographic structure and factors affecting population changes are initially raised in the chapter on demography by Ian Riley and Deborah Lehmann, who deal with migration, mortality, and fertility. These themes are then developed and explored in detail in later chapters on fertility and reproductive biology (James Wood), population origins (Robert Kirk), and genetics (Susan Serjeantson, Philip Board, and Kuldeep Bhatia).

Cultural diversity in Papua New Guinea is indicated by the large number of distinct languages. William Foley provides an overview of the complex linguistic composition and links his explanation of language distribution to the prehistory of the country. The human past is dealt with by Ian Lilley in an essay that surveys the archaeological studies and emphasizes the preliminary and speculative nature of current research into the prehistory of the human population. The chapter on social anthropology (Donald Gardner and James Weiner) deftly outlines the history of anthropological research in Papua New Guinea over the last century. In the process they reveal some of the reasons why human biology and anthropology have developed distinct discourses that only occasionally engage in interdisciplinary conversations, despite recognition of mutual relevances. Their optimism about future interactions is borne out in Carol Jenkins' final chapter on medical anthropology, which gives an overview of research undertaken and suggests how research into health and illness can involve studies from different disciplines.

Several epidemiological studies explore issues of health and disease that are of major significance in Papua New Guinea. Although written for a reader familiar with medical terms and human biological analyses, they are not inaccessible and in the context of the collection convey precise information on health problems that affect large numbers of people. Malaria, intestinal parasites, diabetes, respira-

tory infections and disorders are examined in terms of their distribution and impact on the population. Diseases such as kuru and pigbel, which have been studied anthropologically and medically and are manifest in specific socially determined settings in Papua New Guinea, are discussed in respective chapters by Michael Alpers and Gregor Lawrence.

This volume has been compiled by editors whose work in the area of human biology has consistently aimed at drawing together the various approaches to studying human populations and taking them into account in developing an understanding of the human biology of a region. They have managed to select judiciously a wide range of subjects, and the collection can be consulted as a reference text providing concise presentations of major issues in health, physical anthropology, and medicine in Papua New Guinea. The integration of approaches and general readability also ensure that it can be appreciated as exemplifying the type of research they see as necessary in developing complex understandings of human biology in any country. The book's value for those who study Papua New Guinea is obvious. The editors have fulfilled their objectives in representing the complexity of this small cosmos; it is hoped that their achievement will provide inspiration for research beyond the region.

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