

Britain, not from the point of view of its supernatural beliefs, but rather from that of its place in local political maneuvering and efforts to exercise social control.

Sjoerd Jaarsma, in one of the book's more ambitious chapters, turns the reflexive impulse to more scholarly account in providing a history of the anthropological study of cargo cults. Contextualizing initial cargo cult studies against the background of the literature on acculturation, his discussion of the changing ways anthropologists have approached this topic provides many insights into the relationship between the Western institution of anthropology and the things anthropologists "see" in the field.

The reflexive screw is turned yet another full rotation in Elfriede Hermann's excellent analysis of the way the people of the pseudonymous "Yasaburing," inhabitants of the home village of Yali, the famous Rai Coast cargo prophet, have reacted to the stigma they see inherent in administrative and related anthropological designations of themselves as cargo cultists. They have countered this designation by demarcating a realm of "*kastom*" that contains their "traditional religion," a religion that they assert predates contact and is thus free of the cargo taint. Here perhaps is the best exemplification of the editors' claim that Melanesians are currently inventing the realm of the religious, along with a powerful argument about the role of emotions such as shame and anger in the process of cultural change.

Originally delivered at a conference at the University of Nijmegen in

1992, the chapters here are very brief; most are less than fifteen pages in length. As such, they tend to be provocative rather than conclusive. But in their openness to examining the state of play across traditional and modern religion, and across internally and externally driven changes in religion, these chapters taken together make a fine argument for the importance of religion in contemporary Melanesia and a worthy contribution to its study.

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Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific, edited by Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-521-5842-8, cloth; ISBN 0-521-58614-3, paper, vii + 305 pages, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, A\$105.00, US\$64.95; paper, A\$36.95, US\$22.95.

As a new mother myself, I am acutely aware of the degree to which experts in American society inundate new mothers and parents-to-be with information about the proper way to give birth and to rear children, and the alleged perils of not doing so. Should one have a *doula* or not? A midwife rather than a doctor? Home birth or hospital? Should the baby sleep with the parents or in its own crib? In the same room as the parents or a separate room? Play Mozart to stimulate cognitive development—while still in

the womb or just beginning with birth? And so on. Over the last century, however, pediatricians and scientists who study child development have kept changing the advice they give parents about the best way to rear children. Central to all of these different approaches is the idea that rearing a child remains the process whereby social values are transmitted from generation to generation and that experts—rather than say one's mother, older sister, or grandmother—can best tell one how to do so successfully.

It is increasingly difficult, however, not to view much of this contradictory and contested information as not simply the result of the accumulation of new knowledge, but rather as knowledge embedded in different social and political ideologies dominant at different moments in US history, or among different segments of American society. What is at issue is what lifestyle one subscribes to and, more substantively, what social values one wants one's child to be taught.

In a similar vein, recognizing the centrality of birth and childcare to the creation of specific kinds of adults (eg, good workers, obedient citizens, modern subjects) and the dominant role women, especially mothers, have historically played as caregivers, the essays in *Maternities and Modernities* argue that processes of modernity in Asia and the Pacific took as central the transformation of practices of maternity. By maternity the authors mean the corporeal processes of being pregnant, giving birth, and nurturing. The use of plural rather than singular forms of *maternities* and *modernities* highlights the authors' theoretical

stance that neither maternity nor modernity were homogeneous phenomena cross-culturally, nor was the relationship between the two unilateral.

Blurring the boundary between colonialism and postcolonialism, as well as between metropolitan countries and peripheral colonies, the authors discuss the continuity between these two periods and locations and the legacy of one to the other. More specifically, they aim to show how different projects of modernity in Asia and the Pacific—in particular, the ascendancy of experts (medical missionaries, doctors and nurses, public health officials, etc) in the service of the colonial and postcolonial state—have shaped and remolded maternity. Following a line of argument prevalent in recent anthropological and historical studies of colonialism, the authors suggest that “class-based interventions in mothering in many countries of Europe and North America were paralleled by projects in European colonies where race, ethnicity and class compounded pre-existing local differences between women” (1). A second organizing theme of the volume is that indigenous women have not always accepted the advice and strictures placed upon them, but have resisted as well as embraced these other ideas.

The volume includes three articles on South Asia (India and Bangladesh), two on Malaysia, and three on Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji), plus an introduction by Margaret Jolly and an epilogue by Kalpana Ram. The authors, primarily anthro-

pologists from Australia and New Zealand, first presented their essays at a workshop on maternity convened by the Gender Relations Project at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, in 1992.

Lenore Manderson's and Maila Stivens' articles about Malay maternity complement one another chronologically. Manderson argues that colonial policy regarding maternity was shaped by the assumption that Malay mothers were unhygienic and lazy and impelled by a concern for high rates of infant and maternal mortality undermining the colonial workforce. She also suggests that the reforms prescribed for Malay motherhood were based on the colonial belief in the "natural" acumen of European mothers versus the necessity to teach Malay and other immigrant women how to be good mothers.

Picking up where Manderson leaves off, Stivens focuses on the role of motherhood in the modern Malaysian state. She argues that there is not just one narrative of the relationship between motherhood and modernity in Malaysia but three: that of the mother's role in creating the happy family and nation, that of Islamic fundamentalists who preach of the vulnerability of "traditional" motherhood to "Westoxification," and that of feminists who claim that modern motherhood has meant a loss of autonomy and power for women.

In addition to discussing the relationship between European missionary women and their Indian "sisters" in Travancore, south India, Jane Haggis points out the irony and contradiction for Indian women who

chose to become Christian Bible women between being "dedicated [Christian] workers" who were trained to help other Indian women create good Christian homes or being "good wives and mothers" themselves.

Writing about another group in south India, lower caste Tamil fisherfolk who became Catholics in the sixteenth century, Kalpana Ram describes the tensions between "tradition" and "modernity" contemporary Mukkuvar women experience in their choices surrounding pregnancy and birth in terms of the continuities these tensions represent with more general colonial and precolonial Mukkuvar experiences of subaltern oppression and prejudice.

In her discussion of maternity and childbirth in rural Bangladesh, Santi Rozario acknowledges the modern biomedical assessment of the traditional rural midwife or *dai* as lacking expertise. Because indigenous beliefs regard childbirth as polluting, *dai* are accorded low status and the position is only occupied by poor women. Attempts at modernizing their practices are hindered by the unwillingness of educated Bangladeshi women to assume such low-status positions. Rozario discusses strategies that might help *dai* achieve new respectability in their local communities.

Returning to colonial discourse, Jolly discusses the debate during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among British anthropologists, missionaries, and colonial officials regarding depopulation in the former Pacific colonies of Fiji and Vanuatu. Although various causes were proposed, Jolly suggests that undue

blame was attributed to “maternal insouciance,” including blaming mothers for conditions beyond their control. But, Jolly argues, both in the past and at present many indigenous women have resisted being characterized as “bad mothers,” especially in contrast to white women as “good mothers.”

Leanne Merrett-Balkos describes Anganen women in Papua New Guinea as welcoming many of the innovations in childbirth introduced to them in the late sixties by Catholic sisters, but with intriguing and significant limits. Anganen beliefs imbue the placenta and umbilical cord with symbolic meaning that assures a child’s group affiliation. In order to acquire the afterbirth when giving birth at the aid post, Anganen women collectively protested and succeeded in getting the sisters to give them a portion of it for ritual and symbolic manipulation.

Finally, Christine Dureau describes changing contexts of maternity in Simbo, Western Solomon Islands, in terms of a shift in emphasis from the precolonial importance of the relationship between brothers and sisters to the modern emphasis on the relationship between husband and wife and the effects of this shift on childbirth and maternity.

The rich ethnographic and historical detail of the articles is greatly augmented by Jolly’s and Ram’s excellent introductory and closing essays, which contextualize the case studies in terms of general theoretical discussions of modernity (Jolly), anthropology (Jolly and Ram), and feminist theory (Ram). As Ram points out, only recently have feminists begun to

examine maternity and the embodied experience of motherhood, and when they have, they have focused exclusively on western women. The articles in this impressive volume contribute substantially to illuminating understanding of women’s experiences of maternity and the effects of modernity on them in other parts of the world.

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Times Enmeshed: Gender, Space, and History among the Duna of Papua New Guinea, by Gabriele Stürzenhofecker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8047-2899-2, x + 242 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. US\$45.

The Duna are northwestern neighbors of the Huli people, long known from the ethnographic work of Robert Glasse as notable among New Guinea Highlanders for their practice of cognatic descent (together with long genealogies, apocalyptic cosmological ideas, and strict gender segregation, among other things). Relatively less well known, the Duna came to anthropological attention through the work of Nicholas Modjeska, which centered on the mode of production, and on the political economy of gender in particular.

It makes sense, then, that Gabriele Stürzenhofecker began her own Duna field research, based at Aluni (about 7 km northwest of Modjeska’s field site), intent on exploring the implications of cognatic kinship for the political economy of male–female rela-