

## Book and Media Reviews

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missionary pilot Les Anderson; Sam of Maimafu who tells tales of the “big city” Goroka; and Atticks, of Goroka, a coffee buyer who was once stuck for three weeks in Maimafu when the weather was bad and no plane could come to retrieve him and the coffee. Her narrative abounds with tales of expatriates such as Ravi and Anu Savarti; Madu Namdu, the Indian manager of an export company in Goroka; and Angella and Shannon, wives of expatriate coffee company employees, whose tales are interwoven with concerns about family safety and racism. Other expatriates include Bruce Matton, Dorian Hempsted, and Ed Johnson, and their stories are told with careful attention to a colonial past. Readers soon share West’s amusement with the ironies of Seventh-Day Adventist missionary pilots (who do not drink coffee) having to explain to their American denominational constituents why an important part of their flying duties in New Guinea involve transportation of coffee beans.

West’s encounter with Patrick Faden, a Papua New Guinea truck driver who jokes that he is Black Irish, leads to a fine example of an ethnographer admitting to a planned part of a study gone wrong. Faden’s refusal to let her accompany a shipment of coffee beans from Goroka to Lae because of his concerns for her personal safety means that her book in one sense is missing the perfect chapter. Yet this honest admission is in fact an even better ending to the story than the imagined one. She must fly to Lae, and there she has a rare experience of being “stood up” at the Nazdab airport. This leads to reflections on

the intertwined community that one develops in years of fieldwork and how “naked” one feels when out of one’s own community.

Clearly, *From Modern Production to Imagined Primitive* is not only about the intertwined worlds of coffee production, it is about the process of ethnographic observation and about the human relationships involved in any of these enterprises. This fine study could be useful in anthropology courses, area studies of Pacific culture, and courses on food studies, as well as a satisfying accompaniment to many hot cups of coffee.

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*Sun Come Up*. Documentary, DVD, 38 minutes, color, 2010. Written by Jennifer Redfearn and Tim Metzger; directed by Jennifer Redfearn. Distributed by New Day Films. Available for purchase from [www.newday.com](http://www.newday.com). Institutions: US\$295.00; community groups: US\$129.00; rental: US\$75.00.

*Sun Come Up* tells a story about an attempt by the world’s first climate refugees, the Carteret Islanders of Papua New Guinea. In the absence of state aid, the movie traces their efforts to organize their own resettlement in the context of progressive damage to their ancestral atoll islands by rising sea levels. *Sun Come Up* offers a compelling case study of the Janus-faced nature of capitalism, which, on the pathological side, has produced the greenhouse gases that are causing the sea levels to rise, thus threatening the cultural autonomy of people

like the Carteret Islanders, while it has concurrently produced recursive, critical media, of which *Sun Come Up* is an unavoidably melodramatic but nonetheless useful instance.

There is a sequence that is the heart of the movie. Senior leaders send a delegation of young men and women to the mainland, Bougainville in this case, essentially to beg for the goodwill of hereditary landowners there to donate land so that an initial few families may start the relocation process. The film follows the group's movements through several villages, in each of which they appeal for help. They give speeches about climate change, the erosion of their garden land, and their current lack of food resources. They express private anxieties about having to travel through a landscape of drunks and ex-soldiers who fought in the Bougainville war for many years. After a number of failures, a community set deep in the rain forest offers them a small plot of land to settle on. As a landowner says, "Your stories have broken my heart. I heard them and I cried."

The land is cleared and houses are constructed. But what are we given to hear? Talk from a young refugee about being able to see the Carteret Islands from a nearby mountain and an oration by a local leader who encourages him to join the new community and resist homesickness and isolation. The inherent ambivalence of all parties and the many ambiguities of the situation are well in view in the faces and reactions of participants when a church service is staged to celebrate a symbolic marriage between hosts and guests in which a group of island men are seen "paddling" down the aisle.

Obviously, the new site, being landlocked, is entirely inappropriate for the maritime Carteret Islanders. The delegation returns home, where concerns are voiced about their pending loss of cultural identity and about their nostalgia for their island home, the home that they have yet to leave. A senior man declares that he intends to be the very last one to go, if it turns out that everyone does indeed depart.

This dramatic sequence surely illustrates the political and environmental catastrophe that capitalism has and will continue to produce on ever-bigger scales. The image of poor and weak people in the global south having to trudge through a landscape of reticent landowners, drunkenness, and violence in order to devise their own adaptation to a problem they did not create—having to humiliate and debase themselves—could hardly be rendered any more bleakly.

Allegory (and this movie is allegory) suffers from limited character development because its heroes are subordinated to the ideas they represent rather than allowed to emerge dialogically by and with their authors. That is to say, we do not get much information about the Carteret Islanders or their new hosts other than romantic silhouettes of the former against the sea at dusk, or riding across the waves in modest outriggers, and the heroic act of generalized reciprocity by the Bougainvillian landowner, who, one suspects, had more complicated motivations than the mere sentiment he expresses on camera. Nevertheless, *Sun Come Up* is a pedagogically effective movie. Redfearn and Metzger make the film's shattering point in a visually appealing, understated way

that avoids getting too caught up in the byzantine mazes that local-level Melanesian politics are so famous for. It will well serve the high school or college classroom as well as any other context in which climate change and environmental issues are raised.

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*Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans, and Ecological Exchange*, by Jennifer Newell. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8248-3281-0; 312 pages, illustrations, appendixes, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$45.00.

*Trading Nature* examines the ways in which nature underlies, motivates, and shapes exchanges between cultural parties in Pacific encounters. Drawing on an impressive range of source materials, Jennifer Newell carefully examines the easily overlooked (in part because often underfoot) place of nature in exchanges between Tahitians and Europeans, from the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries into Tahiti's present. Throughout, she draws attention to the material significance of culturally distinct perceptions, conceptions, and engagements with nature and in so doing offers a much-needed perspective on the place of nature in Pacific histories.

As Newell clearly identifies in her introduction, Western observers have demonstrated a consistent tendency to erect impermeable boundaries of the mind between nature and culture, ignoring the many ways in which the two are woven together in everyday

human experience. *Trading Nature* seeks to illustrate and resolve the many inadequacies that this tendency has yielded in broadly circulating understandings of Tahitian historical encounters. Numerous facts about various sorts of exchange are used to showcase the ways in which nature and culture are historically intertwined, as well as the ways in which influences exerted on one another are catalyzed by the interactions of cultural groupings with divergent interests, resulting in consequential legacies into the present. As Newell both argues and reveals throughout the text, the culturally encoded "naturalness" of a place plays a direct role in how an environment is conceived, interpreted, and interacted with. *Trading Nature* also identifies the significance of fluidity—the ways in which the meanings ascribed to and the values associated with the components of a natural environment ceaselessly fluctuate over time. Indeed, in many places, Newell's text contributes to the broad conversation in Pacific history about the understated point of fluidity in meaning, and the ways in which notions of value pass through forms of exchange parallel to yet enmeshed within the more material circulations of goods, services, animals, and plants.

An intriguing duality present throughout the book requires readers to consider the conceptions, values, and motivations behind ecological exchanges on the part of both Tahitians and the European voyagers. Newell moves vividly and carefully through what she calls "landscapes of the mind" and is inclusive of a variety of cultural factors, taking into consideration concurrent European literary