

social, marketing, and related systems if their policies are to be any more than statements of grand principles.

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The Margin Fades: Geographical Itineraries in a World of Islands, edited by Eric Waddell and Patrick D Nunn. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1994. ISBN 982-02-0092-X, x + 297 pages, figures, maps, tables, photographs, notes, references, index. Paper, US\$20, including postage.

This collection celebrates twenty-five years of scholarly effort by the most distinctive of geography departments *in*, rather than *of* the Pacific, at the University of the South Pacific, Lautoka Bay. Within the broader frame of Pacific studies and in the apt metaphor of Epeli Hau'ofa, its thirteen essays bear testimony to divers rather than to surfers. As divers, students of an oceanic realm display a multidimensional concern with past, present, and future that makes them more given to reflection, perhaps slower moving, always searching for what lies beneath the easy visibility of a contemporary world. But at times, even for some runs of years during the university's history, it has been the surfers that captured more scholarly attention, for theirs is an intense preoccupation with knowledge and its passing fashions, with the shine of a momentary present, and with amassing vast quantities of evidence—before speeding on. . . . Divers, not surfers? Then how many metropol-

itan departments of geography can harness so much collective energy and so much spirit of common purpose to display their academic accomplishments between the covers of one volume for a considerable range of years—in this case, from 1968 until 1993.

Throughout, there is an integrated concern with people, land, and sea, with an interlocked humanity of islands. Although the parent “geography” is invoked, the overriding sense is that to follow disciplinary convention and deconstruct that parent to the various kith and kin present in this volume (agricultural geography, biogeography, cultural geography, economic geography, geomorphology, marine geography, social geography, urban geography) would be to demean and to make trivial the more compelling whole. The emphasis, instead, is on issues in which theory and praxis, personal philosophy and scholarly commitment, are two sides of the one coin rather than of different currency. In the largest sense, of the sustained use and sensitive management of environmental and human resources spread unequally across a sea of islands and, beyond that, of biodiversity, cultural identity, geopolitics and aid, marine and foreshore economics, rural land use, urban and industrial dynamics.

The sixteen authors and commentators in this collection range from those associated with the geography department's early and formative years (Rajesh Chandra, Edward Simpson, Konai Helu Thaman, Randolph Thaman, Crosbie Walsh) through to Eric Waddell, coeditor with Patrick Nunn

and perhaps this university's last expatriate professor of geography. In between is a succession of permanent and visiting staff, some of whom returned more than once (John Bigay, William Clarke, Gilbert David, Harley Manner, John Overton), culminating in today's group who are dominantly Fijian by birth or naturalization (Jenny Bryant-Tokalau, Lionel Gibson, Frank McShane, Patrick Nunn, Joeli Veitayaki). Doubtless responding to editorial suggestion, most essays meld personal experience and reflection with research questions and larger concerns, thereby both enlivening the narrative and uncovering the occasional nugget. As when Queen Elizabeth II formally presented the university with its charter, cooled by a fan passing air over block ice placed strategically in an equally strategic new hole in the wall of The Great Hall of Ceremony—a former seaplane hangar!

No matter how long these academic geographers lived and worked on the Laucala Bay campus, it is clear that the enduring influence on them of the Pacific, as cosmos, as people, as place, is immeasurably greater than their own scholarly impact on particular projects, localities, islands, or countries. It is true that Joeli Veitayaki demonstrates the utility of a geographic approach to ocean management, that Randy Thaman advocates community-based biodiversity conservation, that Jenny Bryant-Tokalau emphasizes the environmental ills of the urban scene, and that Frank McShane makes a delicately balanced assessment of the proposed copper mine at Namosi, Viti Levu. But what impresses overall, and

synoptically in the personal diaries of Harley Manner and Cros Walsh, is the strength of spirit and of scholarly resilience needed to withstand the strong waves of big ideas and even grander experts that surfed repeatedly over the reef, only to seep imperceptibly through the coral and reveal the divers, hard at work grappling with depths of understanding beyond the reef face. . . . Perhaps this is why all authors avoid the extremes of the scholarly continuum—the soaring flights to theoretical abstraction or the painstaking empirical search for the next shrub, the next dialect, the next islet—and why there is a synergy in their revealed thinking with Epeli Hau'ofa's conception of the Pacific as a “sea of islands” (*A New Oceania*, 1993). Is a certain overlap in contributors to both volumes more than simply coincidence?

What is distinctive about geography and geographers at the University of the South Pacific? Their collective vision, the editors argue, derives from being in rather than beyond the Pacific, which is at once home, family, and workplace, so that scholarship becomes more applied, more committed, and more authentic in nature. Such a new Pacific geography focuses on an oceanic realm with an exciting future rather than a heroic but fading past, considers ancient interactions between island societies and institutions rather than inevitably within the arbitrary boundaries of nation-states, and views metropolitan learning, academic rigor, personal commitment, island heart and soul as all part of the whole, rather than reduced to a disjunct “objective” versus “subjective.”

Do we have here the first halting but energetic appearance of a particular geographic epistemology, structured knowledge grounded in Pacific ancestry, hard-won experience, and manners of island thinking as much as in the precepts of the western intellectual tradition?

These kinds of considerations are at the heart of a long and thoughtful afterword by William Clarke, "Learning from Ngirapo." Well known for presenting the wisdom of subsistence gardeners, here he shifts focus to caution against the current global fashionability of indigenous knowledge and, taking a cue from Euro-American knowledge, of its apparent universal ability to be transferred with alacrity across time, space, and culture! What at one level are bits and pieces of reality (berries, tendrils, flowers, roots) at another are woven into the fabric of an agricultural landscape set in a particular social, cultural, and environmental context. "It is wholly in keeping with modernity," observes Clarke, "that modern science should lift out that sort of indigenous knowledge and make it a part of Western science" (254)—*precisely* the opposite of what this collection strives to achieve. Namely, to reach toward ways of knowing that are grounded in the experience of the island Pacific and, beyond that, for all scholars to place equal value on *both* indigenous *and* exogenous structures of knowledge. In the words of the Kanak intellectual, Jean-Marie Tjibaou, "Our ancestors are not the Gaels or the direct descendants of Mozart, and in order to participate in history, we must first become people rooted in our funda-

mental specificity. And for us to open up to the modern world, we must invent new forms" (86).

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Reconciling the Past: Two Basketry Kā'ai and the Legendary Liloa and Lonoikamakahiki, by Roger G Rose. Bulletin in Anthropology 5. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992. ISBN 0-930897-76-5, ix + 56 pages, notes, figures, appendix, references. Paper, US\$12.95.

In February 1994 the last two known examples of sculpted woven Hawaiian chiefly burial caskets (*kā'ai*) were secretly taken from the Bishop Museum. At the time, Roger Rose's comprehensive historical and anthropological study of these *kā'ai*, *Reconciling the Past*, was already in print. It was being used to bolster arguments on various sides of a debate over the final resting place for the *kā'ai*. They were to be entombed at the Mauna 'Ala Royal Mausoleum. Presumably they are now interred elsewhere, many believing in Waipi'o Valley on Hawai'i Island.

Rose's study addressed critical questions relevant to the then-emerging debate over the disposition of the *kā'ai*: Where did the *kā'ai* originate? What two chiefs were encased in them? How were the *kā'ai* treated in the past? and What is their cultural significance? While the fate of the *kā'ai* is now beyond control, these questions continue to be meaningful.

Reconciling the Past successfully