

an approach especially appropriate for the study of changing Melanesian cultures. As testament to Lipset's success in realizing his goal "to illustrate the relationship between Murik men and the maternal body as a Bakhtinian dialogue" (10), his ponderous metaphorical vocabulary remained vivid in my imagination when I finished the book, but at the expense of an equally vivid visualization of Murik society. The book is well produced (although Annette and James Weiner's last name is consistently misspelled) and the glossary is helpful to keep track of indigenous terms that, thankfully, are used with restraint.

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Cultural Dynamics of Religious Change in Oceania, edited by Ton Otto and Ad Borsboom. Leiden: KITLV Press (Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology), 1997. ISBN 90-6718-119-6, viii + 144 pages, figures, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, US\$33.50. Distributed in the United States by the Book Bin.

This is a book of essays focused on Melanesian religion. At first glance, this fact about its contents may not strike readers as particularly noteworthy. Yet although quite a few edited collections focus on specific aspects or kinds of Melanesian religion (male cults, female cults, cargo cults, witchcraft, Christianity), few take religion in general as their brief. One of this volume's great successes is the argument it makes for the value of focus-

ing attention on religion broadly defined.

The editors themselves offer one reason for focusing on religion in general in the volume's epilogue, a chapter that stands out as a short but very stimulating theoretical essay that can be read profitably even by those who have not read the other papers in the book. After laying out a typology of kinds of changes cultures can undergo when faced with contact with another culture (a useful list that includes incorporation of new elements into old frames, rearrangement of frames, opposition to the new, experiment with the new, and displacement of the old), Ton Otto and Ad Borsboom go on to observe that as contemporary Melanesians develop a host of new categories for comprehending social life—categories such as custom, business, government, and the like—and as they encounter Christianity and its condemnation of "traditional religion," many of them have begun to formulate their own notions of a discrete realm of the religious. Once such a category is loose in local thought, it makes sense for anthropologists to study it across the broad range that it covers. This is what the contributors to this volume do. Through their work, one gets a sense of the definitional and evaluative debates that make religion such a charged area in contemporary Melanesia.

Leaving aside Thomas Widlok's interesting paper on the sociological transformations effected by Australian traveling rituals, the volume's six ethnographic chapters fall into two groups. Three of them deal with the ways Papua New Guineans have

engaged with Christianity. Elisabetta Gneccchi-Rusccone examines contemporary Anglican church feasts among the Korofe of Oro Province. The Korofe themselves stress that in performing these feasts they have decisively broken with the custom of holding the *vasai* feasts that were central to their traditional religion. Despite these claims, however, Gneccchi-Rusccone argues that many elements of the traditional feasts remain crucial to these Christian rituals.

There is a somewhat odd theoretical move at the heart of Gneccchi-Rusccone's ethnographically rich paper that also shows up in many discussions of contemporary Melanesian religion. This move involves discounting local assertions of change in favor of analyses that aim to demonstrate the continuing power of "traditional" understandings. It is an odd move, at least at present, because so many anthropologists of the Pacific, including the editors of this volume, are these days quick to point out that tradition is dynamic and ever-changing. In assuming that there is an unchanging cultural substrate that can be shown to underlie today's changing religious scene, anthropologists seem to forget this crucial point.

Yet this approach can be put to good use. In Holger Jebens's stimulating consideration of the growing popularity of Seventh-Day Adventism among the Catholic Pairundu of the Southern Highlands Province, he makes this move in arguing that there is an irony at the heart of Adventism's spread: part of the appeal of Seventh-Day Adventism is its promise to eradicate the traditional religion to which

Catholicism had accommodated itself and thus to usher in a wholly new, modern world; yet Seventh-Day Adventism's "plausibility" is largely based on the way its legalism and dualism render it more similar to the traditional religion than is Catholicism. Although brief, this is one of the best available discussions of denominational competition in Melanesia, and it shows how one can use etic assertions of enduring tradition as part of an argument that fully registers contemporary complexities.

Gunter Senft's consideration of the displacement of traditional religion and magic by Methodist Christianity in the Trobriands begins with a nicely observed argument that joining the clergy represented a rare route to social mobility in this hierarchical society. The rest of the article carefully explores how various aspects of Trobriand culture have been lost as Christianity has grown in popularity. Here, even the best anthropological digging cannot find "traditional" religion being preserved. In response, Senft's tone is sometimes elegiac, but he modulates it in impressive ways, and his closing remarks on who bears "responsibility" for these changes are novel, powerful, and worth engaging.

A second group of chapters focuses on cargo cults. In these chapters, matters turn reflexive on several levels. Michel Panoff, in a very brief chapter, contends that the anthropological focus on the supernatural elements of cargo cults follows from anthropologists' "dubious" thirst for the mystical and enchanted. This criticism lodged, he goes on to discuss the Kivung movement of the Maenge of New

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