

Book and Media Reviews

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who took part in the film did a beautiful job, and their work alone makes the experience worth it. Depending on your background and experiences, you may find layers of meaning embedded within the film that move you to tears, but you may also find issues that move you to action. I have found plenty of both. While there is much to celebrate, there is still a long way to go.

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Making the Modern Primitive: Cultural Tourism in the Trobriand Islands, by Michelle MacCarthy. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8248-5560-4, x+270 pages, map, figures, notes, glossary, references, index. Cloth, US\$68.00.

Can we ever leave Kiriwina? *Making the Modern Primitive: Cultural Tourism in the Trobriand Islands* returns us there once again. Not for a new study of intertribal exchange, or to return to the ambiguities of the father in matriliney, or to research chiefs, or to develop a new concept of reciprocity, or to reanalyze Trobriand magic, or to appreciate the island as the birthplace of anthropological methods, or to come to grips with how the place took on a special significance among Bronislaw Malinowski's descendants. No. Michelle MacCarthy's new ethnography, based on fieldwork in 2009–2010, returns us to Kiriwina for another purpose, which is to probe the discrepant meanings of "cultural tourism" from three points of view: hosts, guests, and anthropologists.

Foreigners visit the island in steady but hardly overwhelming numbers, arriving in thrice-weekly planes from Port Moresby or, less often, by yacht or cruise ship. They come, MacCarthy avers, in search of a glimpse of "the primitive" living their true and real life. They come in search of "authentic" experience, which they more or less conceive in static, precapitalist, pre-Christian terms as well as in *National Geographic* clichés—eg, the "islands of love." As such, they take photos carefully framed so as to avoid including evidence of culture change, and they complain when they are asked to pay their subjects for the right to do so. Tourists make their way off the beaten track for a chance to see a moral way of life, or lifestyle, which they fear is disappearing in the face of global capitalism and missionary Christianity. They desperately want to see "the real thing," so much so that they even disparage each other in a kind of touristic hierarchy of value. Independent travelers view themselves as superior to those in groups, and both see themselves as superior to tourists on the big cruise ships. What is more, they feel angst about how they themselves subvert Trobriand culture by commodifying it.

For their part, MacCarthy suggests, the Kiriwinians see the dimdim (foreigners) as a more or less homogeneous kin group from abroad who bear material resources, and, in that sense, they treat them like intertribal trading partners with whom they want to initiate and sustain long-term reciprocal exchange relations. In short, they would like to see tourists as kula men and women. But, of course, this is a wish that cannot be fulfilled. Villag-

ers try to please and give their guests what they think they want. They stage dance performances in which they dress in “traditional” finery—grass skirts and shell ornaments. Men sell carvings, walking sticks, and bowls. Women sell baskets and mats.

Central among the many disconnections between Kiriwinians and tourists to which MacCarthy returns over and over again are the frustrations that the marketing of goods and performances arouses between the gift-based economy of the sellers and the commodity-based one of the buyers. The tourists make purchases but, other than their photography, have little or no communication or interaction with villagers. The tourists are estranged from the sellers. Meanwhile, the Kiriwinians are frustrated by a perceived moral distance, insurmountable as it is, from their guests. Despite many useful and thought-provoking passages, however, it is surprising how very little ethnography makes its way into the book. We do overhear a lot of voices on the scene, to be sure, expressing concerns and desires. There are extended discussions of tourist photography and of the handful of movies made there. But there is an odd shortage of case studies detailing instances of individuals involved in specific events and transactions.

There is another inadequacy in this otherwise enthralling account. I hesitate to call it a failing, but it is a jarring omission, at least to me. I should have thought that MacCarthy’s analysis would benefit from a theory of desire, or a theorization of desire in this scene. On the one hand, why is it that the cultural tourists are so eager to find an unadulterated,

pre-state Eden? Why is it that they sense that something is hiding behind their own lives? Or to put it another way, what is lacking in their experience of modernity that they turn to cultural tourism as a privileged site of the real, the genuine, and the original (see, eg, Susan Stewart’s *On Longing* [1992])? On the other hand, in light of the well-known erotics of Trobriand culture and society (see *The Sexual Life of Savages* [Malinowski 1929]), does gendered desire enter into the meaning of money, objects, and social relationships with the tourists? These are not questions that MacCarthy asks. But perhaps her examination of value, which largely turns upon gifts and commodities, might have become a bit more nuanced by having considered them.

The study of tourism in the global Pacific in general, and in Papua New Guinea in particular, has not produced a sizable literature, although what little there is of it is intriguing (see, eg, Jane Desmond’s *Staging Tourism* [1999] and Eric K Silverman’s “After Cannibal Tours” [*The Contemporary Pacific* 25:221–257 [2013]]). More broadly, of course, tourism studies have an eminent genealogy. One thinks of Dean MacCannell’s *The Tourist* (1976), James Clifford’s *Routes* (1997), and Edward Bruner’s *Culture on Tour* (2005), among many others. I have no doubt that Michelle MacCarthy’s absorbing though indifferently edited new book will find a distinguished spot in both the regional and the general work on this fascinating topic—for its acute multi-perspectivism.

So, to return to my opening question, given the undiminished quality

of the ethnography coming out of research there, I guess the answer is no, we can't leave Kiriwina. Nor, it seems, should we.

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Artefacts of Encounter: Cook's Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories, edited by Nicholas Thomas, Julie Adams, Billie Lythberg, Maia Nuku, and Amiria Salmond. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8248-5935-0, 348 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$68.00.

Artefacts of Encounter: Cook's Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories is a striking collection of photographs and essays about the Early Pacific collection at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (MAA). With its large format and glossy images, this volume may seem like a coffee-table book. However, the essays and extensive catalog within make this project a valuable resource for any scholar studying the material cultures of Oceania, histories of collecting and museum display, and colonial contact zones.

The editors form a powerhouse of scholars and curators: Nicholas Thomas, MAA director, well-known scholar of Oceanic history, and author of numerous books including *Colonialism's Culture* (Princeton University Press, 1994) and *Entangled Objects* (Harvard University Press, 1991); Julie Adams, curator of Oceania at the British Museum;

Billie Lythberg, an Auckland-based art historian; Maia Nuku, associate curator for Oceanic art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Amiria Salmond, former MAA curator and author of *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). Together, this group of curators, anthropologists, and art historians has compiled an exciting and refreshing look at objects from the Cambridge collection, which, with over two hundred objects, is one of the most important collections of Captain James Cook's voyage artifacts worldwide.

The book is divided into five parts, beginning with part 1, "Encountering Artefacts." This section includes an introduction by Thomas and Adams and three essays by other members of the editorial team. The first of these was written by Thomas and describes the history of the MAA Pacific collection and how this history is a part of each story told by these objects of encounter. Simon Schaffer's contribution broadens the scope of "artefacts" to include scientific instruments aboard European ships. In their essay "Relating to, and through, Polynesian collections," Lythberg, Nuku, and Salmond suggest a way of studying these artifacts not as remnants of the past but as "vectors of still-active ancestral agency, even as living ancestors" (44). Using three case studies—Māori cloaks, Tongan ngatu (bark cloth), and Tahitian tamau (plaited belts)—the authors examine in detail the process of making these objects and how this relates to notions of genealogy. For example, in looking at ngatu, the authors describe how in Tongan conception humankind