

*Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, edited by Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. ISBN 0-521-34667-3, xii + 296 pp, maps, bibliography, index. US\$49.50.

The study of colonized societies has shifted its emphasis. Where formerly historians and anthropologists focused on "the other"—indigenous peoples—they are now increasingly turning their analytic attention to "us"—to Western settlers, missionaries, and administrators. Instead of assuming that foreign impact is uniform or unidirectional, scholars are analyzing the colonial situation as a complex encounter between native and introduced cultural models. Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre have assembled a varied and thought-provoking collection of essays reflecting this new direction in historical anthropology (and anthropological history). The volume's primary themes are missionization and gender, and the overall approach illustrates the turn to self-examination in colonial history. Attention is paid to Western views of "the native," missionary motives, and the behavioral models that European colonizers sought to impose on indigenous peoples.

Geographically, the collection is heavily weighted toward Melanesia (eight of twelve chapters), with two chapters on Hawai'i, one on the Marquesas, and one on Australian Aboriginal women. Nine of the chapters address aspects of Christian missionization in the Pacific, with emphasis on the missionaries' own views of their enterprise and the scenarios they

attempted to implement. The gender discussions focus largely on domestic relations, marriage, and family. As is often the case with symposium volumes, the thematic consistency is somewhat erratic. The chapters vary widely in temporal scope and theoretical import. Treatments range, for example, from Donald Denoon's historical survey of medical care for women in Papua New Guinea to Nicholas Thomas's structural analysis of hierarchy, gender, and polyandry in the Marquesas. Roger Keesing's chapter focuses on Kwaio women's narratives about the encounter between Christianity and traditional life.

One of the volume's strengths is that there is a pervasive challenging of received social-science rubrics for analyzing gender, such as the domestic/public distinction, polyandry, pollution, and *tapu*. Reconstructing post-contact changes in the lives of ordinary Hawaiian women, Caroline Ralston dispenses with several Western canards, notably "prostitution" and "promiscuity." Thomas turns a critical eye to Western representations of polyandry and *tapu* in the Marquesas and in eastern Polynesia generally. The chapters by Ralston, Thomas, and Keesing reflect the widespread scholarly dissatisfaction with analyses that see *tapu* and pollution as indexing women's ritual inferiority and low symbolic value. These writers support a reinterpretation of *tapu* in line with Allan Hanson's "attraction" thesis, which sees women instead as a conduit to the divine.

A similar rethinking characterizes Margaret Jolly's analysis of the effects of missionization on family life in

southern Pentecost, Vanuatu. Jolly demonstrates that, in spite of male/female segregation in the religious sphere, the domestic/public distinction does not accurately describe indigenous gender relations. Christianity, she argues, introduced new models of gender separation "which did not necessarily confer on women the powers they enjoyed in the ancestral religion" (223). In line with current trends in gender scholarship, most of the volume's contributors see Pacific women as having a degree of power and autonomy in their indigenous societies, a power that was abridged through missionization and colonization. In an essay that first appeared in *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Patricia Grimshaw details how missionary women attempted to redefine femininity for Hawaiian women in accordance with "the cult of true womanhood." Both Grimshaw and Ralston agree that Christianity did little to ameliorate the negative effects of colonization on Hawaiian women. Mervyn Meggitt, in his overview of contemporary Enga women's status, is less sanguine about women's power in the indigenous system, however. In his summary, Enga women's situation is one of marginality and social dependence on men. Evaluating changes in women's economic, legal, and political status since the 1930s, Meggitt sees few signs of long-term improvement in a society where male leaders dominate women and the young.

In line with the judgment prevailing among today's anthropologists, the contributors to this volume are largely critical of the missionary project, although they acknowledge the benefits of literacy, improvements in medi-

cal care, and missionary advocacy of the people in the face of more mercenary outsiders. In a fascinating description of Wesleyan methods in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, Michael Young shows that the mission attempted to create alternative Christian communities by separating children from their pagan parents. He also details the mission's diversion of native wealth to its own cause, including valuables from the famous *kula* trading system. Annette Hamilton's chapter traces the failure of missionization among Australian Aborigines. She paints a grim and at times horrifying picture of white barbarity and missionary impotence on Australia's frontier, where, in an illustration of "blaming the victim," the Aborigines themselves were held at fault for mission failures.

As this volume proves, seeing colonialism as an interaction between cultures allows for human agency on both sides of the encounter. Colonizers had their own scenarios for political and ideological conquest, but indigenous peoples had the capacity to resist, bend, and frustrate at least some of those schemes. This is the analytic path historical anthropology is now taking, and it is a productive direction indeed.

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*Dealing with Inequality: Analysing Gender Relations in Melanesia and Beyond*, edited by Marilyn Strathern. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. ISBN 0-521-33378-4, xiv + 325 pp, notes, bibliog-