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## REVIEWS

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BILLINGS, Dorothy K.: *Cargo Cult as Theater: Political Performance in the Pacific*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002. x + 267 pp., bib., index, maps, photos. Price: US\$90.00 (cloth).

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Although I found this book rather scappily presented and not, to my way of thinking, happily organised, through persistence it eventually became a highly-valued “old friend”. What made it hard going at first were the anecdotal accounts of fieldwork because these narratives appeared as a mass of *disjecta membra*, not quite hanging together. On the other hand, I came to appreciate that Billings has done something other ethnographers have not been prepared to do: to tell us how fitfully one goes about collecting research data, relating the bits and pieces to each other, and achieving a coherence justified by a day by day and diachronic empiricism. In the process she usefully tells us about her informants, honouring them more appropriately than is typical in most ethnographies.

The main body of her text is about the so-called “Johnson Cult” among the Lavongai of New Hanover, an island complex west of New Ireland in Papua New Guinea. As detailed a history as can be told by an outsider observer is provided, covering the years from 1964 to 1998. The consistent “platform” of this “cult movement” is that it wished America—symbolised by President L.B. Johnson—to rule New Hanover. The “Johnsonists” certainly did not want Australia’s governance. Yet when Independence came they did not want an independent Papua New Guinea either, alleging that Australia was still pulling strings behind the scenes. The altercation created by the cultists goes back to the Australian colonial administration’s early efforts to set up parliamentary institutions in their nearest Trusteeships of Papua and New Guinea. In the 1964 elections, the Lavongai (of southwest New Hanover) stuck with a startling consensus view that they wanted no one to run their affairs except for “Johnson” or “America”, and that the ballot boxes and subsequent government taxes set up by the Australians were not wanted.

The last third of the book tries to make sense of these claims, accounting for their not-unconvincing logic under the chapter headings “Analysis and Interpretation” and “Theories: Cults, Movements, Ceremonies, and Culture”. Billings explains the emergence of the newly named political structure T.I.A. (Tutukuvul Isukal Association) as a viable opposition to the kind of power arrangements intended by the official government(s). Instead of setting store by theories that emphasise villagers’ misguidedness, confusion and “erring acculturation”, Billings underscores the cultists own consistently stated agenda that they wanted change on their own terms and no-one else’s. Far from being “pathological” in nature, their activities were about “symbolic

control” and “dominance” over their own culture. Their unusual request, once modern politics were made available to them, was understandably theatrical, belonging to the arena of impressive actions that forged or changed relations within their own cultural setting. The reaction by expatriates and non-cultists that the Johnsonists’ ploys were absurd and nonsensical do not stand the test of a deeper analysis.

Once Billings goes over the materials hermeneutically, the book begins to come together and take on persuasive force. The last chapter, mind you, in which she relates her own findings to others’ theoretical views, is unnecessarily deferential to many general approaches that are now somewhat *demodés*. In the end she seems to give way to the interpretative rubric of Weston La Barre—a neo-Freudian reductionist if ever there was one—that the Johnson movement was a “crisis cult”. But Billings could have rested on her own laurels and stressed the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of her “collective subject”. She could have capitalised on new methodologies that build analytically on complexity rather than always paring back to broad generalisations.

In my own work, for instance, I discuss the retributive sting of cargo cults, their members’ typical generalising reconstruction of the past (even into “mythological macrohistories”, and their tendencies to take on religious or ecclesial *personae* (as independent churches) once political or developmentalist strategies falter. Thus I could not help but appreciate Billings’ detailing of the Johnsonists’ payback attitudes towards official control, of the way they listed failed and untrustworthy rulers over New Hanover (from the Germans to the present “independent” government), and of the new interest they had by the 1990s in the symbolic role of Jesus (as against political symbols). (Billings rightly gauges the consolidation of Christianity on New Hanover, and is unusual in appreciating missionaries—their hospitality and their work among the local people—a group some anthropologists wish were never around.) Yet while Billings notes all these interesting matters, the information is not incorporated into her own (or any other) interpretative framework, even though she conveys a strong sense of dynamic complexity. Moreover, if she wanted to make so much of performance elements in the Johnson movement, why has she made so little of recent performance theories of ritual and paid no attention to Marshall Sahlins’ assessments of Melanesian cultures as “performative” (especially in his *Islands of History*)?

A few things really disappointed me. The lack of reference to Melanesian scholars writing on the Johnson cult, in particular William Longgar and Norlie Meskaram, or to New Hanoverian intellectuals with a longstanding interest in the movement (for example, Pedi Anis, Alfred Tivinarlik, Catherine Nongkas and Mesulam Aisoli). And then, as I said earlier, the visual presentation of the book is unworthy of the content. There are no clean rectifications to the left-hand margins under headings; occasionally the right-hand margin is not rectified; sometimes headings are left at the bottom of the page; the photographs are blurry, and so on. But in the end, I admit, I am left very satisfied by this solid and thoughtful study.

BRIL, Isabelle avec la collaboration de Soop Dahot, Rony Phadom, Willion Phadom, Elia Thijin, Georges Thijin and the Comité linguistique des Nenema: *Dictionnaire Nêlêmwa-Nixumwak-Français-Anglais*. Langues et Cultures du Pacifique 14. SELAF 383. Paris: Peeters, 2000. 523 pp., apps, bib., map. n.p. (paper).

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Nêlêmwa and Nixumwak are two dialects of a single language (hereinafter referred to as NN) of the far north of New Caledonia, the former spoken around Tiabet and Poum, and the latter further south around Koumac. The 1996 census places the number of speakers at about 1,000. This dictionary is a further contribution to the sequence of excellent descriptive monographs on the languages of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands produced over the past two decades by Brill and her colleagues at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Several of these monographs have already appeared in the Langues et Cultures du Pacifique series.

As the title indicates, there are four languages involved in this work—the two dialects of the source language (NN) and two target languages, French and English. Fortunately Nêlêmwa and Nixumwak have a large majority of words in common; those peculiar to one dialect or the other are indicated with a parenthetical (P) or (K). All NN words (whether headwords or within the entry) are printed in bold, French in plain type, and English in italic sans-serif:

**ogin** (K) [Var. **toven** (P)]. *v.i.* finir, terminer, (être) fini; *finish, end, be over.*

The reasons for the inclusion of English glosses (French being the prevailing language of wider communication in New Caledonia) are not explained. Certainly it will be welcomed by English-speaking linguists interested in New Caledonian languages, and it may be useful to NN speakers who are learning English. But English is clearly secondary to French here—English glosses are sometimes more summary than the French (e.g., “**khimon** petit crabe blanc (de sable, 6-7 cm); *small crab*”), and the translations of examples, as well as miscellaneous notes on morphology, syntax, usage and culture, are in French only. A few items have no English glosses; this appears to be restricted to cases where the meaning is retrievable—some items of flora and fauna (e.g., *fek, guudo, taleyari, uvilu*) that include a trans-lingual Linnaean identification; some English loans such as *hâmwa* ‘hammer’, where the etymology provides the clue; and some words where the English would be a (near-) homograph of the French (*taap* ‘table’, *varade* ‘veranda’). The English glosses, though not so full as the French, are in general idiomatic and accurate.

Etymologies are included only for recent borrowings from English (*tap* ‘tub, bowl’), French (*orâac* ‘orange’) and Polynesian (*kuli* ‘cat’ from Polynesian *kulii* ‘dog’). For the great bulk of the vocabulary, deriving one way or another from Proto-Oceanic, there are no indications, even for the most obvious items such as *on* ‘sand’, *pa* ‘stingray’, *-ru* ‘two’ (POc *\*qone*, *\*paRi*, *\*rua*). The historical phonology of New Caledonian languages

is admittedly difficult, but information about even a core of such unproblematic words would give a more realistic picture of the language's lexical history.

The strictly lexical core of the dictionary is preceded by an Introduction setting out some historical and cultural background, with special attention to the kinship system; an outline of the phonology (22 pages); and a grammatical sketch (29 pages). The main lexical section with NN headwords is followed by a much shorter French-NN section and an even shorter English-NN section. (These useful additions, which would commonly be referred to as "index" or "finderlist" in English, are here labeled "Lexique" by contrast with "Dictionnaire" for the main section.) The volume concludes with two texts in NN, with interlinear glosses and free translation in French.

The treatment of phonetics and phonology is fairly thorough, though the exposition at times suffers from the attempt to treat historical and orthographic facts at the same time as the synchronic phonological system. Vowel nasalisation is discussed at considerable length, as it constitutes a messy analytical problem, with a range of environments from those in which it is clearly contrastive (*taac* 'to remain open', *tâac* 'to walk quickly') to those in which it is predictable and non-contrastive (*on* [õn] 'sand').

The orthography used is locally developed, but follows conventions which have become familiar for Kanak languages, such as extensive use of diacritic *h* for a variety of purposes, the circumflex accent for vowel nasalisation and double vowels for length. The two dialects have nearly identical phonemic systems. The one systematic phonetic difference, with Nêlêmwa fricatives corresponding to Nixumwak aspirated stops, could readily be handled by a single orthography. Presumably for reasons of local preference, however, this has not been done consistently—the labial and labiovelar consonants are spelled differently in the two dialects while the apical, palatal and velar use the same spelling (pp.26-27). The complex consonants described phonetically as sequences of [h] + Resonant are written *hR* in the case of liquids and nasals, but *Rh* for the semivowels.

The grammar section presents only a short sketch of material developed elsewhere by Brill at full length (in a monograph-length grammar in the same series). It places the grammatical categories to which various lexical items are assigned into a more systematic framework, while the individual entries provide examples of usage which supplement the sometimes rather formulaic and compressed grammatical statements. Notable is a set of possessive classifiers more highly elaborated than the average Oceanic language (no fewer than six categories within "food and drink": meat, starch, leaves and fruits, famine foods, soft foods and drinks) and more than 20 numeral classifiers, some highly specialized (*kîix-* for bundles of sticks or straw, *deex-* for hands of bananas).

Errors do not appear to be numerous. *tuzde* means 'Thursday' and is presumably derived from that English word rather than 'Tuesday' as shown. (Confusingly, the word for 'Tuesday' is *tozde*.) A small number of references mentioned in the introductory section appear to be missing from the bibliography (e.g., Bensa and Rivierre 1982, 1993, de la Fontinelle 1971).

The cover photo shows young people in festive dress at the opening of the Collège de Poum in 1995. One hopes that they will appreciate the work by Brill and her collaborators that is represented in this dictionary, and that it may encourage them to preserve and carry forward their unique language.

FRAENKEL, Jon: *The Manipulation of Custom: From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004. 262 pp., apps, figs, index, maps, tables. Price: NZ\$34.95 (paper).

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This book is a gift to readers interested in conflicts that unfolded in Solomon Islands during the late 1990s. Organised chronologically, it presents a history in two parts, before and after the coups of 2000, concluding with the Australian-led intervention in July 2003 (the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands or RAMSI). The author traces a complex array of events which, taken together, constitute a story of state collapse and recovery that has transformed the international image of Solomon Islands from that of an ecologically rich country of traditional cultures to one of a violence-ridden “failing state”.

The book is written so that it will be accessible to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Thus, the introductory chapter gives an overview that is “intended primarily for non-specialist readers and can be skipped by those familiar with the history of the Solomon Islands” (p.15). That latter audience—including Solomon Islanders as well as scholars, development workers, diplomats, journalists, etc.—will welcome this book as one of the first attempts to weave together details of the conflict into a coherent account. The author’s impressive attention to detail is evident in the 50 pages of footnotes, roughly one fourth of the printed text. Thus, interested readers will learn that the capital’s primary international hotel, the Solomon Kitano Mendana Hotel, suspended its popular Wednesday night buffet in 1999—surely a concrete index of the disruption of elite lifestyles. (Given the usefulness of the book’s carefully crafted history, readers will forgive the jacket’s breathless claim that it offers, “the first full and comprehensive account of the crisis that has gripped the Solomon Islands since 1998”.)

The book’s brave attempt to appeal to multiple audiences, however, creates certain problems. Whereas it succeeds admirably in presenting a readable exposition of the crisis, it is less successful in developing an interpretive analysis. As the title suggests, the author is interested to assess the “manipulations of custom”, especially compensation practices, that were used repeatedly by government and militia leaders to redress grievances but, in the end, did little except enrich members of the power elite. He argues that these practices worsened the violence and economic decline, noting, for example, that the Guadalcanal premier’s demand in 1998 for 2.5 million dollars compensation for citizens murdered by Malaitans became a “catalyst for the Isatabu uprising” that resonated with “militants eager for some form of restitution” (p.107). On the other side, Malaitan militia is “as much an armed pressure group aimed at demanding financial compensation from the state for the loss of Malaitan lives as it was a rival militia intent on combating the Isatabu Freedom Movement” (p.7). In summarising, the author concludes, “what was done in the name of Melanesian custom during 1998-2003 was a politically paralysing tale of posturing, patronage and power” (p.187).

Ideologies of custom, and compensation practices in particular, are an important topic worthy of underlining for anyone unfamiliar with Melanesian social organisation. But they are also topics with an extensive literature (if not often in the arena of the state politics). An analysis capable of critically examining the cultural validity and effect of those practices would require a more sustained engagement with socio-cultural contexts. The explanatory framework applied here reproduces insights that will be familiar to scholars concerned with Melanesian cultural politics and nation making. The author makes it clear that he is suspicious of binary models that separate tradition and modernity in exclusive opposition, noting that Solomons history is replete with examples of indigenising of Western institutions of all kinds (p.185). But in the absence of a more developed theoretical discussion, no consistent argument emerges regarding ordinary Solomon Islanders' views of these practices as they traverse local and national political spaces. The book recounts vivid examples of the appropriation of custom in the service of greed and corruption. But since structures of the state provided equally effective vehicles for violence and exploitation, one wonders why Melanesian practices play such a dominant theme in the book's explanatory account.

One of the challenges to anyone attempting to analyse events on a national scale in Solomon Islands is the problem of dealing with the radical diversity of a nation composed of over 80 ethno-linguistic groups. At times the author is careful to delineate differences associated with distinct communities, as in his discussion of compensation practices (p.108). At other times, however, descriptions of cultural practices pass without specification. For example, the statement that "compensation practices are typically associated with traditionalist 'pagan' communities" (p.111) does not reflect the realities of strongly Christian groups that regularly employ exchange practices of all kinds in the service of conflict resolution. As the author rightly notes, these differences also emerged during the tension, such that disputants often did not share assumptions about protocols for exchange and appropriate amounts of compensation.

Although the book provides only limited cultural interpretation, it is better at placing events in historical context, as in its account of the ways in which courts have recognised customary law throughout colonial and postcolonial history. Adaptations and extensions of custom during the colonial period accelerated after independence. In some instances, compensation demands have gone transnational, as in the suggestion by Malaitan militants that the Australian government assist in meeting a \$5 million claim against the *Sydney Morning Herald* because it had quoted a curse against Malaitans (p.115). The book shows such demands to be part of a longer history of claims directed, increasingly, at provincial and national governments.

As a case study of state devolution, this book should be of interest to anyone concerned with the predicament of small states caught in webs of globalisation. The author traces a succession of events through several phases of the conflict. It is instructive, for example, to see the repeated failure of attempts at military solutions that only exacerbated the violence (analogous to events in Bougainville to the north). "Just as the 1999-2000 clampdown on the Isatabu movement proved the midwife of terror and insurrection, so too the 2001-2003 Joint Operation and the Star Division brought to birth new impediments to any peace process" (p.144). And one of the most useful

contributions is the book's ability to place the Australian-led intervention in historical context. Academic and media critics continue to argue about the "colonial" thinking that underwrites this new development in regional conflicts. Reading this book provides helpful background for understanding why the intervention has been welcomed by the vast majority of Solomon Islanders. At the same time, the author provides enough of a wider view to understand that the Australian decision to commit massive resources to peace-building comes in the context of America's Iraq war and the war on terror.

Given the book's main focus, it is perhaps inevitable that it reproduces state-centred images of the Solomons that accentuate the activities of (corrupt) national elites at the expense of the far more numerous activities of people in rural communities and civil society—most of whom maintained peaceful lifestyles and sustained the subsistence economy throughout the period of tension. More attention to the activities of churches and women's groups, as well as rural communities, would provide a useful corrective.

The extensive documentary research that went into this book has produced a lasting resource for scholars in Solomon Islands studies. Its value in this regard would have been increased by the addition of an index, as well as a bibliography and chronology. Other quibbles include the author's invention of the term "Guadalcanalese" to refer to the indigenous Guadalcanal population, when simply "Guadalcanal" or "Guale"—both in common usage—would do. But these are minor points for a book that offers an important and timely contribution to understanding conflicts that are as little understood today as they were at the height of the tension.

GINA, Lloyd Maepeza: *Journeys in a Small Canoe: The Life and Times of a Solomon Islander*. Edited by Judith A. Bennett and Khyla J. Russell. Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2003. xxviii + 301 pp., index, maps, photos. Price: A\$34.96 (paper).

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There is a common English expression that one should not judge a book by its cover. One implication of the expression, of course, is that a book's cover may be artistically attractive yet its content may lack depth, clarity, originality and timeliness as far as knowledge is concerned. *Journeys in a Small Canoe* reverses this reading of the English expression. This is a book whose cover may not be a great work of art, yet the large body of knowledge exhibited by the author in the form of personal life accounts—narrated with depth, clarity and originality—is something the serious and cross-cultural-minded reader will not want to miss. In the same vein, for readers looking for an autobiography free of superfluous and pompous jargon, one instead narrated from the heart with humility and simplicity, this one qualifies with high marks. The unpretentious and masterful way in which the author narrates his life experiences clearly reflects someone who can quite comfortably and competently deal with the

mind-boggling and alienating complexities of the so-called “modern” world while simultaneously living comfortably in the world of his indigenous culture.

In this autobiography Lloyd Maepeza Gina tells his personal life-story starting with his life as a young lad born and raised in New Georgia, Western Solomons, in the 1940s. Immediately following the Second World War, at the age of 11 years, he very courageously left home on a boat without the company of a parent or relative—or even a friend—to attend primary school in Fiji. A decade later he returned to the Solomon Islands and found himself launching an administrative career in the Islands’ colonial government. Gina’s long and dedicated service to the colonial government reached the zenith when he was selected the first Speaker of the National Parliament in 1978, the year the Solomon Islands gained political independence from Britain. He served in this capacity for the next ten years.

Gina organises his autobiography into 12 chapters, each focusing on a specific phase or stage in his *Journey in a Small Canoe*. Chapter titles are short yet speak eloquently to the subject matter. For example, Chapter One, simply titled “Families, Childhood and Home Places” is an excellent account of family genealogies. Gina displays a wealth of knowledge about both his paternal and maternal genealogies that is quite admirable, perhaps even unusual, for someone who left home at a young age in pursuit of a Western education and returned to a career that lasted for four decades and involved the promotion of Westernisation in the Solomon Islands. Equally impressive is the fact that much of the genealogical information reported in this chapter came from disparate oral accounts and not from already written records. The author skillfully weaves the oral accounts into a coherent document of his genealogies, which is a great reference and source of knowledge about his people.

It was through arrangements between the Methodist Church in the Solomon Islands and in Fiji that Gina attended school in Fiji. He was admitted to Lelean Memorial School and later Queen Victoria School. At both schools Gina met and made friends with students from other Pacific Islands such as Tonga, Kiribati (then called the Gilbert Islands) and Vanuatu (then called the New Hebrides). One of Gina’s school friends from Vanuatu was George Sokomanu whose career, especially as the first President of the Republic of Vanuatu, has made him one of the most popular figures in Pacific Island politics. In 1952 Gina’s own father went to Fiji to attend a one-year teacher-training course arranged by the Solomon Islands government. This was the first time in ten years he had seen and talked to his father in person. Stories told by his father about home, families and relatives, especially his mother, back in the Solomon Islands started having an impact on him. At the end of 1955 he went home to the Solomon Islands and despite having the possibility of continuing his education, the love and comfort of being with family, relatives and friends was just too much of a lure, so that he never returned to Fiji.

Gina’s illustrious career in the then Colonial Government in the Solomon Islands began in 1956 with an administrative post at the District Office in Gizo, Western Solomons. With an excellent educational background, Gina climbed the ladder of success quickly, rampant racial discrimination by some white folks against indigenous

Solomon Islanders notwithstanding. With very few indigenous Solomon Islanders of his educational background and the expatriate colonial officers, for the most part, old retirees from British colonies in Africa and Asia, Gina had to play multiple roles as District Administrative Officer at Gizo. He was, for example, the customs and excise officer, district treasurer, tax collector, book-keeper, town planner, policy-maker, translator, land registration officer and marriage registration officer. Gina did not mind the multiple roles, despite his much lower pay compared with that of his expatriate counter-parts, and took all this in his stride.

After having been promoted to Cadet Assistant Administrative Officer in 1963, Gina was transferred from Gizo to Auki in Malaita District. Although the promotion did not lessen the work-load caused by playing multiple roles, by then he had acquired so much experience that he did not mind. Perhaps more than any indigenous, non-Malaitan Solomon Islands colonial administrative officer in the 1950s and 1960s, Gina toured the whole of Malaita many times, spending days and sometimes weeks in the rural villages. Through this he not only came to know the Malaitan people well, but also made lasting friendships with them. As he describes in his book, the stereotypes he had of Malaitans—based on the prejudices of white missionaries and colonial government officials—as truculent, fierce, aggressive, lawless, etc. were for the most part unfounded (pp.82-86). Indeed, he said that he found a great difference between Malaitans on Malaita and those living in Honiara, the capital town of the Solomon Islands. For example, Malaitans living on Malaita were very law-abiding.

Partly because of the small number of indigenous Solomon Islanders who had formal schooling and were able to hold important administrative posts in the colonial government, and partly because of the way the colonial government was structured, Gina and other indigenous Solomon Islanders like him (e.g., Peter Kenilorea, Willie Paia, Silas Sitai, Fred Osifelo, Francis Talasa) were constantly transferred from one district headquarters to another (p.83). Nearly all of them found the system to be extremely hard on their families. One of the greatest difficulties was housing for their families. For example, after having been posted to Auki on Malaita, Gina's next post was at Kirakira on Makira in the eastern part of the Solomons. Unlike Auki, housing was even more difficult at Kirakira, and so Gina had to take his wife and children back to Gizo and leave them there with his parents. It is obvious that under the colonial government, the risk of losing one's career outweighed that of losing one's family. Indigenous Solomon Islanders such as Gina, who far too frequently had to make such tough decisions, must be admired.

During the course of his career, Gina was sent overseas to attend "refresher" courses in administration in Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Fiji. His already illustrious career reached its zenith in 1978 when the Solomon Islands gained political independence from Britain and he was unanimously chosen as First Speaker of the National Parliament, a position he held with integrity until his retirement from public office ten years later.

McDONALD, Ross: *Money Makes You Crazy: Custom and Change in the Solomon Islands*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003. 95 pp., index. n.p. (paper).

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Although the author of this book is an academic, it is not written in a traditional academic mode, and it is self-described on its cover as a “travel book”. Nevertheless, it does deal with issues of great relevance to both academics and general readers interested in Solomon Islands. In the Introduction the author states, “[I]t was the essential cooperativeness of indigenous life that I wished to understand.... [H]ow the customary world was adapting to the immediate but often disastrous temptations of money in its modern form” (p.9).

The book is constructed around five vignettes from different parts of the Solomons. The first is of Paradise in New Georgia on the 25th anniversary of the death of the Holy Mama (Silas Eto), founder of the Christian Fellowship Church (CFC). The syncretic CFC has maintained some of the tenets of Christianity, but promotes aspects of Melanesian tradition as well. Central to this story is the importance of community and sharing resources, especially labour. In this part of New Georgia, the maintenance of a sense of community and the traditional resource base is an important counterbalance to the allure of short-term gain from logging royalties that has caused division in many other communities.

The second chapter is a brief exposition on ecotourism, moving from a conference on this issue in Honiara, to the ecotourist operation at Rapita in New Georgia. The author sees tourism on a small community scale as an appropriate mechanism for the Solomon Islands, which is never likely to compete with the larger Pacific destinations in terms of luxury resort tourism. The narrative then moves to the beautiful Marovo Lagoon and the author’s interesting account of his time there. The reader, however, is left with something of an idealised view of this form of tourism, since there is no mention of the struggle that many would-be “ecotourist” operations in the Solomons have had in attracting tourists and establishing viable operations, even before the ethnic tensions.

The third and fourth vignettes illustrate two very different displacements resulting from “development” and the quest for money. The first involves the avowedly traditionalist Kwaio people of Malaita. McDonald’s encounters with Kwaio are described in an entertaining way, but underlying his account is an attempt to understand the tensions between the traditional lifestyles being actively maintained in the “bush” and the more Westernised Christian lifestyles on the coast. The mutual suspicions in this case reflect all the way back to the murder of the British tax collector Bell in this area 70 years earlier. The next vignette involves a more literal displacement of the villagers from the Gold Ridge mine site in Guadalcanal to the New Settlement near Honiara. As royalties have rapidly been spent, this bleak alternative has quickly lost its appeal and the resentment of residents is palpable and likely to continue to be a significant political issue for years to come. This example starkly illustrates the

unifying theme of the book that there are perils in pursuing Western-style development, i.e., “money makes you crazy”.

In the final chapter the author goes in further search of development alternatives. The venue is the Weather Coast of Guadalcanal where the Moro Movement originated, and where there are still many adherents. Like Silas Eto, the prophet Moro blended elements of tradition, Christianity and Western conceptions of development. The ideals of village-based development and co-operation, however, are under constant threat from the attractions of Honiara, with many of the younger men from the Weather Coast opting for the latter. McDonald found that idealised tradition and subsistence affluence do not always compete easily with store-bought foodstuffs and *Snow White* playing on the village television.

If you are looking for an academic assessment of the dynamics of tradition, cash economy and development, then this may not be the book you are looking for. There are few references to the other books or articles, although some of the material, especially historical, must have originated from these sources. Nevertheless, this small book is highly readable and does raise many issues of importance as well as traverse many of the ambiguities of contemporary developments in the Solomon Islands, many of which are more widely relevant in the Pacific.

MOORE, Clive: *New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003. xiv + 274 pp., bib., index, maps. n.p. (cloth).

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Rather than stopping at the political boundaries of New Guinea and West Papua (previously Irian Jaya), or the boundary dividing the Torres Strait Islands from New Guinea, or the boundary dividing Bougainville from the Solomon Islands, Moore’s intent here is to “leap across centuries, disciplinary divides, and political boundaries” (p.x) as he considers the ancient and contemporary history of New Guinea. In his “quest of the *long durée*” (p.xi), Moore reaches back some 40,000 years to the first evidence of trade networks and human settlement along coastal areas, and forward to the most recent 500 years that have been critical to the development of what we know now as modern New Guinea.

Moore begins with a sweeping panorama of history from 40,000 to 5,000 B.P. with a focus on environment and people within that time span. We read of New Guinea’s relationship to the continent of Sahul, the immense diversity of climates and the volcanic activity, most notable on the island of New Britain, resulting from New Guinea’s position in the Pacific’s “ring of fire”. Climate changes, volcanic eruptions, the end of the Ice Age, global warming about 15,000 years ago and the stabilisation of sea levels about 6,000 years ago, all shaped New Guinea and the migration of peoples within Melanesia. Moore touches on the first tool kits of early inhabitants, indigenous flora and fauna and the rise of early agriculture, tree crops and

“intense irrigated agriculture” about 6,000 years ago, with evidence of horticulture and pig-raising within the last 2,000 to 1,000 years. Seismic activity is offered as an explanation for the human migrations that could account for Melanesia becoming the most “linguistically complex and diverse region on earth” (p.29), with some 750 different languages in New Guinea and another 205 in West Papua. From here, Moore moves into a discussion of cultural spheres and trade systems, noting the “last great change in Melanesia, before the intrusion of Europeans, was the arrival of Austronesian language speakers and the associated Lapita culture complex” (p.34).

Rather than try to categorise Melanesians according to language, leadership patterns or trade cycles, Moore adopts the “culture sphere” concept “which divides New Guinea into a series of lowland, mid-altitude, and Highland spheres, separated by frontiers rather than hard boundaries, each with core and fringe areas, based on human population density and distance from centers” (p.41). These cultural spheres linked trade networks that in turn linked all New Guineans. Moore’s sweep through commodities and trade networks is fascinating as it emerges how the northern coast of New Guinea and the eastern archipelagos were on “the edge of the Euro-African-Asian world system” (p.49): Chinese beads and bracelets were found on the north coast of New Guinea; and obsidian from New Britain has been found in two sites in Borneo. Slaves, sandalwood and bird of paradise skins and feathers were all bartered in this network. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this early history of culture and trade, for this reader, is the trade in spices and slaves in West New Guinea and the Malay world. The introduction of Islam along trade routes, the rule of the Malukan sultanates, trade in slaves, spices and plumes with connections to China and Chinese porcelain, all well before European contact, is breath-taking. The introduction of various European trading companies, especially the Dutch East India Company, brought major economic changes to the area when the Dutch implemented a “ruthless monopoly over the Maluku spice trade” (p.65).

Here begins the complex history of European exploration, exploitation and the incorporation of New Guinea and Island Melanesia into the colonial empires of Portugal, Spain, England, Holland, France and Germany from 1520 to the 19th century. These foreign presences affected indigenous societies in ways still reverberating today. From the 15th century, while Muslim traders spread Islam along western coastal areas, Christian missionaries spread their message in north and eastern New Guinea. Indeed, missionaries were the first long-term foreign residents in New Guinea, and Christianity has become the dominant world religion there (p.122). This period of exploration, whaling, pearling, gold rushes and Queen Emma’s foresight in purchasing land for plantations as the economy of the future are familiar events to most Melanesianists. Of particular fascination at this point is the relationship of New Guinea to Malay, Indonesian, Malukan and Chinese traders and the role of slavery, or “unfree labour”. According to Moore, the extent of slavery, which predated European presence, is underreported and underestimated, even as “trade in humans for Asian and European manufactured goods changed the material cultures and economies of west New Guinea, a process similar to that which occurred in Island Melanesia during

the nineteenth-century labor trade there” (p.68). These are even more familiar times, and Moore describes the exploration and colonisation that took place during the 19th century as European countries jockeyed for geo-political footholds and leverage in Island Melanesia and Australia. Companies and colonisers created political boundaries and indigenous people (coerced, kidnapped or drawn to adventure) signed on as indentured laborers, thereby overcoming Britain’s anti-slavery laws.

Clearly, New Guinea has been in contact with Asians and Europeans for centuries, and Moore deftly interprets that early contact history and the methods by which foreigners and New Guineans dealt with one another. It was not until the 20th century that foreigners entered the interior and highland valleys of New Guinea. Before that, contact was along the coast, often on the deck of a ship, since Europeans felt especially vulnerable on land. Once Europeans did enter the Highlands, they had no ships on which to escape to and were “often left with little choice other than to barter for peace or kill attackers, if they were to survive” (p.168). The final chapter on colonialism and independence in the 20th century links these events to the alteration of cultural spheres and the “indigenous trade routes and concentrations of indigenous power” that were “inadvertently refocused by the imposed patterns of foreign exploration, exploitation, and settlement” (p.178). Condensed into a few pages, the history of 20th century New Guinea is complex, convoluted and one of breath-taking changes. But as Moore notes in closing: “The people of New Guinea, the greatest equatorial island in the world, have always been an amalgam of those who have passed through over thousands of years. They will continue to absorb change” (p.204).

This book is a “must read” for all Melanesianists and others interested in the history of the area. Crossing boundaries of time and space is a welcome approach to understanding New Guinea in the *long durée* and shows once and for all that the peoples and cultures of New Guinea were never primitive isolates, but had intricate trade, political and socio-economic relations among themselves and afar in Island Southeast Asia and China. Although the narrative flows wonderfully, the presentation sometimes reads like short encyclopaedia entries; thus, a single paragraph covers forestry and fisheries in New Guinea, and two pages cover the Second World War. This is a minor quibble, and Moore’s engagement with and knowledge of New Guinea and the detailed notes and the extensive bibliography he has compiled more than compensate for it. My second quibble concerns maps: there should be more sketch maps, especially in Chapters 3 and 4 to track the trade networks of the Spice Islands and the Bird’s Head Peninsula. These are minor points and do not distract from this fine contribution to the history of New Guinea within a Melanesian discourse. Highly recommended.

SALMOND, Anne: *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Seas*. London: Penguin Press, 2003. xxii + 506 pp., app., bib., figs, index, photos. Price: £25.00 (cloth).

GREG DENING

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“Too many Captain Cooks” was the complaint of an indigenous Australian elder, pestered for his opinion of the famous man at one of the unending sesquicentenaries, centenaries, bicentenaries of his birth or death or some first sighting of one of his “discoveries”. His sort of scorn for a “Captain Cook industry” is of the same variety as our Australian Prime Minister’s scorn for “an aboriginal industry”. They are both reluctant to identify themselves with a skewed view of their past. “Too many Captain Cook’s”! One, in fact, would be hard put to keep up with them all with three or four major ones in the past two years alone. And now Anne Salmond’s 500-page “in-the-steps-of” pilgrimage to every island and every encounter event of the Great Man’s three voyages in the Pacific. She is in pursuit of her large vision of two-sided cross-cultural history, which she began so brilliantly in *Two Worlds* (1991) and *Between Worlds* (1997). This time she takes her linguistic skills and humane insights beyond Aotearoa to Tonga, Tahiti, Hawai’i and Rapanui. Any scholar who crosses a beach in the Pacific will see footsteps in the sand of those who have come before him or her, of course. They are big steps too—J.C. Beaglehole, Douglas Oliver, Roger Green, Marshall Sahlins and innumerable other scholars who have created the discourse on the Sea of Islands. It is a privilege, as Anne Salmond acknowledges, being part of it.

The special understanding that Anne Salmond brings to this two-sided history is to delineate the mind-sets of the two different parties to the encounter—of the science and law of the Enlightenment and of the all-embracing metaphors that renewed themselves over and again in a timeless relationship between past and present of the Māori and the Enata, the People of the Sea of Islands. All the particular events of her narrative are seen through the bifocal visions of these mind-sets. Her contribution is not to establish a new methodology or a new theory, but to reinterpret the many familiar events of Cook’s encounters with the native peoples of the Pacific in the light of these two mind-sets.

It should not be any surprise that Salmond is attracted to a cannibal story to give theatre to her understanding. Pacific history is replete with cannibal stories and jokes. Cannibalism was seen as the ultimate divide between the “civilised” and “uncivilised”. Both sides of the beach mocked one another in the theatre of cannibalism. The native side, quickly seeing that there was no way persuade the strangers to a true understanding of what the Strangers called “cannibalism”, mocked them with bloody savagery and enjoyed the horror on their faces. And the Strangers reveled in their cannibal jokes. Salmond describes such a scene in Chapter 11 of her book, “A Feast at Grass Cove”. Men from Cook’s ship *Resolution* discovered a group of warriors cutting up the body of a man killed in a raid. His heart had been stuck on the prow of the largest canoe; his head was lying on the ground with the jawbone missing, also

on the canoe. Around it were liver and lungs and intestines. A warrior skewered the lungs with his spear and offered them to Pickersgill, one of Cook's officers, for a taste. Pickersgill had no taste for what was offered but bought the head as a souvenir for a couple of nails. When the head was brought aboard the *Resolution*, Charles Clerke sliced off a bit of the cheek and barbecued it in the ship's galley. A Māori from the other part of the Sound accepted the cooked item with relish. Members of the crew either laughed or vomited when offered the same piece. Hitihiiti, a Tahitian whom Cook had brought with him, was totally disgusted and told Clerke and the warriors around that "they were Vile men and he was no longer their friend". His disgust had an interesting consequence when the *Resolution* went on to the Marquesas. There Hitihiiti was able to tell the Marquesans to be wary of these Strangers. They were cannibals.

But the cannibal story that sets the flavour of Salmond's narrative is the one that gives the title to the book: *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog*. By Cook's third voyage, his crew who had experienced the earlier two realised that the third was different. They had begun to experience his violent tantrums. "Getting a heiva from the old boy", was the phrase they used. Midshipman John Trevenen explained:

"Heiva is the name of the dance of the Southern Islanders which bore so great a resemblance to the violent motions and stamping on the Deck of Captain Cooke in the paroxysms of passion, into which he threw himself on the slightest occasion that they were universally known by the same name, and it was a common saying among both officers and people: 'the old boy is tipping a heiva to such and such a one.'"

An 18th century crew did not have much redress against a violent captain, but they had their ways. There was always a place for theatre that turned the world of authority and power upside down. The sailor's baptism or the ceremonies of Crossing the Line were notable examples. The crew of the *Resolution* was more ingenious. When Cook brought the *Discovery* and the *Resolution* back to Queen Charlotte Sound where the men of the *Adventure* had been murdered and eaten on his previous voyage, he was keen to be understanding of other cultures and reluctant to blame when he did not know the full story. His men were not so easy going, and when Cook did nothing to punish the murderers even when he had the chief perpetrator, Kahura, in his Great Cabin, and indeed had John Webber paint a famous portrait of him, they were ashamed of their captain. Even Mai, the Tahitian whom Cook was returning to his island, could not understand. "Why do you not kill him, you tell me if a man kills an other in England he is hanged for it, this Man has killed ten and yet you will not kill him", Mai said to Cook. So Cook's men tried and executed a native dog, which by reason of having bitten them was a cannibal. That was not the only theatre, of course. As Salmond sensitively shows, Cook's whole demeanour was theatre to the Māori, too. They despised him for not being like them. They would have killed and eaten Kahura.

Too many Captain Cook's? Maybe. It seems a pity that his encounter experiences should be so constantly the frame for writing the experiences of the other side.

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