

inside meanings and outside systems. Andrew Strathern's "Struggles for Meaning" stresses continuities in exchange practice in the New Guinea highlands. He details the ethnographic history of Melpa *moka* transactions of the past decades, showing how *moka* both expresses and redirects the history of individuals and groups. Against a background (as he briefly notes) of colonial and post-colonial law, cash economy, and land shortages, he argues that the Melpa self-consciously preserve *moka* and other key institutions in order to preserve an internal world of meaning privileging exchange premises of equality and friendship.

Writing of the Paiela, also of highland New Guinea, in "Prisoners of Time," Aletta Biersack describes a people with a "millenarian praxis" and proposes, parallel to Sahlins's proposal for multiple modes of history making, "a new relativism based on variations of praxis rather than structure or meaning" (p. 233). This ethnographically detailed article argues that the Paiela enduringly privilege transformation in their social life and cosmology, an ethnographic and analytic situation calling for the anthropologist's "careful listening and a retraining of the imagination" (p. 231): if we privilege the Paiela interpretation, then external agents are, in fact, products of Paiela agency and contact is the climax of Paiela millenarianism and what Biersack calls the Paiela "global ambitions."

In "Alejandro Mayta in Fiji" Nicholas Thomas considers certain Fijian millenarian narratives, not as expressions of enduring indigenous perspectives or praxes, but rather as expressions of political positions, in relation to codifications of custom and hierarchy in colonial and postcolonial contexts. He juxtaposes a brief description of Seventh Day Adventism in Fiji, colonial accounts of a prophet named Sailosi, and narratives about other prophets and movements, to argue that histories are constructed to invent, codify, and sometimes contest the categories of the present.

In "New Ireland Is Shaped Like a Rifle and We Are at the Trigger," Roy Wagner writes of "kastam" as indigenous transformative power. Mortuary feasting, the core of what the Barok call their "kastam," is a site of Barok cultural reproduction, where structure is explicitly negated and constituted through the agency of feast-givers. Wagner finds Barok "kastam" or transformative cultural powers "not bound to an archaic, frangible social order. . . . It is doing quite well in the twentieth century, managed and maintained by contemporaries" (p. 340).

A final essay by Greg Denning, "A Poetic for Histories," reminds us that anthropology's vision is "built not on the 'primitiveness' of the native, but on the advantage of the dialectic between [cultural] distance and familiarity" (p. 375), a dialectic engaged as well when we consider "now and then." Denning gracefully entwines a personal, scholarly history of an anthropologist's history-writing (of encounters of "natives and strangers" in the Marquesas, of meaning-making and possession in Tahiti, of mutiny on British sailing ships, and the representations thereof) with reflections on history and anthropology's rapprochement of the past decades.

While some of the essays draw heavily on work already published, much here is new and well pre-

sented. Scholars of the Pacific and of historical anthropology are likely to find this a valuable collection, rich both in ethnographic detail and theoretical interest. For those interested in the future of anthropology's histories in the Pacific, Biersack's introduction, while largely reviewing established debates, also raises questions not yet fully engaged (in this volume or elsewhere), for example: can Pacific pasts and presents challenge increasingly reified, totalizing periodicities such as "postmodernism" and "late capitalism"?

***Christianity in Oceania: Ethnographic Perspectives.* JOHN BARKER, ed. ASAO Monograph, 12. New York: University Press of America, 1990. x + 319 pp., figures, notes, photographs, tables, references, index.**

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This volume presents papers from two sessions of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, held in 1986 and 1987. It consists of 11 essays, plus a long introduction and brief afterword by the editor. Nine of the essays are by anthropologists, and two are by teachers of religion. All are ethnographic and historical reports on specific societies, except for some brief suggestions as to what kind of future work is needed (Charles W. Forman). Six of the ethnographic essays deal with Papua New Guinea: Ann Chowning's on Kove in New Britain; Garry Trompf's on the Pomio Kivung movement in New Britain; Martha Macintyre's on Misiman Island in Milne Bay; Carl E. Thune's on Normanby Island; Michael French Smith's on Kragur Village in east Sepik; and John Barker's on Uiaku Station and Village on southeastern Collingwood Bay. One essay is on Micronesia: Juliana Flinn's on Pulap Atoll. Three others are on Polynesia: Martha Kaplan's on Fiji; Tamar Gordon's on Tonga; and M. Jocelyn Armstrong's on Maori of South Island, New Zealand.

In his introduction, Barker suggests that perhaps too much attention has been paid to perspectives of Western missionaries and their encounters with indigenous Pacific societies and not enough paid to the new native Christian societies that have emerged all over Oceania as a result of such contacts. He notes that nearly all Pacific peoples today claim some allegiance to Christian beliefs, however different this may sometimes appear to many Westerners. Studies such as the ones presented here are valuable and timely. I should note, however, that very few sociological or anthropological studies yet exist for Western missionaries anywhere in the world (as contrasted to studies of contact between them and others or mere narrative histories and religious propaganda). Researchers should not prematurely assume that the key questions (essentially Weberian and Marxist) have yet been answered on a topic that Barker seems ready to dismiss as now out of date.

Today, local churches replace the earlier missions. These churches display a wealth of traditional forms and values along with their Christianity, assuring cultural continuity with the past, not the sharp cultural break or absorption that earlier missionaries

anticipated. Barker remarks on the immense variety of local forms of Christianity in the Pacific; he might have also remarked that this is true of "world religions" everywhere. If Christianity is different all over Oceania, it probably varies no more than does Roman Catholicism in Sicily, Poland, and England, or than Mormonism does from mainline Christianity.

Most of the essays provide useful information. Several are especially valuable: one brilliant essay, Thune's, stands far beyond all the others in importance. It is a penetrating and subtle analysis based on superb ethnography that should be a model for all subsequent researchers attempting to understand local Christianity and its rituals. In it, Thune presents a detailed analysis of a Christian service at a Loboda village church on Normandby Island. He relates themes in various phases of this service with both traditional Loboda and newer Christian symbols, showing how the words and rituals reflect a complex interplay between traditional and newer ways of thought and behavior, ways at times difficult to reconcile. (It is surely an indictment of current anthropology that the finest work in this collection is by a scholar without employment in academe.)

Essays by Martha Kaplan, Tamar Gordon, and M. Jocelyn Armstrong also merit praise. Kaplan nicely contrasts two modes of Fijian Christianity, a more egalitarian form promoted by "people of the land" and a hierarchical form promoted by those committed to chiefs. She shows how malleable Christianity may be, and how it may be appropriated to fit different, even opposed, traditional ideologies and organizations. Gordon discusses the ways that Mormons in Tonga attempt to resolve conflicting commitments between the family and the general social exclusivity advocated by Mormonism with enduring Tongan commitments to broader, cross-familial communal and cultural attachments. These values come into particularly sharp potential conflict in confronting traditional Tongan brother-sister avoidances and rituals. Gordon shows how adroit Tongan Mormons have become in selecting and rationalizing alternatives in order to facilitate social advantages. Finally, Armstrong discusses the manifold ways that Maori have modified their views of Christianity and sectarian loyalties in terms of preserving ethnic integrity, which is jeopardized by Pakeha dominance, especially on South Island where Maori are even more outnumbered by Pakeha than they are in the north.

This useful collection of essays displays greater sophistication than the initial, important pioneer symposium volume of the ASAO, *Mission, Church and Sect in Oceania* (Boutilier, Hughes, and Tiffany, eds. University Press of America, 1978). Unfortunately, three analytical approaches still remain insufficiently utilized. First, we still lack many really detailed accounts of the deeper meanings and social significance of religious beliefs for particular Pacific Christians. Thune's superb essay points out how much further such analyses could go. Second, anthropologists have not demonstrated a very sure grasp of Western Christianity and its history and, consequently, are limited in placing non-Western Christianity in comparative perspective. Third, anthropological studies of Christianity and other

"world religions" have not generally displayed a sufficiently keen sense of the enduring issues of social theory. Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Tönnies, Scheler, and Sombart, to mention only giants, recognized how important it is to subject such "sacred beliefs" to the same scrutiny as any others.

***Ethnographic Presents: Pioneering Anthropologists in the Papua New Guinea Highlands.* TERENCE E. HAYS, ed. *Studies in Melanesian Anthropology*, 12. DONALD F. TUZIN, GILBERT H. HERDT, and RENA LEDERMAN, gen. eds. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992. xv + 301 pp., plates, notes, bibliography, index.**

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This volume originated with the desire of three Australia-based anthropologists, Marie Reay, Ronald Berndt, and Catherine Berndt, to assemble accounts by those who, like them, had been among the first to undertake research in the Highlands of what is now Papua New Guinea. K. E. Read had already published *The High Valley* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965). Terence Hays, a Highlands specialist of a later generation, agreed to edit a volume in which the chapters were to be "memoiristic, focusing on the personal aspects of research in the early 1950s" (p.xi)—specifically, beginning no later than 1955. For various reasons, including the deaths of Ralph Bulmer and Richard Salisbury, this collection contains only seven such accounts: from the Berndts (separately), Reay, D'Arcy Ryan, Robert Glasse, James Watson, and Ann McLean, Reo Fortune's niece, describing her uncle's fieldwork in both 1935 and 1951. Other contemporaries of these are mentioned frequently, both by the principals and in an introductory chapter by Hays and a concluding one by Andrew Strathern.

The principal contributors were asked to "reflect" on topics ranging from their training and theoretical orientation prior to arrival in the Highlands to the relation between their discoveries in the field and their subsequent interpretations. As well as describing the complexities of interaction with the local people, including how they thought they were perceived and what the people gained from their presence, they were to deal with "relationships with the administration and/or missionaries" (pp. xi–xii). In fact, the contributions differ greatly, partly because of the personalities of the authors, but perhaps more due to varying degrees of reliance on memory alone, as opposed to direct consultation of old notebooks. The chapters by Reay, Ryan, and Glasse seemed to me by far the fullest and frankest. Indeed, Strathern notes that these three adopt a "wry, almost diffident posture . . . all the more surprising if one recalls their actual achievements" (p. 266). Ryan's acerbic description of his time in Oxford is particularly amusing. McLean is often forced by sketchy documentation to speculate about details of Fortune's research but succeeds in giving a vivid picture of work carried out under very arduous conditions that nevertheless resembled those encountered by a number of later