

(Taonui, R., n.d.)

1860
1987

REVIEWS

DAWSON, Richard: *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language*. Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, 2001. x + 255 pp., bib. Price: NZ\$29.00 (paper).

RAWIRI TAONUI
University of Canterbury

Reading *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language* reminds one of the lines from Lewis Carroll: "When I use a word", remarked Humpty Dumpty, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less". Since Ruth Rush and Claudia Orange published their studies of the Treaty of Waitangi, in 1971 and 1987 respectively, we have all been aware that a central problem in the interpretation of the Treaty texts stems from the way key terms were written and translated between English and Māori.

The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language approaches this problem in a fresh and important way. Dawson asks several questions. Whose English and whose Māori? What are the motivations for defining the same terms in different ways? More importantly, he asks who has the power to make definitive decisions about what terms mean.

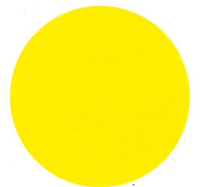
Dawson focuses on nine contested terms: "alienate", "*kawanatanga*", "possession", "pre-emption", "property", "Queen", "*tino rangatiratanga*", "right" and "sovereignty". The book begins with the view that terms in the Treaty of Waitangi are subject to different meanings and interpretations depending on the way proponents, such as the Crown and Māori, use them in debate. He argues that the interpretation of meanings varies according to vicissitudes of political motivation, time, place, culture, academic approach and personality.

More specifically, Dawson argues that the "principal tools of negotiation" concerning the use of Treaty terms are in fact "other words" and that the way these are used ultimately involves attempts to control and manoeuvre language, particularly language concerning questions of sovereignty. He also argues that the meaning of the language used in debate is embedded in the contexts in which it is used. While the debate shapes language, the words used mould and shape the ideas that are expressed through them.

Tracing both the theoretical and historical background of the subject, Dawson is influenced by American writers James Boyd White, the author of *When Words Lose Their Meaning* (1984), and the work in legal economics of John R. Commons. Both argued that economic and political processes influence the meanings of language and culture just as much as language and culture shape politics and economics.

Dawson provides background for the New Zealand experience by referring to American constitutional history concerning Native American rights. He ends this part of the book with the conclusion that Native Americans, unable to assail the

3rd



United States by force, were forced to defend their rights through the language of the courts. In so doing, they conceded to the United States the power to determine the meanings of key terms that ultimately led to the legalised dispossession and marginalisation of their societies.

The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language applies this analysis and these conclusions to several statutes and legal cases in New Zealand history. Dawson argues that European governors, premiers, judges and politicians from Sir George Grey to Frederick Whitaker, with mandate, power and immunity, justified the systematic marginalisation of Māori through manipulative interpretations of the Treaty. The survey covers most of the famous courts cases, notorious statutes and government institutions, from the Native Land Court and Wi Parata through to the Town and Country Planning Act and recent settlement processes, to show how language was used to alienate and subjugate Māori legally. These sections are clear, comprehensive, informative and scholarly.

Less insightful, but still useful, is an analysis of recent scholarly debate about the interpretation of the Treaty. Dawson is critical of legal scholars, such as Paul McHugh and Jock Brookfield, because of what he describes as the self-interested way in which they assume that the institution of the law, which marginalised Māori in the first place, mediates between the Crown and Māori. The point is a good one. The United Nations Human Rights Commission, through the Permanent Committee on Indigenous Issues, makes the same case, stating that indigenous rights defined in European law invariably undermine inalienable rights. Less robust is Dawson's analysis of David Williams, Jane Kelsey and other scholars, whose criticisms of the law as an instrument of domination is over-simplified and driven by "other agendas" and "purpose laden" choices. The weakness here is that *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language* lacks a definitive contextual measure for determining the accuracy of each position, which lends itself to concluding that all positions are in error. To be fair, Dawson recognises this to an extent, arguing that activists and politicians, and professionals and scholars have talked past each other. He suggests ways in which recognition of plurality in the meaning of words might lead to an almost purist "workable mutuality" whereby the diverse interpretations can be reconciled.

There are notable absences in *The Treaty of Waitangi and the Control of Language*, the most prominent of which are the absence of an analysis of language concerning the signing of the Treaty in 1840 and the formulation of the modern principles of the Treaty of Waitangi from the 1980s onwards. These omissions are glaringly obvious in a discussion about the dynamics of power that shape Treaty language. The language used in 1840 laid the foundation of all the later debate, and, while Ross and Orange have canvassed this period, it seems to this reviewer that an approach such as Dawson's cannot ignore revisiting this same debate. The same is true with respect to principles. The principles evolved out of early 1980s Waitangi Tribunal reports (Motunui-Waitara and Manukau), the 1987 State Owned Enterprise case, other litigation and several Crown edicts (in 1989 by the Labour government, in 1991 by the National government, and reviewed again by Labour in 2000). The

ways in which Māori, *pākehā*, politicians, lawyers, professionals and activists manipulated this evolution (often in stark contrast to historical facts) would have been worthy of a chapter.

Perhaps Dawson misses this because his approach rests very much on the application of lessons learned from analysis of the American judicial context to the New Zealand experience. This obfuscates the particular historical, social and cultural context of the Treaty in New Zealand. In the main, this weakness reflects itself most in the debate on the scholars. For Dawson, all views rest on some prior prejudice. Although this is always true to a certain extent, he provides insufficient context to measure the congruency of expressed political views with historical, political, economic, cultural and social realities. In this way, he is wrong to assume that scholars simply talk past each other. As in all politics, some views are more correct than others are. After all, when Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall, he was finally proven wrong.

FEINBERG, Richard: *Anuta: Polynesian Lifeways for the Twenty-First Century*. Second edition. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2004. xii + 247 pp., bib., figs., glossary, maps, photos, tables. Price: US\$16.95 (paper)

ANNE CHAMBERS
Southern Oregon University

This is another detailed yet accessible ethnography in the Waveland series. Rick Feinberg's extensive ethnographic writings have been instrumental in bringing the tiny, isolated community of Anuta to the attention of Oceanic scholars and the wider reading public. This most recent contribution integrates information collected over a 30 year period (field visits in 1972, 1983-84, 1988, 1993 and 2000) to produce an up-dated, diachronic account of the community's situation. Its core is the detailed analysis of Anutan relationships and cultural premises which first appeared in 1981 as *Anuta: Social Structure of a Polynesian Island*. This information is given contemporary context by two additions: a first chapter describing Feinberg's initial encounter with Anuta and a concluding chapter assessing the current issues facing the community.

Anuta's current situation gradually unfolds throughout the book. A Polynesian outlier in the Solomon Islands, Anuta is one of a cluster of small volcanic islands southeast of the country's larger, Melanesian-inhabited main islands. Its several hundred people occupy a land area of 0.38 square kilometres, creating a high population density that has doubled in the last 30 years (to 770 persons per square kilometre) owing to a combination of natural population increase and the return of overseas community members after 1998 fleeing the civil war in the Solomon Islands capital. While local marine and land resources are still ample enough to meet subsistence needs, social tensions and disputes have increased in response to

crowding, as has the threat posed by periodic natural disasters (storms and drought). People resist government control, vehemently asserting their traditional autonomy and their cultural difference from the majority Melanesian population, but they value shipping, education and medical services. Anuta's smallness and isolation buffer some globalisation pressures, but Feinberg depicts its future as "uncertain". Anutans are caught in a familiar contemporary dilemma: valuing traditional relationships and leadership structures, but needing cash and tempted by Western-oriented, individualised upward mobility. Not surprisingly, accusations, conflicts and factional disputes plague current community life.

The book begins in another era, and its focus is on kinship and political relationships central to traditional Anutan culture. The first chapter presents incidents from Feinberg's life on Anuta in 1972 and sketches the personal factors that led him to do ethnographic fieldwork on a tropical island. Descriptions of insect pests, environmental features and challenging cultural differences are used to dispel any illusion that Anuta might be the "tropical paradise" idealised by Western readers. Chapter Two adds information about the island's setting, history, resources and connection to the outside world. Anuta's settlement traditions, complicated pre-contact history and contacts with outsiders are summarised. Attention then turns to living conditions and resource use. Data about agricultural zones and cultivation practices are so highly technical that readers may find it hard to imagine the practical reality of local subsistence patterns. Discussion of fishing techniques is equally precise but much more accessible. The importance of overseas wage labour, the community's health situation and its religious organisation are sketched.

Chapters Three through Seven, describing the intertwined connections among kinship, marriage, descent and authority, comprise the heart of this ethnography. Links between individuals, relationships within (and between) domestic units and larger descent groups, island leadership and overall community organisation are all presented as components in a single connected system. Feinberg's patient, precise analysis is the strength of this ethnography.

Chapter Three lays the crucial foundation. Anutan kinship entails a combination of genealogical and behavioural criteria, and Feinberg's discussion emphasises the importance of interactions rather than simply "shared blood". Local kin categories (terms of reference and address) are itemised and the flexible criteria used to define actual kin category memberships are described. Anuta's population is small and isolated, so everyone is potentially related in many different ways and people must make strategic prioritisations. The system's flexibility allows non-Anutans to be included in kin relationships as well. *Aropa* (with connotations of pity, sympathy, love, compassion and affection) is basic to every aspect of kinship categorisation and behaviour, best expressed by giving and sharing.

Chapter Four describes the organisation of domestic life and the economic functions of its basic unit, patrilineal extended family households (*patongia*). Relationship expectations are also described, along with fosterage practices and the dynamics of authority. Chapter Five focuses on the intricate ritual, political and

economic network created among households through marriage alliances. Incest prohibitions offer guidelines for marriage choices but, as always, kinship definitions have inherent flexibility. Elaborate rites of passage (including birth, first fish feeding, initiation, first voyage return, circumcision, marriage and death) bring the entire population (or a large portion thereof) into co-ordinated reciprocal exchanges, all embodying the core kinship value of *aropa*.

Chapter Six shows how households are connected through patrilineal links to several broad descent categories as well as to four bounded descent clans (*kainanga*) with their origins nine generations in the past. Two of these are chiefly clans which provide leadership to the community as a whole on the basis of genealogical seniority. Chiefly succession principles are explained, using irregular successions (with helpful illustrations) to reveal structural principles. The two non-chiefly clans also have formal leaders, whose focus is on behaviour of clan members rather than on community affairs. Chapter Seven describes all of these aspects of kinship together at the community level and shows how the traditional authority of the high chief connects with that of the local Anglican church. Effective leadership in either realm involves *mana* (or *manuu*) stemming from social rank, which privileges men over women, elders over anyone younger.

While Anutans value their traditions, social organisation and autonomy as central to their identity, these cultural aspects are challenged and increasingly eroded by contact with the wider world. The final chapter describes the dilemmas that this creates for individuals and for the community as a whole, using examples of recent controversies to illustrate the intractability of the issues involved. The key question is how to maintain relationships based on *aropa* when competition and maximised individual interest are the route to material security encouraged in the wider world. Anutans are not the only ones needing to resolve this question, and the book's final pages probe this case study for insights on the human condition and current socio-political affairs. One issue that Feinberg considers is the illusionary nature of political categorisations, suggesting that quality of life, not just "formal trappings" of government, be used in making foreign policy decisions. Other insights concern Anuta's flexible incorporation principles and the reciprocal responsibilities that link all levels of Anutan society. This conclusion to the book helps readers see Anuta as irrevocably connected to their own world.

Anuta has a straight-forward, student-friendly format that will appeal to a wide audience. Its focus is on kinship, making it an apt textbook choice for courses on social organisation, kinship/descent, or marriage and family. It would also be effective in Pacific-oriented or introductory anthropology courses since readers cannot fail to be impressed by the complexity of relationships in this very small society. Feinberg's presentation systematically and patiently shows how kinship can effectively organise wider political and economic affairs, not simply family life. Interesting photographs and helpful tables focus readers' interest, and end notes add useful detail. As in other Waveland ethnographies, however, absence of an index makes retrieval of specific information difficult.

FINNEY, Ben: *Sailing in the Wake of the Ancestors: Reviving Polynesian Voyaging*. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 2003. vi + 168 pp., bib., glossary, index, maps, photos. Price: US\$24.95 (cloth), US\$19.95 (paper).

GEOFFREY IRWIN
University of Auckland

This interesting and attractive book is about the remarkable voyage of six Polynesian sailing canoes from the Marquesas Islands north to Hawai'i in 1995. It is much more than just the story of that event because it provides a rich context that includes the history, personalities, places, traditions and technology relating to it. The book also explains the cultural significance of the revival in voyaging that began more than two decades earlier.

The book is well illustrated with maps, diagrams and photographs and there is an eight-page insert of colour plates. It is easy to read and much of the pleasure of doing so derives from Finney's commitment to the subject, his depth of knowledge and first-hand experience. The book is scholarly but not obtrusively so. The provision of end notes, a glossary of terms and a bibliography will allow a reader to pursue any topic in depth.

The Prologue gives an account of the history of the Polynesian Voyaging Society, founded in Hawai'i in 1973, and the events leading up to this voyage as seen from a Hawaiian perspective. The famous canoe *Hokule'a* had made many voyages without the aid of navigational instruments to destinations in central East Polynesia, West Polynesia and even to Aotearoa New Zealand. While the 62-foot long *Hokule'a* was in many ways a performance-accurate replica canoe, she was built of modern materials, and the Society formed the ambition to create a voyaging canoe of native materials.

The story proceeds in chronological stages, and Chapter 1 describes the construction of the 57-foot *Hawai'iloa*. No suitable trees could be found in the Hawaiian Islands and so, in the light of the historical use of drift logs from the northwest coast of America, two tall Alaskan spruce trees were obtained by gift, thus forming a bond between the respective peoples. The chapter goes on to describe the construction of the canoe by volunteers, the design modifications that were needed and experiments in the use of native materials for cordage and sails.

While *Hawai'iloa* was being built, the Sixth Festival of Pacific Arts took place in 1992 in Rarotonga. Its theme was "Seafaring Pacific Islanders" and there was a gathering of traditional sailing canoes. These included several from the southern Cook Islands, the *Hokule'a* from Hawai'i, *Te Aurere* from New Zealand and a *walap* from the Marshall Islands. Nainoa Thomson, the navigator of *Hokule'a*, then invited other canoes to join the forthcoming voyage of the two Hawaiian canoes from the Marquesas to Hawai'i. What had been planned as a Hawaiian venture was to become pan-Polynesian.

In Chapter 3 the scene shifts to the Society Islands in March 1995 as the canoes assembled for the voyage. A ritual aspect to the cultural revival of Polynesian

voyaging was enacted at Taputapuatēa marae on Ra'iatea. According to elements of tradition gathered by Percy Smith when he visited Honolulu, and by others in Tahiti, Rarotonga and New Zealand, Taputapuatēa could be considered an ancient centre for a network of inter-island contacts, but this was broken by a murder. This gathering of the canoes was to re-establish it as the sacred centre of a new friendly alliance of voyaging peoples. As well as the crews present, there were officials, elders, orators, dancers and others from the various islands represented. *Te Aurere* was the first canoe to be called through Te Avamo'a, a sacred passage through the reef. The *tapu* was lifted.

Chapter 4 provides detailed descriptions of the fleet, including *Hokule'a* and *Hawai'iloa* as described above; *Te Aurere*, a 57 ft canoe with hulls built of kauri logs in Aotearoa by Hector Busby; two Rarotongan canoes designed by Sir Tom Davis—*Takitumu*, a 53 ft *kalia*-type canoe built of plywood and *Te Au o Tonga*, a 72 ft plywood canoe of traditional Tahitian type; *Tahiti Nui*, the 75 ft Tahitian entry that used two dugout *totara* logs (originally from New Zealand) salvaged from the canoe *Hawaiki Nui* that was built by Matahi Whakataka (also known as Greg Brightwell) and his father-in-law Francis Cowan, and sailed from Tahiti to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1985; an unofficial Tahitian entry '*A 'A Kahiki Nui*, created by Francis' nephew that was withdrawn; and finally *Makali'i*, a third Hawaiian canoe, a fine sailing vessel built on 54-foot fibreglass hulls.

Chapter 5 considers evidence for the theory that the origin of the first settlers of Hawai'i was the Marquesas, also called *Te Henua 'Enana* ("The Native Land"). Thus the modern voyage would retrace that original voyage. Chapter 6 records final preparations for getting underway and the ceremonial departure from Taiohe Bay, Nukuhiva. There is an account, accessible for most readers, of the system of navigation that Nainoa taught to his fellow navigators that combines traditional and contemporary concepts.

Chapter 7 describes how six canoes, each with its escort vessel, left the Marquesas on the 19th and 20th of April at intervals that allowed them to proceed independently while keeping radio contact morning and evening. Unfortunately, *Tahiti Nui* had to stay behind because of persisting problems of rig design. The voyage strategy was to sail north across the southeast trade winds, cross the doldrums, then pick up the northeast trades to reach the latitude of the target while still upwind of it (in this case to the east). Five canoes (but not *Takitumu*) navigated without instruments. The DR (dead-reckoning) position estimates of the navigators were recorded and compared with the precise GPS (global position satellite) positions of their escorts. In general the voyage went as planned. As the canoes sailed north, the Pole Star rose in the sky ahead as the Southern Cross sank behind. The weather played its usual tricks, some competition among the canoes inevitably broke out—leaving one dismasted, and the whole fleet came under pressure of a deadline to arrive in Honolulu in time for *Hokule'a* and *Hawai'iloa* to be shipped to the west coast of the United States. Stowaways, in the form of tiny biting flies, caused the whole fleet to be fumigated on arrival.

Chapter 8 records the landfalls, the welcomes and other social outcomes of value. It takes a personal turn in a tribute by the author to the distinguished life of the late

Myron Thomson, father of Nainoa. Finally, the Epilogue tells of how *Hawai'iloa* sailed north on a goodwill tour to thank native Alaskans, who originally gifted the spruce logs, while *Hokule'a* sailed south. And the remaining canoes dispersed to their island homes or went off on other adventures.

For anyone interested in any of these events or the various cultural or navigational issues that arise, this book comes highly recommended.

MODELL, Judith S. (ed.): *Constructing Moral Communities: Pacific Islander Strategies for Settling in New Places*. Special issue of *Pacific Studies*, 25:1-2, March-June 2002. viii + 220 pp., bib., tables. Price: US\$15.00 (paper).

YVONNE UNDERHILL-SEM
University of Auckland

This is a fascinating collection of studies focusing on the dynamics of Pacific Island communities as they settle into new places in the Solomon Islands, New Zealand and the United States. The complexities of life vividly unfold for Sikaiana and Anutan people in Honiara, Samoans and Māori in urban New Zealand, Marshallese in small town Oklahoma, and Hawaiians in rural Hawai'i as they secure housing, embark on fund-raising efforts, worship, establish new *marae* and engage with state institutions. With varying degrees of sophistication and nuance, these studies share an interest in understanding the complex and dynamic nature of community formation, the continuities and the changes over time. The guiding theoretical framework for these studies, presented by Modell in the introductory chapter, however, is less well connected to the substance of the studies, to the extent that at the end of this collection I was unconvinced of the intellectual purchase of the Durkheim's concept of moral communities. Let me expand on this.

Modell draws on Durkheim's concept of moral communities as a way to structure understandings of how Pacific Island peoples settle and survive in new and mostly urban situations. Moving from strong kinship-based ties of affection in rural villages to urban areas where relations are predominantly structured around economic activities and obligations, Durkheim identifies the formation of moral communities as a successful response to the alienation and anomie that pervades urban life. Modell argues that by focusing on the formation of moral communities among Pacific island people a better understanding can be reached about the value of sentiment and obligations in binding communities together in urban settings some distance from their original homelands.

There are many difficulties in this argument however. First, the definition of *urban* is problematic. Although different from village life, there are continuities between rural and urban life in Melanesian cities especially in relation to access to water and fuel. Furthermore, in the studies from Hawai'i, Modell herself depicts a less than urban setting where community socialising on the beach is a routine affair. Second, the concept of evolutionary change is awkward. Durkheim's original

understanding of how primitive societies are transformed into complex societies derives from political economics in the West, not the complex political subsistence economies of the Pacific. The difference is not simply about the extent to which the moral fibre is binding, but also about the dynamic modes of interaction, which are well documented in scholarly texts.

Rosenblatt also finds this concept of evolutionary change problematic in his analysis of Māori community formation in urban New Zealand. He argues that it is not just about making boundaries and identities; the content also matters. What kinds of beliefs did the Marshallese in Enid, Okalahoma, share and contest? How was violence against women in the rural Hawaiian community exercised? As Rosenblatt (p.134) astutely notes, "kinship bounds are replaced by kinship bounds of a different sort". Furthermore, the idea that a similar process of moral unbinding and binding is non-existent in island homelands becomes apparent when one considers Merry's historical article in this volume. At different times, different moral frameworks emerge.

As mentioned earlier, some articles are richer and more analytical than others. Participant observation is clearly a fundamental tool for anthropologists, but it is not sufficient to simply report on one's own observations, especially when time interrupts these observations frequently and for long periods. More useful were the studies that used a variety of analytical frames such as mapping social, economic and political contexts.

In sum, there are some great studies in this collection, but their value lies not in the notion of Durkheimian moral communities, but in persuading us of the need to understand more closely the complex and multi-layered forms of community cohesion and tension in different places and different times.

SMITH, Michael French: *Village on the Edge: Changing Times in Papua New Guinea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. xviii + 214 pp., bib., glossary, index, map, photos. Price: US\$50.00 (cloth), US\$17.95 (paper).

PHILLIP GUDDEMI

Union Institute and University

Village on the Edge: Changing Times in Papua New Guinea by Michael French Smith is a deceptively easy book to read. In clear and lucid prose it manages to address a great number of issues related to culture change among largely traditional, rural Pacific societies. Like his earlier book, *Hard Times on Kairiru Island* (1994), *Village on the Edge* focuses on the way that development and culture change are conceptualised by the villagers of Kragur on Kairiru, a volcanic island near Wewak, the provincial capital of the East Sepik Province in Papua New Guinea. *Hard Times on Kairiru Island* was based on fieldwork in 1975-76 and 1981, capturing a time just after Papua New Guinea became independent, while *Village on the Edge* reflects field visits since that time, especially one in 1998.

As a fellow Sepik anthropologist, I would note that the book titles are somewhat misleading in that they imply that Kairiru Island is particularly poor or in crisis. In terms of "indigenous prosperity", Kairiru, as a volcanic sea island, is well placed to exploit food resources from both land and sea. The village of Kragur, as Smith mentions, is in a particularly idyllic spot with an excellent water supply, fertile volcanic lands and few mosquitoes (always a consideration in the Sepik). Although the 1997 El Niño drought did affect Kragur, the "hard times" and "edge" experienced by the village do not in most years reflect real hunger or want—its subsistence base seems to be largely intact, producing a sufficiency of the materials needed for food and shelter in a traditional manner. But, like hundreds of other villages which find themselves remote from the centres of economic and political transformation in Papua New Guinea (and "remoteness" in Papua New Guinea begins astonishingly close to any provincial capital), the villagers of Kragur today experience both a real deterioration of services and loss of integration with the larger polity (trends that, as Smith mentions, have led across the nation to significant setbacks in infant mortality rates and life expectancy). This is combined with an increased sense of relative deprivation as compared to the lifestyles and material affluence of the Papua New Guinea "middle class" or "elite" (described, as Smith notes, by Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington in their 1999 book on *Emerging Class in Papua New Guinea: The Telling of Difference*).

Perhaps such a paradoxical state of being "lost in transition" is one which bedevils many of the less "tigerish" reaches of the so-called "developing" world. Certainly in Melanesia, where many "grassroots" rural villagers desire change and tend to conceptualise it in a totalistic way, their sense that transition is not seemingly in transit, and that development is not developing, becomes felt as a frustrating dilemma, most poignantly perhaps for precisely those who had yearned the most for change.

Smith is not so much concerned to measure or to demonstrate these trends, as to show their consequences to the "hearts and minds" of a village that is somewhat typical in these respects. In many respects the current quandaries of the village are not new. In spite of the desires sometimes expressed by Kragur villagers, or the fears expressed by others or even by the same individuals, there has not been a sharp, discontinuous change in their social lives in the quarter century between Smith's first and last visits. Instead Smith notes a kind of incremental change away from non-commodity forms of exchange (though these are still present), and towards an increased use of money, an increased presence of imported goods, and an intensified effort, often frustrated, by villagers to sustain small-scale business enterprises. This has led to a felt weakening, but not a collapse, of traditional values and patterns of reciprocity and village co-operation, idealised locally as the generous, hospitable and peaceable "good way" that villagers felt distinguished themselves even from neighbouring places and peoples. A villager, not atypically fluent in English, who had read Smith's dissertation noted in a 1993 letter that Smith had referred to Kragur elders as "at the crossroad"—and then reflected, referring to another generation of elders, that "they still are" (p.70).

Smith treats us to an entertaining biographical narrative of his various visits to Papua New Guinea and by so doing shows us his own positioning *vis-à-vis* issues of change. His life has not been that of a traditional academic, but has involved applied work in bureaucracies, including the World Bank. He is admirably reflexive and candid about how local Papua New Guineans felt about some of the initiatives he engaged in for the World Bank, how he feels about them in retrospect, and how one of its well-intentioned but inevitably bureaucratic programs intended to revitalise localities was almost unusable even by a well-educated village such as Kragur (which has produced more than its share of high school and college graduates, and even professionals).

In a similar fashion Smith treats us to accounts of the place of Catholicism in the village and its relationship to traditional moral ideas of village co-operation; then shows how change has included an increased church bureaucracy as well as new forms of Pentecostal worship that challenge traditional authority patterns. Another topic he describes in an enviably simple way is of how the prospect of possible mining wealth has intensified interest in traditional social structure, or *struksa*, as well as in the contested narratives detailing the origin of social groups. This development has parallels in many areas of Papua New Guinea, and I have noted very similar processes in the region where I work in the far west of East Sepik Province. His treatment of the vexing issue of traditional land ownership and rights could serve as a good introduction to a complex reality.

These disparate trends do not show Kragur as having one simply summarised adaptation to change. Smith's book, which is also an excellent portrait of the travails and contradictions of fieldwork itself, is to be recommended as an unobtrusively profound exploration of the contemporary quandaries of rural Papua New Guinea.

WALLACE, Lee: *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003. xi + 175pp., bib., figs, index, photos. Price: US\$45.00 (cloth); US\$18.95 (paper).

VANESSA SMITH
University of Sydney

In *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Texts, Modern Sexualities*, Lee Wallace proposes a new understanding of the erotics and ambivalences of encounters between Euro-Americans and Polynesians. Analysing a range of texts from the earliest Euro-American accounts of Pacific Islanders to recent reappraisals of New Zealand's settler heritage and inter-island relations, she consolidates a paradigm shift in the rhetorical gendering of the Pacific. Wallace argues that contact placed at issue not—as has been widely assumed—degrees of heterosexual freedom, but rather the cultural permutations of male relationships. The book reveals its brilliance at the level

of close reading. It proceeds through a series of beguiling exegeses that cumulatively expose some of the blind spots in recent reappraisals of Pacific encounters.

The first two chapters focus on early European accounts of Tahiti and Hawai'i, and in particular the different degrees of curiosity and unease produced by encounters with male same-sex relations, as embodied in the figures of the *mahu* and *aikane*. Wallace sets up an opposition between Cook and Banks, one "the model of sexual rectitude, the other of sexual extravagance" (p.9), suggesting that their contrasting representations "provide the coordinates for all subsequent stagings of European masculinity in the Pacific" (p.13). Her approach to the alternately prurient, fascinated or studiously silent documents of early contact is a mode of interstitial analysis, always necessitated in reading archives of encounters between oral and literate cultures, and acquiring an added imperative for Wallace by the absence of explicit referencing of homosexuality in her chosen texts. She theorises the challenge to speak for her subjects skillfully and directly, never resorting to the knee-jerk double-entendre of vulgar Freudianism.

Three central chapters look at representative figures of Pacific encounters: the beachcomber, the missionary and the artist/traveler. For Wallace the Pacific beachcomber, with his semi-naked, tattooed white body, is a sexually challenging figure *per se*. She focuses on beachcombers who spent time in the Marquesas: the heavily tattooed Jean Baptiste Cabri, and Herman Melville—a literary figure with an assured place in the queer canon. Tellingly, she gives little attention to Edward Robarts, who might be more appropriately partnered with Cabri, since they were in Tahuata at the same time and in an openly competitive relationship. Robarts, however, negotiated the politics of intimacy primarily through heterosexual encounter. The missionary William Pascoe Crook, whose own confrontation with the sexually and socially unsayable in the Marquesas has been exquisitely deconstructed by Alex Calder, is also given scant attention. Crook's adoption of Marquesan female dress, which he perceived to be more modest than masculine costume, raised conundra of etiquette among his Marquesan hosts, akin to those invited by Gauguin in his cultivation of the appearance of a *taata vahine* (man-woman). Wallace's research on Gauguin seems to have converged with that of Stephen Eisenmann: although her readings are subtler than those in Eisenmann's controversial *Gauguin's Skirts*, her argument is to some extent anticipated in that book. Her chapter on the missionary William Yates, whose relations with the Māori boys he catechised has been an unfolding story of scandal and recuperation, is on the other hand a challenging and moving essay. Wallace keeps in play depositions from the early 19th century, a variety of contemporary responses and two generations of recent reinterpretations of Yates's disgrace, to produce a subtle meditation on the reverberations of desire and shame.

Wallace's final chapter, on the documentary *Fa'afafine: Queens of Samoa*, exposes the obfuscations that follow from reifying the sexual practices of Pacific cultures as inherently incompatible with Western understandings of the homosexual. While her point is well made, the corollary of this position in her own work is a polemical flattening of cultural and historical difference that can produce its own

attendant blind spots. Wallace, for instance, makes no reference in her opening chapter to other types of non-normative and unfamiliar sexual desire other than those between men, which were nonetheless registered in early voyage accounts and scandalised metropolitan London. The purportedly sexually voracious Porea, known as "Queen Oberea", sentimentalised heroine of Wallis's voyage and ridiculed suitor of Joseph Banks, horrified and excited London with her embodiment of active elderly feminine sexuality. A subsidiary thesis of *Sexual Encounters* is that Pacific encounters were formative of modern categories of sexual identity: a claim that is not convincingly substantiated. The poems, pantomime and play bills produced in the wake of Cook's voyages offer a rich field of sexual speculation on Tahiti that Wallace might have used both to source and nuance her argument.

The inevitable anachronism of her intervention places Wallace in the vexed position of having repeatedly to insert homosexuality into the records of encounter: to assert that the sex acts recorded or disavowed were understood as sex acts, as demonstrating "capacities for pleasure" (p.21). This will no doubt leave her work open (and I cannot, having just read this book, use words like "insert" and "open" unselfconsciously) to tedious reprimands for hyper-interpretation. Yet these would disregard the delicate balance of play and seriousness—the exemplary savvy of her reading practice. My own quibble with *Sexual Encounters* is perhaps the opposite: that the texts of intercultural encounter in the Pacific are potentially more self-knowing than Wallace allows. By assembling a slightly different canon, or, in the case of writers such as Melville, crediting her authors with a little more insight into the complexities of their own obfuscations, Wallace might have avoided appearing again and again in the role of queer theory magician, pulling the rabbit of sexuality from the hat of self-censorship. The theatrics of missionary Lancelot Threlkeld, the self-doubts of William Crook, the recidivism of missionary turned beachcomber George Vason, the artistic friendship of Henry Adams and John La Farge, the unconventional marriage of Robert Louis and Fanny Stevenson, the explicit fables of Charles Warren Stoddard, or the whimsical meditation on missionary-convert relations in Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* might all have offered Wallace an opportunity for less performative, more recuperative readings of the Pacific archive. Yet the fact that her analyses both unsettle any too complacent historicising and invite argument and counter-example confirms their significance for current Pacifica scholarship.