

based on natural resource extraction, production for protected metropolitan markets, aid and remittances, and tourism, are all under threat and unsustainable. If this seems realistic enough, there is a certain naivety in the underlying assumption that these strategies were ever promoted by metropolitan powers for motives other than those driving the free market globalization now overtaking them. Even so, the “livelihoods” approach of *Strategies* is both an effective critique of, and a positive step forward from, the much-compromised capitalist development model still pursued by *Development Sustained*. It is not quite as original as its presentation implies, being a variation on the “bottom up” approach discussed in our own book, *Environment and Development in the Pacific Islands* (Burt and Clerk 1997, incidentally in the same series as *Development Sustained*). Given that alternatives to conventional development economics are under active debate at present, it is a pity that some of the arguments advanced in that book are not engaged with by more than a passing footnote. But *Strategies* has the same emphasis on building on local experience, recognizing the paternalistic colonial legacy inherited by expatriate developers in its frequent references to the “agency” of local people. If the book did more to examine the economic and political relationships between Islanders and foreign development agencies and treated their cultures as a dimension of these relationships—rather than as a local factor in development—by building on the rich anthropological literature of Pacific Islands social change, it might go fur-

ther in its aim to help “sustainable development . . . break free of modernist approaches to ‘development’ and ‘progress’.”

Development Sustained offers no general conclusion. It would have done well to sign off with a defense of its economic critique of policies pursued by Pacific Islands governments and metropolitan agencies, in anticipation of the kind of challenge presented by contributors to *Strategies*. Although the discussion may never catch up with the changing realities of Pacific Islands local livelihoods and national economies, it is essential that both local and metropolitan participants treat the development process as a debate between the kinds of opposing perspectives and interests represented by these two books.

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Adolescence in Pacific Island Societies, edited by Gilbert Herdt and Stephen C Leavitt. ASAO Monograph 16. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998. ISBN cloth, 0-8229-4068-X; paper, 0-8229-5672-1; xii + 239 pages, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$50.00; paper, US\$22.95.

This volume was conceived nearly a decade prior to its publication, at a 1990 symposium of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO), and was nearly aborted several times during its lengthy and difficult gestation. Its long-delayed debut, in a much altered and slimmer form than originally conceived, reveals in

part some conceptual problems implicit in the topic of adolescence in the Pacific (as well as the generally unwelcoming environment for edited topical volumes today in anthropology). The initial design included an additional number of original chapters, supplemented by reprinted papers of Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, and John B. Whiting, who pioneered the study of adolescence in the Pacific over fifty years ago. Several chapters of the present book discuss issues raised by these early writers, but the book does not include the retrospective section that the editors had at first intended. Indeed, the book promises more than it actually delivers, although the end product is a valuable collection nonetheless.

The eight individual chapters fall into three parts: "Comparative Perspectives on Pacific Adolescence," "Cultural Constructions of Adolescence," and "Adolescence and Social Change in the Pacific." In their introductory chapter, editors Gilbert Herdt and Stephen C. Leavitt situate the volume within the wider anthropological study of adolescence, which they point out has been dormant for the past several decades, primarily due to "the decline of development perspectives in anthropology following the demise of culture and personality studies" (5). They pitch the book as the first attempt to "document and compare a range of adolescent development issues among traditional societies of the Pacific Islands" (5)—the "first detailed study of adolescence in any cultural area" (3).

Herdt and Leavitt's introduction gives readers a cogent overview of issues they believe "are central to a cross-cultural understanding of ado-

lescence in contexts of social change" (5). Essential to their approach is a "cultural life-course perspective" that acknowledges the role of biology, while giving primary attention to "local cultural constructions of development" (6). The life-course approach also aims at avoiding "constructions of adolescents as somehow 'marginal' or even 'deviant' figures," and it requires a view of adolescence within broader historical processes, including changes in demography, gender, and socioeconomic status, as well as historical circumstances of colonization and decolonization (7). Much of the introduction underscores the effects of demographic transformation on adolescent experience in Pacific islands; the impacts of culture change on local socialization practices, definitions of gender, and sexual development; and the enormous influence of "modernization" on Pacific Islander youth—involving western education, urbanization, new economic opportunities, and the emergence of new national identities.

Carol Worthman's chapter completes the section on "Comparative Perspectives." Written mainly as a theoretical and programmatic essay, the chapter argues for a "biosocial view" that brings together "two anthropological literatures on human development, one that deals with physical variation and another that documents cultural diversity" (27). She discusses several aspects of this "dialectic of body and context that shapes ontogeny" (27). One aspect finds expression in the dual scientific discourses surrounding the terms *puberty* and *adolescence*, referencing either a physiological process, or a cultural construct. (Worthman also

points out the lack of data on physical maturation in Pacific Islander populations.) She calls for a study of “culture-specific models of child development” (“ethnopediatrics”) as a basis for understanding how culture and physical development of children interact (39). She also cautions that anthropologists have not carefully explored individual variation within societies, and the ways in which societies “winnow for talent” or “channel people into social roles” (48). Her chapter closes with a call for “reformulation” of ethnography and social theory, in order to better address the biological domain (51).

The section “Cultural Constructions of Adolescence” includes three chapters. Victoria Burbank and James Chisholm present an analysis of the local cultural construction of adolescent unmarried pregnancy and parenthood in an Australian Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land Reserve. They explain the rise in premarital pregnancies and number of unwed mothers in relation to adolescent strategies for autonomy and the high values placed on children. Less well explained is the local cultural construction of marriage itself, and how this may be changing. In a style reminiscent of Mead’s *Coming of Age in Samoa*, the authors frame their description of Aboriginal adolescent pregnancy and parenthood against a contrast with unwed teenage mothers in America. They assert that their “analysis of the cultural construction of single pregnancy [among Australian Aborigines] provides a means of exposing some of the assumptions behind Western constructs of ‘teen pregnancy’” (69). The underlying premise of cultural homogeneity within “American society at large” (69)

with regard to the value of children makes the comparison problematic.

Aletta Biersack’s chapter “Horticulture and Hierarchy: The Youthful Beautification of the Body in the Paiela and Porgera Valleys” analyzes a symbolic complex of ideas involving the politics of gender relations, human fertility, and the regeneration of life among the Ipili speakers of Enga Province, Papua New Guinea. Central to this complex are two key metaphors: planting, which symbolizes magico-ritual growth practices and the power of human agents; and fencing, which symbolizes the hierarchical relationship between a man and a “fenced” woman “who has been obligated by bride wealth” to bear her husband children (83). Biersack explains that with missionization, traditional magico-ritual techniques have been abandoned, while clan exogamy and exchange of women have mostly disappeared. She speculates that the waning of “collective life” and the rise of individualism among these New Guinea Highlanders may be related to these changes in their social order.

Eileen Cantrell’s chapter “Woman the Sexual, A Question of When” focuses on the tensions between women and men over the age and readiness of young girls for sexual relations with males, among the Gebusi of Western Province, Papua New Guinea. Although narrowly framed around the question of young women’s emergent sexuality, the chapter offers a nicely nuanced study of wider cultural issues: the protective interests of adult Gebusi women and especially mothers toward adolescent girls, male ambivalence toward heterosexual relations, and competing understandings of marriage as a “relation

of reciprocal sexual longing between spouses [or] as the reciprocal exchange of women between clans" (118). Male views on the sexual readiness of young female adolescents are on display at highly charged and evocative spirit seances at which men and boys gather, and led by a spirit medium, engage in long ribald sessions of songs and interchanges that fantasize the seductiveness and sexual exploits of a selected adolescent girl. Although more attention needs to be given here to men's roles as *fathers* of adolescent girls and not solely as their sexual suitors, the chapter is successful in going beyond the "power-versus-resistance" model of Melanesian male-female relations and showing that "Gebusi women see themselves not as 'opposing men,' but as opposing those excessive and transgressive areas of men's behavior that threaten gender harmony" (92).

The section on "Adolescence and Social Change" also includes three chapters. Maria Lepowsky's chapter "Coming of Age in Vanatinai" explores aspects of gender, sexuality, and power in relation to adolescence among Islanders of the Louisiade Archipelago in Papua New Guinea. Vanatinai is notable for its egalitarian gender ethos and its respect for individual autonomy, ideologies that strongly shape adolescent experience. Lepowsky describes cultural constructions of childhood, menstruation, sexuality, and marriage, and the application of persuasive skills learned during adolescence—oratory, magic, seduction—toward successful adult careers. She also discusses the Vanatinai life stage of youth in relation to wider regional cultural patterns and points out that "youth subcultures . . . are a

distinctive and traditional aspect of many small-scale societies" (144). Her point is a useful cross-cultural correction to classic sociological assumptions about youth cultures as uniquely phenomena of postindustrial, urbanizing consumer societies.

In his chapter "Youth in Rotuma, Then and Now," Alan Howard compares Rotuman youth subculture at the time of his first visit in 1959 with the situation he found on his return nearly thirty years later. He focuses on five aspects: adolescent social relations, typical activities, courtship, marriage, and integration into the community. This unusual time-lapse perspective reveals significant changes: decreases in the demands on youth labor and an increase in youth mobility, with the result that peer-group solidarity is "less pronounced" (167), especially among young men; more autonomy, especially for young women, allowing a greater degree of gender integration among adolescents; and a shift in the controls over sexual behavior "from overpoweringly social towards individual restraint" (170).

The final chapter is Stephen Leavitt's "The Bikhet Mystique," which examines masculine identity and patterns of rebellion among adolescent males of the Bumbita Arapesh people of East Sepik Province in Papua New Guinea. The Neo-Melanesian term *bikhet* refers to individuals who engage in disruptive and provocatively disobedient behavior. Leavitt's chapter questions how the locally perceived recent increase in adolescent male *bikhet* acts of theft, vandalism, slander, and sexual harassment may relate to dramatic social changes, particularly the Christian revival that swept the region, and the consequent aban-

donment of the Tambaran cult of male initiation. Where men once demonstrated their skill and spiritual energy through yam cultivation and competitive exchange in the Tambaran, today young men validate their reputations and “demonstrate their active cultivation of a masculine identity” through *bikhet* behaviors (194). Leavitt uses this example to challenge some sociological and psychological theories that dichotomize delinquent and normal behavior; he argues that *bikhet* behaviors contain “constructive motives” and reveal “attributes deemed appropriate for powerful and successful political leaders” (175).

As a whole, the six ethnographic case studies—mostly of high quality—and the two fine introductory essays, appear oddly conjoined. Examples from Papua New Guinea dominate the selection (four out of six), while the chapter on Arnhem Land Aborigines seems out of place in a volume on “Pacific Island societies.” Polynesia and especially Micronesia get short shrift (and studies of adolescent suicide in those regions are misattributed to Melanesia [47]). The ethnographic chapters give little explicit attention to the role of biology in adolescence, despite the insistence of the editors (5–6), underscored in Worthman’s overview. Worthman’s prescriptive discussion and her many suggestions for reformulating the anthropological study of adolescence are largely ignored in the individual chapters, which appear to exemplify what Worthman faults as “modern anthropological devotion to particularism [which] has sown a meager harvest in understanding social process in a more generalized, prospective way” (52). Each writer focuses on a particular

case study, and no dialog or comparative engagement emerges among separate studies. The ASAO process, in which papers take shape in unison over several years of meetings and discussions around selected topics, does not appear here to have overcome the contemporary anthropological “particularism” that Worthman critiques.

The numerous references in the two introductory and overview chapters to “traditional societies” and even “‘pristine’ traditional” societies (eg, 5, 19, 51), “traditional village life” (24), or “traditional systems” (35, 50) appear to presume static and timeless social systems prior to foreign cultural or colonial contact. A primary intent of the volume is to document social change, from its presumed inception in “pristine” societies, to “strongly acculturated” societies (51). Yet the emphasis placed on issues of social change in the two introductory and overview chapters is not consistently carried through the six ethnographic chapters. Alan Howard’s chapter on Rotuma is the only one that contains a sufficiently longitudinal perspective to adequately deal with issues of change in adolescence.

The long dormancy of anthropological studies of adolescence, which the editors address early on (5), is perhaps related to the problematic treatment of social change in the “personality and culture” model which informed most anthropological studies of adolescence. This model generally treated societies as systems that neatly replicated themselves from one generation to the next. The present volume attempts to reformulate approaches to the study of adolescence, and to direct attention to issues of social change. It is an important

theoretical direction, and hopefully this volume will stimulate further work.

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From Primitive to Postcolonial in Melanesia and Anthropology, by Bruce M Knauff. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. ISBN cloth, 0-472-09687-7; paper, 0-472-06687-0; x + 320 pages, maps, tables, figures, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$59.50; paper, US\$19.95.

For almost a quarter of a century, the writings of Bruce Knauff have been characterized by a willingness to honor the complexities of Melanesian ethnography, coupled with a sobriety of judgment. This book exemplifies these qualities. As its title underlines, if the anthropological imagination of Melanesia began with a view of primitive and self-determining indigenous communities, it is now recognizing that the age of encompassment is in full swing—postmodern capitalism, the politics of the nation-state, and the infiltration of western culture increasingly define Melanesian modernity. Against the grain of much of what passes as transcultural anthropology, Knauff aims to appreciate and affirm the cultural diversity and areal distinctiveness of Melanesia against such theoretically and globally reductive approaches. He self-consciously situates his study in the interstitial zone between a globalism that seems to bracket what is distinctive locally and a localism that fails to grasp how the west's encompassment of others

inflects the trajectory of local communities. Analyzing a variety of topics, from images of the body to the changing character of conflict, he argues that culture practices are seldom stable over an extended time period and that, contrary to a founding premise of Melanesian ethnography, culture is not shared in a relatively uniform manner by a population of same-speaking people. Throughout the text, Knauff raises the critical issue of the ways in which ethnography in the colonial context inflected the description of local practices. In particular, he argues that ethnographers underplayed the violence of Melanesian headhunting and warfare as a counterweight to a colonial administration that was all too ready to pacify local societies by however brutal means were necessary. The specific point illustrates the broader reality that anthropologists have only begun to appreciate how their liminal position within the political structure of encompassment informed their theory and ethnography. Each chapter in its own way also illustrates two other critical points. First, the advance of the west cannot be grasped simply as some machine of domination that subsumes and subordinates Melanesian societies, such thinking tending to elide both the power of local forms of agency and the ways in which indigenous societies always contained the terms and possibility of their own seduction. Second, an understanding of the relationship between the west and the indigenous world depends on an understanding of the mediating structures, including and especially the assortment of western agents and institutions that have imposed themselves on Melanesian lifeways. *From Primitive to Postcolo-*