

implication. The variation among the chapters concerning theoretical focus and analytical clarity in part reflects their origin as conference papers, and in part must be seen as a result of the definite nonhomogeneity of the participating authors in terms of their academic traditions and intellectual agendas. With its companion piece, this book gives valuable insights into the social and cultural dynamics of today's Oceania.

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Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia, edited by David Akin and Joel Robbins. ASAO Monograph 17. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999. ISBN 0-8229-4087-6; x + 284 pages, tables, figures, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. us\$45.

Perhaps one of the hallmarks of a good collection is its capacity to dismay readers who are forced to realize how much more mileage, theoretically speaking, others have been able to get out of the topic in question. This has certainly been my own experience in reading this accomplished volume. Here, for example, are some of the scattered entries on "money" from my own field notes from the Wahgi people in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. I record that older Wahgi men tell me how, when they first began to receive Australian coins and notes at the end of the 1940s, they speculated that the designs and watermarks were images of the money's owner or creator who, they

feared, might appear at any moment to reclaim it. Hence they spent their money very fast. I observe Papua New Guinea currency notes being displayed on bridewealth banners in very much the same way that the pearl shells they displaced once were. I log long conversations with people who wished to know exactly how money is made. I record lots of children named Moni (Money); sometimes they have siblings named Beng (Bank).

The papers in this volume offer a rich and tantalizing set of theoretical observations, insights, and comparisons through which my own miscellaneous observations might have been pursued, developed, and contextualized. The editors' meaty introduction starts from the now-accepted point that the arrival of western money did not have the anticipated effect of overwhelming local currencies. Rather, introduced and indigenous currencies remain in restless dialogue: and here the editors insist that there is a virtue to focusing on currency itself (whether local or state) despite arguments that to do so is to essentialize. The fact that money must necessarily be passed on if it is to be "enjoyed" also lends it a special interest in a region like Melanesia, in which exchange is so prominent. Melanesians have often embraced western money, at least to some extent, but they also experience it as threatening. Money is found threatening, Akin and Robbins argue, because much of Melanesian social life consists of separating relationships according to the kind of exchanges appropriate to each, while the use of money potentially renders all relationships the same.

This suggests that Bohannon's early

African work on spheres of exchange might be applicable, but the editors find his analysis lacking, in omitting what they refer to as the “modality” of exchange: the difference between “sharing,” “buying,” “delayed return,” and “exact equivalence” exchanges. To overcome this deficiency, Akin and Robbins mate Bohannon’s work with aspects of Sahlins’ to produce an enlarged concept of spheres of exchange, in which each sphere features a relationship, a modality of exchange, and the objects exchanged. When each aspect of the sphere is as it should be, the exchange in question is categorized as morally positive, or at least neutral; if the exchange fails the test on any one account, it is culturally censured. Drawing on this initial framework, the editors review the chapters that follow, looking successively at issues of reproduction and responses to money, at agency, and at currencies and changing identities. This is the best kind of introduction: an iterative movement between analytical framework and constituent papers, in which the former is enriched as the latter are illuminated.

In a short review it is only possible to point to miscellaneous highlights among the papers. Mosko provides an exhilarating whistlestop tour of Mekeo history and cosmology, showing—in part—how money has been drawn into a powerful and durable set of Mekeo classifications of “hot” (efficacious) and “cold” (ineffective) things (money is “hot,” capable of swaying minds). Robbins investigates the paradox whereby the Urapmin, committed “modernizers” in every other respect, have yet retained a place

for shell currency (his answer has to do with the way in which the circulation of shell money articulates regional relations between the Urapmin and others). Akin’s paper, among the very best in the volume, describes the pagan mountain Kwaio who prize their own shell money over cash, which they insulate from morally approved social transactions. Shell money’s special status was reinforced by Christian Kwaio, who prohibit its use, and who are more engaged than pagans in the cash economy. A dilemma faced by Kwaio labor migrants is how to convert their wages into shell money. This they do through using cash to purchase commodities and selling these to fellow Kwaio for shell money: what appears to be commodity exchange needs to be understood as part of a longer series of exchanges. Paradoxically, the weakening of Christianity, reflected in the greater use of shell money by Christians, is jeopardizing its role as emblem of pagan cultural essence.

In equally fine and historically sensitive papers, Liep brings out the complexities of the interaction of local and introduced monies on Rossel Island, while Brison suggests the deeper transformations that money is bringing about in Kwanga society, beneath surface continuities. Strathern and Stewart add another substantive paper to the great corpus of Hagen ethnography. Among the useful concepts they introduce is that of “precursion,” in which western contact leads to indigenous valuables (such as pearl shells) being reclassified in ways that pave the way for the later introduction of money. Lipuma’s chapter on the Maring provides an example of a different

kind of postcontact shift in the significance of pearl shells. Where these had originally been emblematic of the external networks through which this Highland New Guinea people imported them, pearl shells later came to represent interiority and local identity, while western money has come to denote exteriority and modernity.

The excellent introduction is counterpointed by two admirable concluding commentaries. Foster's deft survey includes the marvellous aside "Coins and notes are, in a profound Melanesian sense, the skin of the state—the site where Melanesians might look for news about their relationship to the powerful forces brought by contact with white people and their institutions" (exactly the kind of suggestive observation needed to theoretize Wahgi comments to me about the designs and watermarks on currency). Finally, Guyer's overview of the Melanesian and African literatures, her identification of the culturalist tendencies of the former and the political economy approach of the latter, and her reflections on the desirability of a return to interregional comparison, should be compulsory reading for Melanesianists.

Two very minor complaints about this otherwise valuable volume: among the two dozen or so illustrations, it would have been nice to have had a map or two; and where the word *discreet* is used on page 22, the editors mean *discrete*.

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Confronting Fiji Futures, edited by A Haroon Akram-Lodhi. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, Australian National University, 2000. ISBN 0-7315-3642-8, xv + 321 pages, tables, figures, notes, bibliography, index. Paper A\$30.

On 19 May 2000, just as this collection entered production, Fiji changed forever when failed businessman George Speight and his accomplices seized Mahendra Chaudhry's constitutionally elected government at gunpoint, then held them hostage for eight weeks in Fiji's parliamentary complex. A two-page "Stop Press" was inserted to detail these dramatic developments and warn readers that they provided "an unfortunate reminder of the salience of the issues raised" in this book. The observation is valid, although force of circumstances has highlighted a disjunction between a title contemplating Fiji's futures and preoccupations with the immediate past.

The collection is organized in two parts: the first is about politics, economics, and social inequality. Most of the focus is structural and institutional, dealing with the 1997 constitution (Yash Ghai); electoral process and outcome in 1999 (Satendra Prasad); the economy (Sepheri and Akram-Lodhi); institutional rigidities in economic performance (Birman Prasad and Kumar); social policy (Cameron); labor market deregulation (Chand); and women and work (Jacqueline Leckie). Part Two is about the "Fijian" question, and considers problematic reform attempts and the indigenous community (Sutherland); affirmative action and communal capitalism