

*Houses Far From Home: British Colonial Space in the New Hebrides*, by Margaret Critchlow Rodman. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. ISBN cloth, 0-8248-2307-9; paper, 0-8248-2394-X, xiv + 247 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$50.00; paper, US\$17.95.

Houses far from home provide the "architecture" of this monograph (203) and set British administrative colonial space in the New Hebrides under ethnographic scrutiny. Rodman focuses primarily on colonial officers, specifically resident commissioners, district agents, and their accompanying families, rather than on other colonial players in the islands, such as missionaries, traders, planters, and other settlers. In approaching the New Hebrides as a geographical and temporal end of empire, Rodman not only makes the case for *Why here?* but also poignantly discovers in her journey to sites in Vanuatu and the United Kingdom that these houses were not as far from home for their moving inhabitants as she might have imagined. As Rodman discovers varying emotions and degrees of attachment to these islands, her work forces one to ask, *Where is home?*

She begins her excursion with the bamboo house that domiciled her own family on Ambae for the first time in 1978. The dwelling, as Rodman has illustrated effectively in her earlier work, "moved" like other houses within Waileni village and in so doing provided a narrative site for mapping shifting social relationships, life cycle transitions, and the effects of natural disasters. Like her house, so too has

the anthropologist moved. The introductory chapter appropriately sets a reflexive tone and suggests that the mobility of the bamboo house prefigures the future methodological mobility of its anthropologist. Rodman travels to multiple sites in Vanuatu and in England as she gathers family histories, memories, stories, photographs, maps, and diagrams of the past and present, simultaneously inserting fragments of her own travelogue and methodologically actualizing multilocal fieldwork practices. Hers is also a personal journey, sometimes in the company of former colonial officer Will Stober, as she tracks down former inhabitants in their homes in Herefordshire and Somerset, visits the remnants of colonially significant New Hebridean sites, such as the Tanna church and Independence Park, and seeks the archival materials and documents that such an ethnographic history demands.

Five other houses tell different kinds of stories and produce different kinds of data. They are the British Residency, the Prison, the White House and British Paddock, the Tanna district agent's house, and the remains of the island house on Venui off Santo's coast. Especially informative for the histories they reveal are the resident commissioner's British Residency on the summit of Irikiriki in Port Vila (Efate), and the White House and its adjacent British Paddock, or "public plaza of British colonial space" (now Independence Park) (112). The residency is now an international resort for tourists, "the colonizers of the postcolonial world" (83). The White House tells the history of American strategic intervention in the New Hebrides during World War II as mili-

tary forces occupied the building and ploughed its paddock. The paddock's uses—for horses, vegetables, troops, and golfing—serve as chronological markers for Rodman. So, too, the Tanna district agent's house tells a detective story as the blood stain on the veranda points to the pressures of this remote posting and the contrasting reactions of its inhabitants.

Sixty-six illustrations enhance the text, vividly illustrating the contribution of archival finds to a spatial history of colonial life. These include posed photographs of Rodman and Stober with their interlocutors in the United Kingdom; Rodman's evocative site photographs of the remains of the Venui district agency bathtub and doors, the Tanna church, and the entrance to the White House; floorplans of the British Residency juxtaposed effectively beside sketches of its front and side elevations, and of the White House and the remote Tanna house; as well as an aerial photograph of Venui island.

Rodman's approach is shaped by several contemporary concepts in spatial studies—her own productive concept of multilocality (best articulated in her influential 1992 article “Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality,” *American Anthropologist* 94:640–654), George Marcus's formulation of multi-sited analysis, and Nicholas Thomas's notion of colonialism's culture. *Houses Far From Home* aims to provide an ethnographically rich British instance of Thomas's concept, and like his book title, *Colonialism's Culture*—which implies a singularity of culture that his analysis actually defies—Rodman's limits itself to the exploration

of a single instance of British colonialism rather than the comparatively multiple and productive instances that a focus that also included the French spatial presence or other colonial actors could have provided. Missed in this volume is an opportunity for taking advantage of the unique juxtaposition of the British and French colonial administrations that the Anglo-French Condominium provided by virtue of these two nations' shared 1906–1980 oversight. Rodman's appeal to the analytic convergence of race, space, and gender is more suggested than ethnographically illustrated.

The book forces us to ask, How much can the spatial analysis of the house tell us about the administrative, cultural, and political aspects of colonialism? How much texture of the culture of colonialism can such an approach provide? I wished for a fuller evocation of the sociality of the times contained in these structures, for a sense of the ways in which space was used, of the quotidian aspects of daily life in these colonial homes. What did the district agent do in the tainted office space carved out of the veranda of the Tanna house? *Houses Far from Home* begins to transport us spatially and temporally to this distant place, evoking if not fully explaining the social elements of the time.

Rodman acknowledges some of these limitations, noting in particular the insularity of the people and places she finds, and that a broader comparative dimension could follow in subsequent works, including a focus on the settlers. Her primary contribution is indeed methodological; this study illustrates how a comparative analysis

of French and British colonial space across two Pacific sites might be done, and suggests the possibility of comparing one set of colonial players with another in these islands through the spatial analysis of their houses, verandas, and gardens.

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*An American Anthropologist in Melanesia: A B Lewis and the Joseph N Field South Pacific Expedition, 1909–1913*, edited and annotated by Robert L Welsch. Volume I: Field Diaries. Volume II: Appendixes. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998. ISBN 0-8248-1644-7; xxi + 632 pages (Vol I), 287 pages (Vol II), maps, photographs, figures, bibliographies, indexes. US\$125.00.

In the early twentieth century, American anthropologist A B Lewis undertook a remarkable ethnological expedition to collect objects, mainly from New Guinea, for Chicago's burgeoning Field Museum. And collect he did! Lewis returned with an astounding 14,000 items and 2,000 photographs. Pioneering though he was, Lewis's contributions to Pacific Island studies have been difficult to appreciate. But no longer. In an encyclopedic effort, Robert Welsch has masterfully compiled Lewis's field diaries and annotated them with a wealth of contextual information culled from Lewis's photos and writings, museum storerooms and archives, maps and gazettes, and his own fieldwork along the north coast of Papua New Guinea. This innovative two-volume work is important for anthropology, history,

museology, and material culture studies. It offers a comprehensive, textual and pictographic view of a pivotal era in Pacific studies, showing how early twentieth-century science quite literally "saw" Pacific Islanders and their things.

Volume I opens with an introduction that contextualizes the Joseph N Field South Pacific Expedition of 1909–1913 in the history of anthropology and ethnological collecting, and sketches the intellectual biography of Lewis. The bulk of the volume contains slightly edited, footnoted versions of Lewis's seven field diaries, with a huge and stunning assortment of photos from Fiji, Humboldt Bay and the north coast of German New Guinea, West New Britain and the Huon Gulf, the Sepik, Gazelle Peninsula and Solomon Islands, New Zealand, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Papua, Admiralty Islands, and Dutch New Guinea. An excellent historical introduction accompanies each diary, enhanced by the inclusion of letters sent by Lewis from the "field." Particularly impressive is Welsch's keen sense for the colonial setting of these extraordinary collecting journeys and the scientific outlook of the era that framed Lewis's endeavors. A brief conclusion to Volume I summarizes the contributions made by Lewis and his collection to the history of anthropology. Welsch capably puts to rest any notion that there is, or was, such a thing as mere collecting: all collecting is thoroughly motivated by theory, however unstated, and history. In a nuanced discussion, Welsch explains the diminutive status of A B Lewis today: as Lewis unpacked his crates in Chicago, Malinowski was in the Trobriand Islands, initiating the theory