

Pacific Affairs

documenting Vanuatu art. Among other topics, the articles consider European perceptions of indigenous art, audiovisual documentation and the field work carried out by researchers from the Vanuatu Cultural Centre. The final chapter, "The Passing Scene," includes a potpourri of articles examining Bislama, the political history of Vanuatu, foreign collections of Vanuatu art and the contemporary local art scene.

There are flaws, of course. One is surprised to find only three Ni-Vanuatu contributors, a few articles are not well integrated with the volume as a whole and one would be interested to know of the history of this project. The book suffers greatly from the lack of an index. Given the enormous contribution this volume makes to Oceanic studies, however, such shortcomings are easy to forgive. *Arts of Vanuatu* raises the art of collaborative research to a new and exciting standard.

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CREATING ISLAND RESORTS. By *Brian E. M. King*. London and New York: Routledge (*Routledge Advances in Tourism Series*). 1997. ix, 286 pp. (Photos, tables, figures.) US\$50.00, cloth. ISBN 0-415-14989-4.

THE MYTH of the tropical island as an "earthly paradise" has long captured the imaginations of (mostly) European explorers and contemporary tourists. In *Creating Island Resorts*, Brian King examines tropical island resorts as unique communities occupying a postmodern space within regional "pleasure peripheries." Attempting to move beyond narrow marketing or economic analyses, King explores tropical island resorts from many angles and pays particular attention to the social, political and environmental dimensions of resort destinations. King is thus concerned not only with the logistical aspects of packaged tourism in tropical island resorts, but also with the social construction of resorts as sites of pleasure, fantasy, adventure and romance.

Written from the perspective of the Australian tourism market, the book undertakes a comparative analysis using two destination areas: the Whitsunday Islands in Queensland, Australia and the Mamanuca Islands in Fiji. The comparison, although at times difficult due to discrepant economic and social conditions in Australia and Fiji, proves instructive in highlighting how destinations with similar tropical resort infrastructure and imagery compete for "sunlust" mass tourists from the same geographical market (Sydney and Melbourne in this case). Especially interesting is the manner in which the Whitsundays rely on typical images and myths of the South Pacific, despite serving as a domestic, and therefore "unexotic," sun, sea and sand destination.

The book is divided into three parts. The first examines the geographical, historical and political context of the two island groups, including an informative section on the development of mass tourism in each region. In

the second part, King provides a detailed glimpse into the tourism industry intermediaries — travel agents, tour operators and airlines — that package, market and sell air-inclusive resort holidays to the Whitsundays and Mamanucas. The final, and undoubtedly most interesting, section is titled the “raw and the cooked” (after Claude Lévi-Strauss), and it is here that King expands on the argument that resorts represent postmodern “consumption places” due to the commodification of nature, the cult of individualism and the playful blurring of time and space.

This book deals with a wide range of issues, including consumption, tourism imagery, environmental preservation, indigenous rights, postmodernism and community development. In tackling such a vast body of literature, however, the author devotes insufficient attention to most issues, and ultimately presents a wide-sweeping tourism literature review rather than an ethnographic, empirical examination of individual island resorts. In addition to the quantity-over-quality approach to discussion of theoretical issues, the book suffers from two limitations. First, the most interesting sections of the book deal directly with the comments and attitudes of the “holidaymakers” interviewed in focus groups, and the author should have paid greater attention to inconsistencies in the images, perceptions and actual experiences of tourists. Second, by examining twenty-one individual resorts, the author could provide only limited information on each, and the empirical aspects of the study would have been stronger had the author focused on “thick description” of one or two resorts in each destination area rather than fleeting comments on all twenty-one. The complete lack of discussion regarding the military coups of 1987 in Fiji was also a surprising omission considering the substantial damage caused by the coups to the idyllic touristic image of Fiji.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the book is a well-written examination of two competing tropical destination regions and serves as a useful introduction for anybody interested in the way that tropical island resorts are marketed, sold and indeed “created” by the travel industry.

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THE CASSOWARY'S REVENGE: The Life and Death of Masculinity in a New Guinea Society. By *Donald Tuzin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1997. xiii, 256 pp. (Photos.) US\$18.95, paper. ISBN 0-226-81951-5.

In 1985, after a thirteen-year absence, ethnographer Donald Tuzin returned to Ilahita village, in the East Sepik Province of Papua New Guinea. He arrived to find that the Tambaran, a secret male cult he had previously described as “the personified mystique of a total way of life” (1980: 325), had recently been deliberately destroyed. In *The Cassowary's Revenge* Tuzin examines this “murder” and the ensuing transformations in Ilahita society.