

Martha C. Ward, *Nest in the Wind: Adventures in Anthropology on a Tropical Island*. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1989. Pp. 161, maps, illustrations, bibliography. US\$8.95.

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Nest in the Wind is a thoroughly engaging account of the author's fieldwork experiences as an anthropologist researching the language and culture of Pohnpei, Micronesia, and as project director for a medical research team investigating social change, high blood pressure, and heart disease on the island. Ward asserts that this account is not about her research, nor is it written for a professional audience. Rather, this is " 'an impressionist tale' . . . [one] to evoke images, a sense of immediacy, and the feeling that you are there participating and observing. . . . It is written for those who are curious about other people's lives, or who may have wished, from time to time, to live on a tropical island and to be an anthropologist" (p. 4). Writing in a fluid literary style peppered with interesting selections from her field notes and letters, Ward offers a remarkably candid tale of her personal encounters in the field "with team research, strange customs, an awkward environment, and my own personality" (p. 3).

Ward does a masterful job bringing this exotic research setting and the dynamics of fieldwork alive for the reader. Along with Ward, we arrive in a lush, tropical island paradise to find the residents practicing some truly fascinating traditional customs--people engaging in a continual cycle of feasting for the high chiefs, growing five-hundred-pound yams in secret, ritually imbibing a soporific beverage ceremonially pounded from the roots of the kava plant, crawling about under the cover of night as part of their normal courtship activities. We are also struck by some typical scenes from the Third World--the widespread decay of vegetation, buildings, and vehicles; the pervasive smells of mold, mildew, and rust. We experience some of the culture shock that invariably accompanies the beginning of fieldwork--feelings produced when we find ourselves residing in vermin--infested housing with no plumbing; living on a steady diet of imported rice, canned mackerel and corned beef; trying to research heart disease in a culture where such symptoms are diagnosed as spirit possession; poring over the few available native-language texts, only to blurt out in a tense moment "his canoe is blue" instead of the accepted phrase of apology; and attempting to cope with eccentric team researchers, including one male member who expects women (even project supervisors) to perform all necessary domestic tasks.

The chronological format of the text allows us to follow Ward as she makes progress in her work and is able to establish a number of warm, personal relationships with Pohnpei people. We come to know Sohn Alpet as the friendly, clever, calculating Pohnpei field supervisor who eases Ward's entree into the field by having her adopt him as a son,

arranging for her to be awarded a respected title, and by offering wise counsel on adapting lofty scientific research goals to the realities of Pohnpei culture. In the end, Ward writes with obvious pride about the measure of incorporation into Pohnpei culture she achieves during her stay and of the profound changes these experiences have held for her life.

While the reader is indeed seduced by the story of Ward's adventures, it must be pointed out that this monograph also provides a very good introduction to the field of anthropology and to cultures of the Pacific. Topics dealt with range from kinship, gender, sexuality, and marriage to chiefly culture, religion, and ritual; considerable detail on Pohnpei culture is also included. A particular strength of the text is the presentation of information on women's roles and perspectives, to which the author was given special access. Following in the tradition of Laura Bohannan's *Return to Laughter*, I expect this very accessible, reflective, contemporary field account will be especially useful in undergraduate courses in cultural anthropology, research methods, and Oceania.

In this work Ward demonstrates her talent as a marvelous raconteur, one who can motivate and inspire her audience. As a former student of Wards and a Pohnpei specialist today, I speak of this matter with authority, prejudice, and pride.