



Papua New Guinea Sojourn: More Pleasures in Exile

E. A. Markham

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In this absorbing book -- part documentary, part travelogue -- West Indian writer and adventurer Archie Markham evokes in rich detail what it was like to be a Media Co-ordinator in the highlands of New Guinea for two years in the 1980s. Life is never dull: an eclipse of the sun, visits from the Pope and the Prince of Wales, negotiations with aggrieved warriors in the wake of political emergency, along with the smaller day-to-day crises of cultural collision and surprise.

There is an abundance of local colour: the singsing; the mumu (steaming of food in the ground); journeys into the interior which recall the exploits of early explorers. Then there's the question of identity: a black expatriate representing England and a superstate called The World Bank. A writer. A VSO volunteer. A man denying to a crowd at Warbag High School on the Queen's Official Birthday that he is the Queen of England.

Meditating on his role as cultural arbiter in remote Enga Province, Markham inevitably recalls in his title George Lamming's 1960 classic, *The Pleasures of Exile*: what does this global search for relevance tell us about the possibilities of grounding at home?

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