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Welcome new face for critical media studies in South Pacific

Tokwin, edited by Nash G Sorariba, Information and Communication Science in association with UPNG Journalism Studies, University of Papua New Guinea 2001. 107 pp. ISSN 1607-6931

WHILE welcoming this new journal from the University of Papua New Guinea's journalism studies strand, I thumbed through this volume with a growing sense of *déjà vu*. It had a sense of the early issues of *Pacific Journalism Review* — even to the distinctive cover use of the process blue cyan — before this publication had evolved to where it is today.

I should declare my interest here as I was the founding editor of *PJR*, which had its genesis at the Waigani campus of UPNG in 1994.

There is one major difference though. While *PJR* has always stressed work by student journalists and the region's industry journalists doing analytical work, there is little sense of this in *Tokwin*: the only contribution vaguely along these lines in this volume is an article by Neville Togarewa., "West Papua: The story from the past century" (p 60).

But I seem to remember a version of this back in 1995 at a time when Togarewa was on the investigative journalism course at UPNG.

Seriously though, UPNG is to be congratulated on getting back into the critical journalism mode after surviving a really difficult patch. There isn't enough reflective journalism in the Pacific and while Divine Word University has produced some worthwhile media volumes of late (slickly produced with donor agency funds), they

have not had the critical thinking edge that is really needed.

The editor, Nash G Sorariba, is well-known in the region for his short story telling gifts (*A Medal Without Honour* was reviewed by *PJR*). But here he has gathered together a rather eclectic collection here of 11 serious pieces about media issues, ranging from a reprint from *The National* of a defence by Frank Morgan over the need for the UPNG course to continue when it was under threat in 1999 (p 33) to former *Post-Courier* reporter Brian Tobia's treatise on PNG's sex workers (p 18) and H G Mannur on PNG's widening economic gap: "What went wrong?" (p 75).

In fact, the theme of this inaugural edition is globalisation and its impact on PNG, which Sorariba notes in his editorial: "Sounds like another horror story."

In his ominous message about the future, read by me as PNG goes into yet another fractious general election, he says: "Ordinary citizens now understand that the purchasing power of their kina is [sic] gone out of the window. If PNG has to achieve [a] sustained and respectable growth rate, it will have to do a lot of things before the masses instigate a bloody revolution out of frustration."

One hopes *Tokwin* continues its contribution to Pacific media debate and doesn't go the way of *Uni Tavar*.