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Cover Picture: The Thinker (Yerakdu), by Simon Gambulo Marmos and Jo Mare Wakundi (1996.362.16)

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The cover picture depicts a Papua New Guinea (PNG) interpretation of Rodin's 'The Thinker'. While we were at Stanford in 1999–2000 we paid several visits to the open air Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden on campus (<https://museum.stanford.edu> and other links). In the mid-1990s a group of PNG sculptors worked on trees imported from PNG. At first, they carved their trees in traditional ways, but as they began to look outward, they became curious about Rodin in the Cantor Museum also on campus. 'The Thinker', in particular, intrigued them and Simon Gambulo Marmos is reported as saying: 'I can do this even better.' He and Jo Mare Wakundi then transposed Rodin to the PNG imagination. The sculpture echoes some central themes in the book: North–South relations in a post-colonial era; diffusion of ideas; hybridity; globalisation; and above all, the jurist as thinker. 'Ironically, the Garden fostered the Western appreciation of non-Western art by substituting one western category ['master-carver'] for another ['primitive'] art]. One of the great aesthetic joys of the Sculpture Garden is the visual contemplation of the ironies that arise from the cross-cultural dialogue and categorization of artworks in the contemporary, transnational or globalized world.' (Wikipedia entry on Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden. See further www.facebook.com/pages/Papua-New-Guinea-Sculpture-Garden/287527781305652.) Modern commentators have suggested that Rodin's original expresses grief rather than reflection. Perhaps the background story suggests both: constructive thinking about the future after a disaster.