

Thode-Arora, Hilke: *Weavers of Men and Women. Niuean Weaving and Its Social Implications.* Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2009. 320 pp., photos. ISBN 978-3-496-02822-2. Price: € 69.00

Weaving and woven objects accompany Niuean women through their whole life. They are connected to social relations, identity, and prestige. Hilke Thode-Arora demonstrates in her richly illustrated book the historical development of weaving on Niue, its embedment in Niuean culture, and its role among Niueans who emigrated to New Zealand. The integration of personal, social, and economic interests of single women and women's groups is also well examined and described.

The book is subdivided into three parts. The first one introduces the reader to the history of Niue, starting with the creation myth and ending in the recent times of migration as well as returning from places of migration. The typical – and speaking of the landscape – yet not typical island of the South Pacific, demands more creativity from its inhabitants than any other island in the region: The lack of rivers and stable flight connections, along with seasonal cyclones, makes the living on the island difficult. The limestone surface renders caves, used by the islanders as shelters during their hunting expeditions and as freshwater pools or graveyards. Unlike the neighbouring cultures, the Niueans seem to have been separated over decades from the cultural exchange-networks existing in that area.

Interestingly, in accordance with a dual Niuean worldview, the first Europeans to visit Niue – the explorer Cook and the missionary Williams – were also classified into the existing moieties. Neither they nor the following visitors, however, in particular the British and New Zealand missionaries, were able to displace that dual system – namely, the *magafaoa* – based on descent from common ancestors. The arrival of the first missionaries triggered the first major wave of migration. The reasons for those movements differ, but the fact remains that people who then had left the island later returned, and they stay until the present.

In the second part of the book, Thode-Arora deals with social issues on Niue and New Zealand, of which Niue is an administrative unit. Quotations from actual speeches of politicians point to apparent differences between the Pacific Islanders from Niue and Western societies. The Democracy, introduced by the British and New Zealanders, is widely accepted but less important than the traditional Niuan sense of community. This is part of the Pacific-wide process of reconciling traditions and modern values. Current political issues are discussed on the level of local communities and families, but village interests are often given priority over national ones. Common activities, on the other hand, bound people and villages together. For instance, at *Show Days* festivals traditional handcrafted woven objects are put on display, accompanied by song contests, et cetera. Those objects are fabricated by women's groups to which, at least theoretically, all women of the village belong. Still, only the older or unemployed women are the most active members.

The expatriate Niueans in New Zealand are predom-

inantly city dwellers. Like other Pacific Islanders, they inhabit village-like quarters, however, often located close to a Niuean Christian church. Interestingly, in the 1980's, in order to include Niuean traditions into activities of the Maori and South Pacific Arts Council, a weaving section was founded. Like on Niue, where weaving requires peaceful relations and loyalty among all participating women, in New Zealand those traditional elements of the Niuean weaving culture are also preserved. These groups are established to keep aging women active, to continue the tradition of weaving, and to keep the local language, which is spoken today by only 29% of Niueans, alive. Besides the weaving, the groups preserve other Niuean traditional skills, such as dancing, singing, and game playing. In this way – besides life cycle rituals and church events – the weaving groups also bring emigrant Niueans together. Within the multi-Polynesian community of Auckland, the Niuean identity is made palpable through certain clothes or accessories, some of them woven. Another identity-preserving custom is, both on Niue and in New Zealand, the cultivation of traditional knowledge and lore.

The third part of the publication is explicitly devoted to weaving. The presentation ranges from the choice of material, through coloring methods and working techniques to the process of producing specific objects, such as mats, baskets, hats, and fans. The use of hats for example is historically derived from habits practiced before the first European contact. Today hats and baskets are the most prominent woven objects presented on *Show Days* and offered for sale. Due to the different climate conditions in New Zealand, the traditional weaving raw material does not grow in that country. Women use it only when visitors from Niue bring the sought-after coconut and pandanus fibres. Otherwise, they work with local material, such as New Zealand flax cultivated by the Maori. However, both circumstances mean a simplification of the traditional production process that includes not only weaving but also planting, growing, harvesting, and dyeing. Speaking of dyeing, the traditional procedure survived, although nowadays many weavers use also synthetic colorants.

Ample appendices at the end of the book provide information on the Niuean weaving groups that currently exist in New Zealand, the kinds of traditional weaving, and the methodology applied to the research of this topic. The socio-cultural ramifications of weaving are also very well examined.

Hilke Thode-Arora makes clear how important weaving and woven products are in Niuean lives. At the same time she shows the development of the weaving process, including the social implications and the working skills. Many photos allow a better understanding of weaving techniques, woven objects, and their use. They also illustrate the diversity of weaving styles and types of products as well as the rich cultural meaning included in every object. The relationship between weaving and tradition, between weaving and group identity as well as between weaving and personal creativity are also presented in this book.

The volume is interesting, not only to researchers working on Niue but also to all people interested on weaving in the Pacific islands and its social implications, such as identity-building, informal association, and the preservation and transmission of traditions. Doubtless, the weaving traditions are important components of Niuean identity, both on Niue and in New Zealand. The detailed descriptions of woven products also make comparative studies possible.

Alexandra Wessel

Tomlinson, Matt: *In God's Image. The Metaculture of Fijian Christianity.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 249 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-25778-8. (The Anthropology of Christianity, 7) Price: £ 14.95

A colleague has long tried to influence me into spending my Sundays in the Methodist churches of Suva listening to sermons in order to better understand the way in which land and community (*vanua*) are conceptualised in relation to *lotu* (Christianity and more particularly Methodism). In his book, Matt Tomlinson listens to sermons in the Methodist churches of Kadavu, an island south of the main islands of Fiji, to record precisely this relationship.

Tomlinson's work to-date tends to focus on the ambiguous and polysemous language used in Fijian Christianity and *yaqona* (kava) drinking. His latest book returns to these themes and, in many ways, is a collection of this work. The reader is taken to the village of Tavuki to explore Fijian metaculture: Fijian reflections of Fijian culture are analysed as they surface in Fijian Methodist discourse through sermons, chain prayers, and through the talk around the kava bowl. One of the most pervasive themes of this metaculture is the theme of loss.

Tomlinson argues that lamentations of loss have become part of Fijian speech as an expression of the tensions between Christianity, the chiefly system, and the *vanua*. Here, loss is about the loss of *mana* or the power and ability to affect events. The lament is experienced by contemporary Fijians as a loss of custom, physical prowess, and meaning, in comparison to the former pre-Christian era. To Tomlinson, the pre-Christian past has been demonised by Christianity for ancestor-worship and its accompanying practices, and is also valorised for the *mana* the ancestors are reputed to have had, which is perceived as to have been lost with the conversion to Christianity.

Although the book's title suggests that Tomlinson analyses Fijians and Christianity in general, he is most focused on Fijians and Methodism in Kadavu. While the Indo-Fijian population has remained almost entirely on Fiji's two main islands, the population in Kadavu is about 99% Fijian and nearly 82% are Methodist. In Tavuki, everyone is Fijian and everyone appears to be Methodist. As Roman Catholicism and some of the Pentecostal denominations are becoming increasingly important across Fiji, Tomlinson's discussion of Fijian cosmology and particularly the discourse which refers to the triadic terms, *vanua-lotu-matanitu* (where *matanitu*

refers to the chiefly system/confederacies) needs to be contextualised as primarily Methodist; values which are not equally shared by all Fijians.

Tomlinson provides some fascinating material, including an explanation of the importance of soil and its connection with the ancestors and the use of chain prayers to heal a girl possessed by spirits. He also brings together material on the 1987 coups in a new and interesting way. On the other hand, I could happily spend a few nights arguing with him over points such as whether race was such a "misleading" issue in the 1987 coups as he claims, given the number of burned-out shells around Viti Levu which were once Indo-Fijian houses. With regard to the 2000 coup, Tomlinson claims that it was Speight's refusal to engage with the *lotu*, *vanua*, and *matanitu* during the stand-off that led to its failure: a difficult position in the light of the fact that the incoming Methodist President supported the coup. Speight's failure was, at least in part, because of the lack of military support, and, from this perspective, the coup was not a replay of 1987 at all.

Because of the focus on the traditionally masculine field of oratory, I could not help but notice that this book represents a profoundly male view of Fijian society, where women's interests are, by and large, obscured from view. Tomlinson may have had difficulty in securing female informants because of the gender hierarchies in everyday life, but it means that, when Tomlinson talks about "Fijians," he is talking about Fijian men. This becomes most apparent in the discussions about *yaqona* drinking because the darker side of male ritual/social activity such as violence in the home remains unexplored here.

In the last section, Tomlinson provides the life story of Takotavuki, a Methodist catechist, as a counter-narrative to the laments of loss. The narrative is both a typical and amazing account of Takotavuki's life, which involved several criminal acts and trips to prison before conversion. However, it was a radical change in style at such a late stage in the book that it was confusing. This was precisely the point where the book needed more of the insightful analysis I have become used to from Tomlinson. Despite this, much of Tomlinson's fieldwork shines and much of his prose reflects the generosity of the writer's character.

Lynda Newland

Vertovec, Steven (ed.): *Anthropology of Migration and Multiculturalism. New Directions.* London: Routledge, 2010. 209 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-49936-1. Price: € 84.30

This book first appeared as a special issue of the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and includes eight essays, several by very senior scholars of migration and anthropology, addressing a host of important issues and, in a few cases, offering ideas for new approaches to the study of migration and multiculturalism. While the volume does not have complete coherence, it is nevertheless brimming with ideas and offers a wealth of topics and analytical approaches to consider in the anthropology of migration. In his introduction, Vertovec offers a