tions. This is the first time a compact disk has been included with an PNGS Music Department publication, and while the issue of access has favored cassettes in the past, this situation is rapidly changing as CD players become much more widespread. The publication of ethnomusicological works of such quality at such prices is remarkable, given the current financial difficulties faced by the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, and considerable credit is due to Don Niles in facilitating the stream of publications produced under difficult conditions. While most likely most useful for ethnomusicologists, Yamada’s work should be part of the library of anyone interested in the nature of PNG society.

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Cathy Small’s book, Voyages, describes how Tongan overseas migration has changed Tonga and what it means to be Tongan. The book focuses on the members of one family from the village of ‘Olunga (a fictional name), some of whom emigrate to the United States. Small organizes her account into four sections: Departures (from Tonga), Arrivals (in the United States), Returns (to Tonga), and Travels Ahead. This work is distinctive among studies of Tongan overseas migrants in that it tells about the lives of the same people, both before and after their migration to the United States. Readers see them in Tonga before they migrate, and encounter them again in the United States as they make their way with new jobs, new homes, and new ways of relating, both to those that came with them, and those they left behind. Those in the United States help other Tongans to immigrate. They send money (remittances) back to family members to help them fulfill their ritual and social obligations to kin, the church, and the village, and to build a new home to which some of them may someday return. Finally, Small takes her readers back to Tonga with her friends for the celebration of the centennial of the Catholic Church in ‘Olunga. There they see what has happened to the family members and other villagers who stayed behind, and learn how they feel about their lives and about those who have left. Readers vividly experience how intensely crowded the village is when many who have gone overseas return for this celebration. They also see how the returnees have pride of place in the celebration, in the dances they perform for the king, and in their invitations to the feast of one hundred polas (feast trays). Returnees are honored as village members who are prominent and respected because they have given generously to their village.

As Small notes, most studies of immigration focus exclusively on the immigrants in their new country. Moreover, researchers who focus on
remittances back to Tonga are primarily concerned with the long-term economic well-being of Tongans in Tonga. Small, in contrast, is concerned with both ends of the migration process. She focuses not only on the economic changes migration has wrought, but also on the changes in the Tongan family, Tongan traditions, and Tongan social identity that have taken place. She has a vision of both Tonga and Tongans as concepts that are now sustained in a “transnational space.”

The author artfully deploys census data from both Tonga and the United States to give an idea of how the location of Tongans has shifted over the last thirty years. According to the modeled population and emigration figures Small developed, in 1968 there were 80,115 Tongans in Tonga, and 2,000 Tongans living overseas. For 1998, she projects 91,789 Tongans in Tonga, and 50,537 Tongans who have migrated overseas. Thus today, 36 percent of the people born in Tonga are overseas, primarily in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, not including the 28,476 children born to overseas Tongans. By 1989, remittances to Tonga brought almost four times the revenues of exports and accounted for 45 percent of Tonga’s gross domestic product.

Knowing the sheer scale of Tongan out-migration and its impact in these terms makes it easier to grasp the idea that what Tonga is like today is a product of not just the lives and activities of Tongans in Tonga, but also of the lives and activities of overseas Tongans. In this sense Tonga today truly exists in a transnational space.

With this transnational space in mind, Small offers an interesting explanation of what provides the motivation for overseas Tongans to maintain a Tongan identity and to continue to remit funds back to Tonga. In the United States, first-generation Tongans can make more money than they ever could in Tonga, but by US standards, they still are in relatively low-paying jobs that will not give them prestige and status in their new country. “This differential ensures that it is only in returning ‘home’—in transnational visits, investment, retirement, and remittances—that the real promise of the migration process can be fulfilled” (192).

However, Small is less hopeful than other students of the Tongan remittance process, such as Richard Brown and Bernard Poirine, that this process can be sustained. Her penetrating characterizations of the manner and attitudes of young second-generation Tongan Americans toward Tongan culture, oranga fakatonga, both in the United States and when they visit Tonga, make it clear that she sees little likelihood that this generation will continue to send money back to Tonga. Brown and Poirine have based the feasibility of continued remittances as an ongoing foundation for the economic well-being of Tonga on a hope that Tongans can continue to emigrate overseas. If this happens, there will be no need to rely on remittances from second-generation Tongan immigrants. But such a hope ignores recently implemented US immigration policies that have already placed new constraints on Tongan immigration to the United States. This new approach suggests that studies of immigration policies and practices in
countries receiving Tongan immigrants are needed to complement economic studies of the consequences of migration, if realistic predictions about Tonga’s economic future are going to be made.

Small has written her ethnography in an intimate style that is deliberately “postmodern,” as anthropologists have come to understand the application of this term to the way ethnographies are written. She locates herself in her narrative in relation to the villagers of ‘Olunga and the family she most closely documents. She uses their voices, their words, to represent their understandings of the changes taking place in Tonga. And she allows the diversity in the views among those who left and those who stayed behind to shine through. Her book thus encourages one to think about what the strengths and weaknesses are of such an approach to writing ethnographic accounts.

Small has succeeded admirably in writing a clear, accessible, compassionate, and compelling account of the consequences of Tongan migration. One is drawn in by the way she allows the unfolding lives of real individuals to carry her story. I could hardly wait to see what happened next as I read the book, and would happily read a sequel to it. But in order to present this compelling tale, Small has omitted any discussion of current anthropological theory about transnational processes until the next-to-last chapter, “The Meanings of Tongan Migration.” That chapter, while trenchant in many ways, really does not do full justice to the topics and issues it raises. For example, Small predicts that the future world will be a class-based global society where people will have increasingly more in common across national boundaries with those of a similar economic stratum. This is an intriguing idea, and one that in a more personal way has come up in my conversations with Tongan friends as we compare our lives. But I cannot see a foundation for this idea in the chapters on Tongan lives leading up to it.

Small also paints a pretty rosy picture of Tongan life. While anthropologists are prone to such representations, in part due to their liberal humanistic vision of human cultures, the tendency may be exaggerated when an author is writing about individuals who are close friends and likely to be identifiable to at least some readers of the book. Life is hard for many Tongans, and they do have conflicts with one another, but little of that appears in this book.

Even so, the central idea of the book—that Tonga and all Tongans exist at this moment in time in a transnational space—comes through vividly and powerfully, and the durability of this image is testimony to the success of Small’s experiment in ethnographic writing.

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