

Tongans Overseas: Between Two Shores, by Helen Morton Lee. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003. ISBN cloth, 0-8248-2615-0; paper 0-8248-2654-X; viii + 327 pages, tables, figures, photographs, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$55.00; paper, US\$21.95.

Saili Matagi: Samoan Migrants in Australia, by Leulu Felise Va'a. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; Apia: Iunivesite Aoa o Sāmoa (National University of Sāmoa), 2001. ISBN 982-02-0325-2; 298 pages, tables, figure, maps, photographs, appendixes, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. US\$30.00.

The publication of two major empirical studies of the Tongan and Samoan communities in Australia is a milestone in the study of the Pacific diaspora. The studies have certain things in common, as one would expect of studies by two anthropologists concerned with the dynamics of social change in migrant enclaves, but they differ in other, crucial respects. This review focuses first on the similarities and then on the differences.

Each has at its center an ethnographic study. These are all the more valuable because both authors are experienced ethnographers with both extended experience of the "migrant" populations with whom they have worked, and knowledge of the "source" communities. Helen Morton Lee's study focuses on the activities, attitudes, and experiences of a group of some 430 first-, second-, and third-generation Tongans, and 49 associated

non-Tongan persons, living in one hundred households in Melbourne, Victoria. The survey was conducted by the author between 1995 and July 1999, and between 1997 and 1999 by a research assistant, Meliame Tauali'i. Leulu Felise Va'a's study, an extended and edited version of his doctoral thesis, focuses on a similar range of attitudes in a group of some 735 first- and second-generation Samoans living in one hundred thirty-seven households in Sydney, New South Wales, between 1992 and 1993. It contains a brief postscript that adds material collected during a short visit in mid-1999 and updates some aspects of the earlier picture. Va'a carried out his own fieldwork. Both books use material from these studies effectively; the pictures created are rich, and the voices of those who make up the communities are clearly heard.

Both authors draw on additional material from secondary sources to extend and clarify their survey data. Examining the extent to which the experiences and views of Melbourne Tongans coincide with those of Tongans in Tonga and in other migrant enclaves, Morton Lee uses a significant amount of verbatim material from Tongan Internet "chat rooms," including "unsolicited" material excerpted from discussions between unidentified Tongan (and some non-Tongan) "posters," as well as e-mail interviews with some of the regular contributors to those chat-room discussions. This material adds considerably to the data and provides extremely interesting insights into the ways Tongans talk to other Tongans about a range of issues. However, the

use of the chat-room material raises some ethical and methodological issues about the use of such comments that, for me at least, were not adequately resolved.

Va'a's account draws on a significant amount of material from accounts of the Samoan "source" community, and of migrant church and community leaders having long-standing experience of the history of the enclaves. This is used to illustrate parallels and differences between processes in the source and migrant "communities," and then within the enclaves. This detailed field data again adds considerably to the argument.

Each author seeks to understand the ways in which culture and cultural identity are transformed in the diaspora. Each study shows persuasively that the cultures that are changed—the *anga fakatonga* (Tongan culture) and the *fa'a Sāmoa* (Samoan culture)—are not singular worldviews and associated lifestyles, but rather more loosely defined sets of understandings. Each study illustrates the difficulties in identifying what was supposed to be at the core of *anga fakatonga* and *fa'a Sāmoa*, respectively, and how these translated into identities. These sections of the accounts are important and serve as valuable antidotes to tendencies to simply list elements and to characterize the cultures in narrow and essentialized ways. While each author acknowledges the variability, each also notes the existence of an imagined "norm" against which people in the enclaves evaluate their own and others' conduct and identities. The important distinction between the observed variability and the imagined norm explains why, despite real

variation, people can, and must, continue to insist that a unified culture exists. In both cases, the data that are introduced are rich and the evidence is compelling.

The transformation is not, in either case, a unilinear process by which cultures move from one form to another, but rather is a process by which several variant forms of each culture diverge still further in the diaspora. Both authors arrive at the conclusion that the factors and processes that have produced the variation now evident will continue to generate still further divergence, and that the likelihood of significant in-movements of new migrants from source communities (which could slow this process) are relatively low. Each argues that certain factors—the declining use of the indigenous languages; shifting attitudes toward and opportunities for participation in activities in which the cultural practices are enacted and learned; and intermarriage—are likely to have exponential effects on the rate of change in ways of being Samoan and Tongan, respectively.

Each author takes the position that migration, and specifically economic independence, has created new opportunities for expatriates to reconstruct their identities in ways that reflect both their affective attachment to and instrumental evaluations of the utility of elements of each of the "cultures" in a new socioeconomic milieu. This is revealed as an ongoing process that has occurred at various places and in a range of sets of circumstances. For many Samoan and Tongan migrants, current identity is a consequence of experiences in source communities, in various migrant communities in New

Zealand, and now in enclaves in Australia. The identities of their overseas-born descendants are, in turn, defined by their parents' representations of source cultures, their experiences within the migrant community, and the expectations of Australian society. The evidence for this conclusion is drawn from both biographies and migrants' accounts of their lives and is both rich and compelling. These accounts reveal significant numbers of people thinking continually about ways of negotiating their personal and social identities in changing social circumstances, and "cultures" as situationally defined and endlessly contested processes.

Each author also accepts that while human agency looms large in this reconstructive process, it occurs within a set of economic and social constraints that limit the range within which people are able to negotiate and construct identity. This approach, while pursued differently in each study, is valuable because each demonstrates that the range of options available is limited not only by the Tongan and Samoan "cultures," but also by social, economic, and demographic realities of life as a relatively insignificant ethnic minority.

Both accounts demonstrate the gap between the ideal of a "community" united by culture, experience, and language, and the reality of many sub-communities generated by a more or less continuous process of competition and fission. They show how elements such as traditional status and religion continue to produce well-understood divisions within Tongan and Samoan populations. They also show how, in new circum-

stances where some traditional checks and balances no longer exist, these sources produce even more tension and fission. Relations between pastors and their congregations have always been a source of potential tension, but in source communities there are limits to the ways in which discontent can be expressed, thereby limiting public challenges to the status quo. In migrant "communities," as Va'a shows, these constraints are effectively removed, and more public discussion, in which more people can participate, increases the tension and hastens the process of fission. The same is true of social status. In source communities, competition for social status is a reality, but there are limits on overt challenges to established authority, embedded in social organization, lore, and legislation. Thus, as Morton Lee demonstrates, challenges to the authority of the monarchy and nobility in Tonga are clearly proscribed by both law and public culture. In the migrant enclaves no such formal constraints exist, and some migrants take advantage of this to use personal and family wealth to challenge the claims of "traditional" leaders.

Both accounts note that the tendency to compete in public displays of wealth plays a major part in producing the appearance of united "communities" celebrating their "cultures." But these events, in fact, produce tensions that divide and impoverish the communities and lead to increasing disillusion with "tradition." Each author mentions, ironically, that the new formal associations, which are created to advance the interests of migrants, have become sites in which

both traditional and new sources of tension emerge and hamper the efforts of individuals who seek to create a united community. Each book draws on a range of case studies to illustrate this process and thereby provides rich insights into the ways migrant communities become sites of accelerated social transformation.

So much, then, for the similarities in these books. The two are distinguished by significant differences in the ways in which the arguments are framed. Morton Lee's account outlines the history of Tongan migration to Australia, and the range of experiences and attitudes toward identity, first within the Tongan migrant generation, and then within the mostly overseas-born, diasporic youth. This is followed by a chapter on intermarriage, which Morton Lee has identified as a significant influence on the future of Tongan worldview and lifestyle within the diaspora. It shows how the dilemmas that confront those in Tongan-Tongan marriages, and their children, are intensified in inter-ethnic marriages. This chapter is valuable because it illustrates the importance of intermarriage in transforming Tongan social relations, and because it demonstrates that intermarriage is not a singular phenomenon but (as shown in her case studies) one that takes many forms and has a range of possible consequences. Given the increasing frequency of intermarriage of overseas-born Tongans, the study of the forms and consequences of these marriages is a useful way of "looking forward," and of projecting forms that future Tongan identity might take, as the social and historical separation from its source community grows. In a concluding chapter enti-

led "Looking Ahead," Morton Lee brings together a number of themes from both the theoretical literature on diaspora and her study. The chapter rounds out her conclusions about the nature of Tongan identity as a continuing process, influenced both by the experiences of individuals and the social and economic circumstances in which they construct and reconstruct their images of themselves and of what it means to be Tongan.

Va'a takes a somewhat different approach. He too commences with an extended discussion of the history of Samoan emigration and resettlement in a number of locations and uses this framework to identify the unique characteristics of the Sydney situation. His approach focuses less on identity than on the circumstances and social processes in which Samoan social values and relations are being transformed. He takes three central sets of practices that have traditionally defined what it is to be Samoan—the church; exchange, support networks, and remittances; and family and community—and explores how, and more importantly, why these are changing in the diaspora. Va'a is refreshingly frank about the factors that are driving the change and the extent to which these are the consequences of human agency and changing social, political, and economic circumstances. Va'a's account also ends by drawing together some theoretical ideas and some themes in his work. His arguments are clear, and his conclusions well supported by strong data and valuable insights drawn from close observation of and involvement in Samoan society.

While these two studies draw on somewhat different theoretical models,

attend to different elements of social organization, and have different emphases, they arrive, by somewhat different routes, at remarkably similar conclusions about the processes of change in two Polynesian migrant enclaves. In this respect, these studies are valuable contributions both in their own right, and as contributions to the comparative study of the Pacific diaspora. Theoretical, disciplinary, and methodological preferences will undoubtedly lead readers to prefer one approach over another, but both of these works are important contributions to scholarship of the diaspora, and much is to be gained from reading them together and from seeing them as elements of a larger intellectual problem.

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La Saga du kava, du Vanuatu à la Nouvelle-Calédonie, by Annabel R Chanteraud. Collections Îles et Archipels, no 29. Bordeaux: CRET et DYMSET, 2001. ISBN 2-905081-40-6; 288 pages, figures, tables, photographs, appendixes, notes, written in French. €35.

This “saga” of kava (*Piper methysticum*) is a revised PhD dissertation in cultural geography. This plant, cultivated only in Oceania, is famous for the particular properties of the drink extracted from its crushed and diluted roots—muscles loosen and a psychic state generally characterized by a peaceful detachment is created. In this work, Annabel R Chanteraud recounts the history of the consumption of kava in Vanuatu, and also in

New Caledonia. She begins with pre-colonial history, when kava consumption was strictly regulated, reserved for the men, and confined in nakamal (men’s house). She traces that history up to the present, when in the city as well as in the villages everyone can drink kava. The author has conducted lengthy fieldwork—administering survey questionnaires, engaging in participant observation, collecting statistics, and consulting the available literature.

Chanteraud first presents a review of the literature on mythology related to the appearance and domestication of kava in Vanuatu. The various myths associate the birth of kava with that of the human societies in these islands. For the author, the mythology connects kava with the history of the settlement of the islands and the political development of these societies, corresponding with waves of Polynesian migration. The social rules of Vanuatu society, based on sexual dualism and the egalitarian sharing of tasks, can be read in the rites of preparation and consumption of kava that accompany significant social events. More widely, the history of consumption of kava provides a good vantage point from which to draw out the different elements of the history of the country, from what preceded first European contact to recent struggles for independence. In their aim to acculturate these colonized societies, the nineteenth-century missionaries restricted the consumption of kava, even to the point of total proscription on certain islands. That is why, beginning around 1910, the consumption of kava became a symbol of resistance to oppression.

In the cities of Luganville and Port