
REVIEWS

DUNSFORD, Deborah, Julie Park, Judith Littleton, Ward Friesen, Phyllis Herda, Patricia Neuwelt, Jennifer Hand, Philippa Blackmore, Sagaa Malua, Jessica Grant, Robin Kearns, Lynda Bryder, and Yvonne Underhill-Sem: *Better Lives The Struggle for Health of Transnational Pacific Peoples in New Zealand, 1950-2000*. Research in Anthropology and Linguistics, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, 2012. xi + 95 pp., bib., figs, maps, notes, photos, tables. NZ\$25 (paper).

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This is a potted social, demographic and health history of the Pacific community in New Zealand since the Second World War told through seven chapters and 80 pages, using tuberculosis as a starting point and something of a lens on the evolution of this community. This is a way of “telling our story” in Aotearoa as it evolves into the post-colonial multi-cultural society we know. Along the way it gives us an insight into the welfare state, the economy, and the changing social and cultural pattern as seen from the (disad)vantage point of a struggling and striving migrant group. What *Bro Town* and *Sione’s Wedding* have done in television and film story-telling with plenty of artistic licence, the academics are now following through—characteristically, of course, with more restraint and due scientific rigour and objectivity!

“Better Lives”—the short title—is the ninth in a Monograph series from Auckland’s Department of Anthropology. That series runs under the rubric of *Research in Anthropology and Linguistics* (RAL), it dates back more than a decade, and it seems to have had a largely national and regional focus. This is useful and painstaking work for the public record. This will win no academic or cinematic prizes, but it is necessary work along the lines of a social “observatory”, tracking our citizenry and telling their story. A fuller book-length social history treatment of the topic would be a worthwhile project for the future. The multi-disciplinary team drawn from anthropology, history, geography, population health, development and Pacific studies would surely be up for that.

Despite its predominantly documentary nature, there are some real insights here, some of them needing further development. One of the strong themes of the monograph is that the Pacific community needs to be seen as “transnational”. In other words, Aotearoa/New Zealand, as a nation of migrants within historical memory, is linked in to a network of human connections that span the near-Pacific. The nation state becomes a less meaningful unit of analysis in these circumstances. From a bleaker political economy perspective this can be seen as a network of transnational relationships of power and inequality. But looked at within a demographic, cultural and social framework, the concept has a more benign and human aspect, evoking a vision of multiple family and community exchanges of meaning.

A second theme is the use of a health condition—tuberculosis—as a lens or tracer for a consistent line of historical enquiry. This is a helpful and insightful approach since it provides us with a coherent story through social complexity over time, albeit from a particular perspective (the Pacific community). It is part of the social mosaic of the emerging urban New Zealand: the conditions of disadvantage, the circumstances of migration, inequality, race relations, cultural change and relations with the host society. But the concept loses its power over time as the condition—tuberculosis—no longer tells us a full story of the community as a lens or tracer, if it ever did. So the authors deploy the terminology of syndemics; with multiple conditions—diabetes and other health problems now dwarfing tuberculosis—we are entering a model with a complex and sophisticated relationship between health, biology and society. There may be a loss of human agency and too-ready a cession of ground to a disease perspective, but the emphasis on synergy and on the bigger picture of social change is a helpful corrective to a biomedical frame.

A third theme is a multi-faceted story of social history seen “from below”: the gentle and not-so-gentle decline in New Zealand’s social and economic circumstances; the hollowing out of many blue-collar occupations; the struggling welfare state; a transition from a culture of paternalism to one of greater mutual respect; the next-generation spectre of youth crime, health disability, and a potential urban underclass. It is difficult to tell this story without the risk of stereotype and fatalist futures, but it needs to be told.

There are two vignettes that exemplify these themes: the emergence of health services more oriented to the needs of Pacific peoples, and the adjustments made over time in the priorities and tenor of Pacific health research funding. If we look at the latter we can track the changing relationship between the Pacific community and the dominant scientific culture from the study of colonial exotica to an incipient migration story to the current syndemic picture of a complex and multi-cultural melange so typical of parts of New Zealand’s emerging urban landscape.

If there are elements missing in this volume they are texture, conceptualisation and a school or programme of research. I recently reviewed for the *New Zealand Journal of Sociology* an Otago University Press publication on the social history of a clutch of Dunedin suburbs that in their own way were also exemplary of an emerging social order in modern, post-colonial New Zealand. The book comes from years of teamwork involving the close analysis of secondary data and the contributions of multiple student theses and dissertations. This enterprise had texture, it had conceptualisation, and it reflected a distinct school or programme of research played over a quarter of a century of scholarship.

Our challenge is to project from the Otago model of integrated scholarship in history and the social sciences organised around one regional, pre-modern urban setting to the emerging modern, multi-cultural pattern that is contemporary urban New Zealand.

Thode-Arora, H. *Weavers of Men and Women: Niuean Weaving and its Social Implications*. Berlin, DE: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH. 2009. 310 pp. + Colour Plates, appendixes, bib., figs, glossary, maps, notes, tables. €69.00 (paper).

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Weavers of Men and Women: Niuean Weaving and its Social Implications provides the most comprehensive contemporary ethnography of Niue's history, its people and material culture to date since those written by Percy Smith (1903) and Edwin Loeb (1926). Translated from German to English by the author, Thode-Arora has made accessible valuable research that encompasses museum collections, fieldwork and scholarship. From the discipline of anthropology, the author has undertaken an in-depth study of Niuean culture on the island and the diaspora in Auckland, New Zealand. The title "weavers of men and women" is part of a quote from Young Viviani, former Premier of Niue, in reference to his late wife who was a weaver. The author uses this quote as a departure point to focus on the significance of weaving within the broader context of Niuean society.

Between 2002 and 2005, Thode-Arora conducted 18 months of fieldwork in Niue and Auckland, with the support of the German Research Foundation, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin, and a Fellowship at the Women's Studies Programme and the Department of Anthropology at the University of Auckland. From the outset, the author gives a detailed outline of her methodology and the chapters to follow. Thode-Arora has drawn on a range of sources including archives, unpublished and published material, interviews and her own participant observations. This data centres on weaving and has helped to provide a broad and rich foundation for the analysis.

The book is divided into four main sections, with the larger part dedicated to sections two and three. The first section provides a short history of Niue since its human settlement and a closer look at pre-Christian Niuean society. Far from an isolated island the author emphasises (as have other authors) the movement of people particularly from Tonga and Samoa who eventually settled in Niue. Thode-Arora surveys Niue's encounter with explorers, traders, and European and indigenous missionaries in the late 18th and 19th centuries. She then moves onto describe Niue's social structure, and eventual political relationship with Great Britain (1880s-1900) and annexation by New Zealand in 1901. The politics of the New Zealand colonial administration are interrogated with a focus on Resident Commissioner Hector Larsen who was killed in 1953. From the 1960s, Niuean migration to New Zealand for employment is surveyed. However, the author emphasises that Niuean work migration actually began in the 19th century with events like the infamous Peruvian slave trade and the work of Niueans as plantation labourers in places like Samoa. This section ends with a focus on the important Niuean contribution to the First World War.

Section two delves into the central part of the study, comparing the combined contexts of Niue and Auckland, New Zealand. Here the author focuses on a range of topics relating to Niuean society, including church congregations, women's groups, and land rights. A key highlight of this section is the examination of life cycle events

such as the *huki teliga* 'ear-piercing ceremony' in which woven items play a part. Life cycles such as this are embedded in the concept of *fakaalofa* 'reciprocity', and Niueans comment on the complexities of giving and receiving. According to interviewee Maiheote Hekau, aged 62: "Our way of life is reciprocal.... A local person would accept it [a gift of food or other things] quite gracefully and say 'thank you', but then at some stage in the next six months or the next year, however long it takes, they would in turn give back" (p. 148). As Thode-Arora illustrates social relationships are nurtured and regulated through life cycles. However the cycles are not time-bound, and this gives Niueans flexibility to return the *fakaalofa* that was shown.

Section three focuses on the technical and social aspects of the art of weaving. As the author demonstrates, accounts of women in the 19th century were largely non-existent in the literature, thus here an in-depth look at the art is a good reminder of the processes undertaken and the commitment by weavers. Thode-Arora describes the plants which historically included hibiscus bast fibre and pandanus, and has now extended to New Zealand flax and plastic bread bags. The range of woven items are examined as well as their function in the social context, where for one weaver recalling the economic impact in the 1930s and 1940s, "tablemats helped Niue to survive" (p. 258).

Section four summarises in four pages, the complexities of the preceding chapters. One of the key points is that the work of women is situated in the changes in Niuean society, to the point where women are now able to take on more leadership roles in a community which was predominantly egalitarian in nature. Since the early missionary period in the 19th century, which supported weaving, the appreciation of Niuean weaving has continued and expanded to contexts like the annual Pasifika Festival held in Auckland in 2003.

Throughout the text, quotes are interspersed from the author's interviews and from the unpublished Master's thesis by anthropology student Eve Kay (1989). These quotes help illustrate the subtle changes and continuity in ideas relating to identity since the 1980s. The emphasis on the egalitarian society parallels a society that according to the author is inward looking. Thode-Arora's evaluation of societal conflict and the difficulties of migration and cross-generational differences are engaging and shed light on the intricacy of relationships between people, villages and church congregations. The author has provided excellent documentation for her research with an extensive bibliography and detailed footnotes. A table in the appendices section provides good coverage of materials used in producing woven items such as *potu* 'mats' and *kato* 'basket' with Niuean language terms. This will greatly assist future researchers interested in exploring Niue's cultural history. The images and colour plates add depth to the text. The author's research in several museum collections has enabled a rich evaluation of Niuean material culture, and provides good additional information for Te Papa's Niue collection of about 300 *taoga* 'treasures'.

As an extension of the research in New Zealand, I would have liked to see the incorporation of weaving groups outside of Auckland, such as those based in Wellington who have had a long weaving history in the local region. Perhaps re-formatting the layout to have the indigenous terms first (and without italics) and the English translation in brackets would have helped with readability, and put

indigenous categories and terms more forward in the reader's mind. Despite this short list of limitations, I would recommend this book for researchers interested in Niuean cultural history and seeking to understand contemporary Niuean society. The accessible language and empathetic tone opens the work to a range of readers from the more general to a specialist scholar. As an observer, Thode-Arora provides a quiet reading of the cultural context, leaving Niueans to play a central role. The key processes and topics that resonate throughout the text are migration, culture, change, legacy, continuity, transnational communities and relationships, all of which are interconnected with weaving. The last few lines of the book adequately summarises the research and the innovation of Niuean weavers: "the very essence of Niuean weaving seems to be in keen observation, experimenting and improving, until the end product has become a distinctive part of Niuean culture" (p. 266).

YORK, Robert and Gigi York: *Slings and Slingstones: The Forgotten Weapons of Oceania and the Americas*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2011. xxiii + 196 pp., bib., figs, index, maps, tables. US\$55 (hardcover).

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Robert and Gigi York present an extensive array of archaeological evidence, ethnohistoric accounts, and observations of archaeological and museum collections to provide a wide-ranging picture of the extent and diversity of sling use in Oceania and the Americas. The volume begins with a short introduction to slings and slingstones. It is noted that as slings are usually constructed from materials that do not preserve well, there are very few slings in the archaeological record. Most of the evidence for sling use therefore, relies on the identification of sling ammunition (slingstones) and as such these artefacts provide the focus for much of the book. The authors also provide some general notes on the worldwide history of the sling and, perhaps most useful to many readers unfamiliar with these artefacts, information on identifying slingstones by form and weight. The authors then move into regional reviews of the evidence for sling use and slingstones in Oceania and the Americas, which forms the bulk of the text. The Oceanic section is divided into chapters on Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia (the Polynesian section also contains a small section on Madagascar), while the Americas section is divided into a chapter on South and Mesoamerica including the Caribbean, and a chapter on North America. Each of these chapters is comprised of highly detailed sections on specific island groups in the case of Oceania, and on larger geographic units for the Americas. These sections provide information on archaeologically and historically known sling and slingstone forms, historic accounts of sling use, osteological evidence of sling inflicted injuries and treatments for these injuries (notably trepanation), details of actual preserved slings and suggestions of artefact types that may be slingstones, but are not currently interpreted as such. Finally each larger regional section ends with a concluding chapter presenting themes, issues and specific questions regarding slingstone research in the areas.

The overall level of detail for the regional sections is high, however, the chapters are quite variable, with some areas receiving much more coverage than others. Throughout the text, the Yorks acknowledge this and assert that each regional section presents only the sum of the existing evidence for sling use and therefore differences in chapter length or the omission of a particular area, indicates only that there is currently a lack of information for that region. They also contend that this may be the result of a failure to publish the presence of possible slingstones or to identify them as such. In their conclusion to the Oceanic section, the Yorks note that “If we had relied on published syntheses of Pacific archaeology, we would barely be aware of the presence of slingstones – much less their significance” (p. 65). They also note that in some cases where there has been no published information on the existence of slingstones in a region, they have in fact been able to locate collections of such artefacts. The Yorks relate this scarcity of published information on slings and slingstones to one of their central themes: that slings and slingstones have not received sufficient study and are often not considered in archaeological interpretations. They assert that regarding the study of the prehistory of sling use there has been “... a pervasive disinterest in the subject by archaeologists since about 1960” (p. 5). The potential effect of this disinterest in biasing interpretations is made most clear in the chapter on North America, where the Yorks frequently provide arguments for the reinterpretation of numerous artefact types as slingstones.

The logical counterpoint that the Yorks provide to this, and their other central theme of the text, is that slings and slingstones should be receiving more attention from archaeologists, similar to that given to artefact types such as fishhooks and adzes in the Pacific and projectile points in the Americas. Throughout the book they issue repeated calls for archaeologists to consider slingstones in their interpretations and to pursue their study. They contend that such a consideration of slingstones opens up many possibilities for new research; “The questions that beg for answers, the issues to be pursued, seem almost endless...” (p. 145). They also suggest that research into sling related topics could provide valuable insight into several larger research areas. In the case of the Pacific, they suggest that studies of “... settlement of the Pacific, warfare, creation and retention of power, technology transfer ..., and pre-Columbian Austronesian contacts with the Americas.” (p. 65) could all benefit from more sling related research.

The Yorks also make an effort to address and highlight several of these possible avenues of research. Of particular interest is their coverage of “Tregear’s Conundrum” (p. 51, 63-65), from Edward Tregear’s article “The Polynesian Bow”, originally published in the first volume of the *JPS* in 1892. The Conundrum refers to the question of why Polynesian societies (which the Yorks widen to Austronesian speaking societies) exhibited a preference for the sling as a weapon, when there is also evidence for the use of the bow for other purposes. The Yorks, expanding on previous suggestions of the potential advantageous functional characteristics of the sling, suggest that “The truth may lie more in cultural concepts concerning manliness...” (p. 64). They note, however, that unless the call for further study into sling use is answered, such suggestions can only be speculative. Of additional interest are several avenues of research the Yorks suggest in their concluding remarks regarding proxy evidence for

sling use in areas where slingstones have not yet been identified. These include the presence of certain kinds of armour, defensive site features and trepanation.

Robert and Gigi York provide an exceptionally detailed examination of the sling and slingstones in Oceania and the Americas. It will undoubtedly serve as an invaluable reference, especially for those students who may not have heard of, nor know how to recognise a slingstone. One can only hope that the Yorks' aim, to challenge anthropologists to consider the role that the sling and slingstone played in past societies and to pursue the numerous research possibilities presented in this work, will be met in the near future.

Younger, S.M.: *Calculating Chiefs: Simulating Leadership, Violence, and Warfare in Oceania*. Saarbrücken, Germany: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012. 357 pp., appendix, bib., figs, tables. €79.00 (paper).

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Calculating Chiefs investigates the patterned variation in warfare and violence among the agricultural societies of Oceania. With a lengthy bibliography, it reviews the extensive ethnographic and historical evidence, analysing 11 ethnographic cases to compare patterns in Polynesia, the Caroline Islands and Melanesia. The book is a *tour-de-force*.

Stephen Younger is a surprising person to have written such an important book. His PhD is in Physics, he has worked in simulation and policy, and is appointed as Special Advisor to a Vice Chancellor at the University of Hawai'i. He is an outsider to Anthropology, but, almost as the model anthropologist, he comes from outside to immerse himself in the village life of his subjects, a community of fractious anthropologists. The clarity of his review is remarkable. He summarises the relevant theories of major and less major scholars and presents a comprehensive summary of case materials, providing an exceptional review of the literature on warfare and violence. Of course, some individuals, such as Patrick Kirch or Michael Kolb, deserved fuller treatment, but the evenness of Younger's coverage is laudable.

The book's organisation is a model. The clear introduction justifies both the topic (human violence within an evolutionary perspective) and the appropriateness of Oceania for analysis. He provides an overview of Oceania's geography, culture history and political organisations, a review of the existing literature on warfare and the ethnographic data, robust analyses of seven cases, a justification for the use of simulation and the construction of several simulations, concluding with an assessment of the value added by simulations. Looking systematically at the evidence, Chapter 6 draws convincing conclusions across a wide range of important topics. His scrutiny of small atoll societies is particularly significant, explaining why they should have a "participatory" (nonhierarchical) structure with little warfare. He also concludes that the frequencies of interpersonal violence and warfare are correlated, both

increasing with total population but not with population density. Although violence and warfare are also correlated with leadership and social stratification, he argues that the association is not causal as both are connected to the underlying variable of total population size. His justification for the value of simulation in anthropology is also well presented, although I found the actual simulations too simplified to make their conclusions convincing. This is a common criticism by anthropologists, not resolved by the present simulations, although the concluding chapter shows how simulation can help pick apart causal relationships.

The book stresses the importance of comparative studies in anthropology. Although formulated as a comparative discipline trying to make sense of variation in the human experience, anthropologists have pulled away from engaging with big questions, like those which Younger addresses head on (pp. 23-26). Unlike the anthropologists buried in details of their specific cases, he investigates systematically the rich description of human variation as a means to interrogate those key questions. He grounds his work in existing broad cross-cultural studies of warfare, especially those by Carol and Melvin Ember based on the ethnographic resources in HRAF (Human Relations Area Files).

Younger also stresses the importance of evolutionary studies of variability within specific cultural areas, in contrast to broad cross-cultural studies. Such specific evolution creates differing social forms from common historical backgrounds under variable local conditions of geography, productivity, isolation and community size. Oceania provides the exceptional opportunity for such work. As originally described by Marshall Sahlins, Oceania presents a laboratory for understanding specific evolution as adaptive radiation. Better than any other world region, Pacific scholars can assume that “other things are equal” because the region has a common history, technology and subsistence base. As seen in the comparative studies by Sahlins, Goldman, Feil and others, Oceania is a remarkable workshop for studying evolutionary processes. Younger continues this important tradition.

Considering the opportunity to study specific evolution, the greatest gap in Younger’s analysis is his slight consideration of Oceanic archaeology. Why does he pay so little heed to prehistory? I think that he was forced to ignore it, because archaeologists have been too reluctant to develop measures of key variables such as warfare and political leadership that can be used diachronically. When discussing warfare, we often rely on the same historical and ethnographic documentations used by Younger. Archaeology needs to work with observed diachronic variation, developing creative material measures of such significant variables. As illustrated by the work of Kirch and his collaborators, evolutionary processes can be studied systematically with diachronic data available only archaeologically.

I note the lack of Younger’s consideration of political economy. Perhaps the gap represents his commitment to an agent-based modeling, which rarely considers longterm change, or his slight consideration of archaeology. For example, Younger states “Earle (1997) divides the function of leadership into three categories: economic, military, and ideological” (p. 68). These three are not functions, but are sources of power. The ability of chiefs to control bottlenecks in the political economy allows the mobilisation of surplus to support political power strategies involving these elemental

powers. Thus, with the increasing power of chiefs, the goal of warfare shifts from community defense to political conquest seeking revenue sources. The warrior class should be conceptualised as power specialists equivalent to land managers or priests. Although Younger has read the work by Kirch, myself and our collaborators, he fails to understand our political economy perspective on warfare and related topics. Probably each reader will identify some further gaps, but this does not detract from the great scope and fine analyses of the book.

Calculating Chiefs is a classic study in comparative anthropology. Younger's analysis of the ethnographic differences in warfare and violence in Oceania is a touchstone for future work. Now we must meet Younger's challenge to increase the use of modelling, to emphasise comparative approaches, and to take the significance of Oceanic studies to a broad social science audience. We should also reconfigure our approaches to archaeology to measure such key variables as warfare and violence, and to bring in a strong political economy perspective to issues of longterm social change. I appreciate the contribution and welcome the challenge that Younger has given us.