

STEADFAST MOVEMENT AROUND MICRONESIA: Satowan Enlargements Beyond Migration. By *Lola Quan Bautista*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010. xv, 177 pp. (Tables, maps, B&W photos.) US\$65.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-7391-3477-1.

While reading Lola Quan Bautista's *Steadfast Movement Around Micronesia: Satowan Enlargements beyond Migration*, I fondly recalled travelling throughout Micronesia on small planes. Many of my fellow travellers, who represented diverse "Micronesians," had the survive-any-hurricane, massively taped Styrofoam coolers, filled with only-to-be-wondered-at goodies. Or bags upon bags of fast food that filled the plane with that McDonalds french fry smell—all off-island food treasures for people back "home." I understood at the time that what I was witnessing was practice steeped in cultural ideas of reciprocity, the social-cultural value of food, and the interconnections between other places, maybe between "homes" of the moment and their natal islands. However, I never really understood the profound relational work these gifts, and indeed the Islanders' movements themselves, were doing until I read this work by Bautista.

Bautista accomplishes what many researchers find extremely difficult: making clear the complex movements of people through spaces and places that are laden and suffused with a layered cultural significance. Her work makes real those challenges to the social scientific bias of "culture" as place-focused; as a set of practices somehow anchored to space and place, as Karen Fog Olwig and Kirsten Hastrup et. al. (*Siting Culture: the shifting anthropological object*, Routledge, 1997) so eloquently explored. As Olwig and Hastrup assert: "Until recently, space or place operated as fixed coordinates of the ethnographic world map" (3). However, "realities are defined in practice, rather than by pre-established social structures or the fixed coordinates of a semantic space" (4).

Adeptly negating simplistic, Western renderings of Satowan experiences, Bautista spells out the cultural and social specificity of movement beyond what might be the "home" island; challenging "space," "place," "home," "identity" and "culture" in the process. Like the Satowan Islanders who are frequent journey makers and the focus of this research, Bautista takes the reader on an expedition through multi-sited research locations. This is essential because "Satowan is their place, but so also is Weno, and beyond that Guam, for some homes include other places in Micronesia and Hawai'i" (xiii). Through theoretical orientations of "circular mobility," "transnationalism" and Satowan "emic" concepts of movement and migration, Bautista argues that Western analyses about migration are inherently flawed when trying to understand the motivations, the movement patterns, and the overall trans-island reality of how Satowan Islanders actually lead their lives. Rather, Satowan movement does not adhere to Western analytical biases about

migration: “Western concepts of migration assert that the principal streams are from rural to urban, oftentimes one way and permanent, and likely to continue as long as the socioeconomic conditions in the origin area remain bleak. Within this framework, migrants act rationally and individually through economic motivations. Yet an increasing literature among scholars of island mobility points to dimensions of ‘walkabout,’ where movement is fluid rather than fixed and ongoing rather than permanent” (151).

The beauty of this work is in the ethnographic details. In other words, how Bautista makes clear the decisions of the Satowan Islanders for why and how they move, and underscoring that these movements are always culturally constructed. Movements necessarily “fit” the cultural expectations and purposes of Satowan Islanders who construct them within webs of relations and reciprocity, the life cycle, gender and ethnicity. In particular, the author did a wonderful job delineating the importance of women in migration and movement; and as she points out, not in the sense of some anthropological creation of “women” encased amber-like in a matrilineal kinship monolith. Rather, she shows them as women active with an agency often in flux, who are impacted by a whole host of factors and circumstances, such as birth order, life-cycle and individual opportunity. But this, to use Bautista’s words, “micro-focused approach” (141) is also articulated to “macro-level” influences, which simultaneously shape how and why Satowan Islanders make decisions about movement—meaning all those many profound political, economic and colonial constraints.

I was left ruminating about only a few minor weaknesses of this book. First, I would have liked a more detailed analysis of some of the “macro-level” influences, especially those ever-important US colonial and military influences. Second, a more thorough examination of the complex interactions between Chamorros and the Satowan Islanders would have been wonderful, especially considering that Bautista is in a very privileged position to make these assertions. However, these are less criticisms than one reader’s longing for some of these aspects to be taken further for my own interests and benefit.

Bautista manages to illustrate the complex interplay between the cultural and social ties that bind and the forces that push Satowan Islanders to be *at once* in movement and at home. This analysis is especially timely given the continually developing changes in military, colonial and environmental impetuses for migration from and around Micronesia. It will necessarily help in understanding the ever-increasing numbers of Pacific Islanders making the continental US—and indeed other spaces and places around the world—as part of their steadfast movements.

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