

In the concluding chapters XIV and XV the author gives a theoretical exposition of the concept and scope of "indigenisation" and then tries to answer the question how far this indigenisation may go in the Mother Churches established in India. His reply is short and rather disappointing: Since we cannot yet envisage what future shape the Church in India is going to take, it cannot be stated definitely to what extent the Church and can should be indigenised. He merely gives the advice that there should be more indigenisation than in the past. And he adds that surely the Mother Churches—in his case the Lutheran Church—could learn a lot from the local Group Churches such as the Bible Mission.

This book by Solomon Raj is important, because it shows that Devadas' Bible Mission is a folk-religion which in its earthy, practical, and simple framework, well attuned to a peasant mentality, could easily establish contact with the local people and open their hearts to the message of Christ. As such it is a valuable intermediary between the Lutheran missionary Church and the non-Christians. However, for uplifting, widening, deepening, and inspiring the human spirit into a higher and more sublime sphere, such folk-religions may be found inadequate. The author does not say it expressly, but seems to imply that Mother Churches alone could do so, with a higher developed theology and a more sublime and elevating liturgy.

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#### PAPUA NEW GUINEA

LEROY, JOHN, ed. *Kewa Tales*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985. Xxv+251 pages. Photographs, appendices. Paper, US\$ 21.50, ISBN 0-7748-0218-9.

LEROY, JOHN. *Fabricated World. An Interpretation of Kewa Tales*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985. Xii+319 pages. Index, tables, map, figures, appendices, bibliography. Cloth US\$28.95, ISBN 0-7748-0217-0.

The narratives contained in *Kewa Tales* were collected by the author from the Kewa people of the Southern Highlands Province in Papua, New Guinea, over a period of fourteen months during the years 1971-1972, 1976-1977. They were tape-recorded; and, to quote the author, "I have striven for a balance between too free or too literal a translation, one which both reads easily in English and preserves the sense of the original" (xii).

The tales read well and one gets the strong impression that the translator has stayed close to the native texts. LeRoy says the Kewa distinguish two kinds of narratives, *lidi*, which he glosses as *tale*, and *ramani*, which he calls *legend*. *Lidi* are considered fictitious and the *ramani* are held to be true. Sometimes the narrators might disagree as to which is which, "but in my experience this happens infrequently (or perhaps only infrequently is it important to decide)" (xi).

For his interpretative purposes and for inclusion in *Kewa Tales*, LeRoy has chosen the *lidi*. While such tales are untrue in the literal sense, LeRoy points out that they can well convey truth in a figurative sense and are "pointers to deeper metaphorical or allegorical truths" (xii). This comment is also a pointer to LeRoy's interpretative preferences, which are structural and metaphorical. This approach is laid out very

carefully in the preface and I will cover it in detail in my later comments on *Fabricated World*.

LeRoy first provides the necessary ethnographic data, and what emerges is a not unusual picture of a Highland New Guinea culture. There are patrilineal, patrilocal clans, bride prices of pigs and shells, important kin ties, especially among siblings, and close connections between brothers-in-law. There are Big Men who represent the peak of Kewa success, contrasted to the Little Men, they who occupy the bottom of the Kewa prestige ladder. Over all hang the twin palls of the fear of ghosts and ogres and the sudden death necessitated by the grim laws of vengeance. All this comes through strongly in the tales.

Those interested in the interrelationships of the oral literature of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia will find ample evidence of Oceania-wide motifs and tale types. Transformation of people to animals and birds, the origin of animal and bird characteristics, human-animal marriages, journeys to heaven and the underworld, wealth magically given and lost, taboos established and broken, return of malevolent ghosts, the antics of bloodthirsty ogres—all these fit well into Basil Kirtley's motif index of Oceanic narratives (Kirtley 1955).

William Lessa would also find many tale types for inclusion in his fine comparative study of over two decades ago. There are ogre-type tales aplenty, Swan Maiden accounts, and no end of other tales and Motifs that fit his Oceania-wide sample (Lessa 1961). Similar comparisons exist to my own work: jealous spouses and resentful in-laws, wealth from supernatural sources, and supernatural spouses won and lost (Mitchell 1973). Overall, *Kewa Tales* is a solid contribution to the store of contemporary Oceanic folktales.

There are, however, certain limitations inherent in LeRoy's approach. Instead of motifs and tale types, he chooses to focus on what he calls sequences. Some of them are distinctive enough; such as, Two Brothers, Brother and Sister, and Brother, Sister and Wife. But other sequences carry within them variants to several tales. Such a one is Ghost Attack, for ghosts (if one includes both spirits of the departed and other supernaturals) are many, and the catalysts that call them to action are varied.

Another problem is that LeRoy often fails to distinguish variants from separate tales. He does indicate two variants to The Eel Child, two for The Siblings and The Wildman, and selected others. But many more of these narratives belong under one variant. For example, Tales 4, 5, and 6 are all variants on Kind and Unkind Heroes and their rewards or punishments. Tales 7 and 8 are variants on the theme of unfilial brothers. One could go on. Thus, there are far fewer individual tales in the book than the eighty-two listed in the tale of contents.

Nor has LeRoy made an effort to relate his material to any other material than the structural approach followed in *Fabricated World*. I will also reserve judgment as to whether or not this collection is as representative of the *lidi* genre as LeRoy thinks it is (xii). Sixty-seven of the eighty-two tales (with many being variants) are from *one* village, Karapere, with two other villages furnishing fifteen between them. Nor does LeRoy present any comparative evidence that would indicate his collection is indeed representative of Highland New Guinea tales.

When one turns to *Fabricated World*, it becomes quite apparent why LeRoy gave such short shrift to those old-fashioned concerns of motif, tale type, variant, and comparative analysis. His interests definitely lie elsewhere. Early in his narrative he states: "Once the narratives are ordered and their metaphorical structure deciphered, they are found to allegorize basic issues of everyday social life, chiefly siblingship, marriage, and parent-child relations" (x).

As is made apparent by the above quote, LeRoy is not a traditional anthropological folklorist. While he is willing to accept that oral traditions reflect culture and that such traditions do have specific functions in social life, he takes the position that studies based on functions and reflections are too broad and too general to constitute adequate explanations of a society's narratives (20-21). Rather, LeRoy places his interpretative approach solidly within structuralism, citing specifically his debt to structural poetics and "especially to Propp's formalism" (7).

As is common in structural approaches to oral traditions, LeRoy accepts as a given that the human mind works in terms of paired opposites. Kewa tales are presented as dealing with difficulties within the social domain with "specific conflicts or oppositions". But unlike Lévi-Strauss' "cognitive" or "logical" approach, LeRoy terms his oppositions as "moral" or "ethical", stating that each of the social domains he identifies is "mediated by ideas about the propriety of action" (15).

LeRoy chose to interpret only the *lidi* genre, giving these reasons. First, while *lidi* migrate from community to community, they are fairly impervious to change. Secondly, *lidi* are not tied to historical matters as are legends, nor do they depend upon ritual as do myths. And despite the changes wrought by outside governments, economics, and missionaries, LeRoy feels *lidi* have not "sustained major structural damage" (33).

Unlike many structuralists, LeRoy chooses to interpret series of episodes which groups of tales hold in common rather than whole tales. In his opinion, the highly episodic nature of Kewa tales dictates this approach. Nor is he interested in seeking out "abstract oppositions." While not denying their existence, LeRoy considers oppositions "to be existentially significant only when mediated by social realtions" (14).

The cultural references which he identifies in his collection, he calls "social domains." These domains are largely in the realm of kinship (male siblingship, cross-sex siblingship, sisters-in-law, marriage and virilocality, etc.), with a few of a more general nature (individual and collective growth, cultural being and nonbeing, etc.). Broader oppositions are also identified: Forest and Village, Wild and Domestic, Ceremonial (men's house, dance ground) and Familial (women's house, kitchen gardens, pig hutches).

LeRoy's approach is to divide his tales into narrative episodes ("sequences"). He identifies eleven sequences, some of which are Two Brothers, Brother and Sister, the Trickster Poor-Man, Ghost Attack, and Interdictions. These sequences are fully worked out in an appendix. Each sequence is presented within its frame, where it is divided into its constituent motifs, called "functions." The Brother and Sister Sequence appears thusly:

- i. One of the siblings acts improperly
- ii. The other sibling reproves the first or becomes distant
- iii. The siblings separate
- iv. The siblings rejoin. (275-276)

The tale, "Brother and Sister," contains three different episodes, and LeRoy's approach is to deal only with the one episode which fits the sequence under discussion. The other two episodes will be dealt with within their assigned sequence. He provides the reader with a somewhat abbreviated version of the Brother-Sister episode and follows it with brief outlines of those episodes from several other tales and variants to be considered within this sequence.

Then comes the interpretation. LeRoy finds at the heart of the Brother and Sister sequence the precept that brothers and sisters should be different. For the

sister to so misbehave that all suitors reject her is a denial of the principle of brother-sister difference. For the sister to avoid marriage draws brother-sister too close: "[S]urely at issue is a symbolic incest" (82).

With *Tales of Two Brothers*, the principle identified is that brothers should be similar. That they are in conflict is a denial of this principle. Or, as LeRoy puts it, there is an "absence of brotherhood" (56). The interpretation of these various sequences is, of course, more complex than my brief comments would indicate. For example, the opposing natures of the brothers are made sharper by listing their attributes. The older brother is a gardener, married, and thus domestic. The younger brother is a hunter, unmarried, and thus ancestral and wild.

There is also a wrestling with symbolic figures and actions. Thus with those shapeshifters who can appear first as ugly old men and later as handsome young men, the Kewa are said to be dealing metaphorically with the matter of dual roles; and when the unpromising hero reveals himself, this is symbolic recognition of knowledge. When a starving man eats his own ornaments, he is destroying his cultural self. The hollow tree in which men hide symbolizes a men's house. Sugar cane has phallic significance to the Kewa. To have new life generated in a refuse heap containing discarded sugar cane becomes a reference to the generative power of males.

In an early reference to his own work, the author comments that "[the] paradoxical result is a commentary whose bulk rather overwhelms the texts . . ." (x).

There is certain to be agreement on this self-made point by those students of folklore who are more concerned with complete texts. They will be sure to follow with the complaint that grouping the data by episodes makes it difficult to get a sense of the Kewa folktale as a whole. Those who are well versed in the concepts of motifs and tale variants will point out that the most of LeRoy's functions are common motifs and that he is counting many of his tales more than once.

LeRoy would have, I suspect, little patience with these caveats. He identifies two epistemologies with reference to interpreting folktales. One looks for causes outside the tales. The other looks for metaphors within. And—"only the latter is worth adopting" (141).

Fortunately, the publication of texts and interpretation in two separate volumes allows the reviewer to have it both ways. For those who harbor strong reservations concerning the structural approach, I would recommend *Kewa Tales*. There are the basic data that will stand the test of time. For those of structural persuasion, buy both. You will be treated to a careful interpretation, backed up by plentiful ethnographic information, and all that supported by the complete texts.

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