

cally, allows them greater freedom because of the women's perceived adherence to traditional ways.

But Hoodfar's article is also an example of the shortfalls of an approach that relies heavily on perceptions rather than on theory. She wants to argue against the idea that veiling is indicative of the oppression of women but, whether women veil "voluntarily" or not, since they do so to avoid charges of immorality and to ease their husbands' insecurities over their working, they are at least colluding in an ideology which restricts women's lifestyle choices. Further, despite the claim made in the introduction (p. 1), there is little attempt to link gender ideologies to structural and material conditions. Luck's contribution on the segregation of library jobs is an exception and also tries to deal with women's domestic commitments as a reason for their limited options at work.

This collection will be most useful as a consciousness-raising exercise for women engaged in labour markets as it presents an alternative vision of the work-place experience, and as a source of data to work out some of the connections between material, structural and ideological factors which influence women's position in the work force rather than as an answer to these questions. Finally, there is a value in a collection of articles on quite different topics from the questions that are raised from the conjuncture of information.

Mararoko: A Study in Melanesian Religion

Mary N. MacDonald

New York: Peter Lang, 1991. xvii + 591 pp. \$85.95 (cloth)

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Mararoko is the collective name for six settlements, each centred upon a man's house, occupied by Kewa-speakers in the southern highlands of Papua New Guinea. Mary MacDonald first became acquainted with the Kewa between 1973 and 1977 while a Roman Catholic missionary at a local catechist-training college. She returned through the 1980s as a member of the Melanesian Institute, an ecumenical pastoral centre in Papua New Guinea, and as a doctorate candidate. *Mararoko*, the book, reflects MacDonald's vocation and her continuing commitment to the Kewa people. She places her approach to Kewa religion as "somewhere in the intersection of history of religions, anthropology and theology" (p. 4). MacDonald, however, does not dwell upon such abstract concerns. Her attention lies with Mararoko and its inhabitants. The book provides a roaming description of the changing contexts and contents of local religious life and attitudes, enlivened by anecdotes and narratives concerning individuals. Upon finishing the first part of the book, I felt as if I had attended a loosely organized slide show, in which the presenter's narration nudged me along from one striking picture to the next.

In Part One, MacDonald leads the reader on a winding tour through Kewa cosmology, notions of gender, experience of colonialism, storytelling, rituals and pig exchanges. While she does not explore these subjects at length, MacDonald tells stories about individuals that illuminate familiar cultural institutions in surprising ways. Her account of three healers—two traditional medical practitioners and one aid post ord-

erly—is particularly interesting. MacDonald's treatment of Christianity in this section is also novel and welcome. Rather than opposing Christianity and indigenous religion in the abstract, as many secular academics continue to do, she accepts that Christian elements today form part of the Kewa's common-sense world. It is a world in which ancestral ideas and attitudes, such as notions of spirits and sorcery, also play their part. Unfortunately, MacDonald does not complete her account of Mararoko religion with details of the official Christian presence in Mararoko. She provides little information on church services or the clergy and only passing comments on villagers' attitudes towards the church and its teachings.

The second part of the book, running to more than 300 pages, presents the English translations of 188 Kewa texts in the order MacDonald recorded them between 1981 and 1983. Most are folktales, but the collection also includes histories, spells, songs and descriptions of customs. Apart from a few endnotes and references in Part One, the author lets the narratives speak for themselves. While many of the stories are entertaining, I expect that only experts (including Kewa readers) will possess the background knowledge to appreciate most of the texts.

The book appears to have been hastily prepared. It is overly long, with an unacceptable number of typos and print that too often fades away into thin grey. One must also wonder about the inflated price of the volume, which places it well outside the ability of even the wealthiest Kewa to afford to read their own literature.