Tom Davis (Pa Tuterangi Ariki), ***Island Boy: An Autobiography.*** Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific; Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury; Auckland: Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Auckland, 1992. Pp. 349, illustrations, index.

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Autobiographies come and go. This one will be around for a while. ***Island Boy*** is the tale of a multifaceted and multitalented gentleman. Sir Tom Davis of the Cook Islands over time has worn many different hats, including (in no particular order) those of physician, surgeon, master seaman, writer, illustrator, scientist, scholar, anthropological researcher, statesman, politician, prime minister, Polynesian high chief, and more. In his recent autobiography, Sir Tom offers readers the opportunity to reflect with him on the myriad twists and turns his life has taken.

Sir Tom's autobiography is lively throughout and offered with balance, humor, and considerable self-reflection. There is something in this book for everyone. You are not particularly interested in a Ranfurly Shield rugby game? Then how about a precarious sail on board the ***Miru,*** when the vessel was "a very naked lady fighting for her life and ours" (pp. 108-110)? Are

research studies on physiological adaptation to cold not your favorite topic? Then would you value some insights into ***akakino*** (make bad, i.e., "bad-mouth") in the context of Cook Islands politics?

The chronological organization of this book helps us to outline the significant events in the life of Sir Tom. After his childhood and youth in Rarotonga ('We were unique in . . . our ability to dance anyone off their feet. It was a good way to grow up" [p. 9]), he was sent to boarding school in New Zealand. Homesickness was an initial hurdle ("The new environment and my having come from an entirely different world, now very far away, made what might have been a simple homesickness into a desperate longing, overlaying a feeling of utter loneliness" [p. 11]). His adjustment included learning to accept the fact that in New Zealand it was not proper to greet people one passed on the street.

Focused and adaptable, Sir Tom persevered. Although he reports that "I seemed to get caned every day" at King's College (p. 12), he committed himself early on to a particular course requiring advanced study, that of medicine. Medical training in Dunedin, New Zealand, followed in the years of the depression. "These were the hard years, " he notes (pp. 17-24). "In order to make financial ends meet . . . I worked on the roads, in ditches, in the manure works of Kempthorne and Prosser, on the presses of the wood stores and the wool dumps and for one short time, I was foreman of the gang that tar-sealed the Caledonia Grounds Bicycle Race Track."

Upon the completion of medical studies and several medical apprenticeship positions in New Zealand, Sir Tom returned to the Cook Islands. In spite of some difficulties in convincing the resident commissioner to hire him, Sir Tom took over management of the Cook Islands Government Medical Service. This was a formidable task because considerable upgrading of the system was needed ("May I see the laboratory please, Matron?" "Sorry, Doctor, there is no laboratory" [p. 35]). His new position also necessitated that he be a doctor at sea, sailing for the Northern Cook Islands when medical emergencies there required his expertise. Some of these events are set forth in his 1954 book with Lydia Davis titled ***Doctor to the Islands.***

Sir Tom's chronological tale then is set aside in order to discuss in detail the Polynesians (chapter 4). This chapter is coupled with a lengthy discourse on a lifelong love of Sir Tom's, namely Polynesian navigation (chapter 5). In this portion of the book, Sir Tom presents his anthropological insights in a journalistic manner. He has indicated in other settings as well as in this volume that he is weary of academics, particularly anthropologists, who are inclined to question from the outset the anthropological perspectives of indigenous people who do not have terminal degrees in anthropology. I read Sir Tom's discourse in these chapters with considerable interest and with a great deal of regard.

Sir Tom states that some anthropologists "who had difficulty in believing what Polynesians told them if it differed from their own ideas . . . were led up garden paths of their own making." He explains:

> The practice [by Polynesians] of changing names of people, islands, places, canoes and discussing events a millennium apart as though they were contemporary makes life difficult for anthropologists, historians and students alike. This, along with the missionaries' teaching that Polynesian history was best forgotten, as well as the disbelief of the mobility of Polynesians on the ocean of his home [***sic***], is why the pre-contact history of Polynesia is generally lacking. With these distortions in communications and cultural gaps of understanding, Polynesians learned to be guarded about what they said for fear of ridicule. (P. 55)

Sir Tom indicates that the genealogy of his late wife and himself and their relatives in Eastern Polynesia encompasses 116 generations. How I wish I knew such details of my own Norwegian forebears!

Picking up the chronological account of his life again in chapter 6, after some time in medical service to the Cook Islands, Sir Tom departed Rarotonga for the Boston area in the United States. His destination was the Harvard School of Public Health. Along with earning a Master of Public Health degree at Harvard, some of Sir Tom's singular experiences in the United States included being mistaken for Richard Nixon, experiments with mice that "shivered like crazy," and helping to put a monkey into space for NASA.

Sir Tom's professional training and interests also led him to other projects in faraway places. Among his unforgettable experiences abroad were ten days in a solitary Arctic village, severe altitude sickness in the Himalayas, and overland travel via motorcycle to the Taj Mahal. Sir Tom gives measured consideration to some of his personal traumas throughout this book. He shares difficulties in giving up smoking, fighting and beating cancer, and the challenges of various home, spouse, and family ups and downs.

In 1971, after many years of living overseas, Sir Tom once again returned home to Rarotonga. People he valued were asking him to stand for political office. Now comes an especially interesting part of the book, namely Sir Tom's views of and involvement in the Cook Islands political scene, past and present. (A 1979 publication titled ***Cook Islands Politics,*** edited by Ron Crocombe, tells of significant political events since the Cook Islands gained internal self-government from the point of view of many Cook Islanders.) Sir Tom does not mince words in this section. He names names; he tells tales. Among the more bizarre episodes of the period is that of Milton Byrch. However, we do not find here much on Sir Tom's personal views con-

cerning events in the Cook Islands that drove him from political office. Are the memories too painful for him to retell in detail in this autobiography?

Island Boy is not Sir Tom's first publication. He is the author of over eighty publications, books as well as scientific articles in such prestigious journals as the ***New England Journal of Medicine.*** References to some of his writings can be found in the bibliography at the end of ***Island Boy.*** Since ***Island Boy*** went to press, Sir Tom has completed another publication, titled ***Takitumu,*** that concerns the oceanic voyaging of early Cook Islanders. Sir Tom and a few other local men in Rarotonga are currently building a very large double-hulled canoe called ***Te-Au-O-Tonga.*** They will sail it to the Marquesas Islands in February 1995 to meet the Hawaiian canoes ***Hawai'iloa*** and ***Hokule'a*** and traditional canoes from Tahiti and New Zealand. To reaffirm the cultural, geographical, and historical ties that connect these island nations, the five canoes will travel together back to Hawai'i, with landfall expected in May 1995.

What has Sir Tom not addressed in ***Island Boy*** that begs attention? The topic that immediately comes into my mind is the matter of titles in the Cook Islands, including traditional titles, the more recently created titles, and the meaning of titles in the present-day context. Sir Tom does not go into details about his own title in this volume. The reader cannot help but wonder to what extent Sir Tom's traditional title has influenced his political ambitions and fortunes. Elsewhere I have expressed concern with regard to the matter of titles in the Cook Islands (Stephenson 1991). Mokoroa (1984) explored the traditional titles of Atiu in the Southern Cooks in a way that was very informative. But what of Rarotonga, where Sir Tom's title is housed? Sir Tom does mention status and role in the context of Cook Islands titles. Regarding his young years, for example, he shares the following: "Our reception at the dock [on our return to Rarotonga] was a royal one. The elderly ladies, as was the custom, went down on their knees wailing real tears onto our feet and wiping them off with their long gray hair. For me it was a most unnerving and humbling experience" (p. 14). And also, on the same occasion: "We went to Makea's Palace [in Rarotonga] to be formally welcomed back and to have morning tea with the Paramount Chief and his immediate family The crowd was large and the food was, as was the custom, abundant. But the seating was just for the immediate family, my mother, Mary and I, again as was the custom" (p. 14).

In his next publication, Sir Tom is encouraged to set forth his knowledge concerning the nature of titles and titleholding, both historical and contemporary, in the Cook Islands. Such a writing would be a most valuable contribution to our understanding of Cook Islands society.

Modern anthropologists work very closely together with the subjects of

our research. Key informants of times past now likely serve as co-principal investigators on our projects. In the course of contemporary fieldwork, people we encounter are much more than our translators or cheerleaders. We are reminded of the considerable value of these outsider/insider linkages in Pacific Islands anthropological research (see, for example, Kurashina and Stephenson 1985). In this light, Sir Tom's autobiography merits careful study and thought.

Autobiographies of senior scholars in anthropology seem to be in vogue these days (e.g., Cressman 1988; Thompson 1991; and others). Relatively rare are life histories of and by prominent Pacific Islanders. ***Island Boy*** is a very fine book. It is a significant contribution to contemporary anthropological studies of Polynesia, especially with regard to the Cook Islands. ***Meitaki tikai koe;*** good on you, Sir Tom!

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