

# BOOK REVIEWS

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*Matariki: The star of the year*. Matamua, Rangi. (2017). Wellington, New Zealand: Huia. 118 pp. ISBN: 9781775503255. Book review DOI: 10.20507/MAIJournal.2017.6.2.7

I first met Matariki outside a party in a sheep station at Pōrangahau on the East Coast. It was the New Year's Eve of 1993 and I still remember the encounter vividly. Around 11 pm I stepped out of the party for a moment; as I walked away from the sheep shed I was halted in my tracks by beams of light descending from a brilliant glow of a concentrated group of stars. I stood and stared in amazement. On that dark sky, in that remote location with nil light pollution, Matariki was truly awe-inspiring. I te haehae ngā hihi o Matariki! The rays of Matariki are beaming!

That magical incident inspired a lifelong desire in me to learn about astronomy, and in particular Māori astronomy. Three years later, in preparation for a 30-day sailing trip on Te Aurere, I had Matariki carved, front and centre, on a moko on my right arm. Matariki is always the first star I seek out in the night sky. When visible, it is the opportunity to mihi to an old friend. The mystical effect of Matariki has clearly been felt over time by countless other stargazers too, hence the name Matariki—te whetū tapu o te tau.

Māori, and all New Zealanders, are extremely fortunate that this book, *Matariki: The Star of the Year*, has been published. We are fortunate that in the late 1880s Te Kōkau Himiona Te Pikikotuku, a tohunga of Tūhoe and Ngāti Pikiao, and his son Rāwiri Te Kōkau began

to compile a manuscript of Māori astronomical knowledge. We are fortunate that Rāwiri passed this manuscript on to his grandson Timi Rawiri, who in 1995 passed it on to his grandson Rangi Matamua. But mostly we are fortunate that Rangi Matamua is the author of this book. Rangi has spent over 20 years studying the contents of this mātauranga tuku iho and undertaking his own research into Indigenous and ancient star knowledge. A reo Māori and tikanga Māori tohunga in his own right, Rangi has used his background in his analysis of this knowledge and it is from this unique perspective that the book was written. Rangi Matamua is the leading authority on Māori astronomy, so his name could not be more apt!

In recent times attempts have been made to re-establish a number of Māori traditions, generally by Māori, or at organisations where Māori are working. At the forefront of these are celebrations of the Māori New Year and subsequently Matariki. Unfortunately, and despite the best of intentions, many of these functions are held at an incorrect day or time and in a manner incongruous to Māori tradition. This book serves to correct misconceptions about Matariki and provides guidance to those wishing to celebrate the Māori New Year. It delivers the authoritative Māori perspective on (a) the meaning of the name Matariki, (b) when

Matariki should be celebrated, (c) how Matariki should be celebrated, (d) rising and setting significance, (e) the stars within Matariki and (f) other stars associated with Matariki.

From a Western science perspective, astronomy is a natural science that studies celestial objects and phenomena. It should not be confused with astrology, which is not a science but a belief system that human affairs can be divined by the position of the celestial objects. The author states that Māori star lore is the “blending together of both astronomy and astrology, and while there is undoubtedly robust science within the Māori study of the night sky, the spiritual component has always been of equal importance” (p. 2).

The book is well referenced, highlighting the author’s wide-ranging knowledge, including references to Te Kokau’s manuscript. The style of writing is not technical or overtly academic, despite the extensive referencing. It has a direct manner but still finds opportunities for poetical allusions. This makes it an easy read for any audience. The decision to write the book in English is an interesting one, given the author’s staunch support of te reo Māori. However, providing this information in English does mean the misconceptions the author is trying to address can reach a wider audience.

It is very difficult to portray something so dazzling in the night sky on flat pages in a hard copy book. But Rangi has done this brilliantly. He has shared some beautiful photography, all of which would make stunning wall posters. The supporting diagrams and maps have been on point, aptly supporting what is being described in the texts. And the artwork by Te Haunui Tuna is truly outstanding; it captures the wairua of te whānau mārama in a truly uniquely Māori way, embodying the tikanga that is being shared by the author.

While celebrating Matariki, the book also lays down some challenges. It challenges us to return to traditional practices in how we pay deference to the deceased, with how we revitalise Māori spirituality and with how we utilise star

observation and knowledge. In bringing clarity and direction around the timing of Matariki, the book challenges us to celebrate this annual New Zealand phenomenon with integrity and from an informed perspective.

As Rangi explains, the Māori *lunar* system of time does not map consistently to the Gregorian *solar* system of time (p. 40). Hence, setting the Māori New Year date as a single date, or even a single month, each year is not possible. But what is possible is defining a range of days, which varies over the years, when Matariki should be celebrated. These proposed celebration days have been listed until the year 2050 (p. 58).

As Matariki signals the beginning of the year, it is hoped that this book signals the beginning of many more to come from its author. Clearly, the book was written in English so that it could be read by a wider audience, and could influence a larger pool of misinformed people. But when English is used, the depth of Māori thinking cannot be expressed fully. While the author has done an admirable job here, there is much anticipation for future publications and the future knowledge to be shared by this author in te reo Māori.

Kāti. Nei rā ka mihi aroha ki te kaituhi me te taonga tuku iho nei i runga i te whakaaro; ki te kore te mātauranga e tohaina, ka kore he mātauranga.

## Glossary

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|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| mātauranga tuku iho    | knowledge descended from above |
| mihi                   | greet                          |
| moko                   | Māori tattoo                   |
| te reo Māori           | the Māori language             |
| te whetū tapu o te tau | The sacred star of the year    |
| tikanga Māori          | Māori customs                  |
| tohunga                | expert                         |
| wairua                 | spirit                         |
| whānau mārama          | heavenly bodies                |

## Review author

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*Te manu kai i te mātauranga: Indigenous psychology in Aotearoa/New Zealand.* Waitoki, Waikaremoana, and Levy, Michelle (Eds.). (2016). Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Psychological Society. ISBN: 9780473345457. Book review DOI: 10.20507/MAIJournal.2017.6.2.8

The need to recruit and train Māori as health professionals both to contribute to the overall health workforce and to meet the needs of Māori communities is well documented (Curtis, Wikaire, Stokes, & Reid, 2012; Ratima et al., 2007; Waitoki & Levy, 2015). However, recent literature also reports Māori students and health professionals being exposed to institutional and personally mediated racism, expectations of cultural expertise and limited curriculum and/or professional development in Indigenous health (Huria, Cuddy, & Pitama, 2014; Jones et al., 2010; Pitama, 2012). To date, there have been limited published accounts of how Māori health professionals integrate cultural and clinical expertise within a clinical environment or how they personally navigate working within Māori communities as both an insider (Māori community member) and an outsider (health professional).

*Te Manu Kai i Te Mātauranga: Indigenous Psychology in Aotearoa/New Zealand* is a bold move under the leadership of Dr Waikaremoana Waitoki and Dr Michelle Levy to provide a resource for Indigenous health professionals working with/alongside Māori clients and their whānau in mental health settings. It is a forum where Indigenous psychologists are writing for an Indigenous health workforce audience. It claims and owns this uncharted territory within the literature.

The introduction of the book presents the case study of Ripeka. It provides specific details

about Ripeka's case history and the complexities that underlie her presentation. The case clearly outlines how a non-Māori clinician determined her diagnosis in absence of any understanding of either the cultural realities for Ripeka or knowledge of te ao Māori. The rest of the book comprises 16 chapters, each with a different author or authors who explore and examine Ripeka's case from a practice perspective/paradigm.

What is interesting about this book is that the authors, who are from different fields of psychology, use their own area of expertise to explore and reconceptualise Ripeka's presentation. This leads to each chapter of the book having quite a different writing style and presentation. Some chapters take on the format of creative writing while others are presented in a more traditional academic style. This change in writing style can lead the reader to find the book at times difficult to navigate. In most chapters, there is no lead-in paragraph that establishes the paradigm in which the author has chosen to explore Ripeka's case. Instead, most chapters have to be read with the perspective that the paradigm will unfold and become clearer throughout the chapter. The paradigms vary from neuropsychology, education and palliative care through to wairuatanga.

Some readers may find the various writing styles disconcerting; however, I believe they will also conclude that it is a strength of the book. The practice of psychology, unlike other fields