

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*Matters of the heart: A history of intermarriage in New Zealand.* Wanhalla, Angela (2013). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press. 231 pp. ISBN: 978-1-86940-731-5.

Angela Wanhalla's *Matters of the Heart: A History of Interracial Marriage in New Zealand* brilliantly captures the frequently contradictory accounts of "interracial relationships" forged in the early period of contact leading up to colonialism and beyond. With exceptional attention to chronological and social detail she takes the reader on an historical romp traversing a 200-year period between the 1770s and the 1970s. The narratives of intimate encounters between Māori and Pākehā (and Māori and other ethnic groups such as Chinese) are embedded in the histories of the early European explorers, the extractive industries of flax, sealing, whaling and the timber trade, and the communities that were created during these interchanges. The impact of the missionaries with Christian attitudes towards sexuality and monogamy are also discussed and analysed with reference to the missionary agenda to "tame" the lawless Pākehā men and to "civilise" Māori women. Major themes of race, gender, racial amalgamation, racial assimilation and the "science" of miscegenation are interspersed throughout the text and also appear in dedicated chapters. Apprehensions about "interracial marriage" are also explored in the context of post-World War II and the changing attitudes towards social relations and the family unit within New Zealand society. Māori urbanisation, Wanhalla argues, was perceived as an area of concern as there were assumptions that as more Māori came to live in the cities there would be more "interracial marriage" and inevitably these

unions would break down. These assumptions were embedded in cultural racism and stereotypes which constructed Māori men as being unstable husbands, and Māori women as being sexually promiscuous (p. 143).

Throughout these historical time-lines and major themes, Wanhalla provides both successful and unsuccessful examples of "interracial marriage" and cohabitation. There are a number of stories of couples facing unexpected cultural differences and prejudice from family and friends and there are also some particularly poignant stories of cross-cultural relationships. The story of native agent George Wilkinson, for example, whose diaries detail several long-term relationships with Māori women where he chronicles how much he loves his "wives" and family, is both intriguing and fascinating (p. 102).

Wanhalla also broaches a broader field of colonial racial and sexual politics in her accounts of marriages between European women and Māori men. While such unions were relatively low during the 19th century, when they did occur they incited much public discussion and outrage. Such women were frequently "regarded as being beyond redemption" (p. 113). However, it was acceptable for white women associated with churches or education to marry Māori men (particularly if the men were wealthy) in order to civilise and Christianise them and Wanhalla provides several such examples.

The personal narratives in *Matters of the*

*Heart* can be viewed as foundation stories of whakapapa and nationhood, and also stories of how public policy has impacted upon private lives “played out” in New Zealand’s changing attitudes towards race and intimate relationships. Wanhalla points out that interracial marriage was never legally prohibited in New Zealand and reminds us that racial amalgamation was a fundamental aspect of the colonial project during the 1830s and 1840s. Indeed, New Zealand’s marriage laws were fostered by a philosophy of racial amalgamation with an underpinning discourse of creating a nation of social intermixing where Māori and non-Māori could become “one people”. Racial amalgamation was also connected to the civil rights and sexual freedom of the male European colonisers, especially control over marital property, land ownership and inheritance, and eventually had serious implications for Māori communities and traditional Māori culture (p. 47).

*Matters of the Heart* provides a significant summary and insight into an aspect of cultural identity and social history that has had little scholarly attention. However, its concentration on a 200-year span has resulted in a somewhat generalised overview. Additional excerpts from documents of life, such as letters, diaries, journals and the like, would have provided a more in-depth scrutiny of inter-marriage and personalised the stories giving an “insider” perspective into the challenges and tensions as well as the joys and triumphs of the couples and families.

Despite these limitations, Dr. Wanhalla is to be commended for producing a rigorously researched, formidable and impressive scholarly text which manages to combine academia with a lively and engaging narrative style. The text is well supplemented with a number of beautifully depicted images and photographs adding a visual discourse which both complements and enhances the narrative. An extensive index, notes and bibliography also enhance and augment the text. *Matters of the Heart* will be of particular interest to descendants of “interracial marriage” between Māori and tau iwi and those interested in interracial relationships in general, as well as those readers who have an interest in Māori history and New Zealand social history.

### Glossary

Pākehā	New Zealanders of European descent
tau iwi	non-Māori
whakapapa	family history, genealogies

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*Working as allies: Supporters of indigenous justice reflect.* Margaret, Jen. (2013). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland Workers Education Association. 207 pp. ISBN 978-0-473-26238-9.

Over a number of years, elders in the Tiriti movement have explained the Tiriti relationship to me (at an operational/activist level) to be like when Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire danced together in the 1930s and 1940s—a visual symphony of negotiation. Within this analogy Fred Astaire, the indigenous partner, leads and Ginger Rogers, the invited Pākehā

partner, follows his lead. On the outside it looks effortless but within Ginger’s head as she dances backwards there is a lot going on. Jen Margaret, in this treasure-trove of interviews with practising Tiriti workers and allies supporting indigenous justice, allows the reader a glimpse of what is going on inside Ginger’s head. Margaret’s work is driven by a commitment to