

within the whanau will shape research outcomes? Smith's book is a valuable summary of contemporary Maori thinking concerning research practice, and will stimulate debate across a wide range of disciplines.

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Ngā Kura Māori: the Native Schools System 1867–1969. Edited by Judith Simon. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1998. 157 pp. NZ price: \$34.95. ISBN 1-86940-192-1.

NGĀ KURA MĀORI: the Native Schools System 1867–1969 is a product of the International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education (IRI) project. The project aims to create an oral history and document database on the Native Schools system. Editor Judith Simon states that this book is 'a work in progress': the IRI project is still gathering and analysing data for a more comprehensive publication in the future. *Ngā Kura Māori* is obviously a labour of love. It makes no claims to being a comprehensive history of the Native Schools system. Instead, it attempts to highlight selected aspects of the research conducted thus far, and to give an insight into the world of the Native Schools. This it does very well. It depicts everyday school life with many quotations from past pupils and teachers, aided by an excellent range of photographs and accounts of school and community activities. It is beautifully laid out and is an easily accessible work. This is a history which the participants can read and have affinity with. In places it is a little rough around the edges, but Simon acknowledges this and makes the excellent point that, inherent in the nature of this book, is a response to 'fulfil the sense of obligation implied in a Maori research approach': an effort to involve, share and return to the people knowledge that is essentially theirs. The historical discipline could learn a thing or two from such an approach.

In terms of approach the book manages to avoid the homiletic tone of other, similar, works. The conclusion notes that the project was written particularly for those who had been involved with the schools, and this comes through in its many anecdotes of school life. The book is a taonga in its collection of irreplaceable oral histories. Thankfully, these life histories are not submerged beneath the critical analysis which the authors have also employed, and upon which the discipline of education is so dependent. While the authors state that the research reveals the Native Schools as 'sites of struggle' between Maori educational aspirations and Pakeha state policies, 'which operated to control and limit Maori life changes', the human factor is not passed over. The authors are content, especially in the parts of the book best supported with oral testimony, to let the narratives speak for themselves. This is in contrast to Barrington and Beaglehole's book on Native Schools, which gives Maori reduced agency.¹ The stories are not always happy childhood reminiscences, and the nature of the schools as tools of assimilation are displayed through stories of violence towards, and ill-treatment of, Maori by Pakeha educationalists, intent on their 'civilising mission'.

One of the strengths of the book is that it is written from an holistic perspective. Native Schools are viewed as merely a part, albeit an important part, of life in Maori communities. While attention is paid to what the children were taught inside the classroom, much of the book's value lies in the view provided of Maori community life, especially in the inter-war period. Accounts of children's school lunches which included corn on the cob, dried shark, shellfish, wild pork and watermelon, with takakau bread as a staple, not only gives valuable historical

data but also provides a revealing insight into the subsistence economy of the time. The book also gives tantalizing glimpses into the dynamics of the relationship between the community and the institution. The role of teachers as agents of the state are highlighted, and the teachers' growing 'number eight fencing wire' approach to race relations is an interesting development. Parallels can be drawn with today's kura kaupapa movement, and the relationships between community and state at a grassroots level.

The book also has an excellent section on the community health role of the Native Schools. One recollection tells of the difference in approach between a Pakeha teacher and a kuia regarding a boil on a child's bottom. The teacher reflects that 'the child's bottom represented a site of cultural struggle', an example of the book's analysis mediated by aroha. Such history furthers the depth of Maori community-hapu histories, for which there is a great need.

Ngā Kura Māori is a new and interesting type of history, which avoids a pretentiously objective approach and at the same time never descends into rampant nostalgia. It is an important work, and leaves a hunger for more to come.

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1 J.M. Barrington and T.H. Beaglehole, *Maori Schools in a Changing Society: An Historical Review*, Wellington, 1974.

Patrons of Maori Culture: Power, Theory and Ideology in the Maori Renaissance. By Steven Webster. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 1998. 275 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877133-48-5.

IN THE LAST two decades research and writings on aspects of contemporary Māori culture and society have been transformed by the interpretations of Māori scholars such as Ranginui Walker, Mason Durie, Lindsay Cox, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Graham Smith and Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, to name a few. Much of their work in the fields of Māori education, Māori health, contemporary Māori society, Māori history and sociology has been firmly grounded in the matrix of Māori experience and aspirations. In contrast, other approaches and explanations of the lives of Māori people have been written by researchers who have drawn conclusions that, at best, have only a remote connection to contemporary Māori realities and lifeways. Steven Webster's compilation of eight revised essays written between 1984 and 1994 stands firmly within this latter genre. *Patrons of Maori Culture* is an anthropological study of contemporary Māori culture that continues the work of earlier fieldworkers in ethnographic studies (such as Raymond Firth, Allan Hanson, Jeff Sissons and, more recently, Elizabeth Rata) who have constructed (and interpreted) 'Māori culture' within Western paradigms as, in Webster's words 'detached . . . professional outsiders' (p.10).

Webster's essays fall into three main themes: culture and the ideological notion of Māori culture as 'a whole way of life'; the history of the notion of 'Māori culture' in New Zealand; and the development of 'Māori culture' within a university setting.

In chapters 1 and 2 Webster introduces the idea of a Māori cultural renaissance and the political economic ambiguities set in the context of ethnic politics. The ethnographic description (chapter 2) of the social and ritual encounters between a group of Māori visitors and the local people on the island of Rapanui provides a less-than-convincing account. The author's assertion that 'I myself was always torn between anthropological fascination and an impulse to escape a level of