

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

participation' (p.61) encapsulates the level at which the indigenous interactions are reduced to objective descriptors, which lack the personal insights that derive from being an active participant.

Chapters 3 to 5 examine the history of the notion of 'Māori Culture' in New Zealand over three time periods: the 1920s, the 1950s–1960s and the 1970s–1990s. The inclusion of Apirana Ngata in chapter 3 is at odds with the rest of the anthropologists and administrators, as described. While Pitt-Rivers, Best, Firth and Keesing fit the author's description of social anthropologists as those who 'live in and study . . . cultures, societies or social sectors other than our own' (p.10), Ngata certainly does not answer this description. His work in the field of Māori cultural studies was based on his intimate knowledge and expertise in Māori language and culture, as a Māori statesman and Ngāti Porou leader. Moreover, it was this perspective and his expertise in matters Māori that informed his understanding of Western theories, including those of anthropology. The analysis relating to Ngata's view of Māori culture and social organization (p.101) shows the limitations of applying Western theoretical frameworks. There is further proof of this throughout the book. The strength of this book lies in chapter 4, an interesting overview of the work and influence of anthropologist Ralph Piddington at Auckland University.

The last group of essays (chapters 6 through 8) are three case studies set at Auckland University. These studies document the development of Māori studies, the establishment of the university marae and the emergence of post-structuralist theories of Māori culture in academic discourse. Of particular note is an interesting account in chapter 7 of master carver Paki Harrison's unconventional views on tapu related to carving traditions (p.219).

Taken as a whole, *Patrons of Maori Culture* suffers in part from the time-frame in which it was written. Webster writes at a distance from those he is studying. He applies theoretical frameworks that are inappropriate and thus fail to provide adequate explanations. His approach contrasts with that taken by Dame Joan Metge and by Dame Anne Salmond in her ethnographic work, of which Webster is critical (p.174). Salmond's engagement with Māori people has often been at the request of Māori themselves, due in part to her close association with Māori communities on the East Coast. In her ethnographic work with Māori elders, Salmond acts as a vehicle or conduit for the information. Her facility in the Māori language, the experiences and insights gained while researching and working among Māori people provide the basis for her conceptualization of Māori culture and the development of a 'local anthropology'. Webster's writing style unwittingly reverts to patronizing overtones: 'I noted the lack of cultural awareness among Māori children' (p.27). Then there is the literal translation of Māori terms 'whakaringaringa (give it hands) . . . whakawaewae (give it legs)' (p.83) that even in the context in which they are used here, are banal and which serve no other purpose than to denigrate the Māori language.

For the Māori student or the student of Māori culture, *Patrons of Maori Culture* tells us more about 'how anthropologists think' and about anthropology as a discipline in Aotearoa at the turn of the millennium than it does about the realities of contemporary Māori society. It tells us about the desire of anthropologists to continue to tell indigenous people what they already know: that the culture they have now is not the one they had in the past. Yet for all its problems, *Patrons of Maori Culture* has scholarly merit. True to the discipline, the author has demonstrated abundant capacity to apply theoretical constructs to real-life situations and to illustrate the niceties of anthropological research and practice. In that sense, this book will serve as a passing marker in the ongoing evolution of New Zealand's own brand of scholarship.