

In/visible Sight: The Mixed-Descent Families of Southern New Zealand. By Angela Wanhalla. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2009. viii + 208pp. NZ price: \$39.99. ISBN 978-1-877242-43-4.

NGAI TAHU COMMUNITIES were without doubt impacted early and hard by contact and colonization. In the early period, much of this contact was driven by Ngai Tahu themselves, particularly in the form of intermarriage between Ngai Tahu women and male whalers as Ngai Tahu sought to bind newcomers to their communities. In the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries, intermarriage became a potent symbol of the success of assimilationist policy, measuring the integration of Maori into imported European ideas of civilization. Intermarriage continues to be a force in New Zealand society, binding New Zealanders to both Maori and Pakeha identities, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of what it means to be a New Zealander.

In a personal journey of reclamation, Wanhalla sets out to examine what it has meant to her and her forebears to be intimately connected with the history of marriage between Ngai Tahu and Pakeha. Wanhalla takes this journey with her ancestors by exploring family memories and accounts, including oral interviews and personal written communication from 2003, as well as by drawing on more public material. Putting this material together, she builds an at times blurry image of a community struggling to survive the impact of colonization though ultimately rekindling its links to kin and environment, even if the environment is now a more urban landscape and not the wetlands of the Taieri.

Wanhalla begins at the beginning, both personally, with her father's story, and chronologically in outlining some of the earliest points of contact between Maori and Pakeha, many of which existed in the southern regions of the South Island. She outlines her father's ambiguous identification with his Ngai Tahu ancestry, evolving in his later years into pride and a reconnection with iwi and place. Wanhalla searches for explanations as to why her father had to make the reconnection, and how it was that a once vibrant community melted into physical obscurity. Her underlying thesis is that the lives of the people of the community of Maitapapa (also known as Henley, on the northern bank at the head of the lower Taieri River Gorge) were 'overshadowed by a history of interracial marriage'. Her aim is to investigate 'the processes whereby community and individual identity were transformed by a sustained pattern of inter-racial marriage' (pp.1-2).

After briefly exploring the role of and rituals around marriage in traditional Maori communities, she begins her investigation of interracial marriage and its effects on the community of Maitapapa with the arrival of (mainly) European whalers from the 1790s. Ngai Tahu, she says, actively pursued and arranged marriages of Ngai Tahu women to the whalers, to draw the whalers into their community. She brings to life the story of Patahi, one of her own ancestors and a woman who clearly had to find great inner strength to endure the trials life placed in her way in the form of surviving inter-tribal wars, resisting an arranged marriage, marrying a whaler for love, ultimately being abandoned by that whaler and then being denied access to their two daughters. It is in sharing stories such as this, with personal insight to offer in addition to the empirical record, that Wanhalla's work comes to life.

With a pause to explain the arrival of the New Zealand Company and the failure of the company's 'tenth' system, Wanhalla turns to explain colonial native reserves policy and the beginning of the end of the Maitapapa community as the land reserved from the Otakou Purchase of 1844 was successively whittled down and subdivided into smaller and increasingly uneconomic parcels. Using historical analysis of the North American 'reservation' policy, she asserts that native reserves in New Zealand were to be 'geographically bounded "native spaces", designed to be distinct and separate from European settlements' (p.71). It is with this assertion that some notable contradictions in her conclusions begin to become apparent. In the next chapter, she outlines the assimilation policies that drove much of the Crown's tacit encouragement of intermarriage between

Maori and settlers, and the census enumerators overt counting of the success of assimilation through intermarriage by recording the number of 'half castes living as Maori' and 'half castes living as Europeans'. These observations and policies were not about bounding Maori off from European New Zealanders but instead were concerned with trying to make Maori more like Pakeha. Meanwhile it is only a short few pages since Wanhalla outlined the New Zealand Company's unfulfilled policy of setting aside every tenth section for Maori. What was the tenths policy about if not dispersing Maori throughout settler society, rather than fencing Maori off from it?

For the remainder of the book, Wanhalla focuses on the small settlement of Maitapapa and the fragments of family stories she is able to piece together. With this focus, she is again on firmer ground. Coming into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, she is able to increasingly draw on personal, first-hand accounts of some of the families of Maitapapa, including a wonderful contribution to the public history of Southern New Zealand in the unpublished memoirs of Thomas Brown. She uses interviews and personal communications with some of her Maitapapa-descent kin to fill in some of the gaps, and these too offer a valuable contribution to the public record.

The story that Wanhalla tells is most compelling when she uses such primary sources. She writes of real people, real affection and real loss. It is when she is sharing these intimate stories, carefully researched and drawn, that Wanhalla is at her strongest. A particularly generous contribution is the sharing of family photos throughout the book. The captions to the photos provide some of the deepest insights into the story of Maitapapa, and they give a real human dimension to the 'place' of Maitapapa. However, the significance of the photos and the importance of many of the characters reflecting out from them are not apparent until towards the end of the book. On a practical level, it would have been useful to list the photos at the front of the book, so the reader could move quickly between them. Similarly, provision of a family tree (not a whakapapa, but an outline of some of the key Pakeha ancestors and their descendants, such as Edwin Palmer, whose surname is mentioned throughout, and who shines out in person from two photos placed towards either end of the book) would have added considerable value. As it is, the significance of the inter-linkages and how individuals relate to one another and to Wanhalla's main thesis are not always apparent.

The underlying assertion of *In/visible Sight* is that it is the process of intermarriage that shoulders the bulk of responsibility for the loss of Ngai Tahu identity experienced by the descendants of the Maitapapa community. Wanhalla's ultimate conclusion is that intermarriage 'contributed to the eventual loss of community and an erosion of cultural ties to Maitapapa and to Ngai Tahu. The result was the dispersal of families in search of better economic opportunities, and their assimilation into mainstream New Zealand society'. But judged against the bulk of her own evidence, this conclusion is not very convincing, and from the evidence presented, it could equally be said that intermarriage held the community together. For example, she shares numerous photos of extended family outings where all the participants are descended from particular whalers and their Ngai Tahu wives, and in her writing she draws numerous pictures of extended kin networks, not only binding the families of Maitapapa together, but also linking them to related Ngai Tahu communities further afield, including at Rakiura and at Taumutu, near Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

Wanhalla gives only very brief mention to other Ngai Tahu communities and does not draw any comparisons, though many related communities would have experienced similar rates of intermarriage and similar pressures on resources at the same time as the community of Maitapapa. The Maitapapa community did not go through these changes alone; Ngai Tahu and iwi and hapu communities everywhere in New Zealand experienced the same social pressures, including the loss of their resource bases. Meanwhile the Pakeha settler community was itself subject to social pressures and expectations; for

example, an expectation to marry rather than live with one's partner, and to be self-sufficient rather than a burden on the state. That these expectations were extended to Maori is not particularly surprising and does not appear logically to lead to dispersion of communities more than any other pressure exerted by the colonial state – aside from the fact that many Maori communities no longer had an adequate resource base from which they could provide for themselves.

Above all, it does not seem particularly plausible that the process of intermarriage – as Wanhalla says, actively sought by Ngai Tahu, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, and with no evidence provided that at any point Ngai Tahu actively opposed it, or particularly even dwelt on the matter – caused communities such as Maitapapa to disperse. It seems much more plausible that lack of land and opportunity caused communities to disperse, then as today. Unfortunately for Ngai Tahu, the iwi experienced massive land alienation in a very short space of time. The destructive impact of rapid land alienation seems a far more likely cause of dispersal of community than the slow binding and re-binding process of interracial marriage. The failure to explore even briefly the experiences of other Maori communities is frustrating. These communities did not necessarily experience the high and early levels of intermarriage that Southern Ngai Tahu did, but they do generally share a history of land loss and associated loss of opportunity at 'home'.

The bulk of Wanhalla's own evidence, if not her conclusions, is that it was land loss that caused the community at Maitapapa to disperse. She rightly allocates considerable space to describing the creation of the native reserves at Maitapapa. As she describes, the Maitapapa reserve area was one of three areas of land reserved by Ngai Tahu from the Otakou Purchase of 1844. Together the three reserves totalled 9615 acres. When the Native Land Court sat in May 1868 to determine ownership of the Taieri portions, the Taieri reserve was subdivided into three parcels: the first of 1173 acres, the second of 565 acres and the third also of 565 acres. The parcels were shared between the Taieri community and kin from Foveaux Strait and Otakou. That is, around 2300 acres were all that remained for the Maitapapa community and this they had to share with kin resident elsewhere.

Meanwhile, the population was growing, with a number of Maitapapa residents having large families. Many of these families were of mixed descent – for example, in 1878 67 of the 74 residents at Maitapapa were recorded as 'half caste', while the 1896 census suggests that around half of Ngai Tahu's population was of mixed descent (pp. 43, 62). (Again, the evidence suggests that it is not just the community at Maitapapa that was experiencing continuing and high levels of intermarriage). Whether marriage with outsiders was any worse for the Maitapapa community than marriage within is unclear. What is clear is that it was inevitable that members of the community would have to move away to look for new, non-customary land-based opportunities and that this would cause a shift in their identification of 'home'.

Wanhalla finishes relatively abruptly with clear optimism and pride in being a product of intermarriage (though she suggests it was a source of past shame for some descendants, without being clear whether this shame was due to having denied Ngai Tahu whakapapa, or in not being white enough). She concludes that 'The cultural identity of the Maitapapa community has survived: it still exists today in images, in memory, and in family narratives. In this respect, community can exist beyond a spatial boundary, and well beyond its physical loss' (p.158).

Intermarriage is a powerful reality of New Zealand's past and future. Taking this longer view enables a more positive perspective on how intermarriage has in reality worked to some extent as Ngai Tahu leaders, when first coming into contact with Pakeha newcomers, designed; it has worked to strengthen identification with iwi. The short-term view suggests that the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century enumerators were proven right – Ngai Tahu communities were for a time largely dispersed within New Zealand society. But this approach does not explain the fact that Ngai Tahu remains a vital and vibrant iwi.

Taking the longer view, it is more likely that, instead of weakening the 'Ngai Tahu-ness' of the community, intermarriage has played a major role in supporting and sustaining it. Whether it is due to the inclusiveness of whakapapa and the strength of Maori identity, to considerable foresight shown by Maori communities first interacting with Pakeha, and/or to broader global processes, iwi populations continue to grow and a fair proportion of that growth remains due to both historical and current intermarriage. While asserting that intermarriage contributed to the dispersal of Maitapapa families in search of better economic opportunities, and their assimilation into mainstream New Zealand society, Wanhalla's own research suggests that intermarriage has ultimately worked to support the future of Ngai Tahu by drawing Maitapapa descendants back into the Ngai Tahu community, and thereby extending the voice of Ngai Tahu at every level of New Zealand society. It is intriguing to wonder what nineteenth-century census enumerators would make of that.

KATE RIDDELL

Wellington

This Horrid Practice: The Myth and Reality of Traditional Maori Cannibalism. By Paul Moon. Penguin, Auckland, 2008. 303 pages. NZ price: \$40.00. ISBN 978-0-14-300671-8.

IN PUTTING TANGATA WHENUA on trial for the crime of cannibalism Paul Moon was confronted with an evidential deficit: a lack of support at any archaeological site anywhere in New Zealand with which to make his case, a matter he concedes (pp.115–6).¹ Thus, in order to overcome this lack and turn a foundational metaphor of capitalist imperialism into 'a comprehensive history' (p.11), he relied on the penny dreadfuls of early colonial literature and a naïve literalism to read them. The result is a pot pourri of fantasy predilections seasoned with courtroom jargon.

Take the main title: the book's back cover, as well as its epigraph (p.9), tells us it is derived from a sentence attributed to 'Captain James Cook'. The sentence, however, was invented by John Hawkesworth, commissioned by the Admiralty to make Cook's *Endeavour* journal suitable for general publication.² Fond of 'the "slab" technique', Hawkesworth interpolated the sentence into his narrative in order to link a passage he had taken from Joseph Banks's journal, modified and put into Cook's voice, to a passage he had edited from Cook's journal to give the impression that the latter was a continuation of the former and that all was Cook's work.³ Given this elementary gaffe, and that the front cover illustration is a formulaic depiction of savagism produced in nineteenth-century Paris by an artist who almost certainly never visited New Zealand, we might be forgiven for thinking that *This Horrid Practice* refers not to its subtitle but to the author's praxis.

Promoting himself as an intrepid seeker of truth in an area where others have feared to tread, Moon opined on National Radio that 'cannibalism has been the one subject in New Zealand history that has been effectively fenced off. If you look at Keith Sinclair's *History of New Zealand*, I think he devoted all of one sentence to cannibalism. Michael King of course didn't even mention it in his history of New Zealand.'⁴ That claim is repeated in *This Horrid Practice* (p.14), despite King, although not indexing 'cannibalism', referring to it at pages 35, 87, 97, 106, 108, 132, 134–5 and 180 of *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. This is a schoolboy error which should have set alarm bells ringing at Penguin given that it had published King's bestseller just five years earlier.

Another example of the 'accurate and penetrating scholarship' found in 'this brilliant study', as Penguin described Moon's book, may be found at Chapter 9 (pp.64–75).⁵ There Moon presents four different versions of an incident, recorded by Cook, Hawkesworth, Banks and Sydney Parkinson in January 1770, as four different incidents. He not only moves Parkinson's account into February, but also claims that Hawkesworth's cut-and-