

Book and Media Reviews

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 27, Number 1, 295-317
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narrator channels her grief through the boxing ring.

There is something discomfiting and necessary about poetry that steps on the invisible fault lines of what we consider poetic; boxing seems almost anti-poetry, evoking the sweaty and visceral force of fist against flesh, instead of poetry's more subtle but manipulative symbolic force through language.

The sparring figure yields moments of unusual beauty, where the lapses between language and concepts in translation produce rich images, such as "Lifting the summer mountain / Old man holding the melon" in the poem "Master Tricks" (83). The poem "Floating Ribs" maps the human body via sites of potential kickboxing injury, with stanzas on the groin, the armpit, and the hollow of knee (84). Drawing on the schema Marsh has learned from Muay Thai kickboxing masters, this poem exposes bodily and human vulnerability. At this point in the collection, the reader is so immersed in the death of the narrator's mother that death has a meta-textual presence, floating over the poem.

Marsh's in-depth interrogation of the lived experience of loss extends our shared understanding of Pasifika being and identity. Recall Wendt's evocative lines, "Polynesians / Inside me the dead / woven into my flesh / like the music of bone flutes" (*Inside Us the Dead*, 1976, 7). *Dark Sparring* offers a finely tuned meditation on how our loved ones are "woven" into our being, albeit within Marsh's very personal and specific story of loss. The final poem "Salt" says "as if star by blue star / remembered the loss of each mother / and lit her face for a thou-

sand years" (96). The death of her mother is "woven" into the biogeography of the narrator; her relationship with the physical world around her has shifted to embed her mother in the night sky.

The opening page quotes a Tuvaluan invitation to dance—"E lei ma saka taua?"—along with boxer Muhammad Ali's famous quote, "The fight is won or lost . . . long before I dance under these lights." *Dark Sparring* is both a bout and a dance. I am reminded of Alice Walker's tenacious claim, "Hard times require furious dancing. Each of us is the proof" (*Hard Times Require Furious Dancing*, 2010, xvi). *Dark Sparring* is controlled; there is tonal definition between the different faceted surfaces of grief. It is difficult to resist boxing analogies for the collection. *Dark Sparring* packs a punch. It is a hard-working collection that punches above its weight.

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Being Māori in the City: Indigenous Everyday Life in Auckland,

by Natacha Gagné. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. ISBN cloth 978-1442645929; ISBN paper 978-1442614130; xvi + 345 pages, maps, bibliography, index, appendix, glossary, notes. Cloth, c\$70.00; paper, c\$32.95.

With nearly thirty thousand Māori living in Auckland and little ethnography conducted on Auckland's urban Māori, Natacha Gagné's full-length study is long overdue. This earnest

work explores Māori identity politics, kin relationships, and social history and provides readers with an up-close-and-personal account of some of the everyday experiences of Māori city dwellers. Drawing on classic anthropological texts by eminent New Zealand scholars such as Joan Metge, Anne Salmond, Jeff Sissons, Erik Schwimmer, and the late Hugh Kawharu, Gagné weaves together a study that is representative of a portion of Auckland's Māori. At the center of her discussion is the *whānau* (extended family), a sociopolitical descent group that she defines with care and precision. The strength of her scholarship here comes from her inclusion and understanding of an array of fundamental Māori concepts including *aroha* (unconditional love, 150–153); *mana* (authority, 151–154); *manaakitanga* (hospitality, 152–153); and *whanaungatanga* (inclusive kinship ethic, 150–151). Gagné draws on these concepts to elucidate nuanced notions of “comfort” for Māori residing in the city. In many ways her representation of comfort is equivalent to a sense of retreat and safety. She makes the argument that to survive the demands and urgency of urban life, Māori find refuge in their homes and draw on understandings of *aroha*, *mana*, *manaakitanga*, and *whanaungatanga* to replicate customary Māori environments in the city.

Indicative of her conventional anthropological training, Gagné's task is to try and make sense of the Māori world that she has entered. In general, her story is a detailed and sensitive account of a working-class extended Māori family living in West Auckland. West Auckland is a locality with a

sizable percentage of Māori residents. Conveying both the hardships and positive aspects of her participants' daily life, the work is rich with ethnographic narrative. A central argument of the volume is that a number of urban Māori think of their Auckland homes as *marae*, or at least that their homes are “like *marae*.”

At the outset we should commend Gagné for pursuing a study that takes place inside the private domain of the Māori home. No doubt her fieldwork would have thrown up a number of challenges, given that over the past twenty-five years Māori have in general been reluctant to engage in more intimate and familial research projects with local and foreign anthropologists. The question remains, though, as to whether many Māori living in Auckland think of their homes as *marae*. Gagné's work acknowledges that *marae* in Aotearoa/New Zealand serve a number of purposes for Māori. In accordance with Māori scholar Ranginui Walker, she puts forward that *marae* are places that symbolize group unity and are regarded as the final refuge in Aotearoa/New Zealand where Māori can maintain their cultural traditions. My own view of *marae* is that they are collectively owned spaces that bind people together and to a specific place through their association of shared ancestors. And this is where Gagné's work loses some currency for me. In comparison, living in a house (or home) in Auckland does not require the same type of enduring commitment and duty as a communal *marae*. This might also be said of the commitment and obligations to other members living in the home if the basis of

their residing together is mainly to share the household expenses, housework, and child care. While the inhabitants of a home may have significant kin relationships and obligations to one another, it is arguable whether they would have the same obligations and relationship to the house structure that they are residing in, especially if the house is rented.

Another aspect of the study that did not fully satisfy me was Gagné's inclusion of only one whānau case study throughout the text. Although the first four chapters of the work are rich in theoretical analysis and ethnographic content, the second half of the book is somewhat drawn out and repetitive. Had more ethnographic variation been presented, for instance, by inclusion of additional whānau case studies, readers would gain a more accurate understanding of the cultural and socioeconomic diversity among Māori living in Auckland. However, in considering this critique it is important to remember that producing the perfect ethnography is extremely difficult, and with this caveat in mind, I still recommend Gagné's book. Anthropologically, the work is useful to any social-scientific research being carried out on minority people living in urban centers, and it will be particularly useful to ethnographers from abroad who are interested in working among Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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Nonahere Òri Tahiti: Pipiri Mā,
by Patrick Araia Amaru, Edgar Tetahiotupa, and Matani Kainuku, 2012.
In Tahitian and French. Papeete:
Editions des Mers Australes.
ISBN: 978-2-905808-44-8; 46 pages,
illustrations, audio CD, DVD. □30.00.

During the 2011 national celebration of Heiva in French Polynesia—an annual festival of culture and patrimony well known for dance competitions often involving elaborate preparations, costuming, oratory, and musical performances—the Tahitian dance troupe Nonahere Òri Tahiti realized the legend of Pipiri mā. A significant contribution to that year's Hura Tau (Senior Division) section of the Heiva competition, this performance has been captured in a combination book, CD, and DVD package. Collaboratively realized by prize-winning Tahitian literary author Patrick Amaru, Marquesan anthropologist Edgar Tetahiotupa, and Matani Kainuku, director of the dance troupe Nonahere, this collection offers audiences an extraordinary window into Tahitian culture through a key myth related to the constellation Scorpio while capturing a sense of the vital energy and possibility of multimedia art in the contemporary Pacific.

In the legend of Pipiri mā, Pipiri and Rehua (brother and sister) run away from home after being starved and neglected by their parents. They climb the tallest mountain, and, before their parents can reach them, they are tricked by an evil spirit and carried away on an enormous kite. They ascend to the highest heavens and take their place in the stars as the constel-

