

Reviews (Books)

Matters of the Heart: A History of Interracial Marriage in New Zealand. By Angela Wanhalla. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2013. 316pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN: 9781869407315.

Writing the history of interracial marriage has its own particular challenges. Scholars face the problem of exploring people's intimate lives with an eye to the larger historical forces that shaped their experiences. Good writing on this topic combines big stories with little ones, private emotions with colonial contexts, and giant bodies of historiography on transnational phenomena with tiny pieces of archival evidence. Thus, beginning this impressive book must have been a daunting task. I can imagine Angela Wanhalla sitting at her desk, wondering how to describe in one volume the variety of cross-cultural relationships that took place in New Zealand from the 1770s to the 1970s, whilst not losing sight of the emotion at the heart of these relationships and with the added challenge of unearthing Māori women's voices from unforgiving archives. Few scholars who work on interracial marriage have attempted something so ambitious as a national history of the practice, preferring instead to focus on case studies, small geographical areas or particular spans of time. Wanhalla's goal of describing interracial relationships in New Zealand in all their diversity, but with a particular emphasis on affection and sentiment, is laudable. But it is her solutions about how to complete these tasks that make this book great.

Setting the story of interracial marriage firmly in the broader narrative of New Zealand's history, *Matters of the Heart* is an inspiring book. Wanhalla shows how cross-cultural relationships were ubiquitous from first contact through the colonial period and beyond, and how they and views about them changed according to broader historical shifts. The book responds to the particular concerns of historians who have worked on cross-cultural relationships in New Zealand, placing their work in a broader national story, whilst also speaking to scholarship on intimacy and colonialism in settler societies beyond New Zealand's borders. As all good national histories should, it also broaches the question of New Zealand's uniqueness, and rejects the popular claim that New Zealand led the world in race relations because of its policy of racial amalgamation. Instead Wanhalla shows how the tension between social attitudes and government policy created a variety of attitudes to particular kinds of marriage at different times and places.

Matters of the Heart defines cross-cultural marriage as a wide range of practices and, where records allow, follows couples through every phrase of their married life. Wanhalla draws from family histories, government reports, social and anthropological studies, newspapers, private papers and manuscripts. The most striking of Wanhalla's sources, though, are the numerous pictures and the detailed captions that accompany them. Flipping through these sections of the book is unalloyed pleasure. There is much about the couples in this book that we cannot know from the written record, and in the body language and placement of subjects in these black-and-white photographs Wanhalla helps us to see intimacy and love. It is this aspect of the book that reaches

Wanhalla's goal of accessing emotion most successfully, and the pictures of unknown couples speak powerfully about the lives of people who did not make into written sources. The images in this book form a compelling portrait of multicultural New Zealand.

Wanhalla's solution to the problem of combining the intimate with the national is to marry individual stories with a broader chronological account of cross-cultural relationships from first contact until the 1970s. The book begins by putting affection back into the stories of Māori women's relationships with traders and sailors, arguing that a short duration did not necessarily mean a relationship was exploitative and showing that many white men stayed and took an active part in Māori communities. In the second chapter, Wanhalla examines missionary efforts to control cross-cultural relationships, and their embarrassment when their lay servants engaged in sexual relationships with Māori women. An international perspective forms the premise for Chapter Three, which explores the implications of the lack of laws in New Zealand forbidding interracial marriage, and unpicks the history of racial amalgamation. Drawing on work about interracial relationships in other settler colonies, this chapter explores the various ways in which cross-cultural relationships were controlled without laws – by the boundaries of respectability, and by the linking of legal marriage to land settlement and property rights. Interracial marriage was an instrument of Māori land loss when colonial officials sought to establish the rights of white husbands to their Māori wives' land.

Chapter Four uses an imaginatively created sample of 1110 marriages recorded between 1840 and 1900 and collated from missionary, church and baptism records, notices of intention to marry cross-referenced with marriage certificates, published family histories, newspapers and archival and manuscript collections. This sample allows Wanhalla to move her focus beyond marriage to cohabitation, casual sex, illicit sex and bigamy, and her findings contradict the assumption that as interracial marriages became less popular, a corresponding rise in casual relationships occurred. This chapter also covers the less frequent relationships which occurred between white/Pākehā women and Māori men and the even more elusive examples of same-sex relationships. Wanhalla explores the social mores surrounding these unions and the way they were understood alongside ideas of assimilation.

Chapter Six traces the increasing public stigma attached to interracial marriage in the late nineteenth century and explores the scientific thinking and discourses about race that accompanied this kind of thinking. With so many interracial marriages having taken place, the book rightly concludes by recognizing the growing number of children of mixed descent. The final chapter examines how social scientists talked about interracial marriage and people of mixed descent during the urbanization that took place between the 1940s and the 1970s. Drawing from advice columns, Wanhalla examines the anxieties about interracial marriages lasting and how the children would 'fit in' as well as parental disapproval of cross-cultural relationships.

New Zealand historians have proved themselves innovative contributors to the scholarship on cross-cultural relationships, intimacy and colonialism, and with this book Angela Wanhalla has cemented herself as a leading voice in this area. *Matters of the Heart* is a beautifully written and engaging account of the lives of people

who participated in interracial relationships in New Zealand. Using imaginative and intensive research, Wanhalla takes these people from the shadows and illuminates their lives with empathy and accuracy.

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An Imperial Affair: Portrait of an Australian Marriage. By John Rickard. Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, 2013. 146pp. Australian price: AUD\$25.95. ISBN: 9781922235275.

Drawing upon an array of family memory, letters, diaries and archives, John Rickard's *An Imperial Affair* is both a history of Australian cultural identity, and an intimate and emotional biography of the author's parents told by one of Australia's leading cultural historians. John Rickard begins with the discovery of a shoebox of wartime letters written by his father (Philip) to his mother (Pearl) that, he recounts, acted as a prompt 'if only for my own sake, to unravel their story' (p.vii).

This story is told through six chapters, each marking a stage in the evolution of the relationship, and often tied to particular places, ranging from Sydney, Melbourne and London to Dubbo and finally post-war suburbia. Rickard follows a conventional biographical structure. He begins by introducing the family backgrounds of the two key protagonists and their courtship, before tracing the arc of their relationship chronologically. The book draws to a close with the author's own emotional and sexual discoveries.

We begin in Sydney, where Rickard introduces a particular set of constraints and difficulties that shaped their respective families, particularly in Pearl's case. Her early years are emotionally and psychologically imprinted by family secrets, notably her father's institutionalization for mental illness and Pearl's own struggles with depression. In Chapter Two we follow the couple and their young family to England and 'Home' in 1935, where Philip attends the RAF Staff College in Hampshire. Each kept a diary in England, allowing Rickard to pay attention to the cultural and social patterns of life, their friends, social networks, bonds and associations, at a college that was an 'imperial institution' where people from all parts of the British Empire congregated. By 1939 the family had returned to Australia. Melbourne is the setting for Chapter Three, where Philip has an affair, admitting to it on the eve of his departure for London in 1941. This moment of marital difficulty sets the scene for the following chapter. In London, Philip embarks upon an affair with Clare in 1942. The emotional transitions it inspires filter through his letters to Pearl and find expression in Philip's increasingly formulaic expressions of love to his wife. Emotional worlds undergoing change are explored here with nuance and sensitivity. Pearl's discovery of the affair takes place in Dubbo and her distress is reconstructed through John's childhood memories of a marriage close to dissolving. With John promising not to correspond with Clare, the couple stayed