

the daughter's eczema (an often accusatory insistence on its high incidence among "half-Polynesian children" [58]), and the resources available to address it (the eczema "magazine of white children" never once features a "waka blonde" (a part-Māori/part-Pākehā child with blonde hair [59]) render chronic—and often unmarked—forms of racism visible, even as the book's commentary about land evokes a larger history of dispossession in which to situate its everyday manifestations. When the skyrocketing housing market forces the couple to move from Grey Lynn, the poet reflects, "This is perhaps a good / place to take time out to think how the tangata [people] / whenua [of the land] felt, this land theirs and they couldn't / live on it" (8).

Despite Kennedy's use of the third-person to convey the perspective of the "eczema-mother," and despite her distinctive irony, the effect of the narrative that the poems construct is intimate and inviting. Throughout the book, the conversational second-person address to the audience draws us close. Moreover, by representing the mother's perspective in the third person, Kennedy communicates in an understated way the need for and the impossibility of achieving distance when helplessly watching a beloved child's unbearable chronic pain. She inscribes her alignment with the "eczema-mother" in the syntax of the poems. When, in the epilogue, the baby girl's eczema is resolved, the long lines and even longer sentences read like audible if ragged sighs of relief, like exhalations of gratitude for the end of the girl's suffering. Entitled "I tell you solemnly," the poem opens: "the whirr and the cold gust of the

departing ghost / as it fled into the street / in Arch Hill and disappeared out west over the / Waitakere ranges at sunset / and flickered like lightning its goodbye, left / a very fine nothingness / and it's almost worth it" (125).

Sing-song captures not only the profound relief but also the experience of grace that can result from witnessing one's own child's release from agony. As Kennedy tells the family's story, she vividly recreates a sense of the joy, wonder, and "gorgeous mysticism" (61) that a child can bring to her parents. An author already in possession of great range and distinction—in addition to publishing short fiction, novels, and poetry collections, Kennedy is a screenwriter, adapts books for Radio New Zealand, and is editor of *trout* (an online journal for Aotearoa New Zealand and Pacific Islands arts and literature)—she is one who surely will continue to find words for specifically located discoveries that cross cultures, providing "a new way to translate suffering / into another beautiful thing" (61).

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Theatre and Political Process: Staging Identities in Tokelau and New Zealand, by Ingrid Hoëm. New York: Berghahn Books, 2004. ISBN 1-57181-583-x; xii + 205 pages, tables, appendixes, linguistic terminology and abbreviations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$60.00.

Norwegian anthropologist Ingrid Hoëm, in her book *Theatre and Political Process: Staging Identities in Tokelau and New Zealand*, examines the

complex interrelationships between identity formation and sense of place, communicative practices and issues of representation, and nation building and regional migration, within the context of Tokelau atoll societies and diasporic Tokelauan communities in New Zealand.

The centerpiece—and most intriguing contribution—of the book is Hoëm's detailed documentation and analysis of the use of theater by New Zealand-based Tokelauans in the 1990s to deal with their history, culture, and experience of modernity. Hoëm contrasts two plays by the theater group Tokelau te Ata: *Tagi* (cry or lament) and *Mafine* (woman). *Tagi* was created with the larger Tokelau community in New Zealand in mind and dealt with the history of Tokelau over the last few centuries—from village life in precontact times to slave raids to the later migration to New Zealand. *Mafine* was produced primarily for atoll Tokelauans and dealt with the tensions between individualism on one hand and the strong family and community orientation of Tokelauan society on the other hand. Both performance pieces were developed by Tokelau te Ata without being written down.

In analyzing the cultural transactions and negotiations between the theater group and their audiences, Hoëm sheds light on some of the cultural practices, assumptions, and conventions of the different communities receiving both plays. Despite some minor criticisms of both productions, the Tokelau community in New Zealand, not known for conceiving of theater as antithetical to indigenous Tokelauan performance

traditions, responded quite positively to *Tagi* and *Mafine*. The response was different once the theater group traveled to Tokelau to perform their second play. According to Hoëm, the group's expectation that *Mafine* would have some political impact in Tokelau was thwarted by the specific parameters that determine the reception of performances such as skits or clowning in the atoll. Not to offend the Council of the Elders, the theater group decided to present their performance as malaga (gift). This intention was well received, even though the absence of the elders from the first performance implied that the event was of no significance to the community. Also, the presentation of *Mafine* as a gift led the audience to interpret the play as a homecoming celebration by diaspora Tokelauans, thereby curtailing any social efficacy of the play outside the performance context. This lack of impact was sustained by the general perception of ordinary performances as "things of no account" (mea tauanoa), which allowed audience members uncomfortable with the play to avoid confronting any of the issues presented by it.

Among the major aspects of Tokelauan culture pointed out by Hoëm are what she calls "sided" relationships within Tokelauan society: In order to maintain egalitarianism and to avoid conflict within the community, the competitive aspects of behavior are only allowed to be expressed in symmetrical relationships between "similar sides." The formation of sided relationships can be observed in the responses to Tokelau te Ata's performances both in New Zealand and in Tokelau. In both cases, traditional-

ist community members responded to the plays by producing their own theater pieces that challenged the assumptions of *Tagi* and *Mafine*. Unfortunately, Hoëm does not provide any detailed documentation or analysis of those counterplays. What she makes clear, however, is that the political messages of a group like Tokelau te Ata can only be successful if the actors take into account the target community's conceptions of identity, place, performance, knowledge, and interaction.

In later chapters, Hoëm resumes her discussion of the complex negotiations between traditional Tokelauan culture and the more westernized Tokelauan diaspora in New Zealand from different perspectives. She explores, for example, how those negotiations affect notions of political organization and activism in both communities. She also compares and analyzes various oral narratives that, by dealing with leaving and returning to Tokelau, suggest a strong link between subject identity and sense of place.

One of the most valuable features of the book are the appendixes, which include Hoëm's transcriptions of the two performance pieces as well as of the oral narratives analyzed in the earlier chapters. However, the overall structure of the book and the major objectives of the author are not always transparent. Ideas and data are often presented in a confusing order. Hoëm does not provide exact dates for the performances she describes. In addition, her use of terminology is occasionally misleading. Chapter 2, for example, is titled "Political Activism: New Media and Arenas of Leader-

ship," but the chapter itself contains not a single reference to new media, if that term means audiovisual media, computers, the Internet, etc. Apart from these minor reservations, though, *Theatre and Political Process* provides a valuable and insightful introduction to the identity politics and performances of contemporary Tokelauans.

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Pacific Jewelry and Adornment, by Roger Neich and Fuli Pereira. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8248-2882-8; 190 pages, maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index. US\$33.00.

One would expect a publication on Pacific jewelry and adornment to be an attractive production, and this book is indeed beautifully designed and printed. Over 240 high-quality photographs embellish the book and illustrate a splendid array of objects from around the Pacific. Many of the objects are dramatically photographed against a black background; all the pieces are very well lit to reveal fine details of workmanship and materials. In some cases backlighting is also used to good advantage to show off the translucence of jade or turtle-shell finery. Additionally, over 40 photographs taken in situ, some from as early as the 1880s and others quite recent, show Pacific Islanders wearing personal adornments. The objects are all from the collection of the Auckland Museum, and the photographs are from both the Auckland Museum