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the Kingitanga is told through the accounts of multiple people in this book, demonstrating one of the book's key strengths in the presentation of different perspectives of history, even from those who were there at the time. This is an important part of understanding the transmission of historical narratives and the role of the historian not in finding the "truth" but in presenting and assessing different perspectives. There are many other stories to be read in this book, some well known and some not, but these stories stood out to me as an example of why this book is significant.

This review would not be complete without mentioning the visual impact of the book. Aligning the voices to the pictures added a dimension to the storytelling that I appreciated as a reader and, by being able to read the words of those who were there and see that time brought to life through images, sometimes in horrid ways, I was able to connect to a vital part of Aotearoa's history. Anyone who wants to understand Aotearoa's past and how it continues to have impact today should read this book. In the foreword, Māori scholar Arama Rata writes of her hopes for this book beyond the significance of it as an important historical narrative, in words that I think are appropriate to conclude this review: "I hope ... that by considering the voices of our past ... you [the reader] come to a deep understanding that this history has never stopped repeating, and that you strengthen your ability to recognise its ever-evolving forms. Only then will we be able to write a new story" (p. vii).

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LOPESI, Lana: *Bloody Woman*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021. Ack., essays, foreword, gloss., notes, preface. NZ\$39.99 (softcover).

MELODEE PANAPA-LEILUA

Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland

ASHLEY VAOTUUA

Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland

Bloody Woman created quite the buzz within Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. It's not every day you get to see yourself written in text, especially if you're a Sāmoan or Pacific woman. This book makes visible the sacred experience of being a Pacific woman. Although this is clearly a tribute to Pacific women, it is highly beneficial for all to read, whether you're a Pacific girl dad,¹ a devoted husband, a flamboyant fa'afafine (third-gender or non-binary) or a friend of Pacific peoples. This review of *Bloody Woman* is a written talanoa (discussion) between two Pacific women who read this book as part of their PACIFIC 712 course in Pacific Studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland under the guidance of Dr Emalani Case.

Melodee: In a collection of personal essays, Lana Lopesi gives voice “to the overlooked, to the underrepresented and to the exceptionally complex” experience of being a Sāmoan woman living in Aotearoa (p.12). She courageously writes on topics ranging from womanhood, motherhood, feminism and representation to menstruation, pregnancy termination, sexuality and sexual abuse. Lopesi is unbridled in boldness yet compassionate in tone. To reiterate Tusiata Avia’s metaphor, there are many baskets of knowledge in this book, with Lopesi offering Pacific scholarship, Sāmoan Indigenous knowledge and a showcase of poetry that imparts an educational and evocative flair. Although this is predominantly Sāmoan-centric, as a mixed Cook Island and Tokelauan woman living in Aotearoa, I still resonated with these experiences and felt seen and understood. There were some dots that needed connecting, but overall, the book helped to make sense of the tensions and overlaps of my own womanhood. This book is for all those who are looking to honour “the fun, the ugly and the complicated” (p.15) nature of being a Pacific woman.

Ashley: Yes, on the subject of womanhood, Lopesi gracefully navigates the complexities of reclamation within the confines of hyperconservative Sāmoan societal structures. She interweaves her own experiences with stories of the Sāmoan war goddess Nafanua, Teine Sā (spirit women) and the pe’a (flying fox). Sāmoan womanhood has been associated with protecting virginity, represented in deflowering ceremonies and the symbolism of the taupou (village maiden). However, Lopesi emphasises in “Teine Sā, My Feminist Icons” that these practices were not rooted in an obsession with virginity but rather in a deep reverence for the mana (spiritual power) bestowed by Tagaloa, the supreme god or progenitor of other gods, through a woman’s womb. She discusses colonial legacies of shame around womanhood in empowering women as *portals* of mana. As a tama’ita’i Sāmoa (Samoan woman), I am inspired to embrace being a portal of mana, to harmonise with my dual nature—both physical and spiritual. These essays serve as an empowering affirmation for Sāmoan women to persist in embracing their innate strength and spiritual significance.

Melodee: Reframing menstruation as an act of passing mana was challenging but liberating. I’ve often thought of a period as shameful or an annoyance, but for Lopesi it is the portal of life and mana, which is something to be cherished and celebrated. I found the essay “There Is a Vā Between My Thighs” equally enlightening. Inspired by Ria Masae’s poem *My Vā*, Moemoe Malieatoa Von Reiche, and Lily Laita’s work on vā (relational space), Lopesi explains the ways in which vā can open liberated discussions of sex and womanhood, which are normally considered tapu.

The essays “Brown & Bougie” and “Creative Representations of Joy & Hyena Laughs of Resistance” had me feeling all sorts of validation. I’ve always struggled to express the duality of my Pacific and Western identity through my image, perpetually dressing to suit the occasion. I always ensured I wasn’t too Pacific in Western environments and not too Western in Pacific environments. My behaviour in these spaces often mirrored my dress. Lopesi brilliantly illuminates the ongoing colonial legacies that underpin these tensions and encourages interrogation of society’s reluctant acceptance of diverse Pacific representation. Lopesi poses the question of why, instead of either being vibrantly dressed hyena-laughing rebels or quiet business-wearing intelligent lawyers, we can’t be accepted as both. It really inspires me to query the basis of my own code-switching, and I feel encouraged to be authentically myself in any context.

Ashley: I was also intrigued by “Pacific Cyberbunnies & the Digitisation of Care”, which presents social media as a platform for the digitisation of carework and immaterial labour in the ways Pacific women use their platforms to contribute to greater society. Carework is so deeply ingrained in Pacific cultures. I’ve seen many women in my family take on the role of carers as a form of *tautua* (service) or *tausi matua* (caring for your elders). It’s a role that I know one day I will take on. Lopesi speaks to how these representations of being a woman have manifested themselves within the digital realm too.

Melodee: I had been told to read *Bloody Woman* quite a few times by some of my friends, all with the widened eyes and raised brows that us girls make when there’s a secret involved. However, in the essays “Swimming in Circles”, “Eighty-Three Mostly Babies & Children” and “An Open Letter to My Future Adult Children”, Lopesi unashamedly makes space for dialogue on pregnancy termination and the deaths of babies in the Sāmoa measles outbreak of 2019 and for having transparent conversations with children about parenting and family. Lopesi compassionately voices these experiences in hopes of giving others courage to *talanoa*, mourn and heal. Growing up, there was a lot of shame around women and motherhood issues, and publishing these experiences will help to break that cycle for the next generation.

Ashley: While I enjoyed reading the chapters on motherhood, I struggled to connect with these experiences and their real impacts beyond the pages, as I haven’t experienced the stages of parenthood in my journey yet. But from my perspective, I agree, these stories are so important in breaking the cycle, so I take comfort in and inspiration from Lopesi’s stories, which act as a bridge for paths that I haven’t yet walked; they connect me to the shared identity of being a “bloody woman”.

Feminism for Pacific women has been critiqued for perpetuating colonial agendas. In “Becoming a Bloody Woman”, Lopesi addresses the disconnect between Western feminism and the realities of Indigenous and racialised women. She explores the term *tautalaitiiti* (talking above your age, status, experience), reframing it as a sense of empowerment in the face of issues surrounding gender, power imbalances and cultural identity. While I understand how this can bring a sense of empowerment, we need to navigate such discussions with care for the safety and wellbeing of *tautalaitiiti* girls who seek to challenge these issues within cultural contexts. As part of growing up in a family that heavily values *fa’a-Sāmoa* (the Sāmoan way), I don’t think I’d be able to be as *tautalaitiiti* as one dreams to be. Lopesi boldly declares that being a *tautalaitiiti* girl is, in itself, a feminist act. Lopesi’s work is a testament to the importance of reclaiming cultural narratives, challenging gender norms and fostering a feminist consciousness rooted in Indigenous wisdom.

Melodee: I get what you mean, Ash—reframing *tautalaitiiti* as a feminist act of empowerment seems appealing, but there are real consequences that may follow. In my Cook Islands community, I connect *tautalaitiiti* to what my nana would call a *māpū* (young woman), and if you were brave enough to act up, you had better be brave enough for the *kīkau* (coconut frond) broom to be wrapped around your legs. There is an upside to stepping into your female power, but it will be challenging, as not everyone in our communities is able to.

Ashley: This book has helped me to make sense of my journey through womanhood. Each page evokes memories of heartfelt conversations with my mother, valuable lessons passed down from my grandmothers and aunties, the laughter shared with my sisters, girl cousins and friends, and the profound love I hold for my younger sisters and cousins. Aligning with Lopesi’s own sentiments, this book is a tribute to all the *tautalaitiiti* girls—those from the past and present, and those yet to emerge.

Notes

1. “Girl dad” is a term used to capture the love between fathers and their daughters. The following definition is offered on the online Urban Dictionary: “A girl dad is a father who wants his daughter(s) to have the same rights, opportunities, and privileges as any boy.” Posted by user “Swhelper”, 4 February 2020, <https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=girl%20dad>

Glossary

The terms included in this glossary are Sāmoan unless otherwise stated.

| | |
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| <i>fa’a-Sāmoa</i> | the Sāmoan way |
| <i>fa’afafine</i> | people who identify as having a third-gender or non-binary role |

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|------------------|---|
| kīkau | coconut frond (Cook Islands Māori) |
| mana | spiritual power |
| māpū | young woman (Cook Islands Māori) |
| pe‘a | flying fox |
| talanoa | discussion |
| tama‘ita‘i Sāmoa | Sāmoan woman |
| taupou | village maiden |
| tausi matua | caring for your elders |
| tautalaitiiti | talking above your age, status, experience; implies a form of rebellion or independence, suggesting a departure from expected norms and a willingness to assert one’s own thoughts and opinions |
| tautua | service |
| Teine Sā | spirit women |
| vā | relational space |

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MACKINTOSH, Lucy: *Shifting Grounds: Deep Histories of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2021. 300 pp., ack., ed. notes, gloss., illus., image sources, index, maps, notes. NZ\$59.99 (hardcover).

HONE THORPE

Nō Puketapu o Te Āti Awa ki te Tonga

Waipapa Taumata Rau | The University of Auckland

Shifting Grounds by Lucy Mackintosh is a meticulously crafted exploration of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland’s history that delves into intricate layers of detail and nuance. Mackintosh adroitly unwraps the complexity within the interactions between Māori, missionaries and colonisers, revealing a narrative that evolves over time. The initial optimism of the meeting between colonisers and tangata whenua (Indigenous people) transforms into a web of challenges and conflicts, leaving a lasting imprint on the landscape, both obvious and subtle.

The book conveys a profound theme of interconnectedness, aptly echoed by a tauparapara (incantation to begin a speech) shared by Rāpata Newson, a respected figure at Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland War Memorial Museum. The essence of “tūi tūi tui-tuia / tuia i runga, tuia i raro / tuia i waho, tuia i roto” (sew, sew, sew-to be sewn / to be sewn above, to be sewn below / to be sewn from the outside, to be sewn from the inside) reflects the binding thread that ties all individuals and communities to the historical fabric of Auckland. This theme resonates as Mackintosh expertly exposes the many