

Book Reviews

Tripping over Feathers: Scenes in the Life of Joy Jananka Wiradjuri Williams, by Peter Read, UWA Publishing, Crawley WA, 2009, ISBN 9781921401350 (pbk), \$32.95.

This book is a complex biography, scrupulously researched both through written records, recorded interviews and the author's 21-year personal acquaintance, friendship and professional involvement with Joy Janaka Wiradjuri Williams as a member of Link-Up Aboriginal Corporation. I had read the book before being asked to review it and found its lyricism, thoughtfulness and method of biography in chronological reverse compelling and highly readable. I read it first in two long extended chunks hardly able to put it down.

Re-reading it to review was harder. By using dialogue and imaginative reconstructions the biography has a rare and moving immediacy. Re-reading meant having to revisit the bureaucratic envelope, sealed in the hush of an office, that affected an entire infancy, childhood and adult life. It meant hearing again the 'plok' of a tennis ball on gut strings in a spacious north Sydney home, juxtaposed with a silent Aboriginal domestic servant from Cootamundra, powerless to keep her unborn child. It meant reading again the step forward taken by Joy's mother Doretta at their first meeting since infancy, to slap her in the face: 'Why didn't you come and see me before?' As Peter Read explains 'The method here offers a way to graphically present the apocalyptic, headlong, breathless nature of Joy's difficult life. Poet and artist that she was I think she would have appreciated it too' (p. xxiv). The method works and the biography has, at times, harrowing impact.

Read, first met Joy in 1985, when as a staff member of Link-Up, he accompanied her to meet her Indigenous family for the first time. In 2001 she asked him to write her biography but it was not until her death in 2006 that he felt able to complete and publish the manuscript. Underlying the gestation of this book is the author's unease with her difficult and often abrasive persona. 'Perhaps everyone who loved Joy Janaka Wiradjuri Williams remained a little apprehensive of her emotions, even her personality, which could change so fast. I share that fierce ambiguity' (p. xxxiii). This 'fierce ambiguity' is for me an authentic departure in the field of Indigenous Australian life-story. Here is recognition that oppression does not simply create long-suffering subjects with vital counter-narratives to national stories of mateship, progress and the old 'fair go'.

I wanted to convey my own feelings about her ... I wanted to show that the circumstances forced upon her and her family by Australia's hateful

policies of children removal shaped, hurt and warped her, until finally she came to prefer her own loneliness, addiction and pain to sharing it with others. (p. xxiv)

The book does not flinch from the paradox of Joy's personality, her abject victimisation and her own power to hurt others. The two opening quotes from Joy that give the book its title are representative of this core paradox. This is not an easy balance and one that I have not often seen attempted in Aboriginal studies, biography or legal discourse. Difficult, messy, sometimes overwhelmingly painful personal relationships are a legacy of colonialism as surely as are memories of frontier violence. Through a series of court cases Joy sought to get acknowledged that her core equilibrium, her 'mental health' had been shocked and damaged by early removal from her mother and subsequent further dislocations, described in the biography. This in turn had an impact on those around her. Weaving her voice through the biography in poems and recorded interviews we get something of a sense of the precarious balance between her subjugation and her personal power.

Barbara Nicholson writes in a poem after the death of her friend 'The Joy I knew' (2007):

Damaged beyond healthy
Yet stronger than an army
Of those parsimonious patrons
Of white superiority (p. 143)

In her own poetry Joy Janaka thrived. She was a published poet, with two collections of autobiographical poetry and held a Master of Arts in Creative Literature. She was a longstanding member of Link-Up Aboriginal Corporation. She was a mother to her son and finally, in the ways she could be, to her daughter. Flawed and furious and fully alive to her suffering having extricated herself from 'deep substance abuse' (p. xxxiii) we learn of a complex woman of courage.

The 'stolen child of another stolen child' (p. xxii) Joy was taken from her mother at birth and put in the Bomaderry children's home when three weeks old. Her mother attempted to visit her there on a number of occasions whereupon she was removed again to the Lutanda Home to assimilate along with the non-Aboriginal children there. She was subsequently denied all contact with her mother. The biography charts in reverse the promise and potential of the young girl, 'she often surprises us with her questions, she is so grown up' (p. 130), to a teenager disassembled by loss, loneliness, monotony and grief. After an entire infancy and childhood of institutionalisation we find Joy as a young woman alone on the streets of Sydney. Here her creative energy, youthful femininity and intelligence are prostituted and then co-opted by a cult run by Rowie Norton 'The Witch of Kings Cross'. She is involved as a squatter with the Green bans

movement in Victoria Street, Sydney, arrested 'for an offence which morally then and now seems not to have been an offence at all' (p. xxiv) and pushed back into institutional 'care' at the Rozelle Psychiatric Centre.

Rather than seek to present a continuous narrative the biography is a series of key 'scenes in the life'. Read's decision to use direct speech, partly reconstructed scenes and a reverse chronology raise profound questions about the points at which historical narratives begin and about the functions that history serves. The book's reverse chronology reminded me of work by historians and anthropologists in Latin America. Olivia Harris' work on the experience of historical rupture and periodisation among the Aymara-speaking people of the Andes for example, shows that official or colonial versions of what constitutes a 'rupture' or a turning point and hence periodisation more generally, often have little bearing on local or Indigenous interpretations. This work, as does Read's biography, raises broader questions about temporality and perspective, and unsettles and defies easy answers about official versions of the past.

Something I have found inspiring in Peter Read's previous work is the premise that history is not inevitable. Choices are made, attitudes are formed, the course of an individual or community's life is irrevocably altered. This biography holds this premise throughout. Along with the images of the infant to the woman on the cover of the book we are invited through the form of the book, its scenes and reverse chronology to imagine other possibilities in the life of a creative, intelligent woman. The book, like Joy's life and sudden and untimely death, shows the traumatic legacy of loss that Joy, her mother, her grandmother and her extended family lived with and that those that survive her today continue to deal with.

Gordon Briscoe's preface to the book states 'all courses on Aboriginal affairs should place documents like this on student reading lists'. I agree and think that all readers in Australia could learn about our shared past, present and future by sitting with these often disturbing scenes in a life. The final words in the book are excerpted from *Joy Williams v The Minister*, 1999. In this closing paragraph we see how the lines between 'fact' and 'fiction' are blurred not just by inventive, compassionate historians but by lawyers too. Legal fictions, like foundational myths, can be created from a lack of understanding of Indigenous and other marginalised experiences. I hope the inspired method and content of these 'scenes in a life' will go some way to increasing that understanding.

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Daisy Bates, Grand Dame of the Desert by Bob Reece, 204 pp, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2007, ISBN 9780642276544 (pbk), \$24.95.

In *Daisy Bates: Grand Dame of the Desert*, Bob Reece presents a concise overview of the life and work of Daisy Bates. Based on research performed with the assistance of a Harold White Fellowship at the National Library in 2005, Reece draws 'from Bates' letters as well as her published writings to demonstrate their potential to illustrate her work and her life' (p. 5). According to Reece, Bates was a prolific letter writer – 'upwards of 3000 of her letters are extant' (p. 5) – so there is plenty of material from which to draw to inform this work (unfortunately she torched her diaries and a significant portion of her personal correspondence dating back to 1899). His aim is to produce an account so that 'readers may gain some idea of her motivations and beliefs, and of what kind of person she was' (p. 10). Tellingly, after wading through much of this material, Reece finds that while his admiration for her qualities of determination, intelligence and endurance has increased, his opinion of Bates as a person has not: 'she reveals herself on the one hand as a social climber, name-dropper and user of people, a diehard imperial loyalist and an apologist for the Western Australian pastoralists in their treatment of the Aborigines, and on the other as an anti-feminist, anti-socialist, anti-Catholic, anti-German, and so on' (p. 6). As this material is presented, it is difficult to form an alternative view.

As one who has spent many hours poring over Bates's manuscripts on language and culture, however, I find that this focus disappointingly leaves unanswered some of the deeper questions faced by those with an interest in the contemporary practical (and political) applications of her work. While Reece gestures towards the rehabilitation of Bates's reputation as a social scientist particularly in the native title era, I was hoping for something a little more substantial than the mere mention of this. While he refers to the recovery of some of Bates's writings by Indigenous people in recent times, this falls disappointingly short in detail given the importance of questioning the processes that led to the creation of the colonial archive and the ways and means by which contemporary people are unpacking it, often creating local, digital repositories or archives.

According to Reece, through native title processes Indigenous people might come to see Bates as someone 'who gave them back part of their lost past' (p. 156). This is an attempt by Reece to tell the story from the other side, the Aboriginal perspective, and he finishes the book with this sort of redemptive sentiment. What I am lurching towards here is that this feel-good ending masks what I see as a central problem in attempts to use Bates's writings.

A basic problem for anyone with an interest in applying the writings of Daisy Bates to contemporary contexts is the question of how to evaluate a particular piece of writing against her well-known profligacy with autobiographical truth on the one hand and her claims for producing objective knowledge about Aboriginal people on the other. The first part of this equation might well

collapse if one takes the post-structuralist view of the 'death of the author' – it is irrelevant to the value of her writings whether or not she performed a number of fictive selves in public. But what of the relation between Bates's journalism, which is often steeped in sensationalism, particularly with regard to purported cannibalism, and her field notes? Do we read the journalism as geared towards attention-seeking and self-promotion rather than to any grander purpose? A practice not mentioned by Reece is Bates's collection and sale of vocabularies to Adelaide cultural institutions in the 1930s. Was this activity ultimately pursued for profit and her own survival? In the type of social science pursued by Bates it is clear that there are interests at play in the production of knowledge; knowledge production is not value-free. While Reece draws attention to the fact that Bates continually held an eye to advantage, particularly toward potential government funding (which rarely arrived), these questions are largely left unresolved and remain part of the Daisy Bates myth.

A corollary to this problem is the high level of interpretation that is required for the use of her materials. There is a palimpsest-like quality to many of her manuscript materials, at times they are mere fragments or like scattered leaves. Ernestine Hill, who assisted Bates in producing *My Natives and I*, a series of articles commissioned and syndicated by *The Advertiser*, describes working with Bates's 'hundredweight of copious notes ... It was feet deep of jigsaw puzzle, knowledge new to the world, often with Aboriginal words and vocabularies, rituals, racial links, that no one but Daisy could elucidate' (p. 119). In many ways her archived material, certainly those lodged at the Barr Smith Library, are like this and Radcliffe-Brown's gibe that her mind was 'a well-stored knitting basket after half a dozen kittens had been playing there undisturbed' (p. 7) resounds at times in the archive.

A number of Bates's writings have played a crucial role in the current Wirangu Language revitalisation project. Her recording made at Yuria waterhole, about 100 kilometres west of Ceduna, South Australia, has been a key text for eliciting linguistic and other aspects of traditional knowledge from the fading memories of two elderly and frail sisters, the last speakers of the Wirangu language. In the Yuria recording (written), Bates recorded language from Minjia, or Lucy Washington, the grandmother of the two remaining speakers. This intergenerational link has figured centrally in generating local interest in pursuing the revitalisation project that has grown from Luise Hercus's salvage linguistic work in the 1990s.

Having said this, attitudes towards Bates are ambivalent among Aboriginal people on the Far West Coast, South Australia. On the one hand her appalling public attitude towards people of mixed blood, her attempts to control interactions between Blacks and Whites at Ooldea, and her views on the 'doomed race' contrast with memories of generosity, such as Daisy giving sweets to mixed blood children at Penong (witnessed by a now elderly woman), and appreciation that she took the time to write language down.

Bob Reece's book will be an invaluable guide for those who want to follow the ways Bates's written legacy is reincorporated and transformed back into Indigenous lives.

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Donald Thomson, the Man and Scholar, edited by Bruce Rigsby and Nicolas Peterson, 269 pp, The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia with support from Museum Victoria, Canberra, 2005, ISBN 0908290217 (pbk).

Donald Thomson died in 1970 during the first year I spent with Yolngu at Yirrkala; Lloyd Warner died the same year. I had only recently arrived in Australia from the United States to begin my PhD research, and did not get the opportunity to meet either of them. They were the two anthropologists I had most wanted to meet because of the long periods of time each had spent with Yolngu people in Arnhem Land (Warner 1927–1929 and Thomson 1935–1943). Their publications were the first major published works concerning the Yolngu: they were ethnographically rich, and I found them riveting. Moreover, because Thomson and Warner had been in Arnhem Land during a period in which Yolngu society and culture remained relatively undisturbed by alien incursion, their work was of the greatest importance in understanding Yolngu history and the situation of Yolngu leaders who subsequently faced the prospect of a huge mining development on their land.¹

Warner died on 23 May 1970; the University of Chicago held a memorial service for him, and his wife and daughter scattered his ashes, as he had wished, on Coyote Mountain in Borrego Springs, near San Diego, California.² Thomson died on 12 May 1970 and on 19 June 1970 his ashes were scattered over Caledon Bay in eastern Arnhem Land. Djiriny and Maw, Yolngu leaders of the Djapu clan and sons of Wonggu, accompanied the ashes on the airforce aeroplane from which the ashes were scattered. Wonggu was head of the Djapu clan during Thomson's time at Caledon Bay and Thomson had regarded him with admiration and affection.³

In the preface, Warner says his book on the Yolngu, 'is the result of three years (1926–1929) spent in Australia in two field trips to Arnhem Land'.⁴ Thomson, in the only book dealing with Aboriginal society published during his lifetime, says that the work on which it is based was carried out during expeditions 'in 1935–6–7, under commission by the Commonwealth Government, and in 1941–2–3, while on war service'.⁵

Thomson and Warner were close in age – Warner was born in 1898 and Thomson was born in 1901. They both studied at Sydney University soon after AR Radcliffe-Brown became the first incumbent of the University's recently established Chair of Anthropology.⁶ I thought surely they must have known each other and

1 In 1969, Professor Stanner told me he thought that Yolngu remained the most intact Aboriginal society in Australia and subsequently I found no reason to question his assessment.

2 M Warner 1988: 204–208.

3 My fieldnotes 19 June 1970, Thomson *passim*, and letter from Mrs Dorita Thomson 3 March 2007 enclosing photographs taken on board the airplane on 19 June 1970.

4 Warner 1958: xi.

5 Thomson 1949: footnote on title page.

6 Peterson 1983: 2.

engaged in collegial conversation, perhaps even debate, since the proposed field research of each was to be in northern Australia, and that some record of their having met would exist. Although Warner never visited Cape York Peninsula, the possibility of his conducting field research there was briefly considered,⁷ and Cape York Peninsula was Thomson's first field research destination. I hoped that some record of their exchanges would add a dimension to my understanding of Yolngu history and diminish to some small degree my disappointment at never having met them. Their written work certainly suggested common areas of interest as well as important differences. The offer to write this review was the impetus to search for evidence of a meeting, but I have so far been disappointed. (My search for some tangible indication of their having interacted with one another is my excuse for tardiness in reviewing a book which those of you who read this review no doubt read long ago.)

In their published works, Thomson's references to Warner are exiguous, and I have so far found no reference to Thomson in Warner's publications. Inferences about their personal or scholarly relationship are speculative. The reason for the lack of definite evidence of their meeting, I have concluded, lies in the fact that, although they were both Radcliffe-Brown's students at Sydney University, they were there at the same time only for a very short period, if at all. Moreover, shortly after his study of the Yolngu, Warner returned to the United States and at the same time appears to have shifted his entire research interest to aspects of contemporary United States society and culture. However, and though rarely mentioned, there is no doubt that Thomson and Warner knew of each other's research and publications. It is the absence, in one case, and virtual absence in the other, of references to the other's work, in view of the long periods each had spent in Arnhem Land working with and knowing some of the same people, that seemed a conundrum and provoked me, and some other anthropologists who also spent time in Arnhem Land in subsequent decades, to look from time to time for some indication of their scholarly interaction.

Thomson reminded Radcliffe-Brown in a letter that he was his 'first Diploma student at Sydney'.⁸ He enrolled in the year long diploma course, presumably in March 1927 since he graduated in April 1928, and left immediately after completing the course for fieldwork on Cape York Peninsula. After eight months of fieldwork on Cape York Peninsula, he returned to Melbourne without stopping in Sydney,⁹ and in 1929 corresponded with Radcliffe-Brown from Melbourne.¹⁰ Radcliffe-Brown invited Warner to work with him in Australia in

7 M Warner 1988: 1.

8 This was Thomson's claim in a letter to Radcliffe-Brown in 1948; Peterson, who writes about the correspondence between Thomson and Radcliffe-Brown between 1948 and 1954, says that Thomson 'was in the first small cohort of Radcliffe-Brown's students in Australia, and the first to graduate with the Diploma in Anthropology in 1927': Peterson 2006: 17.

9 Gray says, 'On his return from Cape York Peninsula, Thomson passed through Sydney at the end of the year without visiting Radcliffe-Brown' (p. 85).

10 Peterson 1983: 2, 2003: 3.

1926¹¹ and Warner arrived in Sydney in January 1927. He left for fieldwork in Arnhem Land (presumably early) in March, having spent seven weeks studying with Radcliffe-Brown.¹² He returned to Sydney in September 1927 to confer with Radcliffe-Brown and to write and plan future fieldwork. He left for the United States in 1929.

So what is the evidence for the relation between Thomson and Warner? In searching for direct evidence I have consulted only published sources – admittedly a far from exhaustive search – and, as noted above, found no reference to Thomson in Warner’s work and only two references to Warner in Thomson’s work, both in Thomson’s book, *Economic Structure and the Ceremonial Exchange Cycle in Arnhem Land* (1949). In that book Thomson criticised Warner’s use of ‘Murngin’ to refer to the Yolngu:¹³

The arbitrary use of the term *Murngin*, ‘tribe’, for the people of Eastern Arnhem Land, which was introduced by Professor W. Lloyd Warner (*A Black Civilisation*; New York and London, 1937) is particularly unfortunate, for as was pointed out [in a lengthy earlier footnote,] east of Cape Stewart in North Central Arnhem Land tribal organisation is conspicuous by its absence from the intricate social organisation of the area ... The word *murngin* has nothing to do with social organisation, and is in no sense the name of a ‘tribe’.¹⁴

In addition, Thomson’s appraisal of the significance of Yolngu trade with the Macassans is explicitly opposed to Warner’s. Warner concludes that Yolngu society and culture, including trade and exchange, had changed very little as the result of long contact with the Macassans.¹⁵ Thomson, on the other hand, believed that the Macassan voyagers had played a major role in the development of the ‘great ceremonial exchange cycle’ in the Yolngu area, and argued that:¹⁶

11 M Warner 1988: 1. Warner’s widow gives this account (perhaps retold many times) of the invitation: In May 1926 in Berkeley at a dinner meeting where Radcliffe-Brown was the honoured guest, Radcliffe-Brown ‘called down the table to Warner, then a graduate student, “I say, Warner, how would you like to come to Australia with me? ... If you are interested let’s get together and talk.”’

12 M Warner 1988: 21.

13 Thomson 1949: 11.

14 Warner, however, said that he used ‘Murngin’ only as a convenient label: ‘the tribe can hardly be said to exist in this area ... The people do not think of themselves under this name or classification. The word has been used by me as a general term for all of the eight tribes in the area and for the groups of people located in the central part of the territory of the eight tribes. I have seized upon this name as a convenient and concise way of talking about this whole group of people; had any of the other tribes who possess the particular type of social organization found in this area been located in the center of the group, I should have used the name of that tribe rather than Murngin.’ Warner 1958: 15 n2.

15 Warner 1958: 430–433, 453–471.

16 Thomson 1949: 85–86, 91–92.

Professor Warner has missed entirely the tremendous importance of the impact of this Indonesian culture on the ceremonial life of these people in his review of Malay or Macassar contacts with the people of Arnhem Land...

There is no justification for the conclusion that the culture of the natives of Northeastern Arnhem Land showed a resistance to the influence of this virile culture from Indonesia, and certainly none for the statement that the ideas of these people were no different from what they were before he (the Malay seafarer) arrived...

There is little doubt that a ceremonial exchange system existed in Arnhem Land before the coming of the visitors from Indonesia ... but its orientation at the present time, and its most important 'drives' certainly owe much to the impact of Indonesian culture...

From Thomson's references to Warner in *Economic Structure and the Ceremonial Exchange Cycle*, noted above, it is reasonable to infer that he believed his interpretations of other aspects of Yolngu society and culture differed significantly in many respects from Warner's. Consistent with this inference, a letter Thomson wrote in 1937 contains implied criticism of Warner's analysis of Yolngu society:¹⁷

The social grouping here is a mystery. It was studied in part by a previous worker who went astray I think in trying to fit it in to the known scheme of things - to try to discover an ideal and who was not content to study the schem[e] as it is in operation, to see the effects of this in various peoples and under varied conditions. (Peterson pp. 42, 44 fn 19)

Although as noted, Warner makes no published reference to Thomson,¹⁸ Mildred Warner's¹⁹ description of a seminar that led to discussion of 'the Murngin controversy' may have included mention of Thomson's work:

When the Berndts visited England in 1954 while Lloyd was teaching at Cambridge, a seminar was held in Meyer Fortes' rooms at Kings College. It was agreed in advance that the subject of Australian kinship would be avoided if possible, but of course this could not be. Edmund Leach attacked the Berndts with such force that everyone mustered to their defense. Australian kinship systems had lost none of their emotion.

Even though Thomson and Warner were in Sydney at the same time, their only obvious link was Radcliffe-Brown, who appears to have had a very different

17 Letter in Mrs Dorita Thomson's possession.

18 A number of accounts have been given to explain why none of Warner's field notes survive. His widow writes, 'When I went to my husband's offices at Michigan State University to remove his files in early fall of 1970, nothing remained - banks of files accumulated through forty years had disappeared' (Warner 1988: vii). Although university officials instigated a search that included the building, the archives, and Warner's first offices, his widow decided to write a biography of Warner, apparently assuming that the files would never be found.

19 Warner 1988: 27.

relationship with each man. Almost immediately after Warner arrived in Sydney from the United States, Radcliffe-Brown was praising him, and he and Warner became close friends.²⁰ And when Warner returned to Sydney after his first seven months of fieldwork, he and a friend shared an apartment with Radcliffe-Brown.²¹ On the other hand, Radcliffe-Brown was very critical of Thomson's interests and his potential as an anthropologist at the beginning of their association.²² It was only much later and in correspondence (Peterson this volume and 2006) that Thomson's desire for Radcliffe-Brown's friendship appeared to be reciprocated.²³

The question of the relationship between Thomson and Warner (or lack of it) and of those between Radcliffe-Brown and Thomson and Warner is historically significant because of Thomson's nominal adherence to Radcliffe-Brown's model of Aboriginal social structure, and, probably related to that, his failure to engage directly with Warner's Yolngu material. Because of the vast amount of Thomson's ethnographic data on Yolngu and their quality, anthropologists inevitably have asked why he did not publish them. Peterson has suggested what seems a plausible explanation for Thomson's not publishing his data, namely Thomson's 'isolation from other anthropologists and relationship with Radcliffe-Brown' (p. 42).

The nature and effect of the differences between Warner and Thomson might further be divined from unpublished sources including the invaluable Thomson collection in the Museum of Victoria. That collection has been a source of inspiration (in some cases, the main source) for the papers in *Donald Thomson, the Man and Scholar*, the splendid book edited by Bruce Rigsby and Nic Peterson.

The 16 chapters in *Donald Thomson, the Man and Scholar*, began as papers presented at the Donald Thomson Centenary Anniversary Symposium held at the University Melbourne in 2001 under the sponsorship of the Museum of Victoria (p. v). The collection is important as the first book-length assessment of the work and intellectual contribution of an individual scholar to anthropology. Yet the editors' judgement that a 'full assessment will not be possible for a long time to come because so much of [Thomson's] research contribution is in the form of unpublished field notes and his vast and magnificent collection of material culture and photographs, most of which has still to receive detailed attention'

20 Warner 1988: 21-22.

21 Warner 1988: 32-35.

22 Radcliffe-Brown explicitly compared Thomson unfavourably to Warner; see Gray this volume (p. 86).

23 Thomson's need for Radcliffe-Brown's approval apparently led him to continue to write as though Radcliffe-Brown's model of Aboriginal social organisation were adequate, while his own data and interpretations consistently revealed the model's inadequacy. It is a matter of regret that in 1949 Thomson did not respond to Radcliffe-Brown's recommendation that he contact Stanner, who had promised Radcliffe-Brown to help Thomson: 'I feel that in Melbourne you are very isolated. Now that Stanner is returning to Australia you might be able to forget your military conflict with him and get together with him on Australian anthropology ... If you can succeed in making friendly contact with him you would find him, I think a congenial and helpful colleague. He has one thing in common with you, his appreciation of the blackfellow' (Peterson 2006: 23).

(p. 1) is clearly borne out. A bonus of the book is reading the interesting dialogue between the editors and the authors that appear in the many 'Editors' Note' endnotes.

The title of the book reflects its focus on the relationship between Donald Thomson as a person and the evolution of his many faceted career. The editors (pp. 2–3) remark in the introductory chapter that a full biography of Thomson remains to be written,²⁴ and they give only a brief framework (and a timeline pp. 243–244) as a guide to the chapters to 'provide an understanding of the man and scholar'. The guide is important to bear in mind since the authors of the chapters draw on the results of the activities that engaged Thomson's professional life and reveal the twinned passions of natural science exploration and collecting that motivated him. The tremendous energy he invested to achieve accuracy and completeness meant that the material objects he collected are meticulously documented and linked to detailed text describing their manufacture and use and sometimes even their history. And Thomson's observations of Aboriginal life and his recordings of interviews produced an enormous amount of linguistic evidence. The authors of all chapters attend to issues of context as did Thomson and are sensitive to the physical and social environment in which Thomson was working and his interaction with that environment.

A symposium that celebrates a public life inevitably draws contributors who had a special relation to that person and his interests and achievements. In the case of Thomson, the diversity of contributors' interests reflects the range of Thomson's, yet I think it is reasonable to see the chapters as falling into four broad categories: ethnography, relations to other anthropologists, and the discipline of anthropology (Chase, Peterson, Gray, Rigsby, Sutton, Borsboom); material culture including photography (Allen, Hafner, Hamby, Memmott and Fantin); advocacy including public education (Attwood, West); and natural history (Yen and Coventry, Temby). One chapter falls outside these categories (Playne on illustrations that five women artists created for Thomson's material collection). All authors speak of Thomson's personal involvement with the subject or subjects. In what follows the focus is mainly on the chapters in the first category, which reflects my own proclivities.

Peterson has spent perhaps more time than any other anthropologist has working with the Thomson collection, and that opportunity informs his evaluation of Thomson's place in Australian anthropology. Peterson (pp. 29–30) frames his survey of Thomson's work in terms of the three geographic areas in which Thomson undertook field work and in the chief focus of each area: Cape York Peninsula, in which his focus was sociocultural organisation; Arnhem Land, in which his focus was on ecological, economic, and policy topics; and the Central Australian desert area, with a focus on material culture and ecology. Although Thomson's contributions in each of these areas were substantial,

24 They point to other publications about aspects of Thomson's work where 'the main developments, events and features of his career' have been described.

Peterson concludes that it is the vast collection of material objects, photographs, unpublished manuscripts and field notes, that is the greatest contribution, and that establishes his place in Australian anthropology:

They can only come to be valued more and more highly by both indigenous and non-indigenous people as the years go by. It is in the context of the collection that the minute particulars of his hundreds of pages of fieldnotes come into their own through their close relationship with the objects and images. This relationship will ensure that Thomson's ethnography will continue to breath [sic] vitality into anthropological research on the classical cultures and societies of Cape York Peninsula and Arnhem Land for the foreseeable future and that his work will never be forgotten. (p. 43)

Peterson (p. 42), as noted above, also speculates on the reasons why Thomson did not publish or complete for publication his vast corpus of Arnhem Land material on myth, ritual, magic, ceremony, painting and kinship; he suggests that it was principally because Warner published *A Black Civilization* in 1937, when Thomson was completing his intensive research among the same people on the same topics, thus pre-empting Thomson's publication of material on the same topics.

In Thomson's Cape York Peninsula writings, Chase finds his natural science training and interests both in his photographs, which portray 'natural humanity in seamless interaction with the biophysical environment' (p. 20), and in 'his anthropological use of the term "ecology" as early as 1946 ... at a time when such interests were only just beginning to be considered in American anthropology' (p. 21). Somewhat contentiously Chase argues that Thomson's evolutionary perspective was very close to that of Tylor:²⁵

it is not so much biological Aboriginal humans who are primitive, but their culture. He clearly has a dualistic view of human existence which sees 'culture' as an entity which evolves through stages quite separate from biology. [He also sees] northern Cape York Peninsula as an area in possible transition to a higher cultural stage through contacts across the Torres Strait in both the material and social dimensions of culture through selective competitive success. (pp. 25-26)

Thomson was a vocal opponent of assimilation and an early advocate of land rights, and as do the other authors in this collection, Chase finds evidence for Thomson's regard for Aborigines as 'real people for whom he had obvious deep affection and respect, and with whom he had great and memorable personal experiences' (p. 26).

Thomson's isolation from his Australianist colleagues has been widely noted. Gray (p. 84) says that Thomson's 'marginalisation' in Australian anthropology was the result of his estrangement from the Australian National Research

25 See, for instance, Editors' Notes in the endnotes to Chase's chapter.

Council (ANRC) and his conflict with Professor AP Elkin, who became Chair of the Sydney University's Anthropology Department in 1933, and he describes three events (which may be seen as series of related events) to substantiate his argument: Thomson's argument about funds with the honorary secretary of the ANRC, who subsequently was found to have misappropriated ANRC funds and who committed suicide, Thomson's advocacy of segregation for Aborigines and opposition to a policy of assimilation, and his opposition to Elkin over the Woomera Rocket range. Gray aims to provide a nuanced reading of the conflict between Thomson and Elkin, but the nuancing arguably results in a portrayal of Elkin that is more sympathetic than that provided of Thomson. Gray equates Thomson's argument for segregation, with its implied focus on remote areas of the Northern Territory, with apartheid, which as policy was adopted only by South Africa, and he seems to overlook the opposed values and aims of the two governments' actions in relation to their indigenous peoples. By the 1970s Thomson's argument for the maintenance of Aboriginal identity and culture had become more influential than Elkin's argument for assimilation.

Thomson's contribution to anthropological linguistics is substantial, although as consistently remarked with respect to all of Thomson's work, more for the very large corpus of texts he carefully transcribed than for his linguistic analysis of them. Rigsby, however, remarks that Thomson's published 'papers stand out for their attention to the form *and* function of language and speech in culture and social life' and that Thomson 'regarded language learning and recording (that is, transcription and glossing) as an important part of doing ethnography and social anthropology' (pp. 129, 130).

Rigsby (p. 130) has made the study of the languages of Cape York Peninsula one of his special areas of research, and, as an anthropological linguist, he judges that Thomson's understanding of Kuuku Ya'u and Umpila improved during the period 1928–1935 and that his transcriptions are reasonable. Rigsby has focused on the linguistic analysis of the difficult Lamalamic language and during the past three decades has spent a great deal of time working with the Lamalala people in the area of Port Stewart as well as constructing a narrative of Thomson's time and the information he recorded with the people there, which includes unpublished papers, fieldnotes and photographs. Rigsby (pp. 136–139) convincingly exemplifies Thomson's role as linguistic anthropologist and finds that his 'fieldnotes ... include data and comments bearing on a number of topics which linguistic anthropologists later developed more fully'. Thomson's 'innate language-learning ability and feeling for the fuller meanings of what people say to and with one another enabled him to do excellent work on matters of language and speech, despite his lack of formal linguistic training'. Rigsby also points out that recent and current research in native title and related issues has revealed the importance of Thomson's linguistic and linguistic anthropological work (p. 139). Rigsby's copious endnotes (p. 140–142) are a delightful coda to his chapter.

Thomson made the first of two short visits to Flinders Island in 1928; during his second visit, in 1935, he recorded linguistic, genealogical, and territorial information from interviews with the few people who remained in a camp on the

island. Sutton's (p. 148) work on the data that Thomson recorded in connection with his research on the Flinders Island Language segues to noting another purpose Thomson had in writing his findings and to reflect on the relationship that anthropologists have had (and have) with the Aboriginal people they have worked with and become close to and how variously they report their observations in different contexts. Thomson who was appalled by the treatment that Aboriginal people received at the hands of pearlers, sandalwood cutters, missionaries, and pastoralists, and angered at government administrators' inaction or forced removals, became 'well known for his criticisms of Aboriginal administrative policy and practice' (p. 149). Sutton finds a:

consistency between Thomson's first field observations in 1928 and the recurring pattern of his involvement in later events, right through to his public engagement in moves to reform Aboriginal affairs in Victoria towards the end of his life. (p. 151)

In this regard, Sutton observes both parallels and differences in the responses of McConnel, Mountford and Stanner (pp. 149–154). In a fitting conclusion, Sutton remarks:

[Thomson's] sensitivity to the grossness of so many men of the outback in the Depression probably cannot be separated out from this general pattern of a fine-tuned sensibility, combined with his passionate hatred of injustice. His political position on indigenous affairs ... arose from a deeply aesthetic appreciation as much as a moral stance. The destruction of Aboriginal culture which he witnessed at first hand entailed the killing of something beautiful, for base motives of gain, or for arrogant proselytising, or for government control. (p. 154)

Thomson remarked in notes he wrote at Gaarrtji in 1937 during his extensive research in Arnhem Land that, 'If a man could but follow all that takes place when a *yarkomirri* (important) man dies he would understand almost all of the culture of these people'. At Yirrkala in 1969, during mortuary rites for a senior Yolngu man, Daymbalipu Mununggurr told me that I had to understand that 'death is an important part of Yolngu life'. Boorsboom (p. 160, citing Peterson 1976), who had been at Gaarrtji in the early 1970s and in 1998, quotes Thomson's fieldnote and says, 'This observation has lost none of its validity'. I imagine that no anthropologist who has worked in north-east Arnhem Land would dissent, or disagree with Boorsboom's observation of changes that have occurred – new means of transport and communication, but more significantly shift in emphasis from secondary burial rites in grave posts to ritual at the time of burial including cleansing rituals (p. 161). Boorsboom also found Thomson's apt descriptions of 'the dynamics of Aboriginal sociality and the ways people identify themselves in any given context' remarkable because Thomson was writing when anthropological explanations were cast in terms of the 'structural-functional language of clans, tribes and languages ... terms that refer to bounded, essentialist and exclusive entities which did not reflect the social reality of Arnhem Land of his time nor the social reality of Arnhem Land today' (pp. 161, 169).

Thomson's importance as an advocate for Aboriginal rights in the 1930s and 1940s is counterpoised to Elkin's role in Aboriginal affairs by Attwood, who also observes that Thomson's 'distinctive perspective, unlike Elkin's, became increasingly influential with the passing of time' (p. 183). Attwood links Thomson's advocacy directly to his observing, in 1928, the acts of an autocratic mission superintendent at Aurukun and his frustrated attempts to bring about change. During the years between 1928 and the late 1960s, the political environment in Aboriginal affairs in Australia changed as did receptiveness to Thomson's advocacy for the maintenance of Aboriginal identity and culture, so that toward the end of his life, 'political positions he had championed and which had once seemed beyond the pale were moving to centre stage' (p. 174).

Although Thomson and Warner may never have met and thus never had a conversation about Yolngu, I think that had such an exchange occurred, they would have found they had much in common – and it would have been based on their admiration and affection for the Yolngu people and their culture.

Bruce Rigsby and Nicolas Peterson are to be thanked for making the proceedings of the symposium available in print. The book is well presented – photographs, as befits a book about Donald Thomson, are splendid (I especially like the one of Thomson on the cover). The Academy of Social Sciences in Australia is to be thanked for undertaking its publication. A couple of quibbles: the binding is not as good as it should be, and copy editing could have been more carefully done. However, neither of these shortcomings seriously distracts from appreciation of the book.

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Between Indigenous Australia and Europe: John Mawurndjul: Art Histories in Context edited by Claus Volkenandt and Christian Kauffman, 256 pages, 16 colour reproductions, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra and Reimer, Berlin, 2009, ISBN 9780855756666 (pbk), \$87.95.

Can there be too many books on Aboriginal art? Take the example of one Aboriginal artist John Mawurndjul. He featured significantly in *Crossing Country the Alchemy of Western Arnhem Land Art* (Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2004), and was the sole subject of another exhibition catalogue '*Rarrk*': *John Mawurndjul: Journey through Time in Australia* (Museum Tinguely and C Kauffman (eds), Crawford House Publishing, Belair, South Australia, 2005). Both were substantial books in production values and content. In 2009 Mawurndjul was the subject of another smaller publication, *John Mawurndjul: Survey 1979–2009* (Apolline Kohen (curator), ANU Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, 2009), and also of *Between Indigenous Australia and Europe: John Mawurndjul*, a collection of scholarly essays compiled from a seminar in that accompanied '*Rarrk*' exhibition at the Museum Tinguely in Basel.

In this case the excess of books is largely due to Mawurndjul's reputation. A Kuninjku Elder based in the area serviced by Maningrida (Western Arnhem Land), he is the most celebrated contemporary artist from Arnhem Land. The most significant aspect of these four publications is that two of them emanate from Europe, a place that remains sceptical of the Australian artworld's claims for Aboriginal contemporary art. The contributors to *Between Indigenous Australia and Europe* are fairly even divided between Australian and European, and the essays by the Europeans reflect the provocative nature of exhibiting Aboriginal art in an esteemed museum of modern art. This engagement between Australian scholars and European artworld on the subject of Aboriginal art is a relatively rare event and the main value of this book.

To appreciate Mawurndjul's achievement we must remember that in the 1980s and 1990s, as the Aboriginal art industry rapidly developed, the bark painters found it increasingly difficult to compete with the abstract acrylic canvases from the Kimberley and Western Desert communities. This was largely because the desert canvases had shifted the paradigm of Aboriginal art from the ethnographic to the aesthetic, and Arnhem Land bark paintings were too strongly associated with the previous ethnographic paradigm. Mawurndjul was the first bark painter to successfully challenge the hegemony of the Desert and Kimberley styles within the terms of contemporary art.

Between Indigenous Australia and Europe is best read in the context of the two excellent exhibition catalogues, '*Rarrk*' and *Crossing Country*. Not only do both have high-quality reproductions (that cannot be matched by *Between Indigenous Australia and Europe*), their essays are of a high calibre and provide a greater insight into Mawurndjul and his art than the symposium essays.

The symposium essays are divided into four parts, of which the first focuses on Mawurndjul and his art. It begins with essays by Jon Altman and Luke Taylor, two anthropologists with a long experience of Mawurndjul and Kuninjku art. However you will learn more from their essays in the above exhibition catalogues. Judith Ryan, among the most experienced curators of Aboriginal art, largely repeats the points she makes in *'Rarrk'*, but she does give them a wider Arnhem Land context. Most interesting in this first section is the very different accounts that Ryan and Taylor give of Mawurndjul's aesthetic, with Ryan taking a very formalist perspective that focuses on the material-specificity of bark painting, and Taylor's anthropological background embedding Mawurndjul's aesthetic moves within social contexts.

The remaining three parts of *Between Indigenous Australia and Europe*, which more accurately reflect the book's title, are the reason to buy this book. Here the issue is not Mawurndjul's art but its provocation within the European context – the still very vexed question of how European art historiography can adequately understand let alone critique Indigenous art. The issue, which was embryonic in the *'Rarrk'* catalogue, is here given a further edge by the mix of disciplines represented at the seminar – anthropologists, art historians, curators and artists. As it turned out, the professional art historians were Europeans (the Australian Sally Butler was not at the seminar) and the anthropologists were mainly Australian anthropologists who have long histories of engaging with Aboriginal art and have worked closely with the art world. Unlike anthropology, art history still has a small footprint in the field of Aboriginal art, and this is particularly the case with art from Arnhem Land. If anyone was in unfamiliar territory it was the European art historians.

The discussion first really kicks off with the essay by Howard Morphy – the anthropologist who throughout his career has most engaged the art world. The book is worth buying for his essay alone. It succinctly and clearly outlines a benchmark argument that cuts through the debate between art history and anthropology, and European and non-European art. Its thesis is the basis of his recent book *Becoming Art: Exploring Cross-Cultural Categories* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008).

In contrast to most of the European authors, Morphy, Butler and Paul Taçon (who comprise the Australians), as well as Til Förster, the only anthropologist amongst the Europeans, move in a fairly relaxed and pragmatic way between Aboriginal and European art. The three European art historians, Claus Volkenandt, Kitty Zijlmans, and Anne-Marie Bonnet, find it particularly difficult. Their arguments will seem dated to an Australian audience because they return to debates about otherness that we, perhaps too quickly, put behind us some 15 years ago. However their essays are very valuable because they explain why Indigenous art has not been accepted as contemporary art outside of Australia. They also have a better sense than the authors of the ways in which intensification of globalisation is impacting on this debate. Even Bernhard Lüthi and Jean-Hubert Martin, who have long moved easily between Indigenous and European art,

have difficulty moving beyond the European discourse precisely because of their long experiences as European curators challenging the traditional Eurocentric practices of the European art world.

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Pemulwuy: The Rainbow Warrior by Eric Willmot, 429 pp, Second Edition, Weldon International, 2010 (first published 1987), ISBN 9780646530796 (pbk).

Pemulwuy is a highly readable historical novel. It begins as an action-filled page-turner as Kiraban, a young Awabakal man, joins a British ship that has come to assess the harbour and surface coal reserves of what would become the Hunter River, and voyages to Sydney (pp. 13–19). As Pemulwuy and his Bidjigal clan cease trading with the British and begin to wage war against them (pp. 54–56), this intelligent and sensitive young man joins Pemulwuy's camp and becomes part of his inner circle.

But our insight is not confined to Pemulwuy's camp. The reader witnesses discussions in the Governor's drawing room, Bennelong's hut, the road between Sydney and Parramatta and other places of life and work. Willmot paints a rich picture of the pattern of relationships within and between the British and the Irish, the Eora and Tharawal and other surrounding peoples. Close friendships, desire, marriage, conflict and betrayal form and break bonds between characters forged by many different cultures. Communication across multiple languages is a matter of great fun as well as confusion.

The novel is based on a consideration of the historical sources for British and Eora conflict from the 1790s into the first decade of the nineteenth century. Willmot reads the very scant written references to Pemulwuy and conflict around the colony's outposts at Parramatta, Lane Cove, Castle Hill and on the Hawkesbury, as the tip of an iceberg, a barely submerged war. The novel does what no history could do, and brings to life the many and various militant and pacifistic personalities and their machinations, negotiations, plays for power and backings-down on both sides. The decision-making processes of the Eora and other Aboriginal peoples are carefully constructed from anthropological understandings mostly drawn from other places, as is etiquette, marriage practice and kinship, and the Eora relationship with country (pp. 422–423). British decision making, as rendered by Willmot, is as full of intrigue, as shaped by conflicting traditions as it is around the Eora campfires, the preserved written account of events and motivations not at all like the reality.

Pemulwuy himself remains shrouded in mystery for much of the novel, keeping his own counsel, aloof and uncompromising, and experienced by the reader through the eyes of others – the respectful and sometimes fearful eyes of his followers and some of his British opponents, and the contemptuous yet always uneasy eyes of the Rum Corps. He is very much a part of Bidjigal society, but also designated as different, by the cast in his eye and the actions of his mother after his birth (p. 48). Pemulwuy's decisions are unilateral, and he does not have much of a sense of humour. His gothic charisma provokes a mixture of impatience and awe in this reader – much as it does in the other characters – staying just the right side of the ridiculous. As the story progresses, though, the focus of the novel narrows to a more intense examination of the costs of war on both sides (a war

has no winners, only losers in this novel). Pemulwuy becomes more accessible when we finally follow him to one of his father's Dreaming places (pp. 375–376), and find him alone with Kiraban, laughing with exhausted irony about how much has been lost (p. 403).

Willmot has further embroidered on his main themes in the second edition. Most noticeable for this reader was that Willmot has augmented the role women play in what remains nevertheless a very masculine novel. Nargel, a young Bidjigal woman, marries an escaped Irish convict after he has been through a modified initiation process, and carries out a daring and bloody rescue of her husband after he is captured fighting the British (Chapter 14). In the second edition her courage is emphasised more than her brutality, as her husband finally sees her clearly as a 'determined Bidjigal woman' (p. 133). He has introduced two new fictional female characters to the story, one of them a young Irishwoman whose zestful and capable presence as an adopted Eora woman complicates the relationship of captured soldier Lieutenant Marshall (pp. 365–367) to his captors, and helps to re-cast the formerly rather witch-like historical figure of Silky Donovan (another female Eora adoptee) in a more sympathetic light (pp. 174–175).

Willmot has updated his essay explaining the purpose of his novel, and its relationship to history, and is clear about which characters and events are based on historical ones, and which are fictional (pp. 417–427). But he does not engage in introspection about the nature of the known and the unknown in history and the possibilities offered and risks posed by fiction in the telling of such a story, reflections that might have added much to the recent debates between Kate Grenville, Inga Clendinnen and others.¹ Rather, his premise is the same as it was in 1987: that Pemulwuy and his long, astute and at times very effective campaign to expel the British invaders from Eora country were hushed up at the time, and have been neglected and even suppressed by historians ever since (p. 418). This new edition, however, appears in a very different climate (no doubt partly created by Willmot's novel itself), with recent histories such as Grace Karsken's *The Colony* and Rachel Perkins' and Marcia Langton's *First Australians* acknowledging 'Pemulwuy's War' and 'the Bide-a-gal resistance'.² A preface by a second party, helping to place the book in its contemporary context, would have enhanced the book's relevance and appeal. The novel awaits scholarly attention in its new context.

Unfortunately, the new edition contains many and glaring typographical errors and lacks the section breaks that in the previous edition signalled changes of scene, very helpful for the reader's orientation in a book featuring so much simultaneous action.

1 See for example Clendinnen 2006:16-38, and Grenville 2007: 66-72.

2 Perkins and Langton 2008: 29-37. Karskens 2009: 474-480.

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Arrernte Present, Arrernte Past: Invasion, Violence, and Imagination in Indigenous Central Australia by Diane Austin-Broos, xv + 336 pp, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009, ISBN 97802260326304 (cloth) \$US70.00 ISBN 9780226032641 (paper) \$US35.00.

Diane Austin-Broos opens with a long verbatim dictionary definition of the noun *invasion* replete with phonetics. Her book takes the longest possible view of the colonisation of Central Australia in order to explain the state we are in, or rather the state in which Western Arrernte find themselves as a consequence of the invasion of their country from the 1860s. For Austin-Broos it is ultimately an unhappy, disenfranchised and violent state, despite the joy, bravery and resilience of individuals who are her subjects and friends and for whom she has the deepest concern.

Were she given to a more flippant and ironic style of writing she may have applied the celebratory marketing terminology of 'sesqui-centenary' to fit the time-frame of her study; *Arrernte Present, Arrernte Past*. It is just 150 years since the trickle of explorers and pastoralists arrived to take over the rivers and waterholes of the newly named MacDonnells in the 1860s. That flow turned to a flood that inundated that place and its people, dislocating their society. Elsewhere in Australia the faux-birthday of 150 would be some sort of local government celebration at least. The awkward centenary re-enactments of the early 1960s in Alice Springs are unlikely to be mimicked in the next couple of years for the 150th.

Austin-Broos has looked across the century and a half to understand, analyse and explain the effects of that invasion. Its path-finder was John McDouall Stuart followed by waves of cattle and sheep, goats, donkeys, camels, cats and dogs and the unending black hair-string of the telegraph line. She has identified two significant moments that not only remade the economy and demography of the place but also remade the ways of thinking for Arrernte themselves. Her key point is that Arrernte did not just observe things change around them but they were changed in-themselves. She argues there was an ontological shift, a wholly different way of apprehending the world that in important respects was not and could not be voluntary and self-conscious. Simply put, the ontological shift means that even dramatically and profoundly altered circumstances just become accommodated as a *given* of everyday life.

The first moment was the establishment of the Finke River Mission at Hermannsburg and the effects of sedentary dependency further contained by policing and the alienation from land. The second was the outstation movement resulting from Land Rights and new overwhelming forces of the 'market society and its bureaucratic state'. The contradictory outcomes, she argues, left people marooned and unemployed on their own lands and caught in an underlying, enduring if not intractable 'current of violence'.

Austin-Broos has written a dense and subtle book which bravely carries the subtitle *Invasion, Violence, and Imagination in Indigenous Central Australia*. Brave because, like Peter Sutton (who she credits in this context), she is trying to explain the once-and-future risks of a catastrophic social failure exacerbated by endless violence – structural violence – in the community. She is prepared to identify the perpetration and perpetuation of despicable violence and explain its structural form and, what she calls, its *social imaginaries*. In working out the bases she has given a deeply theoretical account that adroitly deploys history as a complex of incidents (facts), recollections (perceptions) and also as structural changes (modes of production, modes of administration, modes of belief). Anthropology is used similarly as a mode of enquiry but with an active sensibility about the heaviest of philosophical assumptions that both inform and destabilise that discipline. Martin Heidegger for example shows up here and there. Marx and Engels have a mention. Durkheim and Levi-Strauss and others appear in the pages to exert or explain the ontological shifts: Bryan Bowman, Pierre Bourdieu, Bob Buck, Thorsten Veblen, Olive Pink, Karl Polanyi, Max Weber, RM Williams, the Braedon brothers, Roland Barthes and the trope of the cowboy. A conga-line of Australia's best and most influential anthropologists cross the landscape with Spencer and the Strehlows in the lead. Austin-Broos both draws from and adds richly to that strong and globally important scholarly tradition. Most importantly she skilfully brings to the forefront the people who are the subject and concern of this book.

However, she will leave most readers behind. The depth of analysis and the density of some of the writing and language will not be accommodated by many. Much of the book would only be intelligible for those already most closely acquainted with the subjects and the subject matter. Much of the detail will serve as an inside record. A work of this complexity demands a primer – a direct, stripped-down, plain language pamphlet that presents the central propositions without both the disciplinary language and the layers of contextual detail. Those who need to read this book but probably will not are politicians, bureaucrats and officials, mining industry consultants, lawyers, magistrates, medical professionals, police commanders and the missionaries who come and go. Also the makers of public opinion would benefit, the journalists and columnists who write so confidently about Central Australia from Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. The point here is that it would be a great pity for such an important and valuable contribution to lie on the shelves with a limited prospect of impact, especially in the context of the present intervention. Her informants and friends, from whom she draws so deeply, are of course among the least equipped to read and comprehend her book, which seems ever thus. Such complex scholarship reproduces a knowledge disequilibrium as we *lhentere* (whities) interpret their *relhe* (Western Arrernte) culture and situation in a non-transferable way.

The book does not set out to be a comprehensive explanation of all factors. Some significant silences may be noticed. First, while the book integrates the two cultures of history and anthropology it leaves aside the third culture, political science in the form of governmental power politics and its bureaucratic

handmaiden, policy. The book deals well with Arrernte factional or interpersonal politics yet the shenanigans of successive Northern Territory governments over decades in their attempts to spoil, influence, divide and rule, do not rate a mention: the funding of almost unending law suits over land and the Land Rights Act, the duchessing and special favours to individuals and communities, the overt and covert campaigns against the Central Land Council (CLC), the byzantine mysteries behind the establishment of the cultural powerhouse that is the Strehlow Research Centre, the siphoning of Commonwealth monies, and the manipulation of land tenures, especially around leases, reserves and national parks. It is hard to argue that Western Arrernte were not heavily directly impacted and detrimentally affected by Darwin for the last 30 years.

Two or three other silences include Native Title, Alice Springs and arguably football. Native Title as a legal, political and organisational force is not addressed. In particular the successful Alice Springs application that gave Arrernte the ownership and authority of which they had been deprived since everyone else moved in. Moreover, Alice Springs itself is strangely absent, hardly discussed. It seems set aside on the dubious assertion that the 'majority of rural Aboriginal people engage with only a few establishments when they go to Alice Springs.' Ntaria/ Hermannsburg is the locus and focus of the story but the giant gravitational influence of 'town' does not really get a guernsey. That metropolis exerts an influence over the entirety of Central Australia. Alice of itself shifts the ontologies and the cultures and tilts the political economy of the whole desert region. The town camps and the family networks, the stores, the Native Title outcomes, the commerce and entertainments, the policing, the car yards, the Commonwealth Bank, Lasseter's Casino, the Todd River and the Todd Tavern bottleshop, the CLC, the government agencies, the Mall and the movies (for anomic youth especially), the court house, the prison, the Yeperenye Centre, Yipirinya School, the Northside IGA supermarket, Red Rooster, Traegar Park, K-Mart, Congress and the hospital. Yes, the hospital. What of the hospital? Hermannsburg in this sense is a dormitory suburb of Alice Springs.

The Yeperenye Festival of 2001, a spectacular, dramatic and moving reassertion of Arrernte cultural presence, is not mentioned nor the extraordinary stamina and performance that night of its cultural director Rupert Max Stuart who sang for hours and hosted the entire show. He is one of Australia's two most famous Western Arrernte people yet is misnamed Stewart in just one other context. Max Stuart is perhaps the most senior man of the past decade or more. Curiously Albert Namatjira and his legacy is not addressed. The Hermannsburg watercolourists could scarcely have generated a more striking ontological shift in literally changing the ways of seeing for everyone. And football does not get a guernsey either (except for a photo taken at a football *festival* – she means *carnival*). Unbeaten so far this season at the time of writing, the Hermannsburg Bulldogs deserve a mention – if not a premiership – because, as Dick Kimber so credibly argues, football has shifted the codes of authority, charisma and respect to favour the young men. Football may have also changed the rituals of conflict

and the identifications with symbolic worlds and kin. By the final siren, men can grow 'big' and 'small' amid the filiations and dances of that ceremonial ground. Football is not a trivial anthropological factor.

That said, a review such as this cannot do justice to a book of the depth, intelligence, honesty and concern as *Arrernte Present, Arrernte Past*. In applying history to anthropology in such a complicated situation – so deeply constituted by a particular understanding of the deep past – Austin-Broos is ruefully aware of her own condition professionally, historically and personally. At the close, as if to draw strength, she invokes Inga Clendennin's remark that anthropology and history together are powerful and says of herself that she is 'an anthropologist principally concerned with change'. At that moment she surely saw the ghost of Karl Marx singing-up his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach that 'philosophers only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it'.

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Palm Island: Through a Long Lens by Joanna Watson, xx + 212 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2010, ISBN 9780855757038, \$34.95.

The frontier period, in Queensland, extended for 80 years after European invasion. Indigenous people who survived the violence and dispossession became strangers in their own land. But this was not the end of their oppression, because for decades afterwards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Queensland were punished – if they showed the slightest sign of resistance to colonisation – by forcible removal to the Palm Island settlement near Townsville. In this way the government effectively dealt with two problems: the provision of minimal relief for Indigenous people scattered across the state, and the incessant calls of European settlers for their removal. The upheaval of removal to distant settlements – after the violence of the frontier – means that places like Palm Island are important sites of European colonisation and Indigenous dispossession in Queensland. Joanna Watson's *Palm Island: Through a Long Lens* alerts us to these important connections, and therefore makes a great contribution to our understanding of the frontier and post-frontier periods.

Misunderstanding about Palm Island's function (and reality) continued up to recent years, helped, as she astutely notes, by indifferent or lazy historians and journalists: 'attention to the island's history is most often non-existent, superficial or distorted' (p. 134).¹ As a result, many people failed to realise what was really happening at Townsville's back door. Correction, in the form of a historical oversight, has been long overdue, and Watson's book finally and effectively meets that need. This book is a valuable and important addition to our understanding of Indigenous history and experience in Queensland. As Watson perceptively explains, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in settlements such as Palm Island were effectively the prisoners of colonisation:

Much of this history has been about the criminalisation of Aboriginal people for trivial offences, the role of police in the colonisation of Aboriginal lands, the over-policing of Indigenous communities and the use of prisons as a means of social control. (p. 145)

Despite Palm Island's critical role in the forced removal regime, many non-Indigenous Queenslanders have remained, it seems, unaware of the island's purpose and history. Palm Island's operation and purpose – as an island penitentiary and as a threat held over Indigenous people throughout Queensland, remained largely hidden from sight. Authorities and tourist operators tried to paint a benign picture of the island's operations, but not

1 'Contemporary journalists regularly visit Palm Island, to focus voyeuristically upon alcohol-related violence' (p. 134). It is not clear if this includes journalist Chloe Hooper, chastised for comparing Superintendent Curry with Sergeant Hurley (pp. 134, 154).

all were convinced.² This attempted cover-up continued, as government officials and ministers constantly extolled the benefits of reserves and removals. In 1936, EM Hanlon, Minister for Health and Home Affairs, told Queenslanders: 'If the aboriginal in Queensland were left entirely on his own resources he would be a miserable individual indeed'.³ 'Palm Island', had been chosen, he said, because of its beauty, the island's isolation from Europeans and the government's 'desire to have a settlement to which recalcitrant and difficult natives could be sent, and from which escape would be difficult'.⁴ Events during the past ten years have helped make the community and the media aware of the circumstances that people on Palm Island have known too well for almost one hundred years. A historical background was urgently needed to grasp why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were suffering such appalling problems in what appeared – to outsiders – to be a tropical paradise.

Watson has made an important contribution to this new awareness. Her 1993 doctoral thesis 'Becoming Bwngcolman: Exile and Survival on Palm Island, 1918 to the Present' was, until now, the main easily-available source for anybody wanting to understand how Palm Island fitted into the broader Queensland context.⁵ Therefore the production of this book, in which her thesis is supplemented by an informed discussion of recent events on the island, is timely. The book is further enhanced by material derived from new scholarship since 1993, and thus makes a great contribution to a better understanding of Queensland's Indigenous history. We can now, at last, begin to appreciate the systematic neglect and racial segregation that took place right across Queensland and reached a pinnacle on Palm Island.

Banishment to Palm Island was, as numerous historians have noted, both a threat and a punishment for Indigenous people throughout the state.⁶ Some went voluntarily, usually to join members of their extended families already removed there. However, as Watson accurately notes, there were a number of much more sinister elements at work. As she argues, government was indifferent to the tensions created on the island:

Palm Island penitentiary was developed in its early days, with the deliberate and articulated desire to allow conflict to foment between the various groups forced into exile there.⁷

2 See, for example, 'Island of palms and tropic beauty: Palm Island provides an excellent example of a Government's paternal care for a dying race', *The Queenslander*, 11 March 1937: 28; and a German publication: 'On Palm Island the Aborigines were thrown together. Some had retreated from the white man, the others were driven by typhoons to Palm Island. They are happier today in their retreat than on the neighbouring continent, changed as it is by foreign culture', *Münchener Illustrierte Presse* (No 19, 1937), translated in Queensland State Archives [henceforth QSA], A/69469.

3 EM Hanlon, 'What settlements mean to the Aboriginal: life in carefree environment', *The Telegraph*, 19 December 1936.

4 EM Hanlon, 'The beauties of Palm Island: tropical richness – wide diversity of work for natives', *The Telegraph*, December 1936.

5 Cited, for example, by Hooper 2008: 272–273.

6 Blake 2001: 43, 136.

7 Blake 2001: 157.

The forced relocation of people who might have been traditional enemies into close proximity with one another was one issue, but a closer examination of selected police, court and prison records uncovers other disturbing facts. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, charged with violence against other Indigenous men or women were removed to Palm Island – despite being found not guilty at court. In other words, the lack of judicial process or incriminating evidence was no impediment to their imprisonment on the island. Some convicted prisoners were taken to Palm Island ‘to complete the remainder of their sentence’. Other men, convicted of violent offences within their own communities and families, were taken by police to the island on their discharge from prison. The deliberate concentration of so many violent offenders was bound to inevitably produce communities that eventually boasted ‘the highest rates of violence in the Western world’.⁸

This use of Palm Island and other Aboriginal Reserves as ‘dumping grounds’ for former prisoners is a point worth closer examination.⁹ Archibald Meston, one of the first Aboriginal Protectors, believed that ‘in no case should time expired prisoners be returned to their original haunts’, yet he complained bitterly when Aboriginal ‘troublemakers’ and ‘dangerous criminals’ were sent to his ‘domain’.¹⁰ His contemporary, Walter Roth, held similar views: ‘all time-expired aboriginal prisoners shall be effectually prevented from getting back to their native countries’.¹¹ As historians Finnane and McGuire noted, removals were an integral component of colonisation:

Incarceration within unique institutions, segregation from the settler population and surveillance and regulation through an expanding bureaucracy were strategies of social control increasingly deployed in an attempt to address the distinctive challenges posed. This practice continued until the last decades of the twentieth century.

There are other factors to consider. Watson notes Mark Copland’s groundbreaking research on Indigenous removals in Queensland, which revealed another important fact: one third of all removals (which reached a peak between 1915 and 1942) conducted throughout Queensland were to Palm Island.¹² Copland showed that Palm Island, Cherbourg and Woorabinda were major destinations for discipline-related removals, with over 40 percent of ex-prisoners sent to Palm Island.¹³ Apart from the ‘disciplinary’ reasons, other Indigenous people were

8 Yarrabah, Mapoon and other Aboriginal communities in North Queensland share this appalling statistic. Blake 2001: 50.

9 See Blake 2001.

10 Southern Protector of Aboriginals to Home Secretary, 7 July 1902, QSA, A/58929, letter 10565 of 1902; Southern Protector of Aboriginals to Minister for Lands, 5 October 1903, QSA, A/58930, letter 29553 of 1903.

11 Annual Report of Northern Protector of Aboriginals for 1899, *Queensland Parliamentary Votes & Proceedings*, 1900: 591.

12 Copland 2005: 147.

13 Copland 2005: 210.

taken there for 'health' considerations. As Copland notes, Dr Raphael Cilento's objective of making Palm Island 'a medical clearing house for Aboriginal people from other settlements and reserves' was almost achieved during the 1940s.¹⁴

A few minor criticisms of the book are necessary. More detailed maps of the island and the settlement, particularly showing structural changes over time, would be useful.¹⁵ Watson's explanation of the shooting of Superintendent Robert Curry in 1930, although well-researched, does not appear to have incorporated the valuable first-hand account provided in Renarta Prior's book *'Straight From the Yudaman's Mouth': the Life Story of Peter Prior* (1993), although Peter Prior's subsequent murder trial and discharge in Townsville was (p. 71). This is a curious omission. Similarly, Cheryl Taylor's excellent recent analysis of literary texts associated with Palm Island gives us good insights into Indigenous and non-Indigenous narratives of island stories.¹⁶ It is also unfortunate that some of the recent work on frontier conflict has not been used as well, particularly studies of the Native Police. For example, no archival evidence has been found to date which supports the descriptive term 'Kalkadoon Wars' (p. 18). Regrettably, Sergeant Chris Hurley was not the first serving police officer in Queensland charged in relation to an Indigenous death in custody (pp. 1, 20). That dubious distinction belongs to Native Police Lieutenant J Donald Harris, charged with the murder of an Aboriginal prisoner in 1863.¹⁷ Despite these small criticisms, this is an important book for anybody wishing to better understand Queensland's and Palm Island's history. It is highly recommended for readers wanting to discover the truth about the treatment of Indigenous people in Australia, and deserves to, at least, be held by every school and public library in the state. The author has done an excellent job of introducing the broader community to the salient features of Palm Island's history.

Much of Palm Island's history can be found in official records, and this book may inspire others with knowledge and experience of Palm Island to produce their own stories. A few extra details from the archives, specifically those concerning the creation of Queensland's most notorious 'island penitentiary', will further enhance our understanding and may encourage further research.

Islands were suggested as prisons for Queensland's Aborigines long before Palm Island. In 1867 (less than ten years after Queensland became a separate colony), Inspector Marlow of Queensland's Native Police wrote to the Commissioner of Police, submitting a plan to 'suppress the slaughter of cattle by the Blacks':

I would suggest they all be collected with their children, placed on some suitable island where they could be educated and taught to become

14 Copland 2005: 199; Kidd 1997: 100, 111.

15 For example, an excellent map of the settlement in 1936, found in the Lands Commissioner's files, can be compared with the 1930 map presented at the inquest into Robert Curry's death; QSA, A/27541 and JUS/ N907, inquest 260 of 1930.

16 Taylor 2009.

17 Richards 2010.

useful. A great many of the Blacks could from time to time be captured. I have no hesitation in stating all the Blacks on the coast might eventually be removed.¹⁸

Marlow's suggestion was forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, who replied 'his proposition is unique but cannot be acted upon'.¹⁹ John Marlow was perhaps one of the more enlightened members of the Native Police, a special military force created to provide 'protection' for European expansion.²⁰ Indigenous resistance in Queensland was always quickly and ruthlessly crushed by colonisers. The only alternative to violence, as far as many settlers were concerned, was the complete 'abandonment of the colony'.

Ten years passed. The 'island solution' to Queensland's 'Aboriginal Problem' was resurrected by colonist Alexander Boyd.²¹ In 1877, he recalled 'one of the Native Police officers' (probably Marlow) speaking to him about a proposal to 'ameliorate the blacks':

The best plan for dealing with the blacks is to select a coast district, with islands some six miles from the mainland. Pick out the island with the best soil and greatest natural advantages, and form a settlement there – establishing a school under the charge of a superintendent, with a staff of civilised natives. Now collect all the young blacks up to the age of fourteen, and teach them, under supervision, how to employ their time.²²

Boyd proposed that old troopers from the Native Police be placed in charge of the island. 'Allow no gins [a derogatory term for Aboriginal women] on the settlement until the youngsters are civilised. Keep them there for three years. By that time they will be pretty well advanced in civilisation'.²³ He deplored the lack of action, saying:

We have islands innumerable all along our coast which are, many of them, very well suited for the requirements of such a station, and there are scores of old faithful troopers who would fittingly end their career as guard over the juvenile natives.²⁴

At least one of his contemporaries agreed. Brinsley Sheridan, Crown Lands Commissioner at Cardwell, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in September 1877, 'proposing the reservation of certain Islands off the coast':

18 Inspector Marlow to Chief Inspector Murray, 9 December 1867, QSA, COL/ A100, letter 552 of 1868.

19 Colonial Secretary to Commissioner of Police, 16 January 1868, QSA, COL/ Q5, letter 32 of 1868.

20 See Richards 2008.

21 Island prisons were popular with European administrators for many centuries; see Kirby 1995: viii.

22 'Old Chum', 'The Native Police Officer No III' (part of series 'Old Colonials'), *The Queenslander*, 10 February 1877: 21; AJ Boyd, 'Regenerating the Aboriginal', *The Queenslander*, 12 June 1897: 1293.

23 'Old Chum', 'The Native Police Officer No III', *The Queenslander*, 10 February 1877: 21; AJ Boyd, 'Regenerating the Aboriginal', *The Queenslander*, 12 June 1897: 1293.

24 'Old Chum', 'The Native Police Officer No III', *The Queenslander*, 10 February 1877: 21; AJ Boyd, 'Regenerating the Aboriginal', *The Queenslander*, 12 June 1897: 1293.

Allow me to suggest that the Palm Islands, the Family Islands, and Dunk Island should be reserved. I recommend the Palm Islands because I know that the inhabitants of the mainland about Palm Creek, Herbert River, and other streams emptying themselves into Halifax Bay, are in constant communication with those residing upon the Islands, if not absolutely belonging to the same tribe.²⁵

However, Sheridan's plan was not adopted and Palm Island remained undisturbed.

In 1889, the Aborigines Protection Society suggested an Aboriginal Reserve be established on Palm Island, but JG Macdonald, Police Magistrate at Townsville, argued against the proposal.²⁶ A familiar solution to the 'Aboriginal problem' was offered by 'A Well Wisher of the Blacks' in 1891:

I would propose that the few remaining blacks, who are congregated around the towns, be generally mustered up, and taken away and placed on an island, or piece of ground specially selected by the government for their sole use and abode, at the same time strictly prohibiting all whites from having any intercourse with them, excepting those who would be placed at the expense of the Government to look after and protect them.²⁷

Public agitation for Government to 'ameliorate' Queensland's Indigenous population slowly increased during the last decades of the nineteenth century. A number of Aboriginal Reserves were established (with varying degrees of success) in the north, but a new colony-wide regime finally began in December 1897 after *The Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act, 1897* was passed. From now on, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander would be supervised by a network of 'Protectors' (the police) under the control of a Chief Protector. At first the colony was divided in two, with Northern and Southern Protectors of Aborigines. The Native Police generally stopped shooting Indigenous people, and 'ordinary' police began 'removing' the survivors of the frontier war from their homelands to designated 'Aboriginal Reserves' at Durundur, Deebing Creek (near Ipswich) and Taroom.

In 1900, the Northern Protector, Walter Roth, asked for authority to 'remove Aboriginal criminals' to the Fraser Island mission station near Maryborough.²⁸ Within a year, Aboriginal ex-prisoners were being routinely 'deported' to Fraser Island after their discharge from prison. Others, accused of various crimes, were sent 'for their own safety'.²⁹ However, the Fraser Island experiment proved to be a failure, and the inmates were relocated to Yarrabah near Cairns in 1904.

25 *Queensland Parliamentary Votes and Proceedings*, 10 September 1877: 1245-1246.

26 Police Magistrate at Townsville to the Colonial Secretary, 30 October 1889, QSA, COL/A595, letter 9668 of 1889.

27 'A Well Wisher of the Blacks', 'Civilising the Blacks', *The Queenslander*, 4 April 1891: 663.

28 Northern Protector to the Home Secretary, 21 September 1900, QSA, A/58786, letter 14947 of 1900.

29 Police Magistrate at Herberton to the Home Secretary, 13 June 1901, QSA, A/58786, letter 5113 of 1901.

Ten years later, the Hull River Aboriginal Settlement (north of Cardwell) opened with a former Native Police officer as superintendent. Soon after, the surviving members of the Palm Island 'tribe' were taken to Hull River for 'proper attention'.³⁰

When Aboriginal people (especially in the State's north) were released from prison, authorities needed to find new homes for them. European settlers called for their permanent removal, so return to their original country was often out of the question. What could be done with them once they had served their sentences? The numbers steadily increased, especially in 1916. Some were removed to Barambah, but both Taroom and Barambah – later renamed Cherbourg – (which replaced Durundur) were full. These 'dangerous' discharged prisoners needed a permanent solution.

One 1916 submission by Chief Protector Bleakley foreshadows official intentions. Hull River and other church-run settlements were bursting with 'removed' Aboriginal people, and as 'none of them are willing to receive troublesome characters', a new reserve was needed. More deportations were planned, including those of former prisoners, but the government's options were restricted:

The promises made to residents of Taroom and Barambah not to introduce discharged criminals and bad characters makes the question of dealing with these cases as they arise a difficult one.³¹

The 'most suitable place', in Bleakley's opinion, was Great Palm Island near Townsville, mostly gazetted 'some time ago' as an Aboriginal Reserve. 'The island has a fine sheltered harbour and I believe permanent water, grazing and agricultural land'.³² However, funding was not available and Bleakley's recommendation was 'held over'.

A second report in 1917 restated the need. A special reserve was needed, Bleakley reiterated, 'for use as a penitentiary':

I would again submit for your consideration the question of establishing another settlement for aboriginals on Great Palm Island, which possess all the advantages necessary for the convenient, economical and successful management of such an institution.³³

The island would be the best site, he argued, because 'it provides security from escape'. The file was marked 'Consider in 1917-18 Estimates' and 'No provision

30 Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Home Secretary, 6 May 1916, QSA, HOM/J234, letter 4329 of 1916.

31 Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Home Secretary, 6 May 1916, QSA, HOM/J234, letter 4329 of 1916.

32 Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Home Secretary, 6 May 1916, QSA, HOM/J234, letter 4329 of 1916.

33 Chief Protector of Aboriginals to Home Secretary, 28 May 1917, QSA, HOM/J234, letter 4959 of 1917.

made'. The proposed 'island penitentiary' was shelved, but in March 1918, the Hull River settlement was destroyed by a Category Five cyclone. Government officials inspected Palm Island, one reporting 'Townsville people could make no complaint' as the preferred site was 'down wind' of an existing 'Health Resort'.³⁴ Within three months, the complete removal of all survivors from Hull River to Palm Island was accomplished, and the Palm Island gaol had finally come into existence (pp. 34–35).

The frontier period led to Indigenous people in Queensland becoming strangers – and being declared criminals – in their own land. For decades, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were punished for showing any resistance to colonisation by forcible removal to Palm Island and other settlements. Removal meant places like Palm Island became important sites of colonisation and dispossession. They allowed government to save money on rations for Indigenous people and satisfied European demands for the land to be 'cleared'. By alerting us to these important connections, Joanne Watson contributes to a better understanding of Queensland history.

In correcting mistakes and misunderstandings about Palm Island, she has helped us to understand how Indigenous people have experienced colonisation in Queensland. The book's importance is further enhanced by her analysis of the criminalisation of Aboriginal people, the role of police and the use of prisons as a means of social control. In writing about Palm Island's purpose and history, she has effectively dispelled a cover-up which lasted for decades. The past ten years has seen much greater media interest in Palm Island, but journalists and the public needed to grasp the island's historical background in order to understand the contemporary situation. Joanne Watson has made an important contribution to a new awareness of Indigenous disadvantage and to a better understanding of Queensland's Indigenous history. Thanks to her, we can now begin to realise how neglect and segregation worked on Palm Island.

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Aboriginal Business: Alliances in a Remote Australian Town, by Kimberly Christen, 304 pp, School for Advanced Research Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico and Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2009, ISBN 9780855757021 (pbk), \$39.95.

Anyone who has spent time in an Aboriginal community cannot but notice the great amount of time and energy that Aboriginal people devote to whitefella 'meeting business'. What is not always apparent, however, is why Aboriginal people are willing to do so. Kimberley Christen's book provides considerable insight into the significance of such meetings to Warumungu people as part of a broader field of business they conduct in and around the town of Tennant Creek. According to the author, 'Aboriginal business', which encompasses a wide range of practices including ceremony, paid work and claims to land and resources, 'is concerned with continually creating possibilities for the future of one's kin and the extended networks from which one draws strength and community' (p. viii). She notes that what sustains much Aboriginal business in the town of Tennant Creek are 'strategic, meaningful and conditional alliances' forged among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parties within structures of unequal power relations (pp. viii, 28). These alliances are rarely straightforward, and the negotiations surrounding them often involve misunderstandings, contestation and compromise (p. 43). In examining how alliances are made, Christen seeks to throw into relief the 'politics of indigeneity' operating in Australia and to illuminate 'the intricacies of these relations, the rerouting of power, and the agency culled by those who may seem to be firmly in the grip of hegemonic power' (p. viii). In doing so she tracks alliances involving Warumungu and a range of non-Aboriginal actors including white settlers, Aboriginal organisations, local councils, mining and railroad companies, the Australian Navy and tourists.

This book is based on the author's doctoral research and collaborative work undertaken with Warumungu at Tennant Creek since 1995. During this period the author helped construct Mukurtu Archive, a digital archive of Warumungu history and culture, and contributed to the development of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre. In addition to her work with Warumungu, the author also draws on interviews with staff (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) of organisations and businesses associated with the Tennant Creek region as well as media reports and relevant academic and archival sources.

The body of the book has three major sections, entitled 'Community Control', 'Uneasy Alliances' and 'Proper Productions'. Each major section comprises two chapters and an introduction. The sections are preceded by a preliminary chapter which outlines the book's theoretical framework and central concerns. This chapter has a brief but incisive discussion about the self-determination and reconciliation 'policies, discourses and practices' which have shaped Indigenous politics over the past 30 years. This is not a seamless account. Rather, by ranging over different scales and debates the author seeks to capture something of the complex and entangled terrain in which Warumungu alliance-making occurs (p. 6). While some readers may disagree with her position, I found the

author's discussion refreshing in that it is neither negative critique nor its opposite. For example, she notes that while there were inherent problems with self-determination – including that it was ambiguous, was often undermined by governments (particularly in the Northern Territory) and clearly did not overcome Aboriginal disadvantage and suffering – it also resulted in 'productive versions/visions of Aboriginal communities and political power' as well as goals yet to be realised (p. 12). Her call to mend former Australian prime minister Howard's separation of the 'symbolic' and 'practical' by 'reorienting practicality around the work of Aboriginal communities, without divisions among social, economic, cultural and political motives and meaning' (pp. 18-19) underpins the approach taken in the book.

In Section 1 of the book the author focuses on how Warumungu engagement with Aboriginal organisations and the land rights process 'redefined the political, social, and territorial landscape of relationships in Tennant Creek' (p. 28). As with other sections, this part of the book is framed by a brief discussion of recent political events – in this case the Howard Government's 'intervention'. Against a backdrop of what the author refers to as the latter's denial 'of history's place in current community dynamics' (p. 35), she asks what community control means in a space characterised as much by interdependent relationships as structural inequalities.

Chapter 2, 'Country Claims', discusses significant historical events following white settlement of Warumungu country, culminating in the rise of Aboriginal organisations and land rights. As noted over many years by a range of scholars including Stanner in the mid 1930s, Nash, and Edmunds, the town of Tennant Creek has a troubled history involving settler conflict with the Warumungu traditional owners of the country that led to their dispossession.¹ However, as Edmunds observed, the town is also unusual in the way that its Warumungu and non-Aboriginal residents tried to accommodate their differing interests. While Christen presents little new material on the early settler period and there is overlap with Edmunds, there are also differences. Edmunds' study is concerned with competing forms of representation and discourse in the late 1980s.² In contrast Christen focuses on Warumungu 'histories of engagement' and partnerships in order to illuminate new arrangements with and claims to people and country amid shifting national and local agendas.

Given the broad sweep of history Christen covers, the selection of topics she treats in detail is necessarily partial. What surprises me, however, is her lack of discussion here of the forced removal of children of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal descent from Phillip Creek Mission. The latter was the subject of *Cubillo v Commonwealth*, a case brought before the Federal Court of Australia which involved sisters Kathleen Nappanangka and Eileen Nappanangka, close relatives of Lorna Cubillo who also feature heavily in Christen's account. I should add that I wrote an anthropological report for the Cubillo case and

1 Nash 1984; Edmunds 1995.

2 Edmunds 1995.

appeared as an expert witness. In my view the subject warranted Christen's examination for what it could reveal about conditions of historical 'intracultural' engagement and issues of concern which continue not only to resonate but explode in the present. Here I am not just referring to the protection of children, which was an official rationale given for the Howard intervention, but also what happens when people are disempowered. The omission is all the more puzzling considering that the coda to *Aboriginal Business* addresses Howard's refusal to apologise to the Stolen Generation and Prime Minister Rudd's apology to the nation, in which he describes how Lorna Fejo, an age-mate of Lorna Cubillo, was taken from Phillip Creek. However, my comments are not meant to detract from what I otherwise consider to be an insightful and well researched book.

Chapter 3, 'Managing Mobs', provides a timely discussion of the rise and roles of the diverse Aboriginal organisations in Tennant Creek 'as part of a local articulation of Aboriginal power vested in the creation of new nodes of community formation' (p. 79). The author interweaves academic commentary concerning their genesis and limitations with her own observations of their significance in the daily lives of Aboriginal people. She points out, for example, that not only do Aboriginal organisations seek to fulfil their own mandates, they also provide community development services and the majority of Aboriginal employment in the town (pp. 85, 101). In the light of this discussion she ponders what changes that the Howard Government introduced might mean, including 'mainstreaming' and legislation which enables the government to seize organisational property (pp. 105-15). Although there is now a new government in power, the fact that the intervention continues to be implemented renders her considerations highly pertinent.

Section 2, *Uneasy Alliances*, discusses the signing and significance of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement involving Warumungu Native Title holders in the face of a history of bitter opposition from the Northern Territory government. Chapters 4, 'Constrained Collaborations', and 5, 'Practical Partnerships', are particularly absorbing in their nuanced coverage of the negotiations and background surrounding post-land claim partnerships. The examples treated involve Warumungu, the mining industry, the Central Land Council, the Australian Navy and railway companies.

The third section of the book is explicitly concerned with the materiality of culture. Comprising chapters 6 and 7, it discusses 'how Warumungu people are simultaneously preserving, producing and repackaging traditional practices in conjunction with national tourist markets, the regional economy, and local desires to maintain proper productions' (p. 200). 'Properness', observes Christen, is a 'type of continuity' in which actions are aligned with 'but don't necessarily reproduce - an ideal version of the past' (p. 203). Chapter 6, 'Negotiating Networks', tracks how Warumungu women negotiate concerns about both the 'properness' of the cultural production of a CD of Yawalyu Mungamunga dreaming songs and control over what is circulated. Chapter 7, 'Culture Work', examines the coming into being of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre.

As Christen describes, the centre is a collaborative project involving Warumungu as authors of their own cultural representations in a space of intercultural exchange.

Aboriginal Business is an impressive achievement. Although the subject matter is complex and wide-ranging, the volume is well constructed and engagingly written. In analysing practices of alliance-making in Tennant Creek, Christen has succeeded in moving beyond binary representations of Warumungu as either victims or agents, assimilated or autonomous, and of the self-determination era as success or failure. She presents us with a valuable, though not uncritical, snapshot of a range of outcomes and possibilities that can emerge when Aboriginal people are active participants in negotiations concerning their futures. The book is especially relevant at a time when, as Nicholas Rothwell recently noted, a 'dreadful disconnect between the administered and the administrators is palpable' in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. This is a legacy of the Commonwealth intervention and changes in Northern Territory local governance structures which have resulted in some positive changes but at the cost of Aboriginal people feeling deeply marginalised and controlled by a burgeoning bureaucracy.³ Christen's book *Aboriginal Business* will be of value to a wide readership, including those interested in Aboriginal politics, applied anthropology, cultural studies, museum studies and Australian history.

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Petronella Vaarzon-Morel

Alice Springs

³ Nicholas Rothwell, 'Landscape of despondency as bureaucrats rebuild the bush', *The Australian*, 30 January 2010.

Yuendumu Everyday: Contemporary Life in Remote Aboriginal Australia by Yasmine Musharbash, xii + 199 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2009, ISBN 9780855756611, \$39.95.

Yuendumu Everyday is the latest arrival in a line of very significant monographs that focus on the Warlpiri people of the Tanami Desert region of Central Australia. These start with Meggitt's *Desert People* (1962) followed by Munn's *Walbiri Iconography* (1973), Bell's *Daughters of the Dreaming* (1983), Glowczewski's *Du rêve à la loi chez les Aborigènes* (1991) and Dussart's *The Politics of Ritual in an Aboriginal Settlement* (2000).¹ Each of these has sought to describe and explain significant aspects of both pre-contact and contemporary post-contact Warlpiri sociality and world view from the perspectives of Social Anthropology, a discipline which aims to document, model and explain the patterns of constants and variables of universal human social behaviour. Of course what was 'contemporary' for Meggitt and Munn who carried out their fieldwork in the 1950s, is, superficially at least, past history for Musharbash who carried out the fieldwork on which this book is based between 1994 and 2001. As well as providing a detailed and in depth record of Warlpiri culture, these ethnographies reflect changes in the discipline itself over the past half century: structural functionalism (Meggitt and Dussart), French structuralism (Munn and Glowczewski), feminism (Bell) and post-structural modernism (Musharbash).

As we would expect of the first of these Warlpiri ethnologies, Meggitt's *Desert People* takes a very wide view of its subjects as it explores their social behaviour and institutions, including ceremonial practices, spiritual beliefs, values system, economic basis, interactions with Europeans and European institutions, and so on – drawn from his observations of both individual and group behaviour and the explanations and commentary given by his subjects. Munn's *Walbiri Iconography* (1973), although it approaches Warlpiri ethnography from a different, and seemingly narrower, viewpoint to that of Meggitt, in explicitly aiming to account for the inventory, meaning, use and role of symbols in Warlpiri artistic expression, also presents an inclusive analysis of Warlpiri society and culture. Although published eight years after Bell's monograph, Glowczewski's *Du rêve à la loi chez les Aborigènes* (1991) drawn from research carried out principally at Lajamanu between 1979 and 1985 follows in the tradition of Meggitt and Munn in situating the Warlpiri within both a general Australian and a universal framework and encompassing both the profane and the religious and the relationships between them. Naturally enough, following the publication of both Meggitt's and Munn's monographs, most anthropological studies focusing on the Warlpiri build on – or react to – their findings and tend to address more

1 Although not strictly an anthropological monograph, Young (1981) should be added to this list as it documents the living conditions of Warlpiri people living at Yuendumu and Willowra in the late 1970s. Musharbash's focus on the 'everyday' and some aspects of her data collection methods have much in common with Young's work in human geography, despite the differences in analytical methodology and theoretical framework.

specific aspects of Warlpiri culture. Both Bell and Dussart, for example, focus on interactions between the secular and ceremonial life of women at Warrabri (later renamed as Ali Curung or Alekarenge) and Yuendumu respectively.²

Yuendumu Everyday also has an apparently narrow focus – zooming in on the life of one ‘camp’ and its sleeping arrangements in particular. The lens does open from time to time to capture a wider vista of everyday life at Yuendumu. However unlike the earlier ethnologies, *Yuendumu Everyday* confines itself to the profane or secular.³

Musharbash moves in with her subjects of study, which she introduces to the reader in Chapter 1, as an ‘adopted daughter’ of one of the senior members of a shared *ngurra* or living/sleeping area in Yuendumu whence she can closely observe the behaviour of her co-residents.⁴ This *ngurra* is of a type known in Warlpiri as *jilimi* or *yarlukuru* whose principal residents are women sleeping without men: widows, married women temporarily or permanently separated from their husbands and unmarried girls. Dependent children and grandchildren of these women also sleep in the *jilimi* area with their mothers, aunts, elder siblings or grandparents, thus spanning four generations. A *jilimi* contrasts with two other Warlpiri sleeping arrangements: a *jangkayi* or *yampirri* which is exclusively for males, and a *yupukarra* where husband and wife (or wives) sleep together within a living space with their young children (pp. 32–33).⁵ Of these, it is the *jilimi* area which tends to be the main locus for socialising involving young and old, male and female during the day (Chapter 7) as its periphery offers the least socially restrictive space of all *ngurra* types.⁶ Musharbash gives a detailed account of life within her *jilimi* (which can be usefully compared with Bell’s writing on *jilimi*).

As part of her research methodology, Musharbash recorded the names and relationships (and other pertinent details) of all the people who slept in her *jilimi* during the 221 nights she was present (p. 62): where they slept, who they slept next to, noting changes in sleeping patterns and their motivations. Over this period 105 individuals slept in this *jilimi*, but the average nightly number was 17, typically consisting of adult women and children (Chapter 4). As detailed in Chapter 3, this *jilimi* was situated around a four bedroom European style

2 Bell 1983; Dussart 2000. Bell’s subjects include Kaytej, Alyawerr and Warlmanpa as well as Warlpiri reflecting the rather more mixed population of Warrabri.

3 A characteristic that *Yuendumu Everyday* displays in common with that of Bell (1983) and to a lesser degree with Dussart (2000) is its overtly autobiographical content, with the author either at the centre of the narrative or at least always overtly present within it. Although Glowczewski’s earlier (1989) monograph is more in this autobiographical genre, it is aimed at a rather different much broader public than her 1991 work which sought to make a serious contribution to anthropological knowledge.

4 Musharbash uses pseudonyms but anyone familiar with these families can easily identify the people referred to.

5 Significantly the elderly husband of one of Musharbash’s ‘mothers’ from whom she had ‘separated’ many years before, but continued to care for, lived close to the *jilimi* which also included his mother-in-law, in a *jangkayi* situation.

6 On Warlpiri avoidance practices see Glowczewski 1991: Chapter 8; Laughren 2001; Meggitt 1962, 1972; Munn 1996.

house with two bathrooms, a storeroom and a verandah off the row of bedrooms stretching between the laundry and kitchen. This house is set in a yard fenced in on three sides with an adjacent house marking the northern boundary toward which the bedrooms faced. Significantly the preferred sleeping area is not the 'bedroom' areas but the outside – bodies sleeping side-by-side in a row on the verandah in wet or windy weather and further out in the yard in front of the verandah at other times. One is struck by the continuity with the sleeping arrangement captured in Munn's wonderful photo taken in 1957 at Yuendumu of a Warlpiri family's *yujuku* 'humpy' with the *ngurra* 'sleeping area' in front of it consisting of hollows in the ground sheltered by a low windbreak (*yunta*) made of tree branches (Plate 1, p. 9 in 1986 edition of *Walbiri Iconography*). The house in Musharbash's *jilimi* takes the place of the *yujuku* in the camp photographed by Munn – both are shelters into which the group can retreat and find shelter or privacy and they also both serve as storerooms for some goods.

Musharbash gives a brief history of housing for Indigenous *yapa* residents of Yuendumu (Chapter 2), a good part of which this reviewer directly witnessed. Although officially established in 1946, only one Warlpiri family lived in a contemporary European-style house when I arrived in Yuendumu in September 1975.⁷ Others lived in proximity to a one-room 'stage one housing' unit (dubbed 'Donkey houses' or 'Igloo' houses) set on a concrete slab, with a curved iron roof extending beyond three of the walls to the edge of the concrete slab to form a small verandah. Others lived near the dysfunctional aluminium Kingstrand houses also set on a concrete slab. However, most of these had been abandoned. None of these 'stage one housing' units had any plumbing installations; there were no taps, no toilet, no ablution or laundry facilities – in fact no facility for either accessing or storing water.⁸ These buildings were freezing in winter and roasting in summer. Most people were living in camps of their own construction made out of all sorts of discarded building materials combined with bush timbers and branches.⁹ Two rather small communal toilet-shower blocks served a population of around 1000. There were some very large *jilimi* occupied by closely related widows, many of whom were sisters who had been cowives along with younger yet unmarried women and some grandchildren. During the cold windy winters they would all sleep in a row (their dogs closeby), one beside the other, with some small fires breaking up the long line of bodies in these long thin structures known as *warntamarri* – barely wider than the length of the tallest woman – made out of the same available materials. In reading *Yuendumu*

7 All European residents, limited to working adults and their families, were lodged in some type of conventional building of European manufacture, supplied by their employer.

8 Although a tank had been installed outside each of the 'Donkey' houses to collect rainwater from the small roof, by 1975 almost none of these any longer held water. Before the long drought broke in 1974 the annual rainfall was so meager and/or irregular that these tanks may have seldom served their objective for any useful length of time. In fact Yuendumu was only equipped with a reliable supply of good water (from bores) in the late 1970s when Ian Viner was Minister for Aboriginal Affairs (further improved in the 1980s) and it was several years after that before this water was laid on throughout the areas of Yuendumu where most Warlpiri people had their camps.

9 See Meggitt 1962: 77.

Everyday it is important to keep in mind that access to European style houses for the majority of Warlpiri living at Yuendumu only became a reality during the 1980s and 1990s.¹⁰

Musharbash frames her study in terms of Heidegger's model of process generated by the interrelated and interdependent actions of 'Building Dwelling Thinking':¹¹ in order to *dwell* one needs to *build* ; how one *builds* reflects how one *thinks* , how one *thinks* influences how one *dwells* (Chapter 1). Musharbash's stated aim is to explore whether 'the interconnectivity between the physical structures in which people dwell, their social practices and their world views, can be metaphorically encapsulated in symbols for different physical structures of domestic space' (p. 4). Can these symbols, which in the Warlpiri case differ from the Germanic or European ones that Heidegger and later Bachelard¹² had in mind, 'express the "integration for the thoughts, memories and dreams" of the people who live in them' she asks in Chapter 2. While Musharbash uses Heidegger's framework quite skilfully to analyse and present her findings, the metaphorical role of these symbols of various conceptions of *ngurra* is never really worked through – nor is it central to my reading of this work, at least not in the way that the Warlpiri repertoire of icons is to Munn's work. This said, Musharbash's characterisation of 'camps' as 'physical manifestations of people's movements through their country [which] embody the core values of *mobility* , *immediacy* and *intimacy* ' (my emphasis) (p. 36) captures quite elegantly some of the connotations associated with Warlpiri *ngurra* . Each of these three values identified by Musharbash in relation to her *jilimi* is explored in a separate chapter (Chapters 4–6) and more generally in relation to daily life in Chapter 7.

Musharbash further unpacks the layers of meaning expressed by Warlpiri *ngurra* in Chapter 2 ranging from its narrowest meaning as 'place occupied by sleeping body' (which would include a bedroom in a European style house if it is primarily used for sleeping in) associated with an icon symbolising a row of parallel outstretched bodies contained within a single windbreak, to a broader notion of 'sleeping area' where an identified group of people sleep, have slept or could potentially sleep, to a 'living area' (symbolised by an icon formed by concentric circles) which encompasses the whole area in which a group (family, clan, tribe) believe that they have the right to sleep (as well as live), that is, *their* country or place as opposed to someone else's, sanctioned by their kinship association with others including their Dreaming ancestors.¹³ Thus

10 Meggitt's description of Warlpiri living conditions was almost directly applicable to those still pertaining at Yuendumu in the 1970s (Meggitt 1962: Chapter VI). However, by 1975 all the Yuendumu Warlpiri (and some Pintupi families) dwelt within the township area. As observed by Meggitt, in the 1950s and 1960s family camps were dispersed over a much larger area of the Yuendumu reserve, with many families spending considerable periods of time travelling (on donkey and on foot) in the country beyond Yuendumu reserve.) For a detailed history of housing for Aboriginal people at Yuendumu, see also Keys 2000.

11 Heidegger 1993[1951].

12 Bachelard 1994[1958].

13 For an in depth discussion of the notion of 'other' in the Warlpiri context, see Glowczewski 1989: Chapter 9.

ngurra is also used to designate the family group as in *ngurra-jinta* 'one camp' (p. 34) or patrimoiety distinguished by the north-south opposition. It extends to the 'habitat' of any creature. Furthermore *ngurra* is used to refer to days as units of time – somewhat akin to 'three more sleeps till Christmas' – which is quite distinct from *parra* referring to 'daytime' as opposed to 'nighttime' (p. 35). Despite the relative sedentarisation of the Warlpiri since the Second World War, terms like *ngurra*, *jilimi*, *jangkayi* and *yupukarra*, are still underlyingly *relational* terms expressing ways of being in relation to place but more importantly ways of being in relation to other people defined by kinship ties, shared experiences, gender and personal preference.

Musharbash proposes that *ngurra* 'encapsulates the parallel metaphoric load to the house in the Western context' (p. 5). This assertion I find difficult to reconcile with the meanings of *ngurra* set out in Chapter 2. *House* denotes a type of fixed physical structure which must be associated with a physical place with which people may or may not interact beyond the actual act of construction, whereas *ngurra* primarily denotes a relationship between people and place mediated through (shared) actions such as camping or sleeping (traditionally a group's location may have changed almost every night at certain times of the year) and/or via kinship links to the actions of their Dreaming ancestors. As Musharbash points out, this nightly construction of one's *ngurra* or sleeping area followed by its daily deconstruction is still practiced within the confines of the fixed location of Musharbash's Yuendumu *jilimi*. It is telling, I think, that the Warlpiri borrowed from the Arrernte the word *yuwarli* as distinct from *ngurra* to designate European style buildings *and* the places where they stand, that is, stations, towns, settlements. Also telling is the fact that the meaning of terms for different types of shelter of Warlpiri manufacture, such as *yujuku* or *yunta*, which are physical objects fixed at a location, has not been extended to denote European buildings or the settlements that contain them. *Yuwarli* marks both European created settlements and their buildings and houses as non-Warlpiri (or even non-Aboriginal).

Unlike the Warlpiri people studied by Meggitt, who carried out his research between 1953 and 1960 at the then recently established settlements of Yuendumu (1946), Lajamanu (1951) and Warrabri (1956)¹⁴ or by Munn who researched at Yuendumu in 1956–57, the residents of Musharbash's *jilimi* had spent virtually all, or, in the case of the senior women, a major part of their lives at Yuendumu. These senior women were born before its establishment and socialised in the main by parents and elders who had experienced 'first contact'. Those born before 1946 had no or negligible experience of formal European education, have a poor command of English and are unable to read or write. Apart from the children born on these settlements, Meggitt's 'Desert People' were all relatively new to

14 In each of these settlements the Warlpiri either made up the majority of inhabitants or, in the case of Warrabri, a substantial proportion. Interestingly none of these was set up on unambiguously Warlpiri land. Attempts by Baptist and Lutheran missionaries and others to persuade the government to create a settlement for Warlpiri on their own country failed as European interests in the land for mining and pastoral exploitation prevailed. See Peterson et al 1978.

life on settlements run by the commonwealth government as part of its post-war welfare and assimilation program. While the adults' experience with Europeans was mixed – some had worked and lived in Aboriginal camps attached to cattle stations or mining ventures, or had worked with the Australian Army during the Second World War – most had been brought up in a still very traditional way of life on Warlpiri and Anmatyerr lands. In the 1950s, despite receiving some government rations, Warlpiri living on government settlements or on pastoral stations were still very dependent on their land and their own food-gathering skills to provide them with adequate food and shelter. Taking Meggitt's work as her base line, Musharbash makes some interesting observations about changes in living and sleeping patterns that have evolved along with the sedentarisation of the Warlpiris and all that it entails (for example, the way in which government pensions and welfare payments are paid) as she does with other aspects of Warlpiri socialisation, including marriage. Marriages, Musharbash concludes, have become far less stable and of much shorter duration, the age differential between men and women in a first marriage has diminished, and the ways in which marriages are initiated in have also changed. Sedentarisation and the financial independence flowing from the payment of various government pensions, argues Musharbash, favours the establishment of long term relatively stable *jilimi* (Chapter 3).

Yuendumu Everyday packs a lot of information into just over 200 pages written in a clear straightforward style supported by useful glossary, index, maps, and other graphics. Despite the daily tally of diverse observations from the *jilimi* that inform this book, there are data gaps that I for one would have liked to have had filled. Where are the dogs? One of the first indications that one is approaching a *jilimi* (or *jangkayi*) camp has traditionally been the extra large contingent of dogs that cohabit with the human residents, each one having its own 'child' (or owner in European terms). Did anyone take responsibility for cleaning the living or sleeping areas? Who? How? How was access to the limited facilities such as the toilets, bathrooms and laundry managed? How does the 'negotiation' or positioning of people with respect to these resources compare with the detailed description Musharbash gives of the production and distribution of food, especially damper, and of firewood (Chapter 7). How are the disruptive incursions of drunken male relatives handled? How typical is this *jilimi* of Warlpiri daily life? How does life in camps which are not so directly influenced by this senior generation compare? What are the sleeping arrangements of younger people, whether in *jangkayi*, *jilimi* or *yupukarra*? Do young married couples prefer to sleep inside bedrooms where they have some privacy or do they too continue to sleep 'outside'?

Despite these gaps in the description, for any outsider working in a Warlpiri community, or in fact in any similar Aboriginal community in central and northern Australia, this book should be essential reading. It will act as a guide to help the outsider navigate their way through this foreign territory and to make sense of some of what they may encounter. In particular it offers much food for thought to those involved in providing services, particularly housing, to the

residents of places such as Yuendumu, and invites a radical rethink of both policy and practice. A crucial insight illustrated by the 'tale of Tasmin's dream home' which Musharbash uses to open and close her book is nature of the relationship between the prestige value of the much desired European style house and the desire to maintain the Warlpiri identity derived from the notions of shelter and family evoked by *ngurra*. One is led to ask, if each adult in Yuendumu were given a newly constructed European style house, what would be the outcome? How many would be occupied by family groups interacting with the house in the way that middle class whites do? If the residents of Musharbash's *jilimi* opt to not occupy their 'bedroom', but rather crave the reassuring 'immediacy' and 'intimacy' of their close family members as both sleeping and waking companions what do we predict? What sort of accommodation would best suit our prediction? This exercise can be extended to other aspects of life such as work, education, health.

It is undoubtedly true that the physical, social and economic isolation which characterised most of the first 40–50 years of Yuendumu's existence (restricted access to outsiders, transport, money, paid employment, modern communications (no telephone, radio or television), coupled with a language barrier and limited schooling) is breaking down, so that mainstream influences now play a much greater role and may bring about accelerated changes in the future, especially as contact with the 'old people' who lived the traditional life and who maintain its values and ways of thinking pass on.¹⁵ Musharbash does not address the likely influences on the pattern of daily life she documents of the contemporary pattern of age distribution within Aboriginal Australia, so marked in 'remote' communities such as Yuendumu, where those under 30 far outnumber those over 50 (which is the mirror image of age distribution in non-Aboriginal Australia). On the other hand, the persistence of ways of being over time, as illustrated by how Warlpiri people interact with their living space and their co-residents within and others without, despite what may appear to be radical changes in both their physical habitat and socio-economic and political reality, cannot be just wished away or decreed against as so often seems assumed by government.

The publication of this book is very timely, coming out shortly after the federal government 'Intervention' aimed at improving the life of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory struck in Yuendumu and elsewhere in the Northern Territory, and as the Northern Territory government reorganised local councils into their mega shires - including those at Lajamanu, Willowra and Yuendumu which were incorporated into a single mega shire. Had the politicians responsible for these policies and the public servants charged with implementing them been informed by *Yuendumu Everyday* and its predecessor Warlpiri ethnologies, would they have perhaps hesitated, reflected and engaged in serious planning and negotiation with the residents of settlements such as Yuendumu and sought advice from anthropologists and others who have gained a deep knowledge

15 At least three of the core senior members of Musharbash's *jilimi* are now deceased.

of the people and their way of life before implementing their policies? Surely good intelligence and careful planning are as relevant to the success of civilian campaigns as they are to military ones.

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Dog Ear Cafe: How the Mt Theo Program Beat the Curse of Petrol Sniffing by Andrew Stojanovski, 316 pp, Hybrid Publishers, Melbourne, 2010, ISBN 9781921665066, \$34.95.

In *Junga Yimi*, the magazine produced by the Bilingual Resources Development Unit of Yuendumu School, exuberant pieces used to appear from time to time by 'Yakajirri', Andrew Stojanovski, about the work of the Mount Theo petrol-sniffing prevention program, and the movement Jaru Pirrjirdi (strong words) which developed out of it. Now Stojanovski has written a book which will, as the medical anthropologist Maggie Brady writes in her foreword to the book, 'make an excellent primer for new frontline workers and for young anthropologists entering the field'.

Dog Ear Cafe is at once memoir, history, report and advocacy piece. It traces Stojanovski's life at Yuendumu from his start as a youth worker trying to deal with petrol sniffing, to the development of the Mount Theo program after the desperate decision taken by Peggy Brown Nampijinpa, her husband Johnny Hooker Creek Japangardi and Peter Toyne, then principal of the school, to take the petrol sniffers away to an outstation for rehabilitation in isolation. The core of the book are 12 chapters in which the course of the Mt Theo Program is tracked through numerous vignettes of life at Yuendumu, interspersed with letters written at the time, photographs, meditations about the nature of petrol-sniffing, of reciprocity in Aboriginal society and in the relationships with *yapa* (Aboriginal) and *kardiya* (non-Aboriginal) which were necessary to make Mt Theo work. Running through the book is the tension between his desire to live with his family and his desire to be at Yuendumu and Mt Theo.

The book is a vividly written account of the development of intercultural understanding. It starts with misunderstandings, Stojanovski's shock on encountering the violence of petrol-sniffers, and a young Warlpiri boy's shock when criticised for upsetting Stojanovski: '*Kardiya* [white people] don't have feelings'. This alleged lack of feeling contrasts with the suggestion that compassion is a defining Warlpiri characteristic (as exemplified by the ubiquity of the 'poor thing' *wiyarrpa* word in modern songs). At the same time he recognises that of course not all Warlpiri show it.

Throughout the book are reflections on the intercultural teamwork needed to create Mount Theo outstation as a place to allow petrol sniffers to regain their lives. This includes recognition of 'humbug' (demand sharing) as mutual obligation, as 'teamwork', but at the same time, recognition of how hard it often is for Warlpiri people to reconcile the obligations of family life with the impartiality demanded of workers in most Australian organisations. He comes to believe that whitefellas are seen as neutral like Switzerland, and so have a special role to play. This is well illustrated by his account of how to reconcile everyone's need and desire for vehicles with the need for an emergency vehicle at the outstation.

Reflections on the actions and beliefs of petrol sniffers are also a key part of the book, and I was struck by his discussion of the success of his younger colleague Karissa Preuss in having serious conversations with petrol sniffers as among peers ('D&Ms' deep and meaningful conversations). In fact the book is filled with the generous recognition of the skills of his associates. No wonder the team worked well.

The story is infused with the breathtaking exuberant desire to Get Things Done, save petrol sniffers from themselves. This led the government to award OAMs to Stojanovski and his colleagues Japangardi and Peggy Nampijinpa Brown. It also led to all sorts of actions that would horrify ethics committees and government agencies. He knows this, but justifies it from the fairly unarguable position that the alternatives would have been more harmful.

Reports and facts appear in more conventional form in an appendix on how the Mt Theo program works, an afterword by the then operations manager of Mt Theo, Brett Japaljarri Badger, outlining the Mt Theo program since the early 2000s and the Jaru Pirrjirdi movement, and concluding with helpful lists of names and places and a Warlpiri glossary. Future historians and biographers of the Warlpiri will regret the decision to change some personal names and details, but the sacrifice was necessary in order to describe events that people may feel sensitive about, but which are important for understanding how people lived in and around 'sniffing central'.

As a portrait of life among the Warlpiri, it can be compared with Yasmine Musharbash's contemporaneous *Yuendumu Everyday: Contemporary Life in Remote Aboriginal Australia* (Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2008), which is reviewed by Mary Laughren in this volume. She talks about Yuendumu from the point of view of an anthropologist living in the single women's camp; Stojanovski does it as a community worker helping exceptional people – Peggy Nampinjinpa Brown, her husband and Johnny Hooker Creek Japangardi. As a memoir, in its astonishing honesty about Stojanovski's feelings and actions (the good, the silly and the dangerous), *Dog Ear Cafe* recalls the frankness of Neil Murray's autobiography, *Sing for Me, Countryman* (Sceptre, Rydalmere, New South Wales, 1993).

The book leaves me with a great deal of admiration for what Nampijinpa, Japangardi, Stojanovski and their associates achieved, with a lot of sympathy for the women and the government officials in Stojanovski's life, and above all with gratitude to him for telling the story his way. It will make a brilliant film.

Earlier versions of parts of this review appeared as 'Life among the Warlpiri, Transient Languages', 25 July 2010, <http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/2010/07/life_among_the_warlpiri_1.html>

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Murray River Country: an Ecological Dialogue with the Traditional Owners by Jessica K Weir, xvi + 175 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2010, ISBN 9780855756789, \$34.95.

With the current critical crisis facing the Murray-Darling Basin, Lower Lakes and Coorong region, any book is welcome that offers some form of dialogue, and contributes to solving the River Murray catastrophe. Aboriginal Studies Press is to be congratulated for publishing Jessica Weir's timely book *Murray River Country: an Ecological Dialogue with the Traditional Owners*, and for the stylish cover and numerous colour plates they include. They have also reproduced many of the same plates in black and white on the relevant pages, plus a number of useful maps, including a map (p. 8) of the system's many locks and weirs. One wonders if Weir sees the irony of her surname?

The book arises from Weir's PhD research, and like any graduate thesis, it contains a considerable amount of theory. It is not light reading and is obviously not aimed at a lay audience, but hopefully this will not drive away those interested in reading up on the current state of play regarding the Murray-Darling water crisis. Even though the subtitle infers the book is a 'dialogue with traditional owners', the book seems at times more a dialogue between Weir and current ecological theoreticians than with the Indigenous Elders. This is disappointing for those expecting to hear multiple voices from the Elders associated with the Murray-Darling system. This is not a criticism – it is just the inevitable nature of the beast that often emerges from PhD theses. Weir's book has value for those who thrive on immersing themselves in social and ecological theory.

Personally, I would have liked to hear more from the Elders themselves, particularly the Indigenous members of the Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN). The MLDRIN is an Indigenous alliance that was formed to promote the voices of Indigenous people of the Basin regarding water management (p. xi), and it was this group who embraced Weir at their meetings, and allowed her to conduct interviews with their members. They obviously collaborated with Weir in her research, with the aim of getting their concerns and genuine frustrations over the water crisis heard by a wider audience. It would have been productive for Weir to have conducted further interviews with more very senior Elders who still have vivid memories of their life before the construction of the barrages, particularly in the Lower Lakes and Coorong region,¹ and with those who grew up along the river prior to the construction of the many weirs, locks and irrigation channels which have altered the flow of the mighty Murray forever. More voices of the Elders, and less theory, would have assisted the book in reaching a wider and less academic audience.

1 For those interested in hearing such voices, I highly recommend the viewing of the excellent DVD *Nukkan, Kungun, Yunnan: See, Listen, Speak: Ngarrindjeri's being heard*. The Hero Project, Camp Coorong, South Australia, 2009.

Although the current water crisis is changing by the day, with the 2010 Queensland floods now feeding into the Darling, and with the recent release of further government commissioned reports and plans, Weir's research has huge value. She outlines the complex mix of state and Commonwealth bodies involved in water management, and the difficulties of government representative bodies dialoguing with non-government lobby groups, including the MLDRIN. She also addresses the inevitable clash of cultural perspectives on how a river should be viewed – as a resource to be exploited for economic gain or as an organic system to be nurtured and respected. Weir is insightful in her observations of the inevitable contradictions that pervade the water debate. Traditional owners, for example, were surprised that water catchment authorities, regional managers and other bodies use the term 'natural resource management' in a different way to themselves. For the MLDRIN it simply means 'caring for country' (see p. 72), while for others it means exerting control over a particular resource (pp. 71–72). Weir includes some very astute quotes from the Indigenous members of the MLDRIN about their frustration at meetings with government bodies: 'We had a chair at the table, but we had to keep our voices outside' (Yorta Yorta Elder Henry Atkinson, p. 68). Weir also provides helpful explanations about the complex system of locks and weirs along the Murray, as well as outlining the chronological passage of political manoeuvres by the various bodies established to manage (and exploit) the waters of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Weir outlines the inadequacy of 'The 'Living Murray' program established in 2002, by the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, which resolved to return 500 gegalitres to the river for 'environmental flows', despite expert advice that 4000 gegalitres was required (pp. 38–40). This plan came to nought, however, as 2002 emerged as 'the worst drought since written records were kept' (p. 40). The consequences of mis-management outlined in Weir's book justify her use of the term 'ecocide', which describes the '*status quo* of deplete, destroy, depart' (p. 140) by the so-called 'moderns' (pp. xii, 4). Weir holds the moderns responsible for the current depleted state of the important Murray-Darling Basin. In Weir's own words:

The expansion of modern water management in Australia was, and continues to be an exercise of the moderns of their powerful knowledges [but this] has been their downfall ... In such a short time the life of the inland river country has been destroyed. In ruining this life support, the moderns negate their own dream ... Their power to intervene, direct, control and allocate nature is not producing the prosperity they expected. (p. 118)

Weir concludes, through her dialogue with Elders, that 'We must look to our relationships with rivers to understand how to get ourselves out of this catastrophe' (p. 145). Just as Weir closes her important book with the words of the Yorta Yorta Elder, Monica Morgan, so will I:

Who else is going to give them (the moderns) the knowledge about protecting country, but those traditional owners who have understood

and lived with their country and passed it from generation to generation?
Then they're all going to lose, and we're going to lose along with those
people. (p. 148)

Unfortunately, Weir's book confirms this sad truth that we are all losers because
we have chosen to ignore the advice of the Elders regarding the need to 'care for
country'.

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Histories of Kanatha, Seen and Told, Essays and Discourses, 1991–2008 by Georges Sioui, xxviii + 372 pp, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, Ontario, 2008, ISBN 9782760306820 (cloth), CAD\$48.00.

In March 2010, Doudou Diène, former United Nations special rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and racial intolerance, gave a presentation entitled 'Slavery, Human Rights, Justice and Reparations'. In this he denounced historical silence and urged historians to re-write tragic and violent histories to include those who had been forgotten or ignored. He was referring to slavery but his presentation in some sense echoed the way historical narratives evolved in Australia in relation to Indigenous peoples. At the beginning of the 20th century, there seemed to be no room for Indigenous Australians in the history of the country.¹ But over the past 40 years, historians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have contributed through works of different forms such as biographies, essays and oral histories, towards putting an end to what anthropologist William Stanner once called the Great Australian Silence.²

In *Histories of Kanatha, Seen and Told*, George Sioui, a member of the Wendat nation (more commonly known as the Huron, a name given by the French and considered pejorative) and turtle clan, the first Amerindian to obtain a PhD in history in Canada (1987–1991), takes us to a different part of the world, to other histories. The 372-page volume is his third major publication preceded by *For an Amerindian Autohistory: an Essay on the Foundations of a Social Ethic*³ (1992) and *Huron-Wendat: the Heritage of the Circle*⁴ (1999) and it is presented as the 'first collection written by an Aboriginal Canadian on the Aboriginal understanding of history and the colonial experience'. The book is divided into five main sections – Living History, *Pardonnez ma présence, Indien sans Terre mais avec Plume*, America my Home, and Bridges, and it is composed of 36 sub-sections with the special feature of being written half in French, half in English. It includes documents as varied as letters, articles and speeches from all over the world and it highlights 17 years of reflection and activism. The reader can find for instance an intriguing letter to the Prime Minister of India where Sioui makes a singular request: the gift of the official name 'Indian' to his nation; a conference paper given in Germany; a keynote address at a special symposium on comparative studies between Amerindians and China's Northern Ethnic Groups at the Inner Mongolia University in China; a text prepared for the Cree Working Group on Cree Governance. We learn about Aataentsic (the First Woman): his text contains a creation myth, as well as legends and poems. We also learn about his struggle for religious and territorial rights and the legal victory of his nation at the Supreme

1 See for instance Reynolds 1989: xiii.

2 See for instance Chapman and Read 1996. Stanner 1968.

3 Published in French as *Pour une autohistoire amérindienne. Essai sur les fondements d'une morale sociale* by Laval University Press (1989, 1999) and in Mandarin by Inner Mongolia University Press (2000).

4 Published in French as *Les Hurons-Wendats. Une civilisation méconnue* by Laval University Press (1994, 1999).

Court of Canada in 1990. Sioui puts forward his idea of 'americizing' the White man, and he refers to the French ideological construction of the 'Noble Redman'. He describes history as a 'road roller' controlled by economic and political elites and presents his own conception of an Amerindian Autohistory. The text is sometimes repetitive but we are warned from the beginning not to be surprised nor worried about this. The reader should not try to find any linearity, as the book should not be approached in a western way. In fact, the notion of the Circle that Sioui describes as the foundation of Indigenous or Amerindian cultures, contributes to the originality of the book. As political scientist Dalie Giroux mentions in her introduction, we are taken on a 'circular journey', a journey in the history of Canada – pronounced Kanatha in Sioui's native language.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) stated about Sioui's book *For an Amerindian History* that:

Nothing is more important for the future of our studies than to know that our Amerindian colleagues are ready and determined to take on their own anthropology and their own history. Sioui's work is a brilliant demonstration of this undertaking.⁵

Through his work *Histories of Kanatha* Sioui shares with us his own vision and his people's perspective on the place of Aboriginal people in Canada. His initiative certainly provides an enriching way of reviewing history.

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5 As quoted in Sioui 1992: backcover.

Fantastic Dreaming: the Archaeology of an Aboriginal Mission by Jane Lydon, 320 pp, AltaMira Press, Maryland USA, 2009, ISBN 9780759111042 (cloth), \$49.95.

The Moravian-run Ebenezer Aboriginal Mission at Antwerp near Lake Hindmarsh in the Wimmera region of Victoria, which ran from 1859 until its closure in 1904, has been the focus of intensive historical and archaeological research in the past decade. Recent studies include Jensz (2001, 2008) and Kenny (2007). Earlier historical and archaeological studies include Massola (1969, 1970, 1975); Werner (1970); Christie (1979); Pepper (1980); Longmire (1985); Clark (1990); Harris (1994); Rhodes (1997); Fels (1998); and Edwards (1999). The title of the work is taken from a reminiscence of the missionary FW Spieseke who commented that the missionaries' vision that Aboriginal people would flock to hear the Christian gospel at Ebenezer may appear to be 'fantastic dreaming' (p. ix).

The book began as an archaeological project, aiming to explore the material and spatial dimension of the cultural encounter between Aboriginal people and German missionaries. Archaeological investigations were conducted with descendants of the Wergaia language speakers who lived and lie buried at the Ebenezer site. Lydon explains that she is centrally concerned with cultural exchange and the potential of historical archaeology to reveal marginal, and especially Indigenous, experience, and to show how certain aspects of the mission regime – its spatial politics and material culture – still influence policy making about Australia's Indigenous peoples. Ebenezer as a 'contact zone' becomes a case study of cross-cultural exchange. Specifically, the study:

explores the role of spatial politics and material culture in the process of missionization and traces the continuing salience of judgements about Aboriginal people's housing and domesticity to relations between black and white in Australia. Focussing upon the archaeological investigation of Ebenezer Mission in southeastern Australia, the traditional country of the Wotjobaluk group of Wergaia language speakers, I examine how spatial organization, the consumption of Western goods, and especially the practices and bodily performances required by domesticity were deployed on missions and reserves as important methods of transforming Aboriginal people. (p. 2f)

In Chapter 2, Lydon outlines traditional Wergaia life at the time of the arrival of the invaders, focusing on broad patterns of social organisation, connections to land, and material culture. The next chapter explores the distinctive nature of the invasion of the Port Phillip district from 1835 until the establishment of the Moravian Mission of Ebenezer in 1859. Chapter 4 explores the disjunction between Moravian missionary attempts to create an idealised didactic landscape and the actual complexity of Aboriginal-European cultural exchange. The next chapter examines the ways that the Protestant evangelical worldview was fundamentally gendered and the enhanced patriarchal structure of the Australian

mission that acted to infantilise the Indigenous people. Chapter 6 explores the spatial aftermath of the closure of the mission in 1904, and especially the system of segregation between Aboriginal residents and white townsfolk and landholders that continued. The next chapter considers the history of Aboriginal affairs in Victoria in the 1930s and 1940s and the public discourse of Aboriginal camp reform and assimilatory public housing. The final chapter documents how former missions and reserves continue to occupy an important place in Aboriginal memory, as sites of recent events, ancestral resting places, historical landmarks, and the focus of social action in the present. In 2005, the Wotjobaluk achieved the first successful native title agreement in south-eastern Australia, and as Lydon explains, this milestone marks a new phase in their history, as the community uses its past to construct a new vision of its future.

Fantastic Dreaming is well-written and provides a comprehensive and rich spatial history of the Ebenezer mission. It presents many historical photographs and reproduces important sketch maps (such as Robinson's 1845 sketch of the Wimmera River on p. 85). Lydon successfully interrogates the marginal status of the Wergaia in regional Victorian towns, such as Antwerp and Dimboola, in the twentieth century and reveals how disparaging comments from non-Aboriginal people, especially in the 1950s, toward the physical fabric of Aboriginal houses were blind to the long term, if intangible, attachment of Aboriginal people to their places (p. 205). This attachment to the mission site is explored in great detail in the final chapter that presents a history of Ebenezer as a site of heritage management. Mission sites are complex places – from one point of view they may be seen as places of incarceration where Aboriginal peoples' lives were controlled and they were subject to infantilisation, and for others they are places with a distinctly Aboriginal past and they support efforts to preserve and interpret the physical remains of mission sites. With the publication of Lydon's book, the Ebenezer mission station has become one of the most researched former Aboriginal mission sites in Victoria.

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Inauthentic Archaeologies: Public Uses and Abuses of the Past by Troy Lovata, 168 pp, Left Coast Press, California, 2007, ISBN 9781598740103 (hbk), US\$89.00 (hbk), and ISBN 9781598740110 (pbk), US\$24.95 (pbk).

This book is written as a teaching volume aimed at undergraduate students. To judge its success we have collaborated on this review, giving both the perspective of a student (KR) and a teacher (RP).

As a university level volume, the book initially appears an easy read. It is short, has many illustrations, uses case studies to make points, and even has the some material presented in cartoon form. Lovata cleverly uses this easy style of presentation to make some rather insightful comments on our discipline, holding up examples of the inauthentic to bring into question ideas about how we perceive the authentic. At the end of each chapter there is a set of exercise questions for students which can serve as useful departure points for further investigation or discussion into ideas, concepts or problems touched on in the case studies.

Lovata leads us into the discussion about what is authentic archaeology using a nice pithy cartoon to describe the Piltdown hoax. This technique avoids the usual hackneyed description of the hoax and the players, while making the point that at one extreme there are clear fraudulent hoaxes designed to deceive. Such frauds, Lovata argues, are interesting in the sense that they provide a useful reference point for what many think is truth in archaeology. It makes us feel better about our authentic versions of the truth if we can point to clear examples of fraud. He hints, however, that things are more complex than this by using examples from some site surveys where truth, or the authentic, is legislated for by the State which defines what constitutes an archaeological site.

Using this as a starting point he then goes into considerable detail in two case studies: the fake Anasazi cliff dwellings at Manitou Springs and the use of torreóns, or stone watchtowers, in south-west United States. These two examples are used to bring into question in a subtle way what is actually authentic, and whether truth is as real as we might like it to be. The fake Anasazi dwellings are seen by most of the public as being real and how they are presented is probably as good a rendition of the truth as you would get at a real archaeological site. The torreóns, although widely used in advertising and as part of a fast food restaurant, are imbued with significant meaning for Hispanic groups in south-west United States. For them the torreóns are archaeological artefacts that connect them to place and form a crucial part of their identities. This appears to be the crux of Lovata's thesis – is it the stories or the artefacts that are important? If it is the stories, then what makes the stories made up by heritage professionals better or worse than those made up by others. Lovata is being quite provocative in holding this mirror up to the discipline.

In the final part of the book, Lovata looks at artists and enthusiasts who use archaeology as part of their research, to comment on how the past is viewed,

or simply for fun. Fridgehenge and other comical renditions of Stonehenge are examined and the artists interviewed. Although this part of the book is quite entertaining, it does reinforce the central theme of the book: questioning the stories that we create around artefacts (be they authentic or inauthentic). Bringing art into this conversation is an intriguing device in another sense. The analogy between art and archaeology and how both disciplines define what is authentic is telling. In art, for instance, there is considerable debate about whether street graffiti is valid, probably because the form breaks the strictures of the conservative core of the discipline. Similarly, in archaeology we are faced with questioning whether, for example, Aboriginal interpretations of archaeological sites are valid. Archaeologists may pay lip service to this, but in the end we continue to allow the State to make management decisions about sites based almost exclusively on the conservative values, or authentic stories, of archaeologists.

Although Lovata's examples are mostly from the United States, students should be able to look with fresh eyes at examples from their own countries. In Australia, for example, we have numerous examples of the inauthentic (Old Sydney Town, boomerangs sold at airports) versus the authentic (Port Arthur) for students to consider.

RP: As a teacher, overall I really liked this book. Lovata does not spoon feed the student. Questions are asked, issues are raised, but the scholar is in the end left to consider. This can cause a bit of unease in students who look to teachers for the authentic version of the truth.

KR: As an undergraduate student, I found Lovata's book an accessible and enjoyable read. I liked how even case studies familiar to me (such as Stonehenge and Piltdown man) were expanded on and presented in fresh ways, whilst new ones (Manitou Springs and torreóns) were introduced and treated in sufficient detail for me to understand their significance to the argument. I was particularly intrigued by the chapters on archaeology's relationship with art and recreation, and Lovata's gentle suggestion that sometimes archaeology takes itself too seriously. Although first year students will be able to follow Lovata's argument, this volume would probably be most beneficial to later year and honours students who are already familiar with the workings of academic archaeology and are interested in investigating how the discipline functions, defines and validates itself.

Kate Rogers and Rob Paton

Oral History and Public Memories edited by Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, xvii + 302 pp, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2008, illus, ISBN 1592131417 (paper), ISBN 1592131409 (cloth), US\$30.95 (paper), US\$81.50 (cloth).

At the 1993 Oral History Association of Australia national conference held in Sydney at the State Library of New South Wales entitled, aptly for this review, 'From private ear to public eye', Paula Hamilton presented a moving paper on roadside memorials as an invitation to the general public to remember and to mourn. At that same conference, the keynote address was given by leading historian Professor Deryck Schreuder, who made the statement that oral history was, in this post-modern age, at parity with all other sources for historical research, all of them being subject to scrutiny and questioning. Oral history and memory had arrived!

In the fine introduction to this volume, the two editors refer to the fact that oral history had for a long time been 'buried' – in that sense an unacknowledged participant in public history. Nevertheless, in the 1970s in Australia, oral history had contributed to a considerable number of published histories. These included histories of the Great Depression, publications on labour and migration history, all largely dependent on oral testimony.

The editors herald in the introduction that the essays in the collection:

demonstrate an understanding of oral history as something more than an archival activity. Oral history, as explicated here, is at heart a deeply social practice connecting past and present and at times connecting narrative to action'.

The chapters in essay form lend the readers the ability to travel the world and to gain a perspective on selected oral history and public history endeavours in other countries. I should like to highlight the essay 'Mapping memories: oral history for Aboriginal cultural heritage in New South Wales, Australia' by Maria Nugent, which finds its place in Part I, 'Creating Heritage'.

Some criticisms of oral history have been that those interviewed did not leave their own 'backyard'. Did life stories remain only at home? Maria Nugent in collaboration with archaeologist Denis Byrne set out to extend that individual backyard into a 'backyard zone'. Their interviewees, who lived near Taree, New South Wales, many of them residents of the Purfleet Aboriginal reserve, remembered continuing to visit places where they had traditionally held beach parties or fished and hunted. They explained how in order to do this, as twentieth-century white settlement expanded, they had to negotiate areas where they were not welcome, indeed often positively excluded, so that their pathways to the beach or the fishing grounds were circuitous, but successful. Their testimonies contribute to a 'geo-biography' – the biography of a landscape with their pathways carefully mapped by means of overlays on aerial photographs.

The 'backyard zone' also included the local cinema, which Aboriginal people were allowed to attend, despite measures that dictated that they were almost invisible. They sat in the roped-off front rows only and entered the building by a separate door. Without the evidence collected in this project, a large part of how an Aboriginal community continued to conduct its lifestyle against the restrictions of white settlement would have been lost.

Part II, 'Recreating Identity and Community' is led by South African historian Sean Field who examines two areas of Cape Town, now changed and dependent on re-imagination. Langa was established in 1927 as an official settlement in Cape Town for black Africans. Overcrowding for many reasons ensued. In 1952 the national government under its apartheid ideology introduced the hated 'pass laws' requiring black Africans to carry identity documents which were frequently checked and much persecution ensued. In remembering Langa, residents recounted with pride and rage how they had protested the injustices of these laws in the 1960s and 1970s.

Established in the 1830s, District Six nearer to the centre of Cape Town had been home to disparate communities including whites, coloureds (mixed race) and black Africans. After 1948 this 'cultural diversity' was anathema to the new national government's apartheid ideology. District Six was zoned a 'white area' in 1966 and thousands of residents were forcibly removed from their dwellings, dispersed to other areas and the vast majority of their former homes destroyed. The area to this day is largely deserted - 'rubble and weeds are all that remain'.

Now in post-apartheid times museums have been established in both areas, that of District Six being the more popular destination. The memories of former residents movingly inform the museum's displays to the public. Sean Field concludes:

Both Langa and District Six are historically significant, but how they are remembered, imagined and represented is contested with the non-racial transformation - or lack thereof - of the post apartheid city.

Langa is imagined as the 'proud elderly African' township of Cape Town. But as it has become a congested mixture of houses, flats, hostels, barracks, and shanties in informal settlements, it has also come to be viewed a poverty-stricken ghetto with different generations and migrant groups competing for scarce resources. In contrast District Six's multicultural past has led a range of people across the racialized working - and middle class areas of Cape Town to make valid claims to its past. For many - especially for coloured former residents - it has an iconic status.

The Langa Museum, still in an embryonic stage, also draws on oral testimony. Brief stories on pillars guide the public along a heritage trail through the community. Field comments:

A persistent challenge for both museums is to transmit the lived memories of apartheid to the second, third, and coming generations. Recording the oral histories of living witnesses, before they become frail or die, is therefore urgent.

These testimonies will allow the people of the future:

to understand the past they did not themselves experience and to ensure that communities are regenerated ... Oral historians can play a constructive role in overcoming the social divisions of apartheid by recording and disseminating a range of people's stories through books, radio, film, exhibitions, memorials and the internet, across communities and generations ... to contribute to imagining the city and its communities as a place for *all*.

Part III addresses issues involving change and advocacy for change, a further powerful use of oral history and public memory. The topics here concern Albanian migration to southern Europe; homelessness in Cleveland, Ohio; how women remember post-war Kosovo; and the lives of Colombian displaced persons.

Oral History and Public Memories is a carefully chosen collection of a worldwide investigation including – in addition to Australia and South Africa – America, Canada, Turkey, Kosovo, Colombia, Greece, New Zealand and Singapore. There are frequent quotations from interviewees. The introductions to each part are clearly and comprehensively penned. There is a useful index and extensive notes and citations accompany the essays.

The collaboration between Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, two illustrious historians in touch across the continental divide between Australia and the United States, has resulted in a volume that is not only instructive and interesting, but inspires reflection and promotes the understanding of the synthesis and the mutual dependence of oral history and public memory.

Rosemary Block

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Unlearning the Colonial Cultures of Planning by Libby Porter, 180pp, Ashgate, UK and USA, 2010, ISBN 9780754649885, £55.00.

I confess to having difficulty with brackets in text, especially when they enclose only part of a word. Porter uses this device for our current (post)colonial times, to signal that the colonial is not a past era since we have not progressed beyond it, at least in planning. The planning that Porter analyses is land use planning, the profession that Porter chose and has found a need to 'unlearn'. In particular Porter explores the application of rational planning traditions in the management of 'public' lands in forests and national parks. She explains and critiques planning as a colonial spatial culture, a set of activities, philosophies, technologies and regulatory methods that produced both the culture of colonies and contemporary mainstream Australian cultures and that continues to produce injustice for indigenous peoples.

Porter's PhD research was the genesis of the book. Her primary research is case studies in Victoria, in Nyah Forest and Gariwerd/Grampians National Park. To frame this, Porter engages lucidly with the well-trodden ground of colonial history in British settler states and also with theoretical foundations important to cultural geography. She picks up the thesis, from Michel Foucault and Iris Young, that modernist rationalities have normalised white, male, bourgeois, heterosexual biases, values and utilities of place and rendered other ways invisible or readily able to be dismissed as aberrant. Her case study material is richest in its discussion of how 'cultural heritage management' is used to construct a planning domain where Aboriginal concerns, aspirations and expertise are appropriate and valued, but which is distinguished from 'everything else', where they are not.

Planning, Porter argues, cannot be transformative of power relations between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in a settler state such as Australia because planning is itself a fundamental and culturally untransformed practice of colonialism. Collaborative and deliberative approaches to planning, which aim to include diverse stakeholder viewpoints in dialogue and negotiation, do not, Porter argues, give sufficient critical attention to the dispossession and racism that is the ongoing impact of colonialism for indigenous people. Hence indigenous peoples need a special place in planning - they cannot be regarded as stakeholders along with other interest groups.

I welcome Porter's attention to understanding the cultural position of land use planning and its genesis. Dominant cultures get too little reflection and critique in their own members' efforts to understand Aboriginal people's past experiences and possible futures. And, for those involved professionally in land use planning or other kinds of decisions about management of 'crown' or 'public' spaces, it is important to foreground the nexus between such decisions and indigenous dispossession. Nevertheless I have some difficulties with the book.

The first concern I have is that, even while writing about the ‘unlearning’ of privilege, Porter privileges planning as something that is done by land use planning professionals. She gives no attention to the notion that everyone can plan, that Aboriginal people can be planners as much as anyone else, that planning is a tool-kit that Aboriginal peoples can use to get more control over their futures, and that in such ways planning can be transformative. She gives very little attention in her analysis to research and action partnerships for planning notwithstanding long standing examples such as, from Australia, Davies and Young (1996), Walsh and Mitchell (2002) which won the Planning Institute of Australia 2005 National Award for Planning Excellence, and more recent innovations including country based planning (Smyth 2008) and cultural planning frameworks (Hill et al 2009; Hill 2010). In contrast to such engagements, the stance that Porter models for planners is one of gazing apologetically at the frontier while veiled in Melbourne angst.

Secondly, I find Porter’s proposals for a way forward out of (post) colonial planning hugely unsatisfying. In the book’s final two pages she proposes love as the key, a love that encompasses a connection with and ethic towards others, a love of selflessness, humility and compassion. Pondering what to make of this, I found that Frank Zappa’s critique of the hippy 60s, *Oh no, I don’t believe it*, kept running through my head: ‘You say love is all we need. You say with your love you can change all of the fools, all of the hate. I think you’re probably out to lunch.’

Is Porter out to lunch? To be fair, Porter does say that her focus in these concluding pages of the book is on the ethical attitude needed for transformative politics, rather than on models of planning practice. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the book would have more traction in the land use planning profession from which Porter’s interest in Aboriginal social justice arose if it had moved beyond critique of mainstream practice to also encompass and promote learning from innovative alternative modes of planning by and with Aboriginal people.

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Alice Springs

Taking Assimilation to Heart: Marriages of White Women & Indigenous Men in the United States & Australia, 1887-1937, by Katherine Ellinghaus, 276 pp, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 2006, ISBN 9780803218291 (hbk), US\$49.95.

Taking Assimilation to Heart demonstrates the efficacy of the new, wide-lensed thinking being applied to studies of colonialism and imperialism. With its comparative settler-colonising framing, this book helps illuminate gendered histories operating on both the intimate and national level, and with ripples both local and global.

Ellinghaus's study concentrates upon marriages between white women and indigenous men. It starts out with a detailed survey of approaches to such intermarriages, drawing upon cases from two key educational institutions in the United States, the Hampton Institute and the Carlisle Indian School. Student surveys and a rich archive reveal the high rates of marriages among students with non-Indian people. Marrying a white woman was seen as a clear proof of assimilation – at least by the school hierarchy. Unfortunately, those who married 'uneducated native women' were considered to have failed – somehow not taking full advantage of their 'educational opportunities'. Indian male graduates were expected to become professionals and to attract partners from white middle class families. In turn, these partnerships were expected to enhance their future success – at least as measured by Anglo-American eyes.

This book is a very significant contribution to trans-national historiography. Firstly, it demonstrates the value of a comparative approach to understanding what happened in Australia and the United States during approximately the same period. Secondly, it demonstrates the degree to which race thinking pivoted around marriage thinking. In so doing, it proves the crucial role that intimacy played, or threatened to play, in shaping colonising relations. It also demonstrates the significance of educational opportunities, of class and community reactions, in shaping intermarried people's futures.

As Ellinghaus treats marriage as a historical theme, as a subject worthy of study, there is no need to argue the importance of gender as a category of analysis. A study of marriage, by definition, must pay careful attention to gender. Focusing on marriage makes gender analysis obligatory. Policy and law cannot stand alone. Marriage is a cultural ritual, a social event with public and private consequences. This study must pay careful attention to the relations between individual people across cultures – in this case across indigenous and colonising cultures.

Ellinghaus's carefully nuanced research and thoughtful analysis calibrates the different tone of ideology, policy and practice in a range of situations in Australia and the United States.

Ellinghaus graciously acknowledges her intellectual influences in the text. This is seen as 'academic' style by trade publishers. While Ellinghaus prioritises analysis over storytelling at times, the people's individual experiences are not lost. She is careful to give them voice by telling their stories, albeit often briefly, and by quoting their voices directly. She also makes indigenous voices, including those of the husbands, prominent – at least wherever the archives allow.

In her attempt to provide a comprehensive overview, readers might become slightly overwhelmed by the mass of quotations and detail. Readers might also disagree with some of the conclusions. For my own part, I tend to steer away from reading 'high policy' and focus instead on the ethnohistory of 'what was happening' in local interactions 'on the ground'. Ellinghaus steers a course between policy and people, and sometimes policy and wider ideologies win out. Balance across the many causal and operational factors of history is always difficult and overall, it is clear that Ellinghaus is a scholar who strives hard to achieve fairness and balance and to remain sensitive to the reactions of diverse readers, including indigenous readers.

It is very valuable to have this fresh overview that extends the scope of her study from Victoria out to the other colonies. In reading through the complexities of policy thinking and operation, however, it is chaos rather than order that often applies. Admirably, Ellinghaus tries to find order, and the comparative insights are valuable for understanding colonialism better, in both the United States and Australia. She has a good mind for complexity, and pummels a great mound of evidence and disparate perspectives into as coherent a picture as the evidence will allow. She might be taken to task on some generalisations, but this is a healthy development that would not have been able to happen without her courageous efforts to scratch a surface previously neglected by many mainstream scholars. She is assisted, in both Australia and the United States, with recent rich research into indigenous history, gender and race. She is especially interested in the motivations and experiences of white women, but the indigenous men who married them are also given plenty of words wherever the archives are available.

The marriages were not always happy. We follow some love stories, and then feel the pain, for example, when a partner died. In some cases, Ellinghaus is able to probe into the stories more deeply, as in the case of Eastman, we find resentment and disappointment at her marriage. While Ellinghaus provides plenty of evidence that in late 19th and early 20th century United States, some white women saw marriage to an Indian man as part of an assimilation process. In case of Eastman, it worked well for her man's career and his wife, although once separated, Eastman was loud in her regrets, as it was not a happy marriage. It is a case where perhaps the gender dynamics of patriarchal marriage systems perhaps saw the 'white woman' to getting the 'raw deal' in a relationship. We also learn, however, that some intermarried men suffered problems that most likely stemmed from competing cultural pressures.

The time-specificity of the 'assimilation' marriage project; could there have been another time when intermarriages were not about assimilation or absorption,

but something else? While Ellinghaus is eager to inform us that both the white woman and the indigenous man in the United States had commitment to the assimilation project, the framing could lead the reader to think it is the woman leading the man, via policies that encouraged such assimilation, rather than the indigenous man engaging with the woman. Ellinghaus' careful probing of every angle by which biological and cultural assimilation had been variously understood provides a useful antidote to any such expectation.

Ellinghaus tries to make logical sense of assimilation in all its confusing nuances. She provides evidence of performances that equally involve showcasing Indianness as well as whiteness, with more problematising of such examples. Oral and family histories are little used and it would be interesting to know why the author shied away from these methodologies.

Stylistically, Ellinghaus pays careful attention to argument, even providing summaries as she goes along. Although this may not appeal to some readers, it helps make complex arguments easier to follow, especially for students. While Ellinghaus tenaciously struggles to create meaning out of her extensive evidence, this wide, grand synthetic approach only allows an occasional and often too-brief opportunity to provide a close sense of individual marriage and life stories.

While Ellinghaus pays particular attention to Victorian history and Victorian-based scholars, the book's final chapter provides an overview of Australia-wide policies relating to intermarriage. The contrasts between Australia and North America are profound, and clearly educational opportunities and class were key differences.

One of the book's most important arguments is that biological absorption had a greater hold as the form of assimilation in Australia, compared with education-driven cultural assimilation in the United States. Plenty of convincing examples back this, but there is also much variety across time, contact zone, colony/ state and between coloniser and indigenous protagonists. So, this contention will most certainly be unpicked by future, more narrowly focused studies.

Overall, however, this is an excellent book. It exemplifies the virtues of thorough, rigorous historical scholarship for explaining the present as well as the past. Analytically, it is exceptionally well-informed. Whenever the reader might think that an angle has been neglected, Ellinghaus has been waiting patiently to tackle it, and she does so with humanity and integrity.

This book has deep policy relevance to indigenous people in Australia and the United States and will assist each group in understanding more about their present day circumstances. Notably, it reveals the empowerment and prime opportunities provided by western-style education. It should be read by policy makers interested in understanding indigenous disadvantage in both Australia and the United States.

It is a book carefully informed by primary sources and the growing theoretical literature in gender and colonialism studies. Through assiduous research, it

demonstrates the value of comparative projects between Australia and the United States. Above all, it leaves the reader with no doubt that histories of colonising gender relations can help explain the heart of colonialism.

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The Last Protector: The Illegal Removal of Aboriginal Children from their Parents in South Australia by Cameron Raynes, xvi + 102 pp incl index, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, SA, 2009, ISBN 9781862548046, \$22.95.

From 1939 to 1953, one man, William Penhall, the Protector of Aborigines and the Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Board (APB), had nearly complete control over the lives and destinies of the 5000 or more Aboriginal people scattered across South Australia. In *The Last Protector*, Cameron Raynes, an Adelaide historian and writer, documents Penhall's role in the 'illegal removal' of Aboriginal children from their families during the 1940s and early 1950s. In other states, legislation allowed for Aboriginal children to be removed from their parents, but in South Australia, Raynes argues, Aboriginal children could only be taken away by the APB with the approval of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department (CWPRD). After several unsuccessful attempts to get the CWPRD to cooperate in the removal of Aboriginal children, Penhall decided to ignore the legal process. Instead he used a combination of deceit, bluff and intimidation, as well as coercive powers such as withholding child endowment payments or denying rations to uncooperative parents, to remove children from their families, usually on the grounds that the children were 'neglected' or their parents 'unsuitable'. In the early 1940s Penhall may not have been aware that his actions were illegal, but by 1949 Penhall had received advice from the Crown Solicitor that the APB did not have the authority to remove children from their parents. Nevertheless, he continued the practice up to the time of his retirement in 1953.

Raynes admits, however, that Penhall did not actually remove many children from their parents:

Under Penhall, the department specialised not so much in *taking* Aboriginal children, as in *withholding* the already institutionalised ones from their parents [emphasis in the original].

What Penhall did, in most cases, was to prevent children temporarily placed in missions or admitted to hospitals from subsequently returning to their homes. Eventually these children would be adopted out to a white family, or committed to Colebrook Home or some other institution, usually without the knowledge or consent of the parents. In other cases documented in *The Last Protector*, Aboriginal parents succumbed to threats from Penhall or the APB's Welfare Officer, Sister McKenzie, that if they did not voluntarily admit their child to a mission or other institution, that child would be forcibly taken by the CWPRD, an action that the CWPRD was clearly very reluctant to undertake except in extreme circumstances. Once the child was handed over, Penhall did all he could to keep the child in that institution. As Raynes documents, Penhall colluded with certain missionaries, who were keen to gain control of child endowment payments, to place Aboriginal children in their institutions. Penhall often lied to the children's parents, he also lied to concerned members of the public and

others who questioned his actions, and he even lied to his Minister when, in 1946, he declared that he could not recall 'a single instance' of an Aboriginal child being placed in an institution 'without the consent of the parents'. To put the lie to that claim, Raynes reproduces some of the heart-rending letters that were written to Penhall by grieving parents pleading to get their children back, or at least be able to see them on weekends or holidays. Such appeals, however, were almost always rebuffed. Some parents kept trying for years; others were soon bullied or bluffed by Penhall into submission.

It is clear that the illegal separation of Aboriginal children from their families did not cease with Penhall's retirement in 1953. In the recent Trevorrow case in the Supreme Court of South Australia, the State of South Australia was found liable for injury suffered by Bruce Trevorrow resulting from his removal from his family as a child in 1958.¹ Bruce, then aged just over 12 months, was admitted to hospital in Adelaide for a medical problem. The APB considered the child to be neglected and arranged for Bruce's adoption by a white family. After his adoption, Departmental staff advised Bruce's parents that the boy was still in hospital, and it was some time before the Trevorrows learned that their child had been adopted by another family. Bruce was not reunited with his family until he was aged about ten, by which time his father had died. The Supreme Court found in 2007 that the State was liable to Mr Trevorrow for 'misfeasance in public office, false imprisonment and breaches of duty of care' and awarded him the sum of \$525,000. That decision is currently being appealed by the State of South Australia.

Julian Burnside QC, who contributed the book's foreword, describes Penhall as 'a dedicated but deeply flawed public servant, a man who put personal beliefs above humanity, and policy above law'. *The Last Protector* portrays Penhall as a harsh and often capricious bureaucrat, driven by a wholly negative and unsympathetic attitude towards Aboriginal people. Penhall was, according to Raynes, a shadowy and reclusive figure who shunned public appearances and who cloaked his department's activities in 'carefully cultivated secrecy'. He rigidly controlled staff appointments and the flow of information within his department and, as the Secretary of the Board, he received all reports and correspondence and prepared all the submissions to the Board. The members of the Board rarely, it seems, challenged any of his recommendations. The *Aborigines Act 1934-39*, the legislation that Penhall himself had helped to draft, gave the APB virtually unfettered power over all Aboriginal people in South Australia and, to all intents and purposes, Penhall *was* the APB.

Raynes, unfortunately, provides little information about Penhall's background or previous career, his religious affiliations or his other motivations, and he offers no real insights into the man himself, other than that he was an officious public servant who did not particularly like Aboriginal people. Raynes tells us, for example, that Penhall was a devout Methodist and a lay-preacher but does not explore how his particular religious beliefs may have influenced his attitudes

1 Trevorrow v State of South Australia, 2007, South Australian Supreme Court (1 August 2007).

to Aboriginal people. Nor does Raynes provide much background on any of the other main players. He mentions briefly two of the members of the Board – JB ‘Prof’ Cleland, the chairman of the APB during the 1940s and 1950s, and Charles Duguid, the medical doctor who had played a crucial role in the establishment of Ernabella mission in the far north-west – but none of the other Board members are referred to by name in *The Last Protector*. The other Board members included representatives from churches and the Aborigines’ Friends’ Association, and, from 1940 to 1946, the well-known feminist and activist, Constance Cooke. Raynes notes that there was considerable conflict between Penhall and Cleland, but does not elaborate. Cleland (later Sir John) was a botanist, anthropologist and Professor of Pathology at the University of Adelaide, and a pillar of the Adelaide establishment. His diaries are in the State Library of South Australia (SLSA) and both the South Australian Museum and the University of Adelaide have extensive collections of his notes and correspondence. None of this material has been consulted by Raynes for additional insight into the nature of the conflict between the two men. Raynes tells us that Duguid resigned from the Board in 1947 due to his frustration over its conduct and lack of success in effecting change and, in particular, the Board’s support for long-range weapons testing at Woomera. Duguid too left a large collection of diaries, notes and correspondence, some in the SLSA and some in the National Library of Australia. Raynes has not examined this material either. It would be interesting to know to what extent the other Board members, particularly Duguid and Constance Cooke, were a party to the removal of children from their parents.

Little has been published previously about the administration of Aboriginal affairs in South Australia during the 20th century and this book is therefore a welcome contribution. It also adds a South Australian dimension to the growing body of research across Australia into the administrative mechanisms and processes which facilitated the separation of Aboriginal children from their families. *The Last Protector* is a slim volume, however, and very much focused upon Penhall himself and his reign from 1939 to 1953, and I found this narrow focus frustrating. Raynes’ study would have been enriched, I believe, by reference to other archival sources such as the diaries and correspondence of Cleland and Duguid and the records of the Aborigines’ Friends’ Association. Some oral history too could have been included; many elderly Aboriginal people today have strong memories of Penhall, Sister McKenzie and other departmental staff. I am surprised that in this age of scanners and desk-top publishing there is no map in the book, and only one illustration, the relevance of which is not readily apparent. Raynes claims that there is only one public photograph of Penhall (strangely, not included in the book) and in that image his face is partially obscured. However, at least one photograph of Penhall does exist; it was published in an Adelaide newspaper at the time of his appointment in April 1939.²

I am also uneasy about the book’s title. Penhall was not the *last* Protector. Clarrie Bartlett, who succeeded Penhall as Secretary of the APB, was made a

2 *AdelaideNews*, 28 April 1939: 5.

Protector upon his appointment as Secretary in 1953. Walter MacDougall and Bob Macaulay, the two Native Patrol Officers appointed by the Commonwealth government during the Woomera rocket trials and the Emu/Maralinga nuclear tests, were appointed as Protectors when they commenced work at Woomera – MacDougall in 1949 and Macaulay in 1956. Colin Millar, the APB's Superintendent of Reserves, was also appointed a Protector in 1956. Those four men continued to act as Protectors until the position was abolished with the proclamation of the *Aboriginal Affairs Act, 1962*. The fact that the position of Protector was not abolished until 1962 was noted by Raynes himself in his earlier publication, *'A Little Flour and a Few Blankets': an Administrative History of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia 1834–2000*, published by State Records of South Australia in 2002. And, in relation to the subtitle of *The Last Protector*, as Raynes himself admits, the children were usually 'withheld' rather than removed.

Raynes has attracted some media attention in South Australia and interstate with his claim that since 2004 he has been denied access by the South Australian Attorney-General's Department to the Aborigines Department files that he required to complete his research for *The Last Protector*. The Attorney-General had advised him that legal opinions of the Crown Solicitor contained in some files (for example, the Crown Solicitor's 1949 opinion about the APB's authority to remove children from their parents) attracted legal professional privilege. Those written opinions should not have been added to Aborigines Department files and should not have been publicly released. Procedures were put in place by the Attorney-General for an officer from the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (AARD) to examine every file requested by a researcher and remove any privileged material prior to that file being made available. Raynes requested clarification of this new procedure but at the time of the writing of the book, in June 2008, he had received no response and was still being denied access to the files he had requested.

However, other researchers, including myself, have been able to access the Aborigines Department files to research native title, family history and other matters, after those files have been vetted by AARD. The vetting process has caused some delays, but once a file had been cleared for any one researcher, that file is then open to all other subsequent researchers. The problems that Raynes has encountered should not deter other researchers from applying to access the Aborigines Department records.

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Creating White Australia edited by Jane Carey and Claire McLisky, xiii + 229 pp, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 2009, ISBN 9781920899424 (pbk), \$35.00.

Creating White Australia is a great little book. I use the term 'little' literally rather than figuratively. It is a small format book (imagine a page size about three-quarters the size of *Aboriginal History* journal) containing 12 well-edited, crisply written chapters divided into four sections. And, hallelujah, the footnotes are at the bottom of the page rather than inconveniently clumped at the end of the chapter.

In the introduction, 'Creating White Australia: new perspectives on race, whiteness and history', editors Jane Carey and Claire McLisky position the book as the first collection 'to draw together an array of studies dealing with the question of whiteness in Australian history as their central theme' (p. ix). From a range of perspectives, the chapters problematise Australian historiography and investigate the mobility and malleability of race in both micro and macro contexts.

The first section locates Australian history in an international context. Ann Curthoys's chapter leads off with a wide-ranging reflection on the racial layering of settler identities that contextualises and problematises the terms white, British and European. She argues that 'whiteness always has to be understood relationally, and in process ... [and] no racial idea remains dominant forever, and no racial idea ever quite goes away' (p. 23–24).

Benjamin Mountford and Keir Reeves revisit the history of the Chinese on the Australian goldfields. Arguing that the archives are thin and inadequate sources for writing histories of Chinese experience on the goldfields, they explore the conjunction of biography and landscape as evidence in a case study of community leader, entrepreneur and government employee, Fook Shing.

Leigh Boucher's chapter criticises the temptation to escape the implication of history in the projects of nation by relocating Australian history in a transnational framework. Focusing on transnationalism at the turn of the nineteenth century, he argues that 'transnational history's apparent potential to address myriad political and methodological malaises is only made possible by a serious case of disciplinary amnesia' (p. 47).

The second and third sections of the book comprise six chapters of Aboriginal history using whiteness as a central category of analysis. Part 2, 'Whiteness on Indigenous missions and reserves' has three chapters. Claire McLisky analyses the history of Daniel Matthews's mission at Maloga in south-western New South Wales. Joanna Cruickshank revisits the history of Ramahyuck mission in Victoria through the letters and diaries of Ellie Hagenauer, daughter of Moravian missionaries, Friedrich and Louise Hagenauer. Fiona Davis explores the effects of whiteness on the research of Joseph Birdsell and Norman Tindale in 1938 at the New South Wales Aboriginal reserve, Cummeragunja.

Part 3 turns to the performance of race in writing and theatre. Tracing the history of public Aboriginal performance of corroborees in the nineteenth century, Maryrose Casey argues that the term 'theatre' is assumed to be 'intrinsically and essentially owned by white ... practitioners' (p. 124), with the result that the rich history of Aboriginal performances called 'corroborees' have not been considered to be Australian theatrical practice. Maggie Scott's chapter looks at the operation of whiteness in the representations of William Buckley as 'wild white man' in the 1830s and 1860s. Jennifer Jones revisits Ella Simon's autobiography, *Through My Eyes*, tracing its transformation from manuscript to publication and arguing that the editorial process imposed a regime of whiteness on Simon's narrative.

The last section focuses on the intersection of whiteness and gender. Marguerita Stephens revisits the evidence that Aboriginal mothers practiced infanticide and concludes that it does not support a conclusion that the practice was widespread. Rather, she argues that the practice of infanticide among Aboriginal people was 'exceptional and incidental', but became a trope that constructed Aboriginal people as 'people whose common rights could be morally suspended' (p. 194). Jane Carey's chapter examines the discourses circulating in Australian women's movement organisations in early twentieth century debates on immigration, racial fitness and, to a lesser extent, the Aboriginal question. Her chapter examines how 'racial thinking inspired reforming agendas and supported white women's agency' (p. 198). In the last chapter of the book, 'Whiteness, maternal feminism and the working mother, 1900-1960', Shirley Swain, Patricia Grimshaw and Ellen Warne, examine the effects of normalised whiteness in the campaigns of white women in relation to work across the two waves of feminist activism. They argue that the concept of 'motherhood' at the centre of activist discourse was specifically white motherhood, a concept that excluded the lives, needs and hopes of women who were not white.

Overall, *Making White Australia* provides a complex and thoughtful addition to the study of race and Australian history. The chapters invite readers to revisit and reimagine familiar histories through the lens of whiteness studies. The book raises many more questions than it resolves and, at times, demonstrates the difficulty of keeping focused on whiteness and resisting the habit of attributing 'race' to people who are not white.

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The Native Title Market by David Ritter, 120 pp, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, WA, 2009, ISBN 9781921401169 (pbk), \$19.95.

This conversational little book explores the process of agreement making under the so-called Future Act regime of native title legislation. It is not concerned with negotiations of so-called 'connection' aspects of native title, but with those typically conducted between resource companies and Aboriginal parties about land access for mining purposes. Ritter is an experienced native title lawyer with more than a decade as a negotiator, advocate and researcher. This book reflects his experience through anecdotes and enlightening insights into cross-cultural negotiations. His overall thesis, that Future Act negotiations are commercial transactions, is important. It helps us understand why, for example, regular dispute resolution mechanisms are not really suited to this kind of agreement making, which is not so much about finding common ground as about agreeing on a dollar figure.

The book suggests that native title legislation and gradual attitudinal change have produced a shift from a hostile environment, in which resource companies were locked in battle with Aboriginal people, to a situation where land access is generally regulated by agreement (although a quick glance at current disputes in Western and South Australia will show this not to be universally so). A key point, made repeatedly and at length throughout the book, is that such agreements are not the result of some 'mythical' corporate reconciliation agenda, but simply the product of legislative requirements and rational business decisions: it is more cost effective and better for the corporate image to come to agreements and acquire a 'social license', than to spend time and money fighting Aboriginal people in the courts.

One of the issues I have with this book is the way it is structured around debunking myths. This narrative tool permeates the entire book but is used most explicitly in Chapter 5. Unfortunately, I do not think most of the 'myths' Ritter sets up to then debunk have much life beyond his usage of them as straw men. One hapless National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT) Member receives a couple of personalised dressing downs for myth creation. The NNTT does like to put its own spin on any agreement it has even the slightest involvement in, but as far as I can tell those actually involved in native title matters always take such pronouncements with a grain of salt.

While Ritter is critical about certain stereotypes (or myths) supposedly being perpetrated about the native title system, some of his assertions about the system seem equally questionable and stereotypical. This may partially be a result of the restrictions on information about typically confidential native title negotiations. These restrictions make it frustratingly difficult for practitioners to learn from experiences elsewhere, make it almost impossible to get a comparative overview of how native title is dealt with across Australia, and may well be restricting Ritter from providing some solid examples to support his arguments. For example, I

would have found it useful to have some supporting facts for the claim that governments are shifting social responsibilities on resource companies, and I found his depiction of corporate approaches to agreement making as purely hard-nosed business decisions just as stereotypical as the myth of corporate do-gooders that he seeks to debunk. A more fine-grained, less polarised analysis, backed up by some detailed case studies would have greatly enhanced this work. Such an analysis might have picked up the fact that South Australia has established an alternative regime that incorporates the Future Act processes into the State's Mining Act, and explored whether this causes any differences to the negotiation culture or outcomes. Maybe this was beyond the scope of this work, which seems to have been designed as a brief introduction for a non-specialist audience. As such it certainly provides some interesting and accessible insights, but at a level of superficiality and generalisation that will limit its value to the specialist reader.

Kim McCaul

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Contesting Native Title: From Controversy to Consensus in the Struggle over Indigenous Land Rights by David Ritter, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2009, xxii + 250pp, ISBN 9781742370200 (hbk), \$45.00.

Contesting Native Title is a valuable book both for those unfamiliar with the native title system, and for those working within it who have difficulty seeing the wood for the trees. People who may otherwise find the legal architecture of native title daunting to understand will appreciate David Ritter's contextualising discussion of relevant political trends and events of historical and legal moment, as well as the clear language with which he expresses complex legal concepts. The breadth of perspective and longitudinal analysis provided by the book will also be welcomed by those whose work involves confined segments of the native title system.

The current culture of agreement-making can lend the appearance of an increasingly settled area of legal practice involving generally equal, freely contracting parties. This is especially so for new generations of practitioners for whom the divisive controversies and early political and legal battles of the 1990s constitute a preliminary footnote in the study of native title. Ritter revives these memories and reinforces their ongoing pertinence. He details the numerous contests, heavy political lobbying and the intricacies of organisational and individual agendas and positioning over the years post-*Mabo* that all contribute to, but are sometimes overlooked in, the present climate of dispute resolution by consensus. While it is always clear that his insights are moulded by longstanding experience advocating for Indigenous claimants, Ritter nonetheless offers a balanced view of legitimate government and industry concerns and does not shy from a realistic appraisal of native title representative bodies (NTRBs) or what he calls 'the black leadership'. Disagreement with parts of his argument is inevitable but the writing is designed to leave even acquiescent readers scope for it by attempting to reveal rather than ignore the ideological and economic agendas behind positions adopted (including his own) and by making explicit the contingency of his conclusions and therefore the scope for valid divergence from them.

There is a foreword by Chief Justice Robert French, to whom Ritter was an associate during His Honour's tenure as the first president of the National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT). Aside from the introductory chapter and a brief final section containing reflections on the native title system, the book is organised into chapters that each focus on a significant group of stakeholders or institutions: Indigenous peak bodies, NTRBs, state and territory governments, mining and pastoral industries, the NNTT and the Federal Court. The introductory chapter and prologue read together are as useful for prefiguring and framing Ritter's preoccupations in the following chapters as they are for their broad overview of the legal and historical circumstances shaping current native title law. Notes are kept to a minimum and confined to the end of the book, and lucid headings frequently punctuate the text which aids readability.

Without enmeshing readers in the technical aspects of the legislation, Ritter conveys the ebb and flow of particular interests being weakened or strengthened by the many amendments that followed the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). He does this by focusing on the practical financial and political effects of the amendments on stakeholder groups and on institutional procedures in the native title system, instead of on the jurisprudence itself (although, clearly, these are linked). Cognisant of the consequences that a lack of resources can have on the conduct and outcome of claims, Ritter identifies the connection between funding levels and sources on the one hand, and the capacity to expedite certain aspects of claims on the other, thereby subtly influencing the direction of claims as well. The acute under-resourcing of NTRBs by the federal government, for instance, engenders the strange situation of claimants' agents relying partly on financial assistance from respondents in order to advance negotiations. Such ironies that result in practice are often left out of sterile legalistic accounts of the native title system. Ritter is particularly adept at exposing such tensions and contradictions, like the conceptual disjunction of a scheme that requires evidence of a high degree of connection to succeed despite it being designed in part to redress the detrimental impact on connection caused by colonial dispossession and misapplication of the doctrine of *terra nullius*.

There is some discussion of a select few important cases to support his line of reasoning, but the book is not intended to chart the development of case law. The lack of a section dedicated to the federal government is justified to some extent in the chapter on the executive government of the states and territories which notes states' responsibility for land titles administration and their vested interest as automatic first respondent to native title claims. However, it does leave one wishing that this gap had been better addressed, given that some of the discussion examining the conduct of state and territory governments as parties to mediation and litigation is applicable to the Commonwealth.

Overall, however, the book is an engaging, balanced and astute account of the players, institutions and processes that comprise the native title system. When the regulatory scheme for native title casts parties as litigants contesting the existence of a right, questions of legality tend to dominate accounts of native title. Ritter reasserts the primacy of history and politics as informing and structuring the law, reminding us that the present widespread policy accord on agreement-making is the result of strategic campaigns by parties to affect and direct the functioning of the native title system to their advantage.

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Strangers on the Shore: Early Coastal Contacts in Australia edited by Peter Veth, Peter Sutton and Margo Neale, 236 pp, National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra, 2008, ISBN 9781876944636 (pbk), \$29.95.

On 29 March 2006 the 'Australia on the Map' (AOTM) project was launched to commemorate the 400th anniversary of a brief visit by Willem Janszoon of the *Duyffken*. Janszoon was of course a latecomer, arriving tens of thousands of years after the first people settled the land now known as Australia. Remembering and commemoration is a culturally selective process. In highlighting Janszoon's achievement, the AOTM organisers faced the danger that Indigenous Australians would, by default, be relegated to a minor role in the story of European arrival. Realising the historical injustice of this, the AOTM National Steering Committee organised a two-day conference immediately following the launch of the AOTM project. The conference - 'Strangers on the Shore' - sought to bring Indigenous Australians into the picture of historical contact and subsequent invasion. The edited volume of collected papers I review here is the published outcome of that conference. It presents a selection of the papers that were delivered (without the addresses given by Howard Morphy and Marcia Langton), with the addition of prefaces by the Director of the National Museum, the Chair of the National Commemoration Council of the AOTM project, and the Chair of the Strangers on the Shore Conference Planning Group.

Including the introduction, the volume is composed of 15 chapters penned by 18 authors. Authors represent a broad church of intellectual perspectives, including history, anthropology, art history, archaeology, and cultural studies. As might be expected from such a mix, the overarching theme of meetings between Indigenous Australians and Dutch, British, French and Macassan arrivals is addressed by examining various forms of evidence - art, archaeological material, archival documents and oral narratives being the more prominent. Although some chapters are loosely grouped by region, there is no clear ordering principle, so the reader skips from group to group, from topic to topic, and from place to place. There are ways in which the chapters might be gathered together to provide a more cohesive assemblage. One is by the approach authors adopt in tackling their subject matter, so that papers might be grouped into the following perspectives - historical examinations that focus contact within the context of European worldviews; socio-political analyses that situate contact in current debates over interpretation, identity and ownership; and regional case studies that detail remembered or recorded contact events in particular locales.

Historical examinations

Understanding encounters between Indigenous Australians and Europeans requires not only an appreciation of the Indigenous world, but also an understanding of European systems of thought and governance. Three chapters provide a European context for the culturally complicated process of contact.

Chapter 2 by Colin Sheehan is a useful historical summary of the origin and operation of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). This gives a plausible explanation of why the Dutch did not settle the Australian continent – there was simply no obvious profit to be made and (interestingly, but not elaborated upon by Sheehan) VOC commanders were instructed to take possession of only those lands not already inhabited (quote from Abel Tasman’s journal at the bottom of p. 22). In Chapter 7 John Mulvaney examines the encounter between French and Indigenous Tasmanians at Recherche Bay, an event – as Mulvaney points out – that has been understated in most historical treatments of the European ‘discovery’ of Australia. The French were meticulous observers and this chapter sets out the details of gift exchange and interaction as seen through the eyes of d’Entrecasteaux and his crew. Mulvaney concludes that this encounter ‘contributed vitally towards fostering an intellectual approach to human society’ (p. 123), and in this the Tasmanians neatly conformed to romantic concepts of Natural Man common in the intellectual circles of France and Britain at the time. That the Tasmanians also incorporated the French in their own myth-making (pp. 122–123) makes for an interesting counter-point. James Warden’s Chapter 14 is another concerned with the belief systems of the European strangers, although in this case he focuses on the British before 1788, specifically Cook, Banks and Dampier. Warden hits home when he states that from our position today all the early European visitors are strangers (p. 209). The British before 1788 were shaped by a world governed by Genesis, the Great Chain of Being and – to a greater or lesser degree – the words of John Locke. This belief system and the mere five encounters between Europeans and Indigenous Australians before 1788 (p. 214) combined to form in the British mind an impression of not only people living in a simple state, but by virtue of their lifestyle existing also at the very bottom of the Divine order of human ‘races’. Warden makes clear that the outcomes for Indigenous Australians were inevitably disastrous as the beliefs of the British ‘all gave structure but were catastrophically contrary to a partnership with the Australians’ (p. 224).

Socio-political analyses

A number of chapters in this volume allude to history-writing as a political act that elevates a particular opinion or focus. Three chapters however make this quite explicit, and for this reason are examined here as a separate group. Other than this commonality, the papers are quite distinct. In Chapter 5 Margo Neale explains that her contribution endeavours to ‘look at how Indigenous people engage in self-liberating strategies through visual narrative, by challenging the plot lines of imposed colonial narratives’ (p. 76). Much of this paper concerns a painting by the artist Paddy Fordham Wainbarranga, which is a Yolngu interpretation of the Captain Cook story. In Neale’s analysis this interpretation ‘deliciously subverts whitefella evidentiary-based history and linear chronologies’ (p. 76). Neale investigates meaning in European and contemporary Aboriginal art to illustrate that the former is implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) colonialist, and the latter often a vehicle of resistance to colonialism. Although few would take issue with this sentiment, in constructing

the case Neale draws some questionable conclusions. For example, on page 78 the reader is told that historians often diminish Aboriginal stories as myth rather than history, when even a casual acquaintance with the so-called 'history wars' shows that Australian historians hold very diverse attitudes toward the use and interpretation of oral history. On page 82 we are informed that in Indigenous history Cook assumes the role of an ancestral being, presumably striking a point of difference with western 'evidentiary-based' stories, but in doing so Neale overlooks the European mythologising of Cook in history and art, such as in Philip James De Loutherbourg's 1785 depiction *Apotheosis of Captain Cook*. And the conclusion reached on page 85 that Wainburranga's history telling has only a remote chance of being considered a legitimate form of history in formal Australian teaching and learning situations must surely be open to debate. Overly generalised statements such as these detract from the important points Neale seeks to drive home.

The other two papers I see as framing history in contemporary debates are Chapters 9 and 13. Both examine case-specific encounters in situations of history-making in today's society. Campbell Macknight in Chapter 9 returns to his haunts of northern Australia and nineteenth century to early twentieth century contact between Indigenous Australians and Makassar-based trepangers. Much of this chapter is devoted to setting out four new insights on this contact situation, that Macknight identifies as: the chronological origins of the trepang industry in northern Australia; the industry in the context of the economic development of south-east Asia and China; the impact of diseases introduced into northern Australia; and the changes that contact brought to Aboriginal society. These four insights synthesise studies by a number of commentators over the last decade or so, and set out the new information, perspectives and debates they have brought to the examination of Asian contact with the north. The chapter's title – 'Harvesting the memory' – relates mainly to the final six pages. Here Macknight strikes out into new and fascinating territory to examine how the historical event of trepanger contact with Indigenous Australians is used to promote national and regional identity, both in Australia and Indonesia. Chapter 13 by historian Maria Nugent offers a perspective on the recasting of the landing of Captain Cook at Botany Bay from a clash of cultures to a less belligerent meeting of different peoples. The chapter sets out to strip away popular interpretations (p. 200) by re-examining the events over the week in 1770 which Cook and his crew spent in Botany Bay. Nugent uses the straightforward device of re-examining the journals of Cook and Joseph Banks to show that this case of culture contact was not the one-sided affair often portrayed. The conclusion is drawn that both cultures sought to control the engagement, and that the Indigenous people Cook encountered did this by non-violent means – including 'retreat' – to leave the door open for establishing relations with the strangers (p. 206).

Regional studies

Eight of the 14 substantive chapters can be grouped as regional case studies that examine contact in specific localities. These are situated accounts that seek

to explore the nature of contact using the tools of ethnography, historiography and archaeology. Three chapters are explicitly archaeological. In Chapter 6 Jo McDonald identifies European contact in the rock art of the Sydney region. There are only 37 motifs (28 if the 'rabbits' are not rabbits; McDonald is equivocal on this – Table 6.1 and p. 104) to work from, so the dataset is relatively slim. The suggestion is made that this paucity of contact art reflects a truncation of the social context of art production (p. 110), possibly caused by the 'disintegration' (p. 100) of Indigenous society soon after European contact, coupled with a lack of engagement with the British (p. 108). However, McDonald does recount historically recorded interaction, including the well known relationship between Bennelong and Governor Phillip. As is often the case, tension clearly exists between the archaeological and historical evidence. Chapter 8 is a study by the maritime archaeologist Mark Staniforth of culture contact at South Australian whaling stations. The archaeological component takes back seat to the much more fulsome historical records. One of the more interesting facts these illuminate is that a degree of symbiosis existed between whalers and Indigenous Australians, with whalers hunting for the blubber and baleen and the Indigenous communities assisting for the whale meat. Chapter 15 by Michael McCarthy presents a summary of a three stage Australian Contact Shipwrecks Program, a program in which the first stage has been completed and the third stage (collecting Indigenous narratives of shipwreck events) is awaiting full commencement. It is a shame this second stage had not been completed by the conference as it would have made a valuable addition to the volume.

Taking a somewhat different approach to the topic, three chapters examine past and contemporary narratives of contact. Peter Sutton, in a wide-ranging paper that forms Chapter 3, writes of Indigenous memories of Dutch arrivals in Cape York Peninsula. Sutton draws on a number of lines of information, including his own and others' anthropological investigations and historical studies of Dutch contact. Indigenous responses to the Dutch – the 'stories about feeling' – are examined from the observations recorded by the visitors. After reviewing information from across Australia, Sutton concludes that these responses were attempts by Indigenous Australians to situate Europeans within the Indigenous world as the ghosts of returned ancestors (p. 54). This theory requires testing, and needs to be read in the context of James Warden's account in Chapter 14 of how the first British voyagers were interpreted as not ghosts or spirits but living animal-like beings (p. 213). Sutton's chapter concludes with speculation on how events may have unfolded if colonial cultures other than the British had colonised Australia, advancing a perhaps controversial proposition that the outcome would have been the same irrespective of whether the Dutch or British had invaded (p. 55).

The other two anthropological papers draw much more upon the authors' investigations of primary sources. In Chapter 4 historian Fiona Skyring and anthropologist Sarah Yu describe early contact between Kimberley people and Europeans. Written observations and oral history are used to provide a rich and fascinating account of the complexities of cultural articulation in (to Europeans,

at least) a remote location. This chapter is solidly researched, well written, and stands out as a major contribution. In another important contribution, Ian McIntosh in Chapter 11 examines tales of pre-Macassan contact with the Yolngu of north-east Arnhem Land. Admitting the limitations of interpretations based on material evidence of contact, McIntosh draws on Yolngu oral tradition to describe how these people have created a 'sacred pre-Macassan "history"' (p. 167) which they use to contrast their later interactions with Macassans, Japanese and Europeans. This history, centred on the locality of Dholtji (Cape Wilberforce), speaks of a golden time of peace and abundance. It is a history, McIntosh suggests, that alludes to early contact events that Yolngu use and have used to construct a vision of the future, a future in which the injustices stemming from later contacts will be overcome.

The remaining two papers that might be categorised as regional studies are Chapters 10 and 12. These two chapters stand apart from the others as they seek to investigate the contact experience not by interrogating the records of the participants to that experience, but rather by invoking reinterpretation and remembering. In a paper that strikes me as one in which some potentially interesting ideas need to be further articulated, Anne Clark and Ursula Frederick in Chapter 10 read interpretations and recording of Groote Eylandt rock art as acts of 'performance'. Their thesis is that the way in which rock art has been 'recorded, described, presented, illustrated, published and read' is in itself a 'performance of cross-cultural relationships' (p. 152). Of the many people who have recorded and studied Groote Eylandt art (including themselves), Clark and Frederick choose to focus on three of the earliest – William Westall, Norman Tindale and Frederick McCarthy. The paper proceeds to analyse the studies of these three researchers; the art recording of William Westall, on whose work conclusions are drawn largely it seems from those reached by Findlay in 1998, was 'curiously disengaged' (p. 157) from his subject matter; Tindale 'created practices of documentation and curation' (p. 160); and McCarthy 'quite literally engaged in a performance with the art through his process of recording and reproducing the drawings' (p. 162). We will never know what Westall, Tindale and McCarthy may have thought of this analysis of their work as cross-cultural performance. Whether or not the chapter accurately captures their intentions and biases remains open to interpretation. Yet, there is a place for ethnography in reading performance. The Groote Eylandt community will have memories of the visits of Tindale and McCarthy, and there are people alive today who have interpreted, described and analysed Groote Eylandt art. I cannot help but ask why the authors did not interleave their analysis of the archives and documents with oral information pertaining to the production, recording and interpretation of rock art. This would have made for an intellectually more satisfying treatment.

Chapter 12 by Len Collard and Dave Palmer is another that sets an interesting course but requires a little more navigation to reach its destination. The chapter concerns Nyungar memories of the landing of European explorers on the south-west coast of what is now Western Australia. The opening paragraphs contain an explanation that the authors present their evidence from different

perspectives and then seek to meet in a third place, 'somewhere in the middle' (p. 181), where they aim to speak together. The two spaces of the authors are the written recorded events of exploration (mainly derived from secondary sources) which are presumably the domain of Palmer, and the thoughts of Collard who (with Palmer) takes 'some licence to reinterpret how Nyungar may well have made some sense of the visitors from the ocean' (p. 181). The question is how much licence has been taken. Collard is an Indigenous Australian scholar, but the reader is left uninformed as to how much the text portrays the collective memories of the Nyungar community. I and other non-Nyungar readers have no right to question the veracity of the myths and imaginings (p. 182) called up in this chapter, but the reader should be given an assurance that these memories are community-held ones. The chapter also needs to provide further discussion of the third space that the authors introduce as the meeting place of their discourses. I had difficulty understanding how this other space might be realised, or even if it needs to be realised. In the brave not-so-new world of post-modernity there is room for conflicting narratives to co-exist in their own respective spaces.

In summary, this volume does - as Craddock Morton writes in the preface - present a 'highly textured terrain' that successfully captures the wide compass of culture contact studies, at least as the field stands at the moment. To achieve this representation the editors have had to assume licence to include some works in progress that would be better suited to a different mode of presentation, as well as including some papers that, to do justice to their topics, require a more lengthy treatment than possible in an edited collection. Nevertheless, the papers overall provide stimulating perspectives on culture contact, and a number are real gems that will undoubtedly be remembered for their significant contribution to this area of research.

Clayton Fredericksen
Canberra

Captain Cook Was Here, by Maria Nugent, 164 pp, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009, ISBN 9780521762403 (hbk), \$39.95.

After observing the Transit of Venus in Tahiti, Lieutenant James Cook, the Ulysses of the English Enlightenment, chose a detour that took his discovery ship HM Bark *Endeavour* and crew to New Zealand and east to a coast previously known only to its Indigenous inhabitants.

Cook's first contact with the people of Kamay/Botany Bay was also the first conflict between locals and strangers. It set a precedent for countless 'first encounters' that would take place across the continent. It inaugurated modern Australia and its history. 'In this way', wrote historian Manning Clark almost 200 years later in *A History of Australia* (1972), 'the European began his tragic association with the aborigines on the east coast'.

Nugent's previous book, *Botany Bay: Where Histories Meet* (Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005), established her reputation as a historian who retrieves insights from the multiple 'pasts' associated with the first meeting place between two cultures. Her empathy for the place itself and members of the present Aboriginal community is tangible. In this book she navigates through the risky currents spanning history, historiography, spatial history, anthropology and the powerful and ever-present 'always beginning – never ending' of Aboriginal oral tradition and myth.

Nugent writes: 'The voyagers' interactions and relations with the locals have often been little more than a footnote, mentioned but dismissed as unimportant or non-existent or, if examined at all, largely misconstrued.' In a scholarly reinterpretation of Cook's eight days and nights at Botany Bay in 1770, she seeks to recover, or at least to restore, historical balance between the view from the beach and the gaze from the ship.

Cook aimed 'To try to form some connections with the natives', but the Aboriginal people kept their distance, advancing and retreating, but pulling back from any positive contact. The *Endeavour* journals record a series of encounters in which both groups failed to meet each other and Cook was forced to conclude: 'We could know very little of their customs as we were never able to form any connections with them'.

'By day eight, after a week in each other's presence', writes Nugent, 'the distance between the strangers and the locals that existed from the outset had not been bridged.' However, history does not end when Cook steers his ship north from Botany Bay, because stories about the other, mythological, 'Captain Cook' continue in Aboriginal communities throughout Australia today. To quote the master, the late and lamented Greg Denning: 'Cook is a man of myth. Cook is a man of anti-myth.'

Percy Mumbulla spins his Captain Cook stories and passes on those of his father King Jacky Mumbulla of Wallaga Lake to the poet Roland Robinson, like that of Tungeei of Ulladulla about Aborigines rejecting the terrible hard biscuits and throwing them back at Cook. In Percy's version the Aborigines kill Cook, just as Hawaiians at Kealakekua Bay killed him on 14 February 1779. While James Cook spent a week at Botany Bay and left in relative peace, the new 'Captain Cooks' steal Aboriginal women and kill, creating an alternative oral history.

Notably missing from the oral stories is one that was told in Dharawal by Emma Timbery to schoolteacher and linguist Mary Everitt, who wrote in a letter to AG Stephen, editor of the *Bulletin* on 12 June 1901: 'They have many absurd stories as to Cook's blowing up men with gunpowder and so on'. Everitt had told Stephens on 9 April that year that Emma Timbery 'told me the story spontaneously, more than a year ago; and repeated it last Saturday week.' Everitt had the story translated, but Stephen did not publish her article.

Emma's story concerns a wooden cask of gunpowder left with a burning fuse by Cook's sailors at the watering place at Kundal/Kurnell (perhaps to enlarge the spring). It would have killed any curious 'natives' that came close enough to examine it, but the local Aborigines wisely stayed in the nearby bushes as the sailors rowed back to the ship and the cask exploded without causing any damage. Everett's original letters are now in the Hayes Collection of the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland Library at St Lucia, Brisbane.

Captain Cook Was Here is a beautifully realised hardback edition that reproduces many colour illustrations of people, places and artefacts that complement and extend the historical narrative. They include the key visual images of Aboriginal men in canoes painted by the Tahitian naïve artist Tupaia and pencil sketches by Sydney Parkinson at Botany Bay in 1770. I was privileged to bring these two originals from the British Library to Australia for the *Eora: Mapping Aboriginal Sydney* exhibition at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, in 2006.

In her detailed deconstruction of the confrontation on that first day (26 March), Nugent suggests that the two brave Gweagal who faced Cook's muskets were prepared for a confrontation and had 'stashed their spears conveniently close by'. Parkinson's sketches surely depict these two men and show one poisoning a fishing spear in his woomeerah, so it seems more likely that they snatched up their weapons on the spur of the moment.

Nugent is not generous with her attributions. She cites Djon Mundine and myself (twice) without fully acknowledging the exhibition *Lines in the Sand*, curated by Ace Bourke at the Hazlehurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre in 2008, which displayed the illustrations reproduced in this work, including Daniel Boyd's wry takes on conventional history painting.

The Kameygal and Gweagal were able to reclaim Botany Bay for 18 more years before more foreign ships came into the bay. Nugent concludes:

Away from this place and some time later, the *Endeavour's* voyage under Cook's command would directly and indirectly set in train a whole series of decisions and events and processes that in a roundabout and unpredictable way lead to a decision being made in England to establish a colony for convicts at Botany Bay. But that is another story.

Stories make the Indigenous world and storytelling keeps that world alive. In the words of Billy Gibbs, an Aboriginal man from the Western Desert, 'Captain Cook made the country a different story'. Nugent succeeds in making the Captain Cook story a different history.

Keith Vincent Smith

Sydney

Pelletier: the Forgotten Castaway of Cape York by Stephanie Anderson, 370 pp, Melbourne Books, Melbourne, 2009, ISBN 9781877096679 (pbk), \$39.95.

Accounts of the experiences of shipwreck survivors and convict escapees who spent substantial periods living with Aboriginal people form a distinct genre within Australia's early ethnographic and ethnohistorical texts.¹ Stephanie Anderson's book *Pelletier: the Forgotten Castaway of Cape York* is an important addition to this corpus. As the title suggests, this is a book about someone who has been neglected in Australia's records. A survey of the research literature shows that this is indeed the case. Narcisse Pelletier, who lived with Aboriginal people in Cape York from 1858 to 1875, is given relative prominence among the 'wild whitemen' mentioned in Heaton's *Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time* (1879) in that almost a full column is devoted to him, while others each receive a mere paragraph. However, until the publication of Stephanie Anderson's book, accounts about this man and his experiences such as that presented in Sir Ralph Cilento's pamphlet *Wild White Men' in Queensland* (1970[1959]), have been limited by the information available in the Australian records.

Narcisse Pelletier was born in 1844 and grew up in France, in the seaside village of Saint-Gilles, where his father worked as a shoemaker. Pelletier went to sea at an early age and in 1858 took the post of cabin boy on the *Saint-Paul*. On what was to be its last voyage, the *Saint-Paul* sailed from Marseilles to Bombay, where it delivered a cargo of wine. From there, it went to Hong Kong, where it took on board 300 Chinese workers bound for the New South Wales goldfields. Halfway through the voyage to Sydney, the *Saint-Paul* was wrecked on the Louisiade Archipelago, off the south-eastern tip of New Guinea. How Pelletier survived this shipwreck and then spent 17 years living with Aboriginal people in eastern Cape York and what happened to him after his removal from Cape York in 1875 are some of the subjects explored in this book.

Pelletier's experiences were first published in French in 1876 in a limited edition of a small booklet written by Constant Merland and entitled *Dix-Sept Ans Chez Les Sauvages Les Aventures di Narcisse Pelletier*. Constant Merland stated that this book was based on information gathered during his conversations with Pelletier and Pelletier's notes about his experiences. Regrettably, after the publication Merland's book, apart from Edouard Garnier's attempt to elicit information from Pelletier in relation to four Aboriginal songs, no one else appears to have sought further information from him. A new edition of Merland's book, edited by Philippe Pécot, was published in 2001. This is also in the French language. Stephanie Anderson is critical of this edition's misrepresentation of Pelletier as living with a 'cannibal tribe' and its inclusion of an Appendix of irrelevant ethnographic material derived from Carl Lumholtz's 1889 *Among Cannibals*.

1 One book that attempts to consider all these persons is Barrett 1948.

Stephanie Anderson's *Pelletier: the Forgotten Castaway of Cape York* presents the first English translation of Merland's book and has thus made this important French record accessible to Australia's majority non-French reading public. Her book, however, is much more than a translation of Merland's book. It also presents her considerable historical research about Pelletier and the ethnographic research of the anthropologist Athol Chase about the *Pama Malngkana* (the Sandbeach People), who gave succour to the debilitated, abandoned cabin boy and subsequently adopted him into their society. Athol Chase has contributed the section 'Pama Malngkana: the "Sandbeach People" of Cape York' and also photographs. As Stephanie Anderson states on page 7 of the Acknowledgements, 'Anyone reading this book will see the imprint of Athol's work throughout its pages.'

The book is organised into two main parts. Part One contains two essays (the first by Anderson, the second by Chase) that provide readers with the ethnohistorical and ethnographic background in which to locate Anderson's translation of the Merland text (which is Part Two). The book also has two maps, six appendices, numerous endnotes, a bibliography and lastly, a note on the translation. This note would be better placed after the acknowledgements, as it pertains particularly to the extensive annotations that are interpolated throughout the translation.

The opening essay in Part One, 'The Two Lives of Narcisse Pelletier' gives an account of the early life of Narcisse Pelletier, his shipwreck, his adoption by Aboriginal people, his discovery and removal from their society, and what happened to him after his return to France. It also includes information about the Australian records made about Pelletier shortly after his removal from Cape York. The following essay '*Pama Malngkana: the Sandbeach People of Cape York*' considers the identity and location of the Aboriginal people who adopted Pelletier and reasons for the neglect of Pelletier in the research records. Among topics considered in this section are family and territorial ownership in this area, spiritual life, land and sea resources, initial and later contact with Europeans, church and state interventions into Aboriginal life, and Archibald Meston's research about Pelletier.

Chase's consideration of the historical and ethnographic records (which include his own research) found that Pelletier's account, as presented by Constant Merland, is authentic, and, apart from a geographical error, factually correct. The geographical error in Merland's account is the identification of the place where *Saint-Paul* crew abandoned Pelletier as Cape Flattery. Chase found a high correlation between the historical and ethnographic records that this place is Red Rocky Point, which is just south of Cape Direction. In this respect, Anderson's book also has a geographical error – the location of Captain Billy as an Aboriginal man speaking broken English among Aboriginal people met at Temple Bay by Robert Logan Jack in 1880 (p. 109). Jack did meet Captain Billy, but in the Shelburne Bay region which is north of Temple Bay, and named a creek to commemorate this event.²

2 Jack 1921 vol II: 589–593.

Chase raises the possibility that Archibald Meston's statement in 1923 that the Pelletier story was a fabrication might have contributed to the lack of interest in Australia about Pelletier. Another contributing reason might be his finding that the family group (clan) who adopted Pelletier had become extinct.

Part Two comprises Stephanie Anderson's translation of the Constant Merland book. This translation is interspersed with annotations, including excerpts drawn from the research of Athol Chase, Bruce Rigsby, David Thomson and Peter Sutton. These annotations are clearly marked as such in the text, and greatly contribute to the text. They not only illuminate and authenticate Merland's account, but also expand on matters mentioned by Merland, and in many instances, provide a historical dimension and show the continuities and transformations in Aboriginal culture in that area.

Merland's account introduces the reader to Pelletier and the events leading up to his abandonment on the east coast of Cape York. Merland's statement, made in 1876, is as relevant today as it was then:

It is no longer the cabin boy Narcisse Pelletier who will be the subject of our discussion but Amglo, citizen of the tribe of Ohantaala. His personality will often recede into the background as we turn to the description of the customs, habits and beliefs of tribes among whom civilisation has not yet penetrated. A curious study, then, whose elements had been lacking until today and which certainly deserves to gain the attention of the public. (pp. 155–156 Anderson translation)

Then follow several chapters of ethnographic interest about the Aboriginal society of which Pelletier became a member, including social and territorial organisation, property, marriage, food gathering, conflict and punishments. This information dominates the text, and there are only glimpses of what Pelletier's experiences. Thus we learn that he was adopted by one of the men who had found him, and that Sassy, the son of his adopted father's brother, became a 'true and faithful friend ... the bonds of kinship having brought them together' (p. 179). Pelletier learnt how to become a valuable and contributing member of his Aboriginal society, and, from his cicatrices, was an initiated man. Not everyone was kind to him and his skin colour, his superior arrow-making skills and his ablution habits drew negative comments, and he was punished for breaking a food taboo. The punishment led to the development of ulcers over the lower part of one of his legs, which from the description might have been yaws. Merland noted that Pelletier still suffered from an ulcerated leg (p. 182) when he interviewed him in 1876.

Merland reported that he was married, according to custom, to a young girl, who was about seven years old when Pelletier was removed from the area. In Merland's view, her young age was proof that the 'union was in name only [and that] Pelletier will therefore be able to contract a marriage in France without fear of being pursued for bigamy' (p. 184).

Is Merland's book a straight record of what Pelletier said, or is it based on what Pelletier said with Merland's interpretation of this? Anderson states that 'I believe that Merland is a straightforward reporter of what Pelletier told him' and that Merland based his book on Pelletier's notes and from conversations with Pelletier (p. 26). Anderson addresses some of the shortcomings of Merland's account such as his incorrect identification of the location of Pelletier's landing as Cape Flattery and the omission of personal and ethnographic information recorded from Pelletier, published in contemporary Australian newspapers. These might not have been accessible to Merland. Fortunately for readers today, Anderson includes the principal of these in her book as appendices and provides information from others in her main text (see, for example, her reference to Aplin's report on pp. 43-44).

Anderson's research supplements and complements her translation of Merland's book. Merland's account omits details of what happened after Pelletier was found on Night Island. Drawing on Australian and French sources, Anderson has filled these gaps. She describes how unlike other Europeans who had rejoined European society after living for considerable periods with Aboriginal people, Pelletier did not leave his Aboriginal people willingly (pp. 42-46). Although she described the removal of Pelletier from Night Island as the 'recovery', it is clear from her account that the *John Bell* crew did not so much rescue him, as unwittingly kidnap him (p. 306) and that he was taken away against his will, and that he made several attempts to escape. Anderson's discovery of a record that Pelletier had left behind two or three children in Cape York (p. 46) suggests a possible reason for his unwillingness to be rescued.

Anderson describes Pelletier's difficulties with adjusting to European life. His apparent loss of language amazed those who found him and excited the interest of academics. No one, however, in France seems to have been aware that this loss was also experienced by others who had been 'recovered' after years spent living with Aboriginal people. Anderson also considers Pelletier's reported reticence to provide information about his experiences to people in Australia. She suggests several reasons for this such as his need to distance himself from being typecast as a 'white savage' and to re-establish himself in European society; the social distance between himself and those who interviewed him; and the trauma of his involuntary return to European society.

Anderson notes some significant omissions in Merland's account - there is no mention of totemic ancestors, totemic sites, Culture Heroes, initiation ceremonies and so forth (p. 55). She considers that his reticence on such matters is indicative of his continuing adherence to Uutaalnganu beliefs and values in the months following his recovery from Cape York.

Another significant omission, not mentioned by Anderson, is the visit by Captain Banner, in command of the *Julia Percy* to Night Island and the adjacent mainland in 1860. On board the *Julia Percy* was John MacGillivray, who had been a zoologist on the HMS *Rattlesnake* and who had participated in the rescue

of another shipwreck survivor – Barbara Thompson – at Cape York in 1849.³ MacGillivray's account of this visit provides the earliest detailed description of the Aborigines in this area, and suggests the probability that one of those encountered was Narcisse Pelletier. MacGillivray reported how while the party was exploring the mainland, they encountered:

a mob of Australian natives (about 150 in number, as I afterwards ascertained), daubed and streaked with white paint, each man with his throwing stick and bundle of spears. ... Being the only one of our party who knew how to deal with wild Australian natives otherwise than by shooting them, I was allowed to manage the business as I thought proper. [...] After distributing some fish hooks among the elders, and going through as many antics and grimaces as a buffoon, patting the old fellows on the head and breast, we became famous friends, the whole of us talking loudly and promiscuously, of course in mutually unintelligible language. A sort of confidence being thus established, others came forward. ... Having established tolerably satisfactory relations – a sort of armed neutrality – we parted, as it was getting near sunset. [...] We had not gone far when a confused noise behind announced the reappearance of the blacks closely following us, each with his bundle of spears in his left hand, and the throwing stick and one spear shipped in the other. ... By dint of keeping the Australians in good humour, laughing away as if unconcerned, and betraying no sign of fear ... as well as keeping close to an elderly gentleman whom I had selected as the first victim should hostilities commence, we got on pretty well ... We induced about sixty of the mob to accompany us along the beach to the boats, where we gave the elderly ones biscuit, strips of calico, fish-hooks, and a knife or two, and parted good friends. ... They were generally well made for Australians. None of those we saw exceeded five feet seven inches in height. The moustache and beard were usually very scanty: the hair of the head had not been subjected to any peculiar treatment; the artificially raised scars on the body and arms were few in number; circumcision or any analogous rite had not been practised; but the loss of the upper front tooth was universal among the men. One man was light enough to have been a half-caste, but he shunned observation, and got out of the way when I wished to examine him closely.⁴

This book contains numerous historical and ethnographic references, for most of which there are endnotes. Some references however have no explanatory note. For example, there is a reference on page 29 to Buckley, but no explanatory note about him. I found that consultation of the endnotes interrupted my reading of the main text and detracted from the pleasure of reading this book. Future editions of this book might consider the substitution of footnotes for the endnotes.

³ See MacGillivray 1852.

⁴ John MacGillivray, 'Wanderings in tropical Australia no. II', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1862.

An inconsistent style of referencing in these endnotes detracts from the academic value of the book. In some, the author's name is provided, in other, the titles only of source material. The reader then has to either scan the bibliography or search the library catalogues to locate the author. For example, endnote 9 on page 318 refers to an article 'Anthropology through a biological lens 2005: 17'. This article was written by Athol Chase and appears in a book entitled *Donald Thomson: the Man and Scholar* and edited by Bruce Rigsby and Nicolas Peterson, Canberra: Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia with support from Museum Victoria, c2005, p. 17-28. Future editions might consider using a different and consistent system of referencing.

Despite these few shortcomings associated with presentation, this book is a most valuable addition to Australia's ethnohistorical and ethnographic records. Stephanie Anderson's book not only restores Pelletier to his prominence in Australia's ethnohistorical records, but also shows just how valuable these early accounts are with respect to authenticating and appreciating contemporary records of Aboriginal society and culture.

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Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us by Nicholas Evans, xxii + 287 pp, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA, 2010, ISBN 9780631233060, \$37.95.

This is a wonderful book. It begins and ends with personal, poignant stories about Evans's own work with last speakers and last hearers in small speech communities in Australia. He emphasises that when a language disappears, it is not only its speakers who die but all of the knowledge and ways of knowing that die with them. In order to show how and why this is so, Evans canvases many issues in the nature and culture of language, languages and linguistics and the relations between these studies and other disciplines, particularly cognitive science and archaeology. Along the way, the book considers case studies in some detail from all the continents and briefer examples are illustrated with apposite anecdotes. This is story telling of the highest quality – with each story told in its relevant language, together with a translation – but it is also text with some messages of great importance.

Multilinguality is almost inevitable in many situations, particularly in small scale societies where spouses may be derived from socially separate groups (p. 9), but even allowing for this, there is substantial evidence of creative differentiation between groups through language novelties (p. 13). This is undoubtedly part of the reason for the enormous linguistic diversity in many regions (p. 14) though, if I have a criticism of the book it would be that it is relatively uncurious about how that diversity may have occurred over time.

William von Humbolt is said to have recognised that human cognition could not be understood from the knowledge expressed in only one language, but must be considered across all languages (p. 36). Several worked examples show, for example, how different the world looks when you reckon directions in relation to yourself (as we do) rather than in relation to cardinal points (as the Guugu-Yimithirr do) (pp. 163–169). Chomsky's approach to the problem of the complexities of language was to propose that humans have some innate structure that permits the parsing of the languages they hear such that they can learn the language they are brought up in. Most importantly, Evans and Levinson have drawn attention to the way in which all the central assumptions of Chomsky's arguments are untenable when the whole range of languages is considered however well they may work for a limited range of languages.¹ To Evans's credit, he does not let this argument become the dominant theme of this book, though it could have been. Particularly relevant to the question of the cognitive implications of different languages are the questions of social relationship and how they are computed. Evans deals with this at length in Chapter 4 with an important model for social cognition in grammar in Figure 4.2 (p. 77).

1 Evans and Levinson 2009.

An indication, admittedly at a fairly low level, of the impoverishment of not knowing the ways in which different languages handle reality is given by the different verbs used to describe the motion of different species of kangaroo and wallaby in the Arnhem Land language Kunwinjku (p. 57). Without knowing the various ways in which people differentiate the variation visible in the world around them, how could archaeologists contemplating the visual representation of kangaroos and wallabies in rock art hope to understand what parts of the variation were being represented long in the past?

Part III is a good discussion of the relationship between linguistics and archaeology with a section on decipherment (Chapter 7) which might fill young people with wonder in the way that I remember being filled with wonder by *The Decipherment of Linear B*.² It is a welcome change to have historical linguistics come to the fore in the study of Australian languages, particularly given the strength of the contribution to understanding New Guinea and Pacific history through linguistics. A weakness might be that there is little discussion of the strong statistical methods currently being applied in our region.³ Non-linguists, such as me, would appreciate a quick guide to the strengths and weaknesses of such approaches.

Section IV deals with further aspects of language and cognition, tackling head on the issues that were originally associated with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language has a dominant influence on thought, maintained in the urban myth that Eskimos have dozens of words for snow.⁴ The view was 'trashed' (Evans's word) by Stephen Pinker in *The Language Instinct* (1994) 'There is no scientific evidence that languages dramatically shape speakers' way of thinking' though Pinker subsequently devoted a book to just that concept.⁵ Here, Evans shows that the issues are much more complex and much more subtle than any of these views.

Two things struck me as weaknesses of the book. First, although the technical language needed to understand the argument is spelled out clearly, there is still a lot of technical language that is not spelled out (particularly about orthography and phonetics). This has the virtue that a reader will not get bogged down in minutiae and we can romp through the book to get its more important messages. The second is that there may be too many topics. Many of the issues are dealt with rather summarily and leave the reader wishing for more. Again, this is a good fault that permits a wide audience to understand the issue and then go looking for the specialist publications that expand on that issue. Commendably, all stories are in their original languages, including several in obscure scripts. It is a little curious, though, that despite the use of, for example, printed scripts of Caucasian Albanian and Epi-Olmec, both extinct and of rather small extension,

2 Chadwick 1961.

3 See for example Atkinson et al 2010; Reesink et al 2009.

4 For example, Wikipedia, 'Eskimo words for snow', accessed 30 October 2010: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eskimo_words_for_snow>

5 Pinker 2007.

there were two quotations (in my copy) which had been pasted in, one in Arabic and the other in Hebrew, both, I would have thought, languages with a vibrant printed tradition.

At the end of the book, Evans wonders out loud whether he should have devoted his time to doing more work with some last speakers, and friends, who had passed away, instead of writing the book. My answer to his rhetorical question is this. The book is so elegantly written, so easy to read, and canvasses so much that a beginning student of linguistics needs to know that it was probably the best investment in the future of dying languages that he could have made. If it encourages only two people to venture into those lonely seats in the dust to help people record their knowledge of the world in language that no one will ever hear once they are gone, then he will have an adequate return on his investment. I am sure it will.

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