Australia’s annexation by the British crown is generally believed to have led to no treaties between the crown and the indigenous peoples. This has made it unusual in the history of the acquisitions of colonial territory by European powers. Apart from South America, which was conquered by conquistadors, these acquisitions were legitimised as a *de jure* - lawful - cession of territory to a European state by treaty. This was the model followed in North America, Africa, Asia and New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi has sometimes been counted as the first Australian treaty. It has mainly been New Zealanders who have not been able to forget that the effect of that treaty was to make New Zealand a dependency of New South Wales. Now it appears that Waitangi was the second Australian treaty.

The focus of Reynold’s re-examination of the Tasmanian wars is the agreement made between the Aborigines and the British which brought the wars to an end. It was the central reference point of the petition to queen Victoria in 1846 by the exiled Aborigines at Wybalenna on Flinders Island. They described themselves as ‘the free Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land now living upon Flinders Island’ and asserted ‘that we were not taken prisoners but freely gave up our country to Colonel Arthur then the Governor after defending ourselves.’ They reminded the queen that they moved to Wybalenna as ‘Mr Robinson made for us and with Colonel Arthur an agreement which we have not lost from our minds and we have made our part of it good.’ Reynolds argues that this reference to an agreement is not an antiquarian curiosity but a justified view of the petitioners’ position. He suggests that the crown, as a result of the agreement, owes a fiduciary duty to the Tasmanian people and that the Australian War Memorial, under its legislation, is required to commemorate the Tasmanian wars and the Aborigines who fought in them.

Reynolds’ account challenges a number of accepted views. When the Aborigines finally went to war they waged a guerrilla campaign which the British army found difficult to effectively resist. Their surrender was not a result of the hypnotic influences of George Augustus Robinson but a political decision that they could not win the war. Truggernana and other women were not ‘bimbos’. They were instrumental in reaching that decision and implementing it. Under the appalling conditions of their exile on Flinders Island the Aborigines were not the passive victims of genocide but developed a number of responses which transmitted their institutions and their claims to the colony to the present generation.

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1 See Williams 1985.
In succeeding chapters Reynolds shows how the Aborigines fought in self defence in the wars from 1824 to 1831. The lateness of the wars was produced by the small numbers of European settlers before the 1820s and the development of Aboriginal strategies to counter guns. The tactics used by the Aborigines were familiar to the British veterans of Spain who described it as ‘guerilla’ warfare. The military campaign unleashed by the Aborigines produced at least two reactions amongst the settlers, to denigrate them as savages and to respect them as tacticians who outmatched them. Reynolds demonstrates that a number of government officers and settlers came to appreciate the political aims which underlay the campaign. The Aborigines finally capitulated as result of continuing migration and ignorance that the British resources were stretched to the limit in the Black Line in 1830.

Reynolds traces the contradictory British policy on indigenous peoples in Australia and the difficulties of enforcing policy made in London on the Australian frontiers. The policy, rarely enforced, that Aborigines were the king’s subjects and within his peace came to a temporary end in the mid-1820s with instructions from London and Sydney that ‘hostile incursions for the purpose of plunder’ by indigenous peoples were to be opposed by force ‘as if they proceeded from subjects of an accredited State’. In Van Diemen’s Land the policy was followed and Aborigines engaged in attacks on the British were treated as enemies and prisoners of war and not subject to criminal prosecution. They were excluded by force from the areas settled by the British. Finally, where they remained in those areas they were subject to the proclamation of martial law which made them ‘open enemies of the King, in a state of actual warfare against him.’ The consequences of this policy in Van Diemen’s Land and growing pressure about indigenous peoples on the British government within Britain itself led to the government reinstating its former practice in the Australian colonies.

The failed Black Line cost half the colony’s annual budget. It coincided with increasing positive responses by Aboriginal groups to George Augustus Robinson’s Friendly Mission. Reynolds discusses whether Robinson’s hypnotic and persuasive charm was responsible for his success. This is the usual explanation. Reynolds argues that it ignores the political abilities of the Aborigines. Women from the Mission, including Truggernana, and from the groups contacted were instrumental in obtaining agreement to the terms offered by Robinson for the British. Reynolds explains Truggernana’s role as political rather than sexual and defends her also from accusations of treachery to her people. The Aborigines had come to accept that they could not win the war. Treaties or agreements were known to them from their own practices between peoples in conflict. The unwritten terms appear to have included that, after a temporary period away from the mainland, the Aborigines would return to their territories under the protection of the British crown. It was this which gave Robinson his influence. The Aborigines who treated with him cannot be blamed for the failure of the crown to honour its part of the agreement. That rests with Robinson and the crown. This has parallels in other jurisdictions to which Reynolds does not refer. The cardinal rule was, and is, in international law that states must keep their word. Treaties must be complied with. If the crown acted deceptively, or its agent, Robinson, exceeded his authority in

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2 The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties codifies the customary law in Article 26: ‘Every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good
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the promises he made this has parallels in treaty making in the United States after the
War of 1812 when the United States had no further need of allies against Britain. Treaties
were then procured by ‘threats, coercion, bribery, and outright fraud by the negotiators
for the United States.’

The Aborigines’ belief that the government had agreed to provide for them made
them reluctant to work, at Wybalenna, as part of a program to develop ‘habits of
industry and moral feelings.’ In breach of the agreement the cultural life of the
Aborigines was also interfered with. Reynolds argues that, while the Aborigines were
oppressed and the death rate appalling, they were sufficiently self-reliant to exercise
some choice in their religious beliefs and practices. Christianity made little impact at first
and, when it did with the young people, it also appears to have generated a strong belief
in their rights as the original owners of the territory occupied by the colony. They were
not compliant victims but a dynamic and resourceful people who developed and
transmitted to the present what may be Australia’s oldest existing political tradition.

Reynolds claims that governor Arthur’s support for treaties when he returned to
Britain may have influenced the Colonial Office to require a treaty for cession of
sovereignty over New Zealand. It seems more likely that the British felt obliged to follow
their general practice. An added reason to treat in respect of New Zealand was a result of
the British government procuring a Declaration of Independence of the United Maori
Tribes of New Zealand. Having recognised Maori sovereignty the British were then
required to procure a cession of it in accordance with international law to more
effectively justify the exclusion of other colonial powers. The consistent practice of the
British crown overseas supports Reynolds’ claims that what was negotiated in Van
Diemen’s Land was a treaty. It was a practice which clerks in the Colonial Office at
neighbouring desks would have been familiar.

Reynolds refers briefly to the fiduciary relationship between the crown, or its
successor as sovereign, and indigenous people in the law of the United States, Canada
and New Zealand. This duty is imposed by the common law in specified situations
where there is an unequal relationship between parties. Generally a fiduciary must use a
position to benefit the person to whom the duty is owed and avoid any possible conflict
of interest. This duty in respect of indigenous peoples is regarded as arising from the
‘power’ of the crown and the ‘vulnerability’ of the indigenous peoples’ title to land.
Justice Toohey, the only judge in the majority in
Mabo v Queensland (No 2) to give the
issue significant attention wrote:

faith.’ UN Doc A/CONF. 39/27, at 289 (May 22, 1969). It is repeated in the Draft Declaration
on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Operative Paragraph 34 ‘Indigenous peoples have the right
to the observance and enforcement of treaties, agreements and other constructive
arrangements concluded with States or their successors, according to their original intent.
Upon the request of the indigenous peoples concerned, States shall provide for the
submission of disputes which cannot otherwise be settled to competent international bodies.’
UN Doc E/CN 4/Sub 2/1993/26 (June 8, 1993).

3 Wilkonson & Volkman 1975, p. 610.
4 Orange 1987, pp. 21-22.
7 (1992) 175 CLR 1.
The power to destroy or impair a people's interests in this way is extraordinary and is sufficient to attract regulation by Equity to ensure that the position is not abused. The fiduciary relationship arises, therefore, out of the power of the Crown to extinguish traditional title by alienating the land or otherwise; it does not depend on the exercise of that power.

Justice Toohey also thought that the duty could also arise from crown's subsequent creation of reserves and the appointment of trustees. The possibility of the existence of a fiduciary duty was admitted by High Court in Northern Land Council v The Commonwealth. It is arguable, but not generally accepted, that all seven judges supported it in Mabo v Queensland (No 2). Whether or not Toohey J was correct in the latter case is known only to the judges of the High Court who must inevitably decide it. The duty is particularly associated with relationships created by a treaty with indigenous peoples. In a number of New Zealand decisions the partnership between the crown and Maori created by the Treaty of Waitangi has been referred to with each partner 'accepting a positive duty to act in good faith, fairly reasonably and honourably towards the other.' If the fiduciary duty does exist much of its content is uncertain. In the United States, where the duty first emerged in the common law as a concept of trusteeship, the courts have rendered it, in the opinion of some, devoid of any positive or legally cognisable meaning. However considerable discretion is a feature of fiduciary law.

If the matter is ever considered by the crown as a matter of its honour or the courts deign to hear Aborigines asserting the existence, and breach of an agreement, they may seek to invoke the rule of construction applied to the terms of such agreements in the United States. They are given the meaning most sympathetic to the Indian parties which would naturally have been understood by them. The reasons for such a rule, the superior power of the crown, existed as much in Van Diemen's Land as in North America.

References

* (1992) 175 CLR 1, Toohey J at 203.
* (1992) 175 CLR 1, Brennan J, with whom Mason CJ and McHugh agreed, approved Guerin v R [1984] 2 SCR 335, at 15 and 73-74, Deane and Gaudron JJ at 113-115 and 119-120, Dawson J at 166-167 and Toohey J at 199-205

While the name Mabo is familiar to Australians as shorthand for indigenous land rights, its bearer and his role in the High Court decision are virtually a cipher. Its frequent mispronunciation ('Maybo' instead of 'Maabo') is indicative of the speed with which Edward Koiki Mabo's claim for his ancestral land on a remote Torres Strait island was obscured by the more momentous claim for Aboriginal land rights on the mainland. His death, a few months before the High Court handed down its historic decision, prevented him from enjoying whatever celebrity might have been due to him at that time, but even the official unveiling and subsequent desecration of his tombstone in a Townsville cemetery in 1995, has not left us with much idea of the man.

I think this is partly because he does not fit neatly into the indigenist stereotypes. Australians seem to have trouble imagining two indigenous groups, and Aborigines far outnumber Islanders. It is the Central Desert which has become the prototypic Aboriginal location, rather than the coral reefs and lush vegetation of Mabo's island, Mer.

But even for those who know something about the Torres Strait Islanders, there are difficulties. The man claiming customary ownership of the places where his ancestors built their grass huts and planted their gardens lived in a mainland city, spoke excellent English, and numbered academics, trade unionists and civic leaders among his friends. Such complex figures are not unusual in the history of decolonisation, but it takes time...
before they can be fitted neatly into the kind of straightforward narrative from which heroes are made.

The book under review goes some way towards documenting these complexities, and is at the same time an outcome of them, arising out of a collaboration and friendship between Mabo and Noel Loos, a historian and educationist at the James Cook University of North Queensland. Loos recalls how they first met at an Inter Racial Seminar in 1967, and then on the university campus where Mabo worked as a groundsman, spending his lunchbreaks in the library reading what anthropologists had written about his people. The last time they met was just a few days before Mabo died. In 1984, when they were sitting together on the educational committee of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, in Canberra, Loos took advantage of a free evening to propose that Mabo should record an account of his life. The project remained unfinished when they went home, and other commitments prevented them from resuming. I remember Noel Loos lamenting this at Mabo’s funeral, but this book shows there was enough for someone who knew and liked the man as well as he did, and who could talk with his wife, Bonetta, and his friends, to tell his story.

In its essentials, Mabo’s career was like that of hundreds of Torres Strait Islanders of his generation. He was born in 1936, in a remote island community that, after some seventy years of colonial rule, retained a robust sense of tradition while hungering for social and material advancement. He grew up speaking Meriam and Torres Strait pidgin, but acquired a better control of standard English than most of his peers, thanks to a friendship with a white school teacher, who had a strong commitment to the Islanders and, unusually had learned both Torres Strait languages.

As often happened with teenage boys, he incurred the displeasure of the island council for ‘girl trouble’ and drinking alcohol, and was sent away to work on a pearl lugger for the year. He never really returned. Work on various boats took him to the ports of North Queensland, and in due course he absconded in search of ‘proper wages’ and the urban life, from which the government had until recently ‘protected’ its Islander wards.

Wages in the Strait were a fraction of what could be earned cane cutting or railway fettling, and many at that time regarded the mainland as place of freedom. And when the market for pearl shell collapsed in 1960, hundreds of young men followed Mabo South, where they quickly acquired a reputation as ‘good tropical workers.’ In due course they brought down wives, children, and even parents, until the majority of Torres Strait Islanders resided on the mainland. Today, Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane each have Islander communities numbering several thousand.

These mainland communities tend to be inward looking. Mabo, having had to make his way at a time when Islanders on the mainland were still few, and being more at home speaking English, did not allow his horizons to be bounded in this way. He sought out the kind of people—mostly white—who could tell him about politics, education, anthropology and indigenous rights. Through his years on the mainland, he built up an extraordinary network of activists, academics and civic leaders, among whom he moved with ease despite his lack of formal education. It was my impression that he was less at ease with the Islander community; certainly he had acquired a reputation in the islands as a trouble maker who associated with Communists and Trade Unionists, and who
questioned mission Christianity. As he says himself, and as Loos confirms, he was neither communist nor godless, but rather selected what he wanted from whoever had something to teach him.

These subversive connections seem nevertheless to have been the ground on which the Mer Council repeatedly refused him permission to visit the island, where his parents still lived. The exclusion, which he suspected emanated from the Queensland government, rankled. However, it was the discovery over lunch with Noel Loos and Henry Reynolds that the land (being a reserve) belonged not to the Meriam but to the Crown that seems to have set him on the course of a legal challenge. Discussions at a Land Rights conference in 1981 set the process in train. One presumes that those who advised Mabo in this course of action perceived the Australia-wide implications of the Meriam case, and no doubt he soon became aware of it if he had not been from the beginning; what is less clear is how far this was part of his project, rather than incidental to it. This ambiguity is not peculiar to the Meriam case, or Mabo’s role in it; it is built into the notion of indigenous rights, according to which indigenous people claim national recognition of entitlements, on grounds which are intrinsically local and particular.

In an organisation like FCAATSI, where Mabo like many others gained his political education during the 1960s, it was possible for Aborigines, Islanders and even the descendants of Pacific islanders to work together around the struggle for civil rights. The Black Community school, of which Mabo was the main mover, began with a similar agenda. But with the shift to indigenous rights, the various groups became preoccupied with their own versions of indigeneity. In particular, the issue of land not only divided Islanders from Aborigines, but set Islanders against one another.

The other island communities in the Strait held back from the Mer case, settling for a form of title that left terra nullius intact.¹ The Meriam, consistent with their turbulent history, refused this option, but were divided over the case, and in particular Mabo’s own claims.

Although the High Court ended up finding in favour of ‘the Meriam people,’ the Meriam held their land as families or even as individuals. Moreover, disputes over boundaries and the rights of particular claimants to inherit were endemic, as the Murray Island court books attest. Mabo’s claims were not immune, and there were some who saw them as an act of self aggrandisement rather than as a bid for native title. Nor could they be altogether blamed for this perception, since Mabo accompanied his land claim with a bid for election to the island council and a for recognition as hereditary chief. (This is the import of the genealogy reproduced in the appendix which by implication demotes another leading family, also among the plaintiffs.)

The council had finally let Mabo return in the mid-1970s, but his attempt to live on Mer was a disappointing and distressing experience. The island had changed over the twenty years since he left, but perhaps it had never quite lived up to the picture that he had carried away with him as a youth, and embellished over the years of exile. His knowledge of the island and its culture was encyclopedic, but his rigid notion of custom left no room for process, particularly political process. The distance from the negotiations

¹I refer to the Deed of Grant in Trust which provided indefinite tenure, which could, however, be overturned by an order of the Governor-in-Council.
of everyday life that enabled him to communicate to non-Meriam a coherent sense of Meriam culture put him at a disadvantage when it came to local politics. The same weakness led to his 'creditability' being questioned by the Queensland judge who determined questions of fact for the High Court, and his being dropped from the list of plaintiffs during the final stages of the High Court hearings. The irony is that, without him, there would probably not have been a case at all. In the words of one of his cousins, 'He was the only bridge from our side to the wider community.' (p.185)

Noel Loos is a professional historian, and as one would expect, the book is built on a foundation of documentary research including *The Papers of Edward Koiki Mabo*, now held in the National Library of Australia. It is also informed by more than twenty years close acquaintance with his subject and other Islanders on the mainland, if not with conditions in the Strait. It is, in this sense, a memoir, which does not attempt to conceal affection as well as admiration for Mabo and his family, but which does not shy away from the difficult issues either.

I wish Loos had told us more about his editing of the taped interviews which form the core of this book, but, he does not seem to have been unduly directive. Mabo was an articulate man, who had spent a lot of time explaining himself and the Meriam to non-Islanders. For the most part, he gives us an unpretentious anecdotal account of a young Islander man making his way on the mainland. He describes some of the difficulties he encountered, but he does not present himself as a victim, rather explaining how he got round them. An increasing political awareness is part of the story, but little in the way of rhetoric.

Compared with the liveliness of the migration story, the account of his early life on Mer is thin. Perhaps this was because Loos knew much less about this world than he did about the mainland—though it seems that the recorder failed to function during one of these discussion. But, as Mabo himself was aware, he left the island before reaching the age at which men begin to take part in community affairs. What he remembers is what he was told, rather than what he would have experienced had he stayed. Much of his systematic understanding of the culture was acquired after he left, not just from books, but in discussion with other Townsville Meriam, who still spend hours arguing over the fine points of what they now call their 'culture'.

Loos does not conceal his grief at the death of his friend, nor his outrage at the desecration of the newly unveiled tombstone three years later, the perpetrators of which have never been found. The Federal government provided the funds for the body to be reinterred at Las, the principal site of Mabo's claim, where the shrine of the dual god Malu-Bomai had once stood. Mabo's friends and supporters (but not the whole community) marked the occasion with a re enactment of the sacred rites. It was not, as Loos was told, for the first time in eighty years—excerpts are to be seen in Cecil Holmes's 1967 film *The Islanders*—but this was the first time for many years that the chants had been performed for their original, funerary purpose. Loos writes:

> The dance........confirmed for many at Las Mabo's position as a spiritual leader in the ancient line of ancestors, zogo le, of the awe inspiring agud, Malu-Bomai.

2 A sogo le was a herditary ritual leader and custodian of sacred objects.
3 Agud was the Meriam term for a spiritual being such as Bomai, which nineteenth century missionaries appropriated for the Christian God.
Many Meriam now saw this dual deity as the forerunner of Christ. Christianity had been brought by the missionaries in 1871, but the Islanders had known God's presence 'from time immemorial.' (178)

Loos concludes:

What I am sure of is that Koiki Mabo would have wished for no other burial site than the one he now occupies at Las. His turbulent life had ended in an extraordinary triumph and he had at last returned home. (186)

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The trouble with colonialism is that it is too big, too encompassing, and too familiar to be easily seen. The discourses which might be most appropriate to give an account of it, modern historiography and anthropology for instance, were partly or wholly developed within the context of colonialism and might even be seen as components of the discursive formation which is colonialism. Will it be necessary then, to invent new scholarly discourses innocent of colonialism's taint in order to study it? Nicholas Thomas argues not. While we should not take their effectiveness for granted, it should be possible to use the 'disciplinary technologies' (p.19) which are already available to undertake a 'historicisation of colonialism' and that is what he sets out to do.

Most crucial to his project is the step of treating colonialism not as a policy or period but as a culture. One of the things which previously has kept the discourses of colonialism out of view has been their success in giving substance and visibility to their subjects rather than to themselves: the precisely drawn racial type, the immutable customary order of the colonised society—it was the very believability of such constructs, the appearance of naturalness bestowed upon them, that kept the discourses of colonialism hidden. So successful, indeed, have those discourses been in naturalising their subjects that we are in danger of ascribing to them a singleness of purpose a concertedness, which they never really possessed. Colonialism, according to Thomas, is best seen as a plurality of projects and voices which, rather than bringing themselves to bear on the colonised in a concerted manner, are often in bitter conflict: 'Colonialism is not a unitary project but a fractured one, riddled with contradictions and exhausted as much by its own internal debates as by the resistance of the colonised.' (p.51).

*Colonialism's Culture* comprises theoretical chapters followed by several case studies situated in the British empire (South Africa, Fiji, the Solomon Islands). In a critique of the work of Bhabha, JanMohamed, and Spivak, Thomas calls into question on three points the account these authors have given of colonial discourse. Firstly, the effort made to show that such discourse works to deny difference in the colonised may exaggerate the extent to which the colonisers actually perceived difference to exist: 'in the
experience of contact, unfamiliarity is not necessarily overwhelming' (52) 'texts and images often create differences that do not exist' (p.53). Secondly, to suggest that race origin has been fixed upon as the basis for ascribing degeneracy to subject peoples is to generalise, according to Thomas, from what has been true in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, neglecting to note that several other criteria (eg. heathenism, lack of industrial technology, dullness induced by tropical climate) were employed for the same purpose in earlier times and to an extent have continued in use. Finally, to presume that colonial discourses portray the colonised 'pejoratively' is to ignore the instances where they 'may admire or uphold them in a narrow or restrictive way' (p.54). Thomas also has a problem with the critical Fanonism' (p.9) of Bhabha and Spivak, which in elaborating the hegemonic power of the English book to deny the colonised an authentic voice, 'excludes the possibility that "natives" often had relatively autonomous representations and agendas, that might have been deaf to the enunciation's of colonialism' (p.57). The question of just how 'natives' have given voice to their experience of colonialism is outside of scope of Colonialism's Culture though one understands that Thomas sees it not as a matter of the colonised speaking back or writing back. Rather, the colonised appreciate that it is not they who are being spoken to by the discourses of colonialism, it is the colonisers speaking among themselves.

It is now seventeen years since Edward Said's Orientalism was first published. Not without reference to that book's problems (which Said himself has subsequently been among the most energetic in addressing), Thomas carefully analyses its contribution to the study of colonial representation. He writes of the manner in which the book 'completely transformed the field by drawing attention to the ways in which a whole series of European writers and scholars created a texted Orient through persistent images and metaphors, some of which werenumbingly familiar' (p 22–23).

While the reinvented anthropology (which Thomas describes as supervising 'the deconstruction of the imperial museum of anthropological knowledge' (p.7) is keen to ascribe agency to colonialism's subjects, it is less ready to do the same for colonialism's individual practitioners.

One way of evaluating Colonialism's Culture is in the extent to which it succeeds in its stated aim of developing a way of writing about colonial culture' (p.31). In part it does this by moving to the site of performance, the places where Western colonialism has been enacted places where one might, as Thomas says, undertake an ethnography of colonial projects 'that presupposes the effect of larger objective ideologies, yet notes their adaptation in practice, their moments of effective implementation and confidence as well as those of failure and wishful thinking' (p.60).

Easily the quirkiest of the case studies consists of a biography of Vernon Lee Walker, a young Australian in island Melanesia in the 1880s, as revealed in a series of letters to his mother. This 'obscure and inconsequential racist' whose 'world was inhabited by failed businesses, bad debts and recalcitrant and aggressive natives' (p.160), languishes in uninspiring Noumea before working on a labour-recruiting schooner in the New Hebrides. He is mildly haunted by a sense of failure and he drifts along waiting for something good to happen until one day he is killed by natives on a remote beach where he has landed to purchase yams. Thomas comments on Walker's apparent lack of interest in scenery and landscape: 'he never takes scenery as a detached thing to be produced and
accentuated' (p.164). Nor does Walker bother to differentiate much between one group of natives and another or to speak about the resource potential of the islands he travels through.

This young man who seems to find himself in the colonial world almost by accident writes letters which signally fail to represent the mission and adventure of colonialism but which end up being curated in the Rhodes House Library, Oxford, only, in the fullness of time, to fall into the hands of Nicholas Thomas who realises the eloquence of this failure. Incomplete at one level, they are complete at another.

The case of Vernon Lee Walker establishes that colonialism could fail not only because its impositions were resisted by the colonised, or because one colonial project undermined another, but also because colonisers were often simply unable to imagine themselves, their situations and their prospects in the enabling, expansionist, supremacist fashion that colonial ideologies projected (p.167)

It appears that discourse never dies, only its practitioners do. In his final chapter Thomas points to the way in which the contemporary primitivism of Robert Lawlor's (1991) book *Voices of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreaming* and Kevin Costner's (1991) film *Dances with Wolves* represent a continuation of eighteenth and nineteenth century progressivism. It is the quality of inversion which distinguishes primitivism from the mere difference valorised by exoticism: Aboriginal society is portrayed as being not just strange and different but 'radically anti-modern', fixed in time, unable to change or to accommodate change, Aboriginality can... be cherished only in so far as it is a stable form that can be made to correspond with New Age metaphysics' (p.177).

Thomas makes the crucial point that the discourse of primitivism does not function to effect a sort of embrace in equality between disaffected whites and tribals. Lieutenant Dunbar in *Dances with Wolves*, disassociated from the flaws of modernity and white Society, as an indigenised white man, is a profoundly different figure to the acculturated Indian; while the latter can only acquire the corruption of white society and... half-caste morality, the white traveller retains the authority of presence that the passing Indian perforce lacks while substituting integrity and an identification with the land for the discredited expansionist narratives of conquest and environmental destruction (p 182). In other words, primitivism functions as a sort of salvaging of certain qualities from the ruins of tribal culture. Where it happens that this culture is indigenous to the land one has settled, then the salvaging serves to indigenise one: 'self-fashioning via the Sioux or the Aborigines does not exoticise oneself, but makes one more American or more Australian' (p.183). It is because such practices are so much a
part of national life in the Australia of the late twentieth century that we can be described as living in a colonial rather than a postcolonial condition.

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The Aboriginal Studies Press is to be congratulated on this magnificent publication. It is timely indeed: after nearly a century this work, which has been out of print for many years, is still constantly studied and quoted and remains a major source-book. There is an initial page containing a warning to those who might be offended by some aspects of the book, all the rest of the work is exactly as it was in the 1904 edition.

The Aboriginal Studies Press has excelled in the way it has published books dealing with important contemporary issues. This facsimile edition may seem far removed from what is contemporary, but it is not. Howitt’s work deals with those parts of Australia where there have been the most dramatic losses of traditions. The fact that it has now become generally available again will help us all to a better understanding of the present through the records of the past. People concerned with many aspects of Aboriginal Studies will be grateful to the Aboriginal Studies Press.

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Despite growing national and international recognition for contemporary Aboriginal art, there is a sense in which this response has overlooked an historical dimension that situates Aboriginal productive endeavour within a colonial context. This publication by Andrew Sayers, undertaken when he was curator of Australian drawing at the National Gallery of Australia, makes a major contribution toward redressing this omission. Sayers devotes a chapter each to three major artists from south-east Australia: William Barak, Tommy McRae and Mickey of Ulladulla. In addition, he interweaves analysis of the work of many other individuals whose artistic career was more brief, intermittent, or, in some cases has remained anonymous: artists such as Erlikilyika (Jim Kite) who accompanied the expeditions of Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen; Yertebrida Solomon, a
Ngarrinderi woman resident at Raukkan (Point McLeay) and the five Aborigines whose drawings formed the basis for *The Dawn of Art*—the first public exhibition of Aboriginal art staged in Melbourne in 1888. It is a telling comment on both historical relations between colonisers and colonised and the enduring strength of Aboriginal creativity that four of these artists were, at the time, inmates of Fannie Bay Gaol, Palmerston (Darwin) whilst the fifth, Billiamook, was employed as an interpreter by police.

Sayers persuasively argues that drawing represented a 'creative space' outside the 'traditional' framework of Aboriginal society which Aboriginal artists strategically appropriated to communicate with members of the majority culture. The drawing are also expressive of Aborigines' historically differentiated colonial experiences: whether, like Barak and McRae, they depict ceremonies and activities associated with a past hunter-gatherer lifestyle; or, like Oscar and Charlie Flannigan, they record contemporary scenes from pastoral life. Writing in a scholarly yet accessible style, Sayers combines detailed visual analysis with a wealth of historical evidence—amassed from explorer's journals, ethnography, government archives and settler records—to highlight the complex and contingent lives of those Aborigines dispossessed by the relentless process of colonisation. In a separate essay, Carol Cooper provides a valuable counterpoint to this narrative, exploring the traditional visual culture of south east Australia that provided the context for these developments. Building on her previous scholarship in this field, Cooper analyses the geometric and figurative elements present in rock art, body designs and artefacts to explore the customary law and individual and group identities they encode.

This beautifully produced publication will have lasting relevance and appeal for several reasons. First, Sayers' research undercuts the stereotypes that surround contemporary Aboriginal art to focus attention on the precursors, earlier generations of Aboriginal artists who selectively syncretised Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal visual traditions. A foreword by the Melbourne artist Lin Onus refers to a second function this book will perform, assisting many dispossessed Aboriginal people to relocate their cultural heritage. Third, by charting the changing critical response to these Aboriginal artists from widespread appreciation in the nineteenth century to their virtual exclusion in the decades to follow, Sayers calls into question our generalised understandings of the delayed response to Aboriginal art. His evidence suggests that the purist constructions for Aboriginality which relegated these drawings—together with the watercolour landscapes of the Hermannsburg School—to relative obscurity, mirrored and indeed supported policies of racial discrimination aimed at rendering Aborigines invisible. Finally, *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century* constitutes a key resource and reference. As Sayers points out, the drawings assembled for the touring exhibition associated with this publication are fragile historical items, located in relatively inaccessible, private and institutional collections, here and overseas. Given these constrictions, there is little likelihood they will ever be reassembled for another exhibition. Instead *Aboriginal Artists of the Nineteenth Century* creates a significant archive combining historical commentary, biographies, a fully-documented catalogue and a wealth of detailed illustrations. A paper back edition issued in 1996, updates this exciting
and engrossing publication by including additional artists and drawings located in subsequent research.

Sylvia Kleinert
Australian National University


Fighters from the Fringe is a very welcome and timely addition to author Robert A. Hall's earlier work *Black Diggers* published in 1989. This new book as was his earlier work is enhanced by the authors military background which delivers both knowledge and authenticity to the subject. The book unveils another chapter of the hidden history of this country. It is well written and researched proving to be both interesting and enlightening. It is illustrated with excellent photographs.

This book is particularly significant as most people are still unaware of the role that indigenous service men and women have played in the defence of their country during the First, Second, Korean and Vietnam wars. My only criticism of Robert Hall's book centres on the wrong assumption (p.8) that Aboriginal political groups had begun to appear in the early nineteen thirties. This statement is clearly in error as it is well documented that the first Aboriginal protest and politically organised group were the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association which was formed in Sydney and was active from 1924 to 1927, as shown by R. Broome.¹ Hall's book displays to the reader quite clearly the horrifying levels of racism which were evident during the early days of the second world war. This was highlighted by the actions of the Army whose policy delivered in early 1940 on indigenous recruitment and enlistment stated 'recruitment of non-Europeans was neither necessary nor desirable'. How suddenly, as the book details, these barriers were withdrawn once the Japanese began to close on Australian shores! The laws governing indigenous recruitment, although never officially appended or changed were certainly relaxed as Australia's own predicament became more threatening. The irony of Government directions was never more evident than in one case discussed in this book: two Aboriginal men in the Northern territory were jailed in 1932 for killing a Japanese trepang lugger crewman. A decade later these same men were among many others recruited in the North for the specific task of defending our shores against the Japanese. The collection of stories and recollections from a number of people, Reg Saunders, Oodgeroo Noonuccal and others gives a first hand account of what life was like for indigenous people during the war. A number of striking similarities came to light from some of these stories. Most had stated that they had enlisted to fight for 'their' country, and certainly not for king, Queen or the British Empire. Also most of the accounts show that suddenly during the war the levels of racism seemed to subside. I cannot recommend this book enough: it is a very good read and highly informative.

¹ R. Broome 1985:160.
References

John Maynard
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There are many Masters theses that are as important to research as PhD theses, and yet they never see the light of day. The Garland Press specialises in publishing such works. Mieke Blows's 1981 thesis on Eaglehawk and Crow is an outstanding example of such a work. It is a pity that it has taken so long to make the study available: there have been changes in anthropological thinking in the interval. This does not impact on the present work as seriously as one might imagine: it is a quite particularly valuable contribution, because it is a little out of the present mainstream of anthropological research. It is based on comparative mythology with psychological interpretations, or as L. Hiatt puts it in a comment quoted on p.x of the Introduction 'Blows uses Lévi-Straussian procedures to reach Róheimian conclusions'. The author has updated the work by including references to some recent works, but two major and highly relevant contributions have escaped notice:

Beckett, J. 1993 Walter Newton's history of the world - or Australia, _American Ethnologist_ Vol.20: 675-693


The present work is a careful and thorough comparative study of the many versions of the myth of Eaglehawk and Crow, widespread particularly in south-eastern Australia, and of major significance in social anthropology as it reflects the matrilineal moiety system. It is a thought-provoking work, but one aspect of Aboriginal mythology that is somehow missed out in all the psychological discussion is humour, and the deep-felt traditional need for entertainment. Anyone who has ever heard a traditional person telling a story in 'the language', or even in English, will be aware of the fact that the narrator takes great delight in events such as a 'bad' character stuck on top of an ever growing tree, moreover the talking faeces that appear in some of the versions would have been a source of great hilarity. Mimicry also often plays a major part in narrative.

There are a couple of minor points where one might disagree with the writer, eg Gurnu, the language of the Bourke area is written as 'Gungu', and there is a need to mention (p.205) that other Australian languages too had terms that were parallel to the Western Desert concept of 'dyugur'. These minor matters are more than compensated by
most perceptive insights into many aspects of mythology and a sensitive criticism of the theories of Tony Swain (p.67).

One of the points that is of more importance is geographical distribution. Thus for instance on p. 12 ff ‘Barkindji’ is taken to include only the Southern Paakantyi people, and there is some discussion as to whether it originally included the Wilcannia area. On p. 15 we are told about Popilta Lake, which is the location of one of the stories: ‘it could be Maraura, it could be Barkindji’. Paakantyi is the general term for all the Darling River people, who shared many traditions as they did also with the neighbouring Malyangapa, and so this point makes no difference. As with some linguistic features there are regional affiliations that cross ‘boundaries’. There is therefore no deep need to discuss whether a tradition belonged to one or other Paakantyi group or to Malyangapa-Wadikali, but the wider geographical distribution of these myths is of significance. Page 48 contains a general map which gives the distribution of the myths. It is clear from the text that the Eaglehawk and Crow myths were known to Adnyamathanha people in the Flinders Ranges and to the neighbouring Ngadyuri and Nukunu, Parnkalla and probably Wirangu people. The people of the west coast, contrary to what is said on p. 33 and p. 51 were Wirangu, and shared some traditions with Parnkalla people. In the Lake Eyre Basin adjacent to Adnyamathanha to the north there were very important Eaglehawk myths, but there was no tradition of conflict between Eaglehawk and Crow. The myths of this conflict are therefore not co-extensive with the Karraru-Mathari and Kilpara-Makwara moiety division, and this might perhaps have been discussed in more detail.

The emphasis throughout is on psychological explanation and deeper meaning. It is said for instance that the tree ‘is the pivotal symbol in the Oedipal drama’ (p.88). It is most important that Blows has made these valuable points, but one may prefer to think of a great tree rising into the sky, as in the Urumbula myth of Central Australia. The tree continues into the night sky as the Milky Way and brings with it a vision of a supernatural world, even more than a vision of human emotions.

The book represents an important contribution to the study of Australian mythology and opens up new fields for further understanding.

L.A. Hercus
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Ruby Langford's first book Don't take your love to town (1988) was a delightful autobiography of a north N.S.W. Aboriginal woman whose life contrasted dramatically with that of a white upper middle class person such as me, born in the same year. Since writing this book and a second, Real Deadly (1992), one of her relatives has given her the Bundjalung (Aboriginal) name Ginibi, meaning 'swan' (the Australian Black Swan, of course), and she has become well known in both white and Aboriginal circles as a speaker and writer. It is pleasing to find more and more books by Aboriginal people
available in book stores and libraries. Among such books, autobiographies probably predominate, and some telling novels and plays have also appeared, as well as much poetry.

*My Bundjalung People* is in another genre, one that has considerable popular appeal, that of the chatty travelogue, visiting relatives and others in search of information on people and places, with no particular highlight or crisis. Information on individuals and groups of people (in this case Aboriginal people with connection to particular places or families) emerges in snippets and vignettes throughout the book, building up a picture of the tragedies and joys of Aboriginal people of the Northern Rivers area of N.S.W. and the Gold Coast area of Queensland, who in the past spoke dialects of a language now usually referred to as Bundjalung. (Traditionally these various dialect groups had names, but there was no all-embracing name of the language, and the name Bundjalung, while generally accepted by most NSW groups, is not acknowledged as a suitable name by some of the groups, both in Queensland and in NSW.)

The book is Ruby Langford Ginibi’s search for information on her family (mother, grandmother, etc.) and relatives, visiting contacts at various Aboriginal (and mostly Bundjalung) communities in the traditional Bundjalung area of the Northern Rivers of N.S.W. and in some neighbouring areas. Despite not particularly enjoying the chatty travelogue style (by any author), I know I will find it a useful reference book to people and places, many of which are known to me through my own work in the area. Although the title might suggest something more general, it deals with specific people and places, bringing them to life in clear and succinct descriptions. It is the author’s search for her roots and connections, not an overview of the Bundjalung people, and is a valuable statement of Aboriginal local history and culture from the insider’s viewpoint. Ginibi’s connections take her to a wide range of the Bundjalung communities in northern NSW.

The book has a number of photographs of people referred to in the text, and maps of the trips Ruby made with her chauffeur, her adopted daughter Pam Johnston. Many conversations reproduced in the book were from tape-recorded interviews, and use forms of English and some Bundjalung words common among the Aboriginal people of the area.

Ginibi uses, with permission, extracts from a number of documents which came into her hands on her trips in 1990 to trace her connections. One of the highlights, to my mind, is the extensive quotation from a script ‘Australian Aborigines’ by a Cunningham Henderson in the mid 1800s. In his accounts, Henderson captures (amongst other things) the delightful situational humour of many of the Aborigines he knew. Ginibi and those she interacted with on her trips also exhibit humour in many situations, which lightens some of the more poignant or cruel situations she has accounts of.

I am less than happy, however, with the spelling of many of the Bundjalung words and phrases she uses in the book. There is a mixture of spellings which reflect standard spellings of Bundjalung words in accepted orthography for this language (in its various dialects), spellings adapted so that monolingual English speakers will perhaps pronounce the words correctly, and spellings that (to me) are wide of the mark in a number of ways. Although there is a useful glossary of terms (including some non-
standard English ones) at the end of the book, there is no guide to pronunciation, and different conflicting conventions are followed in different words. One further constant (though minor) irritant to me was the spelling aye for what many people prefer to spell eh, the agreement seeking tag so common not only in Aboriginal English but in the English of much of the northern half of Australia. At times the 'reading' of aye as an affirmative like Scottish aye suits the meaning better than the (often) implied question of eh. But I still had to work at reading the correct sound into it.

This whole issue of spelling is one that exercises my mind quite a bit, having been involved in editing or discussing manuscripts by some relatively unschooled authors. Quite clearly, the spelling rules some of us absorbed unconsciously (to a great degree) and/or learnt consciously at school, and which seem so reasonably sensible to us, are not absorbed by everybody in our society. Or is it that some deliberately rebel against the spelling rules? Are certain non-standard spellings adopted by subgroups (such as younger people of our children's peer group) as in-group markers? Is it a clash of these various systems that leaves some people floundering with trying to spell, and in particular trying to spell words from another very different language? It is clear, from a comment on one of her pages, that Ginibi was having great difficulty in spelling at least one Bundjalung phrase she records. Magistrates and other reasonably educated white people from last century also showed the same mixture of being 'spot-on' with writing some words and producing hard to interpret messes for others. Ginibi has the advantage over those earlier recorders of having spoken the language, and in continuing to use many of the words and phrases, sometimes 'in lingo' and sometimes in English, and having potential access to those who have recorded the dialects with a consistent system, though in the actual practicalities of life the potential access was never actualised due to the accidents of time, space, money and health. Given the costs of producing a book, I would like to see that in producing future books of this kind, the publisher and author consult a linguist or lexicographer to produce a pronunciation guide and spellings that follow a consistent system.

Nonetheless, on the one hand any Aboriginal readers from the Bundjalung people and area will read the clues of context and their own language knowledge (even if limited to the common words Ginibi uses in the book) and know what words are meant, and how to say them, and on the other hand many (but not all) white readers will have little interest in the exact pronunciation of the words but will pick up the flavour of language use adequately. Both sets of readers will enjoy the book in their different ways, and Ginibi's hopes that it will lead to better understanding will be realised.

Margaret C. Sharpe
University of New England

First published in 1981, Lyndall Ryan's book remains the most comprehensive historical study of Aboriginal - European relations in Tasmania. The second edition provides two additional chapters to bring the political situation up to date (1995), a new introduction and an updated bibliography. Apart from these, the text of the second edition replicates that of the first. Even with the new material, the focus of the book remains squarely on the colonial period; only four of the book's nineteen chapters deal with Tasmanian Aborigines in the twentieth century.

It is an impressive piece of empirical research. Ryan provides meticulously detailed accounts of violent conflict between Aboriginal Tasmanians and European colonists, the endeavours of George Augustus Robinson and the debacle of the subsequent incarcerations. Robinson receives a harsh press. He is depicted as almost simple-minded for his lack of both perception and moral sensibility, with no hint of the strangely troubled soul discerned by other writers. Ryan's strength as an historian, however, lies in her ability to assemble her data into narratives that are both informative and accessible. And if the detail sometimes threatens to overwhelm, the reader has ready recourse to numerous well-designed and well-placed maps tracing the convoluted sequence of events and movements around the island.

Despite the emphasis on conflict, death and oppression, Ryan's paramount purpose is to attest to the survival of the Tasmanian Aborigines. As she grandly puts it in the introduction to the second edition, her intention was 'to liberate the Tasmanian Aborigines from the scientific discourse that had imprisoned them as extinct scientific curiosities'. Perhaps this is merely an inept attempt to pin a little fin de siècle textual trendiness onto what is in fact a work of old fashioned solid scholarship. But more than that, it places an impossibly heavy burden of responsibility on the historical text. Could any work of history accomplish such a liberation? Do the Tasmanian Aborigines depend on historiography for their liberation? Perhaps it would have been better to state the intentions more modestly.

Overstatement also mars the conclusion, where Ryan suggests that Tasmanian Aboriginal political activism is, and always has been, 'ahead' of that of the mainland. 'It seems', she remarks, 'that Tasmania will remain the cradle of race relations in Australia'. Apart from the awkwardness of the 'cradle' metaphor, this claims too much for Tasmania. Similarly in the conclusion to the first edition (reproduced here as chapter 17), she maintains that Tasmania may be held up 'as a mirror that reveals the real nature of those "other Australians across Bass Strait". Such statements put Ryan in a tradition that stretches back at least as far as James Bonwick, whereby Tasmania was held up as an exemplar of colonial race relations and as a portent of what was to come on the mainland. Surely the significance of the Tasmanian study does not need to be boosted with such overstatement.

Of course, comparison between Tasmania and mainland Australia may be perfectly legitimate. The problem is that Ryan suggests some sort of primacy to the Tasmanian situation. She claims, for example (again in what was the conclusion to the earlier edition) that: 'Tasmania was the proving ground of European technology,
warfare, culture and political economy which, emerging victorious in Tasmania, swept across the mainland as an expression of manifest destiny'. Nothing in the text validates this precedence claimed for the island. A little later she maintains that the segregated reserve system instituted in Queensland after 1897 'was expressly modelled on Robinson’s spectacular, blind failures'. No reference for this assertion is provided, which is unfortunate since it accords neither with the writings of Archibald Meston and others involved in drafting the 1987 Act nor with the available secondary literature on the subject.

Only two chapters of the book are devoted to the Cape Barren Islanders, a brevity of treatment that sits oddly against Ryan’s central concern with the survival of the Tasmanian Aborigines. After all, it is that group of mixed descent, once known as Cape Barren Islanders, who provide the necessary linkages between pre-colonial and post-colonial Tasmanian Aborigines. Moreover, insofar as the Cape Barren Islanders are dealt with, the significant issue of identity is skated over too lightly. It is suggested (though nowhere explicitly stated) that from the mid-nineteenth century to the early 1970s, 'Islander' was this group's normal term of self-designation. According to Ryan, they held their Aboriginal heritage, both biological and cultural, in high regard. But to what extent did they identify as Aborigines? Did they consider themselves a group distinct from both Europeans and Aborigines? Perhaps no definitive answers are possible, but if validating the survival of the Tasmanian Aborigines is the book's fundamental purpose, these issues of identity and definition deserve extended treatment. After all, the supposed extinction of the Tasmanian Aborigines rested on a particular (narrowly racial) definition of the group; and more recent affirmations of survival depend on the ability of Tasmanian Aborigines (and others) to gain public credibility for their alternative definitions of Aboriginality.

Then again, perhaps academic validations of Tasmanian Aboriginal survival are now redundant. Some white Australians may continue to dispute the group’s designation as ‘Aboriginal’, but that designation now has a far greater public credibility than it did in 1981. Perhaps the first edition of this book contributed to that process. But the strength of the book does not lie in undermining the myth of Tasmanian Aboriginal extinction; certainly not in liberating them from the 'scientific discourse' that once consigned them to extinction. Indeed, since the book completely fails to address the relevant discourses of racial science, it is difficult to see how it ever could have met that objective. Rather, the strength of the book derives from the solidity of its empirically-based reconstructions of Aboriginal-European relations, particularly in the colonial period. Although such reconstructions may have fallen from academic fashion, and although Ryan resorts sometimes to grandiose and inflated claims, the continuing value of her book resides in the empirical data it contains.

Russell McGregor
James Cook University
North Queensland

This is a confronting book. Its content 'should come as a shock' to regional readers writes David Towler of the Warrnambool Standard, the well known Western District newspaper. 'For any resident of Western Victoria its impact rests not only with the horrific brutality and extent of the killings but the familiarity of the place names and some of the alleged murderers'.

Scars in the Landscape is also a significant book in that it 'takes us forward into a new phase of frontier historiography', as Henry Reynolds states in the Foreword. The first stage was that of general accounts of the frontier which appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s. These reminded readers of the inter-racial violence which accompanied the arrival of Europeans in each area of Australia. The next, regional studies, assembled detailed information and reassessed the frontier experience providing irrefutable evidence that violence was integral to the 'settlement' process. With Clark's Scars in the Landscape we have for the first time a study simply of violence, of massacres, in one region of Australia.

The study area stretches beyond what is usually thought of as the Western District to cover almost half of Victoria: from Werribee west to the Glenelg River and from the coast north to Ouyen.

Scars in the Landscape is a 'register' of massacre sites. The format is one which makes information readily available to the general reader. The massacre entries are presented 'geographically', according to the territories of the ten language groups of western Victoria. Within each territory the entries are arranged chronologically. For each entry there is a standard list of information: place name of the massacre; location, when known; date of incident; Aborigines involved; Europeans involved; and number of reported Aboriginal deaths. Each entry is accompanied by a small map indicating the site of the massacre. The account of the massacre is given as in the primary source material with minimal editorial comment.

Clark defines 'massacre' as 'the unnecessary indiscriminate killing of a number of human beings, as in barbarous warfare or persecution, or for revenge or plunder'. 'In a wider sense', he writes, 'it is taken to refer to a general slaughter of human beings'. I find his use of the term problematic, and after defining the term he makes no attempt to justify its use for individual entries. Nor could he do so with any certainty for some of the reported incidents. There is, for example, the incident in January 1842 when the overseer, James Guthrie, returning to Eumeralla station was accosted by two Aborigines, one of whom threatened him with a leangle—a weapon used when fighting at close quarters. Considering his life in danger, Guthrie shot the Aborigine and later reported the incident. Clark reveals awareness of the predicament I think in his frequent use in the Introduction of the phrase 'massacres and killings' rather than 'massacres'. Perhaps the book should have been subtitled 'a register of massacres and killings'? As well my concern is that 'massacre' as used in the title to cover all killings may suggest,

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particularly to those not aware of frontier history, that the Aborigines were passive victims. They had no chance: they were simply massacred! Yet those familiar with the history know that Aboriginal groups in areas where there were safe places to which they could retreat kept up guerilla warfare over something like five years, and that there were places where Europeans were obliged to employ twice as many shepherds as usual, were forced to abandon outstations and finally abandon stations because of the strength of Aboriginal attacks.

How did Aborigines die on the western Victorian frontier? In ones and twos according to the information assembled in the register. And those who died were mainly men. There were large scale massacres such as the Whyte Brothers massacre of which J.G. Robertson wrote, 'Fifty one men were killed, and the bones of the men and the sheep lay mingled together bleaching in the sun at the Fighting Hills.' But the evidence shows that the typical incident was one in which one or two Aborigines were killed. Over half of the entries in the register (53 out of less than 100 entries) are of this kind.

Most massacres occurred in the territory of the Dhauwurd wurrung (Gunditjmara) and the Djab wurrung language groups. More interesting is the fact that the register exposes how few massacres were reported for some language groups providing more evidence to support the commonly held belief that many killings were not reported. Take for example the Girai wurrung and Djargurd wurrung whose territory stretched from Warrnambool east to Lake Corangamite and from the coast north to Lake Bolac, Derrinallum and Cressy. This was an area in which it was widely believed that killing Aborigines was necessary. Niel Black of Glenormiston, for example, wrote to his partner: 'A few days since I found a Grave into which about 20 must have been thrown. A Settler taking up a new country is obliged to act towards them in this manner or abandon it'. As for Aboriginal women, Black commented: 'it is no uncommon thing for these rascals to sleep all night with a Lubra and if she poxes him or in any way offends him perhaps shoot her before 12 next day.' It is also the area about which the editor of the Hampden Guardian wrote that its history would never be written for it 'would be such a long record of oppression, outrage, wrong, and cold blooded murder on the part of the "superior race" that it dare not be, and, therefore, never will be written'. He suggested by way of illustration that 'were it possible for free selectors to use the same kind of "persuasion" now, in the occupation of the land, as was used to the blacks by..."the early pioneers" there would not be many "squatters" left...in the course of two or three years'. Yet the register lists three entries only, dramatically highlighting the wide gulf between the views of those in the area and the official record.

I would have liked the sites of massacres to be more precisely indicated on a map but that I know is too much to ask.

This is a beautifully produced book. The cover design is attractive, the maps and illustrations clearly reproduced and the material well set out and easy to read. Readers I have spoken to have expressed delight with the quantity of information available, at having assembled for them many of the basic documents held in archives: information perhaps familiar to regional historians but not previously available to the general reader.

2 in Kiddle, 1962, pp. 121-122.
3 12 Sept. 1876.
In the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody National Report Overview and Recommendations*, Commissioner Elliott Johnston, QC added a section on history remarking that he did so 'not because the chapter adds to what is known but because what is known is known to historians and Aboriginal people; it is little known to non-Aboriginal people and it is a principal thesis of this report that it must become more known'. *Scars in the Landscape* is a valuable book which will make a significant contribution to greater understanding of our history for by its nature it provides the evidence of frontier violence in a manner that secondary and tertiary students and general community members interested in local history find powerful and convincing.

Jan Critchett
Deakin University


This delightful book was researched and produced with the assistance of the National Museum of Australia and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Jakelin Troy is a scholar with a wide knowledge of the Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century, particularly in regard to the language and artefacts of Aboriginal-European interaction. In her 'history of king plates' she puts the brass and silver-plated breast plates bestowed on Aboriginal tribal leaders and elders firmly into the historical context of military gorgets worn by British army officers from early times until 1831 and given to American Indian leaders and warriors by both British and French colonisers from at least the mid-eighteenth century.

If this book goes into another edition it might be helpful to include one of the portraits of great American Indian leaders wearing silver gorgets, such as Osceola, the great war leader of the Seminoles, whose people resisted dispossession in the Second Seminole War (1835—42). These plates were worn with pride and, as Jakelin Troy’s narrative makes clear, the negative response to the gorgets by some Aborigines in more recent times has largely been engendered by the derision of white Australians ignorant of the tradition.

The claim by modern Aboriginal spokespersons that there never were Aboriginal ‘kings’ is correct in the political sense but not in a spiritual sense. Sacral kingship originated in the institution of the hereditary shaman who passed on certain curative skills and techniques of controlling or accessing the spiritual world to a chosen family member. All the regalia of modern royalty such as sceptre, crown, orb, originated in the paraphernalia of the shaman. The Aboriginal *kadaija* man with his possum skin slippers and quartz crystals was such a shaman and his position was often hereditary. Many of those who were presented with king plates were high ranking initiates in a hierarchical lodge of shamanic adepts and just as much entitled to be called ‘kings’ as the kings recognised by Republican Rome.
While Jakelin Troy recognises that most of those singled out were ‘elderly and senior initiated men’ or ‘spiritually or intellectually superior men’ (p.14) she also recognises that the brass plates were used deliberately by the pastoralists to curry favour with the local Aboriginal communities whom they were disposessing. Quotations from Carl Lumholtz (Among Cannibals 1889) and others show how insidious the practice had become.

Not all the gorgets recognised ‘kingship’, some being an acknowledgment of service on a pastoral run, or as native constables or as native guides on expeditions of exploration. Gorgets in this category were in reality honours and were often received for particular services or heroic actions. The honours aspect of the gorgets is subtly confirmed by the use of heraldic blazon to describe the motifs used in decoration, language usually confined to armorial bearings and flags. Some gorgets were deliberately commissioned by missionaries to provide a measure of protection against removal or disposal by ruthless settlers or police. A final category comprised gorgets given to the ‘last of the tribe’.

An important section of the book is devoted to gorget collecting, in particular the collection of Edmund Milne which forms the basis of the National Museum of Australia collection. Another important section is devoted to the manufacture and decoration of gorgets. The quality of the photographs is outstanding, most of the originals being in the collection of the National Museum or the National Library of Australia. The Appendices, an annotated catalogue of Aboriginal Gorgets in the National Museum of Australia and a list of known Aboriginal gorgets, provide the substantive text to which the history is an introduction. The provenance of each gorget is given with full documentation, including measurements and description together with a photographic illustration.

This book is well documented, superbly presented, and eminently fair. It provides a historical context for an art form and system of honour which was part of an on-going military tradition but which was exploited in the wake of pastoral settlement.

Niel Gunson
Australian National University


There can be few people possessing more than a passing interest in Aboriginal music who have not confronted the challenges inherent in an understanding of the song poetry. On a pan-Aboriginal basis, so it now appears, there are genres of song poetry whose precise meaning is hidden beneath linguistic conventions (the poems may be mnemonic devices not requiring conformity to spoken syntax) and linguistic circumstances (the poems may contain words of unknown, secret or archaic origin).
Dixon's and Koch's work on the Dyirbal, formerly living in substantial numbers on Queensland's north-western coast but now numbering only a few speakers, represents a particularly difficult type of linguistic-ethnomusicological research because of the limited and ever-diminishing human resources. Dyirbal speakers were not always able to supply English glosses for song words, and individuals sometimes showed different understandings of specific words in their songs, all sung solo.

Following a brief historical section, three quarters of the book is devoted to presentation of the five styles of songs. Each song poem is presented in standard interlinear format, followed by an expanded translation, listing of repetitions of individual lines in the recorded performance(s), and brief discussion under the headings of song word and grammar.

Dixon's summary of the songs' linguistic content and Koch's investigation of musical features are more descriptive than analytical. Dixon finds that the songs contain set numbers of syllables per line, with individual styles also limiting the number of lines per poem, then proceeds to illustrate the several configurations of word-based syllabic patterns occurring within each line. Clearly, grammatical patterning is a major constraint on the compositional process.

I do have some concerns about Koch's musical notations. There is no suggestion that overall exact pitch is significant to Dyirbal songs, so that elimination of a thicket of accidentals (sharps and flats) in the form of key signatures is both simple and practical by means of transposition. The five sharps indicated on p.333 and the seven sharps on pp.320-1 are extreme examples in point.

Koch notes that 'the tonic note', usually the song's final pitch, 'is the note that determines the key of the melody' (p.xix), and this is potentially useful both as a means of both comparing individual songs and also objectively summarising an entire corpus of material. But the tonic of a Dyirbal song does not necessarily connote identically with that of Western tonality, which in performance implies a key and in written form implies a key signature. Standard convention for notating non-Western music is to include accidentals for only those pitches affected, i.e., without automatic octave duplication, and to avoid the imposition of European values such as major and minor modes, key, and so forth by placing at the left-hand end of each stave the accidentals for only such pitches. Although clearly presented, Koch's notations suffer somewhat from foreign values. For example Figures 5 and 6 on p.66 assume an A Major tonality and have key signatures sharpening all Fs, Cs and Gs even though there are no Fs, Cs or Gs in the melodies; and the E Major signature on p.206 sharpens all Fs, Cs, Gs and Ds even though no Cs, Gs or Ds appear in the melody.

Similarly the Western notion of metre as expressed in time signatures (4/4, 6/4, etc.) connotes not merely a succession of pulses but a hierarchy of beats within each musical bar, e.g., in 4/4 the first beat receives the primary accent, and the 3rd beat receives the secondary accent. Although, in her list of musical definitions (p.xviii), Koch notes that 'the [accompanying] sticks always play a steady beat, a rhythmic pulse', she assigns to the melodies by way of time signatures and bar lines the notion of metre. Subsequent research may indeed confirm that the Dyirbal do conceptualise their melodies in terms of 'bars' containing from one to six beats, but such a possibility
appears very unlikely and is moreover negated by the stated non-metric regularity of the stick accompaniment.

When read as an academic document, there is a feeling of incompletion throughout, deriving perhaps from the presentation in various arrangements of raw data as ends in themselves rather than as means to broader ends. Dixon notes (p.35), for example, that 72 per cent of words in spoken texts end in a vowel, whereas 82 per cent of vowel-final words occur in songs; what significance should the reader draw? The authors refer to individual Dyirbal as 'consultants' in recognition of their significant input, and this is doubly appropriate as the book seems designed not for reading cover to cover, but for selective consulting for meaty information on individual songs and singers.

Under the circumstances, Dixon and Koch have probably extracted all the information still recoverable, and their results will be welcome by both present-day Dyirbal and the academic community at large. This is, I believe, the first such collaborative major publication on Aboriginal songs and song poetry, and it achieves two broad successes, contextualising song as a structured medium for transmission of the uttered word, and contributing towards an understanding of how, if not why, language and melody interact.

Richard M. Moyle
University of Auckland


This is a miscellany of exploration and developmental history, local geography, Aboriginal traditions and poetry assembled by the author, who lives in the region - Cape York Peninsula. She moves in small chapters from north to south, beginning with the Torres Strait Islands and ending at Cairns. Toohey's style is friendly and accessible rather than scholarly, as this is intended in part as a book for visitors to the region, but the author very commendably footnotes her many and varied sources, which range from published histories and ethnographies to obscure articles in defunct northern newspapers. The Aboriginal and Islander content is treated with respect and it is pleasing to see the region's recorded indigenous mythology taking its place in the foreground, rather than, as so often happens, briefly preceding the settler mythologies that commonly form the focus of locally produced regional histories.

Peter Sutton
Adelaide

Here is an interesting and important collection of myths, mostly from New South Wales, with a few from other parts of Australia. My friend Janet Mathews who died in 1992 collected stories from many old Aborigines in various parts of New South Wales. Her husband was the grandson of the well-known R.H. Mathews, called in this book Milanen; Janet had access to R.H. Mathews' papers and manuscripts, and the book includes stories collected by him from all over Australia.

The title story of the collection tells how the Wangkumara sent out a pelican to fly to the Northern Territory and to return and report what he saw. On his return he saw beautiful colours (opal) on the ground and tried to break some off with his beak. This caused a spark which set fire to the grass so the people had fire to cook their food.

There are in this collection a number of stories from other areas about the origin of fire: the Wongaibon tell of the owl who captured it from two old women who were keeping it secret; the Kamilaroi story is that Crow had it but kept it to himself until Sparrowhawk stole it from him. Similarly this collection has many explanations of the origin of other phenomena.

Isobel White
Canberra


An undergraduate text on Statistics isn't the normal fare of the review section of Aboriginal History, indeed, to extend the statistical metaphor, I would hazard the guess that the chances for such texts coming for review in this Journal would be less than three in a thousand, nonetheless here we have such an improbability, so let us accept the opportunity we have been given without, I hope, embarrassing our editors.

This small and inexpensive book is specifically prepared as a supplement to a formal, introductory course on Statistics as taught by its author and would indeed serve that role in other such courses. As the author points out, it is not a teach-yourself book, nor is it, in the reviewer’s opinion, a guide to statistical problems specific to History or Archaeology. What is nonetheless intriguing about the book is that the author has selected some fifteen examples from the broadly defined fields of History and Archaeology and one of these is taken from Attenbrow’s taphonomic investigation into discriminating Aboriginal midden shells from naturally accumulated shells. It happens that mentioning such things as shell beds and bird mounds is quite a reliable raiser of blood pressure among many Australian Archaeologists, so the book contains a sort of bonus for us. Most of the other examples are taken from overseas Historical Demography
and Economic History, while the other archaeological cases include data sets from metallurgical investigations of artefacts and a much more interesting case considering evidence for climatic change and the collapse of an Andean civilisation. What the illustrated tests do is not so much to tell us whether our inferences are correct as to tell us whether the evidence can safely support the inferences.

I consider that Dr Hutchinson has correctly identified a problem for many Arts and Social Science students who take courses in Statistics, though he does not express it this way, in that they find it hard to identify with the usual, bland and boring examples that Mathematics and Statistics teachers think up. Bags of red and white balls, people in cars, coincidences of birthdays, or even ranking lecturers (some of which examples actually crop up here too) hold very little intellectual allure, whereas tests that cast light on interesting questions of why?, strike me as having the potential to draw us into a serious consideration of the application of Statistics.

Here it may be helpful for me to clarify my own position. I have been doing quantitative research in Archaeology for nearly forty years and have largely taught myself (with attendant pitfalls) to employ Statistics. In turn, I have recognised a need to explain quantitative methods in teaching, while honours students in Archaeology and Biological Anthropology have expressed the need for an introduction before embarking on their own research. Of course, all Universities offer service courses on statistics which are sometimes excellent, as is that at ANU at present, and sometimes deadly. But Arts and Social Science teachers cannot demand that their students take such courses. There is abundant anecdotal evidence that students who are, as it were, injection moulded into fields such as Statistics, gain little or no benefit and may indeed become hostile. On the other hand, it seems irresponsible to direct people towards research for which they are ill-prepared.

Even people who encounter statistics in their tertiary education may fail to make any connection between the research tool placed in their hands and their everyday experience. At least, that is the reviewer's recollection of the processes of deliberation at academic Faculty meetings. So one cannot but agree with enthusiasts like Paulos, who wish to introduce Statistics at a much earlier stage in education and make our entire society truly numerate.

But there is an ebb and flow in the dynamics of knowledge, and at present there is a strong and perhaps growing tide that is deeply hostile to the further growth of empirical knowledge and its methodology of observation, numeration and statistics. This criticism comes under the banner of Post Modernism, though it seems to retain qualities of earlier cycles such as nineteenth century Romanticism and seventeenth century neo-Platonism. Put very briefly, the argument goes that while granting that the artificial construction of a pure observer (scientist) and an objectified observed have proved remarkably effective for Physics, having given us an intelligible universe, this approach has proved to be an unmitigated disaster, or at the very least a blind alley, when applied to the human situation.

The post-modern argument is not merely rhetorical; it is accompanied by a flood of cases in which the critics have shown that it is possible to turn upside down much of

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1 Paulos 1988.
the accepted thinking based on the conventions of objective observation. Furthermore, for those of us working in Aboriginal History or counting shells and bones, like the reviewer, we cannot console ourselves with the thought that the trouble is 'out there', ravaging such over-ripe fields of learning as Literature and Sociology. No, the wolf is at our own doors, if we are to accept Keith Windschuttle's doom-laden prognosis for Australian History or Julian Thomas's altogether more urbane case in 'The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape',

If I were asked to teach an Honours course again I would also continue to give an introduction to Statistics and would indeed be happy to use the Essentials of Statistical Method as my text. This is not because I reject out of hand the stimulus of Post Modernist criticism, though I find the sometimes rather righteous attempts to cleanse the subject of the erroneous thinking of previous generations as tiresome as I found the selective use of the Philosophy of Science by the missionaries of the New Archaeology, because I do not believe that the more conventional methods of Archaeology have become totally sterile.

It further seems to me that there would be some advantage from the increasingly strategic use of statistical tests in our Archaeology and that these might impart as much benefit as other more radical proposals for surgery. For instance, I am struck by the tendency for statistical tests to reveal profound differences between assemblages where I intuitively feel that they belong to similar entities. Am I using the wrong tests, or am I ascribing too much weight to the criteria, such as the typologies I employ to describe the assemblages, or am I indeed deceived by my experience and intuition? Perhaps we need a healthy dose of Post Modern criticism to jolt us out of our conventional patterns of organising the past, but in the meantime I would very much like to learn what thoughtfully applied statistical tests have to tell us about our archaeological thinking, so I welcome Version 2 (History and Archaeology) of Essentials of Statistical Methods.

References
Windschuttle, K., 1994 The Killing of History: How a Discipline is being Murdered by Literary Critics and Social Theorists, Macleay Press, Sydney, p.266.

Wilfred Shawcross
Australian National University

3 Thomas 1993.

The act of looking at a rock painting, repeated countless times in the Arnhem Land Plateau, is the resonant image of Chaloupka's Journey in Time. It is an act that unites the ancient unnamed artists with the explorer Leichhardt and the artist/archaeologist Chaloupka; an act that links their journeys and makes their human understandings possible. Chaloupka's approach to the archaeology of images is grounded as much in an experience of human action transformed through image as in the 'science' of art and culture. While there is concern with the very archaeological problems of chronology and interpretation, the power of the images to transform and delimit archaeological knowledge is also acknowledged.

The product of over thirty years of research and commitment, Journey in Time is a monumental work. Combining over 270 photographic images with a wealth of textual detail, it will remain the most comprehensive survey of the rock art of Western Arnhem Land for some time to come. The intensity of Chaloupka's engagement with this art of world significance, moves the work beyond its coffee table format into one of both academic and personal significance.

Despite 60,000 or more years of occupation, one of the characteristics of the Australian archaeological record is that the evidence of change over this vast period of human time is often limited. The question of whether this is reflects a deep continuity or a failure of archaeological technique and imagination to capture the subtlety of a complex culture history is in part answered by the sequence of Arnhem Land rock art. Following the work of Mountford (1956) and Brandl (1973) Chaloupka's examination of thousands of galleries has highlighted a cultural richness stretching back into the early Pleistocene; a richness that is invariably represented by a few stone artefacts in uniform deposits.

In keeping with the scope of its theme Journey in Time's complex layout incorporates four parallel elements. The first of these is the well-written text, which, following the broad ranging introduction, is divided into four separate sections (there are no conventional chapters). Gubolk (the land), uses the journals of Ludwig Leichhardt to introduce the geography, fauna and flora of Western Arnhem Land. This European perception of the land is balanced by garrewakwani (the ancestral past), which outlines the land-forming journeys of the ancestral beings which appear in the art. From their actions the people of Arnhem Land come into being and in bininj (the people), the language groups, their relation to the complex kinship system and clan territories are detailed.

Gunbim (the rock art), follows the now familiar chronological scheme presented by Chaloupka (1984, 1985) in earlier publications. The key to this sequence is the realisation that (prehistoric) art contains a record of past environments, material culture and human actions. Although this record will be distorted, by the modes of meaning (both past and present) which are attached to the images, as historical artefacts, they were formed in the world of their creators and change through time. Even if the febrile elaboration of the Yam figures, owed little to the 'everyday' they are bound in time by different modes of
representation, ranging from the naturalism of the early animal figures through to the formalism of the later x-ray art. When these are linked to an increasingly defined sequence of regional environmental change the importance of the art as a record of the human life-world is evident.

The earliest art, which Chaloupka dates from the late Pleistocene to 8000 years, is defined by imprints of objects and paintings of large animals (including some extinct species) and human figures in a naturalistic style. These are followed by ‘the most vital and exciting paintings of the regions long rock art sequence’ (p106); the exquisitely drawn human figures of the Dynamic figure style. The Post-Dynamic phase sees a complex of related styles: post-dynamic figures, simple figures with boomerangs, Mountford figures and Yam figures. From 8000 to 1500 BP, with the rise of sea level and the creation of estuarine conditions up the river valleys, the familiar x-ray style is established. The creation of the region’s characteristic wetlands about 1500 years ago sees the introduction of further elements with the appearance of new material culture (including watercraft) and bird species like the Magpie Goose and Jabiru.

The final contact period is marked by Macassan boats, houses and scenes, European explorers on horses and buffalo shooters armed with rifles. Sorcery figures also increased as disease and social conflict took its toll along the edge of the Arnhem Land plateau. Chaloupka concludes his survey with a series of discussions on some of the major motifs and themes, other art forms and recent artists.

Within the main body of the work information sections on, for example, materials, material culture, animals depicted, and an assessment of the artists as observers of nature are inserted in the manner of many contemporary textbooks or popular introductory works. Unlike these formats they are not clearly defined and so tend to break up the flow of the writing. A further layer of information is added by the detailed captions for the illustrations containing information not necessarily repeated in the main text.

As noted above, the photographs, represent the most comprehensive collection of rock art images yet published in Australia. It is hardly necessary to emphasise the importance of illustration to a work of this nature. While the usefulness of photography to document rock art has been questioned by researchers who argue that they can lack detail (cf Garlake 1995:17) there can be no quarrel with Chaloupka’s photography or the selection. The reproductions are, however, often only of average quality and the presence of the image is often subdued when compared with the brilliant yet somewhat hyper-real reproductions in Walsh (1988), the only comparable work in Australian rock art publication. This is not a significant problem when the size and the diversity of the offering is taken into consideration along with the price of the volume.

One further feature of the illustrations worthy of note is that they are not specifically referenced to by their numbers in the main text. While it is hard not to see this as a production flaw, it allows the images a degree of independence from the text’s capacity to speak for them. This, it will be suggested is not inconsistent with Chaloupka’s deeper intellectual concerns and is in keeping with the overall feel of the work which is somewhat fragmented and layered in the manner of an encyclopaedia or contemporary multi-media product. The effect is not necessarily detrimental as a loss in coherence is balanced by gains in accessibility and information density.
'Rock art is no longer only an archaeological artefact, its study is also concerned with the human spirit, mind and soul' (p79). This statement challenges contemporary archaeology to take seriously the vision of rock art as a product of imagination. Yet in listing the fields of study - anthropology, art history, psychology and comparative religion - which would presumably be more at ease with the implications of this broadened concern, the writer diffuses the responsibility of archaeology to confront the destabilising effects of these images on its authority by confirming its place in the standard disciplinary array.

This confirmation may owe less to the current institutionalised disciplinary conventions as to the events of Chaloupka’s initial encounter with the rock art of western Arnhem Land; not in the lecture hall but in the more dangerous realm of the ‘field’.

Its beginning goes further back, to 1958, when, in the heartland of the region’s rock art at the East Alligator River, I entered a rock shelter whose wall and ceiling were ablaze with multicoloured layers of painted images. ... In the stillness of the day I stood spellbound by their magic, captivated by their unique form and the brilliance of their execution(p8).

If, to paraphrase Cioran (1996:43), all history is the struggle to transform gross feeling into gnosis and that there is a price to be paid, then this can only be harnessed through the finding of a way of acknowledging ‘responsibility’ in the face of the spellbinding mysteries of the ‘cave’ (see Derrida’s commentary on Patocka’s arguments in Derrida 1992). Archaeology is part of Chaloupka’s way of responsibility. The price of gnosis lurks in the defended space which connects theory, imagination and memory to the whelming mysteries of the first encounter.

Chaloupka’s unique articulation and balance of enchantment, responsibility and knowledge both realises yet also decentres and defines the limits of his treatment of the art as an object of archaeological study. The images are seen as artefacts with form, chronology and distribution—their relation to the cultures who created them is primarily illustrative. Hence, while they can inform us about chronology, environment, economy and material culture their link with social and ideological structures is to be treated with caution. For reasons already suggested, Chaloupka shows little inclination to follow his younger colleagues in questioning these latter strictures. Those looking to extend discussion about the social meaning of the ‘dynamic figures’ or the world-view of the ‘large naturalistic phase’ will be disappointed. The few suggestions which Chaloupka has raised in, for example, the interpretation of the ‘Yam figures’ as part of a wide spread ‘Yam Civilisation’ originating outside of Greater Australia have been criticised as inconsistent and simplistically material (Lewis 1988:73).

It will be a matter of opinion whether Chaloupka shows an admirable restraint in limiting interpretive ‘speculation’ (or ‘theorising’) about the socio-ideological context of the most ancient art forms, or simply offers little to complete the picture of the art as a product of a social world - a world where objects may be as ‘good to think’ (see Lewis 1988:73 quoting Levi-Strauss) as they are to draw or eat. It is not Chaloupka’s aim to engage his critics in this work which is free of the contentiousness which tends to mar rock art study in Australia (see Tacon and Chippindale 1994:242). As noted above this is also consistent with Chaloupka’s sense that the human experience that the art reflects
and evokes is not conveniently reducible to an intellectual discourse that is of greater significance than the images themselves.

The naturalism of the early phase and the glorious self affirmation of the Dynamic Figures underline the point that these images derived from cultural modes or mentalities which, although ancestral to contemporary Arnhem Land Aboriginal culture, may not be emphasised by it today. This reinforces the temporal depth of the culture and the narrative and personal complexity involved in its formation and interpretation. *Journey in Time* is an important work with a density and humanity that challenge the often shallow formulaic scientism of contemporary Australian archaeology. By presenting an archaeology that is reflective of the past, yet ethically and humanly engaged in the present, it moves the discipline to respond.

**References**


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