Book Reviews

Digging up a Past by John Mulvaney, xiii + 348pp, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2011, ISBN 9781742232195 (hbk), $59.95

John Mulvaney begins this rewarding excavation of his own life and times by noting a preference for AB Facey's autobiography title, *A Fortunate Life*. There is no doubt that Mulvaney *has* had a fortunate life; certainly more so than Facey whose chronic bad luck – childhood work abuse, serious war wounds and close family loss – renders his title ironic. As he relates, Mulvaney considers his own life and career to have been punctuated by a succession of fortunate alignments, from his arrival at the University of Melbourne during its History Department's 'golden age' of the late 1940s, to his serendipitous presence at critical moments in Australian archaeological history, at Lake Mungo and at Kutikina Cave on Tasmania's Franklin River. But his emergence as a scholar versed in Old World prehistory just as reliable carbon dating techniques were developed during the 1950s was probably the most critical conjunction. The dating breakthrough shifted archaeology methodology from one based on analogy and deductive conjecture to one of incontrovertible fact. As Mulvaney puts it, his 'probing of dusty resources in the State Library during 1950, coincided with Willard Libby's testing of the dating potential of radiocarbon 14, in America. Australian archaeology grew in step with this revolutionary time machine'. This new certainty gave the principal impetus to Mulvaney's pioneering, paradigm-shifting role as Australia's foremost archaeologist, for at least three crucial decades. During his active career the acknowledged span of Aboriginal occupation in Australia was extended tenfold, from barely 5000 years to 50,000 – where it rests today, give or take a few millennia.

Archaeology became a race to the bottom. Stratified sites in landscapes which had undergone demonstrable geomorphological and ecological change were suddenly desirable, and by 1959 Mulvaney had pushed the earliest date for Australia's human occupation to 5000 years, based on his recent excavations at the Fromm's Landing rock-shelter on the Murray River. Just three years later, a meticulously documented sequence of 16,600 years' occupation at Kenniff Cave in Queensland meant that Australia had a Pleistocene human past that could be discussed meaningfully against an Old World context. Of course, luck played a part in drawing Mulvaney to these sites, and in obtaining the dates; but his substantial contributions as scientist and historian, scholar and public intellectual, owe more to his formidable capacity for concentrated research, and a certain doggedness. This has marked his commitment to many worthy projects – and a few lost causes. *Digging up a Past* provides the inside story on all these, ranging from Mulvaney's creative partnership with Rhys Jones in the successful

archaeologically-inspired campaign to save Tasmania's Franklin River from being dammed, to the disappointing fate of the Pigott Committee's report on the new National Museum. Mulvaney remains bitter, for good reason, about the eventual result: a diminished museum 'on a cramped piece of land with no room for expansion', housed in a 'structure that is reminiscent of a fun fair … with curved walls and constricted spaces that are unsuitable for exhibits'.

As the eldest of five children, growing up in modest circumstances in a south Gippsland town, before his schoolteacher father took up a position at Rainbow in the arid Victorian mallee, Mulvaney learnt to make the most of rare opportunities; instances of vacillation or moral dilemmas do not enter this book's script. Otherwise, the young Mulvaney's course towards the Academy, and specifically the Humanities, was steered by a succession of good teachers and his own innate abilities, signalled early and emphatically by his 1937 grade 7 examination results at Rainbow Higher Elementary School, ranging from 'eight per cent for Arithmetic and a fail in Algebra, to 95 for English and Geography and 100 per cent for History'. From then on it seems that Mulvaney not only kept a weather eye on his own academic performance, but was keenly aware of the quality of education being offered to himself and those around him. This is as true of his intensive training as a navigator in Canada and England during the Second World War, as of his undergraduate studies and teaching at the University of Melbourne, Cambridge University and the Australian National University. In fact, aside from holding the reader's interest in his own life and career, Mulvaney has managed to deliver a fascinating intellectual history of several university departments, introducing us in turn to a succession of characters who helped to shape twentieth-century ideas and cultural life in Australia, including Leonhard Adam and Kathleen Fitzpatrick, John O'Brien and George Nadel, not to mention Manning Clark ('even banal material sounded profound'). Similar insights provide thumbnail sketches of some of the key figures of international prehistory, such as Grahame Clark, Glyn Daniel, Abbe Henri Breuil or Charles McBurney, whose lectures and supervision 'combined profundity with impossible concepts'. McBurney invited Mulvaney to join his 1952 expedition to Cyrene in Libya, 'one of the great experiences' in his life, and one which helped to mould the archaeological methodology he would apply so successfully on his return to Australia. It seems to have been Mulvaney's formative years spent in the Melbourne department which equipped him with a sure and steady grasp of his own culture, the signature basis of his confident interrogation of Australia's deep past and of the history of its anthropological thought and practice, perhaps expressed most strongly in his masterly treatment of the life of Baldwin Spencer and his network of Central Australian colleagues.

Mulvaney cites more than 90 of his own publications in this volume. Each illuminates a moment or phase in his developing career; none of the works are lightweight, and all illustrate his gift for rendering previously arcane subjects accessible, even fascinating and compelling. The long series began with his publications on the historiography of Aboriginal anthropology and history, helping to finally end Stanner's 'great Australian silence'. The ground-

breaking *Prehistory of Australia* (1968) was exemplary in that respect; the first work of Australian archaeology to find a wider audience. Notably for readers of this journal, Mulvaney was among a small group who founded *Aboriginal History*, almost 35 years ago, 'a brave venture between linguists, historians and prehistorians'. This is, of course, just one small instance of Mulvaney's activism in neighbouring cultural domains, evidence of an eclecticism he finds perfectly natural. It has propelled him into several diverse roles, such as cultural heritage protection, advocacy on behalf of the Australian Academy of Humanities and of course, the vexed area of museums.

Digging up a Past began as John Mulvaney's modest attempt to construct a readable memoir of his life for his own family, and there are passages in the book which drop down a notch into the mode of a humble and unpretentious record of events. These passages, such as the account of a boisterous family holiday in Africa – complete with safari adventures, as well as a guided tour by Louis Leakey of his famous Olduvai site (Mulvaney had seen the *Zinjanthropus* skull 'in Cambridge during 1961, when Leakey plucked it from its case, like a magician with a rabbit'), are constructed partly from the daily journal of events and family movements kept by Jean Mulvaney. She, and the six Mulvaney children, are never far from the main story and on occasion take centre stage. The book is partly a tribute to Jean's memory, who shared and contributed to Mulvaney's remarkable life and career for 55 years. Jean and the children feature in the compelling selection of photographs chosen to illustrate the book. I hoped there might be an image or two of the famous Mulvaney backyard cricket matches at Yarralumla, but perhaps these are still to be dug from what must be a substantial and immensely significant archive.

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An Appreciation of Difference: WEH Stanner and Aboriginal Australia edited by Melinda Hinkson and Jeremy Beckett, xvii + 293 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2008, ISBN 9780855756604 (pbk), $39.95

Melinda Hinkson and Jeremy Beckett's *An Appreciation of Difference: WEH Stanner and Aboriginal Australia* is a tribute nearly 30 years after his death to one of the most esteemed anthropologists who worked in Indigenous Australian contexts. It is also a reflection on what Stanner achieved in his lifetime and what his work contributes to current Indigenous issues and Indigenous studies in Australia today. The contributing authors to the volume have worked with Stanner, the man, either as students and colleagues, or with Stanner, the intellect, by reading and using his work to extend and develop their own ideas. Some extrapolate from his contributions to policy-making in the past to critique it in the present as Jon Altman (pp. 271–280) quite brilliantly does in the final chapter. This important book is both a poignant biography and something more. The authors use Stanner's work to think through the foundational issues concerning what it is to be Australian. If Australian identity depends on the dispossession of Indigenous Australians and subsequent interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as in my view it does, then this book ranges across many of the key issues in the development of that identity to date. These include the development and politics of policy-making in relation to land, social justice and sustenance of culture for Indigenous Australians; the appreciation of Indigenous Australian worldviews and life ways and the intellectual challenges that all these issues raise. The various authors offer different perspectives of how these challenges might be met by using and/or critiquing Stanner's work.

The various transdisciplinary contributing authors of the volume draw from Stanner's body of work, published and unpublished, and on recollections of working with him in his extraordinary career both within and outside the academy. The chapters reflect on aspects of Stanner's career in the British colonial service in Kenya, in the British academy, his various positions in the Australian army during the Second World War, his work as Chair of Anthropology at the Australian National University, in founding the Australian Institute for Aboriginal Studies and the Council for Aboriginal Affairs. Inevitably, however, due to the productive nature of Stanner's writing, the book is largely dedicated to working with Stanner's ideas. These ideas are arguably most accessible in his famous 1968 Boyer lectures. Threaded through Stanner's five Boyer lectures are the arguments that non-Indigenous Australia had little interest in Indigenous Australia, had almost completely wiped the history of interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples from the public record, and that he had little hope for change because the reasons for what he called 'the great Australian silence' were systemic.[1] That is, as Ann Curthoys (pp. 235–237) argues, a racial structure was established in the first few years of contact whereby it was believed that Aboriginal life ways were so damaged that they were doomed to extinction,

1 Stanner 1974: 27.

and this structure endured into the 1960s. Stanner argued in his lectures that contrary to the beliefs of non-Aboriginal people, Aboriginal life ways, although changing, were still alive in 1968 and that the people living in these worlds were in Nancy Williams' words, 'intelligent, even brilliant human beings' (p. 211).

The contributing authors generally agree that, although Stanner's assessment did not take all Australian discourses operating over the history he discusses into account, he was largely right, and his criticism of the treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Australia was well justified. The consensus of the authors is that although there have been significant steps in acknowledging Indigenous interactions in Australian history and in some policies concerning the improvement of Indigenous Australians' circumstances, many if not all of Stanner's concerns are still current.

I first read the Stanner Boyer lectures in the late 1970s and found them to be so moving and powerful that I decided to learn all I could about relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. After reading Stanner's *Whiteman Got No Dreaming* (1979) I wanted to become an anthropologist myself. It is not an exaggeration to say that reading Stanner changed my life. I cannot speak for the extent of Stanner's influence on the authors of *An Appreciation of Difference*, but it is clear from what they have written that Stanner's work is still current and significant to generations of scholars across disciplines. He is not, however, an entirely heroic figure and *An Appreciation of Difference* is certainly not hagiography. The various contributing authors reveal a man with flaws and frailties in personality, body and intellect. Yet he emerges as someone extraordinary in being able to express his appreciation of humanity in our various manifestations and aspects. This book is a remarkable achievement in being a rigorous critique of Stanner's work that is simultaneously a tribute to it.

References

Stanner, WEH 1974, *The 1968 Boyer Lectures: After the Dreaming*, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.

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The Many Worlds of RH Mathews: In Search of an Australian Anthropologist by Martin Thomas, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2011, ISBN 9781741757811 (hbk), $59.95

This biography of RH Mathews (1841–1918) should go a long way to granting him the recognition he so dearly craved in life. Although a professional surveyor, Mathews was from a marginal Australian rural background (Mutbilly in New South Wales) and came to anthropology late, at the age of 50. Perhaps as part of his competitive 'ethnomania' (Thomas' apt term), he could also be pugnacious as a scholarly rival. He was not of the caste, nor of the powerful social network, of the doyens of the Australian branch of the discipline in his day, and ran foul of Sir Baldwin Spencer and AW Howitt in particular. The role of colonial class in this rift could have been explored further in this work. However, as Martin Thomas shows, Mathews made his own contributions to the establishment's siege mentality. Still, like AP Elkin and others including myself, Thomas does not believe Mathews deserved the degree of opprobrium, rejection and studious ignore to which he was subjected in life, nor the post-mortem obscurity from which he is only now escaping.

The rejections of Mathews by highly placed contemporaries, especially Spencer, who made something of a career of making and breaking other people's careers, had their long legacies afterwards. Somewhere in the mid 1980s, when I was combing Mathews' papers for a detailed study of the Bora ritual complex in New South Wales, I considered it was time his works should be facsimiled, translated where necessary, pulled into logical groups, given a set of linking commentaries, and indexed, as a single large volume. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Council did not warm to this proposal and it disappeared. In an abbreviated form a similar idea reappeared in the 2007 volume edited by Martin Thomas, *Culture in Translation: the Anthropological legacy of RH Mathews* (ANU E-press). This and the present volume, and – not to be underestimated – the post-1993 swathe of native title research projects in south-eastern Australia, have made sure that Mathews will not slip back into obscurity for some long time.

Thomas' book begins with the onset of Mathews' Aboriginal possession in 1892. This foreshadows the fact that his approach to this particular life is thematic as much as it is chronological in structure, and the narrative weaves back and forth in time to an extent. If you are a strict chronologist you will get some vertigo from this, but others will not mind.

Here and there the narrative settles in for a quiet stay among the infinitesimal. Thomas has a taste for Mathews' interest in the fine grain, the details, of Aboriginal people's traditions. This gives the book solidity, which will be welcomed by many, if not by those drawn only to the glamour of the broad and abstract sweep. Mathews was no grand theoriser, although he read theorists. Nor was he much concerned, at least in his writings, with post-classical Aboriginal society, nor with the politics of Indigenous affairs. In these ways he was much like most

of his colleagues of the time, an antiquarian. This narrowness of concern was to be significantly abandoned by Australianists after the First World War, when a younger and more politically engaged generation entered the field.

This book brings some of Mathews' not always riveting papers to life, by telling us here and there who were the historical individuals with whom he worked, and at times showing us their photographs. Also here and there in the text are photographs from places where he did not personally work, which dilute the otherwise south-eastern consistency of the tale. The maps and plans are apposite but several are too reduced to be readable.

Having lived before the post-1950s age of Western self-exposure and self-reflection, with its mixed blessings of the candid, the tumid, and the squalid, Mathews left behind little that allows us to pry into his soul. On this score the contrast between this biography and that of TGH Strehlow by Barry Hill (*Broken Song: TGH Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession,* Knopf 2002), is considerable, even though Thomas does his best to give us some psychological insight into his sitter.

There are some errors of fact in the book that might have been weeded out by circulating the manuscript among people who have specialised in relevant subjects. For example, it is said that before and after Francis Gillen's death Baldwin Spencer 'continued to publish as "Spencer and Gillen" despite the latter not having written a word of these books' (pp. 262–263). The corrective to this urban myth was provided by Philip Jones in 2005.[1]

If I have a serious reservation about this work it is because of how much of it is taken up with the author's own self-exposure and the narration of his journey of discovery. Reflexivity and biography may not be antithetical in theory but one can easily get into the way of the other – unless autobiography is the genre. Even there, a balance is still needed. Abundant self-analysis amid a thin scattering of facts, or, on the other hand, a relentless listing of events in a working life in the absence of any inner voice, can put the autobiographical project out of kilter and kill off readers. In the case of a biography most readers will be interested in the subject, not the writer.

It is to be hoped that this very finely produced new biography will stimulate similar research on other figures in the history of Australian Indigenous studies. We are still without major biographies of Donald Thomson, Ursula McConnel, WEH Stanner, Norman Tindale, Ronald and Catherine Berndt and others who came in the wake of colonial ethnographers like Mathews, and built on their efforts.

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1 'Indispensable to each other: Spencer and Gillen or Gillen and Spencer? Collaboration and Language', *Strehlow Research Centre Occasional Paper* 4: 6–25.

Aboriginal Darwin, A Guide to Exploring Important Sites of the Past and Present by Toni Bauman, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2006, ISBN 9780855754464 (pbk), $34.95

Aboriginal Sydney: A Guide to Important Places of the Past and Present by Melinda Hinkson (text) and Alana Harris (photography), Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 2001/2010, ISBN 9780855757120 (pbk), $29.95

These two books may be part of an Aboriginal Studies Press series on Australian urban centres, as they are almost identical in design and to a point, in content. Both describe historic sites, with details of how to get there, but they also include recent or present day memorials to Indigenous people, and even noteworthy events in which an individual takes priority over site. These include, in Sydney, Laddie Timbery's art and craft stall at La Perouse – hardly history, but still an 'important Indigenous site' of the present; and in Darwin, a photo of the Tiwi member Marian Scrymgour being danced into the Legislative Assembly by Maurice Riolo. Both the books therefore edge away from place-centredness towards the purely historical. Again, the Sydney text carries instructions how to visit some – but not all – of the historic sites: Hinkson does not identify the location of the Aboriginal Legal Service, or the Medical Service, or the Black Theatre, for no very obvious reason. Bauman locates all her sites, though at times I would have liked a photograph of what certain sites long demolished, such as the Kahlin Compound, look like today. I would have appreciated a photo of the spot where, for instance Dakiar Wirrpanda was brought ashore from Caledon Bay, or, for that matter, the grave of his victim, Mounted Constable McColl. Even the identification of the office of Cecil Cook, the pre-Second World War Director of Aboriginal Welfare, or for that matter, of Harry Giese, the last (pre-Whitlam) Director, would have been interesting, and also reminded readers of the intimate connection between Darwin Indigenous life and the bureaucracy. Yet we can note with gratitude Bauman's recognition of the old Darwin Oval, Mindil Beach Government House and the Museum and Art Gallery. We can thank Hinkson for her researches on sites in Parramatta such as the Old Market Place where Governor Macquarie held the first 'Native Conference' and the site of the church where the star Aboriginal pupil of Blacktown Native Institution, Maria Lock, married the convict John Lock.

The Sydney text, however, has many more gaps. The author is drawing rather a long bow in presenting Yarra Bay House at La Perouse as a signifier of Stolen Generations incarceration. The Marella Home at Kellyville and the Anglican Home at Mulgoa would have been much better choices, but neither of these two places is noted at all. The Brickfields, the site of much Aboriginal colonial social activity, near the present War Memorial in Hyde Park, and the notorious Circular Quay camp, near today's Museum of Contemporary Art, would not have been hard to research and identify. A serious omission is the reserve at Sackville Reach on the Hawkesbury River, where scores of Koori people lived for decades. The Aboriginal Inland Mission church, still standing at La Perouse,

was most important in the lives of Sydney Kooris, and beyond. To be fair, some apparent omissions are not altogether the fault of Hinkson and Harris. A number of important sites have only emerged publicly through oral history, which is not easy to come by in a quick research tour evidently relying on what is publicly available. Information on the Narrabeen town camp has only emerged from Dennis Foley in the last decade, while the significance of Biddy Giles' farm at Mill Creek, on the Lower Georges River, and the Saltpan Creek community in the same area, has not yet entered the wide public domain despite the efforts of Heather Goodall and Allison Cadzow. Readers of Bauman, impressed by the attention given to Aboriginal achievers through various public biographical plaques, may wonder why are the analogous plaques in Sydney not equally noted. In truth Sydney is not well endowed with plaques of any kind apart from those attached to colonial buildings in the inner city. One of the few Indigenous plaques on the Opera House walkway is to Oodgeroo Noonuccal, but none of those dedicated to local identities embedded in Darling Street, Kings Cross, are to an Aboriginal person. Joy Janaka Williams, who sued the state for wrongful removal and subsequent institutional lack of care, and who spent a number of years in the area, would be a likely candidate for recognition here. Other areas important for medium or long-term residence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the Field of Mars, on the Lane Cove River, and Quakers Hat Bay, near the Spit, and Bungaree's Farm on Georges Head. These do not appear even in the later edition of Aboriginal Sydney.

An interesting difference between the two urban histories becomes apparent. Because Darwin's Aboriginal population was proportionately larger, almost every public space and many buildings were, and are, highly significant to Aboriginal people. The shared spaces of Fannie Bay Gaol and Darwin Hospital come immediately to mind. Fannie Bay Gaol and the old Darwin Hospital are highly relevant to the Larrakia people as well as Indigenous transit visitors, and are cited in the book. Analogously, Sydney's Long Bay Gaol, the former Royal Women's Hospital at Paddington, the Bidura transit 'depot' in Sydney's Glebe and the Parramatta Girls Home are surely equally significant, but Indigenous numbers and associations are swamped by the association of people and other histories. Thus it emerges that while very many of Aboriginal Darwin's sites are shared, almost all the Sydney places are Indigenous only. The cultures and histories divided earlier and rather more deeply in Sydney.

Photographs, of course, are critical in tourist books. The work of professional photographer Alana Harris has been reproduced fairly well by Aboriginal Studies Press, and certainly much better than the press's photos decades ago. Bauman has used pictures by a number of people, particularly Julie Wells. In both books, though, many of the photographs are too small to be useful beyond an aid in recognition.

Future editions, and the studies of other cities which I hope are to come, should adopt modern technologies such as GPS referencing and on-line presentations downloadable on i-pods. Both books are good starts, but there is much scope for

development. The 2010 edition of Hinkson and Harris might well have taken advantage of new knowledges, but apart from one or two additions it is not much more than a reprint of that of a decade before.

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Urbanizing Frontiers: Indigenous Peoples and Settlers in 19th-Century Pacific Rim Cities by Penelope Edmonds, 317pp, University of British Colombia Press, Vancouver, 2010, ISBN 9780774816229 (pbk), CAD $35.95

In Australia, classical notions of the frontier and its associated histories of invasion, displacement and violence would tend to point us towards the outback or the bush rather than the urban centres where most of us live today. Penelope Edmonds thoroughly unsettles this notion of a distant frontier by moving it back to the edges of the continent, to the port towns where Europeans first landed and where most of them remained. The frontier was not simply 'out there', synonymous with the unruly boundaries of an expanding pastoral economy, but very close to home. This reorientation recognises that our cities were indigenous spaces from the time of European settlement and, in turn, it understands 'Aboriginal histories as urban histories' (p. 238). It also challenges more conventional accounts in which Aboriginal people 'exit the scene' in the early nineteenth century, only to return to urban areas as 'new migrants' in the twentieth century.

But *Urbanizing Frontiers* does more than this. In the recognition that these themes are not unique to Australia, Edmonds places the early colonial history of her case study, Melbourne, in dialogue with Victoria, British Columbia, to produce a comparative and transcolonial analysis of two sites at the 'edges of empire'. Melbourne and Victoria are valuable comparative case studies because both cities were built on indigenous lands, both were imagined as Empire's Edens, 'lights of civilisation and Britishness on the Pacific Ocean' (p. 20), and both were vital economic hubs in expanding imperial webs, remade by gold rushes and migration. Yet they differed in several fundamental ways. In Canada indigenous people were more fully integrated into the fur trade, whereas in Australia the pastoral economy marginalised Aboriginal people on their own land. Melbourne began life as an 'illegal, outlaw settlement' (p. 79), whereas the mercantilist influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, the 'colonizing power by proxy' in Victoria (p. 102), kept renegade settlers in check. Approaches to treaty-making diverged in both places, as did attitudes towards and patterns of interracial intimacy between white men and indigenous women. Ultimately, Edmonds concludes, there was a more favourable colonial impression of aboriginal people in British Columbia because white settlers were far more dependent on them.

Yet, what is striking is the extent to which settler colonialism ultimately constructed indigenous people in both cities as 'inconvenient, anomalous, and vagrant' (p. 137). Edmonds makes a particularly productive reading of the contemporary power of Enlightenment stadial theory, where progress was intimately entangled with the human relationship to land. Cities were believed to stand at the pinnacle of social and cultural evolution; they represented 'the apotheosis of civilization' and 'became a synecdoche for empire and its ideological paradigm' (p. 61). In Pacific Rim settler colonies the ideological and material investment in new cities 'was explicitly racialized as the exclusive destiny of the Anglo-Saxon races' (p.

62). The original inhabitants of the soil were deemed out of place, a danger to health, order and governance. At the same time, the creation of cities created new spaces for aboriginal people, usually on the urban margins, and Europeans expected to see them living in their midst. In fact, they sought them out, and their motivations for doing so varied from spectacle to sex. By attending to the city as the scene of everyday life and not simply to the 'grand designs', Edmonds moves us beyond triumphant nineteenth-century accounts of New World urban development to interpret cities not so much as sites, but as processes – of land transactions, of mobility and its regulation, of interracial encounters, of the generation of knowledge about race, class and gender – processes, in sum, of 'the transformation and reordering of bodies and spaces'.

Urbanizing Frontiers is a fine example of comparative colonial history. This sort of history requires research in multiple locations often separated by vast distances, engagement with the historiographical contours of at least two countries, and a conceptual language to bridge them. The challenges of structure – where to begin, what to put next and what to omit – are magnified too, so in light of these methodological and technical challenges there is certainly much to admire here. There is some repetition in places and a tendency to overuse questions, but these do not detract from the rich and compelling evidence or the insightful analysis which is developed with reference to postcolonial, feminist and spatial theory.

Edmonds stresses that settler colonialism's urban histories were unique. Unlike the 'inward-looking protective cantonments' in established cites such as New Delhi, or the 'sequestered hill stations' in India (p. 65), settler colonial cities were large and expansive, envisioned as transimperial Anglo-Saxon cognate space: Melbourne and Victoria were both 'London reproduced'. The scale and vision of urban settlement and its relationship to the rural hinterlands in Australia and Canada was distinctive, yet I kept hearing echoes from elsewhere in the empire, particularly with respect to the relationship between indigeneity and urban space. In Fiji, for example, which was never envisaged as a white man's country, indigenous landownership was preserved under colonial rule, but, crucially, not in the port capital. Fijians were displaced from Suva and their presence there, along with a range of non-white 'others', was a continual source of debate and anxiety. Maybe we need to ask further questions about the racialisation of urban space *per se*, in whatever colonial context it comes. A wider comparative lens would be fascinating, one which embraces the connections between colonial formations we have more readily kept distinct. In the Pacific World this would mean bringing these settler outposts on the Rim in closer dialogue with the sea of islands that stretched in between. This would also entail a more extended discussion of the material networks that linked them through travel, technology, public speakers, newspapers and global performances, those things explored briefly in Chapter 7.

To reiterate, *Urbanizing Frontiers* is a sophisticated monograph, carefully crafted and impressive in scope. It deserves a wide readership in indigenous studies, colonial history, urban history and historical geography, while also making an important and timely contribution to both Australian and Canadian history. It

shows us the extent to which the urban histories shared by indigenous peoples and newcomers in the formative decades of the nineteenth century have left unfinished business in our postcolonial cities today.

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Singing Saltwater Country: Journey to the Songlines of Carpentaria by John Bradley with Yanyuwa families, xxiii + 301 pp, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW, 2010, ISBN 9781742372419, $39.99

John Bradley's *Singing Saltwater Country:Journey to the Songlines of Carpentaria* provides a compelling account of the author's work with Yanyuwa people in and around the town of Borroloola in the Northern Territory. As he describes in this memoir/ ethnography (which is co-credited to Yanyuwa families), Bradley came to Borroloola as a primary school teacher in the early 1980s. At Borroloola, he rapidly become fascinated with the sacred songlines or *kujika* which link the Sir Edward Pellew group of islands with the Australian mainland in the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria. Indebted to his Yanyuwa informants for teaching him 'language, country and *kujika* [italics added]', the non-Aboriginal Bradley describes the book as part of a 'reciprocal deal', translating Aboriginal knowledge into 'a form that could be preserved for the future' (p. xvi). With this publication (alongside an ambitious attempt to animate Yanyuwa *kujika* for use in the Borroloola school), Bradley proposes to deliver on that deal.

The book sits uneasily in between multiple genres. As a memoir – even a diary – it provides a fascinating account of the author's attempts to explore the phenomena of Yanyuwa *kujika*, and the broader 'multidimensional dynamic' of Aboriginal knowledge that surrounds it (p. 242). Like Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines* (1987), *Singing Saltwater Country* is as much concerned with the possibilities of intercultural communication as it is with classical Aboriginal culture, providing a detailed account of the author's own 'journey' into understanding. This is intensely personal and occasionally moving, conveyed in a simple and straightforward style which strains towards lyricism on occasion, and is accompanied by some hand-drawn illustrations and maps by Nona Cameron. While Bradley arguably lacks the literary gifts of Chatwin, his engagement with this material is much deeper and richer – his journey with Yanyuwa people stretching now across three decades – making Chatwin's exegesis seem impoverished and even perfunctory in comparison. As such, it recalls the work of the other great chronicler of Aboriginal songs, TGH Strehlow, as well as Bill Harney and AP Elkin's collaboration on *Songs of the Songmen*.[1]

As ethnography, the 'thickness' of Bradley's writing is exemplary. In describing his first meeting with key informants Jerry and Elma, Bradley writes:

> They were sitting back to back, engaged in constant commentary on the vehicles and people going past. They shouted questions to passing kin on the whereabouts of other kin, and requests for tobacco, money, 'beef' and bread.
>
> I was introduced to them, but sat down with Eileen [another informant] so I could continue my Yanyuwa lesson. I was trying to make sense of

1 Strehlow 1971; Harney and Elkin 1949.

> male and female dialects, as I had received comments that I was speaking 'too much like a woman'. Eileen, because we were at school together every day, saw it as her task to get me to speak like a man.
>
> As Eileen and I talked, Jerry said loudly and suddenly, 'Me! I'm number one singer [i.e. of *kujika*] myself!' Without hesitation, Elma bluntly responded 'Bullshit!' (pp. 122–123)

Interspersed with colourful episodes like this, Bradley provides his own transcriptions and translations of *kujika*, laid out on the page like poetry. From his 'number one singer' Jerry, Bradley reproduces song verses associated with the Dingo Dreaming:

> *Warrakiwarraki*
> *Warrakiwarraki*
> *Kakami kakamayi*
>
> Well-made stone blades
> discarded flakes lie scattered (pp. 132–133)

Those without access to Bradley's impressively encyclopaedic knowledge might be surprised to learn about verses like these being sung for stone tools, as Bradley himself was surprised at the time (p. 133). Rather than simply commenting on this, however, Bradley explains the significance of these few lines at length, connecting them to his understanding of kinship and Aboriginal Law, and challenging the reader 'to come to feel something about it [i.e. the *kujika*] like these old men [like Jerry] did' (p. 134). Surpassing the generic constraints of both memoir and ethnography, at these moments *Singing Saltwater Country* can be seen as akin to the hermeneutical approach to the study of religion, discussing Yanyuwa *kujika* the way Christian and Jewish scholars discuss the Bible and the Torah. As well as this Dingo *kujika*, which is transcribed and translated in full, Bradley also applies this approach to the Rainbow Serpent, Tiger Shark, Brolga, Groper, Spirit People, Sea Turtle, Crow and Spotted Nightjar and Hammerhead Shark *kujika* in the Gulf.

However, while *Singing Saltwater Country* offers much breadth, mystery and intellectual satisfaction for readers, his unique approach combining multiple genres will likely disappoint some. As a memoir, I wanted to know more about how Bradley managed his movements into and out of what anthropologists call 'the field'. While he describes the impact of his learning on his experience of place in Yanyuwa country – calling out 'without embarrassment' to a flock of brolgas in Yanyuwa, as a kind of 'kinsman' of these birds in Yanyuwa terms (p. 249) – he offers little insight into his life in Melbourne, and the intellectual accommodation that his extraordinary experiences with Yanyuwa people presumably entails. Similarly, Bradley offers little insight into Yanyuwa peoples' intellectual accommodation of others, including anthropologists.

Other anthropologists who have worked at Borroloola and throughout Aboriginal Australia might be disappointed with Bradley's partial engagement with their

discipline, and many of its more pressing current concerns. Apart from a slight index of 'Further Reading' (pp. 289–292), *Singing Saltwater Country* contains no references to academic writing, ignoring the publications of those who worked with Yanyuwa people before Bradley, such as John Avery.[2] As ethnography, I particularly wanted a more fulsome account of Yanyuwa life, including Yanyuwa peoples' engagements with the Australian state. Bradley offers no analysis of the impact of large-scale state transfers of resources to Aboriginal people in the form of welfare payments and funding for 'outstation' developments and the like, which arguably led to an efflorescence of ritual traditions like *kujika* at places like Borroloola in the late 1970s and 1980s. There is also no analysis of the causes of cultural knowledge loss beyond repeated references to 'radical and tragic' contemporary change (p. 248). While Bradley provides a superb account of one aspect of Yanyuwa life – possibly the central aspect of Yanyuwa life in the period he describes – those who come to this book hoping for further insight into the issues which provoked the Commonwealth Government's declaration of a state of emergency in Northern Territory communities in mid-2007 might well be left wondering what all the fuss was about.

This partiality is both a weakness and strength of *Singing Saltwater Country*. While it might enable idealists and romantics to ignore the problems in places like Borroloola, it offers a useful corrective to those who would see contemporary Aboriginal life solely in terms of pathology, reminding readers of the inheritance of belief and value that infuses much of what we understand as Aboriginal culture. As a contribution to a nascent hermeneutics of such culture – and an invaluable record of it – Bradley has more than delivered on the deal he made as a young primary school teacher struck by the beauty of the songlines.

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2 Avery 1985.

Mari Nawi: Aboriginal Odysseys by Keith Vincent Smith, 216 pp, Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, Dural, New South Wales, 2010, ISBN 9781921719004 (pbk), $35.00

In writing this book, Keith Smith's aim was to reveal and celebrate the significant roles that Aboriginal people played in Australia's early maritime history. It is based on research Smith carried out for his PhD submitted in 2008, and focuses on the experiences and lives of Aboriginal people who sailed on ships that sailed through Port Jackson/Sydney Harbour to destinations around the world in the period 1790 to 1850. These destinations included not only places around and close to the Australian coastline and England which are commonly referred to, but also other countries entailing long distances – such as New Zealand, Macquarie Island, North and South Americas, South Africa, India, Tahiti and Hawaii.

There are many people whose names are familiar – Bungaree who is famous for sailing with Mathew Flinders around Australia, and Bennelong who sailed to England with Yemmerrawanne. However there are numerous other people whose names are not so well known. Smith describes how these people became guides, go-betweens, boatmen, sailors, steersmen, pilots, sealers, whalers and trackers. Most of them went willingly on these voyages, but there are descriptions about many others who were sent to penal colonies on Norfolk Island and Tasmania because they were judged to be criminals (for example, Musquito who was sent to Tasmania). Several Aboriginal women also went on voyages, sometimes accompanying their husbands. Some of these voyagers also settled in other countries, such as Thomas Chaseland (various spellings), who lived in New Zealand and whose first and second wives were Maori.

Smith has undertaken much meticulous and detailed research in many institutions around the world and the book is packed full of interesting information, which provides details about the lives of the Aboriginal people who went out on the ships and also provides contexts for the voyages on which the Aboriginal people went. There is some repetition and there are also many details which seem extraneous. I found these irritating as they detracted from the fascinating overall story and stories of individual voyagers which Smith has to tell about the opportunities Aboriginal people took to travel the world. The non-essential details often made it difficult to follow the lines of argument that Smith makes and are necessary where details come from a wide range of disparate sources. The documents include not only the well-known published journals and reports written by the British officers and settlers and visitors from other countries (for example, the French and Russians), but also unpublished ships logs and shipping records.

In the background details about Aboriginal life and activities, a shell fishhook from the Sydney area is cited as being 600 years old and stone files at one of the Curracurrang sites as being 2000 years old (p. 14). In a recent review of the

evidence for hook and line fishing along the New South Wales coast, I found the earliest shell fish-hooks are ca 1000 years old and that they are almost always made from *Turbotorquatus*. A date of 2000 BP for stone files at Curracurrang 2 cannot be supported as there is no clear association between the files and the sample radiocarbon-dated to ~2000 BP and it is not possible to date the age of these specimens; all other stone files along the New South Wales central and south coasts are <=1000 years old.[1]

This is an interesting book about a little known aspect of the activities of Aboriginal people who were associated with Sydney Town, Port Jackson, in the early years of the British colony. Well worth buying by anyone interested in what happened to Aboriginal people in the Sydney region after colonisation. There is often a perception that there were few Aboriginal people living in coastal Sydney in the early nineteenth century; this book clearly shows otherwise.

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1 Attenbrow 2011.

Singing the Coast by Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins, xiv + 240 pp, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, ISBN 9780855757113 (pbk), $34.95

Singing the Coast by Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins looks through the eyes particularly of the present Yarrawarra community of Corindi Beach in the north, and members of Muurrbay Aboriginal Language Centre and other contributors in the south, to 'deep map' connections in Gumbaynggirr society. Through memories and stories, the authors connect in time the Gumbaynggirr journey through the 'no man's land' of the non-Indigenous contact period to enduring elements of the Dreaming. Similarly they show connections in space:

> Through law and custom Gumbaynggirr people learn about connections across country made in linking trails and songlines. (p. 198)

At the same time this work recognises the changed sense of identity forged through the stages of white contact.

The authorship is an interesting collaboration: 'The authorial voice is Margaret's in conversation with Tony' (p. ix). The non-Indigenous Margaret Somerville is meticulous in having the Indigenous Tony Perkins examine his contributions to the work, for she is aware that: 'Writing in the space between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal voices and identities is a risky business'. However there is such collaboration with several other presenters both from the north and the south. It could therefore be argued that there is multiple authorship. In addition several people from Jalumbo at Yarrawarra did research that helped in 'joining the dots' to obtain the final picture in this work. There is ambivalence as to whose goals this work intends to serve. One aspiration that can be shared by black and white is:

> How can we bring traditional understandings of singing the country, singing for the renewal and wellbeing of people and places, into a contemporary present? (p. 3)

However the following indicates possibly the central theme and purpose of this work:

> This writing is about the process of coming to know. It is about how white people can learn to live in this country differently. Through many years of working closely with Aboriginal people I have learned to think through place. I call my work 'oral place story' rather than oral history. (p. 19)

Aboriginal people could have aspirations like this for non-Aboriginal people. But it is clear that Somerville owns this purpose and so possibly the major authorship of this work too.

The stories retold from the southern Muurrbay are regularly about the *matter* of Dreaming song and story – beginning with the story of the 'Women who made the sea' as told in Gumbaynggirr by Harry 'Tiger' Buchanan.

This is contrasted with the northern lived experience of Yarrawarra – and this technique is used from the beginning of this work.

Starting with present day Yarrawarra the reader is rapidly taken back to the post land-loss Aboriginal world at nearby Corindi Lake, an area called No Man's Land, at the sea-margins of the new white-owned land of 'selectors'. Over the years for this Gumbaynggirr community much of the matter of traditional story and language has been lost and practices modified. However the *form* of Aboriginality has been retained. In the freedom to live outside the crushing 'mission' experience, the Aboriginal people here are depicted as adapting willingly and without loss of identity.

Since plentiful food, especially seafood and building resources were at hand, people could retain their lifestyle as well as 'incorporate elements of white culture into their daily lives'.

The estuary of No Mans Land / The Lake is in fact seen as the 'quintessential in-between space where stories could be born'. In this northern 'pole' of the Gumbaynggirr areas depicted, elders such as Clarence Skinner are seen as holders of the Dreaming, through story, song and language.

However, the reader is then brought further back from this seemingly idyllic transitional space to a cataclysmic event in the lifetime of Tony Perkins' great-grandmother: the massacre of several ancestors at nearby Red Rock, henceforth called 'Blood Rock' by the local people.

With terrible beauty we are given the description and interpretation of the survivors escaping though a cave/ tunnel which is near to a women's birthing place.

> For Tony, the massacre and rebirth story became the conceptual framework of the rebirth of his people. These stories locate Tony in relation to the whole story of an ending and a new beginning. (p. 36)

The silence following this event, and a taboo on women visiting the massacre site, is symbolically seen by Somerville as an adaptation of the traditional 'crying song' of women bewailing a tragedy.

A quarter of a century elapses between this tragedy and the re-birth of the people at nearby 'New Farm'. However this establishment is viewed as a song of rebirth symbolised by the establishment of a community band replete with homemade and refurbished instruments. 'Laughter and singing were born again as the old people made music and sang' (p. 40).

We encounter 25 charming historical and contemporary photos appropriately located within the chapter 'Making home in No Man's Land'. This era after the massacre and the period of liminality following it, is a world of adaptation symbolised by the tin and bark humpy shifting and adapting to meet the need; a 'belonging place' largely escaping the traumas of the stolen generations.

A meditative sample of the varied and rich foods of this world is presented for us – for food-getting stories were the most common ones given to Somerville. Thus, scenes of prawning in the estuary; getting *gugumbal* shellfish in the rock-pools and pipis from the sand; seasonal sea fishing that evokes legendary stories of dolphins obeying the call to drive fish shorewards; bush tucker from native plums to carpet snakes; river food such as cobra (wood-worm) – are all depicted with the accompanying skills and prescriptive rules that apply to each. Thus 'place' is ingested.

There is a pervasive sense of the spiritual in this No Man's Land, although in the present twilight world of the Dreaming, this spirituality is expressed in taboos rather than the enlightenment Somerville seeks. She has become familiar with the stories of spirits of particular places but finds it 'challenging to write about this partial and incomplete knowledge' (p. 122). And yet we are introduced to various spirits such as those of deceased persons prevented from returning to the young children whose faces have been masked by pipeclay, and to the spiritual presences in healing and rainmaking.

The spiritual power of no longer performed initiation and ceremony is seen by Somerville as being transferred, particularly through Tony Perkins, to oral storytelling, memories of stone 'property', initiation scars and places to avoid. 'In the absence of initiation, places of taboo came to stand for [sic] power of initiation itself' (p. 145). These translations are not seen purely as loss, however, for:

> In the embodied traces that remain in people, in places and in stories, lies the possibility of transformation. (p. 152)

The focus of *Singing the Coast* now moves to the southern 'pole' of the Gumbaynggirr world at Nambucca Heads and Muurrbay Language Centre. It moves from Yarrawarra's transformed practice of Aboriginality in the modern context, to viewing the active promotion at Muurrbay of the Gumbaynggirr Dreaming in language and story and (through the associated Many Rivers Language Centre) the facilitation of the revival of other coastal Aboriginal languages. The reader is immersed in the Gumbaynggirr Dreaming stories through which language is mapped onto country: for instance how the *Ngambaa Baga-baga*: the Ngambaa man's knee on the river below Muurrbay became 'Nambucca'.

Here, as at Yarrawarra, adaptation and historical change are noted: for instance the relationship of the people to *Girr-Girr*: Stuart Island and their removal from it. But it is *revival* – the language and story-based recapture of the Dreaming (in contemporary form) that is here emphasised. Hero ancestors are celebrated and linkages with the overlaid aspects of Catholic religion recognised; for example, where the hero-ancestor Birrugan is recognised as Jesus and Birrugan's mother, Gawnggan, as Mary. The central place of the last Gumbaynggirr story-man, 'Tiger' Buchanan, is acknowledged, as is the work of the Gumbaynggirr Language and Culture group in publishing his stories.

Somerville describes how a process of 'deep mapping' has been developed in collaboration with researchers at Muurrbay and other contributors.

> In deep mapping we map the storylines of the places where Gumbaynggirr people live now and where they lived in the past, and the creation stories of the ancestors. The story we produce here follows the same processes as deep mapping, beginning with the present and moving back into the deep past. The past is always partially visible in the present, it is never completely erased. (p. 164)

'Connecting the dots' is the final chapter of this work, beginning with a meeting of north and south: Yarrawarra and Muurrbay. This meeting is part of an effort to broaden place knowledge beyond the regional, including 'boundaries, language, movement, exchange, storylines and ceremony.' Each of these categories is accorded respect in this work. There is an emphasis on the linkages connecting one's identity with father's and mother's kin and country.

The work notes 'Tiger' Buchanan's section name as *Wambuungga* and initiation name as *Maruwanba*. An extension of this theme, not covered in this book, could be the links that these names entail *beyond* the Gumbaynggirr language groups. For instance, the Dhanggati to the south have the same kinship and initiation names as the Gumbaynggirr, although Gumbaynggirr and Dhanggati languages differ markedly; and in living memory members of these language groups have had shared initiations and have frequently intermarried.

The work concludes with clan linkages to *miirlarl*, special places. Poignantly, though both the Muurrbay people and Tony Perkins, having lost much of ceremony and site, live 'in the shadow of initiation' (Gary Williams), the *nunguu* (kangaroo) *miirlarl* which they both acknowledge, persists as a spiritual bond for and between them.

The treatment of themes in this work is as tidal and circular as the spirituality of the society described in it. This may come partly from the meditative style, partly from the long passages where different speakers are quoted, treating the same subject matter from their own perspective. Readers demanding linear, dialectic or scientific presentations may find some parts repetitive or unclear. The authors however are comfortable with liminality, with evoking the interstices between the mesh. For the paradox is that not even a partial ability to see the world through present day Gumbaynggirr eyes is possible without this apparent obscurity. This is a thoughtful and respectful work that acknowledges the validity of a refashioned Gumbaynggirr identity.

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Coming to Terms: Aboriginal Title in South Australia edited by Shaun Berg, xix + 570 pp, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2010, ISBN 9781862548671 (pbk), $39.95

The legal pursuit of Aboriginal land rights can trace its lineage to the Gove Land Rights Case of *Milirrpum v Nabalco Pty Ltd* (1971) at which the court held against the Yolngu applicants. That legal battle eventually led to the *Northern Territory Land Rights Act 1976*. The Mabo case 20 years later led to the creation of the *Native Title Act 1993* and a process whereby Aboriginal communities Australia-wide can pursue a (relatively weak) form of land rights. Both the Gove Land Rights Case and one of the early native title matters to go to the High Court, *Fejo v Northern Territory* (1998), explored the significance of the Letters Patent issued by King William IV on 19 February 1836 when creating the Province of South Australia. Neither of those matters considered the Letters Patent to have protected the rights of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. This book argues that the matter is much less clear in South Australia.

The relevant passage from the King's decree, cited repeatedly in this volume, reads:

> Provided always that nothing in those our Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal Natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their Descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives.

The argument, in a nutshell, is that this means that any appropriation of lands occupied by Aboriginal people in South Australia was in breach of the Letters Patent, potentially giving rise to compensation. It could perhaps be described as a posthumous argument for land rights. According to the co-authored contribution by Simmonds and Berg, the relevant provision would have had legal force until at least 1842, possibly 1857, and perhaps beyond. Even on the earliest date of 1842, the lands appropriated during the six years since colonisation were significant and would include most if not all of contemporary greater Adelaide. Should the argument for compensation be legally correct, the implications could be substantial.

Berg is a commercial lawyer with a long-term commitment to acting for the Ngarrindjeri community of South Australia in matters of native title and heritage. That the arguments in this book are close to the heart of his clients is made clear in the preface by three senior Ngarrindjeri men. They describe the question of the Letters Patent as unfinished business and ask why the colonists ignored Aboriginal rights, when King William IV intended to protect them. They would like the South Australian government of today to seriously address this matter and assume responsibility for the failings of its early predecessor.

All the other contributors to the volume are lawyers, many distinguished, and for the non-legally trained the reading can be hard going. But it makes sense

for it to be so, as the book itself seems to be a building block for a potential future court action on this question of land rights particular to South Australia. The composition of the audience that attended the launch of *Coming to Terms* suggests that the significance of the Letters Patent is taken seriously; the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, members of the judiciary and other high profile lawyers were present to hear Shaun Berg's talk.

The tenor of the book, like the book launch itself, however, is fairly cautious, leaving me with the overall impression that the question is really more moral and political than legal. On the face of it, the wording of the Letters Patent is unambiguous as is the fact that the colonisation of South Australia did not adhere to its spirit. Legally, however, the standing of the document seems less certain. In places, this book makes a rousing case for why the Letters Patent has legal standing equivalent to that of statute, but at other times the authors seem very aware that there are legal opinions to the contrary. The fact that this book has been published prior to any legal challenge on the issue makes me wonder whether the editor is aware that such a challenge would be risky and is pursuing a morally based political argument instead. Given the current status of the land rights position in Aboriginal affairs and the emphasis on 'practical reconciliation', however, I do not think that the South Australian government will seriously engage with such a moral argument on the issue of past injustices. I think a legal challenge would be unavoidable if one wanted to pursue this matter further, and it will be interesting to see whether such a challenge will follow this work. The eight chapters by the various contributors are followed by a 300-page appendix of historic material relevant to the matter, including of course the Letters Patent, excerpts of historic legislation and other official documents considering the status of Aboriginal people in the context of South Australia's colonisation. It consequently provides a good resource for anybody who wishes to pursue this question further, whether from a legal or an historical perspective. The contribution of this book may well be that it has pushed this matter to such a point where one South Australian Aboriginal community or another will take it up and put it to the test in the very legal system that provided King William with the authority to appropriate Aboriginal lands in the first place. No doubt, should this matter ever make it to the court, *Coming to Terms* will be found on the bar tables of lawyers on all sides of the argument.

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Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives edited by Ian Keen, 195 pp, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, 2010, ISBN: 978-1-921-66-686-5 (pbk), $24.95

Some of the chapters in this book are important additions to the body of research on the engagement of Aboriginal people in the colonial and twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Interestingly someone should advise Ian Keen that for some Aboriginals it 'still is' colonial engagement, even more so after the 'intervention'. However Keen is certainly correct when he states that Indigenous Australia has been more or less invisible in many economic histories of Australia (p. 1). The text subject outline is: Aboriginal Australians-Economic conditions; Business enterprises-Aboriginal Australian; Aboriginal Australians-Employment; Economic Anthropology-Australia; Hunting and gathering societies-Australia; and Australia-Economic Conditions (p. iv). Enthused, I read on. However after 10 chapters I had to ask myself was some of this work relevant to what the book proposed? There are exceptions. Half of the text is very good. My favourite is Chris Haynes' chapter, which is passionate and relevant to current academic argument: a new voice in an industry that appears at times to be bogged down in the glory of a bygone era researching the exotic with little to no Aboriginal voice and content.

The text arose from an ARC linkage grant and proceedings from a wonderful conference, the Australian Anthropological Society, the Association of Social Anthropologist (United Kingdom) and the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa (New Zealand) held in Auckland 2008. This was a conference that I attended and presented at, which included many excellent papers by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. It's a pity this publication was not more representative of the high standard of presentations at that conference.

The editor groups the chapters into clusters which are explained (at some length) in pages 9–13. They begin with a broad overview of the settler colonial economy starting with Christopher Lloyd who writes of settler capitalism and economic hybridity; it is not until his conclusion (p. 36) that the realisations of destroyed economies and the future are outlined. Overall I found the chapter over-generalising, often set in early to mid twentieth-century beliefs which I thought we had moved on from. Lloyd seems to spend the first few pages waltzing around the issues and the concept of *'terra nullius'* searching for political correctness which leads to an oversimplification of Aboriginal settlement (pp. 24–25). Rudimentary oversights on land use management are concerning as is the summation that Aboriginal economic activity is reduced to that of the simplified forager. The discussion on Australian settler capitalism and the disintegration of Aboriginal societies follows a brief discussion on hybridity. This is the strength of this paper: the origins of Australian settler capitalism, socioeconomic hybridity, and the evolution of Australian settler capitalism in the nineteenth century, and the disintegration/integration of Aboriginal societies. Care must be taken however in understanding hybridity in economic-socioeconomic and in real

market terminology. Lloyd provides a sensitive explanation (p. 29). However from the reviewer's Indigenist position, Aboriginal hybrid economies *are not* the retention of traditional ways of life. Rather:

> *'they are the malnourished economic activity from a deformed and mutated society struggling to survive under the yoke of colonialism and dominance by an invading society'*. You can quote me on that!

Lloyd goes on with international examples which confuse the issue rather than simplify the Australian situation. Jon Altman's work is referenced. However in the author's belief it too is limited in its case analysis, for it does not illustrate comparatives of the economic division and integration of Aboriginal groups based on their resources – opportunity recognition and ability to maximise available assets based on their overall economic position within a wider geographic range that also includes regional and urban populations. It is far more opportunist. Lloyd is somewhat fixated in the foraging community. Altman gives Aboriginal people agency; Lloyd does not.

The importance of this paper was lost on side issues and the author's generalisations. Perhaps the paper would have been enriched by wider referencing on Aboriginal economic activity, literature from scholars such as Dr Heather Builth and Dr Ian J McNiven concerning their work on the Gunditjmara as examples. However this would be in contrast to Lloyd's fixation on the foraging Aboriginal without established economic interactions, established trade routes and the production of value added products produced in surplus for exchange – sale? The quote by Rowley (p. 38) finally shows some empathy to the British domination of the Aboriginal economy. The balance of the conclusion is shallow, superficially linking into the subject matter.

Chapter 3 by Ian Keen examines Aboriginal concepts of property on the frontier that includes King George Sound in Western Australia to Raffles Bay in the Northern Territory. It's a wonderful paper as Keen provides the reader with a ride into history that is well referenced and seemingly unbiased. He attempts to show the intricacies in inter-racial interaction between peoples with vastly different standpoints and values. He tries to explain these in an uncomplicated way, from bartering, demand sharing and reciprocation. The discussion on property concepts in late eighteenth-century England (p. 43) are described allowing the reader a comparative in understanding the following discussion on the interpretation of Aboriginal 'property' (pp. 44–48). I found the writing style and explanation easy to absorb. Keen then reviews amateur anthropologists' accounts of Aboriginal property (pp. 48–52). This is followed by his overview of the early professional anthropologists' accounts of Aboriginal property. That is then followed by English property categories (pp. 54–55) and finally a summation of the kinds of Aboriginal 'property' (pp. 55–56). This separation of the amateur from the professional is novel and important. Keen allows the reader an insight into Aboriginal tangible property and more importantly the intangible and the overarching concept that there is no equivalent between Aboriginal property and the European concepts of ownership. His conclusion

is balanced as he questions the ethnocentrisms within his profession. Keen simply concludes: 'Anthropologists need to record and interpret more of the Indigenous discourse about "owning" things' (p. 57). Race relations in Australia could possibly be vastly improved if settler society (white Australia) read and understood this chapter.

Chapter 4 by Jeremy Beckett is disappointing, written no doubt in his sleep from previous publications over many, many years. Nothing new! Rather a short ethno-history and a modern interpretation of post Second World War Islander migration to the mainland were given. The data is dated in the author's nostalgic overview of his own life's work. This chapter does not address Keen's summation of the text (p. iv). Rather it is about a succinct group who *are not* Australian Aboriginals and arguably this chapter is an orphan within an academic text on Aboriginal economy.

Chapter 5 by Anthony Redmond and Fiona Skyring provides the reader with an explanation of the exchange–Wurnan economy at Karunjie station in northern Western Australia. An insight into white brutality towards Aboriginal Australians and the links with Afghans figure in this remote micro study. Aboriginal people took what they could from an unfair exchange in labour (p. 87) and the most desirable objects into their Aboriginal trade system that existed prior to the European contact and economic subjugation. This is an important story illustrating not only the evil of some white pastoralists on the frontier. I applaud the authors for their links into 'factual history' in the reconstruction of details pertaining to the Wurnan economy, the Aboriginal economy.

Chapter 6 was another important paper and one that I enjoyed. Diana Young is a talented academic. Her paper is on dingo scalping and is one of the better papers in this collection. She illustrates the importance of the 40 year development of the dingo trade on the development of a frontier economy, skilfully managed and manipulated by the missionary industry to substantiate its own survival and the ultimate destruction of the Aboriginal economies. She also illustrates the influence of tourism and its low wages. Young's overuse of the word 'dreaming' is perplexing however; this Spencer and Gillen fictitious phrase that has crept into our vocabulary could be well substituted with more accurate Indigenous terminology or language. Apart from this oversight, it is well written and researched as to the changing development of Central Australia and the changing economies of its traditional residents by waves of explorers, missionaries, graziers, doggers and western economics. The alleged 'corruption' by cameleers and the doggers paying cash to Anangu was unacceptable, so it was better to manage the industry by a 'Mission' (p. 94). Once again Aboriginal people, even though they had showed money management skills for several years, had this stolen from them as Christianity 'cashed' in for the Mission's survival, not the betterment of Anangu. Young links the work of Elkin, Tindale, Love, Charles Duguid (p. 94), Dick Kimber (p. 98) and many others into an important paper on the history and corruption of the Aboriginal 'reserves' and Aboriginal culture by the progressive waves of intruders bringing a new economy, the western economy.

Chapter 7 by John White is based on the history of the south coast of New South Wales from the early nineteenth century concluding with the pea and bean industry in the Tuross Valley in the mid twentieth century. No doubt important for some due to its relativeness and currency within many Sydney and South Coast Aboriginal families even today. However the discussions on the expansion of colonial capitalism in the nineteenth century and Aboriginal engagement with the settler economy seem to lack detail in the Aboriginal involvement in a wages and cash economy. Possibly there are two different papers, or parts, one about laws and regulations, and the impact of the *1909 Aborigines Protection Act* and another about the people in the fields and their employers. The romanticism shown by White in the closing sentence, 'An Aboriginal worker's employer was a patron and a whitefella's employer was simply a boss' (p. 122), lost him credibility. It illustrates a naivety, possible ignorance and lack of grounded qualitative interviews with those that toiled for pennies when the white worker was often paid much more and invariably treated better. True, some Aboriginal workers were allowed to stay on their traditional lands (p. 119), most however were forced to move in the circuit, from Bega, Bodalla – the Tuross to the Goulburn Valley, the Riverina, or Wagga or back to the Monaro; wherever a crop needed picking, sheep dagged, fences mended, ensuring they lived on the fringe and in poverty … and one step ahead of the Protector. Or, they were forced back onto the coastal missions such as Wallaga Lake. The paper provides a possibly biased insight into the rise and fall of one segment of the rural economy involving Aboriginal labour.

Lorraine Gibson in Chapter 8 reviews Wilcannia and 'the justification of white moral values' (p. 137) and highlights the nepotism so prevalent in the white management of blacks (p. 131). Pages 129–130 provide the reader with an enlightening view of insider/outsider ontology. This paper questions 'who is you', with black and white meeting only at the point of service delivery. Overall her findings are: 'You are who you are not by virtue of what you have become' (p. 137). This paper goes deep enough to explain Aboriginal attitudes that are at the interface between Aboriginal priorities and colonisation. Gibson looks at the related elements and redefines what 'work' is within a wider range of Aboriginal socio-cultural meanings. Perhaps her concluding sentence is the perfect summation: 'This sense of self, for the most, is not determined by engagement in the capitalist division of labour; indeed, the greater the engagement in the capitalist economy, the more problematic and fraught a sense of self and of belonging can become' (p. 137). This is a complex paper that allows the reader to combine the structural and psychological factors of the overarching economy and the Aboriginal socio-cultural determinants and needs verses settler cultural expectations to explain 'work' and Aboriginal involvement. Well worth the investment to read and reflect.

Chapter 9 jumps from concept to concept and attempts to understand and/or address sustainable livelihoods after the mining ends. It is highly referenced to the point that one starts to question why? The paper is speculative, whilst it

addresses important issues. Holcombe's paper, and above all her writing style, does little to arouse my interests and I should leave my comments there. Let the reader formulate their own understanding.

As mentioned in the introduction, in Chapter 10 Chris Haynes provides a hard-hitting paper addressing tourism in Kakadu. 'Cultural tourism has created significant disadvantage for the Aboriginal people of the area' (p. 165): at last honesty! Let the reader enjoy this chapter, and realise the poor dividend to traditional owners from tourism (p. 173). Aboriginal people in the far north are being short-changed (p. 181) as are the tourists with the misrepresentations of Aboriginal culture by non-indigenous tour guides (p. 175).

Keen as editor left the best till last. No doubt I will reference Chris Haynes for many years to come; this paper made a huge impact on me as a reviewer for its depth of content. Would I purchase this text or recommend it … outside of a library resource centre possibly, it does contain some very good material. Definitely I recommend it for a resource centre. No doubt the reviewed text will be quoted by many in their industry substantiating what they do. The work by Keen, Redmond and Skyring, Young, Gibson, and Haynes I enjoyed with much pleasure. They alone are worth reading this important addition to a body of research on the engagement of Aboriginal people in the European frontier, the settled history of Australia.

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Aboriginal Family and the State: The Conditions of History by Sally Babidge, xix + 269 pp, Ashgate, Farnham, United Kingdom and Burlington, Vermont, 2010, ISBN 9780754679356 (hbk), £60.00

This book is an updated version of Sally Babidge's award-winning doctoral dissertation (2004) which explored continuities and transformations in kinship practices amongst Indigenous people living in the major mining centre of Charters Towers and its hinterland in north Queensland. Most of the people with whom the author worked live in a post-pastoral work era where the memories of that industry, together with their marginalised participation in a fossicking economy, form an essential part of many people's self-regard. However, the local domestic economy is now mostly based upon state transfers with occasional additional income injections coming from cultural heritage protection agreements in the extensive mining exploration areas. Expertly deploying the classical anthropological method of sustained, fine-grained participant-observation in conjunction with a thorough review of the documentary record, Babidge gained an acute appreciation of the powerful historical forces coming to bear upon a fiercely administered Indigenous population, subjected until at least the mid-1970s to life under Queensland's draconian *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* with its regime of random punitive removals of adults and children to other far-off settlements (such as Palm Island, Yarrabah and Woorabinda), its Kafkaesque intensive bureaucratic surveillance, and the ensuing marginalisation of local Aboriginal people from the mainstream economic and political life of the town.

Babidge paints a portrait of a distinctive and now highly mobile Aboriginal population situated within a wider socio-cultural region which at the time of her fieldwork was on the cusp of the massive economic and political transformations brought about by the renewed minerals boom currently reshaping the face of northern Australia more generally. For the Aboriginal people of Charters Towers, this new phase of the mineral boom exploded in the years immediately following Babidge's field work and has brought some new employment opportunities, encouraged the rise of some Aboriginal contracting businesses, but also made the cost of living, especially housing, much higher and made the continuation of Aboriginal housing co-operatives an even more essential element of the accommodation problem.

Babidge found that the social meaning of the local term 'family' in the Charters Towers area is used polysemically to refer to 'a number of different sets of, but overlapping, relations' (p. 101) which differentiates the local notion of 'family' between the shifting and labile nature of people's every day economic, political and social relationships, on the one hand, and, on the other, the descent-based 'family constructs' which gain prominence in organised political forums (such as native title claimant groups and other corporate-type aggregates), which rely upon descent connections to legitimate (a very limited) participation in natural resource management. As Babidge acknowledges, despite the analytical

value of the distinction between everyday bilateral relatedness vis a vis 'family structures', no clear division is sustainable between these two types of sociality because 'people bring the politics of everyday relations into organised politics, and draw the processes and outcomes of organised politics into their living arrangements' (p. 128). Babidge demonstrates how keenly felt obligations are a critical component of the contemporary social world but also allow a filtering of demands from kin so that more or less stable groupings of familial sets are maintained within the larger polity. This has important implications for managing the demands made upon the kin group and their rights and interests in land and its resources in the contemporary era. Babidge shows that while her subjects' kinship arrangements somewhat resemble Peter Sutton's description of Aboriginal cognatic 'families of polity' in other parts of heavily-settled Australia, this model alone could not capture the complexity through which relatedness is performed and experienced. Babidge is critical of a stream of British social anthropology which over-valued descent structures (seen as having 'jural status', i.e. a public significance which transcends the concerns of the individuals involved) vis a vis kinship (characterised by the less formal significations accorded to more private, familial relationships). Babidge found that anthropological models which focused attention upon corporate group membership at the expense of the multi-faceted demands of everyday kinship, commonly fail to take account of how individuals negotiate their involvement in group interactions and decision-making.[1] To be fair to Sutton, he is clear that all kinship relationships, from the most informal and seemingly contingent to the more structured, cognatic surnamed family, possess certain jural qualities because kinship always involves a public dimension in that it relies on recognition from a 'wider polity' and is never simply a biological aggregation of persons.[2] In Sutton's model, 'families of polity' always mix 'both ideology and action, and of the mix of Aboriginal people's models with their observable behaviour'.[3]

An over emphasis on the primacy of public, jural descent structures over more private and domestic kinship relations is, of course, not simply a product of British social anthropological models (which actually recognised the dynamic relationship between everyday, agentive kinship practices and indigenous ideologies of jural descent quite early on)[4] nor of traditional Indigenous ideologies about these topics. Babidge shows how corporate entities are often elicited and solidified in response to the focus on descent structures by the state itself which seeks out well defined, bounded groups with which to negotiate over native title rights and interests, eliciting the kinds of groups it needs to do this in response. That this is the case is demonstrated by the fact that while federal government agencies often elicit broad regional indigenous groupings that mirror the requirements of its legislation and procedures, State and local jurisdictions commonly elicit more compact, localised groupings.

1 For a discussion of the 'optative' elements of Aboriginal kinship, see also Sutton 2003: 214-216.
2 Sutton 2003: 208.
3 Sutton 2003: 210.
4 Evans-Pritchard 1940; Fortes 1953: 165.

In common with many other transactional models of small-scale gift/service economies,[5] Babidge follows Gaynor Macdonald's argument that in local giving/receiving/demanding processes the 'focus is on the relationship rather than the object'.[6] It is worth considering, though, whether a too exclusive emphasis on the exchange relationship as distinct from the gifted object/service, might not continue to over-dichotomise the exchange process, especially in a regime where the state has traditionally maintained an extremely tight rein on the local distribution of things, from rations, blankets and clothes in the early settlement and mission era to welfare dollars in the present.

In this otherwise excellent book, I found the discussion of intra-kin conflict was somewhat muted compared to the discussion of the early settler versus Aboriginal conflict and the effects of contemporary intra-group Aboriginal battles over native title group membership and housing allocation. Kin-based conflict has formed an essential part of the discussion of kinship in other important works on this subject in Aboriginal Australia, some written by field-work co-evals of Babidge,[7] and others which are a generation or two older.[8] I wondered if this muting might be seen as contributing some substance to the recent round of accusations that anthropologists have failed to describe and analyse violently conflictual conditions in contemporary Aboriginal settlement life. Ultimately Babidge's work is too fine-grained and ethnographically rigorous to be diminished by that kind of topical characterisation but the book might have still have achieved a little more in this regard. This book remains highly recommended reading for those working in intensely settled areas of Australia where the distinctiveness of Indigenous kinship practices is too easily overlooked.

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The Secret War: A True History of Queensland's Native Police by Jonathan Richards, 308pp, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2008, ISBN 9780702236396 (pbk), $39.95

The Queensland Native Police are a curious outlier in the history of Australian settlement; whereas for much of the twentieth century the story of frontier violence between Aboriginal people and settlers largely disappeared from national history, accounts of the operations of the Queensland Native Police were surprisingly persistent. I recently came across an article from a 1914 issue of *The Queenslander* which praised the European officers of the Native Police, who were 'always on the side of justice and propriety', but then revelled in their violent reputation, something explained away by the actions of the 'black police', that 'constabulary of half-tamed savages' who were the 'ruthless arm of the law'. Accounts such as this, Jonathan Richards tells us, were characteristic of the literature about the Queensland Native Police until the 1960s. Produced by 'journalists, novelists and popular historians', these accounts perpetuated romantic stereotypes and had an eye for the sensational. Richards' study is an important corrective.

It would have been easy to write a narrative of the rise and fall of the force, but Richards chooses instead to give us an almost sociological study which cross-sections the constitution and operations of the force. Early chapters detail the formation of the force and its operations on the Queensland frontier. Against claims that such a story could not be told because the records had been lost or destroyed, Richards digs deep into the archives, especially inquest files, and constructs a detailed and convincing picture of their activities. Like Tony Roberts in his recent study of violence in the Gulf country, *Frontier Justice*, Richards is also sensitive to the way in which secrecy was a structural imperative of the force. The tension between the formal role of police as 'upholders of the law', and their understood role as 'a retaliatory force, not a preventive one', is expertly explored, as are the consequences of this on the ways the frontier was reported and remembered. Richards explains that among the various frontier myths that circulated was a belief, accepted as fact by some writers, that a settler could get a 'licence to kill' Aboriginal people. The 1914 account of the Native Police in the above-cited edition of *The Queenslander* perpetuates this very myth. The surviving son of a massacred family, we are told, went to Brisbane where the authorities gave him a 'rifle and free leave to return to the district and shoot as many blackfellows as he could manage'. The 'licence to kill', as Richards' clearly shows, was a myth, but the message encoded in the myth, retold with such nonchalance, is disturbing indeed.

The book also provides a detailed examination of both European and Aboriginal service in the force; the backgrounds of the officers and men of the force, the organisation of the rank and file, and the disciplinary issues that were faced. I was somewhat surprised at the number of European officers who were charged with offences, indeed, offences against Aboriginal people, but as Richards

demonstrates, this was not so much an indicator of the forces transparency, as it was of these officers' failure to maintain its opacity. The sections detailing how Aboriginal people were recruited, and their relationship to the European officers who commanded them, is especially valuable for teasing out the complexities of service in this colonial paramilitary force. The chapter which examines the Native Police in the context of other comparable colonial forces is a reminder of how commonplace it was within empires to use Indigenous people themselves to help in the subjugation of their own people, and to serve the ends of 'empire building'.

In this excellent study Richards not only provides us with a meticulous account of the operations of the force, skilfully unpicks the myths surrounding them, but he also aids our understanding by placing them in a broader imperial context.

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The Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina by Peter Beveridge, xxxiv + 221 pp, Lowden Publishing Co, Donvale, Victoria, 2008, ISBN 9781920753085 (pbk), $45.00

I remember the morning as overcast when we gathered on the veranda at Tyntynder homestead, a group of Mallee primary school-children on our day out to Swan Hill, a trip made by so many like us for decades. This trip was undertaken by generations of local people and undoubtedly influenced their views: the impressiveness of the colonial buildings at Tyntynder was offset by the exotica of the artefact collections. All was overshadowed by the stories told of the killing of Andrew Beveridge by what were deemed 'treacherous local Aborigines'. Versions of that received narrative would have coloured the reception of the first edition, in 1889, of the work under review, and will shape the reception of this second edition, though likely in quite a different manner.

The family of who was to be the long lamented Andrew Beveridge ran Tyntynder and other pastoral stations both downstream and inland from Swan Hill for over 30 years from 1844. Peter Beveridge, Andrew's brother and the author of the present book, was the central figure in the family business for much of that period. Earlier clashes with local Aborigines had led to the killing of Andrew Beveridge, and these clashes continued for some years afterwards. Hostilities only ceased when a point was reached where – as a character in one of Peter Beveridge's fictional works said – the family 'tired of the slaughter'.[1] Conflict was not confined to struggles with the Aboriginal population, as the Beveridges also clashed in court with other pastoralists over occupation of the area where Swan Hill now stands, and armed stand-offs flared with other squatters in the 'back country' away from the Murray particularly in later years as pasturage became scarcer. All this followed on from the family being ordered by the colonial authorities in 1845 to leave the district they had just occupied: they had moved beyond the permitted boundaries of expansion! Ironically it was conflict within the Beveridge family on the back of drought and mismanagement that led to Peter Beveridge having to leave the region and then the remainder of the family sold their interests and severed their connection in 1876.

Peter Beveridge held status as a colonial gentleman as a result of this frontier pastoral experience and this was strengthened by his other attainments. He assisted a number of scientific expeditions to the mid-Murray region and corresponded widely. A collector of flora and fauna and ethnographic objects and member of a range of learned societies, he also pursued creative writing in addition to his better-known ethnographic writings. These writings, in common with his other work, stemmed from deep personal experience of the region where he spent the greater part of his life. His contact and engagement with Aboriginal people extended into forms of intimacy that stretched beyond the experience of most of his peers. He had travelled widely with Aboriginal people,

1 'John Fairfield, the Overlander: an Australian Story', MS, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

including during the years of violence before and after the killing of his brother. He had employed many of them on his pastoral stations and acted as their Local Guardian. This strong link with Aboriginal people is reflected in his writing.

Once retired and having moved 'down country', Peter Beveridge had enhanced opportunities of continuing the writing projects that he had pursued for many years. The major fruit of this period was a draft manuscript of *The Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina*, which was published posthumously in 1889. This first edition was generally very positively received, being reviewed as a work 'not to be missed' by 'those who take an interest in the Aborigines of this country'.[2] Peter Beveridge's work was rated higher than the works of R Brough Smyth (1878) and E Curr (1886–87) due to his more direct experience. His work could perhaps be better understood as it was based on more direct observations and greater sympathy, and was less detached in manner. Despite the standing in colonial society of Beveridge and his family this was no guaranteed outcome, as shown in an early survey of Australian literature where the work of his brother MK Beveridge, *Among Gum Trees*, was acknowledged as 'the first attempt to relate the legends of the aborigines in verse' but was dismissed not just on the basis of a negative view of the poetry, but also because 'the legends themselves are worth little'.[3] The message is clear: writings on Aboriginal people could form interesting curios but details of Aboriginal lore held little worth.

How then might the work be received by readers when perspectives on Aboriginal culture have much altered? As the work itself has undergone alteration those changes need to be considered initially. The recent edition contains additional material in the form of illustrations previously published in Brough Smyth's work and from *The Picturesque Atlas of Australasia* together with biographical notes on the artists concerned. The illustrations add to the volume though it may have been preferable to some readers at least to use illustrations more directly related to the region. It also contains a short biographical note on Beveridge himself from readily available sources which sketches his personal background without providing any particular new insight into his character or experience. The sketch errs also when listing his brothers as it overlooks his brother John. Another biographical note, this time on ML Hutchinson, the publisher of the first edition, follows before the main text. While many of these new additions add to the work – the retention of the inordinate number of typographical and textual errors from the first edition severely detract from it, and the readily recognisable errors in English usage and spelling should definitely have been removed.

In one instance at least a misprint leads to elucidation. The reference 'Tarp' in place of 'larp' highlights that particular section, a section that should be familiar to both ethnographers and entomologists. Beveridge is not referring to psyllids as we would expect nor is the cultural practice around gathering this 'larp' (more regularly spelt as 'lerp') what we might recognise. While surprising, this account has echoes of his observations on interaction of native flora and fauna

2 *The Argus*, 26 October 1889; *Kilmore Free Press*, 2 August 1889.
3 Alexander Sutherland, 'Australian literature in Its First Century', *The Argus*, 10 July 1886.

elsewhere in his writings and thus illustrates the depth of his knowledge even when particular accounts differ from other authorities. His account, though unfamiliar, deepens our knowledge in a way other accounts could not.

Despite the depth of his knowledge Beveridge often presents his material in ways that would be offensive to many readers today and which detract from his account more generally. He appears dismissive if not contemptuous of what he claims are the actions and motivations of Aboriginal people, for example in his account of venereal disease, yet he provides a strong amount of detail not found elsewhere. It is apparent that he is writing for a particular colonial audience in a way that will demonstrate his knowledge on the one hand, yet demonstrate detachment and superiority on the other. Such an approach would have confirmed his status and authority during his own era, whilst blocking criticism from those who dismissed the work of his brother Mitchell Kilgour Beveridge on the basis of it focusing on Aboriginal people, as noted above.

This inbuilt fault in his approach leads to great variation in the accuracy of his analysis of what he has seen and experienced and can obscure what is a consistently important layer of detail of practice rarely found elsewhere. His more pointed writings on topics of Aboriginal life, customs and beliefs found in newspaper accounts and journal articles can transcend these limitations but they are not available to the general reader. At times however his experience and admiration of the way Aboriginal people held to their beliefs breaks through his mannered superiority. Certainly his dialogic account of his own debates with Central Murray people on religious matters in Chapter XI shows greater generosity than some other parts of his work and also portrays Aboriginal people as the clear winners of the debate for those not convinced of the a priori superiority of Christianity. All sections of his work have similar depth of material and all are worthy of careful study.

Apart from reflexive dismissals of Beveridge's work on account of his involvement as a direct actor in frontier violence, or because of the offensive tone of his writing on Aboriginal people, his work might also be dismissed by some readers as that of one of the 'early ethnographers'. As such it would be classed with the work of AW Howitt, RH Mathews, John Mathew, Robert Brough Smyth and EM Curr and deemed of little worth due to a generalised 'lack of scientific rigour'. Such reactions appear to be declining and there is a thawing in attitude with substantive research being carried on in recent years on the works of John Mathew and RH Mathews. This is a positive development as in common with the work of his 'amateur' peers Beveridge's writings stem from informants who can be identified. Thus personal histories developed and regional ethnographies were re-created from observations made when the Indigenous communities of the areas in question were relatively little affected by the inroads of Europeans. Such re-creations require a depth of knowledge amply demonstrated by Beveridge and the other early ethnographers. That depth of knowledge is more than enough reason for readers of today to return again to works such as *The Aborigines of Victoria and Riverina*.

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Great Central State: The Foundation of the Northern Territory by Jack Cross, xii + 404pp, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, 2011, ISBN 9781862548770 (pbk), $39.95

In his 'author's note', Jack Cross tells us that his book 'is the result of forty years of detailed archival research concentrating on the period 1860 to 1911 and using, where possible, only primary or contemporary sources'. His basic theme is the creation and eventual dissolution of a South Australian dream during the period when that colony ruled the Northern Territory. The dream was of the Great Australian State, bestriding the continent from south to north; an Australian colossus, gateway to an unlimited Asian market for the pastoralists and businessmen of South Australia. Cross begins at the beginning, with a chapter on the origins of the dream, the confusion in the initial acquisition of the Northern Territory which saw its principal parliamentary opponents become the custodians of the lands they had never wanted and the efforts of constantly recycled parliamentary ministries to devise a feasible settlement plan. The next three chapters follow chronologically. Chapter 2 traces the fortunes and misfortunes of Boyle Travers Finniss and the 1864 expedition he led to Escape Cliffs with high hopes of founding a modified Wakefieldian empire, only to face fierce dissension among his own men and his Adelaide political masters, humiliating recall and the ultimate failure of the whole scheme in 1866. Chapter 3 covers the political turmoil of 1866 to 1869 which led ultimately to George Goyder's northern surveys and the founding of Palmerston town on the shores of Port Darwin, and the fourth chapter concentrates mainly on the early history of the town and its environs.

To this point, the book is carried by a broad mainstream of events centring on politics and major personalities in Adelaide and the effects of their policies – or the lack of them – on Territory land settlement and industry. Later chapters tend to be more diffuse. Chapter 5 discusses aspects of government attempts to create new hope in the languishing colony, through gold discovery and exploitation, followed by a laissez-faire policy, defined by the author as 'opening the floodgates of North Australia to South-East Asian migration and trade'. A third stream of hope lay in attempts to encourage the migration of religious groups; and this aspect, relating to Santals, Mennonites, Japanese and Jews, is the subject of Chapter 6. Chapter 7, 'Coming of the gauchos', deals with some aspects of pastoral colonisation, mainly in the 1880s and a final short chapter – more of a note – touches on events from that time until the Commonwealth takeover in 1911.

There is notable scholarship in this book and Jack Cross is at his best in tracing the motives and machinations of the Adelaide political class, the pastoralists and the speculators who formed the driving force behind both proponents and opponents of the Great Central State. Here, Cross' reliance on meticulous examination of primary and contemporary sources really pays off: the detail of political conflict and personal idiosyncrasy, particularly in the early chapters, is quite remarkable and is presented with clarity, plus a modicum of well-judged

dry (and often wry) wit. It is likely, though, that the main themes of the book could have been enhanced by consideration of the plethora of secondary sources that have grown up during recent years. It is difficult to judge how much Cross had read, since little of it appears in his footnotes and the book does not include a bibliography. Details of attempts to attract religious migrants to the Territory and accounts of early pastoral treks are fascinating, but they do seem to be more of a diversion than a continuation of the main theme; and the complicated story of the dream's end, the Commonwealth/South Australian negotiations for transfer to the former in 1911 are barely touched upon.

Perhaps the most notable omission in the book is analysis of Aboriginal dispossession in the pursuit of the white man's vision. 'No attempt has been made', writes Cross, 'to analyse the response of the indigenous peoples to the invasion of their country by rootless nomadic outsiders except at the most descriptive level'. That, at least, is a refreshingly honest assessment of the invaders – and Cross makes it clear that he does not wish to impinge on the right of Aboriginal people to write their own history. His empirical descriptions of massacre and dispossession may be sparse but they are blunt; 'And so the intermittent war went on', he says, 'with the scales gradually tilting towards those with superior technology'. The process of power acquisition, oppression and exploitation of conquered peoples may be a constant in world history; yet never morally justified and Jack Cross would not have it so.

The book's diction is lucid. The book is well illustrated, cogently argued, competently referenced with few errors, and it will certainly become essential reading for all who wish to understand South Australia's role in the Northern Territory.

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Nharangga Wargunni Bugi-Buggillu: A Journey Through Narungga History by Skye Krichauff, xi + 203 pp, Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association and Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2011, ISBN 9781862549104 (hbk), $39.95

This book has an interesting genesis based on a Masters thesis and written for the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association. The author, Skye Krichauff, sets out to write the early contact history of the Narungga of Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. Surprisingly, the colonial process through the nineteenth century generated a very limited amount of archival material. The period under investigation was too far back to be accessible through oral accounts, so Krichauff was left with a historical record which gave her the bare outline of events but frustratingly little detail. She has on the whole done an admirable job of presenting a history which reflects both sides of the colonial encounter from the earliest seafaring explorers who sighted the Yorke Peninsula coastline in the early nineteenth century to the establishment of a Christian mission, Point Pearce, in the 1860s.

Although the book has a slightly polemical tone, Krichauff tries, I think successfully, to present an even-handed account of both the Narungga and the early explorers and colonisers. She argues that through the nineteenth century the Narungga were in control of their own lives and made informed decisions about how to relate to the people who gradually came to occupy their lands. This historical approach is not as novel as Krichauff implies (the footnotes, there is no bibliography, do not reflect a wide reading of Australian colonial history), nevertheless, she makes her point well and on the whole convincingly. The Narungga, unlike the Kaurna, their neighbours on the Adelaide plains, were not inundated by large numbers of settlers. The colonisation of Yorke Peninsula was gradual and dispersed. The men who came to the peninsula were on the whole willing to accommodate themselves to the Narungga, who in turn did not act aggressively towards the interlopers. The period of violent conflict was very brief compared to many other regions of Australia, lasting less than a year, (apart from a couple of later incidents). Krichauff assumes that the Narungga were so isolated from the rest of Aboriginal Australia that they were unaware of the Kaurna experience and that they dealt with the colonisers on a one by one basis. Some on the southern coastal regions may have been influenced by whalers and sealers coming to their shores to take women, although there is little documentary evidence that they did so, but otherwise Krichauff does not reflect on the wider colonial context.

My main concern with the approach Krichauff takes is in her attempt to, 'provide colour and tone to the emerging picture, [she] seized on and interpreted clues and used conjecture and imagination' (p. 7). The result is a rather speculative approach to history. It seems rather presumptuous to guess at Narungga motivations, especially in the early days of contact. Occasionally the speculation seems ill informed, for instance, where she wonders if the Narungga men might have expected a survey party to supply them with women (p. 42), rather than

speculating why these strange men seemed to be without women. This conjectural tone is even used where Krichauff does have evidence. Sometimes Krichauff adopts the language of her sources referring to Narungga chiefs and assuming the Narungga would have viewed early exploring parties as hierarchical, even though their own experience was of non-hierarchical socio-political system.

At other points in this history Krichauff's approach works well. Her handling of the violence which erupted in 1849 is empathetic, particularly her analysis of settler interests. She accumulates an impressive range of data from diverse sources in her discussion of a man known as Jim Crack who was an interpreter and police guide and as such appears more regularly in the records than other most other Narungga.

The book ends with the establishment of Point Pearce mission by a Moravian missionary Julius Kuhn. Again Krichauff tries to be even-handed in her discussion of Kuhn and Narungga responses to him, but her analysis would be helped by a wider reading of the extensive secondary literature on missions in Australia where she would find that current scholarship considers Aboriginal as well as missionary motivations behind the formation of missions.

The book is handsomely presented with paintings by Edward Snell and William Cawthorne on the cover. The Contents, however, lacks a list of illustrations and maps used in the book, and rather inexplicably some illustrations lack captions. A bibliography would also be helpful for the reader.

Skye Krichauff with the support of the Narungga Aboriginal Progress Association has filled a gap in our knowledge of early South Australian colonial history in *Nharangga Wargunni Bugi-Buggillu*, and reminds us that we should never assume that all colonial history followed predictable trajectories. She discovered the Narungga were able to live on at least some of their lands relatively independently through much of the nineteenth century, although by the twentieth century their numbers were sadly depleted and they no longer inhabited the southern part of the peninsula.

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Rethinking the Racial Moment: Essays on the Colonial Encounter edited by Alison Holland and Barbara Brookes, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2011, ISBN 9781443828628 (hbk), £39.99

This valuable collection invites readers to engage with the ways that 'moments' can reveal the workings and limits of imperial and colonial power. In a really useful introduction, Alison Holland sets out the context for the collection she has edited with Barbara Brookes, pointing to shifts in global politics post 9/11 and ensuing critical responses – including from historians interested in the genealogies of globalising systems such as the formation of racial difference. Seeking to extend the idea of the 'racial moment' as described in *Race and Nation* edited by Paul Spickard (Routledge, 2005), Holland argues for the application of a more active and diverse notion: that of 'racialising moments' as a methodology for the critical investigation of racial difference. Rather than fundamental or essential categories, the formations of whiteness, Indigeneity and other racial formations are thereby revealed as they were lived: in process, never complete, always relational and contextual, and often contradictory.

With its focus on Australia and New Zealand, *Rethinking the Racial Moment* provides a satisfying combination of interconnection and comparison with diversity. The trans-colonial conference on which the collection is based helps to break the nexus between metropole and colony, or indeed between white and black, that has often characterised colonial history. Similarly, by looking beyond simplistic notions of whiteness or non-whiteness, it asks us to reconsider the complexities of colonial encounters in relational mode; to realise that racial formation was a fragile and sometimes contradictory process. And, thirdly, through applying a global approach to investigating these operations on both sides of the frontier, the collection offers a really exciting set of studies exemplary both for their fine-tuned analysis and for their capacity to look outwards from the archives towards the global geo-politics of past and present.

Contributions range from Hsu-Ming Teo's evocative study of early nineteenth romantic fiction as a racialising moment in relation to European literary representations of the Orient to Tony Ballantyne's insightful investigation of the cosmopolitan maritime culture in New Zealand in the 1850s and 1860s on the cusp of systemic colonisation. A consummate discussion by Angela Woollacott concerns the role that employment of unfree labour played in confirming the free status of white settlers in Australia and New Zealand. While through his study of a leading white male settler in the same era (Alfred Howitt), Leigh Boucher sets out in compelling detail the ways in which a biographical approach can illustrate the fragmented and contingent ways in which settler colonialism has been lived and experienced, and how marginalised figures such as wives and daughters, as well as Indigenous people, have been material to the capacity of its key men. Vicki Grieves draws from family memories of loss in the face of colonisation to consider Indigenous family formations despite the impacts of an inter-colonial discourse of slavery through which white men's property

rights included Aboriginal women and their off-spring as future labour force. Turning again to New Zealand, Barbara Brookes investigates the campaigns of Maori leaders in the interwar years influenced by hegemonic ideas about racial purity. Understanding themselves to be like white men with whom they shared Aryan ancestry, they argued also against sexual relations between 'their' women and Asian men on the grounds of racial contamination. Similarly, Alison Holland writes persuasively of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal utilisations of ideas of uplift in her study of the Yurtookee Club in Adelaide in the 1940s in order to uncover the diverse ways in which Aboriginal and humanitarian politics interacted within that project. Another of the outstanding chapters in this collection is by Rani Kerin who interrogates the humanitarian investment in the idea of Aboriginality through the multiplicity of racial moments in the life of an Aboriginal boy, Sydney James Cook adopted by Christian reform and Aboriginal rights activists, the Duguids (Phyllis Duguid was involved also in Yurtookee). The final chapter offers a fascinating study of the term 'indigenous' as applied by liberal imperialists to the particular rights of 'natives' under international law, and its implications for the emergence of global indigenism in the second half of the twentieth century. Tim Rowse concludes that non-racial notions of Indigenous cultural difference within Western non-racial thought were as influential in the emergence of this political movement as the history of Indigenous self-assertion itself.

One of the central features of the collection is the contributors' assumption that Indigenous perspectives are integral to the kind of history they write. Drawing on whiteness studies, transnational feminist scholarship, postcolonial studies, Indigenous history and critical imperial history, although they cover a wide-range of topics each illustrates how racialising moments have been specific sites with sometimes diverse and contradictory effects, including those articulated and enacted by 'the colonised' themselves. Under the rubric of this interrogative framework, their contributions provide a wonderfully engaging snapshot of new settler colonial history in Australia and New Zealand. It is possible that more might have been said about the spatial aspect of contact history, including where violence rather than accommodation dominates. Obviously racialising moments are locations in time and space as well as representational 'spaces' in which 'notions of racial privilege and subordination are marked, transformed and appropriated on both sides of the colonial divide' (p. 9). But aside from this concern, *Rethinking the Racial Moment* is highly recommended as a volume for teaching as well as one to be enjoyed by readers eager to sample some of the most innovative and well-written history coming out of Australia and New Zealand in recent years.

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