

## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Erratum*

Vol 13 p. 157. The price of *Australians: A historical atlas* should read \$720 the set, not \$270

*Ivory scales: black Australia and the law.* Kayleen M. Hazlehurst ed. University of New South Wales Press, Sydney. Pp. xx + 291, bibliographies, index. \$19.95 .pb.

*Ivory scales* is a collection of 15 essays by different authors focusing largely, to use the editor's words 'on the contemporary functional and dysfunctional aspects of criminal law in its application to black Australians'. The topics covered include, among others, the high Aboriginal imprisonment rate (John Walker, Fay Gale and Joy Wundersitz), the viability of Aboriginal community justice mechanisms (Nancy Williams), the difficulties Aborigines face when interrogated by the police (John Coldrey).

The editor, Kayleen Hazlehurst, an anthropologist and Senior Research Officer for the Institute of Criminology, has carefully balanced the contributions of lawyers, Michael Kirby, James Crawford, Garth Nettheim, John Coldrey, Peter Hennessy, Mary Fisher and John McCorquodale with those of non-lawyers; geographers Fay Gale and Joy Wundersitz, anthropologists Nancy Williams and Dorothy Parker, criminologists John Walker and Greta Bird, educators David Hope and Roderick Broadhurst.

There are several common threads linking all the authors and the editor. Firstly, each has spent a substantial part of her/his professional life working on what can be broadly categorised as Aboriginal justice issues. Certainly none can be accused of being an 'instant expert'. Secondly, the authors are highly regarded and, in the main, very senior members of their respective professions. Their views are influential - even if not always acted on - in the corridors of power. Thirdly; they are all non-Aboriginal.

No doubt all of the authors considers herself-himself to be 'pro-Aboriginal'. Certainly most of the authors have tried to use their professional expertise to benefit the Aboriginal community. One example, from among many that could be cited, is Professor Nettheim's consistent work exposing the iniquitous abuse of human rights for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland.

The editor is to be congratulated for ensuring that all the articles are attractively presented and clearly written in a style accessible to Higher School Certificate and college students. This is fortunate as the main market for this book is likely to be in that area. At last many schools and colleges have Aboriginal studies as a course in its own right or as a segment of other courses, but there is still a lack of well written, accurate course materials. The extract from a police record of interview (pp.83-84) graphically demonstrates an Aboriginal murder suspect's total inability to comprehend the caution. This is the type of material a non-Aboriginal lecturer needs to bring home to non-Aboriginal students, the magnitude of the disadvantage suffered by Aboriginal suspects in police custody (although an interesting class discussion could follow comparing the probable responses to police questioning from other disempowered sections of the community)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pat Carlen, *Magistrates' Justice*. London 1976.

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Existing specialists in the 'Aboriginal industry' will find little new material in many of the contributions, especially those from Garth Nettheim on the norms of international law applicable to Aboriginal peoples and from James Crawford, Peter Hennessey and Mary Fisher on the Australian Law Reform Commission's proposals for the recognition of Aboriginal customary law. The book's main value to such specialists is the ease of reference in collecting so many useful articles on the same broad theme into one volume.

All readers, whether raw students or specialists, are likely to agree with Mr Justice Kirby when he states in his foreword:

Any fair reader of these pages will put this book down with a sense of disquiet, and even shame at the way the Australian legal system had operated in relation to Aboriginal Australia.

Whilst the book effectively provides data on recent developments, such as Nancy Williams' account of community justice mechanisms for the Yolgnu at Yirrkala, it is sadly but not surprisingly inadequate at pinpointing the underlying changes that are needed before non-Aboriginal Australians can cease to feel 'disquiet, and even shame'. Dorothy Parker claims that 'on the whole it is unlikely that most lawyers will be sympathetic to the pursuit of major structural change...in broader political and economic relations'. The contributions to *Ivory scales* are all written by professionals, and this harsh criticism almost certainly extends to the non-lawyer contributors.

Nettheim came close to recognising the need for major structural changes in the conclusion to his article: 'the claims of Aboriginal people on Australia are claims on our sense of justice, not on our sense of charity. They will not be met by handouts'. The changes he was advocating were those in the Holding Resolution of 1983 - but this never went as far as accepting the Aboriginal right to self-determination.

The editor, significantly, notes that Euro-Australian government and service delivery administration for Aborigines has moved into that stage of 'autonomy/accommodation', but clarifies this as the 'growing recognition that still more autonomy should be *granted* to Indigenous Australians' (emphasis added).

Increasingly, indigenous peoples around the world are claiming the *right* to autonomy, such a right flowing from their conviction that they are sovereign peoples and as such entitled to self-determination. There are cogent legal and moral arguments in support of this view.

*Ivory scales* is a useful collection of essays that should be found in all college libraries. The danger is that so far there is no equally accessible and well-produced book presenting materials written by Aborigines themselves arguing the right to autonomy.<sup>2</sup> So unless lecturers place articles written in publications such as *Land Rights News* on reading lists students are likely to complete Aboriginal Studies courses without realising that the *right* to autonomy is being claimed by Aborigines in Australia.

The University of New South Wales is the home of the Aboriginal Law Centre. I hope that the University of New South Wales Press, which published this book will soon publish a companion volume, thus giving the Aboriginal movement the chance to present its view alongside those of the academically prestigious contributors to this book.

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<sup>2</sup> This debate is canvassed by various articles in *Bulletin of the Australian Society of Legal Philosophy* 1985; however this journal is not accessible to most students and the articles are not written by Aborigines. An excellent article written by the Aboriginal author Darryl Cronin is 'Land rights: is that all we really want?' in *Land Rights News*, September.1988.

*Black diggers.* By Robert A. Hall. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989. Pp. xv, 228, +. Bibliography, index. \$19.95 p.b.

How many Australians realise that possibly more Aboriginal people were in the northern front line during World War Two than white civilians, and that remote communities were bombed and suffered casualties? Or that one Torres Strait Islander in every four of the entire population served in the armed forces, one of them, Kamuel Abednego, a commissioned officer in the United States Army? Some 3000 Aborigines enlisted, often in the face of provocative difficulties imposed by changing regulations or discriminatory recruiting officers. A further 3000 people worked closely with the services as civilian labour. In addition, possibly 250 more performed vital patrol and other military duties in remote areas. Not only were they unpaid and lacking any formal standing, but until 1961 the public was ignorant of the service performed by such (very) irregular units (pp.111-12).

All Australians must be made aware of the contents of this critical, yet unpretentious pioneering study, while it should be compulsory reading for senior military command. That this carefully documented study is written by a serving army Major associated with the Australian Defence Force Academy, is an encouraging sign that the modern services possess an integrity so lacking half a century ago. Sections of Major Hall's book are a damning indictment of senior military command for its racist assumptions and decisions, although these were matched by many senior native affairs administrators. Brigadier E.M. Dollery, officer in charge of Northern Territory Force, stands out as a man with genuine humanitarian concern and foresight, whose progressive ideas were doomed by his seniors. He merits greater attention.

Aboriginal people's role in the war is a classic example of Stanner's 'conspiracy of silence'. While Papuan 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels' achieved patronising acclaim, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contributions rarely signified. Until Hall's book stirred consciences, the Australian War Memorial ignored their fundamentally national role. Although the RSL praised Aboriginal veterans after the war, it appears to have forgotten its worthy intentions today. Hall found that even contemporary newspapers ignored what should have been significant items (pp.29-30). The Torres Strait Islanders were never mentioned either in the Melbourne *Argus* or the *Sydney Morning Herald*, while the latter carried only eight articles throughout the war's duration, referring to Aboriginal participation, only one of them concerning an enlisted man.

Hall's initiative has opened a rich vein for future investigation. The following themes of great relevance to indigenous history are amongst those meriting more intensive research. In the first place, more needs to be said about Aborigines in World War One. The army high command in 1939 ignored their previous service record, and in its prejudice assumed that 'normal' diggers would refuse to serve with them; no expert advice was sought. Even late in the war, when Dollery and Major W. Groves, Deputy Assistant Director of (Army) Education and a professional anthropologist, proffered sensible advice for future policy, it was rejected. Senior officers also ignored the reality that the 'normal' troops and Aborigines, whether enlisted men or civilian labourers, enjoyed mutually good relations, even if tinged with patronising racist sentiments.

Senior Command also acted arbitrarily without any consideration of consequences for local people. Despite strong protests from the local naval commander, all Torres Strait Islands luggers were impounded, beached and made ready for burning for the anticipated Japanese invasion (p.36). The population was left without means of fishing or trading, with dire consequences for health. Decisions by Lieutenant-General Gordon Bennett were

equally heavy-handed, when he rejected the sage advice of his commander in the Kimberleys (p.110).

Fears that Aborigines would assist the enemy seemed inbred in senior command, and an army Intelligence Officer was asked to report on security in Cape York. That they chose a man from the Gulf country probably explains the racism and nonsense in his report. Even though the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland labelled it 'false and malicious', there was a strong possibility that all Aborigines would have been evacuated from Cape York (pp.119-22). Already Hope Vale Lutheran Mission had been the target of army Intelligence. The missionary was interned and the community transported by truck convoy to Woorabinda, 1000 km away. Of the 235 persons involved, sixty died within ten months (p.116).

Control of Western Australian Aborigines was no less draconian or panic-ridden (pp.122-32). Hall adds much new evidence to Peter Biskup's account of the war years in *Not slaves not citizens*. H.I. Bray, the Commissioner of Native Affairs, appears moderate at times in comparison with army decisions. Consider the following statements by Bray, however, and judge his fitness for his post.

1. Concerning his *approval* of 'corrective discipline' (1941?): 'elsewhere, except in Germany, I doubt whether methods such as these have been adopted in dealing with the forced labour of natives...' (p.24).
2. Concerning opposition to an Aboriginal military unit (1942): 'a corps would...disturb the peaceful employment conditions of the Kimberleys, and possibly station owners would be bereft of their ordinary labour requirements' (p.108).
3. Concerning claims by communists (1944): 'that the natives possess an intelligent capacity, but you know as well as I do that this is not so, and their future rests mainly in the hands of a benevolent and sympathetic white administration' (p.128).

The missions do not emerge unscathed, as instances occur where local concerns (chiefly control over Aborigines) conflicted with the best interests of the Aborigines and with the undoubted wartime emergency. Cases where Aborigines were hired for labour, but all wages were paid to the central mission authority, and where 'light' duties included heavy manual labour, seem difficult to defend (e.g. pp.169, 174-6).

While missionaries and pastoralists tended to emphasise the bad consequences of the military presence for Aboriginal society, Hall's unbiased study reveals positive aspects. Of particular relevance was the marked increase in employment. Whether labour was paid or unpaid, generous rations improved diet for entire families. Further research should test the claim (p.144) that the crime rate at Alice Springs declined by seventy-five per cent. R. and C. Berndt's *End of an era* (1987) presumably appeared after the book was completed, but it includes further important material relating to these social issues.

Hall accepts at face value an army source, that communal cooking improved health (p.150). Whether it was the mass kitchen, or simply better fare, is another matter. Was this the influence upon the later Northern Territory administration which produced the massive and socially unfortunate communal facilities at Maningrida? The situation at Alice Springs is neglected by Hall. To judge from the comments by Vic Hall in *Outback policeman* (1976, pp.198-200) conditions there in the Native Labour Camp merit investigation.

Surely one of the saddest social aspects touched on by Hall concerns the personal history of many returned veterans, who so soon became forgotten second-class citizens. The most depressing example of what might have been, must be Warrant Officer Leonard Waters, from Queensland. He enlisted in the RAAF as groundstaff. By dint of solid study he improved his rudimentary education and qualified for aircrew, graduating fourth in a class of forty-eight. This must have entitled him to a commission, but even after 95 operational

sorties as a fighter pilot, that promotion did not eventuate. Keen to start an aerial taxi service after his discharge, he lacked necessary finance, so he reverted to his former life as a shearer (pp.62-4).

There is interesting new material on Donald Thomson's wartime career, illustrated by some of his valuable photographs. In ongoing research, I hope to shed more light on Thomson's failure to receive funding, possibly due to a miscarriage of justice. The account here needs elaboration (p.87). Hall uses Thomson's name for the people, Balamumu (p.100), but this term would not gain acceptance today.

This well-illustrated book is one of the most significant contributions to Aboriginal history within recent years. I noted typing errors only on pp.76, 138, 143, 147. The format is pleasing and the text is clear, interesting, but disturbing.

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*For their own good: Aborigines and government in the Southwest of Western Australia 1900-1940.* By Anna Haebich. University of Western Australia Press for the Charles and Joy Staples South West Region Publications Fund Committee, Nedlands, 1988. Reprinted 1989. Pp.413. Illustrations, maps, index, bibliography. \$17.50 p.b.

This powerful book is the published version of Dr Haebich's PhD thesis 'A bunch of caste-offs: Aborigines of the Southwest of Western Australia, 1900-1936'. Haebich explains that she undertook the topic at the suggestion of Nyoongar researchers, who maintained that the recording of family histories, which she had originally intended, was an Aboriginal prerogative. Instead, the researchers guided her 'to the task of unravelling the tragic sequence of events which devastated their community early this century'. Haebich has completed the task with meticulous care and in enormous detail. The result is a description of events and policies quite as terrible as anything which occurred elsewhere in Australia in the same period. The picture justifies the assertion that Western Australia has been, unnoticed by the other states, the hidden villain of Aboriginal history.

Haebich begins her account with a description of Aboriginal agricultural farms at the turn of the century and their gradual decline, partly through the farmers' failure to meet the conditions of occupancy, but more because of the Whites' desire for their properties. She pursues the 1905 Aborigines Act in some detail, with good reason since it remained the oppressive guiding principle and justification for acts of bureaucratic cruelty for the following three decades. We follow the rise and fall of Carrolup Native Settlement, the fringe and town camps of Perth and of the wheat belt. The infamous Moore River settlement, founded in 1918, receives the attention of several sections and the chapter entitled 'institutional life' details the hideous life of the inmates, almost all of whom had been moved there by force. Of all Australia's Aboriginal settlements, Moore River seems to have come closest to the 'one big reserve' concept, often suggested by mercifully seldom attempted.

After World War One, discrimination in schools, employment, facilities and housing put an end to many of the traditional, but unofficial, living areas in the southwest. Nor was there anywhere else to go except to Carrolup and Moore River. Nyoongars came last in the ordering of preferred settlers: the priorities were returned Australian soldiers, returned British

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soldiers, munition workers, civilians, and last of all Aborigines. A constant disregard for law undermined even the provisions of the 1905 Act. Haebich, using many verbatim accounts, outlines instances of families taken without warning by the police and sent away to Moore River, minus horses and dogs, to a terrible diet, flourbag clothes, little work for the adults and little schooling for the children. At Laverton, Nyoongars were decoyed into the police station with an offer of free food, then immediately locked up for transportation to the settlement. There a fifteen-year-old girl was imprisoned for a total of sixty-four days in a year, in a tiny windowless hut known as 'the boob', for repeatedly absconding to rejoin her family. Throughout the period the Aborigines Department bore much more relationship to the administration of an army of occupation than to an instrument of a peaceful and democratic state. It is fortunate for white Australians that the Nyoongars were not numerically strong enough to take forcible measures to oppose the ceaseless oppression which they endured for so long. Surely they were entitled to do so.

Instead the Nyoongar leaders, particularly the Harris family, combined in orderly protest to try to interest the press, white supporters and the government in their predicament by use of the petition and the delegation. They met with little success, though they may have been influential in the general increase in the criticism of the Department in the middle 1920s which culminated in the Mosely Royal Commission of 1934. Even then their evidence, along with much else, was discounted in Mosely's bland recommendations. The resulting 1936 Native Administration Act was worse than that of 1905, since the definition of Aboriginality was broadened to include almost everybody of Aboriginal descent, and there were much more stringent rules about cohabitation. Haebich is cool towards the achievements of Chief Protector Neville's autocratic reign from 1915 to 1940.

In an epilogue Haebich finds that forty years had brought no improvement in the lives of the 3000 Nyoongars in the south. 'Most were trapped in a cycle of poverty characterised by long periods of unemployment, deplorable living conditions, malnutrition, disease and premature death'.

*For their own good* was deservedly the joint winner of the Western Australian Week Literary Awards for the best work of non-fiction. Haebich has complete mastery over academic, official and personal sources. In her use of oral material she provides yet another lesson, if one were needed, that oral history is much better used simply like any other historical source and not agonised about. She is sympathetic towards the Nyoongars, and, unlike many writers who have not spent enough time talking to Aborigines, keeps the information about the white officials to a minimum. Elsewhere the relation of this book to the earlier thesis is a little too apparent. Fifty pages of detail might profitably have been cut. For instance, the Aborigines Act Amendment Bill of 1929 receives four pages, but since the Bill was defeated, the section could have been omitted altogether.

Haebich writes dispassionately and with very little comment from herself, evidently believing that the facts are quite appalling enough to speak for themselves. Here she follows Manning Clark's advice that a good historian is like a bus driver, who having chosen the route, then allows the passengers to observe whatever they want out the windows without comment. My own preference has generally been to grab the microphone at intervals to explain to the passengers my version of what they have just seen. Thus I felt a little flat on reading Haebich's rather prosaic, though tragically accurate, epilogue. I would have liked a little more guidance from her, perhaps a summary at the end of every chapter of what had been the themes, the undercurrents, or the moral issues raised. This history, better than any other regional history, explains exactly what life was like for Nyoongars of the period, and the picture is so bad that I felt the need for something stronger, or more poetic, or more reflective, than this sentence from the last paragraph: 'Discriminatory laws and a

repressive administration had shaped them into second-class citizens and, rejected and despised by the white community, they had become outcasts in their own land'.

For the discriminatory laws were in practice *incredibly* discriminatory, the administration was as dreadful, and the use of illegal force was as blatant as anything in our history. Where does this knowledge leave us as white Australians? I would have liked a little discussion from the author.

Once, in March 1974, Charles Perkins took part in a Perth television debate about Aboriginal Affairs. He rose to declaim that the Western Australian Liberal-Country Party government was the most racist political party in the country's history. There was immediate uproar as all the Nyoongars in the audience, mostly the same people of whom Haebich writes, tried to communicate their own personal experiences. The televised debate and the week which followed it was a time of furious passion, but of the kind that is not reflected in this book. This is not a suggestion that every historian should share the anger or despair of the people described, not necessarily seize the microphone to add an extra voice. But I felt so angry after reading Haebich's book that I wanted to share my anger with her. But she does not allow me to. She keeps her distance. She is content to describe the events (which she does mercilessly enough) and let the issues resolve themselves in the minds of readers.

These observations express, of course, only the personal preference of another writer of Aboriginal history, and the majority of readers may well be thankful that Haebich does not intrude herself into the text. It is less a criticism than an observation of how differently we historians, equally committed, approach our subject. Haebich's is a fine book. Though at times a little laborious, it should be essential reading for all students of Australian history. It will be the starting point for the time when someone begins the mammoth task of putting together the regional histories into a general multi-volume history of Aboriginal Australia.

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*Poonindie The rise and destruction of an Aboriginal agricultural community.* By Peggy Brock and Doreen Kartinyeri. South Australian Government Printer and Aboriginal Heritage Branch, Department of Environment and Planning, Adelaide, 1989, Pp. viii + 120, bibliography, index, black and white illustrations. \$14.95 p.b.

This brief memoir, on a South Australian Anglican mission near Port Lincoln, provides an excellent model for the production of a series on mission and government settlements across southern Australia. It should prove of great value to contemporary Aboriginal communities, because ancestors from so many districts were brought or came here between 1850 and 1894, when it was closed and its people dispersed. Apart from its documented chronological narrative and index, its great bonus consists in twenty-five pages of genealogies of Poonindie people and their descendants, together with a number of photographs of the residents.

The Aboriginal Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning and the South Australian Government Printer merit praise for publishing such a well-produced

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and well referenced study in a pleasing format. Their publications are setting the pace and standard for other states.

Although university theses have been written on Poonindie, no systematic study has been published since its founder (Bishop) Mathew Hale wrote his story in the 1880s. Most importantly, this study is based upon the primary archival sources including the official mission records; numerous footnotes to each chapter identify the sources; there is a good bibliography. One useful contemporary account which is not listed is J.W. Bull, *Early experiences of life in South Australia* (1884), an Aladdin's cave of anecdote on so many South Australian matters.

Poonindie mission exemplifies so many of the racial problems and human tragedies involved in the first two generations of European settlement. The then Archdeacon of Adelaide, Hale, established Poonindie with the best of intentions, but in 1850 nobody could be anything but misguided. He witnessed so much misery amongst Adelaide and Murray River district people, that his solution was to transplant them to another place remote from European disruptive influences. Of course he did not consult the people concerned and ignored the Port Lincoln district Aboriginal people whose land he settled upon. His site was so close to Port Lincoln that even the ideal of total separation never applied.

Under Hale's management, people and pastor at least felt mutual respect, but later superintendents did not share Hale's sincerity. They certainly never sanctioned his policy of virtual Aboriginal self-management. Even so, for a time it became home to some sturdy families who, like contemporary people at Coranderrk, attempted to model their lives upon European rural mores. Their success was such that they attracted the jealousy of white workers, while greedy settlers coveted their rather poor estate.

Hale established the community as a Native Training Institution, but with his early departure that aim was forgotten. In any case, the authors pose the question, where would residents have been able to apply their training in their rural seclusion? It is a terrible indictment of the trustees that, once political and local self-interested pressures grew, they abandoned the settlement without a struggle. The forlorn story is indeed 'a gross example of greed and inhumanity' (p.75).

Poonindie offers a case study for those wishing to examine in detail the social consequences of being Aboriginal during a time of European colonisation. The initial appalling mortality rate is documented. Of 110 people admitted to the institution by 1856, 29 had died; 44 more died by 1860, although others were admitted; a high proportion of these deaths was of babies (pp.23-6). The diseases are familiar and devastating. Measles killed ten of the ninety people in 1875; six died from typhoid fever in 1878; it was whooping cough in 1881; between 1856 and 1860, 28 died from tuberculosis and that remained a constant killer (pp.24, 38-9).

Even Hale used dismissal from Poonindie as a form of social control. Later superintendents applied this policy without remorse, thereby expelling a member of a family from now familiar surroundings and economic support (pp.39-43). When opportunities arose to lodge claims for a land grant, Aboriginal claimants with good credentials invariably lost out to white settlers (p.70). When the institution's lease was terminated, the trustees received £1000 compensation to be spent on Aboriginal needs. Few ever benefitted and the account evidently went 'missing' (pp.67-8).

As a person who has visited Poonindie and written a short essay on it in my *Encounters in place*, it is interesting to note that I emphasised European cultural features, in addition to many of the matters already mentioned. These authors barely mention the important role which cricket played, so early in the history of Australian cricket. The oddly



designed church-cum-school-cum-residence is illustrated but never described, although it is a gem of vernacular architecture.

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*The Torres Strait: people and history.* By John Singe. Revised, paperback edition. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1989. Pp.261, Black and white plates, bibliography, index. \$19.95 p.b.

*Torres Strait Islanders: custom and colonialism.* By Jeremy Beckett. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987. Pp.251, Black and white plates, bibliography, index. \$39.50.

When John Singe published the first edition of his book *Torres Strait: people and history* in 1979 it was at a time when the majority of white Australians had little, if any, knowledge or understanding of the history and culture of the Torres Strait Islanders, Australia's only indigenous Melanesian minority group.

The first edition, published by the University of Queensland Press, was a useful introductory text for anyone contemplating a more detailed study of the complexities of Islander life and custom. Illustrated with romantic etchings from historical sources, such as the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, it was readily available and reasonably priced.

As Singe had worked as a high-school teacher in the Torres Strait and had married into Islander culture, his opinions were to be respected. While Singe wrote from the point of view of a cultural outsider, he at least had some direct association with Islander life. The style of writing was easy and colloquial. It was the only text that included a chapter on the coastal Papuan people and their marginal position in the Torres Strait region prior to the ratification of the Torres Strait Treaty. The final chapter, titled 'The islands today', was an accurate, if somewhat uncomfortable, account of life in the Torres Strait in the late 1970s. The point made was that physical and spiritual exploitation of the Islanders by white bosses and governments had produced a profound state of unhappy lethargy amongst once proud and resourceful peoples.

Singe, it seems, then left the Torres Strait and moved south. According to the author's biography, Singe has now returned to the Torres Strait and lives on Muralag (Prince of Wales Island). The second, revised paperback, edition of the book, published in 1988, has also been published by the University of Queensland Press and is now attractively illustrated with well-produced black and white historical and contemporary photographs. It is therefore interesting to compare the two editions.

The second edition is a complete reprint of the first edition and, according to the author's foreword, the new edition incorporates a small number of changes which have been added without difficulty to the original text. The only major addition to the text has been the adding of the final chapter titled 'The Islands (1988)'. This chapter examines the Islander demands for independence which, while political undercurrents for many years, finally made the pages of the southern press in 1988. The calls for political autonomy, independence, or self-determination documented by Singe were once again symptoms of an old malady; Islander dissatisfaction and frustrations with the bureaucratic structures of state and federal authorities and countless policies which have only served to emphasise Islander marginality in Australian cultural life.

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Singe sees the struggle for autonomy as an indicator of hope for the future of Islander people in the Torres Strait. The final chapter is tinged with bitterness and anger. It seems that this has replaced the sadness and disappointment reflected in the final parts of the 1979 edition. Perhaps this is a true reflection of Islander feelings in the Torres Strait today.

Despite Singe's claim in the foreword that the text has been revised, and that he was gratified to find that only small changes were required, a number of serious errors that may have been excusable in the 1979 edition should have been corrected in the 1988 revision. The majority of errors appear to relate to his apparent dislike of the activities of coastal Papuans in the Torres Strait. For example, in the 1979 edition Singe states that dugong is readily available for sale at the Daru market (p.143) and that 'Queensland dugong end up as Papuan dinners' (p.144). These comments are repeated in the 1988 edition (p.131) without any reference to the successful dugong conservation programmes in the Torres Strait which have been highly effective in eliminating the commercial exploitation of dugong. Signs in the Daru market make it plain in English, Kiwai and Motu that dugongs are protected animals in Papua New Guinea. Readers of this book would be advised to refer to the proceedings of the *Torres Strait Fisheries Seminar* for full details of the complex nature of fisheries rights in the region and for details of the many policy decisions made and implemented by the Papua New Guinea and Australian governments. Singe also makes a rather stinging attack on the Torres Strait Treaty, which was signed in 1978 but which only entered into force in 1985, calling it a piece of 'foreign policy naivete...now widely recognised as unworkable' (p.235).

It is disappointing to see no substantial update of the chapter on the Papuan people who also share the resources and waters of the Torres Strait. The Treaty serves to protect the rights of both Torres Strait Islanders and Papuans but Singe, despite his period in Papua New Guinea, fails to acknowledge not only the genuine rights of Papuans to free access across the Torres Strait but also the long-standing cultural and kinship linkages between coastal Papuans and Islanders. The increase in movements of Papuans indicates not only the extreme poverty and neglect felt by coastal people in the Western Province of Papua New Guinea but also the comparative affluence of the Islanders, at least from Papuan eyes. It seems extreme to state that 'The Papuan villages throughout the island [Saibai] serve as staging posts for the Papuans engaged in illegal fishing and immigration' (p.235) and inaccurate to say that: 'To the Papuan from an impoverished village in P.N.G., sitting in his dinghy in the open sea, the lines of demarcation means nothing'. The lines of demarcation were first established over one hundred years ago and the Papuans are well aware of their place in the political scheme of things. Few Papuans, apart from some Daru Islanders, can afford the luxury of an aluminium dinghy nor the expensive petrol needed to run one. Lack of economic development of opportunities for earning cash have, in fact led to a resurgence of the use of canoes along the south west coast.

If the call for Torres Strait Islander political autonomy has now lost some of its impetus, at least publicly and in the media, it has been replaced by moves calling for the exclusion of Papuans from the islands and threats that Islanders will no longer cooperate with federal and state instrumentalities in the region.

The use of the present tense in Singe's text is also confusing, particularly in the chapter entitled: 'Portrait of three islands: Muralug, Saibai and Nahgi'. For example, in his discussion on social and economic conditions on Saibai, Singe states: 'There is an aimlessness about the place. The only employment available is through the D.A.I.A.' (p.185). This exact statement appeared also in the 1979 edition (p.201). Does it refer to the period of the late 1970s or is this still apparent in 1988? If corrections have been made to the text would it not read better in the past tense with the name of the state authority

amended to the Department of Community Services? In fact the first time the Community Services Department is mentioned is on page 237 of the new edition. This is too late in the text for readers unfamiliar with the earlier edition. It is also unfortunate for new readers that the Queensland Department of Community Services is not listed in the otherwise useful index.

Both editions contain glossaries of language words used and basic bibliographies for further reading.

Singe has produced a slightly updated edition of his 1979 book. The 1988 edition is, however, only partially successful and should not be read without reference to the 1979 edition. It leaves one with the feeling that the 'insider-outsider' may not, after all, be in any better position than the real outsider to make meaningful the complexities of minority cultures.

From the viewpoint of the professional anthropologist, the 'outsider on the inside', Jeremy Beckett in his book *Torres Strait Islanders: custom and colonialism*, published in 1987, examines the Torres Strait Islanders' sense of marginality and resentment at their place on the periphery of white society.

Beckett's book is well-crafted and polished, the result of a long academic career, and while written for an academic audience, it is also directed at the growing educated Islander population. The book begins and ends with a description of a tombstone opening (the celebration of the unveiling of the tombstone which ends the official period of mourning) which, according to Beckett, has an abstract meaning as a celebration 'of the continuing capacity of Islander society, on the mainland as well as in the Strait, to call its members to customary order' (p.235).

To anyone who has sought a deeper understanding of the internal politics of the Torres Strait islands, or the cultural history and music of the Islander peoples, the previous writings of Beckett have been fundamental. This recent study serves more than any other text to put contemporary issues into historical and cultural perspective.

Beckett first commenced fieldwork in the Torres Strait in 1958, a period characterised by entrenched internal colonial rule. The direct paternalistic rule of state and federal governments has, during Beckett's association with the region, been replaced by 'welfare colonialism' (pp.16-17). The state has attempted to manage the social and political problems posed by the presence of depressed and disenfranchised indigenous groups in an affluent and liberal-minded democratic state by direct economic expenditure through the welfare system.

Islanders may not have been dispossessed of their lands, like the mainland Aboriginal peoples, but they did lose control over the marine resources which provided them with economic and cultural advantages over their neighbours. The economically and politically independent Islander became the ward of the 'white state'. Torres Strait Islanders retain little control of the economic fabric of their lives. Perhaps, in a culture that still remembers its history, this provides some clues for the calls for political self-determination of recent years.

Beckett examines custom and colonialism from the point of view of the Baduans and the Murray Islanders. No two islands in the Torres Strait could reflect the inherent differences in Islander life more than Badu and Mer (Murray). The Meriam-speaking people of the eastern Torres Strait have a rich and proud cultural heritage. In terms of fertile garden lands, the Murray Islands may still be seen as the most affluent islands in the Strait. For this reason 'the Meriam made gardening the basis of their economy' (p.114). By contrast, Badu, with its rocky hills and open grasslands, had little fertile land for gardening but was surrounded by waters rich in turtle and dugong. The Baduans were fighters. It is perhaps

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understandable that Badu became the home of the most entrepreneurial group in the islands dominated by a strong family leadership, established under the forceful leadership of Tanu Nona during the 1930s and 1940s.

The division between western and eastern Islander culture has been carried over to the mainland by migrant eastern Islanders, by far the largest single group of Islanders in towns such as Townsville and Mackay, who attempt to hold fast to their traditions. The social and economic reasons for Islander outmigration to the mainland are also examined in detail by Beckett in the chapter 'The society of Islanders'.

*Torres Strait Islanders: custom and colonialism* is not only the product of Beckett's thirty years of research experience but is also a continuation of the long record of cultural history research in the region which first began with Alfred Cort Haddon in 1888. The Torres Strait has an important place in the history of anthropological research. Haddon returned to the region in 1898 with a party of British researchers and the results of the expedition, published between 1901 and 1935 as the *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Strait*, are the most important documents on pre-colonial cultural history of the Torres Strait Islander peoples. Beckett's research follows on from these foundations, for he documents a succession of new changes and influences on the people of the region. He shows that, despite these changes, the sense of identity has been sustained by 'Island custom', the practice of which 'implicitly and at times explicitly, proclaims continuity with the Torres Strait of Haddon's day and beyond' (p. x).

The hope for the future of the Islander people lies in the continued capacity to practise 'Island custom' by themselves, and for themselves, as well as the maintenance of their pride and confidence in themselves as a resolute people in spite of their position on the geographical and political margin of white Australia.

*Torres Strait Islanders: custom and colonialism* is sparsely illustrated. As only two photographs are sourced, most appear to be from the author's own collection. A list of abbreviations used, comprehensive bibliography, and a useful index are included. In a decade's time, Jeremy Beckett's book will still be relevant, not only to white Australians but also to the Torres Strait Islander people themselves.

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*Up rode the troopers: the black police in Queensland.* By Bill Rosser. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1990. Pp.211. appendix and notes, one black and white sketch.

The subtitle suggests that Bill Rosser is offering a brief history of the Native Police Force, which operated from 1849 until 1897 in Queensland. This is not the case. So far no comprehensive history has been written on this force, which had as many as 250 white officers and black troopers and may have killed as many as 5000 Aborigines who got in the way of the European pastoral settlement of Queensland. L.E. Skinner did an admirable job with his *Police of the pastoral frontier*, published in 1975, but that covered only the first ten years of the force's history. Former police officers, such as E.B. Kennedy and A.L. Haydon, published books with titles which suggested histories of the force but were little more than personal reminiscences. Some scholars have recently looked at historical aspects, particularly the force's effects upon Aboriginal-European relations in Queensland, but a full study of Queensland's black police is still needed.

Bill Rosser set out to write a book about the early days of the Queensland Native Police Force but, instead, has written the story of Cyclone Jack, an old Aborigine he met in Urandangie in far western Queensland, during the course of oral history research. It turned out that Jack (no other name is given) was possibly 'the last vestige of the beleaguered Telemon tribe', a reference to the people who had lived near Fassifern in south-east Queensland when the pastoralists arrived. Most importantly, Jack (born about 1900) related what his father had told him about the attack by a detachment of Native Police on Aborigines in the Dugandan scrub near Telemon station just before Christmas 1860.

In those days, those police were bad news...They were a mob of blackfellers from other tribes that lived a long way away...My grandfather and his friends tried to run because they knew what to expect. These police had guns and they knew how to use them. They were taught by the white Pom officers. The first to go down was his uncle. The rest of the mob ran for their lives but they were not quick enough for the guns. My grandfather was one that lived to tell the tale.

Three of the Telemon people died in the attack. Jack's grandfather grabbed his (Jack's) father and escaped into the bush.

The police, led by Lieutenant Frederick Wheeler, had been called by local settlers after Aborigines had stolen sheep, threatened shepherds and robbed their huts. Without warrants having been issued, Wheeler ordered his troopers to go into the scrub, surround the camp and disperse them. They were out of his sight, and thus out of control, for about half an hour. At the inquiry into the Native Police held by a Select Committee of the Queensland Legislative Assembly early the next year, Wheeler was asked what he meant by dispersing. 'Firing at them. I gave strict orders not to shoot any gins. It is only sometimes, when it is dark, that a gin is mistaken for a blackfellow, or might be wounded inadvertently.' Asked whether he thought it proper to fire upon the Blacks in that way, he replied: 'If they are the right mob, of which I had every certainty.' In its report, the Select Committee, heavily stacked with representatives of the squatters, noted that Wheeler appeared to have 'acted with indiscretion' on this occasion and recommended that he be transferred to another district but praised him as a 'most valuable and zealous officer'.

Over several days Rosser recorded more details of this and other incidents as told by Cyclone Jack. Then he checked the story against the evidence given by witnesses to the 1861 Select Committee and other official sources. Jack's account, handed down from grandfather to father to son, proved to be substantially correct. It is a rare demonstration of accuracy in oral history, where people have had little access to written records over the

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years. Further, it is another of the sad tales of the subjugation, dispersal and decrease of Aboriginal peoples. Rosser tells it with artless simplicity, even naive surprise, as he learns from Jack and from the records. This book, however, is not so much a history as the story of a venture in historical research and a chance meeting with a remarkable old man, who, as far as his memory served him, was able to tell it as it was.

Rosser has reproduced the 1861 Select Committee's evidence and much of the evidence in a large appendix. This is a wise move, as it may encourage other writers to take a closer look at the methods used in dispersing Aboriginal people on the early pastoral frontier in Queensland and the attitudes behind them.

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*The lost children*. Coral Edwards and Peter Read eds. Doubleday, Sydney, 1989, Pp. xxv + 197. black and white illustrations, index. \$19.95.

*Reaching back. Queensland Aboriginal people recall early days at Yarrabah Mission*. Judy Thomson. ed. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1989. Pp. xiv + 136, black and white illustrations, maps. \$12.95.

Last century concerned humanitarians in Britain expressed concern for the 'coloured' subjects of the Empire. The Anti-Slavery movement in the 1830s, having succeeded in having slavery abolished in other parts of the British Empire, turned its attention to Australia. The Aborigines Protection Society was formed. Thus began the Protection Era, which history has disclosed certainly did not protect Aborigines but rather imprisoned them.

The missionaries and other philanthropic Europeans shared the misguided belief that Aboriginal children were the key to success in their task of 'civilizing the natives'. They contended that if only the children could be removed from tribal influences at a tender age they could be assimilated - in other words brought up in the ways of the white people. The removal of Aboriginal children from their parents has been a policy in all Australian states at different times. In NSW the treatment of Aboriginal children by authorities charged with protecting them is only now being documented - one hundred years after the establishment of the Aboriginal Protection Board.

In his introduction to *The lost children*, Peter Read states, 'In Australia today there may be one hundred thousand people of Aboriginal descent who do not know their families or communities. They are the people, or descendants of people, who were removed from their families by a variety of white people for a variety of reasons. They do not know where they have come from. Some do not even know they are of Aboriginal descent'.

*The lost children* is a significant contribution to the history of dispossession of Aboriginal people and will go a long way towards helping non-Aborigines realise that the history of black/white relations in this country is a very sad one indeed. This book is a very powerful and often disturbing oral history in which thirteen people describe what it was like being removed from their families, living in institutions or with white families, and knowing nothing about their own history or culture. In these first-hand accounts we learn of their agonising search for their families, and empathise with their feelings before the first reunion and their reconciliation problems in searching for their Aboriginal identity.

My only criticism of this book is the way in which it is divided into sections. This made it difficult to follow through on any particular person's history. I found the lack of continuity in this regard disruptive and confusing. Having to refer back to previous sections in order to trace a life history detracted from the effectiveness. However, it is a valuable book. It fits into the whole tapestry of dispossession of Aboriginal people in Australia and is essential reading for those in pursuit of a true and complete Australian history.

In 1897 the Queensland government, in its desire to protect Aborigines from the white population, proclaimed the Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act. Protectors (often police officers) were appointed with the power to move Aboriginal camps from the outskirts of towns, to control the movements of Aborigines from one locality to another and to relocate Aborigines on reserves. This Act was applauded by white people as an innovative model for other states but for Aborigines it spelt the end of freedom to control their own lives.

In 1898 Dr W.E. Roth, the Protector for the Northern Region of Queensland, wrote favourable reports to the Queensland government about the new mission at Yarrabah. In another role as Inspector under the Queensland Pearl-Shell and Beche-de-mer Fisheries Act, he travelled on the Queensland government ketch, the *Melbider*, collecting the 'half-caste' children up and down the coast. These children, after being hunted, caught and removed from their families, were escorted by police over long distances and finally settled at Yarrabah. 'Miserable and bewildered, speaking different languages and little English, they soon found themselves baptised, given new names and expected to conform to a totally new way of life with no hope of ever returning to a birthplace where their birth was not even recorded.'

In 1901 Yarrabah was proclaimed a reformatory and apart from children, many adults began to be transported to Yarrabah from other parts of Queensland, including Fraser Island. At this time too, the first inhabitants of the Yarrabah area gradually 'came in' to the mission because it had taken their land; other Aborigines from all over North Queensland were arbitrarily picked up and transported there. The Aboriginal population at Yarrabah was indeed a heterogeneous group - there was not even common language let alone a kinship system or a social structure. The ingredients for unhappiness, misery, unrest and disharmony were present right from the start. On reserves and missions at this time, white authority was imposed. Children were taken from their parents and raised in single-sex dormitories. The view was that extremely rigid training was necessary to overcome the 'wildness' in the children. Yarrabah was no exception to this type of inhumanity. This book contributes to the knowledge we already have of absolutely heart-breaking dispossession and alienation of Aborigines.

It is again a collection of oral histories of many people. They give first-hand information of the grim life they were forced into as interns at Yarrabah. Like *The lost children*, I find its division into sections disconcerting when following the full history of a particular contributor.

I found the anointing of Lorna Schrieber as Queen of Yarrabah a bitter pill to swallow. I personally would like to know the circumstances under which an Anglican Bishop anointed Lorna Schrieber Queen of Yarrabah. When the British settled this country, there was little regard or understanding for the culture of the original inhabitants who survived for over 40,000 years as an egalitarian society. Social control was not in the hands of a leader or a chief. It was in the hands of mature men (and women) who had graduated through the many phases of the 'law'. Government by consensus prevailed. Leadership and status were not inherited. One of the first insults meted out to Aborigines was the designation of individuals as 'king' or 'queen' by many white ethnocentric imperialists. Often these people

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were given inscribed brass plates to wear around their necks. However, these symbols did not denote respect or deference from the white people. They were merely useless tokens. Anointing Lorna Schrieber only reaffirms and perpetrates the reprehensible regime of 2000 years of white paternalism, ethnocentrism and imperialism.

Judy Thompson says it all herself about this book when she writes 'This is not a definitive history of the early days of Yarrabah Mission'. The emphasis in this book is on those who left and the time has come for someone to take up the challenge to write a definitive history of Yarrabah with the main emphasis on those who stayed. Sister Muriel Stanley-Underwood, Major Wakefield and Teresa Livingstone are a few of the many people who made their mark on the history of Yarrabah, yet there is no mention of their place in this history of Yarrabah. I look forward to the day when I can read a complete, all-inclusive account of Yarrabah's history and hope it will be in the near future.

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Review Editor's note: Pearl Duncan was the first Aborigine to qualify as a teacher in New South Wales. She taught for two years at Yarrabah in the early 1950s. (See her own story in *Fighters and singers: the lives of some Australian Aboriginal women*. Isobel White, Diane Barwick and Betty Meehan. eds. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1985, pp.40-54).

*The story of the falling star*, told by Elsie Jones, with drawings by Doug Jones and collages by Karin Donaldson, for The Western Regional Aboriginal Land Council. Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1989. Coloured illustrations. \$19.95 p.b.

This book represents a splendid idea - to tell Aboriginal legends in a lively illustrated format, so that young and old, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, can enjoy them and learn from them. The format is original and innovative. The pages are montages, with photographs of Paakantji people and places, together with a few drawings, on coloured backgrounds, with each page a different colour. The people in the illustrations are all doing something interesting, camping, cooking, enjoying a barbecue, or listening to the old people telling a story or explaining the landscape or the rock paintings.

The narrator of the main story is Elsie Jones, who heard it from her Granny and from other old people who in turn heard it when they were young from other old people. Once there was an evil old man in the camp who told the camp-dwellers they should move because something bad was going to happen, but many did not believe him. They heard a great rumbling noise and some fled before a great ball of fire came down and some were burnt. Behind it came enormous rains so that many were drowned, except those who had managed to reach higher ground. Those who survived the fire and the flood left paintings on the stones to tell others that they had travelled south.

Of great importance is the involvement of the Paakantji people in the production of the book. Apart from three columns of acknowledgements for tasks performed there is a list of 200 people whose photographs appear. There are also two pages giving words and phrases in the Paakantji language and an explanation of how to pronounce them.



In conclusion this book is a triumph for the Paakantji people, the Western Regional Land Council and the Aboriginal Studies Press. What triumph to win a place on the best-seller list!

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*Guests of the Governor: Aboriginal residents of the first Government House.* By Isabel McBryde. Friends of the First Government House Site, Sydney, 1989. Pp xvi + 62, black and white and colour illustrations, bibliography.

There is much in the history of the contact between Europeans and Aborigines that remains to be satisfactorily elaborated. This is particularly true concerning those who - whether by choice or force of circumstance - quickly crossed the 'beaches' that bordered the others' culture. The names of a number of the Europeans who made this journey - William Buckley, Eliza Fraser, James Morrill, Narcisse Pelletier - are reasonably well-known, even if much is lost from their stories. The names of those Aborigines who early journeyed the other way are not so well-known, and the stories of their lives are also generally obscure.

Originally delivered as the third Foundation Day lecture, *Guests of the Governor* is now printed in a handsomely illustrated monograph by the Friends of the First Government House Site. In it, Isabel McBryde has taken as her subject the lives of those Aborigines who mingled with the Europeans at Sydney in the first decades of the British colonisation of New South Wales.

Three figures dominate the story: Bennelong and Colbee, captured by the British in November 1789, in an honest but misguided attempt to build bridges, and Bungaree, who sailed with Flinders and P.P. King on their voyages of exploration. About these cluster a number of others, interestingly often related by blood or marriage: Yemmurrawannie, who with Bennelong accompanied Phillip to England in 1793; Arabanoo, the young man captured in December 1788, who then chose to remain with the newcomers before his death from 'smallpox' in May 1789; Nanberree, John White's 'gamekeeper'; Gnunga-a-ngunga, who sailed on the *Daedalus* to Nootka Sound, seeing also the Hawaiian Islands; the wives of Bennelong and Colbee; Boorong, the girl raised by the Johnsons; Baloderree, who commenced a profitable trade with the whites at Parramatta, but who then became their enemy after some convicts destroyed his canoe; Bondel, who accompanied Captain Hill to Norfolk Island in 1791; Moowat-tin, who assisted Caley in his botanical labours.

McBryde elaborates the lives of these people as well as the surviving records allow, pointing to what were for them extraordinary events produced by contact with European culture, and to the great changes that accompanied this contact. However, in view of the paucity of the records, she has also attended to European responses to the Aborigines. Developing the idea that the first Government House provides us with a 'window' onto otherwise dimly seen circumstances, in this part of the work she neatly traces the ways in which British attitudes towards primitivism changed in the period, one sign of which was that the settlers in New South Wales were progressively discouraged by those in authority at home from returning with Aborigines.

An appropriate recognition of the complexities of culture contact at Sydney informs this study; and it offers much judicious comment based on careful readings of texts. I should wish to question McBryde's assessment at only a very few points, the most

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significant of which is that in view of Marsden's having told Dumont d'Urville that Bennelong lived with Governor Phillip in London, it may be that he and Yemmurawannie were not so neglected in England as she implies. (On the other hand, it may be that Marsden's information is not accurate.)

McBryde is struck equally by the extraordinariness of the situation described by Malaspina in 1793:

We have seen gathered and cared for with the greatest kindness, several [Aboriginal] Boys and Girls - Others, both men and women, although entirely naked and disgustingly dirty, have been admitted to the same Room where we were eating and have been regaled with one or other dainty from the same Table. At times we have heard entire Families salute us with several shouts in English; at times in the principal streets of the Colony itself they have danced and sung almost the whole night around a campfire, without anyone molesting them (pp.39, 43);

by the rapidity of the deculturation and decimation of the Port Jackson Aborigines, exemplified in Bungaree's sad later life as described by Angus:

He lived poor fellow, for some years and saw the kangaroos and opossums chased from his domains; but he gloried in a cocked hat, excelled in a bow, knew a fresh arrival instinctively, and welcomed him to 'his country' with all the form of a master of the ceremonies, and concluded by begging a dump (a small silver coin then current) to drink the stranger's health (p.45);

and by the failure of British policies to produce a satisfactory outcome to the inevitable conflict and clash of ways of life and of values:

three reserves were set up - at Georges Head, Blacktown and Elizabeth Bay. Huts were built, gardens established and convicts assigned to assist the Aboriginal families in working the land. Governor Macquarie showed intense interest in the venture, often visiting his 'settlers', particularly Bungaree who was at Georges Head. However, most of these failed to meet the Governor's expectations. Of Aboriginal expectations we have no record. The aims of economic self-sufficiency and independence were laudable but the 'social engineering' involved was inappropriate and resisted. By 1823 the reserves had been abandoned, and the school at Parramatta closed (p.45).

In drawing these contrasts, McBryde carefully avoids the mistake of representing Aborigines as passive victims only. The people she writes of joined with the British partly because they saw advantages (status, goods) in doing so. Particularly interesting here is her pointing to Bungaree's use of jest to obtain a measure of control. Neither does she see Aboriginal culture as timeless, unchanging. As history tells us, all cultures change, even if in ways imperceptible to contemporaries. However, as is only too evident, the changes forced on Aboriginal culture at Sydney in the decades about the turn of the nineteenth century were not of this gentle sort. Rather, they were so massive and so rapid that they could not be absorbed. Even so, there were some Aborigines who sought to travel as the new winds and tides set. McBryde's general comment on Bennelong, Gnunga-a-ngunga and Bungaree is a haunting one:

The voyages these Aboriginal people made are impressive. One regrets the sparse record of their experiences of and reactions to, the different worlds within and beyond Australia to which they were exposed. Even more impressive is their command of new skills, and their ability to adapt and succeed in ways of an alien society.

We can only hope that time may uncover some further records about these people. In the meantime, we have Isabel McBryde's sensitive and scholarly account as a guide.

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