Ballantyne’s *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* opens with a quotation from Eric Wolf stating that concepts such as “nation”, “society” and “culture” are names best understood as “bundles of relationships” rather than things in themselves. Ballantyne aims to unravel such “bundles of relationships” in order to better understand the British Empire over an immense area and timespan. He attempts to move away from historians who examine history from a fixed referent approximating the modern nation-state. Under the British Empire distant peoples who once had no knowledge of one another came into contact, and ideas flowed. Colonial administrators travelled half the globe bringing new ideas on how to rule along with theories and speculation about the natures and identities of those they ruled.

*Orientalism and Race* focuses mainly on Britain, India and New Zealand, and outlines many relationships and shared ideas that shed light on surprising connections between the colonial experiences of India and New Zealand. One of the main ideas that linked the two experiences was Aryanism. According to Ballantyne, “the emergence of this new paradigm should be viewed as the product of tectonic social and cultural shifts arising from the birth of British colonialism in South Asia.” His examination begins with the East India Company in the 1760s and ends in the early 20th century when anthropology and the materialist tradition assumed a more dominant role. Throughout, Aryanism was a crucial lens of analysis used by British Orientalists, often invoked in discourses that justified and obscured the violence of colonial conquest. As a discourse, however, it never attained hegemony as, according to Ballantyne, heated debates arose, particularly following the Indian rebellions of 1857-58.

The birth of Aryanism is often traced back to Sir William Jones who discovered similarities between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin in the 1760s. The term Aryan was in fact taken from the sacred scripts of the *Rig Veda*, an important Sanskrit text of Brahmanical Hindus. The *Rig Veda* describes the arrival of pastoralists who settled in the north of India and identified themselves as “Arya”, which literally translates as ‘noble’. The combination of Jones’s discovery and the tale of a more civilised people entering India from the north resonated with the British civilising mission. Furthermore, according to Ballantyne, Jones’s discovery “profoundly shaped the development of linguistics, the study of early Indian history and... debates over Indian, British and even Polynesian identity”. Jones set out a framework for
reconstructing the history of Asia relying not only on linguistic comparison but also on philosophy and remains of monuments. For many ethnologists of the day, the *Book of Genesis* was the foundational scientific text, and it was used in conjunction with other material to discover racial origins. This biblical underpinning received little criticism before Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. Debates over whether Māori or Indians were descended from Ham, Japhet or Shem, however, remained lively until the early 20th century. Jones believed that Indo-Europeans were the sons of Ham, establishing a brotherhood between the British and the Hindus of India, and at the same time distancing Britain from the Mughals who were imagined as the sons of Japhet. This “brotherhood”, however, was not readily accepted by every British person, scholar or otherwise. After the 1857-58 rebellions in India, many prominent Britons were loathe to think of Indians as their long lost brothers. Where once affinities between Vedic religion and Christianity were emphasised, the emphasis was now on difference.

Early theories on the origin of Māori held that they were of Hebrew descent. Samuel Marsden speculated that Māori commercial acumen might be indicative of Jewish origins. However, it was one of his missionaries, Thomas Kendall, who examined the idea linguistically after receiving Pankhurst’s *Hebrew Lexicon* as a gift. He found affinities in the placement of prefixes and affixes, but later he turned away from this idea and placed more importance on mythological and cosmological beliefs that effectively distanced the Māori from the Israelites.

Since Sir William Jones, the Old Testament was increasingly being interpreted as an oriental scripture, placing the Garden of Eden somewhere in Persia or South Asia. This idea spread to New Zealand, leading to a wave of “Indocentric” and Aryanist scholarship. One of the more prominent Aryanists in New Zealand was Edward Tregear. Just as Jones placed Hindus in the Aryan family, so did Tregear for Māori. Ballantyne goes on to argue that “[t]his allowed him to erase the conflict and violence of colonialism to imagine British imperialism in India and Pakeha power in New Zealand as reunions of long-lost Aryan siblings”. Assimilationist and racial arguments were thus circumvented and, according to Ballantyne, Tregear further obscured unequal power relations. In effect Ballantyne finds a shared discourse in India and New Zealand illuminating webs of empire previously obscured. He also finds that much of this discourse was developed in a climate of insecurity as opposed to hegemony. He argues, for example, that much research into Māori religion—and consequently the growth of Aryanism and Orientalism—occurred after illusions of British hegemony were shattered in the wake of the Northern Wars in 1845-46. In New Zealand the end of Aryanist theory coincided with the professionalisation of anthropology and, in particular, the publication of Raymond Firth’s *Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Maori* (1929). Firth’s work set a pattern in continuing research on the Māori: no longer was the emphasis on identifying distant roots but rather on unravelling local development.

*Orientalism and Race* is a roaming work that encapsulates more material than one would have thought possible in fewer than 200 pages. It most certainly illuminates the multi-directional flows of people and information that a simple core-periphery model would obscure. Ballantyne constructs such a large web connecting scholars
and administrators throughout the British Empire (and beyond) that one has to make a conscious effort to keep track of such a large cast. From my reading I felt that Ballantyne avoided the obvious risk of presenting a list-like book with such a large cast, time period and area. What he skilfully presents is a work that powerfully demonstrates the limitations of historical work that fails to acknowledge the masses of historical connections and entanglements between nations and colonies. He also effectively critiques a strict following of Said’s “Other”, as he details Aryanist theories that emphasised similarities and obscured differences. *Orientalism and Race* provides a new perspective on the study of history, colonialism and the humanities, and reveals pockets of history that deserve more detailed and comprehensive examination.


**JAAP TIMMER**

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The principal author, Jan Boelaars, worked as a Dutch Catholic missionary and anthropologist among the Papuans of the Digul River area of Southwest New Guinea (then Netherlands New Guinea and currently Indonesian Papua) from 1951 to 1957 with subsequent visits in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1967. From the outset of his ethnographic investigations, Boelaars was dedicated to sharing his fascination for these Papuans with the broader world. In addition to a number of articles in missionary journals and extensive research on the history of the Catholic mission in Netherlands New Guinea, he reported on the social structure and life-cycle rituals of the Mandobo in the monograph *Mandobo’s tussen de Digoel en de Kao: Bijdragen tot een etnografie* (*The Mandobos between the Digul and the Kao Rivers: Contributions to an Ethnography*) and on the social structure and head-hunting practices of the Yahray in *Head-hunters About Themselves: An Ethnographic Report from Irian Jaya, Indonesia*. This latest text, *Mono Koame*, offers an anthropological representation of Yahray stories and cosmology, and attempts to show the reader that these Papuans also think; the Yahray expression *mono koame* means ‘we also think’.

The name Yahray occurred in Boelaars’s earlier works as Jaqai, Jaqaj, Yaqai and Yagay. In the introduction to *Head-hunters*, Boelaars explained that Jaqaj is pronounced as “Ya’hry”, an ethnonym heard by Father C. Meuwese in 1937 when Awyu people talked about their arch-enemies dwelling in the river system of the Mappi River. Meuwese soon found that Yahray also used this ethnonym for themselves.

The observation by Meuwese dates back to the period when the colonial government began to receive reports about raids of people from the Digul River on
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Awyu villages to the east. This resulted in the establishment of a military post in Mappi in 1936 in an attempt to pacify the Yahray. The first missionaries to work in the region were Father J. Grent and Father P. Rievers. Father Meuwese embarked on the pacification of the belligerent Yahray in 1937 and Father Jan Verschueren, among others, continued this effort after 1948. Father Boelaars arrived in the region in 1951.

The materials collected by missionary anthropologists have been invaluable to the anthropology, and the decision of the Centre for Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Nijmegen to publish Boelaars’s material on the Yahray is laudable. Missionary ethnography held a prominent place in Dutch ethnographic studies of Papuan worlds in the 1950s and early 1960s. Indeed, one of the best known ethnographies from this area is Jan van Baal’s *Dema: Description and Analysis of Marind-anim Culture (South New Guinea)*, which is partly a compilation of the notes and stories collected by Verschueren who worked among the Marind-anim from 1931 until the late 1960s.

After van Baal completed his anthropology studies at the University of Leiden with a thesis on Marind-anim religion and society based on secondary resources, in particular the writings of Paul Wirz, he joined the colonial civil service. He became Assistant District Officer for the Merauke District in 1936 and worked for two years among the Marind-anim, but his official duties did not allow him to do extensive fieldwork. After his stay in Merauke, van Baal always kept a special place in his heart and his files for the Marind-anim, first as Advisor on Native Affairs to the Government of Netherlands New Guinea after the Second World War, subsequently as Governor (1953-1958), and later as Professor of Anthropology at the University of Utrecht. It was only upon return to the Netherlands that Van Baal found the time to rewrite his earlier thesis, and enrich and complement it with new data collected by missionaries, especially Verschueren.

Boelaars is both an anthropologist and a missionary. He completed his anthropology studies at the University of Utrecht in 1950 with a thesis on *The Linguistic Position of South Western New Guinea* and began to work for the Mission of the Sacred Heart among the Papuans of the southwestern plains of New Guinea. There Boelaars was in good company, as many of his colleagues such as Meuwese, Verschueren, Father G. Zegwaard (with whom Boelaars conducted a short study of Asmat culture in 1954), and Father P. Drabbe (who had produced a Yahray language catechism and whose linguistic work benefited Boelaars during his research) took notice of the particularities of Papuan ways of doing things, meticulously committed their observations to paper, recorded stories and music on tapes, sometimes filmed rituals and kept personal diaries.

On the government side, officials such as F.J.M. Cappetti, a patrol officer in the Mappi district from 1953 until 1957, made effective use of the ethnographic insights of missionaries and others in order to design sustainable development plans. This was exactly how van Baal wished to give shape to the development of the territory. As Director of the Office for Native Affairs, van Baal managed to subsidise the work of a number of government anthropologists, among them Boelaars.
When Boelaars arrived in the Digul River area and was posted to Kepi in 1951, the law and order situation, which had deteriorated during the Second World War period when the police and mission had left, was barely restored. The government was keen to learn more about the native people, in particular the Yahray as they were reportedly reviving their head-hunting practices. Boelaars tried to identify the motivations behind head-hunting and also devoted much time to a study of land rights and rights to fishing grounds for most Yahray settlements.

Boelaars sent his findings to the Office for Native Affairs but van Baal was not impressed by his work and began to regret the amount of funding spent on Boelaars’s work and the payments for his informants. He found that Boelaars was too much the priest with too little of the anthropologist in him (see J. Boelaars, 1997, Met Papoea’s Samen op Weg, Deel III, De Begeleiders, Kampen: J.H. Kok. p.121, fn. 46.). Later, in his foreword to Head-hunters, van Baal wrote that it was unfortunate that Boelaars could not be exempted from the pastoral duties that stood in the way of his ethnographic explorations.

Head-hunters is Boelaars’s major ethnographic report on the Yahray. It is not a well-rounded ethnography with a challenging theoretical perspective, but rather a skilful account of the social structure and head-hunting practices of the Yahray, including several fascinating stories about head-hunting practices told by Yahray themselves. The book has the same modest style as Mandobos, which follows the classical structure of monographs produced in those days. Mono Koame, by contrast, has a more cautionary style as Blom and Boelaars intend their interpretation of Yahray lore and practices to hold lessons for people in the West “who find it hard to deal with so many foreigners in their midst” (p.6, reviewer’s translation).

The book comprises of 26 chapters divided into three parts. The first part is titled “The Old Days” and takes up almost half of the book. It deals with the origin of things, social structure and major life-cycle events. The second part is called “The New Era” and contains accounts of events since the early 1930s with a focus on the arrival of the mission and the government. This section also briefly discusses Yahray responses to these outside influences and the occurrence of a cargo cult in the region in 1957 (pp.231-40). In the final part of the book, the authors broach the subject of change and the differences between them and us.

The chapters that deal with ethnographic information from the Yahray are alternated with intermezzos that offer psychological interpretations. These interpretations do not relate to clear theoretical points of view and not only comment on Yahray mentalities but also pay attention to language styles, rhetoric, and clowning as critical practices. These intermezzos are written largely by the ethno-psychiatrist Blom who was a medical officer for the Netherlands colonial government in New Guinea. These essays contain penetrating remarks and are clearly the result of both intimate knowledge of the Yahray and discussions with Boelaars.

At times, the psychological intermezzos read as complex curiosities that are not clearly linked to the preceding texts. This reflects the lack of a clear theoretical perspective. The reader misses a sense of direction while reading the wonderful
Yahray myths and the histories of the mission and the government in the region, and this I believe is largely owing to the constraints of the ethnographic material available. After 1968 Boelaars did not continue his ethnographic research among the Yahray and began to pull together the information that he gathered with that of missionary documentation since the early 1930s. Despite its shortcomings, a careful perusal of the text gives one a good sense of the wonderful ways in which Boelaar’s key informants blur explanations of ongoing and recent events. In short, what we have at hand is a delicate document disclosing a wealth of materials about a hardly studied group of Papuans.

The astonishing texts presented in Mono Koame overlap to a certain extent with the more concise versions presented in Head-hunters, and largely revolve about practices that interested the mission and the government in the 1950s in their efforts to pacify the people of New Guinea. Now, after half a century, Boelaars and Blom use these materials to present the Yahray to the world as the intelligible Other and thus to set an example for the many bridges that should be built between people in the contemporary world who have different cultural and religious backgrounds. It is a noble goal, but the authors do not succeed in designing a challenging route to a better world through the comparison of two different life worlds.

The head of the Centre for Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Nijmegen, A. Borsboom, together with the Dutch anthropologists L. Buskens and J. Kommers, wrote a 15 page English introduction to the book. They see Mono Koame as an experimental ethnography because of a blurring of genres resulting from collaboration between an ethnographer, an ethno-psychiatrist, and the voices of the Yahray. They note that Head-hunters is a realistic ethnography in which the scholar Boelaars is quite dominant, whereas Mono Koame approaches the kind of presentation that is characterised as a tale jointly told by the informants and the researcher(s) (p.13). In contrast, what Mono Koame suggested to me were images of scholars analysing data in an air-conditioned office, far removed from the context and time in which the stories were disclosed by Yahray. The discussion by Borsboom et al. about experimental anthropology does not add much to the account of the Yahray, but I agree with their suggestion about the possibility of using the materials for a cognitive anthropological analysis that aims to gain insight into the effects of behaviour on ideas and symbolic representations (p.19).

The dedicated reader will get much satisfaction from reading through the richness of the mythological materials and the Yahray accounts of the universe and head-hunting. I would give this book to anthropology students because it shows the power of mythical narrative as a component of the conceptual tools with which people work on their worlds and transform them in their own ways. The Yahray accounts are often very captivating and may be fruitfully employed to explore the morality of these people and their ritual behaviour. They should be read as commentaries on transformations in relations between Yahray themselves and between the Yahray, their immediate neighbours and the wider world at the time when they were recorded.
Charles Illouz’s aim in his book about Kanak mythology on Maré (Loyalty Islands) is the analysis of historicised myth, not as a political strategy (as other anthropologists have done), but rather in terms of indigenous thinking about practices whose renewal seems problematic. In the prologue the author explains that myths in Maré society are strongly entwined with the landscape; what was once the flesh of a human being, animal or vegetable today has become one with the landscape. In fact, in Nengone, the language spoken on Maré, myths are called ‘seats of stones’, hence the title ‘Of Flesh and of Stone’.

The text is divided into three parts—“Le lexique mythique” (Part 1), “Des spéculations à lettre près” (Part 2), “Le langage des plantes” (Part 3)—plus an appendix of two stories collected on Maré in Nengone with word-by-word French translations. Each section is centred on the theme of social alliances. The author connects the myths he presents with a detailed analysis of the language used to tell the story, analysing each word etymologically in order to show the strong link between myth and social life, the social ties of islanders. Indeed, he shows a remarkable knowledge and mastery of the local language, having spent years in Maré, which is linguistically homogeneous (in contrast to the Grande Terre or main island of New Caledonia, where 24 languages are spoken, although Illouz [p.38] writes of 28). He uses a corpus of over 60 myths, most of which came from the work of Father Dubois, although a few are from Guiart and some were collected by the author himself. Yet I have difficulty understanding how and where his work fits in the contemporary anthropological French debate, as well as in the Anglo-American one. Although Illouz speaks of a flexible indigenous society, one is left with an overall picture of a rigid, inward-looking society, concerned primarily with local and inter-Loyalty Island relations. The author certainly has a deep knowledge of the local language, but where are the real women and men?

In the Introduction Illouz presents the works of other scholars who have done research on myths in New Caledonia. He is unduly critical of them, especially of Alban Bensa’s work. He juxtaposes works from the beginning of the 1980s with others from the mid-1990s, in which Bensa’s positions have shifted, accusing him of using some of Bourdieu’s notions, such as euphemism, but in a way completely opposite to Bourdieu and thus relapsing into a functionalist vision of society and mythology.

Any interpretation of a myth is influenced by the interpreter’s point of view. Without taking sides in his polemic, which I found too sharp and unproductive as far as Bensa’s work is concerned, and also accepting the possibility that Illouz’s approach may be of interest to linguists, as a woman anthropologist I am puzzled
when I find myself still reading in the third millennium about females who are exchanged as spouses as a way of positing a relationship between women as spouses and cultivable land. In Nengone Illouz tells us, the term *zine* means ‘cultivable land’ as well as ‘origin of the spouse’ (p.43). He (pp.42-3) emphasises that

C’est sur le mode métaphorique de la terre cultivable que peuvent être formulées toutes les relations à la parenté maternelle: *zine*, l’épouse, est une “terre cultivable” en tant qu’elle vient des oncles utérins, *rela-zine*, “ceux du chemin de la terre cultivable” et donne naissance à des neveux utérins *hna puja (i zine)*, “qui ont poussé (en terre cultivable)”.

I am not suggesting that one cannot draw an analogy between human procreation and the fertility of crops, but here women are completely devoid of agency. When he speaks of “*du point de vue de la pêche*” and “*du point de vue matrimonial*” (p.54), the latter could be better rephrased as “from the male point of view”.

We know all too well that myths can have many different interpretations. Given that Illouz intersperses his text with scattered references to different Western authors, from Escher’s drawings (p.82) to Descartes’s reflections (p.129), I feel authorised to refer to Christa Wolf’s rereading of the myth of Medea, which is quite a different interpretation from that of Euripides. A sorceress from Colchis (a city in the Caucasus region of the Black Sea) living in the 9th century B.C., she is connected with Jason’s search for the Golden Fleece. In his play, Euripides blames Medea for killing her children to vindicate her husband’s betrayal, setting fire to the city of Corinth where she lives and killing her rival, the daughter of the King of Corinth. Wolf goes back to older sources and presents a completely different reading: a figure of a strong woman, a magician who has a deep knowledge of the body and of the earth. In Wolf’s reading, Medea’s children have been killed by Creon, the King of Corinth, and having discovered the secret hidden in the Palace of Corinth, Medea has been exiled. Wolf considers that the inhabitants of the civil Corinth are unable to come to terms with a woman like Medea from a different cultural background (Colchis in northeast Turkey).

A discussion of marriage transaction that does not take into account a wider context considers women as objects and not as active agents. Illouz presents the possibility that women are “*initiatrices de l’échange*” (“initiators of the exchange”) (p.71), but this does not modify his main thrust. When Illouz speaks of adoption he presents it in terms of an operation thought of as a symbolic murder (p.75) and disregards the ambiguous feelings which islander women, at least in the nearby island of Lifou where I have been doing fieldwork, express today about this customary practice. Illouz examines the linguistic expressions used to define this practice, highlighting the fact that their etymology speaks of a symbolic death of the child (a sister gives a child to her brother) without asking how Maré women feel about this practice. Lifou women say that the child is *donné* ‘given’, and today they have ambivalent feelings towards this practice. Some have opposed it, others have accepted it but on condition that they raise the child; which means the child does
not change households, but when he or she gets married the adoptive parents will be considered as the real parents for the purposes of customary exchange. One cannot translate from myth to reality as he does. The linguistic expressions that are examined are taken out of context. He never considers that the situation may influence the linguistic usage. His analysis considers only language forms and not language usage in context as well. While he tells us that some practices are today less widespread (p.152), even if his linguistic analyses are accurate, the impression he gives is of a people entangled in inter-islands exchanges but far removed from the rest of the world.


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This book is divided into three parts with 11 chapters. Part One deals with “Issues of Access”, Part Two with “Managing the Collected Past”, and Part Three with “Transformation, Interpretation and Ownership”.

The division of the book into these three parts curiously creates a paradox. The division makes the structure seemingly neat and reading easier, and yet it appears to have failed to represent the cultural contexts of the issues, problems and functions of information management, as it were. Put another way, the issues are so entwined that almost all the authors reiterated the same problems, controversies and dilemmas of information management, to the extent that the rationale for the division of the book into three separate parts is undermined. Such seemingly harmless structural dividing is yet another anthropological construction imposed on existing cultural problems. The immediate effect is that it is likely to deprive the reader of the emic perspective on the issue. It is a subtle question of representation, once again.

The editor, Sjoerd Jaarsma, provides a perfect introduction with three summary points of the discussions to follow: the legacy of the past and present exploitation, indigenous people asserting their rights of control over cultural identity, and researchers making more sincere efforts to right past wrongs (p.5). Jaarsma emphatically closes his introduction with a word of caution on the looming importance and sensitivity of ethnographic data collection and its management: “Theoretical sophistication and exclusionary jargon will no longer be the primary measure of our work, but will be superseded by a demand for clarity and accessibility” (p.12).

David and Dorothy Counts open Chapter 1 by underlining the opening statements of Jaarsma’s Introduction while cleverly demonstrating ways in which ethnographic data could be made more accessible to a wider audience. It is a brilliant account of
what appears to be a scholarly focus on the trivia of life that nonetheless turns out to
be very well received by the public and local communities. This inevitably raises the
question of whether ethnography was ever intended to be esoteric.

Alan Howard’s ingenious way of overcoming the dilemma of repatriation of
ethnographic data via the internet is a step in the right direction. His chapter
asks some of the questions germane to accessibility and custodianship. Howard’s
suggestion that one determine the “when’s, why’s and how’s” of repatriation is
indeed a good start in sorting out a thorny issue (p.43).

Jaarsma resurfaces again in Chapter 3 with a solid attempt to answer the question
of who owns what and what proportion of the information collected. He notes that
“[t]he result then is ambiguous, as it is nearly impossible to indicate a clear break
between original material and interpretation” (p.56). As I have argued elsewhere,
however, the key issue in this debate is not that people are not interested. Rather it
is a lack of meaningful opportunities for people to understand the full dimensions
and implications of field research. Ethnographers painstakingly learn the language
spoken where they do research, but the people studied often do not understand or
show interest in why ethnographers are studying them. It seems clear to me that
ethnographers now have a duty to reciprocate, and innovatively, notwithstanding the
usual excuse that “we do not have the time”. While that is practically true to some
degree, this kind of excuse has outlived its “use by” date.

In December 2000, I delivered a paper titled “50% for Added Value: A Possibility
for Multiple Copyright Act” at a conference on “Property, Transactions and
Communications” on Motupore Island just outside Port Moresby. My argument
was that for all the information gathered and put together by ethnographers (and
other researchers alike), 50 percent should belong to the authors as reward for their
hard work. Those whose names, according to the authors, deserve to appear in
the acknowledgements should share the remaining 50 percent. The days of a one
page acknowledgement to those hardworking people are gone. Understandably,
my argument did not impress many participants who quickly brushed it aside as
impractical. I still maintain today that that is the way to go with regard to research
processes, ownership and copyrights.

The next chapter by Mary McCutcheon is a timely call for researchers to tidy up
their field notes. Apart from pointedly addressing the shortcomings of the existing
copyright laws in the U.S. (and similar problems exist elsewhere), she notes
that leaving behind untidy notes and information about a people is irresponsible.
Future consequences of a lack of clarity in field notes may not be beneficial to
those depicted in those notes.

David Akin and Kathy Creely take this issue further in their Kwaio case study in
Chapter 5. The problem of repatriation is not as neat as one thinks. Rather it requires
a lot of commitment and consultation among all those involved. The fact that a lot of
consultation was carried out, and will continue to be carried out, provides comfort
and some guarantee for a sensible outcome.

It seems to me, however, that the concern has more to do with sensitive or
restricted knowledge than with common and seemingly innocuous knowledge
accessible to all. One would imagine that, on average, ethnographers would have
collected more commonly accessible information than restricted information. Howard has shown that the expatriate Rotumans in particular enjoyed much of the historical and current information about their place. When I showed people some of the 70 year old photographs of long gone Trobriand chiefs, elders and even sites taken by Malinowski, the average reaction was one of laughter mixed with excitement and surprise. People liked seeing the photographs and did not find them disturbing or a loss.

Suzanne Falgout further underlines the dilemmas of custodianship, ownership and accessibility in Chapter 6. Her concluding observation that “[t]wo misguided wrongs will not make a right” (p.107) hits the nail on the head. But given the complexity of the issues and frequent lack of knowledge of ongoing political dynamics, one should try to avoid making even one “misguided wrong”; indeed any “misguided move” can be quite sufficient to make all moves wrong.

Karen Peacock agrees in Chapter 7 that all the issues raised so far are but admonitions and warnings for researchers to take heed (p.122). Her own and others’ efforts to preserve information and files in archives are commendable, but the question is whether the poor communities will ever have the means to purchase and maintain digitised forms of storage including microfilms. I think that we need to be a bit more innovative in our storage mechanisms and access arrangements.

On the same issue, Amy Ku’uleialoha Stillman provides an admirable piece of work on the preservation of what is arguably a dying art—the choreography of the Hawaiian hula. She poignantly illuminates the subtle differences in perspective between the research communities and the researchers concerning collected data: “While ethnographers are concerned with describing, representing, analysing, explaining and interpreting objects and practices, community members are interested in putting information to practical use, to prescribe actions or outcomes” (p.136). Indeed, researchers are brokers of information and inevitably must be held accountable for the intended or unintended consequences of the information. How an ethnographer perceives the use of and access to information collected might very well explain the options taken. For instance, the following comment suggests community perspectives which might be contra the ethnographer’s perspective: “The community members must make of those materials what they will—whether it be reanimating pieces of poetic repertoire or turning their backs on baggage from the past that they decide is best left in the past” (p.147).

The position taken by Keith and Anne Chambers in Chapter 9 considers repatriation as part of the larger process of doing research. Agreeing with Jaarsma, they begin by recognising the complex dimensions of ethnography as a process. That is a positive approach towards the problems besetting research and repatriation. They note that “[t]oday, a more reflective approach requires that both implicit and explicit dimensions of fieldwork be examined so that we can fully understand the process of ethnographic representation…. This fact makes it even more important to build in the return of information as a more conscious and intrinsic part of the fieldwork process” (p.151, emphasis mine). This may be a watershed in what has been the dominant anthropological view of field research. The component parts of field research as a process has often not been fully and clearly appreciated along
with related responsibilities, moral or otherwise. The impact from the manner in which data was collected, stored and disseminated upon those studied, for instance, was never given its due consideration. The Chambers introduce another related issue: “[D]uring our initial fieldwork in 1973-1974, we felt that few community members really understood our ethnographic intentions, even though we spent considerable effort attempting to explain our research objectives to them. Because people have not heard of anthropology and were not familiar with scholarly research, they had no frame of reference to contextualize or make sense of our ethnographic fieldwork (p.154). The key practical issue faced by the Chambers was how and with whom the genealogies that they collected should be deposited without causing undue harm to anyone involved. Because the Chambers arrived in their research community with a radically new form of storing, representing and presenting genealogies to the community, it is logical that new solutions had to be devised to counter the new problems that emerged as a result. Management of genealogies remains a sensitive issue in many communities.

The remaining two chapters are welcome contributions from Bryan Poles, “Dangerous data from Mokil Atoll”, and Nancy Guy, “Trafficking in Taiwan Aboriginal voices”. These are welcome contributions because, in providing additional cases and situations in which controversies arise, these two authors conclude the volume of essays by underscoring the increasing need for and significance of properly managed researches and their outcomes.

My opening remarks notwithstanding, this book is a very important contribution to research methodology and epistemology. Although originating from ethnography, it nonetheless raises questions and issues pertinent to any field of science engaged in research related to people and their space. Certainly, no research endeavour will be deemed complete without due consideration of all dimensions of data collection. That is the gift lesson from this book.


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In June 2000 the Pacific History Association held a conference in Canberra with the theme “Bursting Boundaries: Places, Persons, Gender and Disciplines”. A selection of the contributions offered on that occasion has now appeared in this book. Associating Pacific history’s move into a new millennium with the transition and/or dissolution of boundaries is linked to a critical-reflexive stocktaking of where the discipline is currently sited. This does justice to the plurality and dynamism of Pacific history in recent years. The theoretical orientation to lines and boundaries deploys the spatial tropes of a recent meta-narrative, adequate to creating, especially
in the social and cultural sciences, a framework of discourse for a strategic realignment to relational and decentred conceptualisations. An integral part of the metaphorical capital of boundaries is the latter’s ambiguity and many-sidedness: they can divide as well as join; they lend themselves to conferring identity and to essentialising, to confinement and control no less than transgression, exchange and dissolution. Hempenstall deftly draws on this multiply-angled metaphorical register in his introduction to this work, the better to link the erosion of old certainties and stabilities to contemporary efforts to reconnoitre new terrain. By focusing on border zones, he is able to shed light on the processes of ongoing construction and reconfiguration, but without losing sight of the archive of demarcations of even earlier or of more recent provenance.

Two aspects of the Introduction are worth taking up briefly. One relates to the thematic complex “Pacific places”. Hempenstall notes that, “Pacific history needs more explorations of how attachment to place has changed…” (p.4). This pertinent suggestion leads directly into the (untreated) question of why such a focus has attracted so little interest in Pacific History, especially since it now seems increasingly relevant. Could it be that the received structural discriminations of a Western scientific canon linger on, opposing the dynamic flow of time to the static, lifeless character of space? What strikes me about this volume, however, is that, for all the talk of spatial metaphors, the idea of “place” barely comes in for theoretical discussion.

The second aspect of the Introduction that I want to touch on has to do with “Pacific lives”. At one point Hempenstall writes, “And Pacific Islanders, if they report upon their lives at all, eschew the blunt argumentative style of Western scholarship and do not like the ego centred tradition of life writing” (p.6). I would caution that such a timeless-seeming anchoring of Pacific Islanders in an exclusively socio-centred process of self perception can only tend to downplay the historical and hegemonic inroads that Christianity, capitalism, media, educational institutions, western state structures and transnational migrations have all had on how the self is reconceptualised in the Oceanic world. And the indigenous appropriation and realisation of a Western way of life, with its dogma of individual freedom and its techniques of self, is by no means restricted to the middle classes and the elites in the urban centres between Port Moresby and Pape’ete. It has spread out too through the social formations of the Pacific rural world. In fact we know very little about the specific genealogies of person and self among Pacific Islanders (cf. p.7, see also Hempenstall’s contribution on biography in Pacific history) and their changing views of ego-centred life histories. How many Pacific Islanders, for instance, have kept or do keep a private journal?

Pacific places and lives in these selected essays constitute at once starting points and signposts for a historiography focused on “participant history”. Lal reviews his active participation in Fiji’s political history, closely linked as this is with the history of his own society, the Fijian Indians. Moore guides us through his personal entanglements with the history of another diasporic group, the Solomon Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, outlining the disparities of demands on the writing of history made by indigenes on the one hand and Western academia on the other. A focus
that cannot be overlooked is the recent history of Pacific educational institutions. Thus Nelson and Lacey write about their experiences and encounters while teaching history at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), with Lacey acknowledging the influence Enga “men of knowledge” had on his academic teaching. “Men of knowledge” are likewise central to the biographical sketches drawn by Denoon and Munro. Denoon attempts to close in on the multi-sited life of Ulli Beier, the writer-cum-professor of literature-cum-impresario (Denoon and Beier also taught at UPNG). Munro unearths biographical details of the life of J.W. Davidson, the Australian National University’s first Professor of Pacific History. Other essays plotting the seamless transitions between personal experience, academic involvement and historical events deal with a variety of topics. There are reminiscences by once radical Kanak students, told against the political background currently prevailing in New Caledonia (Chappell). Review is passed on a project in Fiji devoted to the bilingual writing and publishing of history (Thornley). Also persuasively analysed are problems concerning how religious change in the wake of Christianisation of the Pacific region has historically been conceptualised (Weir). Not least, we are treated to a stimulating exploration of (archival) boundaries to recent historical research, first in Spurway’s project of writing a biography of Ma’afu, a politically influential Tongan in 19th century Fiji, and, then in Hanlon’s astute discussion of existing limitations and possibilities with a view to further clarifying the active role Pacific Islanders played in their Christianisation.

For all the constant stressing of personal encounter and “participant history”, the general impression this work makes on one is that, in contrast to the European voices cited, we almost never get anything verbatim from Pacific Islanders. Still, it is a highly readable book and that in a dynamic discipline clearly committed to breaking new ground, to transgressing old boundaries.


JIM WILLIAMS (NGĀI TAHU)
University of Otago

Wananei! What a treasure for the people of Te Whānau Moana and Te Rorohuri! This book is also a valuable contribution to Māori resource management in general, particularly the branch dealing with traditional knowledge and practices.

For generations it has been said that we must make haste to record the ancestral knowledge and experience of kaumātua before they are lost to us. In order to do so, Margaret Mutu was put “through a very thorough and rigorous training” (p.14) to prepare her to “handle the job of recording his [McCully Matiu’s] teachings”. Her efforts “compiled over a period of 11 years” (p.13) have resulted in a truly emic representation of the knowledge and protocols of her elders; a view that is clearly
presented so as to make it understandable to both the initiated and the neophyte. The book contains a large number of maps and colour photographs—almost 200, taken from land and sea—facilitating a visual, as well as a textual, record of the traditional knowledge and protocols of Te Whänau Moana hāpū of Ngāti Kahu. Extensive whakapapa accompany the text, enabling the descendant reader to link to people and places being discussed. This section of the book (Chapter 4) is of limited interest to a wider audience. The remainder however, and Chapter 5 in particular, is recommended to everybody interested in the relationships between Māori and the natural environment; in this instance the marine environment predominates. Chapter 7 provides a thorough description of important Māori concepts from a Māori viewpoint, and many of Mutu’s observations are useful reading for those whose understanding of terms like mana and kaitiakitanga—so vital to the management of natural resources—are based on etic material.

Yet, there are areas where the detail is missing. Phrases such as “when the time is right” and “in the proper way” hint that another level of knowledge underlies that presented in the book. Examples of specific resource management techniques are disappointingly few; well short of the expectation raised by the book’s blurb which states that it “… describes the customs associated with fishing, birding…”.

Much of the book is bilingual. Māori and English text are usefully juxtaposed. McCully’s insistence on the use of the local dialect, including where necessary non-standard spellings, provide added value for descendants of the area, but can be traps for others. Occasional renderings such as “hōohonu” (p.18) cause one to wonder whether they are a feature of dialect or merely aberrations of proof-reading.

The book’s structure is largely that of McCully’s whaikōrero style, beginning in early ancestral times and progressing to the present, with important digressions to maintain the relevance of the more arcane. Allusion and metaphor are fully explained. Chapter 5 contains some particularly insightful details of the interconnectedness of species, demonstrating the considerable depth of his ecological knowledge.

Chapters 8 and 9 provide summaries of the recent political history of Ngāti Kahu, including outlines of claims against the Crown. These include the Ngāti Kahu claim and the Muriwhenua fishing claim (which included all iwi of Te Hiku o Te Ika). Unfortunately, the book claims that as part of the Fisheries settlement, the “now infamous Sealord deal” was responsible for “the loss of Māori customary fishing rights” (p.197). This is, at best, a very iwi-centric interpretation. In fact the Sealord settlement was for Māori commercial fishing rights only; customary rights were confirmed in a series of court cases through the mid-1990s as documented by Mason Durie in his book Te Mana Te Kawanatanga (pp.162-63). Also, as Durie pointed out, a joint Māori-Crown Customary Fisheries Working Party was established “which eventually produced a set of regulations designed to give substance to Māori non-commercial customary fishing rights”.

As heralded by the English subtitle, the book provides excellent descriptions of Te Whänau Moana’s “Customs and Protocols” in a manner that constitutes a case study of hāpū history and its attitudes toward land and resources. Together with the Treaty of Waitangi issues outlined in Chapter 9, these provide useful analogues...
for situations elsewhere. However, despite its wider appeal, the book’s value to
descendants of Te Whānau Moana and Te Rorohuri, now and in the future, will
considerably outweigh its value to other readers.

It is sometimes claimed that the emic view fails to distinguish the wood from
the trees. Unfortunately, all too often Māori knowledge has been recorded in
an etic way and the trees could not be seen for the wood! In Te Whānau Moana
McCully Matiu and his niece Margaret Mutu have lucidly described both the
wood and the trees.

STRATHERN, Andrew, Pamela J. Stewart, Laurence M. Carucci, Lin Poyer, Richard
Feinberg and Cluny Macpherson: Oceania: An Introduction to the Cultures and
272 pp., bib., figs, index, maps, photos. Price: US$30.00 (paper).

GRANT McCALL
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The only people truly satisfied with a textbook are (probably) those who wrote
it. I declare this at the beginning because I recognise that my reasons for not finding
this a useful text reside in my particular research experience, approach to the Pacific
Islands and teaching context.

The book is intended not to speak to the scholar, much less to the intelligent
lay reader, but to service undergraduate teaching, I believe, most especially in
the United States of America. The authors, except for Cluny Macpherson, are
based in the U.S. One of the “dust jacket” selling points is that all contributors are
“members of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania”, itself an American
organisation, but with a wide membership, including this writer.

The six authors contribute three essays, obeying the standard Dumont D’Urville
conception of (in order) Melanesia (“South-West Pacific”), Polynesia (“Eastern
Pacific”) and Micronesia (“West Central Pacific”), each roughly the same length and
illustrated with black and white photographs, mostly sourced from the respective
writers. When I say “roughly”, I mean 89, 80 and 68 pages, respectively, so that
“Micro-” really is smaller than the rest, the reverse of Firth’s famous podiatric
observation.

Each author seems to have been given the task, probably by Steward and
Strathern, to produce their section. The sections are even in tone, but take up their
subject matter in very different ways.

The large Melanesian section adopts a geographical approach, taking the modern
nation-state as its definition with a little bit on each—Fiji (6 pages), New Caledonia
(4 pages), Vanuatu (4 pages) and the Solomons (11 pages), while the remainder
switches to geography by looking at the islands of New Guinea (34 pages). There
are some pages of introduction and summary at the beginning and end. The
summary section, “An overview of political problems: The legacies of colonial and post-colonial practices in the South-West Pacific” asserts that ethnicity plays a major role in conflicts in Fiji (Indians vs Fijians) and the Solomons (Malaitans vs Guadalcanal folk), and that resource development is a major point of friction in Papua New Guinea. The closing paragraph of that section opines that New Caledonia is moving towards independence while things are not looking good in “Irian Jaya”, the latter being the term they use for what many of us here know as “West Papua”. By the way, the Indonesian government now recognises that as the official name for the province they arrogated four decades ago.

Feinberg and Macpherson present Polynesia in terms of history and a few key (in their view) themes such as honour, *mana*, *tapu*, *aloha* and descent, before turning to a rapid run through contact history. Like the previous section, the authors use geography to structure their “contemporary issues” section, focusing on Samoa, the Māori of Aotearoa, and (no surprise, given Feinberg’s presence) Anuta.

The Micronesia section begins with a discussion of ecology, then proceeding to prehistory and (historical) linguistics before relying on geography, writing separate sections for the Marianas Islands, Guam, the Northern Marianas, Central Micronesia and the Marshalls, with case studies on Banaba, Bikini and Pohnpei. Unlike other chapters, “religious change” gets a named section from Poyer and Carucci. The theme of “reification of culture and the politics of tradition” could well have been developed further.

The whole collection carries a slight introduction from Stewart and Strathern which claims that in the three sections, “each incorporate some discussion of the following topics” (p.5), a template that gives wide latitude to the concept of “some”. This probably was the brief sent to the prospective authors, but to which they were not obliged to conform, as is clear from the resulting contributions.

This is not the first time that there has been attempt to compile a textbook for introductory Oceania courses; it certainly will not be the last, given the palpable shortcomings of *Oceania*. The gamut of past efforts has ranged from single authored encyclopaedias like the one by Oliver to collections of readings from published sources, an early one being that of the American Museum of Natural History.

If you are teaching in an institution with limited library resources, the case for many American institutions, the textbook publishers aver, then this is a reasonable, if slanted introduction to the region, excluding topics and places as much as it includes. The price in the United States is very reasonable; but I would think that ex-U.S. pricing would make this an expensive acquisition for an undergraduate. If, however, your university has good resources and your students are knowledgeable about the location of the library, then most likely you will continue to assemble your own readings, including your own well-focused and well-written articles of course!