

AT HOME IN THE OKAVANGO: WHITE BATSWANA
NARRATIVES OF EMBLACEMENT AND BELONGING

By Catie Gressier

Berghahn: New York, Oxford, 2015. 244 pp. Hardcover, ebook

ISBN 978-1-78238-773-2

Reviewed by

Patrick McAllister, University of Canterbury

This interesting study seeks to explain how ‘White Batswana’ living and working in Ngamiland in North-Western Botswana create and maintain a sense of home and belonging in a region renowned for its natural environment and wildlife, and in a country in which they are a small minority living alongside the majority Batswana people. The setting is the town of Maun and its adjacent Okavango delta, famous for its annual floods and the wildlife associated with this. Most of the White Batswana in the area make their living from the wildlife tourism industry, and they spend a fair bit of time in ‘the bush’, both for work and for leisure. It is in relation to the natural environment, with its fauna and flora, that they construct their identity and their sense of belonging. Their engagement with and knowledge of the bush and its wildlife, their ability to be ‘at home’ there, and to overcome dangers and adversities, gives them a sense of self-sufficiency, pride and an embodied knowledge that contributes to what Gressier sees as their autochthony.

The author tells us that they construct this sense of belonging discursively, through the stories, anecdotes and jokes that they exchange, often in local bars, where the men spend a fair bit of time, especially in the off-season while they wait and watch for the annual flood to materialise. Their storytelling performances recall time spent in the bush, alone or with their tourist clients, and demonstrate their knowledge of the climate, the local indigenous people, the environment, and their familiarity with its fauna and flora. Their narratives confirm their ability to cope with difficult situations and, often, to make light of it. However, the bush is so central to their lives that it has a semi-sacred character, and Gressier speaks of White Batswanan’s ‘bush-based religiosity’, which distinguishes them from their fellow (indigenous) Batswana who are predominantly urban churchgoers.

Given this apparent centrality of narrative, it is surprising that relatively little of it actually finds its way into the text. There are some illustrations of it, certainly, but the analysis is not based explicitly on these stories – they are treated more like interview data – and one misses the kind of analysis associated with folklorists (such as Richard Bauman) or sociolinguists.

Gressier sets the scene for her account rather well and with some useful maps by introducing the reader to the environmental features of the Okavango and the demographics of the White Batswana. She also reviews the situation of the latter within the context of the social, political and economic realities of the country as a whole (some of these latter sections are rather long and perhaps more appropriate for a PhD thesis than a book). This forms part of Chapter One which also provides an overview of her main findings. Although White Batswana share the same rights as other Batswana citizens (Kalahari San excluded!) and can acquire land rights, some seldom venture out of Ngamiland and have never visited other Batswana cities, making them somewhat isolated socially and cognitively from the rest of the country. Their sense of autochthony is thus firmly rooted in a specific place and its characteristics, namely the Okavango, to which they are spiritually and emotionally attached. This strong attachment to place assuages, it seems, their feelings of insecurity as a White minority group.

Chapter Two deals with the tourist industry and how this provides White Batswana with a sense of community and shared identity, because this is the industry that they depend on, and which they almost inevitably become part of by virtue of living in the place. Other employment options are largely absent. They feel proud to be part of such a prized tourist destination, and this contributes to their sense of belonging and locality. Yet tourism has also led to dissatisfaction and a loss of community through the impact on Maun's growth, and the concessions given to large tourism companies that shut out locals. Interaction with tourists feeds the guides' sense of self worth due to their knowledge of the bush in which the tourists are not 'at home' and require assistance. There is also some useful discussion on gender and masculinities, race and class, involvement of indigenous people in the industry, and the tension between conservation interests and cattle raising interests.

Further tensions and ambiguities surface in the following chapter on hunting and its link with emplacement and belonging. White Batswana identity is closely linked to hunting, although it is currently banned in most areas; and there is anti-hunting sentiment as well as attachment to it in Maun. Although some local indigenous communities have benefitted from hunting, there is

nevertheless some resentment at the elite nature of hunting safaris and the gap between local and well-heeled foreign hunters in this regard. This also contradicts the egalitarian ethos that is characteristic of White Batswana.

Chapter Four examines the location of White Batswana within the context of the nation as a whole, which they identify with. While they are incorporated into the State as citizens there are certain insecurities, since the State is Tswana-dominated and minorities traditionally held, and in some cases still do hold, inferior status. There are hints that White citizens are not as authentically Tswana as others, although the fact that Botswana was a British Protectorate and never colonised spares them the status of former colonisers. Their privileged position, level of education, support for the government of the day and contribution to the economy also makes for relatively harmonious relations with the majority. This general topic is explored further and at length in Chapter Five, which illustrates the complex nature of ethnicity in Botswana and its interaction with race and class.

Despite a fair amount of repetition and the strange absence of narrative analysis, this is a useful reading for any social scientist interested in notions of emplacement and belonging, tourism, environmental anthropology, human-animal relations, and the complex interactions of race, class, citizenship and ethnicity. The complexities associated with White Batswana belonging are well explored, and the outcome is certainly an endorsement both of the anthropological tradition of participant observation and the author's excellent fieldwork skills.

DISTANT LOVE: PERSONAL LIFE IN THE GLOBAL AGE

By Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim

(English edition, translated by Rodney Livingstone)

Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2014. 193 pp.

Hardcover, paperback, ebook. ISBN 978-0-7456-6180-3

Reviewed by

Sophia Edwards, Victoria University of Wellington

In *Distant Love*, ideas of love, intimacy and gender as mediated by the economics, and technologies and ethics of globalisation are considered by way of transnational relations, whether legal, commercial, biological or emotional in nature. The book turns the reader's attention to 'world families' (a term

conceived by the authors to capture the variety of families separated by geographical distance and/or brought together by migration) and the ways in which these families embody the dynamics of globalisation.

World families or 'families at a distance' are categorised broadly as 'multi-local' world families (constituted by members of different cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, or races), or multinational and multi-continental world families (where members share an origin but are dispersed across geographical borders). Such families can experience transnational marriage and divorce, 'baby tourism' and surrogacy transactions, 'mail order' brides, the employment of migrant home care workers, and complex visa arrangements.

Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim and the late Ulrich Beck are quick to point out the limitations of the term 'world families' as too broad to comprehensively describe the sheer variety of possible transcultural relationships. However, the important and unifying feature that these families share is a divergence from the classic and still dominant 'single-nation family'. Whatever their constitution, 'world families' are the focal point, the intersection through which the tributaries of globalisation move.

Early chapters deal with intercultural romance in the form of mixed marriages and long-distance relationships, and the tyrannies of distance and closeness. The book progresses to stories of marriage migration and the women who undertake it – stereotyped often as either predators of the old, lonely and infirm, or themselves victimised by lecherous Western males. These chapters cover the familiar ground of cultural preconceptions and prejudices, before moving to counter traditionalist notions of family through a discussion of the commodification of 'care' and the displacement of 'love'. The fraught composition of 'motherhood' in biological, legal and emotional perspectives is brought to the fore in Chapter Six, which looks at migrant care workers, or 'substitute mothers'.

Accessible to a wide and non-specialist readership, the book contains an often fascinating compilation of current research and secondary data. The chaos of love and the contingency of familial connections in a globalised world are elucidated vividly in the exposition of 'baby tourism' and commercial surrogacy in Chapter Nine. The authors examine the bonds of blood and bodily attachment, and the ethical and legal quandaries sparked by rapid advancement in biotechnology. This chapter truly captures a sense of a new frontier to which the rest of the book only alludes.

Gender becomes a more prominent consideration as the book progresses. En-

during gender inequality in the West is attributed in part to the absence of consensus on how to apportion domestic work. By contracting out the domestic labour that has historically been theirs, Western women effectively also outsource some of their own gender oppression. By hiring migrant care workers and housekeepers, Western women are complicit in the continued subjugation of the women they employ. When offering this evaluation, the authors qualify that the effects of globalisation are complicated. By recognising the value of 'globalized work' or otherwise mobilising themselves, migrant women from less affluent nations harness a hitherto inaccessible financial potential. The family members left behind are beholden to their female relative in ways they had not been before. In further consideration of the economic implications of world families, Chapter Eight assesses the potential benefits of such a family unit in terms of the global market. Global families may enjoy commercial privileges by strategically exploiting their access to international opportunities due to a simultaneous labour presence across multiple jurisdictions.

While the authors stress the implications of worldwide income discrepancies and the effect of inequality and power relations, they are also quick to eschew the tired conceptualisation of world families as passive sufferers of globalisation and its forces. By seeing world families as the locus for the dynamics of globalisation, not only socially and culturally but also economically, they explore the fluidity of the globalised condition, and work to erode the persistent dichotomy of Western and non-Western. Those who once had the privilege of distance from issues of global wealth imbalance are now confronted with its harsh realities in their own homes. Western individualist notions of love as a means of personal fulfilment are supplanted by the new global pragmatism of dating and courtship (aided in no small part by the internet).

'Postscript from the Future: The Two Commissions on Love' is perhaps too light-hearted to be a truly rousing or galvanising conclusion to the book however, in their discussion of the 'globalization of love' and 'love at a distance', the authors recognise the variety of worldwide connections, and hint at new possibilities and different standpoints from which to observe 'love'. *Distant Love* is less about the conceptualisation of love itself, and more about family as a means or category of relations between people and the contemporary rearranging or reordering of social lives, familial ties and obligations. There is much reiteration and some repetition, but the effect of the book is to encourage and inspire. Rather than suggesting any distinct methodology for future scholarship on the topic, it points out the issues and serves as a rallying cry or call to arms for theorists. It may be that 'world families' do not in themselves represent a new form of love, nor provide radically new configurations of the

self and the social. However, if *Distant Love* does not offer a new method of theorising love, it does demonstrate that in light of global social change, the development of such a method is a worthy undertaking.

ENGENDERING VIOLENCE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Edited by

Margaret Jolly, Christine Stewart, and Carolyn Brewer

Canberra: ANU Press, 2012. 280 pp. Paperback, ebook

ISBN 9781921862854

Reviewed by

Eleanor Rimoldi, Massey University

A large and growing body of literature on the general topic of women's rights and violence against women is bolstered by international conferences and global or national research institutes such as, in relation to this particular volume, the Australian National University Gender Institute. Accordingly, there is a tendency for self-referencing among a relatively agreeable network of scholars.

A prologue and introduction by Margaret Jolly is followed by seven chapters written by women field scholars, and one chapter by a Catholic priest. Naomi McPherson writes of violence in West New Britain; Laura Zimmer-Tamakoshi takes a more inter-relational view by taking into account male confusion and women's search for agency; Philip Gibbs is a Catholic priest with a long term interest in violence associated with witchcraft accusations in Simbu; Anna-Karina Hermkens applies her broad interest in Marian devotion in PNG to the particular focus of gender violence; Jean Zorn, a lawyer, looks at attitudes of PNG judges to victims of rape; Fiona Hukula (because she is from PNG it would have been interesting to know her cultural group) bases her research on interviews with convicted rapists that were conducted by a male colleague. She dismisses contrasts between matrilineal and patrilineal societies as explaining supposed differences in gender equality and planned to examine that factor in her research, but there is only a brief mention of it here. Christine Stewart reviews a police raid in 2004 of sex workers in Port Moresby; Martha Macintyre in the concluding chapter challenges Millennium Development Goals, even those specifically directed at achieving greater gender equality, because they are negotiated between men and fail to accept the necessity for men to 'relinquish privileges that are currently maintained by the threat of violence' (p.262).

Through this collection, there is a thread of influence from aid and development agencies and NGOs that have a necessary interest in the rights of women. Although cultural aspects are treated with some suspicion in the human rights arena, anthropologists in particular attend to them albeit often in symbolic or psychological terms rather more than sociological terms. Gender is one such cultural concept. It seems somewhat ironic, in an age where gender is being phased out as a credible category, that it is the focus here. In general, gender is almost inevitably associated with male repression and violence in association with Papua New Guinea. Is gender quite the appropriate word here? Marilyn Strathern has argued for a complex understanding of gender 'not in terms of sexed bodies nor merely as relations between the sexes, albeit opposed or the same, but as a dominant cultural code, even perhaps the dominant code for talking about human beings in general, and especially about the relations between persons and things' (Jolly p.5).

Might it be more effective to return to the structural analysis of society rather than the case study approach relying on the theoretical framework of gender especially as it remains stolidly binary at a time when individual social and physical identity is revealed as fragmentary and illusive? Contemporary discussion around gender identity is often expressed as the right to love, not to hate. There may be something to be learned by following this development where it occurs, that is, a greater acceptance (in a relatively short space of time) of love, including erotic love, between same 'sex' partners or even people who deny any sexual identity at all. Love expressed freely without fear of public shame and punishment. Why and how this change is taking place is important. Is it because of the lifting of restrictions rather than the imposition of new laws? Is it a move towards gender-neutral cultural logic?

In this text it is supposed that to curb the domination of males it is necessary to formulate active social policies and punitive measures to address the problem. This idea persists even though this approach has not solved the problem in PNG, nor in Australia or New Zealand for that matter. Even the institution of policies designed to protect women tend not to be as effective as promised and can create a false sense of security that make victims even more vulnerable. This collection of essays confirms the failure of most programs in PNG to 'combat' gender violence. If violence seems intractable perhaps we need more research on the conditions most conducive to allow love to flourish in PNG.

Minor irritations: Inflated language e.g. 'perforce' p. xxii; 'perduring' p. xxiii.

HUMOUR, COMEDY AND LAUGHTER: OBSCENITIES,
PARADOXES, INSIGHTS AND THE RENEWAL OF LIFE

Edited by

Lidia Dina Sciamia

New York: Berghahn, 2016. 220 pp. Hardcover, ebook

ISBN 978-0-85745-074-6

Reviewed by

Bryonny Goodwin-Hawkins, University of Melbourne

Radcliffe-Brown, Mary Douglas and Gregory Bateson walk into a bar ... while not the explicit premise for this slim volume, such a meeting might be imagined through its pages. Radcliffe-Brown, as Sciamia's introductory tour through the literature reveals, was the first social anthropologist to take jokes seriously. Douglas called him 'desiccated', and delivered her own account of laughter as liberating. Bateson, meanwhile, sought the cognitive in the comical.

Despite these top-billers, however, humour has been a fleeting theme in anthropology. This is surprising, since everybody laughs – although not at the same things, which makes humour rich with cultural context. That richness certainly emerges in the nine diverse chapters gathered here, from the hidden comedy of ancient Chinese medical texts, to banter in an Anglo-German bank branch, and to satirical Italian song. Most revel in their material, offering readers plenty of interest.

Both Judith Okely and Shirley Ardener's chapters particularly charm. Ardener updates a previously published piece on the gender-bending spectacle of an English comedy 'panto'. Putting popular culture into historical context, she deftly tugs out analytical threads: gender, morality, subversion. Okely, on the other hand, views anthropologists as (unintentionally) comic actors. She recalls bumbling moments from fieldwork to read our often entertaining ineptitude as learning through the ludic.

Elisabeth Hsu reaches into the past to share her careful re-readings of Chinese physician Chunyu Yi's dynastic-era case notes. Decoding, amongst other gems, the King's 'roaring' recovery as rushing urination, Hsu shows the deep knowledge needed to get, and analytically get at, a joke.

Dolores P. Martinez's contribution and Sciamia's own chapter bring anthropological perspectives to very different screen and stage examples: contemporary science fiction films and an eighteenth-century Italian play. In a very well writ-

ten piece, Martinez whisks us from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* to *Men in Black* to argue that comic approaches to science fiction betray deep anxieties about modern dreams. Sciamia tracks a single example, telling the story of how a comedy initially offensive to Venetian islanders has more recently returned 'home', reclaimed.

Among the contributors, only Fiona Moore draws her analysis directly from the field. Moore's field is a bank office, where everyday relationships between English and German staff are animated by jokes. Her account convincingly shows how loaded quips ('Zwei World Wars and Ein World Cup') fluctuate in their meaning, rather than fix in function.

By contrast, Ian Rakoff and Glauco Sanga catch in their respective materials and struggle to find analytical stride. Rakoff relays plots and trivia from American comic books, showing great personal interest yet little judicious pruning. In a gift for attentive ethnomusicologists and hurried page-flippers, Sanga relays more satirical songs, in both translation and original Italian, than he offers his own words in response.

Of the two reprints included, Ardener's (as noted above) is a welcome re-read, while Ian Wilkie and Matthew Saxton's analysis of parent-child interaction fails to fit. Their psychological universalism is unlikely to engage anthropological readers trained to ask: whose children? As first chapter, this piece provides an unnecessary origin story.

The volume's unevenness likely reflects its own origins in an eclectic Oxford University seminar. As the comma-laced title hints, there is little sense of a shared project across and between chapters. Most authors acknowledge the 'Social Identities' banner (this is the eighth volume in a long-running series), but stop short of deeper engagement. Rakoff's 'therefore ... identity' sentences are especially unconvincing. Further, the diverse contributors write for their regular audiences, making for a choppy stylistic patchwork. Moore, for example, has the habit of defending ethnography within organisational studies – necessary there, but distracting here. A firmer editorial hand may have pared and honed to more coherent effect.

Because of its inconsistency, the volume is more likely to meet with a photocopier than appear in toto on a syllabus or reading list. Graduate students may find Hsu's chapter an instructive example of close engagement with a historical source, while those preparing for or returning from fieldwork will appreciate Okely's honesty. Ardener and Sciamia's neat case studies are approachable and

undergraduate-friendly.

Perhaps the volume's greatest value is in its provocation to further ethnographic focus on humour. Indeed, the contributions here might be viewed as a motley coat, reminding us (as a good jester should do) that jokes do more than tickle. Sciamà's introduction rehearses the classic explanations for why we laugh – incongruity, superiority, tension relief, play – but breaks beyond earlier tendencies to pick and stick to one. This 'de-theorising' is a little bit liberating. We should at least take it as a good excuse to reflect anew on funny things. Audience applause, to that!

MEDIA, ANTHROPOLOGY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Edited by

Sarah Pink and Simone Abram

Berghahn Books: New York, Oxford, 2015. 228 pp. Hardcover, ebook

ISBN 978-1-78238-846-3

Reviewed by

Ruth Gibbons, Massey University

The aim of this edition (Volume Nine) of the series *Studies in Public and Applied Anthropology* is to explore a variety of different projects which have engaged, and in some cases continue to engage, with the public through the web, specific projects, and different media. The book draws together a range of different discussions under the heading of public anthropology, using the concept of *publics* rather than a single public anthropology, that illustrate the diversity of work undertaken. The various authors discuss being public alongside what this entails in the different projects, formats, media and approaches to anthropology they have undertaken. They come from a variety of perspectives, and as a way to approach these vastly different chapters, I follow Sarah Pink and Simone Abram's grouping of them. In Part One the authors focus on 'Anthropology in the Public Media Sphere' with conventional media, including television, exhibitions and theatre, with Part Two addressing 'Public Anthropology and Social Media' through the internet.

Pink and Abrams begin by discussing the main goals of the book which seeks to address four main questions:

1. What is anthropological engagement?
2. What are the *publics* of anthropology?

3. What kinds of media are being used, and how do they affect the above?
4. What kind of anthropology is implied in these questions? (p.2)

These are not simple questions to be asking of public anthropology, and while in a volume of this size it is difficult to explore a definitive answer to each, the diversity of work explored adds new dimensions to the discussion of public anthropology. Each author, through their own practice, engages with the role of media in their approach to anthropology. From Bullen's work in the Basque country, in coping with press releases and journalists, through to Barone and Hart's discussion of OAC (Open Anthropology Cooperative), media remains central to the discussion of public anthropology. The discussion around media and accessibility involves the consideration of representation of anthropological knowledge, which exists predominately in text, and suggests that through using different media, possibilities of being public open up. The editors suggest that the various authors show '...there is a very wide range of media that do not necessarily replace one another, but offer different forms of communication, and create different kinds of public' (p.1).

In Part One, the authors cover a wide range of media engagements through established media forms, such as photography, film and theatre, by looking at the opportunities and difficulties of engaging with these forms. The discussions include 'how anthropologists situate themselves in relation to the politics and priorities of representation' (p.16) in bringing various perspectives into the media discourse. Two examples of the work discussed are the photographic and audio-visual work of Paolo Favero and the theatre work of Debra Spitulnik Vidali. Favero explored and provoked audiences through his representation of India. He discusses how his research, made public through an exhibition and an audio-visual installation which was played at night clubs and bars, explored different representations alongside dominant media discourses around India and changed the public engagement with his work. Vidali discusses theatre as central to her practice of public anthropology, describing the process of creating a play using her fieldwork and research transcripts alongside an explorative theatre method. She directly engages with her concerns over the division between "applied" research and 'pure' research' (p.94) alongside academic expectations of her work. Anthropologists who work with arts and innovative film methods of research practice and ethnographic representation would recognise this question as an ongoing issue.

In Part Two 'Public Anthropology and Social Media', the focus is on the internet and begins with a research project undertaken by Mathew Durlington and Samuel Gerald Collins, called 'Anthropology by the Wire', (www.anthropolo-

gybythewire.com) a project in which students conduct research in Baltimore using a variety of collaborative media methods. Through the concept of overlapping networks, explored online and in the field, the chapter explores how they investigated, and directly engage with, the complexities of knowledge and representation. The diversity of this second section is illustrated in the discussion by Alex Golub and Kerim Friedman who oversee the blog 'Savage Minds' (www.savageminds.org). In their chapter, they discuss the struggles, opportunities and ongoing issues of running this blog. They describe their experiences which include the set-up of the blog, its original goals and the complexities that arise in running and maintaining this form of public anthropology.

Throughout *Media, Anthropology and Public Engagement* is the complex discussion of anthropology in academia and in public. This theme travels across the two parts engaging with the different representations of anthropology. Abram and Pink state that the 'Contributors to this book reject the notion that speaking outside academia, or translating ones arguments and messages for non-academic audiences, constitutes a betrayal of academic rigour' (p.4). In doing so the authors articulate, in some cases, the difficulty of communicating to an academic audience the value of doing public anthropology and the expectations of university hierarchies which do not always recognise these models of communication.

At the recent ASAANZ conference (November 2015) and again at AAS (2015), there were discussions about the public place of anthropology and making people aware of what is, and can be done, by anthropologists. The importance of public anthropology has also been growing around the world making this a timely edition which, 'mark[s] a line in the sand about where we are today' (p.1). *Media, Anthropology and Public Engagement* provides a place to begin to discuss the different ways in which people are currently engaging in public anthropology, including their methods, types of media used, topics researched and blogs such as 'Savage Minds.' It has the potential to be a valuable resource in instigating discussions around what anthropology can do, should do and has the potential to communicate through being public. The impact of media in these *publics* of anthropology reveals possibilities of ethnographic research and ethnography as engaging, through media, with a variety of different spaces as public. It covers diverse areas discussing its possibilities, potential and concerns as the writers engage with the reality of being public.

ON BEING HERE TO STAY:
TREATIES AND ABORIGINAL RIGHTS IN CANADA

By Michael Asch

University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2014. 232 pp.

Hardcover, paperback, ebook. ISBN 978-1-4426-4028-3

Reviewed by

Margaret Kawharu, Massey University

Michael Asch's book is a treasure to read, particularly for anyone who has been a participant/observer of contemporary Treaty claim negotiations in Aotearoa/New Zealand, because it is not about Māori and Pakeha relations and yet, from a comparative perspective, there are so many parallels between the experiences in Canada and New Zealand. The title of the book is inspired by a quote from Chief Justice Antonio Lamer, in the *Delgamuukw* case in 1997, 'Let's face it, we are all here to stay'. But the central question in the book is, 'What, beyond the fact that we have the numbers and the power to insist on it, authorises our being here to stay?' (p.3). Asch calls on 30 years of experience and analysis of treaties, land claims, and the relationships between the aboriginal peoples and the nation state in Canada to argue that the spirit and intent of those treaties, negotiated immediately after Confederation in 1867, were based on shared understandings and shared obligations. He puts forward the view that it is by mutual consent that Canadian society was built, and settlers can claim their right to stay, rather than simply by the power of asserting sovereignty and the weight of the majority.

Asch's research poses a number of interesting questions – different questions than we are used to. For instance, instead of only focusing on the Crown's omissions and failures to act in good faith, he also asks what evidence is there of proper approaches to relations with indigenous peoples taken by the British (and Canadians) in respect of the treaties? There was, for example, the Aborigines' Protection Society in 1840 that promoted 'the indefeasible rights of every people' and that 'sovereignty can only be justly obtained by fair treaty, and with consent'. Therefore, to just move on to lands that belong to others without their permission was wrong. There were nineteenth-century men like Lord Dufferin and Commissioner Alexander Morris in Canada who compare well with Lord Normanby and Henry Sewell in New Zealand, and Asch suggests there is good reason to believe that at the time of engagement between indigenous authorities and Crown representatives like these men, shared understandings were indeed achieved. If we are to keep faith with those who did act honourably in the past, then what are we to make of those shared understandings now, when

the language used by indigenous authorities is often full of metaphor and an uncomfortable fit with western political and legal thought? When nationhood is generally defined as a state with sovereignty and jurisdiction over territory – yet neither party qualifies in each other's eyes – what does nation to nation, equal to equal look like? To what are we agreeing, is the question.

To make sense of this Asch works through the more recent history of political relations between Aboriginal peoples and Canada from 1973 to the present, discussing various legal and constitutional determinations of Aboriginal rights and the consequences of applying them. This takes up the first half of his book and what becomes clear is that the viewpoint of the state always takes precedence and the sovereignty of the Crown reigns supreme in respect to the terms and the exercise of Aboriginal rights. Asch invites us to change that perspective. He suggests an alternative approach, one that is more open to the benefits of learning from Aboriginal peoples about the building of relationships among political communities. Then he turns his attention to treaties for the last half of the book, the practice of treaty making which was long entrenched before the arrival of Europeans, and the concept of sharing, with a number of specific examples of treaties and their implementation. Again, Asch poses a penetrating question, 'What are the treaty rights we guaranteed to them [the Aborigines] in return for *the treaty right they guaranteed to us* to legitimatise our permanent settlement on these lands? (p.75).

The treaty talk was of great interest to me because the language of the Aboriginal peoples and the Crown representatives in Canada is remarkably similar to what we have seen and heard in much of the Treaty of Waitangi claim evidence. For example, one Treaty Six elder said, 'It was the [queen] who offered to be our mother and to love us in the way we want to live'. (Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000, p.34 cited in Asch 2014, p.78). In negotiations between the Treaty Four elders and the Queen's representative, Morris speaks of brothers and friends as equals: 'The red man and the white man must live together, and be good friends, and the Indians must live together like brothers with each other and the white man' (Morris 1880, p.109, cited in Asch 2014, p.89). Metaphors of union and marriage, and building a house together lend themselves to further exploration into how two distinct parties agree to come together to share, but the form of that sharing cannot be predetermined because it requires both parties to take steps together, as in a dance.

In spite of the fact that treaty obligations were not honoured in the past, Asch concludes by proposing a retelling of the story of Canada, whereby the treaties are genuinely acknowledged as the foundation by which settlement was

authorised and legitimised on those lands, by the people who had the authority to grant such permission. He says,

‘If we take the view that we meant what we said, they [the treaties] become transformative, for through them we became permanent partners sharing the land, not thieves stealing it, people who are here to stay not because we had the power to impose our will but because we forged a permanent, unbreakable partnership with those who were already here when we came. Treaties then, and not the constitution, are the charter of our rights, for they give us what is necessary before any form of self-governance can become legitimate: the legitimacy to be living in a place’. (p.99)

He believes that were the public to support this version of the country’s history then governments would be encouraged to act on treaty obligations as solemn commitments not policy options. It makes me wonder if we in Aotearoa/ New Zealand took the opportunity of changing our nationhood narrative to one that was based on the evidence we now have of the conversations between Māori and Pakeha in regards to their Treaty relationships, how different the debate around constitutional reform would be. And Treaty claim settlement redress would be not only an apology, an acknowledgement of Treaty breaches, and a commercial package, but a much more transformative and enduring reconciliation for all of us ‘here to stay’.

SEASCAPES: SHAPED BY THE SEA

Edited by

Mike Brown and Barbara Humberston

Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2015. 200 pp. Hardcover, ebook

ISBN 978-1-4724-2433-4

Reviewed by

Maria Borovnik, Massey University

An unusual and fascinating book, *Seascapes* will be challenging to some and enriching to others. The editors asked contributing researchers to narrate their seascape relationships in a fluid, contemplative way. Rather than aiming at closed and static conclusions, authors were encouraged to use methodologies that provided opportunities for affective reflection and for making ‘the sentient’ a focal point of critical engagement with their seascape experiences (p.187). The outcome is an eclectic selection of narratives of floating with or

being engulfed by the sea, swimming or surfing, using a kayak, or being on a boat or ship. These narratives bring the authors' personal, and even intimate, contemplations to the surface. The editors hoped that focusing on autoethnographic narratives would offer new opportunities for understanding the sea, by exploring relationships between embodied experiences and the cultural contexts of the sea (p.5). Hence, highlighting the 'aliveness' of the sea as a space that allows embodied, material, and cultural human-sea relationships supports the aim of this book.

This aim has certainly been met. The fluid context and free-style writing of the collection of narratives presented here will be best liked by readers who are open to affective, emotional, yet critical ethnographic thought, and by those interested in water worlds. This book was also a risky undertaking as it could be somewhat challenging for readers who are un-easy with the murkiness, uncertainty and instability that fluidity offers, and who would prefer a more defined or structured presentation of research. To me *Seascapes* was worth this risk and I felt that the compilation of stories worked well together. This book was aptly framed by the editors with a detailed introduction that did not over-promise, and a brief concluding chapter. Interestingly both introduction and conclusion hinted towards mobilities research, and future engagement with seascapes might want to embrace mobilities literature and methodologies to a greater extent.

I enjoyed the historical and defining overview on seascapes in Chapter One. Mike Brown examined the changing socio-cultural perspectives of the sea, and how it can be actually viewed as a scape where 'the sea is a participant in, not a contextual backdrop to, social engagements' (p.20). Brown described seascapes as dynamic, life-shaping, and inclusive of materiality. Building on these lively notions of becoming, the methodologies encouraged in this book, Barbara Humberstone (Chapter Two) suggested thinking of embodied activities as part of 'our intuitiveness' that is 'built through our *lived* sensuous encounters with our material environment' (p.29). By doing so, we would become part of the motion of, and are emotionally touched by, the sea. Therefore, she felt, autobiographies and sensuous methodologies could bring a 'mixing of head and heart' to academic scholarship (p.31), creating a personal possibility to 'become' as a researcher (p.36). Humberstone refers to herself and others as 'sea people' or 'water people', emotively connected with the dynamics of the wave and water environment of the sea.

Chapters Three and Four both picked up on this emotional need of being with the sea. In Chapter Three, lisahunter, explained her grieving experience

in which the sea became a healing element that kept her (the sea-person) 'human' (p.49). Spending time with the sensuality of the sea and letting emotions 'flush through' her and letting herself dissolve these emotions is likely shared by readers. The author reflected on the 'sensible physical world' where the ocean acts as a personified healer or teacher of the process of becoming a 'sea-self', that engages spiritually and with kinetic empathy (p.50). Those 'water-people' in Jon Anderson's perspective (Chapter Four) share a 'collective conscience' based on the common experience of being fascinated by the motion and tumult of the sea (p.56). Surfers' engagement, Anderson explained, involves not only being in and on waves, but also reading and interpreting the shore-zone before engaging with it. To Mihi Nemani (Chapter Six) such engagement is not separated from cultural upbringing and involves observations and strategies that relate to one's perception of self in comparison to others. Drawing on her observations as body-surfer, Nemani saw that being Māori-Samoan in a white dominated world, being a woman in a male-dominated sport, and being a body-surfer in a stand-up dominated surfing environment, were influencing the way she lives her everyday experiences of surfing. I loved this chapter, which serves as an important reminder to the subtle and direct hierarchies and stereotypes, left-overs of colonial power, racial and gender dynamics, in our daily lives.

Robyn Zink's (Chapter Five) beautiful reflections on sailing across Cook Strait in a kauri boat specifically outlined that embodied knowing should intertwine with the 'experience prior to our world of abstract meaning' (p.73). Zink argued that she does not own an experience of the sea, but that rather 'the self emerges from experiences and is something that is continually in the making or in process' (p.75). Accepting fluidity of being (or self) she agreed with Deleuze that fixed identities are destructive and rather than focusing on what the sea meant to her, she wanted to focus on the 'messiness' and multiplicity of flows and relationships at work through different bodies (including herself but not essentially just herself). She concluded: 'sailing across the Cook Strait is ... about wind/body/boat/sea movement as an assemblage coming into being in relationship with each other' (p.77).

Journeying or crossing the sea via ship is the focus of Chapters Eight and Twelve. Karen Barbour (Chapter Eight) emphasised the need to trace back to ancestors and their combined knowledge of long-distance ship travel, the wider socio-cultural context of it, and the understanding of shared processes that are experienced by most immigrants to New Zealand. These shared experiences, she felt, will ultimately lead to a better understanding of oneself (p.121). I was particularly interested in Chapter 12, written by elke emerald who

narrated the deep-sea experiences of her friend, Fiona Ewing who worked as observer on a deep sea fishing vessel. This chapter elegantly maximised the narrative methodology and subtly unlaced the deep reflection on the currents of life that ‘run through us’ like water ‘travels in the current’ (p.180). Swimming with the currents was Karen Throsby (Chapter 11), whose ultimate goal was to cross the English Channel. The author explained marathon swimming as a ‘positive deviance’ and vividly described the very direct experience of her body overcoming the sea while ‘becoming a swimmer’.

Engaging with the sea environment also raised questions of environmental sustainability. Robbie Nicol (Chapter 10) described the beauty of the immediate individual or social experience of the sea. Peter Reason (Chapter Seven) felt sailing as not moving *through* waves and weather, but rather ‘riding *with* it’ (p.106). Brian Wattchow (Chapter Nine) contemplated how to live and be meaningfully on the borderline space of the Australian beach. Unfolding and emerging through history and ecological, physical dynamics, Wattchow explained that the beach landscape is enfolded with meanings, activities and memories (p.137).

Reading this book was like walking along a sea-land-scape, sometimes diving on a surf-board right into it, sometimes sailing along with it, learning a great deal of thought and emotion while going along with others’ experiences that are shaped by their cultural and academic upbringings and preferences. This book used language creatively capturing the emotive rolling, roaring, moving and chattering of the sea, starting at the beach and going far into high ocean space. The attempt by some to own the identification as ‘water persons’ – a place embracing all those that are fascinated by, or addicted to, being with the sea, and the freedom that it evokes – was likable but also could come across as constraining and categorising. This book, however, allowed for contradicting opinions and approaches, which made space for the multiplicities of seascapes and individual narratives, and will be enjoyed by those open to sensory approaches.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENT: A.M. HOCART AND
W.H.R. RIVERS IN ISLAND MELANESIA, 1908

Edited by

Edvard Hviding and Cato Berg

New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014. 336 pp.

Hardcover, paperback, ebook. ISBN 978-1-78238-342-0

Reviewed by

Eleanor Rimoldi, Massey University

This collection of essays is a kind of ‘rescue anthropology’ – in this case, a rescue of its own history as a discipline. As in most such histories, origins are significant. Origin stories always carry significant cultural messages, and so it is here. Although this book is essentially concerned with Rivers and Hocart, the story begins with the Torres Strait Expedition ‘... a large-scale, multi-disciplinary effort with major funding ... [that] helped change a largely embryonic, descriptive anthropology into a modern discipline ...’ (p.1). The Introduction by Hviding and Berg reinforces this re-telling of history with a focus on the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Solomon Islands in 1908 that they ‘... see as its prominent but neglected place in the history of anthropology and related disciplines...’ (p.11). The ‘ethnographic experiment’ of the title is said by the authors to have emerged here rather than with the more charismatic, more heroic, and perhaps more self-promoting Malinowski who claimed the method of ‘participant observation’ as his own invention. The contributors to this volume have themselves carried out long term research in the footsteps of Rivers and Hocart, as well as archival and multidisciplinary studies that lend considerable weight to their views.

There are eight chapters, three appendices, notes on contributors and an index, as well as maps, drawings, tables and photographs that all contribute to making this book a document to be taken seriously. In flipping through the book however, I did find it irritating that even though chapters had a main heading, a sub heading and section headings, there was yet another altogether different header at the top of the page for many chapters that could be confusing when reading the book for review. The latter did not seem necessary. This is especially so in Chapter Five (Title: A House upon Pacific Sand; Subtitle: *W.H.R. Rivers and His 1908 Ethnographic Survey Work*, followed by internal section headings, and with a header on each page: *Rivers, Mota and Tikopia: Survey Work Reconsidered*).

In Chapter One Christine Dureau (described in the notes on contributors as a ‘historical ethnographer’) straddles the divide between the culture of post-modernism pervasive in the 1980s when she began her Simbo research, and the need to acknowledge respected ancestors such as Rivers and Hocart. In a highly personal account she describes the process through which she came to ‘... advocate a triple stance of exploitation, critique and generosity’ (p. 63). In other words, use their work (as in science nothing should be wasted); continue to re-evaluate their work (and our own); and to respect the limits of truth in context. Chapter Two by Edvard Hviding highlights Hocart’s ‘cautious field methodology’ and his resistance to over generalizing to constitute ‘a people’ as other anthropologists have done in so-called ‘authoritative’ accounts such as ‘the Nuer’. Hviding feels that this humble approach is perhaps Hocart’s greatest legacy and makes his field material all the more credible.

Cato Berg (Chapter Three) compares Rivers’ genealogical method to his own work in relation to issues over land in north-west Vella Lavella and notes the enduring importance of kinship studies to anthropology. This theme is also central to Chapter Four where Knut Rio and Annelin Eriksen discuss ‘what Rivers saw as an entanglement of matrilineal and patrilineal principles’ (p. 132). Rivers may have persisted in his view that matrilineal societies were a more primitive form (hence the ethnocentrism that Rio and Eriksen refer to early in their chapter) but it is in the detail of social organization in Rivers’ fieldwork that the significance of gender is revealed as a powerful and complex dynamic in ordering social life through kinship.

From time to time scholarly works appear as grand regional surveys or even more grandly, of the world. In Chapter Five Kolshus examines this tendency in Rivers’ survey work, measures it against the more nuanced fieldwork contributed by Rivers and finds the latter to be of more enduring substance. ‘The lesson might then after all be that the quality of ethnography has the right of way, since the higher storeys of theory will not last when resting on shoddy craftsmanship – or in this case upon Pacific sand’ (p. 172).

Chapter Six by Tim Bayliss-Smith is a critique of the efforts that Rivers made to develop a synthesis of his field data with his interest in psychology and demography to come up with a general theory of depopulation in Melanesia. Perhaps influenced by his experiences during the First World War, Rivers saw colonialism and its psychological consequences as a strong factor in population decline in Simbo and Vella Lavella. Bayliss-Smith is not convinced and sees this as a form of ‘conjunctural anthropology’ (p. 210).

Depopulation is also the subject of the following chapter by Judith Bennett who quotes John Baker to suggest that researchers interpret the decline of populations through the lens of their particular discipline, or vested interest. In the early 1920s the claim that Oceanic peoples were disappearing gave an added urgency to the anthropological project 'to prevent the loss of valuable scientific material' and lent weight to funding applications. This was not the first nor the last time that data and theory have converged to articulate a convenient problem of interest to funding bodies.

In Chapter Eight, archaeologist Tim Thomas, draws attention to the neglected material – artefacts and photographs – collected by Rivers and Hocart in the Western Solomons. His discussion of this material shows how it can lend context to written reports but in addition our attention is drawn to the importance of appropriate methods in the collection and identification of such material. Thomas says that there is a 'recent resurgence of academic interest in photographic and ethnographic collections made during the early years of anthropological enquiry' (p. 252), but perhaps they are only as valuable as the care taken in their accompanying provenance. In my experience social anthropologists from the 1970s on have not been trained in the best scientific methods in the collection of material culture, nor indeed in the use of photography in the field. Less attention has been directed at the science (for example in collecting botanical specimens) than to ethics, regulations, and a primary focus on the subjective interpretation of the great cultural imponderables. If this be the case, and if universities lose interest in their role as archivists and repositories of anthropological research, the trail will go cold.

The contributors to *The Ethnographic Experiment* are all experienced ethnographers who have conducted fieldwork in the region explored by Hocart and Rivers and thus in a good position to acknowledge both the contributions and weaknesses of these scholars. In this carefully balanced reconsideration of early precursors there are lessons from the past for the proper conduct of the discipline, for example, what is the proper relation between method and theory? Hviding and Berg have brought together a thoughtful, coherent collection of essays that contribute to the history of the cultures of island Melanesia and to the history of anthropology itself.

By restoring Rivers, and especially Hocart, to a central place in the development of anthropology – its theoretical and methodological core – the subjective, post-modern turn that has for a time dominated the discipline, could be seen as a momentary diversion where story became more important than science. Universities have moved away from single discipline departments as

they compete for funding in a world more concerned with effective solutions to real world problems – social, economic, and political. Practical science is once again the order of the day. The anthropologist is no longer a hero, but now, a member of the team.

THE POLITICS OF INDIGENEITY:
DIALOGUES AND REFLECTIONS ON INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM

Edited by

Sita Venkateswar and Emma Hughes

London: Zed Books, 2011. 296 pp. Cloth, paperback

ISBN 9781780321202

Reviewed by

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This book explores indigeneity, indigenous activism and the ways these might play out in various contexts. The Introduction is followed by three sections covering Settler, Post-colonial and International contexts. A strong thread of local and critical engagement is apparent throughout, highlighting the different meanings and purposes for which people claim and use the term indigenous. It is obvious that these uses are highly contextual and the use of the term indigenous as a tool is a thought provoking notion.

The introduction establishes the key threads of the book and provides glimpses into what is to come. Each contributor used four key questions as discussion starters, addressing what constitutes indigeneity, the politics of indigeneity and the role of local and international indigenous organisations. A number of key areas are covered; the nature of indigeneity being one and how the use of the term challenges individuals, groups and nations to examine their ideas about themselves and how they respond to those seen as different. Similarities and differences in stories and multiple tensions are also apparent, but threads of power, loss, naming and claiming weave throughout. A noteworthy feature is the way each chapter is structured; presenting dialogue and commentary, with contributors to the book also serving as commentators on each other's chapters.

The first section, 'Settler: South America and New Zealand' contains two contributions on Ayoreo and Maori contexts; these are interesting both in their overlaps and contrasts. Section Two, 'Post-colonial: Africa and Asia' includes four

contributions from Central Africa, Egyptian and Sudanese Nubians, northern Thailand and the Nicobar Islands. It is apparent from these brief descriptions alone that the scope of the book is broad and that the sections provide manageable groupings rather than a focus. The final chapter is international in the sense that it is a conversation with two international NGOs and includes a Conclusion, which presents a range of perspectives on whether it is possible to discern an emergent 'second wave' indigeneity.

The book is not always an easy read, both in content and style. Chapters vary in their accessibility, which makes some of the chapters less appealing for those who enjoy an uncomplicated style. The idea of indigeneity is vast and the contributions diverse, however the book's unifying thread is apparent in the use of participant and author narratives alongside commentaries and by the underlying theme that indigenous peoples' experiences are diverse and deeply contextual. The book concludes not by reconciling these, but by presenting a range of responses that reflect the complexity found throughout the dialogues and commentaries.

Overall the book is a very useful contribution to the field and will be of particular interest to post graduate students and scholars of indigeneity. The chapters cover considerable ground and variety, so readers will find some contributions more interesting than others, depending on prior knowledge and interests. At times the content came across as disjointed, but this is not necessarily a criticism; rather it is the nature of telling stories. Although likely to be of varying interest, the spread of the chapters provides something for most readers with an interest in the politics of indigeneity. The ones that covered ground least familiar to me were of the most interest as they presented an opportunity to hear about these nations in the words of their indigenous peoples.

The use of dialogue and commentary encourages the reader to think about the nature of the discussion and the interviewer at least as much and, at times, more so than the interviewee. The book departed from the more usual approach of presenting data drawn from subjects. Without the dynamic involvement of the interviewee, the researcher and subject positioning can mask various divides; some of these divides are exposed in this book. It should be noted that it takes a certain amount of bravery to present material where gaps may be revealed between interviewer and interviewee positions; this was most notable in relation to understandings of local experiences and power relationships between the interviewer and the interviewee. Authors varied to the extent to which they acknowledged and explored these tensions; some focused more on what the interviewee said while others explicitly examined

their role in the process. When this dynamic was unexplored there was, for me, some discomfort with the largely untroubled interpretation and representation of indigenous voices through non-indigenous eyes. This was however, generally assuaged by the self-reflective nature of the non-indigenous voices, acknowledging that interpretation cannot be conducted without placing the interpreter within the frame; when this was done knowingly and explicitly the diverse epistemological positions became part of the story. For me the approach worked best when the story was mutually constructed, building and extending narratives, rather than reconstructing through interpretation.

THE POLYNESIAN ICONOCLASM:
RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION AND THE SEASONALITY OF POWER

By Jeffrey Sissons

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New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014. 160 pp. Hardcover, ebook

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Reviewed by

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This is a small but ambitious book based on thorough and extensive historical-ethnography research, and informed by relevant anthropological theory. Its germ was Sissons' ethnographic research on traditional history in the Cook Islands, a kind of relocation of his earlier research among Māori in the east and north of the North Island (1987 and 1991), and fascination with Cook Island god-images removed from the Cooks by London Missionary Society (hereafter LMS) missionaries and now housed in the British Museum. The research centres on the Society Islands and the Austral Islands, drawing heavily on the LMS archives; the considerable literature on 19th-century Hawai'i, and the Southern Cook Islands where the LMS proselytised at something of a distance, relaying the events their Tahitian surrogates reported. Sissons' narrative text details the dramatic events, the *Polynesian Iconoclasm* of the book's title; the destruction and de-sanctification of existing gods and temples, and their replacement by 'the Good Word' in the form of texts and chapels, later churches and laws. His thesis is that these marked events may be mapped on the ritual seasonality of the 'Pleiades above' and 'Pleiades below' (in Tahitian: *matari'i-i-nia* and *matari'i-i-raro*). The former, from our November to January, a period of renewal, of *communitas* and revelry; the latter, from May to July, a period of the reinstatement of order and hierarchy.

The analysis is rich in theory, informed by concepts and interpretations of Marshall Sahlins (mythopraxis and 'the structure of the conjuncture'), Pierre Bourdieu (on habitus and 'dispositions'), A.C. Hocart (on 'power' in things – here objects, such as idols and texts). When Sissons deploys these ideas in the narrative, they are directly relevant to the questions at hand. In the Introduction these scholars and their ideas are briefly explored, and then tweaked and combined in presenting his own concepts of 'rituopraxis' and creative 'improvisation'. The concluding chapter returns and expands upon these ideas in drawing on the rich material in the intervening chapters. In elucidating the contribution of his forerunners, he is generous in appreciation, in developing his argument he fully acknowledges their inspiration.

The text is judiciously designed to avoid the dangers of such comparative studies: the detailed specific instance versus the broad generalisation and the extension of one case by drawing on another (or interpretative cross-over). Chapter One, 'The Seasonality of Life' describes the religious practices, especially the seasonal ones, in several eastern Polynesian societies, drawing from specific accounts, often supplied by the Polynesian descendants of the participants.

Chapter Two, 'The Mo'orean Iconoclasm' chronicles the events that preceded this initial iconoclasm, which was an innovation of Pomare and his priests, rather than the result of missionary endeavour. Chapter Three, 'Pomare's Iconoclasm as Seasonal Sacrifice' and Chapter Four, 'More Distant Emulations' tracks the spread of this iconoclasm: the former to other of the Society Islands and the neighbouring Austral Islands; the latter to Hawai'i and the Southern Cook Islands. In each case this occurred during 'Pleiades above' (1815–1823).

Chapter Five, 'Re-consecrating the World' turns to events in all these archipelagos during 'Pleiades below', focussing on the houses for the new God. First, there were local chapels and then increasing large churches where the hierarchical order was re-established.

Chapter Six, 'Rebinding Societies' explains the almost insatiable appetite of these new converts for texts – literally 'the Good Word', first when people exchanged their own god-images for spelling books, and later when missionary presses produced readings and Bibles in the local (or a related local) language. Sissons establishes a strong argument about the equivalence of the rejected idols and introduced text as containers of power, with nods to A.C. Hocart and others.

Chapter Seven, 'New Tabus and Ancient Pleasures' tells of the excessive re-

strictions and laws (tapus) imposed by the new hierarchy (of chiefs and missionaries) and their enforcement by judges (often former priests). The missionaries even 'abolished Christmas because it occurred at the wrong time of year' (p.128). Unlike the old tapus, there was no relief from rules and laws, no respite from hierarchy and its restrictions. In reaction, predictably during 'Pleiades above', those who resented the oppression created new revelries. Sissons speculates: if missionaries had 'allowed Christmas itself to be a time of revelry... Christian conversion might have taken a very different course, accommodating rather than denying a Polynesian seasonality of power' (p.134).

Chapter Eight, 'History, Habitus and Seasonality' returns the reader to the beginning, as all such books should – to Bourdieu's habitus, Sahlins' mythopraxis, and their coming together in Sissons' rituopraxis. Moreover, he adds the idea of 'improvisation' to Bourdieu's related ideas of habitus and 'dispositions', imbuing history with more practice, which he writes: '... enable[s] us to steer a course between overly voluntarist history that privileges the intentionality of agents, and an overly objective history that attributes agency to structures and institutions...?' (p.142).

The book is a fine example of the coming together of history and anthropology, initiated by Marshall Sahlins some four decades ago and pursued by many others since. May it inspire other scholars to pursue related research in historical ethnography.

A relevant note: Sissons has since extended his research and analysis to Aotearoa/New Zealand (see *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol.124, pp.129–146 [2015]). The Māori iconoclasm occurred around the 1840s and took another symbolic form – that of the chiefs 'actively polluting their own tapu' by whakanoa rites, which were 'improvisations on ritual precedents', before converting to Christianity.