WAR MAGIC: RELIGION, SORCERY, AND PERFORMANCE

by Douglas S. Farrer (ed.),
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Reviewed by
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War Magic is an interesting volume that takes a broad approach to the subject of war magic. Its value lies in the blend of interviews, ethnographic field observations and informative historical context. Historical examples of war magic and the process of colonisation and de-colonisation and resistance in the contemporary environment are particularly important.

War Magic asks the important question of what magic does, rather than what it means and it is this approach that makes this work interesting, insightful and engaging. This volume challenges western understandings and present conjecture around war magic. A noteworthy aspect is that it acknowledges the martial dimension to religious observation and the concepts of 'dark shamanism' that, while acting as a function to heal, also has an attack and defence component in some societies. Other case studies provide examples of such attitudes. Such a work aligns with literature that has highlighted a move within academia to pacify the past.[1]

Some well-articulated definitions in the introduction provide a clear context; 'War magic is violence, orchestrated or defended against through magic, used alternately to harm or to heal' (p.1). The editor also asserts that war magic is multi-sided 'with porous conceptual boundaries incorporating various particular historical contexts' (p.1). Conceptual ideas and history are supported from the beginning with useful definitions of war sorcery, war magic and warrior religions. War sorcery is defined here as the organisation of ritual practices to 'harness magical, spiritual and socio-psychological forces that results on an opponent's misfortune, disease, destruction or death' (p.5). War magic includes war sorcery but also acknowledges measures to counter malignant forces (p.5). Lastly, warrior religion denotes the social organisation around the destruction

of others providing 'a dividing line between "us and them"' (p.5). A series of case studies present numerous instances of war magic ritual and the cosmological world views in which such practices exist.

Chapter One deals with *Tangki* war magic in contemporary Singaporean Chinese communities and the act of ritual piercing and the imbuing of spirit power and the collection of blood creating talismans for the departure of disease-causing demons. Performance and the use of *qi* (energy) are central to fighting such demons. Chapter Two explores Javanese *Kanurangan*, and the detailed descriptions of ritual and performance. The role magic played in the war of independence against the Dutch in late 1940s provides a good case study linking war magic to independence and continued survival of *Kanurangan* with the pressures from Islam and secular sportification and links to martial arts (pp.48–9). An effective linking of ritual experiences and the historical setting was insightful and informative despite a sense of trying to cover a lot of ground. Chapter Three considers black magic in Sumatra. There is a discerning reference to colonial attitudes towards the predictions of a doomed future of magic practices due to modernisation despite a long history of magic in Europe (p.68). The author confidently asserts that these predictions were incorrect stating that magic has 'proven to be incredibly resilient in the face of broader societal change' (p.68). The theoretical contexts for discussions on black magic are provided through an evolutionary sequence from irrational (colonial discourse) to understanding magic symbolically or metaphorically (p.68), to the anthropological structural-functionalist framework, to the phenomenological approach of observers working within the traditions (p.68). As with other chapters, the offensive/defensive aspects of magic are discussed (p.72), along with some aspects of magic such as shape shifting and black magic. Like some of the other examples of magic, Sumatran black magic uses ritual, but as a way to gain magical power or as a means to communicate and request aid from a spirit or supernatural entity (p.76). Chapter Four discusses the ideas of Kuppi or the gifting of one's life as a weapon (p.92). Linked to Hindu beliefs and practices the Kuppi ritual is one of selfless zeal and a badge of initiation which developed into a sense of espirt de corps (pp.92–95). There is utility in this chapter when placed in the context of understanding spiritual belief under-pinning martial activity and dedication to a particular cause. Chapter Five inspects *shamani* battle grounds in Venezuela and the author acknowledges the prejudiced of western researchers against violence and a discriminatory emphasis on the more positive, healing aspects of shamanism (p.107). Jokić recognises the dark side of shamanism and how it is an indispensable component of Amazonian cosmo-shamanistic systems within a heal/harm dichotomy (pp.107–8). The values orientations of western researchers are

challenged by a solid account of the Yanomani cosmological world and the war magic within this world. Chapter Six links the war magic of the past with the present in the context of response to economic, military and colonial conditions among the Chamarro of Guam. The framework for war magic and warrior religion is placed within a theoretical rubric of performance, enchantment and re-enchantment and it is in this context that Farrer and Sellmann discuss spiritual resistance against the colonial territorialisation of Guam (p.128). The final chapter addresses just war in the Indian Buddhist traditions through the tantric corpus (p.150) and asserts that 'magic' is acceptable if used defensively against a target described as threatening or hostile (p.154). An interesting distinction in yogic warfare is that high transcendence confers higher judgement and can partially nullify negative karmic effects (p.157). Despite the need to protect one's territory, there is still a desire to preserve life (p.161).

War Magic is well worth reading if you have an interest in the nexus between magic and warfare. There are examples that compare to the experiences of Māori and the impact of Christianity. This volume also provides examples of cultural survival, relevant to indigenous cultures world-wide in general and New Zealand in particular. The optics of this work could also be used to extrapolate onto older examples of spirituality and war.

NOTES

1 Steven A. LeBlanc with Katherine E. Register, *Constant Battles: Why We Fight*, St Martin's Press, New York, 2003, pp.xi–xv. Lawrence H. Keeley, *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, pp.vii–xii. Jared Diamond offers some interesting examples of peaceful groups and the unique geographical or economic reasons for this. See *The World Until Yesterday*, Penguin Books Limited, London. 2013, pp.154–155.

SECURITY, RACE, BIOPOWER:
ESSAYS ON TECHNOLOGY AND CORPOREALITY
Edited by Holly Randell-Moon and Ryan Tippet
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 219 pp.
ISBN: HB, 978-1-137-55407-9; ebook, 978-1-137-55408-6.

Reviewed by
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Security, Race, Biopower, published by Palgrave Macmillan, is an excellent collection of essays that add up to more than the sum of its parts. In all, there are ten essays, by eleven contributors including the editors.

As the title indicates, the book focuses on an exploration of three key contemporary issues. Firstly, it addresses concerns about *Security*, which are used to justify multiple intrusions into people's privacy and changes to legislation to enable these intrusions and which construct an environment of fear that enables the abuse of individuals and whole communities. In many ways, the fear generated by security concerns is most like that generated during the Cold War when surveillance was also widespread and intense on both sides of the Iron Curtain. However, the kinds of listening technologies now in use were simply not available, nor were the military technologies that allow remote targeting and attacks on individuals and communities.

Hence the book's subtitle, 'Essays on Technology and Corporeality' because any attempt to deal with contemporary issues of *Security* must address the uses of technology, whether that means the use of military drones in warfare or the use of mass listening devices to spy on whole populations. And most invidious of all is the unequal and unjust way that the technologies are deployed, e.g. the racist assumptions underpinning many of these deployments: why some populations are targeted by military drones, while other populations are commercial targets for the sale of drones for entertainment. So *Race* is the second factor in the analysis.

The final term is Foucault's notion of *Biopower*, which explores the ways in which modern nation states regulate and control populations. We are now faced with the operation of biopower, justified by concerns about *Security*, and specifically deploying technology that engages with bodies – mapping their location, recording their activities, deducing their thoughts, predicting their actions. Any similarities to Orwell's predictions in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are entirely appropriate and deliberate. David Lange, the former New Zealand

Prime Minister, once said that the reason he did not want nuclear technologies in NZ – whether for power or on visiting ships – was not the danger of leaks or explosions, but that their existence created an atmosphere of secrecy in the name of which all kinds of injustices were sanctioned by governments and enabled to take place. This is exactly the kind of *Biopower* that this collection seeks to divest of its secrecy and bring into the light.

The editors list three key concepts that inform the discussion in the book: geocorpographies (which combines the study of space and of bodies), somatechnics (which focuses on the micropolitics of bodily regulation) and biopower (that focuses on the regulation and control of whole populations). All are concerned with the regulation and control of bodies, and each also deals in a specific way with the role of race in this management.

Section One, *Geocorpographies* deconstructs the obvious or given nature of both geography and corporeality to explore the politics of bodies in specific spaces, including the targeting of drone strikes using algorithms that cannot distinguish sufficiently between civilian and terrorist; the differences in sexual practices that are determined not by individual desire but by geographic location and access to drugs; the use of apparently redundant 'royals' to anchor the race-based ideology of settler cultures; and how border zones such as airports have become surveillance spaces, post 9/11, enacting race-based regimes of control. Joseph Pugliese's essay, 'Death by Metadata' opens this section with a chilling account of a debate at Johns Hopkins University, during which Former CIA and NSA Director, Michael Hayden asserted, 'We kill people based on metadata.' Pugliese examines the elision of the human – beings, bodies, relationships – from the NSA surveillance program and the operation of military drones. People become targets because of the way their bodies (*corpora*) are identified within a physical locus or space (*geo*) and subsequently described and recorded (*graphy*). Pugliese's subtle analysis reveals the chain of significations whereby certain bodies (e.g. from the Global South) are rendered no-bodies, and so liable to indiscriminate disposal. Joshua Pocius' following essay on HIV, the practice of barebacking (unprotected anal sex, usually referring to gay male participants) and the unequal availability of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is another example of a geocorpography based on race, mediated in this case by biotechnologies available to the Global North. The following essays by Holly Randell-Moon and Sunshine M. Kamaloni provide other examples of the positioning of bodies in space and the regimes of control to which they are subject: for Randell-Moon the historical disavowal of the sovereignty of Australian Indigenous people anchored by the absent body of the British Monarch; for Kamaloni, the contentious space of the modern

airport in the wake of 9/11 whereby, as she notes, 'certain bodies are rendered invisible as subjects but visible as objects' (p.75).

Section Two, *Technologies* focuses on information technologies, the inevitable enmeshing of technologies and users within expansionist corporate ideology, even when the apparent aim is democratisation. Recent reports of workers at a Wisconsin technology company, Three Square Market (32M) being embedded with a microchip in their wrists to enable them to perform various activities (open doors, log onto computers, and buy snacks from machines) has raised community concerns about privacy. The subject was discussed on a recent episode of *Common Sense*, an Australian reality television program that elicits responses from 'everyday Australians' about current issues and concerns. Opinions were divided on this issue but the dominant concern was for privacy and the prospect of constant employer surveillance that would reduce or eliminate employee autonomy. As one of the participants commented, 'first we microchip our dogs; now we're microchipping ourselves.' This practice is not entirely new: it has been used to embed credit card chips to avoid carrying the physical card in high-risk contexts and the microchip technology used by 32M has already been used in Europe. The key issue is consent and the extent to which such consent might be coercively obtained by employers.

Ryan Tippet's essay on social media questions the power of apparently less intrusive technologies such as social media to enable the same kind of tracking and surveillance of individuals, and their incorporation into a new 'corporate geocorpographies' – techno-economic assemblages that incorporate individual bodies and dominated by corporations such as Facebook. As Tippet concludes, the price of inclusion in this connected world is high, and includes concerns about the loss of privacy, cultural independence, and even a degree of corporeal independence. The latter concern is addressed in the following paper about the self-disciplining of the body enabled by wearable technologies. Again, these technologies map the contradictions within contemporary capitalism about bodies, health, the nature of wellbeing, and of individual versus corporate control and autonomy. This section concludes with Sy Taffel's paper about the labour required to produce the digital technologies we take for granted – the rare material resources they require and the often appalling working conditions for workers on the production lines that have been blamed for a wave of suicides in Chinese factories, such as Foxconn's Linghua plant that produces Apple's iPhone.

Section Three, *Biopolitics* continues the discussion of drones, noting the ease with which this weapon of war has been incorporated into daily life. Thao

Phan and Caitlin Overington locate in the domestication of the drone as a toy in Western societies the banalisation of the rhetoric of war (e.g. the War on Drugs, the War on Poverty, the War on Terror) and the permission this gives for the widespread use of surveillance technologies.

David-Jack Fletcher's essay returns to corporeality, exploring how perceptions of 'productivity' determine the way individuals are treated – a critical question for ageing populations in cultures where the aged body is condemned as unproductive. Fletcher notes the particularly mechanistic understanding of embodiment involved in this understanding of aging. Jillian Kramer's concluding essay brings many of the concerns about embodiment, governmentality, geocorpography, and race together in an analysis of the Northern Territory Intervention in Australia, an action so fundamentally racist that the Racial Discrimination Act had to be suspended to enable it to happen.

The essays are framed by the editors' excellent Introduction that explains the key concepts used in the book, and shows how they interrelate to create an innovative and informative study of these critical issues. As this summary shows, the book addresses a diverse range of issues, every one of which is highly relevant to contemporary social and cultural research and analysis. This comprehensive set of issues along with the methodological guidance offered by the Introduction makes this book not only stimulating scholarly publication for researchers but also an excellent teaching book.

RECONCILIATION REPRESENTATION AND INDIGENEITY: 'BICULTURALISM' IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

By Peter Adds, Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich, Richard S. Hill, *&* Graeme Whimp (eds.)
Universitätsverlag Winter: Heidelberg, 2016, 224 pages.
ISBN HB, 978-3-8253-6619-3

Reviewed by
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Two things caught my attention with this book. On the front cover I recognised my whanaunga taking part in a pōwhiri at Puatahi Marae where we welcomed Minister of Treaty Negotiations Chris Finlayson into the midst of Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. Secondly, this book on biculturalism in Aotearoa New Zealand was published in Heidelberg, Germany. The idea for the book was a joint venture between Victoria University in Wellington and the Center for Intercultural Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz in Germany, and emerged from two conferences, one at each institution. Intrigued, I read on in anticipation of the issues of reconciliation, representation and indigeneity being grounded in the local specifics of Māoridom and also being critically analysed for a wider readership than New Zealand.

Bönisch-Brednich and Whimp introduce the project as an analysis of the reconciliation process between Māori and the Crown by leading and emerging scholars, both Māori and Pākehā, in the field. Acknowledging the need to critically evaluate reconciliation processes that are not easily accessible or transparent in legal decisions, this collection offers rich scholarship that attempts to illuminate the myriad power imbalances in the struggle to achieve creative and enduring solutions in sharing power. The premise is that scholarship and its ability to reshape the nation's reinventing of itself is an important tool for the healing aspect of reconciliation and engaging Aotearoa with New Zealand.

The book is divided into three sections, led by four Māori scholars and their reflections on Treaty claims: Peter Adds, Rawinia Higgins, Carwyn Jones and Marama Muru-Lanning, all of whom are strongly affiliated with their iwi, and driven to preserve the vitality of Māori conceptual thinking, kaupapa Māori and Māori research methodology in the frameworks of biculturalism. They offer quite different case studies in education, language, legal traditions and commercial investments, in which Māori too, must themselves rethink their experiences and responses, in challenging ethnocentric, western, academic frameworks, and neoliberal politics and economics.

The second section includes contributions from Richard Hill, Therese Crocker, Richard Boast and Martin Fisher, who bring historical and political analyses to Treaty claim negotiations, from their experience as historians and practitioners in various key aspects of Treaty claim processes. Undeniably complex and fraught, the negotiation process for a Treaty claim is witnessed and understood by very few people, and these chapters open up the discussion on the positive and negative aspects of the long and imperfect engagement of many parties required to finalise a settlement and achieve a measure of reconciliation.

The final section looks at the modes of engagement and how they are represented and played out in an emerging joint cultural landscape of post settlement. Beginning with a personal overview of the work of the Waitangi Tribunal over the past forty years by Barry Rigby, the reader gains perspective on a bicultural arena that has provided Aotearoa New Zealand with a 'social and cultural safety valve' (p.130) and enabled us all to face up to our common history and future. Alex Frame and Paul Meredith reflect on the ways in which the Waitangi Tribunal has provided an agreed space, for rights-creating performances that conform with custom (p. 147), which acts as a 'lightning rod' (p.148) for the sense of injustice suffered by Māori, and thereby demands cooperation from the players towards reconciliation. The final chapters look at forms of cooperation, partnership, co-governance, co-management and what may be required to not only maintain Māori culture in Aotearoa New Zealand but also accommodate both difference and affinity for mutual prosperity.

As one who has been involved in these very processes from research to negotiation to settlement and now post settlement with my own iwi, Ngāti Whātua, I recommend this book as a significant collection of perspectives, experiences, reflections and analyses, of processes that are largely behind closed doors, leaving the general public uninformed and yet are transforming the nation. It is vital that we inform ourselves of these processes of reconciliation, which are attracting interest from international observers and German scholars such as Rother, Blätter and Schubert-McArthur who have contributed to this book also, and engage in discussion about their implications for our own sense of nationhood.

As Didham and Callister show, there are more questions on the horizon. For example, in post-colonial, post-settlement society, the concept of indigeneity may be applied in time to not only Māori, but settler populations who have settled in the country for so many generations that they consider they do not belong anywhere else. How does a Māori who has migrated to Australia identify him/herself? As migration and intermarriage continue to blur the de-

marcation of Māori and Pākehā inherent in the term bi-cultural, and identity is more self-determined, what will indigeneity come to mean? Having come this far, this book provides a platform for understanding and evaluating those processes already engaged in to consider our future.

In raising the issues and challenging hegemonic frameworks of knowledge production, the irony is that the book remains deeply embedded in the western academic tradition of scholarly writing in the English language, though contributors come from a variety of disciplines and fields. That said, the scholarship presented here is emerging from only the last decade or two of our history and is carrying the voices of active participants in reconciliation processes which, by definition, are pushing the boundaries of what is considered normal. Clearly there is still a long way to go to normalise biculturalism and bilingualism as simply the way of life in Aotearoa New Zealand, and this book gives us all the reasons for making the shift in practice.