

Book and Media Reviews

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 30, Number 1, 215-260
© 2018 by University of Hawai'i Press

tion for more study of these issues. In chapter 9, “Toward a New Research Agenda: Foucault, Whiteness and Sovereignty,” for example, Moreton-Robinson lays out an argument for engagement with Foucault’s theory of biopower in indigenous studies and generates a number of questions to be taken up by other scholars in the field (131–132). One overarching question is: “To what extent does white possession circulate as a regime of truth that simultaneously constitutes white subjectivity and circumscribes the political possibilities of Indigenous sovereignty?” (131). The questions are generative and important but perhaps overlook the many indigenous studies scholars who do centrally engage Foucault and biopower in relation to Indigenous contexts (see Dian Million, Scott Morgensen, among others), though again, such works may post-date the date this chapter was originally, separately published (2006).

Pacific studies scholars may be particularly interested in chapter 3, “Bodies That Matter on the Beach,” which examines the history of how beaches in Australia came to be seen as the proper domain of white settler masculinities via the roles of lifesavers and surfers. The chapter analyzes the 2005 Cronulla riots, in which xenophobic protests were sparked by an alleged assault of a white Australian lifesaver by an Arabic-speaking youth. Moreton-Robinson effectively points out the connections between this xenophobia and the protests’ performance of repossessing the beach as white male property, which also continues the dispossession of Indigenous peoples (43). She further analyzes Indigenous artist Vernon Ah Kee’s

response to the Cronulla riots in his impactful art installation *CantChant*, which featured Indigenous surfers reclaiming space at the beach (44–46).

Overall, *The White Possessive* is a valuable, multifaceted text that provides a significant foundation for furthering global studies of whiteness, patriarchy, and settler colonialism. It has broad applications within the fields of Pacific studies and indigenous studies as well as other interdisciplinary studies of whiteness, patriarchy, and the law. The book inserts Indigenous concerns into literatures and theories that often render Indigenous peoples invisible. Readers seeking serious theoretical and practical engagement of how thoroughly modern discourses of rights related to land, property, and the human itself are premised on Indigenous dispossession in settler colonial nation-states will not be disappointed.

MAILE ARVIN
University of Utah

* * *

Mothers’ Darlings of the South Pacific: The Children of Indigenous Women and U.S. Servicemen, World War II, edited by Judith A Bennett and Angela Wanhalla. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8248-51521, xxiv + 379 pages, maps, photographs, notes, appendixes, references, index. Cloth, US\$65.00.

Some seven decades beyond the end of the Pacific War, oral historians have moved past recording the stories of war survivors (most of whom have passed on) to documenting the war’s effects on succeeding generations. One

effect *was* a succeeding generation—a flush of war babies born around the newly established US military bases and ports. Judith Bennett, Angela Wanhalla, and project collaborators Sauti'a Louise Mataia-Milo, Kathryn Creely, Jacqueline Lekie, Alumita Durutalo, and Kate Stevens, between 2010 and 2012 tracked down and interviewed dozens of these children, several of their mothers, a few surviving fathers, and a number of grandchildren. To find interviewees, they relied on sketchy official records, a project website that invited participation, and local knowledge of family histories in the wartime venues. These sites were Bora Bora, Sāmoa, New Caledonia, Vanuatu (New Hebrides), Wallis (Uvea), Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, and Kiribati (Gilbert Islands). As the Pacific War progressed, the US military also occupied other areas including scattered islands in Micronesia, the Ellice Islands, and New Guinea. It had long occupied Hawai'i and Guam, certainly contributing to demographics there, although these longer-term colonial occupations differed from the briefer military incursions elsewhere.

Contributors to this volume summarize wartime establishments and events in each region, and also the local sociocultural contexts (including women's mobility) that influenced sexual and romantic liaisons and their occasional issue. The editors estimate that wartime relationships between American servicemen and indigenous women produced around four thousand babies across the islands surveyed and perhaps forty legal marriages,

mostly in New Zealand. These are notably small numbers, especially when compared with the thousands of Amerasian children born during the Vietnam War. Colonial and military policies, opportunity, and cultural expectations on all sides that informed sexuality and stranger romance during World War II apparently also limited possible pregnancies.

Oral interview excerpts provide a range of reflections about wartime events, relations with mothers and family, childhood experiences, and seeking and, in a few cases, finding lost fathers and American relatives. Unmarried motherhood and missing fathers are variously accepted or deprecated across the region, and contributors sought and interviewed war babies—now respected elders—with care and sympathy, keeping some anonymous. Most were happy to tell their stories. Some of these life accounts are detailed and extensive, happy or tragic, including New Caledonian Isabelle Pezron, who followed an American husband to Minnesota where she would lose both him and her children, and Wallisian Petelo Tufala, adopted by an American Roman Catholic priest in Vanuatu who would depend on his son during his old age. Poignant illustrative family photographs depict mothers and children during the war and also today.

Although occasional or professional sex workers serviced the more cosmopolitan bases in New Caledonia and New Zealand, according to family stories (which might favor romance over sex) many other wartime relationships were indeed amo-

rous. American “love” discourse was a powerful motivator, then as now. During wartime, young American men may have been desperate for sex, but many soon fell in love with Island girlfriends. Only one reference to affairs between servicemen and Island men pops up, from Tonga, but wartime gay relationships would be even more challenging for oral historians to excavate and document. Military boyfriends were the original mothers’ darlings, followed next by their left-behind children. When the war tore couples apart, some boyfriends struggled to keep in touch and, if they knew of children, left or sent money, photographs, and gifts. Enduring relationships were difficult in the face of military and civilian efforts to thwart wartime romances. None could marry without the permission of commanding officers and this was rarely granted, given US immigration law that then required immigrant wives to be of at least 51 percent documented European ancestry, and given anti-miscegenation laws that pertained in twenty-nine of the states. Furthermore, although military policy required servicemen to support their children, in practice few mothers received monetary assistance, since that policy also demanded proving paternity.

Pacific scholars interested in kinship, the family, and children will appreciate this research. Pacific War babies, unlike Vietnam’s Amerasians (4), in general were integrated into loving families. This followed from Pacific kinship practices including common adoption and fosterage, and also a history of marriage and liaisons with strangers in many com-

munities. Many unmarried mothers passed along new babies for others to raise, but typically they gave them to extended family members. These children, although notably fatherless, were nurtured if sometimes also teased, especially those with African-American fathers who were born into Polynesian communities. Many endured taunts and labeling with new postwar sobriquets like Kai Merika (Fiji), Marikena (New Zealand), and Marike or Puti (Cook Islands). Despite familial nonconformity as children, most grew into respected and successful adulthood.

Those interested in existential Pacific personhood will also trace a mix of individualist and relational elements in these life histories. Almost all those interviewed wanted to find lost fathers and their families: “Each person is prompted to search for his or her American father for different reasons: some only want confirmation of paternity, whereas others want to know where they fit in the family puzzle and to understand their heritage” (226). Desire to locate an unknown parent may arise from an individualistic sense of an incomplete, imperfect self: Knowing the father tells one who one is. Or, it may reflect desire to expand one’s network of kin: The more relatives a person has, the more one feels accomplished, supported, and fulfilled. Both desires may motivate searches for lost fathers and families, but particular children and their communities may lean individualistic or relational.

Should future war babies in search of lost fathers and unknown families discover this book, they will appreci-

ate its appended “Research Guide to Finding Family.” This lists helpful archives and online sites for seekers beginning a paternal family quest. The Mothers’ Darling project also has its own progeny: a website (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/usfathers/>) that offers research advice and invites submissions that might help track missing dads. These life histories remind us that Pacific War relics include both people’s bodies and stories.

LAMONT LINDSTROM
University of Tulsa

* * *

The Battle over Peleliu: Islander, Japanese, and American Memories of War, by Stephen C Murray. War, Memory, and Culture Series. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8173-1884-0, xii + 278 pages, maps, photographs, endnotes, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$59.95.

Stephen Murray has written a remarkably sensitive, insightful, and compassionate book about a war that continues. While Japanese forces surrendered the island of Peleliu in what is now the Republic of Palau to American invaders on 24 November 1944, the battle goes on around issues of memory, commemoration, and the meaning of history. The chadra Beliliou (people of Peleliu) receive scant if any mention in the histories produced by the principal combatants. Their experiences, feelings, trauma, and the terrible devastation wrecked on their island go largely ignored

in national histories that endeavor to explain and justify an unnecessary slaughter. Murray’s book seeks to correct that neglect. While the author’s investigation of American and Japanese sources is impressive, his inclusion of Palauan elders’ voices is what makes this work so distinctive. *The Battle over Peleliu* thus represents a most valuable addition to earlier works by Geoff White, Lamont Lindstrom, Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout, Laurence Carucci, Keith Camacho, and Judy Bennett that deal with the Pacific War’s effects on Island populations.

Murray gives close historical and ethnographic attention to the multiple contexts, both indigenous and international, that prefaced the battle. His book is divided into three parts. In part 1, he writes of Peleliu in the early Japanese colonial period as a time when villages (beluu) were still the focus of life; people lived close to the land and sea and organized their lives around clans, lineages, and chiefly councils. Land was key; people derived their personal identity from family lineages and the land those lineages controlled. For the chadra Beliliou, history and geography are inextricably linked. History is understood as the movement of people among islands and across landscapes. Natural landmarks or human-made stone markers called olangch cueled memories of events deemed historically important and worthy of recalling. The destruction of the olangch, first by Japanese phosphate mining and later by war, severed the people’s ties to their past. As Murray notes, the “destruction of the villages, farms,

Indigenous people are overrepresented in federal prisons and Indigenous women are killed at a rate far higher than other groups. The commissioners identified 20 unmarked gravesites at former residential schools, but they also warned that more unidentified gravesites were yet to be found across the country. A defaced statue of Queen Elizabeth II lies on the ground after being toppled during a rally on Canada Day in Winnipeg on Thursday. Photograph: Shannon Vanraes/Reuters. In Ottawa, thousands gathered on Parliament Hill for the "Cancel Canada Day" rally, shouting "Shame on Canada" and "Bring them home". While these children and their mothers remain absent from the official military record, Judith A. Bennett and Angela Wanhalla have cared enough to ask the question: What happened to the children who were left behind by American servicemen based in the South Pacific between January 1942 and the end of the Pacific War? Each chapter of this book provides an answer specific to the communities and families of one island where American military bases were established. By the end of 1941, the United States began to send servicemen to the South Pacific in order to stave off the Japanese offensive and organize a counter-offensive. Review: Mothers' Darlings of the South Pacific: The Children of Indigenous Women and U.S. Servicemen, World War II edited by Judith A. Bennett and Angela Wanhalla. Winslow, Rachel Rains. Journal: Pacific Historical Review. Year: 2018. Language: English. Review: Beyond Schoolmarm and Madams: Montana Women's Stories edited by Martha Kohl. Hendrix-Komoto, Amanda. Journal: Pacific Historical Review. Year: 2018. Language: English. Epilogue: The Children of Indigenous Women and U.S. Servicemen, World War II. Chapter. Mar 2016. The United States' occupation during the Second World War brought unprecedented numbers of young and attractive young men to these small islands. The biological consequences soon became apparent, as almost a thousand part-American children were born. The colonial response was muted in comparison to New Zealand's action in another archipelago when i... World War 2 brought two million United States servicemen to New Zealand and many Pacific Islands. Inevitably, many formed liaisons with local women and fathered possibly several thousand children. What happened to those babies, and, more than 60 years later, where are they now? Allison Rudd talks to University of Otago historian Prof Judith Bennett, who has won funding to try and trace the all-but forgotten offspring. Judith Bennett was doing some research when she got sidetracked. She was compiling information for a book on the environmental effect of the war on Pacific Island countries when she came across references to the mixed-race children of local women and United States servicemen. Her interest was piqued.