

THE PACIFIC CIRCLE



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PACIFIC CIRCLE NEWS

Presidential Greetings

As incoming president of the Pacific Circle, my thoughts turned to another president, one whose power over the Pacific apparently knows no bounds. Briefly, I imagined my slogan might be: “Make the Pacific Great Again!” But, of course, we all know the Pacific is in no special need of revival – and even if it were, I doubt my influence would count for much.

It may, however, be timely for the Pacific Circle to engage even more vigorously with some current threats to our ocean’s greatness, especially climate change and possible nuclear catastrophe. We might ask how, as scholars of the history and social studies of science in the Pacific, we can further illuminate some of the pressing problems of our times. I hope that during my tenure as president, the Pacific Circle gets an opportunity to address such issues and to support historically informed scholarship on our contemporary predicaments. “Keep the Pacific Great!” may be more apt.

The Pacific Circle offers an unrivaled forum for communication between scholars in various disciplines concerned with science in the Pacific in all its dimensions. I hope that in the following years we can redouble efforts to connect our commission with scholars in currently under-represented areas such as Southeast Asia, Latin America, and the islands of the South Pacific. Additionally, we can do more to engage with general historians and anthropologists of the Pacific – and with historians of science on the Pacific littoral perhaps oriented toward national communities.

The election of my fellow office bearers, all eager to float new ideas, augurs well – as does the continuing commitment of our editor and editorial assistant. Through emails, the regular bulletin, and the website, they create a unique scholarly community and keeps us buoyant. We are grateful also to John Gascoigne and Roy MacLeod, previous presidents, for having guided so adroitly our scholarly vessel.

I look forward to meeting members over the following few years at our sponsored events. Like most things, the more you choose to participate in the Pacific Circle, the more you will get from it.

Warwick Anderson
University of Sydney



Business Matters

The Circle's email address is: thepacificcircle@gmail.com. Contact the editor should you have any questions, requests, or information to be shared with Circle members. That could include recent publications and conference calls-for-papers.

The University of Hawai'i Foundation requests that dues or contributions made by check be made payable to "The U.H. Foundation" with "The Pacific Circle" in the memo space. The subscription and dues rates remain: US\$25.00 for individuals and US\$35.00 for institutions. Only contributions can be made online. Dues must be paid by check or credit card.

The Circle web site includes previous issues, documents from conferences, links to affiliated and complementary groups, and a blog with information about events and publications. There is also an option for searching previous issues of *The Bulletin*. Please visit: <http://thepacificcircle.com>.

The editor keeps issues of *The Bulletin* for potential new members, conference publication tables, and departments. Please notify the editor if you would like a colleague to receive a gratis copy of *The Bulletin*. This has proven an effective way to build our membership and connect folks interested in science in the Pacific.

Recent Publications, Honors & Scholarly Activities by Circle Members

Congratulations to ...

Warwick Anderson, who has been appointed to the Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University. The 2018-2019 appointment is in the Department of the History of Science.

Roy MacLeod, chosen by the Royal Society of New South Wales to receive the Society's History and Philosophy of Science Medal for 2016. The presentation was made in May in Sydney. The honor was awarded for Roy's "significant contributions to the history and philosophy of science" in Australia and around the World, including his pioneering scholarship in the history of Australian colonial science and for his biography of Archibald Liversidge, FRS, entitled *Imperial Science under the Southern Cross* (Sydney University Press, 2009).

Ruth Barton, who recently published "'Not Merely a Scientific Society: The New Zealand Institute and its Affiliates c. 1868-1900," *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 47:1 (2017), 33-40 and "Wanted, a Moa, '£500...Dead or Alive' (1863)," *GSNZ Historical Studies Group* 56 (August 2017), 6-14.

Emily O'Gorman, who published "Imagined Ecologies: A More-Than-Human History of Malaria in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, New South Wales, Australia, 1919-1945," *Environmental History* 22:3 (2017), 486-514.

Kern Kenyon, who published: “Non-Seasonal SSTs of the Western Tropical Pacific,” *Natural Science* 7:12, 605-612 and “Western Tropical North Pacific: A Climatology,” *Natural Science* 8:8, 337-340.

**Summer 2017 Travels in China and Korea:
A Report on Some History of Science Events**

by

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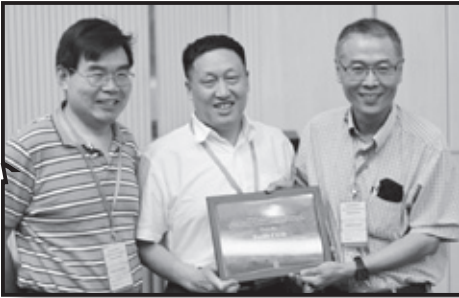
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From late May to early August 2017, I made several trips to China and South Korea and thought that it might be useful to share some of my experiences and observations related to exciting developments in the history of science and technology in these dynamic places.

From May 28 to June 4, I made the first of these trips to Beijing mainly to participate in the “International Symposium on China and the World in the Global History of Science and Technology.” The gathering was hosted by the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences (IHNS) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, under director Professor Baichun Zhang, to mark the 60th anniversary of its founding. The symposium attracted leading scholars from China and abroad, including Nadia Asheulova, Yure Baturin, Francesca Bray, Chia-Feng Chang, Karine Chemla, Christopher Cullen, Joseph Dauben, Danian Hu, Kam Wing Fung, Yung Sik Kim, Alfons Labisch, Jianjun Mei, Jürgen Renn, and Dmitry Shcherbini from France, Germany, Hong Kong, Russia, South Korea, Taiwan, the UK, and the US. On behalf of the Pacific Circle, Professor Mei and I, as a council member and vice president respectively, presented a plaque to the IHNS with the inscription: “Congratulations to the Institute for the History of Natural Science on the 60th anniversary of its founding with best wishes for your continued success and our collaboration in the promotion of the history of science in Asia/Pacific and the world.”

The symposium featured presentations covering a wide range of historical and geographical diversity, and it was refreshing to see many speakers emphasizing the importance of undertaking global and transnational approaches to the history of science and technology (I gave a talk focusing on China-US transnational scientific interactions). Significantly, it was announced at the end of the symposium that a new journal in English, *Chinese Annals of History of Science and Technology*, has been published by the Science Press in Beijing, with Professor Baichun Zhang of the IHNS and Professor Jürgen Renn of the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin serving as editors-in-chief. It should go a long way toward promoting international scholarly communication related to the history of science and technology in China.

During this week-long trip in Beijing I also gave talks at three universities: Capital Normal University on May 29 and Peking University (Beida) on June 2, both on the history of recent American environmental policy, and the Beijing University of Science and Technology on June 2 on transnational science. The talk at Beida (in its College of Marxism) turned out to be most (in)auspicious as it took place a few hours after President Donald J. Trump made good on his campaign threat to start the withdrawal of the US from the Paris agreement on climate change. While deeply disappointed by this decision, I was heartened by the widespread condemnation of the decision and renewed commitment to climate action by much of the rest of the world and indeed much of the American public, as I explained to my attentive audience the historical evolution and complexities of American environmental policy-making.



Jianjun Mei (left), director of the Joseph Needham Institute, Cambridge, UK, and council member of the Pacific Circle, and Zuoyue Wang (right), professor of history of the California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, USA, and a PC vice president, presented a PC plaque of congratulations to Baichun Zhang (middle), director of the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of its founding, May 31, 2017, Beijing.

I crossed the Pacific once more to travel, first, to Seoul, South Korea (via Beijing), to attend a stimulating workshop on “Science, Technology, and Modern Dictatorship in Asia” June 23-24, held at Hanyang University and organized by Professor Sang-Hyun Kim of its Research Institute of Comparative History and Culture. Attracting scholars and students from all over South Korea, the two-day program featured Kuo-Hui Chang of Taiwan University on indigenous Taiwanese engineers, Hiromi Mizuno of the University of Minnesota on Japanese technicians in World War II Manchuria, Aaron Moore of Arizona State on Japanese Cold War developmental projects in Southeast Asia, Sang-Hyun Kim on science and technology in the Park Chung-Hee’s South Korea, Chung-Kang Kim of Hanyang on South Korean Cold War science fiction films, Dafna Zur of Stanford on North Korean nature writings for children, Suzanne Moon of Oklahoma and Anto Mohsin of Northwestern University Qatar on two aspects of post-WWII Indonesia history, the green revolution and technological developments, respectively. I gave my talk on contrasting experiences of Chinese scientists and engineers working in civilian and defense sectors during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), and benefited from the extensive and rigorous discussion that took place in and out of the conference room.

After Seoul I returned to China for an extended visit from June 25 to August 5,

teaching for the first two weeks two large courses – recent American history, with about 300 students, and the history of American science and technology, with about 200 students – at the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Huairou, a suburb of Beijing. I then organized a week-long training workshop (July 10-14) on “Writing History of Science and Technology in English” at the IHNS, with more than 20 young scholars and graduate students from the institute and elsewhere in attendance. Topics and activities included structures and genres of such writings, historiography broad and specific, citation styles, English writing conventions, and hands-on exercises. Judging from the enthusiastic reception there is a strong demand for such assistance and the workshop may well be offered again next summer.

A highlight of this second trip in Beijing was a two-day (June 30-July 1) conference marking the formal founding of a Department of the History of Science at Tsinghua (Qinghua) University in Beijing, chaired by Professor Guosheng Wu. While addresses by celebrities such as the 95-year-old Nobel physics laureate C.N. Yang added to the festive atmosphere at the opening ceremony, the conference actually featured many excellent presentations on intriguing topics by scholars from China and abroad. Once again, I presented the new department with the Pacific Circle’s congratulations and best wishes before giving my talk on US-China scientific discussions in arms control and climate change.

A final note relates to my visit to the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC) in Hefei July 17-22. There I participated in a week-long history of science summer camp, organized by the USTC Department of History of Science and Technology and Scientific Archaeology. Happy campers were several dozen junior college students from all over China, selected from a bigger pool, who were in the process of applying to graduate schools. The hope was for these students to become familiar with the department and for the department to attract outstanding applicants. Judging by the positive feedback the practice may well be spreading to other institutions in China.

In summary, my visits in summer 2017 in China and Korea seem to indicate that the history of science and technology has continued to expand in both scale and quality in the region, and that increased attention to global, transnational, and comparative approaches will help bring new vigor to scholarship and international collaboration in the field in Asia/Pacific and the world.



HISTORY OF SCIENCE SOCIETY (HSS) NEWS

HSS meets for its annual conference in Toronto, Ontario, on November 9-12, 2017. For additional information, please visit <https://hssonline.org>.

FUTURE MEETINGS, CONFERENCES and CALLS FOR PAPERS

15-17 January 2018. 7th International Conference on The History of Medicine in Southeast Asia (HOMSEA 2018), to be held in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic. The conference is supported by Sydney Southeast Asia Centre at the University of Sydney, the Institut de Recherche sur le Developpement, France, and the Universite de Montreal, Canada.

14-17 February 2018. 11th Maritime Heritage Conference/45th Tall Ships America Conference, to be held at the New Orleans Marriott in New Orleans, Louisiana. For information, please visit www.seahistory.org and www.seatraining.org. Proposals should be sent to: proposalsmhc@gmail.com.

29-30 June 2018. New Histories of Pacific Whaling, an international symposium to be held at the University of Hawai'i – Manoa, and co-sponsored by the Rachel Carson Center, University of Oregon and the Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago, New Zealand. If interested, please contact Prof. Ryan Tucker Jones, University of Oregon at rtj@uoregon.edu or Prof. Angela Wanhalla, University of Otago at angela.wanhalla@otago.ac.nz.

29 August - 1 September 2018. Annual Meeting of the Society for Social Studies, to be held in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. The conference theme is "Transnational STS." Pacific Circle members are encouraged to submit proposals in keeping with the following official announcement: "TRANSnational STS encourages presentations, panels, and other events that deepen and extend the transnational character of the Society for Social Studies itself, while engaging issues invoked by both the TRANS prefix (across, beyond, to change thoroughly), and by the problematic and evolving status of 'nations' in processes of global ordering." Please see the enclosed conference flyer for information. Please contact Prof. Emma Kowal at emma.kowal@deakin.edu.au.

BOOK, JOURNAL, EXHIBITION and RESEARCH NEWS

The South Pacific Journal of Natural and Applied Sciences 34:2 contains three articles of possible interest: John B. Sulifoa, Sateki Fangupo, and Rashmi Kant, "Oviposition Periodicity, Egg Morphology and Life History of Large Cabbage Moth *Crocidolomia pavonana* Population in Samoa;" Prayna P.O. Maharaj, Riteshma Devi, and Surendra Prasad, "Antimicrobial Effect of Essential Oils of Some Fijian Medicinal Plant Leaves on Pathogenic Bacteria" and Walter Fa'amatuaina and Flaniko Amosa, "Dry Matter Accumulation and Partitioning of Two Taro (*Colocasia Esculenta* (L.) Schott) Cultivars under Inceptisol Soils in Samoa."

Please see the *Journal of Plant Ecology* 10:1 (2017) for a series of articles concerning China, including the Editorial on "Biodiversity – Ecosystem Functioning Research in Chinese Subtropical Forests." Other articles consider topics such as tree growth in subtropical forests, tree species diversity, root biomass, root-associated fungi and other Chinese-related subjects.

The Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand 47:1-2 (2017) is devoted to "Finding New Zealand's Scientific Heritage." Issue 1 covers "From Matauranga Maori to Augustus Hamilton" (1-144) and Issue 2 covers "Science in the 20th Century" (145-217). Rebecca Priestley and Simon Nathan co-edited both issues.

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BOOK REVIEW



Helen Gardner and Patrick McConvell, *Southern Anthropology – A History of Fison and Howitt’s ‘Kamilaroi and Kurnai’*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, Pp. xx + 329. Index. Maps. Figure. Tables. Sources. Cloth US\$109.00 and ISBN 978-1-137-46380-7 and E-Book US\$84.99 and ISBN 978-1-137-46381-4.

Southern Anthropology presents a history of one of the most important nineteenth-century works on Australia’s indigenous peoples, Lorimer Fison and Alfred William Howitt’s *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, published in 1880. It results from the extensive collaboration of Pacific historian Helen Gardner and

linguist and anthropologist Patrick McConvell who argue for a specific Southern Anthropological perspective that fundamentally, and successfully, challenged existing Northern notions of “inferior” peoples inhabiting the Southern Pacific Ocean.

They show how Fison and Howitt’s revolutionary ways of collecting and interpreting data on kinship systems and social organisation in Aboriginal Australia

conflicted with then dominant social evolutionist theories about human society that were purported by contemporaneous big names such as John Lubbock on the lowest levels of human civilisation. As Gardner and McConvell show, this fundamental contention emerged from their inductive methodology of meticulous questionnaire-based interviewing and the resulting experience with the indigenous peoples whose societies they investigated.

Southern Anthropology is composed of five parts, each of which is organised by two approaches: In the first chapters of each part Gardner tells the historical narrative of specific aspects of the conception, writing and reception of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* in the nineteenth century. In the last chapters of each part McConvell comprehensively introduces the reader to the particulars of anthropological methods of kinship research and interpretation and explicates Fison and Howitt's lasting contribution to the anthropological disciplines.

The authors first outline the scope of their investigation, namely the intellectual and practical (methodological) processes of anthropological research on the basis of which Fison and Howitt conceived *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*. Gardner and McConvell thereby introduce the reader to the significance of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* as a specifically Antipodean counterargument to the hierarchical social-evolutionary theorising that dominated the North American and British-European anthropological discourse at the time of its publishing. This counter position resulted from Fison and Howitt's revolutionary approach to the investigation of kinship systems and social organisation, which they built on their American mentor Lewis Henry Morgan's equally innovative and complicated kinship questionnaires and their collaborating indigenous informants' critical knowledge.

The second chapter explains the significance and uniqueness of the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan's elaborate tool of kinship schedules, which enabled him to gather complex information about the world's kinship systems. Unlike other anthropological questionnaires of the nineteenth century, Morgan's schedules emphasised the necessary agency of the indigenous subjects, who both collaborated in the construction of his schedule and were pivotal as exclusive cultural experts on all matters kinship. Morgan was interested in the actual terms for their family relations instead of their English translations. Therefore, in order to understand the terminology of their cultural experts' kinship systems, the enquirer had to be highly knowledgeable of their own system and had to have proper knowledge of their informant's language and culture. Gathering information thus turned into an "extended moment of cross-cultural encounter" (21), fostering "a relationship that encouraged conversation and reflection" (22). On the basis of these schedules Morgan devised a theory of staged kinship system evolution: First there was the "primitive", merely "classificatory system", which, for example, designated the term "mother" to a variety of female relatives who were not the biological mothers. This "wrong" system still existed in "primitive" societies (such as the

Iroquois' or Hawaiians'). In Morgan's view, these would eventually be superseded by the "descriptive", "natural" or "correct" kinship system of civilised societies (mainly European societies), which were ultimately based on "real" blood relations.

In Chapter 3 McConvell elucidates the way in which Morgan as well as Fison and Howitt prefigured the structuralist approach to studying kinship by undertaking comparative and typological research. Essentially, while they documented the diversity of kinship systems in the world "this diversity was far from endless, and the limits of it revealed an underlying unity" (25) and universalism of human kinship. Crucially, this chapter also introduces the reader to the main concepts of kinship system study, in particular with a view to the importance of relevant classificatory systems (Iroquois, Dravidian and Hawaiian), marriage rules and practices in different societies, principles of descent and a variety of social categories including totemic groups. Although still confusing to the "uninitiated" reader, this introduction enables them to grasp the significance of these concepts for both *Southern Anthropology's* and *Kamilaroi and Kurnai's* central argumentation.

In Chapter 4 Gardner first describes how Fison's upbringing and academic training contributed to his later innovative empiricist anthropological researches which "allowed him to resist some of the wild anthropological fantasies promulgated in the 1870s" (46). However, as Gardner emphasises at several occasions, Fison's initial experiences as a missionary in Fiji in the 1860s were instrumental in his insistence on the empirical method and his rejection of grand evolutionary schemes that assigned indigenous peoples the lower ranks on the ladder of human societies. Against the backdrop of the debate on human unity and racial degeneration, Darwinian evolutionary theory and the discourse on the extinction of "inferior races" and after experiencing utter disenchantment when he was confronted with the reluctance of the Fijians to convert to the Christian faith, he turned to scientific ideas of racial destiny and racial struggle.

As Gardner demonstrates in the fifth chapter, Fison's despondence ended abruptly with his involvement in Morgan's kinship studies. Intrigued by the similarities between geographically distant Northern American, Southern Indian and Fijian kinship systems, Fison was (re-)convinced of human unity. He deeply engaged with Morgan's extensive schedules, becoming "relentless in his pursuit of kinship; colleagues were harassed and every opportunity was taken to gather data from any hapless Fijian or sojourning islander who crossed his path" (65). Utilising the existing mission networks in Oceania, he expanded his enquiries to other islands and Australia in search of kinship term similarities. Importantly for his further research and analysis, Fison realised that the theories about "primitive peoples" that were concocted in the Northern metropolis strikingly differed from the elaborate societies among whom his observers lived.

The next chapter traces, on the one hand, "the problems of the Pacific" in

Morgan's kinship theorising as it emerged through Fison's (and later Howitt's) findings of Pacific and Australian kinship systems. Accordingly, Fison's Fijian society contradicted Morgan's schema of kinship evolution from "most primitive" (classificatory) systems of Hawaiians and Malaysians to the highest (descriptive) systems of the Europeans. This discrepancy also extrapolates one of *Southern Anthropology's* pivotal arguments, namely that "the empirical evidence of the kinship systems of these groups as provided by Fison would challenge the expected Pacific hierarchies and confound the racial classification of the metropolitan theorists" (69) such as John Lubbock and John McLennan.

Chapter 7, written by McConvell, further familiarises the reader with kinship research methodology and the significance of Fison's findings about the Fijian people he researched. In particular, he elucidates how deterministic chronological hierarchies were construed between different kinds of kinship systems in the context of evolutionist theorising.

Part 3 of the book, comprising chapters 8 to 11, follows Fison's and Howitt's pursuit of kinship studies and their increasing interest in the social organisation of Australian indigenous societies. Chapter 8 shows how Fison embarked on the collection of Australian kinship systems through the distribution of Morgan's schedules throughout the continent but became also interested in the investigation of their social organisation. In particular, he included the four-section system of marriage and descent relations of the Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi) into the same category as the Fijian kinship system. In this context, he provided Morgan with reports on extra-marital sexual relations, seemingly supportive of his mentor's idea of "primitive promiscuity" (109). As Gardner shows, Fison made other discoveries about the Kamilaroi's (to Europeans) complicated rules of marriage – for example the importance of totems and cross-cousin marriage, which additionally conflicted with Morgan's staged scheme of kinship evolution.

The ninth chapter follows Fison's "intellectual obsession" (116) to continuously collect kinship data in Australia and the Pacific Islands and his increasingly difficult efforts to correlate them to Morgan's theory. As Gardner points out, his "data proved unruly and could not be readily reconciled to the expected place of Aboriginal and Pacific Islanders on the ladder of kinship development" (117). The chapter also deals with Fison's informants, mostly colonial but also some indigenous. Their kinship information (in particular that of the Ngarrindjeri) further confirmed the diversity and complexity of Australian societies that conflicted with Morgan's schema. These discrepancies compelled Fison to resolve the issues by "tortured reasoning" (127) but, as Gardner shows, he eventually not only doubted Morgan's schema but radically challenged the British evolutionist paradigm on the basis of his Antipodean empiricism.

Chapter 10 introduces Alfred William Howitt as Southern anthropologist,

whose close relation to the Kurnai people generated kinship and social organisational information that proved invaluable for his and Fison's challenge to Northern anthropology. Significantly, Howitt worked closely together with Kurnai man Tulaba whose input contributed to Howitt and Fison's development of their own questionnaires, including the innovative tool of genealogical trees. As Gardner emphasises, this collaboration reinforced the importance of the indigenous voice and agency, but she also points to the unequal power relations between Howitt, the magistrate and Aboriginal protector, and Tulaba, his employee and Aboriginal ward. Despite Howitt's acknowledgement of Tulaba's expertise, he, for example, suspected that Aborigines were inherently less intelligent than Europeans.

After McConvell reflects in Chapter 11 on Fison and Howitt's turn towards social organisation rather than focussing on kinship in *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, Gardner in part 4 of *Southern Anthropology* continues to follow the creation of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*. In Chapter 12 she shows how Fison and Howitt developed a common approach to both their publication project and Morgan's cherry-picking utilisation of their research – despite their differing attitudes to fundamental issues. Howitt saw reason in social and physical evolutionary processes and believed in the (racial) survival of the fittest, whereas Fison insisted on empirical evidence and became increasingly antagonistic to grand theorising on the basis of deductive speculation and armchair library research. Gardner also shows how Fison acknowledged the importance of what Morgan had called the observer's reflexivity and increasingly appreciated the relativity of judgment and the comprehension of ideas and knowledge systems alien to the observer.

Chapter 13 traces Fison and Howitt's, eventually successful, struggle to conceptualise their book in the context of their differing opinions about social evolution and the actual disparity between their subjects of investigation. As Gardner puts it, their book was “in essence, a collection of essays” (209) dealing with different aspects of two rather different Aboriginal societies, the Gamilaraay and the Kurnai. It nevertheless, despite or perhaps because of its limited reference to two distinct case studies, was well suited to challenge Lubbock's and others' social evolutionism (including their inductive method).

The next chapter establishes *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*'s uniqueness in its contemporaneous context, both with view to its content and form. Among other aspects, Gardner points out how the book rejected the traditional role of the colonial collector by offering not only the data but also proceeding with Antipodean interpretation. This analysis, at least in Fison's case, included the reflexivity of the observer and the relativism of, for example, moral judgment. As he argued, morality always followed certain rules and was thus as coherent and adequate in Aboriginal society as it was in any other. Gardner also points to the problematic tension that was produced by the attempt to concurrently defend Morgan's kinship studies against British evolutionists and effectively planting counter evidence to Morgan's

very theory. This is illustrated by the essentially unconnected and contradictory introduction to the book by Morgan who “ignored the findings of his acolytes while commending their work to the reader” (214).

In her analysis of this major anthropological work, Gardner contextualises its uniqueness and representativeness in its times. Accordingly she notes that despite its digression from traditional analysis of indigenous peoples’ place in human history and present, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* was “only tangentially concerned with the contemporary political realities” (225) of the people it investigated. A particularly poignant example presents the book’s focus on marriage laws and social organisation at a time when Aboriginal Australians were violently deprived of just these fundamental cultural practises through Aboriginal protection laws (which were enforced by Howitt in his role as magistrate and Aboriginal protector and Fison’s missionary colleagues). Another example of absences is Fison’s lack of acknowledgement of the cultural experts that made his and Howitt’s publication and analysis possible in the first place, despite his manifold emphasis of their contribution and importance in his correspondence.

Whereas Chapter 15 considers *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*’s current relevance, its errors and lasting achievements for anthropological investigation, the last part of *Southern Anthropology* deals with the reception of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* and its legacy for anthropology. While its reception was “cautiously welcoming, antagonistic or bemused” (253), Fison and Howitt’s new form of anthropological writing and analysis was successful in demolishing established British theorising about human social evolution. Their combined act of performing anthropology on the basis of indigenous agency, culture, and complex social organisation served, according to Gardner, as “a harbinger of the anthropology to come” (253). Their work’s focus on totemism, marriage and kinship not only reflected the debates of the time but also gave them their interpretational and methodological direction – not least because “their carefully detailed engagement with Aboriginal people” (254) provided evidence that was difficult to refute. The complexity of Aboriginal societies continued to pose problems that promised to be investigable by Fison and Howitt’s multi-layered approach, which emphasised the observer’s crossing of cultural boundaries. As Gardner aptly puts it, Fison’s problematizing “of the observer in understanding the lives of the observed flipped the intellectual work of anthropology on its head. ... Now it seemed the intellectual work might lie in the very encounter between the researcher and the subject. And the observer must recognise that his/her perspective was a hindrance to comprehension, not an aid, and not because they were ‘civilised’ people struggling to understand the quaint or irrational pathways of ‘primitive’ people, but because what Fison termed the ‘mind-world’ of the observer was utterly different from the observed” (260-261).

This book is a fascinating and enlightening read that cannot be appreciated adequately from these chapter summaries; they grossly simplify the rich material and

intricate evidence put forward by its authors in their compelling argument for Fison and Howitt's revolutionary *Southern Anthropology*.

Helen Gardner provides the reader with a persuasive analysis of the conception, writing and reception of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*. Her investigation dissects nineteenth century anthropological reasoning, demonstrating the changeability of the discursive and material connections between individuals, institutions, theories and methodologies. Patrick McConvell ties this historical narrative to the anthropological methodology that is so crucial for understanding Fison and Howitt's (and thus *Southern Anthropology's*) argument about the complexity and diversity of indigenous kinship systems, marriage laws and ideas of promiscuity, descent and cross-cousin relations. Importantly, he thoroughly elucidates the lasting contribution of *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* to anthropological investigation including its errors, to this day.

Southern Anthropology is an impressive example of cross-discipline collaboration that is highly informative for both historians and anthropologists. It is both a captivating introduction to and a sophisticated exploration of the possible revolutionary potential of methodological rigor and questioning – despite, or possibly because of, its specialist topic and argument.

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