

*Body Trade: Captivity, Cannibalism, and Colonialism in the Pacific*, edited by Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn. New York: Routledge, in association with Pluto Press Australia Pty Ltd and University of Otago Press, 2001. ISBN 0-415-93842-2; xxii + 296 pages, figures, photographs, notes, appendixes, index. US\$32.95.

Scholars in several fields have recently begun to view the human body as a product of specific social, cultural, and historical contexts, challenging the truth claims of the medical and epidemiological sciences concerning the physical body and the assumed universality of its biological base (see, eg, Margaret Lock's 1993 article, "Cultivating the Body," in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22:133-155). Discontent with a discursive trend that appears to him to remain overly narrow, David Harvey also suggests in his book, *Spaces of Hope*, that proponents of the body as a locus of analysis should take a broader approach to body politics. Body talk, he says, should be integrated with globalization talk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Both camps should welcome this compendium of essays that takes as its focus the notion of the subjugated, captive body, a central construct in recent debates in feminist theory, post-colonial theory, psychoanalysis, and theories of narrativity. *Body Trade* is the first book to present theories of the body in relation to the colonial histories of Australia and the Pacific. Contributors to the volume come from the fields of history, literature, film studies, cultural studies, fine arts, and anthropology. The essays are

dedicated to Gananath Obeyesekere, a contributor whose work is taken to be emblematic of the strain in post-colonial studies that brings together literary analysis, historical contextualization, and anthropological understanding.

In Part 1 (Circus, Trade & Spectacle), Paul Turnbull examines the circumstances in which phrenologists acquired the skulls of Australian Aboriginal people, sometimes illegally, in order to answer a colonial question of the 1820s: What was the destiny of indigenous Australians in the wake of settler expansion? Turnbull shows that the phrenological knowledge gained made a scientific contribution to the antiquarianism of the day, setting the course for colonial ambitions concerning land and culture. For historians of racial thought, this is a chapter in a larger story of the relations between European sciences of humanity and colonial aspirations in Australia.

Chris Healy documents the practice of issuing breastplates to be worn by indigenous people in Australia as a kind of passport. Distributed by all state governments (except Tasmania and South Australia) from 1815 until the 1930s, the plates conferred "titles" on their wearers. In Healy's view, the inscriptions also tell a story of European domination and subjugation and were a signifier of the genocide to come.

Yves Le Fur introduces us to Ahutoru, a Tahitian presented to the French court in 1769. For his part, Ahutoru was fascinated by the opera with its mechanisms of representation and illusion, which Le Fur notes were integral rituals of social intercourse in eighteenth-century France. Ahutoru

died during his return voyage to Tahiti in 1771, three years before Cook brought the Tahitian chief, Omai, to Europe, where his presence sparked a tattooing vogue among the English aristocracy. Additional examples of turn-of-the-century voyeurism include the story of Kabris, a European shipwrecked in the Marquesas Islands in 1795. He subsequently reached St Petersburg, where his tattoos excited the interest of the Tzar, and then that of visitors to the Bordeaux Cabinet of Curiosities. After his death an amateur collector attempted to obtain Kabris' skin to stuff and mount it for display. William Mariner, a Londoner who visited Tonga in 1805, and Barnet Burns, who arrived in New Zealand around 1830, provided European audiences with life histories of daring adventure in exotic lands. Finally, we hear about the New Caledonian Kanaks brought to Paris for the 1931 Exhibition, where they were exhibited as wild cannibals and polygamists despite the fact that most were practicing Catholics.

The first section ends with an essay by Mary Mackay concerning the Australian Native Mounted Police. Enforcers of the law, they were themselves captives of a regime that changed their way of thinking as well as their lifestyle. Invoking Foucault (the only author in the volume to do so), Mackay notes that the police activities were supervised by white superior officers. In this "optics of power," the native police were in many ways "mimic men," not quite white, but used by white society as a weapon in the establishment of imperial power.

In Part 2 (Manufacturing the "Cannibal" Body), Gananath Obeyesekere's

chapter is presented as a centerpiece in a volume designed to re-read the past and the processes of myth-making to which indigenous peoples have been subjected by the colonizing powers of the western world. Obeyesekere deciphers the self-valorizing life history of Peter Dillon, a sea captain and trader, who said he had witnessed a Fijian cannibal feast in 1813. This text becomes a case study to illustrate the way in which settlers, colonizers, and seamen could act out their fantasies with savages. Judging the tale to be a kind of "fabrication," closely related to the invention of the self, Obeyesekere aims to reveal the fantasizing in everyday life, not as psychopathology, but as everyday creativity. As Dillon invented a story, he also invented his imagined self and came close to believing in his self-creation. Obeyesekere finally draws our attention to contemporary cases in which invented stories about the self in literature and in life can often pass as real.

Robert Dixon traces the networks of appropriation from Alfred C Haddon's 1901 *Reports of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait*, through Ion Idriess's 1933 novel *The Drums of Mer*, to an Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre presentation in Sydney in 1996 under the direction of Raymond Blanco. Over these 100 years, others are said to have pirated indigenous narratives to satisfy the preoccupations of their audiences. The trope of captured whites in Idriess's novels, for example, reached an audience concerned with the Torres Strait and its inhabitants in the 1930s and 1940s, the high-water mark of "White Australia." The real "captives" were not the fictional castaways, but the Melanesians whose

lives were controlled by the paternalistic State of Queensland. In closing, Dixon suggests it is a mistake to merely denounce the racism of colonial texts from the high moral ground of the present. Blanco's theft from Idriess as well as Idriess' novels can also be read for the sense of wonder and enchantment that might have provided the basis for reconciliation.

Following Denning, Paul Lyons considers Pacific encounters to be compounded histories made in creative transactions among various players. The more that fear saturates the contact scene, the more dramatic become the interactive performances, which include mimicry and staged deterrence. Lyons reviews two founding texts of Pacific Orientalism, Charles Wilkes' *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (1845) and Herman Melville's *Typee* (1846), each illustrating the influence of the author's anxieties on observation and writing about cannibalism.

Part 3 (Captive White Bodies & the Colonial Imaginary in Terra Australis) opens with Susan Martin's discussion of a late-nineteenth-century novel and the context in which it was written, an exercise that informs contemporary Australian discussions about Aboriginal landownership produced in a similar atmosphere of racist paranoia. *Younah: A Tasmanian Aboriginal Romance of the Cataract Gorge* (1894) is a story about the kidnapping of a three-year-old white girl by a group of local Aborigines. Like tourist guides, the novel peopled the landscape with colorful indigenes, at the same time mapping the country as exotic, unexplored, and available for settlement. Martin's political message is conveyed in her elegant analysis.

Julie Carr's account of the apocryphal capture of the White Woman of Gippsland deals with similar colonial anxieties about contact with racial others. Carr stresses, however, that our critical reading of colonial texts should allow for detecting counter-hegemonic elements. The black subject in colonial discourse is often ambivalently constituted. Nevertheless, despite indications that neither the settlers nor the government officers believed in the White Woman's existence, the story did not die. The legend, reproduced for successive generations for the next 160 years, illustrates its function in different historical contexts.

Kate Darian-Smith focuses on the way in which the discourse of conquest dwelt on material artifacts, an approach that produces a lively account of commodity racism. Technologically simple Aboriginal objects signaled a degenerate culture that was morally and spiritually bereft, reinforcing ideologies about racial superiority and shaping response to reports of female captivity. Moreover, the messages remain embedded in the contemporary display of these nineteenth-century objects.

In the final section (Film, Desire & the Colonised Body), three essays explore the representation of colonial subjects in documentaries and fictional films. Jeanette Hoorn analyzes Marlon Fuentes' *Bontoc Eulogy* (1995), which traces the filmmaker's attempt to find his grandfather who disappeared in America after being taken, along with more than 1,000 other Filipinos, for display in a "village" at the St. Louis World Fair. This melancholic search is said to gain poignancy from the filmmaker's

sense of himself as both a casualty of colonialism and a displaced person living in the West.

Barbara Creed identifies the film *Jedda* (1955) as a reverse captivity narrative. Here, a pastoralist family “rescues” Jedda from her own people to transform her into a “white” girl. A second capture concerns Jedda’s abduction by a “wild” tribal Aborigine to whom she is attracted, although she was meant to marry the half-caste Joe. This tale of sexuality and eroticism documents the range of cultural spaces occupied by indigenous people when assimilation was the official policy of the Commonwealth government.

Finally, Freda Freiberg recounts the sorry tale of the comfort women of World War II, incarcerated in houses of prostitution from which they were unable to escape except by suicide. Commissioned to do research on documentaries about the comfort women, Freiberg provides a nuanced account of the terrible evidence of the abduction, rape, and forced labor of women by Japanese military forces. She also shows that the filmmakers provided a forum for the women to express grievances, revealing areas of experience largely ignored by historians.

The August 2002 repatriation to South Africa of the remains of Saartjie Baartman, the “Hottentot Venus,” underlines the relevance of these marvelous essays, which link body talk to a broad range of potentially sensational topics in a dignified manner.

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*Mr. Tulsi's Store: A Fijian Journey*, by Brij V Lal. Canberra: Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 2001. ISBN 1-74076-007-7; xi + 209 pages, bibliography. A\$26.00.

When a political historian writes a collection of autobiographical essays that he describes in the preface as a work of “faction”—a work, that is, in which the author has “privileged truth over accuracy, attempting to catch the thoughts and emotions rather than dry facts” (x)—a number of intriguing questions are raised about how the book is to be read. How is this book related to the body of academic writing, works of history, and political commentary, for which Brij Lal is already known? And more generally, how are academic, literary, and journalistic genres related to one another and to the social reality that spawns them, generating not only specific content, as refracted by disciplines, but also the understandings and motivations of the readers and writers themselves?

The anthropologist or historian interested in Fiji may approach *Mr. Tulsi's Store* as a highly unusual form of ethnography or as an experiment in history, and such expectations are well rewarded by the book. But abstract theoretical considerations of experimental ethnography or radical historiography recede as the reader enters, via the first essay, the village world of rural Fiji in the 1950s and is introduced to interesting, colorful people like Aja (Grandfather). Aja is an elderly man described in terms of physical appearance, habits of daily