

*Indigenous Mobilities: Across the Antipodes and Beyond*

Edited by Rachel Standfield. Australian National University Press, Canberra, 2018.

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Fittingly published on the eve of Tuia 250, *Indigenous Mobilities* urges us to think harder and with much more depth about the precise nature of colonial contact with Indigenous peoples and settlement on Indigenous land in the antipodes. Given our geographic proximity, the 200 or so year history of Māori in Australia and our entwined if equally divergent political history, it is surprising that scholarship taking in both the Australian and New Zealand contexts does not appear more frequently. Indeed, it is notable how often Aboriginal Australia is *not* brought into conversation with New Zealand Māori histories, experiences and aspirations. A welcome addition to scholarship which actively seeks Indigenous–Indigenous connection and recognition of our shared region, *Indigenous Mobilities* asks what happens when we read Māori and Aboriginal mobility alongside each other. The picture that emerges is a richly hued canvas of lives fully lived and places fully inhabited against a backdrop of colonial oppression.

Specifically, *Indigenous Mobilities* engages head-on with the deeply rooted binary which constructs Indigenous communities and individuals as either locked in to a particular place and thus antithetical to “progress” and “modernity” or aimless (and starving) wanderers with no system of land tenure, commerce or trade. This same old song of racism is unsettled via this collection of carefully researched and written, thoughtful chapters which instead demonstrate the ways in which Indigenous peoples of Te Whenua Moemoeā and Niu Tirani moved, voyaged, explored, undertook economic ventures, brokered new relationships, crossed linguistic borders and reaffirmed political allegiances. The book’s chapters attempt to re-story and re-store the agency of the Indigenous subject and loosen the tightly drawn tension between Indigenous mobility on the one hand and Indigenous fixedness on the other, notions which so vexed European colonisers in Australia and New Zealand and which sit at the core of the colonising project.

The book takes a conscious step away from focusing on Indigenous peoples tapping into European networks and working with Europeans, preferring instead to centre Indigenous communities as the primary locus of life. Imagining the view from the beach, as it were, within scholarship signals a move towards addressing the uneven power relationships between Indigenous peoples and their colonisers. Yet it is troubling that only two of the eleven chapters in the book are penned by Indigenous authors (Michael J. Stevens, Kāi Tahu ki Awarua, and Shino Konishi of the Yawuru people of Broome, as self-identified in the contributors section [ix–x]; I write this with some caution as authors may have their own reasons for choosing not to identify as Indigenous). An 1808 image of Ngāpuhi rangatira Te Pahi in European garb graces the cover of the book. However, Te Pahi’s voice, the voice of his people, the voices of his descendants are absent from the pages of the book. Evidently the question of Indigenous agency does not extend—at least very far—into the question of who is producing the scholarship. Paying attention to “different meanings, rituals, and cultures of movements within Indigenous societies” (10) is a step in the right direction, but paying attention does not equal agency.

The eleven chapters within the book make for fascinating, fine reading with the first, “Moving Across, Looking Beyond,” written by editor Rachel Standfield, serving as the introduction. Standfield here scopes the historiography within the frames of British imperialism, European

expansionism, cross-cultural encounter and Indigenous mobility in Australasia and sets the scene for the chapters which follow. Standfield's introduction is followed by Shino Konishi's careful reading against the grain of colonial sources which re-writes (and re-rights) the notion that early European explorers associated Aboriginal people exclusively with placedness. Konishi's chapter gently prods the perceived tension between mobility and place and argues that Aboriginal mobility actually coexisted with notions of territory and sovereignty within the minds of European explorer adventurers. Drawing on the Māori concept of "utu" as a lens through which to explore the ways in which relationships with Māori sought by Europeans were negotiated in the north, Rachel Standfield's chapter proper focuses on communities rather than individuals and on the ways in which Māori "world enlargement" provided fertile ground for sowing the seeds of positive relationships between Europeans and Māori. The following chapter, by Kāi Tahu scholar, Michael J. Stevens, is a dazzlingly detailed exposition of the journeys across Te Tai o Rēhua undertaken by takata pora (ship people) and Kāi Tahu spanning the early contact period to the present day. Stevens examines the influx of white settlers to the south of the south as well as southern Kāi Tahu travel to such key nodes as Poipiripi and Poihākena. Whānau and whakapapa, names, people and places are intricately woven together to form a pōhā of unique design and beauty which demonstrates that present-day Kāi Tahu 'Mozzies' are doing what Kāi Tahu have always done: move.

Tony Ballantyne's chapter follows and builds on his substantial existing corpus of work on missionaries and missions, mobility, empire and the written word. Ballantyne connects the culture of paper introduced by missionaries as a way to spread the word of God and to account for the mission station itself, with the importance of shipping as the "life blood" of the mission. Ballantyne's reference to Thomas Kendall's request to his superiors at the Church Missionary Society (CMS) for paper, ink, quills and other goods is a wonderful reminder of the materiality of the written world in 1818. Chapter 6, Kristyn Harman's recount of the Aboriginal survivors of the so-called Vandemonian War exiled to the Bass Strait islands and their subsequent 'repatriation' back to Tasmania, makes for harrowing reading, even though this reading is largely of the between-the-lines variety. Harman's chapter charts the increasingly aging and unwell population of survivors' mixed success in subverting colonial attempts to contain them and finds that men and boys who crewed on sealing and whaling vessels perhaps achieved the greatest success in this regard.

Building on the notion of "oceans as escape" for Indigenous peoples, Lynette Russell's chapter "Looking out to Sea" offers two biographical case studies: the first focuses on Tasmanian "half-caste" Henry Walley who crewed on sealing and whaling ships; the second on a group of Tasmanian women who sailed across the Indian Ocean to Mauritius and home again. Russell underlines the silences in the archives (we hear about the women but never from them themselves) and the possibilities for mobility that ocean travel offered Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century. Russell argues that ship decks were liminal spaces, at least until the Australian Government passed the "White Ocean Policy" into law in 1904, as white Australia became increasingly anxious about its place in the world. Tiffany Shellam's chapter argues for a repositioning of the dichotomous relationships between European explorer and Aboriginal people and pulls the focus to Aboriginal guides and intermediaries and their ability to shift the power relations between Europeans and Aboriginal communities. In her careful reading of the actions of Miago, a Nyangar man from the southwest of Australia who served as intermediary on board HMS Beagle's hydrographic expedition in 1837–38, Shellam proves that it is a gross oversimplification to read Aboriginal guides and intermediaries as deracinated figures.

Returning to the kaupapa of women and women's history, Angela Wanhalla explores the life geographies of Agnes Grieve (1830–1903) of Swampy Cree, Canada, and Jane Palmer (1830–1898), Kāi Tahu, and their shared space in colonial Otago, New Zealand, where their kinship networks, “energised their ties to place” (211). It is another fantastic chapter which examines mobility for Indigenous women from opposite sides of the world through the prism of marriage. Rounding out the book are two chapters written by Lachy Paterson and Regina Ganter respectively which explore Indigenous–Indigenous narratives of connection and the role of mobility. Lachy Paterson's reading of Ngāti Whātua rangatira Pāora Tūhaere's journey to Rarotonga leads us to consider spaces and places created by Indigenous people for themselves. Paterson's deft use of Māori-language sources argues for the importance of using source material produced by Indigenous peoples themselves; it is a potent reminder that some “silences” in the archives can be directly attributed to lack of (in this case language) skills by researchers. Finally, Regina Ganter examines pre-colonial ties between northern Australia and South East Asia, between Macassan and Yolngu people centred on the trepang (sea cucumber) industry. Ganter's chapter pushes us to “peel back” outmoded views of Aboriginality and to repatriate histories which have been “turned in.”

That there does not appear to be any particular rhyme or reason for the order in which the chapters appear in the book is apt in a work which deals with the messy, uneven nature of Indigenous mobilities. That more chapters in a book analysing Indigenous mobilities are not written by Indigenous authors is regrettable, particularly while the question of Indigenous agency hangs like a cloud over the Australasian academy.