

which he lives by exploiting the potential of the marketplace. Through Bodil Birkeboek Olesen we encounter design practices for hand-decorated cloth within a Malian community of *bogolan* artisans; in this aesthetic order, individual and society appear as aspects of each other. Through Dimitris Dalakoglou we meet Fato, who builds a house in Albania although he resides permanently in Greece; he thereby brings the totality of a fluid and contradictory migrant life into one sensible system of reference. Through Marjorie Murray we meet Manuel in whose person is manifested elements of the city of Madrid as an urban cosmology. Through Heather Horst we meet Ann, living in Silicon Valley in an ordered alignment with the highly socialized media of MySpace and Facebook. Through Ivana Bajic-Hajdukovic we meet Vladimir, a migrant son from Belgrade and a Londoner: he repudiates the kinship expectations of his mother in war-torn Yugoslavia for a more English aesthetic. Through Julie Botticello we learn how Jo runs a south London market stall; she mediates the relation with her local communities, Yoruba and other, through her clothing. Through Ann Pertierra we learn how Fernanda and Reina, both living in Santiago de Cuba, differently appropriate Cuban discourses of socialist struggle so as to bring an individual aesthetic order to their experiences and practices. Finally, through Gabriella Hosein we witness Merlene, Sandy, Ruqaya and Lionel mobilizing aesthetics on Trinidad—entrepreneurial, spiritual, bureaucratic, artistic—that afford them each a sense of individual authority with which to mediate formal structures of authority.

The overt individual engagements to which this volume offers testimony also provide it with its authenticity. The truth of an aesthetic-material order, in which an individual life everyday expects to locate itself, resonates. (Even if one does not believe in Bourdieu and if one wishes to premise the orderliness or otherwise of social milieux on creative capacities that are not owed to society, the notion of an individual life as possessing an aesthetic truthfulness resonates.)

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### Aboriginal Business: Alliances in a Remote Aboriginal Town

*K. Christen.*

Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press; Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 2009. xvii + 268 pp., illustr., notes, bibliog., index. ISBN 978-0855757021. \$39.95 (Pb.)

*Aboriginal Business* explores the ways in which Warumungu people from the Tennant Creek region go about the business of engaging with and building alliances with others. 'Business' in Christen's terms encompasses both commercial economic activities and 'the work of maintaining and forging necessary social relations... within distinct fields of relatedness' (vii), thereby drawing in the broader issues of maintaining country and culture. Christen suggests that from this perspective, business is essentially 'about *acknowledgement* and *associations*' (*ibid.*, emphases in original). Using this extended notion of business as a way of encapsulating and exploring forms of engagement, Christen takes the reader on a thematic journey through Warumungu realities.

The first chapter, on self-determination, reconciliation, and their ambiguities, sets the scene for the more locally focused chapters which follow by explaining the historical context of current policy regimes, the rise of the Indigenous organisational sector, and public attitudes toward Indigenous development. Attention then shifts for a moment to the local as some of Christen's key informants are introduced. This juxtaposition of snippets of policy phrases and the speeches of politicians with the situations faced by Christen's Indigenous friends and colleagues leaves the reader suspended in the often uneasy spaces between the rhetoric of Indigenous policy and the reality of Indigenous lives. In conceptualising these lives, Christen invites us to use the notion of Aboriginal alliances to move beyond

a dichotomy of assimilation and autonomy (23–24).

Following this introduction, the first section of the book presents two chapters which deal with ‘community control’. Here, a chapter on the history of land claims in the Tennant Creek area is followed by another which explores the Indigenous organisations that operate within the town. The agendas and trajectories of organisations oscillate as they take on new projects and manage their relationships with funding bodies, various local mobs, and other organisations. People engage and disengage from them as opportunities and limitations arise and as they pursue their own political and sociocultural imperatives. Together, these chapters reveal how the Warumungu have reframed their social locations within Tennant Creek over recent decades. Christen highlights the strength and resilience of the networks which connect various Warumungu as they respond to subsequent policy shifts. Most recently, this includes the abolition of CDEP and the Commonwealth’s ‘Intervention’ into the Northern Territory’s remote Aboriginal communities.

In a section titled ‘Uneasy Alliances’, Christen presents two examples of engagements with large corporations: Giants Reef Mining Company and ADrail (which constructed the Darwin–Alice Springs railway). This interesting section explores the complexities of Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations and insightfully captures the ambiguities, mixed agendas, and tensions that arise when willing Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties attempt to engage and negotiate.

The final section, ‘Proper Productions’, explores the production of a music CD and the development of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre. Although losing the critical edge of earlier sections, these chapters draw attention to the important ways in which such productions inject Warumungu-controlled and self-authored representations of Warumungu culture into the mainstream, whilst acting simultaneously to maintain, assert and recast internal ‘mob’ relationships and cultural practices.

Each of these sections uses a different theme to explore the ways Warumungu people engage with their world. The text is not a traditional ethnography, but ‘an ethnographic snapshot of Warumungu engagements with a range of interlocutors, where tensions and compromises, hopes and fears, negotiations and trade-offs are central’ (4). Rather than provide detailed accounts of Warumungu life histories, opinions, or social engagements, the book looks at how Warumungu people engage with certain processes at particular moments. From the development of a cultural centre, to land claim processes, to participating in the opening ceremony of the Olympics, to the naming of a train, this book explores Warumungu people’s discursive engagements with their world.

At times the focus is more on the non-Indigenous residents of Tennant Creek or the non-local businesses which reach into the town for greater or shorter periods of time. At other times the focus is on how Warumungu people negotiate their own relations and cultural trajectories. Refusing to separate the town into Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, Christen explores where the agendas of Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents converge and diverge, the tensions that arise between them at times, and the spaces that open up for collaboration.

There are times when the text leaves the reader wanting more detail on the relationships which underpin survival and the struggles of everyday life, and the specific ways in which these inform the ‘obligations [Warumungu people] have to act within specific arenas’ (vii). But ultimately Christen’s aim is a different one. Her focus is on the more public forums in which everyday relationships are articulated, with her point being that ‘frameworks of acknowledgement, negotiations over protocols, and the changing face of obliged actors situates Aboriginal alliance-making at the centre of the politics of indigeneity within settler states like Australia’ (viii). This aim is achieved not by dwelling on every aspect of daily life, but by showing through specific examples how wider discursive and policy environments are called

upon, reinforced or challenged by Warumungu and others as they engage with each other at the local level. In this sense, Christen's book is a welcome contribution which offers both new material on, and fresh conceptual insights into, contemporary Indigenous Australian experiences.

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### **Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics**

*P. Wilson and M. Stewart (eds).*

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. ix + 305 pp., table, illustr., notes, bibliog., index.  
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*Global Indigenous Media: Cultures, Poetics and Politics* marks a particular moment in interdisciplinary scholarship. The publication of this book clearly announces that the study of indigenous media—once a marginal (even radical) pursuit within anthropology—has hit the academic mainstream.

I use the term 'mainstream' here deliberately. At least in the Australian context, this is a category against which many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media practitioners discursively position their projects, claiming commonality and shared struggle often in the face of significant cultural and historical differences. Yet what is most welcome about this book is that it critically examines 'indigenous media' (and 'indigeneity') as a category of social and political endeavour by marginalised groups that is neither self-evident, nor necessarily radically distinct from broader national and transnational dynamics and agendas.

As editors Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart argue in their introduction, there is much ground to be gained by widening established conceptions of indigenous media and the global tracking of various forces that generate new networks and connections between once discrete and scattered groups. This approach, and

the intellectually deft ways in which Wilson and Stewart lay out their argument, is a great strength of this book. By acknowledging up front the conceptual and political difficulties inherent in defining exactly what is—and what isn't—indigenous media, the editors allow the increasingly diverse levels of political, social and institutional investments in the production of that which comes to be labelled 'indigenous media' to act as a structuring dynamic for the book. In this way too, the inelegant and imprecise term 'indigeneity' is given space to breathe as a shifting marker of identity and political affiliation, even as it's given a working-over and an opening-up within the particular historical, technological and cultural contexts and trajectories of the individual chapters.

This seems to be to be an approach both fitting and productive. As the groundbreaking work of anthropologists such as Terry Turner, Eric Michaels and Faye Ginsburg (who provides an important final chapter of this collection) has previously shown, indigenous media is a field of production directly and indelibly shaped—made possible, even—by the combined efforts of indigenous and non-indigenous media makers, scholars, activists and bureaucrats (and often the lines get blurred here). This book broadens and deepens this purview.

The contributors to the sixteen chapters in this book include film theorists, video activists, cultural geographers, linguists, and anthropologists who offer close and engaged studies of film, video, animation and radio projects from Latin America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Myanmar, Scandinavia, Russia and even Wales. Yet this is more than a collection of case studies. Every essay—even those for which I thought I knew exactly where they were headed from the outset—offered fresh insight and specificity that finessed a sense of what is at stake in each project. Consistently well written, clearly argued and critically engaged, these essays work together to offer a sense of a vital and still emergent arena of cultural production and politics.

As an anthropologist with my own investments in the field, the chapters that appealed