

importance of glamour and the objectification of women in relation to the technology of the aeroplane remained. What had faded more rapidly was the demarcation of British imperial airspace, and many of the racist attitudes that accompanied it.

This is a thorough, thoughtful and important study that encourages further work on the subject. It successfully writes history beyond, yet mindful of, national boundaries and will be useful to a wide variety of scholars.

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Being Māori Chinese: Mixed Identities. By Manying Ip. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2008. 264pp. NZ price: \$44.99. ISBN 978-1-86940-399-7.

ORAL HISTORIES PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS into the lived experience of a wide range of groups whose lives rarely leave traces in the written archive. New Zealand has a strong Chinese community, about which now much more is known because of the work of James Ng, Brian Moloughney, John Stenhouse, Barbara Brookes, Manying Ip and others, who have explored the social world of early Chinese goldminers, the arrival of female migrants, examined market gardens as economic sites as well as loci of gendered racial fears, and traced immigration restriction and intolerance in an era of growing colonial nationalism. An important part of the history of Chinese settlement in New Zealand is the intimate relationships formed between Chinese and Maori. But as Ip notes, these 'cross-cultural relationships have been largely overlooked in the formal historical and sociological discourse of New Zealand'.

Being Māori Chinese is not concerned with tracing the detailed history of interracial encounters between Maori and Chinese. As the word 'being' in the title suggests, this book is largely about the lived experience of being mixed descent in late twentieth-century New Zealand. *Being Māori Chinese: Mixed Identities* offers a glimpse into the lives of seven families of mixed Maori–Chinese descent as they attempted to negotiate the political, economic, cultural and social worlds of twentieth-century New Zealand. While only seven families feature in the book, they cover a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences, deriving from both rural and urban backgrounds and diverse religious affiliations. While some families were formed out of alliances of a casual, fleeting nature, others grew out of committed relationships, and some out of economic need. Interracial relationships are associated with a history of shame, dislocation and intolerance, all of which resonate in the family histories showcased in *Being Māori Chinese*. Ip treats these individuals and their histories with respect and sensitivity, and clearly admires the achievements and gains made by them over the generations. Heart-warming stories of struggle and survival are scattered throughout *Being Māori Chinese*, to show 'the human side of the story of our nation building' through 'intimate first-person accounts'.

Historians may find this book frustrating. Because the focus is on individual and family experiences, the historical and sociological contexts for explaining, interpreting and examining these experiences are pushed into the background, and largely left undigested until the short conclusion. In part, *Being Māori Chinese* is problematic because a tension exists between a desire to highlight and celebrate the history of a diverse set of families and forms of encounter in New Zealand's past through the lived experience, and a determination to link this history to contemporary politics concerned with the relationship between biculturalism and multiculturalism, and between migrants and indigenous peoples within the framework of Treaty rights and the meaning of citizenship. None of the key terms used, particularly biculturalism and multiculturalism, is unpacked for the reader, and anyone unfamiliar with the application of these terms in New Zealand will not

find answers in *Being Māori Chinese*. Each family showcased in the book is grounded in its history of arrival, settlement, encounter and the social, economic and familial worlds it created, but it is rare that the author places all the families into the larger historical context. A strong introduction grounding the individual experiences within a historical context was sorely needed.

Despite these problems, *Being Māori Chinese* does add greatly to a growing literature on interracial intimacy and the diverse families formed out of these encounters. The family histories and interviews tell the reader a great deal about the social spaces these families inhabited, how people came into contact, as well as the complications that come with being of mixed heritage, particularly in relation to identity. There is a great deal of detail across these family histories to suggest the possibility of further examination of New Zealand's interracial past and the discrete contours, contradictions and ambiguities involved in interracial intimacy, colonialism and hybridity. Unfortunately, these themes, so prevalent in the international literature, and which now also shape the New Zealand scholarship, were absent in the author's discussion of racial purity movements, racial intolerance, citizenship and its shifting meaning, as well as the difficulties of identity. *Being Māori Chinese* is packed with wonderful raw material for the future historian of such encounters and I hope that the forthcoming edited volume, which will further interrogate the range of relationships formed by Maori and Chinese through a diverse set of methodological approaches, will engage in the international scholarship and more closely interrogate the historically contingent nature of interracial encounter in New Zealand's past.

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Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia. By John Fitzgerald. University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007. 289pp. Australian price: \$44.95. ISBN 978-086840-870-5.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT BOOK written by one of Australia's leading specialists in Chinese history. Because of his experience, Fitzgerald brings a wide-reaching vision to the discussion of the Chinese in Australia (and, by association, New Zealand). While the author discusses White Australia, this book takes a wider view of the contribution and achievements of the Chinese in Australia.

The book is set against the one-sided and culturally biased discussion of social values that has infected Australian public life over the past decade, ranging from questioning the place of Aboriginal people in modern Australia to some of the ugly debates about the real nature of Australia's vaunted multiculturalism that have arisen in relation to the Muslim community. The early chapters are openly polemical. The recent Australian 'values' topic — I hesitate to say 'debate' because it has largely been one-sided and intellectually bankrupt — was at heart a diversionary political process centred on establishing a subversive rightist ideological dominance in Australian society and politics. For this reason alone the book merits attention, although these chapters will quickly date following the recent change in Australian national politics.

The experiences of the Chinese in Australia and New Zealand were never as ugly as in North America, where an entrenched history of racialism dominates cultural and social history, but they were undeniably marked by humiliating legislation and administration not experienced by other immigrant minorities, although the Pacific Islander 'indentured' labourers (Kanakas) probably suffered as much, and perhaps more. The experience of Australian Aboriginal people stands apart for well-meaning