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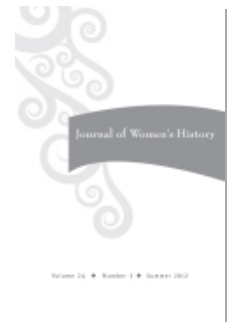
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## The Politics of Race, Nation, Empire, and the Intimate: Recent Explorations

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*The Politics of Race, Nation, Empire, and the Intimate:  
Recent Explorations*

Elisa Camiscioli. *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009. xi + 227 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-4548-0.

Fiona Paisley. *Glamour in the Pacific: Cultural Internationalism and Race Politics in the Women's Pan-Pacific*. Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press, 2009. x + 291 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3342-8.

Margaret Jacobs. *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia 1880–1940*. Lincoln: Nebraska 2009. xxxii + 557 pp. ISBN 978-0-8032-1100-1.

Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton eds. *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 353 pp. ISBN 13 978-0-252-03375-9.

**Patricia O'Brien**

Ranging over substantial topographies of time and place, these four books offer significant insights by some twenty scholars of the intellectual terrain shaped principally by professor of history and anthropology Ann Laura Stoler in her seminal works *Race and the Education of Desire*, "Tense and Tender Ties" and *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*.<sup>1</sup> All the works are of importance, clearly demonstrating the richness and complexity of recent studies in the broadly defined field of empire and gender. Elisa Camiscioli and Margaret Jacobs delve into the fraught history and politics of state interventions into the intimate bonds of sex and family while the Tony Ballantyne and Antoniette Burton edited collection, *Moving Subjects*, contains fifteen essays that illustrate the influence and utility of Stoler's ideas in their own narratives of far-flung empire. Fiona Paisley, author of *Glamour in the Pacific* and also appearing in *Moving Subjects*, is concerned with revealing the inner-workings of the Pan-Pacific Women's Association in the three decades from 1928 to 1958, uncovering a narrative of women's political activism and the politics of race, the turbulence of war and the rebuilding of international associations, and their continued endeavors to project a "women's voice" in the new world order from 1945.

Camiscioli's *Reproducing Empire* offers a very rewarding and pithy illumination of race and sex and the anxieties they produced in the French Third Republic (1870–1940). It is an impressive work, centering on the French predicament after World War One of vastly depleted manpower reserves and potential mates for legions of French women. Camiscioli demonstrates how concerns about labor and economics combined with those of intimacy, creating a rich and revealing archive generated by a range of government officials, jurists, and intellectuals. They fretted over the perils of immigration into the French nation and deployment of French men and women out into the empire, and beyond. Camiscioli uncovers a dimension of the wider field of twentieth-century race and immigration history that has been dominated by attention to immigrant nations like the United States, Canada, and Australia in this time period. These histories have explored the seemingly interminable anxieties about race, cross-racial sexual contacts, national identity, and security in these nations. The central focus of this body of scholarship has been anxieties directed at external non-Europeans, like potential Asian immigrants, or non-Europeans minorities, particularly indigenous peoples, within national borders (as Jacobs's work will demonstrate). Here Camiscioli shows how similar fears deeply impacted this old world, imperial nation long before contemporary French struggles with religious and cultural diversity at home. This book gives longevity and intellectual breadth and depth to acute contemporary debates about the French nation and its jealously-guarded identity.

In essence Camiscioli's work is about politics and bodies—human, intellectual, and political—after a “mortal hole” was inflicted upon the French nation and its economy following the crisis of World War One. Camiscioli shows how the large-scale importation of foreign workers into France precipitated a series of dilemmas, debates, and polemics in the years after the armistice (68). This circumstance tested racial ideas in all levels of French society—from bedrooms and factory floors to high office—reformulating and entrenching pre-existing racial hierarchies. Camiscioli tracks which foreign men—Spaniards, Belgians, Portuguese, Italians, and Greeks—were deemed desirable additions to the French body politic owing to racial attributes, especially work ethic and fecundity, considered most aligned with French ones, and therefore being the most “assimilable” (7). Men from the French empire—North Africans, Indo-Chinese, sub-Saharan, and Caribbean colonies—were conversely the most undesirable along a sliding scale. Not only did they exhibit less productivity in numerous contemporary “scientific” studies that Camiscioli cites, their presence as potential progenitors with French women posed the added and most serious dilemma that the children of such unions would degenerate the French race. Camiscioli details steps that were taken to limit these men's access to French jobs and French

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women after the war's end (although they made up half the ranks of the 662,000 foreign workers brought in during the exigencies of World War One) (55). The presence of so many foreign men led to a surge in marriages between French women and foreign men. Such marriages resulted in the retraction of French women's citizenship and that of children born to those unions, creating another set of dilemmas about French depopulation through attaching French nationality to men only. It also raised the prominence of calls for French women's right to "independent nationality" that were given new impetus in the postwar context, though feminists had been appealing for this to be rectified since 1869. As Camiscioli points out, the newly felt implications of immigration and intimacy in France eventually led to the amendment of the Law on French Nationality in 1927, which elicited very revealing debates about gender, nation, and citizenship rights.

Within this most compelling book, the section on French sexual intimacies in Greater France and the world beyond is particularly absorbing. Here Camiscioli examines how racial anxieties played out over prostitution in both metropolitan and imperial settings. These anxieties stemmed from concern that large numbers of French women were traveling abroad, especially to Latin America, to sate the market for them as exotics in foreign lands (although actual numbers cannot be substantiated). There was also a differing set of anxieties around the state regimes established in imperial settings to ensure France's imperial personnel's sexual access to local women, many of which involved relocating women and sequestering them proximate to French forces. Camiscioli shows how these movements of women for sexual purposes conflicted with the League of Nations' conventions designed to hinder "white slavery" from 1921. This section demonstrates the most grotesque manifestations of the notions of race and sex tracked in the book through the sequestering of colonial women in various regulated forms of prostitution, disturbingly similar to Imperial Japan's comfort women, though here we do not get insights into women's willingness. The French established *bordels militaires de campagne* (ambulatory prostitution units in the field), brothels that flew the *tricolore* and serviced French troops in the Middle East to *quartiers reserves*, a harem-like arrangement, the first one of which opened in Casablanca in the early 1920s and "housed approximately 200 inhabitants" where women were monitored for sexual diseases and made exclusively available for French men (118, 122, 123). Camiscioli highlights how such arrangements that explicitly dictated women's movements for sex contravened "white slavery" conventions, which the League of Nations extended in 1933 to include "colonies, protectorates and mandates." This brought to an end this egregious aspect of the French state's response to racial and sexual anxieties, so lucidly outlined throughout this book (125).

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Margaret Jacobs's *White Mother to a Dark Race* likewise revolves around highly unsettling manifestations of national angst about race, gender, sexuality, and intimacy through an examination of the history of indigenous child removal in Australia and the United States from 1880 to 1940. The inventory Jacobs outlines of national policies and practices concerning indigenous child removal in the United States and Australia, although familiar in many aspects, remains gut-wrenching. Jacobs's task in this comprehensive and lucid book is ambitious, spanning sixty years and numerous political administrations and organizations in two national settings. She is not only interested in detailing the history of indigenous child removal but how it was intricately connected with the rise of white women's political activism through maternalist campaigns and practices. Jacobs's sources are widely dispersed and disparate. The characters and their communities, locations, and relocations are numerous and complex as are the political jurisdictions and religious groups that governed and ministered to indigenous peoples during this era. In writing this synthetic history Jacobs owes a large debt—that is prominently acknowledged—to historians who have built the field examining indigenous child removal most particularly in the Australian setting such as Peter Read, Anna Haebich, Victoria Haskins, and Alison Holland.<sup>2</sup> This invaluable secondary literature is augmented by a wealth of archival research compiled by Jacobs, together producing an immense weight of evidence about this aspect of U.S. and Australian national histories. In the Australian case, before Prime Minister Rudd offered an official and heartfelt apology to the group known as the Stolen Generation as the first order of business of his newly-elected government in 2008, this history had been questioned and negated in public debates over the preceding decades, engulfing politicians in the highest offices.

Jacobs makes a richly nuanced analysis of indigenous child removal in the United States and Australia. She notes that there was remarkable similarity between these white settler societies in their ideologies, policies, and practices towards indigenous peoples in this period. Also, the rise of maternalism in both countries during this time, the causes that these politically ambitious white women took up, and the justifications they gave for their entry into the political realm, are likewise very similar. Notions of race, indigenous women's maternal abilities, and place in their societies upon which their rescue missions were based, were likewise remarkably similar in these two national settings.

Jacobs's detailed chronicle of intersecting ideas and practices regarding indigenous child removal concludes that U.S. intentions regarding indigenous children were to remove them from impoverished and perceived "immoral" conditions in their communities and place them in centralized boarding schools distant from these communities. These schools were

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often vastly inadequate for the children's basic needs of food, shelter, and health, let alone their emotional sustenance. Jacobs outlines horrific cases where large numbers of children perished due to the close living conditions and inadequate medical attention in these schools that permitted diseases to spread at alarming rates. The manner in which some parents were informed of their children's death and the refusal of officials to honor bereaved parents' wishes for their child's body to be returned to them (as was the case with the Springers, an Ohama family, whose daughter Alice died at the Carlisle Institute in Pennsylvania in 1883) speaks to distressingly deep levels of racial abuse (203–6). Through tracking the role of a number of maternalists, such as Alice Fletcher who was appointed as an agent for the Carlisle and Hampton Institutes in 1882 with the purpose to recruit "Plains children," Jacobs shows how many of these maternalists were deeply implicated in the culture of trickery, deception, and force used to fill distant boarding schools with younger and younger indigenous children. Such practices were considered the only way to alter a perceived "Indian problem." Fletcher was initially a staunch advocate of Indian child removal. But once she witnessed the heartbreaking results of her work, such as the death of Alice Springer, Jacobs detects that Fletcher had "growing unease with the practice" and began to advocate for a modification of policy by bringing "young husbands and wives East, to be educated as families, and then to be returned to their tribes and provided with homes, that they may educate their people by precept and example" (206–7). The publicity of other abuses and court cases launched by parents to have their children returned to their care shone a light upon the practice and from 1894 the U.S. Congress acted to prevent the removal of children across state lines and those forms of coercion used to gain parental consent, like the withholding of rations, were made lawful.

Yet Jacobs points out this legislation still allowed much leeway for unscrupulous school agents to persist in their practices of removing children, such as altering the designation of schools to "reform schools" which did not require parental consent to have children placed in them. The continuation of this assault on indigenous communities continued to attract high-level attention and responses, such as that by President Theodore Roosevelt who appointed Francis Leupp as commissioner of Indian affairs in 1905. Leupp not only staunchly believed that Indian culture should be preserved through education, but he also railed in his writings against the "traffic in these helpless little red people" that he equated with the African slave trade (168). In 1934, with the *Indian Reorganization Act* Indian education was shifted towards day schools and a curricular shift that emphasized "Indian language, culture and history in addition to more conventional subjects" (169).

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Despite the litany of abuses Indian people suffered throughout the duration of these policies, Jacobs finds that compared to their Australian counterparts, Indian families' experience of state intervention in child removal differed and was in many respects, less punitive. There were many common attitudes to indigenous peoples in the United States and Australia but Indian relations with the State were fundamentally different. The U.S. government did not have the power to remove children from indigenous communities without parental consent. This gave Indian families legal recourse against the practice, which Jacobs shows they utilized, although presumably many families did not have the means to pursue complex and expensive legal cases and were less likely to generate documents that allowed their plight to be located by historians. Jacobs also found that the underlying philosophy of U.S. child removal policy was that the separation of children from their families was intended to be temporary and based on imparting (an albeit inadequate) education. Many children were permitted to return to their communities during vacations, and parents were permitted—though many were financially unable—to visit their children, or institution officials made such contact difficult.

In contrast, Jacobs affirms in line with most recent scholarship on this subject, that the Australian practice had genocidal objectives. State governments in Australia, through Aborigines Protection Boards and their heads—the Protectors of Aborigines—intended to permanently separate children from their communities with the hope that these children would become absorbed into white society, and thus the perceived “Aboriginal problem” in Australia would be solved. Jacobs shows that in the Australian context white maternalists were heavily implicated in the formation of policies and practices of indigenous child removal. As with the United States, they used positions of privilege gained with women in indigenous communities to become “experts” on Aboriginal culture, and then many conducted what Jacobs terms “intimate betrayals” by informing upon communities to Protectors, giving ammunition to justify such extreme intervention. Yet Jacobs also shows, via the terrain established by Haskins and Holland and their work on Joan Kingsley Strack and Mary Bennett respectively, there were maternalists who assumed a leading role in exposing the innumerable inhumanities of child removal policies that led to their eventual reform.

A persistent and intriguing question runs through Jacobs work: how were such similar ideas about indigenous communities, their children and government policies of intrusion into these most intimate of relations conveyed between the US and Australia? The answer is not clear. Jacobs does not find much evidence of “direct contact between white women activists in the United States and Australia” (130). These shared ideas appear to have been disseminated indirectly, Jacobs concludes, through international orga-

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nizations that promoted "native welfare." The *British Commonwealth League* and the *Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society*, and publications by U.S. leaders who campaigned against racism are the sources Jacobs believes transmitted ideas and practices between the two national polities. She also suggests that from 1928, the Women's Pan-Pacific Conferences that brought U.S. and Australian activists together to discuss respective indigenous policies—amongst other topics—was also an historically significant site of intellectual exchange. These conferences are the subject of Fiona Paisley's insightful book that fleshes out a narrative of Pan-Pacific Women's Association (PPWA) and its members during the historically-charged period from 1928 to 1958. Paisley notes that the PPWA brought together some leading maternalists from Australia and the US and numerous other nations from the Pacific region, to discuss many concerns of the day. Jacobs and Paisley both profile Constance Cooke, one of several women who highlight the shared terrain of their two books. Cooke was one of these Australian maternalists who attempted to use the 1930 PPWA conference as a forum to present a critique of Australian government policy and treatment of indigenous peoples. Cooke had been part of the state apparatus that had removed children in South Australia but by the late 1920s she became aware that far from "solving" indigenous problems, state intrusions into indigenous families were creating levels of immiseration that not only made her "ashamed" but also a voice against them in international fora (90). Paisley describes Cooke and her campaign to highlight state abuses of its indigenous populous as the greatest controversy at the PPWA conference during the time under her analysis, as the Australian government intervened to the point where Cooke did not read the paper that it regarded as leveling allegations of a highly sensitive nature at Australian governments, over matters they deemed "internal" (92). Paisley notes that as a compromise Cooke's paper was published in the conference proceedings along with government rejoinders.

Through her anthropological analysis of this interesting organization and her focus upon individuals, such as Cooke, Paisley is able to reveal the complexities of racial politics within this organization and how they also operated in national settings. Although she has become a champion of indigenous policy reform, for instance, Cooke was "unapologetic" in her support of another controversial aspect of White Australia—the exclusion of Asian immigrants (91). Paisley has tried to track—where records allow—the personal interactions between different women from vastly different backgrounds who met, talked, and performed feminized and racialized roles. The profiling of delegates from Asia, like Dr Mei lung Ting, highlights how this organization, dominated as it was by white women, attempted to increasingly embrace racially different delegates although they often viewed them through the inescapable paradigms of exotic femininity. Despite the

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headiness of the times and the increasingly tense racial politics in the Pacific leading up to the Pacific war, Paisley suggests that this organization was characterized on the surface by a culture of politeness and restraint, though underlying tensions were present and occasionally surfaced. Paisley also shows that this organization, despite the unclear role it played in influencing the male bastions of political power in all the participating countries, was progressive, and dismantled a number of colonial barriers, although as the case of Cooke demonstrates, was also quiescent when pressure was applied, and avoided controversy. Sections of Paisley's *Glamour in the Pacific* and her chapter in *Moving Subjects* focus upon Victoria Te Amohau Bennett, the first Maori delegate who attended the 1934 PPWA conference in Honolulu. The case of Bennett shows a number of conundrums of the organization, individual participants, unresolved conflicts over femininity and feminism, and other underpinning intellectual ideas of her work. Paisley shows that Bennett attracted a great deal of attention, and like other non-white delegates had to straddle the demands of an exotic delegate "performing New Zealand," as well as advocate for greater indigenous representation in the organization. Paisley views Bennett largely through the conference diary of Elsie Andrews, a pakeha delegate. Gillian Whitlock's work on women's autobiography grounds Paisley's reading of Andrews's diary, described as a "site of transculturation," revealing a raft of competing and complimentary politics from New Zealand's attempt to set a national precedent in racial harmony, interracial friendships between delegates, displays of exoticized femininity, and cultures assessed through Andrews's homoerotic gaze (*Moving Subjects*, 131).<sup>3</sup> Through Andrews' attuned view of this organization, Paisley is able to delve below the surface of official records and correspondence or media accounts of the meetings that constitute the bulk of her documentary material, to a level of the personal and the intimate. Paisley shows that Andrews does reveal deeper aspects of these meetings of women from across the Pacific region, while simultaneously revealing perhaps more about Andrews and her own limitations.

Historical attempts to gain insight into the realm of the intimate within the context of global empire, the forging of new communities, and the persistent needs of many to remain connected to places of origin, are the wide-ranging themes of *Moving Subjects*. The locales of these fifteen narratives, generated from a 2004 conference, are diverse, extending around the globe and encompassing an extensive temporal scope. *Moving Subjects* suffers from some of the usual tribulations of such anthologies. It has an historical span that extends from the eighteenth century to the 1930s, as well as an immense geographic terrain that includes Scotland, Africa, Portuguese India, Fiji, Hawai'i, Canada, US, Australia, New Zealand and more. These factors make it challenging to unite them into a cohesive whole. One

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wonders how Frances Steel's exploration of dock workers in Suva in 1880 to 1910 might relate to Dana Rabin's chapter entitled "The Sorceress, the Servant and the Stays: Sexuality and Race in Eighteenth-Century Britain" or Charlotte Macdonald's rich study of New Zealand immigrant Mary Taylor's correspondence with her famous friend, Charlotte Bronte. Editors Tony Ballantyne and Antoniette Burton do an admirable job of creating frameworks in which to house these varying contributions from "Vantage Points: Moving Across Imperial Spaces" (where we find the chapters by Steele, Paisley and Macdonald along with those by Rachel Standfield, David Haines, and Elizabeth Vibert), "Affective Economies: Sexuality and Uses of Intimacy" (chapters by Michael A. McDonnell, Kerry Wynn, Christine K. Skwiot, and Katherine Ellinghaus), and "Bodies on the Move: Scandals of Imperial Space" (Rabin's chapter along with Adrian Carton, Kirsten McKenzie, Adele Perry, and Michelle T. Moran). The editorial puzzle of how to group these various historical works together should not be the limit to how this book is read and used by any means. What this volume offers is valuable testament to the multitudinous applications that Stoler's work on "tense and tender ties"—and her substantial number of interlocutors—has had in shaping imperial histories over the past decade or so.

The stated aim of the volume is to "capture intimacy and its histories" in former European empires (1). These rich empirical studies, though of importance for their historical revelations, display different levels of success with being able to meet this aim. Ultimately, the availability of sources, and the limits to which extant sources can be interpreted and read for intimate histories—the historians' perennial challenge—is at issue. Macdonald's chapter based on the letters between literary friends provides ample substance upon which to make claims about female friendships and colonial cultures conducted across the British Empire in the mid-nineteenth century. David Haines's chapter "In Search of the Whaheen: Ngai Tahu Women, Shore Whalers and the Meaning of Sex in Early New Zealand" encounters far greater limits in what it can capture about intimacy and its history in this setting. Haines concludes that contrary to his aims, he is not able to locate the "agency" of Ngai Tahu women or find "individual actors, expressing their own subjectivity and looking after their own interests" as such expressions remain "elusively outside the archive" (63).

What all the twenty authors under examination make very clear, is, overall, how profitable analyses of intimacy—with all its multiple definitions and limitations—have been to historical studies of empire. Despite archival constraints, these studies deepen understandings of empire and race, nation, gender, and sexualities and illustrate how politically charged these histories were, and in some instances, remain. All of these very significant books are requisite readings for scholars of empire and scholars of gender and its intricate, intimate histories.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995); "Tense and Tender Ties," *Journal of American History* 88 no. 3 (2001): 829–65; *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

<sup>2</sup>There are numerous seminal works by these authors such as Peter Read, *The Stolen Generations: The Removal of Aboriginal Children in New South Wales 1883–1969* (Sydney: Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1998); Anna Haebich, *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800–2000* (Freemantle: Freemantle Arts Press, 2000); Victoria Haskins, *One Bright Spot* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); and Alison Holland, "Wives and Mothers Like Ourselves?: Exploring White Women's Intervention in the Politics of Race 1920s–1940s," *Australian Historical Studies* 117 (2001): 292–310.

<sup>3</sup>Gillian Whitlock, *The Intimate Empire: Reading Women's Autobiography* (London: Cassell, 2000).

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