

## Culture

**Chris BONGIE, *Exotic Memories: Litterature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle*. Stanford University Press, 1991, pp. 262**

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ital and local elites, and provision of a measure of economic security for all citizens. Political-economic developments in Tonga are used to illustrate such contradictions.

Alice Littlefield argues that capitalist demand for labour, as well as demand for lands and resources, conditioned U.S. state policy toward indigenous peoples, particularly in the late 19th century, when allotment of communally held lands to individuals, and its subsequent sale or seizure, forced a large proportion of Native Americans into the labour market. Insofar as U.S. state policy toward indigenous peoples was aimed at satisfying capital's changing demands for labour, it was not significantly different from policies of other colonial powers. If this pattern holds, restructuring of the U.S. economy in response to the current capitalist crisis will result in decreased demand for unskilled Native American labour, and increased pressure on Native lands and resources.

This is a valuable collection, and will be useful to generalists and specialists alike. The articles provide extremely interesting applications of case studies to ongoing theoretical controversies. The work of Max Hedley on petty commodity production might have been of interest to the contributors, as well as recent works by post-structuralist Marxist scholars, such as G.C. Spivak, on the relationship of Marxist notions of class to everyday "consciousness". Tom Dunk has also written insightfully on this problem.

Chris BONGIE, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle*. Stanford University Press, 1991, pp. 262.

Par David Howes,  
Concordia University.

Ce sont les propos du résumé écrit par Michael Taussig au dos de l'ouvrage qui m'ont attiré vers ce livre:

"[*Exotic Memories*] brings together, as few works do, literature with history, criticism of aesthetic production with a subtle political consciousness. It makes one understand the colonial implications of modernity as nothing else does. It is essential for the re-evaluation of anthropology and is a powerful addition to the crucial philosophical issue of Alterity."

Il est normal qu'un résumé apparaissant au dos d'un livre comporte une certaine dose d'éloges, mais il faut bien dire que dans ce cas, le contenu du livre ne justifie en rien de tels propos.

A la rigueur, le livre de Bongie pourrait être d'un certain intérêt pour une poignée de critiques littéraires post-coloniaux, mais il ne contribue en rien à une "réévaluation de l'anthropologie". Cet échec est dû au caractère obscur de l'ouvrage de Bongie. Celui-ci se concentre sur quatre auteurs appartenant à l'âge du Nouvel Impérialisme (1880-1920): Jules Verne, Pierre Loti, Victor Segalen et Joseph Conrad. Il examine leurs oeuvres en tant qu'expressions de l'"idéologie de l'exotisme" et, plus particulièrement, de l'"exotisme exotisant" par opposition à l'«exotisme impérialiste»:

"Whereas imperialist exotism affirms the hegemony of modern civilization over less developed, savage territories, exoticizing exoticism privileges those very territories and their peoples, figuring them as a possible refuge from [and vanishing alternative to] an overbearing modernity" (p. 17).

Le caractère obscur du texte de Bongie vient, d'abord, de la façon dont ce dernier saute allègrement d'un auteur à l'autre - ne développant jamais jusqu'à conclusion ses analyses de chacune de leurs oeuvres spécifiques; la manière dont il cite continuellement, en quelques lignes brèves, des collègues critiques littéraires, sans jamais contextualiser leur pensée, accentue également ce caractère obscur; enfin, l'introduction çà et là de miettes d'éléments historiques, dans le but évident d'historiciser le propos de l'ouvrage, produit l'effet diamétralement opposé de décontextualiser le discours. Le livre se conclut avec un chapitre portant sur l'image du Tiers Monde, en tant qu'espace révolutionnaire, telle qu'on la retrouve dans l'oeuvre de critique littéraire et poétique de Pier Paolo Pasolini que Bongie qualifie de "néo-exoticiste". Bien que ce chapitre veuille établir le lien qui unit l'exotisme du tournant du siècle avec celui d'aujourd'hui, le lecteur n'y trouve rien qui lui permette d'identifier ces liens; en effet, ce chapitre, comme les précédents, apparaît plutôt comme une réflexion rajoutée après coup.

Taussig fait référence à la "conscience politique subtile" de Bongie. En fait, la subtilité de cette conscience est si grande que je fus incapable d'en détecter quelque trace que ce soit. Plutôt que d'user de subtilité, peut-être serait-il plus pertinent d'exposer les présupposés sexistes, racistes et "visualistes" sur

lesquels repose le projet exotique et de les affronter à la manière, par exemple, de Abigail Solomon-Godeau dans sa brillante déconstruction de l'oeuvre de Gauguin ("*Gone Native*", *Art in America*, July 1989). Ajoutons que Susan Stewart nous avait déjà présenté une critique de l'ensemble du phénomène de la nostalgie (ce sentiment si spécifiquement bourgeois occidental) beaucoup plus politique et beaucoup plus fine intellectuellement que celle que nous offre Bongie (voir *On Longing*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1984). En résumé, peut-être vaudrait-il mieux oublier *Exotic Memories*.

David TRIGGER, *Whitefella Comin': Aboriginal Responses to Colonialism in Northern Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 250 pages, \$45.00 (cloth).

By Noel Dyck  
Simon Fraser University

David Trigger's study of a mission settlement for Aboriginal people in northern Queensland provides not only a nicely sketched account of the historical development of this peculiar type of community but also a perceptive analysis of resistance and accommodation by Aboriginal peoples to their White tutors. The community, Doomadgee, was established in the 1930s by an Australian fundamentalist Christian sect with the cooperation of the Department of Native Affairs. In subsequent years the mission authorities assumed a major role in regulating the secular lives of Aboriginal people on behalf of the Queensland government. When Trigger first visited Doomadgee in the late 1970s he discovered a community which was geographically, politically, and culturally divided into the domains of 'Whitefella' and 'Blackfella.'

Entering a situation within which it was virtually impossible to occupy a middle ground, Trigger opted to work within the Aboriginal section of the community. Recognizing the structurally-based power exercised by mission and government officials over the members of the village, he focused upon the extent to which Aboriginal consciousness and practices have been constrained and informed by political and economic structures of Australian tutelage. The quotation included in the title of the book is a

statement heard often by Trigger during fieldwork. "Rarely," he notes in the preface to the book, "was it said with malice, and on occasions the tone was affectionate" (p.x). By including this phrase in the title he seeks to establish the image of the White presence in this settlement as "simultaneously peripheral to much of Aboriginal social life yet also highly influential over certain aspects of Aboriginal action and consciousness."

The first section of the book, which traces the development of the area and the mission, provides a useful summary of the evolution of relations between Aboriginal peoples and Euro-Australians. In the wake of an initial period of sustained frontier conflict and violence between Aboriginal peoples and Whites (identified by the former as the "Wild Time"), Aboriginal peoples were brought under the control of the state by a combination of punitive action, distribution of rations, and the creation of settlements. Government also regulated Aboriginal workers' extensive involvement in the pastoralist industry under the Australian system of nationally determined wage rates; until the 1960s Aboriginal peoples were entitled to only a fraction of the wages paid White workers. By the time of Trigger's field research this source of Aboriginal employment was much diminished and the dependence of the people of Doomadgee upon state assistance (administered in this particular community by religious personnel) was solidly entrenched. Within a mission community religious adherence is socio-economically salient. For instance, Trigger calculates that those Aboriginal people who attended Christian meetings regularly were over four times as likely to be living in the newer houses as were those not attending regularly.

In the second part of the book Trigger pursues two related analytical questions: have Aboriginal people been dominated "hegemonically as well as structurally? Does fine-grained ethnographic study reveal everyday forms of resistance similar to those that have been identified as part of cultures of resistance in the lives of various subordinate peoples?" (p.218). His treatment of these concerns makes this book one which should be read by not only those who are specifically interested in relations between minority indigenous or 'fourth world' peoples and nation-states but also those who are curious about how ethnographic analysis can be conducted in order to explicate relations of tutelage and resistance, whatever the context.