For many in the West in the post-11 September world, Muslims embody the feared ‘Other’. Terrorists, abusers of human rights and patriarchal oppressors, Islam’s adherents are characterised as inhuman. In the Muslim World, the West is viewed as a vulgar, capitalist monolith, devoid of spirituality and, therefore, morality. Of course, these views are hyperbolic stereotypes, repudiated eloquently by Melbourne-based academic, social-commentator and lawyer Waleed Aly in his new book, *People Like Us: How arrogance is dividing Islam and the West*. By his own admission, Aly stands at the crossroads of Islam and the West. Born in Australia to Egyptian-migrant parents, Aly is uniquely placed to comment on the divide between these two civilisations.

Targeted at a predominantly Western audience, *People Like Us* is not a book about Islam, although Aly does draw on Islamic history, faith and tradition to support his argument that arrogance and ignorance are dividing Islam and the West. He explains that the problem lies in our own egocentricity and tendency to dehumanise the ‘Other’. *People Like Us* appeals to those of us who seek to break down cultural and religious barriers and leaves you questioning how you can do more.

Aly does not spare anyone from his analysis. He confronts conservative commentators in Australia and the United States–Janet Albrechtsen, Ann Coulter, Mark Steyn and Robert Spencer. He takes on members of the Religious Right–Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson and Fred Nile. In the political realm, he questions the rhetoric and actions of Bronwyn Bishop, John Howard and members of the Bush administration. Even Oprah Winfrey does not escape scrutiny. And for those of us in the West, accustomed to Muslim apologia, Aly also confronts Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, radical Islamic clerics including Abu Bakr Bashir and, in Australia, Sheikh Taj al-Din al-Hilali, as
well as the oppressive regimes in Afghanistan (under the Northern Alliance), Iran and Saudi Arabia. But it is Aly’s examination of the belief in the inerrancy of the self that stimulates a dialogue between Islam and the West, which is so sorely lacking. Beginning with a study of the uproar that followed the Danish cartoon scandal, he considers the way in which Muslims are portrayed as a threat to Western civilisation. He argues that we must no longer think of Islam and the West as though they are singular entities, but instead we must first acknowledge that “we are all human.” This leads into an informative discussion on the history of the Christian Church and the concomitant rise of Islam. Out of this emerges a rather frank, and dare I say necessary, conversation on the misapplication of ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘moderate’ in contemporary debate on Islam. Here, Aly is unequivocal that descriptors such as ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘moderate’ have no place in Islamic tradition (they emerge out of Christian and political discourse respectively) and are in fact insulting. Aly explains, “I cringe every time the ‘moderate’ label is applied to me. I understand it is probably meant to be a compliment, but the truth is that it is offensive in the way that it would be to be called a ‘moderate intellect.’” He engages the reader in a discussion on the oppression of women in Islam, confronts head on the particularly prickly issues of the Hijab and the Burqa and further contends that Muslim women have become the metaphorical battleground on which the clash between Islam and the West is played out. Aly then confronts the concept of jihad, so thoughtlessly communicated as ‘holy war’ by the Western media and political leaders.

However, Aly’s discussion of secularism leaves me unconvinced. The chapter is set out differently to the others and replays a question and answer panel discussion in which three female audience members challenge his convictions. Aly’s arguments are intricate: secularism is “a broad church”, a concept that is interpreted differently by its various adherents. It is remarkably clear, however, that the debate on secularism is difficult to transpose into discussion on Islam, as he reveals that there is no concept of the Church, within the majority Sunni strain, from which to extricate the state. I cannot do justice to Aly’s arguments here; suffice to say that it took a conversation with him to clarify both his and my positions.

Aly’s most valuable, if not challenging and unconventional, contribution is his argument that Islam requires renewal or renaissance. This stands in stark contrast to
the calls for an Islamic reformation as demanded by Canadian Muslim and feminist Irshad Manji and author Salman Rushdie. As Aly explains, *People Like Us* is not intended to be a response to Manji’s 2003 offering, *The Trouble with Islam: A Muslim’s Call for Reform in Her Faith*, though he does devote some energy to doing just that. Islam, according to Aly, has already experienced its reformation, out of which emerged Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and the Taliban and radical Islamic ideology of the kind bin Laden subscribes. Though he concedes that Manji does raise some genuine issues, Aly rejects Manji’s claims as historical revisionism and contends that she contributes nothing to the intellectual debate within Islam. Instead, Aly’s solution is to embrace a classical Islam that can respond to the challenges of modernity.

A relaxed and informal prose, *People Like Us* is easy to read, though readability would be enhanced by the use of footnotes, both for referencing purposes and in the provision of supplementary information. I found myself having to ‘google’ a number of references within the text in order to find bibliographic information. The book would benefit, then, from the inclusion of a full-length bibliography and also an index.

*People Like Us* is an honest and brave book. It is provocative and insightful without being conceited. Aly’s felicitous contribution brings humility to an increasingly complex debate within Australia and is a prescient reminder that the ‘Other’ is really someone like us.

Geordan Graetz
Flinders University
When the great debate about ‘global warming’ and the evaporation of the River Murray began a little while ago, Australian scientists discovered that the public at large was seriously confused. The scientists seemed to be endlessly arguing among themselves and were, in effect, cancelling each other out and leaving the impression that they could not be followed. They realised that the public knew only their disputes and not the common stock of agreed truths upon which they all concurred. So they sensibly got together and set out the simple accepted propositions which became the essential framework for any kind of public involvement in the future planning of the subject. This was highly therapeutic and quickly dispersed much unnecessary nonsense from the public mind. Historians perhaps have less common ground, and we often seem to deal in instant polemics and the polarisation of interpretation. It leads outsiders to think that History is a game devised for the pleasure of a bickering and imprecise profession. The present book might easily encourage such a perception.

_The Great Mistakes of Australian History_ in fact is an engaging set of miscellaneous essays but not a compendium of the collected errors made by Australian historians—perish the thought. It is about ‘fateful decisions’ which have reaped adverse consequences over the course of Australian history. The classic example is the lamentable introduction of rabbits and foxes by unthinking colonists. But the authors range much more widely over political, social and economic issues from 1788 to the present, though mostly they deal with public policy. The editors are at pains to point out that their enterprise should not be regarded as too ‘negative’; rather their purpose is to offer ‘cautionary tales’ (p.5). In reality most of these stories are full-bloodied denunciations of gross error and therefore the entire volume has a combative air about it.

The idea of the book is methodologically interesting. It entails, of course, a judgmental exercise in hindsight that is evaluating events and decisions in the light of their intentions. Logically and inevitably these judgements imply better and feasible
hypothetical alternatives, even though, as Eric Hobsbawm says, “History is what happened, not what might have happened” (*Worlds of Labour*, p.8). Bluntly, our judges need to say how Australian history might have been different in the counterfactual scenario. This is rather less easy than simple denunciation.

What happened to the indigenous population of Australia forms the ‘great mistake’ of the first two essays. David Andrew Roberts argues that the British colonisers were gripped by misconceptions about the nature of Aboriginal societies: indeed the very first reports caused to them to accept a generalised psychology that Aboriginal people were ‘unworthy of reasonable treatment’. Such wrong assumptions about the receiving societies provided that ultimate basis for the widespread denial of rights to the Aborigines. These founding errors were not righted and, as Peter Read argues, the Aboriginal tragedy can be identified in embryo during the first decades of the first colony: the operations of the Parramatta Native Institution exemplified the manner in which cultural breakdown occurred at the very start. At Parramatta a rigid institutional framework was clamped on the evolving relations with the Aborigines, that is, their management. They were denied legal recognition, given no decent treatment and thus a tradition of marginalisation was entrenched. It set them on a “path to hell” (p.47). Here the indictment is total: none of it was inevitable, says Read, and Australian history could have been so much better if the original errors had been reversed. Instead the colonisation enterprise became irredeemably “tarnished” (p.31).

Several of these error-laden contributions are about ‘states-of-mind’ which delivered Australia along the wrong track at various critical junctures in its history. Alan Atkinson convicts the explorers of colonial Australia for their malformed ‘geographical imaginations’. They were led astray by misguided enthusiasms ‘and preconceptions about the physical possibilities of the new continent.’ They were “out of kilter with reality” (p.57), creating fantasies for the future which, typically, led the Wakefieldians to grossly exaggerate the economic potential of Adelaide and the province of South Australia. In reality, of course, most reconnoitring was a perfectly rational process of trial-and-error which quickly dispersed the majority of such delusions. Richard Waterhouse is similarly critical of the ‘agrarian idealists’, who perpetuated the romance of the small-scale cultivator, a pervasive model transported as part of incoming English mentalities. This was clearly an important and recurring
mindset still invoked as late as the middle of the 20th century. It persuaded governments to set aside land for uneconomic closer settlement, to produce environmental degradation, waste, and lashings of social tragedy (p.65). It is certainly salutary to be reminded of the power of the received agrarian ideology, the recurring idea of creating a yeoman class as the backbone of antipodean society, and based on little more than fantasy. Waterhouse is also perceptive on the cycles of ‘rural miracles’ and the strength of ‘the rhetoric of progress and optimism’: they deluded some regions of Australia in more recent times into a series of errors, not least those involving rice and tobacco, cotton, macadamia nuts and avocados (p.75). Moreover the vestiges of such ideology lives on in the current notion that new immigrants should be sent off to the outback to avoid contributing further stress to the great urban blight, in which light our cities are currently regarded.

Employing the marvellous benefit of hindsight, egregious error is also exposed in the damage done by the introduction of wildly inappropriate new species into the long-sealed Australian ecosystem. Manda Page and Greg Baxter tell us that foxes were foolishly brought to Adelaide in 1869; the cane toad in the tropics were another horror story of how Australians ‘ignored Indigenous knowledge of the land and imposed a Eurocentric view’ (p.80). This depressing litany concludes with further ‘grievous mistakes’ perpetuated in the Australian urban environment, best exemplified by Sydney’s Ashton-Cahill Expressway. The baleful authors offer no stories of successful adaptations of non-natives to Australian habitats, and this will no doubt disappoint our national cheerleaders.

Crotty believes that Australians have been repeatedly lured into foreign wars without understanding the human costs and realities of these distant conflicts. He contrasts the bravado, rhetoric and noble ideals of war-leaders with the grotesque consequences of war. He also gives prominence to the divisive domestic turbulence on the Home Front, reminding us of the food riots in Sydney and Melbourne in World War I, as well as the way in which citizens turned against fellow citizens. He quotes Carl Becker on the ‘futile exhibition of unreason’ at such times, and in which Australians fully participated and were always prone to forget (p.120). David Day revisits the 1930s and the particular decision entailed in’ the Singapore strategy’. It was, he points out, an attractively cheap but wrong-headed option for Australia; in a well-rehearsed
account of the debate, he argues the historical unwisdom of Australia in committing its forces to distant conflicts at the expense of home defence. Day clearly believes that learning from such historical errors can promote better policy for the present and for the future. Ilma O’Brien deals with the treatment of aliens, especially Italians, in wartime Australia and suggests unsurprisingly, that racial intolerance was exacerbated during such times. More surprising was the intervention of Arthur Calwell in 1943, protesting that there had been ‘too much racial and other prejudice’ against ‘many naturalised British Subjects living in Queensland’ (p.148).

Marion Diamond provides a long perspective on Australia’s reluctance to engage with Asia, the origins of which she traces back to the early 19th century. She finds lost opportunities of creating a multiracial trading post in the north, and which she argues set the nation on the path leading towards racial exclusivity and white-ness (p.169). Her account connects nicely with Clive Moore’s chapter: at Federation, he suggests, Australia might have looked towards much wider horizons, with the inclusion of Papua-New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (p.174). This proposal entails an heroic hypothetical alternative in which Australia would have become a multiracial society with a larger population and moreover, would have led ‘Asian and Pacific nations… [to] see Australia as part of their world, rather than a cuckoo in their nest’. (p.174). Klaus Neumann usefully reviews the operation of White Australia by way of four famous test cases which expelled non-Europeans after the Second World War—including the Gamboa episode. He berates Calwell for the damage he did to relations with Asia in the process. Finally Wayne Reynolds returns to the ‘Dismissal’ of the Whitlam government in 1975 and the many errors entailed in that event.

The authors thus present ‘the case for the prosecution’ which, however passionate the advocacy, is arguably not the most persuasive mode of serving history. But The Great Mistakes of Australian History is an engaging exercise and provides rich fodder for historical argument and will be useful for teaching purposes. Balanced they may not be, but these lively essays nevertheless offer very good historical provocation and stimuli to prod the conservative mind.

Eric Richards
Flinders University
Reluctant Indonesians: Australia, Indonesia, and the future of West Papua

Clinton Fernandes
Melbourne: Scribe, 2006, 144pp. AUD $22.00

Indonesia is Australia’s closest neighbour, and in the past decade a number of incidents have highlighted the relationship between these two nations: East Timor’s independence in 1999; the Bali Bombings in 2002 and 2005; the attack on the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in 2004; the gaoling of Schappelle Corby and the ‘Bali Nine’ on drug charges in Bali; and the arrival of 43 West Papuans on Australian shores claiming asylum in 2006. It is this last incident that provides the setting for Fernandes’ book.

In his introduction, Fernandes states that ‘this book is about West Papua’s bid for independence and the resulting challenge for Australian foreign policy’ (p.4). The book is structured so as to provide an account of Australia’s relations with Indonesia, and then moves on to the history of West Papua itself, prior and after its incorporation into Indonesia. Finally, the book takes a critical look at calls for closer ties between Australia and the Indonesian military and what this means for the future of West Papua.

Interest in the issue of West Papuan autonomy was restricted primarily to solidarity groups in Australia until the arrival of the 43 asylum seekers. Their arrival sparked an increase in the number of Australians joining solidarity groups and media coverage. Interest in the issue increased to the extent that a Newspoll, conducted in April 2006, found that over 76.7 per cent of Australians were in favour of self-determination for the people of West Papua. However, as Fernandes points out, ‘most Australian policymakers and media commentators are firmly opposed to any talk of self-determination’ (p.4).

In his first chapter, Fernandes outlines three ‘mantras’ that have been used to pacify the public and limit outrage in Australia: ‘promote the national interest’; ‘stop meddling in Indonesia’s affairs’; and ‘prevent disintegration, fragmentation, instability’. Fernandes shows the fallacies and hypocrisy of these mantras,
demonstrating how they have been used by Australian governments to neutralise public outrage over Indonesia’s actions in West Papua and elsewhere.

After showing how Australian governments have pacified the public, Fernandes conducts an analysis of the history of meddling by foreign nations, including Australian and the United States, in Indonesia, noting the hypocrisy of the Australian government’s calls for people to ‘stop meddling in Indonesia’s affairs’. After Indonesia obtained independence from the Dutch after World War II Sukarno, a popular nationalist and leading opponent of colonialism became president. Sukarno’s presidency saw widespread support for the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). These developments led to concerns within western countries of an increase in anti-colonial and pro-communist feelings within Indonesia, and the possibility that this could lead to similar developments in other countries.

In reaction to these developments, the US and Australia began to implement plans to lessen Sukarno’s power. Over the next decade or so, the US and Australia: encouraged rebellions; tried to strengthen provincial leaders in an attempt to help them defy Sukarno; undertook airdrops of weapons for rebels; and finally, began to support the Indonesian military. This support led to the dictatorship of General Suharto, which included anti-PKI massacres, described in a study by the CIA as, ‘in terms of the numbers killed, … one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s’ (p.41).

Suharto remained Indonesian president until his resignation on 21 May 1998, much of this time with at least tacit support from Australia. As Fernandes notes, ‘many Australian politicians, diplomats, and media commentators would come to strike heroic poses regarding human rights violations elsewhere in the world, yet remain silent about Suharto for the duration of his 32 years in office’ (p.43).

Having outlined the meddling of Australia and US in Indonesia since the end of WWII, Fernandes progresses to an analysis of West Papuan history. Again, Fernandes focuses on events post-WWII, including Dutch control of Indonesia and then the establishment of an independent United States of Indonesia. Until 1961, Australia
supported Dutch control of West Papua, but in an attempt to avoid antagonising Indonesia, Australia’s minister for external affairs issued a statement that referred to Australia’s ‘great interest in the ability of the indigenous people of West New Guinea to have the ultimate choice of their own future, whether it be for integration with Indonesia or for independence’ (pp.52-53).

A method to determine the future of West Papuan sovereignty was decided in 1962, with an agreement (the ‘New York Agreement’) providing for the transfer of West Papua to an interim United Nations Temporary Executive Authority until 1 May 1963, after which there would be a longer period of Indonesian administration. The agreement also stated that before the end of 1969, the territory’s inhabitants were ‘to participate in the act of self-determination to be carried out in accordance with international practice’ (pp.55-56). By 1969 Suharto was in power, and the system for deciding West Papuan sovereignty involved 1022 West Papuans (approximately one-tenth of one per cent of the population), hand picked by Indonesia. As Fernandes correctly notes, ‘it came as little surprise, therefore, when every single one of them agreed to join Indonesia’ (p.59). This decision was later described by the responsible UN under-secretary as a ‘whitewash’.

In chapter 4, Fernandes notes how, as an Indonesian province, West Papua suffered under the Suharto regime. Many Papuans attempted to flee this suffering. Fernandes notes that in 1964, the ‘Menzies government decided not to allow West Papuan refugees to settle in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea because to do so ‘could start migration of such numbers as might burden the people receiving them and create administrative and other problems’’ (p.61). Although not noted by Fernandes, this is reminiscent of the Howard Government’s reaction to refugees 40 years later.

Although a number of West Papuans attempted to leave the territory, many also stayed. Those who stayed suffered at the hands of the Indonesian government. Human rights abuses were commonplace, and combined with the Indonesian government family-planning program, they contributed limited the size of the West Papuan indigenous population. Combined with large migration from other Indonesian provinces, this stalling in the size of the indigenous population has led to a shrinking in the proportion of the West Papuan population who are indigenous. One reason for
the encouragement of migration from other provinces was to instil a sense of ‘Indonesian-ness’ in West Papuans. The result was the opposite, with a sense of West Papuan nationalism emerging.

Fernandes then outlines how this emerging West Papuan nationalism led to a resistance movement, including the formation of the TPN (Tentara Pembebasan Nasional, or National Liberation Army). The weapons of the TPN are no match to the Indonesian military, but as Fernandes notes, “they were quite useful in that the provided a convenient justification for greater military repression” (p.78).

Leaving behind discussion of the political and social issues of West Papua, Fernandes moves on to look at its physical environment. This chapter examines the ‘treasure trove’ that is the West Papuan landscape, in particular the mining operations of PT Freeport Indonesia and Rio Tinto. This examination demonstrates how American and Australian companies have exploited the West Papuan environment, and the damage their mining has done. Suppression of the West Papuan population by the Indonesian government has not only been supported by Australian and American governments, but also by companies from these countries, ensuring their continued detrimental presence in West Papua.

Fernandes then returns to the issue of Indonesia’s control of West Papua, noting that the resignation of Suharto in 1998 opened the possibility of independence or autonomy for West Papua. Although Abdurrahman Wahid appeared to be somewhat supportive of West Papuan autonomy, his replacement, Megawati Sukarnoputri instructed the military leadership to ‘execute your assignments and responsibilities to you best ability without constantly experiencing anxiety about violating principles of human rights’ (p.98).

The key demand by West Papuans is ‘merdeka’, commonly understood by foreigners to mean independence, but seen by West Papuans as a ‘moral crusade for peace and justice on earth’ (p.110). This has still not been achieved, with Fernandes believing that the role of the Indonesian military has been central to this. The fact that the Indonesian military is not reliant solely on the Indonesian government for funding means that the military ‘operates as a law unto itself’ (p.123). Fernandes believes that
until this issue is corrected, any plans by the Australian government and military to ‘strengthen military links in the form of joint exercises and training threaten to undermine Indonesia’s democratic transition’ (p.124).

Returning to his the first of his three mantras, Fernandes considers that the only way to serve Australia’s national interest is to increase the diplomatic isolation of the Indonesian military, rather than to strengthen links. The opposite of this appears to be happening, with public announcements of further support linking the need for this support to the risk of a break up of the Indonesian archipelago and a flood of refugees sailing towards Australia. However, as Fernandes rightly points out:

> If – and this is by no means certain – the state of Indonesia breaks up and a number of newer states are formed, the inhabitants will stay in their new states. If they are trying to flee to Australia now, it is mostly because they face repression at home. (p.132)

The timely release of this book provides a short introduction to what is one of Australia’s most important international relationships. The book is an important, easily accessible contribution to the public’s knowledge regarding the situation in West Papua, Indonesia more generally, and the history of Australian foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific.

Andrew Herd
Australian National University
Growing up one is often taught that the ‘good guys’ always win. This is reinforced through Hollywood movies, television, and the media. However, unfortunately, reality is often different. Sometimes the ‘good guys’ not only fail to win, but are destroyed in the process. This is the case of William Sentner and District 8 of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE). The UE is a small union with approximately 35,000 members. It is an independent union, as it has not been affiliated with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) since it left/was expelled from the CIO in 1949.

However, there was a time that the UE was a powerhouse. At its peak, UE membership grew from less than 50,000 in 1939 to 432,000 during the middle of World War II and by VJ day, the UE had 750,000 members. As it organised thousands of new members the UE then built links with the local community. For example, in St. Louis during the 1930s and 1940s the UE Local President, William Sentner claimed that while the UE was interested in the livelihood of its members, it was also interested in the effects of their economic status on our community. In other words, where workers received higher wages, it was likely that the local community would be vibrant.

In *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*, Feurer analyses the struggles between business and workers in the United States’ Midwest. More specifically she examines the rise and fall of William Sentner and District 8 of the UE. Sentner was a member of the Communist Party and president of District 8. However, his loyalty was to workers first and foremost. Under his presidency, District 8 often (although not always) achieved remarkable gains for employees and the community in the face of hostile employers. The UE is/was a progressive union that advocates such ‘radical’ notions as equality and fairness for all irrespective of race, creed, colour and political belief. As is the case today, such notions were frowned upon. Sentner’s (and other UE members’) links with the Communist Party and the UE’s progressive agenda led to District 8, and the UE’s, decline. The UE sustained anti-Communist attacks from
within its ranks, (which eventually led to the formation of a new union the International Union of Electrical Workers) from other unions, the American federation of labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Catholic Church, and the US government. As Feurer demonstrates, Sentner and the UE’s only ‘crime’ was advocating justice for all. Unfortunately, this is not the only time in US history that radical unionism has been crushed by reactionary forces. Indeed, every time that progressive unionism has gained a foothold, it has faced a backlash from the government, business, and reactionary forces within the labour movement.

A minor criticism of the book is that on occasions Feurer uses the term ‘social movement unionism’ without a detailed analysis of the term; an all too frequent occurrence today. There are different versions of social movement unionism and Feurer should have explained what version the UE matches.

This criticism aside, Feurer’s breathtaking research is not just one for historians. *Radical Unionism in the Midwest* should be read by anyone hoping for the rebirth of a more progressive-based unionism or a rebirth of the Left in general. Workers are central to the revival of the left and, as Feurer reveals, are subject to an incredible backlash if they are successful in, at least partially, gaining justice for all. While in the case of Sentner and District 8 of the UE the ‘good guys’ did not win, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest* should be read by the ‘good guys’ so they will learn from the past and hopefully emerge victorious in the long run.

Michael Schiavone
*Flinders University*
Many different versions of Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War have been, and continue to be, told. Although the ‘official’ version encouraged mostly around Anzac Day is by far the most prevalent, numerous stories are now appearing which convey another reality of the war. In spite of many soldiers’ silence about their experiences in Vietnam, some are battling with their memories to speak up in an attempt to quash the official story of pride and honour. This is all the more courageous given the overwhelming unpopularity of the war at the time it was fought until now, when the public memory of the war has faded into near insignificance. Not only do these former soldiers tell a less ‘honourable’ story of the war, but their telling also separates their experience from that as seen by Australians on the home front, in the media and through declarations by the then Liberal Government.

Barry Heard is one of these soldiers. Despite the success of Well Done, Those Men in telling this type of personalised story, Heard, upon writing the book, did not intend it to be so public. Rather, his decision to document his experiences as a Vietnam conscript, and resultant victim of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), was the response to a suggestion by his psychiatrist, as a form of release from recurring wartime memories. What has resulted is an honest self-evaluation of the impact of the Vietnam War on the life of a seemingly typical, self-confessed ‘naïve’ young man.

The book is separated into three well-defined sections, from training to active service to the post-war years, until the present day. This is fitting, as each section seems to document the ideas and impressions of three different personalities due to the changes which resulted from his experience of fighting the war. Heard himself admits near the end of his tour of duty in Vietnam, ‘My youth, which should have measured a decade, was already well behind me’ (p.174). This is apparent in the reading of the book-the man writing long after the war is clearly different from the one who had hoped years before that he would not be conscripted through the much-dreaded Government ‘lottery’.
Initially, *Well Done, Those Men* appears to be another of the archetypal books written by ex-soldiers (of any war) that sentimentally pay tribute to the life of a soldier as a unique experience that ‘maketh the man’, so to speak. Despite Heard’s emphasis on the negativity of his experience after the war, accounts of his time in training and in Vietnam do not favour the bad over the good. Clearly, he views the war as a harsh experience that he regrets and would be loathe to repeat, but he nonetheless quite fondly recounts his positive memories. In addition, the emotional aspects of this book are mainly in the final section, which describes Heard’s post-war suffering, which he was doubtless still experiencing while writing the book. Thus this reduces, to an extent, the typical problem of exaggerated sentimentality in personal reminiscences. This factor—common to many accounts by veterans—can often obscure their usefulness for historians, but it must be remembered that this is not an intentionally historical work; it is the exercise of one man who is attempting to exorcise himself of the reality of his wartime experiences. The larger issues of the war’s political origins, of whether Australian involvement, or indeed the war itself, was right or wrong, are not dealt with. This is merely a concentration on the thoughts of one young man whose remaining decades of life were changed by less than two years of army training and combat in Vietnam.

What makes *Well Done, These Men* noteworthy among other personal narratives of the Vietnam war is its concentration on the role of PTSD in Heard’s later life. This issue has been quite contentious since the end of the war, because the random nature of this condition has, for many sufferers, made their eligibility for approved disability pensions difficult. The effects of PTSD have been officially recognised in soldiers since the First World War, but the overt nature of symptoms seen after Vietnam caused much more research to be done into the psychological effect of warfare on humans. Many of Heard’s expressed feelings coincide with results of psychological studies of soldiers done since Vietnam (although predominantly in the United States). His openness when recalling memories of the war and afterwards, particularly the recurrence of nightmares, nausea and daily flashbacks serves as a validation for all soldiers of particularly Vietnam, where such effects and, indeed, their very involvement in the war, has been suppressed for the most part.
Heard’s deep self-evaluation has resulted in a book which is extremely readable and quite moving. It is rare to find such honesty and openness in veterans’ accounts of war, and particularly those of Vietnam. This can be clearly attributed to the silence seemingly ‘forced’ on many men upon their return from the war, due to the unprecedented public negativity surrounding the war. Thus an unknown amount of hidden suffering has occurred among men. Despite the absence of a detailed military or political analysis of the war, *Well Done, These Men* successfully serves as a valuable social history tool, especially given the recent popularity of in-depth investigations into the effect of war on soldiers involving the use of first-hand accounts. Hopefully, Heard’s example will encourage more veterans to continue adding to the seemingly vast, more personal stories of the Vietnam War that are, as yet, unrevealed.

**Effie Karageorgos**  
*Flinders University*
Downfall, directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel and released in 2004, is based upon the events surrounding the final days of Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich. Formed from the much-admired Third Reich historian Joachim Fest’s book *Inside Hitler's Bunker* and bolstered with the naivety encapsulated in the memoirs of Traudl Junge, Hitler’s personal secretary, the film is testament to Hirschbiegel’s ability to blend both a strong semblance of historical accuracy with a gripping and fear-provoking insight into the final days of the Nazi elite. The main characters are Adolf Hitler (played by Bruno Ganz) and Traudl Junge, (played by Alexandra Maria Lara). The film is set inside both Hitler’s Berlin bunker and the surrounding Chancellery district in late April 1945. The film also portrays the strong emotional turmoil surrounding the demise of the senior Nazi hierarchy immediately prior to Germany’s surrender to Allied forces on May 7 1945. The film covers a range of issues including Nazism, democracy, totalitarianism, political betrayal and war crimes.

The film commences with a narration by Junge regarding her bitter feelings at first agreeing to work for Hitler after the initial ‘interview’ with four other women in November 1942 at Hitler’s HQ, *Wolfsschanze*, at Rastenburg, East Prussia. She asserts that whilst she was admits naivety, she was however not a follower of Nazi ideology. Indeed, as the film progresses, one begins to feel that Junge merely exhibited the hypnotic influence that Hitler held over many German people, military and civilian, during his dictatorship.

The film then shifts to central Berlin in April 1945, around the Chancellery district, as Russian artillery begins to signal the final assault upon Berlin—a clear contradiction to the situation three years previous. It is Hitler’s birthday, 20 April 1945, and one begins to see that he is clearly a man who is becoming increasingly enraged as he clutches at any perceived opportunity to delay the inevitable collapse of his Third Reich. Indeed, the Nazi hierarchy continue to enter the bunker, provide him with updates of the desperate situation facing Germany—yet he is in total denial and willing to sacrifice everything and everyone. Undeniably, the situation and level of
desperation is reinforced in the fact that child soldiers are now the front line of Berlin’s defence. It is at this stage that one begins to compare the situation just over a decade earlier when Hitler ascended to power under the mandate to unite the German people – however, ten years on, Hitler is now willing to sacrifice them. The fervent nationalism that catapulted Hitler to his Chancellorship in 1933 and his dedication to the German *Volk*, and his later willingness to abandon them to growing deprivations and a fight for survival as the Soviets encircle Berlin, displays a fearsome and loathsome dark side of Hitler–arguably a side that was always present but never truly made obvious until the end.

The film then focuses upon the Nazi elite, their selfishness and reluctance to acknowledge imminent defeat. For example, SS Leader Himmler is seen as a conspiratorial, self-serving individual who believed that he would be able to take the leadership from Hitler and negotiate with Eisenhower. One sees the absurdity of this as he obviously feels totally absolved from his key role in the genocide of six million Jews, and is more focused on whether to salute or shake hands with Eisenhower–regardless of his war crimes. Interestingly, it is at this stage that one begins to see the ongoing betrayal of Hitler by many of his other Nazi lieutenants. Whereas on one hand they offer their undying loyalty to him, on the other hand, they are undertaking individual steps towards escaping and negotiating surrender with the Allies.

The other senior hierarchy included Göering, Bormann, Goebbels, Speer and SS Professor Dr. Schenck. Speer is seen as a member who remains loyal to Hitler, not out of a commitment to Nazi ideology but as loyalty to Hitler–his architectural mentor and friend. This is contrasted alongside the loyalty depicted of Joseph Goebbels and his wife Magda, who remain loyal to Hitler–not out of a sense of loyalty to Hitler the individual, but as a commitment to Nazi ideology. One sees the desperation in the Goebbels family where they choose to murder their six children as Magda Goebbels states to Speer, “I won’t allow the children to grow up in a world without Nationalist Socialism.”

Death then becomes an increasingly common occurrence amongst the bunker’s Nazi elite as the Soviet forces move closer to the bunker surrounds. When Hitler enacts the policy of Clausewitz, it effectively prevents Berlin’s civilians and wounded soldiers
being evacuated and surrender impossible. This decision by Hitler is the epitome of Nazi fanaticism and is illustrated in Joseph Goebbels’ statement to Speer, “They [the German people] gave us their mandate—and now their little throats are being cut.” One then reflects back to 1933 when free elections were held and the Nazis received the majority vote—arguably, democracy gone wrong.

As the turmoil continues unabated in and around the bunker, Traudl Junge becomes increasingly conscious of the desperate situation facing her and the other bunker occupants. Additionally, she is also beginning to fully realise that Nazism is but the personification of selfish fanaticism, as the fate of Berlin’s inhabitants are to be sacrificed for the fanaticism of a few.

Both Speer and Schenck emerge as independent voices of reason and common sense. Individually, they attempt to circumvent incidents of Nazi zealousness in order to protect civilians and wounded soldiers—all in the face of potential conflict with other Nazis. A divide also begins to emerge within the German military. On one side there are the Nazi fanatics; whilst on the other side there are the loyal German Junkers who remain loyal to their philosophy of obedience to one’s duty and dedication to Germany the nation—not Nazism. Arguably, both Speer and Schenck are more dedicated to the nation—not an ideology. Of significance is Hitler’s perceived closeness with Speer, where Hitler asks Speer for advice on what to do when the collapse of the Reich was becoming imminently closer. Hitler says, “Speer, what do you say?” to which Speer simply says that Hitler should leave with Eva Braun. It is at this stage that one actually feels some semblance of pity towards Hitler as having being deserted by his ‘loyal’ lieutenants, he is left to face his downfall with only one true confidante left—Speer. However, the viewer soon regains a sense of realism and sees that Hitler’s downfall is but a consequence of his egocentric murderous personality.

Hitler, now close to suicide, makes one last profound statement to General Mohnke where he states “The Western democracies are decadent. They will be defeated by those disciplined people of the East.” This leaves the viewer with a perception that Hitler was anticipating future conflict—arguably the looming Cold War.
However, the collapse of the Reich becomes a reality when surrender is announced on 7 May 1945. The film concludes with a depiction of Junge’s escape to freedom and her concluding narration where she reinforces that whilst her naivety gave way to false delusions—in no way does she feel responsible for the Nazi onslaught. It would be accurate to view that Junge’s statement reinforces the view of the majority of Germans at the conclusion of World War Two.

Overall, the film, whilst clearly intent on capturing the attention of a large viewing audience—thus utilising the Hollywood style ‘historical enhancement’ generally accepted for this genre of film—is nonetheless more focused towards factual representation than many other films based upon this period. It maintains a strong and essentially accurate depiction of the downfall of the twentieth century’s most evil dictator and his henchmen—aided by a reliance upon the historical accuracy derived from Joachim Fest and Traudl Junge’s respective contributions. Additionally, the use of Traudl Junge as narrator provides a valuable and accurate historical context to the film, effectively juxtaposing it between documentary and entertainment. The film also reinforces the faith in humanity and compassion—even when total war abounds. The exemplary acting provides a gripping and powerful insight into the emotions, personality cults and fanaticism surrounding the final days of Adolf Hitler and Nazism.

Jonathan Ray
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Chalmers Johnson’s *Nemesis* is the third in a trilogy—*The Blowback Trilogy*—about the changing nature of the American political and economic system in its exercise of power in the world, and the legacies and consequences of those changes for both America and the world. The other books in the series are *Blowback* (2000) and *The Sorrows of Empire* (2005). The three books are published as part of *The American Empire Project* (http://www.americanempireproject.com/index.asp).

*Blowback* attracted much attention for its prophetic explanation of the ways in which American economic, political and military influence in the modern world was coming back to haunt it through the rise of anti-American attitudes and reactions across the world. The most significant recent expression of that phenomenon was the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York.

*Nemesis* presents a clear-minded and persuasive assessment of the consequences for American domestic politics and society of the ways in which the exercise of American imperial power has evolved. Johnson focuses on the ongoing growth of militarism and influence of the military-industrial complex (M-IC) on the American system and their distortions of the political and economic foundations of the American republic.

A series of chapters examine the influence of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) as an increasingly unfettered and private means of the exercise of Presidential power; the corrosive impact on host societies of the presence of US military bases and other facilities in foreign countries; a detailed analysis of the ways in which that corrosion expresses itself in the operation of US military bases in Japan—in particular, the scope that US agreements with the Japanese Government to host US bases allow for basic legal rights to be circumvented—and the militarisation of the US Space program. These chapters examine these issues in considerable detail and with an enviable command of sources. The overall impact of Johnson’s analysis in these chapters is very sobering and connects directly with his blowback thesis—that the particular ways in which the
US pursues its imperial interests produces reactions and responses that should not be unexpected or surprising.

The main argument of *Nemesis* though focuses on the domestic political and economic implications of America’s imperial commitments and its more recent adaptations to blowback. Johnson argues that the general directions have been evident for some time. For example, the M-IC has had powerful domestic political influence and economic impacts since the end of WW2. What is new for Johnson are the ways in which the system is becoming more secretive and sinister with very negative impacts on the operation on the American republic. For example, with the rise of the neo-conservatives during George W Bush’s Presidency, the principle of the separation of powers has increasingly been put to one side on the basis of arguments about the need for greater Presidential and bureaucratic autonomy to respond to the problem of terrorism. Decisions have been made—the most significant being that to invade and prosecute the war in Iraq—that wider and more balanced assessment in a system with proper checks and balances might have resisted.

In economic terms, Johnson argues that American military, defence and security commitments have become very expensive and unsustainable with an increasingly destabilising impact on the American economy and society. The M-IC has always be thought about and practiced as a form of what Johnson calls *military Keynesianism*. What this form of economic demand management does is to lock in very inflexible and dependent relationships between government and private industry in the military economy. With economic changes of recent times which have seen other American industry decline and economies like China and Japan grow, the M-IC is increasingly dependent on high levels of international borrowing from those countries. Johnson suggests that with the decline of American economic power, the American military and related commitments express imperial over-reach and ‘threaten the nation with bankruptcy’.

Johnson examines the specific trends from the perspective of an argument about imperial pathologies and makes a comparison of the American case with the Romans and British. For America, he argues that ‘we are on the cusp of losing our democracy for the sake of keeping our empire’. The current political arrangements in America are
less and less able to tame the militarism that is a condition of the maintenance of empire. The British path of giving up empire to keep democracy does not seem to be available to contemporary America.

Johnson is a friend of the American political system and its philosophical foundations. *Nemesis* is not the work of an anti-American critic. He wants to rescue the American system from itself—or from the political and economic forces that currently shape it. He sees direct democratic expression as the best hope in achieving that. While some have argued that Johnson’s trilogy is excessively alarmist and pessimistic, he sees America’s current problems very clear-mindedly while acknowledging that other political paths are open. Whether those paths are taken will depend on the strength of the resistance to the pathologies he analyses so well.

**Lionel Orchard**

*Flinders University*
Herman Koeler’s Adelaide: Observations on the Language and Culture of South Australia by the First German Visitor

Peter Mühlhäusler (ed.)
Adelaide: Australian Humanities Press, 2006, 140pp. AUD $30.00

It is easy for the contemporary Adelaidian to forget that their sleepy town was once a frontier. That Adelaide was a place that evoked mystery, danger, wonder and interest. That it was a bold social experiment. A province (South Australia was never a colony) that might be the better mousetrap of the Imperial way. People came to Adelaide to wonder, to study, to monitor, to experience things that could not be experienced elsewhere. It is very easy to forget these things after only 171 years (there are restaurants in Paris that have run longer than South Australia’s white history). It stung Adelaide recently when the Mayor of the Gold Coast, Ron Clarke, piqued by China’s decision to send pandas to Adelaide, wondered very vocally who goes to Adelaide except by accident. But it stung because the sleepy town image created by our dissenting church member forefathers has been slow to die. Hermann Koeler had a very different picture of this town.

Mühlhäusler as the book’s editor has done an exemplary job in making Koeler’s writings available. He is correct when he points out to his reader that some of Koeler’s observations, especially some of those related to his contribution to our understanding of the Kaurna language, are of great importance to our contemporary studies. Mühlhäusler is equally correct when he points out that some of Koeler’s reactions, impressions and observations are tainted by his–even at the time–extreme right wing views and the reader will find many unsavoury opinions voiced in this book. However if the book demonstrates anything–and it demonstrates many things–it demonstrates that our understanding of mid-nineteenth century racism is a simplistic one. Koeler’s racism, while profound, is also complex. There is praise and admiration for South Australia’s indigenous inhabitants, but it is filtered through a pervasive racism that places them few steps above fauna. Koeler proves that the historian generalises about eighteenth century racism, just as they generalise about the mind of the European enlightenment at their peril.

One presumes that the prime interest in this book is for the linguist. Not being one myself, the many pages in this fine book devoted to this study were quite challenging
and there was a temptation to skip through it. However for those whose specialisation lies in this area *Herman Koeler’s Adelaide: Observations on the Language and Culture of South Australia by the First German Visitor* will be invaluable. For those whose interest lies in more general history the book remains interesting. For the polymath with feet in both areas it just might be indispensable.

David Brooks

*Flinders University*
Given the current national obsession with security this is a timely and topical volume; it offers historical perspectives on a recurring theme in Australian history. For its author, Klaus Neumann, it is also a crucial theme, though in his view this is not reflected in historians’ engagement with the sensitive topic of internment to date.

Published as it is by the National Archives, it is not surprising that the relevant collections of the National Archives various offices feature heavily. Indeed, the project stems in good part from Neumann’s work as Frederick Watson Fellow at the National Archives in 2001, a stint which enabled him to view huge quantities of files, all of which are carefully listed in a most helpful index. Moreover Neumann has been able to access an impressive amount of published and unpublished materials held in other research repositories around the country.

The author’s conundrum has been to convert an enormous volume of material into a single, modestly-proportioned volume (just 124 pages, including a sizeable section on sources and a bibliography). The solution is a good one. Over five main chapters he gives concise and accurate overviews of internment policy and practice, covering the period from arrest through internment, release and then an assessment of historical legacies. Beyond those overviews, however, he also delivers a series of case studies of particular internees who had a broad range of backgrounds and with differing experiences of internment. There is no suggestion that the ten case studies are representative of overall internment statistics, rather, their function is to demonstrate the gamut of internees in terms of such factors as national and religious background, political convictions, duration of internment and so on. Moreover, the approach enables Neumann to strike a balance between the sort of impersonal, “history from above” approach, which a reliance on government records alone might favour, and a focus on subjective, personal histories which offers insights into how internment impacted on the lives of internees and their families.
It is no surprise that Germans and Italians feature heavily in this small sample, albeit in such a way as to destroy any notion that Australian authorities were dealing with homogeneous communities. The actual heterogeneity is perhaps best illustrated with reference to the case of the so-called “Dunera boys”. Like many of Australia’s World War II internees they came from elsewhere, in their case from England, and during their transport to Australia as well as the internment as “enemy aliens”, they were exposed not only to the company of Nazi sympathizers but also to the indifference of officialdom. A separate category of “enemy refugees” was not introduced until late 1942, by which time tensions between fascists and antifascists had manifested themselves in many ways. Most tragic was the fate of the Italian anarchist Francesco Fantin, one of Neumann’s case studies, who was murdered in the Loveday camp in 1942.

The case studies extend beyond the usual suspects. Neumann explores, for example, the internments of the Singapore-born Masuko Murakami, the Hungarian Emre Barcs and, oddest in some respects, Harley Matthews. The last was Australian-born, as were both his parents, and had acquired a considerable literary reputation prior to his internment. He had provoked authorities’ suspicions because of his association with the Australia First Movement. Released some six months after his internment, Matthews then faced a long struggle to clear his name.

Although internment rates were lower in the Second than the First World War, it is nonetheless clear that similar anxieties drove the process, and that many were interned for no compelling reason. Alas, unjustified internment is a phenomenon with a history beyond the Second World War. Neumann’s book, readily accessible and appropriately illustrated, shows that rich resources are available for a deeper and more critical assessment of the theme.

Peter Monteath
Flinders University
Not Part of the Public: Non-indigenous policies and practices and the health of indigenous South Australians 1836–1973

Judith Raftery
Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2006, 278pp. AUD $39.95

Not Part of the Public is a very important book that fills a large niche in South Australian history. The author, Judith Raftery, describes how the process of public policies and practices adversely impacted on indigenous health over a 137 year span: from the beginning of South Australian settlement, in 1836, until the Commonwealth Government assumed responsibility for indigenous affairs in 1973. The book title, Not Part of the Public, reflects Raftery’s primary thesis that chronic ill-health and limited life opportunities for indigenous people originate, historically, in successive political and social policies that increasingly exclude them from mainstream society.

A History graduate of both the University of Adelaide and Flinders University, the author currently teaches in the discipline of Public Health. The focus of Raftery’s research, publications and her teaching have been in the area of public health history and policy and, more specifically, the consequences of colonial and post-colonial history on the health and well-being of indigenous South Australians as well as the continuing legacy of those policies over time. Her extensive teaching experience in this field demonstrates a real inadequacy of contextual material in order to give her (mostly non-indigenous) students a better understanding of the impact of historical processes on indigenous health.

There are few publications that come anywhere near covering the same ground as Raftery’s Not Part of the Public. In 1993, Ernest Hunter’s book, Aboriginal Health and History, focused on the distribution of power and prejudice in remote Australia and analysed how the effects of social disruption and cultural dislocation experienced by most Aboriginal people manifested in particular behavioural patterns. In 2003, Gordon Briscoe wrote a demographic history of Aboriginal health within a comparatively limited time frame in Counting Health and Identity: A History of Aboriginal Health and Identity in Western Australia and Queensland 1900–1940. A more general overview of public health in Australia, supplanting Douglas Gordon’s Health, Sickness and Society (1976) and JHL Cumpston’s Health and Disease in Australia (1928 and 1989), is a
major work in two volumes by Milton Lewis titled, *The People’s Health. Vol. 1: Public health in Australia, 1788–1950; Vol. 11: Public health in Australia, 1950 to the present*. Although a very important longitudinal study of Australian public health in general, there is relatively little information on the state of indigenous health within the same time frame. Raftery’s *Not Part of the Public* is, therefore, the first attempt to link the historical impact of public policy and practice with the decline of indigenous health, albeit in South Australia, over a significant period of time.

In the book’s introduction, Raftery points out that at the time of colonisation the health of the indigenous population compared quite favourably with the settlers, but the rapid progress of settlement lead to a concomitant breakdown in traditional lifestyle, dispossession as well as cultural and social dislocation for Aboriginal people and the inevitable decline of their health status. She sets out to offer a unique and critical analysis that illustrates, very successfully, how South Australia’s political, social and economic policies and practices over time have inevitably led to the poor health outcomes and restricted life chances of the state’s Aboriginal people today. Following the introductory chapters, the author has structured the book chronologically into five eras.

The first chapter covers the period from 1836–1858, in which the early colonial government appears oblivious to indigenous attachment to both land and kin. As the land surveys are completed and settlement spreads further from Adelaide, there is increasing displacement of the original population. Within one generation Aboriginal health and survival were ‘put at grave risk’ by a government which had initially promised them ‘protection, justice and advancement’ and then essentially abandoned responsibility for the rapidly decreasing indigenous inhabitants. The chapter ends with the implementation of self-government in South Australia.

The Missionary and Protector period, from 1858–1911, explores some of the major activities, ‘often intertwined and symbiotic’ of the missions and government in South Australia, where concern for Aborigines varied between neglect and apathy on one hand to a degree of compassion and a sense of duty towards ‘a hapless race, who, although assumed to be dying out, nevertheless deserved to be offered the benefits of Christianity and ‘civilisation’. By this time, the Aboriginal people were considered by
most colonists to be intruders in their own land, particularly in the towns, and they became increasingly dependent on the government’s practise of distributing rations at various depots around the state. This also proved to be an effective method of controlling and restraining their movements and activities and severely undermined their capacity to live healthy, independent and productive lives by engaging in mainstream society, thus reinforcing their status as ‘separate’ and ‘other’ and, therefore, *not part of the public*.

During the 1911–1939 era of protection and segregation, *The Aborigines Act, 1911* signified the actual beginning of non-Aboriginal policy and practice over Aboriginal people, providing the administrative and legal framework to control every aspect of their lives. During this period, Aboriginal people occupied restricted and marginal places and were considered ‘a dying race’ of ‘pure bloods’. The indigenous population was now numbered less than 3,000 souls—approximately one fifth of the 1836 estimate, only a century previously. Aboriginal activists began urging for opportunities to be incorporated into civic life and demanded recognition of their rights which led to the enactment, in 1939, of new legislation that reflected ‘the emerging assimilationist discourse’. According to Raftery, recent anthropological and scientific theories now undermined the old ideas of ‘race’ and ‘evolutionary determinism’ and, fuelled by ‘a sharpened humanitarian conscience’, the new policies would soon have a significant impact upon the lives and futures of the state’s Aboriginal population.

The fourth period, from 1939–1962, the assimilation era, came into effect as the Australian Federal and State Governments reacted to reproaches from other countries regarding the ‘passing of the aborigines to racial degeneracy and death’ and in response to the growing numbers of mixed-race people. Ironically, miscegenation became the means by which this problem could be addressed and, by ‘breeding out the colour’, successive generations would become progressively lighter and more easily merge into the white community. Unfortunately, the assimilation policies paved the way for the removal of mixed-race children from their families—a heartless and cruel practice that continues to have repercussions in the Aboriginal community today. By the early 1960s, the Aborigines Protection Board was forced to admit that forced assimilation was not practicable—nor had it been successful—and formulated further policies to
modify the assimilation project to give Aboriginal people more autonomy and opportunities while encouraging them to take some responsibility for their life choices.

The final era, that of ‘integration’, from 1963 until 1973, was heralded by the passing of the *Aboriginal Affairs Act, 1962*, which acknowledged that most indigenous people had reached the stage of requiring guidance rather than protection and gained bipartisan support in the SA House of Assembly. The bill finally conceded that some Aboriginal people ‘might have other ambitions apart from absorption into the general community, and that being “…assimilated to some aspects of non-Aboriginal culture need not mean the loss of traditional bonds with kin and country or constitute a relinquishing of Aboriginal identity’ (p.222). It was the rejection of a double standard that had been in place since the beginning of settlement of South Australia that assumed Aboriginal people were not entitled to the same resources as white people. By accepting them as members of the community, in principle, the process had begun by which the indigenous population would eventually become part of the public and, therefore, qualified for the same privileges and rights as white people.

This period was one of major transition for the remaining Christian missions and, following the 1967 referendum when Australians voted overwhelmingly for constitutional change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be included in the census, it then became possible to gather statistics and regular analyses of the indigenous population that confirmed significant and persistent disadvantage in most areas including high poverty levels and relatively poor health and reduced life expectancy. The author discusses the question of allowing Aboriginal people the right to choose a unique place for themselves and maintain a distinctive indigeneity, while also being part of the Australian public and suggests that the challenge is to find ways of supporting those choices while respecting and accepting their autonomy and distinctiveness ‘as reconcilable with their membership of the Australian public’ (p.278). Until then, she concludes, there is little chance of Aboriginal Australians, in general, experiencing better health outcomes.

Apart from a few irregularities with the footnotes and bibliography, this book is very well written and fills a large void in the sphere of indigenous public health and history. *Not Part of the Public* contains a wealth of information on the evolution of South
Australian historical and political policies and practices, explaining clearly and logically the processes of colonisation and systematic dispossession of our indigenous South Australians over 137 years, and it is no coincidence that such a history, documenting the steady decline in indigenous health between 1836 and 1973 also reflects the social, political and economic impact of white settlement.

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