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Chinese Emigration to Australia around 1900: A Re-examination of Australia's 'Great White Walls'

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Abstract

This article reassesses the debates around Chinese emigration into the Australian colonies before Federation in 1901. Drawing on the literature relating to the emergence of the Chinese community in Australia, it argues that pressures exerted by anti-Chinese organisations that thrived following the expansion of representative democracy in the Australian colonies, and the emergence of organised labour parties, were instrumental in the creation of exclusionary campaigns waged against Chinese migrants. By depicting the Chinese as temperamentally unsuited to democracy and through campaigns to highlight the impact of imported, low cost manual workers into the Australian colonies, the new forces of colonial labour led by radical politicians were at the heart of an attempt to erect 'White Walls' against migrants from South-East and East Asia. These campaigns drew on a fund of images and popular fears that cohered around the role of the opium den, and the solitary, itinerant Chinese male.

Introduction

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the small localised Chinese communities in Australia were largely shunned by White society. Consigned to the margins, and prompting only hostile scrutiny, the surviving migrants who scratched a living on the urban periphery evoked pity in the eyes of some observers. Nevil Shute's description of Liang Shih in his novel, *In the Wet*, is in this tradition:

'I knew a little bit about Liang Shih because he was the only source of fresh vegetables in Landsborough. He had his garden between two long waterholes on rather a remote part of Dorset Downs station. … Here Liang Shih cultivated two or three acres of land and on it he grew every kind of vegetable in profusion … Twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, he would drive into town in a two-wheeled cart drawn by an old horse to sell his vegetables, and then he would go straight back home. He did not drink at all.'[1]

Nevil Shute's portrayal of the lone elderly Chinese male living a reclusive existence reflects a reality of isolation and exclusion for many Chinese migrants resident in post-Federation Australia. Despite Australia's geographical proximity to China, Chinese symbols and displays barely featured in the pageants that accompanied the declaration of the Australian Federation in January 1901. Until well into the third quarter of the 20th century, Chinese communities and cultural survivals in Australia remained scattered. Most historical accounts have traditionally relegated the Chinese to a merely tangential role in the development of the nation. After 1901, the 'White Australia' policy that underpinned the federated Australian state sought to limit the inflow of non-White and non-Europeanised peoples, and to combine policies for distancing the country from South-East and

East Asia that were initiated by the colonial parliaments. In so doing it created a homogenous Anglophone community resistant to the cultural influences of the wider region. As Eric Richards has remarked, 'it is extraordinary that so remote a settlement could maintain such a homogenous population composition'.[2] In the decades before Federation, Chinese incomers became emblematic of the menace from the East that Australians of European origin thought posed a threat to the fabric of White civilisation in the antipodes. These hostile responses to the presence of the Chinese in the Australian colonies have generated a debate in recent scholarship that has attracted comment from cultural, labour, emigration, and regional historians. This article returns to the issue of the exclusion of the Chinese pre and post Federation, and locates the arguments about their role in the context of the literature that relates to politics and society in colonial and post-colonial Australia. Examination of the recent secondary scholarship relating to this subject reveals that the popular imagery surrounding the Chinese fed a moral panic literature about the proximity of the Australian colonies to South-East and East Asia and coalesced domestic fears about the 'threat' to the White race in the tropics. This article concludes with an examination of the literature on the cultural representation of the Chinese in Australia, and makes a case for the location of these debates in the broader context of the Pacific World.

Democracy and Chinese Exclusion

Rejection of Chinese migration in Australia is rooted in the formative decade of the 1850s. Most surveys of the reception of the Chinese in the colonies examine the experience of the gold rushes in Port Phillip, New South Wales, and later, Queensland, in the 1870s. The discovery of gold at Bathurst in New South Wales in 1851 sparked a large influx of both European and non-European migrant incomers. This period was a high-point of migration from mainland China. Social and political dislocation resulting from the turmoil surrounding the faltering Qing dynasty and the events of the Taiping rising between 1850 and 1864 undermined rural society in China, providing an impetus to mass migration by dislocated peasant workers.[3] In the following decades as restrictions against migration from China were lifted, emigrant Chinese became a visible presence throughout the Australasian region. The first Chinese diasporic migrants appeared in Melbourne in January 1853.[4] Thereafter, as many as 30,000 Chinese made the onerous journey to the 'New Gold Mountains' of Victoria and New South Wales in the decade between 1853 and 1861.[5] The resulting settlements of migrant Chinese provided the first point of contact between the incomers and host Australians or recently arrived Europeans, unfamiliar with the customs, dietary practices, religion and languages of the Chinese mainland. Ann Curthoys has charted some of the ensuing conflicts present on the goldfields in the 1850s. As she points out, inter-communal violence became a regular feature of life there; there were frequent clashes between miners involving orchestrated attacks on Chinese encampments, notably at Bucklands River in 1857 and Lambing Flat in the early 1860s.[6] Thereafter, these pitched battles both here and in Queensland in the 1870s against the 'pig-tailed heathens' became staples of memoirs and recollections of life on the goldfields.[7]

This tension is frequently depicted by historians as formative for the creation of a White cultural identity in the southern hemisphere. The Chinese influx coincided with a period of self-definition for the Australian colonies. Many of the seminal episodes of colonial nationhood occurred during these years. The extension of democratic liberties,

the formation of representative assemblies in New South Wales and Victoria in the mid-1850s, and the adoption of an expanded franchise system of manhood suffrage provided an impetus for definitions of citizenship and civic inclusion.[8] Events like the rising at the Eureka stockade in 1854 in opposition to the prohibitive cost of licences to work the goldfields became the touchstone of the Australian democratic experience. Even recently arrived migrants of White European stock or from the United States and Ireland found a place in these events and a narrative that justified their involvement. As John Fitzgerald has pointed out, however, the migrant Chinese were excluded from this mythology of nation-building. In contemporary accounts they were depicted as the fragment of a stagnant, hierarchical and servile society that proved incapable of adjustment to the egalitarian values of the new democratically inclusive colonial states.[9]

The first attempts to formally exclude the Chinese accordingly coincide with this shift towards greater democratic participation. A number of historians have seen the reform movements inspired by the expansion of the franchise in the Australian colonies and the populist Anti-Chinese Leagues established on the goldfields as co-joined. For Terry Irving and Alan Atkinson, much the same tradition of popular demonstrations and crowd politics inherited from the British political tradition of reform is present in both these instances of agitation.[10] On some occasions the personnel involved in these clashes, including former Chartists and radical demagogues drawn from the charismatic tradition of British platform radicalism, were similar. Such popular campaigns overlapped with attempts to bring an end to the transportation of convicts to New South Wales and Tasmania in 1849–51, and featured the same rhetoric of opposition to cheap imported labour, undercutting the wages of local craftsmen. In these demonstrations the 'Southern Cross' flag featured significantly for the first time.[11] The same instincts that inspired reformers like the ex-Chartist Henry Parkes (later Premier of New South Wales on various occasions between 1872 and 1891) to agitate against the resumption of convict transportation in the 1850s, also led colonial politicians to campaign against the landing of Chinese migrants from ships like *The Afghan* in 1888, with a similar rhetoric of defence of constitutional interests, a panoply of established radical display, and banners, placards and popular slogans.[12] As in the early 1850s, when it was the focus for demonstrations against the resumption of convict transportation, Circular Quay in Sydney again became a stage set for vocal opposition to the penniless Chinese migrants on board *The Afghan*.

The newly expanded franchises for the colonial parliaments provided the environment for a volatile situation in which pressure was brought to bear on locally-elected politicians by anti-Chinese Leagues that sought measures to limit the inflow from China. In 1855 Victoria imposed a landing tax on migrant Chinese heading for the goldfields, and introduced a further tonnage tax on migrant ships allowing for the entry of only one Chinese migrant for every ten tons of cargo.[13] Despite pressure from the British government to reverse these restrictions in the mid-1860s, in Victoria in 1881 a Chinese Influx Restriction bill was introduced reviving an entry tax and tonnage restrictions. In 1877 Queensland had already adopted a punitive landing fee to discourage Chinese gold seekers from entering the state during the Palmer gold rush of 1875–7, and sought in further legislation to exclude them from the goldfields altogether. These separate legislative responses against the Chinese are seen by historians of Federation like Helen Irving as a stepping stone towards the broader policies of exclusion that underpinned the inter-colonial conference around Chinese migration in 1888 and ultimately the barriers against immigration erected by the first federated parliament.[14]

Scientific Racism and 'Whiteness' in Australia

Many of these attitudes were underpinned by a new conception of race that drew on traditional views of Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism and were informed by the constraints of geography and hard physical conditions in new world settler societies. From the 1980s, historians both of Australia and of the empire more broadly, have explored 'Anglo-Saxonism' as a component element in racial constructions of the hardy imperial subject, fulfilling a historic missions to subjugate both the landscape of the new world and other communities of settlers.[15] Gregory Smithers and Warwick Anderson note that in the Australian colonies, as elsewhere in the empire, notions of Whiteness and the privileging of European blood-lines created hierarchies of race and kinship that determined the final form taken by settler societies.[16] Collisions with the indigenous peoples of Australia reinforced these perceptions of successful and unsuccessful races. As Smithers demonstrates narratives of 'Whiteness' were frequently a prelude to racial separatism, or to complete exclusion.[17] Social Darwinist ideas and projects provided the underpinning for a flourishing culture of scientific investigation that fostered crude, dismissive stereotypes of other ethnic and religious identities. A notable feature of recent scholarship in this area is analysis of the degree to which other settler societies, particularly the United States, drew from the example of the Australian colonies. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have highlighted the affinities between Australia and the United States on matters of racial thinking from the end of the 19th-century. They emphasise the importance of trans-Pacific bonds of brotherhood and kinship that were frequently solidified by a common rhetoric and action in defence of a 'White cousinhood' during this period.[18]

The success of the Chinese often confounded much of this contemporary opinion about the bright future of the Anglo-Saxon race. By the 1890s, the Australian politician Charles H. Pearson, sounded warnings about the ability of Chinese incomers to adapt to local conditions, improve European technologies, and survive the ravages of climate and disease. He foresaw circumstances in which China might become one of the world's great powers, reducing the White races in the region to a subordinate role or to the position of mere technicians, servicing the Chinese advance.[19] As recent research has demonstrated, imposing curbs on the entry of the Chinese into the Australian colonies acquired a new urgency in light of these fears about the ability of the Chinese to adapt to, and, eventually, to supplant the Whiteman in the tropics. Such actions were heightened by anxieties that the Australian colonies were a front line in a cultural clash between the forces of European civilisation and Asiatic barbarism that had implications for the imperial mission more broadly.

Images of the Chinese in Australia

A number of negative stereotypes adhered to the image of the Chinese in the Australian colonies, paving the way for legislative and community exclusion of them. Recently cultural and social historians have proved more attentive to these issues. Many of the fears that surrounded the Chinese entry into Australia were widespread in White settler cultures, and recurred elsewhere in the region. As James Jupp has pointed out, White settlers of English origin brought their own prejudices with them from the much more polyglot environment of Britain's town and cities which were already characterised by a more variegated population than the colonial frontier in Australia.[20] A number of popular phobias, both imported and domestically-generated, therefore combined in the Australian colonies to mobilise opposition to the Chinese. The exodus from China conformed to the

standard pattern of migration from troubled rural societies. Individual males made up an unskilled transitory workforce that embarked on the trip overseas, sometimes on several return journeys, in search of work to provide for dependent families at home. These Chinese migrants were only infrequently static once they arrived in Australia. As the work of historians of migration like Eric Richards reveal, this pattern was not dissimilar to the movements and gender balance of migrants from Europe at that time.[21] However, the anti-Chinese legislation of the Australian colonies that denied entry to the families of male Chinese migrants reinforced this practice. Transplanted Chinese men often moved around from job to job. Thereafter the lone Chinese male, often depicted as predatory and sexually dangerous, became a feature of anti-Chinese propaganda. As 'heathens', it was believed that the Chinese were not restrained by Christian morality. Other allegations around the misconduct associated with Chinese culture focussed on opium abuse, gambling, the ensnaring of White women into the slave trade, and the entrenching of criminal behaviour in Australia through the activities of semi-criminalised gangs like the Tongs. Most of these fears were condensed into popular anxieties and campaigns against opium dens. The image of the opium den was a portable one, recurring throughout the Anglophone world, and bringing with it an association with criminality, drugs and illicit and carnal pleasures.[22] By the end of the 19th century a Chinese quarter had grown up in Melbourne where many of the traditional tales about vice circulated, and a strident anti-drugs rhetoric relating to opium dens was freely articulated.[23] Many Chinese characters that featured in these fictions became mere grotesques, inhabiting a world of criminality and urban decay that compromised the unspoilt pastoral purity of White settler Australia.[24] As Andrew Blake has commented, for some contemporaries the moral threat posed by the opium den appeared a reprisal and just reward for the British empire's forcible opening of the Chinese ports to the opium trade in the 1840s and 1850s.[25] For historians of literature, dissecting the opium den provides a way into understanding the major themes of popular fiction. Such dens of villainy created the stage sets for fantastical and lurid thriller and sensation writing that found a wide circulation throughout the empire; the overriding characteristic of this literature was the use of plot devices that turned on the machinations of oriental geniuses and sinister mandarins who masterminded dark conspiracies that threatened the future of the White race. These images remained staples of the thriller genre into the inter-war years and beyond.[26]

Moreover, as with many mobile populations of non-European origin, there were frequent allegations that the Chinese were deficient in their hygiene and acted as carriers of infectious disease. White settlers saw the Chinese cultural practice of sending the bodies of dead migrants home to China for burial as providing a vector for the spread of infection. In contemporary accounts the Chinese often bore the blame for outbreaks of smallpox, bubonic plague and leprosy. Throughout the 19th century, anti-Chinese rhetoric in the Australian colonies traded in these associations with dirt and disease. Writing in the radical *Republican* newspaper in 1888, one correspondent wrote of leprosy as 'the Mongel pestilence', 'and the disease which follows these unclean aliens like a shadow wherever they spread'.[27] As Desmond Manderson has pointed out, public health campaigners were often instrumental in stigmatising the migrant Chinese.[28] This encouraged action against the Chinese community by anti-vice pressure groups, campaigning against poor conditions in the cities, and against immorality and licence on the frontier. Women were often a marked presence in these moral purity campaigns. As Marilyn Lake has noted, the Australian offshoot of the Women's Christian Temperance Association was extremely active on the colonial frontier, waging a symbolic crusade that challenged the practices of

drug-use, drunkenness, and inter-racial sex amongst lonely frontier males.[29] Much of this civic activism validated the notions of scientific racism that relegated the Chinese to an inferior position in colonial Australia. The professionalization of colonial medical, hygiene, sanitation and local government agencies that characterised the late 19th and early 20th centuries reaffirmed the importance of a healthy White community, and promoted an informal segregation from other cultures like the Chinese.[30]

The Chinese and Labour

From a different perspective, historians of labour have also interrogated the proposition that the Chinese provided a cheap workforce, subsisting on rice, requiring less pay, and working longer hours than their European counterparts. Much of this work acknowledges the contentious issues around race that characterised the labour platforms that were beginning to gain a significant electoral following in the White settler colonies, notably in Australia.[31] Many of the most virulent campaigns against the Chinese were orchestrated by trades unions and early labour organisations in colonial Australia. From 1891 the emergent Australian Labor Party (ALP) was an important political component in state parliaments. With branches that co-operated across state boundaries prior to Federation it was able to orchestrate campaigns against Chinese incomers, and was responsible for circulating numerous calumnies about them in its newspapers and pamphlet literature. Economic uncertainty and race-thinking underpinned the ALP platform from the earliest stages of these agitations. In 1887 Henry Lawson's newspaper, the *Republican*, depicted the '"Chinese Question" as one that lies deeper than trades unionism, the eight-hour movement, and the co-operation of labour. It embraces all of these, and, in fact, includes the entire trunk and branches of the labour democracy itself'.[32]

With an outlook rooted in notions of Australia as a new arcadia, purified from traditional British hierarchies and class, the Australian labour movement sought the recreation of an Anglo-Saxon yeoman proprietorship shorn of the constraints of 'Old World ways'.[33] Labour journals subscribed to the notion that the Chinese were imported by Australia's colonial and pastoral elite to undercut wages and to reduce pay levels sustained by the active Australian trade union movement. The viewpoint expressed by the British migrant labour poet, Francis Adams, that the Chinese constituted 'an alien and servile invasion' brought in by labour recruiters to undermine conditions of work was not untypical of the period.[34] Fears lingered in these views of the restoration of the indentured bonded labour of the convict period. In addition, race-mixing, it was believed, would defile the purity and independence of White small-holders and reduce Australia to the level of a plantation society beholden to overseas bond-holders.[35] The resultant style of radical politics was, as Bill Schwarz has christened it, a form of 'colonial populism' opposed as much to the political cultural elite of the colonies, as to migrants from China and Asia more broadly.[36] From 1877 onwards, the consolidation of the trades union movement in colonial Australia was built around protection of the interests of White workers, and the exclusion of the Chinese from jobs, and membership of unions. Many unions produced branded 'White' labels on products to exert pressure that would expel Chinese workers from their trades.[37] This was particularly the case in Queensland, where there was a high level of unionisation amongst the shearers, and signs of an early electoral breakthrough by the newly-formed ALP were apparent by 1899. Moreover, some of the most virulent ant-Chinese propaganda was penned by leading figures in the trades union and labour movement. William Lane, editor of the radical newspaper *The Boomerang*, and

a noted propagandist for the interests of labour wrote a number of sensationalist pamphlets and articles in which the Chinese in the Australian colonies played the role of a fifth column, that undermined White rule by Europeans. In Lane's alarmist, *White or Yellow? A Story of the Race War A.D. 1908* written in 1888, Australia is occupied by Chinese forces and convulsed by a civil war between the occupiers and their sympathisers, pitted against Australian guerrilla forces fighting for freedom.[38] For some historians Lane's racial obsessions provided a template for future populist and racist demagogues like Pauline Hanson in the 1990s.[39] In the short term, such fiction whipped up fears about a Chinese invasion that fuelled many of the moral panics about Chinese incomers in the Australian colonies on the eve of Federation.

The Chinese in a Trans-Pacific Context

Chinese migration was trans-Pacific in nature; some of the largest population transfers of the 19th century occurred across South-East Asia, establishing new Chinese communities in a wide arc from Thailand to Hawaii. The correspondences that shaped the responses and attitudes to Chinese incomers across the region have traditionally proved a marked feature of the historiography of the region.[40] Far from underestimating the pan-Pacific nature of the response to Chinese migration in the White settler colonies, Australian scholarship is frequently attuned to the experience of White settler societies elsewhere across the region. This approach is complemented by a more recent Pacific-centred scholarship on the part of historians of New Zealand and the United States that sees the entire area of the US West Coast, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands as broadly comparable in experience, and sharing a related pattern of development.[41] For the Chinese, the Australian colonies provided a further port of call on a migratory circuit that took in analogous gold rush experiences in California in 1849, and New Zealand from 1861. For correspondents in sensationalist newspapers like John Norton's New Zealand *Truth*, the presence of the Chinese constituted an invasion: 'They are advancing by leaps and bounds across Maoriland, and will eventually turn this so-called paradise into a young hell'.[42] The hostile responses to the presence of the Chinese and the escalating violence often displayed in areas where they settled, demonstrated a pattern commonplace throughout the White settler communities of the region. Self-reinforcing behaviours on the part of transitory White miners created a common experience shared by gold-miners moving around the Pacific.[43] Some of the negative images of Chinese culture reappeared on the frontier in the United States where a strong tradition of community violence and a proliferation of guns led to armed confrontations between gold-miners and Chinese migrants.[44] Points of tension were often repeated in similar contexts across the Pacific Rim, with particular flashpoints around the mining industry and seaports. Many of the same tensions emerged in New Zealand in the early 1880s.[45] 1877, however, proved a pivotal year, both in California and in Queensland. In Queensland a seamen's strike led to attempts to exclude the Chinese from dock-side and sea-faring unions. In California there was an armed attack on a Chinese settlement with a number of fatalities and orchestrated violence broke out against the community in San Francisco's Chinatown. The platform of the group responsible, led by the anti-Chinese demagogue, Denis Kearney, bore some similarity to the populism of the ALP, combining racism, radical egalitarianism, and an anti-employers message.[46] These events created the momentum for a bill to limit Chinese immigration. In 1882, the United States government responded to pressure from California with a Chinese Exclusion Act, the first measure passed in the U.S.

to control the free movements of peoples since independence from Britain. For the Australian colonies, this initiative provided the opportunity for discussion about the formalisation of exclusionary measures against the Chinese through the adoption of pan-colonial migration policies. Fears that exclusion of the Chinese from the U.S. would re-direct them to the Australian colonies were a feature of this period.[47] Visions of the Australian colonies as a new United States of the southern hemisphere also led to proposed imitative projects based around the exclusionary American model that fed through into some of the popular pressures for federation in the 1880s and 1890s.[48]

Peversely, in the late 19th century the most hysterical moral panics about the Chinese in the Australian colonies occurred at the lowest point of Chinese migration into the country. In Queensland, the Chinese population had fallen from 6% to 2% of the population by 1896. By the 1890s previous state legislation enacted against Chinese incomers had excluded many Asiatic migrants, and halted the growth of a local Chinese community in the Australian colonies. At a time of a generalised slowing down of migration into the country, economic recession, and a falling birth rate from the late 1880s, this was a period in which popular culture, politics and fiction were dominated by the prospect of a 'Yellow Peril'. Australia was depicted as an 'empty', sparsely-populated country, facing the threat of human inundation by peoples from an Asiatic near-North. For Helen Irving, who has emphasised the cultural and popular dimension to Federation, these fears were integral to the nature of the legislation drawn up to control entry into the Commonwealth of Australia by non-European migrants after 1901.[49] Acknowledging British sensitivities around the issues of race in the empire, and wary of offending the Chinese government, the Australian Commonwealth opted for an indirect, rather than direct, method for excluding Chinese and non-European entrants. The dictation test, which was the cornerstone of the Immigration Act of 1901, enabled immigration officials to employ a written exercise in a recognised European language. This system was open to manipulation to exclude those with multi-lingual abilities.[50] As Eric Richards has commented, 'the test was designed not to determine skill or education, but to keep out coloured people'.[51] In 1903 further legislation made individuals of Chinese or Asiatic heritage ineligible for naturalisation. These were the 'White Walls' that denied non-Europeans entry into Australia. Until the formal abolition of the dictation test in 1958, this rejection of the Chinese and other non-European races became highly symbolic, measuring the distance of Australians of European-descent from Asia.[52]

Conclusions

The historiographical debate around the exclusion of Chinese migrants from Australia was opened up by the dismantling of the White Australia policy, and driven by periods of thaw in the Cold War. It reflects the country's changing relationship with China after 1972. Traditionally this debate has focussed on the tactics of exclusion and denigration that consigned Chinese migrants to the margins.[53] Despite the discrimination and violence faced by Chinese incomers, the first generation of Chinese migrants were able to establish themselves and to carve out a unique role in Australian society and culture. A growing acceptance of the Chinese and an increasing recognition of the role of Australia within Asia more generally enabled the emergence of a strong community in place of the isolated individuals living on the fringes of townships noted by Shute. More recent work has begun the process of normalising the experience of the Chinese. Recent literature has moved away from the narratives of exclusion that characterised research in this

area, and has emphasised instead the processes of negotiation and compromise that brought settlers from different backgrounds together.[54] The most current assessments have stressed the notions of respectability, hard-work and pride in their community that marked out the first Chinese settlers in Australia. The friendly societies, masonic organisations and self-help groups set up by Chinese migrants and second-generation Chinese domiciled in the country established them as mobile workers, displaying the characteristics that typify all migrant groups.[55] Recent reappraisals of this process and acceptance of Chinese culture as mainstream shows Australia as a country well-advanced down the road towards multiculturalism. From the 1960s onwards the awareness of the scale of the rejection of non-Whites under the 'White Australia' policy, and the attitudes that underpinned this exclusion, has led to a reappraisal of Australian attitudes towards Asia, and marked the beginning of an acknowledgement of past wrongs.

Short Biography

Antony Taylor is a British historian based at Sheffield Hallam University in the UK. He has written widely in the field of popular politics in Britain in both the 19th and 20th centuries. His interests are in the field of radical narratives of opposition to privilege and hereditary institutions. In his research he has explored the language and ideas of British platform radicalism, notably in his examination of republicanism in British society, *'Down with the Crown': British Anti-monarchism and Debates about Royalty since 1790* (London: Reaktion, 1999) and in *'Lords of Misrule': Hostility to Aristocracy in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Palgrave, 2004). He has long-standing teaching interests in Australian history, transnational studies, and British imperial culture. Recently he has worked on historical representations of terrorism in British popular fiction. His most recent book is *'London's Burning': Pulp Fiction, the Politics of Terrorism and the Destruction of the Capital in British Popular Culture, 1840–2005* (London: Continuum, 2012) which provides a study of popular fears about terrorism and their impact on representations of London.

Notes

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