

Baden Offord, Erika Kerruish, Rob Garbutt, Adele Wessell and Kirsten Pavlovic.
Inside Australian Culture: Legacies of Enlightenment Values.
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A number of books have been published that have explored the darker side of Australia's history, culture and values. These include *As Others See Us* (2008), edited by J.V. D'Cruz et al. *Inside Australian Culture* is an acknowledgement and tribute to D'Cruz's remarkable legacy. Once again employing cultural theorist Ashis Nandy's perspectives as an entry point or springboard, the authors of *Inside Australian Culture* scrutinise three real-life Australian historical moments and question Australia's critical engagement with the European Enlightenment values, particularly in its public culture. The use of Nandy's theoretical perspectives and ideas in this book highlights the differences and continuities between Indian and Australian colonial and postcolonial cultural experiences. Building on Nandy's ideas, the authors point to Australia's cultural priorities as 'colonised minds'—with a deep-set culturally conditioned fear of others (particularly Indigenous Australians, Asians, and now asylum seekers). The main reason behind this looming fear is the ongoing colonialism or installation of a British worldview, thus making it difficult for Australian public culture to embrace non-British traditions, ideas and wisdom (2–3).

Nandy begins this book with his 'modest' Foreword, in which he traces the wrong interpretation of Australian history (ix). He writes how through the tools of education and socialisation it was made sure that Australians didn't see themselves as a 'once-colonised society' but as a 'colonial, European power—a subaltern colonial power' (ix). Today, Australia, with ever-growing political and economic pressure in the Asia-Pacific region, has started the process of self-negotiation as can be clearly seen in the abiding interest in the Asian Century and the New Colombo Plan debates.

The book is divided into three parts. 'Part One—Getting Inside Australian Public Culture' contains two background chapters covering significant themes and issues pertaining to the Enlightenment, early colonial society, contemporary Australian values, and Australian civil society and public culture. Using various popular symbols and contemporary texts as examples, the authors demonstrate 'the ambiguity and ambivalence at the heart of Australian culture' (43).

'Part Two—Three Moments of the Enlightenment' contains three chapters critically investigating the inquiry into the regulation of Chinese immigration (1858); the Stolen Generation debate through the *Cubillo v. Commonwealth* case (2000); and the Cronulla Riots (2005). These moments or case studies were selected to illustrate how Enlightenment ideas still 'echo through three, very different, key sites of public culture, fixing limits and contradictions for debates concerning cultural and racial differences' (10). In Chapter Four, we read that although the bill to restrict Chinese immigration was rejected in New South Wales, it was successful in creating a racial chasm that is still visible in Anglo versus non-Anglo-Australian discourses (61). Chapter Five addresses the court cases of 2000 members of the Stolen Generations. These cases entailed wrongful imprisonment and detention, negligence, forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and severing of the ties between these children and their families and communities (64). The controversial

columnist Andrew Bolt has claimed that Stolen Generations is a ‘myth’ and that ‘hysteria’ has reignited the debate on the practice and public perception of such atrocities. By making such claims, Bolt has inadvertently justified a need for the decolonisation of Australia’s public culture (78). In Chapter Six, the authors take us to Cronulla beach, where an ethnic riot erupted almost at the level of a minor civil war between Anglo-Celtic and Middle-Eastern Muslim communities. The shameful events and political hysteria that unravelled in the aftermath of the Cronulla riots raised a number of issues. These include, the role tokenism has played in Australian multicultural policies and also the idea of citizenship or who is an Australian.

‘Part Three—Working with the Necessary Other’ has one chapter that uses Raewyn Connell’s ‘Southern theory’ and Nandy’s intellectual insights to argue for a positive and vibrant Australian public culture that is aware of its history, values, and boundaries. To shape such an Australian public life we must accept D’Cruz’s assertion that ‘belonging arises not out of rejection of “little cultures” but from within them’ (113).

The book ends with a delightful Afterword by Vinay Lal who argues that there are ‘demons’ that each nation has to face, suppress and fight. I agree with Lal’s affirmation that this book is ‘a bold beginning in Australia’s turn to other pasts and intellectual traditions’ (121). This book, a dialogic exercise in getting inside Australian culture and interrogating the moments that question the creation of a desirable and enlightened society, will help deepen readers’ knowledge regarding the centralisation and limitations of Enlightenment values and Australian public culture.

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