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The contribution on 'Memories of war' by Wang Gungwu is complementary to Yeoh and Ramdas's chapter. Gungwu shows how memories of the war vary in different parts of Asia, and how the way in which war is experienced in terms of good and bad determines how people look back at and remember it. He describes an incident in which young South Koreans were upset when they heard an old Korean woman singing Japanese military songs, and argues that their disgust was the result of how they had learned about the Japanese war within the context of what could be called Korean national identity-building. Abu Talib Ahmad, P. Ramasamy and Nimah S. Talib deal with comparable issues in their contributions on the Malay, the Indian and Kuching Malay communities respectively. A very different topic is discussed in a chapter by Yeo Song Nian and Ng Siew Ai on how the war is reflected in Singapore-Malayan Chinese literary work.

What *War and memory in Malaysia and Singapore* shows us is how differently war is experienced by different people, and how diverse are the ways in which different communities deal with that experience and the memory of it. It is not a question of which experience or memory is most correct or valuable. On the contrary: this volume shows the value of alternative readings of history from different communities and different domains. It also shows how useful and necessary oral history is in order to describe this kind of history. *War and memory* proves the importance of the research genre of which *Oral history in Southeast Asia* gives a state-of-the-art survey.

Andrew Lattas, *Cultures of secrecy; Reinventing race in Bush Kaliai cargo cults*. Madison/London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, xliv + 360 pp. ISBN 0.299.15800.4, price: USD 59.59 (hardback); 0.299.15804.7, USD 24.95 (paperback).

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This book focuses on Bush Kaliai discourse about 'cargo' and 'the millennium' in stories told about the past, the present and the future. The Bush Kaliai live in the northwestern part of West New Britain where the author spent about thirty months in four villages during a ten-year period from 1985 to 1996. Bush Kaliai people visited Lattas in the houses that he built from bush material and during these sessions, they would recount their beliefs, rituals, and customs. The gatherings often appear to have been sensational in nature as the stories, chiefly related to a cargo movement that was active in the region during the first half of the 1970s, are remarkable in the way they blend the realms of the symbolic and the real. This is embodied in the book

through an abundantly rich picture of the Bush Kaliai people's creative logic and their particular ways of continuously reworking information, reflections, and expectations.

Lattas transcribes the stories in a remarkably rich manner and successfully conveys, despite the fact that the stories are significantly edited and at times hard to digest, the richness of Bush Kaliai religious beliefs. In often very imaginative ways, these beliefs link traditional practices with recent experiences of Christian stories and ritual, Western influences and commodities, and contact with a variety of different people bringing new knowledge and objects from places previously unknown to the out-of-the-way Bush Kaliai. Theoretically speaking, the book builds extensively on the works of Kenelm Burridge (*Mambu: A Melanesian millenium*, 1960) and Peter Lawrence (*Road belong cargo; A study of the cargo movement in the Southern Madang District*, 1964) yet avoids a thorough discussion of more recently published works on cargo cults.

For the reader familiar with Melanesian ontologies, reading Lattas' book will be a feast of recognition. But the book also resonates with studies about the persistence and resurgence of religious phenomena elsewhere. Indeed, Lattas' study fits well within the anthropology of conversions to Christianity, or local Christianity, and recent works on the ways in which cultural models are reinforced, challenged, and reconfigured as part of the processes of globalization. To anthropologists with knowledge of cargo cults in Melanesia and, in fact, religious imaginations all over the world, this is nothing new, but Lattas' book moves beyond the way religion mediates the colonial encounter to issues of race and other forms of domination. It is here that the two key terms in the title, secrecy and race, are meaningful and pertinent.

Secrecy, the intentional concealing of information, is sketched by Lattas as being very much part of everyday life and discourse among the Bush Kaliai. The Bush Kaliai cargo stories show how what is present in the world has its character formed by the way absences are figured. The seen and the unseen are at the heart of Bush Kaliai ontologies, which are concerned with masks, concealment, trickery, and magic. The political and economic domination by Europeans which the Bush Kaliai cargo cults reacted against in the colonial period is situated in the unseen, among the dead, a representation which ethically repositions the relationship between Melanesians and Europeans. The incorporation of European power into the topographies of the dead and the realms of ancestral myths, Lattas shows, worked to 'familiarize' white domination, allowing Bush Kaliai to bridge new distances imposed by race.

The chapters in the book follow a chronological order, moving from pre-contact cult ceremonies, via a variety of cults that developed after the Second World War, to the roots of the 1970s movement. The bulk of the book deals with ideas expressed about this last movement, together with information from secondary sources. Key themes are the revelation of the concealed, the

affiliation between the living and the dead, interactions between the sexes in the cults, and relationships between Bush Kaliai and Europeans in terms of inequality and race. Towards the end of the book the author brings these themes to bear on the contemporary context, in which issues important in the past cults have become less salient and people tend to focus on the impact of the New Tribes Mission that arrived in the region in 1984. According to Lattas, the new fundamentalist missionaries desired to encourage Bush Kaliai to abandon their traditional culture.

Overall, the reader gets a good sense of the conceptual legacy with which Bush Kaliai work upon their world in transforming it. Lattas has gained a lucid understanding of the importance of mythic narrative in the reproduction of Melanesian communities. The fact that such narratives also serve as charters for practice, and lead to social changes, does not receive much attention in the book. Lattas offers little information on the social position of the informants and the actors in their stories, the composition and histories of the different church groups, customary affiliations, or the social effects of colonial administration. Instead he focuses on various expressions of 'cargo' as interpreted in terms of one major analytical idea, an idea that unfortunately underexposes the variety of those expressions through time and largely avoids taking into account the concerns of real actors.

While reading this book I often wanted to learn more about the contexts in which the stories were told and the social and political worlds that the symbolic themes allude to. In order not to be overly distracted by the lack of a clear historical and political analysis, it is good to keep in mind that the focus of the book is 'popular covert beliefs and practices through which people went about both embracing and subverting the disciplinary routines and pastoral regimes of the West' (p. xxi). Lattas has grasped the aesthetics of Bush Kaliai poetics, metaphors and metonyms that seize upon knowledge about Westerners and the Western world and create mimetic channels between them and the West. While this book is of particular interest to scholars concerned with religion and cultural change, its impact is destined to go beyond the anthropology of Melanesia.