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# ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE EXPEDITIONARY IMAGINARY

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

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### **Anthropologists as Explorers**

Felix Driver opens *Geography Militant* (2001), his foundational study of exploration and empire, by quoting Claude Lévi-Strauss on the hubris of explorers. For the doyen of structural anthropology, exploration had by the twentieth century degenerated into 'a trade' where the object was not to discover unknown facts but to cover as much distance as possible and assemble 'lantern-slides or motion pictures, preferably in colour, so as to fill a hall with an audience for several days in succession'.<sup>1</sup> Driver observes that for Lévi-Strauss, 'the calling of the anthropologist was something altogether more noble' than that of the explorer. The former pursued a course of disciplined observation while the latter disseminated 'superficial stories'.<sup>2</sup> The scientifically trained Lévi-Strauss felt duty-bound to differentiate himself from these commercial travellers.

The proposition that anthropology is antithetical to the ethos of adventurism raises questions that are investigated in the pages ahead. Why this insistence upon a dichotomy so flimsy? Why discount the call of adventure when it acted as a siren for countless anthropologists? To understand the concerns voiced by Lévi-Strauss, we need to acknowledge that they are more than an assertion of academic superiority. The anxieties from which they stem reveal much about anthropology's formation as a discipline; they are the residue of a complex and at times quarrelsome nexus between exploration,

imperial expansion and the ‘science of man’. Anthropology in its early life was enabled by the systemized observation and reporting that a codified practice of exploration had first projected into putatively uncharted spaces. The expeditions of Cook and other Enlightenment voyagers are paradigmatic in this regard, but they had important progenitors (see Douglas, this volume, for a discussion of some Iberian precedents). Anthropology and ethnology, as defined in the guides and rulebooks of the specialist societies created for their promotion in the nineteenth century, absorbed many of the codes and procedures that explorers were expected to follow.<sup>3</sup> Anthropology developed in tandem with the blossoming of exploration, which it ultimately outlived, for exploration came to be thought of as an imperial conceit, while anthropology became institutionally entrenched in universities and museums.

By 1948, Evelyn Waugh was having great fun with the vanities of exploration in his novel *A Handful of Dust*. Nine years later, Patrick White in *Voss* would render the explorer’s mission an existential folly. In Werner Herzog’s *Fitzcarraldo* (1982), it is something decidedly more ludicrous. Bathos is a trait of many depictions of expeditionary journeys from the postwar period. The extent to which explorers became objects of mirth and parody in twentieth-century culture is an indication of how their stocks fell as the world began to decolonize. The once hallowed figure of the explorer could now be safely laughed at, even if, as Simon Naylor and James R. Ryan have pointed out in an illuminating volume of essays, exploration *did* enjoy an afterlife through the twentieth century and beyond, albeit in modified and often derivative forms.<sup>4</sup> Space travel was the most paradigm-shifting manifestation of twentieth-century exploration, yet the cost, the connectedness with the Cold War, and a plethora of other military associations made it anything but unproblematic. The progressivist mythology that legitimized nineteenth-century exploration had by this time worn thin. That exploration survived at all in the latter part of the twentieth century is due, on one hand, to the plasticity of the concept, and, on the other, to the continuing power of the tropes around race, gender and nation that had always underlain it.<sup>5</sup> Various sorts of re-versioning of the exploratory impulse continue in the twenty-first century, with re-enactments of explorers’ routes or voyages being quite common.<sup>6</sup> Here is evidence that despite being the butt of jokes, explorers have not entirely lost their place in the pantheon of Western nations. To former imperial powers, they embody the global spread of European values; in settler societies, they are often foundational figures. In narrative, if no longer in person, they continue to straddle the divide between

'centre' and 'periphery'. They bridge the 'new' world and the 'old'. That role of bridging helps explain why so much cultural processing, in cinema, television, literature and especially on the internet, goes about the work of keeping alive the expeditionary imaginary.

In this book, we demonstrate that anthropology's association with exploration has been far more enduring than is usually acknowledged. We do this by providing a survey – a historical journey – through a range of expeditions that collected data that were in some way anthropological. The period covered begins in the seventeenth century and extends through to the twentieth. In choosing this starting date, we acknowledge that the recorded observation of manners, customs and traditions has an older provenance, extending back to at least the Middle Ages.<sup>7</sup> But that is more than we can deal with here. Our earliest case study is Douglas's chapter on the Quirós and Torres voyage to Vanuatu, New Guinea and the Torres Strait Islands. That journey occurred in 1606, less than fifteen years after the astrologer and polemicist Richard Harvey made the first recorded use of the word 'anthropology' in his book *Philadelphus, or a Defence of Brutes and the Brutans History* (1593).<sup>8</sup> By this time, many of the arguments and developments that we now know as the Scientific Revolution were having impact. In an unprecedented way, nature had become an object of formal inquiry. This prompted new forms of travel and data collection, as is evident in the many exploratory ventures dating from the 1600s. Naval and commercial seafaring established protocols that would culminate in the famed scientific voyages of the Enlightenment. Throughout the period of imperial expansion, opportunities for observing and describing the panorama of humanity were steadily increasing. This ultimately resulted in the more rigorously theorized notion of anthropology that took root in the second half of the nineteenth century.

We consider it timely to excavate this history because anthropology's connection with exploration has been rendered peripheral in many accounts of the discipline. The reasons why the long and formative tradition of expeditionary anthropology has been eclipsed are perhaps obvious. The preference for immersive fieldwork by a sole investigator had, by the mid twentieth century, become the dominant mode of cross-cultural observation, especially for social anthropologists. Our argument is that anthropology never entirely disconnected itself from its genealogy in scientific voyaging and formalized geographic travel. On the contrary, it *drew* from expeditionary models, replicating them on some occasions and channelling them in new directions on others.

George W. Stocking, the best-known historian of anthropology, was alert to the pervasive effects of exploration upon the anthropological enterprise. He too was convinced that fieldwork by an individual researcher retained vestiges of discovery into the 'unknown'. He found evidence of this in – of all places – the Trobriand diary of Bronisław Malinowski, which notes: 'This island, though not "discovered" by me, is for the first time experienced artistically and mastered intellectually'.<sup>9</sup> For Malinowski to be quoted as evidence of anthropology's indebtedness to exploratory expeditions is curious, given his catalytic role in encouraging the departure from group expeditions such as the one led by his mentor, A.C. Haddon, to the Torres Strait (see Batty and Philp, this volume).<sup>10</sup> As Malinowski's model of cultural 'immersion' became prevalent in social anthropology, large-scale expeditions were increasingly regarded as archaic and inauthentic (see Deacon, this volume). Yet in spite of their diminishing reputation, grand ethnological expeditions *did* continue. We will shortly cast a spotlight on one that was both influential and controversial.

Firstly, however, we need to emphasize that the desire to travel, discover and convey information about exotic locales to an audience back home – the fundamental driver for geographical exploration – was by no means at odds with anthropological inquiry. The two had a symbiotic relationship, with metropolitan anthropologists often revelling in the role of veteran adventurer. Consequently, it is not surprising that the authors of a recent study of Frederick Rose, who was based for many years at Humboldt University, tell us that his students 'responded with a sense of wonderment to Rose's accounts of a universe they could never witness themselves. For them he was not just the dedicated, groundbreaking scientist but the intrepid explorer ...'.<sup>11</sup> Comments such as this appear often in biographies of ethnographers, many of whom actively cultivated the persona of explorer-scientist. In her essay 'Science as Adventure' (2015), Henrika Kuklick argued that the mantle of explorer lent credibility to anthropologists who, like other field scientists, considered it imperative to consolidate their authority as observers. In this tradition of scientific inquiry, the veracity of the investigator's subjective impressions was open to question in a way that was never the case for the experimenter in the lab. Naturalists and anthropologists, according to Kuklick, 'used their heroism in the field as proof that they were persons of fine character, mobilizing agreement that their judgements were sound'.<sup>12</sup>

We should bear in mind that by the time Fred Rose was wowing his students in East Berlin, the concept of geographic exploration was essentially obsolete. Yet this did surprisingly little to derail the

anthropological project. The residual power of exploratory narratives, and the ease with which they could be transferred to an anthropological context, is especially apparent in the discipline's more popular guises. *National Geographic*, in both its articles and film productions, provides innumerable examples;<sup>13</sup> time-honoured tropes, such as the search for 'unknown tribes', are a regular refrain. Ignoring or even eschewing narratives of geographical conquest, popular anthropology was nonetheless infused with motifs of expeditionary heroism and romance. Anthropology could enact the urge to discover, even if it openly disavowed it. Humanity in its bewildering diversity became surrogate geography for anthropologists.

Among the host of connections between anthropology and geographical exploration, the role of expeditionary practices in cultivating a public audience was highly formative. Professorial pooh-poohing of the popular lecture circuit ignores the reality that anthropology is itself hardly innocent of entertaining the masses. Largely banished from the discipline's corporate memory is a long and remarkable – if sometimes decidedly problematic – tradition of anthropology finding a broad public for its ideas. Admittedly, some of this was shamelessly opportunistic. P.T. Barnum infamously claimed an interest in the discipline, to the extent that his circus of the 1880s, billed 'The Greatest Show on Earth', boasted an 'Ethnological Congress of Strange and Savage Tribes' where ensembles of 'cannibals' and 'primitives', some abducted from their homelands, were savagely paraded.<sup>14</sup> Of course, not all attempts to gratify the public appetite for anthropological content were so lacking in sobriety. As Diane Losche points out in this volume, during her many years of being the world's best-known anthropologist, Margaret Mead was based in a museum. Producing gallery displays, magazine articles, documentary films and other 'non-academic' outputs was part of her job description, as it was for so many of her contemporaries. Lévi-Strauss bemoaned the banality of explorers, yet forgot to acknowledge the long and rich tradition of *anthropologists* giving public lectures that were often illustrated by lantern slides or films. To ignore these and other 'low-brow' outputs is to overlook their role in the shaping of anthropology, both as a public spectacle that anticipated what we now call 'infotainment', and as a disciplinary formation. Of course, popular anthropology generated excitement in a way that learned articles could not. Yet as the public face of the discipline, it was a prime vehicle for the recruitment of students. Just as importantly, it brought access to money.

In its popular and in many of its academic manifestations, anthropology was enabled by an intricate circuitry that connected 'the field',

the auditorium, the museum, the press and sources of funding. Here is evidence that far from being antithetical to exploration, anthropology and the larger project of geographical 'discovery' have not only a common intellectual lineage but, in certain phases of their history, a common business model. The observations of exploratory voyagers and reports by missionaries or officials on colonial frontiers are the progenitors of what we now call 'fieldwork data'. The practice of raising public interest and finance by publishing and lecturing was standard procedure for geographical travellers. Henry Morton Stanley, who came to exploration from journalism, is a paradigmatic example of the Victorian explorer-showman.<sup>15</sup> While Stanley blurred the boundaries between discovery and the generation of copy – much to the irritation of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and others who tried to police the exploration business – many of the heroic explorers officially endorsed by the RGS or kindred organizations were themselves popular authors and speakers. A number of the anthropologists discussed in this book (Margaret Mead and Donald Thomson are key examples) consistently sought popular outlets in addition to scholarly publishing, sometimes to the detriment of their academic reputations (see Losche and Beudel, this volume). Notably, Claude Lévi-Strauss himself was supremely talented as a public communicator. Indeed, his jeremiad about the commercial crassness of explorers appears in *Tristes Tropiques* (1954), a classic memoir that remains in print after sixty years precisely *because*, as Patrick Wilcken has written, it consisted of a 'genre-bending mix of confessional, travelogue, philosophy and science...'. So writerly was the text that the judges of the Prix Goncourt expressed regret that as a work of non-fiction it could not be considered for France's highest literary honour. In 1956, *Tristes Tropiques* was selected for the Gold Pen, an award for travel writing. But Lévi-Strauss, perhaps mindful of what he had said about the evils of explorers, turned it down.<sup>16</sup>

Driver points out that the concerns voiced by Lévi-Strauss were not novel to his epoch. 'Anxieties about the relationship between sober science and sensational discovery, "professional" fieldwork and "popular" travel, have characterised writings on anthropology (and geography) for at least two hundred years.'<sup>17</sup> When, in the early to mid twentieth century, anthropology became firmly established as a field of academic inquiry, it was naturally keen to assert its maturity by distinguishing itself from that all-too-recent epoch when armchair theorists and amateur fieldworkers were a prevailing force. Part of this agenda involved severing links with geographical exploration. Yet the campaign to exorcise the ghosts of expeditions past was only partially

successful. Roy MacLeod points out that exploratory logic came to function as an organizing principle across the sciences. As the blank spaces on maps turned into a thing of the past, 'the representation of science itself' became 'a symbolic act of perpetual exploration'.<sup>18</sup>

### Spotlight on an Anthropological Expedition

This volume acknowledges and interprets the defining influence of exploration upon the anthropological enterprise. From this premise, we have pursued the specific agenda of examining the structural effects of expeditionary culture upon the discipline. As the book makes plain, expeditions reveal a very different face of the anthropological project. In contrast to the labour of an independent fieldworker, an expedition is at heart a *collective* enterprise. Team-based research can provide companionship, security and support for members of an investigative party. It can also be a theatre for internal competition and conflict. For the people being investigated, the expedition presents a very different experience to a visit from a lone investigator. Solo fieldworkers are, by definition, disconnected from their own societies. Expeditions, in contrast, present a spectacle where scientists appear in something resembling their own social context. As the pages ahead make clear, the collectivity of expeditions shaped the discipline in a multitude of ways.

Expeditions, by their very nature, transplant a structured social environment into a new and often jarring cultural context. The expeditionary team forms a subculture of the society that produced it. These teams arose out of professional and institutional networks that often perpetuated colonial relationships between the knowledge seekers and their subjects. Publicly and privately sponsored, and often supported by major collecting institutions, expeditions were enmeshed in imperial politics and agendas. While the relationship between explorers and the institutions of empire is widely acknowledged, recent scholarship has begun to explore how networks innate to indigenous societies interacted with scientific, exploratory and anthropological expeditions.<sup>19</sup> Several chapters in *Expeditionary Anthropology* specifically address this issue (see Douglas, Shellam and Philp, this volume).

Recognition that local people, whether they acted as guides, interviewees, interpreters or in other roles, could be active *shapers* of expeditions is but one example of how this subject dovetails with current research in the humanities and social sciences. The digital turn has been pivotal to reassessment of the meaning and significance

of expeditionary legacies. Photographic and other forms of copying have greatly increased access to the often vast collections of artefacts or specimens amassed by expeditions, which for years were hidden in museum storage. Digital preservation of sound recordings and photography has generated new audiences for such material, especially among the communities visited by anthropologists and explorers.

This explains why the expedition as a specific mode of knowledge production is at last getting the attention it deserves. In *Expeditions as Experiments* (2016), an edited volume that examines the significance of expeditions to the history of science, the editors Marianne Klemun and Ulrike Spring describe the expedition as a locale where ‘individuals discover and create their own professional identity within this metaphorical constellation of space’.<sup>20</sup> Their volume examines the relationship between the laboratory and the field, paying attention to the communitarian aspects of the expeditionary experience. For contributors to *Expeditionary Anthropology*, the formation of ‘professional identity’ through team-based fieldwork is also an abiding concern. However, for contributors to our volume, the professional identities of both male and female expeditionary anthropologists are indelibly connected with the politics of gender, which we interrogate in some detail. One thread linking this volume and Klemun and Spring’s is recognition of the interdisciplinary potential of expeditions – a subject explored at length by Saskia Beudel in her discussion of the Australian anthropologist Donald Thomson.

For both editors of this volume, the dispatch of knowledge-gathering *parties* to far-flung locations is a source of particular fascination.<sup>21</sup> Although expeditions are remarkably varied, they have common features. The hierarchical organization with a leader at the top and lesser functionaries at the bottom is almost a constant. For Martin Thomas, writing in 2011, the fact that expeditions are severed from their social context renders them a form of human ‘time capsule’. In their representation of personnel, equipment, methods and ideas, they form a curated bricolage of their host society.<sup>22</sup> In introducing the edited volume *Expedition into Empire* (2015), Thomas describes expeditions as ‘machines for producing discourse’. There he argued that modern expeditions exhibit a preoccupation with technological display and a strong interest in self-representation through engagement with diverse media.<sup>23</sup> That expeditions come equipped with a range of perceptual antennae – human and technological – led James Clifford to describe them as ‘a sensorium moving through extended space’.<sup>24</sup> While not in disagreement with this eloquent formulation, Thomas has emphasized the military provenance of expeditionary travel,



concurring with Michael Taussig's observation that 'science and war' are conceptually amalgamated in such journeys.<sup>25</sup> Pointing to the naval and military roots of Western exploration, Thomas noted that 'the infrastructure of violence lies buried in the DNA of the expedition ...'.<sup>26</sup> This martial pedigree must be borne in mind as we examine the relationship between exploration and the putatively peaceful expeditions conducted under the aegis of the 'science of man'.

Expeditions, whether they claim to be exploratory, scientific or specifically anthropological (demarcations that are often blurry), represent a specific form of social organization. A benefit of studying an expedition's complex and at times conflicted internal politics is that they provide a highly revealing portal for observing the observers and understanding the powers they represent. Although relatively few anthropologists have explored the cultural properties of expeditions in great detail, Johannes Fabian is a noteworthy exception. His book *Out of Our Minds* (2000) is a significant investigation of the institutions and social practices that enabled the exploration of Central Africa by Europeans. In his account, an expedition functions as a cultural buffer between the travellers and the polities they traverse. He points out that expeditions bear similarities to, and sometimes model themselves on, localized modes of travel, common through much of Africa, such as the caravan. Drawing on his earlier investigations of temporality, race and ethnicity, Fabian attends to the time-based rituals of expeditionary parties: their celebrations of royal birthdays and other ritual occasions. Honouring the familiar calendar allowed the expedition to maintain an 'umbilical' connection with home.<sup>27</sup>

Fabian makes much of the performative tendencies of expeditions: the fondness for music and dancing among exploratory parties, for example. The expression of communitarianism, which consolidates the data-gathering mission of expeditions, is indicative of the ways in which the culture of exploration straddles science and ritual. The 'chores of knowledge production', writes Fabian, the taking of 'regular observations and measurements, collecting zoological, botanical, and geological specimens and ethnographic objects, drawing maps, gathering information, and keeping logs and diaries' constituted 'a form of hygiene', often linked to the survival of the party.<sup>28</sup> Fabian's scholarship on inland Africa complements Greg Dening's earlier ethnohistorical analysis of naval hierarchies and rituals.<sup>29</sup> Both writers have contributed to what is now identifiable as a gradual shift in scholarship on travel and exploration, resulting in the increasing recognition of group formations and their importance. Thus, to cite a recent example, a volume titled *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on*

*Exploration Archives* (2015) opens with the assertion that by 'working against a conventional emphasis on the exploits and achievements of the singular heroic explorer, imperial and colonial exploration is recast as a collective enterprise involving a diverse labour force and upon which expeditions were dependent for their progress and success'.<sup>30</sup>

To further elucidate the challenges and opportunities of investigating expeditionary anthropology, we will now shine a spotlight on an expedition that occurred in 1948. Both editors have studied this venture from various perspectives. Known as the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land or, more concisely, the Arnhem Land Expedition, it reappears later in this volume as one of two formative journeys in which the Australian anthropologist Margaret McArthur participated (see Harris, this volume). As an international expedition with ethnological and natural science agendas, the Arnhem Land Expedition exemplifies the entwinement of science, anthropology and exploration in a mid-twentieth-century context.

The 1948 expedition was a collaboration involving the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution and the Australian Government. The leader was Charles P. Mountford, a self-taught photographer and ethnologist, who attracted seed funding from the National Geographic Society while on a lecture tour of the United States in 1945. The expedition travelled widely through the extensive Aboriginal reserve of Arnhem Land in northern Australia. As a twentieth-century journey, sponsored by the publisher of *National Geographic Magazine*, it resulted in a vast cache of media including many hours of colour film footage, thousands of photographs and audio documentation of Aboriginal music and ceremony made on electronic wire recorders. Aboriginal men and women displayed aspects of their lives and culture to the camera, as did the expeditionaries themselves. News of the expedition was communicated around the world.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the more popular outputs, the expedition did 'serious' scientific work by gathering vast quantities of plant, animal and ethnographic collections. The fieldwork was reported in four large volumes.<sup>32</sup> The expedition's most famous contribution to anthropological theory resulted from its study of Aboriginal food gathering and nutrition.<sup>33</sup> These data were employed by Marshall Sahlins to support his theory of the original affluence of hunter-gatherers.<sup>34</sup> More infamously, the expedition was responsible for the removal of Aboriginal human remains from mortuary sites and their export

to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. Decades later, they became subject to a repatriation campaign that was ultimately successful, despite fierce resistance from some Smithsonian curators.<sup>35</sup>

An image of the social world created by the expedition is conveyed in a radio documentary by Colin Simpson, a journalist and later a well-known travel writer, who at that time was working for the Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation) (ABC). He met with the expedition at the mission station, Oenpelli (now known as Gunbalanya), its final base. Simpson's radio feature, *Expedition to Arnhem Land* (1948), begins with some artful scene setting. A page of reflective travelogue, recorded by the author in the Sydney studios of ABC, primes the listener for the novelty of the 'actuality recordings' that lie ahead.

COLIN SIMPSON: Arnhem Land is like no other part of Australia I've seen. At Oenpelli the expedition was camped in green canvas tents beside a beautiful inland lagoon – a big boomerang of shining blue water fringed with emerald green grass and decorated right down the middle with waterlilies. On the other side of this lovely lagoon or billabong rose Injalak, a great hill of rugged sandstone and quartzite, full of caves of Aboriginal rock paintings in ochre colours and kangaroo blood. Back on this side, up past the tents, the expedition's cookhouse butted onto the stockyards of Oenpelli Mission. Beyond the tin gunyahs of some mission Natives, up past the small airstrip where we landed in from Darwin, lie plains: savannahs of wild rice and spear grass where the buffaloes graze. It is late afternoon of a burningly hot day. To the east a plateau of stone country has softened with purple haze. Down at the far end of the lagoon natives are gathering lily roots to eat and hand netting fish. And in the middle foreground of this picture are fourteen male members of the expedition, bathing. From wearing only shorts in the sun, they are copper brown to the waist. But here they are wearing nothing except beards. I am going to pick out the expedition leader, he is one of the clean-shaven minority, and go with Mr C.P. Mountford back to his tent. Now he is dressed in khaki shirt and long trousers this time against the evening's mosquitoes. His white solar topee is set aside for the day. And I am asking Mr Mountford how this expedition to Arnhem Land came about.

CHARLES MOUNTFORD: Well it happened this way ...<sup>36</sup>

This is the point where the broadcast cuts from scripted narration to an interview with Mountford, recorded in the field. For what must have been the umpteenth time, Mountford told the story about the favourable reception of his lectures and film screenings in the United States and the largess of the National Geographic Society, who offered him a research grant. When that formality was dispensed with, Simpson rebounded with a trickier question.

SIMPSON: And the nature of this expedition, Mr Mountford, it's not an exploring expedition is it, going into darkest Arnhem Land to contact savages who don't exist any more? It is a scientific expedition, is that right?

MOUNTFORD: That is so. This is not an exploring party, its objects are purely scientific and that is to increase our knowledge of the natural history and the Aborigines of Arnhem Land.<sup>37</sup>

Admittedly, Simpson prompted his interviewee with a possible defence for his 'unexploratory' expedition. Yet Mountford's naturalness in running with this argument suggests that it was not the first time someone had insinuated to him that expeditions had exceeded their design life. In Australia in that period, the notion of acquiring 'new' knowledge within Aboriginal territory was not inherently suspect in the way it is today. But Mountford still had to tread carefully in claiming 'discoveries'. An adept publicist, he knew that salesmanship of the expedition had to be credible to be effective.

White Australia in the 1940s knew little about Aboriginal life in general or Arnhem Land in particular. That said, the terrain of the expedition was hardly terra incognita – at least to the extent that Mountford may have wished. Maps of his day usually identified it. If the actual boundaries of the reserve were marked, it appeared as a great trapezium of country in the northeast of the Northern Territory. Major rivers were usually marked and named; a few other toponyms were inscribed, all foreign imports. Even to this day, the vast network of Aboriginal place names is only partially recorded. In terms of Western cartography, sections of the coastline had been known for centuries. That is how the toponym 'Arnhem', originally the city in the Netherlands, found its home-away-from-home in the southern hemisphere. *Arnhem* and its sister vessel *Pera* were the names of Dutch pin-naces that sailed from Batavia on an exploratory expedition in 1623.<sup>38</sup>

The potent combination of distance and ignorance was conducive to the more baroque imaginings of the reserve that circulated in the United States around the time of the expedition. For the most part, of course, Arnhem Land was too obscure to intrude upon the consciousness of Americans. Once or twice a decade the press referred to it, usually in a short novelty item where familiar clichés to do with savagery and cannibalism were invoked.<sup>39</sup> When the time came to promote the American-Australian adventure, the American publicists enjoyed a licence that their counterparts 'down under' might have envied. We see this in the official announcement of the expedition, written by press officers at the National Geographic Society and published verbatim by the *Washington Post*. To give some extracts:

Its purpose . . . is to fill in the blank space in human knowledge represented by this Maine-size aboriginal reserve east of Darwin. . .

Named for the yacht of its Dutch discoverers in 1623, the region remains virtually unmapped and unexplored except from the air. Although a few exploring parties have penetrated inland, their reports are meagre, scientifically. . .

Only in recent years have the aboriginal tribes been absolved to some degree of a mythical reputation as bad men, killers and cannibals. They can be warlike on slight provocation, but are now described as generally friendly, extremely wary and difficult to approach except by persons they know. . .

True stone-age wild men, they have lived the same primitive life down the centuries amid stone-age birds, beasts and reptiles. Mixed blood is evident only on coasts where equally wild Papuans have come across from nearby New Guinea. . .

A succession of dense scrub forests, deep watercourses and low ranges often rising in sheer, rocky bluffs thwart inland progress. . .<sup>40</sup>

The *Post* article, a swirl of hogwash in which a few sediments of truth are improbably suspended, is easily dismissible. Certainly, as an insight into the world encountered by the expedition, it is useless – but that is not why we quote it. The value of this text lies in the transparency with which it reveals the logic underlying the 1948 expedition: the imaginary geography that it imposed upon the world it purported to ‘discover’. That fantasized topos is the habitat most natural to expeditions. You could say that it is their ‘native territory’. Recognition of this is fundamental to any understanding of how an expedition works. To explain by analogy: we know that the instruments carried by expeditions – cameras or telescopes, for example – process an environment in particular ways. They reduce it; enlarge it; frame it. They sever details from a greater totality and render the three-dimensional in two-dimensional form. That same transformational logic is a feature of the expedition – itself an invention – albeit more complex than the instruments named. In light of this, Mountford’s suggestion to Simpson that his modern and ‘innocently’ scientific expedition was a world apart from its nineteenth-century forebears is at best naive and at worst deliberately deceptive. If only historical baggage could be so easily discarded! Expeditions were of course as inextricably involved in imperial conquest as science itself.

That the 1948 expedition involved researchers from one of the world’s largest museums is hardly incidental. Many in the museum world remained wedded to the concept of the expedition, which was extremely conducive to the wholesale gathering of specimens.<sup>41</sup> For the

first half of the twentieth century, expeditions were an endemic feature of professional life for the Smithsonian curator, often to the despair of families who were expected to endure their extended absences. 'Join the Smithsonian and see the world', was the adage.<sup>42</sup> The Arnhem Land journey was part of a century-long tradition of Smithsonian expeditions.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the institution's museum status is inextricably connected with one of the most prominent expeditionary ventures of the Antebellum period. When the English chemist James Smithson bequeathed his fortune to the United States government to found an institution in Washington 'for the increase and diffusion of knowledge', his likely model was the Royal Society in London (of which he had been a fellow). There was nothing in the will that required it to be a collecting institution, and certainly no hint that it would become the great repository of cultural and scientific treasures – the 'attic of the nation' – that we know today.<sup>44</sup> The Smithsonian's museological turn was a by-product of the 1838–42 United States Exploring Expedition. Commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, this was a wide-ranging cruise through the Pacific that surveyed waterways for strategic and mercantile opportunities and pursued more general scientific objectives, including ethnographic investigation. In 1858, the many artefacts and specimens it acquired were lodged with the Smithsonian, to the annoyance of some officials who saw the warehousing of collections as a distraction from the 'pure' science they wished to pursue.<sup>45</sup>

Four Smithsonian curators and a National Geographic Society writer/photographer comprised the United States delegation on the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition. Occurring at a time when the nature of the postwar American–Australian relationship was still being hammered out, this exercise in soft diplomacy was calculated to generate as much publicity as possible, much to the irritation of local academics who were excluded from its ranks.<sup>46</sup> Even Donald Thomson, a zoologist-cum-anthropologist who had previously worked in Arnhem Land and sympathized with expeditionary modes of inquiry, thought too much attention was given to Mountford and his party, to the detriment of his own reputation (see Beudel, this volume). Here is evidence that as late as 1948, the expeditionary project retained lustre in the eyes of the public, who were blissfully unaware of its facility for exposing disciplinary factions and fault-lines. Perhaps the most pertinent indicator of this expedition's capacity to capture the imagination of the public is a cache of letters in Mountford's archive, written by young men who had seen early press announcements of the venture. In the rush to volunteer their services, they adhered to a fairly standard formula:

I am eighteen years old and as I have been looking forward to such an expedition all my life I thought you might be needing a lad like myself. I have had experience on board boats, and as a cook in the galley also years of experience in the boy scouts and otherwise having three badges of great importance to the backwoods-man, the Campers, Cooks, Pioneers.<sup>47</sup>

The author of this missive, a resident of suburban Brisbane, noted in his cheery sign-off that he was 'waiting for a favourable reply'. He did not receive one. Nor did Bill Smith from New York State, who, upon reading of the Arnhem Land Expedition in the American press, wrote directly to the National Geographic Society, asking if they 'might be able to find a place somewhere for a strong, healthy American boy who has for a long time seriously considered the life of an Explorer but who was always told that you must know someone in the trade to get a start'.<sup>48</sup> As these letters show, expeditions had their supplicants, the vast majority of whom would do no more than participate vicariously by reading the press or watching the films. Yet these files of letters are important, for they reveal the extent to which an expedition's audience might project themselves into the privileged space of the journey.

With its troupe of actors at large in the field, an expedition is both an ideal and a reality. It is underwritten by common codes and bound by often unspoken rules. Simpson evoked this little universe with his description of the tents and cookhouse at Oenpelli, beyond which the expedition members performed their ablutions in the lagoon 'wearing nothing but beards'. This was playful writing on his part. A newspaperman by training, Simpson was on one of his first assignments as a broadcaster when he went to Arnhem Land.<sup>49</sup> He went there determined to explore the radio medium to its full potential.<sup>50</sup> Later, when writing about the experience, Simpson explained that because *National Geographic* retained the photographic rights, print journalists had been precluded from visiting the expedition. He won admission only because radio 'is non-pictorial and so was considered near enough to being non-competitive, and, by permission, we could go in and do a "feature" on the expedition and gather whatever else seemed interesting to describe and record in sound, such as aboriginal corroboree'.<sup>51</sup> Communicating 'non-pictorially', he boldly revealed the expeditionaries in their nakedness, telling the radio audience what a camera could never show. Now one thing that is shown in this tableau of scientists parading their manhood is the deeply gendered character of expeditionary anthropology. Where, we might ask, in that scene of expeditionary hygiene are Margaret McArthur and Bessie Mountford, the two female members of the party?

Mountford had had no easy time in getting even this amount of female representation on his expedition, despite a belated acceptance among Australian ethnographers, influenced by the prewar findings of anthropologists such as Ursula McConnel and Phyllis Kaberry, that the gendered nature of Aboriginal society produced a domain of women's knowledge that was largely impervious to male researchers.<sup>52</sup> The Director-General of the Department of Information (the government agency that oversaw the expedition from the Australian side) was convinced that it would be 'most unwise to have a woman attached to a party that will be living among the natives'. He urged Arthur Calwell, the Minister for Information, to veto the idea. That the presence of women would cramp the very freedom described by Simpson is implied in the director-general's letter.

One would imagine that natural modesty would make a man reluctant to take his wife on such an expedition but there are other considerations. Only recently, we had an unhappy experience in Queensland when Mr. Foster permitted the producer to take his wife on the Barrier Reef Expedition. The party had to live on a launch and husband and wife occupied practically the whole of the living accommodation, compelling the six men in the party to sleep on deck or wherever else they could find room to spread a blanket.

It is a human characteristic that men living under such conditions submit chivalrously to inconvenience at the time, but later moan to all and sundry about the bad management that made such living conditions necessary.<sup>53</sup>

For most of its history, expeditionary society has been predominantly male. Yet for all the hairy-chested ruggedness that goes with the genre, the keepers who patrol this patch invariably paint their expeditions as delicate flowers, bound to wither if exposed to the pollution of femininity. As Tom Griffiths writes in his study of Antarctic science, the excuses used to exclude women from scientific travel could be pathetically lame. Lack of toilet facilities was an old favourite. The disasters that beset any expedition leader so careless as to mix the sexes were knowingly chronicled by commentators, themselves part of the brotherhood. Griffiths writes: "The French explorer-historian, Paul-Emile Victor, in his book *Man and the Conquest of the Poles*, summarised the Ronn expedition in one line: "The expedition ran into all the difficulties ordinarily caused by the presence of women in such circumstances"<sup>54</sup>.

The politics of gender are omnipresent in expeditions. The 'presence of women' on the Arnhem Land Expedition was certainly a complicating factor in terms of management of personnel. The matronly



Bessie Mountford carved out for herself a maternal role in the expeditionary family, while Margaret McArthur became an object of attraction to more than one of her companions.<sup>55</sup> Gossip began to circulate and Mountford, to McArthur's indignation, began to think of ways in which she might be chaperoned.<sup>56</sup> As an experiment in sexual mixing, the Arnhem Land Expedition was an extremely unequal one. Numerically, the expedition was a male enterprise with two female extras. Inevitably, masculine values shaped the image of the expedition, enabling the proliferation of certain narratives and allowing the enforcement of certain silences. These are issues that are taken up in detail in the course of this book.

### The Journey Ahead

As we have suggested, there is no clear linear march away from imperial exploration and towards expeditionary anthropology. Rather, explorers have often found themselves engaged with the study of human others as a necessary side project to the exploration of foreign shores. Both in clearing paths into unknown territories and in approaching human unknowns, cultural intermediaries have acted as go-betweens in the process of exchange. Scholarship in North America in particular, dating from the 1990s, has increasingly brought such people into focus as the subjects of scholarly research into the culture of exploration.<sup>57</sup> Their role in influencing the course of expeditions, and the alternative window they provide onto the activities of investigative parties, is a major theme of *Expeditionary Anthropology*, especially in 'Anthropology and the Field: Intermediaries and Exchange', the first of our three thematic sections.

This section is comprised of a trio of essays by scholars long immersed in the activities of the anthropologists discussed. In Philip Batty's case, a deep understanding of the literature is combined with personal knowledge of territory and communities traversed by the expedition he describes. Batty lived for many years in the Northern Territory where he worked closely with desert communities and co-founded the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association. Later, as a curator at Museum Victoria in Melbourne (a position he still occupies), he acquired an insider's perspective on the massive cache of material culture, visual records and other data concerning Central Australia that was deposited by Sir Baldwin Spencer. Batty opens the volume with an intriguing examination of the notion of 'the field', a key conceptual construct of expeditionary anthropology.

Batty's lens on this subject is the pioneering 1901–02 anthropological expedition of Spencer, a zoologist-cum-anthropologist and professor at the University of Melbourne, and his close collaborator, Francis Gillen, a post and telegraph master at the desert settlement of Alice Springs who was closely connected with the Aboriginal communities of the region. Commencing at the inland settlement of Oodnadatta, their expedition took a roughly northward trajectory through Central Australia, terminating at the town of Borroloola near the Gulf of Carpentaria. Batty's chapter is both an account of the expedition and an interpretation of how the anthropological field was defined and composed. He regards it as a composite spatial formation, brought into being by the expedition's interaction with the locations visited, the objects collected and the local intermediaries who opened facets of their culture to the investigators. The equipment, animals, personnel and funds – the daily necessities of expeditionary life – also contributed to the making of the field, which was of course the product of anthropological intervention, although the researchers purported to 'discover' it.

Batty suggests that the shaping of this objectified field as a privileged site of anthropological meaning occurred in parallel with the establishment of the expedition as a key means of acquiring anthropological expertise. He points out that the fields created by expeditions are highly dynamic and that they morph and resurface over time. Indeed, he suggests that the semiotic richness of the expeditionary field tends to increase as the original subjects of study, or more often their descendants, draw upon expeditionary legacies in projects aimed at cultural revitalization. The use of historical collections to make land claims or assert cultural identity provides examples of how the anthropological field continues to be reinvented.

The 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits occurred just a few years earlier than Spencer and Gillen's mission. This is the subject of the chapter by Jude Philp, a museum curator who, like Batty, has close personal ties with communities studied by this expedition. One of Philp's key contributions to our discussion is her argument that the lines between intermediaries and expedition members were surprisingly blurry. She questions the idea that nineteenth-century expeditions were necessarily disengaged from the lived realities of their research subjects. On the contrary, Philp shows that the visitors from Cambridge were cognizant of the hierarchies and lines of authority that existed in Meriam communities, and that their results – documented traditions, collections of cultural objects, studies of performance traditions and other ancestral heritage – were

irrevocably affected by the decisions of Islanders. The expedition members actively named and profiled their Islander participants and consultants. These data are detailed in both the field notes *and* the expedition's publications – in contrast to the practice of many of their successors (Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown among them). As a result of these clear attributions and the publication of large sections of text in the local Island creole, the practices and knowledge stores of nineteenth-century Meriam-le can be retrieved by contemporary communities. The expedition's publications continue to be used in the Torres Strait.

Donald Thomson's Arnhem Land journeys of the 1930s were directly influenced by the Cambridge expedition and his travels resonate with nineteenth-century explorer journeys more broadly. Saskia Beudel, who previously engaged with Thomson's desert expeditions in her landscape memoir, *A Country in Mind* (2013), here turns her eye to his work in Arnhem Land (which preceded by more than a decade the large expedition of Charles Mountford). In this chapter, Beudel argues that recognition of long-standing 'cultures of exploration' is essential to understanding Thomson's multimodal expeditionary style, in which anthropological research was just one among a suite of objectives that also included photojournalism, narratives of adventure travel and deep immersion in Australian Aboriginal lifestyles.

The fluidity with which Thomson moved between academic and more popular, journalistic modes of expression resulted in an uneasy relationship with dominant anthropological institutions and caused him problems when he sought funding from the Australian National Research Council. Unconventionally for an Australian anthropologist, he developed a close relationship with the Royal Geographical Society who supported his work. Thomson's idiosyncratic views on what constituted serious anthropological fieldwork placed him in conflict with Radcliffe-Brown, who at the time was Professor of Anthropology at Sydney, and then with A.P. Elkin who succeeded Radcliffe-Brown to the chair, the first in an Australian university. Beudel provides an intriguing discussion of Thomson's affinity with expeditionary modes of travel. He formed parties composed not of white men but of Arnhem Landers, with whom he formed genuinely collegial relationships and co-habited on egalitarian terms.

Beudel, Batty and Philp are all deeply concerned with the formation and potentialities of expeditions. They deal specifically with anthropological journeys, but the insights they provide are an important contribution to present-day conversations about geographical exploration, which is now feeling the benefit of comparative approaches. This is

apparent in Dane Kennedy's study of inland journeys in Africa and Australia, which alerts us to the different conventions of expedition making that developed in the two continents.<sup>58</sup> Whereas in Africa it was common for a European explorer to recruit his entire (often extensive) entourage from local labourers, his counterpart in Australia preferred a party composed of Europeans, with the possible exception of native guides who seldom numbered more than one or two. Beudel's discussion suggests that Donald Thomson was bending the conventions of expeditionary practice, especially as they had developed in his own country.

The book's second section, titled 'Exploration, Archaeology, Race and Emergent Anthropology', deals with some of the less benign aspects of the expeditionary imaginary. From very varied perspectives, the four chapters investigate racial categorization and its impacts. The discussion is opened by Pamela M. Henson, who gives a close reading of the late nineteenth-century expeditions of the artist, geologist, archaeologist and museum director William Henry Holmes, a prominent figure at the Smithsonian Institution where Henson herself is Director of Institutional History. Holmes held positions in two newly formed organizations. From 1879, he worked with the United States Geological Survey. Then, in 1889, he began his long involvement with the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology. Holmes' movement between these organizations – one focused on documentation of the landscape of the United States and the other on the history and traditions of people who occupied that landscape – is indicative of the short distance that then existed between the fields of geology, archaeology and anthropology.

Holmes used physical anthropology research to show that contemporary Native Americans were the descendants of the civilizations who had built advanced structures throughout North America – a corrective to the thinking of other researchers in this period. Henson argues that Holmes played a major role in the shift from geological and topographical exploration to expeditionary research that focused on the human occupants of ancient cities.

Warwick Anderson's chapter on Carleton S. Coon's voyages to the Maghreb in the 1920s explores the complicity of expeditionary activities in the survival of social evolutionary thinking. A student of Earnest Hooton at Harvard, Coon was sent to Africa to study racial mixing. The race-based 'human biology' study then in vogue set many of Coon's peers on a trajectory that would lead them, post-Second World War, to robustly critique the very notion of racial classification. Not so for Coon, who remained completely unreconstructed on questions of race

– a position that Anderson explores by excavating the archival record. In so doing, he reveals the inner workings of a physical anthropology expedition in exquisite detail. In a gesture that touches on the long tradition of connecting with, or re-enacting, expeditionary journeys, Anderson's historical narrative is interwoven with an account of his journey, eighty years later, to the site of Coon's adventures.

Anderson is a historian of medicine and a former physician. His celebrated work on Papua New Guinea has delved into the triangulated relationship of science, adventurism and the inscription of human difference.<sup>59</sup> His account of Coon's colourful career reveals not only the prejudices embedded in the expeditionary paradigm but again the potentialities and contradictions. Coon's research took place in the Maghreb region of North Africa. He performed anthropometrical observations that convinced him that the fair-skinned Berber people whom he was studying were not the 'degenerate half-castes' he expected, but 'African Nordics' whom he stridently defended because of their racial 'superiority'. Adopting an anti-colonial position, Coon remonstrated against their oppression and degradation by their Spanish colonizers.

The relationship between expeditionary adventure and the way maritime voyaging opened observational opportunities for the inscription of human differences is explored in the chapter by Bronwen Douglas, whose polyglot inquiries into the cartographic history and maritime exploration of Oceania have exposed the genealogy of racial theorizing.<sup>60</sup> Here she embarks on a fine-grained analysis of cross-cultural encounters, drawing extensively from the records of Iberian explorers who were ostensibly focused on charting land and ocean, but who found themselves involved in an increasingly detailed classification of the people they observed in various clashes and encounters. Through an investigation of the Spanish expedition of Quirós and Torres across the Mar del Sur in 1606, Douglas shows that voyagers' representations of these encounters are enormously significant for charting European ideas about human difference. In the process, she suggests methods and vocabulary for reading the agency of the indigenous communities described in expeditionary texts.

Like the Spanish voyagers of the seventeenth century, early explorers of Australia's coastline were focused chiefly on cartography and geography. In a chapter about Phillip Parker King's hydrographic surveys, Australian historian Tiffany Shellam shows that although expeditions like King's aimed to chart the coastline, the inevitability of encounter between the travellers and occupants of country where an expedition might seek refuge or potable water meant that some form

of ethnographic observation became essential to the expedition's daily business. Shellam makes her argument by drilling deeply into events dating from 1821 when King's party was stationed at Hanover Bay on the Western Australian coast. An encounter between crew and indigenes spiralled out of control, resulting in the spearing of the ship's surgeon and the shooting of at least one Aboriginal man from the Worora group. Like Douglas, Shellam is interested in unpacking the motivations of the local people involved in such episodes. She finds keys to the cipher in a spearhead and other objects, collected by the British in the wake of the skirmish, and in the enigmatic figure of Bundle, an indigenous man from the Sydney area. He travelled on board and mediated interactions with a great succession of Aboriginal groups, showing extraordinary facility for overcoming the linguistic and other cultural differences between himself and the people encountered.

The third part of the book, 'The Question of Gender', extends the discussion, begun in the present chapter, about the contested roles of men and women in the masculinized world of expeditions. The contributors survey a variety of sites and politics, touching on both the theory and pedagogy of anthropology. The conflicts and entanglements of male and female anthropologists, working in a range of university, museum and government contexts, are examined in detail. The three chapters rove widely in scope and perspective, migrating from the nitty-gritty micro-politics of life in the field to broader social and political contexts.

The first offering in this section is by Desley Deacon, a cultural historian and author of the definitive biography of Elsie Clews Parsons.<sup>61</sup> Born into high society in New York, Parsons broke the social mould by becoming a pioneering feminist and anthropologist. In the 1920s, she used her personal wealth to set up the Southwest Society, an organization that funded innovative anthropological fieldwork, supporting – among others – many of the students of Franz Boas who were coming through Columbia University. An intriguing aspect of Parsons' initiative was that the Southwest Society was deliberately set up in resistance to the American Museum of Natural History, still continuing its policy of financing expensive expeditions led by adventurer-scientists. Through her own investigations and through her funding of fellow ethnographers, Parsons encouraged the rise of the woman fieldworker, a development she linked to a larger feminist project. Deacon shows that in countering the heroic and self-serving ethos of those who led large and lavishly funded group expeditions, Parsons encouraged modern modes of anthropological research that would alter the shape of American anthropology.

The second chapter in this section is by anthropologist-cum-art historian Diane Losche, whose work on Margaret Mead complements the discussion of Parsons. Losche takes us inside the American Museum of Natural History, the base from which Mead, too often unsupported and continually unpromoted, made her rise to anthropological stardom. The chapter demonstrates how the framework of the expedition provides an avenue for rethinking the Mead legacy, which has been obscured by misogynistic attacks on Mead's character and her accuracy as an ethnographer. Losche roams widely through Mead's long career, but her case study is the American Museum of Natural History Sepik Expedition of the early 1930s. The chapter shows that Mead's focus on Melanesian women and girls and her investigation of female sexuality posed significant challenges to patriarchal forces within the anthropological establishment.

Mead's Sepik journey won fame for the romantic interests and estrangements that took place *within* the expedition party. This resulted in some uncanny mirrorings between the researchers and the researched. Mead arrived at the Sepik with her first husband, anthropologist Reo Fortune who, in a strange inversion of the usual gender hierarchy, was presented in the press as Mead's consort. While in the field, they met Gregory Bateson, doing ethnographic fieldwork of his own. Mead and Fortune's marriage splintered during the course of the expedition. She and Bateson became romantically involved and eventually married. Losche playfully juxtaposes the anthropologist's interest in the sex lives of others with the often bizarre way in which Mead's own sexual adventurism has been chronicled.

In the third chapter in this section (the last in the volume), Amanda Harris examines some key events in the career of Margaret McArthur, previously mentioned as one of just two women on the Arnhem Land Expedition of 1948. McArthur was a nutritionist and biochemist before she retrained in London as an anthropologist. She belonged to a succeeding generation of women who benefited from the pioneering leadership of figures such as Mead and Parsons. Harris examines McArthur's participation in both the 1948 expedition and another in Papua New Guinea the year before. She documents McArthur's pathway from the female-dominated field of nutritional research into the masculine space of the scientific expedition. Food and the domestic sphere provided a gateway to a broader expeditionary anthropology that was both formative and enabling in terms of her professional aspirations. Not only did she produce field-expanding work in her collaborative publications with Frederick McCarthy, but she laid the groundwork for a future career as an academic anthropologist. In

tracing the shift in women's roles in post-Second World War nation building, Harris argues that women could create opportunities for themselves in twentieth-century expeditions, despite the stubbornness of patriarchal dominance. Certainly, the minority presence of women illuminates the larger culture of masculinity that is such an integral element of the expeditionary imaginary.

### Final Words

This book is not unique in arguing that expeditions deserve fresh and critical attention. In addition to the many studies, historical and biographical, that continue to appear on particular expeditions, anthropologists or explorers, there has in recent years been a spate of publications on the popular impact of exploratory narratives, many of them concerned with the dissemination of film and still photography.<sup>62</sup> The release of an edited volume titled *The Anthropology of Expeditions* (2015) is further evidence of how the expedition has become a site for re-exploration in a postcolonial context.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis there is the connection between the collecting function of expeditions and the institution of the museum. The chapters focus on the hybrid composition of expeditions and are underwritten by a general ambition to investigate the expedition's relationship with the colonial project.

With editors and contributors who are enmeshed in the curatorial world, it is unsurprising that material culture lies at the heart of *The Anthropology of Expeditions*. Indeed, the emphasis on collectors and collecting is so embedded that the book's title turns out to be something of a misnomer. Expeditions are treated as phenomena that ipso facto perform the work of anthropological collection; seldom are they recognized as social phenomena that anthropological analysis might illuminate. Inevitably, this brings some limitations. The realities of gender politics go almost unnoticed, as do the controversies surrounding human remains collection and the claims for repatriation that have resulted.

The contributors to *Expeditionary Anthropology* are hardly indifferent to material culture or the materiality of expeditions themselves. Cultures of collecting, regimes of exchange and broader questions of funding and economy are dealt with in various ways in the pages ahead. But the overall thrust of our argument is that the generation of university and museum collections – certainly an integral aspect of expeditionary anthropology – cannot be adequately contextualized



without a history of the sociopolitical formations embedded in and around the notion of the expedition.

Hence the trajectory of this chapter, an introductory foray into expeditions and the imaginary that underlies them. We began with Lévi-Strauss and his denunciation of twentieth-century explorers. Drawing insight from Johannes Fabian and other thinkers along the way, we queried the alleged demarcation between exploration and anthropology, and in the process journeyed into the social space of the Arnhem Land Expedition, led by the intrepid Charles Mountford. That 1948 journey revealed a set of embedded traits, endemic to expeditionary travel. With its arrangement of tents around the billabong, the expedition had its own architectural layout and its distinctive hierarchical structure in the organization of personnel. Through its relationship with diverse media, the expedition members – and especially the publicity-hungry leader – could channel their fondness for self-representation. Like so many expeditions, it was heavily charged with internal divisions, influenced in part by its gender politics and the under-representation of women scientists. Conforming to such patterns, expeditions have gone about their business of documenting, representing and collecting. As the chapters ahead show, there are many differences between individual expeditions. But they are bound by commonalities. Being mobile organizations that move between cultural spaces, they are specially designed for the documentation and production of difference.

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**Amanda Harris** is a cultural historian at the University of Sydney. Her research focuses on gender, music and cross-cultural histories. Amanda's edited book *Circulating Cultures: Exchanges of Australian Indigenous Music, Dance and Media* was released by ANU Press in 2014

and her research has also appeared in *Women and Music, History and Anthropology*, *Women's History Review* and *Australian Historical Studies*.

### Notes

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33. Frederick D. McCarthy and Margaret McArthur, 'The Food Quest and the Time Factor in Aboriginal Economic Life', in Mountford, *Records of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition*, Vol. 2, 145–94.
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35. Martin Thomas, 'Bones as a Bridge between Worlds: Repatriation and Reconciliation between Australia and the United States', in Kate Darian-Smith and Penelope Edmonds (eds), *Conciliation on Colonial Frontiers: Conflict, Performance, and Commemoration in Australia and the Pacific Rim* (New York/London: Routledge, 2015), 150–68; Martin Thomas, 'Turning Subjects into Objects and Objects into Subjects: Collecting Human Remains on the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition', in Amanda Harris (ed.), *Circulating Cultures: Exchanges of Australian Indigenous Music, Dance and Media* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 129–66; and Martin Thomas, 'Because It's Your Country: Death and Its Meanings in West Arnhem Land', *Life Writing* 12(2) (2015), 203–23.
36. Colin Simpson (writer/producer), *Expedition to Arnhem Land*, ABC radio documentary, first broadcast on 30 November 1948, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Alan Powell, *Northern Voyagers: Australia's Monsoon Coast in Maritime History* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013), ch. 1.

39. 'Cannibals in Australia Are Studied by Scientist', *New York Times*, 17 May 1936, 38.
40. 'Science to Study Wild Region of Northern Australia Corner', *Washington Post*, 8 February 1948, L6.
41. MacLeod, 'Discovery and Exploration', 52; and Joshua A. Bell and Erin L. Hisinoff, 'Introduction: The Anthropology of Expeditions', in Bell and Hisinoff, *The Anthropology of Expeditions*, 4. See also Deacon, this volume.
42. Cited in Gifford Hubbs Miller and Robert Charles Cashner, 'Beneath the Billabongs: The Scientific Legacy of Robert Rush Miller', in Thomas and Neale, *Exploring the Legacy*, 272.
43. Paul Michael Taylor, 'Transformations of the Expeditionary Enterprise: Perspectives on the Smithsonian's Expeditionary History before 1948', *reCollections* 9(2) (2014).
44. Heather Ewing, *The Lost World of James Smithson: Science, Revolution, and the Birth of the Smithsonian* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007), 317.
45. Nathaniel Philbrick, 'The Scientific Legacy of the U.S. Exploring Expedition', <http://www.sil.si.edu/digitalcollections/usexex/learn/Philbrick.htm> (accessed 10 December 2014).
46. On the academic fault-lines, see Thomas, 'Expedition as Time Capsule', ch. 1 in Thomas and Neale, *Exploring the Legacy*, 1–30; Martin Thomas, 'A Short History of the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition', *Aboriginal History* 34 (2010), 143–69; and Philip Jones, 'Inside Mountford's Tent: Paint, Politics and Paperwork', in Thomas and Neale, *Exploring the Legacy*, 33–54. For a reading of the expedition's significance to the US–Australian relationship, see Kim Beazley, 'Nation Building or Cold War: Political Settings for the Arnhem Land Expedition', in Thomas and Neale, *Exploring the Legacy*, 55–71.
47. W.A. Dack to C.P. Mountford, 28 August 1945, American/Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land 1948: Correspondence Vol. 2, Mountford-Sheard Collection, PRG 1218/17/5, State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.
48. William Smith to Gilbert Grosvenor, C.P. Mountford-Gilbert Grosvenor correspondence file, National Geographic Society Archives.
49. Richard White, 'Simpson, Edwin Colin (1908–1983)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simpson-edwin-colin-15926/text27127>, published first in hardcopy 2012, accessed online 12 December 2015.
50. Martin Thomas, 'The Rush to Record: Transmitting the Sound of Aboriginal Culture', *Journal of Australian Studies* 90 (2007), 105–21.
51. Colin Simpson, *Adam in Ochre: Inside Aboriginal Australia* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962), 5.
52. For discussion of McConnel and Kaberry, see Geoffrey Gray, *A Cautious Silence: The Politics of Australian Anthropology* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007), chs 5–6. For an overview of early Australian

- women anthropologists, see Julie Marcus (ed.), *First in Their Field: Women and Australian Anthropology* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1993).
53. Bonney to Calwell, 30 January 1947, Publicity – Arnhem Land Expedition – C.P. Mountford, General correspondence files, two number series, Department of Information, CP815/1, Item 005.87 Part 1, National Archives of Australia, Canberra.
  54. Tom Griffiths, *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica* (Sydney: New South, 2007), 210.
  55. Frederick McCarthy claimed that the expedition's deputy leader, Frank Setzler, frequently made sexual innuendoes to McArthur: Diary 1: Field Notes Groote Eylandt 1, Papers of Frederick David McCarthy, MS 3513/14/1, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, entry for 18 April 1948. Other observers suspected a relationship between McArthur and Frederick Rose, who was an advisor to the expedition at its first base. See Harney to Elkin, 18 April 1948, Correspondence Files, A.P. Elkin Papers, P. 130, Series 8, File 1/8/3, University of Sydney Archives, Sydney; and Elkin to Harney, 19 and 22 April 1948, *ibid.*
  56. Amanda Harris, 'Chaperoned into Arnhem Land: Margaret McArthur and the Politics of Nutrition and Fieldwork in 1948', *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* 20 (2014), 62–75.
  57. Significant examples include Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Margaret Connell Szasz (ed.), *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).
  58. Dane Kennedy, *The Last Blank Spaces: Exploring Africa and Australia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
  59. Warwick Anderson, 'Objectivity and Its Discontents', *Social Studies of Science* 43(4) (2012), 557–76.
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  61. Desley Deacon, *Elsie Clews Parsons: Inventing Modern Life* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1997).
  62. Examples include: Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby (eds), *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing, 2008); Joshua A. Bell, Alison K. Brown and Robert J. Gordon (eds), *Recreating First Contact: Expeditions, Anthropology, and Popular Culture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 2013); Gregg Mitman and Paul Erickson, 'Latex and Blood: Science, Markets, and American Empire', *Radical History Review* 107 (2010), 45–73; Robert Dixon, *Photography*,

*Early Cinema and Colonial Modernity: Frank Hurley's Synchronized Lecture Entertainments* (Herndon, VA: Anthem, 2013); and Prue Ahrens, Lamont Lindstrom and Fiona Paisley, *Across the World with the Johnsons: Visual Culture and American Empire in the Twentieth Century* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013).

63. Bell and Hisinoff, *The Anthropology of Expeditions*.

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