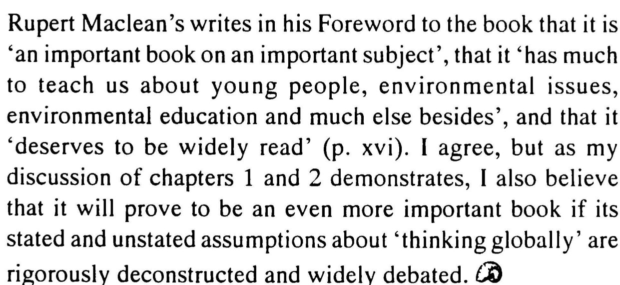
provocative. Chapters 3-8 focus less on 'global discourses' than on 'local traditions' (and practices), dealing respectively with environmental education and relevant social issues in China, Japan, India, South East Asia, Australia, and the South West Pacific. Each chapter provides a judicious selection of qualitative and quantitative data and material drawn from literature reviews. Together these chapters present a fascinating overview of the richness and diversity of environmental education in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chapters 9-11 share a focus on young people and the environment, with chapter 9 considering interrelationships among attitudes, knowledge and behaviour, and chapter 10 drawing out some implications of the research for environmentalism. Chapter 11 suggests some implications for environmental reform of 'listening to the voice of youth'. The research that underpins these chapters is extensive and comprehensive and, because much of the data is drawn from large-scale survey research, there are few 'feel good' stories or victory narratives. But these same data underscore the immense significance of incremental systemic change. As, John Fien writes at the end of chapter 11, 'reorienting education for sustainability is powerful rhetoric and a wonderful aspiration' (p. 275), and what the book as a whole tells us is that acting on such an aspiration is highly complex and, given the inertia in educational and social systems, will take considerable time. Yet at no time does the book give way to pessimism. Rather, it demonstrates through the detail of its national and transnational surveys and reports that small (and slow) changes in desired directions should be treasured for their contributions to realising the 'wonderful aspiration'



Rupert Maclean's writes in his Foreword to the book that it is 'an important book on an important subject', that it 'has much to teach us about young people, environmental issues, environmental education and much else besides', and that it 'deserves to be widely read' (p. xvi). I agree, but as my discussion of chapters 1 and 2 demonstrates, I also believe that it will prove to be an even more important book if its stated and unstated assumptions about 'thinking globally' are rigorously deconstructed and widely debated.

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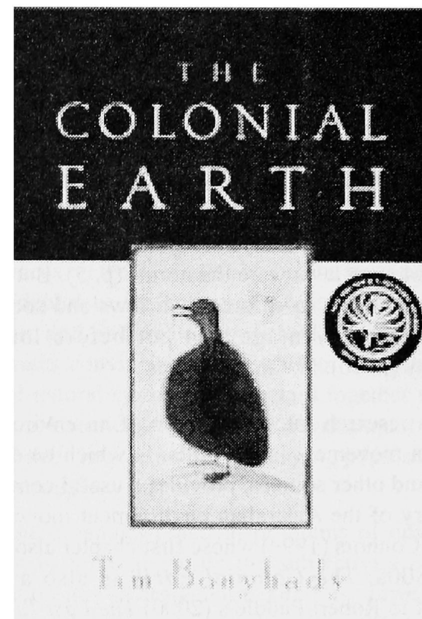
Tim Bonyhady (2000) *The Colonial Earth.* Miegunyah Press, Melbourne. ISBN: 0-522-84915-6

A book that has won both the 2001 NSW Premier's History Prize and the 2001 Queensland Premier's Literary Award for Non-Fiction—as well as being shortlisted for the Douglas Stewart Prize in the 2001 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the 2001 Victorian Premier's Literary Prize, the 2001 The Age Book of the Year and the Harper Collins Publishing Best Designed Fiction and Non-fiction Book in the 2001 APA Book Design Awards—must be doing something right! And this one is.

The Colonial Earth is an extremely well written challenge to the conventional wisdom that Australia's colonists not only viewed their adopted land with incomprehension and distaste but also were blind to their own destructiveness. Through twelve extensive chapters he explores how issues such as the preservation of endangered species, the protection of forests, the maintenance of public rights over the foreshore and even the likelihood of climate change already loomed large in colonial Australia. For example, he draws attention to the concerns voiced about the rapidly deteriorating state of the environment within a short time of the arrival of the First Fleet:

> The settlers' attachment to the colonial landscape was matched by their desire to preserve it. The protection of the continent's native flora and fauna, pollution of its rivers, degradation of its pastoral lands, planning and improvement of its cities, preservation of beauty spots, retention of public reserves and access to the foreshore were all major issues in the colonial era. Even climate change—perhaps the environmental issue most thought of as modern—excited attention as early as 1795, when the magistrate Richard Atkins speculated that the weather was changing 'in consequence of the country opening so fast'. (p. 4)



This is not well known information, and Bonyhady continues to surprise the reader as chapter by chapter he unearths interesting and challenging perspectives and documents. He draws on a great range of sources—from paintings and poems to reports of public meetings and parliamentary debates over the period from the arrival of the First Fleet until Federation—to argue that 'the environmental aesthetic is as deeply embedded in the culture as is resistance to putting environmental ideals into practice' (p. 11).

For many, Bonyhady's standpoint will be extremely controversial, but his research is comprehensive and the

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arguments very convincing. His perspective is certainly a contrast with the standard view of the early settlement period, expounded by well-known and frequently cited authors such as Jock Marshall (1966), William Lines (1991) and Tim Flannery (1997), that the settlers exploited and destroyed the Australian environment. For example, Marshall (1966, p. 2) in *The Great Extermination*, wrote: 'The bush, to our great-grandfathers, was the enemy: it brooded sombrely outside their brave and often pathetic little attempts at civilisation; it crowded in on them in times of drought and flood. It, not they, was alien.' In contrast, Bonyhady (2000, p. 3) notes that 'While many colonists were alienated by their new environment, others delighted in it... many members of the First Fleet lauded the gum tree for its distinctiveness'. Bonyhady also notes that, thirty years later, there was no consensus on the gum trees. Although the native born youth 'appear to have admired the gum trees', 'most writers condemned the eucalypts. Far from delighting in their difference, colonists and visitors judged them against an English standard and found them wanting in even more extravagant terms' (p. 71). According to Bonyhady, the writers' criticisms soon became clichés, repeated in many influential books of the time (p. 73), but not all shared the disdain and Bonyhady documents the reappraisal of the gum tree through art such as Buvelot's and recognition of its utilitarian value during the mid-1800s.

Bonyhady also documents a story of failure: of environmental ideals sacrificed to political expediency and commercial self-interest—of innovative and enlightened laws ignored and broken. For example, he notes that the first environmental law in Australia was declared in April 1788, 'when Lieutenant Philip Gidley King protected plantain or banana trees on Norfolk Island, just four days after discovering them', and that 'by 1804 such laws were the norm' (p. 5). But the first officials were unable to enforce their laws and soon short-term economic advantage was put before long-term sustainability (p. 10). Nothing changes!

Bonyhady's research into the growth of an environmental conservation movement in Australia, in which he draws on art, poetry and other sources, provides a useful complement to the history of the Australian environment movement by Hutton and Connors (1999) whose first chapter also looks at the late 1800s. *The Colonial Earth* is also a worthy complement to Robert Paddle's (2000) *The Last Tasmanian Tiger* (reviewed elsewhere in this issue). Together they provide an alternative history of human perceptions and actions in the Australian environment.

This book should be essential reading for anyone interested in, teaching about, or studying the Australian environment. It is a great resource for teachers and tertiary students, and is of a suitable reading level for senior secondary students too. It could be a prescribed text for VCE Outdoor and Environmental Studies in Victoria! According to a review in *The Australian* (3-4 February 2001) only 2000 copies were printed, so I hope that there are enough remaining for AJEE readers to enjoy.

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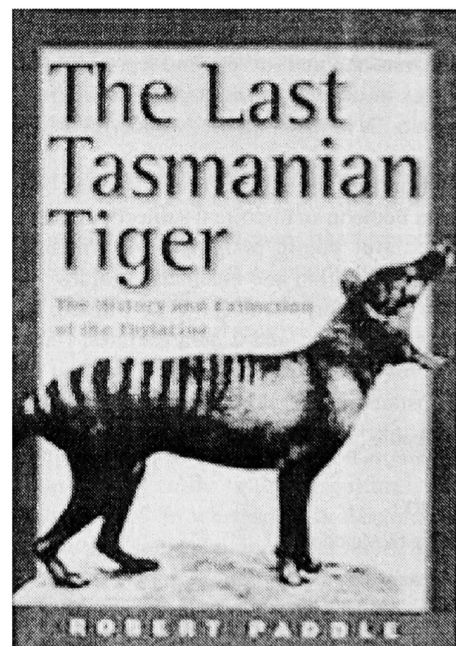
Robert Paddle 2000, *The Last Tasmanian Tiger: The History and Extinction of the Thylacine*. Cambridge University Press, Oakleigh, Victoria.



> Species finally depart the biota, not with a bang but a whimper. The thylacine, Tasmanian tiger or marsupial wolf, *Thylacinus cynocephalus*, is one of a handful of species where that whimper has a precise date. The thylacine became extinct on 7 September 1936 when the last known specimen died in captivity in the Beaumaris Zoo, Hobart.

So begins Robert Paddle's *The Last Tasmanian Tiger*, a critical history of scientific and popular thought about the thylacine

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