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The Paper War
Morality, print culture and power in colonial New South Wales
By Anna Johnston

Making a critical intervention into the ‘history wars’ in Australia, The Paper War brings current international scholarship on race and empire to bear on an intriguing Australian case study.

Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld was named as one of the ‘perpetual blisters’ that the London Missionary Society seemed ‘destined to carry’. He had travelled to New South Wales to set up the Lake Macquarie mission – it was here that controversies, tempers and debates abounded, resulting in a very public ‘paper war’.

This engaging and intelligent book delves into the diverse and voluminous body of texts produced by and about Threlkeld from 1825–41. It identifies an influential network of British Empire men who were as crucial to the humanitarian debate as they were to the destruction of Threlkeld’s mission.

A web of intrigue, corruption, slander, whistleblowing and backstabbing, The Paper War is an eye-opener to colonial Australia.

Those with an interest in colonial history, the history of literature and how we interpret and read history will find it makes an important contribution.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Johnston is Australian Research Council Queen Elizabeth II Research Fellow and Associate Professor in English in the School of English, Journalism and European Languages at the University of Tasmania, Australia, and Co-Director of the University’s Centre for Colonialism and Its Aftermath. She has published widely in the field of empire and colonisation. Her books include In Transit: Travel, Text, Empire, Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860, Reading Robinson: Companion Essays to Friendly Mission and The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook (1888) by Flora Annie Steel and Grace Gardiner.

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