

OCEANIC ENCOUNTERS

MARGARET JOLLY, SERGE TCHERKÉZOFF & DARRELL TRYON (EDITORS)

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exchange, desire, violence



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This volume, the result of ongoing collaborations between Australian and French anthropologists, historians and linguists, explores encounters between Pacific peoples and foreigners during the *longue durée* of European exploration, colonisation and settlement from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century. It deploys the concept of 'encounter' rather than the more common idea of 'first contact' for several reasons. Encounters with Europeans occurred in the context of extensive prior encounters and exchanges between Pacific peoples, manifest in the distribution of languages and objects and in patterns of human settlement and movement. The concept of encounter highlights the mutuality in such meetings of bodies and minds, whereby preconceptions from both sides were brought into confrontation, dialogue, mutual influence and ultimately mutual transformation. It stresses not so much prior visions of 'strangers' or 'others' but the contingencies in events of encounter and how senses other than vision were crucial in shaping reciprocal appraisals. But a stress on mutual meanings and interdependent agencies in such cross-cultural encounters should not occlude the tumultuous misunderstandings, political contests and extreme violence which also characterised Indigenous-European interactions over this period.

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Cover photo: *A watery shot of the island of Ambae under cloud and sunburst*
by John Patrick Taylor

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*In fond memory of Greg Dening
and Epeli Hau'ofa*

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Preface

Scientific collaboration between France and Australia in the social sciences and humanities has really forged ahead since 2000, with collaborative agreements covering a wide range of disciplines across a broad spectrum of French and Australian institutions of higher learning.

In 2001 an International Program of Scientific Collaboration (Programme International de Coopération Scientifique, PICS) was initiated between the National Centre of Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS), France's national research body, and The Australian National University (ANU), Canberra. This program bears the title "Early Encounters in the Pacific."

Within this framework, this volume, *Oceanic Encounters*, is the first fruit of ongoing collaboration between the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) at The Australian National University and the Centre of Research and Documentation on Oceania (Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie, CREDO), a research centre within an Institute of Asia-Pacific (Maison de l'Asie-Pacifique), located at the University of Provence in Marseilles, incorporating members of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), and the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, EHESS).

This multidisciplinary research program, initiated by Serge Tcherkézoff in Marseilles and myself in Canberra, has flourished since its inception, involving twenty researchers and research students in France and Australia. Thus far it has resulted in two symposia, held in Marseilles and Canberra, examining the connections between history and anthropology in the early days of exploration and colonial contact with the indigenous peoples of the Pacific.

A second series of multidisciplinary symposia is looking at contemporary issues such as socio-political upheaval in Oceania. The first symposium of the series has already taken place in La Ciotat, organized by CREDO, with the second set to take place in Canberra. It is planned that this will lead to a volume on contemporary issues in Oceania, perhaps as a special number of the *New Pacific Review/La Nouvelle Revue du Pacifique*, itself a product of French-Australian collaboration in the social sciences.

While scientific collaboration between the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (RSPAS) at The Australian National University is now becoming well established, there is an urgent need to make Francophone research more accessible to the English-speaking world. This was one of the principal findings of the French, Assises de la Recherche Française dans le Pacifique – a French government review

of French research in the Pacific over the last twenty years, held in Nouméa in 2004.

In response to this, and partly as a result of Serge Tcherkézoff's appointment as Linkage International Fellow in the Gender Relations Centre in 2004–05, we have seen the recent publication of *The Changing South Pacific: Identities and Transformations* (Pandanus Books 2005), edited by Serge Tcherkézoff and Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon, itself an English translation of *Le Pacifique-sud aujourd'hui: identités et transformations culturelles* (CNRS 1997); "First contacts" in *Polynesia: the Samoan case (1722–1848): Western misunderstandings about sexuality and divinity* (Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and *The Journal of Pacific History* Monograph 2004); and *Tahiti—1768: Jeunes filles en pleurs: la face cachée des premiers contacts et la naissance du mythe occidental* (Au Vent des Îles 2004), the latter two both authored by Serge Tcherkézoff.

Oceanic Encounters represents a further step in Australia-France collaboration in multidisciplinary research in the social sciences and the humanities in the Pacific. At the same time, our broader French-Australian collaboration is building for the future through the increasing involvement of younger scholars as the program develops.

Darrell Tryon
The Australian National University
Canberra, January 2009

Acknowledgements

Many people and institutions have made this volume possible. As Darrell Tryon explains in his preface, we must first acknowledge the innovative funding which came from the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) as part of the International Program of Scientific Collaboration (PICS). This has been a very successful program. We also acknowledge the “Fonds Pacifique” of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs which, most recently, funded a week-long symposium in Suva, Fiji in December 2008 bringing biologists, archaeologists, historians and anthropologists together to debate the distinction between Melanesia and Polynesia in Oceania. Darrell Tryon and Serge Tcherkézoff were the main co-organisers of that important event.

There have also been significant contributions from the Australian side – from The Australian National University and particularly from several parts of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies: ANU Cartographic Services, Anthropology, Pacific and Asian History and the Gender Relations Centre (all now located in the College of Asia and the Pacific). The Gender Relations Centre has invested much in this volume through the work of research assistants and administrative staff as well as my own time. Also on the Australian side we must acknowledge the generous funding from the large Australian Research Council Discovery Project (2004–08, DP0451620). This bears the same name as this volume, *Oceanic Encounters* but a different subtitle: *Colonial and Contemporary Transformations of Gender and Sexuality in the Pacific*.

We must also thank the several institutions which have allowed images to be reproduced in electronic and hard copy form: All of these are acknowledged in detail in the captions which accompany the images. We warmly thank John Taylor for the use of his superb photograph of Ambae, Vanuatu, which we have reproduced on the cover.

We gratefully acknowledge the professionalism of Duncan Beard and his team at ANU E Press in the final design and production of this volume and Professor Stewart Firth, Chair of the Pacific Editorial Board of ANU E Press, who provided funds for final production and for securing permissions for reproduction of images.

We thank all of the contributors not just for the quality of their scholarship but for their prompt and thoughtful responses to the processes of peer review and copyediting; that has made the final stages of editing this large volume easier and even pleasurable. The comments of two anonymous reviewers were generous, cogent and extremely helpful. We thank each other as editors and contributors for the stimulating collaborative intellectual journey of which this is a part.

We especially thank several members of the Gender Relations Centre staff who have brought this volume to fruition: Annegret Schemberg who did preliminary work in editorial preparation just prior to her retirement, Josie Stockdill who did early work with the images and much later work in the preparation of the final manuscript, and Janet Beard who assisted in the compilation of abbreviations and acronyms, unusual symbols and the all-important index. But most of all we thank Michelle Antoinette whose final copyediting and work in securing images for this volume has been, to use a favourite phrase of Ian Chubb, our Vice Chancellor at the ANU, “superlatively good”. She has been both meticulous and gracious in this crucial role.

Finally we dedicate this volume to the cherished memory of Greg Dening and Epeli Hau’ofa, two stellar scholars, whose inspirational ideas about the “beach” of Oceanic encounters and the concept and value of Oceania have proved formative for all of us.

Margaret Jolly
The Australian National University
Canberra, January 2009

Contributors

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Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon is an anthropologist, a Director of research at the National Centre of Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS) in France, and a member of the Centre of Research and Documentation on Oceania (Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie, CREDO-Maison Asie-Pacifique) in Marseilles. Her research interests include the formation and transformation of political systems in Polynesia (Tonga, Wallis and Futuna) and their relationship with the construction of the person (self, body, gender and sexuality), processes of Christianisation and relations between memory and history. Among her publications are: *Les premiers fruits: Parenté, identité sexuelle et pouvoirs en Polynésie occidentale (Tonga, Wallis et Futuna)*, Paris, CNRS Editions, Editions de la MSH, 1998; The Kava ritual and the Reproduction of Male Identity in Polynesia, in Monique Jeudy-Ballini and Bernard Juillerat eds., *People and Things. Social Mediations in Oceania*, Durham, Carolina Academic Press, 2002; *The Changing South Pacific. Identities and Transformations*, Canberra, Pandanus Publications, RSPAS and ANU, co-edited with Serge Tchekézo, 2005; and *Grand-mère, grand-père. La grandparentalité*

en Asie et dans le Pacifique ed., Aix-Marseille, Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2008.

Bronwen Douglas is Senior Fellow in Pacific and Asian History at The Australian National University. Her major research interest is in the history of race, especially the interface of metropolitan discourses, field encounters, and local agency in the representation and classification of indigenous Oceanian people. She is the author of *Across the Great Divide: Journeys in History and Anthropology* (1998); editor of *Women's Groups and Everyday Modernity in Melanesia* (2003); and co-editor of *Tattoo: Bodies, Art and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* (2005) and *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (2008).

Margaret Jolly is Professor and Head of the Gender Relations Centre in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, College of Asia and the Pacific at The Australian National University. Her work has focused on gender and sexuality across the Pacific, in the context of exploratory voyages, Christianity, the politics of tradition, nationalisms and feminisms and visual anthropology. Her major books include *Women of the Place* (Harwood 1994), *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure* (Chicago 1997, with Lenore Manderson), *Maternities and Modernities* (Cambridge 1998) and *Borders of Being* (Michigan 2001, both with Kalpana Ram). Recently she published *Re-membering Oceanic Masculinities* for *The Journal of the Contemporary Pacific* (January 2008) and papers on the politics of commemorating “discoverers” like Quirós and Cook. She has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa (1998), École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Paris (2001, 2009), Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie/Centre of Research and Documentation for Oceania (CREDO), Marseille (2001, 2008–09), and the University of California at Santa Cruz (2001–02).

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Isabelle Merle, historian and member of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS, IRIS, Paris), is a

specialist in Pacific History and has worked intensively on British and French colonial history in the Pacific since the 1990s, especially regarding Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. *Experiences coloniales. La Nouvelle Calédonie. 1853–1920* (Paris, Belin, 1995), her published PhD, focused on the “fabric” of the French settler society in New Caledonia in the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century. She then turned her attention to a comparative exploration of indigenous status and conditions across Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia, focusing on land problems, legal status and derogatory regimes (such as the *Regime de l’indigénat* in French colonial contexts). In 2006, she introduced and published in French the two volumes of Watkin Tench’s Australian experiences: *Botany Bay. La fondation de l’Australie coloniale* (Anacharsis, Marseilles). In collaboration with Eric Wittersheim, Merle is currently writing a volume for a world collection published by the German Publisher, Fisher World History entitled, *Australia, New Zealand and Oceania*.

Mark S. Mosko is Professor of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University. Over the last thirty-five years, he has conducted four years of ethnographic research among the North Mekeo peoples of the Central Province of Papua New Guinea. He is author of *Quadripartite Structures: Categories, Relations and Homologies in Bush Mekeo Culture* (Cambridge UP, 1985) and numerous journal articles and chapters exploring North Mekeo symbolism, ritual and religion, social organisation, chiefly leadership, personhood, gift exchange, and change. He is co-editor (with Fred Damon) of *On the Order of Chaos: Social Anthropology and the Science of Chaos* (Berghahn 2005). His most recent volume, *Gifts that Change: Personal Partibility, Agency and Christianity in a Changing Melanesian Society* (Berghahn, forthcoming) adapts recent theoretical developments in the ethnography of Melanesian sociality to the analysis of historical transformation.

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Darrell Tryon is Emeritus Professor of Linguistics in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, at The Australian National University. He has published extensively on the languages and sociolinguistics of the region, including his *Comparative Austronesian Dictionary* (1995), *Atlas of Languages of Intercultural Communication* (1997) (with Stephen Wurm & Peter Mühlhäusler) and *Pacific Pidgins and Creoles* (2004) (with Jean-Michel Charpentier).