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Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511–1850

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*For Jean Abbott
and
In loving memory of Jean Craig*

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List of Abbreviations

ACM	Archives centrales de la Marine, Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas, Spain
AN	Archives nationales, Paris
ASN	<i>Annales des Sciences naturelles</i>
<i>Atlas [historique]</i>	J. Dumont d'Urville (1833a), <i>Voyage de la corvette l'Astrolabe ... Atlas [historique]</i> . Paris: J. Tastu
CRHSAS	<i>Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences</i>
MNHN	Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
NLA	National Library of Australia, Canberra
OUP	Oxford University Press
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RAE	Real Academia Española
SHD	Service historique de la Défense
SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales, Sydney
<i>Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie ...</i>	<i>Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie sur les corvettes l'Astrolabe et la Zélée ... pendant les années 1837–1838–1839–1840 ...</i>
<i>Voyage autour du monde ...</i>	<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur les corvettes de S.M. l'Uranie et la Physicienne pendant les années 1817, 1818, 1819 et 1820 ...</i>
<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur ... La Coquille</i>	<i>Voyage autour du monde ... sur la corvette de sa majesté, La Coquille, pendant les années 1822, 1823, 1824 et 1825 ...</i>

*Voyage de découvertes aux
terres australes ...*

*Voyage de découvertes aux terres australes ...
sur les corvettes le Géographe,
le Naturaliste, et la goëlette le Casuarina,
pendant les années 1800, 1801, 1802,
1803 et 1804...*

*Voyage de la corvette
l'Astrolabe ...*

*Voyage de la corvette l'Astrolabe ...
pendant les années 1826–1827–1828–1829 ...*

Preface and Acknowledgements

Beginning nearly two decades ago to work seriously on materials which led eventually to this volume, I published two articles on 'race' and Indigenous presence in Oceanic voyage literature (1999a, 1999b). I planned to produce a book on local agency in Oceanic encounters after 1750 but the theme of race exploded out of every effort I made to write the first chapter. It became clear that a thorough historical understanding of the complex intersections of racial ideas and regional experience requires more than antiracist outrage and postcolonial fluency in discourses on 'the savage'. It was equally evident that most general histories of race lack rigorous comparative grounding in the vernacular works of contemporary Euro-American theorists and that there was a paucity of detailed work on the history of race in the 'fifth part of the world'. Named 'Oceania' in the early 19th century, this vast zone encompasses the Pacific Islands, Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, New Guinea, and island Southeast Asia.

To redress these deficiencies, I combined ongoing research on the rich archival and published legacy of European voyages in that zone with detailed reading of original Euro-American texts in the natural history of man, comparative anatomy, geography, physical anthropology, ethnology, and the science of race during the century after 1750. This work bore fruit in my contributions to the collection of essays *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940* (2008), co-edited with Chris Ballard. I wrote two long chapters – one on the formulation and normalization of a biological concept of race in Europe; the other on the relationships of racial theory to evidence derived from scientific voyaging in Oceania. These detailed histories of the science of race in European theory and Oceanic practice constitute an original contribution to the history of ideas and set the discursive and theoretical scene for the present volume. Their ready availability online freed me to re-focus Part II of this book more on the Oceanic side of my historical equation – on encounters, Indigenous agency, their ambiguous traces in the written and visual representations of scientific voyagers, and their echoes in works of metropolitan synthesis. However, I realized that it was arbitrary and shortsighted to limit the double history of European ideas of human difference and encounters in Oceania to the period after 1750. Accordingly, Part I is much extended to span two entwined

themes. One is the lexico-semantic history of ‘not-race’ – the emergence and usage of a grab bag of words in several European languages to label, describe, and eventually classify people – from the 15th-century onset of overseas encounters until the late Enlightenment. The other is the ethnohistory of the first 250 years of Oceanian encounters with Europeans from 1511 until the scientific voyaging era.

As in *Foreign Bodies*, my strategy is to denaturalize the modernist scientific concept of race by historicizing it. Thus, I track the lexico-semantic history of the word, its non-uses, uses, and cognates, from insignificant genealogical origins to scientific and popular reification. I also seek to expose the tensions, inconsistencies, and fractures in racial discourses. And I scrutinize the disjunctions between voyagers’ ideas about human similarity or difference and their circumstantial renditions of embodied encounters with Indigenous people. This approach has several pragmatic corollaries – ‘racial’ is a relatively neutral term connoting ‘race’ in its modernist biological sense; ‘racialist’ labels negative opinions expressed about persons or groups on the basis of hereditary, supposedly collective physical and mental characters; and the overdetermined term ‘racist’ is generally avoided.

All translations are my own except where otherwise indicated. My particular thanks to Hilary Howes and Brett Baker for generous help in translating passages in German, Dutch, and Latin and Portuguese and Spanish, respectively.

For aesthetic reasons, I use inverted commas minimally except for direct quotations, including them only on first mention of a specialized English term in its contemporary sense. They are, however, consistently implied in the case of now problematic words such as ‘race’, (racial) ‘type’, ‘hybrid’, ‘nature’, ‘civilized’, ‘civilization’, ‘savage’, ‘savagery’, ‘primitive’, ‘Negro’, ‘Hottentot’, ‘Mulatto’, ‘Papuan’, ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘native’, ‘pagan’, ‘heathen’, ‘Moor’, ‘infidel’, ‘heretic’, ‘man’ (in the inclusive sense of humanity), ‘the West’, and so forth. First names are cited on first mention of individual protagonists and omitted thereafter. The personal names of French authors follow the international standard recommended by the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Where available, hyperlinks to online copies of maps or pictures referenced but not reproduced in the text are cited in the Bibliography.



This book entails intellectual debts which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. Bernard Smith told us long ago that pictures as well as words tell stories

and that antipodean experience helped reconfigure metropolitan ideas and modes of representation. Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ranajit Guha, Ann Stoler, and Nicholas Thomas provided theoretical reinforcement for my sense of the instability of colonial power and the cleavages in imperialism's discourses. Guha and Roland Barthes contributed key linguistic strategies for the critical dissection of European voyage texts and the identification of ethnohistorical markers and Indigenous countersigns embedded in them. Inga Clendinnen and Donna Merwick challenged me with their histories of encounters and delighted with their elegant prose. Claude Blanckaert and George Stocking, Jr, introduced me to the history of science and confirmed that the best histories combine empirical rigour with incisive reflection and theoretical sophistication.

I have more personal debts to colleagues, students, and editors. Warm thanks to Stephanie Anderson, Warwick Anderson, David Armitage, Brett Baker, Alban Bensa, Peter Brown, Rainer Buschmann, John Cashmere, Inga Clendinnen, Andy Connelly, Bertrand Daugeron, Greg Dening, Dario Di Rosa, Kirsty Douglas, Karen Fox, Helen Gardner, Tom Griffiths, Hilary Howes, Margaret Jolly, Susanne Kuehling, Spencer Leineweber, Billie Lythberg, Morris Low, Vicki Luker, Sandra Manickam, Donna Merwick, Carlos Mondragón, Michael Morgan, Adrian Muckle, Ashwin Raj, Judith Richards, Ricardo Roque, Anne Salmond, Tiffany Shellam, Matthew Spriggs, Nicholas Thomas, Serge Tcherkézoff, Benoît Trépiéd, Paul Turnbull, Robin Wallace-Crabbe, Christine Weir, and Graeme Whimp, who have generously shared ideas, expertise, experiences, texts, and friendly disputation about them. To Chris Ballard and Elena Govor, and Claude Blanckaert, my partners in successive Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery projects, particular thanks for your meticulous scholarship, collegiality, and unstinting friendship. I also thank my academic and professional colleagues in the Division of Pacific and Asian History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies – now the Department of Pacific and Asian History, School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific – at The Australian National University (ANU), where I was a fellow and senior fellow for 16 fulfilling years. I thank my editors at Palgrave Macmillan, Jenny McCall and Holly Tyler, for their unfailing skill, patience, and encouragement.

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