

Pacific Circle Workshop: Pacific Knowledges and their Contexts, Thurs. 24 April, 2-5 pm

Workshop within the Australian Assoc for Pacific Studies Conference, Sydney University 22-26 April 2014

Chair: Roy MacLeod (Sydney University) Chair, 'The Pacific Circle: its History and Goals'

John Gascoigne (UNSW)

'Indigenous Intermediaries and Western Scientific Pacific Voyagers in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries'

The contact between cultures which Pacific encounters brought about involved exchanges of knowledge as well as material objects such as goods (or germs). This paper will consider the dynamics of such knowledge exchanges under two major headings: the way in which indigenous knowledges were drawn into the classificatory systems of natural history and the forms of mapping employed by Europeans. In both cases local knowledge became part of the schemas Europeans used to make sense of what was to them 'the new world' of the Pacific. Once transmuted into such schemas, however, local knowledge was often translated into new forms which could disguise their origins. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the extent to which Western science can be said to retain links with the indigenous views of the world embodied in some of the data on which scientific theorising had originally drawn.

Chris Maxworthy (Sydney University)

'Advance agents of change in the Pacific: colonial smugglers and privateers against Spain operating from Sydney 1796-1810'

The role of Sydney as a maritime centre for trade in the Pacific is well known. However, recent archival discoveries and analysis reveal the colony at New South Wales as a threat to the Spanish empire, particularly from the onset of the Nootka Convention of 1790, and the outbreak of war in late 1796. This paper draws upon documents in Spanish language archives

of Spain and Latin America, and the impact of the British charter company reforms. The case study of the private ship of war *Hero* that remained at Sydney for three months during the Rum Rebellion in 1808 serves as a proxy. The paper explores the preliminary findings and themes of state sanctioned private war and smuggling against the Spanish empire during the era of the French and Napoleonic wars.

Grant McCall (Sydney University)

The -nesias of Oceania: How metropolitan languages divide the Pacific

There has been some discussion over the years about the ethnographic divisions of the Pacific Ocean and what utility such conceptions might have for understanding the geographical feature that occupies fully one-third of the Earth's surface. Less attention has been paid to a much more obvious set of divisions: those based on metropolitan languages and how these are barriers to people's movement and scholarship.

Christine Winter (Sydney University)

'Race mixing and the Global South'

To better understand our immediate region, the South-West Pacific, a paradigm shift is needed. Anthropologist James Clifford called for new theoretical frameworks for analyzing the diverse and dynamic region of the (South) Western Pacific, exemplar sites of 'aprogressive narratives of modernity'. He argues that identifying ambivalence, diversity, multi-located and de-centered structures are starting points. My project on 'mixed-race' Germans takes up Clifford's argument by drawing on theories of the 'Global South' (Warwick Anderson) as innovative spaces that challenge Northern Hemisphere structures of hierarchy and stability. Focusing on German-Polynesian families and their racial 'framing' in the Southern and Northern Hemisphere, I am exploring the reach of these theories: I ask how racial identity was established in South-North exchange of ideas; how German-Pacific Islanders acted as objects and subjects of racial theory; and finally: can we identify German interwar developments, such as National Socialist inclusion of these families into a new race-based 'Aryan' community as Southern influences?

Wendy Shaw (UNSW)

Researchers as adventure-tourists in the coffee-growing highlands of Papua New Guinea

Abstract:

This paper reflects on how the prospect of travel for 'work', or other non-tourist activities in 'dangerous' places, includes an almost mandatory form of adventure travel for those who visit from other places, particularly from other countries. Researchers who journey out of their comfort zones to work in a place with a dangerous reputation, such as the highlands of Papua New Guinea, bring stories of adventure home with them. For these researchers, moments of tourism are sometimes planned but often unexpected and 'exciting'. They also hark back to earlier encounters, of European voyaging and story-telling, and the fearful other (worlds).