

The Pacific Colonial Shadow: New Approaches



On Friday 19 August the UQ Anthropology Museum will open an exhibition on Solomon Islands, “Solomon Islands: Re-enchantment and the Colonial Shadow” curated by Dr Diana Young, director of the museum, in collaboration with Solomon Islands scholars including Emeritus Professor Clive Moore, Dr Graham Baines and Associate Professor Annie Ross. The brief for the exhibition is that the “show is based on Chakrabarty’s call for narratives that are non-temporal and non-modern to think outside the dominant (European and Australian) approach to European history.” To coincide with this exhibition, the UQ Solomon Islands Partnership and the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at The University of Queensland presents two days of seminars:

Friday, 19 August 2016

UQ Solomon Islands Partnership lunchtime Seminar

Saturday, 20 August 2016

School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry one-day Seminar

(Venues are yet to be announced. There is no cost to attend, but we would like some idea of numbers for catering purposes, for morning and afternoon tea. Participants will be left to get their own lunches on campus; several places will be open, If you plan to attend, email Clive Moore: c.moore@uq.edu.au)

The Pacific Colonial Shadow: New Approaches

Programme

UQ Solomon Islands Partnership

Friday, 19 August, 12.00 to 1.00 pm

Morgan Brigg (Senior Lecturer, School of Political Science and International Studies)

The Colonial Shadow: Reconfiguring Governance for Conflict Management in Solomon Islands

School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry (HAPI)

One-Day Seminar: Saturday 20 August

The Pacific Colonial Shadow: New Approaches

Opening and housekeeping: 9.00 to 9.15 am: Clive Moore, Emeritus Professor, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, to open the seminar.

Session One: (Chair: Jennifer Corrin, Professor, T. C. Beirne School of Law, Australian Research Council Future Fellow)

9.15 to 9.45: **Doug Hunt** (Honorary Associate Professor, School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry)
The First Blackbird.

9.45 to 10.15: **Lalotoa Mulitalo** (Post-Doctoral Scholar, Centre for Public, International and Comparative Law, T. C. Beirne School of Law)

Samoan Electoral Laws and the Colonial Shadow: the struggle to develop an appropriate pluralistic framework.

10.15 to 10.45: **Nicole George** (Senior Lecturer in Peace and Conflict Studies and DECRA recipient, School of Political Science and International Studies)

From ‘Jesus crusades’ to ‘zero tolerance’: policing gender violence and ‘conjugal order’ in post-coup Fiji.

Morning Tea: 10.45 to 11.15

Session Two: (Chair: Brij Lal, Emeritus Professor, ANU)

11.15 to 11.45: **Chris Dixon** (Associate Professor, HAPI)

Black Americans and the Pacific War: African-American Encounters with the South Pacific, 1941-1945.

11.45 to 12.15: **Max Quanchi** (Honorary Research Senior Fellow, HAPI)

Photography in the Pacific: the power of illustration in Frederick O'Brien's *White shadows in the South Seas*.

12.15 to 12.45: **Geoff Gray** (Adjunct Professor, HAPI)

Making an anthropologist: H. Ian Hogbin, 1927-35.

Lunch: 12.45 to 2.00

Book Launch: **Sean Dorney**, *The Embarrassed Colonialist*, Lowy Institute Paper, Penguin Australia (2016)

Session Three: (Jonathan Richards, (Adjunct Research Fellow, HAPI)

2.00 to 2.30: **Paul Turnbull** (Honorary Professor, HAPI, Professor of Digital Humanities, University of Tasmania)

Collecting and scientific uses of the bodily remains of Pacific Island peoples.

2.30 to 3.00: **Volker Boege** (Research Fellow, School of Political Science and International Studies)

Weak state—strong *kastom*. Traditional governance and state formation in post-conflict Bougainville.

Afternoon Tea: 3.00 to 3.15

Session Four: (Chair: Clive Moore, Emeritus Professor, HAPI)

3.15 to 3.45: **Sean Dorney** (Non Resident Fellow at the Lowy Institute)

The Embarrassed Colonialists: Australia and Papua New Guinea.

3.45 to 4.15: **Brij Lal** (Emeritus Professor, ANU)

Making, Unmaking and Re-Making of Modern Fiji

ABSTRACTS:

Volker Boege

Weak state—strong *kastom*. Traditional governance and state formation in post-conflict Bougainville

Post-conflict peacebuilding and state formation on the Pacific island of Bougainville after a protracted internal violent conflict have been relatively successful so far. It will be argued that this success is due to constructive interactions between (rather strong) local 'traditional' (*kastom*) actors and institutions on the one hand and (rather weak) introduced Western liberal institutions of state and civil society on the other. It will be shown that the boundaries between the spheres of *kastom* and state governance are porous and blurred, that there is permanent interaction and mutual permeation, with ongoing processes of mixing, reconverting, leaching and blending, in the course of which both 'traditional governance' and 'state governance' change, adapt and are hybridised.

This entanglement of a liberal-international peacebuilding and state-building approach and local-indigenous *kastom* ways of conflict transformation and forming political community lead to the emergence of hybrid forms of peace and governance that differ considerably from Western concepts of peace and state, but at the same time can be more efficient and legitimate in maintaining public order, security and peace.

This paper builds on research that I am currently conducting on local level governance and on the local/international interface in peacebuilding on Bougainville.

Morgan Brigg

The Colonial Shadow: Reconfiguring Governance for Conflict Management in Solomon Islands

Expectations around European-derived forms of governance in rural Solomon Islands developed through the colonial era and found expression in the local area councils system. But recent decades have seen the retreat of the state, most sharply with the so-called ethnic tensions of 1998-2003. This is not remedied by the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, and has no serious prospect of being remedied by foreign aid and development assistance. In effect the colonial (and missionary) impact is partial, leaving rural Solomon Islands with a hybrid system of governance that combines elements of state, church and 'kastom'.

Solomon Islanders have experience and some capacity with negotiating hybrid governance. In particular, an emphasis on relational systems and ways of doing governance grounded in *kastom* may speak back to the European-derived forms of governance in ways that promise to reconfigure them, and our thinking about governance, in the 21st Century. At the same time, the approach of many rural Solomon Islanders to governance appears to be thoroughly syncretic, combining a pragmatic desire for a better life (including through expectations of the state) with strong ties to identity and *kastom*.

Navigating the possibilities and challenges of these complex governance entanglements requires thinking through and facilitating exchange between differing governance registers and jurisdictions, and this in turn requires nimbleness and reflexivity on the part of Solomon Islands government administrators and donors. This presentation considers the foregoing issues through the lens of fieldwork and experience in statebuilding and peacebuilding efforts in Solomon Islands.

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Sean Dorney

The Embarrassed Colonialists: Australia and Papua New Guinea

Forty-one years after its independence from Australia, Papua New Guinea is the largest recipient of Australian aid. Yet Australians seem to be largely ambivalent about the country. Few Australians know the history of our colonial rule in PNG and our long ties to the country are quickly being forgotten.

Sean Dorney, former Foreign Correspondent and now a Non Resident Fellow at the Lowy Institute, spent twenty years in PNG including seventeen heading up the ABC's Port Moresby bureau. In a Penguin Special Lowy Institute paperback called "The Embarrassed Colonialist", Sean examines PNG's weaknesses and strengths since independence and argues that, for moral and practical reasons, Australia need to reconnect with Papua New Guinea.

He believes it is time we Australians shed our embarrassment about our colonial past and embraced our relationship with our nearest neighbour.

Chris Dixon

Black Americans and the Pacific War: African-American Encounters with the South Pacific, 1941-1945.

As part of a larger project exploring African Americans' experiences in the Pacific Theater from 1941-1945, this paper examines Black Americans' preconceptions of and encounters with the South Pacific. By situating African Americans' experiences in a racially segregated military culture in the context of European colonization of the Pacific, this project utilizes a trans-national approach to African Americans' search for freedom and equality, and to the international struggle against colonialism and racism. For African Americans serving in the wartime South Pacific questions of "race" and national identity were not only fundamental to the causes and conduct of the conflict, but were also significant because the areas and peoples being fought over were sites of continuing colonial injustices and racial inequalities. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, Black Americans were frequently ambivalent about "others" who also bore the brunt of colonial and racial oppression. After considering the cultural and political background to African Americans' wartime encounters with the South Pacific – what did Black Americans "know" about a region, and its peoples, that was widely considered both "exotic" and "primitive"?—my attention will turn to an analysis of the ways in which those preconceptions shaped African Americans' encounters with the wartime South Pacific.

Nicole George

From 'Jesus crusades' to 'zero tolerance': policing gender violence and 'conjugal order' in post-coup Fiji.

Fiji's government has recently committed to improving gender equality for its citizens, campaigning for "zero tolerance" of violence against women and developing a legal regime to protect women and homosexual groups from physical insecurity and discrimination. Nonetheless, state repression of these groups remains insistent. To explain how and why these reform agendas are frequently ignored in the everyday conduct of police and judicial authorities, I discuss the particular ways that the security environment in Fiji is hybridised. To do this I reflect upon the long-standing vernacular influences, customary and religious, which inflect prevailing idioms of security and order in this jurisdiction and consequently the policing of gender.

Geoff Gray

Making an anthropologist: H. Ian Hogbin, 1927-35.

Herbert William Hogbin, (he changed his name by deed poll to Herbert Ian Priestley Hogbin in 1929), was born in England in 1904 and migrated with his family to Australia in 1914. He attended the University of Sydney, on an education bursary, where he completed, in 1926, a Bachelor of Arts and a Diploma in Education. In that year Hogbin attended Radcliffe-Brown's lectures on social anthropology in the new Department of Anthropology. His interest and enthusiasm for anthropology was observed by Radcliffe-Brown, who encouraged him to undertake a Master of Arts, at that time the highest degree conferred by the Arts Faculty in the University of Sydney. With this limited training Radcliffe-Brown sent him to Rennell Island, as part of an expedition examining phosphate deposits. On his own estimation he was ill prepared and consequently largely self-taught. It was a trip to the exotic and gave him his first taste of fieldwork, which he 'enjoyed immensely'. He never found the 'savage savage', an untouched culture, in the Solomon Islands which was a quest unsatisfied until he worked on Wogeo Island in New Guinea. This paper using his correspondence and field notebooks, traces his early development as an anthropologist.

Doug Hunt

The First Blackbirder.

In August 1863 Henry Ross Lewin brought 67 indentured Pacific Islanders to Queensland to work for Robert Towns, thus commencing a traffic which involved some 60,000 Islanders over the subsequent forty years. Lewin was a notorious recruiter, reviled as a 'blackbirder' by both contemporaries and twentieth-century writers, including historians. Yet he remains something of a mystery. Indeed, the early years of the labour trade have been subject to relatively little recent historical scrutiny. A common argument is that abuses in recruiting were more likely to have occurred in this period—especially the 1860s—compared with later years. For various reasons this is the case, though instances of coercion and deception occurred throughout the nineteenth century. Even in the 1860s, Islanders typically enlisted voluntarily, though this neither negates nor excuses the brutality of the system.

This paper explores the life of Ross Lewin to unravel some of the complexities of those early years of the Queensland labour trade. It also reflects on the continuing significance of 'blackbirding' in popular culture and public memory.

Doug Hunt retired from James Cook University in July 2016, after 23 years lecturing in politics and history. He is continuing research on the Southwest Pacific labour trade.

Brij Lal

Making, Unmaking and Re-Making of Modern Fiji

1874 opened a parenthesis in modern Fijian history which was closed not in 1970 when the British colony gained its independence from the United Kingdom but on 5 December 2005 when then Commodore Frank Bainimarama carried out the country's fourth coup. That coup ended the understandings and assumptions about the exercise of power and the nature of the country's democracy which had underpinned Fiji's political culture for more than a century. Commodore Bainimarama has triumphantly proclaimed the birth of a new Fiji but whether it is empty rhetoric or a practical reality remains to be seen. This presentation seeks to explore the paradoxes and the paralyses of contemporary Fijian politics from a broad historical perspective.

Lalotoa Mulitalo

Samoa Electoral Laws and the Colonial Shadow: the struggle to develop an appropriate pluralistic framework.

At its 50th independence anniversary from colonial rule and administration, Samoa, the first Pacific Island nation to gain political independence has accommodated customary practices in at least 12 of its Acts of Parliament, from the first Parliament in 1962 to the 15th in 2012. An analysis of this so called accommodation of customary practices in Parliament laws show that the accommodation was essentially to formalise and continue the existence of colonial set-ups and institutions. There was no genuine effort to appreciate and give some recognition to the customary norms and principles actively practiced by the population for which those Acts of Parliament were made. By 2016, perhaps the Act of Parliament in which customs and customary practices was most recognised and challenged through court proceedings was the Electoral Act 1963. The 6 electoral petitions filed in court following Samoa's General Elections in March 2016 challenged the application of customary practices as worded in the Electoral Act. This presentation discusses how the electoral laws of Samoa struggle to formulate a framework under which the modern democratic representation model filters in the customary practices and the faa-Samoa, i.e. the Samoan chiefly system, norms and principles.

Max Quanchi

Photography in the Pacific: the power of illustration in Frederick O'Brien's *White shadows in the South Seas*.

Frederick O'Brien's 1919 best-seller *White shadows in the South Seas*, liberally illustrated with his own and borrowed photographs, was top of USA library borrowing and best-sellers lists and soon after made into a box office success as a Hollywood movie. He followed this with two more illustrated travelogues on the Pacific in 1920 and 1921, partly a jolly look-at-me and "I-was-there" travel adventure, partly a rant against Imperialism and the western world's woes and partly salvage anthropology, a trend among travellers writing about allegedly declined Pacific populations the Pacific at the time. The 65 photographs in *White shadows*, for example, raise the question—was it the text or the photographs that made it a best-seller? This paper suggests that in the genre of illustrated travel books, it was the visual evidence, not his flowery polemic and popular philosophical ramblings that made him popular.

Paul Turnbull

A Risky but Important Business: Scientific Collecting of Human Remains in the Pacific during the Long Nineteenth Century.

Collecting human remains was a risky business, as Owen Stanley (1811–50), commander of the

Rattlesnake nervously observed when surveying the Louisiade Archipelago in 1849. Aboard his command was surgeon John Thomson, who was eager for Melanesian skulls, as was his assistant, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95). It seemed to Owen Stanley that for the men of Vanatinai, "...a white man's skull would be the most precious thing that they could possess...". But equally, he wrote, Thomson and Huxley "...would not be just as glad to get hold of one of theirs (Keppel 1853, 2, 222)." Hence he took steps to ensure that Huxley and Thomson did not put their own heads and those of their shipmates in danger, by trying to remove remains from burial places ashore. Even so, Owen Stanley was, in less risky circumstances, prepared to allow surgeon naturalists aboard naval vessels under his command to acquire human remains. Indeed, he was one of many European naval commanders who helped metropolitan scientific institutions from Dublin to St. Petersburg acquire skulls and other human bodily structures from the Pacific.

My paper explores naval collecting by British, French and German surgeon naturalists in the Pacific during the long nineteenth century. It does so with a view to assessing what surviving evidence of collecting tells us about the development of scientific thinking and the origins and causes of human variation in differing national contexts, in an era of increasing national rivalries in the Pacific. (Reference: H. Keppel, 1853. *A Visit to the Indian Archipelago, in H.M. Ship Maeander* 2 vols. London: Richard Bentley.)

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