

9

AUSTRALIAN TRAVEL WRITING AND NOTIONS OF SAVAGERY IN MELANESIA

Nicholas Halter

Introduction

Like their European and American counterparts, Australian travellers were fascinated with the possibility of encountering the ‘savage’ in the Pacific Islands. Australian knowledge of the islands in the early twentieth century was significantly influenced by the discourse of the savage, a persistent and dominant literary trope since the first European explorer accounts appeared. The dualism of the ‘noble’ and ‘ignoble’ savage became a popular image in Australian travel writing, and one that was distorted, conflated, and contested over time. Australians were exposed to the savage in multiple forms, a convenient and ambiguous figure used in children’s literature, newspaper reports, missionary and government propaganda, film, and photography. It also featured prominently in tourism materials and travel accounts to entertain, educate, and justify colonial rule to tourists and travellers alike. In Melanesia, accounts of supposed savagery reinforced and legitimized political discourse at home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which called for Australian sub-imperialism in the region. The work of professional authors blurred the line between travel writing and political promotion. This chapter will, thus, explore the history of European representations of Melanesia and consider the ways in which Australian tourists confirmed or modified popular ideas of race and savagery. The travel accounts of three authors, Beatrice Grimshaw in Fiji, Jack McLaren in the Solomon Islands, and Colin Simpson in Vanuatu, show how the growth of tourism in the region prompted a shift in Australians’ perceptions of the Melanesian savage during the twentieth century.

Melanesian misconceptions

The arbitrary boundaries that Europeans have used to demarcate the islands of Melanesia and Australia have often overlooked the ancient connections between them. Lower sea levels allowed peoples to migrate from Southeast Asia in canoes or rafts because the distances between islands were much less than the present. Archaeological evidence documents the migrations of these Archaic Papuans between 60,000 and 35,000 years ago, a first wave of movement through the New Guinea peninsula and spreading throughout the Bismarck and Solomon archipelagos (Lal and Fortune 2000: 54). The colonization of the western Pacific

continued approximately 3,500 years ago when a second Austronesian wave of migration introduced a new cultural complex from Asia and spread further into present-day Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji (Bellwood et al. 2006: 7). Though Melanesia's ancient origins have often featured as a tourist attraction, its people have been portrayed as primitive and static. As a result, their traditional mobility and vast regional connections, including those with Australia, have largely been ignored.

Though the Spanish were the first to reach the South Pacific in the sixteenth century (notable for the discovery of the Solomon Islands by Alvaro de Mendaña in 1568), it was French botanist and explorer Dumont d'Urville who is credited with the division of the Pacific into 'Melanesia', 'Polynesia', and 'Micronesia'. Pacific historians have since shown that these classifications were built upon pre-existing European ideas about slavery and physical differences already in existence (Tcherkezoff 2003). Yet, the category continues to be used today to describe the islands of Fiji, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea. The category 'Melanesia' has been especially problematic because it is the only one of the three island groups named after the skin colour of its inhabitants, literally meaning 'the dark islands'. The other two categories described the geography of the islands. Subsequently this mapping became racialized and 'verified' by science in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pseudo-scientific theories based in evolutionary theory supposed that Islanders could be situated within a racial hierarchy in which primitive races not only exhibited physical differences but also differences of an emotional and psychological nature. These theories placed Melanesians on the same scale as Australian Aborigines, as the 'Oceanic Negroes' were compared to Africans and Asiatics (Kabutaulaka 2015: 197). The absence of a centralized authority, as was found in Polynesia, was perceived to imply inferiority, so Melanesians and Australian Aborigines were considered more primitive than the kingdoms and chiefdoms in the eastern Pacific.

In contrast to Melanesia, Polynesia was romanticized in European literature and art as a natural paradise which was home to the 'noble savage', distinguished by his/her innocence, primitivism and a simple life close to nature (Howe 1977; Smith 1985). Subsequent tourist imagery in the twentieth century repeated tropes of a sexual and feminine Polynesia, an image which subtly justified the colonization of islands by masculine European powers (Jolly 1997). Melanesia was a much more challenging ground for colonial forces to penetrate by comparison. Challenges posed by geographical isolation, disease, and local political organization frustrated colonial attempts to control the Melanesian islands. This meant that some islands, particularly Papua New Guinea and the highland areas, encountered colonial travellers and tourists as late as the 1880s and 1890s.

Developing out of Christian mission outreach in the Pacific in the early 1800s, the 'ignoble savage' was a stereotype used to present Islanders negatively. Emphasizing their nakedness, savage dances, warring, and idol worship, missionaries used the ignoble savage to justify their conversion efforts (Smith 1985: 317). By the twentieth century, tourists were following in the footsteps of many of the pioneering missionaries, and early tourist accounts of Melanesia were informed by this Christian narrative. Today, Christianity remains a powerful force in the Pacific and a prominent feature of tourism promotions. Over time, Christian representations of the ignoble savage softened, and it is important to note that the distinction between noble and ignoble savage was not always clear cut (see Weir 2013). Steamship companies often represented both aspects at the same time, emphasizing both the dangerous and exotic aspects of Melanesia to attract customers but also reassuring them it was a safe destination. This ambiguity was a key feature of subsequent tourism promotions, and lack of knowledge about Melanesia ensured it remained a mysterious destination for many Australians.

Australian tourists in the Pacific

In her pioneering study of the history of Melanesian tourism, Douglas (1996) divided travellers according to three particular groups. The first group were the 'allocentrics', who were the early explorers attracted by the isolation of the islands, the difficulty of access, and the absence of published material. The second group were the 'excursionists', residing less than 24 hours in the country and were associated with the rise of ocean cruising in the interwar period. The third group were the 'pilgrims', travelling to the Islands after World War II to visit battlefield sites. Though these generalizations are useful for thinking about the broader patterns in tourism in Melanesia, in reality, travellers did not fit neatly into these groups. There were adventurers, traders, missionaries, colonial officials, scientific researchers, professional travel writers, photographers, and other artists who possessed different motivations for visiting Melanesia and whose points of origin shaped the ways they viewed the region. It is for this reason that an analysis of Australian travel writing is important to appreciate how Australians understood their neighbours in nuanced and contextual ways.

Prior to Federation in 1901, the Australian continent consisted of a series of British colonies with different motives that shaped their relationships with the Pacific (see Lake 2015; Thompson 1980). Melanesia was viewed as a convenient source of labour and a region that produced copra, gold, rubber, and sugar for companies based in colonial Australia. The proximity of the eastern seaboard to the Pacific region meant that colonial Australia became a springboard or staging point for competing commercial and Christian expeditions into Melanesia. Queensland was concerned with preventing German expansion to the north while also developing its sugar industry using Islander labour, recruited through the controversial practice of 'blackbirding'. The first tourist venture in Melanesia was a shooting and fishing expedition in 1884 offered by Sydney-based Burns, Philp & Company (commonly known as 'BP'). Travellers could travel aboard the *Elesa* to Port Moresby and return for 25 pounds (*Sydney Morning Herald* 1884). Like many of these early allocentric encounters, contact with Indigenous peoples was by default rather than design. BP would later earn the nickname 'Bloody Pirates' for its monopoly of Melanesian shipping and trade, reflecting the close ties between commerce and tourism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Colonial Australian travellers, like renowned fiction writer Louis Becke, conformed to English adventure tropes which pitted courageous white men against supposedly savage people (Day 1967). Becke's travels around the Pacific at the end of the nineteenth century gave his accounts legitimacy and contributed to the popularity of his texts as educational and informative (Halter 2016: 380).

Initially used to refer to a wild and untamed forest, it was not until the sixteenth century that the term 'savage' was used to describe a wild person. By the 1880s, descriptions of the savage environment and people in the Pacific Islands tended to the formulaic and predictable, and travellers increasingly reproduced stereotypical descriptions. This was a process of confirming one's expectations, validating and authenticating one's travel, and often a case of writing for a commercial market demanding adventure and excitement. In Australia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the word 'savage' was commonly used to describe Aborigines and Pacific Islanders, but it was also applied to convicts, drunkards, politicians, and vagrants as well as people living in remote rural areas (Russell 2010: 3). The context in which it was used was important. For the new nation of Australia at the turn of the twentieth century, Melanesian savagery served to justify its strict racial immigration policies, known collectively as the 'White Australia Policy', as well as defend the nation's sub-imperial desires in the region. For example, in the territories of Papua and New Guinea, which fell under Australian mandate from 1918 to 1975, 'savage' was interpreted in the context of Australia's successes or failures as a colonial power.

Over time, 'savage' became an ambiguous, versatile and value-laden term used interchangeably with words such as 'cannibal', 'headhunter', 'primitive', and 'native' to describe Melanesia (see Halter 2021). In their work on nineteenth century notions of savagery in colonial Australia, Anderson and Perrin (2008: 148) criticize an oversimplification of the colonial encounter by drawing attention to 'the discursive failure to represent or construct Australia's Indigenous peoples in the terms that had been applied to other peoples in other colonial contexts'. A similar process can be observed in travel writing about the Pacific Islands produced by Australians in the twentieth century, as Dixon (1995; 2001; 2007) highlights the diverse forms of representation of the Pacific which reflected the shifting literary and political landscapes within the nation.

'From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands'

Early tourism ventures in Melanesia were enabled by commerce, and tourism products promoted the benefits of foreign enterprise in the region. This was no better demonstrated by Beatrice Grimshaw, an Irish sportswriter who became a famous travel writer in the Pacific and was later claimed by Australia as one of their own. Grimshaw was born in 1870 in Ireland. She initially worked as a sports journalist and for various shipping companies until 1904 when she travelled to the Pacific funded by government and company commissions to write tourist publicity for the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and New Zealand and on the prospects for settlers in Fiji. These became the subject matter of three books she published in Europe which launched her into fame: *In the Strange South Seas* (Grimshaw 1907b), *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (Grimshaw 1907a) and her first Pacific fiction, *Vaiti of the Islands* (Grimshaw 1908). When she returned to the Pacific to report on the territory of Papua in 1907, she ended up staying for 27 years and concentrated on her fiction writing. Most were escapist, outdoor romances with a Pacific setting, and one was produced into the movie *The Adorable Outcast* (1928). In 1934, she left Papua, visiting Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga one last time before retiring in Bathurst, New South Wales in 1936. She died in 1953 having published four travel books, 24 novels, ten volumes of short stories, and countless articles for newspapers and magazines (Evans 1993; Gardner 1977; Laracy 2013).

Travel writers like Grimshaw were a useful tool employed by Australian investors to promote their economic interests in the region. Her 1907 travelogue *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* focused exclusively on Melanesia and mostly on Fiji and its potential for settlement and commercial enterprise. In fact, it was published in New York under the title *Fiji and Its Possibilities*. Fiji was 'the richest of all the rich Pacific archipelagos' she claimed and 'were not one-hundredth part developed' (Grimshaw 1907a: 31). Her writing style blended personal narrative with commercial advice, and she did not disguise these ulterior motives from her readers. In her other travelogue, which documented her Polynesian adventures, *In the Strange South Seas* (1907b: 51), she wrote: 'To find out, as far as possible, what were the prospects for settlers in some of the principal Pacific groups, was the main object of my journey to the Islands. It had always seemed to me that the practical side of Pacific life received singularly little attention, in most books of travel'.

Grimshaw spent more than six months in Fiji at a time when the tourism industry was booming. When she arrived by boat in Suva harbour, she observed 'the pavement is dotted with tourists – British, American, Colonial – armed with guide-books and cameras' (Grimshaw 1907a: 24). Colonized by the British in 1884, Fiji became a central hub for trade and transport in the Pacific, which attracted significant investment and tourist interest from Australia. It was also located on the edge of the Melanesia–Polynesia boundary, so, according to Grimshaw (1907a:

7), it was not considered as savage as the ‘wicked cannibal group’ in the West, but it did not have ‘the nameless dreamy charm of the Eastern Islands’.

After arriving in Suva, Grimshaw then toured plantations on the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. She ignored warnings from Suva residents that an inland trip was ‘too rough’ and travelled by horse with three Fijian guides. Grimshaw was unusual in that she was one of only 15 Australian women who wrote about their Pacific travels between 1880 and 1941. She used this to her advantage by styling herself in a pioneering role as a white woman going where few had gone before. On her travels, Grimshaw (1907a: 31) remarked on the ‘satisfactory tropical climate’ and, on several occasions, declared the land unclaimed and untouched: ‘there were tens of thousands of acres all over the islands unused and unoccupied; white settlers and planters seldom or never came to try their luck’. In reality, this narrative ignored Indigenous claims to land and should be read in the political context of the time in which the British-owned Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) rapidly acquired land for sugar plantations. Staffed by Australian overseers, CSR’s growth meant that Fiji was becoming an ‘Australian economic colony’ in 1900 according to Roger Thompson (1998: 19). Despite promoting the economic potential of Fiji, Grimshaw could not resist referring to its supposedly savage past. At the beginning of her book, she warned her readers that the ‘Fijian was the most determined cannibal known to savage history’ (1907a: 10). However, she never witnessed such savage behaviour first hand, imagining ‘the not-so-long-ago days of the death-drum, the strangling noose, and the “bokolo” (human body) served up smoking hot, with savoury herbs for the sunset meal’ (1907a: 72). Although cannibalism was practiced in pre-colonial Fiji, by the 1900s, the practice had been abolished by missionaries and much of the Indigenous population were Christian. However, the growth in tourism in the early 1900s brought a flood of tourists whose accounts show a fascination with finding evidence of cannibalism, be it human bones, cannibal forks, or even dubious ‘ex-cannibals’. As Grimshaw (1907a: 330) observed:

It is very gratifying, from a moral point of view, to see the clean, tidy, school-attending, prosaically peaceful folk that have replaced the original savage; but to the traveller, original savages are a good deal more interesting.

This explains the persistence of the savage trope in travel accounts, though, over time, the idea of the savage Fijian was sanitized and commercialized for foreign tourists.

‘My Odyssey’

Post-World War I tourism in the Pacific continued to expand as improvements in transportation made travel more accessible to a wider range of Australians (Halter 2017; Douglas and Douglas 2004). Like Fiji, the Solomon Islands was a British colony with significant numbers of Australian settlers and investment, though cruise ship visits were less frequent and brought smaller numbers of ‘excursionists’. One of them was Melbournian author Jack McLaren (1884–1954), who described his experiences working and travelling in Papua and New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji in his 1923 autobiography *My Odyssey* (McLaren 1923). Moving to London in 1925 to pursue his writing career, he established a reputation as a writer of the Pacific and worked as a radio broadcaster for the British Broadcasting Corporation. For many excursionists of the inter-war period, cruising the Pacific was popular for escaping the cold winters and drudgery of daily life. McLaren searched for the ‘Real Wild’ (1923: 11) because he regarded civilization ‘with scorn’ (1923: 66). He was critical of city life because ‘people seemed unreal-artificial like’ and were ‘denied the spice of existence’ (1923: 66). These ideas were encouraged

by guidebooks and travel magazines which grew in number during the 1920s and '30s as shipping companies expanded and promoted their routes. Presented as informative and educational, many of these magazines stressed the benefits of economic enterprise in the Pacific and depicted the white trader living amongst Melanesian savages as a tourist attraction (Halter 2016). Magazines such as *BP Magazine* (1928–1942) and *Walkabout* (1934–1978) featured similar stereotypical illustrations which compared the traditional canoes with luxury steamships, and the Melanesian was often portrayed in a masculine and warlike form (see Johnston and Rolls 2016; Kuttainen, Liebich and Galletly 2018).

The British protectorate of the Solomon Islands was a profitable colony in the early 1900s, with many Australian plantations harvesting copra for the British-owned Lever Pacific Plantations (Moore 2019). The main port at Tulagi was not as developed as the port in Fiji, so the island-hopping schedule of shipping services meant travellers had more opportunities to visit plantations and farmlands. Jack McLaren was typical of many travellers at the time who continued to repeat the racialized stereotypes when describing the Solomon Islands. One such feature that McLaren (1923: 68) was fearful of was their supposed unpredictable behaviour, stating:

I could never be sure of them, for they were possessed of instincts at which I could only vaguely guess and over which they had no control. At all times they were liable to give expression to certain queer impulses which were their age-old heritage, and causelessly murder the stranger in their midst – to regret it deeply afterwards no doubt.

Another perceived danger to foreign visitors was disease. McLaren (1923: 244) had suffered malaria and yaws on different occasions during his travels, leading him to conclude that disease was far more dangerous than 'the barbarity, treachery and cunning of the natives'. Though McLaren retained a colonial view of Islanders and used colonialist language to describe the Solomon Islands, he did consider that there were 'degrees of savagery'. Face-to-face encounters in the islands forced McLaren to question his presumption of Melanesian barbarity. He admitted that Solomon Islanders were 'rather good chaps' who had been 'maligned at least in part', and recognized their basic equality:

And I, watching, concluded that in the matters of superstition, tradition and, above all, keen sensibility to scorn the man of the Palaeolithic Wild and the man of the Civilized Wild were brothers all the while.

(1923: 256)

This response became more common in the inter-war period and later as increasing numbers of travellers visited the once-remote Melanesian group and, in the face of humanity, realized 'savagery' was a dubious label.

'The New Hebrides: A Tragicomedy'

World War II had devastating effects on the islands of Melanesia and its inhabitants, particularly in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (Kwai 2017). Yet, the construction of airfields by Japanese and Allied forces during the war enabled an expansion of air transportation and tourism from the 1950s onward. Many of these air travellers were part of the 'pilgrim' wave to visit war sites, but there was also growth in visitors travelling on package tours. One of these travellers was Australian travel writer Colin Simpson, who arrived by the Qantas flying boat in the New Hebrides (present-day Vanuatu) in 1950. Edwin Colin

Simpson (1908–1983) was born in Sydney and began working as a journalist during the Depression with Sydney's *Daily Guardian*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday* papers. In 1945, he worked for three years for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, writing radio documentaries, mostly for a travel series called 'Australian Walkabout'. This sparked an interest in Aboriginal anthropology which resulted in his first book *Adam in Ochre* (Simpson 1951). It gained international popularity and was shortly followed by two books about New Guinea, *Adam with Arrows* (Simpson 1953) and *Adam in Plumes* (Simpson 1954). In 1955, he published *Islands of Men: A Six-part Book about Life in Melanesia* which included a chapter titled 'The New Hebrides: A Tragicomedy'.

Discovered and named by British explorer James Cook, the New Hebrides was divided between French and British colonial rule from 1887 until their independence in 1970. The condominium arrangement resulted in a dual colonial administrative system which created some confusion. British and French traders competed under different laws, British and French missionaries competed for converts, and two education systems operated in English and French. Like many travellers before him, Simpson (1955) was critical of the condominium. When he arrived in Efate in 1950 to write a radio documentary for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, he recalled that it looked the same as when he had first visited in 1934 (1955: 85). Simpson's account is also typical in that it focused overwhelmingly on the details of the colonial administration at the expense of any real consideration of Indigenous peoples.

In the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, White (2012, n.p.) notes:

Seeking international sales, he rejected the strident Australianness of his main travel writer competitor, Frank Clune, and instead presented a self-consciously sophisticated persona, indicated by an interest in the arts and being frank about sex. He nevertheless defended the ordinary tourist against anti-tourist 'snobs'.

Though Simpson's writing style was distinct from some of his predecessors, he reinforced many of the popular stereotypes of the pre-war decades. Drawing on the work of historical and anthropological experts for legitimacy, Simpson (1955: 93–94) reminds the readers 'the people are very dark skinned', naked, polygamous, male dominant, possess a 'primitive culture' and engage in 'fairly constant warfare, of the guerrilla kind, with a life-for-a-life as tribal law'. The chapter is arranged in the style of a play with 'Acts' that mainly focus on the deeds of foreign traders, blackbirders, and missionaries who all fell victim to New Hebridean savagery in the past. The 'missionary martyrs' as he termed them 'bore the brunt of savagery', and he observed that the 'native attitude' was still 'very anti-white' in parts (Simpson 1955: 106–108). Simpson attempts to give more detailed ethnographic descriptions of Indigenous culture, but the aspects he describes (of land diving, homosexuality, and cargo cults) are tokenistic and serve to accentuate the exoticism of the islands. It is likely that Simpson was aware of some of the complexities of colonial rule in the New Hebrides. He recalls meeting Australian zoologist A.J. Marshall, whom he admired and quoted, but rather than publish Marshall's sympathetic comments about the New Hebrideans he emphasized past cannibal rituals and reprinted a photograph of a dead warrior's body. In reality, cannibalistic practices would not have been likely in the New Hebrides in the 1950s, and, indeed, Simpson (1955: 117–120) admitted it 'has now not much significance'. Whether Simpson was actually fascinated with Melanesian cannibalism or merely used it as a ploy to sell copies of his book is unclear. Nonetheless, his books were widely read both at home and internationally and perpetuated an image of the New Hebrides as dangerous and savage.

Contemporary trends and representation

Australian routes have changed significantly in the past 50 years, and a larger proportion of Australians have visited the Pacific Islands as tourists. Although the COVID-19 pandemic significantly slowed down tourist visitation to the region in 2020, with virtual stagnation from April of that year, in 2018, Australia represented the highest share of tourist arrivals in the Pacific, at 28.9% (South Pacific Tourism Organisation 2019: 21). Of those Australian tourists recorded, the most popular country was Fiji, visited by 367,000 Australian tourists in the Pacific in 2019 (Australian Government 2019a). Though successive Australian governments have stated that Melanesia is its closest and most important neighbour, misperceptions about the region have persisted in public discourse and debate. The term 'Arc of Instability' used in Australian foreign policy circles in the 2000s to describe a number of island governments that were in political strife (or perceived to be at risk) continued to perpetuate inaccurate notions of Melanesian culture and society as volatile, dangerous, and inferior (Kabutaulaka 2015: 202). Travel patterns also reveal that Asia is still foremost in Australian minds (Australian Government 2019b). In order to improve relations between Australian travellers and their Pacific hosts, a better understanding of the historical context which has shaped the ways in which Australians have imagined and represented their Melanesian neighbours for much of the twentieth century is needed.

Australian travel accounts are also part of a broader global corpus that presented stereotypical and racial descriptions of Melanesian savagery throughout the twentieth century, both in written travelogues and in magazines and promotional images. A longitudinal study of the *National Geographic Magazine* by Lutz and Collins (1993: 145) identified the dominance of masculine and primitive imagery of Melanesia which suggests that racial tropes and symbols are persistent. Despite the growth of the tourism industry bringing more visitors to the Melanesian islands and increasing public awareness of their diversity and culture, publishing has continued to satisfy a demand for sensationalized and essentialized representations of Pacific Islanders. Paul Theroux's (1992) bestseller, *The Happy Isles of Oceania*, has since been criticized for its scathing descriptions of Melanesians (see for example, Kabutaulaka 2015, Lyons 1994, Va'ai 2005). Subsequent travel writers like J. Maarten Troost continue to encourage savage stereotypes with titles like *The Sex Lives of Cannibals* (Troost 2004) and *Getting Stoned with Savages: A Trip Through the Islands of Fiji and Vanuatu* (Troost 2006).

Limited research has been conducted on how Pacific Islanders have responded to these skewed representations or how national tourism bodies have attempted to counter the narrative. A survey of contemporary tourism websites of the nations of Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu shows that some imagery has changed since the 1950s. Though images of decorated or armed Melanesian men persist, many destinations now emphasize the 'sun, surf and sand' as a key attraction, and there is greater emphasis on cultural diversity and natural wonders. The largest tourist destination, Fiji, continues to promote its 'friendly' nature in contrast to preconceptions of savagery. Nonetheless, the history of cannibalism remains a popular tourist attraction in the Pacific, and, in some cases, Pacific Islanders have taken advantage of this foreign fascination. For some national tourism organizations, cannibalism is a clever marketing ploy for foreign markets. For example, of the '10 Reasons Why You Must Visit Solomon Islands' listed by Tourism Solomons (2018), Number 1 is 'cultural/multicultural' and the explanation begins: 'Journey through an era where headhunters collected trophy skulls'. A search of the website for Vanuatu Tourism (2019) delivered 25 hits on the word 'cannibal'. There is also appropriation of the cannibal trope at the local level. In Fiji, for example, locals sell cannibal forks at souvenir shops in the same fashion as they did in the 1890s. There are also guided tours offered that are specifically marketed to the macabre, such as the 'Cannibal Cave Tour' of Naihehe Cave in

Fiji (Banivanua Mar 2016) or the Amelbati Cannibal Site Tour in Malekula, Vanuatu (Vanuatu Tourism 2019). Not surprisingly, there are attempts within Pacific Island countries to resist and challenge Western notions of savagery or cannibalism. The Fiji ecotourism company Talanoa Treks (2019), for example, actively challenges historical misconceptions by offering guided treks to remote villages, some of which have been involved in historic cases of murder or cannibalism. By providing opportunities for tourists to meet local villages, Talanoa Treks provides a more complex and unique understanding of Pacific history.

Conclusion and research implications

This chapter has presented a broad overview of the ways in which the trope of the savage has been perpetuated and adapted by travellers and the tourism industry since the late nineteenth century. Stereotypes of Melanesian savagery have been stubbornly persistent since they were first invented by Europeans in the 1800s, and a study of the travel writing produced by Australian travellers since the 1880s shows that visitors to the Pacific Islands were exposed to various representations of the savage which shaped their expectations of, and engagement with, the islands. The works of three professional authors, Beatrice Grimshaw, Jack McLaren, and Colin Simpson point to subtle changes in the way that Melanesian savagery was represented over time. The potential for settlement and economic development in the Pacific was a major factor at the turn of the century, and Melanesians were portrayed as inferior subjects to legitimize colonial exploitation. Yet, by the 1930s, more frequent contact encouraged a more complex portrayal of the savage, as travellers questioned familiar generalizations and acknowledged distinct island cultures and histories. Racial distinctions had been further undermined in later decades by these travellers, despite the tourism and publishing industries continuing to promote ideas of exotic savagery for their own commercial gain.

The contemporary implications of this historical review suggest that Australians, and Westerners in general, continue to fall back on familiar stereotypes when visiting the Pacific Islands. The tourism industry today continues to adapt and reinterpret the idea of the savage for their own purposes, and, in many cases, the figure is a convenient marketing ploy. An understanding of the historical contexts which shaped the Pacific Islands shows that each island has a distinct experience of colonialism and tourism which shapes the ways in which the savage trope has been applied by individual travellers. Rather than replicating generalizations, contemporary tourism ventures could provide a more localized and historically informed approach to tourism that complicates notions of Melanesian savagery and locates it within the colonial contexts that created it.

Future research in this area should be multidisciplinary and connect tourism studies with the discipline of history. Few scholars have taken a historical approach to Pacific tourism that seeks to understand the colonial roots of travel in the Pacific and the ways in which history continues to shape the contemporary tourism industry. Cultural and heritage tourism is an emerging and understudied subject in the Pacific, and little is known about how Pacific Island countries and local tourism operators negotiate and present history to visitors. Future critical discussions in this area must problematize the colonial narratives of the past and look at successful cases in the tourism industry in which ideas of Melanesian savagery are negotiated and challenged. For the national governments of the Pacific Island states, many of whom have celebrated or will soon celebrate 50 years since independence, efforts to challenge Western stereotypes are making progress. The challenges of 'basic infrastructure, fragile governments, violent inter-clan rivalry, poor international media exposure, rampant malaria and administrative indifference' (Douglas 2004: 47) are eroding as Pacific Island countries recognize the importance of tourism to expand and

strengthen their economies and societies. More work needs to be done to understand how the heritage and history of the Pacific Islands can be presented in a culturally sensitive way that challenges exaggerated myths of past violence and recognizes the ways in which Indigenous people have responded to and resisted foreign influence.

References

- Anderson, K. and C. Perrin (2008) 'Beyond savagery: The limits of Australian "Aboriginalism"', *Cultural Studies Review*, 14(2): 147–169.
- Australian Government (2019a) 'Fiji country brief', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Available online at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fiji/fiji-country-brief#:~:text=Overview,Suva%20is%20Fiji's%20capital> (accessed 20 November 2019).
- Australian Government (2019b) 'Australian international travellers: The places we go', Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Available online at <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/australian-international-travellers-the-places-we-go.pdf> (accessed 20 November 2019).
- Banivanua Mar, T. (2016) 'Performing cannibalism in the South Seas'. In: K. Alexeyeff and J. Taylor (eds.) *Touring Pacific Cultures*, Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 323–331.
- Bellwood, P., J.J. Fox and D. Tryon (2006) 'The Austronesians in history: Common origins and diverse transformations'. In: P. Bellwood, J.J. Fox and D. Tryon (eds.) *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANUE Press, pp. 1–16.
- BP Magazine (1928–1942) Sydney, Burns: Philp & Co.
- Day, A.G. (1967) *Louis Becke*, Melbourne: Hill of Content.
- Dixon, R. (1995) *Writing the Colonial Adventure: Race, Gender, and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dixon, R. (2001) *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, Representation, and Colonial Governance*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press and API Network.
- Dixon, R. (2007) 'What was travel writing? Frank Hurley and the Media contexts of early twentieth-century Australian travel writing', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 11(1): 59–81.
- Douglas, N. (1996) *They Came for Savages: 100 Years of Tourism in Melanesia*, Lismore: Southern Cross University Press.
- Douglas, N. (2004) 'Towards a history of tourism in Solomon Islands', *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 26(1&2): 29–50.
- Douglas, N. and N. Douglas (2004) *The Cruise Experience: Global and Regional Issues in Cruising*, Frenchs Forest: Pearson Education.
- Evans, J. (1993) 'Feminism, postcolonialism and Beatrice Grimshaw: A case study of a white woman in imperialism', *M.A. Thesis*, La Trobe University.
- Gardner, S.J. (1977) 'For love and money: Early writings of Beatrice Grimshaw, colonial Papua's woman of letters', *New Literature Review*, 1: 10–20.
- Grimshaw, B. (1907a) *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, London: Eveleigh Nash.
- Grimshaw, B. (1907b) *In the Strange South Seas*, London: Hutchinson & Co.
- Grimshaw, B. (1908) *Vaiti of the Islands*, New York: A. Wessels Co.
- Halter, N. (2016) 'Searching for the Land of the Golden Cocoa-Nut: Australian travel writing about commercial enterprise in the Pacific Islands', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 51(4): 375–391.
- Halter, N. (2017) 'Ambivalent mobilities in the Pacific: "savagery" and "civilisation" in the Australian inter-war imaginary', *Transfers*, 7(1): 34–51.
- Halter, N. (2021) *Australian Travellers in the South Seas*, Canberra: ANU Press.
- Howe, K.R. (1977) 'The fate of the savage in Pacific historiography', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 11(2): 137–154.
- Johnston, A. and M. Rolls (2016) *Travelling Home, Walkabout Magazine and Mid-Twentieth Century Australia*, London: Anthem Press.
- Jolly, M. (1997) 'From point Venus to Bali Ha'i: eroticism and exoticism in representations of the Pacific'. In: L. Manderson and M. Jolly (eds.) *Sites of Desire, Economies of Pleasure: Sexualities in Asia and the Pacific*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 99–122.
- Kabutaulaka, T. (2015) 'Re-presenting Melanesia: ignoble savages and Melanesian alter-natives', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 27(1): 110–145.
- Kwai, A. (2017) *Solomon Islanders in World War II: An Indigenous Perspective*, Canberra: ANU Press.

- Kuttainen, V., S. Liebich and S. Galletly (2018) *The Transported Imagination: Australian Interwar Magazines and the Geographical Imaginaries of Colonial Modernity*, New York: Cambria Press.
- Lake, M. (2015) 'The Australian dream of an island Empire: Race, reputation and resistance', *Australian Historical Studies*, 46(3): 410–424.
- Lal, B.V. and K. Fortune (eds.) (2000) *The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Laracy, H. (2013) 'Beatrice Grimshaw (1870–1953): Pride and prejudice in Papua'. In: H. Laracy (ed.), *Watriama and Co: Further Pacific Islands Portraits*, Canberra: ANU Press, pp. 141–169.
- Lutz, C. and J.L. Collins (1993) *Reading National Geographic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lyons, P. (1994) 'Review of the Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific, by P. Theroux', *Manoa*, 6(2): 262–265.
- McLaren, J. (1923) *My Odyssey*, London: Ernest Benn.
- Moore, C. (2019) *Tulagi: Pacific Outpost of British Empire*, Canberra: ANU Press.
- Russell, P. (2010) *Savage or Civilised?: Manners in Colonial Australia*, Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Simpson, C. (1951) *Adam in Ochre: Inside Aboriginal Australia*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson.
- Simpson, C. (1953) *Adam with Arrows: Inside New Guinea*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson.
- Simpson, C. (1954) *Adam in Plumes*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson.
- Simpson, C. (1955) *Islands of Men: A Six-Part Book about Life in Melanesia*, Sydney: Halstead Press.
- Smith, B. (1985) *European Vision and the South Pacific*, Sydney: Harper & Row.
- South Pacific Tourism Organisation (2019) *Annual Visitor Arrivals Report 2018*, Suva: SPTO.
- Sydney Morning Herald (1884) 'Clipper yacht Elsea, for New Guinea', 29 September. Available online at <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article28369242> (accessed 10 June 2019).
- Talanoa Treks (2019) Official website, Suva, Fiji. Available online at <https://talanoa-treks-fiji.com/> (accessed 22 November 2019).
- Tcherkezoff, S. (2003) 'A long and unfortunate voyage towards the "invention" of the Melanesia/Polynesia Distinction 1595–1832', Translated from French by Isabel Ollivier, *The Journal of Pacific History*, 38(2): 175–196.
- Theroux, P. (1992) *The Happy Isles of Oceania: Paddling the Pacific*, London: Penguin Books.
- Thompson, R.C. (1980) *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820–1920*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.
- Thompson, R.C. (1998) *Australia and the Pacific Islands*, Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.
- Tourism Solomons (2018) '10 reasons why you must visit Solomon Islands'. Available online at <https://www.visitsolomons.com.sb/10-reasons-why-you-must-visit-solomon-islands/> (accessed 22 November 2019).
- Troost, J.M. (2006) *Getting Stoned with Savages: A Trip Through the Islands of Fiji and Vanuatu*, New York: Broadway Books.
- Troost, J.M. (2004) *The Sex Lives of Cannibals*, New York: Broadway Books.
- Va'ai, S. (2005) 'Pacific utopias and national identities in the twenty-first century', *PORTAL: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 2(2): 1–23.
- Vanuatu tourism (2019) 'Amelbati cannibal site tour'. Available online at <https://www.vanuatu.travel/en/amelbati-cannibal-site-tour> (accessed 22 November 2019).
- Walkabout (1934–1978) Melbourne: Australian National Travel Association.
- Weir, C. (2013) "'Deeply interested in these children whom you have not seen": The Protestant Sunday School View of the Pacific, 1900–1940', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 48(1): 43–62.
- White, R. (2012) 'Simpson, Edwin Colin (1908–1983)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Available online at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simpson-edwin-colin-15926/text27127> (accessed 13 July 2019).