

Introduction

The truth is that in the places where ‘every one’ goes, almost no man sees with his own eyes ... The celebrated spot ... is like a photograph which a countless number of others, all more or less similar, have been superimposed in the well known ‘composite’ style ... In the whole blurred, worn-out picture, each man’s personal impression counts for just another touch of shade set upon a shadow that has long been there ... It is impossible to admire by the battalion, and yet enjoy to the full that sense of an individuality enlarged by experiences absolutely new, that is the real heart of travel-pleasure.¹

Beatrice Grimshaw is known as one of Australia’s most famous travel writers of the early twentieth century. Beginning as a sports journalist in Dublin in 1891, Grimshaw then found success as a prolific travel writer of the Pacific Islands. She travelled from ‘Fiji to the Cannibal Islands’ and across the ‘Strange South Seas’ before settling in the territory of Papua for 27 years and ultimately retiring to a small town near Bathurst, New South Wales. Although Grimshaw’s career followed an unusual trajectory, her experience of travel resonates with countless global travellers who have described crossing unfamiliar landscapes and oceans and who have faced the choice of following well-worn routes or forging their own path—or, as she has explained, the choice between the collective memory or knowledge of ‘the celebrated spot’ and ‘that sense of an individuality enlarged by experiences absolutely new’. However, her observations were also mediated through a particular cultural and historical lens. A close reading of her observations may tell us something about the individual that she was, the time in which she lived and her distinct view of the world and place in it, but can she be claimed as ‘Australian’ if her national identity was rendered ambiguous and fluid by her mobility? A similar question

1 Beatrice Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1907), 168.

could be asked of the ‘Australian’ audience who consumed her books for education and entertainment and of the literary context in which her accounts emerged. More importantly, what can travel writing tell us about the collective ‘Australian’ knowledge of the region, and how did travellers like Grimshaw shape popular notions about the Pacific Islands?

Grimshaw’s contribution forms part of a more extensive collection of Australian travel writing about the Pacific Islands that has yet to be studied in detail. Whether used to describe an individual or a body of literature, the category of ‘Australian’ is contested, and its origins may not be simply traced to the nation’s formal independence in 1901. In fact, notions of a distinctive national identity emerged well before the federation of the six colonies—the settlements that owed much to the British colonisers who claimed the continent in 1788 and less to the first inhabitants who had lived there for approximately 50,000 years. It is generally acknowledged that Australians have always been, and continue to be, exceptionally mobile. Despite the relative proximity between Australians and their Pacific neighbours, their relationship has not been studied by historians to the same extent that Australia’s relationship with Asia or Europe has warranted. This may be due to the immense diversity of Pacific Island cultures and the complex web of European colonial masters who tried to control them. Or perhaps it reflects the dominant European narrative of the Australian colonies and the predominance of Asia in Australian perceptions of the Asia-Pacific region. This book re-centres the spotlight on the Pacific Islands, which have played as important a role as Asia or Europe in shaping Australians’ notions about the world and their place in it.

Australian engagement with the Pacific Islands intensified during a crucial period of Australia’s formation and growth, from c. 1880 to 1941. Situated on the periphery of the British empire, colonial Australian travellers began to consider themselves the centre of an emerging Australian–Pacific empire. A growing body of literature that was produced in the Australian colonies during the late nineteenth century reveals the development of a more robust national consciousness (politically and culturally), with the Pacific Islands featuring in public debates about federation, nationhood and regional expansion. However, the Pacific War, which commenced in 1941, has tended to overshadow Australians’ much longer-standing relationship with the Pacific Islands. This historic period also coincides with the expansion of steamship routes between Australia and the

Pacific Islands. These routes responded to, and facilitated, the growth of Australian engagement with the Pacific region, including in the areas of trade, business, Christian outreach and colonial administration in the region. Consequently, more Australians than ever before came into contact with the Pacific region and its peoples, which created new possibilities for encounters and exchange. It is surprising that no historian has considered the corpus of travel writing itself to understand Australia–Pacific relations.

The travel accounts that were produced demonstrate that Australians were more closely connected to the Pacific Islands than had previously been acknowledged. The level of engagement was much deeper and more widespread than a purely political or economic relationship. It infiltrated popular language and literature, as well as public discourse. Travel writing reflected how close Australians living on the eastern seaboard were to their Pacific neighbours, the constant exchange of goods, peoples and notions across the Pacific Ocean, and a broader awareness within Australia of how significant the Pacific Islands were in their national history, as well as in European fantasy. These travel writing texts provide a reminder of the historical legacy of early European and Australian encounters in the Pacific Islands, signifying that these places and people were as familiar, if not more so, than other exotic backdrops of Africa or Asia.

Travel Writing, the Pacific and History

‘Travel writing’ remains a highly contested term, reflecting ambiguous literary content and form. The purpose and style of travel writing have changed over time, and the category today can encompass both records of exploration and more modern tourist reflections. Prior to 1900, travel writing was more commonly termed ‘voyages and travels’ in the English vernacular—and, to this day, library catalogues continue to offer a diverse set of categories and subjects for this corpus. This is reflected in the use of terminology such as ‘travel memoir’, ‘travel narrative’, ‘travelogue’, ‘travel magazine’, ‘travel guide’ or simply ‘travels’. The ambiguous status of travel writing has left the category open to different interpretations from the disciplines of literature, history, anthropology, linguistics, geography and sociology. It has thus been labelled as a ‘genre of genres’, a ‘hybrid genre’, a ‘subspecies of memoir’ or, alternatively, as a theme or discourse rather

than a genre. Its diversity is reflected in the numerous edited collections dedicated to the subject, which have demonstrated that efforts to define and limit travel writing to a set of specific criteria are fraught.²

Efforts to articulate what exactly constitutes travel writing have often focused on the category's intellectual or literary value. Once regarded as a sub-literary genre, travel writing began to feature in the works of historical and cultural revisionists, such as in analyses of discourse and representations of Roland Barthes, Hayden White, Michel Foucault and Edward Said.³ Finally accepted as a historical source, travel writing was adopted as a useful tool for postcolonialists who were interested in revealing the processes and structures that underpinned imperial endeavours. Said's landmark study of European colonial discourses about Asia identified travel writing to be a major, influential component in the construction of a 'second-order knowledge'—a term Said used to explain 'Europe's collective day-dream of the Orient'.⁴ Following this cultural turn, the literary criticisms of notable scholars such as Peter Hulme and Mary Louise Pratt have highlighted the colonial discourse that is inherent in the language and judgements of European travellers. Travel writing is now commonly acknowledged as having played an informal yet significant role in European colonial exploits overseas, not only revealing the activities and attitudes of the travellers abroad but also creating a sense of excitement about European expansionism.⁵

2 Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'New Worlds and Renaissance Ethnology', *History and Anthropology* 6, nos 2–3 (1993): 157–97; Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), doi.org/10.3998/mpub.16396; Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travelling between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Jan Borm, 'Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology', in *Perspectives on Travel Writing*, ed. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs (London: Routledge, 2004), 13–26, doi.org/10.4324/9781315246970-2. See also Ros Pesman, David Walker and Richard White, eds, *The Oxford Book of Australian Travel Writing* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996); Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), doi.org/10.1017/ccol052178140x; Tim Youngs, ed., *Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Filling the Blank Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2006); Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Tim Youngs, *Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Carl Thompson, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

3 See Mary Blaine Campbell, 'Travel Writing and Its Theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 262.

4 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Pantheon Books, 1977), 52.

5 Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London: Methuen, 1986); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

The first Europeans who traversed and described the Pacific Ocean in the sixteenth century were influenced by a long tradition of travel accounts with biblical and classical origins. As Neil Rennie demonstrated, popular notions of the Pacific Islands in European literature and mythology can be traced back to Greco-Roman texts and concepts (e.g. Elysium, Atlantis or the Golden Age), evidencing the ‘desire of men to locate the imaginary historical past in the real geographical present’.⁶ In addition to the more well-known accounts of explorers, the reports of itinerant merchants, pirates, captives, castaways, diplomats and scholars were influential in reshaping European ideals. Their voyages to the Pacific Islands formed part of a broader narrative about the discovery of the ‘new world’ that, according to Eric Leed, stimulated a ‘cultural reorientation’ in Renaissance Europe; it shifted the focus away from the traditional centres of Western civilisation (Greece, Rome, Egypt, India and Palestine) to the new-found peripheries. These peripheries ‘became the site of cultural origins, in contrast to which Europeans defined themselves and crystallized a cultural self-image’, and the information that was produced ‘ultimately transformed ancient categories of order’.⁷

In light of these encouraging voyages of discovery outside Europe, this period encapsulates the time when travel writing as a genre began to form. The chronological report emerged as a common format and symbolised a new systematic form of observation among travellers—one that would soon become the primary method for Europeans to investigate and observe the world. The work of English philosopher and scientist Francis Bacon was especially influential in the sixteenth century, as he was one of the first to advocate a scientific methodology for travel that would become increasingly regulated and disciplined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Discoveries in the Pacific Islands profoundly influenced scientific thinking in Europe, arguably more so than any other continental expeditions at the time. With the drive for colonial competition and expansion in the Pacific, a more precise, scientific and utilitarian form of writing was adopted not only by Pacific explorers and colonial administrators, but also ‘ordinary’ travellers such as sailors, missionaries and traders.

6 Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 6.

7 Eric J Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 135.

The sixteenth century also witnessed the emergence of tourists within Europe, a new group who travelled for pleasure rather than necessity and who shaped travel writing accordingly. Although pilgrims may also be considered the ancestors of modern tourists, scholars have typically attributed the ‘grand tour’ as evidence of this shift in the form and content of travel writing. Extending from previous traditions that were established by errant knights and wandering scholars of medieval Europe, the grand tour was a social ritual in which young English male elites travelled Europe along well-worn routes after university to visit the centres of civilisation and engage in sexual encounters. These young elites were often required to keep a journal, which introduced the new philosophical notion that knowledge was rooted in experience and that travel was considered a method of self-improvement.⁸ It was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that the emergent middle classes in Europe increasingly engaged in tourism (corresponding to a growth in travel writing), and only in the late nineteenth century that a similar process began to develop in the Pacific Islands. Since these tropical destinations were relatively new and unknown, the ensuing travel accounts were initially valued as a form of education and were widely considered valid contributions to the public record. Yet, when faced with the unknown, European travellers continued to rely on European conventions and traditions to observe and describe the Islands.

The tension between conformity and individuality underscores many travel accounts and is often expressed in the distinction between ‘traveller’ and ‘tourist’. John Urry, Dean McCannell and James Buzard have unpacked the processes of tourism and the ‘tourist’ label, explaining the gradual development of a distinction between *reactive* tourists who were associated with conventional sightseeing and *proactive* travellers who were considered superior because they followed their own routes rather than the ‘beaten track’.⁹ A similar distinction emerged in the Pacific in the early twentieth century in response to greater numbers of people travelling in the region recreationally, thus increasing fears of homogenisation among travellers and placing pressure on travel writers to validate and distinguish

8 Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler*, 184; James Buzard, ‘The Grand Tour and After (1660–1840)’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Peter Hulme and Tim Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 37–52.

9 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications: 1990); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books Inc., 1976); James Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

their accounts from others. These structural processes have since been illuminated by sociological and anthropological approaches, many of which have informed the field of tourism studies by using quantitative methods to test social and cultural theories of change. Although they have been useful for understanding the universal experiences of travel, tourism studies in the Pacific Islands context have tended to concentrate on contemporary trends. They have been criticised for traditionally focusing on static destinations rather than mobilities and for relying on reified notions of tourism rather than for acknowledging complexity.¹⁰ In her work on Hawaiian tourism, Jane Desmond called for ‘the need for greater specificity in situating acts of tourist consumption within a wider frame of historical relations between specific groups of consumers and the places and populations they visit’.¹¹

The changing nature and purpose of travel over time has complicated attempts to locate and define the narratives that are produced from it, particularly when the literature has so often incorporated fictional elements. The ambiguous relationship between fact and fiction is a common feature of most travel writing and its criticisms; Thompson argued that ‘a degree of fictionality is thus inherent in all travel accounts’, and White regarded most travel narratives as ‘fictions of factual representation’.¹² The Pacific was no exception to the rule—it was torn between popular European imagination and a growing desire to explore and categorise the Islands scientifically.¹³ In some cases, the manuscripts of Pacific explorers returning home to Europe were rewritten and embellished to make them more interesting and adventurous. In other cases, a physical journey was not always a prerequisite, and narratives of discovery provided material for philosophers and so-called ‘armchair travellers’ to adapt. The publication

10 Jane C Desmond, ‘Afterword: Ambivalence, Ambiguity and the “Wicked Problem” of Pacific Tourist Studies’, in *Touring Pacific Cultures*, ed. Kalissa Alexeyeff and John Taylor (Canberra: ANU Press, 2016), 444, doi.org/10.22459/tpc.12.2016.31. See also John K Walton, ‘Histories of Tourism’, in *The SAGE Handbook of Tourism Studies*, ed. Tazmin Jamal and Mike Robinson (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 115–29, doi.org/10.4135/9780857021076.n7.

11 Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), xix.

12 Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 28; Hayden White, ‘The Fictions of Factual Representation’, in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in cultural criticism* (Baltimore: Publisher, 1978), 121–34.

13 For further discussion of European literature about the Pacific Islands, see Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (Sydney: Harper & Row, 1985); Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts*; Vanessa Smith and Rod Edmond, eds, *Islands in History and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is conventionally regarded as the defining moment of Pacific Island travel writing, as his work stimulated a new interest in adventure and the exotic. Prior to Defoe's publication, literary interest in mythical and exotic islands was mainly utopian and influenced by fictional or satirical works, such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516–1519), William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627). The emergence of a new survival literature (the 'Robinsonade') included first-person narratives of shipwrecks, castaways and mutinies that offered the illusion of truth by sometimes being based on real shipwreck narratives, while also incorporating mythical creatures, pygmies and giants.¹⁴ Legitimated by the 'pseudoscience of observation', the heroic figure of the Robinsonade was modified to the form of the gentlemanly naturalist or scientist, and the use of scientific language and detailed observations increasingly featured in fictional works.¹⁵

Given this entangled web of discourses, it is unsurprising that scholars have been reluctant to pursue travel writing as a reliable source for historical analysis. As Ryota Nishino noted, the dangers with travel writing are that it can easily be dismissed as a 'genre of "pseudos"—pseudo-ethnography, pseudo-biography, pseudo-literary and pseudo-historical' and that, in this dismissal, we lose a more 'textured' appreciation of these genres.¹⁶ Or, as Carl Thompson expressed, much academic discussion of travel writing has tended to focus on critique: 'They regard the form as typically seeking not to reflect or explore contemporary realities, but rather to escape them'.¹⁷ This trend towards critique has overlooked travel writing's potential to inform our understanding of mobility as a central force in historical transformations. Cultural histories of travel—notably those by Jas Elsner, Joan-Pau Rubiés and Eric Leed—have identified global trends and patterns to expose the cultural paradigms that travel writing has built and challenged over time. Large-scale studies of travel in the African and Asian regions also highlight similarities in the experiences of colonial

14 Chris Ballard, 'The Art of Encounter: Verisimilitude in the Imaginary Exploration of Interior New Guinea, 1725–1876', in *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, ed. Margaret Jolly (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2009), 224, doi.org/10.22459/oe.07.2009.08.

15 Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, 24; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 26.

16 Ryota Nishino, 'The Self-Promotion of a Maverick Travel Writer: Suzuki Tsunenori and His Southern Pacific Islands Travelogue, *Nanyō tanken jikki*', *Studies in Travel Writing* 20, no. 4 (2016): 379, doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2016.1264356.

17 Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 5.

travellers.¹⁸ In the Pacific, Ngaire Douglas's *They Came for Savages* (1996) is one of the few histories of tourism that refocuses on tourism's origins in the colonial period.¹⁹ Although the subfields of transportation and technology history occasionally draw on travel writing as a source, it is the social histories of colonialism and empire that have greatly benefited from acknowledging these mobilities—and these subfields now present imperialism more accurately as a contested and fluid network rather than a static and monolithic system. Historian Tony Ballantyne suggested that 'webs of empire' is a more suitable and integrative notion of colonialism that also acknowledges the imperial connections between multiple nodes and localised encounters that existed outside the metropole.²⁰ Nicholas Thomas advocated a similar approach by identifying colonialism as a cultural process that was often disputed and conflicted; he noted that travel reinforces colonialism at the same time that it is 'an enlarging and liberating process that unsettles the confidence of authority'.²¹ Travel writing is thus increasingly identified as a vehicle for colonialism and as a highly contested and contradictory space in which European travellers, authors and audiences negotiated colonial legacies. The same argument can be applied to individual travellers who cannot always be compartmentalised into convenient categories and whose intentions were not always exploitative.

Although historians have more frequently discussed the subject of travel in the Pacific Islands in recent years, none have made travel writing their primary focus. Conversely, this book's focus on a specific corpus of Australian travel writing locates authors and their texts within certain historical contexts and discourses and compares key experiences in the hope of revealing underlying issues. It does not concern itself with

18 Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler*. See also Joan-Pau Rubiés, 'Travel Writing as a Genre: Facts, Fictions and the Invention of a Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Europe', *Journeys* 1, nos 1–2 (2000): 5–35, doi.org/10.3167/146526000782488036; Johannes Fabian, *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520221222.001.0001; Steve Clark and Paul Smethurst, eds, *Asian Crossings: Travel Writing on China, Japan and Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008).

19 Ngaire Douglas, *They Came for Savages: 100 Years of Tourism in Melanesia* (Lismore: Southern Cross University Press, 1996); Ngaire Douglas and Norman Douglas, 'P and O's Pacific', *Journal of Tourism Studies* 7, no. 2 (1996): 2–14.

20 Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Wellington: UBC Press, 2012).

21 Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

the achievements or failings of individual writers, nor with providing a comprehensive history of Australian tourism or colonialism in the Pacific. The discipline of history is well placed to situate travel writing more meaningfully within the contexts in which it arises, in which the lives and experiences of travel writers are connected to broader trends and patterns over time. A historical approach to travel writing offers a suitable compromise between the universal experiences of travel that sociologists and anthropologists attempt to define and the specific textual analysis of a work and its author that is espoused by literature studies. Such an approach recognises that travellers, in the act of writing, also seek to maintain a balance between past and present, between the ‘desire to come to terms with a complex world in transformation and its nostalgic need to restore the imaginary site of a “simpler” past’.²² Eric Leed described this as a ‘tendency of modern Europeans to equate differences in space with differences in time—to “historicize”’.²³ If we consider travel writing a form of memory through which people construct and legitimise cultural identity, then history is apropos to studying these cultural interactions. As Jeannette Mageo described it:

Too often cultural identity is conceived as flat—as an ideological presentation of culture. When one re-examines cultural identity in light of memory, however, these identities appear as sites of transit between layers of historical experience.²⁴

These tensions between past and present, fact and fiction, and individual and collective travel experience are an inherent part of travel writing and will thus be a constant theme throughout this book. Studying Australia, as a periphery of empire and as an emerging colonial power, offers the opportunity to examine some of these ambiguities and complexities of travel and the European colonial experience in a new light.

Australian Travel Writing

The emergence of travel writing in Australia is significant because travel has been a pivotal force in shaping the continent’s history. The *Oxford Handbook of Australian Travel Writing* noted that ‘travel has always been

22 Holland and Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters*, 24.

23 Leed, *The Mind of the Traveler*, 172.

24 Jeannette Mageo, ed., *Cultural Memory: Reconfiguring History and Identity in the Postcolonial Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 2, doi.org/10.1515/9780824841874.

central to the experience of living in Australia'.²⁵ Post-structuralist and postcolonial studies that encourage an exploration of cultural transmission, flexible identity, mobility and dissolving borders are especially relevant to Australians, whose experiences of travel have often been shaped by an ambiguous sense of place. From the first inhabitants of the continent to its more recent European colonisers, Australians have been defined by journeys of migration and are distinguished by their exceptional mobility. In literature, Australians idealised the explorer and the wanderer, acknowledging a proud maritime heritage and celebrating the pioneers of the inland frontier.²⁶

Although Australian historiography has been previously criticised as isolationist, Australian historians have slowly adopted a more regional focus that acknowledges the international encounters and exchanges that shaped the country, including those connections with the Pacific Islands.²⁷ Building on earlier political and economic histories of Australia's relationship with the Pacific Islands,²⁸ these regional or 'transnational' histories have been useful in highlighting the crucial role that the Pacific Islands played in the development of an Australian cultural identity. Similar conclusions have been made by scholars who have explored Australian connections with

25 Pesman, Walker and White, *The Oxford Book of Australian Travel Writing*, ix.

26 Pesman, Walker and White, *The Oxford Book of Australian Travel Writing*, xii; Richard White, 'Travel, Writing and Australia', *Studies in Travel Writing* 11, no. 1 (2007): 6, 10, doi.org/10.1080/13645145.2007.9634816.

27 Donald Denoon, 'The Isolation of Australian History', *Australian Historical Studies*, 22, no. 87 (1986): 252–60, doi.org/10.1080/10314618608595747; Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein-Smith and Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* (Oxford: Wiley, 2000); Donald Denoon, 'Re-Membering Australasia: A Repressed Memory', *Australian Historical Studies*, 34, no. 122 (2003): 290–304, doi.org/10.1080/10314610308596256; Marilyn Lake, 'Colonial Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region', in *The Cambridge History of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 535–59, doi.org/10.1017/cho9781107445758.025. See also the first seven articles from *Australian Historical Studies* 46, vol. 3 (2015): 337–439.

28 Clinton Hartley Grattan, *The Southwest Pacific Since 1900, A Modern History: Australia, New Zealand, the Islands, Antarctica* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963); William Roger Louis and William S Livingston, *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands since the First World War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Roger C Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820–920* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1980); Roger Thompson, *Australia and the Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 1998).

Asia.²⁹ Richard White's work was crucial in this cultural turn because it encouraged an examination of how collective and individual identities of Australians are shaped by travel.³⁰ The significance of mobility was well known to Pacific historians—many of whom trained in the first school of Pacific history that was established in Australia in the 1960s and who continued to study the early colonial contacts that constituted 'Australia's Pacific Frontier'. It resonated with Pacific historians such as Donald Denoon, who argued that 'the essence and the implications of many Australian ideas became manifest *only* [his emphasis] in those extreme situations which Australians encountered abroad'.³¹

Of course, national identity is an elusive and fluid concept that historians find challenging to articulate. In her review of travel writing theory, Mary Blaine Campbell noted that travel literature was significant not only for highlighting multiple different views that challenged conventional or official narratives but also for revising theoretical approaches that have been based on 'locatable cultures, bounded nations, and the imperial past'.³² This is especially true for colonial Australia prior to federation, as demonstrated by the maritime histories of Frances Steel, Cindy McCreery and Kirsten McKenzie. Steel's history of the Union Steamship Company in New Zealand extended beyond conventional business histories of shipping to explore the problems of national identity and colonial power in light of the regional connections that were facilitated by steamships in the Pacific. This was an approach that consciously sought to avoid the 'conceptual and spatial narrowing' of a nationalist history and to decentre

29 For more information on Australia's relationship with Asia, see Neville Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific 1901–1914* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1976); Neville Meaney, *Australia and the Wider World: A Documentary History from the 1870s to the 1970s* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1985); David Walker, Julia Horne and Adrian Vickers, eds, *Australian Perceptions of Asia* (Kensington: UNSW Press, 1990), 65–79; Alison Broinowski, *The Yellow Lady: Australian Impressions of Asia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992); David Walker and Agnieszka Sobocinska, eds, *Australia's Asia: From Yellow Peril to Asian Century* (Crawley: UWA Publishing, 2012); Agnieszka Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours: Australians in Asia* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2014); Agnieszka Sobocinska, 'Innocence Lost and Paradise Regained: Tourism to Bali and Australian Perceptions of Asia', *History Australia* 8, no. 2 (2011): 199–222, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2011.116668380.

30 Richard White, *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity, 1688–1980* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981); Richard White, *On Holidays: A History of Getting Away in Australia* (North Melbourne: Pluto Press, 2005); White, 'Travel, Writing and Australia', 1–14; Richard White, 'Time Travel: Australian Tourists and Britain's Past', *Portal* 10, no. 1 (2013): 1–25.

31 John MR Young, *Australia's Pacific Frontier: Economic and Cultural Expansion into the Pacific: 1795–1885* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1967); Denoon, 'The Isolation of Australian History', 258.

32 Campbell, 'Travel Writing and Its Theory', 262.

imperial history.³³ Although this book shares many similarities with Steel's subject matter and recognises the contested, transnational space in which Australians were moving, it makes the individual travellers its central focus, rather than the ships that carried them. These 'ordinary' travellers, as depicted by the work of Agnieszka Sobocinska in her study of Australians in Asia, highlight 'the ways in which personal experience intersected with broader political patterns'.³⁴

Australian accounts are distinct in a broader travel writing context because they offer insights from the periphery of empire. Studies of colonisation in the Pacific Islands have tended to focus on how the colonised were represented by the colonisers, with little recognition of how the colonisers imagined themselves as conforming to this racial and cultural hierarchy.³⁵ This is the point at which Australians, simultaneously coloniser and colonised, can offer a more nuanced perspective of colonialism and the racial hierarchies that underpin it. This is especially significant in terms of the 'White Australia' policy—a term referring to a series of immigration and quarantine legislation that was introduced by the national government from 1901 and that lasted until the mid-twentieth century. One of the first policies of its kind in the world, it formally enshrined the superiority of white Australians and implemented protective measures that were designed to promote racial segregation.³⁶ The undesirability of Asian immigration was an important political motivation at the time. Writing in 1912, Australian journalist Frank Fox warned that 'Australia is at once the fortress which the White Race has thinly garrisoned against an Asiatic advance southward, and the most tempting prize to inspire the Asiatic to that advance'.³⁷ Race was a persistent underlying theme in Australian travel writing of this period, as revealed in Sobocinska's study of Australian travellers to Asia; Australians believed that they were inferior to the British at home, yet they were considered Europeans and

33 Frances Steel, 'Oceania under Steam: Maritime Cultures, Colonial Histories 1870s–1910s' (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2007), 22; Frances Steel, *Oceania under Steam: Sea Transport and the Cultures of Colonialism, c. 1870–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Cindy McCreery and Kirsten McKenzie, 'The Australian Colonies in a Maritime World', in *The Cambridge History of Australia*, ed. Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 560–84, doi.org/10.1017/cho9781107445758.026.

34 Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours*, 2.

35 Nicholas Thomas and Richard Eves, *Bad Colonists—The South Seas Letters of Vernon Lee Walker & Louis Becke* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 79.

36 Marilyn Lake, 'The Australian Dream of an Island Empire: Race, Reputation and Resistance', *Australian Historical Studies* 46, no. 3 (2015): 410–24, doi.org/10.1080/1031461x.2015.1075222.

37 Frank Fox, *Problems of the Pacific* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1912), 107.

were reassured of their white superiority abroad.³⁸ Similar tensions and experiences can be found in accounts of the Pacific Islands, with travel accounts confirming and contradicting notions of racial superiority and progress.

The benefits of studying the periphery perspective also apply to the understanding of class and gender. Studies of the Australian version of the grand tour (often framed as Australians' return to their ancestral origins in Europe) have revealed that women travelled as frequently as men, unlike the conventional European tradition, and that travel was not just for the aristocracy, but for all classes.³⁹ Geographically far from Europe, the Australian and Pacific colonies were consequently less restricted by social requirements or expectations, so they attracted a diverse group of travellers.⁴⁰ Of the 81 travel writers whose ages are known, 16 were in their 20s, 21 were in their 30s, 17 in their 40s, 14 in their 50s and 12 were older than 60 years. Travellers were also diverse in occupation: they were businessmen, politicians, academics, journalists, artists, opportunists, soldiers, seamen, traders and teachers. 'Opportunists'—a term used here to describe wanderers without any particular aim, or those travelling in search of employment or residence—constituted the highest proportion of travel writers in this book's study (with 18 in total, followed by journalists, who numbered 12). Travel accounts reveal that travellers to the Islands were not restricted to a specific class or social group, and the relative isolation of the region did not discourage those with limited means. In fact, the Pacific was often considered a land of opportunity for those seeking to climb the social ladder. Male travel writers may have outnumbered their female counterparts in the Pacific Islands (they represented over 80 per cent), but it is unclear whether this bias reflects travel patterns in general or the nature of the publishing industry at the time. For certain, the development of trans-Pacific cruises rendered travel much safer and more accessible to a greater number of female travellers. The few female

38 Sobocinska, *Visiting the Neighbours*, 28.

39 Ros Pesman, *Duty Free: Australian Women Abroad* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996); Anne Rees, 'Ellis Island in the Pacific: Encountering America in Hawai'i, 1920s–1950s' (paper presented at the Travel, The Middlebrow Imagination, Australasia-Pacific 1918–50 Colloquium, James Cook University, Queensland, 29 November 2013); Angela Woollacott, "'All This Is the Empire, I Told Myself': Australian Women's Voyages "Home" and the Articulation of Colonial Whiteness', *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 4 (1997): 1003–29, doi.org/10.2307/2170627; Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Laura Olcelli, *Questions of Authority: Italian and Australian Travel Narratives of the Long Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2018), doi.org/10.4324/9780203709719.

40 Penny Russell, *Savage or Civilised?: Manners in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

travel accounts that do exist confirm that Australian women in the Pacific were resilient and intrepid travellers. This further evidences the need for a more nuanced understanding of Australian travellers—one that does not bind them to a specific group or category.

The Australian perspective of the Pacific changed considerably between c. 1880 and 1941, which must be considered in the context of changing patterns of mobility, political and economic changes in the Pacific and Australia, and cultural shifts in literature and publishing. Some travel writing accounts were produced by colonial Australians before 1880, but they were intermittent and limited in scale compared to those written after the 1880s, when the Australian colonies' interest in the Pacific Islands peaked. Three general phases can be discerned in this 60-year period, though they often overlap.

The few accounts that were written in the late nineteenth century continued to exhibit European myths and stereotypes of a romanticised and alluring Pacific, in which the Islands were appropriated as settings for fantastical tales of savagery and adventure. Travel was irregular and intermittent at this time, so these accounts were influential sources of information to the Australian colonial reader, even if they relied on stereotypes. Deeply entrenched tropes of the 'noble savage' and 'ignoble savage' persisted well into the early twentieth century, influencing public opinion and underscoring domestic and regional issues such as the Queensland labour trade and the White Australia policy.

Travel writing increased dramatically from the 1890s to 1914, encouraged by economic prosperity in Australia, the growth of publishing, steamship and tourism industries, and a national self-confidence and optimism that followed the federation of the colonies in 1901. Travellers from the Australian continent in the decades before and after Federation began to identify themselves as being distinct from their European origins. Possessing their own ideological baggage regarding a distinctively Australian form of masculinity, progress, purity and innocence, these travellers began to write accounts that were distinct from conventional European observations. They were also aware of the colonial rivalries in the region since the late nineteenth century, their descriptions often containing judgements regarding the successes or failures of colonial rule and, in some cases, the potential benefits of a new Australian imperialism.

The bulk of Australian travel writing was produced during the interwar period that followed World War I. Tourism industries responded to the new demand for travel in, and through, the Pacific Islands and increasingly more travellers produced travel accounts, in which they attempted to distinguish themselves in a competitive commercial market. Some of the accounts began to question previously held assumptions about the Pacific and Australia's role within the region. These accounts evidence the gradual shift away from conventional stereotypes that emphasised Islander inferiority and savagery to a more humanistic identification with them. This change may represent a 'cultural maturity' in Australian literature that was prompted by the massive social and economic upheaval after World War I and Australia's newly acquired mandates in the Pacific.⁴¹ A close study of travel writing provides additional evidence of a general weariness of exaggerated and overused Pacific tropes, compounded by the proliferation of travellers whose experiences did not match their expectations. Travel writers who challenged conventional perspectives of the Pacific were still a minority by 1941, but their critical attitude would reappear with greater frequency in subsequent decades. The beginning of the Pacific War in 1941 restricted Australian mobility in the region and the construction of island airstrips facilitated the growth of air transportation after the war, which permanently changed subsequent Australian travel to the region. After 1945, popular literature about the Pacific increasingly focused on war themes, with sites of conflict becoming memorials and tourist attractions.

Sources and Categories

Strict definitions of travel writing are subjective and problematic, and they risk excluding valuable sources. A historical approach to travel writing should be inclusive and flexible, which is why this book prefers the 'guiding principle' proposed by Tim Youngs:

Travel writing consists of predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author–narrator. It includes discussion of works that some may regard as genres in their own right ... but it distinguishes these from other types of narrative in which travel is narrated by a third party or is imagined.⁴²

41 Andrew Hassam, *Through Australian Eyes: Colonial Perceptions of Imperial Britain* (Carlton: Sussex Academic Press, 2000), 167.

42 Youngs, *Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 3.

Such a broad approach is important because how texts are read has changed over time, as is reflected in the different catalogues of archives and libraries in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji that were consulted during research. Such texts included published memoirs, autobiographies, travelogues and unpublished accounts (e.g. letters, diaries, notebooks and draft manuscripts). The classification of texts was not always clear—some were clearly labelled by the authors as ‘notes’, ‘observations’ or ‘accounts’ of travel, while others were described as ‘reminiscences’, ‘musings’, ‘opinions’, ‘reflections’, ‘confessions’ or ‘memories’. Interested only in the personal and ‘ordinary’ experiences of travel, I avoided texts that were written by authors with a vested interest (e.g. missionaries, scientific researchers and government officials) or by authors who had resided in the Islands for longer than six months. Other travel narratives were also scattered throughout guidebooks, newspapers, travel magazines and encyclopaedic and educational materials that are too numerous to count.

Determining who was ‘Australian’ was equally problematic, given that a sense of distinctive Australian identity was not clearly articulated between 1880 and 1941 and that travellers did not often explicitly describe themselves as ‘Australian’ in their texts. Mobility often prompted many travellers to avoid national labels, instead preferring to present themselves as romantic and heroic wanderers or explorers and using terms such as ‘globetrotter’, ‘vagabond’, ‘wayfarer’, ‘sundowner’, ‘beachcomber’, ‘shell-back’, ‘troubadour’ and ‘pilgrim’. Several bibliographies and dictionaries of Australian literature provide some guidance in this regard, though they have different criteria.⁴³ The crucial criterion in this book is whether Australia was the writer’s natural comparison or reference point. Of course, blurred lines exist, especially given that more emphasis was placed on being Anglo-Saxon than on being British or Australian during most of the nineteenth century. Before 1871, over half the Australian population was born elsewhere and by 1901, 18 per cent of Australians in

43 In fact, a body of ‘Australian literature’ was not identified until 1927, when Sir John Quick published *A Classified Catalogue of Books and Writing by Australian Writers*. See John Arnold and John Hay, eds, *The Bibliography of Australian Literature* (St Lucia: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2001); Terri McCormack et al., eds, *Annotated Bibliography of Australian Overseas Travel Writing, 1830 to 1970* (Canberra: ALIA Press, 1996); Edmund Morris Miller, *Australian Literature from Its Beginnings to 1935: A Descriptive and Bibliographical Survey of Books by Australian Authors in Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Criticism and Anthology with Subsidiary Entries to 1938* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1940). Online databases include the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au; and *AUSTLIT*, University of Queensland, www.austlit.edu.au.

the census were born in the United Kingdom (UK).⁴⁴ Some travellers thus referred to themselves as ‘British’, ‘Britisher’, ‘Colonial’ and ‘Australasian’ to express a shared colonial identity under the British empire. Due to this colonial legacy, national identity continued to be ambiguous and contested in the early twentieth century. Passports did not distinguish between the two nationalities until 1949, and Australians’ upbringing and education prepared them to believe Britain was ‘home’, with travellers who visited Europe finding their British identity being strengthened (as well as their own Australian identity).⁴⁵

Between c. 1880 and 1941, approximately 130 travel accounts about the Pacific Islands were produced by ‘Australian’ authors. This is only an approximation due to the ambiguities within the texts themselves, which sometimes obscured the texts’ authorship, nationality and dates of travel or publication. These accounts represent just over 10 per cent of the 1,000 travel books that were written by ‘Australians’ between 1830 and 1970.⁴⁶ Of the 130 sources that were examined, 23 were ‘personal recollections’—that is, they were written by travellers who did not travel on a steamship tour, but who sailed their own vessels or who visited the Islands for a purpose other than tourism. Their accounts usually had more detailed descriptions of the Islands (and of the authors themselves) compared to the 65 ‘tourist recollections’ that contained momentary observations. There were 18 memoirs and autobiographies, and 18 texts were written for a specific purpose (though often disguised as travelogues): personal treatises, promotional material commissioned by governments or businesses and reports to specific communities or organisations at home. There were 20 unpublished materials, including the diaries of businessmen, Australian naval seamen, missionaries’ wives, as well as the logbooks of traders and sailors and other travel ephemera (e.g. scrapbooks, postcards and letters).

The study of this corpus as a whole has never been undertaken before. Instead, more general bibliographies of Australian literature or non-indigenous literature about the Pacific Islands were written; rarely have

44 White, *Inventing Australia*, 47–8; ‘A Snapshot of Australia, 1901’, Australian Bureau of Statistics, www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D31110124.NSF/24e5997b9bf2ef35ca2567fb00299c59/c4abd1fac53e3df5ca256bd8001883ec!OpenDocument.

45 Hassam, *Through Australian Eyes*, 15.

46 McCormack et al., *Annotated Bibliography of Australian Overseas Travel Writing*.

scholars considered Australian travellers a collective group.⁴⁷ Popular individual Australian travellers such as Louis Becke, Frank Clune, Beatrice Grimshaw, Frank Hurley and Ion Llewellyn Idriess have thus far occupied the attention of scholars.

The vast archives of photographs and films related to the Pacific Islands were also an important feature of many travel writing accounts. Images were no longer a luxury by the 1900s; they not only featured in monographs, but were also reproduced in photo albums, encyclopaedias, guidebooks, magazines, newspapers, stamps and postcards, and were presented at exhibits, museums and lantern shows. Up until the 1930s—after which camera technology became more accessible—few travellers took their own photographs. Popular images were instead reproduced and widely circulated, such as the works of Australian artist Norman Hardy and those of Australian photographers John Watt Beattie, Frank Hurley, John William Lindt and Thomas McMahon. As such, reprints often reduced the quality and resolution of the original photographs, and authors could misappropriate images for their own purposes. As the cinema industry developed from the early 1900s, several Australians were influential in the production of cinematic works as writers, actors, actresses and directors. Notable Australian contributors to cinema include Charles Chauvel (director), Errol Flynn (actor and author), Beatrice Grimshaw (author), Frank Hurley (director), Annette Kellerman (actress and author) and Raymond Longford (director). Amateur films were even taken aboard cruise ships by travellers in the 1920s—two of which are currently preserved at the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.⁴⁸ American films dominated the commercial market, preferring Hawai'i as an ideal location. The visual imagery of the Pacific reinforced and contributed to the persistent tropes about the Pacific Islands, which are discussed in the following chapters. Although the proliferation of images, both static and moving, did not wholly displace travel writing, it did alter the market for travel literature—in some cases even subordinating travel writing as

47 The exceptions to this include McCormack et al., *Annotated Bibliography of Australian Overseas Travel Writing*; Pesman, Walker and White, *The Oxford Book of Australian Travel Writing*; Hank Nelson, 'Lives Told: Australians in Papua and New Guinea', in *Telling Pacific Lives: Prisms of Process*, ed. Brij V Lal and Vicki Luker (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2008), 243–76, doi.org/10.22459/tpl.06.2008.18.

48 Title #64121 [*Pacific Islands Leg of Boat Trip to U.S.; Sydney to Los Angeles by Boat*], (National Film and Sound Archive of Australia: c. 1927), home movie; Title #37863 [*New Zealand, Pacific Island and Canadian? Holiday*] (National Film and Sound Archive of Australia: c. 1928), home movie.

a form of communication that was less ‘real’. Subsequent travel writing had no choice but to incorporate, and respond to, this new collection of images that was perpetuating certain tropes about the Islands.

The proliferation of texts and images regarding travel in the Pacific presents a formidable challenge to those wishing to study and understand this period in history. It would be futile to try and provide a complete list of every piece of travel writing, or to offer a conclusive analysis of every Australian who lived in, or travelled through, the Pacific Islands. Their lives were often fragmented and intermittent, and the evidence they left behind reflected this accordingly. Instead, these travel accounts have been read as a collective so that general trends in Australian representations of the Pacific Islands can be discerned, and the momentary glimpses that individual travellers provide highlight the key themes and issues that shaped Australian notions about the region. Like many of the texts that these Australians wrote, the chapters in this book are arranged thematically. They signpost a set of themes that persisted in Australian travel writing from c. 1880 to 1941 and question how these themes changed over time and why individual Australian travellers chose to reinforce or undermine them.

In some cases, these themes are located within a specific location or region. The following chapter situates Australia within this complex region of diverse indigenous peoples and mutable colonial networks. It explores the fluid geographical boundaries and ambiguous national identities found within the Pacific and considers the changing uses and meanings of terms such as ‘South Seas’, ‘Australasia’, ‘Melanesia’ and ‘Polynesia’. These terms are useful for situating the Australian continent within the Pacific region, as well as for acknowledging Australia’s historic maritime connections to the Pacific. Understanding these terms is also important for determining who was an ‘Australian’ travel writer and for understanding how ‘Australians’ identified themselves in relation to others.

Chapter 2 charts the rise of steamship travel and Pacific Islands tourism, as well as the effect that this rise had on the individual experiences of travel and the Islands. It examines the processes of travel—the excited anticipation, disappointed realisation and remembered nostalgia—as Australian travellers read, observed and wrote about the Pacific Islands. As steamship companies grew in size, trading operations expanded from cargo to passengers, and tourism became an increasingly viable source of revenue by the early 1900s. Islands responded to the new influx of visitors,

and the influence of tourism became visible in stopover destinations such as Suva, Papeete, Apia, Pago Pago, Honolulu and Nuku'alofa. Travel accounts describe life aboard these modern ships as new communities were temporarily created, with the experience of cruising shaping travellers' expectations and impressions of the Pacific Islands. The voyage culminated with the moment of first arrival, a point on which travel accounts often focused, describing the inevitable clash of expectation and reality. As the Islands became increasingly consumed by the 'tourist gaze' in the 1920s and 1930s, travel accounts grappled with the commercialism and popularism of travel, with many choosing to reject the 'tourist' label because it contradicted the values of adventure and exploration that were traditionally associated with the Pacific.

These popular ideals were frequently associated with Polynesia—a region historically imagined by Europeans as utopian and romantic. Chapter 3 considers the Polynesian ideal and its sustained use by Australian travellers throughout the early twentieth century. For those Australians who sought escape and freedom, Polynesia was the preferred choice; it was enshrined as alluring, available, feminine, pure and idyllic. Australian representations specifically focused on Tahiti and remained relatively unchanged from 1880 to 1941, despite the increasing number of travellers who expressed disappointment with the sought-after paradise that had been tarnished by European residents, tourists and modernisation. Rather than deconstructing the problematic trope, representations of Tahitian fragility and corruption only enhanced Tahiti's desirability, and its geographical isolation from Australia facilitated the continuation of European myths and romanticisms. The accounts of those Australian idealists and escapists who chased the utopian lifestyle in Tahiti reveal the limitations of the Polynesian ideal—namely the difficulties of interracial romance and of abandoning 'civilisation', as well as the role that gender played in shaping experiences of travel in the Pacific.

In contrast to Polynesian femininity was Melanesian masculinity—specifically the Islander 'savage' that was a persistent and complex trope in Australian travel writing. Chapter 4 tests the savage–civilised dichotomy as it was applied by Australian travellers to Melanesia, identifying four perceived traits of the savage—the bestial, infantile, primordial and cannibal—and revealing how these were modified and adapted over time. Popular notions of the savage were influenced by the representations of those involved in the Queensland labour trade who emphasised the brutality of the savage until the early 1900s; by the missionaries who

stressed childlike characteristics to further their evangelising goals; and by the tourists who tolerated the savage in their search for an idealised, natural primitivism. Representations of the Islander cannibal were consistent throughout the first half of the twentieth century, albeit increasingly formulaic and commodified over time. The changing emphasis on certain traits of the savage, those that shifted the category away from the barbaric image portrayed in adventure fiction and pioneering accounts, suggest that Australian representations of the savage softened over time as travellers expressed an awareness of the category's contested nature.

Despite the dominance of the savage trope, the Pacific also presented opportunities for employment and investment. Chapter 5 focuses on the commercial motivations of travel writers and discusses the difference between emotive travel impressions and accounts written by those with vested interests in the Pacific (e.g. to evangelise, propagandise, make an official report or substantiate a scholarly theory). The economic idealisation of the Pacific Islands was a key component of travel writing, symbolised by the romantic figure of the 'enterprising Australian' who was based on nineteenth-century tales of traders, overseers and miners in the Pacific. Australian travellers contributed to a narrative that imagined the Pacific Islands as a region for Australian investment and profit, and they negotiated the disjuncture between the romanticised Pacific trader/planter and the stark realities of making a living in the Islands.

Commercial endeavours in Melanesia also encountered French colonial expansionism in the Islands of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. Chapter 6 discusses how both Island groups were the subject of intense debate in Australia before World War I, which formed an integral part of the Australian Federation movement and shaped early Australian perceptions of the Pacific Islands. These island groups were distinct from other French possessed lands in the eastern Pacific, with their proximity to the Australian coast driving alarmist public sentiment. New Caledonia was chiefly known for its convicts and violent conflicts with Islanders, while descriptions of the New Hebrides were characterised by uncertainty and confusion. Although concern about the French annexation of New Caledonia subsided after World War I, the British and French governments' shared custodianship of the New Hebrides continued to stimulate public debate throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

Chapter 7 traces the genealogy of ‘scientific’ racial theories and how Australian travellers used these theories in their representations of the Pacific Islands—particularly their judgements regarding the perceived progress and stasis of particular places and peoples. Racial theory was a persistent undercurrent in Australian travel writing that informed popular notions about disease, depopulation and ethnic diversity in the Pacific. Australians expressed concern about disease and the assumed dangers of a tropical environment; they commented on the alleged depopulation and degradation of Pacific Islanders (and queried the role of Australians in protecting and civilising); and they questioned the presence of other races in the Pacific (especially Indian, Chinese and Japanese peoples). Travel provided opportunities for face-to-face encounters that challenged assumptions of the passive and primitive Islander, as well as drew attention to the diverse racial makeup of the Pacific. It also fuelled growing speculation regarding the superiority of Australian civilising agents and their role in the development of the Pacific Islands.

The questioning of popular stereotypes and preconceptions is ever present in travel writing—it is an inevitable product of the tension between the individual traveller and travellers as a collective group. Yet the Australian experience of travel in the Pacific is a topic that has not been sufficiently explored. It can offer a perspective from the periphery that counters dominant European narratives, as well as enriches our understanding of how Australia expanded its presence in the region. The risk of generalisation when drawing together a diverse collection of travel accounts about a vast geographical area over a long period is far outweighed by the valuable insights that are garnered—insights that reveal how ordinary Australians understood concepts such as science, race, gender, commerce, nation, empire and mobility as they were applied to the Pacific Islands. Ultimately, this discussion is rooted in the accounts of individual travellers. From these individual reflections, impressions and glimpses of the Pacific Islands, historians can make connections to broader historical themes and issues and better inform and expand our understanding of Australia’s relationship with the Pacific Islands.

This diversity can also be applied to Australian authors and the islands they visited. Australians were not a uniform set of travellers—they carried their own ideological baggage with them, influenced differently by their own backgrounds and upbringings, education, gender, class, religious and political affiliations, professions and different motives for travel. Just as this book displaces the formulaic stereotypes of Pacific Islanders, it also

displaces a specific Australian type. Regional Australian diversity among the different colonies, states and towns shaped travellers' impressions of the Pacific, as well as influenced how readers responded to travel literature. Ultimately, individual Australians forged their own paths, even when travelling along others more well-worn. For this reason, it is important to recognise how Australians in the past perceived the Pacific Islands with their own eyes.

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