

Pacific Journeys
Reviewed by Sarah Powell.

Pacific Journeys: Essays in Honour of John Dunmore.

Eds. Glynnis M. Cropp, Noel R. Watts, Roger D. J. Collins, and K. R. Howe.

Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2005.

Designed to pay tribute to the remarkable life and work of John Dunmore, Professor Emeritus of French since 1984, *Pacific Journeys* presents fifteen essays written for the occasion by his New Zealand colleagues as well as contributions from scholars based in Australia, New Caledonia and his native France. With the exception of two anglocentric pieces, the articles each honour in some way this leading researcher's primary interests in French explorations and encounters in New Zealand and the greater Pacific.

Glynnis Cropp's introduction, a warm biographical account of Dunmore and his considerable achievements, is followed by a comprehensive, albeit non-exhaustive, inventory of his prolific publications.

Taking as his point of departure the discovery in Tasmania in 2003 of the site of an eighteenth-century garden, Edward Dukyer identifies Félix Delahaye, a member of D'Entrecasteaux's expedition, as having established the plot in 1792 and then, retracing the gardener's experiences in the Pacific, outlines his contribution to botanical knowledge.

Alan Frost's fascinating study, "I'll Make You Eat Grass Like Cows", uncovers Captain Bligh's abusive manipulation of his crew's rations, here interpreted as an unorthodox punishment and indeed the catalyst of the infamous mutiny of the *Bounty*.

In the first of four French language essays, François Moreau adds his voice to O.H.K. Spate's, amongst others, in highlighting the transformation of explorers' raw, rough manuscripts into increasingly polished, 'realistic' and/or romantic literary narratives by armchair editors during the Enlightenment.

Christine Hemming then documents the ethnological value of Philibert Commerson's extant notes and drawings as a 'precious' and 'accurate' record of Tahitian artefacts and pre-colonial customs. One of the reprinted plates featuring sketches of pirogues is also reproduced on the front cover, effectively evoking the 'pacific journeys' of the title.

Reiterating the well-known 'extrême réserve' of the Restoration régime (1815-1830) to support French activity in the Pacific, Christian Huetz de Lempis attributes many of the voyages undertaken during this period to the personal initiative of ambitious individuals. His essay resonates with the two

preceding ones in alluding to, amongst other things, the contribution of published (doctored) accounts and drawings.

In “Patrick O’Reilly: Bibliographer of the Pacific”, Hugh Laracy redresses the oversight of tributes to the late French *océaniste* by chronicling his personal life, rather than merely his productivity which, as the biographer also crucially highlights here, preserved the ‘knowability’ of the Pacific and recorded the French imperial/colonial enterprise there but did not ‘engage in criticisms’.

Jessie Munro’s slightly disjointed piece is a sad tale principally honouring Jean-Marie Grange who, recruited to New Zealand in 1861 from the Lyon-based Clercs de Saint Viateur, was left to die alone after an increasingly lonely and wretched existence, insufficiently supported by his superiors and by Bishop Pompallier.

Claiming that the role of Maori leadership is an ‘element missing’ from theories on the successful adoption of Christianity in New Zealand whilst acknowledging, paradoxically, ‘best known’ examples of indigenous missionary work, John Owens seeks to ‘redress the balance’ by examining the influence of Tauri, Hipango and Aperahama in the Wanganui district.

In his broad survey of the little known interactions between French whalers (‘Ngati Wiwi’) and Maori, Peter Tremewan draws heavily on archival research to uncover, amongst other things, the identities of various deserters and crew members, and also to provide an appendix of Maori workers on French whaling ships.

The next essay also attends to the heretofore neglected topic of French whalers. Despite Ian Church narrowing his area of focus to Otago, there remains considerable overlap between the two essays and some duplication.

Continuing the French whaling theme, Christiane Mortelier’s highly engaging essay offers a very fine and original analysis of Jules Verne’s long misunderstood novel *Les Histoires de Jean-Marie Cabidoulin* (1901).

Rosemary Arnoux tells the classic story of Tahiti in literary discourse, moving from Bougainville, Commerson and Moerenhout to the standard trio of Loti, Gauguin and Segalen. Her discussion of the latter, the most illuminating section, leads her to conclude on the many ‘complications’ of writing ethnographic fiction.

In “‘Hybridity’ in French-Kanak Encounters in the Literatures of Kanaky/New Caledonia”, Raylene Ramsay adds to research suggesting possible readings of Forster’s eighteenth-century travelogues in light of postcolonial and feminist thought. Conjugating Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity with translation theory, she then presents an original examination of the re-writing and grafting of Kanak texts by (amateur) French ethnographers.

Sonia Faessel's descriptive analysis of *Les Dieux sont borgnes* (2002) gives valuable insights into this complex, dialogical theatre production written conjointly by a European and a Kanak playwright.

The collection finishes with an accessible and absorbing account by botanist John Dawson of the research, past and present, conducted into New Caledonia's rich endemic flora, 'one of the most remarkable in the world'.

Beautifully organised to flow easily from one to another, the diverse range of essays in this attractively presented volume are a fitting homage to the doyen of Franco-Pacific studies. Dunmore's innovative work in this field has paved the way for a new generation of scholars who will, amongst many others, enjoy *Pacific Journeys* and the contributions of the well-established academics whom he first inspired.