

1 Borders

The colonisation of mobile worlds

[A]s the islands of the Pacific are opened up . . . [t]he next hundred years therefore may perhaps produce in the South Pacific unimagined changes which will fill the world with wonder. (Cheers) What a flood of light, and what an array of stupendous events have changed the character of the world since 1774. Sir Hercules Robinson, 1874.¹

The year 1874 drew to a triumphant close for the loyal imperialists of New South Wales. At a banquet held in Sydney's Merchants' Dining Hall, glasses were charged between speeches that celebrated and honoured the formal arrival of the British Empire in the Pacific. Fiji had just been annexed as Britain's first Pacific Crown Colony, and the newly established British Western Pacific High Commission was now extending shoots of British sovereignty into Pacific waters. In a lengthy speech, Sir Hercules Robinson, the governor of New South Wales and temporarily of Fiji, declared that the annexation of Fiji would enable the expansion of 'the younger Britain which is now so rapidly growing into maturity in these seas'. His hope and expectation was that the island colony would become an outpost of Sydney, a valuable link in the chains of communication and trade joining Sydney to San Francisco, Vancouver and the British Empire at large.

Also in the dining hall that night sat Fijian Ratu Seru Cakobau. He was an incongruous figure amidst the huddle of white men cheering an empire of white men's countries. The ex-King of Fiji, Cakobau had ceded the islands to Britain in a last-ditch attempt to protect Fijian land from a small but permanent settler population intent on creating another white man's colony. In a much shorter speech delivered in Fijian, although he was fluent in English, he 'wished all the gentlemen present and chiefs of the white man's country not to forget Fiji and to do all they could for it'.² As both speeches foreshadowed, the annexation they celebrated was destined to become a turning point for colonial interests in and around the Pacific. It both coincided with and propelled a new imperial zeal in the region.

¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 December 1874, p. 4. ² *Ibid.*

The gathering in Sydney was a turning point in the lives of the two men who spoke. Robinson was rewarded well for his services to empire and went on to become governor of New Zealand and later of the Cape Colony, eventually winning a privy councillorship in 1883.³ Ratu Cakobau, however, contracted the strain of measles that was circulating amongst the settler and Indigenous populations in urban and rural New South Wales. On returning to Fiji in January 1875, he met with 69 chiefs from throughout the islands to garner support for annexation, and to get their mark on the Deed of Cession. Within a matter of weeks, these chiefs also contracted measles, which went on to sweep unchecked through the unexposed Fijian population. Although Cakobau survived, the epidemic took the lives of his brother, son, daughter and more than a quarter of the Fijian population.⁴ From this point of convergence in Sydney, Robinson's world expanded along the tendrils of empire spanning the globe, but Cakobau's world, now a native one, contracted. The separate paths were deeply symbolic.

This chapter tracks the mobilities that came together in Sydney in 1874 and goes on to consider what came next. In so doing, it observes the particularity of colonialism in the Pacific as its islands were threaded together to become an interdependent region, linked by the physical connections people made as labourers, travellers or traders. In the Pacific, as elsewhere, empires formed in uneven spaces with diverse impacts on Indigenous peoples. This chapter explores how the mobility and dwelling of imperial and Indigenous subjects, both forced or intentional, were indicative markers of colonisation.⁵ A long period of informal colonial contact proved critical to the ability of some Indigenous communities to integrate new economies and social structures, and to travel extensively, connecting and colliding along imperial and Indigenous circuits. Building on the claims made by Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann, while the formal empires were made up of critical webs of social and cultural movements, these built on networks that

³ Bede Nairn, 'Robinson, Sir Hercules George Robert (1824–1897)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-sir-hercules-george-4493/text7343>, published first in hardcopy 1976, accessed online 17 November 2015.

⁴ Christine Weir, "'We Visit the Colo Towns . . . When It Is Safe to Go": Indigenous Adoption of Methodist Christianity in the Wainibuka and Wainimala Valleys, Fiji, in the 1870s', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 49:2 (2014): 141–5.

⁵ David Lambert and Alan Lester, 'Introduction: Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects', in David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careerings in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1–32.

predated the arrival of formal empires.⁶ This ensured that when imperial spaces formed they remained contingent sites of colonial power, with borders that could be porous in places and always vulnerable to the physical and intellectual mobility of colonial subjects. Nevertheless, the advent of formal imperialism in the Pacific ushered in a new isolation for many Indigenous peoples that restrained established dynamics of exchange and interaction.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most islands in the Pacific were partitioned, parcelled, transferred and traded by European powers in a process that incorporated the Ocean and its people into the global dynamics of empires, capital and nation-making.⁷ In the aftermath of sometimes catastrophic collapses of populations, the Pacific was left divided into sometimes arbitrary and always expediently defined colonies and possessions. For many, as Hercules Robinson predicted at the Sydney banquet, 'unimagined changes' transformed identities throughout the Pacific world as imposed relocation and diaspora emerged to define the region in new ways. In the settler colonies, Indigenous peoples were cleared from their land and confined to margins, reserves and missions, or what Cole Harris has termed 'native spaces', while in other colonies people were relocated in their thousands to other islands, or to plantations, mines or mission schools all over the Pacific.⁸ This is a critical context, for the effects of physical diaspora and a concomitant imposed isolation would play a constitutive role in the formation of decolonisation.

Expanding worlds: mobility and the Pacific's middle ground

When he journeyed to Sydney in 1874, Cakobau continued a tradition of mobility and journeying that was indigenous to Oceania. The Pacific and its fringes had been charted for centuries by countless maps detailing currents, island locations, outcrops, genealogical links and reciprocal trade relations. These were written in the stars, could be danced and

⁶ Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann (eds), *Beyond Sovereignty: Britain, Empire and Transnationalism, 1880–1950* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 2.

⁷ For recent regional overviews, see Thomas, *Islanders*; Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous Peoples from Australia to Alaska* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁸ Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

chanted like the *Futa Hehu*, a map from Kiribati to Tonga, physically held as in the Marquesas, or remembered and passed on as guarded knowledge as in Tahiti and Australia.⁹ Throughout Oceania these enabled obsidian, ochre, pottery, copra, tattoos, whale teeth, flax, stories, songs and food to be traded and exchanged across vast distances. In the west, a region incorporating the island of New Guinea, the Torres Strait Islands and Australia's north to the Kimberley, was the outer perimeter of an Asian exchange network that linked China, Macassa and the Dutch East Indies in thriving pearl, pearlshelling and trepang industries.¹⁰ Not all Indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific region were saltwater people, nor were they navigators, and throughout the Solomons, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and Australasia, trade between highlanders and lowlanders, or saltwater and inlanders, crossed the dynamic borders of hundreds of language and kinship groups.

The Pacific world has been described evocatively by Matt Matsuda as the confluence of multiple sites of 'trans-localism', a world that was increasingly connected to the narratives of south-east Asia, Europe and the ocean-going peoples of Malaysia and Indonesia.¹¹ From the 1500s especially, ocean highways began to be shared with Spanish galleons carrying their vast wealth and trade goods across the Pacific from Acapulco to Manila.¹² But it was not until the last thirty years of the eighteenth century that Pacific worlds were significantly impacted by newcomers. In quick succession, Samuel Wallis, Jean-François La Perouse, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, George Vancouver and James Cook with their numerous crews visited island groups in modern-day Tahiti, Hawaii, Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Cook's published journals and the arrival in Europe of Omai, a Tahitian traveller who accompanied the second of Cook's voyages to England in 1774, sparked

⁹ Epeli Hau'ofa, 'Pasts to Remember', *We Are The Ocean: Selected Works*, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), p. 73; Matthew Spriggs, 'Oceanic Connections in Deep Time', *Pacific Currents: eJournal of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies*, 1:1 (2009): 7–27.

¹⁰ Campbell Macknight, "'The View from Marege": Australian Knowledge of Makassar and the Impact of the Trepang Industry Across Two Centuries', *Aboriginal History*, 35 (2011): 121–43. See also Jayne Lydon, 'Picturing Macassan-Australian Histories: Odoardo Beccari's 1873 Photographs of the "Orang-Mereghi" and Indigenous Authenticity', in Jane Carey and Jayne Lydon (eds), *Indigenous Networks: Mobility, Connections and Exchange* (New York; London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 140–2.

¹¹ Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 7–8.

¹² Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "'Silver Spoon": The Origin of World Trade in 1571', *Journal of World History*, 6:2 (1995), pp. 201–221. See also Dennis Flynn, Arturo Giraldez and James Sobredo, *European Entry into the Pacific: Spain and Acapulco-Manila Galleons* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001).

an intense fascination in Europe for all things Pacific.¹³ As Nicholas Thomas has recently emphasised, the fascination was mutual and new charts of the Pacific realigned both Indigenous and European worlds. This made both substantially larger.

For Indigenous peoples throughout Oceania, including Australia, contact with Europe could be a valuable resource. New trades and commodities enhanced the wealth and prestige of some Indigenous elites, especially in Tahiti and Hawaii, and tipped the balance of old and new power struggles. In such an environment, missionaries and absconding Europeans or Americans found their own sources of enhancement. Throughout the Pacific's islands, especially those on the trade routes, deserting ships' crews, escaped convicts and other traders often stayed for months or years. Popularly despised outside the Pacific as beachcombers, and the 'very vilest' of the 'lowest order', they were popularly represented as a source of pure evil.¹⁴ But many who dwelled in the islands did so with the consent, or at the mercy, of locals. In Indigenous peoples' new worlds, beachcombers were employed as labourers, social and linguistic interlocutors and could sometimes impart mechanical skills.¹⁵ By the 1840s and 1850s, there were an estimated 2,000 of these so-called beachcombers settled throughout the Pacific, living precariously at the mercy of their host communities.¹⁶ Whether they worked as cooks, as did African Americans in Fiji, or as political and economic intermediaries, these figures epitomised the delicate balance and flow of power of the new mixed worlds of the early colonial period.¹⁷

¹³ Studies of Omai are extensive. For more recent studies, see Richard Connaughton, *Omai: The Prince Who Never Was* (London: Timewell Press, 2005); Eric McCormack, *Omai: Pacific Envoy* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1977); Michael Alexander, *Omai, Noble Savage* (London: Collins, Herville Press, 1977); and T. B. Clark, *Omai: First Polynesian Ambassador to England* (San Francisco, CA: Colt Press, 1940). For comparisons with visiting Aboriginal envoys such as Bennelong, see Kate Fullagar, *The Savage Visit: New World Peoples and Popular Imperial Culture in Britain, 1710–1795* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012); L. R. Hiatt, 'Bennelong and Omai', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 2 (2004): 87–9; J. Brook, 'The Forlorn Hope: Bennelong and Yemerawannie Go to England', *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1 (2001): 36–47.

¹⁴ 'Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines British Settlements: With the Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index', *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons*, no. 425. (London: House of Commons, 1837), p. 22.

¹⁵ Edward D. Beechert, *Honolulu: Crossroads of the Pacific* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), p. 15; Carolyn Ralston, *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities in the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1978), pp. 20–43; Ian Campbell, 'Gone Native' in *Polynesia: Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific*, Contributions to the Study of World History, No. 63 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), pp. 1–26, 83–150.

¹⁶ Kerry Howe, *Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Islands History from First Settlement to Colonial Rule* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), p. 103.

¹⁷ Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 108.

Most newcomers to the Pacific did not dwell, but simply traded. Servicing ports in Tahiti, Hawaii, New South Wales and Aotearoa New Zealand became nodes connecting corridors of influence throughout the Pacific that conveyed and radiated people, information, wealth and disease.¹⁸ In new ports, British and American traders exchanged weapons and goods with Maori for flax, timber, potatoes and other agricultural products, while colonists in New South Wales acquired poultry, cattle, goats, dogs and horses from Tahitians.¹⁹ In Hawaii, George Vancouver reported that by the 1790s Kanaka Maoli had moved from trading salt, food and stock for iron, nails and hogs to trading arms, technology and knowledge.²⁰ Trade for goods also acquired other resources, and when traders departed island ports, they increasingly took with them growing numbers of voluntary and curiosity-driven Tahitians, Kanaka Maoli, Maori and Aboriginal people who worked for passage.²¹

The crew of sealers and whalers, and later sandalwood and bêche-de-mer trading vessels, were a blend of Europeans and Americans, African Americans (enslaved and free), south and south-east Asian bonded workers, Aboriginal, Maori and Islander crew.²² As sailing crew, Maori, Aboriginal and Islander people joined a global traffic of maritime and other workers who crossed the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans between ports in New South Wales, Tahiti, Hawaii, Fiji, north island New Zealand and San Francisco, as well as Boston, Salem, Nantucket, Bengal, Manila and London.²³ This diaspora was not just confined to maritime trades. Thousands of Hawaiian Kanaka Maoli worked for the

¹⁸ The language of nodes and corridors here is borrowed from Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1–2.

¹⁹ John Ward, *British Policy in the South Pacific: A Study in British Policy Towards the South Pacific Islands Prior to the Establishment of Governments by the Great Powers* (Sydney: Australian Publishing Company, 1948), p. 6.

²⁰ Beechert, *Honolulu*, p. 11; George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World* (London: Thomas and Andrews, 1801): Vol. 1, pp. 353–5, 391–2; Vol. 3, pp. 183–4; Vol. 4, pp. 179–80; Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. 1 (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1938), pp. 22, 35–6.

²¹ Thomas, *Islanders*, pp. 1–30. See also Joan Druett, *Captain Cook's Polynesian Navigator* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010); Anne Salmond, *The Trial of a Cannibal Dog* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 34–139; Beechert, *Honolulu*, p. 33; Edwin Dwight, *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a Native of Owyhee and a Member of the Foreign Mission School* (New Haven, CT: Edison, Hart, 1819).

²² F. Rhodes, *Pageant of the Pacific: Being the Maritime History of Australasia*, Vol. 1 (Sydney: Thwaites, 1937), pp. 122–51; Frances Steel, *Oceania Under Steam: Sea Transport and the Cultures of Colonialism, 1870–1914*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

²³ Robert Macnab, *Murihiku and the Southern Islands: A History of the West Coast Sounds, Foveaux Strait, Stewart Island, the Snares, Bounty, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell and Macquarie Islands from 1770 to 1829* (Invercargill: William Smith Printer, 1907).

Hudsons' Bay Company in the wilds of Canada in the early nineteenth century and travelled and settled as far afield as Oregon and Lake Superior. By the 1820s, a small Kanaka Maoli community had settled in Nantucket, and by the 1840s, thousands every year were engaged in visiting maritime industries.²⁴ At the height of the whaling industry from the 1830s to 1850s, when the dominant New Englanders alone had 700 vessels staffed by at least 16,000 people in the Pacific, the demand for labourers was intense and incessant, and produced mixed mobile and transnational worlds.²⁵

As new items of wealth and trade and new sources of prestige transformed Indigenous societies, the wider impact of interactions with European and American traders was ambiguous. On the one hand, maritime industries were brutal and mostly unregulated, with profit margins defended by violence. Sexual violence was notoriously rampant, and when conflict broke out between traders and Indigenous communities, it was governed by frontier methodologies in spaces viewed by traders as legal voids.²⁶ Moreover, in unregulated waters, although many thousands of Islanders willingly volunteered their services to traders, they were notoriously vulnerable to abduction and exploitation. On the other hand this capacity for violence, and what Lynette Russell has called the 'attenuated' nature of labourers' agency, this work also ushered unprecedented levels of social and physical mobility into Pacific worlds.²⁷ Work in maritime industries provided wages (sometimes), travel and new experiences, and a new social value defined by enhanced expertise.²⁸ For Aboriginal and Tasmanian labourers, these mobile maritime worlds could offer levels of autonomy and independence that increasingly could not be enjoyed in the settler colonies from which they came. In the Tasmanian whaling industry, for example, it was not uncommon for black seamen to be promoted to boat-steerers, officers and whaling

²⁴ H. W. Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii: The Pioneers 1789–1843* (Stanford, CA: P. Smith, 1942): pp. 33, 227–8; Ernest Dodge, *New England and the South Seas*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 47; Thomas, *Islanders*; David Chappell, *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* (Armonk, NY; London: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

²⁵ Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 93.

²⁶ For an excellent overview of the historiography of violence in the sealing and whaling trades, see Lynette Russell, *Roving Mariners: Australian Aboriginal Whalers and Sealers in the Southern Oceans, 1790–1870* (New York: SUNY Press, 2012), pp. 1–22.

²⁷ Russell, *Roving Mariners*, p. 7.

²⁸ Lynette Russell, 'Kangaroo Island Sealers and Their Descendants: Ethnic and Gender Ambiguities in the Archaeology of a Creolised Community', *Australian Archaeology*, 60 (2005): 1–5; Russell, *Roving Mariners*. See also Kerry Howe, 'Tourists, Sailors and Labourers: A Survey of Early Labour Recruiting in Southern Melanesia', *Journal of Pacific History*, 13:1 (1978): 22–35; and Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, pp. 326–7.

masters based on their skill and ability, while at the same time intense violence raged on the frontiers of their homes.²⁹

Although some in Oceania were able to embrace available opportunities that accompanied colonisation in Australia, and colonial trade in the Pacific, these nevertheless had an unambiguously devastating impact. While varying degrees of violence, sexual violence and exploitation were prevalent, this was compounded by disease that, like the measles in Fiji in 1874, precipitated sudden and sustained population declines. Disease was a notoriously swift and efficient killer, and epidemics of smallpox, chickenpox, measles, respiratory infection, flu and venereal disease decimated unexposed populations. These were recorded and witnessed in New South Wales the year after the British landed permanently in 1789, in Hawaii in 1804 and in Tahiti in the wake of Cook's voyages. Throughout the islands, where months could pass between visits from European vessels, the virility and speed of epidemics meant that observers often recorded the aftermath of disease, and settlers and traders often arrived in communities already devastated. Cook estimated that the population of Tahiti and Hawaii was 200,000 and 400,000 respectively in the late eighteenth century.³⁰ By the time the London Missionary Society missionaries arrived in Tahiti in 1797, there were only 16,000, and within ten years this had more than halved. In Hawaii, the population of nearly half a million had dropped to 150,000 according to a census conducted by the society's missionary William Ellis in 1823.³¹

In the Australian colonies after the 1820s, the scale of depopulation was compounded by the occupation of Indigenous peoples' land with a brutality and swiftness that was unmatched in the Pacific.³² Occupation of land had expanded from 2,520 acres in 1821 to 91,636 acres in 1825. In the Port Phillip District, a region not officially opened to settlers until the late 1830s, and amongst the first to experiment with humanitarian models of colonisation, the settler population increased to 77,345 people, with seven million head of stock in less than twenty years.³³ Echoing settlement practices in New South Wales and Tasmania, settler interest in land

²⁹ Lynette Russell, '“A New Holland Half-Caste”': Sealer and Whaler Tommy Chaseland', *History Australia*, 5:1 (2008): 2. See also *Mari Nawi: Aboriginal Odysseys, 1790–1850* (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 2010), pp. 16–18.

³⁰ David Stannard, *Before the Horror: The Population on the Eve of Western Contact* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), pp. 3–31.

³¹ 'Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines', p. 24.

³² Scholarship on Australia's frontier wars is extensive and contested. For a good overview of the scholarship, see Stephen Foster and Bain Attwood (eds), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2003).

³³ Jessie Mitchell, *In Good Faith? Governing Indigenous Australia through God, Charity and Empire, 1825–55* (Canberra: Australian National University E Press, 2011), p. 3.

and territory was single-minded, and while a handful of missionary enterprises, both independent of and supported by government, had been trialled by the 1840s, most met with little support or success.³⁴

While numbers are, in the end, estimates and notoriously unreliable, they nevertheless speak to the scale of the impact of early interactions between Indigenous peoples and Europeans throughout the Pacific. In Australia, numbers were based on crude headcounts, and in the islands, population was measured both by counting the living and, hauntingly, by taking stock of the numbers of abandoned dwellings and villages. Such qualitative measures of depopulation reflect the deep political and social transformations occurring in Indigenous communities whose ports and resources were being incorporated into expanding networks of new global trades.³⁵

The informal colonial era in the Pacific triggered deep structural changes in the many Indigenous societies that found themselves in the path of colonial settlement or colonial trade routes. But as Indigenous peoples and communities adjusted throughout the region and, to the extent that it was possible, incorporated newcomers and their trades, desires, wealth, skills and objects into their transforming frameworks, some experienced new mobility and expanded the interconnectedness of the region. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the process by which Indigenous communities engaged in this connectivity was remarkably autonomous. In Tahiti, where Islanders had been cultivating potatoes and yams and raising cattle, chickens and pigs to trade with passing vessels for years, by 1836 they were cultivating, spinning and weaving their own cotton, producing sugar cane and had also built a 90-ton ship to trade sugar with New South Wales.³⁶ Elsewhere, emergent trades in flax, copra, sandalwood and trepang engaged Indigenous peoples as cultivators and workers, allowing them to mix with maritime travellers, prisoners and traders. This activity criss-crossed the Ocean and islands, knitting them together with physical and conceptual webs in new ways. Power relations between newcomers and Indigenous peoples would remain ambiguous in these early decades, however, and as long as European traders and settlers remained outnumbered and outgunned, or as long as the autonomous men and women of the Pacific and its surrounds remained useful and skilful, power flowed both ways.

³⁴ Mitchell, *In Good Faith?* pp. 33–4.

³⁵ For a detailed discussion of depopulation throughout the region, see Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein Smith and Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, the Blackwell History of the World* (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000).

³⁶ Evidence of Reverend W. Ellis, Secretary of the London Missionary Society, 'Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines', pp. 50–1.

As the decade of the 1840s drew to a close, so too did the era of the Pacific middle ground.³⁷ By this time a new era of colonial relations began to unfold that was signalled by events in Australasia. There, Indigenous survivors of the frontier violence that had radiated with ferocity from penal settlements, were being dealt with in the new Port Philip Protectorate (Victoria) and Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) as remnant and nuisance populations. Settler ambition in New South Wales had ensured the annexation of more territory in New Zealand, and in an early expression of territorial competitiveness, a French protectorate was declared in Tahiti in 1842. In other words, a new permanence underpinned colonial markets and settlements. New South Wales, no longer a temporary dumping ground for British convicts, was a self-aware, ambitious and outward-looking British offspring looking hungrily towards the Pacific.

Colonial land and labour: entwinement and interdependence

In 1847, John Williams, the American commercial agent overseeing trade in coconut oil, *bêche-de-mer* and tortoise shell in Fiji, ordered a list of trade items from the United States Department of State. These included fish hooks, pipes and tobacco, vermilion, paper, scissors, plane irons, 'Fancy Jewellery (cheap article)', beads, muskets, red, blue and printed cotton, 'Blankets, various Colours, but cheap', and, most valuable of all, whale teeth. He added an explanatory note that Fijian trade was so cheap a trader could purchase *bêche-de-mer* or coconut oil for trinkets and still receive 30,000 or 40,000 dollars for it in Manila.³⁸

Williams' request is indicative of a prevailing raid mentality that inspired much trade in the Pacific. His explicit willingness to exploit the relative innocence of Fijian suppliers, who were yet to realise the true value of their resources, was an inherently short-term strategy. It reflected the way, at the end of the 1840s, much of the Pacific was still largely seen as something to be crossed or as the source of short-term profits and trade. Until this time it was only on the rim of the Pacific in Australia and the Americas where settlers had gone to stay with a voracious hunger for land. This changed dramatically after the 1850s when world events drew

³⁷ Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, Cambridge Studies in North American Indian History (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

³⁸ John Brown Williams to Department of State, 1 October 1847. Department of State, Consular Letters, Lauthala, Vol. 1. Cited in Jean Ingram Brookes, *International Rivalry in the Pacific Islands, 1800–1875* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1941), p. 420.

renewed attention to the Pacific. The 400 or so traders present in Fiji in Williams' time swelled to 2,000 by 1870, and unlike previous arrivals, these new settlers arrived with their families to stay.³⁹ As colonialism intensified throughout the Pacific, the distinct experiences of Indigenous peoples throughout the region became increasingly entangled and interdependent.

While the advent of an expansionist, settler-colonial drive to occupy land directly effected the Australasian colonies in the 1840s, the impact was felt in different ways elsewhere. More settlement into western New South Wales and north into the tropical regions of what is now Queensland brought vastly more occupied land into use and cultivation, and generated a new desire for labour. This was exacerbated after 1847 by the abolition of convict transportation, which remained Australian agriculturalists' principal source of cheap and forced labour. While Pacific Islanders had long provided Europeans with labour therefore, in the second half of the nineteenth century, this escalated to an industrial scale. Moreover, if Europe had been incorporated into island societies as a resource in the early nineteenth century, this was because the colonial presence was largely maritime. Mostly, ships came and went again, and something of a co-dependency with Islanders ensured that coastal communities had some time to adapt. But as had been the case in Australia from as early as the 1790s, and in New Zealand from the 1830s and 40s, the precarious balance of colonial middle grounds tipped when land became the focus.

While Williams was overseeing commercial activity in Fiji, elsewhere traders were seeking new avenues for trade. Extreme profits in China and Europe had driven speculators and traders to scour most islands of Polynesia by this time, and by the 1840s a few traders, such as James Paddon in Vanuatu, were just beginning to access the southern and eastern reaches of Melanesia.⁴⁰ In 1847, Australian-based mariner Benjamin Boyd took advantage of Paddon's toehold and took seventy men and boys from the islands of Tanna, Lifu and Uvea to New South Wales to work as indentured agricultural labourers on land appropriated from the Wiradjuri west of Sydney.

Around half of Boyd's men and boys absconded once the conditions of bonded labour became apparent to them, and many were returned to their islands soon after they arrived in New South Wales. The remainder were returned eventually, but not before they had travelled throughout the western Pacific. A smaller handful ended up in Pohnpei in the

³⁹ Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, p. 273.

⁴⁰ Howe, *Where the Waves Fall*, pp. 296–8; Thomas, *Islanders*, pp. 210–11.

northern Pacific where they were sold as labourers for pigs, yams and firewood. Six escaped and ended up in Hong Kong, where five died and the final labourer, whose name was not recorded, was eventually returned to Uvea via Hawaii in the east.⁴¹ Their experiences were the first of a new generation of travel for Islanders. Now, however, they did not engage as semi-free or free workers but as indentured objects of trade transported to extract value from acquired Indigenous lands elsewhere. This ensured that localised colonial experiences were entwined with and influenced by those of peoples elsewhere, and that the appropriation of the land and labour of Indigenous peoples was increasingly cross-subsidised.

Following his failed experiment importing indentured pastoral workers, Boyd left for California in search of gold in 1849 on a vessel crewed by Aboriginal sailors from New South Wales.⁴² He and his crew joined a relative rush of Australian settlers embarking for California across the Pacific to seek their fortunes in the newly opened goldfields. Incomplete passenger lists suggest that around 7,000 to 8,000 Australian settlers followed gold to California.⁴³ Many would make a round trip two years later in a return rush from California to the newly opened Australian goldfields. The circular traffic of the gold rushes was a boon for canny mariners such as Robert Towns, who made a number of passenger voyages to California at this time. Capitalising on the desperation of many to seek their fortune, he was simply able to convert his clapped-out trading vessels into passenger ships, spending so little on their upkeep that the area in Sydney harbour where he moored his vessels became known as 'Rotten Row'.⁴⁴ Towns later became the second pastoralist to import indentured Pacific labourers to an Australian colony and the first to make it work. People, bodies and labour were beginning to replace goods as the key source of profit in the Pacific.

The impact in the Pacific of the Californian and Australian gold rushes was both direct and indirect. Most obviously, it was felt in the ports of Hawaii and Tahiti, which lay between San Francisco and Sydney, Launceston or Auckland, and in the case of Hawaii, between Cape Horn and California for the traffic coming from the American east

⁴¹ Morell, *Britain in the Pacific Islands*, pp. 171–2; John Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific, Including the Feejees and Others Inhabited by the Polynesian Negro Races, in Her Majesty's Ship, Havannah* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1967), p. 342; George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia* (London: J. Snow, 1861), p. 509.

⁴² Rhodes, *Pageant of the Pacific*, p. 151.

⁴³ Charles Bateson, *Gold Fleet for California: Forty-Niners from Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1963), p. 142.

⁴⁴ William Collin, *The Life and Adventures of (an Essexman), Captain William Collin, A Queensland Pioneer* (Brisbane: H.J. Diddams & Co., 1914), p. 105; Bateson, *Gold Fleet*, p. 30.

coast. As the march of America's Manifest Destiny continued westwards into the Pacific, the higher traffic brought increasingly permanent settlement and economic penetration into the islands, and in Hawaii a brief land rush and correspondingly intense demand for Kanaka Maoli labour followed.⁴⁵ The indirect impact, however, was profound and long-lasting. As prospectors gravitated towards the goldfields, settler populations exploded in Australia, New Zealand and, by the 1860s, New Caledonia. At the same time, gold very literally put the Pacific on colonial maps, while increasing both the volume and efficiency of trans-Pacific traffic. Alongside increased sales of carbines, maps of the Pacific were advertised as 'the way to California' after 1848, and in 1851 Lieutenant Matthew Fontaine Maury published *Sailing Directions*, a study of the best sailing routes of the Pacific, charting its winds and currents.⁴⁶ As gold-fuelled population explosion in Australia, New Zealand and California drove further aggressive and intensive occupation of Indigenous lands, so too the scrutiny of the Pacific's offerings to expanding colonial markets, industry and territory intensified. When the Australasian colonies were granted self-government in the 1850s, this signalled a new era of aggressive settler-colonialism and emerging settler-colonial imperialism.

By the 1860s, and in the context of market gaps caused by civil war in the United States, a new interest in the profitability of labour-intensive tropical crops, particularly cotton and sugar, fuelled the Pacific's first land rush. In Queensland, New Caledonia, Samoa, Fiji and Hawaii, individuals, syndicates and land-purchasing companies acquired land in New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa and Hawaii. In Samoa, the aggressive San Francisco-based Central Polynesia Land and Commercial Company and Godeffroy & Sohn of Hamburg claimed to have purchased more than the entire acreage of Samoa.⁴⁷ A Land Commission enquiring in 1892–94 into the legitimacy of claims to land found that westerners collectively claimed two and a half times the entire landmass of Samoa. Titles to land that had been sold by those without the authority to do so, had been sold multiple times over the same piece of land, or had been sold in overlapping, separately titled land.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 247; Natsu Taylor Saito, *Meeting the Enemy: American Exceptionalism and International Law* (New York; London: New York University Press, 2010), pp. 133–60.

⁴⁶ Bateson, *Gold Fleet*, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Deryck Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of Western Pacific High Commission, 1877–1914* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1967), p. 15.

⁴⁸ Jocelyn Linnekin, 'New Political Orders', in Donald Denoon et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Pacific Islanders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 208.

Land grabs throughout the Pacific were messy affairs in which Indigenous tenure was acknowledged, but only as a legal foundation for appropriation that would be recognised by non-Indigenous authorities. Throughout the Pacific, paper titles could be easy to acquire from Indigenous landowners but more difficult to assert as they frequently represented one thing to Indigenous landowners, who often dealt with usufruct rights to land, and another to purchasers, who sought exclusive rights to spatially allotted parcels of property. In New Zealand, such confusion led to widespread conflict during the land wars from the 1840s to the 1870s and in New Caledonia to the Kanak uprising in 1878. So too in Fiji, disputes between settlers and landowners over the use, boundaries or permanence of settlers' use of land broke out in sporadic cycles of violence.⁴⁹ The extent to which Indigenous landowners were thus dispossessed from the 1850s was uneven. In Queensland, New Zealand and New Caledonia, Indigenous peoples lost access to rights in the vast majority of their land. But in Samoa and Fiji, landowners would claw some of it back, though not the most fertile or useful lands. The immediate impact in the 1860s, however, was that as land was acquired, however dubiously, the resulting hunger for labour to work it was intense.

Having joined the rush for land in Queensland, Robert Towns, by 1863, had abandoned his rickety fleet and turned to growing cotton. In search of labour he revived Boyd's failed experiment and imported a load of Islander men and boys as indentured field workers. His act was immediately condemned as slavery by local humanitarians, and by settlers who objected to his importing black labourers into a white colony. His response underscores the racialisation of labour that would dominate the rest of the century. The importation of a cheap, exploitable and temporary black labour force, he wrote, would save the colony from the 'inhumanity of driving to the exposed labor of field work, the less tropically hardy European woman and children'.⁵⁰ Moreover, white men did not have the constitution to survive hard labour in the tropics, and if they did, they were too expensive for planters who sought free labour. The myth was convenient and it naturalised the vast expansion of trades in people's bodies and labour that dominated the Pacific for the next few decades.

⁴⁹ Tracey Banivanua Mar, 'Cannibalism and Colonialism: Charting Colonies and Frontiers in Nineteenth-Century Fiji', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 52:2 (2010): 255–81.

⁵⁰ Captain Robert Towns, *South Sea Island Immigration for Cotton Cultivation: A Letter to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary of Queensland* (Sydney: Reading and Wellbank, 1864), p. 3. It continues, 'for I suppose the most thorough advocate for European labor will admit, that in cotton clearing and picking they, as well as the men, must take part in the labor'.

From the 1860s well into the twentieth century, labour trades in the Pacific saw hundreds of thousands of Pacific Islanders traded, kidnapped or employed under periods of indenture ranging from three to seven years. Mostly they were transported to work in agricultural, guano and mining industries in Queensland, Papua and New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, Samoa, Hawaii and Peru.⁵¹ They were taken by labour traders from islands as isolated as Rapanui/Easter Island in the far south-east of the Pacific, and from throughout the south, south-western and northern Pacific. While many who were recruited were undoubtedly experienced and deliberately sought employment, many thousands of others were not and were taken either against their will or under false pretences. The industries they laboured in had mortality rates so high they were considered unacceptable for white workers, and in Queensland where reliable statistics were kept from the 1870s, the mortality rate of Pacific Islanders was never less than five times the rate of the white population. At its worst it was fifteen times the rate, and in 1889 Queensland's registrar general estimated that an average of two out of every ten Islanders arriving in Queensland died during their term of employment.⁵²

The most immediate impact of the Pacific labour trades was felt in the declining populations in the source islands of the most able-bodied men and women. The implications for agriculture, subsistence, genealogies, cultural transmission or landowning were profound and are still being measured. But while the effect was similar throughout the Pacific, the intensity was uneven. Communities in regular recruiting grounds, such as those in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, were able to manage the loss in population in a reasonably sustainable way so that the trade continued into the 1920s.⁵³ But the short-lived and intense Peruvian trade that visited the south-eastern Pacific, including Rapanui and the Cook Islands, devastated populations in short periods of time, with estimates of between 24 and 79 per cent of entire populations shipped to Peru. In a single day on the tiny island of Tokelau, half the population was taken,

⁵¹ Peter Corris, *Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870–1914* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1973); Dorothy Shineberg, *The People Trade: Pacific Island Laborers and New Caledonia* (Honolulu, HI: Center for Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawaii Press, 1999); Henry Evans Maude, *Slavers in Paradise: The Peruvian Slave Trade in Polynesia, 1862–1864* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1981); Tracey Banivanua Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue: The Australian-Pacific Labour Trade* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

⁵² These figures are likely underestimates as not every death was reported. 'Kanaka Statistics', *Queensland Votes and Proceedings* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1889), pp. 225–8.

⁵³ Shineberg, *The People Trade*.

and from Rapanui a third of the entire population went to Peru. Only half returned, and in an all too familiar pattern, those who returned to Rapanui were ill, in their case with smallpox that went on to infect their home communities.⁵⁴ Elsewhere labourers regularly returned to their communities with tuberculosis, cold and flu and dysentery.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Pacific was dotted with displaced communities of labourers who, for a variety of reasons, never returned to their homes. In addition, while Islanders were being moved out of or around the Pacific, tens of thousands of indentured workers, mainly from China, India and Japan, were imported after the 1870s to Hawaii, Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia establishing new, permanent and sometimes marginalised settler populations that put further pressure on Indigenous communities.⁵⁵ There, their identities were reduced to the generic category of an indentured labourer, and if they were stranded in Fiji, Samoa, Queensland, Peru or New Caledonia, social restrictions contained and marginalised them. In Queensland, where they were known generically as 'kanakas', Islanders were treated as blacks in a white colony and subjected to extensive legal restrictions, social and spatial curfews and, ultimately, in 1906, faced forced deportation of three quarters of the population.⁵⁶ In Fiji, where Islander labourers whose contracts had expired were simply known as 'Melanesians', they were mostly ignored at the end of their contracts, and denied the offers of land or other incentives to settle that some Indian labourers received. Although not actively discriminated against, their marginal and landless status forced many from plantations to urban slums and illegal settlements, and back again for employment.⁵⁷

While individuals may have engaged freely, and others were taken by force, the overall structure of the Pacific labour trades was imposed without consent on island communities. They opened a new and minimally regulated frontier in the Pacific whose sheer scale was unprecedented. Unlike the earlier maritime industries, labour traders were not seeking labourers for their vessels where they would have some sort of

⁵⁴ Maude, *Slavers in Paradise*, pp. 73, 171.

⁵⁵ The status of marginalised settlers in settler colonies in the Pacific has not been deeply examined outside Hawaii. The relevant literature is growing and can not be cited here, but the special edition of *Amerasia* (26:2) edited by Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura provoked wide scholarship and discussion on the issue. This was published again in 2008. See Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Okamura (eds), *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawai'i* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), pp. vii–xii; 1–42; 43–75.

⁵⁶ Banivanua Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, pp. 140–2; 91–4; 116–18; 175–7.

⁵⁷ Winston Halapua, *Living on the Fringe: Melanesians in Fiji* (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 2001), pp. 43–4.

ongoing relationship. They sought bodies to exchange for profit in a new industry that was structured to extract the most value for the smallest cost. Recognised as such at the time, the trade faced vehement opposition from missionaries and related organisations such as the Anti-Slavery Society who viewed it as little more than slavery. On the eve of the annexation of Fiji in 1874, therefore, ongoing reports from throughout the islands of frontier-style violence and legal chaos were strong incentives for the British Colonial Office to act, to impose some sort of sovereign presence in Pacific waters. So too, international rivalry was stirring and settler aggression in the western Pacific, particularly in Fiji in the preceding five years, meant that by the mid 1870s, the Pacific was on the verge of being incorporated into aggressively expanding Euro-American empires.

Until the early 1870s, movement, adaptation and adjustment as well as violence and exploitation had characterised a period of informal colonialism in the Pacific. But as the insatiable desire for agricultural land, and labour to work it, gripped the Pacific and settler-colonial rim, the old traders in goods began trading in people, removing them to plantations and mines where the relative mobility and autonomy of maritime labour were replaced with a displaced isolation. This ensured that the lives and futures of Indigenous peoples across oceanic divides and borders were increasingly entangled and entwined, and the appropriation of land and labour were interdependent processes. As the formal colonial era unfolded in the Pacific from the late 1870s, in the settler colonies and annexed territories and protectorates, isolation, immobility, restriction and the shrinking of worlds would increasingly define colonial experiences.

Paper partition, protection and isolation: severed connections

Before Cakobau travelled to Australia his son, Ratu Joseph Celua, had studied in New South Wales. At a picnic in Sydney in April 1872 Celua honoured Charles St Julian, the newly appointed chief justice of the Fijian kingdom, and previously the Hawaiian Consul in Sydney, who was exceedingly close to the monarchs of both Hawaii and Tonga. Celua had met St Julian while in Sydney attending the newly established Wesleyan Methodist Newington College where, as he put it, 'I have come to white man's land to be trained . . . I am anxious to be . . . that I may be of service in the government of my country.'⁵⁸ Celua would finish his training and return to Fiji at the end of 1873, but not before freely

⁵⁸ *The Mercury*, 29 April 1872, p. 3.

travelling throughout rural New South Wales, even helping to rescue a drowning child from the Hunter River near Maitland in July 1873, and attending the New South Wales parliament.⁵⁹ He would again visit Sydney with his father and brother in late 1874 when he too would contract, but later survive, the measles. Celua's and St Julian's travels, like the careers of Cakobau and Robinson, are emblematic of the physical networks that connected colonial experiences in the Pacific, the intellectual impact of which will be explored in the following chapter. When they came into contact St Julian and Celua were physical conduits that joined seemingly disparate colonial experiences across vast spaces. But Celua's own travels as a free agent, and his ability to gain an education and to move freely around Sydney within elite circles were also emblematic of a period of colonial contact in and around the Pacific that, by the time of his second visit, was on the brink of being closed down.

When Britain annexed Fiji in 1874 the British Colonial Office extended the jurisdiction of common law to British subjects in the Pacific through legislation and the establishment of the Western Pacific High Commission. This was essentially an extension of the office of the Governor of Fiji, but it formalised and institutionalised the presence of common law on the Pacific frontier. Moreover it signalled a first step, or the first degree of sovereignty, in what would be a succession of European appropriations throughout the Pacific in the following years.⁶⁰ As Lauren Benton has noted of the middle to late nineteenth century, imperial moves towards territorial expansion were matched by the rise and bureaucratisation of concepts of state sovereignty over bounded and administered territorial space.⁶¹ As the scramble for Africa gathered pace on one side of the world, in the Pacific the carving out and appropriation of territory took place in a more perfunctory partitioning of imperial possessions. With maps and coordinates at the ready, European and American delegates re-ordered and rationalized Indigenous spaces in ways that were dominated by short term expedience.

The grappling of imperial powers for partitioned territory in the Pacific gathered pace from the early 1880s and was all but over by 1900. Spain, the Netherlands, Britain and France had already formally acquired degrees of sovereignty in the Micronesian islands (Spain), West Papua (Netherlands), Tahiti and parts of French Polynesia (France), Fiji (Britain) and the settler colonies in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia by the beginning of the Pacific partition. Elsewhere private

⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 July 1873, p. 3; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 May 1872, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Ann Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', *Public Culture*, 18:1 (2006): 138.

⁶¹ Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*, p. 9.

interests had established strongholds through companies such as those purchasing land in Samoa, or mission enterprises that reflected strong and increasingly dominant national allegiances. What was not claimed by the Netherlands on the island of New Guinea was divided between British Papua and German New Guinea in 1884. Chile annexed Rapanui, and Britain took over the administration of the Cook Islands in 1888, later establishing protectorates over the Solomon Islands, and Gilbert and Ellice Islands (Kiribati and Tuvalu) in 1893 and 1892. After decades of on-again off-again jostling for power in Hawaii the kingdom was occupied by the United States in 1893 and annexed in 1898. In the same year the United States inherited Guam from Spain following the Spanish–American war, and later annexed Wake Island. In Samoa the islands were divided between Germany in the west, and the United States in negotiations that also saw Germany acquire Nauru, and purchase the Caroline and Marianas island chains from Spain. Tonga, still a fiercely independent constitutional monarchy, was given protectorate status by Britain in 1900. Finally in 1906 the New Hebrides was shared between the British and the French who created an Anglo-French condominium in one of the more bizarre examples of administrative expedience.

Initially, the partition of the Pacific into colonial territories meant little for the vast majority of Pacific islanders. Stewart Firth has estimated that at least one-third of the region's population remained effectively independent or 'lightly touched' by colonial administrations. This was particularly the case where land ownership, and therefore subsistence and a source of independence, had been retained.⁶² Indeed in many cases it would not be until people attempted to move beyond newly, and inorganically, imposed borders that the presence of empire would be felt. This was key to distinguishing the new colonial order from the laissez-faire period of empire of the first half of the nineteenth century. Until the partition of the Pacific into imperial territories most Indigenous peoples, theoretically at least, maintained the autonomy of mobility to and from their homes. With new imperial borders acting as containment lines, Pacific worlds shrank during the formal colonial era and the expansiveness of trans-Pacific trade and movement was replaced with sanctioned contraction and isolation. This would be compounded by the ushering in, through colonial administrative practices, of the age of reduction when Indigenous identities would be collapsed into racially governed categories.

⁶² Stewart Firth, 'Colonial Administration and the Invention of the Native', in Donald Denoon et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Pacific Islanders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 255.

If imperial borders had the capacity to physically restrain people, their spatial discipline was partly predicated on the reduction, production and rationalisation of Indigenous identities. In the islands, landmasses were clustered together for administrative expedience, despite the lack of any Indigenous cultural or linguistic affinity. In other cases peoples were divided. The people of Bougainville, for example, who identify as black-skinned, were to be part of red-skinned Papua New Guinea despite being closer and having greater cultural affinity and familial links with the black-skinned Solomon Islands.⁶³ In the horse trading of 1898, when Germany negotiated with the United States and Britain over the division of Samoa, Germany had ceded its annexed territory in the Solomon Islands to Britain, but kept nickel-rich Bougainville as part of its New Guinea possessions.

Elsewhere on the island of New Guinea and the Australian continent, the invisible but powerful line tracing the 141st east meridian imposed on people of the same or similar cultural and language groups new sovereign identities – Dutch, British or German. Along the same theoretical line, Indigenous peoples in Australia were divided by the borders separating Queensland from South Australia and New South Wales. The 141st east meridian carved a jurisdictional line through established nations and language groups, stranding communities and individuals in states and colonies that they could no longer legally leave without express permission and supervision well into the second half of the twentieth century.

In settler colonies this time of partition was accompanied by a matching intensification of the regulation of Indigenous peoples. In Australia, as in the settler colonies of New Zealand, New Caledonia, and later Hawaii, the period of colonial administration was dominated by an overarching push to forcefully assimilate Indigenous peoples into settler society. This was governed in each state by Aboriginal Protection legislation that was mostly introduced after Australian federation. The first versions of such legislation were introduced in the colony of Victoria in 1869 giving a government-appointed body extensive and executive control over the care, custody and maintenance of the colony's Koori population.⁶⁴ This empowered administrators to micromanage those subject to the legislation with a spatial and time discipline that frequently extended into peoples' intimate and private lives. In 1889 the legislation was strengthened with the introduction of a quasi blood quantum allowing mission and reserve residents, particularly politically active ones below the age of 34, and those of mixed descent to be reclassified as 'half-caste' and

⁶³ Douglas Oliver, *Black Islands: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville, 1937–1991* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).

⁶⁴ *An Act to Provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria 1869* (Vic), ss. 2, 5, 8.

removed from missions and families.⁶⁵ Finally, in 1897 the colony of Queensland emulated Victorian legislation with its own Protection Act, one so draconian that protectors and reserve managers could, for loosely defined disciplinary purposes, summarily jail, punish, or relocate to asylums, missions, hospitals or other secure institutions, anyone deemed to be Aboriginal under the act. Later amendments would allow Australian South Sea Islanders, the descendants of indentured Pacific Islanders, to be 'deemed' Aboriginal for the purposes of discipline.⁶⁶ Comparable legislation was introduced in every state in Australia in the early years of the twentieth century, ensuring that every Aboriginal person on the mainland was potentially subject to legislation that could control everything from identity to everyday mobility.

In New Caledonia powers similar to the Australian models were granted to the colonial governor in 1887 by a legal code, the so-called *code de l'Indigénat*, originally designed to suppress anti-colonial resistance in Algeria. Like Australian Protection legislation it created a permanent state of exception for Indigenous Kanaks, legally defined by the French as Canaques, governing them as subjects rather than citizens. As was the case in Australia, the governor or representative gained control over the status, identification and residence of Kanaks and the ability, as in Queensland, to dispense disciplinary fines and to relocate individuals without recourse to courts, and with no right of defence or appeal.⁶⁷ Kanaks were unable to leave reserves without permission, were subject to strict curfews and frequently required for forced labour. As was the case in Australia, legislative mechanisms served the dual purpose of controlling anti-colonial resistance and disobedience, while enhancing the accessibility of Kanak land.

While Australia and New Caledonia were occupied and settled in ways that ignored in law any prior Indigenous sovereignty, in New Zealand the Treaty of Waitangi created a legal acknowledgement and theoretical safeguard for Maori land rights. There land would remain, as it was in the

⁶⁵ *An Act to Provide for the Protection and Management of the Aboriginal Natives of Victoria Amendment Act 1886* (Vic), s 4(2). Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Victorians: A History since 1800* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2005), pp. xvii–xxv, 183–257.

⁶⁶ *An Act to Make Provision for the Better Protection and Care of the Aboriginal and Half-Caste Inhabitants of the Colony, and to Make More Effectual Provision for Restricting the Sale and Distribution of Opium 1897* (Qld), ss 9, 31; Thom Blake, "Deported . . . at the Sweet Will of the Government": The Removal of Aborigines to Reserves in Queensland 1897–1939', *Aboriginal History*, 22 (1998): 51–61; Banivanua Mar, *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, pp. 175–85.

⁶⁷ Adrian Muckle, 'Troublesome Chiefs and Disorderly Subjects: The *Indigénat* and the Interment of Kanak in New Caledonia, (1887–1928)', *French Colonial History*, 2 (2010): 131–60.

Pacific, a powerful buffer protecting communities from the assimilationist pressures of settler society and economy. It was therefore through the management of land rights, and by extension identity, that settler governments in New Zealand pursued the amalgamation of Maori into settler society. Amalgamation was something the state had promised since as early as 1844 when the Native Trust Ordinance committed to ‘assimilating as speedily as possible the habits . . . of the Native to those of the European population’.⁶⁸ Andrew Armitage has argued in relation to comparative assimilation programmes in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, that New Zealand’s assimilation programme was pursued through the twin forces of education in English, compulsory after 1871, and the extinguishment of traditional land rights. While under the *Native Reserves Act 1851* many Maori were confined to marginalised and isolated reserves dominated by assimilationist practices, extinguishment of native title compounded the policy.⁶⁹ Extinguishment was a creeping tide in New Zealand that was bureaucratised in 1862 and 1865 by the establishment of the Native Land Court. In the aftermath of the New Zealand Wars Maori were required to apply to the Court to adjudicate land disputes, with winners receiving disposable Crown title. The overall impact of this over time, of a gradual fragmentation or alienation of Maori title, and thus the legalized dispossession of swathes of land, locked many dispossessed Maori landowners into states of dependency on settler society.⁷⁰

In Hawaii, as in New Zealand, the United States inherited residual Kanaka Maoli rights in land that would need to be extinguished or disposed of to secure non-native property rights. While native education was also mainstreamed in Hawaii, as J. Kehaulani Kauanui has argued, assimilation and the dilution of Indigenous identity by absorption into settler society was principally pursued through the control of access to land. Most native lands were transferred to the United States government in trust for Kanaka Maoli as Home Lands in 1898. At the time access to land was openly recognised as crucial to the survival of Kanaka Maoli, whose population was in rapid decline, and many of whom, dispossessed and landless, were living in impoverished urban tenements and squatter camps reliant on the colonial state for survival. But in 1921 the Hawaiian Homes Commission restricted the grant of homelands to Kanaka Maoli with

⁶⁸ Cited in Judith Simon, ‘Anthropology, “Native Schooling” and Maori: The Politics of “Cultural Adaptation” Policies’, *Oceania*, 69:1 (1998): 66.

⁶⁹ On native reserves in New Zealand, Angela Wanhalla, ‘Women “Living Across the Line”: Intermarriage on the Canadian Prairies and in South New Zealand, 1870–1900’, *Ethnohistory*, 55:1 (2008): 34–5.

⁷⁰ David V. Williams, *‘Te Kooti Tango Whenua’: The Native Land Court 1864–1909* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 1999).

no less than 50 per cent Hawaiian blood in an explicit move to racialise and quantify Kanaka Maoli identity. With only 8,000 homeland leases granted to individual applicants in the ninety years since 1921, the move effectively contained and practically extinguished both Indigenous claims on Hawaiian land and an important route to effective self-determination.⁷¹

Throughout the settler states of New Zealand, Australia, New Caledonia and Hawaii, the dispossession of land and appropriation of sovereignty were tightly bound to the racialisation and reduction of Indigenous identities. As such, definitions of indigeneity were coupled with a permanent state of legal exception even as the catch cries of integration, dilution, assimilation or amalgamation proliferated. In this way identity joined land, mobility and sovereignty as a principle site of conflict and appropriation as settler governments pursued policies of extinguishment that naturalised racialised disadvantage for generations. To varying degrees of intensity, this would also be the case throughout the Pacific.

The partition of the Pacific into colonial territories produced small colonies with tiny economies and resource bases, and dwindling Indigenous populations. By this time the populations of Indigenous peoples had reached or were reaching their lowest point. With the notable exception of the island of New Guinea with upwards of two million people, most Pacific Islands had populations in the tens of thousands, mere fractions in many cases of pre-colonial numbers.⁷² By world standards these were small, readily forgotten and easily marginalised numbers. In the coming decades, the administration of these peoples would vary widely throughout the Pacific region with an uneven impact that will be explored more fully in coming chapters. But a commonality of the colonial experience itself was that of containment. Whether colonised in settler colonies where Indigenous identities were subject to the deeming

⁷¹ J. Kehaunani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 67–84; J. Kehaunani Kauanui, “‘For Get’ Hawaiian Entitlement: Configurations of Land Blood and Americanization in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921”, *Social Text*, 59 (1999): 123–44.

⁷² Solomon and Fiji islands and Australia had Indigenous populations close to 100,000, while most Pacific Islands had populations of less than 50,000. The Maori population was just over 45,000, and the Kanaka Maoli population in Hawaii was just over 40,000 in 1890. Tonga, Western Samoa, Gilbert and Ellice, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Tahiti had populations of between 24,000 and 47,000. Smaller isolated islands such as Guam, Wallis and Futuna, the Cook Islands, Niue, Nauru and Rapanui all had populations of less than 15,000. *Population Issues, Indigenous Australians: Occasional Paper 4708* (Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996), p. 10; A. H. McLintock, ‘Population – Factors and Trends’, *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/publication/3. Last accessed 15 February 2012; Firth, ‘Colonial Administration’, pp. 253–4; Eleanor Nurdyke, *The Peopling of Hawai‘i* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1977), pp. 174–8.

powers of authorised bodies and to slippery notions of blood quantum, race and tribal identity; or whether they were subject to colonial administrations concerned principally with extracting resources using cheap internally supplied labour forces, colonialism ruled through a reductive transformation of peoples. This reduction, or rationalisation, of peoples through a form of identity discipline mirrored the spatial reduction of place into bordered territorial possessions. Overcoming this confinement of minds and bodies, and the isolation imposed by colonialism's formal and informal borders, would have to be a conscious, deliberate and decolonising act of overcoming smallness.

Conclusion

When trader John Turnbull travelled the world at the turn of the eighteenth century, his Tahitian crew engaged in lengthy exchanges with their Kanaka Maoli hosts in Hawaii, and found Tahitian relatives living in Tonga.⁷³ Already, within twenty years of sustained contact with Europeans, Islanders had expanded their exploration of the world. In Sydney, Turnbull's unnamed crew spent time with Maori who had recently travelled to London and lingered at the water's edge of this fledgling city that was already a key node in a vibrant global network. There, another traveller noted that an evening stroll along Sydney's shores was frequently 'melted with the wild melody of a [Tahitian] love song' or the 'terrific whoop of the New Zealand war-dance'.⁷⁴ Sydney would continue during the nineteenth century to be a site of arrival and departure for visitors from all over the world, and unlike Celua and Cakobau whose travels are caught in the freeze frame of physical archives, most would move through unnoticed as steerage or crew.

Over the next hundred or so years, Indigenous sailors, whalers and sealers, maritime and plantation workers would move throughout the Pacific ensuring that Indigenous Australians, Maori, Kanaka Maoli, Tahitians, Fijians and Islanders from all over the Pacific visited each other, mixed together in missions and on plantations and ships and exchanged information and language along with songs, dance and gods. Connections, the vast majority of which we will never quantify, were

⁷³ John Turnbull, *A Voyage Round the World in the Years 1800, 1801, 1802, 1803, and 1804* (London: Printed for R. Phillips by T. Gillet, 1805), pp. 400, 506.

⁷⁴ P. Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), pp. 57–9; Alan Birch and David Macmillan, *The Sydney Scene: 1788–1960* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1962), p. 53. For more on Sydney's water's edge see Tracey Banivanua Mar, 'Shadowing Imperial Networks: Indigenous Mobility and Australia's Pacific Past', *Australian Historical Studies*. 46:3 (2015): 340–355.

significant enough to give birth to new languages by the 1880s. These pidgin languages and creoles grew in currents that flowed from the Caribbean and Atlantic via encounters between English speakers and Indigenous Australians on the coast of New South Wales.⁷⁵ Functional words such as ‘by-and-by’ for the future tense, ‘savvy’ for understand or ‘plenty’ for much were common to Caribbean Creole, Pacific Pidgins, Australian Aboriginal English and Torres Strait Islander Broken. More subtle or emotional terms such as ‘picanniny’ for child, ‘bra’ or ‘brother’ for male peer, or ‘shame’ show direct links between Jamaica, the Bahamas, Hawaii, New South Wales and the Torres Strait.⁷⁶

With the arrival of colonial administrations, infested as they were with racial taxonomies and reductions, the potential of the middle ground that had opened in parts of the Pacific was shut down. Physical movement across borders was both imposed and rendered illicit, and to differing degrees Indigenous peoples were governed and produced as ‘natives’ – small in number and perceived capacity, physically and intellectually isolated from the world beyond the colony and constricted by laws and borders. Depopulation, labour trades and dispossession had widely disrupted the region and everywhere islands of peoples were left to mend broken and disrupted genealogies and familial links, lost land and discontinuities. By the turn of the nineteenth century, as the abilities of individuals were defined by ideologies of race, the dynamic and skilled attempts to adjust to the new world were forgotten as imperial powers made decisions about native peoples’ abilities and potential to be self-governing, self-determining peoples. This forgetting would leave a state of deficit or absence that decolonisation would have to both un-colonise and fill.

The process of colonisation had produced enmeshed and entwined experiences in and around the Pacific, where the loss of land in one colonial site precipitated the extraction of labourers from another and vice versa. But perhaps one of the internal flaws of the colonialisms of Oceania was the uniform and chronic underestimation of the abilities of Indigenous peoples. To this extent colonialism engendered the conditions of its own demise. This was an underestimation that was perversely acknowledged by the widespread limitation of Indigenous peoples’ access to education, civil rights, mobility, the economy and other fundamentals of self-determination. As a settler in Rabaul noted in 1929 in the *Rabaul Times*, the ‘coloured man in his own country with a little bit of insufficient

⁷⁵ Darrell Tryon and Jean-Michel Charpentier (eds), *Pacific Pidgins and Creoles: Origins, Growth Development* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 1–4, 65–114.

⁷⁶ John Holm, ‘Atlantic Meets Pacific: Lexicon Common to the English-Based Pidgins and Creoles’, *Language Sciences*, 14:3 (1992): 187, 185–6, 194; R. Clark, ‘In Search of Beach-la-mar: Towards a History of Pacific Pidgin English’, *Te Reo*, 22 (1979): 3–64.

education is a great menace to the well being of that country'.⁷⁷ This would prove the case throughout the colonies of the Pacific as fluency in the languages of empire enabled the establishment of deeply rooted traditions of both anti-colonialism and a longer-lasting decolonisation effort. It was this that would render the borders of empires porous enough to enable lingering currents of connected dissent, or the wellsprings of decolonisation.

⁷⁷ Firth, 'Colonial Administration', p. 286.