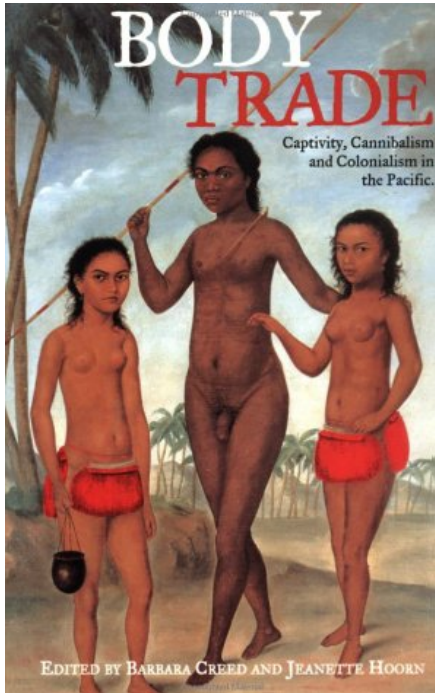


Body trade: Captivity, cannibalism and colonisation in the Pacific edited by Barbara Creed and Jeanette Hoorn. Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2002, pp. 287, £16.99, paperback, ISBN: 1 86403 184 0.



This volume results from a 1997 symposium held for Gannath Obeyesekere and is propelled by a desire to further develop Obeyesekere's deconstructions of cannibal stories. As such the series of essays are representative of post-colonial studies of the body. The volume has thirteen chapters, of which seven are on specifically Australian topics, and is divided into four parts. The first part, consisting of four chapters, discusses how indigenous bodies are possessed by colonisers to highlight for their own purposes aspects of similarity and difference. Paul Turnbull explores the phrenological use of Aboriginal skulls; Chris Healy examines how selected Aboriginal elders were 'chained' to breastplates and concludes that the labelling and material remnants anticipated the supposed extinction of the Aborigines. Mary Mackay, in the final chapter of this section, sets out to deconstruct images of the Native Mounted Police. This chapter appears as rather odd in that only three

pictures accompany the text; I suspect the symposium presentation was rather more liberally illustrated.

The second part, of three chapters, deals with the myth (or otherwise) of the cannibal and begins with an essay by Obeyesekere who further develops his work on Fiji. Robert Dixon discusses representations in the writings of Ion Idriess and the third essay is an examination of Melville's *Typee* by Paul Lyons. Part III has three chapters in which the typical colonial gaze is reversed in order to consider captive white bodies in Australia. Happily, we are only treated to one mention of Eliza Fraser and instead other instances in literature and historical sources are pursued here. 'Film, desire and the colonised body' is the final part of this collection and in this Barbara Creed identifies Chauvel's movie *Jedda* as an early example of the stolen generations narrative.

As might be expected in post-colonial studies, this volume represents a wide range of scholarship and the body as a theme encourages this. Captivity and cannibalism are emotionally challenging topics with which to engage and the authors have done well in doing this with great sensitivity.

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5 April 2005