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Edited by Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega, Lorenz Gonschor

# Mysteries and Dreams

*The French in Oceania*

SERIES IN CRITICAL MEDIA STUDIES

## About the editors

**Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega** was born and raised in Senegal of mixed European ancestry. She has been living in Tahiti for 26 years, where she currently holds a tenured position at the University of French Polynesia as a full professor in Anglophone literature. Her field of expertise is postcolonial and decolonial studies and environmental humanities about and from Oceania, which she teaches at both the graduate and postgraduate levels. She has published extensively, with some of her works selected for inclusion in anthologies like 'Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism' (2024) and 'Routledge Historical Resources: 19th Century Empire' (forthcoming). Her latest articles can be found in the special issues of 'Archivio antropologico mediterraneo' (2022), 'Sciences du Jeu' (2023), and 'Journal de la Société des Océanistes' (2025). Her latest books include two collective volumes, 'The Bounty from the Beach' (2018) and 'Urgence écologique au Fenua' (2023), a monograph, 'Orientalisme ou Défi Postcolonial? L'Âme des Guerriers d'Alan Duff' (2021), and a novel, 'Kœur' (2022), about migrations between Europe and Africa.

**Lorenz Gonschor** was born in East Germany of Masurian and German ancestry and has lived in Oceania for 22 years. He is currently a senior lecturer in politics and international affairs at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. Previously, he taught various social sciences at the University of French Polynesia in Tahiti, 'Atenisi University in Tonga and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where he also obtained his PhD in Political Science and his MA in Pacific Islands Studies. His research focus is on the politics of Oceania, both historical and contemporary, with a particular interest in the Hawaiian Kingdom, its international relations, and its intellectual history, as well as the unfinished business of decolonization of Oceania. He is the author of 'A Power in the World: The Hawaiian Kingdom in Oceania' (2019), of chapters in the recent 'Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean' (2022) and 'Unconquered States: Non-European Powers in the Imperial Age' (2024), and a co-author of the forthcoming fourth edition of the 'Historical Dictionary of Polynesia'.

## Summary

Oceania has been the source of mysteries and dreams from the first contact with Europe onwards, both for Indigenous Oceanians and outsiders. 'Mysteries and Dreams: The French in Oceania' is a collection of cross-disciplinary essays that explore the mysteries, allures and questionings raised by Indigenous Oceanians and French people about their mutually different worldviews, as well as their dreams, aspirations or disillusionings as they navigate their relationships. With a strong focus on reciprocity, this original project analyzes diverse forms of French association with Oceania and the responses engendered by Indigenous communities, authors and artists as they reshape French narratives.

Organized along three lines – history, literature and arts – this innovative lens offers unprecedented examinations of hitherto unexplored Oceanian and French figures involved in Oceania, bringing to the fore Marist missionary Xavier Montrouzier, influential politicians Charles de Varigny and Auguste Marques, playwrights and artists Pierre Gope and Greg Semu, and filmmakers Sima Urale and Édouard Deluc. It also offers fresh postcolonial approaches to better-known figures such as Paris Commune convicts Louis Michel and Henri Rochefort, prominent authors like Titaua Peu, Selina Tusitala Marsh, Teresia Teaiwa, Vilsoni Hereniko and Édouard Glissant, and widely-discussed artists like Yuki Kihara. It also critically engages individuals representing the colonial gaze, such as Pierre Loti, Allan Hughan and Paul Gauguin.

Spanning across Oceania, from the Solomon Islands to Rapa Nui, Hawai'i to Aotearoa-New Zealand, Tahiti and Kanaky-New Caledonia, it shows the wide impacts of the French on this vast region. Bridging together Anglophone and Francophone Oceania, this volume is an authoritative and enlightening reference to scholars and students in postcolonial Pacific Island studies, to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Oceanians wishing to discover interactive processes of change in their region's past and present, and, more generally, to all outsiders who might, some day, have felt inclined to fall under the spell of an imaginary Oceania.

September 2025 | Hardback 236x160mm | 339 Pages | ISBN: 979-8-8819-0300-8

**SUBJECTS** Sociology, Language and Linguistics

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