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Introduction

It is possible to see the foundation of Australia not so much as a convict settlement, but as an Enlightenment society, dedicated, as were many others, to a social experiment, through the making of a new, ordered society. Convicts had never before been formed into a colony and the challenge before Governor Phillip was the very Enlightenment one of obtaining mastery over the natural world. He was also working out, just as global explorers had in other parts of the world, his relations with the Aborigines, or indigenous people, with whom he enjoined his men to stand in good relations. In all these ways, Sydney Cove was an Enlightenment society. (Outram: 313)

This quote, from Dorinda Outram's *Panorama of the Enlightenment* (2006), neatly captures a great many truths *about* as well as a great many problems *with* the Enlightenment. It also conveniently provides a good starting point with which to introduce this small group of papers. They are the result of a Symposium held in 2014 at the *Interdisciplinary Centre for European Enlightenment (IZEA) Studies* at the Martin-Luther-University in Halle (Saxony-Anhalt), thus set at a place dedicated to the study of the Enlightenment. The Symposium was titled "Enlightened Powers: American, French, and British Interactions in Botany Bay, 1788–1800".

To begin, then, with the truths: The eighteenth century, in a quite startling way, was a global period, and the extension of European imperialist aspirations was global, too. The binary enshrined in postcolonial theory between the centre and periphery is, therefore, one that simply does not do justice to the late eighteenth century. Most of its critical verve writes back to the imperialist denigrations which developed after concepts of race, white supremacy, and the religious fervor of Evangelical missions shaped imperial Britain in the nineteenth century. All this lasted well into the twentieth century and, to some extent, even transcended the dissolution of Empire itself. In the eighteenth century, however, it is difficult to see how such a central/peripheral binary would apply to the newly founded United States, the range of the East India Company far into the Indo-Pacific, to settlements such as Rio de Janeiro, Boston, Cape Town or Mauritius. None of these places thought their local issues were peripheral, though some European administrators may have already considered them to be so. In consequence, it would also be an error, in critical terms, to focus only on a Transatlantic binary relationship, which embodies conceptually the consequences of the Cold War and the United States' ties to Europe and Britain – and which thus anachronistically imposes a conceptualization upon eighteenth century studies that can only fail to adequately represent the period. In order to grasp the order of the magnitude of imperialist strategy (or its bungling) in the South Pacific at the end of the eighteenth century, one needs a more extensive, global focus indeed.

An Enlightenment social experiment, then, the colonial foundation at Port Jackson in 1788 may well have been, yet if so, it was an experiment driven by necessity. Where to send all those convicts after the Treaty of Paris (1783) had clarified

once and for all America's rejection of their settlement? At a time of dire poverty, thriving criminal industry and enterprise, and various rebellions within the British Isles, there were a great many convicts to dispose of indeed. Notorious hulk loads full of prisoners, floating on the Thames or off-shore at various harbours, awaited the results of the American War of Independence, during which British courts had simply kept sentencing to transportation, and this became a feature well into the nineteenth century (see Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*). The overflowing short-term confinement facilities that Britain had, in place of a fully formed penal system, additionally bear witness to the government's necessity to come up with a quick and efficient solution to the convict transportation problem. African ports proved too dire a place with tropical diseases and high mortality rates, and survivors' reports caused enlightened shocks and consequent rejections (cf. Christopher 2011). In the slightly longer run, the first penal colony at Port Blair on the Andaman Islands – founded in 1789 almost contemporaneously with Port Jackson – failed for similar reasons, despite moving the site to Port Cornwallis; it was abandoned in 1796 (cf. Vaidik 2010). Transportation was to be a civilized, enlightened move away from the gory consequences of the Bloody Code; exile was not supposed to be, effectively, just a prolonged form of death sentence. Yet this social experiment was also, from the start, a strategic move – and strategic on a global scale. If the British or the French had an interest in Australia, it was because of the access the Bass Strait and the Torres Strait gave to the larger Pacific.

The South Westerlies made the coast of Spanish settlements in Chile closer to Australian settlements than the coast of Cape Town, as Péron noted in his report to the French Government, which finally issued Napoleon's instruction to take the British colony, though in 1810 this order came far too late (Scott: 21; see also Fornasiero 2014). In fact, this strategic position made Australia so uncomfortably close that the Spanish checked up on Port Jackson in 1798, just to be on the safe side (King: 47). It was also of paramount strategic importance to the eighteenth century balance of power because the trade triangle between the West Australian coast, the ports of Mauritius and the Seychelles, and India – with the first Andaman Island convict colony – promised to Britain control over the ungovernable, ongoing exchange of goods with Asian and Pacific riches. Within this geostrategic focus, French and British naval and imperialist ambitions were similar and in great competition, as the successful British invasion of French Mauritius and surrender of the French governor of the Seychelles in 1810–11 testifies. Neither could fully stop the ongoing activities of French privateers, who after the American War of Independence had started preying again on the East India Company naval routes from bases in Madagascar (Piat: 10). The eighteenth century is the time of the rise of naval traffic, and this traffic – so vital to military, economic and diplomatic connections and strategies – was teeming, and above all it was global.

Naturally, the seas being purportedly free for all, American traders, slavers, whalers and sealers roamed the oceans with the rest of the Europeans. American ebony traders, bound for China, were there in the Indo-Pacific, to transport exchanged prisoners of war between the British in India and the French in Mauritius (Flinders: 410, 432). They were there at Governor King's own instigation, David Collins claims, to bring Caribbean rum to Port Jackson (Collins: 186), and thus circumvented the East India Company's attempts at selling their Indian arrack. So one needs to con-

sider this additional US competition to the British and French naval and economic presence in the Indo-Pacific, if one is to understand the balance of the geostrategic implications of the British settlement at Port Jackson.

It also pays well to remember the impact of this global, historical focus on our world today. From the beginning of their first settlements at the Eastern coast of the North American continent, the settlers in the American colonies had thought of themselves as confined towards the West by the Pacific only – certainly not by any lines drawn on the map to designate spaces of white settlement by His Most Gracious Majesty King George III's government. This was, after the royal proclamation of 1763, a territory running only parallel to the Atlantic coast, extending little more than a few hundred miles into the interior. In the sense of the following American drive towards the Pacific, Hillary Clinton's declaration of the twenty-first century as "America's Pacific century" is quite traditional, though it startled and puzzled Europeans at the time (Clinton 2011). Notably, for all the more contemporary bluster of "America First", the Trump Administration's ongoing focus on China, both Korean states, Russia and Japan, to the detriment of its post-World War II Transatlantic focus on Europe, shows this still ongoing change, or, more properly speaking, this ongoing return to the eighteenth century's global focus.

Undoubtedly, though it had the makings of a social experiment, the settlement at Port Jackson had an economic background and a strategic focus. Yet it was founded within the humanitarian concepts of Enlightenment. The accumulation of knowledge was seen as the core of progress, and so the progress of society, industry, and commerce was interpreted as the driving force of civilization. It is important to remember that "mastery over the natural world" (Outram: 313) could in part be bought and sold. It is here that the trade in expedition journals, maps, plants, anatomical specimens, and knowledge, the circulation of concepts and ideas mirrors and follows the circulation of ships. Ships brought books to Port Jackson, and took specimens, drawings, journals, letters, seeds to spread globally again. And more grisly fare: Collections of Indigenous skulls and other human remains have been reclaimed in the last decades from American, British, and European hospitals, museums and university collections, not to forget cultural artefacts. The eighteenth century's Enlightenment has thus not merely laid the foundation stones of global political and economic modernity, it continues to exert a problematic reach into the present as well because the scientific community often pushed humanitarian concerns aside in order to serve scientific and economic interests.

Establishing a new research paradigm is not an easy venture, and will of necessity just scrape the surface of such a vast interdisciplinary project. The papers from this Symposium provide a comparative perspective each, bringing to the table their respective authors' individual expertise. There is a strong focus on historiography, represented by historians from America, Europe, and Australia, but also a focus on cultural studies in the more general sense. As keynote speaker, we were very fortunate to win Professor Cassandra Pybus, Centenary of Federation Medal recipient of 2003 for her service to Australian society and literature, a historian who needs no introduction to Australians and to a great many other international historians. The *University of Queensland Press* considers her rightly "one of Australia's best known and most admired non-fiction writers" (UQP, web). *Black Founders: The Unknown Story of Australia's First Black Settlers* and *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves*

of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty (both 2006) opened the field of research into eighteenth century global imperialist history. In her keynote she focuses on the contrasting fates of Black Caesar and John Randall, both originally from America, who had been transported to Australia on the First Fleet. She also stresses the debilitating effects which the New South Wales' Corps' corruption and rum trafficking had on the colony. Nicole Starbuck, an Australian expert on the French explorations of the South Pacific, is the author of *Baudin, Napoleon and the Exploration of Australia* (2013). As Senior Research Associate she also contributed to the ARC Discovery Project "The Baudin Legacy: A New History of the French Scientific Voyage to Australia, 1800–1804". Starbuck presents in her historiographic paper a closer look at French republican views and representations of Aborigines. She argues that the Indigenous population of Port Jackson, from the French ethnographic point of view, was already "tainted" by urbanity, in contact with the British colony and other international (such as American) shipping traffic. To understand the French evaluation of Indigenous life in Port Jackson, one needs to differentiate between their own frameworks of rurality vs. urbanity, local authenticity vs. international mingling.

The German independent historian Henriette von Holleuffer, co-editor of this special edition, general co-editor of the *Australian Studies Journal*, and editor of the German translation of Edward John Eyre's encyclopaedic and scientifically relevant *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia / Expeditionen in den Westen Australiens* (2016), discusses in her paper the pragmatic politics of French and British naturalists, botanical artists and gardeners who explored the Australian flora in the early Australian colony. Her research illustrates "the maintenance of an international academic network that enabled science to continue freely – in times of peace and war". Against the background of ongoing military hostilities, von Holleuffer traces an attempt by scientific correspondents to create a transnational, pacifist community of science, which also shapes their practice of botanical naming. Prior to my own contribution, I had recently edited a new bicentenary version of the first German translation of Matthew Flinders' *A Voyage to Terra Australis / Die Entdeckungsreise nach Australien* (2014). In this special edition's paper, I focus on a triple causality behind the Irish convict rebellion at Castle Hill in colonial New South Wales (1804), more specifically on the question how the interaction between United Irishmen republicanism and Defender Catholicism in the specific context of the Australian colony and with regard to the events before, during and after the rebellion can help explain the iconography of an Ecce Homo statue presented to ex-convict William Davis in 1817.

Cross-currents between these historical, political, social, religious, and scientific interactions opened up in the Roundtable discussion between Cassandra Pybus, Andrew O'Shaughnessy and Jennifer Anderson, which focused on the as yet not fully considered implications of the early American maritime presence in the South Pacific, and on the circulation of individuals between America and Australia following the British loss of the American colonies. Cassandra Pybus has already briefly been introduced above. The other two participants were no less illustrious. Jennifer Anderson, Assistant Professor at Stony Brook University, New York, and author of *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (2012), brought to the table her expertise on the history of early American trading from Indonesia to the Caribbean

and across the Atlantic, but also on the local Nantucket whaling industry. Andrew O'Shaughnessy, finally, has been Saunders Director of the Robert H. Smith International Centre for Jefferson Studies at Monticello since 2003 and works as a Professor of History at the University of Virginia. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and elected Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society. O'Shaughnessy is one of the foremost American experts on colonial military history and has published extensively on the American War of Independence in its global ramifications, from *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (2000) to *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire* (2014), to name just the most important publications for the context of this special edition. The Roundtable discussion was open to questions from the public.

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