

How Scholars Think: About Captain Cook, for Example

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As Howe noted in 1996, both scholarly and popular interest in Captain Cook is not uniform and unchanging, but shifts focus over time, in ways that provide a useful lens for understanding key intellectual and political transformations. The Tuia - Encounters 250 Commemoration provides a contemporary opportunity to use scholarly and popular commentary on the events surrounding Cook's voyages as a mirror to reflect, not on Cook himself, but rather on competing contemporary understandings of the relationships between indigenous knowledge and global science. This paper explores the ways in which, since the 1990s debates between Sahlins, Obeyesekere and their critics and advocates, the figure of Cook has provided a freighted symbol for competing theoretical understandings of the relationship between indigeneity, science, and the world system.

Biographical information

Nicole Pepperell is Manger of Research Training and Senior Lecturer of Social Theory with the school of Global, Urban and Social Studies at RMIT University in Melbourne. Among other topics, she writes on the formative engagement between sociological and political theory and colonialism. But moving to Waikato.
