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Mutiny's Bounty. Pitcairn Islanders, Social Scientists, and Knowledge Making in a Captivating Place.

Tuesday 25 March 2014 11.00am – 12.30pm

Adrian Young, Princeton University

ANU Centre for European Studies, 1 Liversidge St Canberra



In 1789, sailors on the Royal Navy vessel *Bounty* mutinied and, with a small group of Tahitian captives, settled on Pitcairn Island, a remote islet in the southern Pacific. Some of their descendants still live there, though others migrated to equally remote Norfolk Island. During the last two centuries, social scientists from Europe, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand transformed these two islands and their inhabitants into ready-made social experiments. Knowledge about Pitcairn Islanders circulated broadly around the globe and through a wide set of scientific debates as scientists used evidence from Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands to support theories of racial hybridity, eugenics, creole language formation, population dynamics, Polynesian migrations, and the formation of cultural identity. But Pitcairn Islanders'

prominence in social scientific discourse was attendant upon Pitcairn Island's much romanticized place in Anglophone culture, and Pitcairn Islanders and their interlocutors alike took up the island's captivating power for their own ends.

Adrian Young is a doctoral candidate in the history of science at Princeton University, where he researches the histories of the human sciences, cross-cultural contact, and the circulation of knowledge across European empires. Adrian's dissertation is on the history of social scientific interest in Pitcairn and Norfolk Islands, home to the isolated descendants of a small group of eighteenth-century British mutineers and Tahitian women. In addition to his dissertation work, Adrian has also written about the history of the search for "missing links" across the twentieth-century colonial world and the radical nineteenth-century origins of object lessons. Before starting his doctoral work, Adrian earned an M.A. in history at Princeton (2011) and a B.A. (hons) in history and international relations at The Ohio State University (2008).

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