# Pacific Geographies

## Research | Notes | Current Issues from the Asia-Pacific Region



**SPECIAL ISSUE**
in cooperation with Austrian
South Pacific Society (OSPG)

**PAZIFIK DOSSIER**
Publication #XIV

# CONTENTS *#55* | January / February 2021

Océanitude and Pacific regionalism in the wake of climate change - 04

Identities of Indigenous and missionary cultures in German New Guinea? – 11

Tapati Rapa Nui, a festival of indigenous identity or expression of constructed authenticity? – 20

## EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

we are pleased to announce a special issue of Pacific Geographies in collaboration with the Austrian South Pacific Society (OSPG), for which this volume is part of its "Pazifik Dossier" publication series.

The six contributions are based on papers presented and discussed in the frame of a young scholars' session ("More than a cliché and the dream of the South Seas? Young research in and about the South Pacific") at the Vienna Anthropology Days' conference in autumn 2020, organized by OSPG members. They all deal with representations of "the Pacific", since the transmission and the re-interpretation of clichés of the South Pacific region is a recurring theme in Pacific Studies

The contributing authors made a great effort to point out the connections between their respective articles: Two scientific papers are based on doctoral research projects. Claudia Ledderucci's paper discusses Pacific regionalism in the wake of climate change. Magdalena Kittelmann takes a historical approach to medical and missionary work in Papua New Guinea.

The following research notes are authored by BA and MA students: Wolfgang Kiss explores if the Tapati Rapa Nui festival nowadays is an expression of constructed authenticity. Hannah Dittmer discusses the representation of Pacific Islanders in the Disney movie "Moana". Rebekka Wörner's contribution analyses images of Oceania in Ballantyne's "The Coral Island", whereas Julia Hazar analyses the historical photograph of Sir Bob Jones taken at the demonstrations against the 1981 Springbok rugby tour in New Zealand.

We hope that this (for most of the session's participants) first publication will provide the readers with insights on topics that are relevant for aspiring scholars working on Pacific Island issues.

In addition, Britta Schmitz's book review on "Beijing from Below – stories of marginal lives in the capital's center" was not part of the conference session, but is a valuable contribution in making the voices of a highly marginalized community heard.

Please enjoy your readings and do not hesitate to give us feedback.

The editors of this special issue, Elisabeth Worliczek & Matthias Kowasch

# Pacific Geographies

**COVER PICTURE**
Dance group from Rapa Nui
at the Tapati Festival in 2020
Source: © Wolfgang Kiss

# Océanitude and Pacific regionalism in the wake of climate change

*Claudia Ledderucci[1]*

[1] University of Turin, Department of Cultures, Politics and Society, Lungo Dora Siena, 100A, 10153, Torino, TO, Italy, E-mail: claudia.ledderucci@unito.it

*Abstract: The ocean is a shared space for all Pacific Island States and the common element that renders Pacific identities unique. Today, low-lying atolls are potentially exposed to rising sea levels threatening their very existence. Instead of precise borders, the ocean that washes Pacific shores could be considered as a blurry and inclusive space. Pacific identities are shaped by a network of relations unfurling across the ocean. This is echoed in Epeli Hau'ofa's regional identity, Maurer's Océanitude, and Titifanue's grassroots regionalism. This paper rethinks Pacific grassroots regionalism in the wake of climate change and its impacts in Oceania. In addition to contesting the Western narrative and raising awareness among local communities, the Pacific Climate Warriors are trying to reconnect traditional inter-island links through a transnational network.*
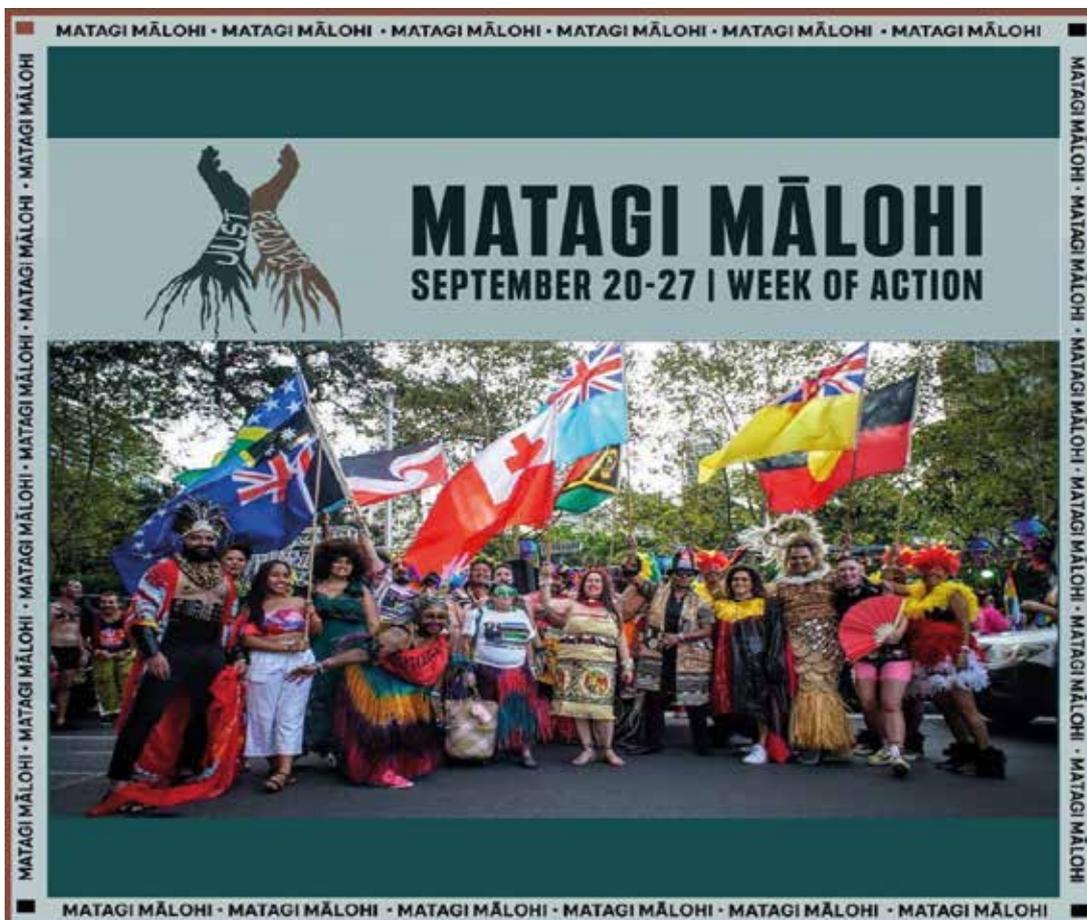
Source of all figures: © 350 Pacific.

Figure 1: One of the banners of the last campaign "Matagi Mālohi - Week of Action" that took place from September 20th to 27th, 2020.

## Introduction

Travelling across the Pacific is not new. The *genealogical history* of the Austronesian peoples, a history of continuous movement and settlement, confirmed regular historical voyages between Pacific islands (Jolly 2007). Yet, when speaking of and imagining Oceania, our view very often implies isolation, smallness, cultural and racial differences, and boundedness. These imagined boundaries do not coincide with Islanders' vision of their island homes. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the ocean is the principal element of Pacific identities: an element that renders them unique from others (Hau'ofa 1998). The ocean is the shared space of all Pacific Island States. National borders, established during the colonial time and reinforced with the independence movements, do not always confine Pacific Islanders.

Considering the serious threats posed today by environmental changes to the Pacific Island States, is it possible to rethink a new Pacific grassroots regionalism in the wake of climate change in Oceania? In this paper, I argue that instead of precise borders, the ocean that washes Pacific shores could be considered as a blurry, inclusive and connective space (DeLoughrey 2001). Moreover, Pacific identities are shaped by a network of relations unfurling across the ocean. This echoes the regional identity proposed by Hau'ofa (1998), considered to be a useful means to unite Pacific Islanders and to make Oceania prosperous and able to act when necessary as a united body, bound by cultural ties: the same grassroots regionalism concept proposed by Titifanue et al. (2017). The similar idea of *Océanitude*, as explained by Maurer (2019), could be defined as the valorization of mobility (through the ocean) as a source of cultural rootedness; or, as stated by Clifford (1997:2), dwelling-in-travel.

This study uses a discourse analysis methodology, combining interviews with key respondents and activists. The analysis examines indigenous strategies and narratives regarding climate change in the Pacific Islands region. Information is gathered through online sources such as 350.org, and the 350 Pacific official webpage, and social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Further information also stems from past research experience in New Caledonia in 2018. The aim of the paper is twofold: first, to explore climate change in Oceania as an imaginative idea (Hulme 2009), a form of cultural creativity (Favole 2010), fostering resilience, resistance and grassroots agency. Second, I propose to consider the Pacific Climate Warriors' activities against climate change and their campaigns to protect Pacific environments as a new form of regional identity. Before turning to these issues, ideas of Pacific regionalism are briefly presented in the following section.

## Pacific regionalism

Hau'ofa's 1998 founding paper on Pacific regionalism, *The Ocean in Us*, combined with his 1994 piece, Our Sea of Islands, sparked a fundamental paradigm shift in the view of the Pacific Islands as "tiny, isolated dots in a vast ocean" (Hau'ofa 1994:153). These publications echoed the cultural effervescence that drew public attention during the 1970s and 1980s all over Oceania and which were substantiated by the Pacific Way, defined as a trait of peculiarities, "a core of basic ideas and emotional responses" (Crocombe 1976:3) common to many Pacific communities. The amount of studies on the *Pacific Way* is very extensive and it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze such a concept, nonetheless it is interesting to note that the ideals of the *Pacific Way* are not shared by the totality of Pacific intellectuals (Lawson 2010). For instance, Simione Durutalo (1992:552) defined it as "a condition of false unity among potentially conflicting groups", highlighting the risk of idealization and uncritical positioning in a post-colonial world. Social movements rapidly developed to contrast colonialism and to gain independence from the former imperial powers, using cultural traits to reiterate a *native* identity and local characteristics. In those same years, the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement was founded (1975) to fight against nuclear experiments and hegemony in the Pacific. Another important festival, Melanesia 2000, organized in Nouméa by the Kanak political leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou took place in 1975, to present the local culture to non-indigenous inhabitants of New Caledonia and to fight for independence from France (Levallois 1995). This cultural turmoil led to the emerging perspective of "cultural studies for Oceania" (Wood 2003; Teaiwa 2001) consisting of the prominent use of Pacific epistemologies and the distinction of different roles for local intellectuals and non-native researchers.

In this sense, in the 1990s Hau'ofa proposed that a common and uniting element of all Pacific cultures could be the Ocean. The inheritance of this element and the strong value of its protection (not least from climate change) enable the formation of a common identity: that of Pacific Islanders. It is important to highlight that Hau'ofa did not propose a homogenization of Pacific cultures. Such common identity grounded in the Ocean does not mean homogenization but diversity into sameness. Oceanic identity is added to the *national* or local one. Moreover, this form of regionalism was an independent and native initiative, not led by colonial powers, post-colonial powers or institutions for their interests as was the South Pacific Community (SPC). Founded in 1947 by the colonial powers to sustain the development of Pacific Island States and Territories, the SPC dwindled the Pacific Islands. In fact, SPC meetings originally only included colonial powers with interest in the region. Moreover, the main goal was to provide technical advice on economic and social issues, with political issues being omitted (Shibuya 2004). For this reason, the independent Pacific Islands' countries decided to give birth to the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) in 1971, comprising exclusively sovereign states, to decide on their own goals without the interference of the colonial powers (mostly France). There is a large literature on Pacific power and diplomatic agency, focusing on the region-building activity for Pacific societies (see for example Fry 2019; Holz et al. 2016; Ivarature 2013) that is not analyzed in this paper. Yet, the concept of *affinity geopolitics* is extremely useful in the analysis proposed below. As defined by Davis (2015:3), "affinity geopolitics is an approach to international relations where security does not require domination", instead at the core of the geopolitical relations are respect and mutual aid among communities.

Mobility is a key issue of Hau'ofa's interpretation of cultural regionalism, as the ocean is considered to be a waterway connecting the islands, allowing the creation of kinship and commercial relationships to develop. It does not mean that Pacific communities and their cultures do not take into consideration

the land, the other element at the base of Pacific Islanders' identity. The land and the ocean are fundamental elements of Pacific societies. The articulation between *roots* and *routes* proposed by Clifford (1997, 2001) and the metaphor of the tree and the canoe to exemplify traditional identity suggested by Bonnemaison (1985) can help explain the connection between these two elements. The land is usually a symbol of attachment to place in Pacific Island cultures, the homeland in which indigenous people are rooted (Bonnemaison 1985; Clifford 2001; Farbotko et al. 2018; Kempf, Hermann 2014; Kim 2020). The ancestors, the cornerstones of Pacific societies, are buried in the land, and in this sense it symbolizes where one comes from, strengthening the idea of belonging. Yet at the same time, although significant, land does not delimit Pacific spatial, political and cultural values (Farbotko et al. 2015, Di Piazza et al. 2007). In this sense, mobility could be considered as a way to be rooted (Clifford 1997). As explained by Maurer (2019), and as it can be observed spending some time in Oceania, mobility does not represent a dispersal, a dissolution of local peculiarities lost to the meshes of the global system. Instead, mobility can express added value through the links of local identities and cosmopolitan Pacific Islanders' identities. We could affirm, with Clifford (1997), that mobility and travelling are a form of a dwelling or, as stated by Maurer (2019:117) "c'est le déplacement qui fonde l'autochtonie" (displacement is at the base of autochthony) . Differently from other forms of regionalism, such as the *Négritude* in the Caribbean proposed by Glissant (see Maurer 2019), *Océanitude* is not an exclusive movement founded on specific characteristics and/or racial traits, nor is it founded on an archipelagic identity. *Océanitude* represents an open and inclusive identity. This is a direct consequence of the end of colonialism: the Small Island States (or Large Ocean States, if we embrace the shift of paradigm) are recent products, created in the 1980s by the will of ex-colonial powers. Before the independence process, and even before colonialism, the Ocean was an open waterway, a blurry and inclusive space, connecting, not separating, Pacific shores. Furthermore, Océanitude is not exclusively based on the movement of people and the diaspora as the only peculiar trait of that identity. Mobility and rootedness

are complementary and not exclusive: they are the basis of an oceanic identity, composed of a web of relationships unfurling through the ocean. Mobility in Oceania is not the exception, rather it is the rule. In modern times, travel is more accessible because of a particular historical conjuncture: on the one hand, the period from the 1960s to 1970s represented a powerful boost for the development of independence movements in different countries; on the other, Pacific communities witnessed globalization and the quest for modernity. In this sense, we can think of the Pacific Islands and Islanders as cosmopolitan citizens *ante-litteram*. As explained by Maurer (2019), ethnonyms such as Kanak or Mā'ohi were initially used negatively by the colonizers, to differentiate the native peoples from themselves. Between the 1960s and 1970s, these names were appropriated and re-signified by the natives and are now commonly used to refer to themselves and their cultures with pride (e.g. the festival named Melanesia 2000). Indigeneity is therefore not a form of tribalism, nor a form of cultural homogenization. Rather, we could think of it as an articulation (Clifford 2001) of cultural forms. This means not only acknowledging cultural and historical diversities of all the realities that composed Oceania but also of its similarities.

## Re-imagining climate change

It is said that climate change and the impacts it entails, among them sea level rise, are a real threat, especially for small Pacific Island States (Nunn et al. 2020; Klöck et al. 2019). Always considered remote and marginal, Oceania seems to confirm, in the mainstream discourse, its vulnerability in the face of inevitable global phenomena. The possible scenarios proposed by the latest IPCC report (2018) predict that sea level rise, sea surface warming and consequent coral bleaching, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme climatic events, like cyclones, will jeopardize the habitability of coral atolls in the long term (Barnett & Adger 2003). A rather persistent and still circulating idea is that the Pacific islands seem destined to disappear underneath the ocean, swallowed up by the waters. This thought promotes an alarmist and simplistic scenario. Nevertheless, the history of ecological crisis is linked with a multiplicity of different factors of which the current extreme weather events are only a tangible consequence.

Different kinds of assessments could be added to this set of environmental problems, including social and juridical ones. From a legal and institutional point of view, the possible scenario envisioning the future uninhabitability of the low-lying islands threatens international standards of justice and security in a new way (Barnett & Adger 2003). How is it possible to combine the idea of loss of places and the disappearance of entire nations with the high mobility (on whose inevitability some authors disagree, see for example Kelman et al. 2015) of local communities? Migration could be considered as the failure of *in situ* adaptation measures but also as an adaptation strategy itself.

If this is the most common (yet catastrophic) reality pictured by the media when talking about climate change, it is also true that "not only climate change is altering our physical world, but the idea of climate change is altering our social worlds" (Hulme 2009:xxviii). In this paper, I would like to imply a different perspective than the one usually used and presented above and, following the analysis of Hulme (2009:xxvii) arguing that climate change could represent an "inspiration for a global network of new, or reinvigorated, social movements". The creative potential for societies inherent in climate changes should be further emphasized. The plasticity of the concept allows one to think about it as an imaginative resource around which we could re-build our personal and collective identities and shape political, economic and cultural projects. Using climate change as an imaginative idea implies the opportunity to stimulate scientific research, e.g. green and sustainable energy sources, or inspire artistic representations; promoting new lifestyles, rethinking the urban environment and so on. More profoundly, this signifies a change in our thinking about nature and the future. In the words of Hulme (2009:326):

"[...] rather than catalyzing disagreements about how, when and where to tackle climate change, the idea of climate change should be seen as an intellectual resource around which our collective and personal identities and projects can form and take shape. We need to ask not what we can do for climate change, but to ask what climate change can do for us".

I argue that thinking about climate change as an imaginative idea provides

a focus on indigenous mitigation and adaptation strategies, and to represent new possibilities for social movements and Pacific regionalism. This hypothesis resonates with the theory of cultural creativity proposed by Favole (2010). Following Sahlins and his critique of *despondency* and *dependency* theories (see also Sahlins 1999), Favole overturns the ethnocentric vision about native communities as subaltern victims of the imperial West, claiming the idea of cultural creativity. In this context, creativity is understood as "the capacity of human societies, in a particular condition and bypassing numerous constraints, of creating unforeseen, emergent new forms" (Favole 2010:IX). Today, researchers face new challenges to investigate how indigenous people reconstruct, re-elaborate, and re-imagine their societies by analyzing them in relation to the outside world. In recent years, numerous societies seem to experience a period of intense artistic, political and cultural fervor in the wake of climate change. In the Pacific region, this Oceanian Renaissance (Hau'ofa 1994; Friedman 2007) was possible because of the re-establishment of trans-national connections through migration, the diasporas and globalization which, even if usually criticized, represents, especially after World War II, a new opportunity for intercultural exchange (Favole 2010:XI). Climate change could then be understood as a new challenge: even though its impacts threaten the Pacific islands and their very existence, it could be used as a cultural device, a means to reinvigorate trans-Pacific connections and a new form of regionalism. After the long invisibility and immobility due to colonial politics, the Pacific Ocean can finally be thought of as a "sea of islands" (Hau'ofa 1994) in connection. Such connection is supported by the articulation of external and internal, global and local elements. Creativity is, in fact, a process that thrives in the encounter, but also in situations of coexistence, in the relationships between different cultures and societies (Favole 2010). It is not only a product of ties and connections but also of friction (Tsing 2005). Creativity can be understood as a tool to abandon the centre-periphery logic and to represent a new mode of appropriation of modernity, which indeed develops hand in hand with globalization. As stated by Bonnemaison



Figure 2: Banner and screenshot of a Zoom meeting, part of the Pacific Pawa Up Fellowship (2020)

(1991:119), "an island is habitable only when it is not considered either the centre or the periphery, but rather part of a line that unites it with the world". Following these suggestions, we could argue that Pacific Islands' weakness was crafted by colonialism, development, and globalization; at the same time, these processes have allowed new connections. Studying the processes of creativity means attributing agency and the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2013) to the communities in question. Faced with the flows of globalization, native societies do not limit themselves to opposing strategies of resistance and counter-hegemony, but they give life to new and unexpected cultural forms. One example is the indigenous response to climate change explained in the following section.

## Strong winds from Oceania

The Pacific regionalism proposed by Hau'ofa in 1998 drew inspiration from the ocean and its protection as a common inheritance. The idea of *Océanitude* proposed by Maurer (2019) as a literary movement, highlights an ecological consciousness that aims at marine environmental protection and mobility as a common Pacific trait. In this sense, the Pacific Climate Warriors, a

grassroots organization fighting climate change in Oceania, are well-positioned to represent this new kind of transnational and regional identity (Fair 2020; Steiner 2015; McNamara, Farbotko 2017). The network, founded in 2011 and linked to the international environmental movement 350.org, is composed of young indigenous adults who want to create awareness about the vulnerabilities of Pacific islands, both locally and internationally. They are active in more than fifteen Pacific island countries and also in the diaspora (Australia, New Zealand and the United States). The Pacific Climate Warriors embrace environmental values, such as protection of the ocean, and Pacific values, such as mobility, working as a catalyst for both identity and spreading ideas, working as custodians whose task is to maintain and nurture human relationships with the cosmos (Koya Vaka'uta et al. 2018). They made themselves known through their 2014 Newcastle Canoe Blockade in Australia. Cultural elements, such as those mentioned by Kiss (2021 in this volume) are strategic tools for activists to explain scientific issues to local communities through campaigns; the goal is to foster resilience and agency in the population to protect the islands from climate change and also to pro-

Figure 3: Storytelling series "Matagi Mālohi - Strong Winds" to promote the homonymous campaign (2019).

mote a deep understanding of mitigation and adaptation measures. Shifting the "doomed fate" (McNamara & Farbotko 2017) attributed to them by the catastrophic future scenarios of climate change, the Pacific Climate Warriors embrace what Appadurai (2013) has defined "the capacity to aspire", which is the cultural capacity to contest of the present situation, and to imagine an alternative future.

Climate activism as promoted by the Pacific Climate Warriors is supported by the use of new media. New media represents a tool through which the activists reiterate their agency, make their voices heard and mobilize a growing number of people to fight against the impacts of global climate change. At the same time, such campaigns to raise awareness on environmental changes are creating a new sense of regionalism, of Pacific Islanders' identity, and are uniting activists living in numerous Pacific Islands. The new media platforms perform an informative role as many people today gather information on the internet. They also have a communicative role because they are used by the activists to exchange information in real-time. According to Titifanue et al. (2017), social media platforms could be used in different ways:

they are useful in creating multimedia contents such as videos or photos; they can circulate information and invitations to live events; they give their messages and actions major visibility through the use of hashtags (#). These activities foster a new kind of grassroots regionalism and environmental consciousness in the Pacific region. This was recently made visible through the organization of the first Fellowship Program (the *Pacific Pawa Up* Fellowship) organized online by the Pacific Climate Warriors. This program aimed "to coach Pacific climate activists by equipping them with essential skills needed to make a positive impact in a rapidly changing landscape" (350.org 2020a), and merged into the 350.org campaign for a just recovery from Covid-19 (350.org 2020b). The latest campaign, the *Matagi Mālohi Week* of Action that took place from September 20th to 27th, 2020, gathering Pacific Islanders throughout the region and the diasporas (Australia, New Zealand and the United States). Pacific Climate Warriors are also hosting many online and offline events for a *Just Rekavary* (just recovery). Examples of such events include organizing art exhibitions and community clean-up in New Caledonia, planting medicinal plants in Tuvalu, and

sponsoring a No Car Day in Tonga, just to name only a few activities. In this sense, information and communication technologies (ICTs) turn out to be very useful tools to mobilize Pacific Islanders in numerous situations. New technologies are used by the Pacific Climate Warriors as a tool to aggregate Pacific Islanders, the underlying aim already proposed by Hau'ofa (1998) and Maurer (2019): a call for a grassroots regionalism, which is a broad and powerful movement not limited to fight against climate change or advocate local impacts but to be guardians of Pacific environments. The Pacific Climate Warriors could be identified as *passeurs culturels*, defined by Favole and Aria (2010) as social actors moving along borders, and between different universes of meaning. Even if they come from Pacific Island States, many activists currently live in the diaspora allowing them to connect with international networks and build relationships with organizations such as 350.org, which have similar claims. At the same time, this privileged position risks to distance their campaigns from people living in the outer islands. Taking into account the articulations and disarticulations (Clifford 2001) within the movement discloses a certain dif-

ference between the activists and local communities: the Pacific Climate Warriors live in cosmopolitan towns or are members of the diaspora in Australia, New Zealand or the United States, while the majority of Pacific Islanders reside in rural areas. While on the one hand, the cosmopolitanism of cities enables activists and leaders to connect their movement and its ecological and environmental concerns with broader realities and perspectives, on the other hand, this same cosmopolitanism risks alienating ordinary people from the movement, which ironically defines itself as a grassroots organization. Although this dichotomy between cosmopolitan cities and rural areas is certainly too rigid, I think it is useful to further question the connections and dis-connections amongst the movement and its supporters. It is necessary to question the activists' positioning and also their ability to act on the edge of two different worlds: perhaps it is the city itself, as a hybrid space, that has given rise and allowed the development of transnational movements reclaiming a form of Pacific regionalism, understood here as an articulated tradition (Clifford 2001). This relationship is made possible due to the kinship and diplomatic connections with neighboring nations. At the same time, mobility placed the activists in a dynamic relation between the cosmopolitan city and the rural areas and/or outer islands. Cities are laboratories in which indigenous worlds and modern practices intermingle. The urban dimension, even in Oceania, led to an articulation of environmental and eco-critical ideas with place-based environmental knowledge from rural areas in Pacific islands. This articulation paved the way for student associations, grassroots movements and transnational organizations. What remains to explore is the relationship between these movements and people from rural areas. On the one hand, this situation could lead to the perpetuation of the centre-periphery dynamics. This critique was first proposed by Durutalo (1992:253), who feared the *Pacific Way* to be an uncritical idealization of Pacific identity. Such idealization, in his thought, risked to obscure the diversities of Pacific cultures and identities and to hide power inequalities. On the other hand, island studies scholars are trying to rethink this dichotomy in an archipelagic way (Baldacchino 2008;

Favole & Giordana 2018; Borgnino & Giordana 2020) or according to what has been defined as *tidalectics*, which is an oceanic worldview reflecting the rhythmic fluidity of water (Brathwaite 1983; DeLoughrey 1998; Hessler 2018).

## Conclusion

Other than just contesting the Western narrative and raising awareness among local communities, the Pacific Climate Warriors are trying to reconnect traditional inter-island links through a transnational network, renewing the economic, political, and kinship relations, which suddenly disappeared due to the divide and conquer politics of the colonial era, later replaced by the creation of new national boundaries and through the establishment of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). The Pacific Climate Warriors seek to reconnect Pacific communities through their campaigns and initiatives, overcoming the previous colonial borders of the Nation-State and making mobility useful as a local resource instead of seeing it as a negative quality. This has been done before by other movements, such as the Polynesian Voyaging Society which aimed to pass on traditional voyaging methods that risked to be lost due to colonial banning. There was also the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific movement, and the regional protests against the resumption of the nuclear testing in Moruroa in 1995. The protection of the environment is at the core of the *affinity geopolitics* (Davis 2015) supported by the Pacific Climate Warriors, a system based on cross-ocean linkages of affinity and solidarity. The

concept of *warrior* as a classic male figure in the Pacific is re-imagined for all genders (see also George 2019; McNamara & Farbotko 2017). A warrior is anyone who will stand beside Pacific Islands' environmental activists, as warriors defend their homes and their world (Gard 2018). In this sense, I argue that climate change and all the consequences it entails, such as sea level rise, represent a new possibility for Pacific Islanders. Rather than seeing it only as an inevitable catastrophic event, climate change and the connection it could make throughout the *sea of islands*, could be considered as a new form of creativity and resilience (Favole 2010; Hulme 2009).

Nevertheless, some questions still need to be further discussed: how do the leaders of the movement, urban dwellers, connect with local communities, especially with those living on outer islands? Can these leaders who have an assumed knowledge of the land accurately have a positive effect on the islands? Can we assume that the movement is not well-rooted in the local social fabric, but represents instead an exogenous model imposed by foreign influences? And if so, to what extent it is not a real imposition on the local social fabric but rather an adoption or re-appropriation of this exogenous model by the activists themselves? Can the city be thought of as a social laboratory within which different practices meet and collide, giving rise to new forms of protest or resistance? On the other hand, can urban centres also be seen as places that reproduce social inequalities reflected in different ways?



Figure 4: Pacific Climate Warriors protesting at the Climate Strike (September 27th, 2019).

## References

350.org. (2020a). *Pacific Climate Warriors leading a Just Recovery.* Available from: https://350.org/press-release/pacific-climate-warriors-leading-a-just-recovery/ [accessed 21st September 2020].

350.org. (2020b). *Principles for a #JustRecovery from COVID-19.* Available from: https://350.org/just-recovery/ [accessed 21st September 2020].

Appadurai, A. (2013). *The Future as Cultural Fact: Essays on the Global Condition,* London, Verso.

Baldacchino, G. (2008). *Studying Islands: on Whose Terms? Some Epistemological and Methodological Challenges to the Pursuit of Island Studies. Island Studies Journal 3(1),* 37-56.

Barnett, J., Adger, N. (2003). *Climate Dangers and Atoll Countries. Climatic Change 61,* 321-337.

Bonnemaison, J. (1991). *Vivre dans l'île. Une approche de l'îléité océanienne. L'espace géographique. 2,* 119-125.

Bonnemaison, J. (1985). *The tree and the canoe: roots and mobility in Vanuatu societies. Pacific Viewpoint. 26(1),* 30-62.

Borgnino, E., Giordana, L. (2020). *Oceania, il Blue Continent.* In: Favole A. (ed.) *L'Europa d'Oltremare.* Milano, Raffaello Cortina, 49-165.

Brathwaite, K. E. (1983). *Caribbean Culture: two paradigms.* In: Martini, J. *Missile and Capsule.* Bremen, Universität Bremen, 9-54 .

Clifford, J. (2001). *Indigenous Articulations. The Contemporary Pacific. 13(2),* 468-490.

Clifford, J. (1997). *Roots. Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century.* Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Crocombe, R. (1976). *The Pacific Way: an emerging identity,* Suva, Lotu Pasifica.

Davis, S. (2015). *The Empires' Edge,* Athens, University of Georgia Press.

DeLoughrey, E. (2001). *The litany of islands, the rosary of archipelagoes: Caribbean and Pacific Archipelagraphy. ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature. 32(1),* 20-51.

DeLoughrey, E. (1998). *Tidalectics: charting the space/time of Caribbean waters. SPAN Journal of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies 47,* 18-38.

Di Piazza, A., Kempf, W., Pearthree, E. (2007). *Mapping Oceania past and present: movements, geographies, identities. Journal de la Sociétés des Océanistes 125,* 209-212.

Durutalo, S. (1992). *Anthropology and Authoritarianism in the Pacific Islands.* In: Foerstel L., Gilliam A. (eds.) *Confronting the Margaret Mead Legacy.* Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 205-232.

Fair, H., (2020). *Their Sea of Islands? Pacific Climate Warriors, Oceanic Identities, and World Enlargement, The Contemporary Pacific 32(2),* 341-369.

Farbotko, C., McMichael, C., Dun, O., Ransan-Cooper, H., McNamara, K., Thornton, F. (2018). *Transformative mobilities in the Pacific: Promoting adaptation and development in a changing climate. Asia Pac Policy Stud. 5,* 393-407.

Farbotko, C., Stratford, E., Lazrus, H. (2015). *Climate migrants and new identities? The geopolitics of embracing or rejecting mobility. Social and Cultural Geography. 17(4),* 533-552.

Favole, A., Giordana, L. (2018). *Islands of islands: responses to the centre-periphery fractal model in East Futuna (Wallis and Futuna) and the Belep Islands (New Caledonia). Island Studies Journal 13(1),* 209-222.

Favole, A. (2010). *Oceania. Isole di creatività culturale.* Roma, Laterza.

Favole, A., Aria, M. (2010). *Passeurs Culturels, patrimonializzazione condivisa e creatività culturale nell'Oceania francofona. AM-Antropologia Museale 9(27),* 5-18.

Friedmann, J. (2007). *The anthropology of global systems: Modernities, class and the contradictions of globalization.* Walnut Creek, Altamira Press.

Fry, G. (2019). *Framing the Islands.* Acton, ANU Press.

Gard, R. (2018). *Talanoa for climate change. Paper presented at the 12th ESfO Conference,* University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 7-10 December 2018.

George, N. (2019). *Climate change and 'architecture of entitlement': beyond gendered virtue and vulnerability in the Pacific Islands?* In: Kinnvall, C., Rydstrom, H. (eds.) *Climate hazards, disasters, and gender ramifications.* London, Routledge, 101-121.

Hau'ofa, E. (1994). *Our Sea of Islands. The Contemporary Pacific. 6(1),* 148-161.

Hau'ofa, E. (1998). *The Ocean in Us. The Contemporary Pacific. 10(2),* 392-410.

Hessler, S. (ed.) (2018). *Tidalectics,* Cambridge, MIT Press.

Holtz, A., Kowasch, M., Hasenkamp, O. (2016). *A Region in Transition – Politics and Power in the Pacific Island Countries.* Universaar, Universitätsverlag des Saarlandes.

Hulme, M. (2009). *Why We Disagree About Climate Change.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

IPCC (2018). *Annex I: Glossary.* In: Masson-Delmotte, V. et al. (eds.) *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.*

Ivarature, H. (2013). *Regionalism: Performance and Promise.* In: Hegarty, D., Tryon, D. (eds.) *Politics, Development and Security in Oceania,* ANU Press, Canberra, pp. 179–194.

Jolly, M. (2007). *Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and Foreign Representations of a Sea of Islands. The Contemporary Pacific 19(2),* 508-545.

Kelman, I., Stojanov, R., Kahn, S., Alvarez Gila, O., Duzi, B., Vikhrov, V., (2015). *Viewpoint paper. Islander mobility: any change from climate change? International Journal of Global Warming 8(4),* 585-602.

Kempf, W. & Hermann, E. (2014). *Epilogue. Uncertain Futures of Belonging. Consequences of Climate Change and Sea-level Rise in Oceania.* In: Hermann, E., Kempf, W., van Meijl, T. (eds.) *Belonging in Oceania. Movement, Place-Making and Multiple Identification.* Berghahn, New York, 189-213.

Kim, M. (2020). *Nesor Annim, Niteikapar (Good Morning, Cardinal Honeyeater). The Contemporary Pacific. 32(1),* 147-163.

Kiss, W. (2021). *"Ariki meets Tangata manu" Tapati Rapa Nui, a festival of indigenous identity or expression of constructed authenticity?, Pacific Geographies, 55 (January/February 2021),* 20-24. DOI: 10.23791/552024.

Klöck, C., Debelts, H. & Fink, M. (2019). *Dealing with Climate Change on Small Islands - Towards Effective and Sustainable Adaptation? Pacific Geographies 51 (January/February 2019),* 23-25.

Koya Vaka'uta, C., Vaka'uta, L. & Lagi, R. (2018). *Reflections from Oceania on Indigenous Epistemology, the Ocean and Sustainability.* In: Hessler, S. (ed.) *Tidalectics: Imagining an oceanic worldview through art and science.* Cambridge, MIT Press, 127-132.

Lawson, S. (2010). *'The Pacific Way' as Postcolonial Discourse: Towards a Reassessment. The Journal of Pacific History 45(3),* 297-314.

Levallois, M. (1995). *Mélanesia 2000 - Un festival très politique. Journal de la Sociétés des Océanistes 100-101(1-2),* 125-127.

Maurer, A. (2019). *Océanitude. Repenser le tribalisme occidental au prisme des nationalismes océaniens. Francosphères 8(2),* 109-125.

McNamara, K., Farbotko, C. (2017). *Resisting a "Doomed" Fate: an Analysis of the Pacific Climate Warriors. Australian Geographer. 48(1),* 17-26.

Nunn, P., McLean, R., Dean, A., Fong, T., Iese, V., Katonivualiku, M., Klöck, C., Korovulavula, I., Kumar, R., Tabe, T. (2020). *Adaptation to climate change: contemporary challenges and perspectives.* In: Kumar, L. (ed.) *Climate Change and Impacts in the Pacific.* New York, Springer, 499-524.

Sahlins, M. (1999). *What is Anthropological Enlightenment? Annu. Rev. Anthropol. 28,* i-xxiii.

Shibuya, E. (2004). *The Problems and Potential of the Pacific Islands Forum.* In: Rolfe, J. (ed.) *The Asia-Pacific: A region in transition.* Honolulu, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, pp. 102-115.

Steiner, C. (2015). *A sea of Warriors: Performing an Identity of Resilience and Empowerment in the face of Climate Change in the Pacific. The Contemporary Pacific. 27(1),* 147-180.

Teaiwa, T. (2001). *L(o)osing the Edge. The Contemporary Pacific. 13(2),* 343-357.

Titifanue, J., Kant, R., Finau, G., Tarai, J. (2017). *Climate Advocacy in the Pacific. The Role of Information and Communication Technologies. Pacific Journalism Review. 23(1),* 133-149.

Tsing, A. (2005). *Friction. An Ethnography of Global Connection.* Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Wood, H. (2003). *Cultural Studies for Oceania. The Contemporary Pacific 15(2),* 340-374.

**Corresponding Author: Claudia Ledderucci [claudia.ledderucci@unito.it] is a PhD candidate at the University of Florence and the University of Turin. She graduated in Cultural Anthropology at Sapienza University of Rome presenting a dissertation on the social construction of climate change and indigenous narratives, based on her fieldwork research in New Caledonia. Her current research focuses on the nuclear legacy in French Polynesia.**

Figure 1: School in Tami (PNG) with missionaries Hoh and Bamler.

# Identities of Indigenous and missionary cultures in German New Guinea
## Cultural changes through medical work carried out by the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society

*Magdalena Kittelmann[1]*

[1] Institute of the History of Medicine and Medical Ethics, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg,
 Glückstraße 10, 91054 Erlangen, Germany, Email: magdalena.kittelmann@gmx.de

*Abstract: The German colonial period in Papua New Guinea (1884-1919) involved profound changes in culture and identity – for Indigenous peoples as well as for missionaries and administrators. In 1886, the first Lutheran missionaries from the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society arrived at Finschhafen in Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, initiating many first contacts between Indigenous communities and European medicine as missionary societies played an important role in establishing medical facilities. This article explores similarities between traditional Indigenous spirituality and missionary beliefs in a medical context. In both cultures, medical topics like illness and healing were linked to metaphysical ideologies, which provide the basis of my contention that medical work could interfere with, and transform Indigenous beliefs and identities. However, for the purpose of evangelisation, the missionaries also adapted their theology and spiritual conceptions of illness to Indigenous spirituality. The use of medical care for missionary purposes is a good example of how changes of culture and identity interacted and were accommodated by both parties. I explore whether the two cultural identities evolved and changed to meet each other.*

Source: Archive Mission EineWelt, 000808 (cit. in Greif 2020:11).

## Introduction

In 1886, the first missionary of the Protestant Neuendettelsau Missionary Society, Johann Flierl, arrived at Finschhafen (today Morobe Province) in what was then called German New Guinea. Only two years earlier, in 1884, the German colonial period had commenced with the arrival of the ethnologist and colonial explorer Otto Finsch at the same place (Hiery 2017). Finschhafen is 80 kilometers east of Lae on the Huon Peninsula in Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. The Germans abandoned it in 1901, but the surrounding area featured in the Second World War, with first Japan and then the Allied forces developing military facilities and airstrips.

Photographs from this period show strong contrasts. White men in white clothing met Indigenous people wearing little or no clothing (Figures 1 and 2). Missionaries pose in close proximity to local people, aiming to depict a "brothers and sisters" relationship (Eves 2006). The images reveal the major differences between Indigenous cultures and Europeans, meeting for the first time.

I consciously speak of cultures, because missionaries were faced with diverse Indigenous tribes, and Indigenous people encountered different European cultures – for example missionaries but also colonists with different cultural attributes. This led to a multitude of varied first contact experiences, even though there were some shared features (Hiery 1992).

From today`s perspective, it is impossible to find out what really happened back then – even though historians often aim to "reconstruct the past as it really was" (Neumann 1989). Unfortunately, any "constitution of historical facts" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, cit. in Neumann 1989) is biased given the eclectic but partial selection of sources. Therefore, it is inevitable that there will be always more than one history, more than one truth. Despite the necessary bias of historical research about this period and in these places, it is still interesting to glimpse part of this history.

Nowadays in Papua New Guinea (PNG), stories about the time of first contact are still being told, again and again. I personally experienced these partial accounts when staying as a volunteer at Mission EineWelt (which fol-
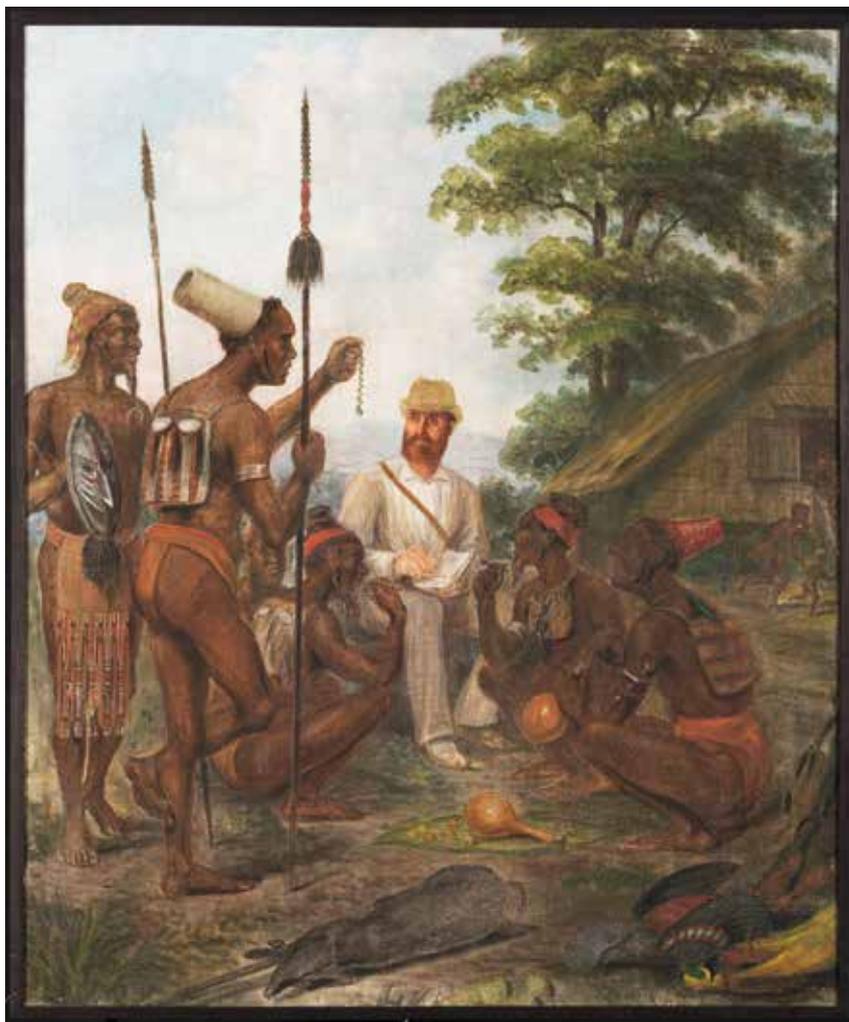


Figure 2: Arrival of Otto Finsch in German New Guinea 1884, painter: Moritz Hoffmann.

lowed from the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society) in Finschhafen in 2009. People told me about the missionaries bringing 'light' to New Guinea, which had been held in 'darkness' before (cf. Barker 2003; Neumann 1989). They are referring to an assumed "original" state of Papuan culture, to the constant tribal struggles and conflicts caused by blood revenge, from which they were supposedly liberated by evangelisation (Hiery 1992). This current local view is rather astonishing, since it runs counter to decolonial views of an oppressive colonial presence. And it motivates to have a closer look at the very beginning of the shared history between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in Papua New Guinea.

## Cultural negotiations and changing identities

When two cultures clash, especially if they intend to co-exist, they have to adapt to each other. Cultures start to change: new identities have to be found. But back in the late 19th century, missionaries were sceptical of this view.

Most missionaries upheld the idea of their colonial "civilising mission" [Zivilisierungsmission] (Conrad 2008:26). They considered their own culture as superior by defining Indigenous cultures as inferior, and did not intend to change their own – they aimed solely at the cultural enhancement of Indigenous peoples (Eves 2006). As far as the sources reveal, Papuan cultures did not share this view either. Obviously, they did not perceive their own culture as inferior (cf. Hiery 1992), so we might assume that in the beginning, an adaptation to the missionary culture was not their goal (cf. Bamler 1900).

Nevertheless, colonial and missionary research increasingly tells the story of an entangled history (Habermas & Hölzl 2014). In particular, the recent history of missions shows the entanglement of German colonialism and local responses, with interaction between different actors and in negotiations of religious and secular interpretational hegemony as well as cultural exchanges (Ratschiller 2018). To reveal the entanglements of cul-

tures, different perspectives from variable vantage points are necessary (ibid 2018). One of these is medical history, revealing different points of view on shared anthropological states: the human body, illness and disease, birth and death. According to Hölzl, the human body is the "place" in which power and identities are negotiated – the identities of the people examined and also the identities of those who examine (Hölzl 2011). Therefore, we can extend our interrogation of missionary practices to knowledge of the body, cultures and identities, as well as re-negotiations of spirituality and philosophies of life (Ratschiller 2018). Medical work set some of the preconditions for cultural exchange between missionaries and Indigenous people. As historical research shows, proselytisation often led to "disenchantment" and "rationalisation" of the body (Ratschiller 2016:15), as missionaries taught hygiene or treated diseases with Western medicine. There were religious negotiations that took place as part of this (Höpflinger 2016).

This article highlights the ways that, in the missionary work of the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society in German New Guinea, missionary medical treatment dealt with topics such as illness, disease and death. To what extent were these central for the negotiation of religion and spirituality? They certainly led to cultural change – all protagonists were knowingly or unknowingly altering their views, their behaviour, their beliefs and their convictions. I trace how these cultural processes took place, asking: in the New Guinea of the colonisation period, did different cultural identities evolve and change, meeting at some point?

## Remarks on methodology

As mentioned, the article is concerned with the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society in Finschhafen, and covers the period from 1886 to 1919. I collected missionary periodicals and missionary diaries as well as non-published letters and other archive documents. This historiographical research was conducted in the frame of a doctoral thesis in medical history (Kittelmann forthcoming).

These available sources are quite challenging in different ways. As there is a lack of written Indigenous sources (Fugmann 1986), it is necessary to

work with others, most written from a Western perspective. And of course, I am mindful of my own perspective as European researcher. Obviously, missionary sources always bring their own ideological views and falsifications with them, as they reflect one type of colonial perspective (Gründer 1982). Published documents were often intended to solicit donations to missionary societies, so they emphasised stories of success (Jensz 2018). Moreover, falsifications in letters, memoirs and autobiographies abound, as the authors only told what they wanted their readers to know.

These are known problems for the interpretation of historiographical sources. To get an idea of an Indigenous perspective, "reading against the grain" is recommended (Douglas 1994:354). This method focuses on rare passages that contradict the common stories and ask questions that the sources did not intend to answer (Ratschiller 2016). Furthermore, it is useful to search for discrepancies or even conflicts, revealing a little of a local perspective. Very short or subordinate clauses or single sentences can reveal the complexity of missionary history which is hidden at first glance.

## Medical missionary work and cultural transformations

What is the link between medical work and changes of cultures and identities? Since missionary societies played an important role in establishing medical infrastructure in colonial times, they were often responsible for the first contact between local communities and European medicine. Thus, medical work served as medium for quite close interaction and exchange between missionaries and Indigenous peoples – arguably much closer than preaching the gospel verbally.

Medical work – and this includes both colonial and missionary medical work – is mostly seen as a humanitarian act. Usually, in spite of the many criticisms of missionary work, building schools and medical infrastructure is acknowledged as a contribution to local development (Mückler 2018). But medical work has special potential to interfere with Indigenous beliefs and identities. The article asks to what extent medical work was instrumentalised for the evangelisation of local communities, and it also discusses how

the missionaries' own cultural perceptions of illness and disease were transformed in the encounter.

## Cultural preconditions and cultural intersection points

As far as missionary sources reveal, in Papuan cultures, illness (and this includes diseases, epidemics, accidents and injuries) and death were connected very closely to "sorcery" (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1898:10). No illness developed without sorcery. But sorcery was also considered essential for healing.

As there are very few historical documents revealing insights into Indigenous understandings, more recent local ethnography can assist. The cultural thoughts and findings of historical documents and current descriptions are not directly comparable, as there is an era of changes in between and a "syncretism" has developed (Frankel and Lewis 1989:33). But ethnographic documents can develop a more reflective and broader understanding of historical missionary documents. Current ethnography still describes a very close connection between illness, healing and spirituality (Barker 2003; Street 2014). While analysing concepts of illness, it is essential to be aware of Western biases and interpretations. For example, Mayer (1982) has shown that Indigenous understandings of "illness" can be categorised in different ways. Didn`t missionaries back then face similar misunderstandings? And what about descriptions, "that Western medicine can deal with symptoms and local medicine with causes" (Frankel and Lewis 1989:30, cf. Mayer 1982)?

Thinking about cultural concepts can help reading and understanding missionary ethnographic sources. In historical sources, views and experiences around sorcery were quite central for the missionaries. They considered this culture of sorcery as "dark" and "cruel" and in this sense inferior – and so it lent the perfect justification for their own civilising mission – basically the justification for their stay in New Guinea (e.g. Eckart 1997; Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1893). As one of their main achievements the missionaries themselves described that they liberated the Indigenous people from the fear that was connected to sorcery (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1919).

But if we try to look beyond the

Figure 3: Missionary Pfalzer with Papuan people to be baptised, 1914.

missionary view, we discover something else. We find some evidence that Papuans were not caught in fear of sorcery (as missionaries often liked to claim) and that they did not feel the need for salvation. For example, we have the voice of Dr. Otto Schellong, former doctor of the New Guinea Company, who had been stationed in Finschhafen shortly before first missionaries arrived. In a letter to the missionary Christian Keyßer in 1941, he recalled that he did encounter superstitious beliefs, but that he did not have the impression of a fear of sorcery among local people (AMEW 1941). We can find similar references if we look more closely at missionary sources. The report of missionary Leonhard Wagner in 1903 is a striking example. Besides the usual missionary staple of the "fear of sorcery" he cogitates that sometimes he had the impression that Indigenous people "felt quite well in the waste land far apart from God" (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1903:60).

The sources even reveal intersectional points between the two cultures, perhaps more than some missionaries even wanted to notice. On the one

hand, missionaries sought to distance themselves from this, in their view, inferior cultural aspect of sorcery. On the other hand, Papuans obviously did not differentiate between their own practices of sorcery and Christian prayer. For example, only one word ("tamingau") in the Indigenous language of the island Tami was used equally for both practices (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1891:67). Another report states, that the Indigenous people were pleased with the missionaries' abilities to "conjure", as they called praying (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1892:23). This Indigenous view shows something essential: even if missionaries felt superior in their own religion, the Indigenous and the missionary religious practices did have some similarities, which were at least noticed by local people. Both missionaries and Indigenous people "explained their worlds and their experiences in religious terms" (Douglas 1994:356).

In the medical context, this is especially evident – given that sorcery as well as Christian prayer were believed to be instrumental to healing by the respective parties. Which means both

cultures resorted to spiritual solutions for medical problems. Indigenous sorcerers used spells or rituals to heal people (e.g. Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1902). In frequent cases of illness or injuries, missionaries did not have proper medication available, so they could not do anything else but pray for improvement (cf. Frankel and Lewis 2012; Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1910). Even though missionaries differentiated between these acts – objectively they had a lot in common. And during the timeframe I investigated, these two cultures probably developed even more similarities.

## Transformations within Indigenous and missionary cultures

Missionaries were interested in the cultural "advancement" of Indigenous people – therefore aiming to further change, particularly through conversion to Christianity. And for this, medical work turned out to be quite helpful. From 1886-1919, no professional medical missionary was stationed in Finschhafen. Thus, the medical work was carried out by the missionaries, their wives, some nurses and midwives.

Figure 4: Missionary Lehner with Papuan people to be baptised.

They all put a lot of effort into these tasks, out of an altruistic dedication to charity and welfare (Höpflinger 2016).

Medical treatment served as a perfect contact zone, as it was used by missionaries as a point of contact with local people (Dirar 2006), for example by visiting local villages regularly to care for wounds or to distribute medicine (e.g. Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1914). Medical work turned out to be an attraction on missionary stations which sometimes featured small hospital wards (e.g. AMEW 1913a; Eckart 1997). Indigenous people attended these stations to receive medication or treatments – and sometimes, after being healed, they stayed to live there (AMEW 1911). This changed local culture, as people adapted to a more European way of life with different clothing, schooling for children and regulated working schedules. But missionaries deliberately used their medical work for proselytisation (Höpflinger 2016). The Indigenous spiritual connections of illness and healing provided the missionaries with the opportunity to set their medical work in a religious context.

In the late 19th century, the local population and Europeans were confronted with endemic and new diseases (Davies 2002). In 1909, climate and health conditions were still considered to be worse than in all other German colonies (Eckart 1997). Missionaries especially suffered from constant fever (which was mostly associated with malaria), while local populations were susceptible to diseases brought to New Guinea by colonists and the missionaries themselves such as smallpox or influenza (e.g. Frankel and Lewis 1989, Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1919). Missionaries were only partly aware of the two-way exchange of pathogens. In the early years of the mission, knowledge of tropical disease was rudimentary and "miasmic theories" were used to explain regular fevers (Froehlich 2015; Street 2014:42). We can suspect that early missionaries had little understanding of how their presence caused disease for those without immunity to conditions brought from Europe. Several missionaries seemed surprised at reports of more local deaths at younger ages after their arrival (e.g. Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1898, 1901

and 1902), something disease specialists now understand.

Although the medical facilities in New Guinea were quite limited, the number of treatments was quite high – for example, in 1912 18,000 were reported across Neuendettelsau Missionary Society stations (Kittelmann and Sommer 2020). The effects of the treatments can be questioned, as the main medication used was homeopathy (ibid). Homeopathy was quite a widespread and commonly used cure at the time (Eckart 2017). Nevertheless, missionary Johann Stößel for example reported that homeopathy was inadequate in cases of serious disease (AMEW 2013b). Other treatments had also doubtful effectiveness. Even common wounds did not heal for months in the tropical conditions – with or without treatment (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1893). The more effective remedies included quinine for malaria, vaccinations against smallpox, and salvarsan for treating endemic yaws, a severe tropical bacterial infection of skin and bones. These medications were quite useful for the missionaries – not only for their own therapeutic

use, sometimes saving their lives, but also for the bodily treatment of the Indigenous people combined with spiritual influence. What if a child that was supposed to die because of an enchantment is healed suddenly by the use of quinine (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1917)? If Western medication suddenly competes against sorcery? If the "heathen" belief in sorcery was proven to be wrong by the effect of quinine (ibid)? Some of the healed became pupils of religious lessons that prepared them for baptism, and this was not by coincidence (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1911, cit. in Kittelmann and Sommer 2020:63).

Figures 3 and 4 show one effect of the Indigenous cultural changes that were partly induced by medical work. We must not forget that during this time photographers thought that, as "the eye is a mirror of the soul", pictures are "a truthful representation of reality" (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1916:59). It took some decades until the limitations of photography were revealed – as pictures at this time usually emphasised the differences between the European and the Indigenous cultures (Kelm 2005), although also the existence of change. These two photos were taken as testimonials of the baptism of a group of Indigenous people, in front of churches. All are standing, in very orderly serried ranks, in postures that befit Christians.

Missionaries highlighted how their photos showed the adoption of modest dress (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1918, 1921), a success of the civilising mission. On the other hand, missionaries wanted their male converts to wear a waistcloth with a belt, not trousers and shirts, and their female converts to wear simple dresses (Eves 2006). In the eyes of the missionaries, a distinction in dress befitted Indigenous people – some distance had to be maintained (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1921). Furthermore, the newly baptised were dressed all in white (the colour adopted by the missionaries themselves on first arrival), signifying outward – and inner – purity. But it was not only the change of clothes that marked Papuans as "Christians", missionaries described a change in "facial expression", that, after conversion, shows "the liberation of the savage fear" (Keyßer 1923:5). This facial expression formerly carried

"the desire to kill" and "the longing for human flesh" but now, after the baptism, did "reflect the peace of the heart" (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1912:18). The missionaries seem united in these perceptions.

A critical voice can be found in the missionary records. A photo description of an Indigenous man, Auataun, reported that he told a missionary: "If he saw that Christians had really become different people, he would be baptised too" (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1917:4). The sentence is followed by the editor's note: "Can he really not perceive any change?" (ibid). The implication is that the white missionaries noticed obvious changes resulting from finding God, while local people did not. This shows the culturally specific symbolism of the missionaries, which did not translate easily, and raises questions about the descriptions they used.

Medical effectiveness, competing against the Indigenous sorcerers, was only one part of the proselytisation process. Another was change in missionary medical culture itself, used to enable evangelisation. Missionaries had to modify their own way of life, in the new conditions they experienced (Hiery 1992). Figure 5, of missionary Flierl and others, shows his clothing better adapted to the tropical climate, but diet was also changed by necessity. Besides the visible changes, the missionaries also altered their perception of life – including their religious views. When they noticed in the early days of their work that Indigenous people had no consciousness of sin in the missionary sense, and therefore no perception of the necessity for salvation (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1893), they tried to understand the Indigenous culture as a precondition for proselytisation. Missionary Vetter was convinced: "Who thinks and talks like a Papua will be understood, and out of understanding and perceiving the sermon Faith will follow." (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1893:33) Vetter realised that it was necessary to get a deeper understanding of the Papuan culture to be able to adapt the Christian sermon (Farnbacher 1999). He established that if local people made a connection between illness and sorcery, a God that protects from illness was more appealing than the death of Jesus as a source of salvation (Kirchli-

che Mitteilungen 1893; Pilhofer 1961). By placing a focus on divine protection from illness, the missionaries adapted their theology and their way of thinking to the Indigenous culture, despite the other essential tenets of the Christian religion less adapted to local conditions (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1910). Over time, they concentrated more and more on the cultural points of intersection, rather than broader theological tenets and reasoning. This is quite surprising and important – as evangelical theological beliefs were the central reason for the missionaries' stay in New Guinea. The close connection to medical topics is surprising. God's power of protection against illness, the promise of good health for believers – these assurances turned out to be quite essential for religious conversion. If missionaries recovered from an illness themselves, they maintained that it was God who healed them (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1899). And Western medication turned out to be evidence for the truth of such sermons.

One particular example for an effective treatment that was set into a religious context was smallpox vaccination. After a previous epidemic in 1872, the infectious virus was introduced again to New Guinea in 1893 and 1895 through German colonists, and an epidemic spread into the vicinity of the Neuendettelsau Missionary Society where it caused a lot of local fatalities (Fenner et al. 1988; Penman et al. 2017; VEM 1893, 1896). During this epidemic, mission stations became "safe havens" from the disease, as vaccinations were available there (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1895:51). But was it the vaccination that gave protection – or God? In the missionary reports of that time the effects of medication and God's healing power were strongly intermingled. For example, missionary Hoh reported that the Indigenous people knew that the missionaries had carried out vaccinations and that they prayed to God for his protection at the same time (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1895). Of course, the missionaries themselves believed in God's protection from the epidemic (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1895). Obviously, the combined effects of the epidemic (that local sorcerers couldn't deal with, in contrast to the missionaries using vaccines) with the missionary pro-

Figure 5: Missionary Flierl with assistants.

jection of their Christian God led to more acceptance of the new religion. The missionaries witnessed the first baptism to result from these occurrences (Farnbacher 2004; Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1899).

Preaching in this way was not completely successful. There was quite a big discrepancy between a protecting Christian God and continued premature deaths: "This gave one pause and led to talk: does belief in the miti [Gospel] and being baptised mean to give oneself up to death? Is an early death the dubious blessing of the miti? This is their God?" (Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1913:41). Missionary Keyßer reports some people did not want to get baptised as they thought they could die from it (cf. Douglas 1994; Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1906; Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1920). So, the missionaries again had to adapt their sermons. They did this by explaining that a "salvation from eternal death" could result from becoming a Christian (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1898:87), but death of the body could not be avoided.

Nonetheless, there are several missionary reports that tell of an additional shift towards instilling a fear of God, as opposed to preaching salvation through God. For example, missionary Hoh reports missionary Pfalzer told local people something rather different, that the cause of illness is not sorcery and that, instead, it is sent by God (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1898). Similar explanations can also be found in reports by missionaries Zahn (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1907) and Raum who explicated that fatalities of children were caused by the sins of their fathers (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1910). Missionary Bamler found a similar way to sermonise: "God will protect you if you follow his words, but for five years we have preached to you and you are still doing Evil, therefore it is quite possible that God has drawn his [protecting] hand from over you" (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1896:37). These examples show that a sermon based on the fear of illness or even death was not uncommon. This was an interpretation and instrumentalisation of the "wrath of God" in the Lutheran doctrine (Härle 2007:267). Some missionary work spread this fear of illness, linking it to pious and godly behaviour (cf. Farnbacher 1999).

Sometimes, the local population would connect misbehaviours (as defined by missionaries) with illness themselves, which resulted in some rather strange rationalisations. Missionary Zahn for example reported that locals thought that when missionaries got sick, this was caused by their sins (Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1910). He quoted a chief who said: "Truly, our faults and sins have made you severely sick again." (ibid) And, surprisingly, the missionaries' reaction was not to explain this misunderstanding – but rather than it would connect them to God (ibid).

Very often the missionary reports conflate illness on earth and illness in a spiritual sense. For example, missionary Vetter, as well as missionary Keyßer, preached, that "the wages of sin is death" (Keyßer 1934:45; Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1899:10). While this sentence comes from the Bible, it is generally not taken literally, i.e. sin results in fatalities, but is understood as a general thought about death. But missionaries realised that in their preaching, the fear of God's anger induced local people to hear the Gospel (cf. Douglas 1994). This led them to employ very similar arguments to those that they criticised strongly in local culture: the fear of sorcerers who cause illness, and the role of supernatural forces in determining

health, illness or death. The difference between a sorcerer causing illness and death, which makes people afraid – and a Christian God causing illness and death – also making people afraid, is no longer detectable.

If we think about the fact that the missionaries celebrated themselves as "liberators from darkness" – "liberators from the fear of sorcery" – we can say that they progressively replaced what they criticised with something that – at a critical glance – might appear very similar. By stressing issues in their theology similar to characteristic traits of Papuan culture, they accommodated their religion to Indigenous cultural concepts.

## Conclusion

In the context of evangelical missionary endeavours, the administering of medical assistance exposes the complexity of encounters in contact zones where people of different origins meet. Individual people, cultures, religions become interlocked and entangled – until even the protagonists themselves can't differentiate original ideas and beliefs anymore (cf. Ratschiller 2016). To see in a positive light – the cultures move towards each other, developing – and perhaps this provided a basis for a peaceful coexistence (figure 6).

In Papuan cultures, topics like illness and healing are commonly conceptualised in a spiritual context, leading to a religious dialogue shaped by misunderstandings. Even though in this case, the missionaries tried to translate the Indigenous culture into their own points of reference, they could not bridge the vast differences between cultures (cf. Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1907). To communicate their Gospel in Indigenous languages, missionaries had to determine the vocabulary to be used, and it remains quite unclear to what extent Indigenous people understood the meanings. Sometimes, Indigenous people were talking of earthly disease while missionaries were thinking of an abstract and heavenly death. There were ample possibilities for misconceptions to occur.

How can these retrospective ruminations about first cultural encounters be reconciled with the positive accounts of the same historical occurrences that are found among Papuans (e.g. Hiery 1992)? One answer is that people in Papua New Guinea give the answer they think is expected by a European listener, and the burden of proof is not hard to achieve. Looking again to the historical records suggests another explanation. By 1918, missionary Keyßer was trying to listen and pass on Indigenous perspectives. Sources show that even back then Indigenous people reproduced missionary stereotypes: "Only now we know how ignorant and bad we were before. Anguish ruled us completely … Fear of sorcery and murder permanently tormented us… But Jesus did not only live and die for Whites, but also for everyone, including us. This is very precious to us. We Blacks are already so very poor." (Keyßer 1939:5-6) The quote illustrates another misunderstanding, emerging from the disconnection between missionaries focussing on spiritual poverty, while Indigenous people were talking about their poverty in material and comparative terms. We therefore might assume that materialistic motives played a role. It has to be considered that the people questioned by missionary Keyßer in 1918 were already baptised and had visited missionary schools, so had probably internalised the missionary view. The truth eludes us – but we can say that there are contrary historical sources which clearly contradict these Indigenous and missionary views. However, as Papua New Guinea specialist Hiery says, referring to Hillgruber, it is not disturbing that different interpretations of cultural contact exist (Hiery 1992). If we consider the plurality and dissimilarity of cultural contacts, it would be surprising if there were no discussions or differing interpretations of historical situations (cf. Hiery 1992:75). And is history more than the sum of events that "actually-factually" occurred (Neumann 1989:216)?

## References

AMEW (Archiv Mission EineWelt) (1941). 4.141, Akte Martha Koller, Brief Otto Schellong an Christian Keyßer, Königsberg, 26.03.1941.

AMEW (1911). 4.42, Brief von Missionar Stößel an den Inspektor, Deinzerhöhe, 12.08.1911.

AMEW (2013a). 4.42, Brief von Missionar Stößel an den Inspektor, Immanuelheim, 26.05.1913.

AMEW (2013b). 7.218, Missionar Stößel, Butaueni, Jahresbericht über Heiltätigkeit in unserer Mission 1912, 08.03.1913.

Bamler, G. (1900). Komm herüber und hilf uns! Oder: Die Arbeit der Neuen-Dettelsauer Mission in Deutsch Neu-Guinea. Mitteilungen und Schilderungen. Nr. 5. Zehn Jahre Missionsarbeit auf Tami von 1889–1899, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag.

Barker, J. (2003). Christian Bodies: Dialectics of Sickness and Salvation Among the Maisin of Papua New Guinea. In: The Journal of Religious History, 27 (3).

Conrad, S., Randeria, S., Römhild, R. (eds.) (2013). Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften, Frankfurt: Campus.

Davies, M. (2002). Public Health and Colonialism. The Case of German New Guinea 1884-1914, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Dirar, U.C. (2006). Curing Bodies to Rescue Souls: Health in Capuchin's Missionary Strategy in Eritrea, 1894–1935. In: Hardiman, D: Healing bodies, saving soles. Medical Missions in Asia and Africa, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, pp. 251–280.

Douglas, B. (1994). Discourses on Death in a Melanesian World. In: Merwick, D. (ed.): Dangerous Liaisons. Essays in Honour of Greg Dening, The University of Melbourne.

Eckart, W.U. (2017). Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Eckart, W. U. (1997). Medizin und Kolonialimperialismus Deutschland 1884–1945, Paderborn: Schöningh.

Eves, R. (2006). `Black and white, a significant contrast`: Race, humanism and missionary photography in the Pacific. In: Ethnic and Racial Studies, 29(4), pp. 725-748.

Farnbacher, T. (1999). Gemeinde verantworten. Anfänge, Entwicklungen und Perspektiven von Gemeinde und Ämtern der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Papua-Neuguinea, Hamburg: LIT.

Fenner, F., Henderson, D.A., Arita, I., Jezek, Z., Ladnyi, I.D. (1988). The History of Smallpox and its spread around the World. In: Fenner, F (ed). Smallpox and its Eradication, Geneva, World Health Organization, pp. 209-244.

Frankel, S., Lewis, G. (1989). Patterns of Continuity and Change. In: Frankel, S., Lewis, G (eds.): A continuing trial of treatment. Medical pluralism in Papua New Guinea, Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 1-33.

Froehlich, S. (ed.) (2015). Als Pioniermissionar in das ferne Neu Guinea. Johann Flierls Lebenserinnerungen, Teil II: 1886–1941, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Fugmann, G. (1986). The birth of an Indigenous church. Letters, Reports and Documents of Lutheran Christians of Papua New Guinea, Goroka: Melanesian Institute.

Gerhardy, C. (1986). Medical and Diaconal Work. In: Wagner, H., Reiner, H. (eds.). The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea. The First Hundred Years 1886–1986, Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, pp. 513–554.

Greif, T. (ed.) (2020). Ferne Nächste. Weltweite Diakonie aus Bayern, Lindenberg: Josef Fink.

Habermas, R., Hölzl, R. (eds.) (2014). Mission global. Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19.
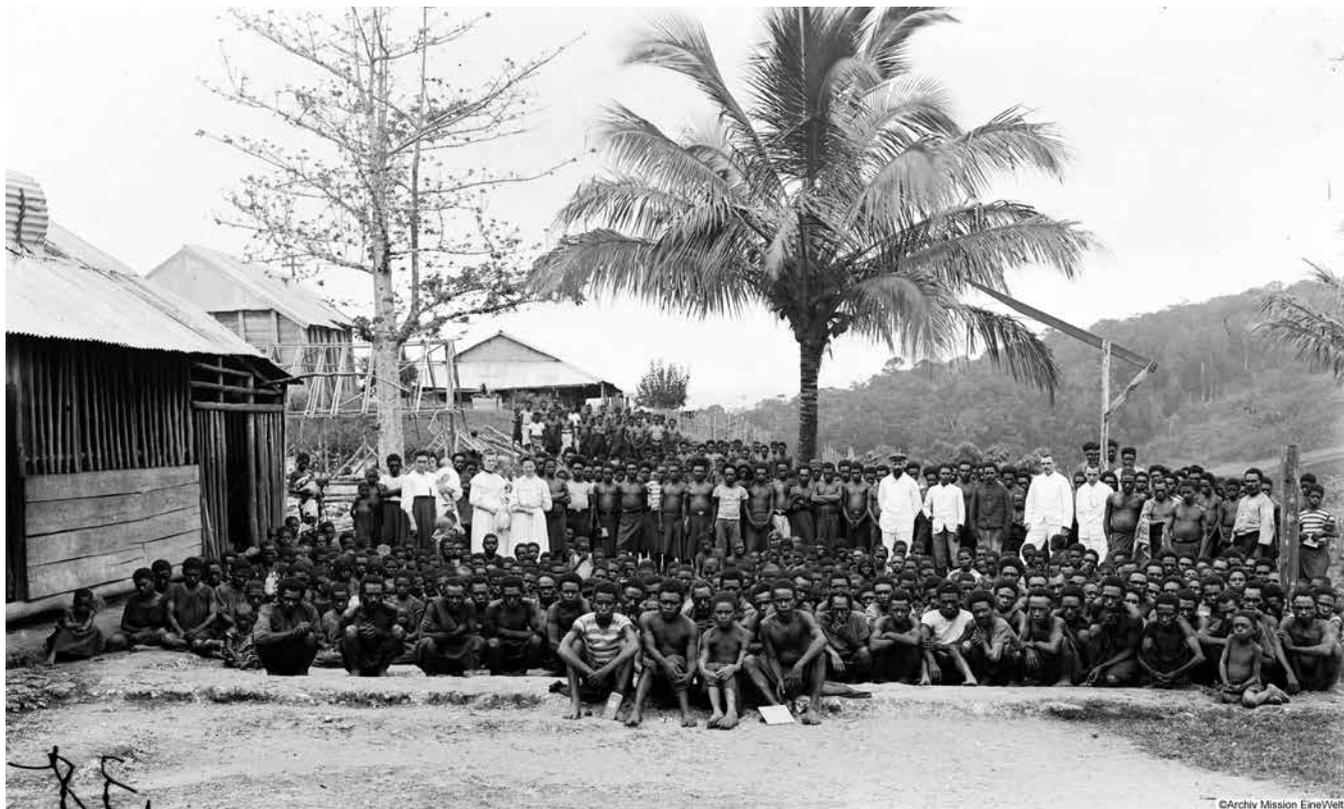
Figure 6: Mission feast in Sattelberg 1910.

Jahrhundert, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau.

Härle, W. (2007). Dogmatik, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Hiery, H. J. (2017). Die deutschen Kolonien in der Südsee. In: Gründer, H., Hiery, H. (eds.): Die Deutschen und ihre Kolonien. Ein Überblick, Berlin: be.bra, pp. 89–122.

Hiery, H. J. (1992). „Stori bilong waitman tru". Erstkontakt in melanesischer Sicht, In: Geschichte und Kulturen 4, pp. 63–75.

Hölzl, R. (2011). Der Körper des Heiden als moderne Heterotopie. Katholische Missionsmedizin in der Zwischenkriegzeit. In: Historische Anthropologie 19, pp. 54–81.

Höpflinger, A.-K. (2016). Zwischen Repräsentation und Regulierung. Körper als Aushandlungsorte für Weltanschauungen. In: Ratschiller, L, Weichlein, S. (eds.): Der schwarze Körper als Missionsgebiet. Medizin, Ethnologie, Theologie in Afrika und Europa 1880–1960, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, pp. 175–187.

Jensz, F. (2018). „Schilderungen aus der Südsee". Missionsperiodika und ihre Rolle in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit. In: Hensel, S., Rommé, B. (eds.) Aus Westfalen in die Südsee. Katholische Mission in den deutschen Kolonien, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, pp. 40–51.

Kelm, A. (2005). Skurrile Exoten und liebenswerte Mitmenschen. Ethnographische Anmerkungen zur kolonialen Südseefotografie. In: Hiery, H.J. (eds): Bilder aus der deutschen Südsee. Fotografien 1884–1919, Paderborn: Schöningh, pp. 16-33.

Keyßer, C. (1923). Songangnu, ein Großer unter den Kâte. Lebensbilder. 6. Heft. Nr. 55, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag.

Keyßer, C. (1934). Zake. Der Papuahäuptling, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag.

Keyßer, C. (1939). Wir Heiden und ihr Christen, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag.

Kirchliche Mitteilungen 1891–1910, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag. All direct quotations have been translated by the author.

Kittelmann, M., Sommer, F. (2020). Geheilt, getauft: Medizinisches Engagement als diakonisches Wirken – die Neuendettelsauer Mission in Papua-Neuguinea. In: Greif, Th. (ed.): Ferne Nächste. Weltweite Diakonie aus Bayern, Lindenberg: Josef Fink, pp. 60–70.

Kittelmann, M. (forthcoming). Medizin und Mission in Neuguinea, 1886-1919. Doctoral thesis in medical history, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg.

Mayer, J. R. (1982). Body, Psyche and Society: Conceptions of Illness in Ommura, Eastern Highlands, Papua New Guinea". In: Oceania 52(3), pp. 240-260.

Mückler, H. (2018). Katholische und protestantische Missionsbestrebungen in Ozeanien von den 1850er Jahren bis 1918. In: Hensel, S., Rommé, B. (eds.) Aus Westfalen in die Südsee. Katholische Mission in den deutschen Kolonien, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, pp. 30–39.

Neuendettelsauer Missionsblatt 1911–1922, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag. All direct quotations have been translated by the author.

Neumann, K. (1989). Not the Way it Really Was: Writing a History of the Tolai (Papua New Guinea). In: The Journal of Pacific History, 24 (2), pp. 209-220.

Penman, B. S., Gupta, S., Shanks, G. D. (2017) Rapid mortality transition of Pacific Islands in the 19th century. Epidemiol. Infect. 145(1), 1-11. Available from doi:10.1017/S0950268816001989.

Pilhofer, G. (1961). Die Geschichte der Neuendettelsauer Mission in Neuguinea, Band 1, Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag.

Ratschiller, L., Weichlein, S. (2016). Der schwarze Körper als Missionsgebiet 1880–1960. Begriffe, Konzepte, Fragestellungen. In: Ratschiller, L, Weichlein, S. (eds.): Der schwarze Körper als Missionsgebiet. Medizin, Ethnologie, Theologie in Afrika und Europa 1880–1960, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, pp.15–40.

Ratschiller, L., Wetjen, K. (2018). Verflochtene Mission. Ansätze, Methoden und Fragestellungen einer neuen Missionsgeschichte, in: Ratschiller, Linda, Karolin Wetjen (Hrsg.): Verflochtene Mission. Perspektiven auf eine neuen Missionsgeschichte, Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, pp. 9–24.

Richter, G. (2012). Flexibles Wissen in Beziehungen. Wissenstransfer zwischen Menschen in Ozeanien (Chimbu-Hochland von Neuguinea) und kontinentalen Missionaren. In: van der Heyden, U., Feldtkeller, A. (eds.): Missionsgeschichte als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen. Transkulturelle Wissensaneignung und -vermittlung durch christliche Missionare in Afrika und Asien im 17., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, pp. 329–338.

VEM (Archiv der Vereinten Evangelischen Missionen) (1896). 2.114, Brief von Frobenius an den Inspektor Schreiber, Siar, 15.01.1896.

VEM (1893). 2.114, Brief von Frobenius an den Inspektor, Siar, 12.06.1893.

**Corresponding Author: Magdalena Kittelmann [magdalena.kittelmann@gmx.de] is currently doing a doctoral thesis, entitled „Medicine and mission in New Guinea, 1886-1919", in medical history at University Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany). Since 2019, she works as an assistant doctor at the Cantonal Hospital in Glarus (Switzerland). She is interested in Pacific history, cultural change, colonisation and missionary medical work.**

Figure 1: Curanto - food prepared in a traditional umu (earth oven) is distributed to all festival visitors.

# "Ariki meets Tangata manu"
## Tapati Rapa Nui, a festival of indigenous identity or expression of constructed authenticity?

*Wolfgang Kiss[1]*

[1] Pielgasse 8A, 7023 Pöttelsdorf, Austria, E-mail: w.kiss@gmx.net

*Abstract: Rapa Nui, Easter Island, has had a great fascination for archaeological research since its discovery in 1722. The focus of interest was on the massive stone monuments, the moai, sculptures with a human face, which raise many questions. This stone evidence of Polynesian culture's uniqueness led to its recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995.*
*Central elements of the cultural identity of minorities often do not find enough reverberation in nation-states. In the case of Rapa Nui, the island in the South Pacific that has been part of Chile since its annexation in September 1888, the rebellion against ruling powers has manifested itself not only in political protests but also in cultural terms, particularly in recent decades. This return to tradition and indigenous identity is particularly evident at the annual Tapati Rapa Nui Festival, whose origins go back to the late 1960s. Nevertheless, the correlation between tourist growth and the increasing expansion of the festival also allows an economic interpretation, although the islanders point to its primarily identity-enhancing function.*
*Whether we are dealing with tradition or traditionalism in the definition of Mückler and Faschingeder (2012) at the Tapati Rapa Nui Festival is the subject of this research note.*

*Keywords: Rapa Nui, Cultural Performance, Authenticity, Indigenous identity*

## Introduction

More than ever, different types of cultural festivals are strongly woven into international tourism's various trajectories and textures. While the inter-relationships between festivity and tourism are far from inevitable, the two phenomena appear to be increasingly entwined as tourism extends its influence (Picard & Robinson 2006). Referring to the example of Tapati Rapa Nui Festival on the South Pacific island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), this paper analyses whether the boundary between the representation of indigenous authenticity and tourist spectacle has already been crossed.

Rapa Nui, together with Hawai'i and New Zealand, marks one of the three corners of the Polynesian triangle (Figure 2). As one of the most isolated islands on earth - Pitcairn as the nearest inhabited island is about 2,075 km away, the Chilean mainland 3,515 km – Rapa Nui measures an area of only 163.6 km² (Cristino & Izaurieta 2006). The capital, and at the same time the only larger settlement, is Hanga Roa, where 7,750 people live according to the last census in 2017 (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Chile, n.d.). The main source of income is tourism, which is very good reflected in the number of visitors that increased from 8,000 in 1981 to an estimated 120,000 in 2019 (Alba Roque 2018; Rivas 2017).

History books first mention the island with the discovery in 1722 by the Dutch admiral Jacob Roggeveen although the prevailing opinion says that the initial settlers came from the Southeast Asian region in two waves and can be dated back to the 4th and 5th centuries (Krendelov & Kondratov 1990; Mückler 2009). The island looks back on a,
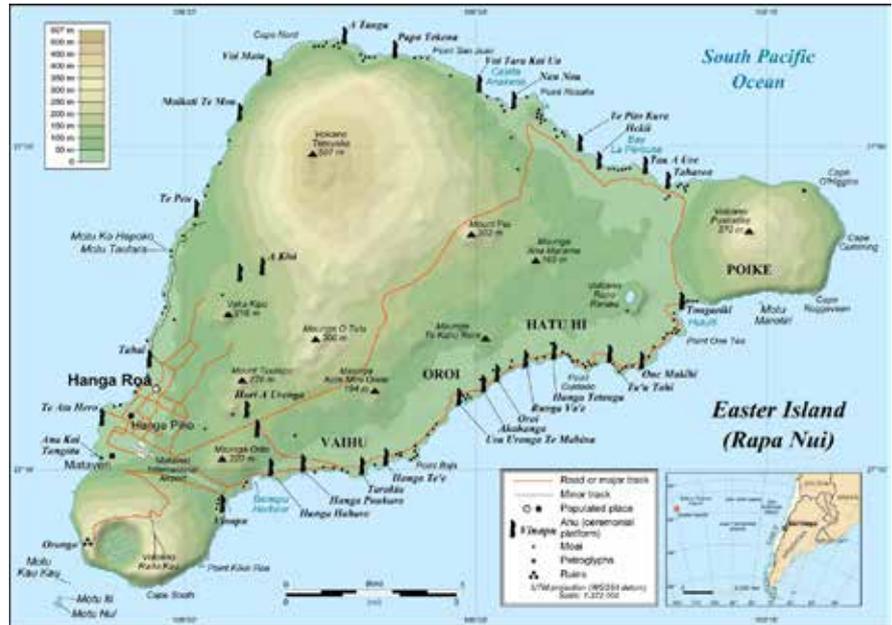


Figure 2: Map of Easter Island (Rapa Nui).

Source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Easter_Island_map-en.svg.

in many parts, cruel history like the period of the slave raids of 1862/63, in which a large part of the population was deported to Peru to work in guano mining, and the years of oppression by European sheep farmers coming from Tahiti who seized the island and obliged the indigenous population to forced labour while being treated like animals in fenced-off territories (Fischer 1999; Fischer 2005; McCall 1988). To increase its strategic position in the South Pacific, the Chilean flag was hoisted on the island in 1888, and Rapa Nui lost its sovereignty through annexation (Delsing 2015). Imported diseases reduced the population to around 100 islanders in 1877 (Mückler 2009) – therefore, oral tradition is almost not available today. For example, the knowledge about the Rongorongo script[1] used exclusively on Rapa Nui could not be passed on, which meant that the characters could not be

deciphered until today. And it was only Sebastian Englert, head of the catholic mission station on the island from 1935, who started to learn rapanui (the indigenous language, which is nowadays spoken only by the roughly 3,000 Rapanui) and who wrote down the vague memories of some of the older islanders.

The methods used for this research are essentially interviews, informal talks, audio and video recordings, and participant observation during the Tapati Festival from January 29 to February 16, 2020. Moreover, I have conducted a large number of informal conversations and have evaluated posts and comments on social media (facebook, Instagram) from May 2019 to April 2020.

## The Tapati Festival

The Tapati Festival includes a series of individual and group competitions in sports, traditional art, and folk art, which take place at the beginning of February over two weeks. The central role is played by the extended family (*mata*) of each candidate, which has to select and train the participants for a wide variety of competitions and tasks during months of preparation. At the festival, points are being awarded to the candidates after the daily competitions by a professional jury. On the final day, the candidate with the most points in her account is crowned *ariki* (Concha Mathiesen 2017).

*Ariki* can be translated into king or queen and is the designation that the Queen of Tapati carries after her coronation. This coronation, and thus



Figure 3: La farándula – The parade marks the climax and conclusion of Tapati Rapa Nui.

Figure 4: Participants in the competition for the production of flower crowns, paintings and shell necklaces in Hanga Piko.

"reign" for the coming year, can be interpreted as a reference to the Bird-man cult[2], which was practised on the island from around 1500 AD until the last documented ceremony in 1866 (Esen-Baur 1983; Weiss 1978). The victorious tribal leader of the yearly competition was called *Tangata manu* or "Birdman". This ritual, dedicated to the creation god *MakeMake*, commemorated the discovery and possession of the first egg laid by the sooty tern on Motu Nui, a small island off the coast of Rapa Nui (Mückler 2009).

Candidates of the Tapati are young, unmarried women, usually in their late teens or early twenties. At first sight, what sounds like a well-known beauty contest, at a closer look, turns out to be a festival celebrating the islanders' culture and tradition. The contestants compete for individual fame, prizes, and points for the *ariki* title's final vote. This title is awarded for one year and entitles the winner to certain privileges such as cash and material prizes, study scholarships, and travel. Although there is no limit to the number of candidates, the considerable financial and human resources required for a Tapati application result in only two or three candidates who compete (Bendrups 2008).

The Tapati Festival, which was first carried out in 1967 - in the beginning as a copy of the Chilean Spring Festival[3] - serves to revive cultural practices, pass them on to subsequent generations and strengthen social ties and structures. The individual Tapati competitions, which are contested not only by the candidates but also by other members of the family, cover a wide range of sports (Rapa Nui triathlon, horse race, canoeing, javelin,

fishing), some of which quite extreme, arts and crafts performances (Figure 4) (production of traditional mahute fabric, carving, sculpturing, production of flower crowns, feather hats and shell necklaces), and folkloric singing and dancing performances (Figure 5).

## Theoretical embedding in the discourse of tradition and authenticity

This research, which is theoretically located at the interface between ethno-history and identity research, tries to link cultural authenticity and performance analysis. In addition to the debate on tradition (Keesing & Tonkinson 1982; Hanson 1989; Thomas 1992) versus traditionalism (Mückler & Faschingeder 2012) in the sense of "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm & Ranger 2012), I argue that the festival in its current form is increasingly moving from a festival of and for the islanders to a money-making tourist spectacle.

"Indigenous traditions, like all traditions, are not fossilized remains of the past; they are constantly being reinterpreted and resignified to accommodate innovations and socio-cultural changes that constantly bombard their lives both from within and without their societies." (Ramos cited in Rivas, 2017: 414) This quote by Brazilian ethnologist Alcida Rita Ramos focuses on an important aspect. Traditions, and here in particular indigenous traditions, must not be interpreted as "sacred" ancestral traditions, but rather as part of ongoing negotiation and reappraisal of history and identity. Dittmer (2021 in this volume) takes a similar approach in her research note when she tackles the issue of how

Pacific Islanders' identity is viewed by external observers.

Over time, Tapati has undergone many changes. For example, various competitions of the festival were held in specific places on the island in the past: "Every competition had its place" (Andrade Buscar 2004). One of the reasons for choosing different locations was that the locals wanted to commemorate events at particular sites to give them a specific meaning. Using them in this context was intended to transform the sites into physical and cultural reservoirs of knowledge, restore the mythical time and importance attached to them at the time, and create a link between life and place.

Following a competition on a location like Rano Raraku, the quarry where the moai (Figure 6) were cut out of the volcanic rock is undoubtedly imposing and builds a historical bridge to the people who created these statues. Or, to follow a performance on the beach of Anakena, the bay where, according to mythical lore, chief Hotu Matua, who came from the East Pacific region to Rapa Nui, went ashore. Although these physical manifestations of emotional references have been largely lost in present days for various reasons, the reports of events surrounding Tapati continue to point out where the foundations and connections to the ancestors originally lay.

Despite these efforts to increase the attractiveness of the festival, the motives for the constant expansion and adaptation of the event were of economic nature. The two weeks of the festival are the most important time for local tourism and contribute significantly to the income of the residents. Although the islanders stress the fact that most of the activities are "traditional" and are held in *rapanui*, the percentage of foreign elements that are communicated as traditional is increasing. For example, the queen's coronation with a crown cannot be verified in any historical equivalent. The sash given to the queen is made of *mahute*[4], but it is a sash like those worn by winners of international beauty contests (Fortin 2009). It is not about condemning these elements as modernisation or accuse them of lacking authenticity. But one could argue that this development is a logical one, in which a culture takes over aspects of other cultures and thus shows that it is progressing, growing, and moving

instead of freezing and dying. Nevertheless, it is important to identify these changes and adaptations and explain that this decision is quite controversially discussed among the people living on the island. This change becomes particularly clear when looking at the structure of the festival in the last two years.

The dramaturgy was originally designed around a competition between two families and the "rule" for the coming year, and thus clearly interpreted as a reference to the Birdman cult's long-practised ritual. But from 2019 onwards, the organisers were no longer able to persuade a second family to participate.


Figure 5: Takona (body painting) - a participant of the competition in Hanga Vare Vare.

## Reasons for this development

The expansion of the festival and the introduction of new elements not in line with initial intentions resulted in a fundamental rejection of the Tapati Festival by many of the 36 *mata* (tribes) on the island. A growing number of Rapanui people withdraw from active participation in the festival because of increasing influences from continental Chileans who live on Rapa Nui, a taxi driver, who is Chilean himself, tells me on the way from the airport to the city. (Interview with anonymous, 2020). Therefore, a deep division concerning the festival within the Rapanui community becomes obvious. New travel restrictions to the island, in force since 2018, were intended to counteract this development. Another resident on the island for almost thirty years even goes a step further and locates the problem in the "nature of the indigenous population": "Residence laws will not help there either. The problem is the Rapanui themselves [...] they are lazy. They take the workers from the mainland, but on the other hand, they do not really want them on the island." (Interview with Zsakai, 2020)

The increasing formation of groups among the residents leads to more and more controversies within the indigenous community that are openly carried out. In this context, I have to highlight the investigations and accusations of corruption against the mayor and the leadership of *Ma'u Henua*, an indigenous community that runs the National Park (Young 2020). This social rift and other major problems that the organisers of Tapati have to face have been described by Greindl (Interview, 2020): "In the last few years, it has become more and more a tourist show [...] the biggest part is alcohol. Like a big binge drinking with participants and tourists [...] for two years now, it has been a little better since the festival area, and farándula (Figure 3) are no longer served alcohol [...] now the situation has improved a little."

She also notes that in particular the grand parade at the end of the festival is no longer understood as a festival of Rapanui in which the community presents itself in its cultural diversity, but is celebrated exclusively as a tourist attraction in which, apart from the candidate's family, the islanders show little interest. This results in a decrease in the number of participants and spectators, which in 2020 was only a fraction compared to previous years.

In this apparent division of the population, one can also see an instrumentalisation of Tapati for political purposes. Although the indigenous groups are not necessarily interested in complete political independence from Chile (which seems to be a difficult project from an economic point of view), they want to achieve self-determination and political and cultural emancipation. In addition to recurring violent conflicts on the island, this tendency is also reflected in the rejection of the increasing commodification of the festival by indigenous Rapanui. The open conflict was brought to outsiders' attention when, during Tapati 2020, the *Haka Pei*[5], one of the most popular events, was first officially cancelled and then still carried out by *Ma'u Henua*, who sees herself as the representative and official voice of the indigenous community.

"We sponsored this event through placing safety barriers for the public and grooming the track for the competitors in order to avoid accidents that have occurred in previous years. We hope to continue to preserve and rescue the traditions of the Rapanui people [...]." (Ma'u Henua Celebrates Pei Amo 2020).

*Ma'u Henua*'s reaction shows that the preservation of traditions is important to the population. Therefore, it is not surprising that, although the event was not even mentioned with a word on the municipality's official portals, the influx of visitors especially from the Rapanui community was enormous.

## Conclusion

Although more and more Rapanui are withdrawing giving the impression that the festival is being left exclusively for tourist marketing, the past year marked by COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced an emerging reflection process. Claims for reflection and a refocusing of the festival on the cultural heritage can be observed (Municipalidad de Rapa Nui 2020).

Whereas the economy of Rapa Nui relies to 90% on tourism, and a major portion of the income is generated during the Tapati Festival period, most of the "Continentals", Chileans working in the tourism sector, left the island after a complete lockdown has been imposed on the island in March 2020. As a result, the total population (which was around 7,800 in 2018) on the island dropped dramatically – it seems that Rapanui people are getting back their island. Although economically problematic, the isolation that the island is facing for almost a year now, can be seen as an opportunity to fill the Tapati vision with new life. As it is expected that commer-

Figure 6: A moai watching over the people of Rapa Nui.

cial flights to the island will not reopen before mid-2021, the festival has been shortened to one week. Moreover, the organisers of the festival intended to celebrate the return to their roots, OF and FOR the residents of Rapa Nui (Tapati Rapa Nui Oficial 2020).

Since natural resources are very scarce on the island, electricity is provided by generators, water is precious and depleted, everything, from industrial to consumer goods and even most of the food supply has to be imported from the mainland. The steady accumulation of garbage, over-fishing, the constant increase of tourist arrivals, but also lichenification and erosion processes that slowly destroy the giant moai go hand in hand with social developments described in this paper. Such developments increasingly demand actions to preserve the island's cultural heritage and sensitive ecological balance. Therefore, it is not surprising and a sign of hope for this magnificent festival when a Rapanui woman comments alongside one of the competitions: "... write that down! We don't do this for you visitors [...] we don't play anything for you. We LIVE our culture every day!" (Interview with anonymous, 2020)

## Endnotes

[1] The Rongorongo script consists of horizontally arranged and to the right running symbols in the form of anthropomorphic as well as zoomorphic figures or objects, which were carved into wooden panels or sticks with pointed tools.

[2] The ritual was an annual competition to collect the first egg of the sooty tern from Motu Nui, a small island offshore Rapa Nui.

[3] Following the incorporation of Easter Island into the Chilean political system, this festival, ordered by the administration in 1967 and very widespread in Latin America, was intended to highlight the link with the mainland.

[4] Bark of the Paper mulberry tree

[5] This risky game consists of sliding down the hillside, lying on a kind of rustic sledge built with two trunks of bananas joined together. At speeds that sometimes reach 80 km/h, the contestants descend to the base of the hill.

## Acknowledgement

## References

Alba Roque, A. P. (2018) Isla de Pascua: visualización de la acción del turismo. Madrid, ETS Arquitectura Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.

Andrade Buscar, P. (2004) Artífices del imaginario. La Puesta en Escena, una Aproximación a la Construcción de Identidad Rapa Nui. Santiago de Chile, Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano.

Bendrups, D. (2008) Pacific Festivals as Dynamic Contact Zones. Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures, 2(1), 14–28.

Concha Mathiesen, R. (2017) Dinámica del Turismo y Transformaciones en los usos del Patrimonio en la Isla de Pascua. Barcelona, Universitat de Barcelona.

Cristino, C. & Izaurieta, R. (2006) Easter Island: Total Land Area of Te Pito O Te Henua. Rapa Nui Journal 20(1), 81.

Delsing, R. (2015) Articulating Rapa Nui: Polynesian cultural politics in a Latin American nation-state.

Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.

Dittmer, H. (2021). Moana made waves: Discussing the representation of Pacific islanders in the Disney movie Moana. Pacific Geographies, 55 (January/February 2021), 25-29. DOI: 10.23791/552529

Esen-Baur, H.-M. (1983) Untersuchungen über den Vogelmann-Kult auf der Osterinsel. Wiesbaden, Steiner.

Fischer, H. (1999) Schatten auf der Osterinsel: Plädoyer für ein vergessenes Volk (2. überarb. Aufl.). Oldenburg, BIS.

Fischer, S. R. (2005) Island at the end of the world: the turbulent history of Easter Island. London, Reaktion.

Fortin, M. (2009) The Development of Theatre in Easter Island. Dunedin, University of Otago.

Hanson, A. (1989) The making of the Maori: Culture invention and its logic. American anthropologist, 91(4), 890-902.

Hobsbawm, E. J., & Ranger, T. O. (Eds.). (2012) The Invention of tradition. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, Chile (n.d.) Censo 2017. Available from: http://resultados.censo2017.cl

Keesing, R. M., & Tonkinson, R. (1982) Reinventing Traditional Culture: The Politics of Kastom in Island Melanesia. Mankind. (special issue) (13)4, Sydney, Anthropological Society of New South Wales.

Kiss, W. (2020) Ariki trifft Tangata manu: Tapati Rapa Nui, ein Festival indigener Identität oder Ausprägung konstruierter Authentizität? Wien, Universität Wien.

Krendelov, F. P., & Kondratov, A. M. (1990) Die Geheimnisse der Osterinsel (2. Aufl.). Moskau, Verl. Mir [u.a.].

Ma'u Henua celebrates Pei Amo 2020. (2020) Moe Varua, 145, 15–17.

McCall, G. (1988, November) Chile's Bitter Pacific Legacy. Pacific Islands Monthly.

Mückler, H. (2009) Einführung in die Ethnologie Ozeaniens. Wien, facultas.wuv.

Mückler, H., & Faschingeder, G. (Eds.). (2012) Tradition und Traditionalismus: zur Instrumentalisierung eines Identitätskonzepts. Wien, Promedia [u.a.].

Municipalidad de Rapa Nui. (2020, October 27) Ahora tenemos los ojos abiertos. Available from: https://www.facebook.com/MuniRapaNui/posts/4560240777383461

Picard, D., & Robinson, Prof. M. (2006) Festivals, Tourism and Social Change: Remaking Worlds. Clevedon, Channel View Publications.

Rivas, A. (2017) Ono Tupuna, the richness of the ancestors. Multiples Landscapes Relationalities in Contemporary Indigenous Rapa Nui. Berkley, University of California

Tapati Rapa Nui Oficial. (2020, October 9). Available from: https://www.facebook.com/TapatiRapaNuiOficial/photos/a.420822304653948/3298704706865679/

Thomas, N. (1992) The inversion of tradition. American Ethnologist, 19(2), 213-232.

Weiss, G. [VerfasserIn]. (1978) Der Vogelkult auf der Osterinsel: Eine ethnohistorische Untersuchung. From: Wiener ethnohistorische Blätter 16. Wien.

Young, F. W. (2020) Rapa Nui. The Contemporary Pacific, 32(1), 262–274.

Corresponding Author: Mag. Wolfgang Kiss, MA [w.kiss@gmx.net] graduated from the Vienna University of Economics and Business and holds a Master's degree from the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna.

Figure 1: Moana, the protagonist of the eponymous movie (picture distorted not to get into conflict with copyright issues of the Disney company).

# Moana made waves: Discussing the representation of Pacific Islanders in the Disney movie Moana

*Hannah Dittmer[1]*

[1] Gattergasse 2A, Stiege 2, Tür 25, 1110 Wien, Austria, E-mail: hannah.dittmer@aon.at

*Abstract: This paper sheds light on the debate the Disney movie Moana sparked on Pacific Islands by reviewing literature from indigenous Pacific anthropologists such as Vicente Diaz, Vilsoni Hereniko, Mārata Tamaira, and Dionne Fonoti. The author analyses the plot of Moana and the general representation of the Pacific Islands in Western movies. Various points of critique on the movie from indigenous Pacific anthropologists are discussed. Despite problems of cultural homogenization, stereotypical representation, and commodification, it is argued that it is short-sighted to view Moana as a mere object of cultural theft. In addressing these issues, the author wants to propose a platform for the plethora of Pacific opinions to discuss how Pacific Islanders are represented in the popular Disney movie Moana and how they may feel about this representation. Furthermore, this research note has the ambitious aim to motivate readers to a more critical and informed consumption of Disney movies.*

*Keywords: Disney, representation, stereotypes, indigenous stories, Pacific Islands*

## Introduction

"Moana made waves across the Pacific" (Tamaira 2018a: 299), cites the Hawai´ian anthropologist Mārata Tamaira whilst discussing the debate the Walt Disney production Moana[1], an US-American computer-animated movie, sparked on Pacific Islands. Written by Jared Bush, the movie was released in 2016 in cinemas worldwide. The story of Moana unfolds on the fictive Polynesian Island Motunui. The storyline revolves around Moana, a young Polynesian girl who is the hereditary successor to the Island chiefdom. Unlike the rest of her village, who have forgotten or repressed their roots as navigators, Moana feels a strong connection to the ocean. To fulfil her grandmother's last wish, Moana sails across the reef to search for the demigod Maui in order to save Motunui from an impending catastrophe (Clements & Musker 2016).

Indigenous Pacific anthropologists

such as Vicente Diaz, Vilsoni Hereniko, Mārata Tamaira, and Dionne Fonoti debated the advantages and disadvantages of such exposure, the representation of Pacific Islands in the movie, and the involvement of Pacific people in the "Oceanic Story Trust"[2], a group with various Pacific experts such as anthropologists, navigators, and artists, that was established by Disney for this production. In this research note, the ongoing discussion is considered with particular interest in the perspectives of indigenous Pacific anthropologists. The paper is based on literature review and on a brief movie discussion and results of a seminar paper at University of Zurich (Dittmer 2020).

## White beaches and coconut bikinis: Paradisiac clichés in movies

Moana is not the only movie that is inspired by Pacific people and landscapes (De Largy Healy & Wittersheim 2019). With its variety of Islands, the Pacific has always fascinated people around the world. The region, which offers a unique backdrop for films, is very popular especially for European and North American movies and series. The paradisiac image with blue sparkling water, white beaches, and tropical landscapes is the main representation of Pacific Islands in these productions (Tamaira 2018a). In addition to films, books also draw from the perfect paradisiac scene for stories set in the "South Sea". In a critical reflection of Ballantyne's novel "The Coral Island", Wörner notes that indigenous peoples are only portrayed as Europe's exotic Other and only exist in contrast with Western societies (Wörner 2021 in this volume).

Hau'ofa (2008) argues that the origins of these misrepresentations lie in the early contacts between Western conquerors and Pacific inhabitants. In particular, Christian missionaries on Pacific Islands propagated the image of Pacific cultures as savage, lascivious, barbaric, and simple (Tamaira 2018b). According to Hereniko (2018, cit. in Tamaira 2018b), such simplistic representations are problematic because they present indigenous people as simple, without agency and ambitions. As events in the colonial history have shown, such images con-tributed to legitimise colonisation and land seizure of Pacific Islands and appropriation of Pacific property.

In the past, Disney has faced heavy criticism for cultural appropriation and the presentation of stereotypes in movies (Hereniko 1999). Confronted with this critique, it seemed that Disney had learned from the previous movie productions and tried to create a more realistic image of Pacific Islands with the help of the Oceanic Story Trust. However, not everybody, especially on the Islands, seems to be satisfied with the outcome, and the movie and its commercialization are criticised.

## Moana made waves: A debate on Pacific Islands

In the wake of Moana, indigenous Pacific anthropologists embraced opportunities to critically reflect on the film and production process. One example of such engagement can be seen on the Facebook page "Mana Moana: I am Moana, I am Maui", analysed by Tamaira (2018a). The Facebook page has more than 4,000 followers and it aims to offer "a place for critical thought about Disney and the Pacific" (Mana Moana: I am Moana, I am Maui 2020). On this webpage, many Pacific scholars and artists (e.g. Vicente Diaz and Tēvita O. Ka'ili) participate in an active discussion about the movie. Referring to Tamaira (2018a), the main focus of the page members' critique is not to reflect the story of the film but to criticize the Walt Disney company and the commodification of indigenous knowledge (Tamaira 2018a). In reviewing the debate, Tamaira (2018a) criticises the closed nature of the Facebook page, noting that while there initially seemed to be room for every opinion, it quickly became a site of rejection for alternative and positive thoughts about the movie. For example, Pacific experts from the Oceanic Story Trust, that had an active part in the production of the movie, such as Dionne Fonoti, were verbally attacked and accused of selling Pacific culture (Tamaira 2018a). The Facebook debate was fittingly described by Tamaira as "looks like there's trouble in Paradise" (Tamaira 2018a: 299). Such debates show that indigenous opinions about the representation of Pacific Islands are far from homogenous.

## From best intentions to money spinner and clichés

Attempting to respectfully produce the film, Disney established the Oceanic Story Trust and cast almost all roles with actors from the Pacific. Despite Disney's probably best intentions and efforts to include local people in the making of the movie, the production led to various points of critique. In Hereniko's opinion (2019) the filmmaker's efforts to produce a culturally accurate film were overshadowed by the pressure to produce a blockbuster film. By continuing to employ paradisiacal clichés, Disney's efforts to involve local people were minimized.

The commodification of indigenous knowledge and Pacific lifestyles created criticism. In the case of Moana, the process of commodification included merchandise products[3], like Moana plastic dolls and a brown, tattooed Maui costume with a curly wig. The latter was swiftly removed due to strong critiques. These products are not only mainly made of plastic that could wash up on Pacific shores, but the Maui costume echoes the practice of brown facing (Diaz 2017; Tamaira 2018a). Beyond the problem of racist stereotypes that resonate in these merchandise products, the commodification of indigenous knowledge seems like a profitable sell-out for Disney with Pacific Islands not profiting at all. Although Disney earns much money with selling movie tickets, the revenues from selling merchandise products should not be underestimated. From this point of view, the movie seems to become a big advertisement for merchandise products and Disney holiday resorts such as the "Aulani Resort" in Honolulu (Diaz 2017; Ngata 2017). Keeping in mind that Pacific Islands do not profit from those revenues, the question arises: who is in the position to present and capitalize on indigenous Pacific knowledge, if not Pacific Islanders themselves (Diaz 2017)?

Arguably the most severe critique that Disney faced was about the clichés and stereotypes that seemed to draw a nostalgic picture of the colonial past (Diaz 2017; Tamaira 2018a), as already mentioned before. Without addressing the exact era in which the story takes place, the film depicts an old, imagined idea of Polynesia, where time stands still and everything fits perfectly into the fantasies of the "South

Figure 2: Drawing inspired by the movie „Moana" : Moana (l.) & Maui (r.)

Sea" (Tamaira 2018a) as a paradise with happiness and simplicity. This can already be seen at the beginning of the film with children walking in loincloths, all men dressed exclusively in skirts and clamshell necklaces, and diets comprising of bananas, coconut, fish, and pork (Clements & Musker 2016). In picturing the protagonists as innocents happily living in a pristine Island with nothing to do but laugh, sing, and dance all day, the movie supports the stereotypical idea of Islanders as primitive and savage (Diaz 2017; Clements & Musker 2016). Additionally, the fact that the protagonists are in no way portrayed as sexual beings is problematic. Disney avoided the pattern of movies set in the "South Sea" that frequently imply sexuality through exotic stereotypes of beautiful women in coconut bikinis. While this might look like an exemplary decision, scholars such as Hereniko (2018, cit. in Tamaira 2018b) have noted that Pacific Islanders seem to be less human due to the absence of this important biological components.

"All Pacific Islanders are not Hawaiian", with this quote Lisa Hall (2015:

727) addresses the issues of cultural homogenization and polycentrism, which have also been brought up in relation to Moana. According to Vicente Diaz, an anthropology professor from Guam, Moana presents one picture of Pacific Islands that is dominated by Polynesia (Diaz 2017). Lyons and Tengan (2015) discuss these issues in relation to a variety of Hollywood movies that show Pacific Islands as homogenous and mainly cast people from Polynesia to represent "the Pacific". They problematise that such homogenous representations draw a simplistic picture of Pacific Islands[4] focused on Polynesia. Diaz illustrates this problem in Moana by paying attention to the figure of demigod Maui, who claims at the beginning of the movie: "I am the most important Demi god in whole Oceania" (Clements & Musker 2016). In this case, Disney both simplifies and homogenizes Pacific belief systems, as Maui[5] does not play such an important role as demigod on each of the Islands. This example of cultural homogenization is only one of many present in the film. Personally, the author of

this paper was quite confused by the excessive amalgamation of cultural elements. While she expected a story that plays in a more or less "Polynesian world", she was swamped by borrowed features, such as navigating from Micronesia, Fijian boats and the mythological creatures "Kakamora" from the Solomon Islands. The insertion of culturally distinct features into the Polynesian landscape leads to the assumption that such elements are of Polynesian origin and/or can be found everywhere in the Pacific.

Furthermore, Diaz worries that the presented standard of "the Pacific Islander" in the movie might cause an identity crisis. Diaz describes that "if you don't look like that [people presented on the screen] you must not be a Pacific Islander" (Diaz 2017). He claims that the homogenization of the Pacific in Moana is far away from the image of a diverse Pacific as a sea of Islands in the sense of Epeli Hau'ofa.

After discussing several problems identified in the movie by Pacific Islanders, Moana could be easily labelled as a failed cinematic experiment. In the following section, additional arguments that paint a slightly different representation of Moana and its impact on the Pacific are considered.

## "The people on the screen actually look like us"

There is a common tendency to see *Moana* as an instance of cultural theft, where indigenous knowledge is taken away from Pacific people and is transferred into money for the Disney Company (e.g. Ngata 2017; Diaz 2017). While this perspective, which draws on troubling aspects of the film, certainly makes a good point, the author thinks it is short-sighted to only focus on this argument. Tamaira (2018a) argues that this perspective pushes Pacific Islanders into a passive, defenceless role where there is only one correct way to represent Pacific ways of life. Epeli Hau'ofa (2001: 3) opposes putting culture in cages and advocates for liberating traditions: "They're not just things of the past; they're part of our world now". A similar issue is addressed in the paper of Kiss (2021 in this volume) analysing the "Tapati Festival" in Rapa Nui. Kiss argues that the changing festival structure and content shows that traditions should not

be perceived as static but rather as an ongoing negotiation process and as a reappraisal of history and identity (Kiss 2021 in this volume).

A second way in which the aforementioned critique falls short is the refusal to acknowledge existing perspectives that are supportive of the film. Despite the critique, Tamaira (2018a) notes that *Moana* still offers a platform to show Pacific needs and problems and strengthen Pacific self-confidence. New Zealand journalist Vaimoana Tapaleao agrees, stating that "the people on the screen actually look like us" (Tamaira 2018a: 302). Like Tapaleao, the characters in the movie have Polynesian tattoos, Polynesian noses and wide feet. Additionally, the stories told by Moana's family are stories that Tamaira and Tapaleao grew up with. In times where minorities are underrepresented in popular culture media, the appearance of a "Polynesian Disney princess" can fill people with pride and propel the Pacific into the spotlight (Tamaira 2018). The presence of such strong Polynesian characters on screen may give Pacific youth and children the opportunity to identify with relatable role models who evoke feelings of pride in their cultural identity.

Whilst Diaz addresses a homogenization problem in the movie, Hereniko praises the presentation of various Pacific elements in the movie. In his opinion, the presence of multi-perspective elements forms an image of the Pacific as a "sea of Islands", or as one ocean that connects all the Islands (Hereninko 2018).

The theme of representation goes hand in hand with the presentation of Pacific landscapes. Although the author felt that the pictured Pacific environment with coconut palm trees, white beaches, and sparkling sea was very stereotypical and kitschy, Tapaleao (2018, cit. in Tamaira 2018a: 302) describes that these presented images are an exact copy of her neighbourhood:

"The Polynesia depicted in the film is an animated yet mirror image of our backyard. The glittering see-through ocean looks like the one the village kids splash in behind my mum's family fale [house] in Savaii… The way the lava meets the sea […] yeah, it is magical, but it is also our reality."

Besides these landscape images that some Pacific Islanders experienced as realistic and well implemented, the dualism of paradise and anti-paradise also plays an important educational role in Moana. Whilst projecting a perfect paradise, the movie shows what could happen if people, or even a demigod, do not care for their environment. This is illustrated by the act of stealing the heart of the goddess Te Fiti in the movie (Tamaira 2018a). The movie highlights the actual impacts of global warming and environmental pollution, reminding that Moana and her village are not the only ones dealing with rotting coconuts and declining fish stocks. In times where the whole world faces the consequences of climate change and environmental pollution, the movie could play an important role as an educational tool in the combat against global warming.

When it comes to important educational work that Disney could achieve with its movies, the role of Moana as a young, strong and self-confident Polynesian Disney princess must be emphasized. According to Tagi Qolouvaki, (from Hawai'i Community College), the movie shows "girl power pasifika style" by challenging patriarchal patterns and hegemony with the young female heroine Moana. In addition, the movie exposes the combat against patriarchal taboos, represented by Moana's struggle to be a good daughter and successor to the chief, but also, against her father's will, follow her own desire to be a navigator (Qolouvaki 2018b).

## Conclusion

Moana has evoked different reactions, from euphoria about "girl power Pasifika style" to worries and anger that indigenous lifestyles are being commodified by Disney. Mirroring Pacific Islands, the debate is inhomogeneous, it is manifold, diverse and changing. The fact that a private company like Disney narrates indigenous stories has been criticized. And it has been Disney which has brought such stories into the cinemas. This leads to the question of obstacles that Pacific Islanders face when accessing or creating their own cinematic platform and how it can be ensured that Pacific cultures are represented respectfully in non-Pacific movie productions. This apprehension also raises questions about why Pacific Islanders seem to have less possibilities to tell indigenous stories by themselves and whether it should really be Disney putting these stories and histories on screen. Moreover, it is important to ask how film productions can give sufficient space to local people to tell their stories and perspectives. The debate clearly shows that traditions and stories can not be trapped in a cage, as they are steadily changing and willing to be told in a new way, as Hau'ofa (2001: 23) declares:

"And now we work to release, to free our traditions, and they invite them to come to our world and teach us, tell us their Oceania. […] They're not just things of the past, they're part of our world now."

Referring to Tamaira (2018a), the question is not only which story is told and what elements are presented correctly, but rather about how the story is told and how the movie is produced. In this regard, it seems that Disney has taken a first step in the right direction and shared its self-imposed duty of storytelling with indigenous peoples. However, the people from Pacific Islands represented in movies such as Moana should be able to decide who has access to their stories and how the stories should be communicated. In the future, we will see whether film producers are willing to take further steps towards the narrators of these indigenous Pacific stories. Alternatively, these stories can be produced without global players like Disney, enabling Pacific Islanders to tell their own stories.

## Acknowledgements

## Endnotes

[1] The movie is in most English- and German speaking countries known as "Vaiana" or as "Oceania" in Italy, but since the title Moana is mainly used on Pacific Islands I´ve decided to use the latter in this paper.
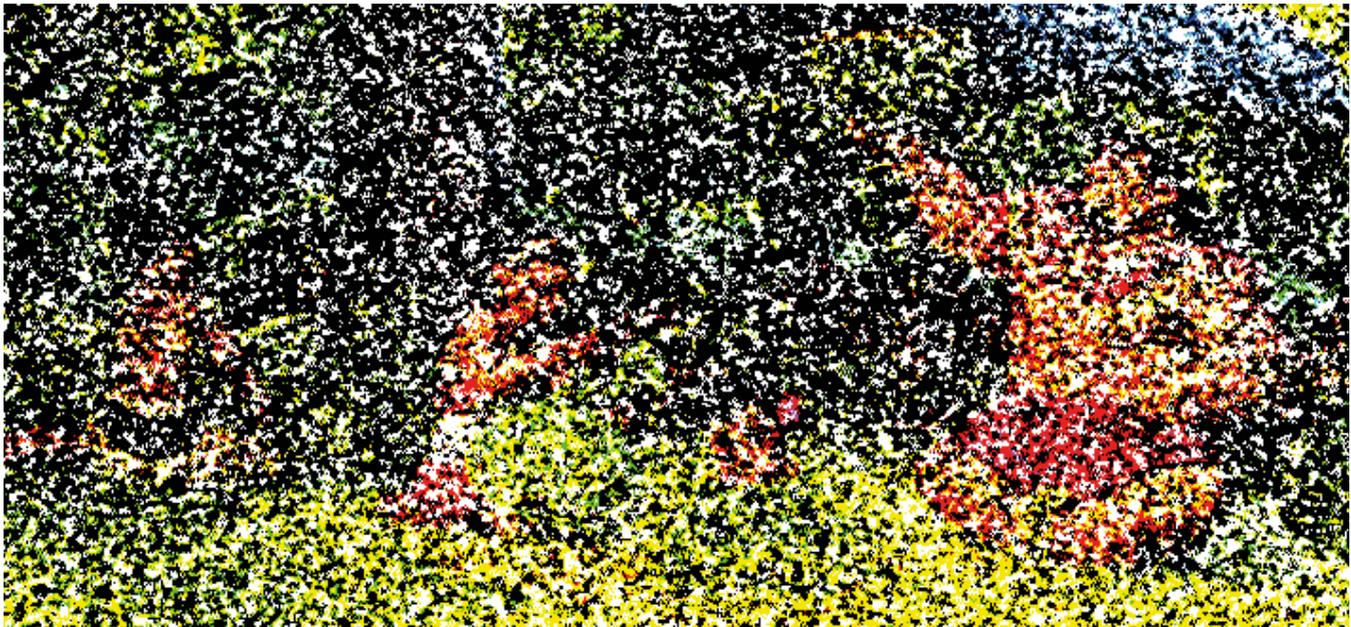
Figure 3: Moana and her family are weaving baskets on a fictive Island (picture distorted not to get into conflict with copyright issues of the Disney company).

[2] The "Oceanic Story Trust" is a group of Pacific experts consisting of artists, scientists, musicians, tattoo-artists, filmmakers,… that were hired by Disney and advised the movie producers. The Pacific members of the group include Tautala Asaua, Dionne Fonoti, Layne Hannemann, Tiana Nonosina Liufau, Su'a Sulu'ape Peter, Yves "Papa Mape" Tehiotaata, Hinano and Frank Murphy, Jiujiu "Angel" Bera, Vilsoni Hereniko and Kalikolehua Hurley (Fonoti 2018a).

[3] For more info on Moana merchandise products visit following website Moana (Character) shop Disney: https://www.shopdisney.com/characters/disney/moana/

[4] This problem becomes apparent when keeping in mind that most of the so-called blockbuster movies that were located in the Pacific focussed solely on Polynesian Islands such as "couples retreat" (2009, in Bora Bora), "Lilo and Stitch" (2002, in Hawai'i), "Hawaii five-0" (2010, in Hawai'i) or "forgetting Sarah Marshall" (2008, in Hawai'i).

[5] Maui is a shape-shifting trickster god who plays an important role in ancestral stories and genealogies mainly across the Polynesian region. He is gifted with accomplishing various superhuman feats such as slowing down the sun or hauling up Islands with a magical fishhook (Tamaira 2018a).

## References

De Largy Healy, J. & Wittersheim, E. (2019). Introduction. The Pacific on Screens: From Representation to Reappropriation. Journal de la Société des Océanistes 148, 5-22. Available from: http://journals.openedition.org/jso/11127 [Accessed on 12 June 2020].

Diaz, V. (2017). Decolonizing the Disneyfication of pacific Culture and history. A critical indigenous view of the film Moana from Guam and Micronesia. Guam Museum's HITA Series. [Video] Available from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ixel40JIE [Accessed on 13 June 2020].

Dittmer, H. (2020). Moana – hat Disneys Repräsentation einen Haken? Darstellung Ozeanischer Identitäten im Disney Film Moana. Unpublished seminar paper, University of Zurich.

Ellis, J. & Hau'ofa, E. (2001). A New Oceania: An Interview with Epeli Hau'ofa. Antipodes 15 (1), 22-25. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/41958724 [Accessed on 15 June 2020].

Hall, L. (2015). Which of These Things Is Not Like the Other: Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders Are Not Asian Americans, and All Pacific Islanders Are Not Hawaiian. American Quarterly. 67 (3), 727-747. Available from: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/593313/pdf [Accessed on 3 March 2021].

Hau'ofa, E. (2008) [1994]. Our Sea of Islands. The Contemporary Pacific 6 (1), 147-161. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/23701593 [Accessed on 15 June 2020].

Hereniko, V. (2019). Authenticity in Cinema: Notes from the Pacific Islands. Journal de la Société des Océanistes. 148, 65-72. Available from: http://journals.openedition.org/jso/10633 [Accessed on 12 October 2020

Hereniko, V. (1999). Representations of Pacific Islanders in Film and Video. Available from: http://www.yidff.jp/docbox/14/box14-3-e.html [Accessed on 15 June 2020].

Kiss, W. (2021). "Ariki meets Tangata manu": Tapati Rapa Nui, a festival of indigenous identity or expression of constructed authenticity? Pacific Geographies, 55 (January/February 2021), 20-24.

Lyons, P. & Tengan, T. (2015). Introduction: Pacific Currents. American Quarterly. 67 (3), 545-574. Available from: https://muse-jhu-edu.uaccess.univie.ac.at/article/593297 [Accessed on 13 October 2020].

Mana Moana: We are Moana, We are Maui. (2016). Available from: https://www.facebook.com/manamoanawearemoanawearemaui [Accessed on 15 June 2020].

Clements, R. & Musker, J. (2016). Moana [Film]. USA: Walt Disney Productions. Available from: https://www.amazon.de/gp/video/detail/B01MQXW497 [Accessed on 14 October 2020].

Ngata, T. (2017). Ngati Porou environmentalist and indigenous rights advocate Tina Ngata discusses some of the concerns around Disney's Moana. [Video] Available from: https://vimeo.com/194799458?fbclid=IwAR0qrV8C_UVlqcBcM319f17MHpCYscx-ybi8fKHCLFDBKe3c3frtMN4-HQk [Accessed on 14 June 2020].

Tamaira, M. & Fonoti, D. (2018a). Beyond Paradise? Retelling Pacific Stories in Disney's Moana. The Contemporary Pacific. 30 (2), 297-327. Available from: https://muse-jhu-edu.uaccess.univie.ac.at/article/700782 [Accessed on 10 October 2020].

Tamaira, M., Hereniko, V., Qolouvaki, T., Hopkins, J., Steiner, C. (2018b). Moana by Jared Bush (review). The Contemporary Pacific. 30 (1), 216-234. Available from: https://muse-jhu-edu.uaccess.univie.ac.at/article/683746 [Accessed on 15 June 2020].

Wörner, R. (2021). An Imperialist's Garden Eden? – Images of Oceania in R. M. Ballantyne's The Coral Island. Pacific Geographies, 55 (January/February 2021), 30-33.

Corresponding Author: Hannah Dittmer, BA [hannah.dittmer@aon.at] is a Master student at the Department for Cultural- and Social Anthropology of the University Vienna and currently a board member of the Austrian-South Pacific Society (OSPG).

# An Imperialist's Garden of Eden: Images of Oceania in R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*

Rebekka Wörner[1]

[1] Höflinger Ring 26, 93083 Obertraubling, Germany, E-mail: Rebekka-JuliaWoerner@gmx.at

*Abstract: This paper discusses how Oceania is depicted in an example of Victorian children's literature, in Ballantyne's The Coral Island. The island is described as a garden of Eden, in which the protagonists of the novel can build a model colonial civilisation. The idea of civilisation is also central to Ballantyne's representation of Pacific Islanders, who are described with typical racist stereotypes as childish and cruel, but whose inferiority is described as cultural rather than biological and who should be civilised and christianised.*

## Introduction

The 19th century was the century of industrialisation and the high tide of colonialism and imperialism. But, while large parts of the world were divided up between European powers, while cities grew and technology developed, writers still searched for a life close to and in harmony with nature, unspoilt by industrialisation, for a paradise on Earth. This paradise many writers believed to have found in Oceania. The Scottish author Robert Michael Ballantyne was one of them, and in this research note, which is based on my master thesis in Anthropology, I want to look at how Oceania and its inhabitants are represented in Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*.

The novel tells the story of three boys – Ralph, Jack and Peterkin – who serve in the merchant navy. When they are shipwrecked, they manage to reach a nearby island. In the course of their adventures there, they get caught in a conflict between two groups of indigenous people, who visit the island. Later in the book, Ralph is abducted by pirates. After he manages to escape, the boys continue to have adventures on other islands. The second half of the book focuses on them trying to find a way home and is more serious in tone than the first half, emphasising moral and religious questions.

## Island Myths

In the 19th century, the "wild" and "unknown" seemed to grow scarce. New and faster means of transport disenchanted many parts of the world, newspapers and other media made various information easier to access, and writers of adventure books had to find new and more remote settings for their heroes to get lost in. Fulton (2013) argues that the fascination with Oceania for writers lies in its remoteness, in its being terra incognita. While other regions of the world were quite well-known by the middle of the 19th century, Oceania was not. Children in Victorian England could gain a lot of knowledge about places like India or Australia, but information about Oceania was difficult to come by. The South Seas therefore offered a lot of freedom for writers' imagination and made an ideal scene of instruction for the European reader, a setting, where "there is no resistance from history itself", because there was no factual information available (Edmond 1997: 132).

This interest in Oceania can be seen as part of a wider theme of fascination with remoteness and with islands in particular. Gerber (1959: 37) even speaks of an "island myth" in British literature. In *The Coral Island*, we also witness a South Sea myth, because

we see Oceania recreated through a European's eye, overlaying, using and transforming indigenous visions in the process (cf. Jolly 2007). Hau'ofa (1994) points out that even the connection between islands and remoteness is an idea that is projected onto Oceania by Europeans, and that Pacific Islanders might consider the sea something connecting rather than separating islands.

In literature, this remoteness functions as a narrative device. Because of the separation from home and from "civilisation", the conflict of the narrative has to be solved without outside influence, and the protagonists gain agency and control of the situation (Bristow 1991). This is especially the case in children's literature: to become the main movers of events it is necessary for children to be removed from the control of adults. Islands thus become imperialist classrooms "representing colonialist dreams and fears in miniature" (Bristow 1991: 94). There are dangers, but in this miniature, controlled environment they are easily overcome, and the children always emerge as masters of the situation. The island serves as a model for how to build a civilisation. Children's literature seems at first relatively remote from discourses of power and politics, but due to didactic intent, imperialist ideol-

ogy is often particularly pronounced in children's books. After all, imperialism is a system of belief that is learnt, or, as Hall (1991: 51) notes, it is "a complex process by which a group of potentially noncolonial infants becomes a nation of active colonizers".

In *The Coral Island*, the boys explore the island, conduct scientific experiments, build a camp and construct weapons. Hulme (1986: 122) sees "an imperialist production of Robinson Crusoe as a boys' adventure in the nineteenth century", but this always serves the colonial endeavour, is always "colonial alibi". Accordingly, in *The Coral Island*, immediately after their arrival the boys declare the island a British possession. One of the three children protagonists in the book, Jack, says: "We'll take possession in the name of the king; we'll go and enter the service of its black inhabitants. Of course, we'll rise, naturally, to the top of affairs. White men always do in savage countries." (Ballantyne 1991: 16)

## A Garden of Eden?

When the French explorer Louis de Bougainville arrived in Tahiti in 1768, he described the island as Elysium and its inhabitants as embodiments of the Greek gods. Since then, similar descriptions have never ceased to be a central element of the image of the South Seas in European imagination. Smith (1985) argues that the descriptions of Oceania that can be found in early travel reports, especially in the reports from James Cook's pacific journeys, continued to be influential for a long time and that similar motives can be observed in the imaginings of Oceania for several centuries, with many writers taking up – perhaps sometimes unconsciously – elements from literature rather than relying on their own observations. Hoomanawanui (2012) compares such descriptions to a process of elimination of indigenous cultures. European writers submit the South Seas to their own preconceptions, reducing indigenous cultures to stereotypes that are constantly repeated, and appropriating indigenous cultural elements that they perceive as worth preserving.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the idea of paradise appeared prominently in poetry but also in travel literature. Byron (1823: 16) describes Tahiti as the land "[w]here all partake the earth without dispute", and Ten-
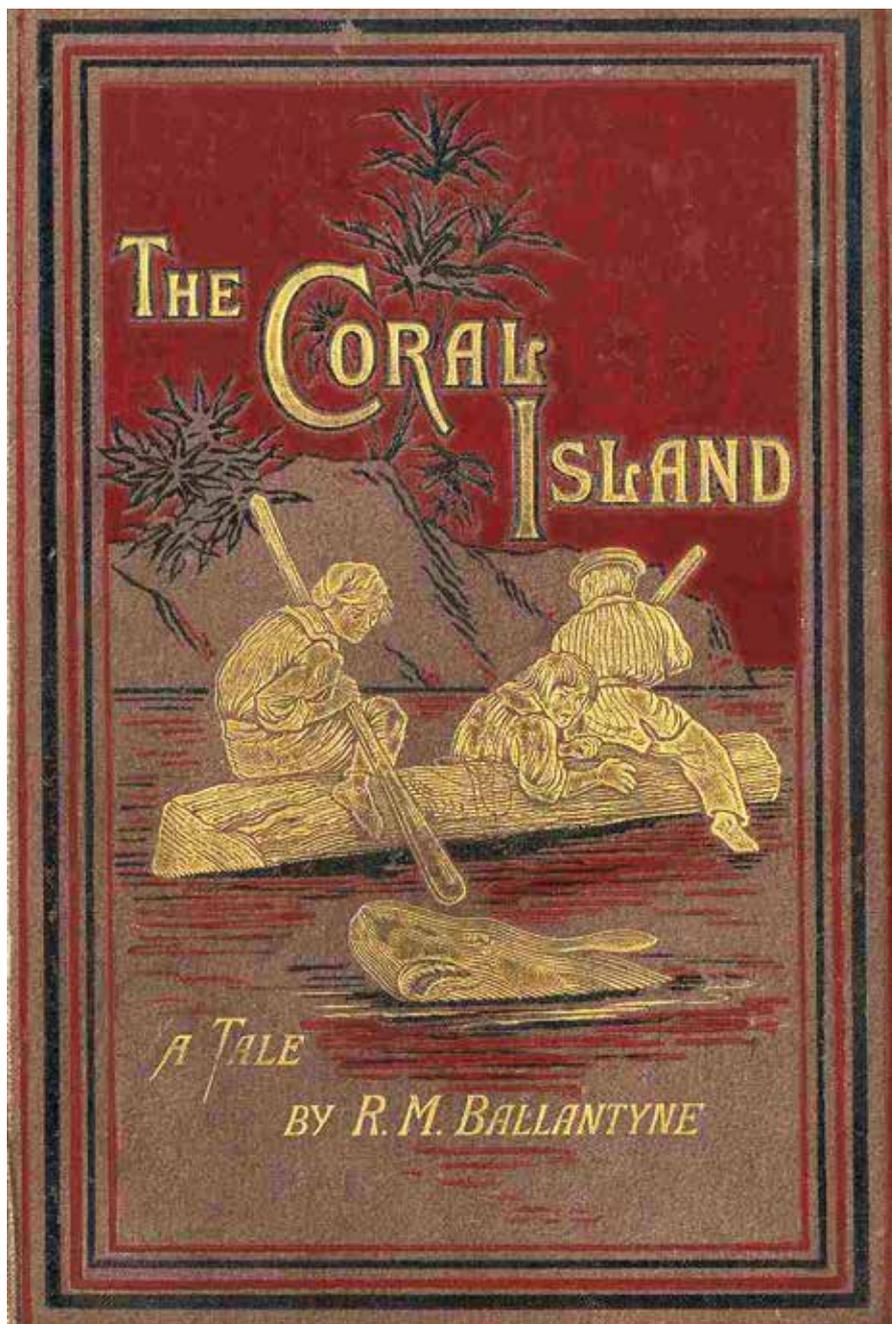


Figure 1: Book cover page of an edition from 1894.

nyson (1992: 33-34) dreams of "[s]ummer isles of Eden", where "never floats a European flag". In 19th-century South Seas' novels, the image of Eden appears frequently (Schulz 1985), and it survives well into the 21st century. This is apparent in Disney's 2016 film *Moana*, though Tamaira (2018: 302-303) highlights that it is not necessarily something projected onto the region from outside but is also "rooted in a lived reality" of Pacific Islanders today. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* is depicted as a paradise on Earth, far removed from European influence:

"The island on which we stood was hilly, and covered almost everywhere with the most beautiful and richly coloured trees, bushes, and shrubs […]. A sandy beech of dazzling whiteness lined this bright green shore, and upon it there fell a gentle ripple of the sea." (Ballantyne 1991: 21)

Everything the boys need to survive is readily available on the island, without the necessity of work. There is food and drink, a tree that provides them with fabric to make clothes from, another tree grows in planks that they can simply cut off to build a shelter. There are no seasons with most fruit-trees being evergreens, and the boys might "when we wished, pluck the blossom and the ripe fruit from the same tree" (Ballantyne 1991: 44-45). The island is not only physically remote but appears to be

Figure 2: Shipwrecked (original illustration)

taken out of time, a place where nothing ever changes, what Spurr (1993: 127) calls "a realm outside of time". The protagonists themselves perceive the island as Garden of Eden: Peterkin describes it as "the ancient Paradise" (Ballantyne 1991: 27-28), and Ralph wonders "whether Adam or Eve had found Eden more sweet" (ibid: 187).

A conflict between two traditions, which led to inconsistencies in the works of many 19th-century writers, is apparent in *The Coral Island*: The literary tradition of romanticism that celebrated an Edenic setting and a life close to nature contends with a more modern belief in progress and civilisation (Street 1975). In *The Coral Island*, the children are forced to discover that the island is a fragile paradise that is easily lost. Only the children of the ship reach the island, and their existence there is dependent on their innocence (Ballantyne 1991). When they stop being content with life on the island and start to explore and strive for knowledge and power, they grow up, and this means loss of innocence and subsequently loss of the island. Bratton (1991) describes the diamond cave the boys discover as a symbol of this loss. Peterkin, who, like the other children, is at first happy with life on the island, can't reach the cave, because he can't dive as well as the others, and becomes obsessed with reaching it. Carelessly leaving the cave leads to Ralph's abduction by pirates. When he returns to the island, he no longer wants to remain there (Ballantyne 1991). The return to civilisation,

which in the beginning didn't interest the boys at all, is their goal now. The other islands they visit are neither as Edenic nor as removed from civilisation as the Coral Island, and no similar idealised existence is possible in this world of adults.

## Noble Savages?

Before Cook's Pacific journeys little was known about the South Pacific and its inhabitants. Reports dating back to the 17th century place the peoples of the South Pacific more in the realm of fairy tale than fact. Even Joseph Banks' reports from Cook's journeys say little about the actual culture of the people he met, and like Bougainville, he describes them as resembling ancient Greeks (Smith 1985).

The way non-European people are described in European literature tends to fall into one of two categories. Popular in the 18th century and, to a lesser extent, in the 19th century was the concept of the "noble savage", who was "closely related to his natural setting, for he was, in a sense, a personification of the eighteenth-century belief in the nobility and simplicity of Nature" (Smith 1985:42). Non-European people were considered closer to nature and to creation than Europeans and therefore became an ideal to aspire to, in their way of life and in an essential nobility in their character that was unspoilt by civilisation, a natural feeling for Right and Wrong (Landsdown 2006). The concept of the noble savage, while popular throughout the 18th century, came into conflict with the aim of missionary societies, who regarded non-European people as morally inferior, decadent and promiscuous, as "heathens", who had to be civilised and converted to Christianity to be saved (Samson 1998; cf. Kittelmann 2021 in this volume). The perceived difference remained a cultural rather than a biological one, but some 18th-century texts anticipated aspects that would feature in racialist theory, e.g., an emphasis on physical features and a ranking of peoples in stages between savagery and civilisation (Jolly 2007).

This second, racialist viewpoint assumed a general inferiority of non-European peoples. The concept of different "races" was first formalised by Blumenbach in 1795 and was adopted in literature especially in the late 19th century. It was now believed that

non-European people could only be civilised to some degree and that they would never achieve the same "level" of civilisation as Europeans (Street 1975).

In *The Coral Island*, the Pacific Islanders are in a state of nature, not yet raised to civilisation:

"As they were almost entirely naked, and had to bound, stoop, leap, and run in their terrible hand-to-hand encounters, they looked more like demons than human beings. […] the man's body was as black as coal, and I felt convinced that the hair must have been dyed. He was tattooed from head to foot, and his face, besides being tattooed was besmeared with red paint, and streaked with white. Altogether with his yellow, turban-like hair, his Herculean black frame, his glittering eyes and white teeth, he seemed the most terrible monster I ever beheld." (Ballantyne 1991: 173-174)

Like other writers before him, Ballantyne combines elements of the material culture of Polynesia with features that seem to have their place in the realm of fairy tales. He works quite consciously with colours and light. The indigenous people are naked, their bodies are not just described as dark but as "black as coal", contrasted by "glittering eyes and white teeth" (Ballantyne 1991: 173). The coloured hair gives the impression of decadence, while the turban creates a connection to the Orient. Dutheil (2001) argues that the colours red and white hint at the bloodshed that is to follow. She points out that the physical bodies of the Pacific Islanders are described in more detail than the Europeans and refers to the body of the Other as one of the "repressed fantasies of Victorian society" (Dutheil 2001: 112).

The indigenous people are described as childish but at the same time very cruel, killing indiscriminately, even women, children and prisoners (Ballantyne 1991). Ballantyne argues that the natives are bad, because they have not received the blessings of civilisation and "true" religion. They frequently conform to typical racist stereotypes: cannibals, tyrants, infanticidal mothers (Elleray 2013). In *The Coral Island*, Ralph points out that the boys think of stereotypical images, even before they meet any Pacific Islanders:

"[M]y companions afterwards confessed that their thoughts at this

moment had been instantly filled with all they had ever heard or read of wild beasts and savages, torturings at the stake, roastings alive, and such like horrible things." (Ballantyne 1991: 42)

But the novel creates two kinds of natives: The bad one that has not been civilised and remains heathen conforms to typical stereotypes, while the good, Christian one becomes a role model to the protagonists. The best example is the Pacific Islander missionary, who is "held up to British boys as a model of masculinity, civility and faith" (Elleray (2013: 168). Yet Ballantyne doesn't completely escape racism beyond the idea of civilisation: the British protagonists are the most active characters in the novel, while the Pacific Islanders remain passive and inactive, standing in one scene "powerless and petrified with surprise" (Ballantyne 1991: 311). At the same time, Jack is fighting to protect a Christian woman from being forced to marry a "heathen".

However, the pirates, who behave as badly as the indigenous people while having a European background, are judged far more harshly. After spending time with the pirates, Ralph notices that he is becoming inured to the cruelties that are committed around him and finds he can't judge the Pacific Islanders, who know nothing else:

"I came to the conclusion that if I, who hated, abhorred and detested such bloody deeds as I had witnessed within the last few weeks, could so soon come to be less sensitive about them, how little wonder that these poor ignorant savages, who were born and bred in familiarity therewith, should think nothing of them at all, and should hold human life in so very slight esteem!" (Ballantyne 1991: 243)

### Conclusion

Ballantyne's book uses the didactic format of a children's novel to imagine an island that serves as a model for colonial civilisation. The island provides the boys with an environment separated from the European and the adult world, where they learn to become imperialists. The Edenic setting of the novel is not only a typical element of many South Sea tales but also mirrors the children's innocence. Yet the life in

harmony with nature has to be replaced with the civilising mission that Ballantyne believed in and that is at the centre of the second part of the novel.

This idea of a civilising mission also determines the description of the Pacific Islanders. They are described as childish, cruel and savage, but, when they come in contact with European culture and are Christianised and "civilised", they can become role models and teachers to the boys. But the novel denies the indigenous peoples' own voice, a problem that even contemporary cinema films like *Moana* continue to face (Dittmer 2021 in this volume). Indigenous people only exist as Europe's Other and are always compared to European "civilisation".

## References

Ballantyne, R. M. (1991). *The Coral Island. A Tale of the Pacific Ocean.* Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press.

Bratton, J. S. (1991). Introduction. In: Ballantyne, R. M.: *The Coral Island. A Tale of the Pacific Ocean.* Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, pp. vii-xxi.

Bristow, J. (1991). *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World.* London & Henley, Routledge.

Byron, G. G. (1823). *The Island or Christian and his Comrades.* London, John Hunt.

Dittmer, H. (2021). Moana made waves: Discussing the representation of Pacific islanders in the Disney movie Moana. *Pacific Geographies,* 55 (January/February 2021), 25-29. DOI: 10.23791/552529

Dutheil, M. H. (2001). The Representation of the Cannibal in Ballantyne's "The Coral Island". Colonial Anxieties in Victorian Popular Fiction. *College Literature* 28 (1), 105-122.

Edmond, R. (1997). *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin.* Cambridge et al., Cambridge University Press.

Elleray, M. (2013). Watermarks on The Coral Island. The Pacific Island Missionary as Children's Hero. In: Hoffenberg, P. H. & Fulton, R. D. (eds.): *Oceania and the Victorian Imagination. Where all Things Are Possible.* Aldershot & Burlington, Ashgate, 167-180.

Fulton, R. D. (2013). The South Seas in Mid-Victorian Children's Imagination. In: Hoffenberg P. H., & Fulton, R. D. (eds.): *Oceania and the Victorian Imagination. Where all Things Are Possible.* Aldershot & Burlington, Ashgate, 51-165.

Gerber, R. (1959). The English Island Myth. Remarks on the Englishness of Utopian Fiction. *Critical Quarterly* 1 (1), 36-43.

Hall, D. E. (1991). "We and the World": Juliana Horatia Ewing and Victorian Colonialism for Children. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 16 (2), 51-55.

Hau'ofa, E. (1994). Our Sea of Islands. *The Contemporary Pacific* 6 (1), 148-161.

Hulme, P. (1986). *Colonial Encounters. Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797.* New York, Methuen.

Figure 3: A threat (original illustration)

Hoomanawanui, K. (2012). From Captain Cook to Captain Kirk (or, From Colonial Exploration to Indigenous Exploitation): Issues of Hawaiian Land, Identity, and Nationhood in a 'Post-ethnic' World. In: Fojas, C. & Guevarra, R. (eds.): *Transnational Crossroads: Remapping the Americas and the Pacific.* University of Nebraska Press, 229-268.

Jolly, M. (2007). Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and Foreign Representations of a Sea of Islands. *The Contemporary Pacific* 19 (2), 508-545.

Kittelmann, M. (2021). Reflection on identities of Indigenous and missionary cultures in Papua New Guinea during the German colonial period. *Pacific Geographies,* 55 (January/February 2021), 11-19. DOI: 10.23791/551119

Landsdown, R. (2006). *Strangers in the South Seas. The Idea of the Pacific in Western Thought.* Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.

Samson, J. (1998). *Imperial Benevolence. Making British Authority in the Pacific Islands.* Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press.

Schulz, M. F. (1985). *Paradise Preserved. Recreations of Eden in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England.* Cambridge et al., Cambridge University Press.

Smith, B. (1985). *European Vision and the South Pacific.* Second Edition. New Haven & London, Yale University Press.

Spurr, D. (1993). *The Rhetoric of Empire. Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration.* Durham & London, Duke University Press.

Street, B. V. (1975). *The savage in literature. Representations of 'primitive' society in English fiction 1858-1920.* London & Boston, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Tamaira, A. M. K. with Fonoti, D. (2018). Beyond Paradise? Retelling Pacific Stories in Disney's 'Moana'. *The Contemporary Pacific* 30 (2), 297-327.

Tennyson, A. (1992). *Selected Poems.* New York, Dover.

**Corresponding Author: Rebekka Wörner [Rebekka-JuliaWoerner@gmx.at] studied Cultural and Social Anthropology, Comparative Literature, History and Archaeology at University of Vienna (Austria). She is currently working in refugee counselling.**

# An Analysis of Historical Imagery – The Picture of Sir Bob Jones responding to anti-tour demonstrators in New Zealand 1981

*Julia Hazar[1]*

[1] Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna, Universitätsstraße 7, 1010 Vienna, Austria,
 E-mail: julia.isabell.hazar@gmail.com

*Abstract: The photo of Sir Bob Jones responding to an anti-tour demonstration in Auckland 1981 captures a pivotal moment in New Zealand's history. By analysing the imagery and its connection to the broader historical context at the beginning of the 1980s, we can see a multilayered picture going beyond this brief snapshot. In this article, I carry out a semiotic analysis of the photo, which starts with a description of the visible attributes and the aesthetic dimension. Different micro-aspects of the photo will be described and connected. After considering aspects that are immediately visible, I extend my inquiry to subtleties hidden in the deeper layers of the photo. The analysis include the subject, the setting, the surroundings and the people involved. It is also beneficial to learn about the story behind the photo, including the motivations of the photographer and the dissemination of the photo.*

## Introduction

The process of analysing a photograph requires consideration of many factors, leading to questions about why a certain frame has been chosen by the photographer, why a particular photograph has been published, and how an audience's reaction may influence the general perception. The semiotic analysis of imagery is one method of analysis that supports the in-depth exploration of a photograph. In this article, I provide an overview of the three steps of semiotic analysis. Firstly,

I give a general description of the content of the image (Figure 3) and the physical characteristics of the photograph. Following this, I delve into the details of the photo. Finally, I interpret the photograph by drawing on extensive research. This analysis refers to the historical context, which is crucial to understanding the social impact of the photograph. The relevance of the protagonist Bob Jones within the turbulent times in New Zealand in the 1980es will be explored and explained through visual details.

## Beginnings of visual anthropology in Oceania

As early as the beginning of the 20th century, anthropologists like Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) and Alfred Cort Haddon (1855-1940) realised the power of photography and kept photographs for analysis. As participants in the Torres-Strait-Expedition, exploring the strait and its islands between Australia and New Guinea, an enterprise that is well known for sparking the birth of modern anthropology, Spencer and Haddon embraced visual materials, like

cameras, throughout their travels. Their usage of visual devices led to an increased appreciation of the value of photography as a research tool, inspiring anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and Margaret Mead to incorporate visual documentation into their research. Nowadays, visual anthropology is considered a distinct sub-discipline (Altekamp et al. 2014: 379). With this in mind, this particular historical image analysis aims to combine anthropological and historical perspectives.



Source: Wikimedia 2021.

Figure 1: Protest badge



Source: Pinterest 2021.

Figure 2: Demonstrations against the Springbok Tour

Figure 3: Bob Jones at demonstrations in Auckland against the Springbok tour

## Historical Background

The late 1970s up until the eighties were turbulent years for New Zealand, marked by demonstrations and social change. From 1974-1976, the Dawn Raids served to crack down on mainly targeted at Polynesian "overstayers". In the 1980s, the Waitangi Tribunal (1984) was established after Muldoon's defeat, and *te reo Maori* became an official language (1989). The Springbok Tour, a tour of the South Africa rugby team in 1981, polarized opinions in New Zealand. In 1968, the United Nations called for a boycott of South African sports teams to position against local apartheid laws. Two years later, the "All Blacks" New Zealand rugby team flew to South Africa to take part in a competition as a mixed-race team. Maori team members were allowed to travel as "honorary whites", which caused discord in New Zealand. Fans claimed that politics and sport should not be mixed, and Robert Muldoon, Prime Minister from 1975 to 1984, announced that the rugby union would allow the tour. Over a decade after these events, the Springbok tour arrived in New Zealand in 1981. Reactions to the tour were violent and

emotional, as comparisons were made between the plight of the black population in South Africa and rampant racism in New Zealand (Figures 1 and 2). This tour sparked a debate about racism, sports, and politics in New Zealand. The photo was taken during this period of political upheaval. (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2020a)

Sir Robert Edward Jones, known as Bob Jones, a property investor, author and former politician born in 1939 in Lower Hutt (New Zealand), has had a prominent position in the debate pictured. Jones became also known in the political landscape after establishing a political party a few years later, called the "New Zealand Party". In the photo analysed, Jones' identity is projected in the noticeable way that his head is positioned high above every-

one else. The fact that there is a lot of free space around him while police keep demonstrators away is a testament to his privileged position. There is no direct contact with those present, but he communicates with the crowd through his posture, gestures, and facial expressions. It is not possible to see exactly where his gaze is falling, but he seems to be addressing the crowd as a whole. A film recording that documents the demonstration shows the moment in which the photo is taken, emerges from a movement in a fraction of a second, which is also shown in the picture. The image reproduces clichés: the rich white man in formal wear with a Rolls Royce and a cigarette is reminiscent of the "Marlboro man", who stands for "coolness". While this visual characterises wealth, class mem-


Figure 4: Background zoom


Figure 5: Zoom on banners

Figure 6: Zoom on car


Figure 7: Zoom on Bob Jones


Figure 8: Facial expression

bership and supposed superiority, the demonstrators in the background are shown with clenched fists, which can be interpreted as aggressiveness, but also as anger and frustration in the face of the situation (Mita 1983).

## Methodological approach

Ivy Rogers (2016) states that many picture analyses do not take into consideration how non-visual factors influence a photo. For this reason, he suggests using semiotic analysis, which combines additional research in order to establish the context. The first step to conducting a pictorial analysis is to analyse characteristics of the photographic process, such as where the picture is from and who has taken or produced it. The next step is to describe what is immediately visible. This brings up questions about the subject of the picture and its structure. The picture is layered with many forms of depth, leading to questions about what is seen in the centre of the image and what is located in the background (Brocks 2012).

## Description and analysis of the photo taken by Kapil Arn in 1981

Captured by Kapil Arn on the 4th of July in 1981, the photo is titled Wealthy Property Speculator and Developer Bob Jones Responds to Anti-tour Demonstrators. It is a gelatine silver print and is sized at 314mm x 474mm. The black and white analogue photo shows a man in a tux wearing a bow tie, standing next to a car with a cigarette in his mouth. There are protesters in the background, which the man is pointing at with two fingers. The protestors hold signs that state: „Rugby yes! Racism no!“ and „A night at the racists”. Police can be seen between the man and the protestors (Figure 3).

To explore the significants aspects of the photo, I cut out persons and objects. Due to the age of the photo, this method seems to be more relevant than digitally processing. By breaking it down to little pieces, the analysis was less overwhelming as a whole. Additionally, I could question details such as the car brand or the identity of the man. By combing through each layer, it is possible to perceive the subject of the photo, the time of day and the setting.

While the protagonist is centred in the photo, the background showcases an industrial area at night (Figure 4). As seen in Figure 5, the banners hold by the protestors give a historical context to what is immediately visible in the front layer. They clearly connect the image to the demonstrations against the Springbok-Tour of 1981. These signs express the anger and dissatisfaction of the protestors towards the topic of racism within the related political discourse. (Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2020b)

Through extensive research, it was possible to identify the car as a 1980s Rolls Royce Corniche (Figure 6). As this was a very expensive car, it speaks to the wealth and status of the owner: Bob Jones. The car stands in direct contrast to the protestors in the background.

At the forefront of the photo stands the main protagonist: Bob Jones (Figure 7). His hand gesture can be translated as giving the finger to the protestors. This degrading gesture communicates contempt and insult. In interpreting Bob Jones' facial expression (Figure 8), it is useful to draw on Paul Ekman's et al. (2011) research of micro expressions, which are involuntary expressions face muscles make when reacting to a situation. Ekman notes that the only facial expres-

sion that is unilateral presents itself through a tightened and raised lip corner on one side of the face. It can occur with or without a hint of a smile or angry expression. The posture of the subject is described as upright and looking down on people, expressing arrogance (Ekman et al. 2011).

## The photographer Kapil Arn

The man behind the camera is Kapil Arn, born in 1946 in Switzerland. Throughout his life, Arn travelled to different countries, working as a nurse, miner, and border guard before finally settling in Auckland (New Zealand), where he currently works as a reporter and documentary photographer. Arn became known as a photographer both with photos of the 1981 Springbok-Tour in Auckland and photos of the protest against French atomic bomb testing in 1974 on Mururoa (French Polynesia) in the South Pacific. While organising the anti-tour protests, Arn had the opportunity to choose between leading a squad or taking photos. In a video-call, Arn recalls that due to political events and his involvement in the resistance group, he had a perfect opportunity to seize that exact moment and take the picture of Bob Jones (Interview with Arn, 09/29/2020). Arn elaborates that his dedicated efforts to stand against injustice and racism involved joining the resistance group HART (Halt All Racist Tours) and taking a stand against apartheid in a rugby match when the New Zealand team played against the South African team. When participating in different squads, Arn had the opportunity to use his status as established photographer to take pictures of protests from more than one perspective (Interview with Arn, 09/29/2020).

In an archived interview with Lynn Freeman, radio host at the radio format "Standing Room Only", Arn explains that the photo was sold in an auction in Auckland in April 2019 (Interview with Arn, 09/29/2020). Due to the destruction of the film negative, the selling price of the photo was around 1,800 euros, which was the highest selling photo at the auction. Arn describes the photo being his most famous. While the exact location is unknown, it is clear that the photo was taken at a fundraiser hosted by the National Party (Mita 1983). In this

Figure 9: Extracting photo details

interview, Arn confirms various details including that the man in the picture is Bob Jones, one of the invited guests at the event. Arn describes the moment when Bob Jones arrives and is received by singing demonstrators as follows: "And when he arrived there was a lot of demonstrators that were chanting, and he gave them all the finger" (Freeman et al. 2019: 00:01:38 - 00:01:44).

Arn also highlights that the picture was taken at night with a flash, which illuminated the texture of Bob Jones' velvet tuxedo. In the following years when Bob Jones started campaigning for his own political party, Arn printed the photo and distributed it through Auckland. When Bob Jones was interviewed on New Zealand live television to promote his political party, the interviewer pulled out a copy of the picture and started questioning the aspiring politician (Interview with Arn, 09/29/2020).

## Conclusion

Taken at the right time and place, this photo is a historical snapshot. By digging through every layer of this image (Figure 9), it was possible to discover more covert details. In cutting up the pictures and looking at every object and person individually, I was able to get a different sense of the context and build connections between the persons on the photo and the surrounding circumstances. With this in mind, it is clear that the historical background of a photo is just as significant as visible details. Through additional research, one can find relevant pieces of information that collectively allow for a more complete understanding of the picture. In contacting the auction house where the image was sold and looking at their social media, I found the recorded interview with Kapil Arn. Through the information revealed from the interview, I was able to find documentaries about the Springbok Tour, which helped to find the exact moment when the photo was captured. Therefore, the photo could be better contextualized. Through the interview with Kapil Arn, missing information could be collected to formulate this research note.

## Acknowledgement

## References

*Interview Kapil Arn. (2020). [through personal communication on 09/29/2020]*

*Interview Freeman/Arn/Ninow. (2019). Radio New Zealand National, Auckland. Available online: https://www.rnz.co.nz/search/results?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=kapil+arn&commit=Search – [accessed on 03/18/2020]*

*Brocks, C. (2012). Bildquellen der Neuzeit. Paderborn: Schöningh (UTB Geschichte, 3716).*

*Ekman, P., Kuhlmann-Krieg S., and Reiss M. (2011) Gefühle lesen: wie Sie Emotionen erkennen und richtig interpretieren. 2. Aufl., unveränd. Nachdr. Heidelberg: Spektrum Akad. Verl (Spektrum-Akademischer-Verlag-Taschenbuch).*

*Schäuble, M. (2014). Bildwissenschaften - Ethnographie. In: Günzel, S. and Mersch, D. (eds.) (2014). Bild: ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, pp. 379-384.*

*Rogers, I. (2016). Factors that Affect Interpretation of Visual Images. Study.com, 1 August 2016, Available online: study.com/academy/lesson/factors-that-affect-interpretation-of-visual-images.html*

*Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2020a). The 1981 Springbok rugby tour, Available online: https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/1981-springbok-tour, [updated 4-Feb-2020]*

*Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2020b). Politics and sport, Available online: https://nzhistory.govt.nz/culture/1981-springbok-tour/politics-and-sport, [updated 4-Feb-2020]*

*Mita, M. (1983). Patu!, Awatea Films Production. Available online: https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/patu-1983/overview [accessed 03/20/2020]*

*Pinterest (2021). Available online: https://www.pinterest.com/tenxmega/*

Corresponding Author: Julia Hazar [julia.isabell.hazar@gmail.com] is a Bachelor student at the Department for Cultural- and Social Anthropology at University of Vienna (Austria).

# Beijing from Below - Stories of Marginal Lives in the Capital's Center
# Author: Harriet Evans

*Britta Schmitz*

*Abstract: This review discusses Harriet Evans's book „Beijing from Below - Stories of Marginal Lives in the Capital's Center" in which the author traces the social, economic, and architectural transformation of Beijing's Dashalar district. Dashalar street, which gave name to the district, lies just South of Tian'anmen Square, China's center of power and often seen as the quintessence of old Beijing. Since the 1950s the area fell more and more into disrepair, following intense densification due to the influx of outsiders (外地人) and years of neglect by the original residents. Uncertain land tenure after the communist revolution in 1949 and restructuring of space as a result of the economic reforms of the 1980s lead to the emergence of dazayuan (大杂院 - "big, cluttered courtyards"): Housing compounds occupied by different families, many of them living in only one room without running water, toilet or kitchen. In the early 2000s, the possible former glory of the buildings which had been teahouses, brothels, or merchant homes was long gone - the district became an ever-worsening eyesore to the municipal government, leading to a complete makeover, and consequently to forced relocation of most of the inhabitants. The author, Harriet Evans, visited the hutong (alleyway) and surrounding district regularly from 2007 to 2014, and the results of her anthropological fieldwork are gathered in this book published in 2020 by Duke University Press.*

*Keywords: China, old Beijing, hutong, urban development, anthropology, oral history.*

Harriet Evans is Emeritus Professor of Chinese Cultural Studies at the University of Westminster and Visiting Professor in Anthropology at the London School of Economics. During her regular research visits in China, she became witness to the fundamental changes to Beijing's cityscape which she not

only wanted to document, but also see through the lens of the local population. This led her to interviewing a group of Dashalar residents over a period of several years, resulting in a series of oral histories collected in the recently (2020) published volume Beijing from Below.

The author describes the aims of her book as such: "This book emerged from a desire to understand how non-elite, working-class people in Beijing have accommodated the relentless pace and scale of change in their everyday lives in recent decades. What memories of childhood and growing up do they hold on to when the physical and social spaces of those memories have been destroyed?".

For the reader, it is fascinating to see how Evans was able to build up confidential relationships with her Chinese interview partners of six different Dashalar households. In fact, it is surprising the extent to which courtyard residents share memories touching on very private topics like family grudges, love affairs, or even politically-sensitive subjects like the 1989 Tian'anmen Square protests. Meanwhile, she doesn't conceal the problems which

arose during her fieldwork. One example is the language-hurdles she regularly encountered when dealing with the Beijing dialect of her interview partners. Another difficulty was cultural barriers, which demanded a great deal of reading between the lines, especially in situations where the boundaries between her roles as interviewer and family friend became blurred. This aspect of the book gives the readers interesting insights into the fieldwork and practical problems of anthropological research.

Beijing from Below consists of seven chapters as means to move away from showing a big picture of Beijing's recent development and instead put the focus on individual fates. Still, the author found a way to put the life stories of her protagonists in the historical context. Each chapter comprises the oral testimony of one individual family and links it with a second more theoretic part ("interlude") in which the author incorporates analytical discussions and the information from different official and academic sources. Readers who are mostly interested in the oral
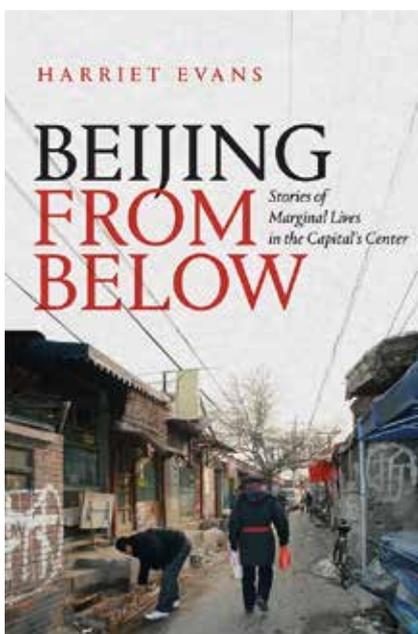
Figure 2: Refurbished Qianmen dajie with white street lanterns.

history part can easily skip the more theoretical interludes. The individual narratives are quite engrossing and moving, and some of them go back as far as to the 1920s, making this work an interesting English-language document of contemporary Beijing history. Furthermore, they are a rare source of underclass (社会底层) biographies, recounting the lives of a population group which historically has been neglected by the elite.

Nearly all of Evans's interview partners have a working-class background but fell into poverty after becoming unemployed with the onset of the privatization of state factories after which many jobs became redundant. At the time of the interviews, most of them live at the border of formal and informal economy, struggling to make their living as illegal pedicab drivers, cleaners, or sellers of cheap souvenirs and the like.

The hutong-life portrayed in this book is not romantic at all; it is characterized by inconvenience, poverty, and daily conflicts with the authorities (especially with the 城管 - Beijing's notorious law enforcement officers). The reader soon understands that the inhabitants of Dashalar don't stay in their courtyard houses because of sentimental reasons, but because they have literally nowhere else to go.

However, many of the residents never had the chance to live outside of Dashalar, and so the hutong is the only social and emotional center of their lives. Thus, it is not surprising that they cling to their homes – and it is clear that there will be no future for them in a radically modernized and upgraded hutong environment.

It is significant that only very few of the book's featured individuals - mainly the hobby calligrapher Wang Wenli and the restaurateur and photographer Jia Yong – have the educational and cultural prerequisites to reflect and analyze the changes of their direct environment in a wider context. Those two are also the only ones who have found ways to keep the memories of hutong-life alive. Or as Jia Yong, the photographer puts it: "Without the buildings, there is nothing left, so what you have to do is keep a record of those buildings, otherwise no one will know that there was once an old Beijing."

The prose in Beijing from Below sometimes lacks a higher literary quality, but nevertheless it makes good and gripping read. Furthermore, Evans' work is a valuable contribution in making the voices of a highly marginalized community heard, and I would recommend it to anyone who is interested in Beijing's recent history, cultural anthropology or a sociological perspective on urbanization.

Corresponding Author: Britta Schmitz [brittabrittanika@gmail.com] has a master's degree in Modern China Studies, as well as a degree in „Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language". She has been living in different cities in China, whereof six years in Beijing. Dashalar holds a special place in her heart as the fabric for the sash of her wedding dress was bought at the famous silk store Rui Fu Xiang located on Dashalar street.

# ADVERTISEMENT OSPG

## INTRODUCTION

The Austrian South-Pacific Society, (Österreichisch-Südpazifische Gesellschaft, OSPG) is a non-profit association whose aim is to offer a platform to all those interested in the Pacific Islands. Information regarding the diversity of the Pacific cultures is collected, published and made available to a wide public. In addition, great emphasis is laid on the cultivation of cultural and social contacts between Austria and the South Pacific countries.

## OSPG PUBLICATION SERIES

In addition to a regular lecture series and social events, the OSPG has two publication series: "Novara. Contributions to Pacific Island Studies" (so far: nine volumes) is published by the OSPG since 1998. The "Pazifik Dossier" publication series consists of booklets which are usually based on exceptional lectures held in the OSPG lecture series, or any other particular context (such as the present collaboration with Pacific Geographies). We are particularly pleased to present hereby our 14th volume of the Pazifik Dossier.

### *Published volumes of "Pazifik Dossier"*

So far, the following "Pazifik Dossier" volumes have been published and can be ordered at the OSPG (ospg@univie.ac.at):

Volume I: Wolfgang Lichtl (2006). Die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zwischen der EU und dem unabhängigen Staat Samoa.

Volume II: Günter Zöhrer (2007). Aspekte der traditionellen Architektur Ozeaniens mit Schwerpunkt Neukaledonien.

Volume III: Erika Neuber (2007). Der Moderne Künstler als ,,Rubbish Man"? Sozioökonomische Ungereimtheiten in Papua Neuguinea.

Volume IV: Christine Binder-Fritz (2008). Weaving a Basket of Knowledge. My continent spanning health research projects linking Aotearoa/New Zealand and Austria.

Volume V: Karl R. Wernhart (2008). Österreich und der pazifische Raum. Die Erforschung der Kulturen Ozeaniens und Australiens.

Volume VI: Sehnsucht: Augusta Laar, Carina Nekolny, Sylvia Petter, Judith Pfeifer, Petra Sturm (2008). „Südsee" Gedichte und mehr.

Volume VII: Frauenwelten. Moderne Malerei aus Papua Neuguinea. Special edition: Exhibition catalogue (2009).

Volume VIII: Lukas Hartmann, Jennifer Newell (2010). Rund um James Cook.

Volume IX: Elisabeth Worliczek, Wolfgang Kempf (2010). Aspekte des Klimawandels im Pazifik.

Volume X: Dieter Warncke (2012).100 Jahre Rabaul. Eine Betrachtung aus postgeschichtlicher Sicht.

Volume XII: Milène C. Rossi (2015). Keulen Ozeaniens. Blut, Prunk, Ritual. Keulen und ihre Rollen in den Gesellschaften Ozeaniens.

Volume XIII: Edeltraud Hruschka (2015). Lebenswelten protestantischer Missionarsfrauen in Ozeanien im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert.

Volume XIV: More than a cliché and the dream of the South Seas? Young research in and about the South Pacific. Special Issue of Pacific Geographies #55 in cooperation with OSPG (2021).

## UPCOMING EVENT

Thursday, 29 April 2021, 18h / 6pm (CET):

**Is a Chinese Pacific in the making?" An interdisciplinary ethnography of Asia Pacific diplomacy**

*Rodolfo Maggio, PhD, University of Turin, Italy*

This is an online event, please register here:
https://bokuvienna.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMsdeGvrj0iH9MUjbGeWgi9zidhodTZC5ZD

More information on this event: www.ospg.at