

PACIFIC VOYAGING: A SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGE¹

Riet Delsing

University of California, Santa Cruz

INTRODUCTION

In a 1999 symposium on "The Origins of Postmodernity", Perry Anderson gave a gloomy account of the state of contemporary world culture. In his view, ever since the French Revolution there has existed an enormous wealth of revolutionary possibilities and social alternatives, as well as a rich array of narratives that have virtually ceased to exist due to the collapse of the socialist paradigm in the late 1980s. All that is left now is global neo-liberalism, which has spread to the furthest corners of the world by way of technological developments, mass media and the workings of international corporations. The result of these processes has been a homogeneous global culture characterized by brute standardization through the channels of the world market, one of the main features of late capitalism. These developments and the global neo-liberal hegemony in particular are the reason for Anderson's despair².

This paper will argue that this analysis does not consider the existence of various counter- and parallel narratives, which have been emerging over the last decades outside the area of the North Atlantic, curiously (or significantly?) within the same period in which the Marxist/Socialist narrative has been seriously undercut. On a regional level we have been witnessing the emergence of a Pan-Polynesian movement in the Pacific and a Pan-Mayan movement in Central America. On a local level there is the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, created in response to U.S. (neo)colonial practices, and the current rebellion of Mapuche Indians, in response to similar practices exercised by the Chilean nation-state (Foerster 1999).

And when I say emerging, I am not arguing that the content of these narratives is new. On the contrary, they have never ceased to exist in spite of centuries of colonization. But they have been transformed by prolonged processes of hybridization, by cultural revivals and other processes of transformation and mimesis. They have been "covered over", *encubierto*, in the terminology of Enrique Dussel (1995), in a process of misrecognition of a non-European geography and the people inhabiting it³.

These narratives have not only been "covered over" by the act of colonization itself, that is to say by the occupation of lands, the depletion of resources and genocidal violence, but also by the way various Western intellectual traditions have wiped the "other's" cultural narratives off the map, by either not recognizing them as valid interlocutors in the production of knowledge, or considering them to be inferior to the master narratives of the West. I think that Anderson's reflections about the global hegemony of neo-liberalism can be read in this light⁴. In this context I wish to discuss one of the important features of current Polynesian cultural politics: the revival of traditional Polynesian voyaging. This revival can be seen as a counter-narrative, a way of inhabiting, knowing and envisioning the world from a specific local perspective; a social alternative con-

strued by Polynesian peoples as a critique on the prevailing neo-liberal narrative.

A SEA OF ISLANDS

Central to my argument is the viewpoint of the Tongan scholar and writer Epeli Hau'ofa, developed in his essay *Our Sea of Islands* (1993:7): "Our ancestors, who lived in the Pacific for over 2000 years, viewed their world as a 'sea of islands', rather than 'islands in the sea'. This concept is a relational rather than a geographic one, in the sense that it emphasizes the *relations* between the islanders and their (is)lands, rather than the insurmountable *distances* between the islands: "Theirs was a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers. From one island to another they sailed to trade and to marry, thereby expanding social networks for greater flow of wealth. They traveled to visit relatives in a wide variety of natural and cultural surroundings, to quench their thirst for adventure, and even to fight and dominate" (Hau'ofa 1993:8).

Hau'ofa also argues that modern Pacific societies are "belittled" by politicians and social scientists who emphasize the islands' smallness, isolation, and poor resources, asserting that it will be impossible for them to ever reach any degree of economic and financial autonomy⁵. But, he says, "what kind of teaching is it to stand in front of young people from your own region... and to tell them that their countries are hopeless? Is this not what neocolonialism is all about? To make people believe that they have no choice but to depend?" (Hau'ofa 1993:5) Hau'ofa proposes that the perpetrators of the smallness view of Oceania—the national politicians, bureaucrats, diplomats and academics—are only focusing on bounded national economies. They emphasize the need for aided development and Pacific Rim geopolitics, thus perpetuating neo-colonial relationships of dependency. They are doing so without recognizing that there exists another order, of ordinary people, who are independently redefining their world in accordance with their perceptions of their own interests (ibid. :13,14).

An important post World War II development is that many islanders are traveling and settling elsewhere, creating Oceanic diasporic communities. Hau'ofa points out that:

The new economic reality made nonsense of artificial boundaries, enabling the people to shake off their confinement and they have since moved, by the tens of thousands, doing what their ancestors had done before them: enlarging their world as they go, but on a scale not possible before ... expanding kinship networks through which they *circulate* themselves, their relatives, their material goods and their stories all across their ocean... (Hau'ofa 1993:10, my emphasis)

The idea of circulation brings me to another important feature of Oceanic cultures, also pointed out by Hau'ofa: the social

centrality of the ancient practice of reciprocity. He states:

... for everything homelands relatives receive they reciprocate with goods they themselves produce, and they maintain ancestral roots and lands for everyone, homes with warmed hearths for travelers to return to at the end of the day, or to re-strengthen their bonds, their souls and their identities before they move again. This is not dependence, but interdependence, which is purportedly the essence of the global system (Hau'ofa 1993: 13)

We could argue, however, that the kind of interdependence based on reciprocity, caring and sharing, is different from global interdependence, saturated as the latter is with power relations between first and third worlds, rich and poor, black and white, men and women. Hau'ofa emphasizes the importance of oral tradition as a way of interpreting and constructing history. Many Pacific societies have internalized colonialism and divide their histories in two parts: the era of darkness, which is associated with barbarism and the era of light, associated with civilization and Christianity⁶. Oral tradition, however, allows for a continuous and circular interpretation of history, based on events rather than linear time. It is this concept of history that Hau'ofa wants to stress and recuperate⁷. Oral tradition also unites Oceanic peoples by its simultaneous emphasis on sea and land:

If we look at the myths, legends and oral traditions, and the cosmologies of the peoples of Oceania, it will become evident that ... their universe comprised not only land surfaces, but the surrounding ocean as far as they could traverse and exploit it, the underworld with its fire-controlling and earth-shaking denizens, and the heavens above with their hierarchies of powerful gods and named stars and constellations that people could count on to guide their ways across the seas. Their world was anything but tiny. They thought big and recounted their deeds in epic proportions (Hau'ofa 1993:7).

What I find so captivating about Hau'ofa's analysis and the manner in which he maps out "Pacific Ways", is that it constitutes a powerful counter-narrative to Western tropes. One of these is an implicit deconstruction of neo-liberal/late capitalist thinking. Hau'ofa replaces economic dependency with the concept of interdependence, reciprocity and circulation, thus revealing and complicating the power relations inherent in the economic concepts of dependency, "global interdependence" and "integration". This analysis becomes even more interesting when he connects the concepts of interdependence, reciprocity and circulation to the diasporic phenomenon. Thousands of island people "are flying back and forth across national boundaries, the International Dateline, and the Equator, far above and completely undaunted by the deadly serious discourses below on the nature of the Pacific Century, the Asia/Pacific co-prosperity sphere, and the dispositions of the post-cold war Pacific Rim .." (Hau'ofa 1993:15). The importance of the recent economic alliance between Pacific Rim countries and the prospect of the approaching Pacific century is thus questioned by Hau'ofa in the sense that he minimizes its impact on the everyday lives of people, and empowers these very people in the process. If we carry this analysis further, we could argue that while "ordinary people" in the West may have been pulled and

trapped into economic interpretations of their world, without a memory of former cultural narratives, such a narrative is still very much alive among the "people of the sea".

His second powerful counter-narrative consists of the alternatives he develops to Western knowledge construction, such as his reversal of Western geographical notions of land and water masses, and the impact of this notion on social relations, which allows for the empowerment instead of belittlement of Oceanic people. This insight, as well as his emphasis on the importance and historical nature of oral traditions, challenges Western rationality and knowledge construction in a significant way. I will further develop these ideas below.

A HISTORY OF VOYAGING

The Legacy of Functionalism

The cultural practice of Pacific voyaging has caught the attention of anthropologists since the early days of the discipline. One of the founding ethnographies of early 20th century British anthropology, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, by Bronislaw Malinowski has, as its central theme (as the title suggests), the seafaring practices of the Trobriand Islanders who inhabit islands off the coast of New Guinea.

In his ethnography, Malinowski describes the intricate workings of the Kula, a form of trade by exchange between communities inhabiting a wide ring of islands. The practice, known in anthropological circles as the "Kula ring", is one of the showcases of the discipline, as an example of how circular trade can be an important societal organizing principle, an institution, as Malinowski suggests. His study thus became a textbook case of the functionalist school in anthropology. In the Kula ring, articles of two kinds were traveling in opposite directions: necklaces of red shell (*soulava*) in one direction, and bracelets of white shells (*mwali*) in the other. The ceremonial exchange of these two articles was the fundamental feature of the Kula but, simultaneously, many other products were traded (Malinowski 1922:81, 83).

I will now have a closer look at some of Malinowski's assessments about the Kula. He states:

It must be remembered that what appears to us an extensive, complicated, and yet well ordered institution is the outcome of ever so many doings and pursuits, carried on by savages, who have no laws or aims or charters definitely laid down. They have no knowledge of the *total outline* of any of their social structure. They know their own motives, know the purpose of individual actions and the rules which apply to them, but how, out of these, the whole collective institution shapes, this is beyond their mental range. Not even the most intelligent native has any clear idea of the Kula as a big, organized social construction, still less of its sociological function and implications (Malinowski 1922:83).

I suggest that this passage reveals Malinowski's view of the islanders as savage "others"—a viewpoint characteristic of the way anthropologists constructed their science in the first quarter of the century, and of which Malinowski is an important exponent. While *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* gives a thorough and keen description of the process of canoe building, the ceremonials connected to it, and the resulting expeditions, Mali-

nowski also argues that the native(s)-savages, although they are "intelligent" are not capable of understanding their world as an "organized social construction" and that it is "beyond their mental range" to do so.

This passage is one of several in his book, where Malinowski puts knowledge on a hierarchical scale, implying that "scientific" knowledge is superior to "native" knowledge. But, isn't scientific knowledge *our native* Western way of knowing? No more and no less? I propose that Enlightenment epistemology, with its emphasis on legality, rationality and individualism, informs Malinowski's thinking in such a way that he is only able to do his analysis within these parameters. Even in the last chapter, "The Meaning of the Kula", in which he shows real sympathy and even admiration for the islanders' *Weltanschauung*, he describes their way of knowing as "mental attitudes", while he installs himself firmly in the "true Science of Man".

Malinowski also asserts in the above passage that the savages/natives were not able to perceive the institution of the Kula as a "whole", despite the fact that they had a name for the common practice. Holistic thinking is a feature of the scientific method, and not necessarily employed in other knowledge systems. Malinowski argues that each institution or cultural practice in a specific society is constitutive of that society, thus the society would fall apart as a society without them. Anthropologists composed a list of such institutions essential for the life in community of primitive people, religion being one of these essential features. Religion was often mixed with magical beliefs and myths, and sometimes conflated with them, and local knowledge was easily relegated to the realm of magic or myth.

An example is how Malinowski was unable to recognize the highly specialized *knowledge* the Trobrianders had acquired about seafaring and which I will discuss further. For example, he says that what "makes their sailing not so dangerous as one would imagine is the regularity of the winds in this part of the world". (Malinowski 1922:224) Note that he implies that he has a superior knowledge about the behavior of the winds "in this part of the world", a knowledge the islanders supposedly do not have. "The natives also as a rule are able to foretell a day or two beforehand the approach of a squall. Rightly or wrongly, they associate the strength of the North-Westerly gales with the phases of the moon". Malinowski thus disqualifies the connections the Trobrianders make between the phases of the moon and the wind currents and says: "There is, of course, a good deal of magic to make wind blow or to put it down". He seems to operate on the basis of rationalist assumptions, and explains the islanders' knowledge away as "magical beliefs". He even goes further by stating that "the natives have no need of even the most elementary knowledge of navigation. Barring accidents they never have to direct their course by the stars. Of these, they know certain outstanding constellations, sufficient to indicate for them the direction, should they need it." (ibid.:225, 226) Here again he underestimates the islanders' knowledge, since we now "know" that the star compass was one of the basic features of Pacific seafaring.

While not wanting to belittle the exceptional quality of Malinowski's ethnographic work in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, I do wish to complicate his ideas about the islanders'

belief in magic, to which he also dedicated a large part of his later work in *Coral Gardens and their Magic* (1935), and in *Magic, Science and Religion* (1948)⁸. By his emphasis on the magical and mythical qualities of the cultural achievements of the Trobriand people and by his scientific importance in the field of anthropology, his successors in Pacific anthropology minimized for a long period of time the extraordinary accomplishment of the settlement of the Pacific islands. Anthropologists were suggesting until recently that the Pacific Islanders could not have traveled intentionally and repeatedly, and that the settlement of the Pacific was accidental and could only be attributed to random drift and exile voyages.

The Turning of the Tide

In the mid 1960s, Pacific islanders started to experiment with sea voyages without the use of instruments, and to actually *re-invent* Pacific seafaring traditions, which revealed the remarkable knowledge Pacific islanders had built up over the centuries. These experiments reversed the still-reigning anthropological analyses that defined seafaring practices as based on, and merely determined by, magical practices and beliefs.

Studies about Micronesian and Polynesian voyaging started to appear in the early 1970s, such as Thomas Gladwin's, *East is a Big Bird. Navigation and Logic on Puluwat Atoll* (1970), David Lewis' *We the Navigators. The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific* (1972), and the marvelous graphic account of Edward Dodd's *The Ring of Fire. Polynesian Seafaring* (1972). These accounts offer a wealth of knowledge about voyaging practices, and show a shift in conceptions about them.

Anthropologist Ben Finney wrote an article as early as 1967, "New Perspectives on Polynesian Voyaging" and he has been writing about the issue ever since. He has been actively involved in experimental voyaging and is one of the founders of the Polynesian Voyaging Society of Hawaii (see Finney 1994). In a 1991 article entitled "Myth, Experiment, and the Reinvention of Polynesian Voyaging" he discusses how experimental canoe voyages between Hawai'i, Tahiti and New Zealand/Aotearoa, were carried out from the 1970s, in the context of cultural revival movements. These voyages were made without the help of modern-day instruments and were based on information contained in myths and oral traditions. This is a significant theoretical contribution, since it challenges another important Malinowskian functionalist axiom that considers "native" myths in general and myths about seafaring exploits in particular to be "cultural" interpretations, void of historical validity and accuracy. Finney argues for the conflation of mythical and historical explanations. He suggests that some oral traditions about voyaging may have been inspired by actual events. Maori traditions in particular contain explicit instructions on how to get from Tahiti, via Rarotonga (Cook Islands) to Aotearoa. (Finney 1991:394) He describes how he and his crewmates were skeptical of the legendary instructions when they sailed the Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hokule'a* from Tahiti to Aotearoa, via Rarotonga, in 1985, but they found the instructions to be accurate, not only as to direction, but also as to the most appropriate time of the year to make the voyage:

Further confirmation of traditional wisdom concerning the

best time to sail to Aotearoa became apparent when we spotted along the shore, the brilliant red flowers of the *pohutukawa* tree ..., which, according to a number of canoe legends, so impressed earlier voyagers arriving from Hawaiiki. Upon learning that this tree does not blossom until late November and early December, we realized that the seemingly extraneous mention of the flowering *pohutukawa* trees in the legends botanically encoded information as to when wind conditions were most favorable for sailing to Aotearoa. (Finney 1991:395)

This marvelous example of historical information, as contained in oral traditions, is something earlier anthropologists had overlooked in their zeal to relegate myths and oral traditions to a non-historical realm. Finney also argues convincingly that the fact that voyaging traditions may have been inspired by actual events does not mean

“...that they may not be laden with cultural themes and symbols and have been told and retold to validate claims to land and status, any more than their cultural structuring and functional employment eliminate the experimental validated possibility that they reflect a time when Polynesian sailors deliberately pointed their canoes toward Hawai'i and Aotearoa. Partisans may champion functionalism, or structuralism, or symbolism (not to mention various postmodernisms) as exclusive truth, thereby producing analyses that satisfy their chosen method, but grossly distort the rich, multifaceted nature of oral traditions” (Finney 1991:396)⁹.

The bringing together of anthropological knowledge and local systems of knowledge seems an important step towards a full appreciation of local knowledge.

From Magic to Knowledge. Mapping the World in the Mind

Anthropologist David Turnbull proposes that “Ten thousand years before what ethnocentric Europeans often call ‘the birth of civilisation’ in the Mediterranean basin, people from South-east Asia were systematically colonizing and transforming the islands of the south-west Pacific Ocean” (Turnbull 1991:3). He argues in several recent publications (1991, 1993, 1997, 1999), that the knowledge about seafaring was orally transmitted and that this knowledge was almost entirely mental, with very little material manifestations. As does Finney, he sustains that Pacific navigators combined knowledge of sea currents, marine life, weather, winds and star patterns to form a sophisticated and complex body of natural knowledge. (Turnbull 1997:555)

For Turnbull, there is not an evident preconceived plan in Pacific navigation, but navigation is, instead, based on local interactions with the environment. This seems to me quite a fundamental critique of Western ways of constructing knowledge, in which abstract preconceived ideas predetermine the outcome of events. Building on the work of Thomas Gladwin and David Lewis, he suggests changing their idea of the map as a “chart for calculating” to a map as a “performative device for establishing connections and determining action”. Turnbull (1993, 1997) introduces a “dynamic cognitive map”, which has three components:

1- The star compass (which is the heart of the system) provides the framework or map within which the navigator is

able to be continuously aware of his position;

2- *Etak*, a mental technique for estimating distance to be traveled, is again performative rather than calculative. “The navigator conceives his canoe to be stationary and imagines a reference island as moving backwards against the backdrop of the rising and setting points of the stars thus dividing the voyage into segments.” (Turnbull 1997:556);

3- The system is essentially strategic. e.g., the islands were colonized by minimizing wastage of resources, time and human life. Most importantly then, Micronesian voyaging is a set of open-ended practices or strategies for handling uncertainty rather than a set of fixed techniques, rules and plans. Turnbull sustains that:

...the system is crucially dependent on the social organization of knowledge transmission and trust. Navigational knowledge is learned through a very long and arduous apprenticeship from which relatively few emerge as master navigators. Those who do, not only possess great navigational skill, but also become moral and political leaders. Their knowledge is recognized not just as an important tradition but also as being a source of meaning and value to all the islanders. Thus rather than there being a great divide between the Western and Pacific knowledge traditions there are instead different knowledge spaces with different devices and strategies for assembling and moving the knowledge (Turnbull 1997:557).

Turnbull’s analysis of the difference between the Western and Pacific “knowledge spaces” supports my earlier suggestion that we are dealing with different traditions of knowledge, which we have been “covering over” (Dussel 1995) in Western science and are just barely starting to “discover”. This way we can recognize local knowledge as knowledge systems, independent of the knowledge tradition in which we situate ourselves.

A final important point Turnbull makes is that evidence of cultural and linguistic cohesion amongst Pacific islanders suggests that the colonization of the Pacific Ocean “was unlikely to have been accidental in the sense of occasional isolated groups being blown onto distant islands” (Turnbull 1997:556), and that the fundamental prerequisite for a knowledge system to transcend the merely local is “the ability to bring the knowledge back”. There is now a good deal of evidence that the Pacific was colonized by people with a complex and common culture and that the colonization of the Pacific was neither a mystery nor an accident, but the consequence of the implementation of a sophisticated knowledge system (ibid. :1993:47).

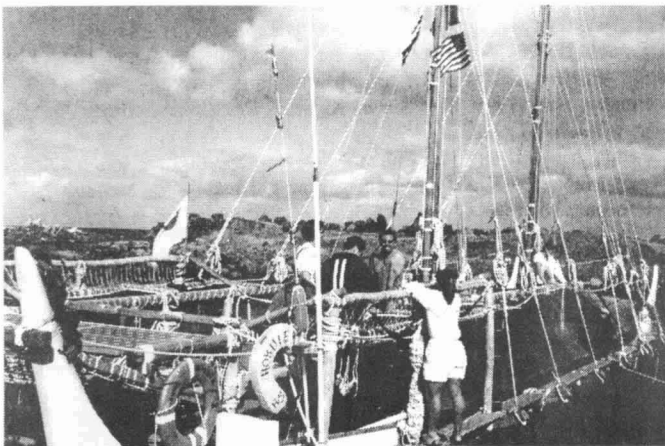
In the following section I will briefly describe how Polynesian voyaging has been recreated over the last decades¹⁰.

The Polynesian Voyaging Society

In the 1960s, when Polynesian voyaging canoes had disappeared and ways of navigating without instruments had been largely forgotten, Hawaiians began to reconstruct sailing canoes and to test traditional ways of navigating without instruments over legendary voyaging routes. This was partly in response to Thor Heyerdahl’s (1950, 1960) popular theory that the Pacific had been colonized from the South American coast. After a decade of planning and navigating and the reconstruc-

tion of a Hawaiian double canoe, a group of people, including Ben Finney, formed the Polynesian Voyaging Society with the purpose of building a deep-sea voyaging canoe "to show that the ancient Polynesians could have settled the Polynesian triangle in double-hulled voyaging canoes using non-instrument navigation" (website <http://leahi.kcc.hawaii.edu/org/pvs>).¹¹ *Hökūle'a* was launched in 1975. It was the first voyaging canoe to be built in Hawai'i in more than 600 years.

Since then, several trips have been undertaken on *Hökūle'a*.



The *Hökūle'a* at Rapa Nui after sailing from Mangareva (Photo: R. Delsing).

kūle'a. One of the important figures in this voyaging revival movement is Mau Pialug, a master navigator from the atoll of Satawal in the Caroline islands in Micronesia¹². Mau navigated *Hökūle'a* from Hawai'i to Tahiti on its first voyage in 1976. Between 1985 and 1987 *Hökūle'a* sailed more than 16,000 miles of traditional migratory routes from Hawai'i to Tahiti, Rarotonga, Aotearoa, Tonga and Samoa. In 1995 seven canoes: *Tahiti Nui* from Tahiti, *Te Aurere* from Aotearoa, *Takitumu* and *Te Au o Tonga* from Rarotonga, and *Hökūle'a*, *Hawai'iloa*, and *Makali'i* from Hawai'i, gathered at the *marae* of Taputapuata in Ra'iataea, Tahiti (see Finney 1999).

In 1999, *Makali'i* with Mau aboard traveled from Hawai'i to Chuuk, in the Caroline Islands, on a voyaging expedition called "Sailing the Master Home" (website: www.bigisland-hawaii.net/home.html). After a successful trip *Makali'i* arrived back in Hawaii on June 1 (*Star-Bulletin* of Hawai'i, June 2). The Polynesian Voyaging Society met its greatest challenge, when *Hökūle'a* left Hawai'i in June 1999 to sail via the Marquesas and Mangareva to Rapa Nui. The "quest for Rapa Nui" was made in the early spring of the Southern hemisphere (September-October), when storms around Antarctica break down the easterly trade winds and bring westerly winds.

Pacific islanders are navigating and *Hökūle'a* sparked a cultural renaissance which continues today. Wherever the canoes appear on the horizon, they are welcomed by cheering crowds of people, rejoicing and being able to think "big" once again. As Myron Thompson, the father of Nainoa, the Hawaiian navigator who sailed *Hökūle'a* to Rapa Nui, said:

What began as a dream, a *mana'o* (idea) in the mind's eye of a few, has culminated in today. We have all come home with a greater understanding of the world and our place in

the world. And I say "we" because we were all on that canoe, whether you strung one *lei* or a thousand, whether you looked after her as so many have throughout the Pacific, or had one thought of *aloha* for her. We voyaged together, and we are changed. *Hökūle'a* was built to answer questions about her past. We went out as Hawaiians and scientists, and came home as Polynesian brothers and sisters (Thompson in Finney 1994: 326).

FINAL THOUGHTS

In my discussion of Pacific voyaging I have compared the "Pacific Ways" (*Hauo'fa*) of knowing with knowledge as constructed by Western scientists, and in particular, anthropologists. I have concentrated on Bronislaw Malinowski, partly because he did his famed ethnography about seafaring in the Western Pacific, and partly because he exemplifies in his writings the pitfalls of functionalist anthropology and of the construction of knowledge based on Enlightenment principles.

More recently, anthropologists like Ben Finney and David Turnbull have been instrumental in convincingly pointing out that anthropological conventions, such as the emphasis on the magical and mythical quality of the "natives" thinking, has obscured the historical nature of oral traditions. They have suggested that "others", such as Pacific islanders, may actually be constructing knowledge differently, that they may be "moving" (Turnbull) knowledge differently.

Michel Foucault has suggested in his thought-provoking 1976 lectures that we may be witnessing an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges", after the events in Paris of 1968 (Foucault 1980:81), of which the knowledge system as expressed in contemporary Pacific voyaging is a wonderful example. Enrique Dussel suggests to read processes of colonization in a way which allows us to see that Western science has "covered over" (*encubierto*) "native" narratives. These are both important insights and powerful theoretical tools, that will help us to deconstruct Western narratives, which have so insistently and so convincingly captured our imagination over the last centuries. The practice of Pacific Voyaging then becomes a compelling criticism of "Western Ways" in the Pacific. In this sense we ought to be keen in following *Hökūle'a* on her island path, as a messenger of new ways to envision the Pacific and our world at large.

ENDNOTES

¹This paper was written in the context of a seminar taken with Professor James Clifford of the History of Consciousness Department, University of California, Santa Cruz, in preparation for a visit to Rapa Nui to witness and celebrate the arrival of *Hökūle'a* in October 1999.

²Other analysts of postmodernism, such as Fredric Jameson (1984) and David Harvey (1990) employ the same line of thinking.

³ Enrique Dussel argues in his book *The Invention of the Americas. Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity* (1995) that the conquest of the Americas in 1492 was constitutive of the creation of modernity as a European paradigm. He proposes that "modernity as such was 'born' when Europe was in a position to pose itself against an other, when, in other words, Europe could constitute itself as a unified ego exploring, conquering, colonizing an alterity that gave back its image of itself." (Dussel 1995:66).

As such, the Americas were not discovered (*descubierto*) but covered over (*encubierto*).

- ⁴ I do concede however that matters are much more complicated than I have outlined here. The local elites and governments of Third World nations have often been educated within Western intellectual traditions, or simply within pragmatic market orientations, thus "covering over" their own traditions and knowledge, and employing neo-liberal discourses.
- ⁵ I would like to argue that, even from an economic perspective, the Pacific islands are part of modernity, as they are in the possession of one of the most valuable commodities/resources of late capitalism, namely tourism, which has been labeled as "the world's largest industry".
- ⁶ An example of this can be found in Vilsoni Hereniko's essay *Representations of Cultural Identity* (1994), in which he discusses his native Rotuma perspective on history, as divided in three phases: *ao maksul ta* (time of darkness), *ao taf ta* (time of light), and *ao fo'ou ta* (new time). These phases coincide with the Euro-American categories of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial.
- ⁷ See also Hau'ofa's 2000 essay, *Pasts to Remember*.
- ⁸ In *Magic, Science and Religion* he employs a social-psychological and at the same time functionalist approach, which emphasizes, as Clifford Geertz suggests, "what religion does for the individual—how it satisfies both his cognitive and affective demands for a stable, comprehensible, and coercible world, and how it enables him to maintain an inner security in the face of natural contingency" (Geertz 1973: 143).
- ⁹ This analysis reminds me of another theoretical discussion within Pacific anthropology, namely the history versus structure debate between Nicholas Thomas (1992) and Marshall Sahlins (1993) around the Fijian custom of exchange *kerekere*. Thomas accused Sahlins of reifying *kerekere*, by explaining it within a structuralist framework, which tends "to treat actors as dupes who merely passively reproduced or enunciated cultural codes". (Thomas 1992:227) Within Sahlins' reply he said that Thomas' interpretation of the colonial construction of *kerekere* was "plainly mistaken". (Sahlins 1993:848), suggesting that it had an earlier pre-colonial genesis. The conflation of structuralist and historical approaches seems an important step to take then.
- ¹⁰ I have not been clearly distinguishing between Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian voyaging. Malinowski worked with the Trobriand people in Melanesia. Gladwin worked among Micronesians. The current revival of the tradition seems to be mainly in the hands of Hawaiians (Polynesians), but with logistical support by Micronesians. Hau'ofa has suggested to do away with the division between Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia altogether, since it is an anthropological construct to begin with. He proposes to use the term Oceania.
- ¹¹ I find it symbolic and ironic at the same time that one of the latest "scientific" and technological developments that has entered our lives on our home computers, is introduced by an image of shooting stars, which invites us to "navigate" on the web.
- ¹² Satawal belongs to the same group of islands in which Puluwat is situated, the island about which Thomas Gladwin wrote his ethnography *East is a Big Bird*. (1970)

Riet Delsing is a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Anthropology at the University of California at Santa Cruz. A native of the Netherlands, Riet studied at the University of Leiden. She lived in Chile for twenty years where she was involved in the human rights struggles and the women's movement, and worked as an editor, researcher and anthropology instructor.

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