



Australian
Association
for Pacific
Studies



Dear members,

It has been a busy 12 months once again, but especially for our Sydney members who have worked with great energy over the past year to bring together the AAPS biennial conference entitled **Oceanscapes: Cooperation across the Pacific** (see below). This event will be held at the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney from 22-25 April. We are hugely grateful to Jude Philp and her team for their work in bringing together an exciting list of guest speakers, plenary sessions, panels and participants. We hope that many of you will be attending some or all of the sessions in the coming week.

In this newsletter we hear from our President, Kati Teaiwa, on developments within the association. We include some reflections on interesting workshops as conferences attended by some of our members. We also include a list of publications in Pacific Studies that have appeared since 2012.

With best wishes to all our members for the rest of 2014

AAPS executive

OCEANSCAPES: cooperation across the Pacific

DATE: 22-26 April, 2014

WHERE: University of Sydney

The Pacific Ocean covers one-third of the earth's surface and contains thousands of islands. Yet, as Epeli Hau'ofa's seminal paper about the 'Sea of Islands' shows, oceans are not a barrier, but highways to contact. This conference employs the concept of Oceanscapes from The Pacific Oceanscape Vision, introduced by President Anote Tong of Kiribati and endorsed by the Pacific Island Forum. It is a vision for cooperative conservation action and adaptation to issues of climate change. With a population just over 10 million and an area that stretches from Australia to Asia, Canada and the Americas, peoples of the Pacific region are adept at movement, contact and working together.

This conference focusses on the cooperative nature of relations across the Pacific and the necessarily cooperative partnerships that allow for effective delivery of programs in health, education, trade and development while maintaining the integrity of the cultural diversity that is the hallmark of Pacific island nations and overseas territories.

Presidents Report

Two Years of Transformation and Reflection

Dr. Katerina Teaiwa

AAPS President

Kam na mauri and ni sa bula vinaka colleagues.

Before proceeding with our AAPS report and reflection I would like to acknowledge the passing of our wonderful AAPS Executive Committee Member Dr. Pamela Zeplin in August 2013. Pamela was a passionate teacher and scholar of art history at the University of South Australia and is remembered fondly across the region by artists, communities and colleagues alike. Please see a tribute to her: "Remembering: Pamela Zeplin" on Artlink here: <http://www.artlink.com.au/articles/4016/remembering-pamela-zeplin/> and a beautiful piece she wrote reflecting on her relationship with the island region: "Grandmothers, grass skirts and a little piece of paradise" here: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue27/zeplin.htm>

Image: Pamela Zeplin in 2012 at the Festival of Pacific Arts with the late artist Fijian artist Josie Crick and Fijian poet Darren Kamali.

The executive committee of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies has spent the last two years working on a number of technical and branding issues for the association and believes there is more work to be done in this area. Our first goal was to make the association as national as possible by having representatives on the executive committee from diverse states and institutions. This was relatively successful and we began our term with committee members from the University of South Australia, University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, Australian National University, University of Wollongong, University of Sydney and University of Queensland. While this also means our activities and communications are often quite dispersed it allows the association to connect to a number of key institutions where Pacific Studies is concentrated.

Initial work for the committee focused on producing a biennial newsletter, amending the language of some aspects of the constitution particularly in the areas of membership, association subscriptions and accounts, and decision making matters required at AGMs.

At the November 2012 AGM hosted by the University of Melbourne we agreed to amend the name of the association, dropping the word "advancement," added two postgraduate liaison officer roles for the association, and then began work on branding AAPS with Pacific artist Jacob Tolo. In December 2012 a contingent of AAPS members including myself, Margaret Jolly (ANU), Jack Taylor (La Trobe), Anna-Karina Hermkens (ANU) and Jaap Timmer (Macquarie) also made an official appearance at the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO) AGM in Norway to discuss the need for more direct communications and collaborations between profession associations devoted to the Pacific.

At the 2013 AGM hosted by the Australian National University we adopted the proposal for membership subscriptions and hosted the first AAPS annual lecture featuring Associate Professor Keith Camacho of the University of California at Los Angeles discussing his research on militarism on Guam. The implementation of membership subscriptions is yet to ensue but we look forward to the incoming committee rolling this out to secure a regular, if still humble, funding base for AAPS.

In 2013 we also added a role on the committee for a web liaison officer after Dr. Rachel Morgain worked hard on devising a plan for a new AAPS website which could meet the needs of the association while not requiring maintenance or upkeep through a particular university or institution. We hope to launch this website currently being constructed by Jacob Tolo in 2014.

Image: AAPS AGM 2013, ANU

We have also revisited the existing goals of the association which are still currently to:

- promote the international excellence of Australian research and teaching in Pacific Studies
- play an advocacy role with Government, NGOs, schools, businesses, media and universities and to increase public awareness of Pacific Studies
- promote Pacific Studies and its component disciplines at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels
- promote the role of Australian repositories in the collection, preservation and access to Pacific Island research, cultural and historical materials
- promote excellence in the teaching of Pacific Studies through professional development programs for university teachers
- promote specifically the study of Australia-Pacific Island relations
- establish and maintain links with Pacific communities in Australia
- establish and maintain links with honorary correspondent members and cognate organisations overseas.

We need to reconsider some of these goals or the way in which they are framed.

Part of the challenge of AAPS has been living up to the visions of our founders who launched the association in an era of growth in Asia-Pacific funding, particularly through the Australia Research Council, over eight years ago. While such activities continue in other modes, today the current financial and political environment requires new and creative thinking in the area of funding and support for national activities. Similar to the rhythm of work for the ESfO, our biennial conference has become the focal point of exchange and activity, and additionally AAPS is active in social media with 535 group members on Facebook and an average of 1 new person joining per day. Some of these goals can be achieved at the biennial conferences (such as including a workshop for teachers), and sharing teaching resources online through free social media networks such as Facebook.

After observing what is desired and what is possible for an association such as ours in the absence of paid administrative support, I encourage the incoming committee to pair back some of the goals and move away from the task of “promoting” to the role of “supporting” and networking of members, their institutions and activities and connecting to other associations such as the Pacific History Association (PHA), ESfO, the Pacific Island Political Studies Association (PIPSA), the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO), the Taiwan Society for Pacific Studies (TSPS) and others.

It is important that currently AAPS is the only professional “Pacific Studies” association anywhere in the world so our group could provide an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary space for dialogue and exchange in the context of the discipline focused associations internationally. And, responding to the social media interest that attract many non-academic members and indicate a strong intersection of journalism, arts, education and political interests, AAPS could put more effort into playing the role of information clearing and dissemination via social media. While there are existing groups in Australia that provide Pacific news and research including the Lowy Institute, and the State Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) program, most of them, in line with Australian government priorities, are focused on governance, politics, conflict, economics and the south west Pacific region. We still need forums that include a wider diversity of activities and issues across Oceania, and in Pacific communities in both the islands and diaspora. AAPS is thus an important space for members to reaffirm their commitment to all corners of the vast Pacific region and provide a supportive network for Pacific Studies stakeholders in and beyond Australia.

In November 2013, four members of AAPS, Stewart Firth (ANU), Max Quanchi (USP), April Henderson (VUW), Terence Wesley-Smith (UH), and myself, participated in a meeting hosted by the University of the South Pacific in Nadi, Fiji that discussed the nature of our diversity and similarity in the teaching, research and role of Pacific Studies at national and international levels. Further discussions of this nature are encouraged and at the 2014 conference in Sydney this year April Henderson, Julie Walsh (UH), Damon Salesa (Auckland), Lea Kouvaka (USP) and myself will continue these conversations in the “Travelling/ Anchoring” session. All are welcome to participate and share their views and continue these important discussion on the role, nature and purpose of Pacific Studies in our various local/ state, national, regional and international contexts.

Image: USP hosted Pacific Studies symposium, Nadi, November 2013

Conferences, Workshops in 2013-2014

Made in Oceania: Social and Cultural Meaning, Conservation and Presentation of Oceanic Tapa



From the 16th until the 17th of January, an interdisciplinary Symposium on the topic of tapa (barkcloth) was held at the Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum –Kulturen der Welt museum in cooperation with the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS) of the University of Applied Sciences Cologne. Background of the symposium was the exhibition ‘Made in Oceania. Tapa-Kunst und Lebenswelten’ (12-10-2013 until 27-04-2014).

Both social anthropologists and conservation scientists are fascinated by tapa. Historical tapa designs are often living cultural heritage, but today’s objects also combine content, form and tradition in new ways and are intimately connected with the social and cultural identity of individuals, groups or even nations. With tapa being completely alien to European traditions, conservation scientists are challenged by the material and its restoration and preservation. Questions of adequate presentation in exhibitions touch upon both disciplines – particularly when cultural requirements of the source communities additionally come into play.

The symposium brought together renowned scientists of both disciplines from all over the world, presenting cutting edge research into the social and cultural meaning of tapa, the possibilities and challenges of restoring and conserving historic and recent examples and their presentation in exhibitions. Topics included the material and aesthetic qualities of tapa, their use as everyday objects and markers of identity, connections to modern art, and challenges of their new existence in museum contexts. Among the presenters were: Verena Keck, Anna-Karina Hermkens, Joshua Bell, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai Nimamea’a koka’anga, Fanny Wonu Veys, Anne-Claire de Poulpiquet, Julia Gresson, Adrienne Kaeppler, Jeremy Uden, Eva Raabe and Sean Mallon. Several participants to the symposium also contributed to the exhibition’s publication titled: *Made in Oceania Tapa - Kunst und Lebenswelten*. Edited by P. Mesenhöller and O. Lueb. Cologne/Koln: Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum (2013).

Image and words: Anna Karina Hermkens
Australian National University

Gender and Personhood in Polynesia : ISEPP Papeete 24-26 September 2013



*Conference participants Nicky George and Kalissa Alexeyeff travelling through Papeete in a local truc hired by conference organisers
Photo: Keith Camacho*

This conference was convened by Hina Grépin (ISEPP) and Serge Tcherkezoff (EHESS and ANU) and was additionally supported by the University of French Polynesia and Professor Margaret Jolly’s ARC Laureate project at ANU.

It brought together academics working across the Francophone and Anglophone divide in the Pacific, and scholars with expertise in gender and sexuality studies from mainland France as well as the broad Pacific region. Irene Thierry,(EHESS Paris) a French public intellectual whose first visit to the Pacific region occurred in 2011, returned to the region for the Tahiti conference. She gave lively and impassioned addresses in two key-note presentations; one focused on theories of gender and personhood and another on the topic on same-sex rights and gay marriage in France. Agnes Fine also from EHESS and a new visitor to the region, gave two papers, one on the

ways older women experience maternity and another on articulations of gender in adolescent diary writing. Margaret Jolly gave a stimulating and broad ranging address on the relationship between gender, sexuality and personhood in Oceania. In later sessions, participants reflected on the way gender is promoted and constructed through linguistic structures, historical practices, religious discourse, the law and institutional governance structures. Kalissa Alexeyeff and Keith Camacho extended the conference focus on sexuality, by examining the political and popular status of homosexuals, gay and transgender communities in the region. Niko Besnier also gave a paper on the complex normative socio-cultural environment in which sexuality is articulated in the Pacific Islands. Scholars from the University of French Polynesia were also important contributors; Bruno Saura spoke on gender and Polynesian mythology, Jacques Vernaudon presented on gender in Polynesian and European Linguistics and Semir Al Wardi gave a presentation on women in politics in the region.

Although the weather during the conference was unseasonably cool, taking many by surprise, the atmosphere amongst participants was warm and lively. Communications made difficult by language gaps were traversed with good humor and the official translator Olivier put in a marathon effort switching efficiently from Anglo-Franco to Franco-Anglo translation as circumstances demanded. Outside the conference participants were warmly received and ably assisted by the ICEPP hosts particularly Yasimina Taerea, Pierre Soufet, Louis -Marie Hallereau and André Chuong. Trips around Papeete, one occurring memorably in a local *truc*, (see photo) also enabled those new to French Polynesia to appreciate the remarkable cultural heritage and beauty of this country.

Nicole George
University of Queensland

Oceans and Nations : “Failed States” and the Environment : University of the South Pacific 10-11 July 2013

Coinciding with the Pacific Interscience Congress held at USP 8-12 July, this workshop was convened by Liz Deloughrey, Keith Camacho and Victor Bascura all from UCLA, and Mohit Prasad from USP. It brought together scholars working from a range of universities in the broad Pacific and in engaged in Pacific studies from a range of perspectives including, gender studies, political science, history, literary studies, media studies and development studies.

Highlights were many. John O’Carroll gave an opening key-note address on the history of the idea of floating island in literature and lessons that can be taken from this work in the era of climate change. David Robie offered an overview of climate change debate in the contemporary Pacific media. Leevin Camacho gave a strong presentation on the struggles led by activist groups on Guam to challenge increasing US military-base encroachment onto lands of cultural importance for the Chamorro population. Linda Lisa Natividad continued the critique of militarism in the northern Pacific by examining the health and environmental impacts of the US military presence, showing how these range from ongoing radiation contamination from nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands to the impacts of the large base presence on Guam. Wilisoni Hereniko discussed his current film project based on the acclaimed Robert Barclay novel *Melal*. USP students also made impressive contributions to the discussion. Most notable of these was Maelin Pickering-Bhagwan’s powerful presentation on the vulnerability --- legal, economic and environmental --- of squatters in Suva’s Nanuku Settlement. While the overall conference theme and mention of “failed states” had, prior to the conference, attracted some critical feedback, the question of how generalisations are applied to the region became a point of debate for many conference contributors. Indeed it was argued by some, that there may in fact be important reasons for “framing the Islands” (as Greg Fry has put it) in ways that recognize the common ways in which global phenomena, as well as global interpretations of those phenomena, make Island populations, or specific sections of those populations, vulnerable.

Outside the workshop, participants attended literary readings and dance performances in conjunction with an art exhibition on campus at USP and a performance by Oceania Centre dance troupe entitled 100 Men Dancing.

The workshop organisers, ably assisted by Pua Warren created a warm, sympathetic and inclusive atmosphere. This ensured that, in addition to the many stimulating ideas shared during the workshop, laughs and good humor were also an important part of the formal and informal proceedings.

Nicole George
University of Queensland

Australasian and Pacific Travel in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1925-1950: Cairns Research Institute
28-29 November 2013

I was a participant at this interdisciplinary symposium, convened by Dr Victoria Kuttainen and Dr Susann Liebich of James Cook University. The symposium aimed to recover and examine in detail a diverse body of literary output, both fiction and non-fiction, which has largely escaped critical attention because it sat outside the parameters of a 'national canon' and because it was published in 'middlebrow' forums such as popular magazines. Scholars from Australia, Fiji and Scotland brought to the symposium their collective expertise on travel writing, magazine culture, visual culture and Pacific history to explore questions of modernity, print cultures and 'Pacific-mindedness' in the interwar years. Questions explored in pre-circulated papers included: How did this writing frame travel in and about the Australasia-Pacific in the first half of the twentieth century? How did images frame and reflect the cultural imaginary of this broad region, generally, and its specific landfalls and territories specifically? How were cultural and racial interchanges conceived?

Papers included those by Anne Rees (ANU) who discussed Australian women's travel writing about Hawai'i, particularly its status as the legal entry-point to the United States, where passengers endured immigration and customs protocols. Many women travelled with presumptions about Australia and America as twin white bastions in the Pacific; Hawaii's mixed culture and apparent 'foreignness' unsettled these perceptions. The ways in which Australia and the United States both mediated 'the Pacific' for each other was a key theme that emerged from a number of papers. Nicholas Halter (ANU) explored multiple narratives of adventure, romance, science, and missionisation at play in travel narratives of Melanesia, while Max Quanchi (USP), added photography to middlebrow literary representations of the Pacific, stressing that it was not so much what was read as what was seen that influenced audiences.

There are a number of publication plans arising from this event. At the conclusion of the symposium the convenors unveiled a website currently under construction - 'The Transported Imagination' – which will explore Pacific imaginaries represented in magazine culture of the interwar period. It promises to be a very rich resource for future research, canvassing a number of Australian and American titles.

Frances Steel
University of Wollongong

New Historical Perspectives on New Zealand and the Sea: Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, University of Otago
23 November 2013

This one-day workshop which I convened with the support of the Centre for Research on Colonial Culture in the History Department at the University of Otago, followed directly after the New Zealand History Association Conference in Dunedin. The workshop emerged out of the recognition that the writing of New Zealand history has been dominated by terrestrial concerns and events, including the nineteenth-century land wars, prior and subsequent Maori land loss, and the grasslands revolution. New Zealand history has been largely insulated from the

broader trends sometimes referred to as history's 'oceanic turn'. This workshop aimed to provide a forum for thinking in more sea-focused and mobile ways about the past – from the local to the global, in archipelagic terms, and in relation to a wider oceanic and imperial world of multiple and shifting centres and peripheries.

Historians, literary critics and scientists discussed themes ranging from the impacts of humans on marine ecosystems since first settlement; the experiences of some Maori leaders who crossed the Tasman Sea in the early nineteenth century; and maritime narratives in contemporary historical fiction and the reimagining of Pakeha settlement. Associate Professor Damon Salesa (Auckland) and Professor Johnathon Scott (Auckland) offered stimulating summative commentaries in a concluding roundtable discussion. Planning is now underway for the production of an edited collection.

Frances Steel
University of Wollongong

Upcoming events

- 2014 Pacific Islands Political Science Association Conference (PIPSA) <http://blog.hawaii.edu/cpis/2013/05/14/pacific-islands-political-studies-association-pipsa-biennial-conference/> : University of French Polynesia 3-5 June
- 2014 Oceania Conference of International Studies (OCIS) VI <http://www.ocis.org.au/> : University of Melbourne 9-11 July.
- 2014 Samoa Conference III (including panel on Gender and Governance) University of Samoa 26-29 August, <http://samoanstudies.ws/events/samoa-conference-iii/> to be followed by the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Conference 1-4 September.

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