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Unraveling Paradise: Colonialism and Disguise in German Language Literature

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Unraveling Paradise:

Colonialism and Disguise in German Language Literature

An Honors Paper for the Department of German

By Brigita Kant

Bowdoin College, 2022

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Introduction

At the turn of the 20th century, Germany became a center for industry and technology in Europe. This was also a period of complex German colonial relations. Around the world, Germany struggled to assert a fiscally successful colonial presence. As noted by George Steinmetz in his book *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa, and Southwest Africa*, German colonies spanned across the globe, including colonies in Cameroon, Namibia, Tanzania, Togo, China's Shandong Province of Jiaozhou, and the Oceanic nations of Palau, Papua New Guinea, and Samoa (Steinmetz, 1-2). German colonialism in Samoa, the basis for my project and the setting of the text in my second chapter, was central to Germany's struggle for colonial power. Its ownership was desired by Germany, Great Britain, and the United States in the late 1800s, creating tensions between these three nations and their relations to Samoa. As explained in Kees van Dijk's book *Pacific Strife*, the central disagreement between the three competing states was regarding which colonial nation had better military capabilities and could therefore maintain order over colonized Samoan citizens. For Germany and Great Britain, the strife over who would claim possession of Samoa came to resemble the quarrel that had happened between them years earlier over New Guinea and parts of Africa. But Germany especially felt that they had much more at stake. As described by the German Minister for Foreign Affairs Bernhard von Bülow, Samoa was a key part of German colonial policy, as it was "the birth of German colonial aspirations" (Dijk, 108).

However, while Samoa later became the central area of conflict in the Pacific Islands between the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany, the Fiji Islands was the first location where conflict was had. In 1858, a small number of Germans came to Fiji when at the time most of the Fijian colonial community was British. While Britain did not initially see Germany as a

threat, they soon felt that Germany was attempting to take over many of the locations that the UK already had or wanted to annex in the Pacific region. In 1874, Fiji's leader Cakobau gave Great Britain full annexation of Fiji. What resulted were years of dispute over the land rights of German settlers, particularly their demands to be compensated by the British for land and property destruction caused by Fijian uprisings in years before. The Germans felt they had not been protected by their supposed ally, and they also felt that Fijian laws (where the British had political sway) were purposefully discriminatory against them. A joint investigation into these claims in 1885 allowed the two nations to find mutual ground in 1885, however, the tensions were never properly resolved (Djik, 80).

Likely because of the difficulties in the Fiji Islands, building conflict was beginning to take place in Samoa. In 1872, the United States gained a foothold in Samoa, but realized that maintaining their place in Samoa also meant keeping Germany out. As Great Britain and the U.S. were at the time allied, hostility also began brewing between Germany and Great Britain over which state would lay claim to Samoa. A large part of the divisions between the three states was rooted in religious tensions, particularly the fear that missionaries of one denomination who lived on the island would have to undergo the island being annexed by a state with a different main denomination (Dijk, 65). Tensions continued to build and after another decade of strife between the U.S.A, Great Britain, and Germany, colonial ownership of Samoa was given to Germany during the Anglo-German Samoa Convention held on November 8th, 1899. Given the U.S. left Samoa years earlier, the U.S. worked with Britain to grant Germany claim to Samoa by reaching a compromise- in exchange for Samoa, Tonga would become a British protectorate (Djik, 95).

The German fascination with the Pacific Islands went beyond the concept of military power. Instead, German colonies in the Pacific, among others including Papua New Guinea and

the Solomon Islands, served as experimentations for all encompassing German power and rule. Essential to the shaping of how the Pacific Islands were approached as a place for German colonization was Samoa. Samoa came to represent a new opportunity to expand German naval power and practice colonial rule after the violence that they inflicted upon South West Africa (now known as Namibia). Between 1904 and 1907, the German Empire caused an ethnic extermination of the Herero and Nama peoples (Melber, 143). The genocide was said to have been begun because of a need to prevent uprising (Dederling, 84). Nevertheless, the concept of preventing uprising rested in the need to exert colonial and racial dominance over the Indigenous communities in South West Africa. Ultimately, the genocide did not lead Germany to reconsider colonialism, but instead acted as encouragement for how to reassert their colonial dominance in other locations and by other means. By this logic, Samoa became so valuable because of its ability to serve as a source for the German purification of guilt while also allowing Germany to establish colonial dominance.

A central figure to Germany's entrance into a new phase of colonial rule was Colonial German governor Wilhelm Solf. Colonel Solf and his supporters said they intended to colonize Samoa in a way that would minimally interfere with the lives and customs of the Samoan people (Steinmetz, 14). The deeper sense of "sympathy" that colonizers like Solf felt for Samoa can be tied back to the 19th-century understandings of race and racial affinities. In Robert Tobin's book, *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex*, the author explains that Solf's approach was born out of arguments like that of German sociologist and sexologist, Benedict Friedlaender, who stated that "the difference between Europeans and Polynesians was decidedly much smaller than that between Polynesians and Negroes" (Tobin, 143). This claim led him to propose a need, bundling desire and a false sense of ethical obligation, to protect Polynesians. This desire to

protect “primitive communities,” which were supposedly aligned with Whiteness, led to Germans viewing themselves as “benevolent colonizers” of the Pacific. But this benevolence was only based on the hypothetical relation of Pacific Islanders to Whiteness that encouraged Germany to wish to “protect” Samoa in a manner that was less “invasive” than their violent actions in South West Africa. Benevolence was also in large part based on Germans comparing themselves to other Western powers. Solf was especially disturbed by the “racial corruption” of the islanders such as the mixed marriages that were common in French colonized Tahiti (Steinmetz, 14).

Furthermore, the German obsession with “protection” is deeply tied to the concept of paradise. As the idea of “paradise” is central to my project, I would like to offer an initial understanding of the concept. It relied on what was viewed by the West as outside of social norms; rhetorically, it was often associated with the idea of unrestricted freedom. For those who felt they were outsiders in German society, particularly disenfranchised White men, paradise served as a form of escape. People partaking in the colonial enterprise cultivated the imagination of the Pacific Islands as a place uncorrupted and untouched, even after the effects of colonialism became visible. Through this cultivation of “paradise,” the realities of how violent and negatively impactful colonialism was (and continues to be) have been erased. Simultaneous to the furthering of the concept of “paradise” has been “paradise lost.” In Kalissa Alexeyeff’s and Siobhan McDonnell’s article “Whose Paradise? Encounter, Exchange, and Exploitation,” the authors describe “paradise lost” as a favored Euro-American genre because it serves as a “green” and “natural” alternative to their industrialized and urban existence (Alexeyeff et al., 334). European paradise had been lost, hence they felt that they had rediscovered paradise in the Pacific. The German approach to preserving Pacific Island culture was not for the benefit of the

islands, but for the benefit of maintaining German paradise fantasies at the cost of these islands being categorized as “primitive”. The portrayal of the Pacific Islands as paradise in three texts therefore serves as one of the central ways of disguising colonialism.

In the following chapters, I will show how German beliefs about the Pacific Islands and Pacific Islanders related to racial hierarchy and the supposed “primitivism” of the land and peoples, allowed German behaviors to be hidden behind White saviorism rather than them taking accountability for their role in colonial violence and oppression. In an effort to preserve their identity as saviors and suppress acknowledging the Pacific Island colonial reality, Germans have engaged in the writing, over-writing, and rewriting of this reality.

The works of three German language authors, E.T.A Hoffmann’s *Haimatochare* (1819), Erich Scheurmann’s *Der Papalagi* (1920), and Christian Kracht’s *Imperium* (2012), have all upheld the conceptions of “Island Paradise,” the myth that the Pacific Islands are a place of primitive purity, unaffected by colonialism. This colonial image of Oceania, and specific places like Samoa, have allowed authors to disguise the Pacific Islands as a place for fantasy, where men can assert their dominance and possessiveness without consequences.¹ In the process, Whiteness becomes visible as a central element in their identity construction and affirmation. In this, men from colonizing countries have used the Pacific Islands as a haven to rebel against their understanding of “normal” societal rules, allowing them to engage with violence, sexual relations with women of color, and most importantly, to reinvent themselves through the appropriation of Pacific Island culture.

¹ I am using Pacific Islands and Oceania interchangeably throughout my project.

Colonial influence presented itself in many forms, including the exposure to certain ideas, governmental laws and rules, such as the banning of mixed-race marriages, as well as the withholding of certain concepts from Indigenous populations, like capitalist modernity. The most authoritative mode for exhibiting oppressive ideas that drove the colonization of the Samoan islands and continued colonial conceptions of the Pacific Islands were forms of media, starting with literary texts and later including photography and film. As I discuss these “authorities” throughout my project, I want to clarify that most often I am referencing their status as modes of authority in order for me to work through how the message of the mode is perceived and understood in the literary examples. Throughout my project I am mainly discussing how German authors have established authority in describing and creating how the Pacific Islands are imagined without any consideration for native voices; I show that even small textual details aided this process.

In chapters one and three, irony as a figure of speech plays a central role. For my project, irony is being largely defined as a “trope that communicates a meaning opposite/contrary to the literal meaning of an utterance. The traditional understanding of irony is then premised on meaning inversion insofar as one meaning is stated and a different, typically antithetical, meaning is implicitly communicated” (Dynel, 91). Irony further creates a form of separation between author and text, allowing for “negation that lets us hold ourselves separate from and above the world” (Dynel, 133). In chapter two, in my discussion of *Der Papalagi*, separation is exhibited through Scheurmann masking his perspective behind that of the fictionalized character, Tuiavii. Separation is further created because Scheurmann’s disguise is never revealed by him but nevertheless understood by audiences who read the text critically, especially regarding his messaging around the advancements of Germany compared to, as noted by him, “simple” Samoa

(Scheurmann, 8). No matter whether separation and irony are used as deliberate narrative devices or manifest happenstance in the eyes of the reader, in all three texts - *Die Haimatochare*, *Der Papalagi*, and *Imperium*- I have found that the employment of forms of separation and the “escape trope,” White German men wanting to leave Germany, tie back to the concept that only the powerful can choose to relinquish power, or in many instances, only those in power can pretend they desire to relinquish power through their various uses of masked disguise.

In the first chapter, the literary form—epistolary novella—emerges as the dominant disguise.² In order to affirm his voice as authoritative, E.T.A. Hoffmann manipulates the epistolary literary tool and ties it with a false claim that the letters in the text were given to him by the naturalist Albert von Chamisso who was known to have been exploring in Hawaii in years previous. Written at a time before Germany had embarked on their colonial expedition in the Pacific, E.T.A. Hoffmann’s text *Die Haimatochare*, has become a defining work in the canon of German language literature about Pacific Island colonialism. In my project, I accredit this short text to be the basis for Pacific Island literature tropes, particularly the central themes of eroticizing and exoticizing of Indigenous communities that is carried throughout all three of my chapters.

² As my project is not focused on an in-depth analysis of the novella genre, I am only going to offer a brief definition of “novella.” Broadly understood, a novella “lacks subplots and contains only one major storyline that centers around one decisive turning event, such as the sudden occurrence of an accident, a revelation of one person as another, or similar arrivals of the inexplicable into the characters’ everyday. This plot and its unforeseen incident drive the whole of the novella and give it the form of a chance occurrence that brings about decisive consequences” (Fuchs, 400). Given that the novella is shorter, it is limited in its ability to explore and develop characters, setting, or plot beyond the limits of one major storyline.

Chapter 1

E.T.A Hoffmann, a Prussian author, published one of his lesser-known short works titled *Haimatochare* in 1819. Unlike his other more popular texts that are set in Germany, including *The Sandman* (1817) and *The Nutcracker and Mouse King* (1816), *Haimatochare* is set in O’ahu and revolves around the colonization of Hawaii by the British. Hoffmann dedicated much of his artistic life to irony, for example when working for a music magazine where he satirized the upper class’s lack of artistic understanding (McGlathery, 59). In Annelise Moore’s article, “Hawaii in a Nutshell—E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Haimatochare*,” the author notes that while Hoffmann’s text is still ironic and serves as a critique of scientific discoverers and the upper class, *Haimatochare* differs from Hoffmann’s other works in both content and writing style (Moore, 14). In *Haimatochare*, the story begins with a preface from Hoffmann, who does not introduce himself by name, in an attempt to appear objective and omniscient. He furthers the narrator's supposedly objective characterization by claiming to rely on “authentic sources.”

Told through a series of letters between two British scientists researching the natural life in Hawaii, what starts as a strong and loyal epistolary exchange between two colleagues in the beginning of Hoffmann’s text soon becomes violent and tense due to the central focus of the story: the scientists’ growing obsession with an unspecified insect. The insect is personified as a woman, leading the reader to believe that the scientists are experiencing a sexual fixation. The insect is then revealed to be a louse newly discovered and named “*Haimatochare*” by Menzies, one of the scientists. When describing the *Haimatochare*, Hoffmann refers to it as “she,” accompanied by long descriptions of its beauty. The scientists descend into madness and rage through the course of the letters, both vying for possession of *Haimatochare*, and both believing themselves to be the rightful owner.

This work touches upon disguise in three main ways: first through Hoffmann's manipulation of the epistolary genre as a method for authenticity; secondly using British main characters in a German language text and therefore only showing Hawaii through their limited perspectives; and lastly, through the eroticizing, fetishizing, and exoticizing of the Haimatochare and Queen Kahumanu who both act as representations for the Indigenous Hawaiian community and environment. All these concepts are communicated through the emphasis on Hawaii as paradise, and the frenzy to reclaim the beautiful Haimatochare. I will exhibit how irony paired with an emphasis on paradise plays an important role in disguising the White desire to conquer the Pacific Islands and dominate Pacific Island women. I highlight how the battle to have claim over an insect that is symbolic of Hawaii islands is actually a commentary on Pacific Island colonial possession.

Hoffmann first engages with disguise through the epistolary format. The utilization of the epistolary form allows for authors like Hoffmann to "present multiple perspectives and internal commentary, putting into question the possibility of objective truth or stable authority" (Kučinskienė, vii). Hoffmann questions objectivity while simultaneously upholding authority is displayed through Hoffmann's assertion in the preface that the collection of letters was given to him by Chamisso. However, it is believed that Hoffmann only spoke briefly with Chamisso about his travels, prompting Hoffmann to use documents from Chamisso to write a text on Hawaii, including Chamisso's diary which noted a rivalry between two colleagues who traveled with him. These documents as well as documents from other travelers served as the basis for his fictional text (Moore, 14). However, by writing his fiction piece in an epistolary format, Hoffmann dispels any sense of having invented the events taking place in Hawaii, suggesting instead veracity and that the protagonists may have had the experiences described in the letters.

The first instance of Hoffmann authoritatively placing himself as an “unbiased” outsider is shown through the preface which attributes the letters/handover of letters to A.v. C. (Albert von Chamisso).

Nachfolgende Briefe, welche über das unglückliche Schicksal zweier Naturforscher Auskunft geben, wurden mir von meinem Freunde A. v. C. mitgeteilt, als er eben von der merkwürdigen Reise zurückgekommen, in der er den Erdball anderthalbmal umkreist hatte. Sie scheinen wohl öffentlicher Bekanntmachung würdig. – Mit Trauer, ja mit Entsetzen gewahrt man, wie oft ein harmlos scheinendes Ereignis die engsten Bande der innigsten Freundschaft gewaltsam zu zerreißen und da verderbliches Unheil zu bereiten vermag, wo man das Beste: das Ersprießlichste, zu erwarten sich berechtigt glaubte (Hoffmann, 1).

Hoffmann states that in the following text he will present letters that outline the “unglückliche Schicksal” of the two naturalists. Moore writes extensively about the role that the exchange of information between Hoffmann and Chamisso played in developing the story of *Haimatochare* (Moore, 1). Hoffmann claims that these letters, given to him by Chamisso (“A.v.C.”), should be viewed by the public, implying that the events of the letters should be used as a cautionary tale for those expecting profit for scientific exploration without acknowledging the risks. Hoffmann introduces the two main, human characters of the text, researchers and close friends Menzies and Broughton. Moore writes that the use of Chamisso’s experiences to establish authenticity related to fictional events, and the objective voice used in the preface “not only sustains the author’s poetic pretense of authenticity of the letters, it also points to the source of his information, and in addition it invites the historically-minded reader to compare Hoffmann’s fiction with facts related to Hawaiian history” (Moore, 14). She suggests that, when readers compare Hoffmann’s work to fact, that in itself may cause his work to be regarded as authentic and through that, authoritative.

Hoffmann writing as the narrator explains why tragic loss of friendship between the two main characters occurred when the two men believed they would prosper and gain profit and respect from their travels. Specifically, he uses the word “berechtigt,” referencing entitlement

(Hoffmann, 1). Given that entitlement often disregards guilt and accountability, Hoffmann explores these ideas in the context of his text. He plays on the trust of readers (of the time this work was published in the early 1800s) in the innocence of the White European scientists, alluding to the fact that they were regarded as “harmless” in their research and exploration of Hawaii, and their deaths were deemed unjustified. On the other hand, Hoffmann imparts doubt upon this thinking, describing the scientists as entitled and naïve in their belief that their entrance into Hawaii could only be seen as positive. In this opening paragraph, Hoffmann does not examine the ultimate deaths of both characters, instead describing the tragedy as a loss of friendship between them. As Hoffmann was critical of the academic upper-class, he is also in this instance criticizing how colonial explorers and their entrance into the space of the Pacific Islands is often portrayed as innocent research rather than what it appeared to be, a time for self-promotion or egotistical thinking. This goal to be the individual who gets to own the Haimatochare is what tears the men apart. Hoffmann’s emphasis on the emotional relationship between Menzies and Broughton initially leads the reader to believe he is cultivating empathy for them and their relationship against the backdrop of the supposedly objective narrative about Hawaii. However, the friendship between Menzies and Broughton is not about the Haimatochare at all but stands in for a critique on how male protagonists depend on the concept of individualism to establish themselves, even when it becomes destructive.

Irony in the text is first presented through Hoffmann’s critique of characters like Menzies and Broughton—when he himself insists upon his authority to do so. Hoffmann criticizes those with insular world views and who are obsessed with escaping German society entering into foreign spaces to become “experts” on the place and make grand scientific discoveries. Yet, his use of the epistolary format furthers the notion that the White male gaze is “all seeing” (Alexyeff

et al., 142). The genre of letters enables the appearance of multiple perspectives, while also carrying power because letter writers are thought to have experienced what they describe. Letters transport the feeling of experience. Hoffmann arranges the various sets of letters to once again affirm the objective by not relying on one individual, allowing the reader to look into the minds of the characters as they presumably experience the events in real time.

The trope of authority and entitlement, articulated by Menzies and Broughton in their quest to enter Hawaii is continued in the following passage:

Du hast recht, mein lieber Freund, als ich Dir das letztmal schrieb, war ich wirklich heimgesucht von einigen spleenischen Anfällen. Das Leben auf Port Jackson machte mir die höchste Langeweile, mit schmerzlicher Sehnsucht dachte ich an mein herrliches Paradies, an das reizende O-Wahu, das ich erst vor kurzem verlassen (Hoffmann, 2).

Here, Menzies writes about his need to escape Port Jackson, Australia where he was becoming bored. Port Jackson, established as a port by British colonizers in the 1770s, became a hub for British convict settlers and agriculturalists (McGillivray, 264). Aboriginal communities lived there as well, although while in contact with both British colonizers and French voyagers, they lived separately in their own communities. In historic accounts, both the French and British felt disappointment at the lack of “progress” shown by the Aboriginal peoples, who had not assimilated in the way the British and French wanted and expected given their exposure to the more “civilized” British colony (Starbuck, 41).

As an established colony with a higher White population and where the Indigenous community was not reactive in the way he desires, Menzies could not identify Port Jackson as a place for exotic fantasies or as a place to assert power. Instead, he had to move on to O’ahu, now idealized as paradise in his mind, a place to be conquered. Menzies expresses feelings of boredom, further exhibiting his entitled attitude, as he expects his life to be exciting and

entertaining at all times. Menzies describes Hawaii as an “exciting” and “undiscovered” place but also “others” it. He and Broughton consider it their right to discover, and that discovery can only be done at the hands of White explorers because only they can “study” or research” what is not yet “understood” or “possessed.”

Their supposedly devoted relationship to each other is crucial in this endeavor as shown in the following scene. “Der edle Mensch, mir mit Herz und Gemüt auf das innigste zugetan, unterstützte indessen jenen Wunsch so kräftig, daß der Gouverneur ihn bewilligte. Aus der Überschrift des Briefes siehst Du, daß wir, Broughton und ich, bereits die Reise angetreten” (Hoffmann, 2). Throughout the text, the dynamic between Menzies and Broughton overshadows their intent to pursue scientific research. In O’ahu, the narrative is about how paradise can provide a place for the unity of these men. Nevertheless, and despite emphasizing their affection continuously, they do not fail to assert their devotion to the scientific task. This authoritative approach to categorizing O’ahu through a “scientific” and “objective” lens allows them to claim their perspective of the islands as truth. Hoffmann ends up creating irony in his emphasis on the emotional relationship between Menzies and Broughton, which is juxtaposed to their allegedly unemotional, scientific authority. The letters speak of the “Herz und Gemüt” and the devotion that Broughton has for Menzies (Hoffmann, 2). Hoffmann’s exploration of these characters as deeply emotional men, later also shown in their reaction to the Haimatochare, ultimately functions to dismantle the conception of Western scientific authority. Instead, they project a sexualized fantasy.

This projection of sexual fantasy manifests itself in a growing obsession. In the next letter, written by Menzies to a friend, Edward Johnstone, Menzies describes how during

scientific discovery, he becomes so obsessed with his “objects of study” that he forgets about everything else.:

Ich sehe Dich ironisch lächeln über meinen Enthusiasmus, ich höre Dich sprechen: »Nun ja, einen ganzen neuen Swammerdamm in der Tasche, wird er zurückkehren, frage ich ihn aber nach Neigungen, Sitten, Gebräuchen, nach der Lebensweise jener fremden Völker, die er gesehen, will ich recht einzelne Details wissen, wie sie in keiner Reisebeschreibung stehen, wie sie nur von Mund zu Mund nacherzählt werden können, so zeigt er mir ein paar Mäntel und ein paar Korallenschnüre und vermag sonst nicht viel zu sagen. Er vergißt über seine Milben, seine Käfer, seine Schmetterlinge, die Menschen! (Hoffmann, 3).

Menzies writes that he believes Johnstone to be laughing in irony at his letter because in the past Menzies has been too focused on scientific discovery to interact with the people and culture of Hawaii (Hoffmann, 3). Irony is more than ridicule; here it sets up a sharp criticism of Menzies’ attitude. Menzies acknowledges that he becomes so obsessed with insects that they become more valuable than human life. While this recognition may point to Hoffmann’s stance as a writer, this evaluation of human life in comparison to insects is also a foreshadowing of the plot that will ensue. Menzies likens the Haimatochare to a woman, and he eventually murders Broughton over the louse, allowing science to take over any regard for humans. At the same time, we see in this letter that Menzies becomes more self-aware and conscious of the unreliability and possible denunciation of such obsessive projections.

But another reading lurks in the background: accounts of colonized locations had to be brought back to the West. Menzies assumes that Johnstone believes he will barely be able to provide more information and detail than a traveler’s account when asked. This is because Menzies only provides information through scientific information and “objects” rather than sharing actual observations or information on the Indigenous ways of living from accounts of actual human interaction. We see that a degree of authority is given to Menzies who is expected to bring information back to Europe, but also that he only understands Hawaii through inhuman

objects. Indigenous people are viewed as unimportant and separated from their home, leaving them with no authority to decide how their home is to be understood by outsiders. Consequently, Menzies reduces them to clothes and material attributions to be used as examples for material culture that is to be exhibited in the West.

As Menzies tells the story of a German senior lieutenant who was a very zealous naturalist, we understand how this “exhibition culture” is combined with biographical narratives in order to underscore the danger of scientific objectivity to human relationships and interactions. The German senior lieutenant was incredibly obsessed with his naturalist research, and therefore became entirely isolated from all people, including his younger brother, whom he had not seen in 30 years. The younger brother came to visit the naturalist, but the naturalist ignored him in favor of studying a tiny black insect. The brother returned to his home in Amsterdam without the naturalist ever having noticed he visited. In this letter, Menzies poses a similar hypothetical scenario to his friend Edward Johnstone. If he were to show up in Menzies’ office as he was studying a bug, would he (Menzies) ignore Edward? Or would he allow Edward to come into his arms? We see parallels from this story to what eventually transpires in the letters between Menzies and Broughton, their relationship disintegrating as a consequence of their obsession with an insect. In the end, the reader learns that both Menzies and Broughton choose their obsession with an insect over one another.

Initially Hoffmann’s text appears as a critique of the United Kingdom, intended for German readers. Through more subtle ways, such as Menzies’ story about the German naturalist, it appears that Hoffmann is also offering a critique of Germany. However, this critique is shallow and further contributes to the strategic disguising of German colonial intention. As Valerie Weinstein has shown in her article “Capturing Hawai’i’s Rare Beauty: Scientific Desire and

Precolonial Ambivalence in E.T.A. Hoffmann's 'Haimatochare,'" the author writes that "even though Hoffmann's story does not seem to promote even latent colonial ambition (the attempt to possess the native comes across as deluded, depraved, and dangerous), it may have indirectly contributed to broader discourses that condemned English imperialism with the fantasy of installing German colonies in its place" (Weinstein, 8). The indirect installation of German colonial ambition is supported by Hoffmann's use of the preface, claiming that he relies on credible, "authentic" information and the eyewitness accounts from Chamisso. Furthermore, the use of the homonym "Heimat" in the title references the German state as a colonizing empire and the idea of what "the intersection of sexual and colonial desires has to do with Heimat in the nineteenth century" (Weinstein, 8).

Only very self-aware German readers would not fall into the trap of separating themselves from the British or other European colonizers. The audience of this text is only those who can understand the ironic jabs from Hoffmann, therefore also adding a layer of exclusion to *Haimatochare*. While Hoffmann challenges certain behaviors, his use of humor, over-the-top plot, and irony could once only be read by the men who likely engaged in the very behaviors he criticizes, and likely, very few of them picked up on any kind of subliminal messaging that encouraged the colonial reader to rethink colonial scientific discovery or the act of colonization. This question of how and who could receive his commentary begets the question of what kind of commentary was Hoffmann trying to make. Is he stating that it is wrong for man to focus on insects above people? In that, does he mean that human beings should always be the most valued, or are they just the most interesting subjects? If Menzies interprets people to mean only those equal to him, does that mean those who are not equal are not people? Or does Hoffmann mean that the study of "people" is always hierarchical?

Analyzing the use of “friendship” and interpersonal relations provides us with further answers regarding the central messaging of Hoffmann’s text. In the end of the long letter to Johnstone, Menzies writes that while he can become distracted by his research, he cares for his friends, implying that his priority in Hawaii is the centering of White male relationships above everything else. Menzies and Broughton believe that Hawaii is supposed to be the place for their relationship to flourish and strengthen but also for their proof of Self, an engagement with and realization of their personal, individual plans and ambitions. Men travel to these paradise-like locations and are able to engage in projects and behaviors unavailable elsewhere. This causes and reinforces their perception of paradise to be a place that is uncharted, lawless, and anarchical. As a result, men are drawn together for a form of stability and camaraderie over chaos that was self-caused. For Menzies and Broughton, the concept of paradise is then centered on the preservation of self, friendship, and colonial power structures. What is at stake in “paradise” is the preservation of Whiteness. This self-centered definition of paradise erases the experiences of the colonized, those whose lives become interrupted by colonialism.

The eclipse of Indigenous Hawaii is continued through Hoffmann’s emphasis on representing Menzies and Broughton’s interpersonal conflict, which initially aids to distract the reader from the colonial violence they bring to the island. The diversion comprises of Broughton’s discussion of the interactions between himself and the Indigenous peoples of Hawaii, alleging that the British showed signs of respect upon arrival. But such a reading only scratches the surface.

Teimotu ist entzückt über Ew. Exzellenz reiches Geschenk und wiederholt ein Mal über das andere, daß wir alles, was O-Wahu nur für uns Nützlich und Wertes erzeugt, als unser Eigentum betrachten sollen. Auf die Königin Kahumanu hat der goldgestickte rote Mantel, den Ew. Exzellenz mir als für sie bestimmtes Geschenk mitzugeben die Gnade hatten, einen tiefen Eindruck gemacht, so daß sie ihre vorige unbefangene Heiterkeit

verloren und in allerlei fantastische Schwärmereien geraten ist. Sie geht am frühen Morgen in das tiefste, einsamste Dickicht des Waldes und übt sich, indem sie den Mantel bald auf diese, bald auf jene Art über die Schultern wirft, in mimischen Darstellungen, die sie abends dem versammelten Hofe zum besten gibt. Dabei wird sie oft von einer seltsamen Trostlosigkeit befallen, die dem guten Teimotu nicht wenigen Kummer verursacht! – Mir ist es indessen doch schon oft gelungen, die jammervolle Königin aufzuheitern durch ein Frühstück von gerösteten Fischen, die sie sehr gern ißt und dann ein tüchtiges Glas Gin oder Rum daraufsetzt, welches ihren sehnsüchtigen Schmerz merklich lindert. Sonderbar ist es, daß Kahumanu unserm Menzies nachläuft auf Steg und Weg, ihn, glaubt sie sich unbemerkt, in ihre Arme schließt und mit den süßesten Namen nennt. Ich möchte beinahe glauben, daß sie ihn heimlich liebt (Hoffmann, 5).

Broughton clarifies that upon his and Menzies' arrival to Hawaii, they presented gifts to Teimotu and Kahumanu including a gold-embroidered cloak. The first signs that colonial disturbance is being brought to O'ahu can be seen in how after receiving the gift, Queen Kahumanu falls into what Broughton describes as a deep depression. Presumably just a beautiful gift, the gold and red cloak carries corrupting effects in its relation to capitalism, symbolizing a material lifestyle that the Queen is unaccustomed to.

Despite Broughton claiming that their arrival and gift exchange were well-received, the gifts reveal the inequality between the colonizer and the newly colonized. While attempting to appear generous by giving gifts, the true "gifts" brought by the colonizers are rarely received as visible at the time of arrival, these "gifts" being diseases, Western religion, customs, and hierarchy that are hidden behind a mask of colonial benevolence. Based upon Marcel Mauss's theory on "the Gift," gifts are representational of the giver's identity and how they wish to be perceived. If we take this initial definition of the gift and view it within a colonial concept as examined by Albert Sarraut in his work on France, then the gift can be "conceived in solidarist terms as an implicit contract between two political societies" (Grégoire, 91). This implicit contract then forces the Pacific Islands to engage with colonizer property rights or the right of first occupation. This exchange further exhibits the "benevolent colonizer" idea, for the exchange

is not based on “giving” for the sake of goodness, but giving for the sake of gaining (Grégoire, 91). The cloak is only given so that Menzies and Broughton can explore and physically possess the island, as seen through their fight to own the Haimatochare, which I discuss more in depth later in this chapter.

After assessing Queen Kahumanu’s erratic behavior, Broughton explains how he has tried to cheer the queen up with a meal of dried fish and gin, both of which are associated with British colonialism (Weinstein, 7). Corrupted by Western goods, she is portrayed as unstable, needing to be controlled through patriarchal care from men like Broughton. On top of this, Broughton notes that he believes the queen is in love with Menzies, creating more tension between Broughton and Menzies.

Menzies had previously described the devotion of Broughton to him as a homoerotic bond, signifying moral sin in the early 19th century, while also placing himself as dominant over Broughton despite Broughton inviting him on the trip. Broughton not only feels frustration and resentment that Kahumanu is interested in Menzies and not him, but also that Menzies has abandoned him in favor of the Haimatochare. Having the Queen be in love with Menzies is another example of Hoffmann’s decision to flip tropes. Usually in texts it is the White man who falls in love with a beautiful Indigenous woman. However, with the roles reversed, Kahumanu being in love with Menzies, Kahumanu is still not empowered. She is portrayed to have little agency, her life now controlled by the objects and people coming from Port Jackson. Menzies is given power because the queen’s love for him is described as unrequited. So, while the queen pines for him, he is unaffected as he becomes more obsessed with the Haimatochare. Kahumanu merely serves as a symbolic extension of the Haimatochare, her humanity likened to that of an insect. Feminizing and humanizing descriptions of the Haimatochare create the impression that

the queen and the insect are equated to one another. In recounting his meeting with the Haimatochare to Edward Johnstone, Menzies writes:

Kaum hineingetreten, erblicke ich – O Himmel! – auf dem bunten Teppiche glänzender Taubenflügel liegt die niedlichste, schönste, lieblichste Insulanerin, die ich jemals gesehen! – Nein! – nur die äußeren Konture zeigten, daß das holde Wesen zu dem Geschlechte der hiesigen Insulanerinnen gehörte. – Farbe, Haltung, Aussehen, alles war sonst anders. – Der Atem stockte mir vor wonnevollem Schreck. – Behutsam näherte ich mich der Kleinen. – Sie schien zu schlafen – ich faßte sie, ich trug sie mit mir fort – das herrlichste Kleinod der Insel war mein! – Ich nannte sie Haimatochare, klebte ihr ganzes kleines Zimmer mit schönem Goldpapiere aus, bereitete ihr ein Lager von eben den bunten, glänzenden Taubenfedern, auf denen ich sie gefunden! – Sie scheint mich zu verstehen, zu ahnen, was sie mir ist! Verzeih mir, Eduard – ich nehme Abschied von Dir – ich muß sehen, was mein liebliches Wesen, meine Haimatochare macht – ich öffne ihr kleines Zimmer. – Sie liegt auf ihrem Lager, sie spielt mit den bunten Federchen. – O Haimatochare! (Hoffmann, 5).

This description of the Haimatochare as a feminine sexual object brings forth the stereotype of Indigenous woman as less than human (Weinstein, 165). The natural environment of O’ahu is also equated to the evocation of the Haimatochare as a sexual object. Menzies describes what could nearly be read as a climax scene, describing a shudder that runs through his body as he enters the sultry, perfumed atmosphere in the forest housing the Haimatochare. He describes the Haimatochare as a lovely islander, Indigenous to O’ahu. He takes her as she sleeps, keeping her in a bed made of gold paper and feathers. We again see the parallels between Kahumanu and the Haimatochare in their connection to gold. However, while corrupting the queen, the gold paper for the Haimatochare is related to reverence, even if this desire to care for her is tied to a desire for dominance and possession. In any case, both the Haimatochare and Kahumanu are diminished. The Haimatochare is removed from its natural habitat and is infantilized by strangers. Kahumanu cannot offer them the same form of scientific prestige as she is hierarchically placed below the Haimatochare, nor is she characterized to be as innocent, small, or vulnerable as what is revealed to be a louse. Lacking the feminine purity and innocence of the

Haimatochare, Kahumanu's humanity and worth are brought into question. At the same time, the colonial quest for nature and the feminine is disguised through the emphasis on the complicated relationship between Broughton and Menzies, which is brought once again to the forefront of the story by Broughton's letter complaining about Menzies to Captain Bligh.

Sehr leid tut es mir übrigens, Ew. Exzellenz melden zu müssen, daß Menzies, von dem ich alles Gutes hoffte, in meinen Forschungen mich mehr hindert, als fördert. Kahumanus Liebe scheint er nicht erwidern zu wollen, dagegen ist er von einer andern törichten, ja frevelhaften Leidenschaft ergriffen, die ihn verleitet hat, mir einen sehr argen Streich zu spielen, der, kommt Menzies nicht von seinem Wahn zurück, uns auf immer entzweien kann. Ich bereue selbst, Ew. Exzellenz gebeten zu haben, ihm zu gestatten, daß er der Expedition nach O-Wahu folge. Doch wie konnte ich glauben, daß ein Mann, den ich so viele Jahre hindurch bewährt gefunden, sich plötzlich in seltsamer Verblendung auf solche Weise ändern sollte (Hoffmann, 6).

While Broughton states that his friendship with Menzies is at stake, the letter ties back to my idea about the competitive nature existent in research and colonialism. Broughton feels a sense of jealousy because Menzies has both the affections of the queen and the possession of the Haimatochare. He further believes that Menzies owes him, because he is the reason that Menzies was allowed to travel abroad in the first place. Menzies' hostility towards friendship is viewed as an act of disrespect against Broughton and the Governor. Broughton calls for the protection of the Governor, that is, the protection of the state, against Menzies whom he views as a dangerous and anarchic individual. Menzies, who has severed himself from the state and his original scientific research, while no longer upholding the same power position as Broughton, cannot separate himself from the colonial institution. Menzies has the affection of a woman, and he has possession of a career altering scientific discovery. In O'ahu, Menzies is dominating the land and the women in a way that Broughton had fantasized to do himself. Both men view themselves as not within the hierarchy, believing themselves kind exceptions to cruel colonial encounters. Both are also inspired by their relationship with the Haimatochare, causing the men to believe they are

saviors. But ultimately the men cannot disguise their individual actions to be separate from the colonial establishment.

The desire for power tied to the isolated portrayal of self in Hawaii is furthered in the following passage where Menzies writes to Broughton demanding an explanation for why Broughton is so angry with him (Hoffmann, 6). This portrayal of Menzies as completely unaware bolsters the portrayal of the characters as ignorant. Menzies in this passage is isolated in his own perspective and unable to see his own faults. According to him, he has only taken what is rightfully his. The dominance and possession of place to him is organic. Neither of them can recognize that they do not have any claim to the Haimatochare. Broughton responds that he feels resentment towards Menzies for “kidnapping” the Haimatochare and hiding it away from the world. Broughton believes he has the right to possess the Haimatochare, and the right to decide how and when she is viewed by the world as his scientific discovery. This concept alludes to the obsession of writers and fictional characters with policing how the Pacific Islands are to be seen and understood by Western audiences.

Menzies disagrees with Broughton, as he believes that the Haimatochare is his because he found her first and has taken good care of her. When he found her in nature, he “saved” her, believing his possession to be safer than the Haimatochare’s natural habitat. He shares this belief with Broughton, because their desire to dominate is deeply tied to fear of the unknown and the uncontrolled, like the Haimatochare in its natural environment. In the next passage, Broughton questions Menzies account of the situation once again when he asks, “In der Freiheit hast Du sie gefunden?” (Hoffmann, 7). Broughton doubts that Menzies found the louse in a free state, believing it to have been found on a bird he killed. However, the other interpretation could be that he doubts it to be free entirely, that regardless of where it was found, it was always an object

to be possessed. The Haimatochare is no longer merely an insect, but a symbol for O'ahu and the self-determined right of Menzies and Broughton to enter and dominate space. Both believe themselves, as most colonizers, to have rights to the land, to make scientific discoveries, conduct research, and so on.

This dispute between Menzies and Broughton continues, where the two intended to meet and fight for the Haimatochare, which ultimately results in them shooting each other dead. In a letter to the Governor, Captain Bligh outlines the series of events causing the men's deaths. Having found the bodies of Menzies and Broughton, and the Haimatochare in its box, Captain Bligh writes that the newly discovered species of lice had been named by Menzies as:

pediculus pubescens, thorace trapezoideo, abdomine ovali posterius emarginato ab latere undulato etc. habitans in homine, Hottentottis, Groenlandisque escam dilectam praebens und zwischen nirmus crassicornis, capite ovato oblongo, scutello thorace majore, abdomine lineari lanceolato, habitans in anate, anseri et boschade (Hoffmann, 10).

By having Bligh report this, Hoffmann utilizes an ironic and absurd sense of humor, in order to criticize the scientific hierarchy of the West. While Hoffmann gives Menzies the authority to name and authorize the discovery of the Haimatochare, he separates it or rather sets it apart as an object within the text. In the description, he uses Latin words that range in meaning from *pubescens* (the Latin word for ripe) to *ovalis* (egg-shaped) to the term "Hottentottis" which was widely used in eighteenth-century European travel texts about the Cape region of Africa and likely also a reference to "Hottentot Venus," a woman who was taken from her home in South Africa and exhibited around Europe. After her death in 1815:

She was dissected by Baron Georges Cuvier, the leading naturalist in France, who published a definitive report on her anatomical peculiarities. Other scientists followed Cuvier's lead, using this rare specimen as a basis for sweeping generalizations about the physical and cultural characteristics of certain native peoples of South Africa. As a consequence,...she became reified as a biological concept, a scientifically sanctified racial cliché. Her skeleton, decanted brain, and other remains were preserved and studied at the

Musée de l'Homme, where a plaster cast of her body, naked and unadorned, stood on public display until 1982 (Lindfors, 37).

Given the previous stated interests from Menzies and Broughton in “exhibition culture,” it becomes clear that they had similar desires to remove the Haimatochare from her habitat and to display her in front of a European audience, like the “Hottentot Venus.” In doing so, they could thus control every aspect of how the Haimatochare would be perceived.

But the Haimatochare meets a different fate, as the reader learns from the last few letters exchanged between Captain Bligh and the Governor. Captain Bligh discusses how Menzies and Broughton, enchanted by the Haimatochare's beauty, fell into the “trap” of an island paradise that could serve as the backdrop to their self-affirming conquests. In the letter, Bligh goes on to ask the Governor “ob ich das unglückselige Tierchen wohlverpackt für das Museum einsenden, oder als die Ursache des Todes zweier vortrefflichen Menschen in die Tiefe des Meeres versenken soll” (Hoffmann, 10). Captain Bligh and the Governor both blame the louse for the deaths of Menzies and Broughton, believing it to have been what drove the scientists to madness through its allure, rather than their own madness and obsession to receive recognition for scientific achievement. The island loses its positive allure, and therefore the insect is killed in memory of the explorers. Although the governor orders Haimatochare's burial, he criticizes the scientists' singlemindedness and describes them as having failed in their duties as fellow subjects. He describes Broughton and Menzies similarly to how Menzies had written about the German naturalist - as men who lost themselves in their passion for science. Once again Hoffmann utilizes humor, as the two men have died because of an obsession over a small louse but are being provided with a formal military funeral service. Instead of the louse being recognized as the victim of the obsession of these men, it is instead deemed a dangerous temptress that must be drowned in the depths of the ocean.

Captain Bligh in his concluding letter describes the funeral and the execution of the Haimatochare. At six in the evening, a uniformed crew, King Teimotu, and Queen Kahumanu gather as Captain Bligh shoots the Haimatochare, in her box weighed down by stones, from a cannon on the ship. He writes how “Hierauf stimmte die Königin Kahumanu einen Gesang an, in den sämtliche O-Wahuer einstimmten und der so abscheulich klang, als es die erhabene Würde des Augenblicks erforderte” (Hoffmann, 10). This snide remark from Hoffmann launches this scene into melodrama. Hoffmann then writes that “Die gute Königin kann sich noch gar nicht zufriedengeben über den Tod ihres lieben Menzies. Sie hat sich, um das Andenken des geliebten Mannes zu ehren, einen großen Haifischzahn in den Hintern gebohrt und leidet von der Wunde noch große Schmerzen” (Hoffmann, 10). Queen Kahumanu’s instability is rooted in her contact with the European colonizers (Weinstein, 8). As a result of this interaction with the Europeans and ultimately Menzies’ death, Queen Kahumanu is driven “to a particularly bloody form of mourning, one that warps the traditional mourning custom of self-mutilation, as she bores a large shark’s tooth into her buttock” (Weinstein, 8).

In the end, we are left with an ambivalent image of the island; it had been source of fantasy and inspiration incompatible with how it also came to symbolize danger. Captain Bligh’s and the Governor’s blaming of the Haimatochare for the breakdowns of all the characters in the end, “imply that they, during their limited contact with the bug, they have been partially infected as well” in reference to the possibility of the Haimatochare carrying sexual disease (Weinstein, 8). But the blame placed on the Haimatochare also speaks to a larger tension in the text, the inability for the British characters to be accountable for the tragic events. In the context of German literature, *Haimatochare* points to the complex narrative disguises in which colonial legacies express themselves.

Science and its status as a disguise that claims to be innocent continues to play an important role. Guiding me in my analysis of the history of colonialism and science has been scholarship by both Valerie Weinstein and Roland Borgards. Both of their works explore the intersection of imperialism and scientific discovery. In Borgards' chapter in *Animals and Humans in German Literature, 1800-2000*, the author notes that Hoffmann took his scientific terms straight from the most up to date science of the time, which was Ignaz von Olfer's 1816 treatise *De Vegetativis et animatis corporibus in corpibus animatis reperiundis commentarius* (commentary on the plant and animal bodies to be found in the bodies of animals) (Borgards, 47). Furthermore, Borgards explains that one year prior to the publishing of *Haimatochare* in 1819, zoologist Christian Ludwig Nitzsch introduced the concept of "parasites" to the zoological realm. He develops an argument that exceeds the more recent argument of Weinstein, where *Haimatochare* acts as one part *science-in-fiction* and one-part *literary precolonialism*. The combination of the scientific references in the text and the text's engagement with tropes like the combined desire and fear of the "primitive" other act to trick readers into possibly questioning their "imperial prejudices" (Borgards, 45). In relation to the theory of "parasite," according to Bogards, Hoffmann calls into question who the true parasite is. While scientifically, parasitism references the specific relationship of one animal to another, in Chamisso's notes, which Hoffmann used as a basis for his text, he wrote about parasites in terms of the relationship between non-native and native species, such as how non-native species transferred sexual diseases to Indigenous communities through biting. Though being uniquely focused on incorporating scientific knowledge into the text, Bogards' analysis therefore affirms that Hoffmann used distancing strategies and even irony to cast doubt on the colonial project.

Hoffmann flips the narrative, because historically insects carrying diseases, like lice, arrived from the body of an animal or person arriving from Europe. Instead, the native louse causes the death of non-native humans, which Bogards reads as fighting back against the historical context that depicts the louse as symbolic of the infiltration of colonialism in all facets of the colonized place, including the lands and bodies of Indigenous peoples. I have placed Weinstein as a direct contemporary contrast to Bogard, as seen in how Weinstein interprets the parasitic louse as a “as a metaphor for the colonizer draining the colony of resources to strengthen the imperial center.” The Haimatochare can ultimately serve as a warning for how ‘colonial fantasy’ seems to be more like a colonial nightmare, and a warning against colonial desire” (Weinstein, 9). Weinstein (and Hoffmann) leave open what textual “message” is sent to the future German nation as an imperial power, because the story in some ways retreats into the realm of science. In the end, Hoffmann’s epistolary and ironic short story certainly acts to unveil problematic actions and ideas about science, particularly through the obsessive battle of two researchers to bring a newly discovered insect into the realm of scientific hierarchy. Hoffmann’s scrutiny of science invites readers to question the trust in scientific objectivity and authority. But Hoffmann’s use of tropes and irony still result in the shrouding of O’ahu in how it is presented as a place for fantasy (especially in the sexual context), othering through categorization in terms of natural science, and the characterization of figures like Queen Kahumanu. The story is still told through White scientist male character perspectives, including Hoffmann’s. Overall, his story could also be argued to be contributing to Hawaii being seen through an orientalist lens, where tropes from Western works are later repeated. This is one of the ultimate colonial acts, disguising colonial indignities through ideas of paradise and removing the autonomy and sovereignty of places like Hawaii’s ability to control how they are perceived.

We come to realize that the “colonial fantasies and desires” may have “indirectly influenced actual colonial encounters” (Weinstein 9).

Images of tainted paradise and the overall ambivalence of colonial fantasies show in yet another element that sets Hoffmann’s text apart from others. *Die Haimatochare* concludes on the improbability of maintaining the concept of the “noble savage”, which encompasses the “Ethnocentric European construction of overseas peoples...imagined to be unspoiled by all negative aspects of European civilization, by its rules, its regulations, its powers, its repressions, and last but not least by its morals” (Senft, 23). In *Die Haimatochare*, the Indigenous characters are clearly exhibited as corrupted and disrupted by the behaviors of the colonizing characters. The origination of the “noble savage” idea can be traced back to 1772 Tahiti in ethnographic from the French explorer Louis Antoine de Bougainville. Despite attempts from authors like Hoffmann to unveil the irony of the “noble savage,” most works that comment on the concept, whether it be criticism or support, have aided in the depiction of the “noble savage” as truth rather than fiction. About a century after the publication of Hoffmann’s text it played an important role in not only imagining Germany as a colonial power, but also in reimagining the White male protagonist. For example, the imagination of the “noble savage” as truth can be tied to German author Erich Scheurmann’s work *Der Papalagi* (Senft, 23).

CHAPTER 2

Paramount to the dominance of the “noble savage” in German literature is the event of Germany’s colonialism in Samoa. In defining the term, “the key distinctions between ‘ignoble’ and ‘noble’ savages in Oceania revolved around the axis of pacifism and hospitality versus militarism and hostility. The figure of the noble savage was correspondingly more pacific in the Pacific than in Southern Africa. Such differences in emphasis and expectation partly reflect the differing histories of the initial contact zones” (Steinmetz, 244). The “noble savage” is a synthesis of the “noble:” the submissive, hospitable, with the “savage:” the animalistic, barbaric, and threatening. This combination allowed for a hierarchy to be created to which the closer proximity a person had to Whiteness, the higher up on the hierarchy the person was. But regardless if a group of people were categorized as aligned with Whiteness, if they were not actually seen as White, they would not receive full respect or rights. The term “noble savage” serves as a form of justification for why this hierarchy needs to exist, the savages needing order and discipline (Steinmetz, 244). Tension is further exhibited in the gap between the expectations colonizers have for Indigenous communities and the reality of who the Indigenous communities really are. The “savage” is expected to be bad. When they instead appeared to the colonizers as “human” and even as “kind”, they became “noble.” But they were still “savages.” The belief was that the “noble savage” would never be as educated or as intelligent as the White man. Therefore, Whiteness and intelligence become inherently tied to one another, allowing for Whiteness to then mask itself behind an idea of intellect as power, and “intellect” (a term now hiding Whiteness) as a necessity for power. In claiming the intellectual inadequacies of the Indigenous population in Samoa, a pinnacle idea of the text examined in this chapter, German colonizers are then allowed to excuse their colonial presence as a necessity to the “development” of the Pacific. This “development” is imposed upon the Indigenous people by colonizers, forcing them into a

dependent relationship where the Indigenous people must rely on colonial powers in order to achieve “development.”

Entangled with colonial development was the creation of hierarchies, particularly racial hierarchies. The German rule in Samoa was marked by the popularization of racial hierarchy which contributed to differentiating groups of people, including Indigenous people in the Pacific world. Hierarchy also assisted in legitimizing colonial power based on these differentiations.

This is noted in how:

Melanesians were said to be less intelligent, less beautiful, and less civilized than Polynesians, and to have a less centralized and complex political system. Melanesians were also said to be preoccupied with warfare and to be hostile to outsiders. They were ‘natural enemies of the whites’ who had ‘always shown obstinate defiance and pronounced antipathy to Europeans.’ The topos of the unfriendly welcome was associated with cannibalism, a practice that was thought to be more common in the ‘darker-skinned’ islands’ (Steinmetz, 446).

If we return to the logic of Wilhelm Solf, the colonial German governor mentioned in my introduction, I will show how these ideas regarding Polynesians being different than those from other islands or colonized locations in Africa came to serve as the basis for the “benevolent colonizer.” Solf led the German colonial movement with his belief in how the physically lighter skinned peoples of Polynesia, specifically Samoa, were more closely related to Whiteness. Because of this belief in the Polynesian alignment to Whiteness, feelings of sympathy were elicited on the part of the colonizers (Steinmetz, 14). Likely based on race, Polynesians were perceived as less threatening and defiant compared to the people from Melanesia. Melanesia was a label believed to have originated in Jules Dumont d'Urville's adaptation of Bory de Saint-Vincent's 1825 term “Mélaniens,” meaning “dark skinned peoples of Oceania” (Arvin, 39). In reference to Melanesia, the “representations of Islanders as Black, savage, tribal, violent, and physical were intimately related to the colonial project of constructing and containing

colonizable, oppressable, and exploitable objects” (Arvin 39). Polynesians, and as specifically discussed in my current chapter, Samoans, were still regarded as “colonizable, oppressable, and exploitable objects,” however as they were deemed the more civilized and beautiful, they were regarded with a different kind of colonial treatment. This kind of treatment is based in Germany viewing itself as the “benevolent colonizer.”

The German “benevolent colonizers” wanted to appear as if they were “protecting” the Samoan people while still upholding their own power based in Whiteness. To ensure the Samoan people were untouched by “corruption,” the “benevolent colonizer” was driven to shield the Samoan people from modern technologies and moral impurities. Moral impurities and technologies can be understood as things like mixed race marriages and capitalism, all of which were believed by the Germans to go against their image of Samoans being primitive in nature. Therefore, what was really being protected was not the Samoan way of life, but a hierarchy that benefitted Whiteness and relied on the oppression of other races. The undeniable quest for racial purity in Germany is exhibited in how Samoa was one of only three colonies, including Southwest Africa and East Africa, where there existed a mixed marriage ban (Wildenthal, 267). The laws “infringed upon German men’s legal right to pass on citizenship to their wives and children” (Wildenthal, 267). These laws are contested, as they were said to be purposed to ensure the continuation of Indigenous heritage. However, given the strict implication of racial separation, these laws were essential to ensure White racial purity and citizenship was upheld, further segregating the colonizers from the colonized. These forms of division served to protect Whiteness and create a link between Whiteness and German citizenship, all of which has informed understandings of German ethnic and national identity.

In this chapter I will discuss how Erich Scheurmann's *Der Papalagi* (1920) (which translates to "the White man" in Samoan) adopts both the "noble savage" and "benevolent colonizer" themes as a means to justify the German colonial mission in Samoa. I will also show how this text has contributed to the German imagination surrounding colonial Samoa, even after the country "lost" the colony. I will first show how ambivalence towards colonialist projects, which in the first chapter shines through in the textual disguises that Hoffmann employed, is translated into an over-idealization of the Pacific world. Second, I will emphasize that the idea of an untainted paradise is resurrected, but contrary to my first chapter, is instead used to stabilize the White German male Self.

In 12 chapters and inhabiting the persona of Tuiavii, an alleged Samoan chief, Scheurmann's *Papalagi* claims to be attempting to question and dismantle German society and its power structures. The section titles speak for themselves: *Einführen; Vom fleischbedecken des Papalagi, Seinenvielen Lendentueschern und Matten; Von den Steinernen Truhen, den Stein Spalten, den Steinernen Inseln und was dazwischen ist; Vom runden Metall und schweren Papier; Die vielen Dinge machen den Papalagi Arm; Der Papalagi hat keine Zeit; Der Papalagi hat Gott arm gemacht; Der große Geist ist stärker als die Maschine; Vom Berufe des Papalagi und wie er sich darin verirrt, Von dem Orte des falschen Lebens und von den vielen Papieren; Die schwere Krankheit des Denkens; and Der Papalagi will uns in seine Dunkelheit hineinziehen*. Through much of the 20th century, *Der Papalagi* has been read in terms of the dismantling of power structures in Europe or the West more generally, with critics ignoring the portrayal of Samoa. In contrast, I will show how he simultaneously emphasizes globalized hierarchies through repeated discussions of the stagnancy and ignorance of the Samoan peoples in comparison to Germany, thus reasserting the alleged superiority of the West.

Scheurmann first went to Samoa in June of 1914. Shortly thereafter in August, Scheurmann was held as a prisoner of war by New Zealand until he was released to leave to North America in the fall of 1915 (Senft, 25). Ultimately, Scheurmann's time in Samoa was short lived and was spent mostly isolated from Indigenous Samoan communities. Because of this, there has also been a skepticism surrounding Scheurmann's Samoan language skills, or the lack thereof, which is especially important because Scheurmann based the authenticity and authority of the text on his supposed translation abilities from spoken Samoan to written German. Scheurmann insisted that he had recorded and translated the oral speeches given to him by the Samoan chief. In other words, Scheurmann claimed to be acting on behalf and in aid of Indigenous people. His contemporaries – both readers and publishers – tended to believe him, and trust in Scheurmann's authority has persisted for many decades, despite the speculations that Scheurmann wrote the book, merely pretending to be writing from the perspective of Tuiavii. As I will show, this farce ties back to Scheurmann's own conception of self, exhibited throughout the text. It is apparent that Scheurmann, a disenfranchised German citizen, views himself as a liberator and supporter of the Samoan people. The work contains countless critiques of the German way of life and even at times criticizes how Germans treat Samoan people. While he writes about the supposed appreciation he holds for the lifestyle of the Samoans, he simultaneously places himself (and other Germans) above them, as the corrupt but more developed people. His writing further contributes to themes of hierarchy building and the preservation of Whiteness. This strategy is tied to constructing Samoa, and the entire Polynesian world – and as we will see the broader Pacific world – to the imagination of an earlier stage in history. In her book *Possessing Polynesians: The Science of Settler Colonial Whiteness in*

Hawai'i and Oceania, Mailee Arvin introduces the idea about racial and ethnic categorical constructions in Europe, writing that:

Polynesians were mapped onto an invented past- a past that, like the ancient histories of Greece, Rome, and Egypt, was claimed as the natural heritage of Europeans...Though Polynesians had been viewed as almost White by some of the earliest European visitors to Oceania, this did not mean that Polynesians were seen as identical or equal to Europeans- far from it. As much as the so-called Polynesian Problem literature about Polynesian origins investigated the similarities between Polynesians and Caucasians, Euro-pean scholars were at least as interested in delineating racial distinctions in order to rank Polynesians as inferior to white settlers who saw themselves as more deserving to rule and profit from Polynesian lands (Arvin, 44).

Within his constructed hierarchy based on the ideas mentioned above, Scheurmann establishes himself as an ideal (and Self-idolizing) mediator who believed heavily in the concept that there existed a difference between White Europeans and people from Polynesia or other parts of the world based on racial stereotypes.

Erich Scheurmann developed an affinity for Samoa because of his early engagement with nature-based movements. In Gunter Senft's article, "Weird Papalagi and a Fake Samoan Chief: A Footnote to the Noble Savage Myth," the author expands upon how Scheurmann, an art student, subscribed to the *Wandervogel* movement in his earlier years (Senft, 25). Formed in 1897, the *Wandervogel* movement, was a "youth hiking movement that grew out of the Stenographic Club of the Berlin-Stieglitz high school...The appeal of the *Wandervogel* was two-fold; first, it was organized and led by youth, and second was its romantic articulation of nature as a place where one could escape the restrictions of society, finding one's authentic self and living life to the fullest extent possible" (Fassnacht, 438). The *Wandervogel* movement centered around the texts of Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, both literary contributors to the early German Romanticism movement. Their embrace of nature and the individual likely informed Scheurmann's own individualistic approach and his conviction in

his identity as “unlike” other Germans who engaged with mainstream society. Perhaps Scheurmann was also drawn to the then German Colonized Samoa because of his belief in the purity of nature and his desire to act out or explore personal “authenticity” away from society. Scheurmann’s participation in the *Wandervogel*, and later, his belief in the trope of paradise exhibits the attempts of White, disenfranchised men to find belonging in the Pacific Islands through the appropriation of Pacific Island societies and cultures.

Central to the text is Scheurmann’s simultaneous critique of Germany; at times denigrating Samoa while also being obsessed with Samoa as “paradise.” The trope of paradise manipulated for the specific purpose of oppressing and marginalizing Samoa as primitive is used throughout the text and it remains stable as another topic pushes to the fore: the critique of German modernity. But despite Scheurmann’s critique of capitalism and technology, which stand for modernity, there exists the simultaneous attempt to uphold capitalism and technology as a reason for why Germany is superior and more advanced than Samoa. In describing paradise, the “Edenic before” becomes central to the contradictory messaging in *Der Papalagi*. While Scheurmann never specifically describes Samoa as paradise, given his description of Samoa as a place that is in desperate need of preservation, the trope of paradise is implicit. As described in Kalissa Alexeyeff’s and Siobhan McDonnell’s article “Whose Paradise? Encounter, Exchange, and Exploitation,” paradise connects to the “Garden of Eden as a site of original sin” while also signifying “a future heavenly state paired with its opposite—an afterlife of infernal punishment” (Alexeyeff & McDonnell, 273). This idea of “Earthly paradise” began due to fifteenth century European colonization of the Americas where an “expansion of an ideology to motivate, as well as to legitimate, material exploitation of resources and peoples in other parts of the world” occurred (Alexeyeff & McDonnell, 273). Paradise came to be seen as something that could be

not only found but owned and conquered. Paradise is also rooted in Christian narratives and the spread of missionary evangelism that was entrenched in the belief that religious conversion brought the Pacific Islands and other colonized locations from the “darkness” into the “light” (Alexeyeff & McDonnell, 273). The story of capitalism mirrored religious conversion efforts, in that capitalist narratives were “similarly told through oppositional tropes of paradise and antiparadise, or paradise lost...colonized lands and peoples came variously to stand for ‘our’ Edenic past, which has been ravaged by civilization through to its opposite—a depraved wasteland that requires spiritual work alongside productive enterprise” (Alexeyeff & McDonnell, 273). This notion of capitalism as something necessary to the expansion of Western power and influence yet dangerous in the colonized states and therefore causing them to require religious purification brings us back to the role of the “benevolent colonizer.” The view of capitalism as too corrupting for paradise also withholds the colonized from capitalistic gains, causing the colonized to be reliant on the colonizer. Ultimately, the story of paradise becomes a means for colonizers to enact corruption while then leaving room to perform saviorism.

Moreover, the obsession with Samoa and paradise could be read through another idea of early Romanticism, the desire to achieve bliss, which was also known as the Romantic “absolute,” a state without conflict, even though it can never be met with absolute contentedness and be marked as finite. In this respect, *Der Papalagi* resolves the ambivalent notion of “paradise” that manifests in the *Haimatochare*, another, although not early, Romantic text. In Hoffmann’s text, “paradise” is first exhibited through the land and physical setting, before the Indigenous peoples of Hawaii are turned into extensions of their natural habitat to be possessed, owned, and corrupted. Distinctively, in *Der Papalagi*, the purity of “paradise” becomes tied to the individual Indigenous person and their absorption of or aspiration to a historical but perfect

nature. Connected to “paradise” in his text is once again Scheurmann’s relationship to nature (via early Romanticism and the *Wandervogel* movement). In Alison Stone’s article “The Romantic Absolute,” the author writes that if we look at Schlegel’s ideas in connection to nature, “we feel the absolute in the sense that we aesthetically intuit it in certain natural phenomena...Schlegel holds that certain natural features – such as a skyscape, the atmosphere of a season, or a complicated natural scene – are infinitely complex, yet that we intuitively apprehend them as wholes” (Stone, 498). Although Scheurmann does not discuss the blissful state of nature on the island, he recognizes it in the human beings he discusses. In this, the idea of paradise becomes one of both land and people that contain absolute innocence, purity, and happiness without conflict. Scheurmann wants to cultivate the absolute, but his version is stagnant, because he places the people on a pedestal with his unrealistic expectations of them as already perfect in his imagination. They cannot and should not develop because if they did, they would disrupt Scheurmann’s conception of paradise.

Scheurmann in turn claims to represent the Indigenous people in an adequate “objective” manner and derives his power to do so from his knowledge, desire for learning and positive disposition towards Samoans. But his ability to engage with complex ideas other than that of the “simplistic minds” of the Indigenous Samoan community sets him apart from them. Scheurmann therefore views himself as elevated individual: He considers himself better than German society in how he seeks knowledge in environments outside of himself and Europe (like the natural habitats in Samoa), but even more so in how he believes himself to be more complex than the people in Samoa. Scheurmann isolates himself not out of necessity but out of a desire for superiority and individualism. He is simultaneously an outsider and insider.

This superiority is also shown in how Scheurmann acknowledges that Tuiavii never intended for his speeches to be read by Western audiences, but how he, Scheurman, felt it to be of importance in how these speeches can humble German society. He speaks in what is claimed to be Tuiavii's voice in order to give authority to his own text. And Scheurmann's desire to be different and superior is further apparent in how he makes Tuiavii (himself) exceptional in comparison to other Indigenous people. He is set apart, resembling his fellow compatriots when it came to daily habits and traditions, but distinguishing himself through his ability to think critically, unlike his peers:

Nichts unterschied Tuiavii im übrigen von seinen eingeborenen Brüdern. Er trank seine Kava, ging am Abend und Morgen zum Loto, aß Bananen, Taro und Jams und pflegte alle heimischen Gebräuche und Sitten. Nur seine Vertrautesten wußten, was unablässig in seinem Geiste gärte und nach Klärung suchte, wenn er, gleichsam träumend, mit halbgeschlossenen Augen auf seiner großen Hausmatte lag. Während der Eingeborene im allgemeinen gleich dem Kinde nur und alleine in seinem sinnlichen Reiche lebt, ganz und nur im Gegenwärtigen, ohne jede Beschau seiner selbst oder seiner weiteren und näheren Umgebung, war Tuiavii Ausnahmenatur. Er ragte weit über seinesgleichen hinaus, weil er Bewußtheit besaß, jene Innenkraft, die uns in erster Linie von allen primitiven Völkern scheidet (Scheurmann, 9).

Scheurmann describes how despite the childlike tendencies – and these are Tuiavii's similarities to his “primitive” peers – he was more intelligent than his fellow islanders, and consequently was powerful enough to rise above them and live a more conscious life.

As Scheurmann pretends to be writing as a member of Samoan society, he creates an entirely falsified perspective, a new form of disguise. Like Hoffmann's rhetorical disguises, Scheurmann's are intended to warrant authority. By usurping Tuiavii's position and voice, he engages in a unique form of cultural appropriation. In doing so, Scheurmann contributes to the inability for Pacific Islanders to have ownership over their own perspectives. Placing himself as Tuiavii's close neighbor, Scheurmann unwillingly reveals that it is not necessarily Tuiavii who is an exception to Samoan society (despite Scheurmann's claim), but that like other Indigenous

people in the text, he is merely an instrument or tool to reveal Scheurmann's own self-fashioning. This is done through Scheurmann's utilization of Tuiavii as a way to communicate his own beliefs about himself, styling himself as the German exception. After setting up the narrative in such a way, Scheurmann pursues his project by breaking down *Der Papalagi* into the aforementioned 12 sections. Through these chapters, Scheurmann carries the reader from a critique on how the White man understands the nude body, to capitalism, and ultimately to his "critique" of German oppression.

The technique of combining criticism of Europe with an appropriation of Indigenous life has been exposed by a project discussed in the article "In Polyface in Paradise: Exploring the Politics of Race, Gender, and Place." Here, scholar Alexeyeff discusses Samoan artist Yuki Kihara's art film titled *der Papalagi* on Scheurmann's book. Kihara dressed two German expats living in Samoa in traditional Samoan dress (those intended for a chief and his wife) and filmed them in busy urban areas in Samoa. Intended to comment upon cultural appropriation and to contradict the image made popular by colonization that the islands were uninhabited "paradises", the video shows Samoa as a place of bustling urban life (people on their phones, driving, etc.). Mimicking Indigenous people through their dress, the Germans are cast in a role similar to what Scheurmann envisioned for Tuiavii. And while the article underscores that there have been many historical accounts of the appropriation of native bodies and material culture (e.g., dress, crafts, housing), it also affirms that *Der Papalagi* is an example of the appropriation of the Samoan mind (Alexeyeff, et al, 336). Scheurmann appropriates the Samoan mind by writing through a falsified Samoan perspective. Despite and through the fabrication of this perspective, Scheurmann betrays his own Western mindset and cliched thinking, as his writing is riddled with

the incorporation of stereotypes that have been continuously repeated through Western literary interpretations of the Pacific, including the idea that Samoan people are naive and unintelligent.

One strong example of Scheurmann disguising the degradation of the Samoan people behind a shallow critique of Western society is shown in the following section:

Der Papalagi ist immer unzufrieden mit seiner Zeit, und er klagt den großen Geist dafür an, daß er nicht mehr gegeben hat. Ja, er lästert Gott und seine große Weisheit, indem er jeden neuen Tag nach einem ganz gewissen Plane teilt und zerteilt... Das ist eine verschlungene Sache, die ich nie ganz verstanden habe, weil es mich übel anmacht, länger als nötig über solcherlei kindische Sachen nachzusinnen. Doch der Papalagi macht ein großes Wissen daraus. Die Männer, die Frauen und selbst Kinder, die kaum auf den Beinen stehen können, tragen im Lententuch, an dicke metallene Ketten gebunden und über den Nacken hangend oder mit Lederstreifen ums Handgelenk geschnürt, eine kleine, platte, runde Maschine, von der sie die Zeit ablesen können. Dieses Ablesen ist nicht leicht. Man übt es mit den Kindern, indem man ihnen die Maschine ans Ohr hält, um ihnen Lust zu machen (Scheurmann, 55).

Initially Tuiavii (Scheurmann) critiques the obsession of the “Papalagi” (the Whites) with time.

Supposedly, Tuiavii finds it ridiculous how the Papalagis blame their god for their lack of time, and how they live their lives according to strict plans and schedules. Only a paragraph later,

Tuiavii writes how he never understood the concept of time or the ability of telling time, for it is far too complex for him to understand, even though the Papalagi children can understand.

Scheurmann portrays Tuiavii as someone who has both visited Germany, but somehow cannot use the vocabulary terms, describing a watch as a “dicke metallene Ketten gebunden und über den Nacken hangend oder mit Lederstreifen ums Handgelenk geschnürt, eine kleine, platte, runde Maschine, von der sie die Zeit ablesen können” (55). Scheurmann continues this theme of observing something that disturbs him about German society but explaining it through a shrouded and fictionalized Samoan lens that uses simplistic vocabulary, rendering the Indigenous Samoans forever infantilized.

Throughout the chapters, Scheurmann makes it seem as if the Samoan people are completely unfamiliar with many things, including newspaper media, money, and jobs, all of which further the portrayal of Indigenous Samoans as “stuck in the past.” In the chapter “*Vom runden Metall und schweren Papier*” a critique of capitalism is launched. Money is constantly described as “ein blankes, rundes Stück Metall oder ein großes, schweres Papier” (Scheurmann, 35). Given that this description is supposed to be coming from the Samoan perspective of Tuiavii, Scheurmann makes him appear ignorant because Tuiavii fails to distinguish among the different usages of a material, leading to a lumping together of different areas of life in one expression. For example, “Papier” designates money, but also history, administration, and media. In addition, we see the role of material wealth and possessions that began to dominate the modern reality of the period. Even White children of the time are offered the technologically advanced object of the watch or money, things that Scheurmann claims the character of Tuiavii and his community will never possess (Scheurmann, 32). These material objects can never be possessed by Tuiavii and others because of their different approach to money and inability to navigate the social structure materialism creates. In the eyes of Scheurmann and his German audience, the Indigenous communities are subjected to the possession by others. They are seen through their objects and become objects suitable for being viewed, very much like in a museum. This understanding of the Samoan Indigenous community is because they would only be seen and understood through material artifacts brought back by the West. The people were given no opportunity to speak for themselves, and their only forms of representation are through objects chosen by colonizers and then defined by these same colonizers.

Furthermore, returning to watches specifically, they are symbolic of other attributes of capitalism. On one hand, watches function as accessories and on the other, they are tools to

display dominance, intelligence, and autonomy. The display of tangible, material objects exhibits the separation between the colonizers and the colonized in this text. If taken further, we also begin to understand the degradation of the Samoan people to the level of the watch in how Scheurmann similarly utilizes the people for accessorizing purposes. Outside of a broader material culture, Scheurmann specifically is not viewing these people as individuals and equals, but rather instruments of self-critique. Samoans are not only there to be viewed, but they become objects through which Germans view themselves. Scheurmann's self-criticism comes at the expense of the Indigenous peoples, as the Samoans are forced into the positions of props. This is done most notably by rendering the Indigenous body as object-like. Scheurmann, through writing as Tuiavii, makes the argument that the nude body should be desexualized (Scheurmann, 15). He bases this argument on the "return to nature" idea that informed his earlier life when he participated in the *Wandervogel* movement. But this return to nature approach to nudity further renders the Indigenous Samoan body as just another aspect of the natural landscape and ultimately dehumanizes the Samoan body. We see a similar strategy in both the first and third chapters of this thesis. First, we see it in the objectification of the female body, especially the Indigenous female body seen through the portrayal of the Haimatochare and how the insect and the character of Queen Kahumanu are equated. In the third chapter, the dehumanization of the body is shown through the desexualization of the human body in *Imperium*, where the physical, bodily ideal discards all bodies that do not match the White, male, athletic form exemplified by the main character, August Engelhardt.

Media and material artifacts play an important role in claiming that Western accounts of the Pacific islands are authentic. In *Die Haimatochare* (1819) written accounts referencing real historical figures were of great importance to bolstering Hoffman's authority. Scheurmann's *Der*

Papalagi reiterates the importance of writing and translating the spoken word into written text. But *Der Papalagi* also shifts to highlighting the growing value of photography that was occurring in the early 20th century. The emphasis on the image, displayed through graphic written descriptions and vivid depictions, upholds Scheurman's authority. As he is moving towards installing the authority of the image, which will eventually become the moving image during the 20th century, Scheurmann exhibits a skepticism towards more traditional written forms of media in German society. This in turn reinforces Scheurmann's twisted critique of administration and the bureaucracy it involves. Amplified in Scheurmann's commentary on media, particularly news media, this criticism extends to the accusation that people can no longer tell apart representation and reality.:

Der Ort des falschen Lebens und die vielen Papiere haben den Papalagi zu dem gemacht, was es ist: zu einem schwachen, irrenden Menschen, der das liebt, was nicht wirklich ist und der das, was wirklich ist, nicht mehr erkennen kann, der das Abbild des Mondes für den Mond selber hält und eine beschriebene Matte für das Leben selber (98).

Scheurmann speaks to more than the issue of men who become attached to a fantasy and how this fantasy causes destruction. He is commenting upon the issue of mainstream media, at the time put in the spotlight by a broader turn towards mass entertainment culture that was to celebrate film, popular music, and other entertainment after World War I, and how he believes men in Germany were no longer formulating their own images of reality. Instead, they gave in to mass manipulation. Scheurmann felt men were too distanced and separate from nature, wrongly believing Western ideas about capitalism, industry, as well as sexuality, all mentioned in his critique of the West given in the "Tuavii's speeches." People who are a part of mainstream society have not reached enlightenment like Scheurmann has, someone who identifies as "different" because he is sheltered from the news and openly embracing the "simplistic" paradisiacal, island life.

Unbeknownst to Scheurmann, he also engages with a fantasy that cannot be realized. In tension to that of the Western fantasy for all men to have economical and industrial superiority and capitalistic success, and the dominance through hegemonic power reached through claiming colonies, Scheurmann's desire to live a "simplistic" island lifestyle is equally unreachable and falsely constructed. Just like the capitalistic fantasy is used to keep the urban poor bound to the labor that benefits the rich in hopes of accessing wealth, Scheurmann ignores his own power position that allows him access to Samoa. Without Germany's role as a colonial power in Samoa, Scheurmann would not have been able to access the islands. This liberating and fantastical life he constructs throughout his text relies on the oppression of Samoa under the Germans, fundamentally removing the freedom of Samoa while simultaneously making it appear that freedom is being upheld. Ultimately, for the island fantasy to be achieved, the freedom of the island and the Indigenous communities must be surrendered for White colonizers to feel liberation, even if they themselves are bound to colonial powers.

In order to further establish White oppression as a means to enforce White liberation, Scheurmann returns repeatedly to the noble savage concept by emphasizing his belief in the naivete of the Samoan people:

Das ist wohl wahr, daß wir wenig das Wissen üben, was der Papalagi 'denken' nennt. Aber es fragt sich, ob der dumm ist, welcher nicht viel oder der, welcher zuviel denkt. — Der Papalagi denkt dauernd. Meine Hütte ist kleiner als die Palme. Die Palme beugt sich im Sturme. Der Sturm spricht mit großer Stimme. Derart denkt er; in seiner Weise natürlich. Er denkt aber auch über sich selbst. Ich bin klein gewachsen. Mein Herz ist immer fröhlich beim Anblick eines Mädchens. Ich liebe es sehr, auf malaga [40] zu gehen. Und so fort (Scheurmann,100).

According to Scheurmann, the inability of the Samoan peoples to engage with the complex German intellect/White intellect is what allows for the Samoan community and Tuiavii to feel happiness. In this, Scheurmann argues that the Samoans live in a state of ignorant bliss, even

ridiculing – at the surface – the obsession with intellectual work and reflection. But the dynamic cuts in at least two ways: disguising the repression of the Samoan peoples’ ability to engage with complex ideas by uplifting White “intellect” is entangled with another disguise, namely veiling this issue as a critique of the Western denouncement to live happier and more simplistic lives in favor of capitalistic and intellectual gains.

Scheurmann’s obsession with the concept of “simplistic living” supposedly embraced by the Samoan people is connected to the colonial notion of nostalgia. Scheurmann’s text can serve as an example of “polyface”, described as the “appropriation of Indigenous knowledge” (Alexeyeff and McDonnell, 270). The maintenance of and longing for imagined paradises- including ideas of Indigenous knowledge and primitive societies therefore become understood as “colonial nostalgia,” described as “a desire to retrieve and possess what European and American colonialism destroyed” (Alexeyeff and McDonnell, 270). Alexeyeff and McDonnell article argue that colonial nostalgia also centers around appropriation and reappropriation (Alexeyeff and McDonnell, 271). The initial appropriation took place through direct colonial encounters, while re-appropriation has since continued. We can see this through the example of *Der Papalagi*, where there was an initial appropriation, and then a redistribution of *Der Papalagi* in later years, most notably, as part of student-led hippie movements in the early 1970s (Senft, 25). Even the production of texts like *Imperium* become a part of the narrative of re-appropriation that wrestles with colonial nostalgia. White authors, filmmakers, explorers, etc. all reenact colonialism by finding ways in which to further colonial ideologies and affirm the belonging of White possession in the Pacific Islands. Authoritative objects like written material and the later introduced photographic and film materials are essential to the acts of appropriation, possession, and the contorting of history through manipulated presentations of the Pacific Islands and its

Indigenous communities. Through these materials, colonial nostalgia becomes about the corruptors (the colonizers) desiring the uncorrupted (the Pacific Islands before colonialism).

The belief in paradise also ties back to the concept of the benevolent colonizer. The desire of colonizers to return to the period prior to colonialism also shows an aspect of remorse or inability to admit wrongdoing. To create paradise ultimately acts as the erasure of colonial violence, because “Paradise” is something that people desire to possess while it simultaneously remains powerless. Power is not given to paradise itself, but the owner of paradise. Even today, when paradise is discussed through the lens of real estate and tourism, the actual owning of paradise advances the idea of taming what has been titled “the primitive.” In exchanges of power through arguably continuous colonial encounters, the paradise used to market the Pacific Islands exists without authority or autonomy for Indigenous communities, and they do not gain actual power or ownership of the island fantasy or stake in paradise. Instead, the power to explore, to designate, and ultimately, to possess is transferred from the initial colonial encounter to newer colonial encounters, only diluted through economic or symbolic sharing arrangements

If we return to Scheurmann’s personal following of the *Wandervogel* movement, we may also see how core *Wandervogel* beliefs related to the body, sexuality, and homoeroticism. Max Fassnacht in his article “On the Ground of Nature: Sexuality and Respectability in *Die Freundschaft’s Wandervogel* Stories” connects homoeroticism to the *Wandervogel* movement and notes that, “by accident or design, the early *Wandervogel* neither banned nor openly allowed self-identified ‘Urnings’ within its ranks, though close homosocial bonds between members were tacitly allowed...the *Wandervogel* became connected to a masculinist, elite, and völkisch wing of the homosexual emancipation movement” (Fassnacht, 439). In 1912, one of the members, Hans Blüher, published *The German Wandervogel Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon*, “which

argued that the erotic bonds between men formed in sexually segregated associations were important for group cohesion as well as society” (Fassnacht, 439). Furthermore, the important reasoning behind sexually segregated associations was that homoeroticism aided in creating a “strong patriarchal nation” (Fassnacht, 439). Also born from the *Wandervogel* movement was the concept of *Körperkultur* (body culture). This concept laid down ideas about the ideal “body,” the masculine body that had gained strength and physical muscle through outdoor sport and exercise, especially hiking. Often, men in body culture were presented through a lens that highlighted the men’s lack of dress, the bare physical body. This form of nudity was “different from established, normative Western views of heterosexuality” which idealized – by not accounting for it as sexual or not even articulating it as body – the White male body, while advocating for veiled female bodies that were represented as tempting (Fassnacht, 439). This image of bodies becomes a means for upholding White, patriarchal power structures while distorting Indigenous images of body culture. We see this in the following passage from Scheurmann’s text:

Weil nun die Leiber der Frauen und Mädchen so stark bedeckt sind, tragen die Männer und Jünglinge ein großes Verlangen, ihr Fleisch zu sehen; wie dies auch natürlich ist. Sie denken bei Tag und bei Nacht daran und sprechen viel von den Körperformen der Frauen und Mädchen und immer so, als ob das, was natürlich und schön ist, eine große Sünde sei und nur im dunkelsten Schatten geschehen dürfe. Wenn sie das Fleisch offen sehen lassen würden, möchten sie ihre Gedanken mehr an andere Dinge geben, und ihre Augen würden nicht schielen, und ihr Mund würde nicht lüsterne Worte sagen, wenn sie einem Mädchen begegnen. Aber das Fleisch ist ja Sünde, ist vom Aitu. Gibt es ein törichtereres Denken, liebe Brüder? — Wenn man den Worten des Weißen glauben könnte, möchte man wohl mit ihm wünschen, unser Fleisch sei lieber hart wie das Gestein der Lava und ohne seine schöne Wärme, die von innen kommt. Noch aber wollen wir uns freuen, daß unser Fleisch mit der Sonne sprechen kann, daß wir unsere Beine schwingen können wie das wilde Pferd, weil kein Lendentuch sie bindet und keine Fußhaut sie beschwert und wir nicht acht geben müssen, daß unsere Bedeckung vom Kopfe fällt. Laßt uns uns freuen an der Jungfrau, die schön von Leib ist und ihre Glieder zeigt in Sonne und Mondenlicht. Töricht, blind, ohne Sinn für rechte Freude ist der Weiße, der sich so stark verhüllen muß, um ohne scham zu sein (22-23).

To analyze this passage in greater depth and nuance, I use Robert Tobin's book *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex*. Tobin claims that through the sexualization of Samoan women because of their beauty (they were often photographed shirtless by Europeans, and the photos sold to other Europeans), Samoan women became the symbol for all Samoans, thus feminizing/sexualizing Samoan men (Tobin, 152). According to him, "despite, or perhaps, because, of this feminization, Samoan men, like all Polynesians, were also regarded as highly sexed...The assertion of the high level of sexual activity among Samoan men could in fact be seen as a further feminization, for...at least one late nineteenth-- century school of thought regarded precisely women as more influenced by their sexuality than men" (Tobin, 152-153). Scheurmann's text attributes to Tuaviii, and thus all Samoans, a simultaneous overt ridicule of Western attitudes towards the body and celebration of their natural state. But overall, a fascination with what is seen as "taboo"- overt sexuality, nudity, sex between different races- become the foundation of the "controlled" White male body. The White male body is created by comparing the White-documented ways in which Pacific Islanders act in connection to sex, therefore creating a White ideal that engages with, even relies on a desexualized body. Respect for their intellect, for depth beyond the physical, is what further manifested Whiteness at the top of the racial hierarchy, not least because this ideal traced a Western philosophical tradition that ignored or even erased the physicality and sexuality of bodies. White masculinity and White male sexuality are thus understood by the comparison to bodies, and the images of Samoa are unique in that they not simply equate body and woman, but that they also create a juxtaposition to non-White male bodies.

The discussion of bodies in both a sexualized and desexualized manner therefore becomes another form of disguising colonial intent. Indigenous bodies becoming

desexualized/sexualized/feminized or a combination of all three is not about the normalization and acceptance of Indigenous existence. Instead, the categorizing of people is weaponized to view the Indigenous body within a sexual context. This further marginalizes people, as the focus on the physical – and the oversexualization that itself becomes the fodder of fantasy – disguises the actual oppression that is occurring. The attempt to distract from colonial projects through the fixation on the categorizing of bodies was furthered through the growing use of images and film.

Returning once more to Scheurmann's emphasis on the descriptive yet simple quality of his language, I want to briefly comment on the status of photographic images at the time of his writing. During this time there was a clear transition in the mode of how Indigenous communities and their life were recorded, documented, and ultimately understood by outsiders. Representation began to move away from written and textual accounts and towards photography and documentary film. In fact, documentary films acquired a foundational role in the establishment of modern ethnography as "science" (Oksiloff, 2). Max Quanchi's article "The Imaging of Samoa in Illustrated Magazines and Serial Encyclopedias in the Early 20th Century" confirms this trend. The author observes that the use of photography in combination with written elements solidifies the construction of Samoan identity as primitive, savage, and isolated from modernity. Quanchi notes that between 1890s and World War II, it was common for photos that were taken much earlier to be reprinted, without their original context. One example is of a type of Samoan canoe known as an 'alia. In a photograph taken by Tattersall in 1902, the original photo showed a ship that was constructed as a gift for the German Kaiser. "One of the last of its kind to be constructed, it eventually broke up on a beach in Samoa, having proved too big to ship to Germany...Photographs of this 'alia were republished in popular and academic publications...with the suggestion that it was typical of the presumably still current skills of

Samoa shipbuilders and navigators” (Quanchi, 209). As a result, Samoa became understood as a place frozen in time, “consistently depicted as operating in an unchanging mythic past, unrelated to the realities of the dominant European/American world” (Quanchi, 212). Scheurmann’s written descriptions work similarly to photography, in how using simplified and clear language, an image can be produced in the mind. These images fostered any and all ideas of a mythical standstill, while at the same time insisting upon and replicating - in no small part by being reproduced repeatedly across different displays - their newfound role as authoritative claim or evidence. This authoritative mode was then extended to the alleged depiction of German flaws in Scheurmann’s text specifically. Broadly speaking, authority is also presented in how descriptions of intellectual, religious, cultural features are coupled with physical differences and then put forth to advance not only the belief in racial differences and hierarchy but to represent them as observable facts. Photographs promise authority and imply authenticity, even though they (and other media) may work to disguise the authentic.

Forward 100 years: whereas Scheurmann had invoked the then still young claim to the ethnographic authority of the photographic image, Christian Kracht’s text, *Imperium* (2012) is narrated through the film lens. This text latently builds upon the discussion of authority and authenticity displayed in *Der Papalagi*. In Kracht’s usage of irony as a device for separation and contending ideas, the paradox of film is explored. As discussed by Walter Benjamin in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”, film serves as a form of authority without authenticity (or aura) because of the process of mechanical reproduction. According to him, “The whole sphere of authenticity is outside technical—and, of course, not only technical—reproducibility. Confronted with its manual reproduction...the original preserved all its authority; not so vis à vis technical reproduction” (Benjamin, 3). This understanding implies a moment of

genuine perception and representation that can never be resurrected or replicated and that is bare of manipulative intention as well as of complex intentional constructions that suggest neat interpretations. I am thinking of authenticity in yet another, more mundane way. All three of my chapters grapple with authors or characters attempting to utilize a mix of lies, truths, and falsely constructed authentic origins to create a sense of authority. They rely on this authority to simultaneously disguise colonial undertones and effects in texts, while allowing us to recognize the same. In my final chapter, I confront the question of how something, such as documentary film, can be authoritative without authenticity in Christian Kracht's *Imperium*.

CHAPTER 3

The politics of the image in literature are upheld in Kracht's 2012 novel, *Imperium*. The novel consists of a fictionalized retelling of the life of August Engelhardt, a German man who in the early 20th century ventures to German New Guinea to embrace a life of nudity and religious worship of God by only eating coconuts, which he believed to symbolize God's flesh. *Imperium* is both referential to E.T.A Hoffmann and appears to be heavily inspired by Erich Scheurmann's *Der Papalagi*; like those texts it maintains an element of masking and disguise. This is done through Kracht's stylistic utilization of irony as a means for him to distance himself from the veracity of the text and Engelhardt's character. In creating this divide between author's representation and identification, Kracht is enabled to negate responsibility for the racist stereotypes presented in the text. The irony of the text, while at times bringing forth an aspect of self-awareness and critique, still aids the furthering of problematic tropes, among them the theme of "disguising the Pacific Islands" that threads my three primary texts together.

Imperium is set in German New Guinea. German New Guinea was created out of the interest of Germany to increase "commercial interests in the Pacific, fortuitous colonial conflicts, and negotiations with other imperial powers" (Buschman, 8). The attempt to take over German New Guinea began in 1884, but it did not formally become a German territory, also including northern Solomon Islands, the northeastern corner of New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, Marshall, Caroline, and Northern Mariana Islands, until 1906. Germany's reign in this Pacific territory ended after World War One when enemy forces took over occupation of German territories (Buschman, 8).

The original roots of the ethnographic differences and the hierarchy of race at play in the Pacific world originates from now Papua New Guinea, simultaneous to the German occupation

in Samoa that was happening parallel to that of German New Guinea. According to *Anthropology's Global Histories: The Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea, 1870-1935 (Perspectives on the Global Past)*, the root of the belief in ethnic differences between Germany, its African Colonies, and its endeavors in the Pacific was the Berlin Ethnological Museum which was opened in 1886 (Buschmann, 12). The museum housed what Hoffmann's "mad scientists" tried to project, namely, to bring back to Europe material objects, and what Scheurmann would sell in his pseudo-ethnography some thirty years later. Headed by the museum director Adolf Bastian, the museum affirmed James Cook's conception that there was an intellectual division between Melanesia and Polynesia. This belief was founded in Cook's own interpretation of his interactions with Pacific communities, concluding that Polynesia was more hospitable to Europeans and had a more intelligible language, while Melanesians were deemed xenophobic to outsiders and had less intelligible language (Buschmann, 20). Bastian became interested in Melanesia, because for him it was a place that posed great importance to understanding "less developed" and "elementary" peoples (Buschmann, 20). For Melanesia, including the four countries of Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea, ethnic differences between them and Polynesia were at this time based upon false beliefs about innate racial differences and their visual expression. As Melanesians had darker complexions, they were perceived as inferior. Inherently, the establishment of "ethnic differences" was rooted in colorism. This colorism is further shown by how Adolf Bastian's own visit to Hawaii led to an emotional attachment and supposed concern for the decline in the Indigenous population. His conviction in the belief that Europe and Polynesia were tied to one another was based upon his understanding that there were similarities between the Indigenous stories of the creation of the Hawaiian Islands and ancient Greek mythology (Buschmann, 21). However, feeling it was too late

to make efforts in Hawaii, Bastian begrudgingly supported Germany focusing upon the colonial conquest of Melanesia.

Paralleling Germany's racist approach to Papua New Guinea, *Imperium* is no stranger to racist characters enacting racist storylines. An example of this being when the protagonist, Englehardt, arrives at the island to start a coconut colony where his workers are mistreated as he forces them to build his house on their native lands without pay. While the irony in *Imperium* at times appears as an attempt to malign German colonialism, referencing E.T.A. Hoffmann, Samoa, and presenting itself as a commentary of *Der Papalagi*, the text also contributes to the ongoing othering of the Pacific Islands. In Gabriele Dürbeck's article "Ozeanismus im postkolonialen Roman: Christian Krachts Imperium," the author writes that "Der Begriff 'Ozeanismus' bezeichnet, dass sich in der deutschen Kultur und Literatur ein dauerhaftes System von Aussagen über Ozeanien rekonstruieren lässt, das in hohem Maße durch Stereotype geprägt ist, die über lange Zeiträume hin reproduziert und im Lichte neuer, dissonanter Erfahrungen allenfalls re-organisiert und re-arrangiert, aber nicht revidiert wurden" (Dürbeck, 116). In this quote Dürbeck discusses the complexity of "Oceanism" that is created and reproduced in German culture and literature. Oceanism deprives the Pacific world of internal diversity, despite it being home to many peoples. Furthermore, it is not just the reproduction of stereotypes about the South Pacific as a way to affirm Western domination, but it is also a form of discourse that allows the West to engage with a foreign world that is both seductive and scary (Dübeck, 116). Oceanism contributes to the othering of the Pacific Islands and affirming the West as the cultural "norm." In doing so, those who desire an escape from the norm become fascinated with the strange, exotic, and "other" island that hibernates outside of time and space. Following the legacy of *Der Papalagi*, *Imperium* contributes to the reproduction of stereotypical viewpoints

about the Pacific, and the book proliferates tropes such as the White man seeking marginalization to elevate himself; together they ultimately serve to remove the authority of the Pacific Islanders in order to self-fashion themselves.

Imperium is mainly known for the controversy it caused. After its publication, Georg Diez wrote an article in *Der Spiegel* denouncing Kracht as a racist because of the messages presented in *Imperium* (Finlay, 214). Undoubtedly there are confusing aspects of Kracht's novel, as he clearly lays traps in the text for people to mistakenly assume meaning or assign Kracht an opinion. These traps are methodically carried out through the text's engagement with Romantic irony and narration. Romantic irony is highly referential to other works' styles as well as literary traditions. This type of irony cannot be read at face value, but it also cannot be interpreted as the opposite of what it appears to be, meaning the author intended for both ideas to strike at once (Immerwahr, 666). Kracht's utilization of narrators further complicates how the reader interprets authority. *Imperium* has two types of narratorial subject, the *erlebendes Subjekt* (experiencing subject) and the *erzählendes Subjekt* (narrating subject), furthering the idea of disguise or the performance of authenticity as the *erzählendes Subjekt*'s omniscient perspective appears as all knowing, explaining real historical events as well as providing background and insight into the characters (Patron, 111). The narratorial subjects are just further evidence of disguise which becomes evident through how they intercept reader interpretation and/or the self-fashioning of the Indigenous characters and/or the Pacific Island setting. At a minimum, through both their interrelatedness and tension between them, they underscore that the text can only be read as fiction.

Despite the speculation surrounding Kracht's intention or purpose behind *Imperium*, when analyzing this text, it is both more important and interesting to place *Imperium* within the

context of German language literature that centers on the Pacific Islands. When carefully examined, the text reveals its ties to the reproduction of colonial tropes. Irony can only act as a buffer and must remain an attempt at complete separation or distance. For, despite its very real originality and fiction, *Imperium* cannot be seen entirely separate from the realm of history and culture in literary interpretations of the Pacific. This holds despite the ironic overtones of the book. We as readers must not be too trusting, just because the author and the text appear to be truthful and open. While reading, the true focus of the book should be that of the unraveling of the colonial mindset.

The strongest example of the colonial mindset exists through August Engelhardt's characterization. Lacking any self-awareness, Engelhardt becomes obsessed with fantasies of liberation, which he believes can only be done outside of German society, where he was ostracized and from which he exiled himself. The island becomes the breeding ground for his fantasies, where he envisions his embrace of God through surviving only off coconuts. Such an intellectual conquest is possible only because he considers the island like a blank canvas on the one hand, to be overwritten by his story, and as a place that is naturally close to the divine, just like paradise in the Christian tradition. He wrongly claims that this behavior is common in the Pacific Islands, thus maintaining an authority of knowledge. This gives him in turn a false sense of superiority, as if he is naturally more enlightened than the repressed Germans he left behind. Unlike them, he has on his own found his way back to nature and by extension back to God, purity, and freedom. Concurrently to his recovery of Self through the coconut colony experiment, Engelhardt enacts dominance in Papua New Guinea in several ways: first, through his still deep ties to German power structures, including his Whiteness, which he exhibits

through his capitalistic tendencies akin to colonial trade (albeit on smaller scale) and, finally, through his blatant embrace of racism and antisemitism.

We see Engelhardt's oppressive embrace of the Pacific Island fantasy play out in one of the first scenes of the book, as he travels to Papua New Guinea:

So oder so ähnlich dachte der junge August Engelhardt, während er die dünnen Beine übereinanderschlug, einige imaginäre Krümel mit dem Handrücken von seinem Gewand wischte und grimmig über die Reling auf das ölige, glatte Meer hinaussah. Fregattvögel begleiteten links und rechts das Schiff, nie war es weiter weg von Land als hundert Seemeilen. Auf und ab tauchten sie, diese großen, schwalbenschwanzähnlichen Jäger, deren vollendetes Flugspiel und kuriose Beutemanöver jeder Südseefahrer liebte. Auch Engelhardt begeisterte sich für die Vögel des Pazifischen Ozeans, insbesondere für den Glockenhonigfresser *anthornis melanura*, früher, als Bub, hatte er sie und ihr herrliches, ausladendes, in der Glutsonne seiner kindlichen Imagination schimmerndes Gefieder stundenlang in den Folianten untersucht, mit den kleinen Fingern über ihre Schnäbel fahrend, über ihre bunten Federn. Nun aber, da Engelhardt tatsächlich unter ihrem Flügelschlag fuhr, hatte er keine Augen mehr für sie, nur für die dickleibigen Pflanze, die – lange schon unbehandelte, tertiäre Syphilis in sich tragend – jetzt zurückkehrten auf ihre Plantagen und über den trocken und ermüdend geschriebenen Artikeln in *Der Tropenpflanzer* oder der *Deutschen Kolonialzeitung* eingeschlafen waren und nun schmatzend träumten von barbusigen dunkelbraunen Negermädchen (Kracht, 11).

Here Engelhardt contemplates the dichotomy between his fantasy of the Pacific and an interruption of this fantasy shown through the other German men making their journey to establish colonies. Engelhardt, as described in the opening of chapter one, was deeply fascinated by birds as a boy. The birds, like in *Haimatochare*, are symbolic of two things: 1) the exotic or, more generally, the other, and 2) freedom and liberation. The birds connect to the exotic because Engelhardt creates a degree of separation between himself and the birds. Until this journey they stood for something he had only read about, that is experienced second-hand through books. These scientific books refer to the roots of anthropology as well as common patterns of engaging with so-called exotic locales, plants, and animals in libraries, zoos, and museums, and always with the exotic other to be inspected and studied. Therefore, as they are now alive, Engelhardt

views the birds as an escape from his existence in Germany. The fantasy of communing with birds liberates him from his German life, and now marks his entrance into a new and “other” environment. But once he experiences this environment, his image of paradise and its inhabitants changes. As written, he is not satisfied at all; the fantasy of him seeing the birds does not reach his expectations of paradise. He becomes distracted; his deep disdain for the German men aboard the ship takes over. They ruin his fantasy of solitude and living in an environment that is pure and untouched by other people (Note that the people mean White colonizers, erasing the existence of Indigenous communities from the outset). These men are described as carrying untreated syphilis, referencing the sexually transmitted infections Europeans brought to colonies and thus inscribing factual micro-histories. (Incidentally, this episode also reverses the image of a native louse carrying disease that co-created Hoffmann’s image of tainted paradise.) Engelhardt separates himself from these men, who are shown to still be firmly attached to Germany, exhibited through their reading of *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* and their eroticizing of Black women in their dreams, diluting the female bodies into a graphic sexual fantasy.

This passage is also highly referential to images and tropes developed in *Der Papalagi*. Erich Scheurmann’s text was created under the guise of being a critique of German society through the eyes of a Samoan chief. As we now know, Scheurmann is the true author; therefore, when accounting for this fact, it becomes apparent that while criticism is one piece of the work, another main aspect is the creation of hierarchy between Samoa and Germany. Where Germany is imagined as the corrupt, yet technologically advanced and culturally sophisticated society, Samoa is the pure yet primitive, oversimplified, and othered natural location. Similarly, German Papua Guinea is portrayed as the primitive yet liberating escape land for the exiled August Engelhardt.

Furthermore, this paragraph of the text engages with the process of understanding the world filtered through media, and the authority of certain media, especially in relation to imperialism and colonialism, to determine the lens through which history is viewed. In *Haimatochare* we see this historical filtering exhibited through claims of how the text was based on the accounts of A.v. Chamisso, and the story is told through a series of fictionalized letters. In *Imperium*, the transformation of media (e.g., letters, newspapers, travel books) into a filter or distancing medium allows for the narrator to be presented as being a historically accurate educator tasked with guiding readers. This scene of Englehardt on the boat criticizing the men reading newspapers, transforms the central idea of the text away from Englehardt's attempt to simply separate himself from his peers to a broader question, namely about the status of the subject in literature and, here specifically, about what is a critical, even ironic perspective, or what is represented as historical if subjective truth (that is, as Englehardt's "truth"). Nothing in the book can be accepted as total reality, but people often do so because of an inherent trust in ideas from the West and the belief that it is the norm for contemporary writers like Kracht to simply reproduce colonial tropes which until recently have not been widely challenged.

We see another attempt at the separation between Englehardt and his peers in this passage:

Das Wort Pflanze traf es nicht richtig, denn dieser Begriff setzte Würde voraus, eine kundige Beschäftigung mit der Natur und dem hehren Wunder des Wachstums, nein, man mußte im eigentlichen Sinne von Verwaltern sprechen, denn exakt das waren sie, Verwalter des vermeintlichen Fortschritts, diese Philister mit ihren gestutzten, in der Berliner oder Münchener Mode von vor drei Jahren gehaltenen Schnurrbärten unter rotgeäderten Nasenflügeln, die ihrerseits bei jedem Ausatmen heftig zitterten, und mit den darunter gelegenen, flatternden, schwammigen Lippen, an denen Speichelbläschen hingen, als würden diese, könnten sie sich nur von ihrem labialen Klebezustand befreien, sich von selbst in die Lüfte begeben, wie die schwebenden Seifenblasen eines Kinderspieles (Kracht, 11).

As Engelhardt separates himself from the other men aboard the ship, he critiques their use of the title of “*Pflanzer*,” noting how disconnected the men are from the land, culture, and communities of the Pacific (in the eyes of Engelhardt). Engelhardt claims the authority of interpretation over the word “*Pflanzer*,” deciding what it is to mean and how it should be used and interpreted. He gives this German word an “Indigenous” definition, while Kracht the author – via the narrating subject – signals a discrepancy to the reader’s knowledge who may or may not know about the colonial connotation of the title: *Pflanzer* was the historical term for settlers who, while not owning the land or not having taken it violently and personally from the Indigenous, farmed it on behalf of the colonialists. Just to be sure that the readers will know, the narrator translates the term into a functional synonym, *Verwalter*, hinting at the internal hierarchies that existed among colonizers and thus elevating the men, while their responsibility and culpability in the colonial project goes unchecked. But while Engelhardt himself is ignorant of this linguistic differentiation, he nevertheless delivers another example of the obscuring of the Indigenous perspective, this time through dominating language. Engelhardt, believing himself to be a liberator, places authority over both the term “*Pflanzer*” and how the term should apply to certain people. Through this act, Engelhardt removes the autonomy of the communities he believes he has the right to speak for.

Engelhardt further critiques the German men on the boat in how they are still deeply attached to Germany in their appearance, dressing themselves in clothes from Germany that went out of style there years prior. Here, irony comes full circle, presenting itself in that the men are criticized for being attached to a past reality that no longer exists, while Engelhardt himself is attached to a future and place that likewise will never exist. Engelhardt is therefore similarly misguided, if not more so, as the men he places himself above. Whereas they are nostalgic for

home in the colony, he is delusional about the colony's ability to remove him from home and hold him in a paradise-like space.

We are shown the extent to which Engelhardt is not self-aware as the narrator points to the tension that exists between Engelhardt's self-perception and the reality of who he really is:

Ein Herr mit Zwicker im weißen Tropenanzug näherte sich ihm, einer, der, obgleich leibesvoll, nicht ganz so stumpf zu sein schien wie seine Kollegen, und Engelhardt war augenblicklich von jener fast krankhaften Schüchternheit ergriffen, die stets von ihm Besitz nahm, wenn er auf Menschen traf, die von sich und der Richtigkeit ihres Tuns und Seins vollkommen überzeugt waren (Kracht, 17).

In this passage, Engelhardt is described as deeply shy when interacting with self-assured people "die von sich und der Richtigkeit ihres Tuns und Seins vollkommen überzeugt waren" (Kracht, 17). While initially this could be read as Engelhardt lacking confidence (which in some complex, contradictory way he actually might be) and criticizing the colonial overreach of his compatriots, he himself is also displaying entitlement and feelings of righteousness about his plan to start the coconut colony. He makes himself the exception to colonization, because he is not engaging with colonial behaviors in the "traditional" sense. The coconut colony is not for capitalistic gain to the benefit of a state power or a big importer, but instead for his individual profit that Engelhardt disguises as spiritual desire. He disguises his desire for power and success behind his claim that consuming a sole diet of coconut flesh will bring oneself closer to God, the coconut symbolizing the body of Christ. By extension, Engelhardt views himself as holy, pure, and enlightened in his methods that only he, through his intelligence and contemplative work, was able to discover. Engelhardt then sells spirituality and the idea of paradise through the coconut oil from the colony, promising worshippers a form of purification in both the spiritual and physical sense. Engelhardt falsely constructs the idea that only eating coconut flesh could be in some ways tied to the behaviors of Indigenous communities, going as far as extending the

appropriating attribution of his diet experiment and claiming that his project is based on Indigenous religion. His distorted reality between what he believes himself to be doing and what he really is doing further connects to the concept of the “benevolent colonizer,” who claims to act on behalf of the Indigenous but furthers his goals.

The following passage reminds us of the competing notions of sexuality circulating in *Der Papalagi*, while also showing the appropriation of ideas and false usage of these ideas for personal gain. “Engelhardt verstand nicht ganz, auch waren ihm Kalauer geschlechtlicher Natur suspekt, hielt er doch den Sexualakt für etwas völlig Natürliches, ganz und gar Gottgegebenes und nicht für einen Teil einer verklemmten, falsch verstandenen Manneszucht” (Kracht, 21). Clearly, Engelhardt denies viewing sexuality as taboo and believes himself to not be engaging with German conceptions of masculinity and its ties to repression. But this professing does not absolve him of also functioning within the colonial institution and proliferating ideas that reveal an idiosyncratic, self-serving spiritual rendering of Indigenous views about sexuality. Engelhardt appoints German New Guinea as a place that does not view sex sexually, but instead as a way to grow closer to God. This appointment is not necessarily true, but is an idea created by Engelhardt in order to cope with his own deep sexual insecurities and repression. His ironic discomfort with sexuality reveals itself in the following passage where the narrator mediates between the speech of an *erlebendes Subjekt* and the repressed Engelhardt “Dieser Fremdling habe ihn rasend vor Lust gemacht, berichtete der Helgoländer seinem Mentor Engelhardt, der seinerseits verständnisvoll nickte, dabei aber mit einiger Mühe versuchte, seine Abneigung gegenüber so offen vorgetragener Homosexualität vor Aueckens zu verbergen” (Kracht, 124). Here the text reproduces the indirect speech of “der Helgoländer” but only tells us from the narrator's perspective about Engelhardt's reaction, suggesting perhaps that Engelhardt's conversation

partner is more trustworthy than Engelhardt's words would be. But he does not speak. Instead, we are to trust what the narrator tells us about Engelhardt's reaction.

Engelhardt's actions and existence are contradictory to his self-understanding. Despite Engelhardt's insistence that he is liberated, free, and nonjudgmental and thus unlike the sexually repressed Germans, he is described in this moment as deeply uncomfortable with homosexuality. He remains unaware of this ignorance of his own limitations, when he feels later justified in his homophobia because Aueckens, an acquaintance that comes to stay with Engelhardt, is revealed to be antisemitic after he claims religion as the reason for a boy denying his sexual advances. Irony presents itself in how Engelhardt's dismissal of his homophobia due to his objection to antisemitism mirrors Aueckens dismissal of his antisemitism due to his homosexuality.

Although these traces of Engelhardt's German identity are everywhere in the text, I am more interested in the text's engagement with its location or setting in the Pacific world, for example here in what I think is one of the most important moments of irony in the text:

Er beugte sich herunter, um das Männchen an der Schulter zu berühren und ihm mitzuteilen, er brauche sich doch bitte seinetwegen nicht so zu beeilen, aber dieser verstand ihn nicht und beschleunigte noch seinen Lauf, weswegen er, schlußendlich an der Vorfahrt des Grand Hotels angekommen, schweißüberströmt und japsend neben der Rikscha zusammenbrach (Kracht, 34)

Although Engelhardt wants to release the man from the stress and pressure he feels when he transports the Western man to the hotel, the man speeds up and is even more exhausted. What looks like a misunderstanding is more complex. Engelhardt believes that his tapping on the shoulder of the man will remove the man's burdens, but it has the opposite effect. This is very symbolic of the idea I wrote about in the introduction, that colonialism in the Pacific by the Germans was done under the guise of wanting to "protect" Indigenous communities from the dangers of modernization, progress, and other colonies. However, this "help" was more harmful

than beneficial, recalling past histories of encounter with Europeans and overall bringing oppressive regimes, violence, death, and forever altering the sovereignty and independent trajectory of the islands colonized. Engelhardt's touch recalls the history of Germany's or rather Europe's engagement as well as the lingering effects of the history.

Attempts to help were deeply tied to Western preconceived ideas about what the Pacific Islands were like and assumptions of what they needed. The reason that Engelhardt becomes so obsessed with the Pacific Islands is because of what he thinks he believes to be inherent truths, but are instead ideas that are tied to racism, misogyny, and colonial power. One such example is how Engelhardt envisions sexuality on the island. Another is how Engelhardt appropriates the place through the idealization of his own body, which the narrator relates as follows:

Engelhardt hatte während des Aufenthalts auf seiner Insel nicht nur etliche Pfund abgenommen, sondern war durch die gesunde Lebensweise drahtig und muskulös, seine Haut nun von einem satten Dunkelbraun, und sein Haupthaar und Bart, die er allmorgendlich mit Kokos-Öl einrieb, waren durch Sonne und Salz hellblond und golden geworden. Das Öl, das seine Arbeiter auf Kabakon preßten, wurde entsprechend seinen Anweisungen auf dem Festland in Halbliter-Flaschen abgefüllt und mit einem ansprechenden, vom Herbertshöher Postbeamten entworfenen Etikett versehen, das Engelhardts etwas geschöntes, bärtiges Profil zeigte. (Die Alternative, aus dem gestockten Öl den Grundstoff für die in Deutschland sehr gefragte Margarine und das Palmin-Kochfett zu liefern, wie es der Großteil der Kokospflanzer im Schutzgebiet bevorzugt tat, kam für ihn aus ethischen Gründen überhaupt nicht in Frage – er würde mit Sicherheit seinen Landsleuten kein Pflanzenfett liefern, damit sie darin ihr sonntägliches Beefsteak brutzelten) (Kracht, 98).

Experiencing a drastic physical change from being on an island, Engelhardt is described to have dark brown skin, with the build of a runner. But most shocking is his hair which is described to have turned golden blond through the daily application of coconut oil and exposure to sun and salt. It is as if Kracht is affirming modern-day Western beauty standards as if they were invented or at least “naturally” displayed by Engelhardt. Aligning with, and perhaps benefiting from, the islands through physical beauty and strength, Engelhardt's blond hair still

ensures that he remains closely aligned to Whiteness. Perhaps, the text seems to suggest, his misconstruing of his one-sided, extremely rigid diet as Indigenous diet promotes his healthy appearance and physique. But it comes full circle through Engelhardt's product "advertisement" and aligning with his self-image. Clearly, while this scene is very ironic it is also full of colonial undertones.

The understanding of beauty standards and Engelhardt's embrace of nudity is reference to the early 20th century *Nacktkultur*. In Karl Eric Toepfer's *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935*, the author claims that the intention of the *Nacktkultur* movement was the furthering of "vegetarianism, social reform, and racial hygiene" (Toepfer, 30). Derived from *Freikörperkultur* that originated before World War I, *Nacktkultur* became a signifier of anti-intellectual and conservative attitudes in response to "urbanization and rationalization" (Toepfer, 31). Furthermore, the movement was central to two ideas: "the use of racial and eugenics theory to justify nudism; and the idea that 'natural' nudism was antierotic and did not disturb conventional sexual morality" (Toepfer, 31). *Nacktkultur* also played an important hand in determining modern aesthetics, one that embraced the open, physically fit, strong, yet desexualized male body. In creating this aesthetic by placing himself on the bottle, Engelhardt banishes bodies that do not fit into these categories. Engelhardt employs his body as the aesthetic standard in order to sexualize, other, and objectify Indigenous peoples similar to how they are likened to objects in the previous two chapters. I assert that by determining the physical aesthetic through his own body, Engelhardt is humanized. Consequently, the Indigenous body is dehumanized because it is excluded from being understood as the human body.

In this scene we also see how Whiteness remains the reason for why Engelhardt is on the cover of the coconut oil bottle, and therefore how he is able to appropriate its consumption and

through it amass capital gain. Although the narrator describes Engelhardt as more ethical than locals and the companies involved in the trade of raw materials, he still makes a profit and finances his esoteric lifestyle by selling paradise in a small bottle. This is, I suggest, Kracht – again via the narrator - ridiculing the self-proclaimed ethical standards of many Westerners today, while he exposes their hypocrisy. But historically, the physical relationship between Engelhardt and the Indigenous community he infiltrates in German New Guinea can be described by recalling contemporaneous, that is early 20th century beliefs, about race, namely that “the Polynesian proximity to whiteness seemed to carry a promise, or at least a possibility, of equality for Polynesians...[but] it was clear in practice that there were strict limits to the Polynesian– white comparison on the Polynesian side of the equation. The expression of the ‘conditional Caucasian’ in physical anthropological studies emphasized how much the logic of possession through whiteness was a relentlessly one-- way conduit, transferring what was expedient for white settlers to feel at home in Polynesia, while providing little to Polynesians besides the nominal attribution of almost whiteness” (Arvin, 95). While this quote uses Polynesia as an example, we can see how Engelhardt in Melanesia similarly contributes to Whiteness as a means of possession, allowing him mobility through German New Guinea and in his business venture at the cost of the liberation of the Indigenous community he made a part of his colony.

The mobility of Whiteness is also exhibited in how Whiteness allows Engelhardt to infiltrate an Indigenous community, while at the same time Makeli’s, Engelhardt’s young worker, alignment to Whiteness causes Makeli’s identity to be erased. We see this in the following scene where “Slütter wundert sich über den jungen Makeli, der so sehr zum Deutschen geworden ist, daß er seine Rasse ähnlich beurteilt, wie es ein Kolonialbeamter täte....junger Mann?” (Kracht, 222). In this passage, Makeli’s identity is brought into question, when Slütter,

one of the colonizing characters in the text, briefly questions if Makeli is even Indigenous anymore. Particularly, “Germanness” in this passage is marked by the judgement of race. Again, Makeli is a character within the text symbolic of Papua New Guinea whose portrayal is filtered by a White writer who through his narrator alludes to official German classifications of race and citizenship that were applied in the Federal Republic of Germany until 2000 (El-Tayeb, 149). But Makeli’s characterization also comes to represent how Indigenous communities were pitted against one another. The main non-white characters, Makeli and Queen Emma, are placed in forced alignment with Whiteness. Their placement in *Imperium* becomes not about showing them as individuals, but to aid the colonial power structure in the text. Essentially, Makeli and Queen Emma are only written to later be erased.

In terms of the flexibility Whiteness offers Engelhardt, we see the eventual transformation of a White character existing outside mainstream societal conventions into a character with a distorted sense of otherness and marginalization.

Engelhardt wird ebenfalls zum Kind, zum Rex Solus. Vegetabil und einfach, ohne sich an etwas erinnern zu können, ohne Voraussicht, lebt er allein im Präsens, ab und zu Besuch erhaltend, redet er wirr, die Menschen fahren wieder ab und lachen über ihn, schließlich wird er zur Attraktion für Südseereisende, man besucht ihn, wie man ein wildes Tier im Zoo besucht (Kracht, 229).

Engelhardt’s decline recalls on the one hand some of the characteristics that Scheurmann had praised about the simple life in Samoa and also the Enlightenment histories that depicted cultures outside Europe as children. On the other hand, this passage alludes to common displays of other cultures in Europe of the early 20th century. The description of him being visited like an “animal in the zoo” is reference to the treatment of marginalized peoples around 1900 in Europe (Demski, 9). Towards the end of the book, as Engelhardt falls into insanity, he becomes a tourist attraction. Kracht, like Hoffmann in my first chapter, leaves space for the remembrance of Venus

Hottentot and the tradition of disguising the “other,” as noted by Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz in her article “Chase Riboud's *Hottentot Venus* (2003) and the Neo-Victorian: The Problematization of South-Africa and the Vulnerability and Resistance of the Black Other” (Ruiz, 2). While Engelhardt becomes the other in this instance, but he connotes sympathy by being likened to a vulnerable child. Despite the attempt to mirror the positioning of Engelhardt to the tradition of displaying the bodies of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, one cannot forget the major differences. Engelhardt chose the life that he did, deciding to remove himself from German society. The act of marginalization is for him a choice, and therefore an act of privilege. We see this obvious privilege again in how easy it is for Engelhardt to escape being viewed like a zoo animal.

Through referencing the power of film, the film made about Engelhardt allows him to reenter mainstream society, also done through his colonial conquest and later his antisemitism: “Die Kamera fährt nah heran, ein Tuten, die Schiffsglocke läutet zu Mittag, und ein dunkelhäutiger Statist (der im Film nicht wieder auftaucht) schreitet sanftfüßig und leise das Oberdeck ab, um jene Passagiere mit behutsamem Schulterdruck aufzuwecken, die gleich nach dem üppigen Frühstück wieder eingeschlafen waren.” (Kracht, 244)

While camera, the ship’s horn, and bell make the reader snap out from being roped into the island fantasy that was created around Engelhardt, the ending leaves us with two shifts in the text meant to comment upon broader changes that were happening at the time this text is set in: 1898. The power to represent the Pacific Islands originally rested in the ethnography of objects that were sometimes attached to people (e.g., clothes, tools, fruit). The reliance on objects then shifted to the authority of textual interpretation, then to the film screen. We see this in *Imperium* in how the text begins with a pamphlet advertising Engelhardt’s coconut colony, moves towards

the discussion of German newspapers, and ends with Engelhardt's story being shown in a movie theater in Hollywood. Like the discussion in my other texts, authority, power, and dominance are moving targets. Modes of oppression shift to best fit certain time periods, people in power, and ideas.

Concurrently, later on we see the text through a depicted film lens, shift to the discussion of antisemitism. Both discourses of racism and antisemitism become normalized through the false objectivity that is presented in the documentary films, such as those by Margaret Mead or Nazi propaganda films. Because of this, the reflection on the relationship between White people and Indigenous people in the Pacific Islands was overshadowed by the reflection of antisemitism. Antisemitism, as we know, is also a manifestation of White supremacy. A new hierarchy is then established through these documentaries:

Engelhardt teilte nicht jene aufkommende Mode der Verteufelung des Semitischen, die der fürchterliche Richard Wagner mit seinen Schriften und seiner schwülstig-komischen Musik wenn nicht initiiert, dann aber allerorten salonfähig gemacht hatte. Unser Freund liebte die Musik von Satie und Debussy und Mendelssohn-Bartholdy und Meyerbeer (Kracht, 126).

The conception of the benevolent colonizer through the latter part of the book becomes more deeply tied to the conception of antisemitism at the time. Engelhardt again separates himself from others, in this instance through the excuse of appreciating the music of Jewish composers. He confounds his appreciation or desire for something to be an absolving force. However, we later see how Engelhardt's fragile disguise as someone tolerant of Jewish people is not enough to separate himself from his more openly antisemitic peers. Once his fantasy crumbles and his colony fails without him being closer to God, he runs into money problems. Financially destitute and disenchanted with the island, Engelhardt behaves just like other violent members of the colonial machine. "Ja, so war Engelhardt unversehens zum Antisemiten

geworden...und daß die ganze Misere des Scheiterns seiner begnadeten Utopie denjenigen anzukreiden sei” (Kracht, 224). Although his utopia was destroyed by his own actions, he blames others. A reference to both Germany at threshold of WWII and Scheurmann (who after the publication of *Der Papalagi* became a party member of Hitler’s NSDAP and wrote poems to celebrate Hitler’s birthday), the narrator reveals Engelhardt to be an antisemite who just like his compatriots back in Germany uses antisemitism as a scapegoat for his own accountability for the collapse of his colony (Senft, 62).

By collapsing the distance between narrated time and the historical reference to the workings of antisemitism, Kracht creates a link between colonialism and the antisemitism that led to the Holocaust. In doing so, the messaging of the text includes the argument that all totalizing forms of oppression and ideology are connected. This line of thought presents as troubling. Both are serious issues that require consideration, but the focus of the text quickly shifts away from Germany’s violent colonial enterprise in the Pacific to then focus on Nazi atrocities. German colonial history becomes eclipsed by the Nazi past, isolated within what happened in or nearby Germany, and therefore the resolution of German history is also isolated to Germany in its singular focus on the Holocaust. While many aspects of World War II, Nazism, the Holocaust, and antisemitism remain unresolved, there is a feeling that history has been “worked through.” Consequently, historical events that happened outside of Germany and Europe begin to exist outside of the imagined historical reality. Kracht mirrors these events through *Imperium*, in that little closure is given to the colonial impact of the text, and therefore Indigenous characters like Makeli fade into the background. No form of justice is offered, no global condemnation. Instead, what happened in German New Guinea, both in reality and in

fictional retellings, remains forgotten. Like a film, this same self-imaging of Germany from within plays on repeat.

Conclusion:

Both Kracht and the character of Engelhardt become examples for White Power and dominance, and regardless of intention, Kracht's *Imperium* ends up aiding in the shrouding of Pacific Island identity and voice. This text was my final example of Oceanism in action. Beginning with Hoffmann, I have been able to trace a direct relationship from the first chapter to here in that even in as recently as 2012, Hoffmann and Scheurmann's work have contributed to the continual construction and reconstruction of the Western imagination of the Pacific Islands.

Throughout all three texts I have explored the dangers and long-lasting effects of colonial oppression and violence. I have unveiled these effects by focusing my analyses on the reproduction of colonial power structures in German language literature. In all three works- *Die Haimatochare* (1819), *Der Papalagi* (1920), and *Imperium* (2012)- the element of disguise has been employed by authors to convey an appearance of criticizing modernity and aspects of colonialism through texts and literary history, without truly critiquing colonial workings and effects. These critiques never result in accountability from Germany or come at the expense of Germany, as the harmful tropes and stereotypes presented in all three texts are solely based on the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands. Ultimately, all the works I discuss utilize tropes as methods to degrade, erase, and isolate the South Pacific Indigenous communities that they represent. These tropes include the previously discussed "benevolent colonizer" and the "noble savage." What further ties all three texts together is the Western creation and obsession with projecting the "paradise" fantasy upon the islands. These ideas about the Pacific Islands are then reproduced, unfortunately empowering my three discussed texts (and those similar) to form a basis of authority.

Authority, as initially defined in my project, was rooted in the authority of written works and of the authors who wrote them, namely their identities as educated White men who claimed possession of portraying the Pacific Islands despite having very little first-hand experience. Now at the end of my project, authority can also be understood as the power for one author or critic (particularly those from the West aligned with colonial power) to decide how non-Western and non-White places or people are portrayed and perceived. Each text provides multiple layers of disguise, including but not limited to, the use of irony and authors and/or plots with fictionalized historical backgrounds.

In E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Haimatochare*, Hoffmann disguises his own voice, someone who had no firsthand experience in Hawaii, by writing a series of fictional letters. These letters, in combination with a fabricated backstory that the well-known naturalist Albert von Chamisso had been witness to the letters' account of events, gave authority to Hoffmann's voice. Hoffmann also utilized irony to critique modern scientific obsession and exhibition culture, but his critique falls short of a clear condemnation of colonialism. No one is victimless to his ironic humor, meaning both the colonizing explorers and the Indigenous peoples and the Hawaiian natural landscape are tools weaponized for his authoritative irony.

Erich Scheurmann's *Der Papalagi* is not an outright ironic text, but the one most heavily and clearly engaging with overt disguise. The short series of essays were written under the pretense of being a translation of oral speeches given by a Samoan chief while Scheurmann lived in Samoa. While the essays claim to be spirited critiques of German society, particularly modern capitalism, Scheurmann's "writing in disguise" aids in continuing the stereotype of the "noble savage," and proliferates the belief of Germany as a "benevolent colonizer," while simultaneously insisting on the intellectual inferiority of the Samoans and the importance of

“protecting” them from modernity, suspending the Indigenous community to a time outside of history’s changing trajectory towards the present.

Directly tied to *Der Papalagi* is Christian Krachts novel, *Imperium*. Kracht’s book is a fictional retelling of the life of August Engelhardt, a German man who went to German New Guinea in the late 1890s to start a coconut colony. Told through the perspective of ironic narrational voice, *Imperium* contains insertions of historical background and uses a narrator to create separation between author and the problematic characterization of Engelhardt, someone who adopts a growing racist, homophobic, misogynistic, and antisemitic perspective throughout the story.

Furthermore, what also binds my discussion of all three texts is the presence of the White male ego. My texts build upon one another to exhibit each author’s desire to center the White male identity in history and setting of the Pacific Islands. In fact, all three of the authors I discuss actively adjust their texts to the changing histories and authorities, once again “tapping on the shoulder of history” as it moves from the authority of paper media culture in *Die Haimatochare*, to photography in *Der Papalagi*, all the way to film and the moving image in *Imperium*. And even though the colonial presence is undeniably an aspect of negotiating Pacific Island past, neither Hoffmann, Scheurmann, nor Kracht attempt to offer space to the Indigenous communities most affected. Instead, they favor their own fictionalized White characters who portray the Pacific Islands as perfect, untouched, and unharmed colonies. Through using textual strategies like irony to mitigate the brutal reality of the time periods and situations discussed, those that participate in furthering the colonial enterprise in both the past and present, are absolved of guilt and the need for accountability. Islands being shown as places uninhabited and uncorrupted

conceals not only the lived experiences of the Indigenous communities that do live in these places, but further disguises the damages left by colonizers.

My project is an active exploration of the German perspective in German language literature on the Pacific Islands. Acknowledging that I am someone without knowledge of Indigenous Pacific Island languages, I am hopeful that as the authority of academia also begins to shift away from traditional perspectives, new waves of historical reclamation from marginalized and oppressed peoples will continue to grow. The call for accountability and the unveiling of the past from those previously (and still) excluded may be the only way for those in power to reckon with the damage of colonial history.

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