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## The Fifth European Society for Oceanists Conference

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# The Fifth European Society for Oceanists Conference

The next conference of the European Society for Oceanists will be held in Vienna, Austria, at the Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology, from 4 to 6 July 2002, co-hosted by the Austrian-South Pacific Society (Österreichisch-Südpazifische Gesellschaft, OSPG), the Institute for Cultural and Social Anthropology/Vienna University and the Slovenian Academy of Science. The members of the conference committee are Hermann Mückler (chair), Borut Telban (deputy chair) and Margit Wolfsberger (conference secretary).

The general theme for the conference « Recovering the Past: Resources, Representations, and Ethics of Research in Oceania » may be developed around a wide variety of aspects.

The board members of the ESfO have specified 10 subthemes each characterized by a number of key words. The sub-themes will be addressed in working session.

1. The Pacific in Europe : Voyagers, missionaries, administrators, art collectors, tourists writers, dreamers... all of them have represented or imagined Pacific Islanders in one way or another. From the 'bon sauvage' to the most feared cannibal, the different perception of how Pacific islanders are seen have fed the imaginations of European researchers over several centuries. In this session these representations of the Pacific will be discussed and analyzed.

2. Europe in the Pacific : Discoverers, traders, etc., seen through the lens of the 'other' : Early contact and its consequences for the indigenous Pacific populations, the introduction of firearms, money and Christianity, concepts of introduced state, nation and legal-bureaucratic procedures, WWII, economic and environmental changes caused by European exploitation.

3. Pacific Modernities : Cultural change and continuity, transformations of local cultural models, personhood and agency, consumption and exchange, modern myths and rituals, contemporary forms of social organization.

4. Media (Self-)Representation : websites, CD-ROMs, interactive programs at museums, dedicated to indigenous people, produced by academic institutions, but also private initiatives, supply of Oceanic migrants with effective means to re-establish connections, participation in local affairs, people with email access: cultural brokers, middle-persons; authenticity, ethics of knowledge, intellectual copyright, political and scientific implications of the internet and multimedia expressions, use of new technologies to access archives, re-present old cultural data, current cultural claims, redefining the own identity (the conference will have excellent facilities for audio-visual presentations).

5. Histories and Systems: Reconceptualizing 'Connectedness' in Oceania : Exchange, circulation

and migration, historical and regional analysis, globalization and local processes.

6. Property Rights and Resources : Property, ownership, looking at anthropological resources to help characterize new contexts, tracking the use Oceanic peoples made of their own resources in claiming ownership of their old resources, and how they employ their resources to claim ownership of new contexts.

7. Multiculturalism : Cultural differences, cultural identity, ethno-nationalism, liberalism, postcolonialism. Multiculturalism is an epiphenomenon of globalisation and signals a crisis in the definition of nations and cultural groupings aspiring nationhood. Since communal identities are generally founded on exclusions which are oppressive for some or many, multiculturalism reinforces the quest for cultural identities and cultural differences, not only between communities but also between individual members of different cultural groupings.

8. Methodologies : Advocacy, consultancies, ethics, indigenous methodologies, multisited ethnography/fieldwork, participant observation. The transformation of the traditional field for anthropologists challenges the discipline's traditional methodology. An increasing number of professionals are either self-employed as consultant or they act as advocate for their 'informants', while Pacific peoples increasingly claim to have their own, specific 'indigenous methodologies'. At the same time, the globalisation of the world economy and the diaspora of Pacific people across the Pacific Rim demand traditional fieldwork to become multisited. Both developments also raise important ethical issues for anthropology's trademark: participant observation.

9. Environmental Changes : Mining and other environmental challenges, tackling unsustainable forestry, fish stock depletion, damage to coral reefs, overpopulation issues and the environment, conservation using local knowledge, commercial farming developments versus subsistence farming, colonial exploitation of the environment (including the nuclear testing legacy), the implications of global warming for the Pacific.

10. Regional Perspectives : This session offers a focus on specific regional features dealing with the general theme. Proposed sub-sessions : Micronesia, Vanuatu, Anglophone versus francophone countries.

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