

The Coming of the White Bearded Men:  
*The Origin and Development  
of Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki Theory*

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
The Australian National University

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2020

The research presented in this thesis is my own. This thesis has not previously been submitted in any form for any other degree at this or any other university.

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# Abstract

From the late 1930s to his death in 2002, the Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002) relentlessly sought scientific acceptance for his controversial Kon-Tiki Theory. The theory separated the settlement of the Pacific into two different migrating races: the transatlantic culture bearers or white bearded men; and the originally Asiatic warrior race, the Maori-Polynesians. To date very little scholarly attention has been devoted to what influenced Heyerdahl to develop the intensely debated theory. Heyerdahl himself claimed that the theory came to him as an epiphany through encounters during his first journey to Polynesia in 1937.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the origin and development of Heyerdahl's theory by focusing on his 1937 journey to Polynesia. This will be done particularly by targeting three distinguishable tropes of ethnographic travel writing detectable in Heyerdahl's own narration of the theory's origin. These include: Heyerdahl's contrasting of the omniscient traveller and the armchair scientist; the connection he drew between a white race and advanced culture; and his emphasis on being there as the only means to extract knowledge. In Heyerdahl's writing the latter trope also includes a second level which stressed the need to be there not only physically but mentally by performing primitivism.

A central aim of this thesis is also to deconstruct Heyerdahl's autobiography, to extract original chronologies and intentions masked by later improvements from secondary contexts and intentions.

In addition to published sources, the thesis source material consists of archival material such as field-journals, letters and manuscripts. Through these sources the origin and the development of the theory will be analysed from the mid-1930s up until its final publication in 1952. The analysis will focus on the influence Norwegian scientific tradition and Heyerdahl's student years at Oslo University had on the theory. It will also focus on Heyerdahl's knowledge and perceptions of Polynesia prior to his Polynesian journey, and how these perceptions altered when he encountered the real Polynesia. Further, the influence on the theory of Heyerdahl's discovery of material culture and archaeological sites in Polynesia will be considered, as well as how meetings and readings in Europe and North America in the period 1938-1952 influenced the development of the theory.

This thesis concludes that Heyerdahl's theory originated in the contrast between his pre-

journey vision of humanity's natural state and the Polynesia he encountered. This contrast sparked a racist interpretation of Polynesian prehistory, where the Polynesian people were detached from their own prehistory and replaced by a more advanced race. Heyerdahl further defined the origin of this race as the transatlantic white bearded men, through actively choosing to ignore research literature in favour of amateur studies and adventure stories when he developed the theory in Norway and the US. Heyerdahl sought acceptance of the theory by polarising his own knowledge achieved from being there against that of an outdated image of the scientist and scientific institutions, and finally by developing his own fields of specialisation by creating and performing various experiments without attachment to empirical material.

# Preface/Acknowledgement

This research has been conducted as part of the ARC Laureate Project *The Collective Biography of Archaeology in the Pacific: A Hidden History*, hereafter CBAP Project (Spriggs 2017), and funded through research scholarships and grants from the Australian National University and the CBAP Project. For fieldwork in the US additional research funds were granted by the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo.

In addition to this thesis, further results from the research project have been published in three peer-reviewed papers: 'The Head-hunters of the North and the Polynesian Shadow', dealing with Heyerdahl's 1937 human remains collecting act on Fatu Hiva, in the *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* (Melander 2017); 'A Better Savage than the Savages', on Heyerdahl's early attempts on ethnography, published in *The Journal of Pacific History* (Melander 2019b); and 'David's Weapon of Mass-destruction', on the reception of the Kon-Tiki theory and Heyerdahl's *American Indians in the Pacific*, in the *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* (Melander *in press.*). Further, detailed documentation of Heyerdahl's ethnographic/archaeological collection from his 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands has been made available in report form (Melander 2019a).

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to those individuals and institutions that made this thesis possible. First and foremost to the Australian National University, my supervisor Matthew Spriggs and panel-members Hilary Howes, Joakim Goldhahn and Helene Martinsson-Wallin. To Eve Haddow, Andrea Ballesteros-Danel, Michelle Richards, Elena Govor, Emilie Dotte-Sarout, Catherine Fitzgerald, Bronwen Douglas, Guillaume Molle, Sofia Samper-Carro, Felicity Gilbert and Paul Wallin. To the Kon-Tiki Museum and its staff, especially Reidar, Nadja and Marit for their hospitality. To Meghan, Kim, Jennifer and the Brooklyn Museum. To the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, the Norwegian National Library, Oslo University, Umeå University Research Archive, Uppsala University and the National Library of Australia. To encouraging and inspiring voices encountered at conferences and seminars in Australia and Europe. To Linda and her family. To friends, housemates, colleagues, dogs, and others who provided support and relief along the way.

## Notes on terms and language

To ensure consistency, this thesis has used only established English versions of names of various islands, places, cities and countries that appear in the text and bibliography. This means, for instance, that 'Marquesas Islands' is used rather than *îles Marquises*, *Te Henua enana*, *Te Fenua 'Enata*, or other extant names. In the same way, 'Easter Island' has been used instead of Rapa Nui, to avoid confusion with older quotations for instance. This also applies to other Pacific islands mentioned. Similarly, European cities are identified by their English names (Copenhagen and Munich rather than København and München).

Terminology used in the text in languages other than English has been placed in italics; this is above all the case for ethnographic and archaeological terms in various Polynesian languages. Italics have also been used when introducing theoretical terminology, whether this be established or developed for this thesis.

To avoid confusion with actual quotations, quotation marks have been omitted for antiquated and outdated terminology such as 'race', 'race nation', 'white', 'mongoloid', 'primitive' etc. This is merely a stylistic decision and should not be interpreted as any form of acknowledgement of such terminology.

The terms *Archaeology*, *Anthropology*, *Ethnology*, and *Ethnography* are somewhat intertwined in pre-World War II Pacific studies, and not easily separated. There has been no attempt at making any grand definition of the various terms in this thesis, and they are generally applied in line with the commonly used framework for each field. *Anthropology*, however, is separated throughout the text from *Physical Anthropology*, *race studies*, *eugenic studies* etc., even though this separation does not necessarily exist in older contexts.

The terms *Polynesia*, *Melanesia*, *Micronesia* are used in this thesis to refer to the established geographical areas; it has not been necessary for this study to define exactly which islands and atolls are to be included in each area. When referencing more than one of these areas the term *Pacific island world* has been used. The term *East Pacific* in this study refers to the easternmost Polynesian islands in general but might also include, for instance, the Galapagos group. Heyerdahl's theory has been referred to as a *Pacific migration theory* rather than a Polynesian migration theory as his discussion obviously also included Asia and the Americas.

## *Translations*

A substantial part of the source material for this thesis was written in other languages than English, above all Norwegian, but also Danish, Swedish, French and German. Quotations in the aforementioned languages used in the thesis has been translated to English to make the content of the thesis accessible to those not familiar with these languages. This has been the sole purpose of these translations and all argumentation and conclusions are based on the content of original language texts.

For consistency all originally non-English source material texts have been translated even when previous translated versions of these texts exists. The purposes of the re-translations has been to avoid dated adaptations of these works (see further Andersson 2007a).

Translation is a difficult task as content within one language's words, idioms and expression does not necessarily translate well to another. In addition to this there is also the author's style to attend to. For works of fiction a certain amount of freedom of interpretation on the translator's part might be accepted, depending on whether the translator decides to focus on communicating the author's style or the content and intention of the original text. However, for a scientific work there cannot be much if any freedom of interpretation, as such liberties might lead to false conclusions. On the other hand, if the meanings of certain words and expressions are not adapted and altered into suitable counterparts in the target language, the translation becomes impossible to understand and misleading in its own right. Idioms, for instance, need to be translated in relation to content and not necessarily word for word. For this work a certain amount of freedom of interpretation has thus been deemed unavoidable to make the translations comprehensible. To ensure full transparency in this matter, all translations used in this work have been compiled in Appendix I. In this appendix the translated paragraphs can be found in their original language and in the translated form used for this thesis. Where necessary, the appendix also features a comment section including words, terms and expressions that are difficult to translate into the English language and other remarks the reader should be aware of. Each time a translation found in Appendix I appears in the text it is marked by 'TR' followed by a directory number, as for instance 'TR1', meaning that the original quotation, its word for word transcription, translation and necessary comments on the translation are to be found in Appendix I under the directory number indicated.

## *Abbreviations*

**ANU** – The Australian National University.

**AMNH** – The American Museum of Natural History.

**BBC** – British Broadcasting Corporation (British Public Service Media company).

**BRM** – Brooklyn Museum.

**BPM** – Bernice P. Bishop Museum.

**CMC** – The Canadian Museum of Civilization.

**KTM** – Kon-Tiki Museum.

**MGM** – Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (American cinema company).

**NHM** – Naturhistorisk Museum [Museum of Natural History], Oslo University.

**NOK** – Norske kroner [Norwegian kroner].

**NRK** – Norsk rikskringkasting (Norwegian Public Service Media company).

**SR** – Sveriges Radio (Swedish Public Service Media company).

**SVT** – Sveriges Television (Swedish Public Service Media company).

**UiO** – The University of Oslo.

**UiO-NB** – The University of Oslo and National Library of Norway Archive.

**UKA** – University of Kansas Research Archive.



# Chapter 1 – Introduction

Perhaps it all started last winter at a museum office in New York City; or perhaps it had started already ten years earlier on a small island in the Marquesas group in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. I can still vividly recall one evening. The civilised world seemed so unbelievably distant and unreal. We had, as the only white people, spent almost one year on the island. We had purposely left civilisation's good and bad sides behind us. We lived by the sea, in a cabin raised on poles, which we had built ourselves, and only ate what the jungle and the Pacific Ocean provided us with. The harsh and practical experience gave us insight into many of the Pacific's enigmatic research questions. I do believe that we both physically and psychologically closely followed a trail trodden by the first primitive people to reach these islands from an unknown homeland (Heyerdahl 1948a:8-9, TR21).

The quotation comes from the introductory chapter, entitled 'A theory', in the Norwegian adventurer and amateur ethnologist Thor Heyerdahl's (1914-2002) book *Kon-Tiki ekspedisjonen* (1948a). This was Heyerdahl's first real mention of how and why he had taken an interest in Pacific migrations. He described how he and his then wife Liv Torp-Heyerdahl (1916-1969) had travelled in 1937 to the Marquesas Islands in the East Pacific to return to nature. He depicted this as a decisive moment which led him to pursue the mysteries of the Pacific. The 1947 *Kon-Tiki* experimental raft expedition was the crescendo of a decade-long struggle to find acceptance for the hypothesis he had drawn from his experience in the Marquesas. The *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, which saw Heyerdahl and his fellow crew members journey from Peru to Polynesia on a balsa raft they had constructed themselves, propelled Heyerdahl into worldwide fame overnight (1.3), presenting him with a rare opportunity to agitate publicly for his thoughts on Pacific migrations. This was thus an important event for the history of archaeology in the Pacific, as it could be argued that the fame Heyerdahl received from the expedition made him the most influential individual in post-exploration era Pacific archaeology. His influence is not attributable to his very limited and highly controversial theoretical contribution, but to the interest in Pacific archaeology he managed to create among the general public. Countless are the scholars who decided to devote themselves to the Pacific, influenced either directly by Heyerdahl's stories of adventure and mystery, or indirectly to 'prove Heyerdahl wrong', as historian Greg Denning wrote (Denning 2004:47; see also Hagelberg 2014:134).

The main objective of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* had been to verify the possibility of the theory – henceforth referred to as the *Kon-Tiki theory* – the Marquesas journey had inspired.

This theory argued that the Pacific island world had first been settled from the Americas, and not from Asia as the master narrative of contemporary Pacific settlement discourse suggested.

A cultural connection between Polynesia and the Americas was hardly a new idea. It had been suggested already by James Cook in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Kahn & Kirch 2014:35) and was proposed in numerous studies throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ballesteros-Danel *in prep.*; Ellis 1829a-b; de Zuñiga 1814). Earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the idea had been discussed by noted scholars such as Kenneth Emory and Erland Nordenskiöld (Emory 1942; Nordenskiöld 1931). In fact the idea can on occasion still be found today (for an overview of the discussion see for instance Jones et al. (eds.) 2011). However, these recent suggestions, like the work of Nordenskiöld and Emory, generally claim that cultural contacts occurred due to Polynesians reaching American shorelines. Heyerdahl's theory stands in contrast to the abovementioned theories by not just discussing a connection to the American continent, but by explicitly stating that two different races had settled the East Pacific island world, both of them via the American continent. First a transatlantic Caucasian high civilisation race – *the white bearded men* – who had reached Polynesia via South America, and then an Asiatic Stone Age warrior race – *the Maori-Polynesians* – coming via North America (1.4).

The theory was first published at a developmental stage in 1941 (7.2). It reached its largest audience with the publication of the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, and was finally published in full in the 1952 book *American Indians in the Pacific: The theory behind the Kon-Tiki Expedition* (henceforth *American Indians*).

After the publication of *American Indians* Heyerdahl directly involved himself with Pacific archaeology. In late 1952 he organised his first archaeological expedition to the Galapagos Islands. In 1955, Heyerdahl continued his search for supporting evidence for the theory by organising and funding an archaeological expedition to the East Pacific, especially known for its excavations on Easter Island (1.3).

Even though the theory formed the gravitating spot for Heyerdahl's interest in Pacific prehistory, and he spared no means in his search for its verification, the origins of the theory and how Heyerdahl reached his conclusions have scarcely been discussed to date in biographical and scholarly work. The biographical narrative, partly dictated by Heyerdahl himself, has focused on the man and the adventurer, and has been criticised for its hagiographic tendencies (1.7). Pioneering scholarly work has particularly been targeted at how Heyerdahl and his biographers worked to mythologise Heyerdahl's own biography

(Andersson 2007a), as well as raising questions about the racist background and content of Heyerdahl's theory (Andersson 2010; Holton 2004). The historiography of the Kon-Tiki theory, on the other hand, remains a blank spot on the map. The purpose of this thesis is consequently to chart some of this terrain, by discussing the Kon-Tiki theory's origin and development from the mid-1930s up to Heyerdahl's first full publication of the theory in 1952.

This opening chapter will further define the research questions and aims of this thesis (1.1; 1.8). It will present materials used (1.2), theoretical and methodological points of departure (1.6), as well as necessary background presentations on Heyerdahl's biography (1.3), the structure and content of the Kon-Tiki theory (1.4) and an introduction to the Marquesas Islands (1.5).

## 1.1 The Kon-Tiki Theory: A Traveller's Tale?

Historian Axel Andersson's critical analysis of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* has convincingly illustrated how Heyerdahl created a legend of himself and his achievements by continuously reusing and re-framing old material in new settings, improving on his own biography over time (Andersson 2007a:23-74). This stresses the need to approach critically the existing biographical narrative, both to *deconstruct* (1.6.3) it and to create a new reliable chronology of events from archival sources.

Since Heyerdahl was not a scientist but an adventure-traveller with scientific aspirations, the development of his theory needs to be approached with this particular condition in mind. In Heyerdahl's own narrative of the theory's origin and inspiration, three clearly distinguishable themes can be detected, all of which are well-known *tropes* or clichés of ethnographic travel-writing (1.6-1.6.2). As is illustrated in the quotation above, Heyerdahl emphasised the importance of being at the actual location to be able to understand the particulars of the problem in question. He continued this argument by mentioning meetings with people that had influenced him. However, they were not just any people, but special individuals whom isolation had conserved in a pure state of primitivism:

The old man sat thoughtful. He lived for the past and was by all means tied to it. [...] Old Tei Tetua was the last survivor of Fatu Hiva's eastern tribes. He did not know how old he really was, but his wrinkled, bark brown leathery skin looked as if it had been dried by the sun and the wind for a century. He was probably one of the last people on these islands who still

remembered and believed in his father's and grandfather's legends about the great Polynesian chief and deity Tiki, the son of the sun [...] that night I was haunted by Tei Tetua's stories of Tiki [...] I could not sleep. It was as though time had ceased to exist and Tiki and his sea-voyaging men at that very moment were about to make their first landfall (Heyerdahl 1948a:10-11, TR6).

Heyerdahl's description of Tei Tetua suggests that the man was not just the last of his kind, but also almost as old as nature itself. Heyerdahl's phrasing suggests that he had gained insight in pre-historical questions by more or less directly interacting with prehistory itself. The above quotation thus highlights not only Heyerdahl's journey to the Marquesas, but also his direct interaction with people during the journey as an important path for understanding the origin of his theory. This naturally makes his journey the focal point for any study wanting to discuss the Kon-Tiki theory and its influences.

In the introductory chapter to the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, Heyerdahl also used contrasts between 'civilisation' and 'primitive', associating the first with terms such as 'we', 'our race' etc. He thus suggested an identification between white Europeans and civilisation, which was contrasted to primitive and non-European people. This separation between primitiveness and civilisation in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue included a value hierarchy in which so-called advanced material culture and architecture were directly linked to a white race, *Tiki's people*, consequently denying for instance the Polynesians or the Incas their own prehistory:

Our own race, who claimed to be the discoverers of these islands [Polynesia], found cultivated lands and villages with temples and houses on every single inhabitable island. On some they even found old pyramids, paved roads and carved stone statues as tall as four storey buildings in Europe [...] Here [South America] an unknown people had once lived. They founded one of the world's most peculiar cultures, before they suddenly vanished, as if they had been driven off the face of the earth. They left behind them enormous anthropomorphic stone statues which resembled those found on Pitcairn, Marquesas and Easter Island, and huge step-pyramids similar to those on Tahiti and Samoa [...] [The Incas] told the Spaniards that the colossal monuments, which were found dispersed around the landscape, had been made by a race of white gods who had lived there before the Incas seized power over the lands. These vanished master builders were depicted as enlightened and peaceful teachers. They had come from the North at the dawn of time and had taught the Incas' primitive ancestors how to build and farm the land and all their customs. They had been different than other Indians, with white skin, long beards and tall stature [...] The Incas took power over the land, and the white teachers disappeared for ever from South American shores, westward bound straight into the Pacific [...] [In Polynesia] there were entire families that separated themselves from the crowd through their noticeable pale skin-colour, red to blonde hair, blue-grey eyes [...] The Polynesians in contrast had golden brown skin and raven black hair [...] The individuals with red hair called themselves 'urukehu', and said that they descended directly from the islands' first chiefs, Tangaroa, Kane and Tiki, who had all been white gods (Heyerdahl 1948a:11-16, TR2).

This particular theme is not just significant for the outline of Heyerdahl's theory but has also been intensely criticised in later years for its arguably racist content (Holton 2004).

Interestingly enough, Heyerdahl's writing prior to his journey to the Marquesas in 1937 shows no inclusion of this theme at all (Chapter 3), suggesting that it developed out of events either during the journey or in the decade following it.

A third identifiable theme driving the narrative of the Kon-Tiki theory's origin, which also connects to the journey and the need to be at the actual location for intellectual development, can be found in Heyerdahl's description of his antagonistic relationship to academia:

That was how it all got started, by the campfire on a South Seas island, where an old native told me his ancestors' legends and history. Many years later I found myself sitting next to another elderly man, this time in a dark office on the top floor of a large New York City museum. [...] Everywhere you looked there were books. Some of them had been written by one man and read by less than ten men. The old white-haired man, who had read all of the books and even written some of them, sat in good faith behind his desk [...]

- Arguments, he said. You cannot approach ethnographic problems as if they were murder mysteries!

- Why not? I asked. I have based all my conclusions on my own observation and the facts science has put on the table.

- The purpose of science is not to prove this or that, but to review, he calmly said, while carefully pushing the still sealed manuscript to the side of the table (Heyerdahl 1948a:18-19, TR1).

Heyerdahl's use of binary opposition, contrasting the down-to-earth, campfire-enlightened knowledge he had gained in the Marquesas to the dark, top-floor book cave (or Babel's tower) of the museum specialist, serves to illustrate Heyerdahl's belief that scientific specialisation led to an arcane and artificial discussion disconnected from common sense (1.6.2). For Heyerdahl, the settlement of the Pacific island world was a question that could be answered as in a detective story, where the detective's deductive ability ('my own observations') to read the evidence ('the facts') would eventually eliminate the suspects one by one until only the guilty one remained. The specialist (the ethnographer/anthropologist/archaeologist), on the other hand, would get lost among the details and fail to see the larger picture.

To understand Heyerdahl's relationship to science, attention must also be paid to his suggestion that being at the location was not enough, to understand an ethnographical/archaeological problem you also needed to experience it. This is noticeable in the introductory chapter to the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue in Heyerdahl's emphasis that he had

gained his knowledge not just by being in the Marquesas but by closely following the object studied both 'physically and psychologically' (Heyerdahl 1948a:8-9, TR91). He seems to suggest that to study perceived primitive cultures (the object), the ethnographer (the subject) needed to become the object. This is something which directly connects to Heyerdahl's later raft expeditions, suggesting that it was an approach of great importance for his perception of science and scientific studies.

This thesis will analyse how Heyerdahl's 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands came to influence the development of his Kon-Tiki theory, by particularly discussing the importance he placed on *being there*; the connections he made between race and advanced cultures; and his relationship to science and scientists. This will be achieved by *deconstructing* Heyerdahl's own biographical narrative and retracing it through archival sources. The thesis will examine Heyerdahl's education and his perception of Polynesia prior to the Marquesas journey. It will consider his interaction with the people of Polynesia, and his discovery of Polynesian archaeology during the journey, as well as how he worked to develop his experiences in Polynesia into the Kon-Tiki theory in Europe and North America in the late 1930s and 1940s. The thesis will particularly focus on how various well-established tropes of ethnographical travel writing and Heyerdahl's perception of race, science and humanity's origins affected the creation of the theory.

## *1.2 Source Material*

A major component of the source material for this work consists of archival material, such as letters, manuscripts and other unpublished sources. These have been studied above all at the Kon-Tiki Museum in Oslo. The Museum's archival collection also features copies of material from other archives which have been used for this work. These archives include the University of Kansas Archive, The Canadian Museum of Civilization, The Oslo Museum of Natural History, Oslo University and the Norwegian National Library, and material kept in the Heyerdahl family's private collections. Research visits to the Norwegian National Library/Oslo University, the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, and Umeå University Research Archive, have also provided additional source material for this thesis.

### 1.2.1 Letters

The abovementioned archival studies have targeted Heyerdahl's correspondence with professional scientists or other individuals connected to scientific institutions. Therefore, so-called fan mail and personal correspondence have generally been avoided. This is partly due to the private nature of these sources, but also because sample reading of this type of material was found to provide limited relevant information. One obvious exception to this is the correspondence between Heyerdahl and Liv Torp-Heyerdahl and their respective parents during the 1937 Marquesas journey. This exception was made due to the rich detail contained in this correspondence on artefacts, sites, people, and the couple's actions during the journey. Heyerdahl's limited interaction with established scientists and scientific institutions at that time also affected the decision to include this material. The same reason has motivated the less frequent inclusion of correspondence between Heyerdahl and Torp-Heyerdahl during the 1940s.

In the selection process of correspondence material during Heyerdahl's war years (1942-1945) and at the time of preparations for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, the author wishes to acknowledge existing catalogues of these letters at the Kon-Tiki Museum made by Reidar Solsvik, Ragnar Kvam and Axel Andersson – these catalogues have been most helpful in providing an overview of the material.

### 1.2.2 Manuscripts

A few of Heyerdahl's early manuscripts have been of importance for this thesis; all of these are curated by the Kon-Tiki Museum. These include a presentation about Heyerdahl's journey to the Marquesas Islands, held at the Zoology Department of Oslo University on 23 November 1936. The presentation is documented in a handwritten manuscript of some 29 pages with four hand-drawn maps (Heyerdahl1936a).

Two poster-style presentations of Heyerdahl's theory, entitled *Hvem er Hvem av Polynesiene og Indianere?* [Who's who of the Polynesians and the Indians?] (Heyerdahl n.d.c) and *Indianerne på Sydhavsøiene* [South Sea Indians] (Heyerdahl n.d.a, TR23), have also been of the utmost importance for this thesis. Both manuscripts lack known dates. However, based on content, both can be dated to the period between October 1938 and September/October 1939.

This is because neither manuscript could have been made before Heyerdahl met Ivar Fougner, around October 1938 (6.5), and neither of the manuscripts indicates that Heyerdahl had undertaken studies in the Bella Coola area, which he travelled to in late September 1939. The *Who's who* manuscript is also said to have been shown to Thomas Olsen (1897-1969), one of Heyerdahl's benefactors, before Heyerdahl left for Canada in September 1939 (Jacoby 1968:74). The dates are therefore in both cases fairly secure.

Heyerdahl's manuscript *Polynesia and America* (Heyerdahl n.d.b) has also been important for this thesis. The manuscript consists of roughly 600 handwritten pages and represents a draft of the manuscript with the same name that Heyerdahl tried to publish in New York in 1946 (7.4).

### *1.2.3 Miscellaneous*

Other archival material used, above all from the Kon-Tiki Museum, includes advertisements and contracts for Heyerdahl's first book, his Marquesas journey travelogue *På jakt efter paradiset* [Searching for Paradise] (1938a, TR25); various clippings from contemporary newspapers; even Heyerdahl's 1939 tax return and the passport he and Liv used between 1936 and 1946.

For various details surrounding the Marquesas journey and Heyerdahl's and Liv's contacts at the period, their personal scrapbook has been used. The scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.) includes around 200 pages of drawings, photographs, poems, stories and messages. The material is assembled into an artistic narration of the couple's life and relationship from around Easter 1936 (with flashbacks) to early 1941. The scrapbook is both interesting and above all an important source since it includes messages from people the Heyerdahls met and associated with. It is also a contemporary source for the Marquesas journey, as the couple carried the scrapbook with them, and it outlines their journey in a slightly different and more personal manner than Heyerdahl did in his later publications.

For the chronology of the Marquesas journey and above all for Heyerdahl's zoological project, the field-journal he and Liv kept for their zoological collection has provided some important details. This field-journal (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937) is kept by the Natural History Museum of Norway, but was recently published in a report on Heyerdahl's zoological collection (Bakke 2017). A full chronology of the Marquesas journey from known



source material is presented in Appendix II.

Another important unpublished source is the lengthy interview the film-maker Dale Bell conducted with Heyerdahl in the 1980s. The interview is of particular interest as it features details and information which have otherwise been omitted from biographies on Heyerdahl. Since it is a transcript of a filmed interview each page has a reference to the relevant reel, side and page. Consequently, references to this interview are given as follows: Reel (r)/ Side (s)/Page (p.), for instance Bell n.d. r1/s1/p.1.

#### *1.2.4 Source Critical Concerns: Archival Material*

There are obvious source critical concerns to take into account when utilising archival material. First of all, personal correspondence might include jargon, jokes and information only understandable for the individuals involved. An example of this can be seen in a letter sent from *Kon-Tiki Expedition* crew member Bengt Danielsson (1921-1997) to Heyerdahl, in which Danielsson mentions that he had been to see their old friend Rudolf Heß, who happened to be a great admirer of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (Danielsson 1948). As this letter was sent in April 1948 when Heß was held in isolation in prison (e.g. Goda 2007), it seems rather unlikely that Danielsson had actually met Heß or been informed of Heß's opinions of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*. What Danielsson meant by this statement is therefore probably only understandable for himself and Heyerdahl.

It should also be pointed out that manuscripts are unpublished for a reason, and that they do not necessarily represent in full detail what was intended as the final product. However, the manuscripts used in this thesis do not really present this problem, since the presentation at Oslo University was a public lecture, while the two poster-style manuscripts *Who's who* and *South Sea Indians* (1.2.2) were made to be – and seemingly were – presented publicly. The same case can be made for the *Polynesia and America* manuscript as it was shown to scholars in the US and Canada in the 1940s (7.4.2.2). Even the scrapbook can be seen as a semi-public source as the Heyerdahls invited others to participate in its creation with messages and drawings.

### *1.2.5 The Brooklyn Collection*

The source material for this thesis also includes the ethnographic/archaeological collection Heyerdahl and Liv assembled in the Marquesas Islands. The collection is today held by the Brooklyn Museum and was documented for the first time during a research visit in August 2016. It includes some 220 different objects and will be further discussed in chapter 5.

Information about the artefacts in the collection, their provenance and the way they were collected has been compiled from available sources. This includes both curatorial information and archival material from the Brooklyn Museum, as well as information from other archival and published sources researched during this project. A full presentation of the collection and the source material has been compiled in a separate report (Melander 2019a.).

### *1.3 Thor Heyerdahl, a Biographical Note*

Heyerdahl was born in 1914 in the small coastal town of Larvik, located at the mouth of the Oslofjord some 100 km southwest of the Norwegian capital city. He was the first child of Alison (née Lyng) (1873-1965) and Thor Heyerdahl Sr. (1869-1957) – both of his parents had adult children from previous marriages. As a member of the aristocratic Heyerdahl family, Thor Jr. was born into a world of privilege, with servants and immediate wish fulfilment. His father was a captain of industry and the local tycoon; and his mother was a member of the prominent Lyng family (Evensberget 1994:12-14). The only restriction on Heyerdahl's childhood came from his mother's somewhat unorthodox ideas of raising a child. Her overprotective nature has frequently been used in autobiographical and biographical writings as a psychological driving force for the young Heyerdahl, leading him to rebel against his mother by embracing stereotypical ideas about masculinity and physical activity, eventually creating the daredevil adventurer of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*. In a similar manner, autobiographical and biographical works have used the polarised relationship between his parents as a psychoanalytical explanatory model for his later life choices. Thor Sr. and Alison have generally been presented as binary oppositions – Thor Sr. portrayed as a conservative, religious 'Germanist' and Alison as a progressive, Darwinist anglophile – and the clash between these two opposites is said to have created the ethical dilemma of Heyerdahl's life,

namely how to combine Jesus and Darwin (Andersson 2010; Evensberget 1994:12-15; Heyerdahl 1974a:7-31, 1991, 1994:275-277, 1998; Jacoby 1965a:11-54; Kvam 2005:1-81).

After graduating from secondary school in Larvik, evidently the only education Heyerdahl ever completed (2.1.1.1), he moved with his mother to Oslo to study zoology at Oslo University in 1933. The shift from the small town of Larvik to the big city of Oslo was a substantial change for Heyerdahl, who does not seem to have been particularly fond of his new environment. He took every opportunity he could to get out of the city and go for long wilderness expeditions, preferably on skis, accompanied by his dog Kazan and friends from Larvik or the University (2.2).

In late 1935, Heyerdahl met Liv Torp-Coucheron. They were married on Christmas Eve 1936 and directly embarked on the Marquesas journey (Evensberget 1994:11-46; Heyerdahl 1974a, 1991, 1998; Jacoby 1965a:55-78; Kvam 2005:80-226). The journey seemingly came into existence for a variety of reasons. It was planned and even publicly presented as a zoological collecting expedition (chapter 2). However, an alternative motive seems to have been its main reason. Heyerdahl claimed that he wanted to escape from modern civilisation and return to a primitive and purer way of life. A third possible motivation seems to have stemmed from Heyerdahl's relationship with Liv, the journey being the young adventurous couple's honeymoon (chapter 3).

The Marquesas journey was paid for by Heyerdahl's father. Heyerdahl and Liv left Norway at Christmas time 1936. They travelled from Europe by ship to Tahiti, where they acclimatised themselves and sought permits to enter the Marquesas. In mid-March 1937 they landed on the Marquesan island of Fatu Hiva where they would be stationed (Appendix II). They seem to have come into conflict almost immediately with the local inhabitants for various reasons; they also suffered from tropical diseases and malnutrition (4.3.4). In late December 1937, after around 9 months in the Marquesas, they embarked on their journey back to Europe (Appendix II).

In the latter part of 1939, the Heyerdahl couple set out again; this time the goal was the Pacific Northwest coast, particularly the Bella Coola area in British Columbia. The object of this journey/expedition was directly linked to the development of Heyerdahl's theory on Pacific migrations (chapter 7). The journey/expedition was interrupted by World War II, and Heyerdahl joined the Norwegian overseas army in 1942, but was lucky enough to avoid any direct combat. After his service was over, Heyerdahl returned to the US in 1946 to continue

his Pacific studies (7.4). Being unable to receive recognition for his hypothesis on Pacific migration patterns, he decided to organise the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (Evensberget 1994:47-101; Heyerdahl 1948a, 1950a, 1998; Jacoby 1965a:79-231; Kock-Johansen 2003:23-37; Kvam 2005:227-455, 2008:16-60).

The *Kon-Tiki* experimental raft expedition, undertaken in 1947 with compatriots Erik Hesselberg (1914-1972), Torstein Raaby (1918-1964), Knut Haugland (1917-2009), Herman Watzinger (1910-1986), and the Swedish anthropologist Danielsson, took Heyerdahl's self-made balsa log raft from Callao in Peru to Raroia Atoll in the Tuamotus, French Polynesia, a journey of some 100-odd days at sea. The expedition travelogue, first issued in Norway, but later worldwide, was a marketing success initiated by the Danish-Swedish publisher Adam Helms (1904-1980). The book is estimated to have sold more than 50 million copies, not including the numerous bootleg copies that circulated in communist countries like Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and Cuba, where Heyerdahl was especially popular. Raw footage taken by the crew during the expedition was edited into an Academy Award-winning documentary (*Kon-Tiki* 1950), praised by noted film theorists like André Bazin (Andersson 2007a-b, 2010; Bazin 1958; Dahl 2002; Evensberget 1994:47-101; Heyerdahl 1948a, 1950a, 1998; Jacoby 1965a:79-231; Kock-Johansen 2003:23-37; Kvam 2005:227-455, 2008:16-60).

In hindsight, the massive attention given to six men rafting in the Pacific might seem exaggerated. It should be remembered, though, that at the time of the expedition the Pacific Ocean still represented one of the world's great beyonds. Roald Amundsen had reached the South Pole only 35 years earlier, and it would be another 14 years before Yuri Gagarin ventured into space. The expedition was also undertaken in the wake of the horrors of World War II, and for a rebuilding world, an expedition showcasing humanity's ability, through the ages, to overcome seemingly unfathomable obstacles was at the time an urgently feel-good story.

Following extended lecture tours, work on the expedition travelogue and the documentary film, Heyerdahl again found time in 1949-1951 to finish the first full presentation of his Kon-Tiki theory. However, the resulting book *American Indians* was not particularly successful among either the scientific community or the general public (7.5.2). Possibly as a reaction to the lukewarm reception of *American Indians*, Heyerdahl redirected his focus in the early 1950s towards organising archaeological expeditions to the Pacific, with the aim of finding convincing proof of his theory's accuracy. His first archaeological expedition went to the

Galapagos Islands in late 1952 and early 1953. Heyerdahl decided to bring professional archaeologists with him on the expedition, Erik K. Reed (1914-1990) and Arne Skjølsvold (1925-2007), something which became a routine for his subsequent expeditions (Heyerdahl 2000a; Jacoby 1965a:254-271; Kock-Johansen 2003:48-52; Kvam 2008:127-133; Skjølsvold 1989). The expedition led to the discovery, in the Galapagos group, of traces of human activity, claimed by the expedition party to date from pre-Columbian times (Heyerdahl 1955, 1963a, 1978:239-252; Heyerdahl & Skjølsvold 1956). This interpretation was later disputed and pre-Columbian occupation of the Galapagos group is today generally seen as unlikely (Anderson et al. 2016; Flett & Haberle 2008; Froyd et al. 2010; Plischke 1961; Suggs 1967).



*Illustration 1: Thor Heyerdahl (right) and William Mulloy (left) in 1956 during the Easter Island Expedition's excavation campaign on Rapa Iti. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

Spurred on by the successful outcome of the *Galapagos Expedition*, Heyerdahl started planning for a new and more comprehensive archaeological expedition. Eventually realised as the *Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and the East Pacific* (henceforth *Easter Island Expedition*), it brought an entire ship and crew to Easter Island, Pitcairn Island, Rapa Iti, Raivavae and the Marquesas Islands for an almost year-long excavation project. The

crew included the archaeologists William Mulloy (1917-1978), Carlyle Smith (1915-1993), Ed Ferdon (1913-2002), Skjølsvold, and Gonzalo Figueroa (1931-2008). The reports and proceedings of the massive enterprise were published in two large scientific volumes and in a popular travelogue. Heyerdahl personally financed both the expedition and the publication of the scientific volumes. The expedition was the most extensive archaeological project on Easter Island to that date; it also aided in the establishment of the island's modern tourism industry (Heyerdahl 1957; 1976; Heyerdahl & Ferdon (eds.) 1961, 1965; Kvam 2008:127-227, 278; Martinsson-Wallin 2007a, 2014; Solsvik 2014; see also Golson 1965, 1968; Holton 2004).

The interest Heyerdahl had shown in financing and organising large archaeological expeditions in the Pacific area was most likely a major contributing factor to his 1961 election as a member of the board – together with leading names of Pacific archaeology: Kenneth Emory (1897-1992), Alexander Spoehr (1913-1992), Wilhelm G. Solheim II (1924-2014), Ichiro Yawata (1902-1987) and Roger Green (1932-2009) – for the *Pacific Archaeology Program* at the 10<sup>th</sup> Pacific Science congress (Green 1961; Jacoby 1968:271-274; Kvam 2008:266-268). Despite the prominent position Heyerdahl had reached within Pacific archaeology circles, the expeditions had failed to present any new evidence to support his theory, which was still considered as unlikely (Bushnell 1963; Emory 1962, 1963a, 1968; Golson 1965, 1968; Hawthorn 1963; Vérin 1970). Heyerdahl subsequently decided in the mid-1960s to redirect his interests towards the Atlantic.

In the late 1960s Heyerdahl created the two reed ships *Ra I* and *Ra II* to demonstrate the feasibility of prehistoric Atlantic transoceanic voyaging. Another reed boat experiment, the *Tigris Expedition*, was carried out in the late 1970s. The 1970s also saw Heyerdahl reinventing himself as a cosmopolite, spokesperson for world peace and environmentalist, and publishing several re-editions and compilations of works from his previous projects (Evensberget 1994:169-236; Heyerdahl 1968a-b, 1970, 1974a-b, 1976, 1978, 1979; Kvam 2008, 2013).

In the 1980s Heyerdahl returned to archaeology and work resembling his 1950s projects. He participated in the Kon-Tiki Museum's excavation campaigns on Easter Island, led by Skjølsvold (Heyerdahl 1989a-b; 1998, Kock-Johansen 2003:139-151; Kvam 2013; Skjølsvold (ed.) 1994). Heyerdahl made no modifications to his theory on the settlement of Easter Island, even though Skjølsvold presented convincing evidence connecting the island's earliest

settlements with the Polynesians (Kock-Johansen 2003:139-151). Together with Skjølsvold, Erling Mikkelsen and Øystein Kock-Johansen, Heyerdahl also conducted archaeological excavations in the Maldives (Heyerdahl 1986, 1988; Kock-Johansen 2003:101-137; Skjølsvold (ed.) 1991; see also Litster 2016). As with the *Ra* and *Tigris* expeditions, Heyerdahl's work on the Maldives was an extension of his Pacific migration theory. He argued that the structures and objects discovered were the remains, temples and bath houses of an ancient Middle-Eastern high civilisation people called 'Redin' (Heyerdahl 1986), sharing all the same characteristics as his Caucasian first settlers of Polynesia. As with Easter Island, Skjølsvold did not share this interpretation and instead argued that the discovered remains were Buddhist shrines, predating the introduction of Islam to the Maldives by Arab traders (Skjølsvold (ed.) 1991).

In addition to these projects, Heyerdahl also led a large excavation campaign at Tucume in Peru and a smaller one at the so-called Pyramids of Güimar on Tenerife. Both sites were used, similarly to his earlier archaeological projects, as supporting evidence for the Kon-Tiki theory. Heyerdahl interpreted the sites as stepping stones for his Caucasian high civilisation group's Atlantic and Pacific crossings (Heyerdahl 1993; Heyerdahl et al. 1995; Kock-Johansen 2003:181-196).

By the 1990s Heyerdahl had attained iconic status in his home country, being voted the Norwegian of the century, and joining Liv Ullman as master of ceremonies at the opening of the 1994 Olympic Games in Lillehammer (Anon. XV. 1998; Kvam 2013; LOOC n.d.). His reputation in his homeland was somewhat tarnished by his last archaeological project, *The Hunt for Odin*. Heyerdahl's idea that the Norse mythological deity Odin was an actual man who had originated in the Caucasus was brutally criticised and accurately labelled as pseudo-science in Norway (Haavardsholm 1999, 2001; Heyerdahl 1999a-b, 2000b-c; Heyerdahl & Lillieström 1999, 2001; Hovdhaugen et al. 2000; Keller 1999; Kock-Johansen 2003:181-211; Lillieström 2001; Roggen, V. (ed.) 2014; Steinsland 2000a-b). The Odin theory was created using similar methodological approaches as his Pacific migration theory; it also connected to the same concept of a Mesopotamia/Caucasus/Anatolia origin for a migrating highly advanced people spreading out over the world from Norway to Easter Island.

From the 1980s until the final days of his life, Heyerdahl planned several other archaeological projects that never materialised, in places as far distant as Morocco, Australia, Cuba and Samoa (Kock-Johansen 2003:211-245); only the latter was ever undertaken, but

without Heyerdahl's involvement (Martinsson-Wallin et al. 2003; Martinsson-Wallin (ed.) 2007b). Heyerdahl's original intent with all of these projects was to continue tracing the migration path of his Caucasian high civilisation people, through the distribution of various 'step-pyramid' structures (Kock-Johansen 2003:211-245). Heyerdahl therefore spent more or less his entire life looking for evidence for the existence of his white bearded men and for popular and scientific approval of his theory.

## *1.4 The Kon-Tiki Theory*

For such a well-known figure, who so strongly advocated a particular theory, it is surprisingly common to find confusion over the essence of Heyerdahl's theory. In various works supporting, criticising or even ridiculing Heyerdahl's theory, it is not uncommon to find claims that he argued that 'South Americans', 'Amerindians', 'Peruvians' or 'Incas' had originally settled Polynesia (e.g. Langdon 2001:70; Skolmen 2000; see also Schuhmacher 1976:807, who pointed to this problem already in the 1970s). In a paper analysing the Easter Island gene pool, Erik Thorsby wrote:

Some of this evidence as well as the similarities between the giant stone statues (moai) on Easter Island (and some other Polynesian islands) with pre-inca [*sic.*] stone statues and platforms in Tiahuanaco at Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, led Thor Heyerdahl to propose that eastern Polynesia, including Easter Island, was first populated by Amerindians (Thorsby 2012:812-813).

In fact Heyerdahl did nothing of the sort. Since the objective of this thesis is to discuss and analyse the origin and development of Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory, it is of course essential first of all to present the actual theory and its content. As Heyerdahl on occasion gave the impression that he wanted to be taken seriously as a scientist, and had this aim with the theory, the following presentation of it is based on his 1952 *American Indians* rather than on his popular works, and does not include any of Heyerdahl's later additions to the theory as he started to trace the roots of the white bearded men across the Atlantic. This component was obviously already of importance for Heyerdahl in the 1950s as it is hinted at in *American Indians* (e.g. Heyerdahl 1952:340-345, plate XXXIII; see also Heyerdahl 1948a:7-17, 1949a,



1950b-c; Skottsberg 1949a). However, the main focus of *American Indians* was on the question of the settlement of Polynesia (Heyerdahl 1952:344).

Heyerdahl liked to refer to *American Indians* as a detective story, examining the clues left behind in order to solve the mystery (e.g. Heyerdahl 1998:94-95; see also 1.1). *American Indians* was also written like a British turn-of-the-century detective novel, with the author examining the existing evidence over and over again in relation to each of the suspects. This is not just tiresome to read, but also creates certain problems when summarising the theory, which is heightened by the fact that the more than 800-page book does not feature a conclusion or a summary. This section will therefore provide a summary of the theory as well as an overview of the key components of Heyerdahl's argument.

### *1.4.1 The Maori-Polynesians and the White Bearded Men*

The essence of the theory Heyerdahl launched in *American Indians*, referred to in this thesis as the Kon-Tiki theory, was the dividing of the settlement of Polynesia into two different migration waves.

The first group to settle Polynesia were the so-called *white bearded men*. The white bearded men appear under various names in Heyerdahl's different publications but are always defined by the same characteristics; they were fair-skinned, blue-eyed, fair- or red-haired, tall, and bearded. In *American Indians* they were generally presented as a Caucasian race group.

Heyerdahl connected cultural behaviour and mentality with physical appearance in *American Indians* – as well as in other publications. In other words, his work was based on definitions of various separate *race nations* where material culture, cultural practice, language, behaviour, and intellectual capacity were connected to biology; put simply, the colour of your skin or shape of your head could determine what kind of person you were, or what kind of pots you made, etc. The white bearded men were thus also associated with a range of different cultural concepts.

Heyerdahl defined these cultural concepts as so-called high culture or high civilisation aspects. The white bearded men were 'peaceful', 'culture bearers', 'sun-worshippers', 'highly skilled navigators', and 'stone carvers' among other things. In *American Indians* they were defined as a wandering people, the founders of the great civilisations of Central and South America, who had brought and taught civilisation to other race nations.

The specified traditions of light-skinned and bearded founders of culture were most prominent and complete among the Aztec, Maya, Chibcha, and Inca nations, that is, among the natives with the highest cultural standing in the New World, and we have also ample evidence to verify that these historic nations really did owe their cultural standing to other people with even more impressive high-cultures, who had been active in just these same localities in earlier times. These original culture-bearers are known to us only through their archaeological remains, chiefly consisting of deserted ecclesiastical sites (Heyerdahl 1952:284).

Heyerdahl defined the white bearded men's archaeological remains as various types of stone monuments, especially anthropomorphic stone statues and step-pyramids, and he consequently believed that the migratory movements of the white bearded men could be traced through the distribution of such monuments.

He further wrote that the white bearded men had been forced into exile by another invading race nation around the year AD 500. Led by the culture hero *Con-Ticci Viracocha* (a sun-god and priest-king), they left the Tiahuanaco area of modern Bolivia and took refuge in the Pacific Ocean, subsequently becoming the first settlers of East Polynesia. The remains of their stone monument culture could be found above all on the Marquesas Islands and Easter Island (Heyerdahl 1952, particularly pages 179-425, 621-764).

The white bearded men lived in Polynesia for some 500-600 years before their position was threatened by a new migration wave. This second wave of migrants, referred to by Heyerdahl as the *Maori-Polynesians*, were of Asian origin and spoke an Austronesian language. They had migrated out of their original homeland in Southeast Asia in a remote past and spread out over parts of East Asia, finally crossing a land-bridge existing at the time in the Bering Strait area into the American continent. According to Heyerdahl, the Maori-Polynesians were of the 'yellow-brown race', a racial admixture between the original Asian 'Indo-American race' and the later 'Mongoloid race'. They had reached Polynesia at a late date around AD 1000/1100 by travelling in canoes from the American Northwest Coast (Kwakiutl area of British Columbia). The first land they settled was the Hawaii group, which Heyerdahl claimed to be the mythical Hawaiki of Polynesian legends. From Hawaii, their migration continued on through Samoa and the Society Islands to the furthest eastern and western extent of the Polynesian triangle.

The Maori-Polynesians were fishermen specialised in wood-carving and had a 'warrior spirit'. Upon first contact between the groups, the Maori-Polynesians quickly either eliminated or assimilated the white bearded men. The white bearded men only rarely survived in Polynesia, but Heyerdahl argued that their superior racial characteristics allowed them to

reach the top of the newly formed societies (Heyerdahl 1952, particularly pages 69-216, 709-764).

### *1.4.2 Key Components of the Argumentation*

The key component or essence of Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory is his division of the settlement of Polynesia into two different migration waves: one explaining the origin of the first settlers, and one explaining the origin of the actual Polynesians. *American Indians* is perhaps best described as an amateur ethnological study, with its comparison of different defined cultural groups and their interactions.

To argue for this dual migration hypothesis, Heyerdahl employed a type of cross-disciplinary approach, bringing in material from various fields and disciplines. He claimed that this method of compiling material from various scientific fields stood in stark contrast to contemporary specialisation in science, and that he, as the compiler of information, was the only one who could see the larger picture (Heyerdahl 1952:3-9, 1991:88). For scientific support of this claim, Heyerdahl repeatedly referenced (see 1952:8-9) Edward Handy's (1892-1980) 1930 paper 'The problem of Polynesian origins'. In the paper, without favouring any scenario, Handy presented the large corpus of existing Polynesian migration theories and the material to support them. He concluded that for a full understanding of the migration process one needed to have an open mind and not be 'dogmatic' (Handy 1930a). Heyerdahl thus used Handy's paper as a supportive voice for his own antagonism towards perceived dogmatic scientific specialists (2.1) – even though this was of course not Handy's original intention. Handy was a scientific specialist himself, and of course well aware that the type of cross-disciplinary approach Heyerdahl used was the standard approach for Pacific archaeology/anthropology studies of the period. Pacific archaeology/anthropology up to the 1950s more or less exclusively relied on combining elements from various disciplines, most commonly including ethnography, archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, studies of myths and legends, studies of historical sources, and botany and zoology (e.g. Buck 1945, 1950, 1954; Fornander 1878-1885; Gregory 1921, 1923, 1924). Heyerdahl's cross-disciplinary approach therefore should not be viewed as in opposition to the prevailing research tradition, but as following the same lines.

The cross-disciplinary approach meant that Heyerdahl, in *American Indians*, notoriously

used a long list of sources to argue for his dual migration theory, discussing more or less everything from how frizzy people's hair was to the leaf shape of different sorts of pineapples. To address all of these aspects would require a very lengthy text. However, *American Indians* masks its straightforwardness and simplicity in repetition and plenteous material. All of the various details and arguments Heyerdahl presented were used to define separate race nations, and to study the distribution of these race nations' traits to detect their migration patterns. The various details are just small parts of a larger structure, and all of Heyerdahl's arguments can be defined under three overarching categories, identified in this thesis as *Biological ethnology*, *Cultural ethnology* and *Geographical ethnology*, with all categories overlapping with each other at various points.

#### *1.4.2.1 Biological Ethnology – Physical Anthropology and Race*

As stated above, Heyerdahl's argumentation rests on the concept of race nations, where cultural aspects were viewed as part of biological composition. The two different races that entered Polynesia were defined by different sets of characteristics, separating them by physical appearance as well as cultural aspects and even different mental abilities, thereby creating a definable race or race nation. Heyerdahl's belief in a fixed relationship between mental capacity, cultural behaviour and physical appearance identifies him as a biological determinist and closely positions him with the eugenics movements of the 1920s and 1930s (3.2.1, 6.3.1.1-2).

In *American Indians* and other works, Heyerdahl's argument relied on the assumption that there was a fixed value hierarchy between various races. In *American Indians* the culture-bearing white bearded men stood at the top of this hierarchy, followed by the Maori-Polynesians, and at the bottom were the Melanesians (see Heyerdahl 1952:181-209). The Melanesians, whose existence in Polynesia had been defined through so-called 'Negroid elements' in the craniological data (Sullivan 1921, 1922, 1923), were obviously a complication for Heyerdahl's dual migration theory, especially as he could hardly argue against the craniological data since he was simultaneously using it to support the existence of the other two race nations (see Heyerdahl 1952:15-16, 20, 24-25, 50-55, 181-189). He therefore used the value hierarchy he had defined and argued that the Melanesians' race characteristics meant that they had been unable to reach Polynesia by themselves; the task

was too challenging, and they did not have the necessary biological prerequisites:

There is only one logical conclusion to be drawn; if there were any Melanesians at all on these islands before the Maori-Polynesians came, their early companions – the creators of the cyclopean stone monuments found on some islands – must have been good seamen. Certainly they must have been in need of manual labour, if not slaves (Heyerdahl 1952:187).

As the quotation suggests, for Heyerdahl the only option to explain the Melanesians' appearance in the Polynesian craniological data was that they had been brought along by another superior race as slaves. To put it bluntly, he thought that sailing and navigating was too advanced for black people.

This race hierarchy existed in a similar way between the white bearded men and the Maori-Polynesians, even though both of these groups were capable of maritime travel. However, the ability to create stone sculptures and other aspects defined by Heyerdahl as culture-bearing or trademarks of high civilisation was a biological impossibility for the Maori-Polynesians. They could not, therefore, have made the large anthropomorphic stone statues or *marae* (*me'ae*, *ahu* etc.) sites of Eastern Polynesia. Heyerdahl used a value hierarchy which placed white in front of yellow-brown, and yellow-brown in front of black.

Heyerdahl also used biological determinism and racial separation to argue against a direct Asian origin for the two migration waves. He argued that the idea, reasonably well accepted at the time, of an Austral-Papuan or black racial barrier separating the fair-skinned populations of Asia from their Polynesian counterparts posed an impossibility for a direct migration from Southeast Asia to Polynesia (Heyerdahl 1952:14-18, 50-55).

The idea of *Biological ethnology* (race definitions and distributions) thus constitutes one of the keys to Heyerdahl's argumentation. Compositions of set physical, mental and cultural traits and capacities were presented and played out against each other, defining the two migration parties' key components and excluding a third possible group, while also limiting the possibility of a direct Asian origin for any of the migration parties concerned.

#### *1.4.2.2 Cultural Ethnology – Stone Age Culture and Culture Heroes*

In Heyerdahl's argumentation, as noted above, ethnography, cultural aspects, and material culture were considered component parts of the race or race nation and directly associated with biology. Comparisons between different types of material culture or architectural features

(such as step-platforms or anthropomorphic stone statues) were therefore as much a part of the racial discussion as comparisons between hair colour or cranial features. Even though Heyerdahl is best known for his comparisons between stone statues in South America and Polynesia, he generally only used material culture and architectural comparisons of this kind as supporting arguments to trace the geographic distribution of the race nation. Instead his key argument for locating the origin of the different migration waves rested on the existence of Stone Age cultures at the time given for Polynesia's first settlement.

In this regard chronology was important, and Heyerdahl advocated distinct dates for the two different migration waves, both of which can be seen as fairly late, around AD 500 for the first migration wave, and around AD 1000 for the second (Heyerdahl 1952:33-67). The late dates were of great importance, as they suggested to Heyerdahl that a direct migration from Asia could be excluded due to the fact that Polynesia had a Stone Age culture, and Stone Age culture existed only on the American continent at the time Polynesia had been settled; this prevented a direct migration from Asia, but did not exclude one from the Americas (Heyerdahl 1952:13-34, 220). Asia had moved on from the Stone Age to the Metal Age before Polynesia was settled, making a direct migration from Asia unthinkable. However, Heyerdahl noted that the race nation composition of the Maori-Polynesians did suggest an origin in Asia. He therefore argued that the Maori-Polynesians had not reached Polynesia directly from their Asian homeland but had travelled via the North American continent.

One of the key arguments supporting this hypothesis was linguistics, the distribution of the Austronesian languages. Heyerdahl argued that the Maori-Polynesians were a branch of the original Southeast Asian Indo-American Austronesian speaking race. That they still had a Stone Age culture upon reaching Polynesia, but spoke an Austronesian language, could only imply that they had departed from their Asiatic homeland long before AD 1000. They had thus migrated out of Asia but not directly to Polynesia. The migration route had to be longer both in time and space, to be able to account for the fact that the Maori-Polynesians had not been influenced by the emergence of metal-working in Asia (Heyerdahl 1952, particularly pages 11-178).

Comparative linguistics, in which different words and place names were compared – most famously the word *Kumara*, used for the sweet potato in parts of Oceania and South America (e.g. Ballard et al. (eds.) 2005; Dixon 1932; Ladefoged et al. 2005) – was a well-established branch of Polynesian studies long before Heyerdahl. It was also an integral part of his race

nation definition. Heyerdahl used this method to trace the route taken by the Maori-Polynesians, referring to similarities he claimed to have found between place names in British Columbia and Polynesia, perhaps most evident in the case of 'Hawaiki' and 'Hawaii' (Heyerdahl 1952:169-172).

An important *cultural ethnology* argument used by Heyerdahl, especially for defining the white bearded men's existence, was his use of a *cultural hero* interpretation of mythology, where mythological narratives were interpreted as based on historical events. That is to say, Heyerdahl imagined that a creation or origin myth was based on a real event, and that individuals figuring in the myths and legends had once been actual living persons: 'Inca historical traditions were not fiction or fairy-tales, although full of superstition. They were sincere and deliberate efforts to memorize events as they and their ancestors had seen and interpreted them' (Heyerdahl 1952:227).

For Heyerdahl this meant, for instance, that he interpreted stories about white deities in Aztec and Inca legends as direct proof of the existence of an earlier group of white people living in the Americas. Mythology was not viewed as a way of detecting belief systems or cultural practices, but as providing access to direct historical sources revealing events of prehistory. Most famously, Heyerdahl used the Inca legend about the white sun deity Con-Ticci Viracocha and his migration over the ocean, connecting this to the famous legend of the first settler of Easter Island, Hotu Matu'a. The ancient legends and mythologies on one side of the Pacific spoke of a departing migration party of white culture-bearing men, and on the other side in Polynesia, there were legends of the first settlers arriving from the other side of the ocean (Heyerdahl 1952:228-284 – a brief summary appears on page 284).

The Polynesian *Manahune* legends, which speak of different populations existing in Polynesia, were also commonly used by Heyerdahl as a kind of historical evidence for the existence of more than one race nation in Polynesia (Heyerdahl 1952:184-192; see also Handy 1927; 1930b; Henry 1928; Kirch 1984:9). Just as with physical anthropology, mythologies, language and material culture were used to define the existence of race nations and trace their spread in the Pacific area.

#### *1.4.2.3 Geographical Ethnology – Ocean Currents and Trade Winds*

The third main component of argumentation in *American Indians* rested in the natural

sciences but was also directly linked to the bio-cultural notion of races and their capacities and limitations. In general, Heyerdahl's arguments represent a strongly biological determinist world view, where human beings were bound to their race groups and viewed as animals in a Darwinian concept, and where human migrations were bound by the laws and limitations of the surrounding nature and environment. Most famously, it was of the greatest importance to Heyerdahl to display how trade winds and ocean currents limited the possibilities of migration.

For these *Geographical ethnology* aspects of the argumentation, the chronology of the settlement was again of importance. For Heyerdahl the very late settlement dates implied that older theories of sunken continents and migrations over land-bridges were not an option for such a recent migration. The settlement of Polynesia must have occurred over the sea, implying that the direction of ocean currents and trade winds needed to be taken into account. Heyerdahl argued that the Humboldt Current would have provided the most accessible route, as it effectively carried whatever came in its way from the Peruvian coast out to Polynesia – as he had demonstrated with the Kon-Tiki raft in 1947. The wind conditions, he believed, also favoured such a direction. Heyerdahl therefore considered the most reasonable scenario to be a migration from the Americas into Polynesia, while the Asian side did not provide the same favourable conditions (Heyerdahl 1952:161-168, 511-620).

All of these three main criteria of Heyerdahl's argumentation illustrate a very strictly deterministic mindset. In Heyerdahl's world of ideas, human beings were bound by their assigned racial characteristics and the conditions of nature. There was only one possible interpretation of historical sources such as myths. In *American Indians* there are no variables, methodological reviews or source critical aspects, only a single determined *truth* revealed by the autodidact author's deductive reasoning.

## 1.5 Heyerdahl and the Marquesas Islands

As mentioned in the introduction, in his first reminiscence of his theory's origin, Heyerdahl emphasised the 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands as a pivotal moment. Even though Heyerdahl might be more closely connected in popular imagination to Easter Island, the Marquesas appears with a perhaps even higher frequency in his bibliography and biography. He debuted as an author with the travelogue *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) describing the



journey. Heyerdahl would on two later occasions issue re-edited and heavily altered versions of this book: the 1974 *Fatu Hiva: Back to Nature* and the 1991 *Grønn var jorden på den syvende dag* (Published in English in 2007 as *Green was the Earth on the seventh day*). Since the Marquesas Islands are not well-known outside of Polynesian archaeology and Pacific history circles, a brief introduction has been deemed necessary for the discussion to follow.



*Illustration 2: Map of the Pacific Ocean. Map by Victor Melander. ©*

### *1.5.1 The Marquesas Islands*

The Marquesas Islands are an island group in the Southeast Pacific Ocean, administratively belonging to French Polynesia, and consisting of some 15 islands. They are located around 1,400 km northeast of Tahiti and some 4,800 km from the closest continental landmass, Central America. The combined landmass of the Marquesas Islands is just over 1000 km<sup>2</sup>,

roughly comparable in total to the island of Tahiti. All of the islands are volcanic in nature and have a dry tropical climate. Particularly important for the Marquesas Islands are mountainous landscapes creating high-altitude plateaus and open jungle-covered valleys. The valleys, which have traditionally been the inhabited areas, are horseshoe-shaped, separated from each other by mountain ridges and opening towards the ocean (e.g. Allen 2004:145-147; Brousse et al. 1978; Cauchard & Inshauspe 1978; Kellum-Ottino 1971:17-30; Rolett 1998:19-40).

The fauna consists mainly of maritime animal life, insects and birds. The Marquesas lack non-human introduced terrestrial mammals, and the archipelago has been heavily altered by human impact (Anderson 2002; Huebert 2015; Huebert & Allen 2016; Kirchman & Steadman 2007; Millerström & Coil 2008; Rolett 1992, 1998:90-117; Steadman & Rolett 1996).

The Marquesas Islands are commonly divided into a Northern and a Southern group, with the islands Nuku Hiva, Eiao, Ua Pou and Ua Huka being the larger and more important ones in the Northern group, and Hiva Oa, Tahuata and Fatu Hiva the larger ones in the Southern group. The division is predominately geographical, but also has some linguistic relevance, as the Marquesan language is divided into Southern and Northern dialects. However, the division into these two groups is a simplification which does not take into account other regional variations and dialects. The practical implication of the linguistic differences is that, for instance, place names, archaeological and ethnographical monuments and objects may have different names, pronunciations and spellings depending on region (see further Handy 1923; Linton 1923, 1925; Suggs 1961a, 1962; Thomas 1990a).

### *1.5.2 Early History of the Marquesas Islands*

When the Marquesas group was first settled by humans is still debated, with modern research suggestions ranging from as early as AD 700 to as late as around AD 1200, but generally settling on around AD 1000 (e.g. Anderson 1995, 2000; Anderson & Sinoto 2002; Anderson et al. 1994; Allen & McAlister 2013; Conte 1995, 2002; Conte & Anderson 2003; Kirch 1986; Molle & Conte 2011; Rolett 1993, 1996, 1998; Rolett & Conte 1996; Spriggs & Anderson 1993; Wilmshurst et al. 2011). The settling of the Marquesas Islands has been, and still is, of importance for the broader understanding of human colonisation of the Eastern Polynesian area, in particular the role of the Marquesas Islands as a possible point of origin for later settlement of the Hawaii group (e.g. Allen 2014; Allen & McAlister 2010; Anderson & Sinoto

2002; Rolett et al. 1997; Sinoto 1968, 1970, 1983; Suggs 1961a; Wilson 2012, 2014).

The established Marquesan cultural sequence positions the earliest settlements on beach sites (as for instance the important dune-site at Hane on Ua Huka), with a gradual expansion and later settlement predominately in the inland valleys. The valleys are also marked by the presence of megalithic architectural remains, such as *paepae* (dwelling platforms), *tohua* (community centres and dance arenas), and *me'ae* (temple sites) (e.g. Allen 2004, 2009; Allen & Addison 2002, 2003; Chavallion 2003; Chavallion & Olivier 2005a-b, 2007; Linton 1925; Millerström 2003; Molle 2011, 2013; Molle & Conte 2011; Rolett 1998, 2010; Sinoto 1979; Skjølsvold 1972; Suggs 1961a).

As with other Pacific island cultures, subsistence strategies were varied, including maritime food sources, agriculture and arboriculture, as well as keeping domesticated animals such as pigs and chickens (e.g. Addison 2001, 2006, 2007a-b, 2008a-b; Allen et al. 2011; Conte & Poupinet 2002; Huebert et al. 2010; Leach et al. 1997; Rolett 1998:90-177; Sinoto 1979:110-120; Suggs 1961a:174-195).

The socio-political structure encountered in the Marquesas Islands by early European explorers has been widely discussed in relation to other Polynesian and Melanesian social structures. In particular, the more flexible social hierarchy, and chiefs having ceremonial rather than worldly power, have been identified as contrasting examples to other, more monarchic Polynesian cultures, such as those of Hawaii and Tonga. Despite this, Marquesan social structure was still deeply stratified, with several different specialist occupations within local tribes (Allen 2010; Drioult-Gérard 1940; Goldman 1970; Kirch 1991; Maranda 1964; Sahlins 1958; Thomas 1990a).

The material culture consists of objects made out of naturally occurring raw materials, such as basalt and organic material (hair, shell, wood, bone, bark, feathers etc.). The Marquesas Islands are particularly known for aesthetically appealing artwork in the form of wood-carvings, tattooing, bone objects and also stone carvings. The Marquesan *Tiki-style* can be documented to at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but has not been found on objects from the earliest settlement phase (e.g. Handy, E. 1923; Handy, W. 1922, 1925, 1938; Ivory 2001; Kjellgren & Ivory 2005; Linton 1923; Ottino 1992a-b; Rolett 1986, 1998:182-249; Sinoto 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1979; von den Steinen 1925, 1928a-b; Suggs 1961a-b).

Pottery has also been discovered on a few occasions during archaeological excavations (Sinoto 1966, 1979:120-121; Suggs 1961a:95-98). The finds are few and far between,

suggesting that pottery was never a part of the Marquesan material culture sequence, but more likely represented exotic imports, something that is also supported by temper sand analysis (Allen et al. 2012; Dickinson & Shutler 1974; Dickinson et al. 1998; Kirch et al. 1988).

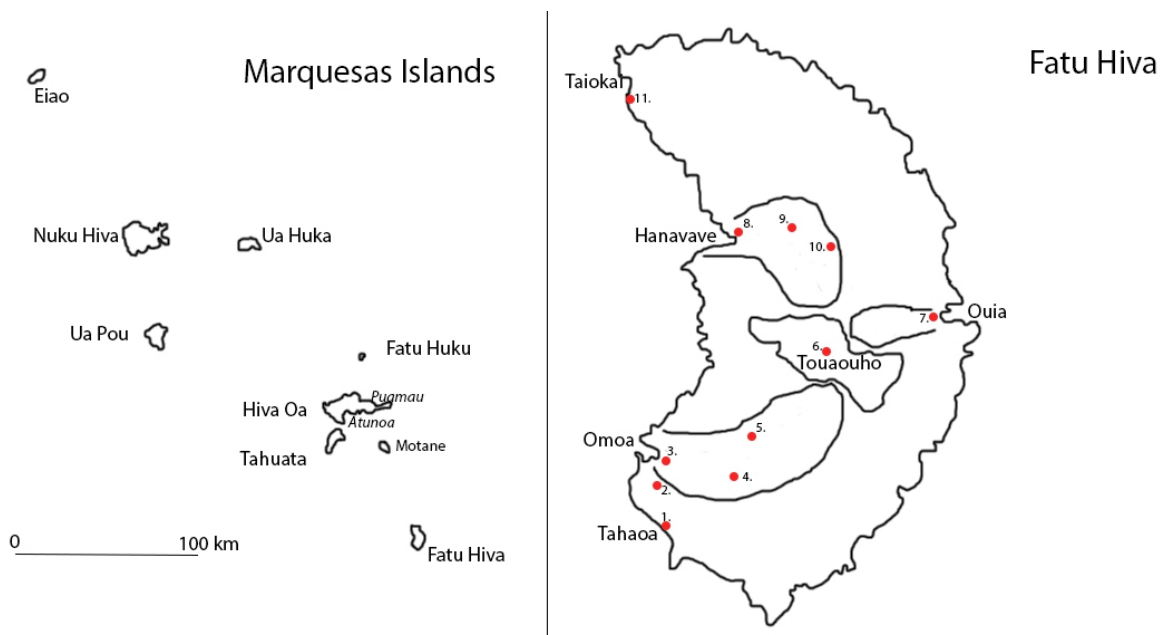
With the development of geochemical definition of stone sources, it has become possible to demonstrate the existence of prehistoric long-distance trade/exchange within the island group, but also with other areas in Eastern Polynesia. Objects and raw materials from basalt sources on the small island of Eiao in the Northern Marquesas have been shown to have been especially widespread. As stones rarely travel great distances across the sea by themselves, the dispersal of Eiao basalt around Central Polynesia clearly illustrates an intensive mobility. In view of the enormous distances between islands and atolls in the area, the population of Pacific island groups such as the Marquesas must have been highly skilled in sea voyaging and related activities (Allen 2014; Candelot 1980; Charleux et al. 2014; McAlister 2011; McAlister & Allen 2017; McAlister et al. 2013; Rolett 1998:182-216, 257-262, 2001; Rolett et al. 1997, 2015; see also Weisler 1997, (ed.) 1998; Weisler et al. 2016).

### *1.5.3 Images of the Marquesas*

To understand Heyerdahl's interest in the Marquesas group in the late 1930s, some attention should also be directed to European and American perceptions of the Marquesas Islands in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Marquesans first came into contact with European explorers when a Spanish expedition led by Álvaro de Mendaña reached Fatu Hiva in 1595. The expedition had been sent out to find the lands beyond the sea that were mentioned in the Inca legend of Tupac Yupanqui. This expedition was the second attempt; the first had reached the Solomon Islands, following the Humboldt Current. The Spaniards named the newly discovered islands in honour of the Marqués de Cañete, then viceroy of Peru (Baert 1995; Lavondès & Jacquemin 1995:26; Suggs 1962:31-34).

Even though the Spanish beat England and France to the island group, more intense interaction between Marquesans and European explorers, traders and colonists was not initiated until the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Attempts to bring the islands under American military control, and the London Missionary Society's attempt to convert the Marquesans to Protestantism, both failed. From the 1840s onwards, more intense colonisation was carried out by France and the French Catholic Mission, eventually bringing the Marquesas under full

French colonial control in the 1870s (e.g. Delmas 1927; Dening 1980, 2004; Ferdon 1993; Govor 2010; Suggs 1961a; 1962; Thomas 1990a).



*Illustration 3: Maps: Marquesas Islands (left) and Fatu Hiva (right). Fatu Hiva map after Heyerdahl 1938a. Numbered locations: 1. Tahaoa beach site visited by the Heyerdahls on several occasions during their journey. Also the location of the cave the Heyerdahl couple lived in while awaiting the schooner for Tahiti (4.3.5). 2. Location of paepae site and where Heyerdahl and Liv collected human remains (5.3). 3. Omoa village. 4. Location of petroglyph site visited by the Heyerdahls in May 1937 (5.4.1). 5. Location of the Heyerdahls' bamboo cabin, paepae site where the Heyerdahls stayed from April to July 1937 (4.3.3). 6. The mountain plateau Touaouho between Fatu Hiva's three larger valleys Omoa, Ouia and Hanavave. 7. Location of Tei Tetua's residence in Ouia Valley, where the Heyerdahls stayed in October–November 1937 (4.2). 8. Location of Hanavave village, visited by the Heyerdahls in June 1937 (5.4.2). 9. Location of Motonui, according to Heyerdahl a 'tabu-jungle'. Several paepae sites were visited by the Heyerdahls in June 1937 in this area (5.4.2). 10. Location of burial cave visited by the Heyerdahls during excursion to the area in June 1937 (5.4.2). 11. Location of the cave site called Vai Po, visited by the Heyerdahls in June 1937 (5.4). Maps by Victor Melander. ©*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Marquesas Islands and the Marquesans themselves came to possess an infamous reputation, focused particularly on sexual behaviour, violence and cannibalism. These ideas of widespread cannibalism and sexual behaviour unthinkable to 19<sup>th</sup>-century Christian morals (promiscuousness, homosexuality and transsexuality) dominated descriptions of the Marquesas Islands from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century until the first archaeological and ethnographic expeditions in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Christian 1910; Church 1919; Danielsson 1956; Dening 1980, 2004; Ferdon 1993; Govor 2010; Radiguet 1860;

Robarts 1974; Rollin 1929; von den Steinen 1988, 1995, 1996; Stewart 1831; Suggs 1966, 2005a-b; Tautain 1896; Terrell 1982; Thomas 1990a). Even though it must be noted that the emphasis on cannibalism in Marquesan culture is highly overstated – the worst example of all is perhaps Linton's and Kardiner's 'Freudian analysis' of Marquesan society as completely psychologically driven by the fear of being eaten (Kardiner 1939; Linton 1939) – there is no smoke without fire. However, the number of references to cannibalism in works and travelogues on the Marquesas up to the 1960s is hardly in proportion to the phenomenon's cultural significance, and analysis of excavated settlement refuse has failed to present direct evidence of cannibalism (Rolett 1998:90-117).

Even though these ideas of Marquesan violence, warfare and cannibalism were most widespread among various traveller-adventurers like Herman Melville, they also form an important part of early ethnographic and archaeological interpretations of the Marquesan culture (see Handy 1923, 1927; Linton 1923, 1925; von den Steinen 1925, 1928a).

In addition to cannibalism, depopulation was a key topic for early ethnographic studies and travellers' accounts. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, population counts were compared to estimates made by early exploration voyagers. The comparison suggested a massive population decline from around 100,000-200,000 people in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to hardly more than 2,000 people a century later (Kirch & Rallu 2007; Molle & Conte 2015; Rallu 1990, 1992, 1995; Vosin 1962). This suggested decline was popularly referred to by ethnologists and adventure-travellers with salvage ethnographical ideas (e.g. Church 1919; Handy, E. 1923:5; Handy, W. 1965:4; Linton 1923:266-267; Tautain 1898a-b; see also Gruber 1970 for details on the concept salvage ethnography). The depopulation numbers suggested to salvage ethnographers the urgent need for ethnographical expeditions to record whatever little was left of the Marquesan culture. Arthur Baessler (1857-1907), for instance, wrote: 'According to the French Resident, the native population has so quickly diminished in recent times that he assumes that by the year 1930 not a single Polynesian will be found in the Marquesas Islands' (1900:213, TR3). The discussion also provided an opportunity for those who wanted to condemn European colonialism's impact on Pacific cultures, since the population decline could be directly sourced to the colonial era.

Recent research has presented more balanced approaches and estimates, questioning the reliability of 18<sup>th</sup> century demographic assessments and limiting pre-European population numbers to around 30,000-40,000 people. In addition to European introduced diseases, tribal

warfare and famine caused by droughts have also been emphasised as contributors to the population decline (Bellwood 1972:40-48; Conte & Maric 2007; Kirch & Rallu 2007; Molle & Conte 2015; Rallu 1990:149, 1995; see also Kellum-Ottino 1971:31-50; Suggs 1966:220-229; Thomas 1990a:169-173).

Both the Marquesan demographic decline and the islands' cannibal reputation can be detected in archival material and Heyerdahl's early writing on his Marquesas journey (chapters 3-5). It is possible that such aspects could have influenced Heyerdahl's choice of the destination in 1937, as he was searching for a somewhat more savage and isolated version of Tahiti.

#### *1.5.4 Heyerdahl's Archaeological Work in the Marquesas*

That the Marquesas had a special significance for Heyerdahl is not just evident from his biographical narrative, but also indicated by his archaeological work.

According to his own testimony, Heyerdahl carried out excavations during his journey to the Marquesas in 1937. These excavations, perhaps better described as treasure hunts, and their impact on his theory will be further discussed in chapter 5.

In the early 1950s, Emory suggested that Heyerdahl should organise an archaeological expedition to the Marquesas (Emory 1951c). This never materialised, but the Marquesas Islands were part of the *Easter Island Expedition*. The expedition was originally scheduled for a lengthier stay in the Marquesas, which was considered an area in need of more thorough investigation. However, plans changed after the expedition party encountered the American archaeologist Robert Suggs in Tahiti, who informed them about the American Museum of Natural History's excavation project in the Marquesas group. This led the two expedition parties to focus their attention on different targets (Heyerdahl & Smith 1961:18-19).

Heyerdahl seems to have been unhappy about this solution and would later develop an intense antagonism towards Suggs, especially following the publication of the latter's *The Island Civilizations of Polynesia* (1960; see also Ferdon 1965:122; Smith 1960). The sparse archival material known to exist in relation to Suggs' and Heyerdahl's mid-1950s meeting in Tahiti does not indicate any hostility at that stage, suggesting the conflict did indeed develop afterwards (Emory 1958b, 1963b; Heyerdahl 1959a-b; Smith 1959a-b; Suggs 1957, 1959). On the other hand, correspondence between Emory and Harry Shapiro (1902-1990) – initiator of

American Museum of Natural History's archaeological project in the Marquesas – reveals that Heyerdahl had accused Shapiro of stealing his idea of excavations in the Marquesas (Emory 1958a-b). Shapiro, who had been involved in expeditions to the Marquesas on several previous occasions, beginning in the 1930s, was of course not happy about the accusations (Shapiro 1958; see also Anderson, W. 2012). Disregarding who – if anyone – had stolen whose idea, the conflict between Heyerdahl and Shapiro illustrates that around the time of the *Easter Island Expedition* Heyerdahl still had a strong interest in the prehistory of the Marquesas Islands and found it important for his theory.

The excavation work carried out in the Marquesas by the *Easter Island Expedition* was subsequently limited to smaller trial excavations at two of the larger *me'ae* sites of the island group: Paeke in the Taipi Valley of Nuku Hiva, and Ipona in the Puamau Valley of Hiva Oa (Ferdon 1965; Heyerdahl 1965). The choices of excavation locations strongly relate to Heyerdahl's 1937 journey. Heyerdahl had visited the Ipona site himself in 1937, a visit that appears to have had a profound effect on the development of the Kon-Tiki theory (5.5). Taipi Valley was connected to several of the romantic travelogues Heyerdahl had read prior to his expedition (3.3), although he did not visit it himself in 1937.

Heyerdahl's and the Kon-Tiki Museum's undertaking in the *Pacific Archaeology Program* of 1961 (1.3) was to organise a new archaeological expedition to the Southern Marquesas Islands (Green 1961), again emphasising Heyerdahl's interest in the islands of Hiva Oa and Fatu Hiva. The archaeological project was eventually undertaken in partnership with Bishop Museum and in total three expedition parties were sent to the Marquesas Islands in 1963. As a result of various problems, neither of the two Kon-Tiki Museum expeditions amounted to much. The Bishop Museum team of Yosihiko Sinoto and Marimari Kellum, on the other hand, had great success, particularly after moving out of the southern part of the Marquesas group and focusing on the northern island of Ua Huka instead (Kellum-Ottino 1971; Sinoto 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1979; Skjølsvold 1972). However, by the time the Kon-Tiki Museum expedition parties set out for the Marquesas, Heyerdahl had already left the project for reasons unknown.



## 1.6 Travellers' Chronotopes and Hagiographic Mythologies: Theoretical and Methodological Points of Departure

As was presented in the introduction (1.1), Heyerdahl's first descriptions of the theory's origin and early influences utilised several clearly distinguishable ethnographic travel writing *tropes*. Tropes in this thesis refer to a type of repeated imagery or clichés in narration and perceptions of reality. The term as used in this thesis is based on the literature scholar Michail Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope* [χρονοτοπος], literally meaning 'time-space' and referring to a certain imagery of importance during a specific time or context (Bakhtin 1981:84-85). Bakhtin used the term to discuss an author's need to create a reality more real than reality itself for the reader to find the narrative believable (Bakhtin 2004; Dentith 1995). In this larger-than-life narration, an author draws on certain specific ideas of his or her time or genre to convince the reader of the accuracy of his or her statements.

These types of time-space ideas or tropes of travel writing are an essential part of the historiography of ethnography, above all for the Pacific. It is not without reason that 'encounter' is a common term in studies of Pacific history and the history of archaeology and anthropology in the region (e.g. Denning 1980, 2004; Douglas 2018; Jolly et al. (eds.) 2008; Stocking 1992; Tcherkézoff 2004; 2008; Thomas 1990b). Specifically, this refers to the meeting between the traveller (explorer, missionary, scientist) and the subject sought, and above all to the description provided of the encounter by the traveller. The foundations of the scientific fields of ethnography, anthropology and for that matter archaeology can be said to rest in and originally depended on the writings, recordings and collections of travellers, initially exploration voyagers and later missionaries (e.g. Ferdon 1993; Jolly et al. (eds.) 2008; Kirch 2000; Tcherkézoff 2004; Thomas 1990a). So-called 'gentleman amateurs' provided scientific institutions with material up to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Stocking 1992:17-20). The field of ethnography/anthropology was for better or worse undoubtedly entangled with the traveller and thus also with travellers' narratives, even after the gentleman amateurs were replaced by professionals (Barnard 1989). This is illustrated, for instance, by the abovementioned discussion on cannibalism in the Marquesas Islands. Even a professional archaeologist/ethnographer like Ralph Linton based his reading of Marquesan culture on the cannibal cliché of earlier travel writing (1.5.3).

### 1.6.1 Isolation Tropes

The creation or capturing of knowledge in ethnographical travel writing centres around concepts of isolation, both in space and time. One example is the commonly occurring trope in ethnographic travel writing that ethnographical knowledge was something that could only be retrieved through adventurous journeys to isolated places. By reaching this isolated place the author became an authority on the subject by the unique knowledge he/she had achieved by 'being there' (Holly 2016:97). The isolation of the object in itself is also commonly emphasised as an assurance of the purity of the object's information:

Travel writers working within the hunter-gatherer genre also emphasize the difficulty of finding the native peoples they seek, and then when they are invariably located, spend considerable time convincing the reader that they have discovered something special—the really isolated, or “pure,” or especially primitive (Holly 2016:100-101).

Purity is also extracted from isolation not just in space but also in time, by the travel writer suggesting a deep distance in time between the world of the author and the world of the object (Holly 2016:101). This type of perception of isolation, or lost world scenario, creates an idea of the culture/people encountered as static, without the ability to transform or change over time. This trope originates in early evolutionary approaches to anthropology, which explained the contemporary existence of so-called primitive cultures and so-called civilisation, by separating the studied primitive object from the civilised subject through an evolutionary scheme (Fabian 2014:37-66). Temporality in space was not equivalent to perceived natural development laws (time). Anthropology's *Other* was kept in another time (Fabian 2014:156). By discovering the culture during the adventurous journey, the traveller could connect to an ancient time and way of life (Holly 2016:101-102).

This separation in time between object and subject in relation to the polarisation between civilisation and primitive has obviously also been important for archaeology, not just for travel writers and laymen interpretations, but also for the scientific discourse, with explanatory models for changes in architecture or material culture explained through evolutionary replacement of races (Rowley-Conwy 2007; Trigger 1989:110-147). In the Pacific region this trope was commonly used to provide justification for various colonial enterprises. By separating the existing population from perceived advanced pre-historical remains, the evolutionary hierarchy used to justify the colonialists' right to govern the colonial

subject was not challenged by the historical narrative (e.g. Ballantyne 2002; Dotte-Sarout 2017; Douglas 2014; Douglas & Ballard 2008; McNiven & Russell 2005; Obeyesekere 1992; Sand 2005; Spriggs 2012).

### 1.6.2 *The Travel Writer and the Scientist*

Exploration has become a profession; not, as one might suppose, that it's a matter of unearthing new facts in the course of several years laborious study – not at all! Mere mileage is the thing; and anyone who has been far enough, and collected the right number of pictures (still or moving, but for preference in colour), will be able to lecture to packed houses for several days running. Platitudes take shape as revelations once the audience is assured that the speaker has sanctified them by travelling to the other side of the globe. For what do these books, these lectures, amount to? A luggage-list, a story or two about the misdemeanours of the ship's dog, and a few scraps of information – scraps that have done a century's service in every handbook to the region. Only the speaker's impudence and the ignorance and naivety of his hearers could cause them to pass as an eye-witness account or even, for all I know, as an original discovery (Lévi-Strauss 1974:18 (English edition); see also 1955:10).

The salty quotation comes from Claude Lévi-Strauss' own travelogue *Tristes Tropiques* [1955]. In the book's introduction Lévi-Strauss stressed his scepticism towards the genre, stating that 'shame and disgust' had kept him from writing the book for 15 years (1974:17; see also 1955:9). The point Lévi-Strauss wanted to stress was that even if these travellers tried to persuade the audience of their authority on the subject matter through having been at the actual location, they were not professional ethnographers. For the general public, ethnographic information of the period largely came from travel writers (Holly 2016:96; Lévi-Strauss 1955:10-11; Wheeler 1986). It is worth taking note of this point when it comes to Heyerdahl. Since Heyerdahl developed his ideas outside of scientific institutions, it is likely that his inspirations came above all from fellow travellers.

The separation between the professional and the traveller also provided the travel writer with an additional trope to claim authority from: 'writers often strategically draw on a cartoonish and antiquated image of anthropologists to cast their own intentions and experiences with indigenous peoples in a more favourable light' (Holly 2016:102). This particular trope is a staple of Heyerdahl's writing, and was continuously used throughout his career to describe his relationship to academia (Melander *in press*). He can be said to have developed this approach, his criticism towards the dogmatism of scientific specialisation, primarily as a narrative technique to highlight his own persona's restless struggle for

acceptance and to discredit the reliability of his adversaries. His adversaries were generally presented as if they were all part of the same elitist conspiracy to protect the established narrative and world order, which was challenged by Heyerdahl's discoveries, theories and experiments. In his autobiography Heyerdahl claimed that leading anthropologists had even tried to silence the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (Heyerdahl 1998:181-185). This type of narrative, with the lone crusader fighting for the truth against an established societal elite, is of course a well-known trope, commonly deployed in political propaganda, with the purpose of creating mistrust towards the adversary of the author/speaker (Castanho Silva et al. 2017; deHaven-Smit & Witt 2012; Imhoff et al. 2018; Sutton & Douglas 2014). Heyerdahl's transparent use of this trope calls into question the accuracy of his description of his conflict with academia. His narrative is also problematic as it suggests a continuous struggle between himself and academia over several decades, which if accepted would imply that his theories had always been completely out of touch with the prevailing discourse, making his inclusion in scientific circles and his many contacts among Pacific anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s (1.3) seem contradictory (see also Spriggs 2014). All in all, this suggests that other factors were in play in this discussion, but were masked by the structure of Heyerdahl's narrative.

### *1.6.3 Deconstructing the Kon-Tiki Legend*

Binary oppositions form a central part of Heyerdahl's narration, for instance the polarisation between mother-father, England-Germany, Darwin-Jesus in the depiction of his childhood (1.3), but also for his theory (1.1) or as above for his relationship to academia. In his analysis of Heyerdahl's biography, Andersson labelled Heyerdahl as a creator of myths, or mythographer, by connecting this narration technique with Lévi-Strauss' dissection of a mythological narrative's components (Andersson 2007a:30-35; see also Lévi-Strauss 1962). Andersson's idea was that: 'Heyerdahl was a *bricoleur* of myths who constantly recycled old material and gave it new forms' (Andersson 2007a:11).

The idea of Heyerdahl as a *bricoleur* – a self-made amateur creator using what was at hand, rather than the master craftsman's established toolbox of methodologies and theoretical approaches (Lévi-Strauss 1983:13-44) – is of course suitable, not least in relation to the sort of dialogism which can be found within Heyerdahl's own texts and in his biographical narrative.

Dialogism refers to the relationship between various texts. It was Bakhtin's theory that texts communicated with each other, that they were found in a continuous dialogue. As such this also implied that meaning was interpreted out of this communication in an ever-transforming way (Bakhtin 1991; see also Allen 2000:8-58; Kristeva 1980). This dialogue between texts can be detected by different indirect or direct components of the text's structure, for instance by a quotation, an allusion, or even embedded in the language and words used by the author (Bakhtin 1991, 2010; see also Allen 2000; Dentith 1995).

Heyerdahl's Marquesas journey is above all found in this structure, continually changing purpose as it was re-framed into a new phase of his autobiography. It changed from being 'the escape from civilisation' in the 1930s (Heyerdahl 1938a, 1941b) to the inspiration for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* in the 1940s (Heyerdahl 1948a:7-17), an archaeological research project in the 1960s (5.2.5), a life-altering experience and rite of passage in the 1970s (Heyerdahl 1974a), and part of a quasi-philosophical pondering on faith, science and the meaning of life in the 1990s (Heyerdahl 1991). It is thus essential to point out that the three different editions or versions of the Marquesas journey travelogue that exist (Heyerdahl 1938a, 1974a, 1991) are in fact three very different books that should not be confused with each other. Heyerdahl's own writing with its autobiographical content marks an interesting example of changing perceptions over the course of time (or better yet life), but at the same time it continually relived past experiences through contemporary perceptions. In Heyerdahl's own writing, events of his life never fully became historical events, but kept being relived through their inclusion in new narratives. This of course also extends to Heyerdahl's narrative of his theory's origin. This particular way of narrating emphasises the need to return to the original source, as statements in Heyerdahl's work tend to find themselves in new and improved circumstances over time. There is thus an urgent need to *deconstruct* Heyerdahl's own narrative of the Kon-Tiki theory's origin.

Jacques Derrida's concept of *deconstruction* (1976, 1978, 2007) has had a major impact on post-modernist hermeneutics and history of science in general (e.g. Lüdemann 2014). The ability to look beyond the surface, to peel each layer of the onion (Nash 1995:21), is obviously appealing, providing the possibility for a deeper understanding of texts and actions. However, deconstruction is a term and approach with various implications depending on how closely the author aims to adhere to Derrida's writing. The transformation of Derrida's concept from philosophy into other disciplines also requires a certain amount of adaptation,

consequently leading to misinterpretation. As Anders Olsson has argued, the idea of deconstruction is not to break things down into their smallest components, examine them, and then reassemble them; rather, it is to break down concepts and arguments, to detect what has been taken for granted to construct the argument or idea (1987:89), or to 'expose forgotten and dormant sediments of meaning which have accumulated and settled into the text's fabric' (Harari 1979:37). For this thesis deconstruction has been applied to discuss how the various abovementioned tropes influenced the creation of the Kon-Tiki theory, and how Heyerdahl, as the *bricoleur*, used various perceptions he took for granted to verify his assumptions. The object is thus to deconstruct or track the original narrative before it was masked by various changing perceptions, to view the theory in relation to the relevant, contemporaneous narrative.

When discussing intertextual connections (dialogism) it is of the utmost importance to use an argument as meticulous as possible, demonstrating not just a connection through idea, expression and terminology, but also with additional sources to illustrate the possibility of such a connection (Espmark 1975, 1985; Landgren 1982). Similarities between ideas or phrases (dialogue) need not always occur through direct influence but can also develop by two texts drawing from the same tropes. That is to say, two texts can communicate with each other through an intermediary. This means that the author of one of the works might have been oblivious of the original source of information, and therefore not directly influenced by it. In this regard, philosopher Paul Ricoeur has spoken of the idea of *generation time*, meaning that within each given moment of a discourse multiple generations are active at the same time, some belonging to an older school of thought and others pushing into future directions (Ricoeur 1993). The idea here is that even if a certain idea was present at a certain time, it need not have influenced Heyerdahl's creation of his theory. It is necessary to define which *generation of knowledge* Heyerdahl belonged to, and as he was an amateur researcher it cannot be assumed that he was up to date with recent developments in the research discussion. Heyerdahl himself, especially in later works, liked to present an image that he had already been at the forefront of knowledge on Pacific migration matters from the start (Heyerdahl 1992:205). As he continuously rewrote his narrative of the theory, then for each stage, new thoughts favourable for the theory ventured into the narrative. This creates a precarious situation and all claims made by Heyerdahl on the development of his thoughts need to be verified as chronologically relevant before they are brought into the analysis.

### 1.6.4 Definitions of Racism

As has been noted above, Heyerdahl's theory has been harshly criticised in recent years for its racist content. There are also several known examples of scholars criticising Heyerdahl for racist ideas as early as the 1950s (e.g. Nordbeck 1953:93; Smith, M. 1958:386; van Tilburg 1991). In the 1990s television series *Signaturen* Heyerdahl was even directly asked whether his ideas could be interpreted as racist. Heyerdahl, bothered by the question, answered that Europeans were not the only white people in human history. However, this response does not really answer the question.

In a 2004 paper Graham Holton argued that Heyerdahl's idea was not just racist but could even be referred as a 'cultural genocide' (2004:165), since the theory denied the people of Easter Island their prehistory and indigenous heritage (2004:176-179). Building on Holton's criticism, Andersson claimed that Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory was a white supremacist theory influenced by Nazi scholars (2007a:54-56; see also 6.3). This criticism has also been presented on occasion in later studies (e.g. Engevold 2013; Magelssen 2016; Skolmen 2010).

Criticism of this recent criticism has also been presented, above all emphasising that the methodological approach, presentism and limitations in supportive empirical material in Roar Skolmen, Holton and Andersson's studies warrant serious concern (Coughlin 2016; Solsvik 2014).

As can be seen both in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1.1) and in the presentation of the Kon-Tiki theory above (1.4), race and value hierarchies between races were essential aspects of Heyerdahl's theory, which unavoidably makes racism a central theme for the discussion to follow.

Addressing racism in the history of science is a complicated matter, as present and personal moral values might guide interpretations into judgemental opinions. The question has been approached in various works for a long time (e.g. Back & Solomos (eds.) 2009; Goldberg (ed.) 1990; Zubaida (ed.) 1970), leading to various classification schemes to distinguish and aid in attempts to find an objective definition. In the case of presentism, Kwame Appiah's distinction between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* racism has some relevance, as it suggests that a reasonable individual brought up in cultures where racist agendas was taken for granted, could/would when presented with a scientific set of evidence change his/her perception. But

this set of evidence still needed to be presented, as one would not discard rooted beliefs unless there was a compelling reason to do so (Appiah 1990), suggesting above all that people can change their minds and have different opinions on different occasions. Racist scholars in one epoch might not have had the same thoughts in a different era. However, this can only become a hypothetical scenario; a racist idea will remain a racist idea regardless of how respectful and understanding of differences at different times one might be. The important thing becomes to use set criteria for definition, to be able to define a racist idea in an objective and reviewable way, rather than defining it through personal opinion. In this thesis racist ideas and racism have been defined following anthropologist Olof Ljungström's categorisation of the term. Ljungström used three criteria to define a racist idea, of which all three should be met: a) a division of people into clearly defined races; b) an assumption that racial division rests on biological/genetic grounds; c) an assumption that races can be placed in a value hierarchy (Ljungström 2004:21-32). In this thesis these criteria have been used to define whether Heyerdahl's theories, expression and thoughts can be determined as racist. As is illustrated by the presentation of the Kon-Tiki theory given above, Heyerdahl's definition of biological races with associated hierarchically valued cultural and mental abilities (1.4) does without question meet all three of these criteria.

## *1.7 The Biographical Narrative: Previous Biographical and Scholarly Work*

The public recognition of Heyerdahl's achievements as an adventurer has naturally sparked a substantial interest in biographical information. Many biographies have been written on Heyerdahl and his expeditions in a wide variety of languages (e.g. Dahl 2002; Evensberget 1994; Hansen 2009; Hjeltnes 1999; Jacoby 1965a, 1968, 1970, 1984, 1986, (ed.) 1989b; Kock-Johansen 2003; Kvam 2005, 2008, 2013; Malam 1997; May 1973; Ralling 1990; Schulz 2004; Thyvold 2014; Westman 1982). In this jungle of biographies, an unofficial but generally recognised canon of works exists: Jacoby's *Señor Kon-Tiki* (1965); Evensberget's *Oppdageren* (1994); Ralling's *The Kon-Tiki Man* (1990); Kock-Johansen's *Thor Heyerdahl* (2003); and most recently Kvam's three-volume work, the first to deal with Heyerdahl's entire life (Kvam 2005, 2008, 2013).



The canon has received criticism for being hagiographic rather than truly biographic (Andersson 2007a:25-28; Skolmen 2010:148-149). This rings true for at least some of the abovementioned works. For instance, Evensberget's biography, which heavily depends on lengthy passages from Heyerdahl's own writing, was commissioned by the Norwegian oil company Statoil in celebration of Heyerdahl's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (see Evensberget 1994 and the book's preface by Statoil CEO Harald Norvik). At the time of the biography's publication, Heyerdahl was helping the company with representation for business interests in Azerbaijan (Kvam 2013:318-330); Evensberget's biography is therefore not particularly objective. The same can be said for Ralling's book and the related TV series which came out in celebration of Heyerdahl's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday (Ralling 1990; see also Andersson 2007a:27; Kvam 2013:240-245).

Similarly, Kock-Johansen's book came out shortly after Heyerdahl's death and he was not just a close collaborator of Heyerdahl's but also a personal friend. However, as this friendship is the point of departure for Kock-Johansen writing the book (see Kock-Johansen 2003), it is more of an *in memoriam* than a hagiography.

Prior to Kvam, Jacoby's *Señor Kon-Tiki* was the most significant of the biographies. Being the first of them, it established the narrative of Heyerdahl's life which has been used for almost all subsequent biographical writing, including Heyerdahl's autobiography. The reliability of the narrative created by Jacoby (and Heyerdahl himself, see below) is questionable, and will be discussed throughout this thesis (see also Andersson 2007a:25-28).

Jacoby was a respected author, which brings a certain amount of credibility to the biography. It also hides more compromising aspects, for instance that Jacoby was a personal friend and even neighbour to Heyerdahl. Correspondence material also documents that Heyerdahl was actively engaged in the biography project, not just presenting Jacoby with material and interviews, but also personally collecting material for the biography; for instance, photographs from a Canadian mining company he had worked for (Heyerdahl 1963b). *Señor Kon-Tiki* was published in conjunction with Heyerdahl's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, establishing a tradition of biographical work issued at major birthdays.

The criticism of hagiographical writing has also been extended to the most recent biographical work by journalist Kvam, due to Kvam interviewing the Heyerdahl family and working closely with the Kon-Tiki Museum (Andersson 2007a:29-30). This criticism is somewhat unfair, since the aforementioned steps must be considered as a reasonable approach for a biography. Kvam's work also steps away from the trail trodden in earlier works, and in a

contemporary framework exposes flaws in Heyerdahl's heroic persona. The bona fide loyal adventurer of the earlier biographies still appears in Kvam's work as a solid adventurer, but also as a selfish, contentious and arrogant man, constantly neglecting his children, wives, girlfriends and mistresses (Kvam 2005, 2008, 2013).

### *1.7.1 Heyerdahl as a Scientist*

Heyerdahl's theory and his relationship to science – beyond various conflicts with academia – have scarcely been examined in previous scholarly and biographical work. There have of course been numerous writings about Heyerdahl's theory (e.g. Heine-Geldern 1950; Schuhmacher 1976; Suggs 1960; Wauchope 1962). However, these are not analyses of the theory per se, but direct debates on its content.

An exception to this is found in Kock-Johansen's biography (2003). Like other biographical work (1.7), Kock-Johansen's biography does frame Heyerdahl in a heroic legend style, describing him as a successor to the great Norwegian exploration tradition, a man of action struggling relentlessly against dogmatism, a man not afraid to think brave new thoughts and go against the current (Kock-Johansen 2003:11-23, 247-266). Of greater interest is Kock-Johansen's description of situations in which he and Heyerdahl disagreed, particularly in relation to interpretations of excavations and archaeological material (2003:101-135, 173-180, 197-211). Kock-Johansen's description of how Heyerdahl tended to jump to conclusions and then stick with his initial idea is especially noteworthy (2003:101-135).

A paper by Willy Østreng (2014) also deserves attention, as it was devoted to Heyerdahl's theories and approach to science. Østreng's study, however, was directly based on material and conclusions from earlier biographical work by Kvam and Kock-Johansen and consequently provided the discussion with few new perspectives. Østreng concluded that Heyerdahl deserved scientific respect for questioning established dogmas, but in general showed little respect for others' work, disregarded new research, and was 'more of a true believer than an open-minded scientist' (Østreng 2014:93).

In 2000 the author Roar Skolmen published a book entitled *I Skyggen av Kon-Tiki* [In Kon-Tiki's Shadow], in which he discussed Heyerdahl's theory, pointing to the numerous earlier scholars who had argued for the possibility of a South America-Polynesia connection. In *I Skyggen*, as well as a later book on Norwegian travellers in Polynesia (2010), Skolmen argued

that Heyerdahl had stolen his ideas from other scholars including MacMillan Brown (1845-1935), William Ellis (3.1.1.1) and Jules Garnier (1839-1904) (Skolmen 2000, 2010:147-349). Similar thoughts have been expressed by Andersson, who claimed that the theory was influenced by Edward Tregear's (1846-1931) Aryan Polynesian ideas (2007a:54-56). However, such claims are difficult to comprehend, as Heyerdahl's emphasis on transoceanic voyaging (1.4.) directly disputes the ideas of sunken continent theorists such as Garnier and Brown, while his belief that the Polynesians were of an Asian 'yellow-brown' race (1.4.) opposes the 'Aryan' origin of the Polynesian in Tregear's work (3.3.2.1). Skolmen and Andersson manage to point to vaguely similar thoughts existing at the moment of Heyerdahl's creation of the theory but fail to show that Heyerdahl was directly influenced by them. Rather than illustrating a direct dialogue between Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory and the texts mentioned, the material suggests a connection through thoughts originating in similar or identical tropes, without direct intertextual communication (1.6.3).

## *1.8 Research Aims and Thesis Structure*

The aim of this thesis will be to analyse Heyerdahl's creation and development of the Kon-Tiki theory. The thesis will centre around Heyerdahl's 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands and his interaction with the islands' people and prehistoric remains. The discussion will focus on how well-established tropes of ethnographic travel writing affected Heyerdahl's meeting with the people and prehistory of Polynesia, as well as what role they played for the Kon-Tiki theory. Three connected tropes or perceptions presented in the discussion above (1.6) will be considered:

- a) *being there and going native* – the idea that ethnographical knowledge was attained not just by reaching an isolated last survivor of a primitive culture, but that the ethnographer/traveller also needed to live a perceived primitive lifestyle to access and comprehend the knowledge transferred.
- b) *The civilisation of the white gods* – Heyerdahl's use of and belief in the trope of civilisation as something not just contrasted to the isolated primitive subject, but deeply connected to racial affiliation.
- c) *the specialist scientist and the omniscient gentleman traveller* – Heyerdahl's perception of and relationship to science. The origin of his antagonism with the scientific specialist, and

how this impacted his development, argumentation and attempts to get his hypothesis accepted in scientific circles.

As discussed above (1.6.3), this will only be possible if a chronology of events is established through deconstructing Heyerdahl's changing biographical narrative, so that at each given moment the knowledge Heyerdahl really held on Polynesian topics is present, rather than what was masked by inserting older events into new and improved narratives. The aim is to retrace the origin of the theory and the context in which it really developed, not where it was placed in Heyerdahl's later writing when new contexts demanded a different setting.

The thesis will be structured chronologically, with chapter 2 and 3 discussing influences and events leading up to the Marquesas journey, while chapter 4 and 5 will discuss the impact of events during the journey, and finally chapter 6 and 7 developments after the journey.

Chapter 2 will present and discuss Heyerdahl's time at Oslo University, examining how research topics and attitudes towards fieldwork, experimentation and expeditions among the University's staff affected the Marquesas journey and the Kon-Tiki theory. The chapter will also investigate University staff members' connections to Pacific scholars and Pacific scientific institutions, and discuss the impact Norwegian scientific traditions had on Heyerdahl.

Chapter 3 will examine Heyerdahl's alleged studies in the Kroepelien Library and the status of his knowledge about Polynesian archaeology prior to the Marquesas journey. The chapter will also present Heyerdahl's romanticised perception of Polynesia and the Polynesians prior to the journey and discuss these perceptions in relation to contemporary travel writing, South Seas films and German conservative philosophy. Finally, the chapter will discuss the influence romantic travel writers such as Melville and Frederick O'Brien had on Heyerdahl.

Chapter 4 will focus on Heyerdahl's interaction with Polynesia and the Polynesians during the journey. Above all, this chapter will discuss how strongly the Polynesia he came to encounter in 1937 differed from his pre-journey perception of it. The chapter will also discuss how Heyerdahl altered descriptions of people he met to fit with his pre-journey romantic visions.

Chapter 5 will deal with Heyerdahl's archaeological/ethnographic collection from the Marquesas Islands and his impressions of archaeological sites in the Marquesas group, analysing how the material culture and the archaeological remains of the Marquesas Islands led him to develop the Kon-Tiki theory.

Chapter 6 will assess the meetings and readings that did and did not influence the development of Heyerdahl's theory in the roughly 18 months he spent back in Norway after returning from the Marquesas journey. These include his meetings with the German race scholar Hans Günther and the British Columbia migrant Fougner, Heyerdahl's reading of popular Scandinavian works on ethnography and physical anthropology, and his studies of articles in *National Geographic Magazine*.

Chapter 7 will look at how Heyerdahl developed his theory while based in Canada and the US during the 1940s, by discussing Heyerdahl's first publication of the theory in 1941, his subsequent 1946 manuscript *Polynesia and America* and the additional work on the theory by Heyerdahl after his 1947 *Kon-Tiki Expedition*.

Finally, chapter 8 will consider Heyerdahl's creation and development of the theory in the light of the discussion above (1.6) on travel-writing tropes of being there, white civilisations and perceptions of science, as well as presenting the thesis conclusion.

## *Chapter 2 – The Anarchists' Department: Heyerdahl and Oslo University 1933-1938*

Even though it was the only time Heyerdahl ever spent at an academic institution, he and his biographers have generally downplayed the importance of his years at Oslo University's Zoology Department in the mid-1930s. His own description of the period varied depending on the context, that is to say, in what light he wanted to present himself. If he wanted to present himself with scientific credibility, Heyerdahl spoke with admiration about the University, and especially Professor Kristine Bonnevie. He mentioned that he had studied subjects, such as physical anthropology and geography, which would be important for the intellectual framework of his theory (Heyerdahl 2014; Nordal et al. 2012:303-308 with references). If, on the other hand, the object of the narrative was to present Heyerdahl's self-proclaimed struggle against scientific specialisation, the tables were generally turned, with Heyerdahl mocking the University and the Department staff for their dogmatic attitudes and desktop-oriented approach to science (Heyerdahl 1998:72-78).

These contradictory narratives call into question the accuracy of Heyerdahl's statements, stressing the need for a more in-depth reading of the Zoology Department's staff and their views on themes important for the outline of the Kon-Tiki theory. Heyerdahl's use of what was identified in the previous chapter as geographical ethnology, as well as his discussion of so-called botanical evidence (Heyerdahl 1952:425-498) to support his theory, suggests that some of his ideas had their origin in the type of zoogeographical and botanical discourses that were researched at the Zoology Department. His 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands also featured a zoological component, which can be directly traced back to the University. There is thus fair reason here to ask if Heyerdahl's university years could have had a larger impact on his thoughts than he himself admitted. As it was also his first relationship to a scientific institution, the experience would most likely have been formative for Heyerdahl's later views and attitudes towards science. The traditions and attitudes towards fieldwork and experimentation among the scholars at the University therefore become important topics to examine. This chapter will outline Heyerdahl's time at Oslo University. It will examine the various scholars at the Zoological Department, their research at the time, and their attitudes

towards fieldwork and experimentation, as well as their connections to Pacific research and researchers. The chapter will present the zoological component of Heyerdahl's journey to the Marquesas Islands. The Marquesas journey and the Kon-Tiki theory will also be discussed in relation to Norwegian scientific traditions, as well as to Oslo University's 1937-1938 Tristan da Cunha Expedition.

## *2.1 The Reindeer's Nostrils: The Artifice of Scientific Specialisation*

Heyerdahl was hardly more than 20 years old when he made the move from the sleepy coastal town of Larvik to the Norwegian capital, to enrol at the University (Jacoby 1965a:11-54). To attend a university was a privilege in 1930s Norway. Just as for most other European countries, the century preceding the 1930s had seen mass emigration from Norway, due to poverty and strict social stratification (Mørkhagen 2010; Semmingsen 1975). Most emigrants headed across the Atlantic to the US, but there were also other more exotic destinations. From Heyerdahl's hometown of Larvik, for instance, emigration parties set out to find a better life in the Galapagos group. Very few of these settlers managed to be successful in their enterprise, and the over-romanticised image of an Eden in the Pacific sold to them by the works of explorer William Beebe proved to be far from the reality of the rugged volcanic islands they encountered (Beebe 1929; Blomberg 1953:50-51; von Hagen 1949:252-254; Hoff 1985; Repo 2011:33; Skjølsvold 1953; Wittmer 2013:274). However, the hardships and disappointments of poverty and emigration did not directly affect Heyerdahl, who grew up in the secure and wealthy arms of the Norwegian aristocracy. To attend university was thus something that could be expected of him.

As is illustrated by two satirical drawings made by Heyerdahl in 1935 (Ill. 4; Lundell & Wold (eds.) 2012:84-85), the university experience did not live up to his expectations. Heyerdahl's use of his university experience to highlight his perceived polemic relationship between the omniscient traveller/explorer and the armchair specialist scientist can be illustrated by one of the more frequently occurring stories from Heyerdahl's university years. The story tells of how Bonnevie showed Heyerdahl a photograph of a blurred animal in the distance and asked him if he could tell whether the animal in the picture was a reindeer or an

elk, to which Heyerdahl confidently replied that it was beyond doubt an elk. Bonnevie then asked, “How can you tell?”, to which Heyerdahl replied that it was obvious from the overall impression. Seemingly not content with the answer, Bonnevie asked if Heyerdahl knew how to distinguish scientifically between a reindeer and an elk, upon which Heyerdahl answered that he was not familiar with that particular definition. “You measure the distance between the nostrils”, Bonnevie said, “can you measure the distance between the nostrils in this photo?” (Heyerdahl 1998:73; Kock-Johansen 2003:20).

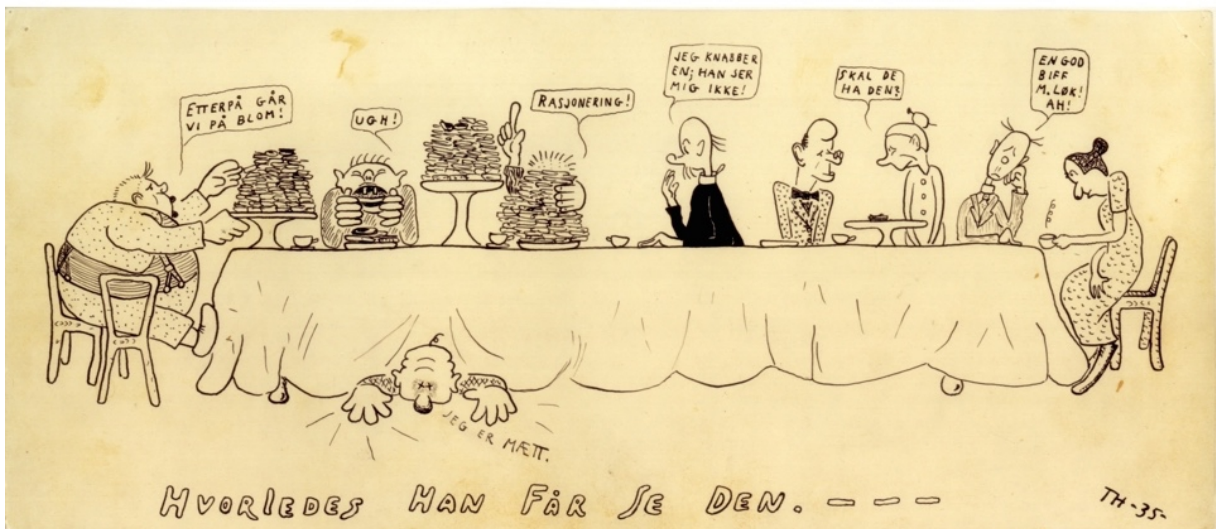


Illustration 4: Drawings by Thor Heyerdahl illustrating 'Hvorledes Nybegynneren tenker sig en aften i zoologisk Klubb' [How the freshman imagines an evening in the Zoological Club] and 'Hvorledes han får se den' [and what it is really like], 1935. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©



In his reminiscences Heyerdahl used this story to expose a sort of decay within scientific discussion, illustrating how the specialist had painted him- or herself into such a narrow corner that the discussion had lost all contact with common sense:

Already on my first day at the University I learned an important lesson: to be a specialist is not the same as being omniscient. It is actually the complete opposite [...] I had been looking forward to gaining a deeper knowledge about animals from a professor in zoology than what I had previously learned from a mountain man like Ola Bjørneby; but to my surprise the country's leading expert could not tell the difference between a reindeer and an elk without looking up its nostrils (Heyerdahl 1998:73-74, TR5).

According to Heyerdahl, this led him to question the scientific institution and the specialisation of disciplines. It made him realise that he wanted to apply a more direct, simplified, hands-on approach to the discussion, to get out into the field and look for the 'truth' that had been lost in the specialists' over-complicated models (Heyerdahl 1998:73-81; see also Kock-Johansen 2003:20).

The story illustrates the central concept of Heyerdahl's narrative structure, the use of binary opposition to create suspense in his stories. Two things were commonly played out against each other and exaggeratedly depicted as night and day to make the story easily comprehensible (1.6.3). Instead of using a more complicated grey scale of description and analysis, Heyerdahl favoured an easy-to-follow black-and-white contrast, where he was the omniscient flawless protagonist and the scientific institution had to play the narrow-minded unscrupulous antagonist.

In his analysis of this account, Skolmen pointed out that Heyerdahl used the story to create a power hierarchy, where the young student's ability (at least in his own mind) to see beyond the superficial specialisation of science revealed a truth which was not obtainable to the professor's restricted specialist mind, implying that the narrator (Heyerdahl) already at this young stage possessed a superior intellect to that of the veteran professor (Skolmen 2010:231). Skolmen's interpretation contains some substance, and points to the rather condescending attitude Heyerdahl expressed towards scientific institutions at large.

Nonetheless, of greater importance is the way in which Heyerdahl can be seen to connect his criticism of scientific specialisation to the travel writer trope of *being there* (1.6.1-2). He used Bjørneby, the mountain man, as a direct contrast to the university professor; suggesting that Bjørneby by *being there* had a deeper understanding of nature and animal life than

Bonnevie, and as someone who had been there with Bjørneby, Heyerdahl had also been able to tap into this knowledge. This suggests a similar idea to his emphasis in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1.1) on the additional need to physically and psychologically experience the research question. *Being there* was seemingly not enough for Heyerdahl, you also needed to live with it. Bjørneby, the mountain man, lived in/with nature and could thus access it on a level unattainable for Bonnevie. However, the use of Bonnevie and Bjørneby as binary oppositions does make them both static symbols rather than transformative objects. Heyerdahl never disclosed how Bonnevie had gained her knowledge, he never approached the possibility that Bonnevie could have attained her knowledge the same way as Bjørneby had. In the same way, he never approached the possibility that he could have misunderstood Bonnevie, that he might have misinterpreted the question.

The story in itself is actually quite interesting if it is approached from Bonnevie's perspective instead. What was it that she wanted to convey to the young student by showing him the photograph? It could be argued that Bonnevie actually wanted to teach her pupil a significant lesson on the importance of objective definition criteria in science; the importance of being able to argue beyond personal opinions. In hindsight, this is a lesson that Heyerdahl really would have benefited from. It also stresses the need to approach what Heyerdahl is leaving out of his narration, that is to say in this case the scientist.

### *2.1.1 Kristine Bonnevie, Norway's First Female Professor*

Bonnevie (1872-1948) was Norway's first female professor (appointed in 1912), and an internationally well-respected name in zoology circles. At the time of Heyerdahl's university years she had become the head of the Zoology Department. According to a modern definition, Bonnevie's research on cells and chromosomes would probably fall within the field of genetics or molecular biology rather than zoology. She had already been breaking out of zoology and into the field of 'human inheritance studies' or genetics in the 1910s. Her work on inheritance, just like Fridthjof Økland's on land-snails (2.4.1) and Erling Christophersen's research aims for the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* (2.3), focused on isolation as a way of detecting processes of biological evolution (Bonnevie 1907, 1924, 1926, 1934, 1950; Nordal et. al. 2012; Semb-Johansson 2009c; Stamhuis & Monsen 2007).

Bonnevie was also a strong advocate for the importance of fieldwork and practical

experimentation as a source of knowledge: 'sources should not be sought for in books and collections but from the free and living nature', she said (Semb-Johansson 2009c, TR7). Throughout her career she pursued a rigidly empirical and rational approach, illustrated for instance by her opposition to the unscientific side of the eugenics movement in Norway (Nordal et. al. 2012:177-200; see also Kyllingstad 2004, 2012, 2014). Central to her research were concepts of Darwinism and Mendelian inheritance laws (Nordal et. al. 2012:146-170). She also viewed herself as a person with a 'natural approach to life, unorthodox and free of dogmas' (Semb-Johansson 2009c, TR8).

In addition, Bonnevie was politically engaged for the conservative anti-socialist movement and was a supporter of the Norwegian independence campaign. During the World War II German occupation of Norway (1940-1945) she was considered a dangerous member of the resistance movement, despite being by then a woman in her 70s (Nordal et. al. 2012:234-290).

### *2.1.1.1 Bonnevie and Heyerdahl's Journey to the Marquesas*

Bonnevie is the person most frequently mentioned by Heyerdahl himself from his years at the University. In later years Heyerdahl also claimed that the choice of Fatu Hiva as destination for his first Polynesian journey was a decision taken in agreement with Bonnevie, and that she was actually the one who had encouraged him to 'follow in Darwin's footsteps' (Nordal et al. 2012:305-308). These remarks are perhaps a bit exaggerated, but there is correspondence showing that Bonnevie was encouraging Heyerdahl to go through with the Marquesas journey. In a letter sent to Heyerdahl on 26 September 1936, Bonnevie expressed her interest in Heyerdahl's suggested project of studying the animal life on a Pacific island. She did not consider herself sufficiently well acquainted with the literature to make any statements on the status of the research discussion, but thought that the project could approach several more general research problems:

Questions on the significance of isolation for species evolution; the relationship between environment and heritage in adaptation to extreme conditions; human impact on flora and fauna. An isolated island group of this type offers many problems that could be addressed (Bonnevie 1936, TR9).

The letter also discloses that Bonnevie and Heyerdahl had discussed the topic on a previous occasion. Her major concern seems to have been with the planning of the journey, and

whether Heyerdahl was really ready to go through with a scientific project of this sort.

Bonnevie's interest in the project was obviously from a research perspective; the isolation of the island group is repeatedly mentioned as something of interest in her letter, and it is in line with the direction of her research at the time. It is also evident that she thought Heyerdahl was too inexperienced for the project to have a successful outcome. However, she still encouraged him to go through with the project and said that it might also be an investment for the future (Bonnevie 1936), a further indication of her strong belief in the importance of fieldwork.

Bonnevie's concerns over Heyerdahl's inexperience and her talk of investments for the future make Heyerdahl's later claims that the project was planned as doctoral research (Heyerdahl 1998:81) seem unlikely. He is also addressed in the letter as 'Stud. Real.', meaning that he had not completed any college/university degree by late September 1936; seemingly he never did (cf. Bakke 2017:28-33, 134). The project never materialised as Heyerdahl decided to leave his zoology studies behind after he returned from the Marquesas.

Despite Heyerdahl's failed zoology studies, he appears to have been on good terms with Bonnevie long after his return from the Marquesas. Bonnevie wrote a letter of recommendation for Heyerdahl before his trip to Canada in 1939 (Bonnevie 1939) and was trying to help him to obtain an ethnology/anthropology PhD position in the US in 1946 (Nordal et al. 2012:231-232). She and Hjalmar Broch are the only people from the University who appear in Heyerdahl's acknowledgements in *American Indians* (Heyerdahl 1952:9-10).

### *2.1.2 'Don't trust your teacher's word': Hjalmar Broch and Werner Werenskiold*

As the biographical note above illustrates, Bonnevie's ideas on fieldwork, experimentation and scientific dogmatism were in fact quite similar to Heyerdahl's opposition towards dogmatism, as well as to his emphasis on the importance of practical knowledge gained through experiments and expeditions. This suggests, in opposition to Heyerdahl's own claims, that Bonnevie's approach would have been an influence on him. Bonnevie's attitudes and approaches were not limited to her; in fact, several of the Department's staff members, as well as several of Heyerdahl's fellow students, expressed similar views, for instance the zoology professor Hjalmar Broch (1882-1969).

Broch was a first-generation student of Bonnevie's and would later develop a career of his own at the institution, eventually taking over Bonnevie's professorship after her retirement (Semb-Johansson 2009b). He worked predominantly on marine zoology and zoogeography. His interests included the marine zoology of the Northern Pacific, particularly the area northwest of the Tuamotus (see Broch 1936). Broch wrote several papers on material from the Norwegian *Maud Expeditions* to the North Pole and the Arctic Sea, as well as on material from Russian Polar expeditions of the early 1930s. He also worked on samples that had been collected by the infamous Swedish zoologist Eric Mjöberg during his expeditions to Australia in the 1910s (Broch 1916, 1956; Sverdrup (ed.) 1927-1939; see also Mjöberg 1915, 1918). In addition, he wrote several popular books on zoology and a historiography of the field of zoology in Norway (Broch 1939, 1954).

To his students Broch was a popular lecturer, working under the concept 'Don't follow your teacher's word' (Semb-Johansson 2009b, TR10). This motto or catchphrase of Broch's illustrates an attempt to encourage students to question established ideas, even if these ideas came from the lecturer himself. Like Bonnevie, Broch viewed himself as a force of opposition towards dogmatism in science. Of his students, he particularly mentioned Heyerdahl as someone who had listened to his motto (Anon. I. 1952). In an interview following the defence of Heyerdahl's fellow student and friend Yngvar Hagen's (2.3.1) dissertation, Broch argued that Heyerdahl's achievements were of the same order as Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen's:

It is only amateurs who can break new ground, said Professor Broch in response to the accusations of amateurism in Heyerdahl's work. A trained scientist has his eyes covered, he follows an established path, drawn up by others. If someone comes forth with a path of his own, the scientists will call him an amateur – but if the amateur's hypothesis is big enough, the scientists will accept it, like a feather in one's hat. Personally I regard Heyerdahl's achievements to be in the same division as Fridtjof Nansen's, Professor Broch added. Heyerdahl belongs to a group of my students who could think for themselves, who refused to blindly trust the statements of their lecturers, and they were right to think so. It is the teacher's obligation to transfer his real knowledge – not his beliefs – and let the students judge for themselves. Belief includes doubt – doubt can be accepted in belief, but never in science. To search for the complete truth, beyond compromise and doubt, that is the purpose of science, the Professor exclaimed (Anon. II. 1952, TR11).

Heyerdahl's geography professor Werner Werenskiöld (1883-1961) can also be included under this slightly unorthodox banner within the University. Werenskiöld studied under Nansen and even worked as a research assistant for him. Over time, Werenskiöld developed a career of his

own, including a large corpus of both scientific and popular publications on cultural and anthropological geography, as well as other geographical themes. He also participated in several scientific expeditions, for instance to Spitsbergen. From 1925 until his retirement, Werenskiold worked as a professor at Oslo University (Brynhi 2009; Holtedal 1962; Werenskiold 1931, 1934, 1936, 1941). He also features in several stories of more light-hearted humanist protests against the German occupation and the *Nasjonal Samling* government (Stokker 1997:133-134).

### *2.1.3 The Badger Party: Heyerdahl's Fellow Students Knut Schmidt-Nielsen, Edvard Barth and Per Høst*

It has been said that the primary function of schools is to impart enough facts to make children stop asking questions. Some, with whom the schools do not succeed, become scientists. I never made good grades in school. At times I nearly failed, and I never stopped asking questions. (Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:3)

The anti-dogmatic attitude seen among the professors of the Department was even more prominent in the small student group to which Heyerdahl belonged. The group consisted of only a handful of students (Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:39), almost all of whom made a name for themselves either inside the field of zoology or outside it.

The best-known name within the field of zoology would without doubt be Knut Schmidt-Nielsen (1915-2007). After his years at Oslo University (1934-1938), Schmidt-Nielsen moved on to the University of Copenhagen, where he received his doctorate. From the early 1950s and onwards he was predominately based at Duke University in the US, where he became a household name in American zoology and biology circles over the years. Schmidt-Nielsen is known for several leading textbooks for university students, as well as for his influential work on animal physiology. His most famous work revealed how camels keep cool in desert climates by breathing through their nose (McNeil Alexander 2007; Schmidt-Nielsen 1964, 1972, 1984, 1997, 1998; Travis 2009; Trætteberg 2009; Vogel 2008; Weibel 2007).

Schmidt-Nielsen described Heyerdahl as an athletic, outdoorsy type who would go off for long ski trips in the wilderness with his Greenland hound any time an opportunity presented itself (Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:38). These wilderness trips or expeditions to the Norwegian mountainside were published by Heyerdahl in a light-hearted fashion in Norwegian

newspapers, above all *Tidens tegn*, generally accompanied by some of his own humorous drawings (see Heyerdahl 1934, 1935a-c, 1936b). In addition to his Greenland hound Kazan, Heyerdahl was often accompanied on these trips by his cousin Gunnar Nissen or later Kon-Tiki expedition crew member Erik Hesselberg, and on occasion by another fellow student, Edvard K. Barth (1913-1996).

Barth would later become a leading light in the Norwegian Resistance movement. After the War he lived for almost a decade in an isolated cabin in the Rondane Mountains. Eventually, he decided to leave the mountains and obtained a position at the curatorial department for the ornithological collection at Oslo University's Zoology Department (Haftorn 1997; Semb-Johansson 2009a). Barth published several scientific papers and popular books (e.g. Barth 1953, 1971, 1975) and took up amateur archaeology in later life (Haftorn 1997; see also Barth 1982, 1996).

Another member of the student group, Per Høst (1907-1971), also had an interest in field experiments and wilderness expeditions. Høst began a successful career as a zoologist in the 1940s. His best-known contribution to the field was the discovery that changes in plumage among Norwegian mountain grouse depended on light conditions and not temperature as had previously been believed (Høst 1942), a discovery considered one of the most significant made by a Norwegian ornithologist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Iversen 2009, 2014; Nordal et al. 2012:304). During the late 1930s, he started making nature films, which eventually led him to abandon academia to pursue a career as a filmmaker. Høst predominately made nature and ethnographic documentaries, such as *Jungelfolket* (1948), *Ecuador* (1953), *Naturen og eventyret* (1953), and *Same-Jakki* (1957), a corpus of work for which he is considered one of the leading Norwegian documentary filmmakers (Iversen 2014). Høst also worked for both the BBC and NRK, and wrote several travelogues from his expeditions (Høst 1951, 1956, 1964). He collaborated with Heyerdahl during the latter's expedition to the Galapagos Islands (Heyerdahl 1955, 1963a, 1978:239-252; Heyerdahl & Skjølsvold 1956), resulting in the film *Galápagos* (1955). Disagreement over the film's structure – and even more so over how to plan expeditions – discouraged the two men from further collaborative efforts (Iversen 2014:114-134). In the student group Høst seems to have been a rebellious and mischievous leader (Nordal et al. 2012:304-308). Schmidt-Nielsen, for instance, mentioned frequent parties instigated by Høst. The most notorious of these was the 'badger party', which in addition to distilled preserving alcohol stolen from the laboratories also featured a serving of

fresh badger meat from one of Høst's hunting expeditions (Bakke 2017:27-28; Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:39-40).

Høst's name also features in a frequently told story by Heyerdahl and his biographers. The story is generally used in a manner similar to the 'reindeer's nostrils' story (2.1), to contrast Heyerdahl's interest in practical experience with that of armchair or laboratory specialisation. It focuses on the mundane chore of studying Mendelian inheritance laws in generation after generation of banana flies. Becoming completely fed up with the assignment, Høst opened a window and set all of the little creatures free (e.g. Heyerdahl 1998:75). In his autobiography Schmidt-Nielsen presented a parallel story of how Heyerdahl announced that he would leave zoology. The incident occurred in a similar laboratory on a stormy October day in 1936. Apparently Heyerdahl, all soaked from the storm, walked into the laboratory, and upon finding out that the students were studying anemones, he exclaimed, 'Damn it, these are flowers. I quit!' According to Schmidt-Nielsen, very little was seen of Heyerdahl at the Department after that (Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:38).

As the opening quotation from Schmidt-Nielsen's autobiography indicates, he was not a great fan of traditional ideas of schooling. In his autobiography he disclosed that he felt he had learned more from informal discussion and private experiments and studies undertaken with Iacob Sømme (who lacked an academic degree) and his fellow student and friend Høst than he had from university studies (Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:35). His comments are interesting as they express a rebellious attitude towards the educational institution similar to Heyerdahl's, favouring fieldwork and experimentation over the classroom – something which is also suggested by the two stories of Høst and Heyerdahl's behaviour during laboratory experiments. Nonetheless, there is an evident difference between Schmidt-Nielsen and Heyerdahl. Schmidt-Nielsen associated these qualities with science/the scientist, while Heyerdahl saw them as in direct opposition to science/the scientist. The different paths for the two men suggest that it was not in the scientific institution that Heyerdahl's antagonism with scientific specialisation originated but in later life circumstances.



## *2.2 Nansenism: Expeditions in the Light of Norwegian Scientific Tradition*

The anti-dogmatic standpoint and emphasis on fieldwork, experiments and expeditions seen in Bonnevie's, Broch's and Werenskiöld's approach to science, as well as in the attitude of their student group, can be traced back to the Norwegian Polar exploration era. In fact it is hard to speak of Norway in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century without bringing up the importance of the Polar explorations (Drivenes & Jølle (eds.) 2004a-b). Even the formation of the Norwegian nation and its independence from Swedish colonial rule in 1905 are intimately linked to Fridtjof Nansen's (1861-1930) 'Norwegian expeditions' in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fulsås 2004:184-195). Nansen, inspired by the Swedish Polar explorer Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld (1832-1901), saw scientific exploration as an expression of national pride:

It is not through warfare that small nations can leave their mark and assert their independence. It is through fields open for each and every one, like culture, civilisation, science and art, that the small nation can strive for the recognition of its people's greatness (Brøgger & Rolfsen 1896:214, TR4).

Nansen's naming of his expeditions as 'Norwegian' is therefore to be read in relation to his agitation for the Norwegian independence movement, as well as a way of marketing the Norwegian nation (Friedman 2004; Fulsås 2004; Hestmark 2004; Næss 2004). This is important to keep in mind for understanding the complex relationship between the Norwegian scientific tradition and colonialism. Nansen's expeditions' can be seen as an uprising of the colonial subject (Norwegian independence) rather than suppression, yet at the same time he worked with an imperial ambition for various fields such as science. This dual position for Scandinavians is often overlooked in discourses on colonialism, especially in the Pacific (Coughlin 2016). On the one hand, the Scandinavians were part of Europe, participating for instance in British or German exploration parties, but on the other hand they were not colonisers themselves. Therefore colonial readings common when discussing British, French, Dutch and German exploration voyaging and scientific expeditions in the Pacific are not suitable for discussing Scandinavian enterprises as they lacked colonial claims and subsequently were not trying to justify colonial rule.

Norway had been a late bloomer on the Polar exploration scene, entering the stage only in the late 1880s through Nansen. By that time, exploration of the Arctic area had been a discipline conducted above all by the British, but also the Americans, the Russians and the Swedes, for almost a century (Hestmark 2004:44; Wråkberg 2004:15-50). Nansen, however, brought a new approach which would alter the rules of the game and become the foundation for the success of the Norwegian expeditions. This approach included a substantial amount of borrowed elements from Inuit populations in Greenland (Berg 2004; Jølle 2004; Nansen 1961a-c). The populations of the Arctic had previously been given little attention by the British, who generally viewed them as savages with nothing to provide to the Empire (Jølle 2004:279). Nansen saw it differently and believed he could gain from the Inuit of Greenland the knowledge needed for a successful outcome to his envisioned Arctic exploration voyages. A key aspect was Nansen's ideas about the composition and skills of the crew. He favoured a small crew, specially trained for the expedition, in which each man had several different areas of expertise, but all held the basic skills needed to survive in the Arctic environment (Jølle 2004; Nansen 1961c; Næss 2004). This model was in stark contrast to the large, hierarchically organised crews of the British exploration vessels, where the sailors lacked multi-disciplinary specialisation and were not taught how to survive the harsh Arctic environment, which on occasion had disastrous consequences (Næss 2004:69-70). In addition to the use of approaches developed from indigenous knowledge, Nansen also employed cutting-edge ship construction techniques and scientific theories which were controversial for the period, for instance concerning underwater currents, leading up to his successful *Fram Expedition* in 1893-1896 (Jølle 2004; Nansen 1897, 1961c; Næss 2004).

Nansen also placed particular importance on the scientific background to the expeditions. There needed to be a reason for the adventure, otherwise it would seem pointless and hollow. Nansen's approach was later deployed for the framework of the Norwegian Polar exploration era.

For the Norwegian scientific community, especially within the fields of natural history, the Polar exploration era was absolutely crucial, and positioned the Norwegians in the international spotlight. Participation in expeditions and collecting samples to be brought back for analysis became central elements of the Norwegian scientific scene, affecting generations of scholars during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Heyerdahl's relationship to Nansen is a rather complicated matter. The ageing Nansen was

no longer the same intense heroic figure for Heyerdahl's generation as he had been at the turn of the century. Heyerdahl admitted to an interest in his and Amundsen's expedition among the youth of his generation but would not confess to any further connection to Nansen in his autobiography; seemingly he considered his own dog a more important influence (Heyerdahl 1998:61-62).

Heyerdahl was clearly not telling the truth here. There are numerous connecting points between Heyerdahl and Nansen, especially concerning Heyerdahl's expeditions, which he seemingly modelled after Nansen's. For Heyerdahl, just as for Nansen, the expedition needed to rely on a scientific justification, a point to justify the necessity of the adventure (e.g. Hestmark 2004). For Heyerdahl's expeditions this justification came from the Kon-Tiki theory. Heyerdahl's emphasis on indigenous knowledge for the creation of his expedition vessels – whether this was through library studies for the Kon-Tiki raft, or the use of actual indigenous builders from Chad and Bolivia for the *Ra Expeditions* – mirrors Nansen's use of Greenland Inuit knowledge for his Polar expeditions (see Heyerdahl 1950a; 1970; 1979; Jølle 2004:267-279; Nansen 1890, 1961a-c; Næss 2004:65-70; see also SVT documentaries *Pyramider och papyrus* [Pyramids and Papyrus] and *På papyrusbåt över Atlanten* [Papyrus Boat across the Atlantic]). Criticism of modern civilisation and romanticisation of nature mark further parallels between Heyerdahl and Nansen (see further 3.2). Heyerdahl also named his *Kon-Tiki*, *Galapagos* and *Easter Island* expeditions 'the Norwegian...', alluding to the expeditions of the Polar exploration era (see Heyerdahl 1948a, 1957; Heyerdahl & Skjølsvold 1956; Heyerdahl & Ferdon (eds.) 1961, 1965). Heyerdahl's three expeditions between 1947 and 1956 were also undertaken in the decade immediately after the Norwegian nation had broken free from colonialism (the German occupation during World War II) for the second time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus for instance the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* and the subsequent archaeological expeditions to the East Pacific can be placed within a nation-building framework. Yet, as mentioned above, none of the expeditions aimed to colonise Pacific islands or people, but can be said to have attempted to colonise the Pacific migration discourse.

Another correspondence between Heyerdahl and Nansen can be seen in their respective use of the antagonism between themselves and so-called established dogmatic armchair scientists as a narrative driving force (e.g. Heyerdahl 1948a, 1974a, 1998; Nansen 1961a:14, 1961c:16, 22-34).

All of these connections dispute Heyerdahl's attempt to downplay the importance of Nansen for his work. However, they do not necessarily express a direct dialogue but could instead be viewed in the light of Heyerdahl working in a tradition labelled as *Nansenism*. The term refers to big-budget scientific expeditions with intense media coverage, preferably featuring components of physical challenge and danger designed to accentuate the nation and the individual explorer, but also including less bombastic elements emphasising collaboration, loyalty, duty, humility and hard work as desired ideals (Friedman 2004:114). This is a fitting image particularly for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, but also on a smaller scale for the Marquesas journey. It might therefore be argued that Heyerdahl was working in the tradition of *Nansenism* when organising and describing his expeditions, rather than being directly inspired by Nansen. That is to say, the dialogue occurring between Heyerdahl's writing and his organisation of the expedition does not need to have been directly with Nansen, but through an intermediary, namely the tradition of *Nansenism*.

### 2.3 *The Tristan da Cunha Expedition*

Scientific exploration expeditions were also on the agenda for Oslo University during Heyerdahl's years at the Zoology Department, as plans for the 1937-38 *Norwegian Scientific Expedition to Tristan da Cunha* were being drawn up at that time. This again illustrates that rather than a direct dialogue between Heyerdahl and Nansen, Heyerdahl could have been introduced to these concepts through the University environment.

The *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* was a massive undertaking for the University, and funding had been drawn together not just from University research funds, but also from several private benefactors (Christophersen 1938b, 1940, 1946-1968). The large budget was predominately due to the isolated location of Tristan da Cunha. The South Atlantic island is found around 2,000 km from the closest inhabited island, which happens to be Saint Helena, once chosen by the British as suitable for exiling Napoleon. The seed for the expedition had already been sown in 1933, when the University's botanical curator and later expedition leader Christophersen (2.3.2) had received a package with samples from the isolated island (Christophersen 1940:3-5). The expedition would thus have been in the planning stage when Heyerdahl entered the University.

All in all, the expedition featured eleven different scientific members from several different

disciplines (Christophersen 1940:14). Its overall idea was quite similar to the studies of evolutionary development in geographical isolation that Bonnevie and other researchers at the Department were conducting. In particular, zoogeography and migratory patterns for birds and animals – both those able to travel by the winds and the sea, and those bound to the land – were of importance for the expedition. How, for instance, could wingless birds have ended up on the small volcanic island in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean? To answer such questions, Christophersen emphasised the importance of moving out of the office and into the field; he wrote, 'a solution was not to be found by sitting and reading books' (Christophersen 1940:6-7).

The expedition also featured a component intended to study the human community on the island. This part of the expedition likewise followed the line of zoological research questions, focusing on the development of health, physiology and social interaction in isolation. The impact of the islanders' potato and fish diet on their teeth was of particular interest. Two members of the scientific party and an additional assistant were devoted solely to medical and dental studies of the Tristan da Cunha population (Christophersen 1940:5-16). In the popular account, Christophersen also expressed an interest in the islanders from a more romantic anti-civilisation perspective: 'This problem of insular loveliness was certainly worth studying, especially in an age such as this, when envy and jealousy seem to be more predominant than ever' (Christophersen 1940:5). Christophersen also compared the 'peace-loving community' of Tristan da Cunha to that of the 'newly rediscovered' community of Bounty descendants on Pitcairn Island (Christophersen 1940:5, see also Belcher 1870; Shapiro 1929). As a result of this interest in the island's population, a sociologist, P. A. Munch (1908-1984), was also brought along in addition to medicinal staff (see further Munch 1964, 1970, 1971, 1979; see also Munch & Munch-Snyder 2008).

### *2.3.1 Yngvar Hagen and the Atlantis Land-bridge*

Besides Munch, two other PhD students from the University participated in the expedition: the algae researcher Egil Baardseth (1912-1991) (Sunding 2012), whose thesis *The Marine Algae of Tristan da Cunha* was published in 1941, and the ornithologist Yngvar Hagen (1909-1993).

Hagen was a student at the Zoology Department at the same time as Heyerdahl, and is

frequently mentioned in Heyerdahl and Liv's scrapbook prior to the Marquesas journey (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Hagen and his girlfriend were seemingly responsible for introducing Heyerdahl and Liv to each other. He also seems to have been the only one from the University who was invited to the couple's wedding. On the wedding day Hagen presented the couple with a drawing showing himself at Tristan da Cunha and Heyerdahl at the Marquesas (Ill.5; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Whether Heyerdahl himself had held any hopes of being asked to join the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* is not known. However, the possibility that the Marquesas journey could have developed out of Heyerdahl's disappointment at not being picked as a member of the Tristan da Cunha party should not be excluded – especially since his friend Hagen was chosen.

The close relationship between Hagen and Heyerdahl is interesting in relation to how the two men approached corresponding research questions. As mentioned above, Hagen is predominately known for studies in ornithology. He received the equivalent of a Bachelor's degree from Oslo University's Zoological Department in 1936 (Mysterud 2009) and was a member of the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition*, where he studied birds and also acted as the expedition's draughtsman, drawing maps and sketches of the different islands the expedition called at (Christophersen 1940). Hagen did not finish his PhD on the birds of Tristan da Cunha until 1952 (Hagen 1952a); the same year also saw the publication of his best-known work on the birds of prey of Norway (Hagen 1952b). From 1952 until his retirement in 1977, Hagen was employed by the University of Oslo as curator for the ornithological collection. The hiatus in Hagen's career between the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* and 1952 was a result of his open support for Nazism and *Nasjonal Samling* during the 1930s and 1940s (Mysterud 2009).

Like the Zoology Department in Oslo in general, Hagen seems to have been occupied with zoogeographical concerns at the time. In Christophersen's travelogue from the expedition, each member of the expedition party contributed a section of their own. Hagen's section discussed theories of land-bridges and sunken continents as a means for possible migration of wingless birds. However, in his discussion Hagen also drifted over to discussing human migration and the idea of Atlantis. While discussing Atlantis theories he mentioned cultural parallels between ancient Egypt and ancient Central America, and stated that researchers had suggested a possible two-way migration of a culture-bearing race from a sunken continent in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean. Hagen, however, concluded that after reading the work of

botanist Elmer Merrill (1876-1956) he had become more sceptical of Atlantis theories (Christophersen 1940:85).



Illustration 5: Pages from Heyerdahl's and Liv's scrapbook prior to the Marquesas journey. Left: Page illustrating Thor and Liv reading about the Marquesas. Middle: Bon voyage greetings from Alf Wollebæk (top) and Erling Christophersen (bottom). Right: Bon voyage greeting and drawings from Yngvar Hagen. Top illustrates a wilderness expedition Hagen and Heyerdahl undertook in June 1935. Bottom left shows Hagen at Tristan da Cunha, bottom right shows Hagen's depiction of Heyerdahl in the Marquesas, drawing signed 24 December 1936. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©

Hagen's discussion is interesting as it reveals that the kinds of ideas on human migration Heyerdahl would later present were also on the minds of his peers. Hagen's attempt at presenting cultural parallels between Central America and Egypt illustrates an interest in a diffusionist understanding of human migration and culture dispersal – similar to the ideas launched by Heyerdahl in his Kon-Tiki theory. That Hagen combined the discussion with his thoughts on ornithological dispersal and migration reveals that theories based on zoological material were also being compared to anthropological questions in Heyerdahl's circle. Hagen's scepticism towards the Atlantis theory was shared by Heyerdahl, at least in later years; Heyerdahl strongly opposed the idea of land-bridges playing a part in human migration processes, instead favouring transoceanic voyages, to the point of suggesting the concept of 'sea-bridges' (e.g. Heyerdahl 1950b:31).

### 2.3.2 The Botanist Erling Christophersen

The *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* leader Christophersen has surprisingly not been mentioned

in earlier biographical work on Heyerdahl. This is odd, as Christophersen had direct contact with leading scientific institutions in the Pacific and is also mentioned in archival material by Heyerdahl himself as an important factor in his early knowledge of the region. In a presentation Heyerdahl held at Oslo University in late November 1936, he said: 'Literature has been made available to me through curator Erling Christophersen, who has previously worked with Pacific material for the Bishop Museum' (Heyerdahl 1936a:3, TR12).

Christophersen (1898-1994) was employed at the time of Heyerdahl's presentation as curator of Oslo University's botanical collections. After World War II he abandoned his academic career to work as a diplomat in the US. His connections to the US had already developed during his student years; in 1924 he received a PhD from Yale University (Christophersen 1925; Jørgensen 2009; Kelly 1926; Stafleu & Mennega 1997:165). After gaining his PhD, Christophersen obtained a fellowship at the Bishop Museum through the formal Yale-Bishop Museum connection and was affiliated to the institution in 1924 and 1925. During this period he participated in both the *Tanager Expedition* (2.3.2.1) and the *Whippoorwill Expedition* to the Line Islands (Buck 1945:48; Christophersen 1927; Gregory 1925; see also Anderson et. al. 2000; Di Piazza & Pearthree 2001a-b; Edmondson 1923; Emory 1934; Fowler 1927; Wentworth 1931).

When his fellowship at the Bishop Museum ended, Christophersen returned to Norway and worked at Oslo University for a few years, until he obtained a new botanist position at the Bishop Museum, combined with a professorship at the University of Hawaii. He remained in Hawaii until 1933, when he returned again to his homeland to become curator of Oslo's Botanical Museum (Jørgensen 2009; Stafleu & Mennega 1997:165).

Christophersen's work on Pacific material included studies of samples collected during the *Tanager Expedition*. However, his major corpus on Pacific material was a large two-volume work on the plant life of Samoa. In addition, he published studies on the plant life of Krakatoa in the then-Dutch East Indies and the Galapagos Islands (see Christophersen 1927, 1931a-b, 1932, 1934a-c, 1935, 1938a; Christophersen & Caum 1931; Setchell & Christophersen 1935).

Even though Christophersen himself is not known to have held any theories on anthropological or archaeological matters, there are still some connections of interest in this regard for Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory.



### 2.3.2.1 Christophersen and the Tanager Expedition

The *Tanager Expedition* was part of the program for Pacific research of the Bishop Museum, the leading institution in studies of the East Pacific area at that time. The Museum had been established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and became prominent when Herbert Gregory (1869-1952) was appointed as Museum Director in 1919. The following year saw the first Pacific Science Conference and the launch of the extensive *Bayard Dominick Expedition*, with ambitious aims of cross-disciplinary surveys (including studies of botany, zoology, etymology, physical anthropology, ethnology and archaeology) of the Polynesian island world (Buck 1945:41-47; Gregory 1921, 1923). The *Bayard Dominick Expedition* set the standard for the Museum's multidisciplinary expeditions, and the *Tanager Expedition* was carried out in a similar manner. The *Tanager Expedition* was divided into four different sections in 1923, with an additional fifth section in 1924. The last section, in which Christophersen participated, was particularly targeted at surveys of the archaeological remains discovered on Necker and Nihoa Islands towards the northern end of the Hawaiian chain (Buck 1945:47; Gregory 1924, 1925; Olson 1996:1-18; see also Bryan (ed.) 1927; Christophersen 1931b; Christophersen & Caum 1931; Edmondson et. al. 1925; Emory 1928; Fowler & Ball 1924, 1925; Palmer 1927). Despite being a botanist, Christophersen also participated and assisted in the actual archaeological fieldwork (Emory 1928:4).

The archaeological surveys of Necker and Nihoa Islands are particularly important in relation to the Kon-Tiki theory. It was in the publication of the fieldwork from Necker and Nihoa Islands that Emory suggested the possibility of South American influences on Polynesian material culture. The remains on Necker Island of several large *Marae* sites with erected stone slabs and stone statues had drawn Emory's attention to South America. Emory suggested a possible correspondence between the statues on Necker Island and statues from South America depicted in Arthur Posnansky's (1873-1946) 1914 publication on Tiahuanaco (Emory 1928:112). However, this possible connection to South America was only mentioned as something to take notice of. Emory's discussion predominantly revolved around comparative analysis of material from the Society Islands, the Marquesas and the Austral Islands (Emory 1928:106-123). For Emory, Necker Island was a particularly interesting case study, since it had been discovered uninhabited in the late 1780s and was not known to the historic Hawaiian population. It thus presented a unique opportunity to study Polynesian

archaeological remains abandoned prior to European contact, which were of importance for understanding early Polynesian migratory movements (Emory 1928:3).

The importance of Necker Island would not have been lost on Christophersen, but his writings do not feature any discussion of archaeological topics, neither is there any indication that Heyerdahl was familiar with Emory's work at the time, suggesting that the literature Christophersen made Heyerdahl aware of was most likely only botanical and zoological studies.

## *2.4 The Zoological Club Presentation*

A key source for understanding the state of Heyerdahl's theory prior to his Marquesas journey in 1937 is the handwritten manuscript of a presentation he gave just a month prior to his departure (Heyerdahl 1936a). The presentation was held on 23 November 1936 at the Zoological Department at Oslo University, and included a panel discussion with contributions by Professor Bonnevie, Alf Wollebæk, curator of the zoological collection, and Fridthjof Økland, an expert on land snails and molluscs (Heyerdahl 1936a:29). The influence of Christophersen and the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* is also noticeable in the presentation. Heyerdahl marked Tristan da Cunha on one of the maps (Ill. 6) and stated, as mentioned above, that he had gained access to research literature through Christophersen (Heyerdahl 1936a:3).

The presentation itself follows a standard format for a presentation of an expedition project with scientific intentions. Heyerdahl discussed the state of previous research, mentioning the few zoological studies undertaken to that date: the work of C. M. Cooke on land snails, as well as studies by Edward P. Mumford and A. M. Adamson (1936a:1-3). He then ventured into a lengthier presentation of the geographical situation of the Marquesas group, its individual islands and the Pacific in general. This section includes discussions on topics such as trade winds and currents, which would later be of importance for the Kon-Tiki theory. It also gives a general introduction to the climate of the Marquesas Islands, as well as further discussion of Marquesan botany and zoology (both natural and domesticated). The presentation concluded that, in the light of limited previous research, the outlook for the project was promising (Heyerdahl 1936a:4-29).

The mention of trade winds and direction of currents in the presentation could be seen as an

indication that Heyerdahl had already been contemplating the geographical elements (1.4.2.3) of the Kon-Tiki theory at the time of the presentation. However, the overall composition of the discussion suggests that it should be viewed in another light.

In connection to discussing currents and trade winds, Heyerdahl also spoke of the geographical isolation of the Marquesas Islands. This was presented at three different levels: the isolation of the island group from other island groups in the Pacific; the isolation between the different islands within the island group; and, finally, the isolation between different valleys on the individual islands (Heyerdahl 1936a:20). This division suggests a focus on geographical boundaries for biotopes, and therefore the discussion is more likely to have been linked with zoology than with an anthropological discourse. As the next section demonstrates, this can be further illustrated by the emphasis on land snails in the presentation (see also Anon. VII. 1936; Anon. VIII. 1936; Nordal et al. 2012:305-308).

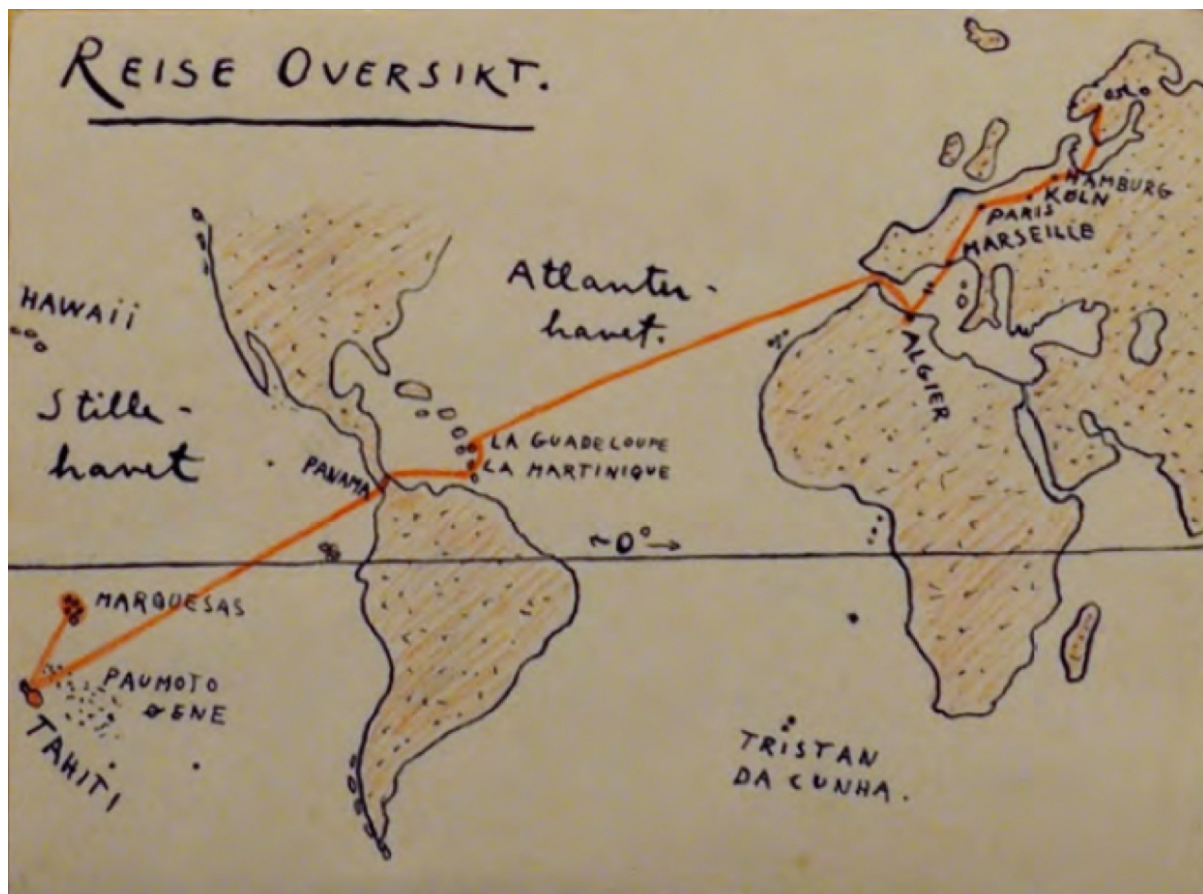


Illustration 6: 'Journey map' for Heyerdahl's Marquesas journey, from Heyerdahl's November 1936 presentation of the journey at the Zoological Department of Oslo University. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©

### *2.4.1 Fridthjof Økland and Pacific Land Snails*

Land snails have long been of interest for studies of human impact on Pacific biotopes (Christensen & Weisler 2013; Kirch et al. 2009; Lee et. al 2007). The snails' low mobility – land snails spend their entire life confined to areas that seldom exceed more than a few square meters – and their lack of salt water tolerance (Goodcare & Wade 2001:136) prevent them from dispersing over great distances or crossing oceans on their own. Therefore the spread of closely similar species around the Pacific islands has been argued to stand in relation to human introduction. However, the majority of land snails are endemic to different islands, suggesting a pre-human origin and isolated genetic development. The snails' low mobility rate means that differences in genetic development can be found even between populations from different valleys on a single island like Fatu Hiva. The snails thus become valued species for studies of evolutionary development and natural selection processes, something which was already recognised in the 1920s and 1930s (Adamson 1935a; Bick et. al. 2016; Bouchet & Abdou 2003; Clarke et. al. 1996; Coote 2007; Gillespie et. al. 2008; Goodcare 2001; Goodacre & Wade 2001; Holland & Cowie 2009; Johnson et. al. 2000; Lee et. al 2009, 2014; Mumford 1936; Rundell 2010; Satori et al. 2013, 2014).

The emphasis on land snails and geographical isolation in Heyerdahl's presentation suggests a project very much in line with Bonnevie's research on evolutionary genetic development in isolation. Heyerdahl also stated in later interviews that the project had been developed in agreement with Bonnevie (2.1.1.1; see also Nordal et al. 2012:305-308). However, the way Heyerdahl presented the outline of the expedition suggests that the topic was even closer to the work of the second member of the discussion panel, Fridthjof Økland.

From his long and varied publication list, as well as biographical notes, Økland (1893-1957) seems to have been an industrious figure. In addition to his scientific work, he also published several popular scientific volumes on Norwegian birds and insects (Økland 1942, 1944, 1952, 1953a-b, 1955b; Økland et. al. 1948a-c, 1949), as well as two biographies, one on the Norwegian pioneer zoologist Michael Sars (Økland 1955a) and the other on Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution (1951). Økland had already participated in the Norwegian expedition to Novaya Zemlya (Arctic Ocean) in the early 1920s (Natvig 1958) and had received his PhD for a dissertation on land snails in Norway (Økland 1925).

In the 1930s, by the time Heyerdahl entered the University, Økland's work had become particularly focused on zoogeography and studies of evolutionary development in isolation among land snails and ants, and his zone of interest had expanded beyond Norway to embrace Europe at large (Hessen 2009; Natvig 1958; see also Økland 1930a-b, 1937). His research during this period was not only limited to snails; he also published more philosophical works and inheritance studies (roughly similar to modern genetics) on human populations (Hessen 2009; Natvig 1958; Økland 1932, 1944). The direction of Økland's research in the 1930s was following a similar path to Bonnevie's and Christophersen's outline for the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition*, and it closely connects to the outline of Heyerdahl's presentation, explaining Økland's presence in the discussion panel.

#### 2.4.2 Alf Wollebæk and the Galapagos Islands

The third participant on the discussion panel, Alf Wollebæk, is a more difficult fit for the Marquesas journey's zoological research interests. Wollebæk (1879-1960) was employed as curator of the University's zoological collection. He had previously been a member of several scientific expeditions to the Arctic Sea, the Barents Sea, the Baltic Sea, the North Atlantic and the Scandinavian Arctic zone (Iversen 2014:18; Nissen 2009).

In 1925, together with his assistant Erling Hansen (1901-1953), Wollebæk had organised an expedition to the Caribbean, South America and the Galapagos Islands. In a twist of fate, their Galapagos research station was established on the island of Floreana (Grant & Estes 2015), which would later become the gravitating spot for Heyerdahl's 1952-1953 archaeological expedition to the Galapagos Islands (see Heyerdahl 2000a; Skjølsvold 1989; Wittmer 2013:316-322). The purpose of Wollebæk's Galapagos Islands expedition had been to collect zoological samples in order to evaluate the possibility of an earlier existing land-bridge connecting the Galapagos group to the American continent. The theory of a connecting land-bridge, and its importance for understanding the evolutionary development of the Galapagos fauna, had originally been promulgated by Darwin (Darwin 1859:388-406; Sevilla 2016:16-22). Wollebæk found that the expedition's results proved beyond doubt that the land-bridge scenario was impossible. The expedition resulted in a large number of papers, and Wollebæk also wrote two popular accounts about it (Grant & Estes 2015; Wollebæk 1926, 1927, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1936).

His expedition to the Galapagos Islands might have been the reason for Wollebæk's participation on the discussion panel. He might have been asked to attend in relation to his expertise on the East Pacific geographical zone. It is also possible that his participation was encouraged on account of his extensive expedition and collecting experience.

Of the three members of the discussion panel, Wollebæk seems to have had the closest personal ties to Heyerdahl. He is, for instance, the only one who wrote a personal bon voyage greeting (featuring a drawing of a Galapagos Islands iguana) in the scrapbook Heyerdahl and Liv kept in conjunction with the Marquesas journey (Ill.5; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### *2.4.3 The International Connection: Cooke, Mumford and Adamson*

In his presentation Heyerdahl mentioned or referenced Forrest Brown, Adamson, Cooke and Mumford (Heyerdahl 1936a), all entomologists, botanists or zoologists tied to the Bishop Museum. As Heyerdahl stated, the introduction to the group of Bishop Museum-associated scholars was made through Christophersen (Heyerdahl 1936a:3). Christophersen had been a colleague of Cooke's, and on several occasions collaborated with Brown (see Christophersen 1927:7, 1935:4; Christophersen & Caum 1931:4). There is therefore a clear connection between Christophersen and the Pacific scholars Heyerdahl was influenced by before his Marquesas journey. However, Heyerdahl himself claimed half a century later that the introduction to contemporary research on Pacific natural history had been made through Bonnevie (2.1.1.1). This later statement by Heyerdahl is confusing in relation to Bonnevie's own testimony on her limited knowledge of Pacific material (2.1.1.1), and especially since Heyerdahl still emphasised the importance of Christophersen's colleague Brown in the late 1990s (Heyerdahl 1998:190-194, 213). All of the members of the discussion panel, Bonnevie, Økland and Wollebæk, as well as other University staff, had international connections, especially to Germany, the UK and the US (Broch 1959; Kyllingstad 2014; Løken 1964; Natvig 1958; Nordal et al. 2012; Ottesen 2009; Sømme 2012a-d). Despite these international ties, the only one with a direct connection to Pacific natural history was Christophersen. Whatever the reasons might have been, Heyerdahl was consistent in not acknowledging this influence from Christophersen in later life.

Charles Montague Cooke Jr. (1874-1948) had been on the staff of the Bishop Museum from 1902 and stayed there until his retirement. He was an alumnus of Yale University, with the

land snails of the Pacific as his main area of expertise. Cooke led the Bishop Museum's 1934 *Mangareva Expedition*, which called at several of the island groups in Eastern Polynesia, and also included archaeological/ethnological work led by Emory and Peter Buck [Te Rangi Hiroa] (Buck 1945:52; Cooke 1931, 1935; Kondo 1952; Pilsby & Cooke 1908; Pilsby et al. 1928).

Edward Mumford (1902-1977) was an English-born entomologist with a PhD from Oxford. In the late 1920s he had stepped in as replacement project leader for the Bishop Museum-based *Pacific Entomological Survey*. His work in Polynesia, which included studies of the fauna of the Marquesas (undertaken with Adamson, among others, in the early 1930s), was cut short due to health issues, seemingly sparked by the Hawaiian climate. Therefore, despite being associated with the Bishop Museum until the 1960s, Mumford is not known to have worked in the Pacific other than the abovementioned brief period in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Bianchi 1979). In his presentation at Oslo University, Heyerdahl spoke of Mumford in a manner indicating that they might have been in correspondence with each other either directly or through an intermediary. Also, according to Heyerdahl, Mumford was planning an expedition to the Marquesas Islands. Heyerdahl even claimed that the two would join forces in the Marquesas ['slå oss sammen der nede'] (Heyerdahl 1936a:2). As noted above, Mumford is not known to have taken part in any expeditions to the Marquesas in 1937, and he is not mentioned anywhere else in the archival material from Heyerdahl's journey. It is possible that Mumford's health problems forced him to abandon any plans he might have had for a new expedition to Polynesia (e.g. Baker & Rutherford 2014:65).

A paper by Mumford in the January 1936 edition of *Ecology* includes some remarks of interest for Heyerdahl's theory. For instance, Mumford opened the paper by writing:

Though the generally accepted theory is that the faunal migration waves originated on the western borders of the Pacific, gradually losing their force as they travelled eastward, ethnologists, zoologists, and botanists have long debated the possibility of some American influence coming from the opposite direction. The strategic position of the Marquesas, as the principal high islands near the eastern border of Polynesia, promised results of great interest (Mumford 1936:143-144).

Mumford further argued that mammals such as dogs and rats had been introduced by human agency, presumably prior to European contact (Mumford 1936:155). However, he concluded that these species, as well as most of the other fauna and flora, had a south-western origin (Asia and Melanesia), with a few exceptions which Mumford considered likely to have been

secondary introductions from Hawaii and the Americas (Mumford 1936:156).

Mumford's views were similar to those of his colleague Martin Adamson (1901-1945), who made a more substantial contribution to the natural history of the Marquesas Islands (see Adamson 1932, 1935a-b, 1936, 1939). The Scotsman Adamson had a career as a travelling naturalist. Employed on different surveys and projects, he collected and studied material from various parts of the US, Mexico, Polynesia and the Caribbean. In 1927 he became employed by the *Pacific Entomological Survey* and was stationed in Honolulu; between 1929 and 1930 he spent 15 months doing fieldwork in the Marquesas (Adamson 1939:5; Baker & Rutherford 2014).

While employed on the Survey, Adamson worked under the leadership of Mumford. Adamson was, however, not particularly impressed by Mumford, whom he described as a 'hindrance to the work – ill health psychological and physical, total incompetence and lack of knowledge' (personal correspondence quoted in Baker & Rutherford 2014:65).

Adamson considered the Marquesas Islands as an almost virgin territory for natural historians and his work focused on the origin of the Marquesan fauna and flora. He claimed this question could only be answered through a cross-disciplinary approach, bringing together results from various fields such as geology, geography, zoology, botany, entomology and even anthropology (Adamson 1939:5-6). Just as for Wollebæk's discussion of the Galapagos Islands, Adamson had the question of the putative existence of lost land-bridges between the Pacific Islands in focus. However, he found no conclusive evidence for such theories, and instead emphasised the importance of transoceanic dispersal in the form of trade winds and currents (Adamson 1939:12-19, 75-80). Adamson argued that the fauna and flora of the Marquesas Islands had its predominant origin to the south-west (Western Polynesia, Melanesia and Asia), with very few indications of any introduction from the Americas to the east (Adamson 1935a:5, 1939:75-78). He argued that several species, particularly mammals, but also parts of the flora, had been introduced by humans, which he connected to the settling of the Marquesas by Polynesians (coming from the west) within the last 2,000 years (Adamson 1939:26-27).

Adamson's lengthier discussion on the natural history of the Marquesas was not published until 1939 and therefore was not available to Heyerdahl before his journey. Some of the discussion does, however, exist in earlier works (e.g. Adamson 1935a), and also in Mumford's paper in *Ecology* from early 1936. Even though Adamson's later work would have been of



interest for Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory, especially with Heyerdahl's cross-disciplinary approach and emphasis on zoological and botanical studies, he seemingly did not read it; and none of Adamson's publications are listed among the references for *American Indians*. Heyerdahl instead focused on the botanist Brown's work.

#### 2.4.3.1 *Forest Brown and the Origin of the Marquesan Flora*

Forest Buffen Harkness Brown (1873-1954) had been the lead botanist on the Bishop Museum's *Bayard Dominick Expedition* to the Marquesas Islands (Davidson 2008:8; Gregory 1921, 1923; Handy, E. 1923; 1930b; Handy, W. 1965; Kirch 2000:20; Linton 1923, 1925; Skinner 1923:250-251). He spent 17 months in the island group in 1921-1922 (Brown 1931:3, Stafleu & Mennega 1995:134). Brown's fieldwork, undertaken together with his wife and fellow botanist Elizabeth D. W. Brown, was presented in a major three-volume publication (Brown 1931, 1935; Brown & Brown 1931; see also Brown 1928). The surveys and collecting efforts were extensive and had the ambitious aim of covering 'every square mile' of the island group (Brown 1931:3). In total the Brown couple spent 22 days on Fatu Hiva. The island was described as covered with heavy vegetation, and as one of the most picturesque in the Marquesas. Brown also claimed that parts of the island had hardly been seen even by the natives, and as far as he could tell it represented one of the best places to study native culture. He wrote that Fatu Hiva was a treasure trove for archaeologists and ethnologists (Brown 1931:6). Several of these statements were directly quoted by Heyerdahl in his presentation (Heyerdahl 1936a:28). It is also worth noting that on several occasions Brown mentioned types of plants he thought had been introduced from South America by human agency prior to European contact (e.g. Brown 1931:137). He concluded that as many as 82% of the dicotyledonous flowering plants had an American origin (Brown 1935:15).

Brown's ideas of the origin of the flora and its relation to human introduction were not supported by the expedition's archaeologist Linton (Handy 1965:214). Heyerdahl, on the other hand, devoted some attention to Brown's claims in *American Indians*, emphasising Brown as an unbiased source, since Brown did not dispute the commonly accepted Asiatic origin for the Polynesians, but only claimed that part of the flora had been introduced by human agency from South America (Heyerdahl 1952:463-470). However, Heyerdahl failed to mention that Brown's theories of the origin of the flora were already disputed within botanical circles in the

1930s. Adamson, for instance, wrote that Brown's studies had presented a frequency of American inclusion in the South Pacific flora far above what was commonly accepted, and that '[h]is views [...] are in direct opposition to those of most botanists' (Adamson 1939:19).

Brown was an advocate for the theory of a land-bridge between the Americas and the Eastern Pacific (Adamson 1939:10), and therefore his possibly unbiased position on the origin of the Polynesians should be matched with a biased position on the origin of the flora. That Heyerdahl failed to mention the concerns over Brown's work suggests that he was either ignorant of the controversy or actively chose to omit it to support his own argument. Whatever the reason, this example illustrates the weakness of the superficial anti-specialist methodology employed by Heyerdahl for the Kon-Tiki theory.

## 2.5 Summary and Conclusion

The strong position taken against dogmatism, not just among the professors and staff of the Oslo University's Zoological Department, but also among Heyerdahl's fellow students, heavily disputes Heyerdahl's claim that his years at the University made him aware of dogmatism in contemporary scientific institutions. He seems to have created this idea in retrospect. On the contrary, the anti-dogmatic stance, the emphasis placed on fieldwork, cross-disciplinary approaches, experiments and expeditions among the natural history scholars of Oslo University have several connecting points to Heyerdahl's later approaches and argumentation. Heyerdahl's time at Oslo University seems to have had a strong impact on him. Both Bonnevie's and Christophersen's statements that answers were not to be found by sitting around and reading books are echoed in Heyerdahl's later writing, as is Broch's appeal to his students to seek answers for themselves and not blindly trust the words of their teachers.

Heyerdahl's organisation of his expeditions can be seen in the light of the Norwegian research tradition of the period and its roots in the Polar exploration area, suggesting a further connection between Heyerdahl and Oslo University. Heyerdahl's presentation of the Marquesas journey's zoological objectives in late 1936 illustrates a direct connection to research questions and methodologies applied by the Zoology Department and associated natural history scholars of the period. The connection to the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* in 1937-1938 led by Christophersen is particularly evident.

The influence of Heyerdahl's university years on his Kon-Tiki theory is also noticeable in relation to the theory's *geographic ethnology* aspects (1.4.2.3). Heyerdahl's emphasis on trade winds and ocean currents can be seen already in his 1936 presentation at Oslo University. However, in the presentation they appear in a strictly zoological or zoogeographical context, in line with the discussion on evolutionary development in isolation which Bonnevie and Økland were researching at the time. This connection can be further seen in discussions on the impossibility of land-bridges as an explanation for zoogeographical questions by Wollebæk, Christophersen and even Heyerdahl's friend and fellow student Hagen. The land-bridge theory to Polynesia would later be heavily criticised by Heyerdahl in his Kon-Tiki theory.

As the objectives of the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* and of other researchers' work at this time illustrates, the distance between anthropological studies and zoological studies was not large. Heyerdahl himself stated when discussing his time at the University: 'man is the youngest species in the animal kingdom to any zoologist' (Heyerdahl 2014:59). The border between zoology and anthropology was blurry, and zoogeographical theories were applied at this time to human migration processes as well.

Christophersen also offered Heyerdahl a direct introduction to contemporary natural history research on the Pacific. Among the more important sources Heyerdahl was introduced to by Christophersen were the works of the botanist Brown. The importance of Brown's work for the early development of the Kon-Tiki theory was stressed by Heyerdahl on several occasions in later life (e.g. Heyerdahl 1998:190-194). Thus the years Heyerdahl spent at Oslo University seem to have had substantial impact on his interest and knowledge of the Pacific as well as on important aspects of his later theoretical framework. Nonetheless, his connection to Oslo University and the presentation he gave before his journey do not present any material to support the idea that Heyerdahl was interested in Pacific migration questions or archaeology at the time. The state of Heyerdahl's knowledge on Pacific archaeology and ethnology before his 1937 Marquesas journey will be further considered in the following chapter.

## *Chapter 3 – Modern Man and Other Savages: Heyerdahl's Perception and Knowledge of Polynesia Before 1937*

Perhaps the most famous story of why Heyerdahl took an interest in the Pacific comes from Jacoby's biography. Jacoby described a conversation the two men had in their youth, in which Heyerdahl told him that he wanted to become an explorer. "How can you be an explorer in a world where everything is already discovered?" Jacoby replied. Heyerdahl disagreed and stated that even though most land had already been discovered, there were still things unknown or lost to time, as for instance the mysterious stone statues of Easter Island (Jacoby 1965a:38).

That Heyerdahl might have envisioned himself as a future explorer in his youth is not particularly surprising. He grew up in the aftermath of the Norwegian Polar exploration era. The nation's leading heroic figures were still adventurer-scientists like Nansen and Amundsen (2.2; Eriksen 2004; Frängsmyr 1984; Fulsås 2004:173-176; Goksøyr 2004). The 'mystery of Easter Island' had been popularised by Katherine Routledge (1866-1935) in the early twentieth century (Routledge 1919), and the *Moai* of Easter Island were seemingly a well-known cultural reference in the period. For instance, in 1934-1935 the major Norwegian publishing house Gyldendal issued a two-volume book called *Fortidens eventyrland* [Ancient Lands of Adventure] in which the *Moai* of Easter Island featured in the same sentence as the pyramids of Egypt and Rome's Colosseum (Hammerston & L'Orange 1934, 1935; see also Anon. III. 1935). The *Moai* can also be found in this company in other contemporary sources (e.g. Anon. IV. 1936; Anon. V. 1931; Anon. VI. 1930; Larssen 1934; Pierre 1932), several of which include discussion on the age and origin of Easter Island's culture. It is not known whether Heyerdahl was familiar with any of these sources, but they do illustrate that Easter Island and its alleged mystery were far from unheard of in Norway at the time, thus supporting the possibility of Jacoby's story. Nonetheless, that the goal of Heyerdahl's aspirations would have been Easter Island from the start seems more like a reconstruction fitting the period in which Jacoby's book was written.

In his presentation at the Zoology Department in November 1936, Heyerdahl made few references to anthropological or archaeological themes. These references can all be traced

back to paragraphs from the work of Brown (compare Heyerdahl 1936a:28, to Brown 1931:6). There is no indication at all in the presentation that Heyerdahl was particularly well versed in Pacific ethnography or archaeology at the time, as he claimed in later life (3.1). Instead, his early popular accounts of the Marquesas journey focused solely on his escape from civilisation plan (Heyerdahl 1938a, 1941b). This chapter will further discuss the status of Heyerdahl's anthropological knowledge prior to the journey. It will also present his idea of escaping from civilisation and his perceptions of Polynesia and the Polynesians prior to the Marquesas journey, as well as discussing the roots of these ideas in contemporary popular culture, historical traditions and travel writing.

### *3.1 Everything there was to know about Polynesian Ethnology: Heyerdahl and the Kroepelien Library*

According to a letter quoted by Skolmen, Bjarne Kroepelien (1890-1966), then in his late twenties, had written to the socialite and travel writer Birger Mörner (3.2.4.2), asking him for advice on a suitable South Seas island where he could get away from modernity and live freely in the sun among primitive people (Skolmen 2000:29-30). Not long after, Kroepelien ended up in Tahiti and the Papenoo Valley, where he was adopted by the local administrator Teriieroo a Teriierooiterai (4.1), and 'married' the barely adolescent Tuimata (Harnes 1995; Heyerdahl 1998:79-80; Jacoby 1965a:50-51; Kroepelien 1944; Olsen 1931a:14-15; Skolmen 2000:29-33, 47-49). Kroepelien only spent a short period in Tahiti and then returned to Norway, where he started to collect books on Polynesia. By the time of Kroepelien's death in 1966, Jacoby claimed that the Library was one of the world's largest private collections of publications on Polynesia (Jacoby 1965a:50-51). The Library, which includes around 4,500 books, is currently housed by the Norwegian National Library and the Kon-Tiki Museum (Du Reitz 1969; Engelstad 2008).

The Kroepelien Library holds a particularly important position in Heyerdahl's narrative of how he developed his Kon-Tiki theory. Heyerdahl repeatedly claimed that from the time he had started attending Oslo University in the autumn of 1933 until he departed for the Marquesas in December 1936, he had spent all of his free time studying in the Library (e.g. Heyerdahl 1974b:15-22; 1998:79-80). The many wilderness expeditions, Heyerdahl's and Liv's scrapbook and other contemporary sources heavily dispute these claims. Nonetheless,

biographers and critics have often repeated Heyerdahl's narrative of his studies of the Kroepelien Library (e.g. Andersson 2007a:48-50, 2011; Kvam 2005; Skolmen 2000, 2010). The size and content of the Kroepelien Library would have been sufficient for Heyerdahl to gain an insight into Polynesian subjects. It is thus not surprising that Heyerdahl continued to refer to his studies in the Library as a central part of his research background (Heyerdahl 1989b:8, 1998:90, 95, 98, 179). In 1992, he wrote that in the Kroepelien Library he had thoroughly read everything that had been published on Pacific ethnography (Heyerdahl 1992:205). For the development of the Kon-Tiki theory, the implication of these claims would be that Heyerdahl had intensely studied archaeology/ethnography before his 1937 journey to the Marquesas Islands. The journey would then have been conducted with such thoughts in mind as a stepping-stone towards his theoretical work on Pacific migrations.

The problem with this scenario is that the Library does not appear in Heyerdahl's writing before the 1960s. The Kroepelien Library is first mentioned by Jacoby as a source for zoological/botanical information: 'Here [Kroepelien Library] he found an enormous quantity of useful material for study. Far more than he had dreamed of finding in all of the university libraries in Scandinavia put together' (Jacoby 1968:37). Prior to Jacoby's biography, the only known possible mention of Kroepelien at all is in Heyerdahl's presentation at Oslo University, where Heyerdahl said – in stark contrast to Jacoby's claim – that some minor material had been made available to him through an unnamed resident of Oslo (Heyerdahl 1936a:3), presumably Kroepelien. The Kroepelien Library was not mentioned in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a), nor in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue. Heyerdahl also failed to mention Kroepelien or the Library in his acknowledgement for *American Indians* (1952:9-10), which has to be considered as remarkable as the book summed up Heyerdahl's library research to date. It was only after Jacoby's biography, from the 1974 *Back to Nature* and onwards, that the Library became a corner-stone for Heyerdahl's narrative of his research background.

The Kroepelien Library represents an evident example on how Heyerdahl improved or mythologised his autobiography over time (1.6.3), stressing the importance of deconstructing or chronologically retracing the autobiographical narrative. For Heyerdahl the Kroepelien Library was apparently of minor importance, hardly worth mentioning, when he sought scientific acceptance in the 1940s and 50s. His studies of the Kroepelien Library thus seem to have been a narrative invented by Heyerdahl in the 1960s and 1970s to improve his research background (see also 5.2.5); in consequence, its relevance for Heyerdahl's development of the

Kon-Tiki theory becomes questionable. Obviously this is an important point to make as the emphasis placed on the Library in post-1960s biographical and critical writing is not consistent with Heyerdahl's own pre-1960s statements or with archival sources.

Nonetheless, Heyerdahl definitely knew and associated with Kroepelien. This can be securely documented through archival material. Heyerdahl wrote several letters to Kroepelien from Fatu Hiva (see Skolmen 2010:235-263) and there is a long *bon voyage* letter from Kroepelien in his and Liv's scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Since it is debated when and how Heyerdahl and Kroepelien became acquainted (for various suggestions see Andersson 2007a:48; Kvam 2005:117; Skolmen 2000:48, 2010:235), there is no way of knowing exactly when the two men met, except that it must have been after Heyerdahl moved to Oslo in the later part of 1933. Heyerdahl himself said that they had met after Kroepelien had heard about his and Liv's plan to escape civilisation (Heyerdahl 1998:79-80), which since he and Liv starting dating in October of 1935 (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.) would imply that Heyerdahl could have been introduced to Kroepelien as late as early 1936. The two men had a falling out in 1938 and seemingly never spoke again (Kvam 2005:213-225; Skolmen 2000:58-66, 2010:257). The time period during which the Library would have been available to Heyerdahl could therefore have been very limited. This might explain why Heyerdahl did not find the Library worth mentioning in the 1940s and 50s. However, the main reason that Heyerdahl did not speak about the Library in the 40s and 50s was presumably not the limited amount of time he had to study in it but the actual contents of the Library itself.

### *3.1.1 The Archaeological/Ethnographic Content of Kroepelien's Library*

The Kroepelien Library consists mainly of publications on the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands and the Tuamotus. It is vital to point out that it is not a research library but a collection of romances, travelogues and other types of travel writing. However, it does include a number of scientific publications and, most importantly from a research point of view, works by 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century exploration voyagers, beachcombers and missionaries (for a full presentation of the Library see Du Reitz 1969; Engelstad 2008). Since Kroepelien expanded the Library throughout his life, it is somewhat difficult to tell which books were in the Library at any given time. Therefore, even though the Library might include works that could have been of

importance for Heyerdahl, it is not certain that they were part of the Library around 1934-1936 when Heyerdahl had access to it; and even if a particular book was in the Library, it is not certain that Heyerdahl actually read it. The argument made by Skolmen (2000:46-50) and Andersson (2007a:49-50), that Heyerdahl would have had access to thousands of volumes relating to his theory in the 1930s, is not tenable. For instance, it is noticeable that of the works mentioned in Heyerdahl's presentation at Oslo University, only Adamson's *Marquesan Insects* from 1936 is in the Kroepelien Library – illustrating that the abovementioned claim in Jacoby's biography is inaccurate.

Nonetheless, the Kroepelien Library was apparently already an impressive collection by the mid-1920s, and included works which could have been of interest for Heyerdahl. The zoologist and amateur ethnologist Ørjan Olsen (1885-1972), for instance, visited Kroepelien prior to his expeditions to the Cook Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand in the mid- and late 1920s. According to Olsen, the purpose of the visit was to study Kroepelien's copy of the missionary and Pacific migration theorist William Ellis' *Polynesian Researches* (see Olsen 1931a:14-15).

### *3.1.1.1 William Ellis' Pacific Migration Theory*

There are several editions of *Polynesian Researches* in the Library (see Engelstad 2008) and it is a work which strongly connects to Heyerdahl's theories. Ellis (1794-1872) was a missionary, and during his almost decade-long service in Polynesia he also studied various aspects of Polynesian culture, including archaeology. His conclusions were published in the extensive two-volume *Polynesian Researches* in 1829, reissued in an even further extended four-volume work in 1831 (Haddow 2017). Ellis' migration theory placed the origin of the Polynesians in the Malay Archipelago, but had them migrating north, crossing the Bering Strait, spreading out over the American continent and from there out to Polynesia (Ellis 1829b:37-63; Haddow 2017:3-4). This is clearly similar to Heyerdahl's migration theory (cf. 1.4.1). Ellis used trade winds, comparative studies of material culture and ethnology, linguistic aspects, mythology and oral traditions to argue for his theory (Haddow 2017:4-7), all of which also indicate a connection and possible inspiration for Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory (cf. 1.4.2). On the other hand, Heyerdahl's writings up to and directly after the Marquesas journey give no indication that he held these beliefs at the time. From existing



archival material, the North American part of Heyerdahl's migration theory is closely linked to his chance meeting with Ivar Fougner in late 1938 (6.5), and Ellis is not mentioned in Heyerdahl's first scientific publication of the theory in 1941 (7.2). Ellis' name appears for the first time in the bibliographical notes from Heyerdahl's unpublished manuscript *Polynesia and America* (Heyerdahl n.d.b), which he worked on during the 1940s. Therefore, even if Ellis' books were in the Kroepelien Library, there is no evidence to suggest that Heyerdahl read them during the 1930s. From the existing material it is not possible to document a direct dialogue between Heyerdahl and Ellis before 1941; it therefore seems more reasonable to suggest that Heyerdahl read *Polynesian Researches* somewhere between 1941 and 1946 while he was in Canada and the US (see chapter 7).

### 3.1.1.2 *The Bulletin Series*

The uncertainties over Heyerdahl's studies of the Kroepelien Library can be further examined by a case study of the Bishop Museum's Bulletin series. In a letter to the Bishop Museum sent in February 1936, Kroepelien wanted to negotiate a deal to expand his collection with 27 volumes of the Museum's Bulletin series. The request also included a number of further titles from other publication series issued by the Museum (Kroepelien 1936). The deal was eventually declined a month later (Titcomb 1936).

The request list included the complete number of titles of the Bulletin series dealing with the Society Islands, the Marquesas Islands and the Tuamotus, Kroepelien's main geographical areas of interest. These titles were thus most likely not in the Library at the time Heyerdahl allegedly studied it. In fact, of the 23 volumes (14 from the request list) of the Bulletin series that did end up in the Kroepelien Library, only 14 (12 from the request list) appear in the bibliography for *American Indians*. It seems unlikely that Heyerdahl would have had the opportunity to study any of the volumes in the Bulletin series that were on the request list, or for that matter any other publication from the Bishop Museum in the Kroepelien Library. As the 1936 request list includes all key works on the archaeology and ethnography of the Marquesas Islands and the Society Islands, the Kroepelien Library in the mid-1930s would have been a poor source of information for anyone interested in the archaeology and ethnography of the Marquesas Islands and Polynesia. Heyerdahl's claim that he had been able to read everything that had been published about Pacific ethnology by studying in the

Kroepelien Library is obviously not true.

In addition to the Bishop Museum's complete coverage of the archaeology and ethnography of the Marquesas Islands, Kroepelien's request list also features other titles which could have been of interest in relation to the Kon-Tiki theory, such as Robert Aitken's classic *Ethnology of Tubuai* (1930), and John Lawrence's Chubb's 1933 publication of his geological studies of the Galapagos Islands, Cocos Islands and Easter Island. Chubb's work is interesting as it devotes a small section to discussing whether or not Easter Island had been part of a continent connected to South America in the past, and whether or not Easter Island's famous monumental statues could have been made in this period, as suggested for instance by Macmillan Brown (1907, 1926, 1927). Chubb considered such theories unlikely, noting that the statues were placed by the coastline and the entire geological composition of the island was of a volcanic nature, suggesting that Easter Island had been a volcanic island long before any people had ever set foot on it (Chubb 1933:40-43). Since the geological discussion of the sunken continent could have been of interest for Heyerdahl's emphasis on transoceanic voyaging, and the book is an odd topic for the collection at large, this might suggest a connection to Heyerdahl. However, Chubb (1933:4) also wrote that two popular accounts had been published on the expedition, and both of these, *Sea-girt Jungles* (1926) and *The South Seas of To-day* (1926), feature in Kroepelien's Library. Kroepelien was thus most likely requesting the volume from the Bishop Museum to complete his coverage of the expedition. Probably this would have been the case for the other volumes as well. That Kroepelien's request of volumes from the Bishop Museum coincides with his friendship with Heyerdahl, might actually suggest that Kroepelien was made aware of the existence of the Museum through Heyerdahl. If true, this would indicate that Heyerdahl, despite being hardly familiar with the subject at all, still had a greater knowledge on Pacific research institutions, through his connection with Christophersen, than Kroepelien did, which above all highlights the limited research content of Kroepelien's Library.

## 3.2 *The Great Mutiny – Heyerdahl's Back to Nature Experiment*

As his correspondence with Mörner indicates, Kroepelien had once longed to escape modernity for the primitive life of Polynesia (Skolmen 2010:29-30). The idea that Polynesia was a primitive paradise, where modernity could be left behind, is of course a central trope in Pacific travel writing (3.2, 3.3). It could even be said that a Library like Kroepelien's was devoted to this trope. The Library was not a research library but a collection of romantic travel writing on French Polynesia. Heyerdahl and Kroepelien did not come together over a shared interest in Pacific prehistory but in a shared romanticised view of primitive Polynesia (Heyerdahl 1998:79-80).

Heyerdahl's escape from civilisation plan – in various works simply described as 'the plan' – was also the central theme for all of his early writing on Polynesia, including *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) and the newspaper articles he wrote about the Marquesas journey, as well as for his 1941 publication in *National Geographic Magazine* (7.1). The prehistory of the Pacific did not become the main theme in Heyerdahl's writing until the publication of the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue in 1948. In order to understand the world of ideas that the Kon-Tiki theory developed from, it is essential that the ideas behind the escape from civilisation plan are examined in some detail.

That the plan to escape civilisation existed prior to the Marquesas journey can be documented from archival material. For instance, Heyerdahl mentions 'the progress of the plan' in a letter sent to Kroepelien from Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl 1937m), illustrating not just that the plan had been a part of the journey's aims, but also that this was something Heyerdahl and Kroepelien had discussed before Heyerdahl left for the Marquesas.

From the archival material it is evident that Heyerdahl viewed the escape from civilisation as an experiment. The journey was planned for two years and according to Heyerdahl the objectives were, in addition to collecting zoological specimens, to show that modern Europeans could live like primitive people. According to Heyerdahl, he and Liv had planned first to settle in Atuona village on Hiva Oa, to learn Polynesian ways and language, and then move out to a more isolated island and live a Polynesian life with a Polynesian family. They wanted to learn how to make fire, hunt, fish, and prepare food as the Polynesians did, without

the use of modern European tools or techniques (Anon. VII. 1936). The extent to which they actually went through with this experiment can be debated; extracts from letters Liv sent to her parents reveal that their primitive life was perhaps not so primitive as Heyerdahl later portrayed it in his books (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937b-c). The escape from civilisation was thus an experiment with a time limit, and perhaps a less-than-ascetic implementation; going native was not supposed to be for all eternity as Heyerdahl later claimed (e.g. Heyerdahl 1974a; Jacoby 1965a). Actually this marks another example of how Heyerdahl altered his life story over time.

The story about the escape from civilisation narrated from Jacoby's biography and onwards has Heyerdahl dreaming of abandoning civilisation already as a teenager. In a humorous way it is told how the shy and awkward young man attempted to find a dream girl to follow along. After several misfortunes he finally found his fearless and kind-hearted girl, ready for the great eternal adventure (Heyerdahl 1974a:14-15; 1998; Jacoby 1965a).

In this case the scrapbook Heyerdahl and Liv kept provides a contemporary archival source in which the entire scope of their courtship and relationship can be followed. The outline in the scrapbook is in large part consistent with the story that has been presented in the canon of biographies. The major discrepancy between the scrapbook and the biographical narrative concerns the escape from civilisation plan and the Marquesas journey. In the scrapbook, Polynesia is not mentioned until somewhere around August-September 1936 (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.), just a few months before the journey. In the scrapbook Heyerdahl was not looking for a perfect woman to elope with. In fact, the journey was originally planned solely with the objective of collecting zoological specimens. The scrapbook includes a section entitled 'We want to go to Otaheiti' (TR14), in which Liv wrote: 'It was planned that Thor would go to a South Seas island, with equipment and all, to collect rare animals' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d., TR15). According to the scrapbook, Heyerdahl seems to have been well on his way to the Marquesas before there was any talk of Liv joining him. The escaping civilisation experiment might thus very well have been a secondarily developed aim of the journey, evolving out of the young couple's relationship.

The difference between the suggested chain of events in the scrapbook and the narrative Heyerdahl and Jacoby launched in the 1960s and 1970s might seem insignificant, but it is actually of some importance. Since the scrapbook makes it evident that Heyerdahl had planned a zoological collecting expedition for himself, the importance of the zoological

component and the journey's relationship to Oslo University is highlighted. The alteration also suggests that the Adam and Eve escape from civilisation narrative from the 1960s and 1970s is a literary construction of a later date, which probably drew inspiration from somewhere else – possibly from 1920s-30s South Seas romances and travel writing (3.2.4.2). Nonetheless, the extent to which the couple were convinced by the paradise idea should not be underestimated. Heyerdahl, especially, seems to have nourished anti-civilisation ideas, nature romanticism and noble savage ideals before the journey.

### *3.2.1 Heyerdahl's Criticism of Civilisation*

The biographical narrative has strongly emphasised that Heyerdahl already had a particularly strong relationship to nature from an early age. In his autobiography Heyerdahl wrote about the impact the woodsman and drifter Ola Bjørneby had on him as a youngster (Heyerdahl 1998:54-57). Unfortunately there is not very much known about Bjørneby and his thoughts, other than that he was from a wealthy family but had decided to live a less modern and materialistic lifestyle (Kvam 2005:73-79). In his youth Heyerdahl also collected animals and had a little museum of his own (Kvam 2005:10-70). Heyerdahl said that he had, inspired by his mother's library, nourished an interest for zoology and entomology alongside anthropology from early years. He claimed that zoology had gained the upper hand as a result of his environment: 'I had always wanted to collect Negroes and Indians, but there were not that many around Larvik, so I had to settle for animals and insects' (Heyerdahl quoted from the documentary *Tukume – med Thor Heyerdahl i Peru* [Tucume – With Thor Heyerdahl in Peru]; see also Heyerdahl 1974b:13-14, 1998:41-43; Kvam 2005:1-81). When he attended the University, newspaper articles and his and Liv's scrapbook disclose that Heyerdahl took every opportunity he had to go on wilderness expeditions, camping in igloos or under the open sky (Heyerdahl 1934, 1935a-c, 1936b; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). From his early years, Heyerdahl was seemingly an outdoors enthusiast with a romanticised perception of nature. This perception of nature as something pure and less materialistic is generally contrasted in Heyerdahl's writing to the corruption of modernity, something which is particularly noticeable around the time of and above all following the Marquesas journey.

Yet, Heyerdahl's contempt for modern civilisation is perhaps most vividly expressed in his 1974 *Back to Nature*. In the book, Heyerdahl used the first airplanes he had seen as a child

flying over Larvik as a metaphor for his relation to civilisation. He described the feeling of awe and fascination as he climbed up to the roof-top to gaze at the technological landmark; but the amazing flying machine also came with an ear-splitting sound and left behind a trail of biting, foul-smelling diesel (Heyerdahl 1974b:12). For Heyerdahl, the landmarks of technology and the 1920s belief in progress represented a step in the wrong direction, in which humans were torn from their true home in nature:

I shared my father's zest for nature, and my mother's passion for zoology and 'primitive' people, but could not for the life of me understand their admiration at modern man's attempt to cut all ties to nature. What was it they tried to get away from? Had they been spooked by Darwin's ape-man ancestry? Head-on they saluted everything that broke with the world of their parents, and called it 'progress'. 'Progress' was apparently to remove themselves from nature (Heyerdahl 1974a:10, TR16)

The quotation marks another example of Heyerdahl's use of binary opposition in his narration (1.1, 1.6.3), creating two contrasting pairs of connected concepts: on the one hand, primitive, pure, and nature; and on the other, modern, civilisation, technology, and corruption.

Heyerdahl's relation to modernity (he generally used the term 'progress') was the running theme for his unpublished 1940s cartoon series of conservative satires, entitled *Modern Man and Other Savages* (Tane n.d.; see also Lundell & Wold (eds.) 2012:131-156; Mørch 2012). In his drawings (generally signed 1940 and 1946), Heyerdahl mocked modernity in all its aspects, whether it was jazz music, modern abstract art, technology, factories, social life, warfare or socialism; they were all depicted as representatives of degenerate vices, evil steps away from a pure and natural past where humanity had lived in harmony with nature. One drawing shows a dirty factory with its *Modern Times*-style workers and executives saying, 'It is not pretty', 'It is not healthy', 'It is smelly', etc., while the title reads: '...but it is progress from paradise' (Ill. 7). In one strip, a man can be seen rushing through life, chased by clocks and demands until his dream is interrupted by a natural man lying beneath a palm tree eating bananas. The natural he-man appears in another strip as a pure, muscular and healthy Stone Age man, while the men of different stages of 'progress' get fatter and fatter, weaker and weaker.

The cartoons all centre around a conservative world view presenting the modern democracy as filled with double standards, superficiality and idiocy, an abomination towards the laws of nature. In his cartoons, just as in the quotation above, Heyerdahl expresses an idea of a connection between nature, masculinity (see also Andersson 2007a:23-74 for his discussion of

Heyerdahl's use of masculinity), purity and primitivism, which is contrasted to artifice, modernity, degeneration and civilisation. Heyerdahl's cartoons and their expression of a world on the verge of self-imploding from losing touch with humanity's true nature can be seen as a sign of the times and deeply connect to popular views in conservative German philosophy (see further 3.2.2.1). Several of the drawings also express strong anti-intellectual tendencies in line with Heyerdahl's idea of the dogmatism of specialisation in science.

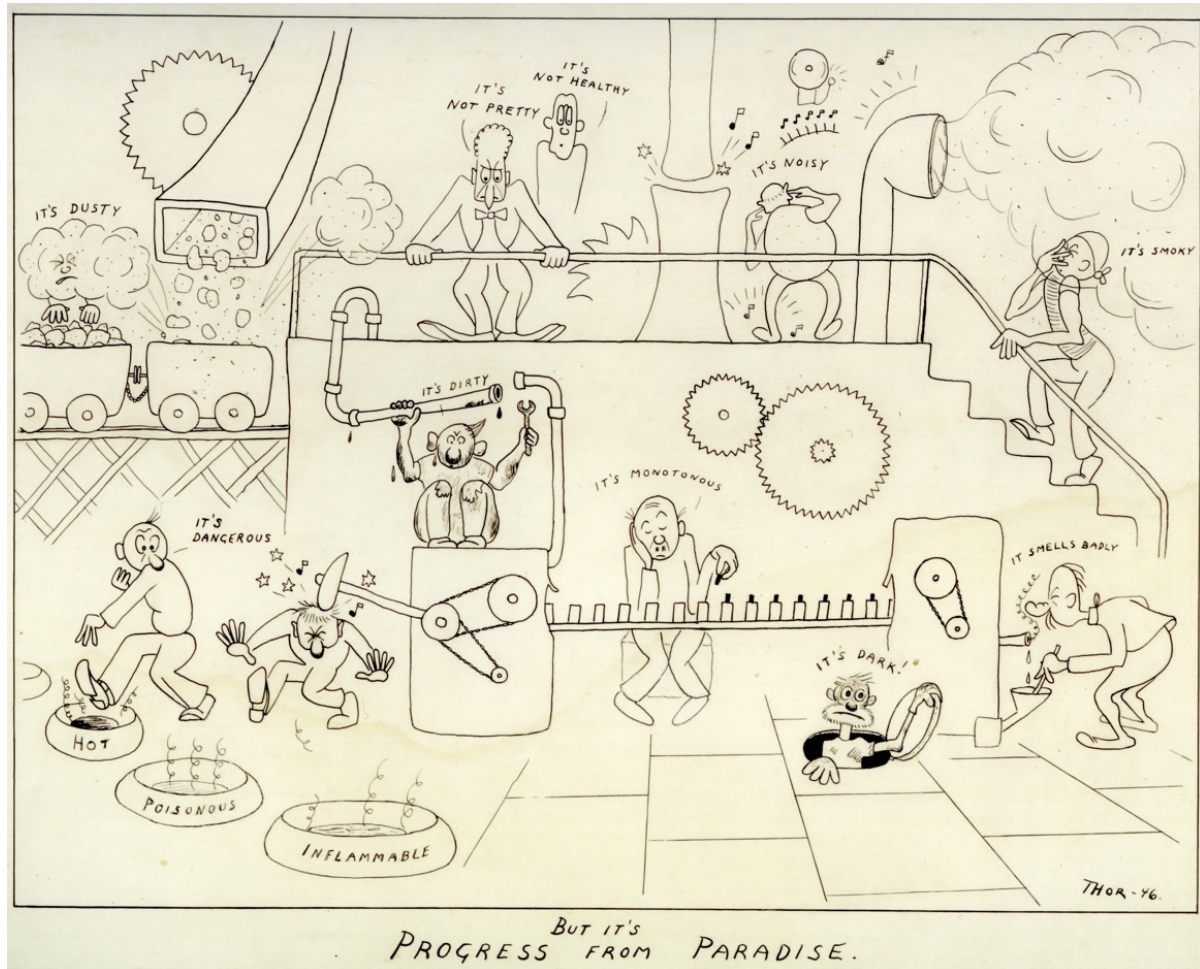


Illustration 7: Satirical drawing by Thor Heyerdahl from 1946 illustrating his idea of modernity. From Heyerdahl's *Modern Man and Other Savages* series. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©

The ideas expressed in the *Modern Man* series seem to have been closely connected to, or possibly even developed out of, Heyerdahl's experiences during the Marquesas journey. For instance, the drawings he published in Norwegian newspapers, together with stories of his expeditions in the Norwegian wilderness between 1934-1936 (Heyerdahl 1934, 1935a-c, 1936b; Lundell & Wold (eds.) 2012:69-94), are all in a more gentle comedic style, without



any political undertones or satirical comments about contemporary society. In these drawings Heyerdahl also commonly makes fun of himself. The author and his companions are the fools in this series of drawings. The *Modern Man* series is in this case the complete opposite, with the author continuously pointing out others' foolishness without reflecting on his own. The drawings Heyerdahl made during the Marquesas journey (Lundell & Wold (eds.) 2012:97-108) fall somewhere in between the two. They include satires and racial stereotypes ridiculing the Polynesians, Chinese settlers and missionaries, but many of them are also self-reflexive, with Heyerdahl making fun of himself (Ill. 8). The three series of cartoons suggest that the actual journey and the preparations for it had a transformative effect on Heyerdahl's thoughts on the relationship between nature and civilisation. The inclusion of Polynesia in his world of ideas does seem to have provoked a more aggressive anti-modernity stance.

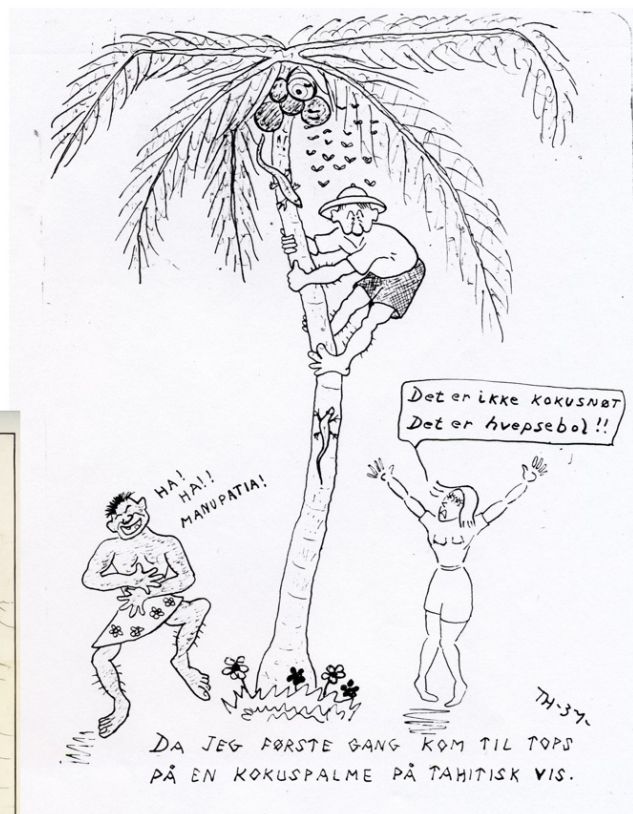
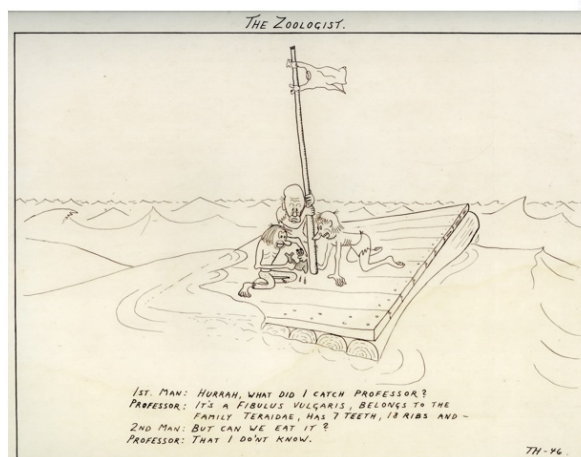


Illustration 8: Drawings by Heyerdahl. Top left: 1935, 'Tomorrow I will do the cooking'. Bottom left: 1946, 'the zoologist'. Right: 1937, 'When I reached the top of a palm tree for the first time, Tahitian style'. Liv says, 'It is not a coconut, it is a hornets' nest!' Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©



### 3.2.1.1 *The Polynesian Paradise*

Heyerdahl and Liv's decision on Polynesia as the scene for their experiment was seemingly directly connected to a belief in civilisation and nature as opposites. Already on *Searching for Paradise'* first page, Heyerdahl described how he and Liv searched through the maps to find the perfect location for their experiment:

A small spot that the world had forgotten about, a single little overlooked safe haven which had not yet fallen into the claws of civilisation [...] Where we could live with nothing to rely on but our own two hands, just as our very first ancestors had done, completely without the aid of civilisation. This of course meant that we needed to find a place where the environment would provide us with the possibility to do so (Heyerdahl 1938a:5, TR17)

As the quotation illustrates, the escape from civilisation plan necessitated an environment that would not require tools for survival. They wanted to live a life 'at one with nature' (Heyerdahl 1938a:6, TR18), relying only on their own hands, which eliminated the Norwegian wilderness as such a lifestyle would still require rifles and fishing gear. Heyerdahl's ideas on the subject evolved further; he stated that he and Liv were not just looking for a simple life away from modern civilisation, but wanted to embark on a practical experiment, returning to the roots of humanity:

On this island we could go through with our experiment. Return to the woods. Escape our time. Culture. Civilisation. Travel back thousands of years in time. Back to the ways of the first humans. Live life in its full and purest form. Was it possible? Theoretically yes. But theory was of no interest to us. We wanted to experience it, live it. We wanted to see if the two of us, man and woman, could live the life our ancestors had left behind. If we could truly abandon our artificial lifestyle. Stand on our own, cutting all ties to modern civilisation. To be free of everything, except for nature itself (Heyerdahl 1938a:7, TR19).

Their choice of Polynesia was thus directly linked to the idea of an environment which represented the habitat in which people had originally lived prior to their succumbing to civilisation. The Norwegian wilderness, or other isolated spots like the Sahara desert or Greenland, would not do, as habitation in these areas required the tools of civilisation, something that was not perceived as part of the experiment's objectives. Heyerdahl wanted to go to a place where human beings could live in their natural state, at one with nature; and seemingly agriculture or other technological advances did not belong to his idea of this

natural state. It could, perhaps in an overly unkind way, be argued that Heyerdahl wanted to live like a perception of 'Darwin's ape-man' (see quotation above, 3.21) rather than a human being; or that he envisioned humankind's natural state as a sort of biblical Garden of Eden, where he and his Eve could wander around in the nude, eating fresh fruit off the trees.



*Illustration 9: Heyerdahl and Liv 'returning to nature' on Fatu Hiva, 1937. From page 76, *Tilbake til naturen* (1974a).*

### *3.2.1.2 The Natural Man of Polynesia*

In Heyerdahl's mind the Polynesian environment represented this Garden of Eden. But he also seems to have viewed the Polynesian people as representatives of his idea of humanity's natural state. His writing suggests that he was under the impression that the Polynesians lived under conditions similar to the outline of his experiment.

We had practiced a Tahitian song during the journey. We had planned to start singing it as soon as we saw the first canoes of Tahiti coming up to the ship. We wanted to show the Tahitians that we were as free and happy as them. That we were not superior beings of civilisation, but natural people like them. That we deeply admired them and their way of life under the tropical sun (Heyerdahl 1938a:9, TR20).

Ideas of the Polynesians as natural, free and happy people were also expressed by Heyerdahl prior to the expedition. In his presentation at Oslo University, Heyerdahl briefly spoke of the inhabitants of the Marquesas Islands, describing them as members of the Polynesian race, the same as the inhabitants of Tahiti and Samoa. He added that they were fair-skinned, beautiful and almost Nordic in their appearance, with commonly known virtues (Heyerdahl 1936a:16; see also 1937a, 1938a:69-70). Interviewed by *Tidens tegn*, Heyerdahl gave a similar description, emphasising the hospitality and generous nature of the beautiful and proud Polynesian race (Anon. VII. 1936). In both cases Heyerdahl also claimed that the Polynesians were lazy, a common racial prejudice of the period. It seems that Heyerdahl had been convinced prior to the journey that the Polynesians were the closest thing to a living version of his perception of humanity's natural state, and that all they did was laze about in a paradisaical environment. The allusion to their Nordic appearance also suggests that Heyerdahl imagined the Polynesians as closely related to himself, and to the 'forefathers' whose way of life he and Liv wanted to emulate.

### *3.2.2 Polynesian Romanticism from Bougainville to The Hurricane*

Pacific romanticism and idealised images of South Sea islands and their people are well-known tropes in travel writing and in popular imagination. The perception of Pacific islanders as children of paradise and the last remaining tribe of *natural man* runs through the Enlightenment from Bougainville's 'Nouvelle Cythère' to the present (e.g. Bougainville 2002; Geiger 2007:18-38; Jolly et al. (eds.) 2008; Mönter 2008:49-64; Rousseau 1754; Tcherkézoff 2004; 2008.). The idea of Pacific islanders as children of nature is curiously alien to the extremely socially stratified and highly complex cultures that the European voyagers of the Enlightenment encountered in the Pacific (e.g. Clark et al. 2008; Earle (ed.) 1991; Kirch 1984, 2000, 2010; Sahlins 1958; Sand 2002; Suggs 1960; Thomas 1990a; Wallin 1998). The persistence of the idea therefore evidently lingers in the Enlightenment and Romantic Era's

perceptions of humanity and human history. There was a determination to see Pacific islanders as time capsules of an imagined long-lost utopian past of European primitivism, rather than seeing them as equally evolved and caught up in a similar type of complex social rat race. Several of the ethnographical travel writing tropes (1.6-1.6.2) are present here, including the need for exoticism, or a larger than life reality to persuade the reader of the account's credibility – you could not travel to the other side of the world and come back to say that things were pretty much the same as back home. This trope or romanticised image of the Pacific and its people, originating in the travel writing of Enlightenment exploration parties, made its reappearance at various stages of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It seems to have been especially strong in the period when Heyerdahl approached these concepts.

### *3.2.2.1 Civilisation Criticism in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

To escape from civilisation and settle on isolated Pacific islands to live in harmony with nature was not anything particularly novel in the 1930s. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a number of people leaving modern cities for a life of eating bananas and coconuts in the jungle. For most of these individuals and movements the objective of such enterprises was to engage with what was viewed as a pure and natural lifestyle.

One example is the German Friedrich Ritter, who in the late 1920s left his medical practice and family in Germany to pursue a life together with his mistress Dore Strauch on the uninhabited island of Floreana in the Galapagos group. Ritter's idea was to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life to live like a hermit under the heat of the Pacific sun, eat a healthy vegetarian diet, and contemplate the great philosophical questions posed by Nietzsche. However, living a solitary life in the Pacific was hard work; and to ease the subsistence burden, Ritter and Strauch used the mainstream media's interest in eccentrics like themselves. By sending stories to the press about their isolation and lifestyle, they drew attention to themselves and encouraged wealthy American yacht tourists to call upon their camp, bringing with them food and gifts. The downside to Ritter and Strauch's stratagem was that their stories in the press inspired other people to settle on Floreana, which would eventually have disastrous consequences for Ritter (Blomberg 1953; Skjølsvold 1989; Wittmer 2013; see also films *The Empress of Floreana* (1934); *The Galapagos Affair* (2013)).

Another example of this is the German 'Sonnenorden' [Order of the Sun] led by August

Engelhardt (Mönte 2008), who settled in German New Guinea in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to live free from the constraints of modern civilisation and feast upon coconuts. Sven Mönte placed the 'Sonnenorden' in relation to the development of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century German concept of *Lebensreform* (life reform or lifestyle reform), which advocated country air, sunshine, physical activity and vegetarian diets as means of developing a healthier lifestyle (Mönte 2008:29-49; see also Jefferies 2003; Ross 2005). Mönte also argued that the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century anti-civilisation movement's idealisation of Pacific islands drew from romanticised ideas about humanity and nature found in the works of Enlightenment and Romantic Era philosophers and writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Goethe, for instance, envisioned the Pacific island world as the remains of a paradise on Earth, where people still roamed free from the constraints of the modern world and its societal bounds, a common perception at the time (Mönte 2008:49-64).

Heyerdahl's idea of civilisation as degenerate and suffocating the human spirit (3.2.1) can of course also be viewed as a sign of the times, perhaps most clearly illustrated by the popularity of historian Oswald Spengler's two-volume *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* [The Decline of the West] (1918, 1923; see also Cavaille 2009). Spengler even used the term 'civilisation' to refer to the stagnation and decline of great historical epochs. Even though it was hardly Spengler's intent, his ideas of 'the sunset years of western civilisation', together with the emphasis on the 'struggle of the races' in works by eugenic advocates like Hans Günther (6.3.1), laid the foundation for new order movements within the conservative political environment of 1920s and 1930s Europe (e.g. Massin 1996; Weindling 1989).

Although Heyerdahl's views do not approach the complexity of Spengler's discussion, they hover in the same sphere of German conservative philosophy and nature romanticism; in particular, the *Modern Man* series echoes this discourse. Heyerdahl can therefore be understood within a period of vocal conservative anti-civilisation movements, closely tied to ideas of *Lebensreformer* aimed at restoring the population's mental and physical health, which in turn were closely paired with the contemporary eugenics movement.

### 3.2.3 Cinema and South Seas Romanticism

The post-World War I period saw an intense interest in South Seas romances. In the US an

English translation of Paul Gauguin's *Noa Noa*, issued in 1919, was immediately sold out (Geiger 2007:68); and the year after, Frederick O'Brien's *White Shadows of the South Seas* became a massive bestseller, sparking a flood of Polynesian travel and adventure literature (3.3.2). By the mid- to late 1920s the South Seas romance trope was fully embraced by Hollywood and also seems to have made a grand entrance into Scandinavian popular culture. For instance, the marketing phrase 'Söderhavet' (South Seas) appears in the title of only five films premiering in Sweden between 1916 and 1927, but between 1928 and 1936 the number rose to 14, not including additional Swedish-produced short subjects (Appendix III). With the exception of W. S. Van Dyke's film version of *White Shadows in the South Seas*, none of the original titles of these films included English or French versions of the South Seas concept (Appendix III). This suggests a strong commercial appeal for South Seas adventure themes in Scandinavia at this time. The starting point for this rise in interest in South Seas films was *White Shadows*, which premiered in Scandinavia in 1929 and was boosted as part of the introduction of sound film (Natzén 2011:68-70).

Like other South Seas films released in the period, including *The Pagan* (1929), *Bird of Paradise* (1932), *Tabu* (1931), and *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935), *White Shadows* generally presented exaggerated romantic images of Tahitians and other Polynesian islanders roasting pigs, swimming in clear waters, fishing, running, and playing on paradisaical beaches in a last age of innocence. The South Seas environment and even Polynesian song and dance traditions acted as a barely concealed excuse to frame the young, sun-touched, athletic bodies of the protagonists in a manner not very distant from the fascist obsession with the athletes' physiognomies in films like Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938). These films also presented the Polynesian people as noble savages, lacking any knowledge of modern society. In *Mutiny on the Bounty*, the fictive version of Pomare I, called Hiti-Hiti, says he prefers the nail to the shilling. In John Ford's *The Hurricane* (1937), the drunken doctor even refers to the islanders of the fictive Pacific island Manakoora as the last human race living in freedom. In another sequence of the film, the islanders are described as being more like birds than humans, a metaphor for the protagonist Terangi's refusal to be imprisoned under the colonial law of modern civilisation (see further Dixon 2006:28-32; Geiger 2002, 2007; see also Koepnick 2008; McFee & Tomlinson 1999; Venters 2016).

The Polynesia that appears in these films is not far from the Polynesia that appeared in the Enlightenment and the Romantic Era. In both cases, Polynesia is presented as a paradise

inhabited by the last innocent natural people. As the free interpretations of *Mutiny on the Bounty* or O'Brien's *White Shadows* suggest, it was not just a paradise for the Polynesians, but also for the European or American traveller/sailor fed up with the rules and developments of modern civilisation. However, modern civilisation is constantly present in almost all films of the period, lurking behind every corner, threatening to destroy the charming pastoral once and for all, like the merciless storm of *The Hurricane*.

Heyerdahl's ideas of Polynesia and Polynesians reveal a strong influence from the imagery and perception of these contemporary films. That these films had a substantial impact on his thoughts on Polynesia can also be demonstrated from archival sources. In particular *Mutiny on the Bounty* (Heyerdahl 1944b), as well as probably both the book and most definitely the film version of *White Shadows* (e.g. Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; Stroller 1938), seem to have been important for Heyerdahl's ideas of Polynesia and his escape from civilisation plan. This suggests that these ideas of Heyerdahl's, rather than originating in classical or philosophical literature, could have been rooted in his mind through an intermediary, in this case Hollywood.

### 3.2.4 *Tourism and Travel Writing*

In a newspaper interview after their return from the Marquesas, Heyerdahl and Liv also expressed plans to become professional travellers, supporting themselves through collecting zoological and ethnographic material, writing newspaper articles and travelogues, and giving lecture tours (Den Stundesløse 1938b).

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the formation of the concept of tourism. Travelling, previously largely related to necessity, became a pleasure, a way to spend the vacations and weekends created through the development of the bourgeoisie and 20<sup>th</sup>-century labour laws. The popularity of so-called scenic films, shorter subjects showing distant lands and places, in the 1910s and the arrival of the still-frame version, the postcard, represent the rise of the industry of tourism (Petersen 2013; Prochaska & Mendelson (eds.) 2010). The concept of course can be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and especially the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the movement outside of society's wealthy elites belongs to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Anderson, M. 2012; Cassar 2009; Eide Johnsen 2013; Emmanuel 2017; Foley 2011; Hundstad 2011; Leonardi 2010; McClelland 2013).

Travelling in the South Seas for no particular reason was popularised in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by more bohemian artists like the painter Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) (Gauguin 1919, 1998; see also Danielsson 1964, 1965) and the author Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) (1892, 1896; see also Gray 2004:110-160; Reid 2009). In the wake of Gauguin and Stevenson came a new generation inspired by their tales, for example Frederick William Christian (1867-1934).

#### *3.2.4.1 F. W. Christian and the South Seas*

After receiving a Bachelor degree from Oxford, Christian left England to try his luck managing a copra plantation on Samoa. As it happened, Christian ended up being a neighbour to Stevenson. Inspired by his tales, Christian sold his plantation and decided to travel through the Pacific island world. On Stevenson's recommendation, Christian started writing for the Polynesian Society and presented several papers on ethnographic, linguistic and mythological themes over the years (Christian 1895, 1899:xi-xiii; 1910:17, 1924; Richards 2017:12-17; Stevenson 1997:548.549; Williams 1939:349).

For Christian, the origins of the inhabitants of Micronesia and Polynesia and other ethnological concerns came to be of particular importance. He is best known for his work on Micronesia and the Nan Madol site on the island of Pohnpei (Christian 1899; see also e.g. Athens 1980, 2007; Gillilliand 1975:22; McCoy et al. 2016; Rainbird 2004; Seikel 2011). However, Christian's first travels took him to Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands (Christian 1910). Just as for Nan Madol, Christian envisioned the history of the Polynesian people and Polynesian megalithic sites (for instance in the Marquesas group) to be thousands of years old, and the creations of an 'Aryan' race that had once emigrated from the Asian continent (Christian 1910:126, 197). His ideas were often presented in flowery romantic passages (e.g. Christian 1910:81).

To finance his expeditions, Christian collected ethnographic material on behalf of the British Museum (Christian 1910:138; see also Richards 2017). He also described in his travelogue how he collected human remains (Christian 1910:170-171). The section about collecting human remains in Christian's travelogue is interesting, as its outline and events are quite similar to Heyerdahl's description of his own collecting of human remains on Fatu Hiva in 1937 (Melander 2017:82-83). It is possible that Heyerdahl could have read Christian's



travelogue prior to his expedition, especially since the romantic style and content of Christian's work would have appealed to his own ideas. Several of Christian's works, including his 1910 travelogue about the Marquesas, were listed in the bibliography for *American Indians*.

### *3.2.4.2 Scandinavian Travellers*

Christian's later years were spent under more humble conditions, serving as a college headmaster in New Zealand (Williams 1939:349). Travelling around the Pacific island world was of course an expensive occupation and was limited in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the very rich, like the Swedish Count and diplomat Birger Mörner (1867-1930) for instance. Mörner, who was also a socialite and personal friend of celebrated authors such as August Strindberg and Hjalmar Söderberg (Holmbäck 2002; Mörner 1924, 1925), published several books in various genres. Among these is a substantial corpus with South Seas themes (Mörner 1910, 1911, 1914, 1915, 1923). Like Christian's books, these were part of the Kroepelien Library, and seemingly Mörner's work had a personal impact at an early stage of Kroepelien's life (Skolmen 2000:30). For those who did not have Mörner's financial privilege, but still wanted to explore the Pacific, funds had to come from somewhere else. Writing, as in the case of Jack London (Campbell Reesman 2009; Kershaw 1999; London 1911), was one way to make ends meet; collecting material for museums, as in the case of Christian, was another.

When reminiscing about how he had got into travel writing, the Swedish journalist Rolf Blomberg (1912-1996) described how he had approached a well-known publishing house trying to get an advance for an expedition, but was promptly told to take a number and get in line with all the other young men who had come along with the same plans (Blomberg 1953:7-11). As Blomberg's story reveals, in the early 1930s travel writing had become a career dream among young men and a few women as well. Blomberg eventually succeeded in his enterprise and made a name for himself through his travels to the Galapagos Islands. He funded his travels through a combination of selling newspaper articles, drawings and travelogues, as well as collecting zoological specimens for museums (Blomberg 1953; 1965; Repo 2011). In this way Blomberg resembles Heyerdahl, even down to the style of his drawings; however, whether Heyerdahl was in any way inspired by someone like Blomberg is another story. The only known mention of Blomberg by Heyerdahl occurs in a letter he sent to

his publisher Helms while on the *Galapagos Islands Expedition* in the early 1950s; in the letter Heyerdahl seems to have been well acquainted with Blomberg but referred to him as 'a piece of crap' (Heyerdahl 1953, TR27).

As Skolmen (2000:28-42, 2010) has demonstrated, there were also several Norwegians writing about their travels in the South Seas who had books published in the early 1930s. Interestingly enough, they all represent different types of travellers that made up the mix of the period. The very rich consul Eric Arentz published *Hvor jorden slutter* [Where the world ends] (1929) and *Sydhavets vikinger* [Vikings of the South Seas] (1930); the old school zoologist/ethnologist scientific expedition traveller Ørjan Olsen published *I Sydhavs paradiset* [South Seas paradise] (1930) and *Eventyrlandet: fra en reise i New Zealand* [Adventure land: From travels in New Zealand] (1931b); and the tourist and round-the-world sailor Erling Tambs published *Fribytterferd til fjerne farvann* [Freewheeling travels in foreign shores] (1930, TR24), financing his travels through various bits and pieces of work and selling travel stories.

Even though rarely mentioned in the Heyerdahl narrative, Tambs (1888-1967) would most definitely have been an influence on Heyerdahl's interest in the Pacific and Polynesia (Andersson 2007a:47-48; Jacoby 1989a:16; Skolmen 2000:34-42, 2010:90-99). Tambs was a native of Heyerdahl's hometown Larvik and made his name through a series of texts published on his adventurous crossing of the Atlantic and the Pacific with the Colin Archer design ship *Teddy* (Skolmen 2010:90-99; Tambs 1930, 1931, 1933a-b). Tambs also participated in the *Tristan da Cunha Expedition* (Christophersen 1940).

Tambs' influence on Heyerdahl is most evident in the comparison between Heyerdahl's travelogue from the Marquesas journey and Tambs' books from his adventures (Tambs 1930, 1933a-b, 1935). Just as Heyerdahl later did (1974a), Tambs commenced his narrative with the conflict of the great escape to freedom and how to get the girl to go along for the ride (Tambs 1930:13-14, 1933a:23-30). However, the problem with this comparison is that the narrative structure corresponds more strongly to Heyerdahl's 1974 *Back to Nature* than to his 1938 *Searching for Paradise*. A similar case can be seen in Skolmen's suggestion that Heyerdahl was inspired by the Swedish traveller Rolf Andersén-Barnholdt's book *Förlorat paradiset* [Paradise lost] (1935), especially a sequence where Andersén-Barnholdt smashes his wristwatch as a symbolic act of abandoning civilisation (Skolmen 2010:253). A similar story occurs in *Back to Nature*, but not in the original *Searching for Paradise*. Like the comparison

to Tambs' works, this may suggest that Heyerdahl did not read these works until much later in life. Perhaps he only read these books in the process of writing the 1974 *Back to Nature* and then lifted evocative passages from them.

Since this dialogue between Heyerdahl and other Scandinavian travel writers like Tambs or Andersén-Barnholt does not chronologically match, it cannot be said for certain that they served as sources of inspiration for Heyerdahl. He might actually have encountered them first in later life. The popularity of South Seas genre and Polynesian romanticism tropes in the 1930s implies that such ideas could have been picked up without contact with the direct sources, as for instance through watching *Mutiny on the Bounty*. However, there are at least two travel writers of notoriety whose works archival material suggests that Heyerdahl had read before he left for the Marquesas.

### *3.3 The Ventriloquist's White Shadow: Melville and O'Brien's Travel Writing*

The first mention of Polynesia in the Heyerdahl couple's scrapbook is from an unknown date somewhere between 4 August and 10 September 1936. In a full-page collage (Ill. 5), centred around a photograph of Heyerdahl and Liv closely studying a book, a number of facts about the Marquesas Islands can be seen. The Marquesas Islands were presented in general and very idyllic statements about the climate, temperature, and the lack of dangerous and poisonous animals. The Marquesans were described as a grand and beautiful people known for their great hospitality. It is also stated that the Marquesans wore *Pareu* (a type of Polynesian clothing) and drank *Kava* (a Pacific narcotic drink). The collage reveals at least two works that the couple probably read prior to their journey. In a caption on the page, the title of O'Brien's novel *White Shadows in the South Seas* appears, and in a small map of the larger islands of the Marquesas group, Taipi Valley was marked out (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Since Taipi is the only marked location within the island group and has such strong ties to Melville's book *Typee* (1846), it is reasonable to suggest that Melville's book was part of the research material. Both Melville's and O'Brien's books are romanticised travelogues of the type likely to have occurred in the Kroepelien Library at the time – 13 editions of *Typee* (the title is spelled 'Taipi', 'Teipi' or 'Tai-pi' in Swedish and Norwegian editions) and 7 editions of

*White Shadows* occur in the Library (Engelstad 2008:141, 50).

### 3.3.1 *Typee and Ventriloquism in the Marquesas Islands*

*Typee* was the debut work of the famed American novelist Herman Melville (1819-1891). Over the years the book has been the subject of numerous different studies (e.g. Calder 1999; Doan 2016; Mukattash 2015; Sanborn 1998; Thompson 2005). Analytical work on *Typee* has been particularly focused on the book's criticism of modern civilisation, and the book has been labelled as a 'Rousseauvian celebration of the noble savage' (Murphy 2003:249: see also Evelev 1992; Ivison 2002; Pilditch 1996). As this suggests, there are connecting points between *Typee* and the romanticised vision of Polynesia Heyerdahl held prior to the journey. Melville, for instance, described a scene where the Marquesans came swimming out to greet the foreign ship (Melville 1982:21), just as Heyerdahl had imagined his first meeting with Polynesians (Heyerdahl 1938a:9). It is of course not certain that Heyerdahl was inspired by Melville in this case, as the scene is a staple in early writing on Polynesian encounters. Melville's protagonist's plan to jump ship and live on fruit in the wild (Melville 1982:42) is another connecting point but not necessarily a direct influence. However, the strongest parallels between Melville's and Heyerdahl's work is found in Melville's criticisms of modern civilisation and the Christian Church.

Melville's book severely criticised how modern civilisation threatened to destroy what was left of pure primitivism in the Marquesas Group. On Nuku Hiva, for instance, he wrote:

Its inhabitants have become somewhat corrupted, owing to their recent commerce with Europeans; but so far as regards their peculiar customs and general mode of life, they retain their original primitive character, remaining very nearly in the same state of nature in which they were first beheld by white men (Melville 1982:21).

As the quotation illustrates, Melville, like Heyerdahl, imagined that the Polynesians had been living in a pure state of nature until they came in contact with modern civilisation, represented in Melville's case by exploration voyagers, whalers, traders and missionaries. Melville's modern civilisation is evidently a different one than Heyerdahl's, but the arguments are the same, contrasting the pure state of nature that appeared in Polynesia before contact with modern civilisation. The polarisation between nature and civilisation or between Polynesian and European undoubtedly leads to a pairing of Polynesian and nature, contrasted to European

and civilised. Europe and Europeans became something belonging to the world of humans, while Polynesia and the Polynesians were viewed as part of nature. As romantics, neither Melville nor Heyerdahl favoured civilisation over nature, but they viewed themselves as coming from civilisation into nature, which in both cases can be said to have affected their relationship to actual Polynesians.

Melville did not present *Typee* as criticism of contemporary society, but as an account of the life and people of Nuku Hiva, that is to say as an ethnographical study. Even though the accuracy of his account was on occasion questioned from the start, Melville's *Typee* was also popularly perceived as a source of ethnographical information up until the 1930s. However, from the late 1930s and onwards several studies have demonstrated that Melville borrowed passages from other authors and explorers, and that details and aspects of his work were literary fabrications (Anderson 1939; Otter 2005; Sattlemeyer 1980; Suggs 2005a-b; see also Blair 2005; Bryant 2005; Calder 2005; Dening 1980, 2004; Despland 2004; Quinby 2005; Sanborn 2005; Smith 2005; Walter Herbert 2005). Melville embroidered his story to create a more real than reality version of the Marquesas Islands; and in order to present his criticism of modern civilisation, he did not shy away from fabricating details and events. He was selling the trope, so to speak. However, it is unlikely that Heyerdahl would have been aware of this in the mid-1930s. If Heyerdahl read Melville prior to the Marquesas journey, he might have done so believing that he was reading an ethnographical study.

In comparison to Heyerdahl, perhaps the most essential part of Melville's societal critique is the use of 'ethnic ventriloquism', to use Mita Banerjee's (2003) term. The term refers to the way in which Melville used the Nuku Hivans (the noble savages) as a means of criticising modern civilisation; that is to say, the pureness of the Marquesan culture was contrasted against the degenerate constructions of modern civilisation. However, the Nuku Hivans were not allowed a voice of their own, but were used as puppets speaking the script of the puppeteer:

the white American subject critiques his own civilization by assuming an ethnic subject position. This ethnic posing stands in curious contrast to native agency itself: the Other cannot speak because the white beachcomber has already spoken for him (Banerjee 2003:207).

Such a perspective presents a false image of the criticism, as if it was coming from the puppet and not the ventriloquist. It is therefore not truthful to the agency of the Nuku Hivans but to Melville's own views. By presenting this criticism through the agency of the Nuku Hivan,

Melville is creating an image of Nuku Hivan agency to fit with his aims. This illustrates the deceptive nature of the type of travel writing tropes Heyerdahl indulged in prior to his journey to the Marquesas.

### 3.3.2 *Frederick O'Brien and the Cradle of the Caucasian Race*

The author of *White Shadows* (1919), Frederick O'Brien (1869-1932), had lived as a vagabond and travelling journalist prior to the book's publication, covering a large section of the globe's surface. During his later years he spent a substantial amount of time in Tahiti, Samoa and the Tuamotus. However, it was his one-year stay in the Marquesas group in 1913 that laid the foundation for his success and short period in the spotlight. O'Brien's travelogue from the Marquesas was finished in 1914, but not published until September of 1919. The book became a massive success, reaching second place on the US bestseller list in 1920 and in the same year becoming the book most frequently borrowed from American libraries (Geiger 2007:74-117). The book, which follows the trail trodden by Melville almost a century earlier, explores romanticised topics of the noble savages of the Marquesas Islands and their dying culture, the island group's splendid scenery, and the adventures of a travelling writer. It also includes themes of anti-colonialism, criticism of the Catholic Church, and the negative impact of Western culture on the islanders. The book's commercial success opened the gates for a flood of South Seas romances on the American market so intense that the popularity of the genre started to fade only a few years later. By that stage O'Brien had already published two sequels to *White Shadows*, *Mystic Isles of the South Seas* (1921) and *Atolls of the Sun* (1922). O'Brien had also ended up in trouble; accused of not crediting a co-author and suffering from writer's block and a drinking problem, he slipped out of the public eye (Anon. IX. 1932; Barry 1932; Geiger 2002, 2007:74-117; Walton 1922; Willcox 2017).

By the end of the 1920s, O'Brien's work would again enter the public spotlight when the cinematic adaptation of *White Shadows* (the film version is actually based on a story in *Atolls of the Sun*, see Geiger 2002:99) was filmed by Van Dyke (1906-1986) (Geiger 2002, 2007:74-117, 160-191). As noted above, the film was a success in Scandinavia and was most likely seen by Heyerdahl (3.2.3).

In *White Shadows* O'Brien painted a picture of the Marquesas Islands in extremely exaggerated colours. It was presented, probably attractively to Heyerdahl, as the opposite to

the cages of civilisation represented by New York's Wall Street (O'Brien 1919:123). The island of Tahuata was described as a paradise filled with abandoned fruit trees and food in abundance, and the population as if they had returned to a pre-European lifestyle, spending their days perfecting the art of doing nothing (O'Brien 1919:61, 74-78). Photographs showed young women in *pareu* with flowers in their hair, with captions like 'nothing to do all day but rest'. Despite their Caucasian blood (3.3.2.1), the Marquesans were portrayed as lazy, according to the common stereotype of the period. O'Brien also stated that 'the Marquesans were not thinkers' (1919:97). This statement immediately appears ironic, as O'Brien on the next page described how the 'non-thinkers' came over to his *Paepae* at night to discuss esoteric and existential questions (1919:98). In the same sentence O'Brien also expressed anti-intellectual ideas, claiming that 'primitive thought' was superior to the scientific mind (1919:99). Like Melville, London and others, he also wallowed in the islands' cannibalistic history to the point of obsession (see 1.5.3; O'Brien 1919:178-188, 228-239; see also Obeyesekere 2005).

When visiting Fatu Hiva – which he described as 'the little forgotten island' (1919:318) – O'Brien met the Swiss settler and copra farmer Francois Grelet, who described his world as a paradise, where he was free to follow his own will (1919:310-321). It is interesting that in the midst of Grelet's talk of paradise, O'Brien does not shy away from mentioning the fact that Grelet's easy life was due to him having purchased two kidnapped men from the Tuamotus to work as modern-day slaves on his plantation (1919:322-323). The contrast between the paradise-like islands and how they were haunted by the white man and his civilisation was in fact O'Brien's main theme. The *White Shadows* of the title referred to the negative effects of colonialism and the Christian Church on the mental and physical health of the Marquesans (1919:162-166). While discussing the Church's ban on tattooing, O'Brien exclaimed that the Marquesans had been 'robbed of racial pride and clan distinction, and their social life destroyed' (1919:373).

The concept of modern European civilisation destroying the purity of primitive peoples is of course an obvious connecting point to Heyerdahl, and *White Shadows* clearly presents several other connecting points to *Searching for Paradise*, from the criticism of the Church (4.3.2) to Heyerdahl and Liv staying with Grelet's son in Omoa village (Appendix II), and even O'Brien's meeting with Henry Lie (5.5; O'Brien 1919:311). There are also several noticeable differences between O'Brien and Heyerdahl. O'Brien, for instance, had no interest in living

like a primitive man in the wild; he took the first possible opportunity to purchase a large brass bed to ensure a good night's rest (O'Brien 1919:41-51). His alter ego is also found throughout the book using his typewriter and drinking rum – O'Brien was not attempting to leave civilisation.

Nonetheless, the idea of the Polynesian paradisaical environment and its primitive inhabitants, as well as the idea that the white shadow threatened to destroy a natural purer way of life, illustrates that Heyerdahl and O'Brien were closely connected in spirit through their shared tropes. Together with the fact that O'Brien is one of the few authors who appears repeatedly in Heyerdahl's journey contemporary source material, this suggests that the ideas O'Brien presented had a strong impact on Heyerdahl, at least before his journey. Afterwards things had changed and Heyerdahl referred to O'Brien as the 'worst liar ever' (Stroller 1938). However, the pre-Marquesas journey connection between O'Brien and Heyerdahl, in combination with the fact that large sections of O'Brien's book actually discusses ideas on the origin of the Polynesian people, requires further investigation on possible similarities and difference between O'Brien's ideas on Polynesian origins and Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory.

### *3.3.2.1 Lemuria and Stephenson Percy Smith*

In *White Shadows* O'Brien repeatedly returned to the idea of the Polynesians, especially the Marquesans – referred to as 'the Vikings of the Pacific' (O'Brien 1919:26) – having Caucasian blood, and actually inhabiting the area of the 'Caucasian cradle' (e.g. 1919:7- 8, 35). O'Brien suggested that Marquesan (and Polynesian) culture was several thousand years old; for instance, he mentions that dogs had been known to the Polynesians for thousands of years (1919:337), and described Maori genealogies dating back at least 4,550 years (1919:447), illustrating an idea of the Polynesians as an ancient people (cf. Christian 1910; 3.2.4.1).

That the Marquesans had a special connection to the Caucasian race in O'Brien's mind is illustrated by one of his attempts to discuss cultural parallels. He claimed that 'the father-right' (referring to patrilineality) as a social system among 'primitive people' was not found on the American continent to the east, nor among the Australians, Papuans and Melanesians to the west, nor among the Hawaiians, all of whom practiced 'the mother-right'; the Marquesans, on the other hand, had kept 'the father-right' despite the 'promiscuous nature' of the women of the



island group. According to O'Brien the only other people to practice the father-right before recent times was the 'Caucasian race' (1919:111-112). Examples like these led O'Brien to believe in a racial connection between the Marquesans and what he labelled the 'Caucasian race':

I seemed to see in this curious fact another proof of the ancient kinship between the first men of my own race and the prehistoric grandfathers of Malicious Gossip and Haabunai. My savage friends, with their clear features, their large straight eyes and olive skins, showed still the traces of their Caucasian blood. Their forefathers and mine may have hunted the great winged lizards together through primeval wilderness, until, driven by who knows what urge of wanderlust or necessity, certain tribes set out in that drive through Europe and Asia toward America that ended at last, when a continent sunk beneath their feet, on these islands in the southern seas (O'Brien 1919:112).

As the quotation illustrates, O'Brien envisioned himself and his Marquesan friends as tied together by an ancient common ancestry. He believed that the common ancestors had wandered across a now-sunken continent. This is also expressed on several occasions elsewhere in the book; for instance, he suggested a connection between Peru and the Marquesas through the structure of *Kava* manufacture and ceremonies, which he immediately connected to the idea of a sunken continent or land-bridge (1919:206). This sunken continent is most likely a reference to the imagined sunken continent of Lemuria, which was viewed as the possible cradle of humanity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ramaswamy 2004:35-50) and is represented, for instance, in Macmillan Brown's ideas on Polynesian origins (1907, 1926, 1927).

O'Brien discussed the sunken continent theory in connection to Stephenson Percy Smith and his theories on Polynesian origins (O'Brien 1919:160-161). O'Brien's inclusion of Smith in the discussion is somewhat confusing as Smith was not an advocate for sunken continent theories. Like Fornander, Tregear, and Christian, Smith was a supporter of Caucasian origin theories for the Polynesians, and it might have been this that O'Brien was referring to. However, the migration theories of Fornander, Tregear, Smith and Christian all located the origins of the Polynesians in various parts of India and Central Asia, and claimed that they were either directly or closely racially related to the Caucasian race – which for the majority seems to have referred to Europeans of various ethnic groups – and that their migration out of Asia was of a very ancient date (Ballantyne 2012; Best 1923; Christian 1932; Davis 1978; Fornander 1878, 1880, 1885; Howe 1988, 1991; Smith 1898a-b, 1904, 1910, 1911a-b, 1919, 1921;

Tregear 1885, 1891; Whimp 2014:153-160).

### *3.3.2.2 The Different Caucasians of Heyerdahl and O'Brien*

The inclusion of a sunken continent in O'Brien's writing is important as it marks a stark contrast to Heyerdahl's theory. Even though both men argued for Caucasian racial elements in Polynesia there is not really any connecting point between their theories. O'Brien's Caucasian blood was a part of the actual Polynesians, while Heyerdahl's Caucasian elements belong to a pre-Polynesian people (1.4.1).

O'Brien imagined islands like Tahiti and the Marquesas as the remaining mountaintops of a sunken Pacific continent and believed that the origin of humanity and the Caucasian race was on this continent (O'Brien 1919:8). In O'Brien's view, the Polynesians came from Polynesia, or a once existing continent in the area that would become Polynesia. O'Brien was actually suggesting something similar to James Churchward's Mu – the science fiction version of Lemuria (Churchward 1926; Geiger 2007:91; Ramaswamy 2004:77). This separates him from Smith and his Caucasian origins peers, who envisioned a migration from Asia. It also separates him from Heyerdahl, whose white bearded men and Maori-Polynesians both had transoceanic origins (1.4.1). There is therefore no correlation between the Kon-Tiki theory and O'Brien's thoughts. However, the image of the Polynesians Heyerdahl presented before his Marquesas journey, as an almost Nordic race and remainder of humanity's natural state (3.2.1.1-2), closely corresponds to O'Brien's ideas. This suggests that events during the Marquesas journey made Heyerdahl break with the perceptions he had held before his journey, and that the Kon-Tiki theory developed out of these events.

## *3.4 Summary and Conclusion*

There is no indication that Heyerdahl held any deeper knowledge about Pacific archaeology/ethnography prior to his Marquesas journey. Heyerdahl's later claims that he had gained a comprehensive knowledge about Pacific ethnology by studying in the Kroepelien Library are obviously false. The Kroepelien Library was not a research library, and did not feature essential works on Polynesian archaeology and ethnography at the time Heyerdahl had access to it.

Heyerdahl's early writing instead emphasised his romanticised plan to escape civilisation. He wanted to experiment with primitive life to return to an imagined natural state of humanity, representing the direct opposite to the modern world he so thoroughly despised. He transferred this vision of humanity's pure origin in harmony with nature directly to Polynesia and the Polynesians. He imagined Polynesia to be a paradisaical environment and the Polynesians to be the last living natural people, connected to humanity's origin through their almost Nordic appearance.

These ideas of Heyerdahl's can be linked to contemporary conservative movements in Germany, for instance, with their emphasis on escaping the degenerate modern industrial world for more rural, nature-oriented lifestyles. The images of Polynesia presented in Heyerdahl's early writing closely connect to themes and expressions of the Enlightenment and Romantic Era, as well as to contemporary popular cinema. The latter seems to have had a particularly significant impact on Scandinavian popular culture, where South Seas travel was seemingly highly appreciated in the late 1920s and 1930s. For instance, several examples of travellers with Polynesia as their ultimate goal published books in Norway in the early 1930s.

A direct influence from contemporary travel writing on Heyerdahl can be found in O'Brien's *White Shadows*. However, the influence on Heyerdahl of O'Brien's romantic perception of the Marquesas Islands and his contempt for modernity does not extend to Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory. O'Brien's idea that the Polynesians were distant relatives of the Caucasian race, and that the 'Caucasian cradle' was to be found on a sunken continent of which only the Polynesian islands remained, shows no connections to Heyerdahl's later Kon-Tiki theory. This suggests that Heyerdahl's theory did not originate in O'Brien's or any other source he had engaged with prior to him travelling to Polynesia in 1937.

Evidently Heyerdahl's romantic perception of the Polynesians as an almost Nordic race from the dawn of humanity did not survive the 1937 journey, and after his return he disappointedly lashed out at O'Brien, calling him the world's worst liar. Something had changed during Heyerdahl's journey which made him redefine his ideas about the Polynesians and their history. What it was that made Heyerdahl change his mind will be further examined in the following chapters.

## *Chapter 4 – The Death of Natural Man: Heyerdahl's Interaction with Polynesia in 1937*

“Wait a month and you will see for yourself”, a Scandinavian settler on Tahiti allegedly said to Heyerdahl when he first came into Papeete and brought up his ideas of a paradise on Earth (Heyerdahl 1938a:12-13). As presented in the previous chapter, Heyerdahl had envisioned the Polynesians as natural people living in a paradisaical environment. This was an image created out of prevalent travel writer tropes of Polynesia in Enlightenment and Romantic Era literature, and in 1920s-1930s South Seas romances and films. However, he and Liv had hardly got off the boat before they had to face a quite different reality; the French immigration agents and the waiting South Seas maidens had not been a part of their envisioned paradise. As Heyerdahl's travelogue discloses, the first people they became acquainted with in Polynesia were other North Europeans, who did not share their romantic vision of Polynesia. The Norwegian settler Larsen is quoted saying that everyone who came to Tahiti had to write a book about it, and if they were to sell any copies of the book, they had to describe Tahiti as a paradise, but nothing could be further from the truth (Heyerdahl 1938a:15). Larsen satirically continued:

One of these days I will publish a book here in Tahiti. Written in Polynesian. It will be all about 'the North Seas paradise' and as truthful as its counterparts from the South Seas. I will write about Norway, a land of adventure, a dream, where Viking men sit around on icy lakes, striking fire with flint, while their women dance *halling* dressed in bearskins and give birth on skis (Heyerdahl 1938a:16, TR28).

Larsen's satirical comments anticipate Bakhtin's *chronotope* concept (1.6). The expectations of the genre and theme needed to be present for the reader to find the story believable; the South Seas needed to be a paradise, a reality more real than reality itself. Heyerdahl in his turn used the quotation in a similar manner; it paved the way for the paradise lost image he ended up describing in his travelogue – or, perhaps more accurately, *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) described his realisation that the Polynesia he had read about in South Seas travelogues no longer existed. From archival material it is evident that Heyerdahl was devastated by the satirical comments his escape from civilisation plan attracted, and that he had really believed

the more-real-than-reality version of Polynesia from the tropes of romantic literature to be true. In a letter to Kroepelien he expressed his disappointment in the paradise lost comments Larsen, the Swedish settler Swenson and an Englishman named Halligan had written in his and Liv's scrapbook, and talked about how Tahiti had changed (Heyerdahl 1937j; see also Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Since Heyerdahl had never been to Polynesia before his arrival in 1937, the change he was describing cannot really be said to have been a change, but rather the difference between what he had imagined and what he found himself facing. Heyerdahl was very reluctant to part with his vision of Polynesia and was seemingly ready to go to great extremes to preserve at least a little fraction of it. In doing so, he ended up creating his own larger-than-life narrative, not just to make the story believable for the reader, but seemingly also for the author himself. This chapter will analyse this process through Heyerdahl's interaction with Polynesia in person, focusing on how the reality of 1930s Polynesia and its people differed from Heyerdahl's pre-journey perceptions.

#### *4.1 Teriieroo a Teriierooiterai and Hiti-Hiti*

Heyerdahl's first relationship with anyone of Polynesian ancestry was with Teriieroo a Teriierooiterai (1875-1952). Over the years, Teriieroo had come to form a point of gravitation for Norwegians visiting Tahiti. He had become acquainted with Kroepelien in the late 1910s, and from then on he acted as a welcoming committee for Norwegian visitors to Tahiti. In the 1930s Teriieroo appeared in no less than three different Norwegian South Seas travelogues (see Heyerdahl 1938a; Olsen 1931a; Tambs 1930). Heyerdahl's description of his meeting with Teriieroo is interesting, partly because it has been argued that the description led to the rift between Heyerdahl and Kroepelien (Kvam 2005:213-225; Skolmen 2000, 2010), but above all because Heyerdahl's portrayal of Teriieroo so evidently deviates from available biographical information. That the meeting was of great importance to Heyerdahl is attested by statements he made in later life, where he referred to Teriieroo as one of the finest persons he had ever known (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p.3-4; see also Heyerdahl 1952:9-10). In his autobiography he wrote:

Chief Teriieroo, father of the notorious beauty Tuimata, was the most powerful of Tahiti's seventeen chiefs. Grand and towering in both spirit and body. A full-blooded descendant of the ancient Polynesian line of chiefs. We brought with us gifts from Bjarne Kroepelien and were

welcomed with open arms into the family. [...] we received the best education imaginable, both of us dressed in richly coloured *pareu* – Liv with Faufau and the household's women, bent over the earth oven in the kitchen floor, and me with the chief and his sons out in the jungle (Heyerdahl 1998:84, TR29).

As the quotation illustrates, Teriieroo's family provided Heyerdahl and Liv with just the type of experience they had talked about when interviewed by *Tidens tegn* prior to their departure (Anon. VII. 1936; 3.2). Teriieroo and his wife Faufau Taahitue showed them traditional cooking and listed what was edible in the jungle. The Heyerdahl couple were even adopted into Teriieroo's household (Heyerdahl 1937i).

On the other hand, Teriieroo's household was far from Heyerdahl's primitive vision. Yet, Heyerdahl chose to portray Teriieroo as an admired but rather primitive character, describing him as a chief of the Papenoo Valley (Heyerdahl 1938a:18). Teriieroo was further presented as an avid supporter of the escape from civilisation plan, and Heyerdahl claimed that he had said he would have joined them if he had not been too old. Teriieroo is said to have despised modern civilisation, favouring instead the old customs and the practical knowledge of nature. He is said to have told Heyerdahl that the Marquesas was a land of adventure where there were no mosquitos, Chinamen or cars (Heyerdahl 1938a:20, 25). Heyerdahl considered Teriieroo a 'pure descendant of the good old Polynesian race' (Heyerdahl 1937j, TR30). In his *National Geographic* article Heyerdahl presented a similar description, stating: 'A full-blooded native of proud demeanor was Teriieroo, conscious of the past culture of the islands and bitter at the shadows cast over them with the arrival of the white man' (Heyerdahl 1941b:109). All photographs of Teriieroo in *Searching for Paradise* show him posing in front of palm trees wearing a *pareu* (Heyerdahl 1938a: Illustrations between p. 8 and 9).

Heyerdahl's description also emphasised Teriieroo's obesity, and how bad his table manners were: he ate with his fingers, had chickens, pigs and cats all around the table, and washed his face in a teacup. This part of the description, like a drawing illustrating a dinner with Teriieroo and Faufau, were obviously humorous inclusions aimed at entertaining Norwegian readers of the travelogue and newspaper articles. This is also illustrated by Heyerdahl's inclusion of a story in the travelogue in which an attempted joke by Faufau backfired on her as she was too heavy to climb a banana tree; the tree simply broke and fell on top of her. Teriieroo's weight is further described as so massive that it was hard to believe he had once been 'the island's greatest fighter' (Heyerdahl 1937d-e, 1937i, 1938a:18-27, 1974a:22-32).

The image of Teriieroo is thus a rather uniform portrayal of an obese, nostalgic noble

savage, dreaming of the past and the old ways before Tahitian culture was destroyed by European civilisation and modernity. The Teriieroo who appears in Heyerdahl's writings corresponds closely to his idea of the Polynesians as remnants of the world's last natural people. However, Teriieroo was nothing of the sort. Even Heyerdahl himself, in his 1974 *Back to Nature*, admitted that there was another side to the story. He confessed, for example, that everywhere they had wanted to go, Teriieroo had volunteered to drive them in his car, seemingly his most cherished possession. On Sundays they had to dress up in their fanciest clothing, Liv wearing a large hat adorned with shells, as they went in a procession to attend the church service. Heyerdahl also said, sounding both condescending and disappointed, that Teriieroo looked like an old banker when he dressed up for meetings in town (Heyerdahl 1974a:22-32).

Teriieroo was in fact a local government administrator for the Papeete Valley, and a noted politician who served several terms in the Tahitian government. When photographed or portrayed by others than Heyerdahl, he is generally depicted as an intellectual, a public speaker who could enthuse his audience, and a modern progressive statesman. During his spells in the Tahitian government, he worked to modernise Tahitian agriculture. He also received the French *Légion D'Honneur* for his contribution during the World Wars and his service to French colonial rule (O'Reilly & Teissier 1962:553-554). The image presented by Heyerdahl was thus very distant from reality. Teriieroo was portrayed as a representative of Heyerdahl's romanticised pre-journey vision of the Polynesians as children of nature, rather than the car-driving, business-suited civil servant that he was.

Teriieroo's adoption of the Heyerdahl couple seems to have been particularly important to Heyerdahl. In the narrative, it represents Heyerdahl's break with his own origin in the corrupt civilised world of the white man, to become part of the natural people of Polynesia. This was the objective of his escape from civilisation plan. For Heyerdahl the adoption represented a rite of passage, where he learned the ways of the Polynesian, stopped being Thor Heyerdahl and became Teraimateata Tane; stopped being a white man and became a Polynesian natural man. Heyerdahl wanted to be welcomed into a Polynesian household in the same way that the midshipman Byam had been welcomed into the household of Hiti-Hiti in the film *Mutiny on the Bounty*. For this narrative to be believable, it was important that Teriieroo really corresponded to Heyerdahl's vision of Polynesia's natural people. Being adopted by a politician and colonial administrator who worked in an office and drove a car was no different

to where he had come from; on the other hand, being adopted by a bare-chested savage chief of the jungle who detested the Chinese and modern civilisation was just what Heyerdahl was looking for. In the travel writing genre the success of the enterprise is measured by finding something different during the journey; 'the aim of traveling to distant lands, after all, is not to find the familiar' (Holly 2016:101).



*Illustration 10: Left: Teriieroo a Teriierooiterai and his wife Faufau. Top right: The protestant sexton Tioti from Omoa village. Bottom right: Ioane Naheekua, Heyerdahl's and Liv's landlord on Fatu Hiva. Photographs by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

Since the so-called adoption, at least according to the scrapbook, happened during the very first days the Heyerdahls spent with Teriieroo's family – the names Teraimateata Tane and Vahine are first mentioned in a message from Teriieroo on 4 February, while they said their



goodbyes to Teriieroo's family around 20 February (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; Appendix II) – the rite of passage story is greatly embroidered, if not entirely created. As with his description of Teriieroo, Heyerdahl rearranged the details to fit the narrative he wanted to tell. Heyerdahl's portrait of Teriieroo, and his alteration of the chronology of his Polynesian rite of passage (getting his Polynesian name at the start of his visit, rather than at the end as a sign of him being accepted as a Polynesian), illustrate the distance between his more-real-than-reality version of Polynesia and the actual Polynesia he encountered.

## *4.2 Tei Tetua, the Last Cannibal on Fatu Hiva*

Heyerdahl's determination to alter portraits of people he met to fit with his vision of Polynesia is also evident in his description of his meeting with the Marquesan elder Tei Tetua, on Fatu Hiva.

According to Heyerdahl, Tei had once been a cannibal chief of four tribes and had had 12 wives, but every one of them had died, and Tei had ended up alone in the Ouia Valley, except for Tahina Momo, an adopted daughter from Omoa (Heyerdahl 1938a:166-182, 1974a:254-295). The idea that Tei was of pure descent and a more genuine Polynesian than any of the people they had met previously on Fatu Hiva was repeated by Heyerdahl on several different occasions. In *Searching for Paradise* he wrote: 'He is the last of the men of old days [...] He is the last of the man-eaters' (Heyerdahl 1938a:167, TR47). In 1940 Heyerdahl repeated these claims, stating that Tei was the only inhabitant on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa who still lived a 'primitive life' (Heyerdahl 1940:529, 544). In an interview in 1938 Heyerdahl said that Tei was 'An old Polynesian of pure race, the last cannibal in the Marquesas islands. He was in many ways a real rock. He never lied or stole; remarkable qualities down there' (Stroller 1938, TR48). In a letter to his parents, Heyerdahl described Tei as 'one of the legendary Polynesians' and the last to have preserved a true Polynesian lifestyle, concluding: 'He is one with Polynesia' (Heyerdahl 1937l, TR49). In the letter Heyerdahl also claimed that Tei had only left Ouia Valley once in his lifetime. By 1974 the number of times had doubled to two, of which the second had been to get Tahina Momo (Heyerdahl 1974a:257). Interviewed by Bell in the 1980s, Heyerdahl disputed Bell's suggestion that he had learned about navigation while he was in the Marquesas, claiming instead that no-one on Fatu Hiva knew about navigation; Tei

had never been to sea in his life, Heyerdahl asserted, and the rest of the Fatu Hivans were 'too degenerate' to have any navigation skills (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 19). It is evident that Heyerdahl created an image of Tei, in accordance with the travel writing trope (1.6.1), as something isolated and purely primitive. Tei's hermit life – his isolation – had left him untouched by civilisation.



*Illustration 11: Tei Tetua photographed next to his own grave. Photograph by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

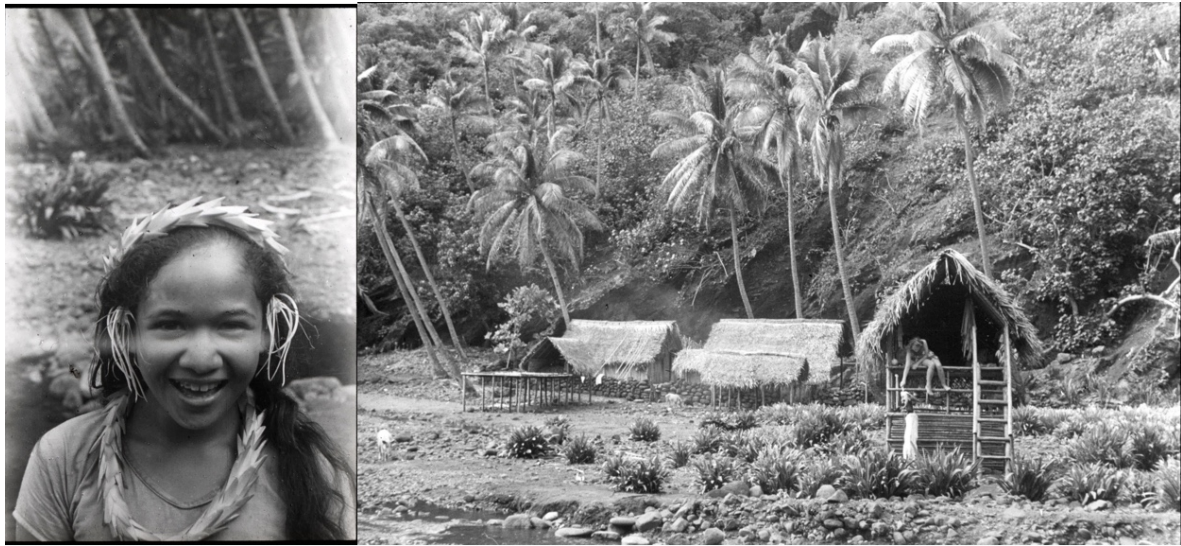
As with most of his other accounts and descriptions from the journey, Heyerdahl was relatively free in his recounting of people and events. The 'real Polynesian' Tei was no more a stranger to modern civilisation than the rest of Fatu Hiva's inhabitants; he smoked, drank, and embraced all the other qualities that Heyerdahl had considered despicable among the Fatu Hivans (4.3). In the visitors' log Heyerdahl and Liv kept for their bamboo cabin, Tei – as well as presumably Momo (or otherwise an additional inhabitant of the Ouia Valley) – came to visit them in Omoa village on separate occasions; both arrived in a canoe (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). That Tei had only left Ouia Valley once or twice in his lifetime, and did not know how to paddle a canoe, cannot be considered believable. Instead this seems to have been part of a strategy by Heyerdahl to highlight Tei's authenticity and purity through his isolation.

In his writings and in interviews in the 1930s, Heyerdahl continuously referred to Tei as 'the last cannibal of Fatu Hiva' (see Anon. X. 1938; Anon. XIII. 1938; Den Stundesløse 1938a-b; Heyerdahl 1938a-d, 1974a; Stroller 1938), connecting to the established cannibal trope of the Marquesas Islands (1.5.3). However, Tei, as Heyerdahl occasionally admitted, was not a cannibal and had never engaged in cannibalism himself (Anon. X. 1938; Heyerdahl 1938a:166-138). Yet the idea that Tei was a cannibal was constantly used, above all in *Searching for Paradise*.

Heyerdahl seems to have had two objectives in portraying Tei as a cannibal: partly to humour and entertain his reader or audience, and partly, as the quotation above illustrates, to connect Tei with old times and the untouched Polynesia Heyerdahl imagined had existed before modern civilisation's intrusion. Through his cannibal past, Tei could be connected to a time before European arrival and before Christianity reached the islands.

Heyerdahl claimed that Tei was around 70 years old (various ages between 70 and 80 occur in Heyerdahl 1937m, 1938a:166-182, 1940, 1941b, 1974a:254-295), meaning that he would have been born in the last few years of the 1860s. Since whalers, traders, beachcombers, French and American military, and several different Christian missions had been part of the history of the Marquesas from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (1.5.3), Tei was of course not old enough to have remembered a time prior to European contact as Heyerdahl made it seem. In fact, Heyerdahl's portrait of Tei closely resembles his depiction of Teriieroo. Both men were portrayed in a manner echoing Heyerdahl's vision of Polynesia before he embarked on the journey; both are described as simple woodsmen, with all the practical knowledge one could wish for, and full of contempt for modern civilisation and its artifice.

In 1974, Heyerdahl further emphasised the idea of Tei as a pure intellectual, suggesting that he might have been able to pass as a university professor if he had worn a lab-coat, and claiming that Tei reminded him of Hjalmar Broch (Heyerdahl 1974a:254-255). Heyerdahl framed Tei within his own anti-intellectual agenda, turning him into a vessel for his own thoughts on the superficiality of scholarship (dogmatism). Depicting Tei as an intellectual also empowered Heyerdahl's own position, emphasising his possession of knowledge unattainable for anyone else. No university professor in the world could match the practical knowledge of Tei, and the jungle professor's knowledge was only available to those who dared venture out to his hermitage at the end of the world.



*Illustration 12: Left: Tahina Momo, Tei Tetua's adoptive daughter. Right: Tei Tetua's house in Ouia Valley (background), and Liv feeding a goat in her and Thor's cabin in Ouia Valley (foreground). Photographs by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

Heyerdahl's description of Tei, with its emphasis on his pre-European purity, knowledge and isolation, thus not only connects to Heyerdahl's pre-journey vision of the Polynesians as natural people, but also suggests that Heyerdahl had made a great discovery, a valley where time had not moved. In this way Heyerdahl's description of Tei checks all of the ethnographical travel writing tropes (1.6.1-2). Heyerdahl as the adventure traveller had found his 'something special—the really isolated, or “pure,” or especially primitive' (Holly 2016:100-101). This find provided him with an edge not attainable for the scientific specialist in his or her laboratory.

#### *4.2.1 Tei Tetua and the Kon-Tiki theory*

As was noted in the introduction (1.1), the meeting with Tei came to hold a special place in the narrative of how Heyerdahl developed his theory. Interviewed by Bell, he said it was one of two really important events during his Marquesas journey which led him to pursue an anthropological path (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 10-13). In the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, Heyerdahl particularly pointed to Tei's story of an eastern origin of his people as important for his

development of the theory (1.1; Heyerdahl 1948a:9-11). Tei's positioning of Polynesian origins to the east was also emphasised as essential for the theory's origin in *Back to Nature* (1974a), in this case inserted into a larger discussion of Heyerdahl's work on Polynesian origins. However, there are noticeable discrepancies in the way Heyerdahl used Tei's stories in his various publications, which again requires a deconstruction of Heyerdahl's biographical narrative.

The story of Tei's ancestors coming from the east was not included in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a); in this version Tei sings a song about the origin of humanity (also recorded by Handy 1927, 1930b:123-124), but he does not mention any eastern origin for his people (Heyerdahl 1938a:175-179). The eastern origin appears first in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (Heyerdahl 1948a:10-11), and was taken a step further in the 1974 *Back to Nature*, where Tei even states the name of the eastern land his people had come from, 'Te-Fiti' (Heyerdahl 1974a:265-267). There is an evident development here, with Tei's story becoming more specified over time.

To support the accuracy of the story he had recorded from Tei, Heyerdahl in 1974 referenced Handy, who was said to have recorded a similar story (Heyerdahl 1974a:267). However, this is only partly true, as Handy actually recorded a legend of a migration party setting out from Puamau (Hiva Oa) on giant rafts and heading east to a land called 'Tefiti' (written as 'Te-Fiti' by Heyerdahl). Handy interpreted Tefiti as Tahiti; he consequently had to ask his informer twice regarding the direction, and was told *i te tihena oumati*, interpreted as 'towards the rising sun' (Handy 1930b:131) – thus not east in the literary sense. Handy's story does not actually suggest an eastern origin for the people of the Marquesas; rather, it describes a group from Hiva Oa travelling across the sea to Tahiti or an unknown land. Heyerdahl either slightly garbled Handy's recording or misunderstood it (see also Heyerdahl 1952:744-747).

Some confusion also exists over other ethnographic information Heyerdahl received from Tei, especially concerning ancient Marquesan medicinal practices and the existence of trepanation in the island group. According to Heyerdahl, he was told of a *Ta'oa* (priest or medicine man) on Fatu Hiva called Teke who cured head wounds by trepanation, replacing the injured skull cap with a piece of coconut which was stitched to the patient's skull (see Heyerdahl 1938a:179-182, 1952:655-657, 1974a:284-285). The *Ta'oa* Teke had lived in Tei's time (Heyerdahl 1938a:181), most likely the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The story seems to have made a substantial impact on Heyerdahl. In a letter to his mother, he expressed great

excitement at having found just such a piece of human skull on Hiva Oa, with perforations to attach the coconut band-aid. Heyerdahl exclaimed that this find proved the accuracy of Tei's stories (Heyerdahl 1938e; see also Heyerdahl 1938a:181-182). A more extended version of Tei's story of Teke and his medicinal practice, as well as the skull Heyerdahl found, occurs in *American Indians*, worked into a lengthier discussion of cultural parallels regarding trepanation (1952:655-666).

The object is a damaged piece of a human skull with ten perforations and some other possibly worked features (Ill.13). The perforations would definitely have been made after the individual had died; this most likely applies also to the other possibly worked features on the skull. As only one piece of the skull exists, it is impossible to tell whether it had suffered a head-wound that had healed through trepanation or not. However, both in *Searching for Paradise* and in the letter to his mother, Heyerdahl wrote that it had been found in a burial cave, in Atuona on Hiva Oa, where skulls attached to coconut fibre ropes and strings were hanging from the cave's ceiling (Heyerdahl 1938a:181-182, 1938e; Melander 2019a: no. 210). Skulls and other bone material worked into different decorative objects and attachments were not uncommon in the Marquesan material culture sequence (Boës & Sears 1996; Handy, E. 1923; Handy, W. 1938; Kjellgren & Ivory 2005; Linton 1923; Suggs 1961a; Valentin & Rolland 2011). From the existing information, it therefore seems more reasonable to suggest that the piece was worked post mortem.

In *American Indians* Heyerdahl referenced other, similar finds from the Marquesas Islands; he claimed that Handy had recorded similar practices, and so had the beachcomber Stewart (Heyerdahl 1952:655-657). As in the case mentioned above, Heyerdahl slightly garbled Handy's statement; Handy had merely recorded what one informant had told him about his grandfather's practice as a *Ta'oa*, but could not confirm the accuracy of the statements (Handy 1923:269).

In 1974 Heyerdahl further adjusted the account, claiming that he had read about the existence of trepanation in the Marquesas group in Handy's book, and had known that 'Dr. Linton' had taken a photograph of a trepanned skull. Thus in the 1974 narrative, in contrast to his writings and letters from the 1930s, Heyerdahl knew of the practice before Tei told him of it. The reference to Dr. Linton is a direct quotation from Handy's book, with Heyerdahl seemingly shifting Handy's 'I' to himself to make it seem as though he had been informed by Linton in person rather than reading about Linton in Handy's book (see Heyerdahl



1974a:284).



*Illustration 13: Perforated piece of a human skull, collected by Heyerdahl in a burial cave outside of Atuona village on Hiva Oa. Melander 2019a:no 210. Photograph by Victor Melander & Meghan Bill. ©*

Even more confusingly, Heyerdahl then claimed that he had obtained the object (Melander 2019a:No. 210) from Veo, an inhabitant of the Omoa Valley, and suggested that Veo might have made or improved the perforations (Heyerdahl 1974a:285). As this newly added story completely contradicts the earlier accounts, it has to be considered as pure fabrication, either purposely or as a result of Heyerdahl not remembering the actual event almost 40 years later. The narrative function of the alteration, as on other occasions in the 1974 *Back to Nature*, seems solely to be to shift the emphasis on when Heyerdahl gained his knowledge on Pacific ethnography from after to before the Marquesas journey – suggesting a similar pattern to that seen with the Kroepelien Library (3.1). These examples also illustrate the at times very confusing dialogue occurring between Heyerdahl's original works and his improved later retellings of earlier accounts. Both in the case of Tei's story of an eastern origin of his people and in the case of the perforated skull, Heyerdahl over time included dialogues with the ethnographical work of Handy into his own reminiscences. It becomes uncertain if

information actually came directly from Tei or if it evolved out of dialogues with, for instance, Handy's recordings.

The skull, like Heyerdahl's interactions with Tei in general, was worked into a pattern. In *Searching for Paradise* (1938a), the emphasis was fully on the escape from civilisation part of the journey; Tei did not tell stories of where his ancestors came from but described their creation mythology of Tiki and the first man and woman living in nature. He was portrayed as the last Polynesian, taking his knowledge with him to the grave, as well as his hospitality and generosity. Tei was initially part of Heyerdahl's escape from civilisation and paradise lost narrative. It was not until the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue a decade later that Tei started to tell stories of an eastern origin of his people. The stories were described as important influences leading Heyerdahl on the trail of Polynesian migration patterns. In the 1970s, the positions had again shifted and now Heyerdahl had apparently known everything Tei was about to say before he said it; Tei was only confirming things Heyerdahl already knew. In the sense of ethnic ventriloquism (3.3.1), the figure of Tei functions as a puppet, a conduit for Heyerdahl's voice, giving authenticity to Heyerdahl's interpretations, whether this was the 1930s idea of a return to paradise and humanity's natural state, the justification for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, or in 1974 the confirmation of the accuracy of Heyerdahl's life work, the Kon-Tiki theory.

Even if Heyerdahl used the figure of Tei for his own purposes, it does not necessarily imply that Tei's statements were incorrect. For instance, a couple of perforated stone discs from Ouia Valley in the Brooklyn collection were documented by Heyerdahl as having been used as drill-weights (Melander 2019a: nos. 108-110 & 112); the same information was recorded by Linton (1923:332-333; see also von den Steinen 1928a:42, Fig. 31b). As the objects came from Ouia, it is reasonable to suggest that Heyerdahl obtained the information from Tei. The ethnographic information Heyerdahl received from Tei was probably accurate to the degree Heyerdahl was able to record it. The major concerns centre instead on how Heyerdahl used this information, and how he wove the figure of Tei in to his changing interests through dialogues with his own earlier texts and those of other authors. When retracing or deconstructing Heyerdahl's account of Tei's description of an eastern origin for his people, it becomes uncertain whether this was really information coming from Tei, or if the idea developed out of Heyerdahl's dialogue between his own biographical narrative and his interpretation of Handy's ethnographical recordings.



### *4.3 White Shadows and Marquesan 'Browns'*

In recent scholarly and biographical work, Heyerdahl's descriptions and attitudes towards Polynesian people – generally just referred to as 'the browns' [de brune] (TR31) – during his Marquesas journey have been severely criticised. Kvam, Skolmen and Andersson have all pointed to different aspects of Heyerdahl's failure to interact with the people of Fatu Hiva. His reluctance to visit the local church; his demeaning language; his stealing of artefacts and human remains for personal profit; his and Liv's choice to isolate themselves from the people of Fatu Hiva – breaking with Polynesian social custom – and Heyerdahl's claims that the Polynesians had a 'thieving nature' have all been presented as key aspects of his wrongdoing (Andersson 2007a:23-75, 2010:17-22, 2011; Kvam 2005:142, 187-188; Skolmen 2000:43-66, 2010:148-150, 224-269, 328-347). The critics' position is easy to understand, especially in regard to Heyerdahl's complete lack of self-awareness; an example of this is that he kept talking about the thieving nature of the Polynesians while he himself was stealing human remains (Melander 2017:84). After witnessing several of the Omoa villagers perish from an influenza outbreak, and being asked by their friend Tioti to take a photograph of his last son who had been unfortunate and contracted the disease, Heyerdahl wrote:

After a couple of carefree days in the sun, we quickly got over the tragedy we had witnessed in the village. The fruit trees basked in the sun. The rain hammered on the palm-leaf roof. The moon took its usual tour and shone on the enchanted jungle's black leaves (Heyerdahl 1938a:74-75, TR32).

Statements like this make it hard to sympathise with Heyerdahl. His complete lack of compassion for the Fatu Hivans is striking and difficult to understand. He and Liv were of course very young and inexperienced; their newspaper articles and Heyerdahl's travelogue clearly illustrate that this was the young couple's first venture beyond the well-protected walls of the Norwegian aristocracy and upper-middle-class community. They described the world in condescending and disrespectful terms; for example, Liv considered the inhabitants of Guadeloupe 'subhuman', and amusedly told how the 'nigger children' hid in their mother's skirts when they laid eyes on the white couple (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937a). Even though there is no defence for their phrases and actions, their youth and the time in which they lived must of course be taken into account. It is also important to note that it generally takes two to tango,

and that Heyerdahl's and Liv's interactions with the Fatu Hivan community were more complicated than some critics have made them seem. Perhaps the biggest concern with the criticism is that all of it has targeted Heyerdahl as solely responsible for the breakdown in his relationship with the Fatu Hivans. In consequence, the Fatu Hivans have been depicted as helpless victims exposed to the great evils of the white colonials. In fact this perspective does not stray very far from Heyerdahl's own idea of the Marquesans as pure defenceless children of nature exposed to the white shadow, and is problematic in its own right, as it deprives the Fatu Hivans of their agency as humans. The Fatu Hivans were of course not merely Heyerdahl's helpless victims, they were people like everyone else, and as such were capable of the same shortcomings as people in general: among them greed, pettiness, and questionable behaviour under the influence of alcohol (for further discussion on this type of denial of indigenous agency in Pacific history writing see Thomas 1990b, particularly pages 146-156).



*Illustration 14: Some of the villagers from Omoa. Photograph by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

The importance of the contrast between Heyerdahl's vision of Polynesia and the reality he encountered should not be disregarded either. As discussed in chapter 3, Heyerdahl imagined Polynesia as a sort of Garden of Eden, the last place on Earth where humans lived in full

harmony with nature as they had done at the dawn of time. The shock of the Polynesia he actually encountered struck at the heart of his perception of the world (see also Andersson 2007a:299). This was evidently a theme of great importance to him, and was expressed in letters, interviews, newspaper articles, as well as forming the main narrative for his travelogue.

This disenchantment, as noted above, commenced on Tahiti; he described in a letter to Kroepelien how the once glorious paradise had turned into hell. His and Liv's meeting with some of the Scandinavian and English settlers and their talk of Tahiti as paradise lost had already discouraged them, and they had been sad to find that neither in Tahiti, nor in the Tuamotus or Marquesas did people walk around in *pareu* any more. There was not much left of the 'South Seas people', Heyerdahl wrote to Kroepelien (Heyerdahl 1937j). And if Tahiti had been bad, the Marquesas were even worse. After a little more than six months there, Heyerdahl wrote again to Kroepelien, stating that the Marquesas Islands must be the most godforsaken ['gudsforlatte'] place in the universe and describing the Marquesans as little more than greedy 'bastards':

In the larger scheme of things the Tahitians seem to have kept their characteristics better than the Marquesans. Most of the Marquesans have white fathers, the new generation is a pure race of bastards, and money is their only interest in the world (Heyerdahl 1937m, TR33).

After returning to Europe, Heyerdahl further elaborated on his experience in a 1938 letter to his mother, referring to Polynesia as a South Seas hell infected by diseases and greed. He also expressed contempt towards French colonial rule, writing that the French had closed and burned down leprosy hospitals just to save money, and adding:

We both [he and Liv] share the same contempt for everything French. It is impossible to imagine a people more rude, impolite, and unrefined than the French commoner. French courtesy and good manners can only be found among the most prominent social classes. The common Frenchman has not an ounce of decency. Our experience has left us with an everlasting resentment to everything French. It is an uneducated, egotistic, immoral, and rude shit country in all respects. It was such an incredible difference crossing the German border, almost unbelievable. The Germans were clean, loveable, educated, helpful and polite. I guess you are cursing at me now, mother, but I really mean it. We have met many people during the journey, and it has continuously been such a contrast between Englishmen, Americans, Germans and Scandinavians on one side, and Frenchmen, Spaniards and Polynesians on the other side. The first have character, honesty and pride, qualities we had not once encountered among the others. Maybe we have just had bad luck, but we have not seen any tendency to prove us wrong; we thought Renée Hamon was an exception, but she also turned out to be dishonest. We like the English very much, perhaps even more than the Germans; the English

are not as obsessed with militarism as the Germans are. After having had so much to do with the French, you cannot imagine what a magnificent difference it is to be able to deal with a race of such firm character. We have nothing but contempt for the French (Heyerdahl 1938e, TR34).

Heyerdahl's statements illustrate his ideological worldview at the time, and his positioning in the conservative upper-class camp, imagining social and cultural difference to be caused by racial characteristics (see also 3.2, 6.3.1.1-2). At one point he even has to apologise to his mother for sounding too positive towards Adolf Hitler's regime – Heyerdahl's mother was an outspoken anti-Nazi (Jacoby 1965a; Kvam 2005; see also Heyerdahl 1945; Heyerdahl-Lyng 1942).

Even though Heyerdahl's ideological stance at this time is of importance for understanding his actions and views, the above quotation also expresses the importance he placed on personal experience, subjective knowledge and perceptions. Heyerdahl's judgements of the French, Spaniards and Polynesians were not based primarily on theoretical material or established racist doctrines, but on his own observations and the experiences he had gained during the journey.

#### *4.3.1 Gauguin's Rifle – Heyerdahl and the Laws of French Polynesia*

In the letter Heyerdahl also wrote that he and Liv had smuggled artefacts and human remains in their hand luggage, and were hoping for assistance in Germany to get the remaining part of the ethnographic/archaeological collection cleared by customs (Heyerdahl 1938e).

Heyerdahl's aggressive statements about the French therefore probably referred primarily to troubles with customs agents and the French bureaucracy. Neither of these are unheard-of sources of conflict, either before or after Heyerdahl's visit to the Marquesas Islands (e.g. Suggs 1962:23, 196, 220). Nor is it particularly surprising that the Heyerdahls had problems getting their ethnographic material through customs; in the 1930s it was already illegal to collect artefacts and human remains in the Marquesas Islands (e.g. Heyerdahl 19371).

Heyerdahl had not obtained permission to collect ethnographic material or conduct archaeological projects. His resentment towards the French is thus rather unfair, as they could hardly be blamed for upholding their own laws.

Other conflicts with French citizens are not known, with a few exceptions, all of which were initiated during, or related to, Heyerdahl's time in the Marquesas. In Tahiti, things apparently

worked out better for Heyerdahl; he was on friendly terms with Teriieroo, a representative of the French government in the Society Islands, and his application to visit Fatu Hiva was processed and approved within days (5.2.5). Other known interactions with the crew and passengers on the ship *Com. Ramel* en route to Polynesia seem to have proceeded without difficulties, and the Heyerdahls apparently got along well with people of various nationalities and religious beliefs on the voyage (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). The French painter and architect Jean-Paul Aluax (see Aluax 1937; Aluax 1994:52-54), whom Heyerdahl and Liv met on their journey from Europe to Tahiti, even came to visit them briefly on Fatu Hiva (see Appendix II). The relationship with journalist Renée Hamon and her cameraman is only described in positive terms in Heyerdahl's books, with Hamon coming to the Heyerdahl couple's aid in a situation of need (Heyerdahl 1938a:136-138, 1974a:190, 201); on the other hand, Heyerdahl's letter to his mother implies something different.

In the 1974 *Back to Nature* another incident that might have affected Heyerdahl's relationship with the French is mentioned. Heyerdahl described acquiring a rifle which had once belonged to Gauguin (Heyerdahl 1974a:175-176); the rifle's buttstock had been carved by the famous painter. Heyerdahl bought the rifle from Willy Grelet, a citizen of Omoa village who had housed him and Liv when they first came to Fatu Hiva. A handwritten letter/receipt from Grelet reveals that the price paid had been 2,000 francs (400 NOK) (Grelet 1937). However, it was not the purchase but the possession of the rifle that resulted in conflict. Heyerdahl claimed that it had been confiscated from him in Atuona by the local gendarme Triffe, who had acted in accordance with local laws requiring anyone carrying a firearm to have a valid license. Seemingly this annoyed Heyerdahl as he considered the rifle an *objet d'art* rather than a weapon (Heyerdahl 1974a:198-199). Although one can see Heyerdahl's point, the rifle was still functional and the gendarme's enforcement of the law could not be considered out of place. Heyerdahl saw it differently: 'A white man who has spent a lifetime alone amongst the browns unavoidably starts to pick up the browns' vices. He becomes native in his behavioural pattern and thoughts' (Heyerdahl 1938a:133, TR35). In Heyerdahl's view, Triffe was not upholding the legislation because he was obliged to do so, but because his mind had been corrupted by too much contact with local people. Heyerdahl's reasoning here is quite peculiar, as his own plan to escape from civilisation was similar to what he accused Triffe of doing. It also shows Heyerdahl in a rather arrogant and unflattering light; his reluctance to accept the firearms legislation, together with his intentional theft of human remains and

artefacts (e.g. Heyerdahl 1937i), suggests that he considered himself above the law.

### *4.3.2 Heyerdahl and the French Mission*

In Heyerdahl's writings on the Marquesas journey, there is one individual whom Heyerdahl singles out as solely responsible for his and Liv's integration troubles on Fatu Hiva: the Catholic missionary Père Victorin, whom Heyerdahl described as 'a pure devil' as late as the mid-1980s (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 10). According to Heyerdahl, Victorin had arrived with the schooner about a month into their stay at Fatu Hiva, and from then on, his and Liv's relationship with the inhabitants of Fatu Hiva fell apart (Heyerdahl 1938a:80-82).

They had involuntarily been dragged into a religious conflict between the local Catholic and Protestant Churches in Omoa village. Teriieroo had given them a letter of introduction to the Protestant minister of Fatu Hiva, Paekeekee. Since the Protestant community of Omoa village was very small, comprising only the families of Paekeekee and his sexton Tioti, they had been happy to welcome new members into the congregation. According to Heyerdahl, this had been of marginal interest to the Catholic community until Victorin arrived. Victorin mistook Heyerdahl and Liv for Protestant missionaries. Believing that his position on Fatu Hiva was threatened, he warned the members of his congregation that interaction with the Heyerdahls could have serious consequences. In Heyerdahl's travelogue the situation was depicted as very serious, with him and Liv receiving death threats (Heyerdahl 1938a:80-82; 1974a:84-85, 110-130).

As with all of Heyerdahl's writing, it is somewhat hard to judge how exaggerated this account is, but the conflict was undoubtedly real, and presented the young, inexperienced couple with a situation that was very difficult to navigate. Heyerdahl wrote to Kroepelien in despair, asking for advice on how to handle the explosive situation (Heyerdahl 1937j).

Since neither Heyerdahl nor Liv were actively practising Christians and were in fact on a quest to escape civilisation, which they saw as connected with the Christian Church, their attitudes towards the Church had already got them into trouble on Tahiti. Their protests against attending Sunday service had been a particularly sore spot; eventually they agreed to attend as a sign of friendship towards Teriieroo and his family. Even so, Heyerdahl still wrote to Kroepelien describing the scorn they had received for not dressing properly and not showing enough reverence towards the ceremony. From Heyerdahl's letter it seems that his



and Liv's reluctance to attend church because of religious views was only part of the picture, and that youthful rebellion was also involved; Heyerdahl described how Liv was informed that she needed to wear a hat to church, to which she responded by turning up at the next service wearing a pith helmet. Seemingly neither Heyerdahl nor Liv was particularly keen on following the laws and customs of the French government and 'the browns'. However, religious tolerance was not prominent in either Tahiti or the Marquesas in the 1930s, and by the time the Heyerdahl couple reached the Marquesas they had learnt their lesson. Whatever objections they might have had, they still dressed up and walked down to the village for the Protestant Sunday service (Heyerdahl 1937j).



*Illustration 15: Left: Liv Torp-Heyerdahl examining skulls on a burial platform on Fatu Hiva. Right: The French Catholic missionary Victorin. Photographs by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

That the conflict with Victorin deeply bothered the Heyerdahls is well attested by archival and published material. In addition to its more immediate personal aspect, part of the issue can also be traced back to Heyerdahl's belief – romanticised and unrealistic, but still of great

importance to him – in the Polynesian people's natural state. The Polynesia he encountered in the Marquesas Islands was very far from his vision, but instead of admitting that he had been wrong, he preferred to believe that his vision was merely out of date. It remained true, he felt, for the Polynesia of the past, but the Polynesia that now existed had been degenerated and destroyed through contacts with modern civilisation, and next to money the most malignant spirits of modern civilisation were the Christian missionaries. In his and Liv's scrapbook there are satirical drawings of the Mormon mission on Takaroa and the different Christian Churches' attempts to secure Polynesian souls for their congregations (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Heyerdahl's realisation that Polynesia was not as he had imagined made him loathe the Christian Churches, which he saw as responsible for destroying his imagined paradise. He wrote to Kroepelien that to the Polynesians religion was a 'sport' (Heyerdahl 1937j), and further elaborated on the theme upon his return:

The missionaries have checked the warlike spirit of the natives and have removed every trace of cannibalism and manifested brutality, but they have also taught them to despise every bit of their own culture and to look down upon their own customs and goods. What the natives had of their own values the missionaries took away, together with their bad habits and their property, without being able to renew their life. Today native life is rootless, because, while they have lost their old beliefs and habits, they have been unable to assimilate European religion and civilization. Whatever we can say about their old religion and morals, they understood the very earnestness of it and absolutely lived according to its laws. The natives find the new religion amusing and interesting because of the impressive churches with their decorations, the music, and the occasion to wear and show off their best clothes, but when they hear the missionary preach one moral and see the white man living after another, it does not impress them as something real, connected with life itself. The fight between Catholics and Protestants supports this view and is looked upon as a great game. Extremely few of the natives grasp the ideas at the bottom of our religious belief. [...] As teachers of civilization, the missionaries seem to have acted absolutely wrong, giving little or no mental help to the natives and no physical or hygienic help at all, taking away the old culture and giving nothing back (Heyerdahl 1940:544-545).

Heyerdahl's view that the Polynesians failed to understand the meaning of the Christian religion, and that they had been robbed of their culture by the missionaries, is similar to O'Brien's thoughts on the topic (3.3.2). Heyerdahl and O'Brien were of course not the only ones to have had such thoughts; on the contrary, travel writers, ethnographers, and archaeologists of the period commonly expressed similar salvage ethnographical views (1.5.3), even if few went as far as the Swedish zoologist and ethnographer Mjöberg, who claimed to support Australian Aboriginals' beheading of missionaries (Mjöberg 1918:353-359). Similar ideas also survived to later days (e.g. Suggs 1962:58).



What Heyerdahl meant by 'the ideas at the bottom of our religious belief' is not entirely clear. However, his depiction of the Church and civilisation as concepts that the 'native' could not grasp, suggests that Heyerdahl viewed the Marquesans as intellectually inferior. The salvage ethnographical ideas Heyerdahl expressed – that the Marquesans had been better off with their perceived primitivism – further illustrates that he thought of the Marquesans as bound to one type of culture through biology; they were biologically without the intellectual capacity to understand European societies. This anticipates the framework of his biological determinist outset for the Kon-Tiki theory (1.4.2.1).

The quotation also illustrates how Heyerdahl took upon himself the role of the 'ethnic ventriloquist' (3.3.1), speaking on behalf of the Polynesians without considering what their thoughts on the subject really were. It was perhaps not so much the Marquesans who had been robbed of their beliefs by the Christian Church, as it was Heyerdahl who had been deprived of his vision of Polynesia. Since he had so intensely imagined a Polynesian lifestyle in line with his perception of humanity's natural state, his realisation of the importance of the Christian Church to the contemporary Marquesan and Tahitian communities he encountered seems to have been a sore disappointment to him. Heyerdahl's vision of Polynesia had been replaced by a harsh reality where Polynesia's children of paradise had voluntarily abandoned nature to attend something as artificial as a Mormon service. Heyerdahl could not understand this; instead, he developed a strong resentment towards the Church and the missionaries. Being involved in a direct personal conflict with the Catholic minister on Fatu Hiva did not help the situation. Père Victorin embodied everything Heyerdahl resented in Polynesia: the Church, the supposed degeneration of the Polynesians, and the effects of modern civilisation. The French priest was a reminder of everything Heyerdahl had come to Polynesia to get away from, and he was no doubt disappointed to discover that even in paradise one could not hide from the church bells.

### *4.3.3 Greed*

Perhaps the most harshly criticised aspect of Heyerdahl's description of the Marquesas Islands and its inhabitants has been his statement that the Polynesians had a 'thieving nature' (Andersson 2010:19; Melander 2017:84; Skolmen 2010:253-261). What he really meant by this is somewhat hard to make out. Liv, for instance, disclosed in an interview that nothing



positioned right next to a road leading up the mountains from Omoa village (Ill.16; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). The site itself was an abandoned *paepae* which according to Heyerdahl had belonged to the last Queen of Fatu Hiva and was rented to them by Ioane Naheekua (Ill. 10), a villager from Omoa, who claimed to be a descendant of the old Queen. The price was 250 francs (50 NOK) a year (Heyerdahl 1937g; 1938a:43-50; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Heyerdahl and Liv seem to have been quite satisfied with the rental deal. However, things rapidly changed when they tried to build themselves a little cabin. Since they were not experienced hut builders, their efforts quickly failed. Ioane, who had noticed their struggles, offered to build them a cabin for the sum of 17.5 francs (3.5 NOK) per man per day (Heyerdahl 1938a:50). The daily wages Ioane and his co-workers asked for were not excessive in relation to the land rent, but as the construction work dragged on, they started to accumulate to a substantial amount. In his travelogue Heyerdahl also suggests that the day labourers were in no great hurry to complete the construction:

“If the cabin is not finished today, we will come back tomorrow”, Ioane said comfortingly. And he was a man of his word. Every day for three long weeks he came back. We could not rush them; surrounded by brown people, we needed to keep things friendly. In the Marquesas it is not like with primitive Negroes, you cannot just put your foot down and be *Bwana*. Then you end up in an open conflict. They do not bow down to the white man. Since they don't need paid work, they consider it a favour to the contractor. For the sake of friendship, we had to let them go on at their own pace. When we finally got them to finish the project, they expected heartfelt thanks, payment, and gifts. And the kitchen, well, we had to build it ourselves (Heyerdahl 1938a:51, TR36).

Even though it is not supported by the archival material (see Appendix II), if the process, as Heyerdahl wrote, had taken three weeks, the price for the cabin would have been almost the same as (if not more than) the 'small fortune' of 2,000 francs he offered Grelet for Gauguin's rifle (4.3.1). But it was not just the money and the lengthy construction process that annoyed Heyerdahl. Over time it became clear that the cabin was not perhaps of the highest standard:

Ioane and the other brown ones had swindled us thoroughly. They had built the cabin out of unripe bamboo, and they were very well aware that it would be eaten and destroyed by insects. The bamboo should have been ripe, and should preferably have been soaked in saltwater for a week before the construction started. But they wanted the cabin to crumble, so they could come again and offer to build a new one for even more money (Heyerdahl 1938a:113, TR37).

Heyerdahl obviously felt that Ioane had taken advantage of him. This feeling was not eased when Ioane started to come and collect fruit from the land Heyerdahl had rented, which he

thought belonged to him (Heyerdahl 1938a:117-118). Heyerdahl's own words suggest that the cabin and land rental left him feeling tricked and betrayed, feelings which were probably exacerbated by the fact that he had little control over the situation.

Regarding Heyerdahl's failed relationship with Ioane, another important aspect was that Fatu Hiva had been cut off from foreign visitors by French colonial rule (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). For the villagers of Omoa, the arrival of the young, naïve Norwegian couple could thus very well have been seen as a rare opportunity to make a few extra francs. With Heyerdahl spending thousands of francs on artefacts and the cabin project, it is not hard to imagine that the Fatu Hivans would have regarded Heyerdahl's pockets as bottomless, resulting in them doing their best to overprice everything the Heyerdahls might have been interested in or in need of. There are numerous examples throughout Heyerdahl's travelogue of him claiming to pay large sums of money for renting horses and other things. Further examples suggest that he and Liv paid different villagers from Omoa to guide them around the island and to come along as labourers during their excursions. For instance, Heyerdahl describes how he bossed 'the browns' around at a petroglyph site, ordering them to clear the land to earn their pay (Heyerdahl 1938a:69).

Heyerdahl seems to have used this behaviour of throwing money around to signal his social status, as is demonstrated by his story of when he and Liv, marked by tropical diseases, arrived in Hiva Oa. In the story Heyerdahl walks into the village shop and buys everything he can to gain the respect of the local community and show that he and Liv were not paupers (1938a:132-136).

They looked us over from top to toe. They were familiar with the white race. To them, there were three types of white: 'The uniforms', whom they admired; 'the tourists', who made them laugh; and 'the copra workers', whom they despised. A uniform was to them a symbol of governance and power; someone who made the rules and could send them to jail in Tahiti. A tourist was to them the essence of stupidity. The tourist spent life jetting from one place to the next, spreading money around like a madman. The tourist would gladly give up his own hat and all the shiny coins in the world for an old broken stone idol. No one could ask such silly questions as the tourist; he could not even tell the difference between fei and banana; he possessed the knowledge of an infant. The tourist did not care for modern houses or fancy clothes, but went straight out to the jungle to praise its beauty. However, in all of his stupidity, the tourist was at least a millionaire. The copra worker, on the other hand, was white but penniless. He knew the ropes, and did not ask stupid questions; and surely, he could drink coconut wine like a real Marquesan. But they just wanted to suck the white man's wallet dry and had nothing to give in return, so the copra worker was of no use to them; and in addition, the copra worker was despised by the government and the tourists. A white man without money was not a real man to them (Heyerdahl 1938a:132-133, TR38).

Since Heyerdahl, even though he might have wished otherwise, was not a Polynesian, and had no qualities that the Marquesans were interested in or in need of, he seems to have found the role of the tourist the only possible way to uphold his social status. He was respected as long as he paid for it; if he did not, he was just a white copra worker, or even worse, as he did not know anything about copra. Heyerdahl must have been aware of this situation, since he already described how he used money to gain respect in the 1938 travelogue. However, his desire to boss the Marquesans around, treat them like servants, and believe himself to be above the law, suggests that he also wanted to be respected when he was not paying for it. In the scrapbook he and Liv depicted themselves as the King and Queen of Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.), suggesting that they wanted to be worshipped like the white gods Heyerdahl would later claim had been the first settlers of the Marquesas group. Heyerdahl's background in Norwegian high society and as the tycoon's son in the small town of Larvik (1.3) should not be forgotten in this context.

The gift-exchange, the hut building project, the land rental and Heyerdahl's need to pay for respect most likely account for his repeated statements that the Polynesians were thieves and dishonest (e.g. 4.2; Stroller 1938, TR48). Heyerdahl made no such statements before the journey (3.2), suggesting that his idea that these qualities were part of the Polynesians 'nature', that is to say their biology, was guided by his own experiences. He defined these biological qualities through his own personal judgement. His failure to understand local customs and social practices, as well as basic communication, forced him into the role of the tourist, and this was not why he had travelled to the Marquesas. In a letter to Kroepelien, Heyerdahl vented his disappointment with the Marquesans and his plan to escape civilisation, saying that he and Liv were the true primitive people of Fatu Hiva, the ones who lived as the Polynesians should (Heyerdahl 1937m).

#### *4.3.4 Diseases, Isolation, Alcohol and Sex*

As noted above, Heyerdahl found one of the biggest betrayals of the missionaries to be their failure to educate and care for the health and sanitation situation on Fatu Hiva (4.3.2). For Heyerdahl, the diseases that tormented the people of Fatu Hiva were all creations of modern civilisation, and the missionaries and French colonial rulers – the representatives of modern civilisation – did nothing to limit their spread. Leprosy, elephantiasis, tuberculosis, and

venereal diseases were common among the people of Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl 1940:544). Their prevalence clearly shocked Heyerdahl and Liv when they arrived; and their decision, denounced by later critics, to settle on their own, several kilometres up the Omoa Valley, seems to have been made with health concerns in mind, as they feared they would contract diseases through the food and water if they stayed in the village. Heyerdahl wrote in his travelogue that they wanted to get away from the unsanitary conditions of Omoa village (Heyerdahl 1938a:43). But even if the water was purer upstream, they could not get away from the mosquitos. Heyerdahl wrote that their camp became infested with insects to a degree beyond what even a zoologist would enjoy (Heyerdahl 1937m). Heyerdahl also believed that the insect problem, particularly the mosquitos, had been created by modern civilisation. In an interview after his return he said:

In the greater scheme of things nature on the Marquesas Islands never disappointed me. It was great. Completely wonderful, like a paradise. It was the people that were disappointing, and all of the dangerous diseases and the insect plague they had brought to the islands (Stroller 1938, TR39).

He continued this reasoning by saying:

There is not much left of the true Polynesians. Today they are mostly bastards. And they have become extremely degenerated since they came into contact with civilisation. They have adopted all of civilisation's bad sides and none of the good. Excessive alcohol consumption and diseases kill off the population. Venereal diseases, tuberculosis and elephantiasis are rapidly gaining ground. Most of the islands in the archipelago are without medicinal practitioners, and there is no consideration for sanitation; entire families, healthy and sick, eat from the same tray. Once there were 100,000 people in the islands, now there are only 2,000 left. Almost all Marquesan men are impotent, and since it is only 'scum of the Earth' white men who enjoy native women, you can imagine what kind of children are conceived in such unions. But the natives were once different (Stroller 1938, TR40).

In 1940 he elaborated further on the theme, claiming that it was the white man who had brought cats, rats, and dogs to the Marquesas Islands, which killed off the bird life and consequently created the insect issue (Heyerdahl 1940:543-544).

These statements effectively summarise Heyerdahl's conception and experience of Polynesia in 1937. It was a place where the vices of modern civilisation, in the shape of alcohol consumption, diseases and interracial sexual relations, had degenerated and threatened to kill off the entire remaining Polynesian population. Heyerdahl's idea that all Marquesan men were impotent (also repeated in Heyerdahl 1940:544) suggests that he believed that the Polynesian

man had been deprived of his warrior's spirit by the missionaries, and his potency by modern civilisation, and was left a mere shell of himself. His ideas on who was engaging in sexual relationships with native women also suggest that, at least by the time he returned, he had come to view the Polynesians as something very far from the 'almost Nordic race' he had imagined before leaving for Polynesia (3.2.1.2).

In his mind Heyerdahl saw all the components of degeneration and modern civilisation unavoidably leading to the downfall of Polynesia, and envisioned a grim future for the Marquesas Islands, exclaiming that the 'Marquesan race' was doomed to extinction:

It seems to be too late to save the Marquesan race; extremely few are of quite pure blood and they are, as a rule, destroyed by disease and degeneration. The race seems to have been sentenced to death. In a clean and hygienic milieu some more or less purebred individuals might manage to withstand extermination, but not in the Marquesan milieu of today (Heyerdahl 1940:545).

Heyerdahl's statements on 'pure blood' and interracial sexual relationships as something leading to degeneration and eventually extinction show clear parallels to the ideas of contemporary Eugenics movements (cf. 6.3.1.1-2). Discussions of the imagined dangers of racial admixture were particularly common in the Pacific area in the period Heyerdahl visited the Marquesas, drawing attention from scientific institutions even in Scandinavia (see further 5.3.1), although such discussions would eventually be debunked as nonsense (Shapiro 1953). Heyerdahl's statements are too vague to be able to suggest a direct source of inspiration, especially since Eugenics ideas were popular in Scandinavia in the 1930s (Hagerman 2011, 2015; Kyllingstad 2004, 2014; Mjøen 1932, 1938; Pedersen 2003). Consequently, Heyerdahl could have developed these ideas through combining his experiences in the Marquesas with popular ideas he carried with him.

#### *4.3.5 The Death of Natural Man*

The journey had not been a dream trip to the untouched paradise he and Liv had imagined back in Norway. Their relationship to the Fatu Hivans had completely failed and modern civilisation had sunk its claws deep into the South Seas. In fact even primitive life had turned out to be much tougher than they had imagined. Everything had been a struggle. Interviewed by Bell, Heyerdahl said that even the smallest thing had been a fight (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 1).

Subsistence had also proved to be much more difficult than they had thought. Heyerdahl described how he and Liv would lie at night dreaming of meat and Norwegian dishes (1938a:59-60), and continued:

Our feet hurt so badly that we could do nothing but lie down; and when we eventually limped out to get some food, we noticed to our horror that there was none. The fei and banana trees had been cut down, and it was not breadfruit season yet. We were starving. It was such a powerful experience when the sexton now and then stopped by with fresh fish (Heyerdahl 1938a:59-60, TR41).

Interviewed by Bell, Heyerdahl gave an even more depressing image of their starvation (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 15-16, r4/s2/p. 28-29), and in a letter to Kroepelien he wrote that the days when one could live only on fruit were long gone (Heyerdahl 1937m). Heyerdahl's idea of escaping civilisation and living on fruit thus seems to have been very similar to the ideas of Engelhardt, the self-described 'first apostle of the coconut palm' (3.2.2.1; Mönter 2008:35).

Feeling that they had been tricked out of their money, suffering from malnutrition and tropical diseases, in an open conflict with the local inhabitants, with unhealed wounds, and hardly more than four months into their stay in Fatu Hiva, Heyerdahl and Liv were forced to escape from their escape from civilisation, and attempt a dangerous crossing to Hiva Oa. Ironically, it was Heyerdahl's own antagonists in Omoa village, above all Ioane, who took them safely to shore (Heyerdahl 1938a:108-131).

After about two months recuperating in Hiva Oa, they returned to Fatu Hiva, either to collect their belongings or to give their expedition a second try. Before going to Hiva Oa, they had already decided not to prolong their stay in Omoa, and instead to move to the more isolated Ouia Valley on the island's east coast (Heyerdahl 1937l). But their stay in Ouia was also cut short; they decided to escape over the mountains when they found a drinking party visiting from Omoa too hostile. The last few weeks of their time in Fatu Hiva were spent in a cave in Tahaoa. Under miserable conditions, with the cave flooding each time the tide came in, the starving couple did nothing but sit around watching the horizon so they would not miss the moment when the schooner arrived (Bell n.d. r4/s2/p. 28-29; Heyerdahl 1938a:184-192).

Back in Norway, Heyerdahl vented his anger and disappointment over the journey. In newspaper interviews and letters he blamed the 'vicious and in all ways despicable' (Anon. XIII. 1938, TR42) Fatu Hivans for the failed enterprise. When asked by one reporter about the accuracy of O'Brien's *White Shadows*, he lashed out, exclaiming: 'Lies and goddamn



fabrication. Frederic [sic.] O'Brien, who wrote *White Shadows*, is the world's worst liar' (Stroller 1938, TR43; see also Anon. X. 1938). He further stated that he had been 'deeply moved by the magnificence of nature and the paradisaical climate; but filled with disappointment and resentment towards the islands' degenerate and sub-human people' (Anon. XIII. 1938, TR44). In his travelogue, he concluded that there were no tickets to paradise to be bought (Heyerdahl 1938a:192).



*Illustration 17: Heyerdahl and Liv hiding out in a cave (Tahoa beach site) on Fatu Hiva awaiting the schooner to Tahiti at the end of their journey. Photograph by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

The journey had made Heyerdahl realise that a return to nature was impossible. He had set out to search for the last place on Earth where humanity still lived in its natural state, in full harmony with nature; in his mind this place had been Polynesia. However, his Polynesian experience had been utterly different. He concluded that if natural people and humanity's natural state were not to be found on Fatu Hiva, they could not be found anywhere else in the world: 'The expedition has convinced me that there is no place on Earth where civilised man

can return to his pure natural state' (Stroller 1938, TR45). *Natural man* was dead, and modern civilised people could not return to nature.

#### *4.4 Summary and Conclusion*

Heyerdahl's ideas of Polynesia as a paradisaical place where the world's last natural people, the almost Nordic Polynesians, lived in harmony with nature, suffered a severe blow when he and Liv came to Polynesia in 1937. The reality of Polynesia turned out to be far from the romanticised vision Heyerdahl had held prior to his journey. The Polynesians were not at all what he had imagined. They were profoundly burdened with what Heyerdahl believed to be the vices of modern civilisation, something which led to major conflicts between him and the people that he met during the journey.

Seemingly in an attempt to save whatever could be saved of his vision, Heyerdahl altered the portraits of people he met to make them fit more closely with his pre-journey vision. The bureaucrat Teriieroo became a noble savage, a woodsman and chief of the old Polynesian ways, and the hermit Tei became a university professor. Teriieroo and Tei were both presented as being filled with contempt for modern society and the young generation of Polynesia. Heyerdahl as the ethnic ventriloquist used the elders' voices to justify his own contempt for Polynesia's new generation.

Throughout the description of his first encounter with Polynesia, Heyerdahl chose to portray the people he formed personal relationships with as closely related to his romantic vision of the Polynesian natural people, even if, as with Teriieroo and Tei, this was obviously not the case. In contrast, people with whom he developed an antagonistic relationship were portrayed as degenerate bastards of modern civilisation (cf. Coughlin 2016:261-262). This way Heyerdahl through his own personal experience created a division between the contemporary population which he despised and his romanticised pre-journey vision. His emphasis on Tei as an isolated last remnant of what had once been suggests that by the stage of meeting Tei at the end of his journey, Heyerdahl had fully relocated his perception of Polynesia's present to the past. Tei was the last survivor of his vision, preserved in his valley isolated from the world. Heyerdahl's search for *natural man* and the purity of humanity's origin was moved during the journey from something to be found in contemporary times to something that had once been.

In the following chapter this change of time will be further explored by looking at how the archaeological remains of the Marquesas Islands influenced Heyerdahl's thoughts during the period.

## *Chapter 5 – Discovering Archaeology: The Importance of Marquesan Material Culture and Archaeological Sites for the Kon-Tiki Theory*

As discussed in chapter 3, Heyerdahl was not at all familiar with Polynesian archaeology and ethnography before his journey to the Marquesas Islands. In his presentation at Oslo University in late 1936 he mentioned the high frequency of abandoned settlement sites in the Marquesas Islands. However, this was not framed in an archaeological discussion, but directly connected to ideas of depopulation as a result of European colonisation (1.5.3; Heyerdahl 1936a:16). Heyerdahl was not envisioning an abandoned civilisation, but a culture recently destroyed by modern society. He viewed the archaeological sites as part of his criticism of modern civilisation, the central theme of his early writings. The disappointing results of his return to nature experiment led Heyerdahl to conclude in 1938 that there was no longer any place in the world where humanity could be found living in its natural state (4.3.5). Rather, this imagined natural state of humanity was dead in the present, it had become a relic of the past. Heyerdahl's depiction of Tei as the last cannibal of the Marquesas Islands, a relic from the time before French colonisation (4.4), suggests that he imagined that the memory of the past could be retrieved from ethnographic studies. However, Tei was a dying breed, at least to Heyerdahl's mind. He would therefore be forced to move further into the past to continue his search for humanity's natural state; he had to approach archaeology.

That he was embarking on a path completely unknown to him will be further demonstrated in this chapter, which will discuss the ethnographic/archaeological collection Heyerdahl assembled on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa in 1937, as well as his experience of archaeological sites in the Marquesas group and how they came to influence the creation of his Kon-Tiki theory. The chapter will also discuss how Heyerdahl, during the Marquesas journey, was influenced by his meeting with the Norwegian copra farmer Henry Lie.

## 5.1 *The Zoological Collection*

As presented in the previous chapters, Heyerdahl's journey to the Marquesas had no archaeological or ethnographical background. However, it had a scientific objective, with Heyerdahl's plans to collect zoological samples (2.4). From the existing archival material it seems that Heyerdahl, at least initially, took the zoological part of the Marquesas journey very seriously. He seems to have commenced collecting immediately upon arriving in the Marquesas. The specimens were registered in a field-journal, and the first entry was recorded on 19 March 1937 (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937), the morning after he and Liv had landed on Fatu Hiva (Appendix II). The field-journal includes a total of 148 collected samples, each with notes on find location, environment and altitude. Some registrations also include lengthier descriptive information and notes on species behaviour.

The field-journal suggests that, at least initially, the collecting of zoological specimens was carried out with much enthusiasm and substantial effort. It is of course hard to judge how much effort was needed to collect the approximately 150 different specimens mentioned in the field-journal. Unfortunately, the field-journal is one of the few sources which relates to Heyerdahl's zoological collection. The zoological collecting efforts were, for instance, completely left out of Heyerdahl's own autobiographical work. In the Bell interview, Heyerdahl gave some scarce information on his collecting efforts, stating that he had been moving around the jungle with jars, tweezers and other equipment in a rucksack. He also spoke of a trap he had made to catch rats. Heyerdahl further claimed that while he had been out on collecting expeditions, Liv had stayed at the camp preparing food (Bell, n.d., r4/s1/p. 1-3). These statements should, however, be treated with care. For instance, Heyerdahl wrote during the Marquesas journey that Liv was assisting him in his endeavours and was in charge of the journal (Heyerdahl 1937k; see also Den stundesløse 1938a).

Sparse information aside, the overall image from the field-journal suggests that a substantial amount of time and effort was invested in collecting zoological specimens during the first stage of the journey (see also Heyerdahl 1937a). Nonetheless, about two months into their stay in Fatu Hiva something changed, and records of collected specimens became few and far between. After 10 May it took almost a month until the next specimen was collected. Spread out over the course of three days in early June, 10 specimens were collected at varying altitudes between 600 and 700 metres above sea level, at a location referred to as 'mountain

plateau no. 1'. This spot was most likely the mountain plateau between the Ouia, Omoa and Hanavave Valleys in the central part of Fatu Hiva. The specimens collected on the mountain plateau were the last to be recorded in the field-journal.

In a letter to Wollebæk, Heyerdahl also mentioned 'deep sea' samples he had collected off the eastern coast of Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl 1939c). These samples were most likely marine samples collected in the waters around Ouia Valley, which was not visited by the Heyerdahls until October 1937 (Appendix II). A compilation of Heyerdahl's samples in storage at the University of Oslo lists no fewer than 24 jars/boxes (preserved samples), including as many as 160 different specimens, labelled Ouia (or various versions of the name) from the journey (Bakke 2017:123-134). Several of these are marine samples. Even though the list indicates that mislabelling occurred at the University, a few of the labels include dates (22 October to 13 November 1937) coinciding with Heyerdahl's time in Ouia Valley. This indicates that Heyerdahl, close to the end of his journey, still had the ambition of expanding his zoological collection, but no longer had any interest in documenting the collection.

There seem to have been multiple reasons for Heyerdahl's hiatus or abandonment of his zoological collecting efforts. In a letter sent to Kroepelien in October 1937, Heyerdahl wrote about the progress of his and Liv's journey. When mentioning the zoological collection, he wrote that it had come to an end as he had run out of preservation fluids. He had seemingly tried to order more from Tahiti, but the order had never arrived (Heyerdahl 1937m). Heyerdahl repeated the claim that the zoological project came to a standstill due to lack of proper equipment in a letter to Wollebæk after his return to Norway. He mentioned that much more material was still to be found in the jungles of Fatu Hiva, but he had not been able to retrieve it since he lacked the necessary equipment (Heyerdahl 1939c). However, when interviewed by Bell, Heyerdahl presented another reason for the termination of his zoological collecting. He stated that the fauna of the Marquesas group had failed to live up to his expectations, and that the many archaeological sites and objects he had encountered on Fatu Hiva had gradually occupied more and more of his and Liv's time (Bell n.d., r4/ s1-2/p. 1-37). Incidentally, his resumed zoological collecting in Ouia corresponds to him having to cease his ethnographic/archaeological collections (5.4.1)

Location	no. record in F-jo.	No. labelled jar/box UiO	No. specimen in jar/box UiO	Mollusca	Myriapod	Crustacea	Insect	Arachnida	Pisces	Reptile
'Willy Grelet's place' (Omoa Village)	9	4	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
Omoa beach	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Omoa village	2	2	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
Omoa Valley	3	7	13	2	-	-	-	2	9	-
'Our places' (Omoa Valley)	99	48	126	-	-	1	114	-	-	11
Anaoti	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tahaoa	17	6	27	4	-	10	-	-	13	-
'Mountain plateau 1'	10	7	170	-	103	-	67	-	-	-
Ouia Valley	-	23	116*	5	3	4	22*	4	68	-
'Ouia cabin'	-	1	43	-	-	-	43	-	-	-
Fatu Hiva	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marquesas Exped.	-	2	16	-	-	-	14	-	2	-
Mountain plateau 3	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Fatuhiva: plateau	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

*Table 1. Columns from left to right: 1. Location specified in the field-journal (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937) or on jar/box labels in UiO collection (see Bakke 2017:123-134). 2. Number of entries in the field-journal. 3. Number of labelled jars or boxes from the Marquesas journey in storage at UiO (information compiled from Bakke 2017:123-134). 4. Number of specimens in jars and boxes in storage at UiO (information compiled from Bakke 2017:123-134). 5-11. Type of animal and number of specimens in storage at UiO (information compiled from Bakke 2017:123-134). Note that the field-journal does not include taxonomic class for samples. \*Includes an additional unknown number of specimens. In addition to the items listed above, one jar with 'Pacific rats' is listed by Bakke but according to him not found in storage in UiO (see Bakke 2017:61).*

## *5.2 Thor Heyerdahl's Ethnographic/Archaeological Collection from the Marquesas Islands*

That archaeology was not part of Heyerdahl's original plans for the journey was clear at the very start, with his and Liv's choice to build their camp directly upon an archaeological site (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). The decision would nonetheless come to be of importance for Heyerdahl in developing an interest in archaeology. While clearing land to make way for their cabin, he and Liv started to find adzes and possibly also other objects. They seem to have immediately found the artefacts fascinating, something that did not go unnoticed by the Fata Hivans, who started to bring them more artefacts and talk about sites in the jungle (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 3-6; Heyerdahl 1937a; 1937g). Heyerdahl said that immediately upon finding the artefacts, he felt a connection to the people who had once lived on the island (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 3-4), a particularly suggestive comment in relation to his difficulties interacting with the contemporary population.

The collection of archaeological and ethnographic objects Heyerdahl assembled during the journey has received hardly any attention in previous works. The only existing discussion of the collection (beyond Heyerdahl's own writing) has been in regard to Kvam's discovery that Heyerdahl gifted a stolen cranium to the infamous German race theorist Günther (6.3; Kvam 2005:193-199). However, no previous work has addressed the contents of the collection, given a more detailed review of how Heyerdahl went about assembling it, or argued for its importance, in combination with the archaeological sites Heyerdahl visited in the Marquesas Islands, for the development of his theory.





*Illustration 18: Examples of artefacts in the Brooklyn collection. Top left: Elaborate sinker, 'from secret hiding place on paepae', Taaoa Valley, Hiva Oa, Melander 2019a:no. 125. Bottom left: 'Kneeling' stone statuette, 'found on a paepae' in Omoa Valley, Fatu Hiva, Melander 2019a:no. 130. Top right: Headdress with glass beads and porpoise teeth, from the Kaimuko family purchase, Atuona Valley, Hiva Oa, Melander 2019a:no. 204. Bottom right: Ornaments made out of whale teeth, Atuona Valley, Hiva Oa, Melander 2019a:no. 176. Photographs by Victor Melander & Meghan Bill. ©*

### 5.2.1 The Contents of the Collection

The ethnographic and archaeological collection Heyerdahl brought back from the Marquesas journey includes roughly 220 individual objects. With the exception of one wooden lid claimed to be from the island of Ua Huka, all objects were collected on Fatu Hiva or Hiva Oa. The collection was eventually sold to the Brooklyn Museum in New York City in the spring of 1942 (7.3.1), where the majority of the objects still are today.

For the sake of an easier overview, the roughly 220 objects have been divided into eight different categories. The majority of the objects (96 items) are adzes. The adzes in the

collection are predominately of the triangular cross-section *Koma* type, generally associated with the later part of the Marquesan material culture sequence (Melander 2019a; see also Kellum-Ottino 1971:89; Kellum-Ottino & Sinoto 1966, BPM; Linton 1923:320-330; Ottino 1985; Rolett 1998:182-214; Suggs 1961a:105-112). The collection also includes several other varieties of adzes, of which a few are similar to finds described by Sinoto from chronologically early deposits (Sinoto 1979:121-122). One adze from Hiva Oa is made out of a particularly eye-catching red stone source and is said to have belonged to a local chief (Melander 2019a:no. 88).

Other stone objects in the collection include seven perforated discs used as drill-weights (Melander 2019a:nos. 106-112; see also Linton 1923:332-333; von den Steinen 1928a:42 & Fig. 31b); nine pounders or parts of pounders, both so-called Tiki-headed pounders and pounders of possibly earlier types (Melander 2019a:nos. 97-105; see also Coote 2016; Linton 1923:337-343; Suggs 1961a:99-102); 14 sinkers and fish lures (Melander 2019a:nos. 113-126; see also Linton 1923:333-334; Rolett 1998:177-179; Suggs 1961a:89-94); and five small statuettes (Melander 2019a: nos. 130-134; see also Linton 1923:344-346).

The collection also includes 15 miscellaneous artefacts of various materials, including three stone pipes (Melander 2019a:nos. 127-129); three shell scrapers (Melander 2019a:nos. 134-136); one wooden lid, richly carved with Tiki patterns (Melander 2019a:no. 216); and three registered inclusions of human remains (Melander 2019a:nos. 210-212).

Another 15 pieces have been defined as clothing and headdresses, including a full 'dancer's costume' made out of human hair (Melander 2019a:nos. 205-208); a shell-trumpet (Melander 2019a:no. 209); several *pavahina* or 'old man's beards' (Melander 2019a:nos. 197-202); and two elaborate headdresses (Melander 2019a:nos. 203-204).

The remaining objects (59 items) have been classified as ornaments and include various ear plugs and other ornamental objects made out of bone, porpoise teeth, and shell (Melander 2019a:nos. 138-194; see also Heyerdahl 1941b:124-126).

Almost all objects can be located within the chronologically later periods of the Marquesan material culture sequence, roughly dated as post AD 1650 (Allen 2004; McAlister & Allen 2017; Conte & Molle 2014; Molle & Conte 2011; see also Sinoto 1966; 1979; Suggs, 1961a). A few objects, for instance the stone pipes (probably also the human remains and the dancer's costume), can be dated to the later 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other objects in the collection, for instance a human head trophy, are known to have been manufactured for sale during

historic times (Boës & Sears 1996; Valentin & Rolland 2011). One Tiki-headed pounder and two large pieces of white *Tapa* were still in use at the time Heyerdahl purchased them in Omoa village (Melander 2019a:nos. 97 & 196).

	Adze	Pounder	Perforated Disc	Sinker	Statue	Ornament	Clothing & Headdresses	Miscellaneous
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Fatu Hiva</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Omoa</i>	85	4	1	4	3	None	2	None
<i>Hanavave</i>	2	3	2	2	None	None	None	1
<i>Ouia</i>	2	None	4	3	None	None	None	1
<b>Hiva Oa</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>Hanaiapa</i>	5	1	None	None	1	None	None	3
<i>Taaoa</i>	2	None	None	3	None	None	None	None
<i>Atuona</i>	None	1	None	1	None	57	10	1
<i>Hanatekua</i>	None	None	None	None	1	None	None	2
<i>Puamau</i>	None	None	None	None	None	None	3	2
<i>Taahuku</i>	None	None	None	None	None	1	None	None
<b>Ua Huka</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>1</b>
Unknown	None	None	None	1	None	1	None	3

Table 2. Content of Heyerdahl's archaeological/ethnographical collection from the Marquesas Islands and provenance distribution of objects. See further Melander 2019a.

### 5.2.2 Collecting Practices

The different categories of objects in the collection were acquired by different means. There is also a striking difference between Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa in relation to the types of objects and how they were collected. On Fatu Hiva objects were generally surface collected.

Heyerdahl mentioned, for instance, that he had found 23 adzes on and around their camp-site in Omoa Valley (Heyerdahl 1937a). He also purchased objects on Fatu Hiva, as is indicated by the two pieces of *Tapa* and the Tiki-headed pounder mentioned above. Further purchases on Fatu Hiva can be demonstrated through correspondence material, where Heyerdahl

mentioned that he had bought seven items from villagers in Hanavave Valley during an excursion (Heyerdahl 1937i). Two adzes and a few other stone objects listed as coming from Ouia Valley (Melander 2019a:nos. 25, 26, 108-110, 112, 114, 115, 121 & 219) were presumably surface collected or gifted/exchanged by Tei Tetua or Tahina Momo, who were the valley's only inhabitants at the time of Heyerdahl's visit. As mentioned above, Heyerdahl also received objects from the inhabitants of Omoa Valley. The material he collected on Fatu Hiva therefore predominately consists of stone objects that were either surface collected, purchased or possibly exchanged for other goods.

	<b>Fatu Hiva</b>	Omoa	Hanavave	Ouia	<b>Hiva Oa</b>	Hanaiapa	Taaoa	Atuona	Hana-tekua	Puamau	Taahu ku
Excavated	<b>1</b>	1	None	None	<b>5</b>	1	1	3	None	None	None
Excavated / 'found on papepae'	<b>3</b>	3	None	None	<b>4</b>	None	2	2	None	None	None
Exchange/surface	<b>101</b>	91	None	10	<b>2</b>	1	None	None		1	None
Purchase	<b>13</b>	3	10		<b>84</b>	8	2	66	3	4	1

*Table 3. Methods of acquisition and geographical distribution. Illustrating the various means by which Heyerdahl assembled his collection and the different approaches taken on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa.*

This can be contrasted to the large number of bone, hair, and shell artefacts in the collection, which almost exclusively come from Hiva Oa. With a few possible exceptions, all of this material was most likely purchased in Atuona village, the main settlement on Hiva Oa. The majority of the purchases would have been made between July and September 1937, when Heyerdahl and Liv were stationed in Atuona. In a letter to Kroepelien, Heyerdahl wrote about collecting artefacts in Atuona:

During our long interlude on Hiva Oa, we were able to purchase several really interesting artefacts. Among many other things, we were able to acquire a complete king's costume made out of human hair, and a king's crown, skilfully carved out of a large turtle shell, and ornamented with depictions of gods. We also got hold of several small ear plugs made from human bone, and some idols and other things. But you have to be very careful with your purchases down here. The natives produce forgeries which they bury in the ground for several months to make them look old, and then they pass them off as ancient and sell them for absurd prices. It does not surprise us any more when they ask for as much as 10,000 or even 15,000 francs for artefacts (Heyerdahl 1937m, TR51).



The objects described by Heyerdahl match well with ear ornaments and Tiki figurines in the collection, and it is likely that most other bone and shell artefacts were brought into the collection at the same time.



Illustration 19: Left: Illustration in Heyerdahl's and Liv's scrapbook of the purchase of artefacts from the Kaimuko family in Atuona village, Hiva Oa, August 1937. In the centre of the page is the receipt for the purchase signed by E. Kaimuko, surrounding it is a series of drawings by Heyerdahl, humorously illustrating how the artefacts came to be. Right: Heyerdahl modeling the artefacts he had purchased, as well as a human skull in a braided net (Melander 2019a:no 211), which was gifted to the American Museum of Natural History following its acquisition by the Brooklyn Museum. Photograph taken by an unknown photographer after the expedition, presumably in 1938. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©

The best documented purchase is that of the two headdresses and the human hair costume in the collection. A written receipt in Heyerdahl's and Liv's scrapbook states that on 16 August 1937 Heyerdahl purchased the objects from a Mr. Kaimoko or Kaimuko in Atuona village. The objects were the family's own possessions and had apparently been considered *tapu* and kept in a sack (Melander 2019a:nos. 205-208):

I, Mr. Kaimoko, certify that I sold to Mr. Thor 2 *Kakiu* crowns (one *Pane Kea* and one crown of teeth), 3 *Pavahina*, 1 *Potona*, 2 *Poeima*, 1 *Poekooi*, all for the sum of 2000 Francs (two

thousand Francs). I certify that all of these objects are family possessions and have always been in our house. None of them were found on a *Paepae*. Received 2000 Francs, Atuona, Hivaoa, 16 August 1937. [signed] E. Kaimuko (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d., TR52).

The receipt indicates that the transaction also featured the shell trumpet and three *pavahina* in addition to the two headdresses and the different parts of the costume. The sum of 2,000 francs (or 400 NOK) paid for the objects was identical to 'the small fortune' Heyerdahl paid to acquire Gauguin's rifle from Grelet (4.3.1).

### 5.2.3 Heyerdahl's Belief in the Collection's Economic Value

Heyerdahl's willingness to spend large amounts on artefacts suggests that he thought the money spent would be a good investment; he seems to have believed that the material had a high financial value.

The Marquesan collection was eventually sold to the Brooklyn Museum for 1,000 USD in 1942 (7.3.1). To compare financial values from one period to the next is of course difficult, but it can be estimated that the 2,000 francs Heyerdahl paid Mr. Kaimoku would have amounted to roughly 10% of the sale price for the collection<sup>1</sup>. With additional purchases, travel expenses (see Appendix II), living costs, shipping costs, customs fees – both from the Marquesas to Norway in 1937-1938 and from Norway to Canada and the US in 1939-1942 – it is unlikely that Heyerdahl made any financial profit from the collection at all; it was not a good business deal. However, Heyerdahl himself seems to have thought that the objects had a much higher financial value:

Now, I will first write a book about Fatu Hiva, after that I am going to sell my collection of idols and other artefacts, they are worth at least 20,000 Kroner, and there are already several museums interested in purchasing the collection; and in addition, there will be lecture tours and other small things. I do not doubt for a second that exploration voyages of this kind could become a very profitable business (Den Stundesløse 1938b, TR53).

As this quotation indicates, Heyerdahl was under the impression that the collection was very valuable – based on the calculations above, as much as five times what he eventually got for it

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<sup>1</sup> For this comparison the website and database <http://www.historicalstatistics.org/Currencyconverter.html> has been used. The site uses comparative values of labour and gold prices to make estimates. The reliability of the database was tested through estimates of the exchange rate between Francs and Norwegian Kroner in 1937, as a rough exchange rate of 1 Kroner to 5 Francs can be documented from Heyerdahl's material. A similar result was suggested by the database.

from the Brooklyn Museum. His exaggerated idea of the collection's value indicates that he was unaware of the existence of similar material in museum collections around the world.

Marquesan *objets d'art* have an intriguing and eye-catching aesthetic, which means that there has been a high demand for Marquesan artefacts among collectors, ethnographic museums, and art museums, starting already with the earliest European exploration voyages in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Collections of Marquesan artefacts can be found in museums from Bergen to Auckland. In fact, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Marquesas Islands were so frequently visited by collectors that it had long been claimed they had been drained of quality artefacts (e.g. Cumming Dewar 1892:175). The bone artefacts in the collection (ear plugs with Tiki motifs and smaller figurines/beads, so-called *Tiki ivi'po*), which Heyerdahl purchased in Atuona village, are some of the most commonly represented artefacts in ethnographic collections around the world, along with warrior clubs (*U'u*) and Tiki-headed pounders (Dodge 1939; Gunn 2014:125-151; Hooper 2006:150-163; Kjellgren & Ivory 2005, McKinney 2012; von den Steinen 1925, 1928a-b). The spectacular value of the artefacts described by Heyerdahl in letters and interviews might have appeared true to him, but it cannot be said to be true from the state of museum collections worldwide in the 1930s.

#### *5.2.4 Heyerdahl's Thoughts on the Scientific Value of the Collection*

Heyerdahl's exaggerated belief in the collection's economic value is also echoed by his belief in its scientific value. In his travelogue Heyerdahl wrote that the collection they had assembled held the key to understanding the origin of the islands' first settlers and it consisted of material made before European contact which could not be found any more (Heyerdahl 1938a:175). His belief in the objects' value is also attested by his statement that he kept the material in a sack hanging from the roof of their cabin (either in Omoa or Ouia) to prevent it from being eaten by insects (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 5-6).

Liv also shared this idea. In letters to her parents she wrote about the high scientific value of the objects they had been able to obtain. She also wrote that they had found sites and objects that even the local residents were unaware of (Den stundesløse 1938a; Torp-Heyerdahl 1937e see also Heyerdahl 1937i).

This exaggerated belief in the collection's scientific and economic value suggests that Heyerdahl was not at all familiar with the archaeology and material culture of the Marquesas

Islands. If, as he claimed in the 1970s, he had been to study artefacts at the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin (Heyerdahl 1974a:67), he would have been aware that almost all of the objects they collected were well represented in museum collections around the world, and had been richly described and depicted in works by Baessler (1895, 1900), von den Steinen (1925, 1928a-b), Handy (1923), Linton (1923, 1925) and others. Heyerdahl's perception of the collection and his and Liv's belief in its value strongly suggest that they were more or less completely unaware of existing studies on Marquesan ethnography and archaeology, and that the scope and appealing aesthetics of the Marquesan material culture came as a surprise to them.

### *5.2.5 Excavating and Stealing*

Around 10 objects in the collection seem to have been acquired from archaeological sites by subsurface prospection. They were recovered by removing stones, turf, roots or other vegetation, a process referred to by Heyerdahl as 'excavating' (e.g. Heyerdahl 1941a:18). Treasure hunting is perhaps a more suitable term, as the term excavation would require some documentation to be considered accurate. By 1962 Heyerdahl's collecting and 'excavating' in the Marquesas group had developed into a full-blown survey project:

The undersigned carried on investigations in the Marquesas group from February 1937 to July 1938. [...] archaeological surveys were conducted in the valleys of Omoa, Hanavave and Ouia in the island of Fatuhiva, as well as at the Oipona site in Puamau Valley on Hivaoa. (Heyerdahl 1962b).

As has been noted in previous chapters, Heyerdahl was no stranger to improving stories, rearranging chronologies and exaggerating details. As the quotation above illustrates, by 1962 his journey to the Marquesas had developed into an archaeological project. It also seems to have been prolonged by an additional 7 or 8 months, doubling the time he had actually spent in the Marquesas. The change of the journey's dates to February 1937 to July 1938 rather than just 1937 can also be seen on other occasions in the period (e.g. Heyerdahl 1962a) and should not be considered an incidental typing error.

How Heyerdahl went about his excavations is not known as the process was not documented. From the information available, it can be concluded that the excavations were predominately carried out on Hiva Oa (7 out of 10 objects), above all in the Taaoa Valley,



which is located directly by Atuona village. From a letter sent to his mother, some of the human remains Heyerdahl collected can be sourced to a burial cave outside the village and were collected at the very end of the journey (Heyerdahl 1938e). It is thus likely that the majority of these excavation projects were carried out in November/December of 1937, when he and Liv were based on Hiva Oa for the second time, awaiting the schooner to Tahiti (Appendix II).

With the exception of some human remains, the artefacts collected through excavation were all stone artefacts: generally statuettes, but also a few adzes, and one sinker with an attached rope of coconut fibre. The last object, the sinker, was apparently 'found on a paepae' (Melander 2019a:no. 119). As such sinkers were still used in the 1920s, and by tradition left on so-called fisherman's shrines while not in use (Handy 1923:164-178, Linton 1923:333-334; von den Steinen 1928a:89-93; Suggs 1961a:89-90), it is likely that Heyerdahl removed an object in use without permission; that is to say, he stole it.

The point about stealing is in fact important for the material at large. As noted above (5.2.2), Heyerdahl had to have a receipt from Mr. Kaimoku proving that the artefacts had been acquired through purchase and were the family's private possessions and not objects from an archaeological site; removing artefacts without permission was already against the law at that time. Mr. Kaimoku's reassurance that the objects were the family's possessions and not retrieved from a *paepae* also highlights that this was presumably a common problem in the Marquesas, and that the law also extended to local residents. If you wished to collect archaeological or ethnographic artefacts, you needed to have permission from the local authorities, and Heyerdahl had no such authorisation.

While in Tahiti the first time, Heyerdahl had applied for an exception from the decree issued in 1936 that limited foreign visitors to the Marquesas group, and had been granted such an exception by the French governor's office in Papeete. However, the authorisation does not stipulate any permission to collect material from archaeological sites:

In a letter received on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February you have asked for permission for you and your wife to enter into and stay on the island of Etu-Hiva [sic.] (The Marquesas archipelago) for one year to conduct zoological research. I am glad to announce that in accordance with paragraph 3 of the decree of 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1936, which limits access for foreign visitors to the Marquesas Islands, I have granted you and your wife permission to stay one year on Fatu-Hiva. I have taken the liberty of informing the head administrator of the Marquesas Islands of your arrival. Please accept, dear sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.,TR54).

Heyerdahl and Liv's correspondence discloses that they were well aware of the legislation against removing archaeological objects but did not care for it. They seem to have argued that since the only punishment was deportation from French Polynesia, they really had nothing to lose from their unlawful behaviour (Heyerdahl 1937l; Torp-Heyerdahl 1937e). A letter sent by Heyerdahl in October 1937 indicates that they had stopped their collecting efforts when they moved over to Ouia Valley, as they were being watched by the local inhabitants by that time (Heyerdahl 1937n) – presumably referring to Tei. The Heyerdahls were consciously breaking local laws to get their hands on archaeological, osteological and historic ethnographic material. Their justification of the theft rested on a salvage ethnographic argument, in which they saw themselves as protectors of material of high scientific value, which Marquesan superstition and French colonial law failed to protect. Both in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) and in correspondence, Heyerdahl repeatedly told of a particular incident when an unnamed inhabitant of either Fatu Hiva or Hiva Oa threw objects into the ocean to avoid having them stolen by Heyerdahl (Heyerdahl 1938a:75; Schreiner 1937; Heyerdahl 1937l; see also Melander 2017). Such a display of protectiveness over the material evidently had no effect on Heyerdahl at all. As was discussed in chapter 4, Heyerdahl's behaviour during the Marquesas journey suggests that he believed himself to be above the law and did what he wanted, disregarding local legislation and customs, as well as the consequences his actions could have for others. This can be further illustrated by Heyerdahl's approach to collecting human remains.

### *5.3 Collecting Human Remains in the Marquesas Islands*

Naturally, Heyerdahl's collecting of human remains without permission has sparked stronger controversy than his collecting of stone adzes. There are only vague indications in the archival material to suggest that Heyerdahl had any plans to collect human remains during the journey. Just as with archaeological material in general, he and Liv seem to have been greatly surprised by the quantities of human remains in the Marquesas group.

There are two distinguishable collecting acts known from Heyerdahl's writing and the archival material, one on Fatu Hiva and one on Hiva Oa.

The collecting act on Fatu Hiva happened at a platform site in the mountain range between

Omoa Valley and Tahaoa beach. The site was probably detected by Heyerdahl and Liv on one of their early excursions in April 1937 (Appendix II), while the actual collecting event happened on a separate occasion. In *Searching for Paradise*, Heyerdahl stated that the *paepae* on which the cranial material was kept had carved sculptures in its base and was covered with human skulls. He added that he was investigating the teeth of some of the skulls when he was informed by their local guide that they were not allowed to take the skulls. Heyerdahl continued:

In front of us was material of great scientific value. A specialist could make great discoveries from such a large collection of crania. I was carrying a copra sack on my back, but the brown one's watchful eye made it impossible to take as much as a single bone fragment. He was watching my every move. But we had a bright idea and started scheming in Norwegian. A man is a human being on Fatu Hiva, but a woman is only a woman. She exists only for food and sex; otherwise she is of no importance [...] In the meanwhile Liv was left alone in the temple ruin. When I returned, closely followed by my watchman, the copra sack looked as if it was completely filled with turnips. Our jailer did not suspect a thing, and merrily he followed us back down the valley (Heyerdahl 1938a:76-77, TR56).

The skulls Heyerdahl collected on Fatu Hiva had to be left behind as Heyerdahl could not smuggle them off the island (Melander 2017:84; Heyerdahl 1939d). On the other hand, the Heyerdahls did manage to get a few pieces collected from a burial cave on Hiva Oa back to Europe. The objects are described in a letter Heyerdahl sent to his mother:

In Atuona on Hiva Oa, we rented a native house from the princess; ate at the Chinese restaurant and had many new adventures. The most amazing thing was that we came into possession of an old skull, which we found in a cave; the fragmented skull has had a head-wound cured by attachment of a coconut shell! it proves that the stories old Teitetua told us about ancient medicine men are true. We have also managed to smuggle out two regular crania and an ancient skull braided into a net of coconut threads that the medicine man used to wear hanging from his waist (Heyerdahl 1938e, TR55).

The objects described can be identified as the previously discussed human skull with perforations (4.2.1), and a human skull trophy in a braided net, which was gifted by the Brooklyn Museum to the American Museum of Natural History in the late 1950s (Melander 2019a:no. 211); Heyerdahl can be seen posing with the skull in photographs from the period (Ill. 19).

The two 'regular skulls' are mentioned in correspondence material from the period. In letters from February 1938 both Heyerdahl and Liv gave the impression that they planned to present

one of the skulls as a gift to the German race theorist Günther (Heyerdahl 1938e; Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b). Liv's role in the contact with Günther was later downplayed by Heyerdahl, who in 1974 claimed that he had been asked by Günther for human skulls from Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl 1974b:118-119). Later criticism has used this statement to highlight the Kon-Tiki theory's connection to and inspiration from Günther (6.3). On the contrary, the contemporary correspondence actually suggests that it was Liv who had been approached by Günther through a family connection (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937f). This illustrates a repeated pattern in Heyerdahl's writing, where he emphasised himself over time as the journey's active agent (e.g. Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 2; Heyerdahl 1974b:118-124), and Liv was gradually turned into a more peripheral figure. In contemporary sources and her own writing, Liv appears as an active agent in the human remains collection, as well as in other parts of the journey (e.g. Torp-Heyerdahl 1937e, 1938a).

It has not been possible to verify whether the Heyerdahls really gave the skull to Günther in February 1938, and the skull's whereabouts today are unknown. It is reasonable to assume that they did so, since the fragmented skull (the 'trepanation piece'), the head-trophy and one 'regular' skull are mentioned in a letter Heyerdahl wrote in March 1939 to Kristian Schreiner at Oslo University's Anatomical Department. In the letter Heyerdahl disclosed that he had lent the human remains to Schreiner, and now wanted everything returned, except the 'regular skull' which Schreiner was allowed to keep (Heyerdahl 1939d).

Correspondence material also suggests that Heyerdahl had actually been approached by Schreiner prior to the journey about skull collecting. Schreiner seems to have taken for granted that Heyerdahl would first secure permission from local authorities before he started his collecting efforts. On the other hand, some of the correspondence suggests that Heyerdahl received equipment for collecting and packing human remains which Schreiner had sent by schooner to Fatu Hiva. Schreiner also did what he could back in Norway to secure permission for Heyerdahl's collecting acts (Heyerdahl 1939d; Schreiner 1937; Torp-Heyerdahl 1937d).

That the Heyerdahls consciously stole the human remains from burial grounds is thoroughly documented in the archival material; they were aware not just of the Marquesans' objections to their collecting, but also of the illegal nature of their behaviour. Heyerdahl wrote:

Any attempt at saving the scientifically valuable material is harshly penalised by the French authorities. We have seen with our own eyes how the natives burnt and destroyed a large collection of skulls, and they did this for the sole purpose of preventing us from stealing the crania (Heyerdahl 1939d, TR57).

The particular practice of collecting human remains without permission from local authorities and against the will of local inhabitants was not confined to Heyerdahl. In fact, it can probably be viewed as a standard inclusion in more or less every anthropological or ethnographic expedition in the period (Anderson, W. 2012; May 2010; Melander 2017; Thomas 2014; Thomas & Neale (eds.) 2011). Just as can be seen in many other contemporary acts of collecting human remains during this period, Heyerdahl used the story in his travelogue as a way to express his own bravery and cunning, his ability to outsmart the Other (Melander 2017:82-83; see also Hallgren 2003, 2010a-b; Mjöberg 2006:65-79).

As the quotation from his letter to Schreiner above illustrates, the justification of the act rested on salvage ethnographic ideas. Heyerdahl argued that the material was of particular importance for science, and as a result no effort should be spared in attempting to preserve it. Heyerdahl's belief in his own intellectual and moral superiority made him think that his removal of the material against the wishes of the Fatu Hivans was actually done with their best interests in mind; he self-righteously believed that he was preserving the material, not stealing it (Melander 2017:83).

### *5.3.1 Kristian Schreiner and Oslo University's Pacific Interests*

This salvage ethnographical justification that the material needed to be saved for scientific purposes can also be seen in Schreiner's attempts to secure permission for Heyerdahl's collection. In correspondence with the Dean of the University, Schreiner argued that the Polynesians and their origins were one of the last true riddles for anthropology. He mentioned his student Konrad Wagner's recent work on the topic and stated that a cranial collection from an island like Fatu Hiva could be of the utmost importance for the University and science in general (Schreiner 1937).

Schreiner (1874-1957), at the time head of the Anatomical Department, was a household name and a leading scholar in Norwegian physical anthropology circles. Even though his work mostly concerned Norwegian populations, he was also responsible for the so-called 'Schreiner collection', Norway's largest collection of crania (Brøgger 2009; Holck 1990; Kyllingstad 2014:133-158).

Fatu Hiva might seem a bit out of place for his research interests, but in fact this tendency

can be seen in Scandinavian physical anthropological and race studies in the period in general. The Swedish Race Hygiene Institute, for instance, had already taken an interest in Pacific material in the 1920s, above all to study mixed race populations. In the mid-1920s the Institute's associate, the dentist Gustaf Bergfors, was sent to the USA and Polynesia to study and collect Polynesian cranial and dental material (Broberg 1995:32; Davidsson (ed.) 1968:30; Melander 2016). At the University of Oslo, one of Schreiner's students Konrad Adolf Wagner (1900-1952), had just published the results of his study *The Craniology of the Oceanic Races* (Wagner 1937). Wagner's study actually featured cranial material from the Marquesas Islands. The material came from the collections of the Royal College of Surgeons in London and had probably been collected by Christian in the late 1890s (Christian 1910; Wagner 1937:8). Wagner's study also included material from Oslo University's collections, which had been collected on previous expeditions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to Oceania by zoologist Knut Dahl (1871-1951), who visited Australia (Dahl 1926; Wagner 1937:8); and cranial material collected from a cave in the Whangarei area of New Zealand's North Island by Olsen in the 1920s (Wagner 1937:7-8; see also Olsen 1930, 1931b). Through Olsen's expeditions the University had come into possession of zoological and osteological material which they tried to have analysed (6.1). It is likely that the material Olsen had collected was the reason for Schreiner and Bonnevie's interest in Heyerdahl's journey, as they would have seen the possibility to secure comparative material for the University. Heyerdahl's human remains collecting on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa should therefore be viewed in the light of the University's interest rather than solely his own personal interest or the Kon-Tiki theory. This further illustrates that Heyerdahl's collecting activities in the Marquesas had other motivations than the Kon-Tiki theory.

## 5.4 Archaeological Sites

At least a handful of archaeological sites on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa can be identified from information in Heyerdahl's writings and in the archival material. Even so, Heyerdahl's material actually mentions surprisingly few sites. In Omoa Valley, on Fatu Hiva, Heyerdahl only mentions three sites: the already discussed *paepae* site upon which he and Liv positioned their camp; the *me'ae* site on the mountain side bordering Tahaoa, from where they took cranial material; and a petroglyph site in the jungle (5.4.1).

In *Searching for Paradise* and in a newspaper article, Heyerdahl gave a lengthier description of two different sites visited during an excursion to the neighbouring Hanavave Valley (5.4.2).

On Hiva Oa, the Ipona *me'ae* site stands out in Heyerdahl's writing, both around the time of the journey and during later phases of his life. In conjunction with that site, Heyerdahl also seems to have visited a fortress in the mountains (5.5.2).

Heyerdahl also mentioned a brief visit to archaeological sites in the Hanaiapa Valley on the northern side of Hiva Oa (Heyerdahl 1938a:157-159). From some of the correspondence and documentation concerning the Brooklyn Museum collection, it can be shown that Heyerdahl also visited several other sites in and around Atuona village and the adjoining Taaoa Valley on Hiva Oa's southern side. Unfortunately, not very much information exists about these sites and Heyerdahl's thoughts on them. He would have visited them after he and Liv decided to leave Fatu Hiva, and it is here that he seems to have carried out most of his so-called excavations (5.2.5).

Overall the chronology in which the sites were visited illustrates an interesting pattern. Heyerdahl's zoological collecting efforts were halted around mid-May 1937 (5.1). Around this time his and Liv's excursions changed focus, from looking for sites of zoological interest to sites of archaeological interest. On 17 May Heyerdahl and Liv visited a petroglyph site in Omoa Valley. In early June they visited sites in Hanavave Valley. During their first interlude on Hiva Oa (July-September 1937), their sole interests seem to have been archaeological sites and ethnographic collecting. When they returned to Fatu Hiva (late September 1937) and settled in the Ouia Valley, they were not allowed to continue their ethnographical collection and instead resumed the zoological collection (5.1). Further visits and excavations of archaeological sites were then carried out when they returned to Hiva Oa for the second time in November/December 1937. Heyerdahl thus seems to have focused more and more of his attention towards archaeology and ethnography as the journey proceeded. The sites mentioned and Heyerdahl's impressions of them evidently played a crucial part in this transformation.

#### *5.4.1 A Petroglyph Site in Omoa Valley*

The petroglyph site in Omoa Valley which Heyerdahl and Liv visited on 17 May 1937 is marked on Heyerdahl's 1938 map of Fatu Hiva. It appears to have been located up the valley

from the beach, close to the mountainside on the southern side of a river or creek running through Omoa Valley (see map in Heyerdahl 1938a:177). According to Heyerdahl, he learned about the site's existence one day when 'a pack of browns' (TR60) came up to his camp and told him about a giant stone fish in the jungle (Heyerdahl 1937a). Heyerdahl further mentioned that the petroglyphs were covered by vegetation, and that he had to order his guides to clear the bush and remove moss from the rocks. He also stated that rocks with grinding marks, possibly used to sharpen stone adzes, could be seen at the site. Heyerdahl further said that not more than 20 m from the petroglyph site was a *paepae* surrounded by a wall in which large white stones with faded carvings could be seen (Heyerdahl 1937a, 1938a:67-70). In the scrapbook he wrote that the site was discovered on 17 May. He also made drawings of several of the petroglyphs they had encountered. The drawings show anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and geometrical figures and patterns (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; see also Heyerdahl 1941b:131). All of the figures depicted by Heyerdahl can be identified in classification schemes from later scientific work (see Millerstrom 1997).

Marquesan petroglyphs have predominately been studied in later years, above all by Sidsel Millerstrom (1988, 1989, 1990, 1997), but their existence and distribution throughout the island group was well-known and documented already in early research (e.g. Linton 1925:96-99; Metraux 1937). Heyerdahl's claim that petroglyphs were unknown in the area (Heyerdahl 1938a:70) is therefore yet another indication of his limited knowledge of Marquesan archaeology in the period.

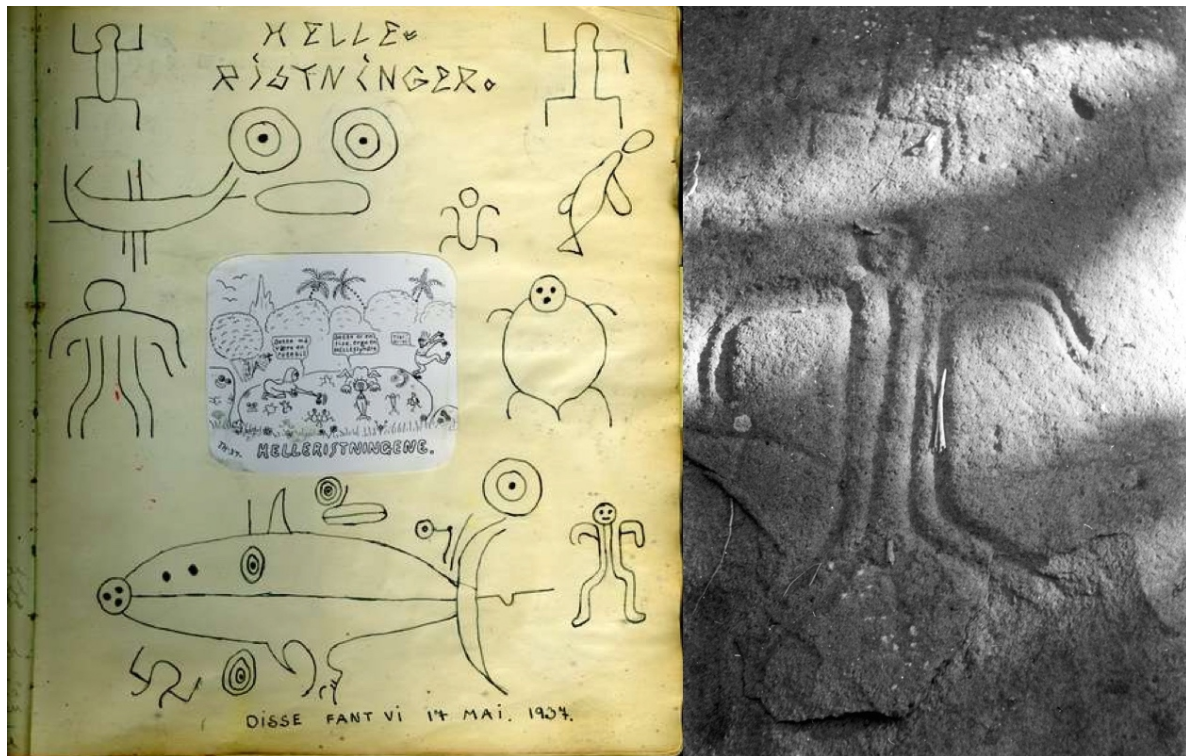
Both in his travelogue (1938a:69-70) and in a newspaper article published in *Tidens tegn* on 4 December 1937 (presumably written around May 1937), Heyerdahl stated that the petroglyphs had been made by a now extinct people that had occupied the islands before the Polynesians:

At night the moon shone over the jungle, but we were still awake. We were thinking about the silent stone figures, dancing over the rocks in the moonlight. We thought about the mysterious people that once had ruled an island kingdom, reaching as far south as Easter Island; a people of unknown origin. But we could feel that out there in the deserted jungles of Fatu Hiva, the island that science had forgotten, important clues were to be found (Heyerdahl 1937a, TR59).

The newspaper article in *Tidens tegn* is the first known publication in which Heyerdahl mentions a different non-Polynesian people inhabiting the Marquesas Islands. This suggests that it was coming into contact with sites like the petroglyph site in Omoa Valley that opened



the door to the question of Polynesian origins for him.



*Illustration 20: Left: Drawings of the petroglyphs encountered in Omoa Valley on the 17th May 1937 in Heyerdahl's and Liv's scrapbook. Right: Photograph of some of the encountered petroglyphs. Drawing by Thor Heyerdahl, 1937. Photograph by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

#### *5.4.2 'Sensational Discoveries' in Hanavave Valley*

That Heyerdahl was completely unaware of Polynesian archaeology and ethnography at the time (3.1) is further attested by his description of sites he visited in the Hanavave Valley. In a letter to his mother he spoke about the 'new sensational discoveries' he had made in the Hanavave Valley in early June 1937 (Heyerdahl 1937l).

In Hanavave, Heyerdahl visited a burial cave in the mountains called 'Den store sten' [The large rock]; a 'tabu-jungle' called Motonui; and a coastal cave site called Vai Po [Night's water], which was located in the smaller valley of Taiokai on Fatu Hiva's northern extremities. For the excursion to Hanavave (a neighbouring valley to Omoa), the sexton Tioti and a younger man, Fai, from Omoa village acted as local guides. (Heyerdahl 1937l, 1938a:93-106, 1938d; 1941b:125-135; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

In the 'tabu-jungle' Motonui, they encountered several *Paepae* sites:

When cutting through the vegetation we encountered a large overgrown stone wall. We were struck with excitement. Large dressed boulders had been stacked on top of each other to a man's height. Carefully I climbed on top of the wall; Liv and the sexton followed. We found ourselves standing on a large platform, built by skilled masons. The surrounding vegetation engulfed the platform in a dark and gloomy atmosphere. I was baffled how these primitive people had been able to transport and lift these massive boulders. All of a sudden the sexton screamed in fright; he had discovered something. On the platform there were two large blood-coloured slabs; they rested against each other like a roof-ridge. The slabs were almost completely covered by turf and roots. We carefully removed the vegetation. The painstakingly dressed slabs were carved with ancient figures; we could not tell if they were Gods or Demons; grotesque creations nonetheless. Some stood, as if they were pondering, with their hands under their chins; others had their arms crossed; and some seemed to have their arms raised to the skies. Some had large bristling ears, which made them look almost like animals. Between these demons was a double-headed figure, of high artistic quality. The two figures stood side by side on the same pedestal, identically made with their arms crossed (Heyerdahl 1938a:97, TR61).

What Heyerdahl described was a burial cist on the *paepae* with carved figures. The feature is depicted in the scrapbook. The drawing in the scrapbook (also featured in a newspaper article) reveals that the stone slabs measured roughly 2.1 x 0.6-0.7 x 0.2 m (Heyerdahl 1938d; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). The stone cist depicted by Heyerdahl has an apparent resemblance to the grave Tei Tetua had prepared for himself in Ouia (Ill. 11). However, this comparison seems to have been lost on Heyerdahl, who instead connected the site to a long-vanished 'primitive people' (Heyerdahl 1938d).

In the travelogue and in a newspaper article Heyerdahl described how he climbed down into the burial chamber, and when striking a match, caught a glimpse of the chamber's resident:

The carved demons on the burial chamber's roof had probably been made to keep evil spirits out of the tomb. In the South Seas the most vicious spirits of all are the white ones, so I decided to slowly crawl back out of the tomb and let the old one sleep in peace (Heyerdahl 1938d, TR62).

The paragraph strongly connects to themes and metaphors used by O'Brien, with the white man as the dark shadow (or spirit) of Polynesia (3.3.2).

From Motonui, they continued on to a site referred to as 'The Great Rock', where Heyerdahl, Liv, Fai and Tioti climbed a cliff wall to get into another burial chamber, which Heyerdahl described as:

Covered with ancient wooden vessels, filled with human skulls and cracked bones. Old tapa

rag were wrapped around skulls and bones. Tapa cloth was made in the old days by beating out the fibre of the mulberry tree. The mulberry tree is now extinct. There were also long pitch-black braided bundles of hair hanging from the cave's ceiling. In the corner, behind all of the wooden vessels that had been dug out from great logs by use of fire and stone tools, stood a nailed box. European clothing and buttons were wrapped around a solitary skeleton. We shuddered. What if it was a sailor who had once been marooned here among the hungry cannibals (Heyerdahl 1938a:100, TR63; see also Heyerdahl 1937l, 1938b-d).

Just as with the similarity between the tomb made by Tei Tetua and the one found on a large *paepae* in Motonui, it is again noticeable that Heyerdahl did not react to the obviously modern, possibly even contemporary, features of the burial cave. One would think that preserved hair, *tapa*, wooden objects, and European clothing would have made Heyerdahl at least consider the possibility that the material had a more recent date. He instead stuck with the expression 'ancient' (see TR61), which he also used throughout the travelogue when discussing archaeological sites or the artefacts of his collection.

The idea that sites and objects were very ancient and had been made by pre-Polynesian settlers was not supported by contemporary archaeological work (Linton 1925:3-4). Heyerdahl's unfamiliarity with the Marquesas Islands archaeological record and the scientific discourse about it was probably the reason for his exclamations describing sites and objects as sensational finds. Heyerdahl was most likely taken by surprise by the frequency and scale of sites he was shown by local residents in the jungles of Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa. His colourful description about the excursion to Hanavave is reminiscent of turn-of-the-century aristocratic explorers such as Percy Fawcett, Hiram Bingham, and Heinrich Schliemann (e.g. Bingham 1922, 2003; Fawcett 1953; Schliemann 2010a-d). In a letter to his parents, Heyerdahl described the sensation of finding the Motonui burial, and said that it made him feel like he was in Ancient Babylonia or Egypt (Heyerdahl 1937l). With the appealing aesthetics of Marquesan material culture and artwork, the islands' large archaeological sites and infamous reputation from travel writers (1.5.3), it is not hard to imagine that a young person with overly romanticised perceptions of the world, like Heyerdahl, would have been enthusiastic over what he had encountered in the jungle. The idea of being the first white man (as Heyerdahl would have said) to uncover hidden secrets in the jungle would of course have tickled his imagination even more. And if sites on Fatu Hiva had been spectacular, on Hiva Oa Heyerdahl would visit a site that would exceed everything he had experienced to that date.

## 5.5 *The Industrious Henry Lie, the Docile Polynesians and the Mighty Ipona Site*

The Ipona (sometimes Oipona or Ipona) *me'ae* site in the Puamau Valley of Hiva Oa is one of the better-known archaeological sites of the Marquesas group. The *me'ae* site is particularly well-known for several large stone statues (Chavallion & Olivier 2007:113-119; Linton 1925:159-163; Ottino 1996). That the site made a particularly strong impression on Heyerdahl when he visited it in either August or September 1937 is well documented. Heyerdahl devoted several pages and four drawings in his travelogue to the site (Heyerdahl 1938a:145-150). Interviewed by Bell, Heyerdahl stated that the most important influences on him during the Marquesas journey had been meeting Tei Tetua and visiting the Ipona site. He also added a third encounter to his list of key influences, his meeting with the Norwegian copra farmer Henry W. Lie (1889-?), who lived close by the Ipona site in Puamau Valley (Bell n.d. r4/s1/p. 10-13). According to Heyerdahl, these three encounters made him decide to devote himself to the question of Polynesian origins (Bell n.d. r4/s1/ p. 18). The importance of Ipona and Tei Tetua is already noticeable in Heyerdahl's writing in the 1930s. Lie, on the other hand, is a different story. He appears in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) but without any connection to the Kon-Tiki theory. Lie is not mentioned in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1948a), nor in *American Indians* (1952), and he is completely omitted from Jacoby's 1965 biography. In fact, the claim that Lie influenced the Kon-Tiki theory does not appear until Heyerdahl's 1974 *Back to Nature*, where he was suddenly described as an important influence (Heyerdahl 1974a:206-220). This suggest a possible parallel to the Kroepelien Library (3.1) and stresses the need to deconstruct the narrative of Lie's possible influence on Heyerdahl's theory.

### 5.5.1 *Henry on the Robinson Crusoe Island*

Lie was born in Trondheim in 1889. He went to sea at an early age and when he was around twenty years old he jumped ship on Nuku Hiva and ended up staying the rest of his life in the Marquesas Islands. After working for various trading companies, he eventually started a copra plantation in the Puamau Valley on Hiva Oa. The plantation, along with all of his possessions and his house, were swept away by a tsunami on 1 April 1946. Lie, who by 1946 was close to

60 years old, was seemingly not discouraged by the tsunami, and started a new plantation in Eiaone Valley on Hiva Oa. He was married twice, first to Noémie Layton from the Marquesan island of Ua Pou, and secondly to Tetua Patii from Tubuai (Heyerdahl 1937h, 1938a:144-145; 1974a:206-220; O'Reilly & Tessier 1962:345; Skolmen 2010:215-220; see also Hébert et al. 2001; Okal & Hébert 2007; Okal et al. 2002, 2003; Tanioka & Seno 2001).

In a few letters written by Lie to archaeologist Skjølsvold in the late 1960s, he signed the letters 'your friend Henry on the Robinson Crusoe Island' (Lie 1967a-b, 1968). Lie initiated the correspondence to tell Skjølsvold of a newly discovered cave site in Eiaone Valley on Hiva Oa. Archaeology and ethnography were apparently of great interest to Lie; he is said to have been a book collector, possessing a noteworthy library especially on Marquesas-related topics. Lie is also said to have held a large and very fine collection of Marquesan ethnographic material. However, both the library and the ethnographic collection were lost to the 1946 tsunami. Lie was employed as a local informant by both Handy and Linton during the *Bayard Dominick Expedition* in 1920, due to his knowledge of Marquesan archaeology and ethnography. He was also described as being well versed in several Marquesan dialects (Handy 1923:3; Linton 1923:270; O'Reilly & Tessier 1962:345; Skolmen 2010:215-220). There is therefore little doubt that Lie possessed an impressive knowledge of the Marquesas and its archaeology. Heyerdahl's emphasis on the importance of the meeting is not surprising. Still, it most definitely represents another example of how Heyerdahl rearranged chronologies and took literary liberties in his writing. In *Searching for Paradise* Heyerdahl wrote:

Down by the beach we could see our destination, a single lighted cabin, the home of the Norwegian Henry Lie, who owned the island group's finest coconut plantation. We heaved ourselves off the horses, every joint was aching from the long ride. We knocked on the door. From the cracks in the boards came a smell of fried eggs. The door was pulled open, and a spark of light enveloped us. The Norwegian examined us closely in the light of his raised kerosene lantern. It was months, if not years, between each time he had white visitors, and no whites ever came across the mountains. He was satisfied with a short "Bonjour"; I replied "Godaften" in Norwegian. He stepped back in astonishment (Heyerdahl 1938a:144-145, TR69).

The story of Lie's surprise of meeting white people, let alone Norwegians, was repeated again in *Back to Nature*; this time Lie was even further highlighted as a lonely man, spending years in solitude between visits by other 'white men' (Heyerdahl 1974a:206-210). Just as with the portrait of Tei Tetua, Heyerdahl portrayed Lie within the travel writing trope of isolation (1.6.1), even though this was very far from reality. Since Lie managed a copra plantation, he

was of course in regular contact with 'white men' every time the schooner from Tahiti stopped by. As the schooners called at his plantation, he had the opportunity to meet any foreign visitors to the Marquesas Islands, including the Heyerdahls. An article Heyerdahl wrote about Lie and his life discloses that this was how Lie was actually introduced to the couple. They had first met in March 1937, before Heyerdahl and Liv were set ashore on Fatu Hiva, and around six months before they came riding over the mountains (Heyerdahl 1937h; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

The newspaper article Heyerdahl wrote further reveals that Lie was visited in March 1937 by his sister, Mrs Alfhild Lund, who had travelled alone to the Marquesas Islands to see her long-lost brother; the newspaper article even includes a photograph of Mrs Lund (Heyerdahl 1937h). Lie could therefore hardly have been surprised by Heyerdahl and Liv coming by his home or speaking Norwegian in August or September 1937, since they had already met several months earlier. That Mrs Lund was omitted from Heyerdahl's travelogue is not hard to understand. Heyerdahl as the travel writer aimed to describe the Marquesas Islands as an isolated island group for adventurous travellers, the far distant dangerous cannibal islands of Melville's. The notion of a middle-aged Trondheim woman travelling there on her own was thus hardly consistent with the image Heyerdahl wanted to narrate. This marks another example of how Heyerdahl's narration relies on travel writing tropes and larger than life depictions to persuade the reader of the accuracy of the author's description. The Marquesas Islands was not, as Heyerdahl claimed, a lost world at the end of the universe, but an island group accessible for anyone wealthy enough to pay the ticket.

As the story unfolds, both in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) and *Back to Nature* (1974a), it is revealed that yet another European settler, an elderly unnamed Frenchman, also lived in the valley. The idea of Lie being a lonely isolated white man in the Marquesas group was therefore far from the truth.

Since Heyerdahl took such liberties with the description of events, his narration of what Lie thought and said must also be treated with some scepticism, and as in the case of Tei Tetua (4.2), later dialogues between Heyerdahl's various texts need to be filtered out.

In a letter to Kroepelien, at the time of Heyerdahl's meeting with Lie, Heyerdahl wrote:

A strange, but intellectual and pleasant personality. His experience of the Marquesas was that the natives had only one thing in mind, and that was to figure out how they could get as much out of the Europeans as possible. He did not like them at all (Heyerdahl 1937m, TR70).

The idea that Lie was not fond of the Marquesans was also repeated in *Searching for Paradise*, where Heyerdahl wrote that Lie kept away from 'the browns':

“I have lived here for thirty years,” said Lie one day. “But I have no friends among the browns. I have the valley's only store in the basement, so they do not dare to hurt me. And I have money and enough fruit on my plantation. But a white man can never get close to them. No one. I have seen some try. But they have no use for the whites. They only have one thought when they see a white man; we have to get as much as possible out of him. One of the natives might give you a chicken, but it is only because he expects to get an ox in return. It is not like that on the other islands” Henry Lie said. He would never have married a Marquesan woman (Heyerdahl 1938a:154, TR71).

Whether Lie really shared these views, or if he, like Tei or Teriieroo, became a vessel for Heyerdahl's own visions, is hard to tell. Some of the language, the use of the phrase 'the browns' for instance, is obviously Heyerdahl's; and according to O'Reilly and Tessier (1962:345), Lie's first wife was from the Marquesan island of Ua Pou and his second was also an East Polynesian from Tubuai, which casts doubt upon Heyerdahl's statements. Lie's alleged knowledge of the Marquesas and the Marquesan language and its dialects also seems to suggest otherwise. But even if these things contradict Heyerdahl's description, it cannot be excluded that Lie could have expressed such thoughts to a visiting fellow Norwegian.

#### *5.5.1.1 Henry Lie's Altered Roles*

The South Seas paradise Heyerdahl had imagined was seemingly not Lie's cup of tea:

“But what about the South Seas paradise,” I said, “What do you think about that?” He cracked a big smile and answered, “If you know what kind of soup the customers like, then of course you serve that soup” (Heyerdahl 1938a:155, TR72).

Lie positioned himself together with the other Scandinavian and British sceptics Heyerdahl had encountered in Tahiti (chapter 4). In *Back to Nature*, where Heyerdahl took a more reminiscing approach, discussing the journey in relation to his later career, Lie was given a more prominent role in the narrative. He went from being one of the sceptical Scandinavian settlers Heyerdahl encountered to an important intellectual with insights into the islands' prehistory.

As has been noted previously, the reliability of many statements in *Back to Nature* is questionable. This can be seen, for instance, in a paragraph where Heyerdahl discussed

Gauguin's claims of being the only intellectual on Hiva Oa. Since Heyerdahl, according to himself, had been familiar with Gauguin's statements, he was very surprised to find Lie's book collection. Gauguin had obviously been untruthful, Heyerdahl claimed; just on the other side of the mountains from Gauguin's home in Atuona lived another intellectual (Heyerdahl 1974a:207). The problem with this story is of course that Gauguin had died several years before Lie came to the Marquesas Islands. Heyerdahl's claim of Gauguin's ignorance makes it seem as though Heyerdahl had discovered something others had overlooked, a forgotten intellectual in the Marquesas, a secret source of information only Heyerdahl had gained access to. He used the travel writing trope of discovering a hidden secret during a travel to a distant place to present Lie as an overlooked intellectual gem (1.6.1-2). This was of course inaccurate, since Lie had previously worked with Linton and Handy.

In *Back to Nature* Heyerdahl also stressed the impact Lie had on his work with the Kon-Tiki theory. According to this narrative, it was after the visit to Ipona and the meeting with Lie that Heyerdahl decided to shift focus in his career (Heyerdahl 1974a:209). Heyerdahl wrote that he had discussed the stone monuments of Ipona with Lie and his French neighbour. In the discussion Lie emphasised that there was not a single person among the local inhabitants who knew who had made the statues; they only said that they had been made by another people than their ancestors. Lie then took out one of his books and showed Heyerdahl pictures of similar statues in San Agustin (modern-day Colombia), pointing to the resemblance and suggesting that this was perhaps where the stone carvers had come from (Heyerdahl 1974a:210-220).

This narrative gives Lie an instrumental role in the Kon-Tiki theory's origin. Lie becomes the one who suggests the division of the settlement into two different migration waves, as well as the one who directly points out the South American origin of at least one of the migration waves. However, this development cannot be found in any of Heyerdahl's earlier writing. Lie's role in the various publications was substantially altered. As mentioned above, in the 1930s, Lie was only one of the sceptical Scandinavian settlers the Heyerdahls encountered in Polynesia. His role in the narrative was to mock and make satirical comments about Heyerdahl's naive and romanticised pre-journey vision of Polynesia, acting as a supportive voice to provide authentication to Heyerdahl's paradise lost description of Polynesia. Lie is not mentioned in any of Heyerdahl's publications after that until *Back to Nature* in 1974. Lie's involvement in the Kon-Tiki theory's creation therefore seems to come



straight out of the blue. The statements Lie makes in *Back to Nature* about the Ipona site, for instance, also directly contradict those of Handy and Linton (5.5.2.2), for whom Lie had worked as an informer. Lie thus seemingly contradicts himself. All of these altered and incohesive circumstances make it impossible to determine whether the statements actually came from Lie. Lie's altered roles and the way he was worked into Heyerdahl's transforming interests over time suggest that Heyerdahl made Lie into a puppet, a mask behind which Heyerdahl disguised his own ideas to lend them authority, just as he had done with Tei and Teriieroo.

### 5.5.2 *The Ipona Me'ae Site on Hiva Oa*

Close to Lie's home in Puamau Valley lay the Ipona *me'ae* site. That visiting the site was important for Heyerdahl in creating the Kon-Tiki theory is evident from the source material. In *Searching for Paradise*, he described his impression of the large stone statues at Ipona:

They stood looking out over the temple grounds like grotesque demons, frozen, towering over the terrain. Red bodied, with eyes the size of washbasins and broad mouths stretching from ear to ear. They reminded me of bulky goblins, with huge round heads, small bent legs and their hands on their stomach. Some had fallen to the ground. They lay there helpless, staring through their devil's mask at the stars passing over the temple grounds. They are the Gods of Poamao. When we first saw them coming out of the thick jungle vegetation, we halted in awe. The temple ground was surrounded by great stone walls and platforms on which the statues had been erected. The red giants rose out of the ground like supernatural phenomena. The powerful masks glared imperiously on us, as if they wanted to force us to our knees. They must have been used to being worshipped by cowering humans. They were the gods of the island's first mysterious people (Heyerdahl 1938a:145, TR64).

As with the sites he had visited in Omoa and Hanavave (5.4.1-2), in Puamau he again claimed that the site was the creation of a mysterious people who had populated the Marquesas before the Polynesians arrived:

Here and there among the fallen stone gods in the shrubs we could see other large stone giants. Statues of gods started but never finished. They were the remains from the time when the Polynesians had arrived from their unknown homeland, and chased the temple people up into the mountains, where they eventually perished [...] It is just as hard to understand how these large stone colossi were transported and erected, as it is to understand how the Egyptians build their pyramids. The blood-red stone cannot be found near the temple site. It comes from far up the valley, where the old quarry can still be found. In the quarry large boulders were cut out of the mountain with stone adzes. In a mysterious and completely unimaginable way, these primitive people transported the boulders through the valley, all the way to the temple site,

where the boulders were carved into the temple's gods. In the same way the great boulders of the platforms had been brought to the temple site from the coast (Heyerdahl 1938a:146, TR65).

As the quotation illustrates, Heyerdahl made reference to Egypt, just as he had done when describing the burial in Hanavave. However, it is more likely that this was the reference with which Heyerdahl was most familiar (e.g. chapter 3), rather than an expression of Heyerdahl's belief in a cultural connection.

The Egypt reference can also be seen in Heyerdahl's emphasis on how impossible he found it to understand how the platforms and statues had been made. The statement echoes the type of argument Heyerdahl would later use continually to describe the *Moai* and *Ahu* sites of Easter Island (Heyerdahl 1957, 1989a). This trope of the mystery concerning how so-called primitive cultures could drag heavy stones from one place to another is not an uncommon viewpoint of laypeople, generally including a certain amount of racial prejudice, in which people of the past are viewed as less evolved than contemporary human beings (e.g. Kuper 1988; McNiven & Russell 2005).

### 5.5.2.1 *The Ancient Dogs of Ipona*

Heyerdahl argued that the statues and sites were extremely old because he had found a dog carved in relief on one of the stone statues (the statue is called *Makii taua pepe* (Ill.21) and the carving can be seen in Chavallion & Olivier 2007: Fig. 173-174; Heyerdahl 1938a:147, Fig. 3; Millerstrom 1997: Fig. 3):

It was a dog. And that was strange. The dog was unknown on the island in the days of the people who made the ancient stone gods. The dog was brought to the Marquesas by white men. But maybe the ancient people had seen the model for the carving in a far distant land. When digging next to a wall, we noticed some mysterious signs hidden underground. Could it be writing? Some sort of hieroglyphs? No one knows (Heyerdahl 1938a:148, TR66).

What these signs or 'hieroglyphs' were that Heyerdahl refers to is unclear, and the rough description makes it impossible to identify the features from other publications on the site. The idea that the dog was unknown to the Marquesas Islands prior to European contact was also stated in a letter to Kroepelien in October 1937, in which Heyerdahl discussed the Ipona site and the relief-carving of a dog he had found (Heyerdahl 1937m).

That dogs were unknown to the Polynesians or the Marquesans before European

colonisation is of course a complete misunderstanding on Heyerdahl's part; the dog was indeed present in Polynesia before European contact (for an overview of 18<sup>th</sup> century recordings see Luomala 1960; Titcomb & Pukui 1969). Dog remains are known from every habitation phase of the Hanamiai site on the Marquesan Island Tahuata (Rolett 1992:88; 1998); that is to say, they are present through the entire period the island had been inhabited. In his work on the Marquesas, Linton mentioned dogs in funeral practices, at one point with reference to Ellis (Linton 1925:62, 152). Even O'Brien wrote that the dog had been known to the Polynesians for 'thousands of years' (O'Brien 1919:337).



*Illustration 21: Two photographs taken by Heyerdahl of the Ipona me'ae site in Puamau Valley on Hiva Oa. The photograph to the right shows the statue on the foot of which Heyerdahl claimed to have found a carving of a dog. Photographs by Thor Heyerdahl & Liv Torp-Heyerdahl, 1937. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

It has not been possible to determine why Heyerdahl thought that the dog had been introduced by Europeans. Fifteen years later in *American Indians* he stated the opposite, claiming that the dog had been known from early times in the Pacific area at large; he also quoted Cook's recording of dogs as domesticated animals in New Zealand in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

(Heyerdahl 1952:501-504). That Heyerdahl was apparently under the impression, both in correspondence material from 1937 and during the writing process of his travelogue the following year, that dogs were introduced to Polynesia by Europeans, shows yet again that he had not familiarised himself at this time with the work of Ellis (1829a-b), Linton (1923, 1925), Henry (1928), and other important texts on Polynesian prehistory. It is also clear that he had not read the writings of exploration voyagers such as Cook.

### 5.5.2.2 *The Temple People of Ipona and the Arrival of the Polynesians*

In the vicinity of the Ipona *me'ae* site Heyerdahl also visited a fortress site on a mountainside:

Above the temple site rose sharp peaks and rocks, which are characteristic for the Marquesas. It reminded me of Motonui 'the great rock'. Henry Lie told me about the peculiar peak, where no white man had ever been [...] Just outside of the wall were tunnels down into the mountain. The tunnels were filled with human bones and skulls. Starvation had conquered. A people had perished. They would never rise again. A new culture had come to the valleys. A culture which at present is being destroyed by our own race; and no new culture will ever come to the valleys again (Heyerdahl 1938a:148-150, TR67).

The way Heyerdahl wrote about the Ipona site in *Searching for Paradise*, and the similar expressions he used in newspaper articles sent from the Marquesas, indicates that around the time of, or perhaps even during, his visit to Puamau, he had started to envision a historical sequence quite similar to what he would later present with the Kon-Tiki theory. This was the idea that on the Marquesas Islands, and seemingly also Easter Island, 'Not only one, but two culture phases are known. The latest is the Polynesian culture, which now has gone down the drain' (Anon. XIII. 1938, TR68). The first settlers, who were not the Polynesians but the 'temple-people', had made the large stone statues and platform sites around Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa that he had visited. Some 700 years before Heyerdahl's visit, the Marquesas Islands had then been conquered by the ancestors of the Polynesians, who had driven the temple-people up to the mountains, where they had starved to death (Anon. XIII. 1938; Heyerdahl 1938a:69-70).

Heyerdahl's ideas about two cultural phases were alien to previous publications and discussion on the Marquesas Islands and Ipona. Handy, for instance, had suggested through genealogy that the Marquesas Islands had been settled by the Polynesians in the period AD 950-1100 (Handy 1923:10-16). Linton claimed that there was no indication of any particularly

ancient settlements or material; he wrote that sites were still within living memory, and that there were no signs of any other cultural influences on the Marquesas than the present one (Linton 1925:3-4, 70-95, 159-163). Von den Steinen suggested a construction date for Ipona as late as 6-7 generations earlier than the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (approximately AD 1690-1750) (von den Steinen 1928a:84-86); even Christian claimed that the Ipona site and its stone statues had been made by the Polynesians, whom he believed to be of 'Aryan origin', some 40 generations before his visit in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Christian 1910:123, 195). Heyerdahl's ideas were thus either his own creation or originated outside the known research discourse of the period.

### *5.5.2.3 The Active and the Passive People of the Marquesas Islands*

As mentioned above, the division of the settlement of the Marquesas islands into separate phases, one advanced and one primitive, connects to a common trope among laymen discussing pre-historical sequences (5.4.2). An example of this is found in the amateur archaeologist Posnansky's 'eternal theory' on the cultural sequence of the Tiahuanaco site. Posnansky claimed that Tiahuanaco had initially been settled by a primitive race some 10,000 years BC. Later on they had been replaced by a more advanced race, responsible for the site's large monolithic monuments (Marsh 2019:7-9).

Ideas like Posnansky's were rooted in a tradition of Darwinian interpretations of material culture sequences, where changes in these sequences were explained through the replacement of races (1.6.4; Rowley-Conwy 2007; Trigger 1989:110-147). Consequently two perceived different cultural sequences were explained as the occurrence of two different races. Many of these separations between advanced and primitive cultures – as in the case of Posnansky (Marsh 2019:7-13) – were motivated by nationalistic or colonial agendas (1.6.4; see also McNiven & Russell 2005). As noted in chapter 2, this perspective is not applicable to Heyerdahl. He, as the Norwegian, was not aiming to uphold colonial rule, in fact the complete opposite can be said (3.2, 4.3). Therefore, even though there is an obvious similarity between for instance Posnansky's and Heyerdahl's reasoning, another origin for Heyerdahl's thoughts needs to be sought.

Posnansky detected his two different races through comparing craniological data from contemporary Aymara populations with material from excavations. The results of the

comparison suggested different craniological (cephalic index) features between the two materials, which gave Posnansky the idea of a racial separation between pre-historical and present populations. He also claimed that the results suggested an evident degeneration which had led to the downfall of the advanced Tiahuanaco race (Marsh 2019:7-13). Nothing of this sort is applicable to Heyerdahl at the time of his visit to Ipona, but Posnansky's comparison between present and past is highly relevant.

As presented above (5.5.1), Heyerdahl claimed that Lie found the Marquesans unappealing. Whether this was true or not can be debated. That Heyerdahl, on the other hand, found the Marquesans quite abysmal is no secret; in *Back to Nature* he wrote:

There was a remarkable difference between the active Henry Lie, always working to expand his great plantation, and these lazy Polynesians, who had no other ambition than to fill their stomach and make love. Aletti explained that they just sat around and waited for the coconuts to drop (Heyerdahl 1974a:207-208, TR74).

The statement is somewhat ironic in relation to Heyerdahl's own escape-from-civilisation plan, which seems precisely to have revolved around lazing about waiting for the coconuts to drop. His admiration of Lie, the copra farmer, the 'white shadow', a representative of modern civilisation, and his industriousness also seem somewhat out of place. On the other hand, it was perhaps not so much Lie's industriousness that Heyerdahl admired as the contrast it made to the lazy Polynesians (see also Andersson 2011). In Heyerdahl's text the active Norwegian is contrasted with the passive Polynesian. This contrast was obviously of importance to Heyerdahl's interpretation of the archaeological material. He found it impossible to understand how the Polynesians could have made the large stone statues:

The giants of the mountainous Puamau Valley stood in such contrast to the docile and lazy people down by the beach, that they created an unavoidable question: Who had made these red stone giants, and how had they done it? (Heyerdahl 1974a:208, TR75).

The Polynesians as a people, or in Heyerdahl's vocabulary a race, were not able to create something as splendid as the Ipona *me'ae* site. The degenerate (in his view) people he had met had not been the creators of the stone statues. Rather, they had been made by a pre-Polynesian race inhabiting the islands:

I started to suspect that an energetic highly civilised people, who had the habit of erecting giant stone statues, had reached Hiva Oa's eastern shores before the Polynesian fishermen came

paddling in. The Polynesians had also once been full of power and ambition, but their efforts were directed to the sea, to warfare and to wood-carving. The stone statues of Puamau had another story to tell (Heyerdahl 1974a:209, TR76).

According to Heyerdahl, the stone statues of Ipona could not have been made by the Marquesans, as they were too docile for such an achievement; to lug boulders up to the temple site lay beyond their capacity. The stone statues of Ipona had to have been made by someone else, someone more industrious, more similar to Lie. Thus Heyerdahl created a binary opposition pair in which the primitive, passive, 'browns' (Marquesans) were contrasted to the advanced, civilised, active pre-Polynesians, sharing characteristics with his fellow Norwegian Lie. Heyerdahl based his separation between the present Marquesan population and the so-called 'temple people' on an argument which meets all the three criteria for a racist idea (1.6.4); the biological separation, its associated characteristics and a value hierarchy between these characteristics. The racist implications of Heyerdahl's statements are unavoidable. Rather than colonial justification, racism laid at the heart of Heyerdahl's division of the settlement of the Marquesas.

## 5.6 *Summary and Conclusion*

That archaeology was not a part of the aims for Heyerdahl's Marquesas journey is evident from his and Liv's choice to set up camp at a *Paepae* site in Omoa Valley. Nonetheless, the choice of camp site would lead them into archaeology as they started to find artefacts around the site. Their interest seemingly grew from there on. As the journey progressed, the Heyerdahls seemingly became more and more occupied with collecting archaeological and ethnographical artefacts. The artefacts were acquired by various means, through surface collecting, trade and gift exchange with local residents, but above all artefacts were purchased in Atuona on Hiva Oa. A few of the artefacts, especially the human remains, were collected against local legislation. That their actions were against the law was something both Heyerdahl and Liv were well aware of. A few artefacts were also collected through what Heyerdahl called excavations, above all at *paepae* sites on Hiva Oa during the latter stages of the journey.

Rather intriguingly in connection to the troubles the Heyerdahls had with interacting with the Marquesans, Heyerdahl claimed that upon finding adzes and other artefacts, he had

immediately felt connected to the people who had made them. He separated the present population from the artefacts. This pattern is also noticeable for Heyerdahl's description of archaeological sites on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa.

Heyerdahl mentioned surprisingly few archaeological sites. The few mentioned sites were described in lyrical and exaggerated words. Heyerdahl kept referring to them as sensational discoveries and claimed that both the sites he visited and the artefacts he collected were unheard of for science. Heyerdahl's collections and his description of sites illustrate above all his lack of knowledge of Marquesan and Polynesian archaeology at the time.

This is also illustrated by his visit to the Ipona *me'ae* site in Puamau Valley on Hiva Oa. At the site, during one of Heyerdahl's so-called excavations, he found petroglyphs on one of the site's famous stone statues. Heyerdahl interpreted one of these carvings as a depiction of a dog. Since he erroneously believed that dogs had been introduced by Europeans in recent times, he saw the carving as direct evidence of the existence of a pre-Polynesian people. It was these pre-Polynesians, the temple-people, who had created the site's monolithic monuments. After visiting a nearby fortress site, Heyerdahl claimed that the temple-people had been driven to the mountains and starved to death once the Polynesians had arrived.

In Puamau Heyerdahl also met the Norwegian copra farmer Lie. In later narratives Heyerdahl claimed that Lie had played an active part in the development of the Kon-Tiki theory. However, this story does not appear until a very late date and is filled with contradictory statements, suggesting that Lie, in a similar way to Tei and Teriieroo, was used by Heyerdahl as a mask to lend authority to his own thoughts.

Heyerdahl found Lie, the industrious white copra farmer, to stand in direct opposition to the Marquesans, who in his mind were docile and degenerated. Heyerdahl also found it impossible to believe that the Polynesians – 'the browns' – could have accomplished something as astonishing as the Ipona *me'ae* site. Instead, the polarisation between the industrious Lie and the passive Polynesians was merged with his temple-people, creating a split between Lie, Ipona and the temple-people on one side and the Marquesans on the other. Thus the central part of the Kon-Tiki theory, the separation of the settlement of Polynesia into two different migrations waves, had its seed in the Marquesas journey, in Heyerdahl's separation between an admired non-Polynesian past and a despised Polynesian present. The following chapters will examine how Heyerdahl developed his discovery in the Marquesas into the Kon-Tiki theory.



## *Chapter 6 – After Paradise: The Early Development of the Kon-Tiki Theory 1938-1939.*

As has been argued in chapters 4 and 5, Heyerdahl's journey to the Marquesas Islands represented a break with his pre-journey interests. During the journey, he abandoned both his zoological collecting and his escape from civilisation plan. Instead his discovery – sensational to him – of the Marquesas Islands' material culture and archaeological remains led him onto a new path. This chapter will discuss Heyerdahl's early steps in anthropology during the roughly 18 months he spent back in Norway, before he again ventured on a new journey in late September 1939. The chapter will examine the state of Heyerdahl's theory in his 1938 travelogue *Searching for Paradise*. It will also investigate the connection claimed to exist in recent criticism between Heyerdahl's race theories and those of the German race scholar Günther, whom Heyerdahl briefly met in February 1938. The chapter will also approach the impact Heyerdahl's chance meeting with the former British Columbia resident Ivar Fougner had on the Kon-Tiki theory. Finally, the chapter will analyse how the theory was influenced by Scandinavian amateur researchers such as Halfdan Bryn and Waldemar Dreyer, as well as adventure stories in *National Geographic Magazine*.

### *6.1 The Fate of the Zoological Collection*

The zoological collection Heyerdahl and Liv had assembled during their journey was sold for 400 NOK to the University of Oslo upon their return to Norway (Wollebæk 1938). Based on his correspondence with Wollebæk, Heyerdahl seems to have had an interest in seeing the material analysed and identified. In a letter dated 27 January 1939, Heyerdahl wrote to Wollebæk to inquire on the progress of analysing the material (Heyerdahl 1939b). He also informed Wollebæk that he had been corresponding with the Bishop Museum, and attached sections from letters he had received from Elwood C. Zimmerman (1912-2004) – then assistant entomologist at Bishop Museum (Upton 2004) – and from Cooke (2.4.3), in which both of them expressed their and the Bishop Museum's interest in working with the collection. Heyerdahl also told Wollebæk that he was particularly interested in getting his samples of ants, rodents and a particular type of crab (which he had discovered in the Omoa Valley

jungle) analysed. Heyerdahl stated that it grieved him to hear that the collection had been untouched since it was handed over to the University. In his response just a few days later, Wollebæk informed Heyerdahl that matters were a bit more complicated than Heyerdahl imagined. The University had independently initiated contact with the Bishop Museum through Christophersen and was also in contact with experts in Germany through the entomological curator Leif Natvig (1894-1975). According to Wollebæk, the slow progress of getting the collection analysed was due to the fact that none of the experts contacted had agreed to the University's conditions – the central issue revolved around the publication rights. Wollebæk also wrote that the University was trying to get Olsen's collections from the Cook Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand analysed at the same time, which further complicated matters (Wollebæk 1939a-b).

Heyerdahl contacted Wollebæk again in the later part of August 1939, seemingly with the object of requesting financial support to visit the Bishop Museum during his upcoming expedition to the Pacific Northwest Coast (Heyerdahl 1939e). Of the zoological samples, Heyerdahl particularly told Wollebæk that he was interested in the rodents he had collected. He requested that these be sent to Hagen at the University's zoological laboratory so that he could bring them with him to Canada (Heyerdahl 1939e). Both Heyerdahl's requests were denied by Wollebæk in a brief response a few days later (Wollebæk 1939c).

Heyerdahl's interest in the rodents is potentially significant as they hold a particularly important position in the discussion on the settling of Polynesia (Heyerdahl 1952:14-15; Kock-Johansen 2003:139-151; see also Holden 2004; Matisoo-Smith 1994; Matisoo-Smith & Robins 2004; Matisoo-Smith et al. 1998; Wilmshurst et al. 2008). From the content of Heyerdahl's letters at this period, it seems fair to suggest that Heyerdahl had an interest in the Pacific migration question; however, it is less certain whether this was the reason for Heyerdahl's interest in the rodents. Despite Wollebæk's denial, Heyerdahl was able to take his samples of rodents with him to Canada and gave them to zoologist Ian McTaggart Cowan (1910-2010), then Museum Director at the Provincial Museum of British Columbia (Bakke 2017:61). It is therefore possible that Heyerdahl was interested in the rodent samples only because he intended to gift them to McTaggart Cowan.

After his correspondence with Wollebæk in the latter part of the summer of 1939, Heyerdahl's connections to the Zoology Department at Oslo University became few and far between. The University did not reach agreement with anyone to have the collection analysed,

and in Spring 1940 Norway was occupied by Nazi Germany. By the time the occupation was over and wounds from the War had been healed, the collection had slipped into oblivion, and having it analysed was no longer a priority.

## 6.2 Searching for Paradise 1938

Heyerdahl was issued a contract for a travelogue describing the journey by Gyldendal on 25 February 1938, hardly more than 14 days after his return to Norway (Gyldendal 1938a). The contract was made official a couple of weeks later, and the manuscript, limited to 200-250 pages with a maximum of 32 illustrations (standard format for travelogues), was due on 1 August 1938 (Gyldendal 1938b).



*Illustration 22: Heyerdahl's exhibition at a local bookshop in Larvik in 1938. Several of the artefacts from the collection can be seen on display. Unknown photographer. Courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©*

Gyldendal had only been established just over a decade before Heyerdahl signed his deal with them. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag had formed as an independent Norwegian breakaway from the older Danish publishing house known simply as Gyldendal. The company had quickly emerged as a powerhouse of the Norwegian publishing industry by purchasing the

publishing rights to the works of the 'great four' – Norwegian 19<sup>th</sup>-century authors Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910), Jonas Lie (1833-1908) and Alexander Kielland (1849-1906). The company also owned the rights to Nobel Laureate Knut Hamsun's (1859-1952) works; Hamsun was also the company's major financial backer, while Harald Grieg (1894-1972) acted as CEO.

In the years immediately following Heyerdahl's signing with the company, Gyldendal would seriously harm its reputation by issuing Nazi propaganda and support for the German occupation. Grieg, who held his chair during the early stages of the occupation, was eventually forced out of office and sent to the Norwegian concentration camp Grini, where he was imprisoned together with many other leading figures of the Norwegian cultural, academic (for instance Kristian Schreiner (5.3.1)) and political elite. At Gyldendal, Tore Hamsun, son of the abovementioned Knut Hamsun – perhaps the most infamous Norwegian Nazi supporter – took over as CEO. Greig, however, was reinstated as head of operations after the War ended (Grieg 1971; Hamsun 1949; Jacobsen 2000; Rem 2015). After the War Gyldendal also resumed its collaboration with Heyerdahl, publishing all of his major works up to the 1990s.

*Searching for Paradise* came out in late October or early November of 1938 (see Andersson 2007a:62; Jacoby 1968:74; Kvam 2005:218-219, for various suggested dates). The book did fairly well for a first work by an unestablished writer and received several favourable reviews. As Kvam has pointed out, Heyerdahl's work was praised by reviewers for stepping away from the staple romanticised image of Polynesia, and adding a darker undertone by discussing diseases, conflicts and the hostile environment he and Liv had encountered (Kvam 2005:213-225). Several reviewers favoured the biblical serpent in paradise metaphor to describe the book's theme. A review by 'S. L.' characterised the book as a refreshing break from the ordinary blue skies paradise Polynesia found in American cinema and in the writings and paintings of Gauguin. Heyerdahl was also praised for his storytelling, with one reviewer finding the thrilling book's only disappointment to be that it did not feature any of Heyerdahl's humorous drawings. An advertisement from Gyldendal also reveals that Heyerdahl's book was praised in a review in the Swedish newspaper *Sydsvenska dagbladet* by a 'professor Bertil Handström' (presumably University of Lund zoology professor Bertil Hanström (1891-1969)). Unsurprisingly, Heyerdahl received his most favourable review in *Tidens tegn*, where the reviewer Trygve Width called the book one of the best Norwegian travelogues in recent years (Anon. XIV. 1938; Gyldendal 1938-1939a-d; Jacobsen 1938; S-L.

1938). The favourable reviews from newspapers like *Tidens tegn* and *Østlandsposten*, for which Heyerdahl had been a correspondent during the journey and in which he had also published prior to the journey, call into question how impartial these reviews actually were.

Despite the support Heyerdahl received from local media, *Searching for Paradise* was not sold to any other country, with one exception. In 1942 the book was translated into Danish and issued under the same title in the series 'green ribbon adventure stories' (TR77) by the Copenhagen-based publishing house Westermann (see Ditlevsen 2009). The 'green ribbon' series featured travelogues from around the world, such as *Storvildt* [Big game] by the Swedish aristocrat and African big game hunter Bror Blixen (1944; see also Rostbøll 2011:45). The object of the series was to provide the reader with sturdier travelogues with ethnographic content that did not shy away from depicting the true nature of the region described, but at the same time did not lose track of the dream of paradise (see cover of Heyerdahl 1942a). *Searching for Paradise* was thus defined within the ethnographic travel writing genre in its contemporary setting, both by the original publisher, its reviewers and later on also by Westermann publishing house.

Heyerdahl himself claimed that an English edition had been planned but the War intervened (Kvam 2005:219). This was presumably another exaggeration on Heyerdahl's behalf, as there is no material to support the claim. Coughlin has also astutely pointed out that *Searching for Paradise* is very Norwegian in style and content (Coughlin 2016). An English edition would therefore have required adaptation to an English language market, in addition to translation.

Heyerdahl seems to have been slightly disappointed in the resulting travelogue (e.g. Andersson 2007a:62 note 134). The title of the book was apparently chosen by the publisher rather than himself (Kvam 2005:218-219), and he issued not one but two re-edited versions of the book during later years (1.5, 1.6.3). Somewhat surprisingly, the book was not translated into English in the 1950s when Heyerdahl's popularity peaked, suggesting that Heyerdahl was not at all satisfied with his debut work and wanted to re-write it before it was re-issued.

### *6.2.1 The Kon-Tiki Theory in Searching for Paradise*

The state of Heyerdahl's theory in *Searching for Paradise* was considered in chapter 5.

Heyerdahl started to speculate about the origin of Marquesan culture when he was introduced to archaeological sites during his journey, above all the architectural remains of the Puamau

Valley (5.5). As has been discussed in chapters 2 to 5, Heyerdahl did not have any knowledge of Polynesian archaeology or anthropology to speak of prior to his Marquesas journey. The journey was solely focused on zoological collecting and the escape from civilisation plan. Heyerdahl's ideas about primitivism and his criticism of modernity also completely dominate the narrative of *Searching for Paradise*. His newfound ideas on prehistoric migrations are only hinted at in a few sentences, always in connection with descriptions of archaeological sites or objects, particularly in relation to the Ipona site in Puamau (5.5.2).

For Ipona, Heyerdahl separated the settlement of the Marquesas into two different migration waves, both of mysterious origins unknown to science. The first settlers had been the *temple people*, the stone carvers who had made the large statues, platforms, and fortresses of the island; on one occasion Heyerdahl claimed that they had ruled a kingdom including Easter Island. The second wave was an invading group of Polynesian warriors who had slain the *temple people* (5.5.2.2; Heyerdahl 1938a:69-70, 146-150).

The foundation of the Kon-Tiki theory, the separation of the colonisation of Polynesia into two different migration waves, can thus be traced back to the Marquesas journey. However, that had not been the original intent of the journey. The travelogue also includes numerous inaccurate and uninformed statements (6.5.1), suggesting that as late as the Autumn of 1938, when *Searching for Paradise* was published, Heyerdahl was still unaware of even basic literature on Pacific ethnography and archaeology. Since Heyerdahl travelled to North America in early Autumn of 1939 with the Kon-Tiki theory in mind (chapter 7), the formative period for the theory's outline must have occurred during the period between late 1938 and late 1939. However, the aspect of Heyerdahl's brief period back in Europe most emphasised in recent years already happened in February of 1938.

### *6.3 Hitler's Anthropologist and the Architect of Neo-Darwinism*

When Heyerdahl returned from the Marquesas in 1938 and decided not to pursue his zoological studies, he also cut ties to the only scientific institution with which he had interacted. With the exception of his administrative communication with Wollebæk, Schreiner and some of the Bishop Museum's zoological staff, there is nothing to indicate that Heyerdahl

interacted with any other scientific institutions until he came to Canada in the last months of 1939 (6.1). In fact the only known personal meeting between Heyerdahl and anyone remotely involved with human migrations or archaeology in the period is his brief, but very controversial, meeting with the infamous German race historian Hans Günther. Heyerdahl met Günther while he and Liv were travelling through Berlin in early February 1938 on their way back to Norway (Heyerdahl 1938e; Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b). This meeting with 'Hitler's anthropologist' was mentioned by Heyerdahl himself in 1974 (1974b:118-119), but did not create any controversy until it was brought into the biographical narrative by Kvam in 2005 (Kvam 2005:136-137, 193-199; see also Korslund 2005; Kyllingstad 2005; Skorgen 2005).

Above all, Andersson has vocally criticised and emphasised this connection, claiming that Heyerdahl developed his theory through inspiration from Günther. He alleged, for instance, that Heyerdahl had been 'thrilled' about this meeting and only mentioned it in 1974 to diffuse any potential controversy. Andersson argued that Heyerdahl was well aware of the similarities between his and Günther's theories and had contacted Günther both in 1935 and 1938 to seek support for his theory (Andersson 2007a:55-61). He further asserted that:

Heyerdahl's visit to Germany ran the risk of contradicting two main, and related, tenets of his legend; that he came up with his "original" theory himself, and that this theory came to him as an epiphany when he was on Fatuiva (Andersson 2007a:55).

Andersson's interpretation has been taken to the extreme in later works, for instance by Scott Magelssen, who interpreted Andersson's account to suggest that Günther had been the 'architect' and driving force behind the Nuremberg laws (2016:32), consequently placing Heyerdahl in a highly compromising position as a collaborator to a leading Holocaust theorist. It is important here to point out that Magelssen heavily misinterpreted Andersson's factually supported statement that Günther's ideas had inspired the Nazi regime (Andersson 2010:17-18). However, Günther had no active political role in either the creation of the Nuremberg laws or the Nazi party (Skorgen 2002:223-224).

The connection between Heyerdahl and Günther was also elaborated on by Skolmen, who claimed that Heyerdahl's connections to Nazism went beyond theoretical influence (Skolmen 2010:231-347). In this case, Skolmen's claims include dubious source material, speculative reasoning and even some pure fabrication; for instance, Skolmen's claim that Bonnevie had disowned Heyerdahl after becoming aware of his meeting with Günther is simply not true

(compare Skolmen 2010:240-242 to Nordal et al. 2012:231-232).

Unfortunately it is not just Skolmen's work that includes source critical problems in this case. Andersson's analysis was not based on original source material but on Kvam's biography, which includes inconsistencies and misinterpretations of the source material for this particular incident. For instance, Kvam's claim of a connection between Heyerdahl and Günther dating back to 1935 (Kvam 2005:136-137, 193-199) was solely based on two postcards Heyerdahl sent his mother from Saßnitz and Berlin. The postage stamps on both postcards are heavily worn and it cannot be said whether the printed year is actually 1935, 1936 or 1938; in this case Kvam seems to have jumped to conclusions and decided on 1935. However, one of the postcards, sent from Berlin, features a propaganda stamp, *Erfülle Deine Luftschutzpflicht!* [Fulfil your air raid defence duties] (TR78), that was not issued until the beginning of 1936,<sup>2</sup> making it implausible that the card was sent in 1935. Heyerdahl's passport, which was issued in late 1936, further illustrates that he did not travel abroad in October 1938, thus the trip most likely occurred in 1936. Heyerdahl could very well have travelled with his father during this trip as Kvam suggested (2005:136-137, 193-199), since Heyerdahl and Liv's scrapbook mentions that Heyerdahl Sr. travelled to Germany in September/October 1936 (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

The postcards themselves do not specify, as Heyerdahl (1974b:118-119), Andersson (2007a:55) and Kvam (2005:136-137, 193-199) claimed, that he had been to study ethnographical material (see also 5.2.3-4), but merely that he had visited the Botanical Gardens and presumably had a meeting with one 'Dr. Rensch' (Heyerdahl 1936c-d).

'Dr. Rensch' was most likely the German evolutionary biologist Bernhard Rensch (1900-1990), sometimes referred to as the 'architect of Neo-Darwinism'. Rensch had been on expeditions in the Indonesian archipelago and worked on biogeography and the evolutionary development of land snails. He held a position at the Zoological Museum of Berlin University (now Humboldt University) until 1937, when he was forced to leave for Münster after refusing to join the Nazi party (Delisle 2008; Dücker 2000; Heberer & Lehmann 1950; Hoßfeld 2004, 2012; Junker 2003, 2004; Junker & Hoßfeld 2002; Krüger & Hoßfeld 1999; Mayer 1992; Reif et al. 2000; Rensch 1930, 1959, 1960, 1964, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1979a-b, 1985; Rieppel 2011, 2013; Wuketits 1992, 2007). In relation to Heyerdahl's connection to Bonnevie and Økland in the later part of 1936 (chapter 2), a meeting with

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2 See <http://www.philastempel.de/stempel/zeigen/1738>. Accessed 17 Apr. 2018.



Rensch would not have been out of place. In addition, if this meeting did take place in Berlin, it would most likely have occurred before Heyerdahl left for the Marquesas and before Rensch was forced out of Berlin by the Nazis, further suggesting that Heyerdahl's visit to Berlin took place in 1936 and not 1935 or 1938.

Since both Andersson (2010) and Magelssen (2016) depicted pre-war study trips to Germany as suspicious behaviour, it is worth pointing out that Germany was the primary collaborator for Scandinavian scientists, especially in fields like zoology, biology, archaeology, and ethnography, until World War II broke out; German was also the main scientific language. Visiting German scientific institutions and meeting with German scientists in the period was nothing out of the ordinary; indeed, several of Heyerdahl's fellow students did the same (e.g. Schmidt-Nielsen 1998:41-42). Heyerdahl's meeting with Rensch should most likely be viewed in a similar light. Interestingly enough, Heyerdahl did not mention his meeting with Rensch in his presentation at Oslo University in late November 1936 (Heyerdahl 1936a).

Since correspondence material also discloses that it was Liv and not Heyerdahl who had been asked for cranial material (5.3), which follows naturally as Liv had the family connection to Günther through his wife (6.3.1), it seems unlikely that Heyerdahl would have been in contact with Günther before his journey to the Marquesas. In two letters Heyerdahl and Liv sent respectively to Heyerdahl's mother from Berlin in February 1938, one letter the day before the meeting (Heyerdahl 1938e) and one letter the day after the meeting (Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b), it is also evident that neither one of them had met Günther previously. Liv humorously described how they went around town looking for the Günther family's residence. Upon eventually finding it, they had to plead with the doorman to be allowed in (Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b).

There is no known correspondence between Heyerdahl and Günther afterwards. There is thus no source material to indicate any connection between Günther and Heyerdahl other than the meeting in February 1938. This calls into question the emphasis placed on this meeting in recent criticism. The fact that Heyerdahl included the meeting in *Back to Nature* connects to the same pattern as seen with the Kroeplien Library (3.1), Tei Tetua (4.2) and Lie (5.5), with Heyerdahl trying to create a more substantial scientific background for himself by highlighting how much he knew about Pacific archaeology and anthropology before the Marquesas journey, and emphasising his contacts with scientific institutions, seemingly also

making Liv's actions and contacts into his own (see also Melander 2019b).

### *6.3.1 Did Hitlers' Anthropologist Think that the Polynesians were Aryans?*

Andersson's claim that Heyerdahl was familiar with and inspired by Günther's theories (2007a:55-61) is worth considering, even though the source material indicates very little contact between the two.

Günther (1891-1968) had earned a doctoral degree in linguistics in 1914 through studies in Romantic, Germanic, and Finno-Ugric languages. With the publication of his *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes* [roughly translated as: *Racial Science/knowledge of the German people*] in 1922, he became an established name in the fields of race studies and eugenics, even though he lacked formal education in physical anthropology and related fields. Around the same time he left Germany and moved to Scandinavia, where he was invited to give seminars in eugenicist environments. In 1923, Günther married a Norwegian woman, Magda (Maggen) Blom, a childhood friend of Liv Torp-Heyerdahl's mother Anna Coucheron-Torp. Despite being a successful writer and welcomed contributor to the Scandinavian eugenics scene, Günther suffered financial hardship and failed to establish himself in Scandinavia.

In 1930, he returned to Germany and was appointed Professor in Social Anthropology (Anthroposociology) at the University of Jena. Since Günther had no academic background in the discipline, the appointment was controversial and interpreted as directly politically motivated, a result of the Nazi party's attempts to gain power in the region. For Günther the position was welcome as it solved his financial difficulties, but it also closely tied him to the Nazi party. His inaugural lecture on 15 November 1930 was attended by leading Nazi party members, and by 1932 Günther had joined the party. However, his relationship to the NSDAP remained strained and complicated (e.g. Steinweis 2008:25-28; Strobl 1999:335-336).

In 1935, he obtained a new professorship in racial studies at the University of Berlin, which he kept until 1939 when he moved to the University of Freiburg, his hometown. After the war he was sent to detention camp for his collaboration with the Nazis. He was eventually tried and acquitted in the late 1940s.

In later years Günther continued publishing on themes similar to those he had addressed in the 1920s and 1930s, and never showed any signs of changing his mind on the eugenicist

stance he had taken in the 1920s (Farrenkopf 2001; Günther 1956, 1957, 1959, 1967; Hecht 2000; Hoßfeld 2005:220-229; Jungcurt 2016:169-172; Kyllingstad 2014:201-214; Lipphardt 2015:62; Mosse 1966:57; Olsson et al. 2006:6-7; Pedersen 2003:65-75; Schwandt 2008; Steinweis 2008:25-28; Strobl 1999; Weisenburger 1997).

### 6.3.1.1 *Günther's Theories on Race*

Günther's work can be said to exist in a liminal space between race-based romanticised popular history and political agitation. His books combine philology, linguistics, studies of historical texts, myth and religion with physical anthropology and his associated belief in racially affiliated mental characteristics. As with *The Racial Elements of European History* (1927a), Günther's books tend to end with a lengthy agitation for eugenicist policies, using the historical framework as an argument for governmental control of procreation. His theories have been positioned in connection to the German physical anthropology tradition (Steinweis 2008:25-41) as well as to the French *anthroposociological* tradition, closely related to the works of Gobineau and Vacher de Lapouge (Hecht 2000; see also Weisenburger 1997:168-170). Günther's work received a varied reception in its own time, either praised by eugenicists and political peers or ridiculed by scientific institutions for its dilettantism (see Hooton 1929; Neumann 1931; Redfield 1929; Sullivan 1925; Wallis 1930a-b; Wolf 1924; see also Hecht 2000:297-298; Kyllingstad 2004, 2012, 2014; Lipphardt 2015). In relation to the latter it is worth pointing out, as shown by Massin, that a large component of the physical anthropology scene around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century consisted of non-professionals, amateurs, or people who according to Felix von Luschan had physical anthropology as a 'Sunday hobby' (Massin 1996:86; see also von Luschan 1916:18). Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one of the most prominent race writers in Germany at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even bragged about his dilettantism (Massin 1996:93). Günther's work can be positioned within this tradition of dilettantism (Hecht 2000:300), making Heyerdahl's claim that Günther was a 'skull expert' (Heyerdahl 1938e) a rather inaccurate description.

Günther's race theories, like all race theories, contain contradictory and irrational components, making it difficult to pin down how Günther imagined the concept of race to work. Consequently, it is not easy to logically explain the thought process of a theorist like Günther, something which should be kept in mind for the following presentation.

The foundation of Günther's race theories, which exclusively focused on the Old World (Europe and Asia), was the existence of five original European racial types (see Günther 1927a). These types had intermixed with each other over the course of history, creating hybrid forms. However, the idea was not that the original pure racial form had ceased to exist and new racial types had formed, but rather that the admixture of inherited traits had formed new combinations, and following Mendelian laws, pure racial types did still exist, particularly in areas or groups with limited interbreeding with alien racial elements (Morris-Reich 2006a:323-324).

This forced a distinction in Günther's work between *race* and *Volk* [people]. A race was an original form, consisting of different distinguishable physical and mental attributes, whereas a *Volk* was a group of people of different and mixed racial types, brought together by language and culture (Morris-Reich 2006a-b; Steinweis 2008:27-41; see also Günther 1922, 1924, 1925, 1927a). This meant that Günther viewed both Jews and Germans as a *Volk* rather than a race. Consequently, though it seems contradictory from a modern perspective, a well-known Nazi like Günther could be a supporter of the Zionist movement (Steinweis 2008:28-41). However, for Günther this was a rational position. Following a strict, almost extremist type of eugenics doctrine, he believed that all different *Völker* [peoples] should be separated in accordance with the dominant racial traits in each group, to ideally nurture each pure racial form. Like other eugenicists, he believed human beings were suffering from degeneration caused by racial intermixture (compare Heyerdahl's statements in section 4.3.4). Different *Völker* should thus be kept apart for the sake of human life in general, he argued (compare to Heyerdahl 1940:545). He saw the idea of a Zionist, or Jewish, state in Palestine as a step in the right direction (see further Günther 1929; Steinweis 2008:28-41).

Such ideas might suggest a separation on equal terms, but this was not the case. Günther's racial division was firmly based on a hierarchical order of different racial traits according to their perceived value. At the top of this pyramid was the Nordic race. The purity of an individual's mental characteristics was related to his or her level of Nordic race components. Günther argued that people with high levels of Nordic race components would by virtue of their superior racial qualities rise to the top of any society (or *Volk*). Günther thus imagined that there was a connection between aristocracy – in all parts of the Old World – and dominant Nordic racial traits (Morris-Reich 2006a:324; see also Günther 1926a-b, 1927a-b).

In this respect Günther argued that the question of 'increase' or 'fertility' was important (e.g.

Günther 1927a:183). He believed that the upper class did not increase at the same pace as lower classes. He attributed this to modernity and industrialisation, claiming that modern industrial and liberal societies favoured the inferior Alpine, Mediterranean and East Baltic races over the Nordic race. The Nordic race, which Günther believed had created modern civilisation, could only thrive in a more rural setting. According to Günther, the Nordic race would only be able to procreate effectively if they lived closer to nature and were not burdened by the constraints of modern technology and urbanisation (Günther 1927a:183-194; also compare to Heyerdahl's thoughts in 3.2.1).

This thought, echoed in the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum*, was also connected to Günther's belief in the restless spirit of the Nordic type, which had led to the race's migration out of its original homeland in north-western Germany during the Neolithic period. From this homeland the Nordic race had migrated, spreading its superior culture and language components all the way to China and India (Günther 1927a:93-95, see also Günther 1934). Günther used this concept to argue that all the civilisations of the Old World had been formed by the influence of the Nordic race:

Günther maintains that only the Nordic race is the purveyor of civilization. His solution to the production of high civilization in very different geographical areas is the concept of "racial layers" [*Schichtung*]. Peoples are layered hierarchically. The decline of a civilization is identical with the drying out of its Nordic element. Mixture brings about "degeneration" [...] The Nordic racial element is inherently aristocratic and aristocracy is inherently Nordic (Morris-Reich 2006a:324).

Günther's books were therefore filled with imagery of portraits and statues, with the aim of persuading his readers that famous historical figures celebrated in the narrative of European history showed mental and physical traits of the Nordic race. Civilisation and its prominent contributing figures were seen as part of an aristocracy with a biological foundation in the Nordic master race.

In this context Günther's peasant romanticism of course becomes somewhat contradictory. The notion that these superior humans, the architects of civilisation, would be better off living humble farming lives in isolated rural communities and not engaging with the civilisation they themselves had created is rather irrational. However, it was in line with contemporary political and anti-modernity aspects of the ideas of people like Günther, or for that matter Heyerdahl (3.2.1-2). The modern industrial world also carried new ideas of redistribution in the form of democracy, socialism and liberalism. These new ideologies formed an active

threat to conservatism and the aristocracy with their aim of redistributing the means of production. Since Günther believed there to be a direct connection between aristocracy and the Nordic race, the class war was also a race war, the Nordic race was under attack and modern civilisation was its main enemy (see Hecht 1999:3-9, 2000; Kyllingstad 2014:43-63; Massin 1996). Günther's claim that modern society favoured other races over the Nordic also connects to the 'Jewish-Bolshevism' conspiracy envisioned by Hitler (Kellogg 2008; Kershaw 2000; see also Hitler 1925, 1926, 1939).

### *6.3.1.2 Heyerdahl and Günther: Making a Mountain out of a Molehill?*

As the summary of Günther's work and his ideas on race illustrates, there are very few connecting points to the Kon-Tiki theory. There is no indication that the Pacific area was of interest to Günther at all; and Günther never mentions any 'Aryan race' or similar concepts, in fact the idea is not compatible with Günther's theories. Heyerdahl's claim that Günther thought that the Polynesians were Aryans (Heyerdahl 1974b:118-119) can thus only illustrate Heyerdahl's lack of knowledge of Günther's ideas, or possibly his failure to understand them. In fact it is questionable whether Heyerdahl had ever read anything written by Günther. It is also hard to see why Günther (as claimed by Andersson) would have had any interest in Heyerdahl, who at the time was just a young university drop-out. It is unlikely that the meeting with Günther had any influence on Heyerdahl's development of the Kon-Tiki theory.

On the other hand, Andersson's superficial white supremacist connection between Heyerdahl and Günther (2007a:55-61) has some relevance. As shown in chapter 4, Heyerdahl expressed the same type of Eugenics ideas that Günther was involved in developing, both during and after the Marquesas journey (4.3.4). Günther's work positioned the Nordic race as the culture-bearing and civilisation-creating race on a global stage. Günther also claimed a connection between societies' aristocracies and a high Nordic blood component'. This is actually quite similar to Heyerdahl's claims that the white bearded men of the Kon-Tiki theory were culture-bearers and a migrating group of civilisation creators (1.4.1). However, these statements do not enter the framework of Heyerdahl's theory until the 1940s (7.3), which makes it hard to trace them directly to Günther.

It should also be noted that Heyerdahl came from an aristocratic and conservative environment, where *Nordicist* tendencies could have existed independent of Günther's

thoughts. Heyerdahl also expressed *Nordicist* and Eugenics ideas before he was introduced to Günther; for instance, his description of the French claimed that only the aristocracy was equal to the 'firm German race' (Heyerdahl 1938e). This, however, opens up some compromising questions about Heyerdahl's affiliation to Nazism, whether connected to Günther or not. Heyerdahl's political position during the late 1930s and 1940s appears to have been close to the German national-conservative movement, showing contempt for socialism, the intellectual and cultural spheres, and modern society, as well as displaying overly romanticised ideas about human origins and nature lyricism (3.2). In addition, Heyerdahl's father was a Nazi supporter (Heyerdahl-Lyng 1942). This political affiliation was also shared by Heyerdahl's close friend Hagen, a known Nazi sympathiser (2.3.1). Heyerdahl was also an associate of the Oslo-based conservative newspaper *Tidens tegn* and its editor-in-chief Rolf Thommessen – who whitewashed and collaborated with the Norwegian Nazi party *Nasjonal samling* in the early 1930s (Thommessen 2008). There are here many unfavourable circumstances for Heyerdahl. However, since archival studies for this thesis have found no indisputable evidence for such a connection, and no one should be made a victim of circumstances, Heyerdahl must be granted the benefit of the doubt. Nonetheless, the intertextual point remains. As was discussed in the introduction, dialogues between various texts do not always occur through direct interaction; they can also develop through intermediates, for instance by approaching popular tropes at the given moment (1.6.3). The type of *Nordicist* ideas Heyerdahl expressed could actually have been coming from Günther or his peers; however, especially since Heyerdahl expressed such ideas before meeting Günther, it is more likely that they came through an intermediary – in this case, for instance, from within Heyerdahl's own social circle or his political affiliation in the period.

From the existing material there is no direct indication that Heyerdahl's meeting with Günther had any impact on him as a person or on the Kon-Tiki theory, but indirectly through intermediaries they could have had. However, there are other race scholars of the period to whom Heyerdahl's theory can be connected.

## 6.4 Halfdan Bryn's Influence for Heyerdahl's Race Theories

The first known outline of the racial component of Heyerdahl's theory can be found in the *Hvem er Hvem av Polynesiere og Indianere?* [Who's who of the Polynesians and the Indians?] (Heyerdahl n.d.c) manuscript from around 1939 (1.2.2). Intriguingly, the manuscript details Heyerdahl's idea of the racial origin of the two settlements of the Marquesas Islands mentioned in *Searching for Paradise*, but it also clearly deviates from his later racial theories, the so-called white supremacist theory which Andersson attempted to connect to Günther.

The manuscript consists of a short summarising text and four drawings. One drawing shows Heyerdahl's view of the spread of 'Stone Age culture' at the time of the settlement of Polynesia. From this drawing Heyerdahl concluded that since there was no Stone Age culture in Asia at the time Polynesia was settled, the Polynesians could not have originated in Asia (6.5.1). The other three drawings show the direction of trade winds over one year in the Marquesas group; the 'Indo-American race tree'; and the migration routes of the 'Indo-American race'. In a short explanatory text, Heyerdahl wrote:

The Indo-American race migrated in two directions from its original isolation centre in Southeast Asia: 1. Throughout the Malay Archipelago. This migration took place in a period when the Malay Archipelago was still attached to the Asian continent, but separated by the sea from the Austral-Melanesian continent. 2. Along the Asian east coast all the way to the northeast, and then via a land-bridge existing at the period between Siberia and Alaska over to the American continent; where the race spread out over the entire continent, making up the aboriginal population of the Americas. At a later stage, a mongoloid race group invaded the American continent, using the same Siberia-Alaska land-bridge. This group mixed with the most northern of the Indo-Americans. It is from this later intermixture that the Eskimos and the Northwest Coast Indians have developed. One branch of the Northwest Coast Indians, specialised in fishing, seems to have got over to Hawaii in more recent times, and from there on, with the Northern trade wind in their back, reached Savai'i on Samoa; from where the race populated the entire uninhabited Polynesian island world, and New Zealand. It was only on the islands furthest to the east (Easter Island and the Marquesas Group) that they came into contact with, and had to fight off, another group of people; a recently arrived culture people, most likely of a culture-bearing branch of the Indo-American race, from the area around modern Peru. To the west they encountered the Austral-Melanesian race barrier; intermixture in this area created the Micronesian islanders (Heyerdahl n.d.c, TR73).

The terminology in this case is fascinating, as it shows, in addition to the general outline of the racial migration theory, a direct influence on Heyerdahl from the Norwegian amateur physical anthropologist Halfdan Bryn (1864-1933).

Bryn was a physician employed by the army, who had started to conduct physical



anthropology studies while performing physical examinations of recruits. He intensively measured the Norwegian population in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading him to establish himself in Norwegian physical anthropology circles without any formal training. Bryn is known for a long line of controversial and speculative interpretations of both the contemporary and prehistoric populations of Norway, claiming for instance that certain Norwegian areas had direct 'Cro-Magnon ancestry' and that the people of his home *fylke* [County] Trøndelag were a bastard race. He also published the work *Homo Cæsius*, 'The blue-eyed man', in celebration of the Nordic race (see Bryn 1918, 1920a-b, 1921, 1922, 1925, 1929a-b, 1930; Holck 2009; Kyllingstad 2004, 2012, 2014:115-133).

Bryn, who was known for slightly pseudoscientific approaches and theories, should be viewed as a somewhat surprising influence on Heyerdahl in relation to Heyerdahl's connection to the University of Oslo. Bryn had collaborated with Schreiner at one time but had lost respect in the university environment due to his speculative interpretations and association with the eugenics movement and people like Günther (Kyllingstad 2012, 2014). Heyerdahl's use of Bryn's work could therefore be viewed as a break between him and his former alma mater. However, in a roughly contemporary manuscript (Heyerdahl n.d.a), Heyerdahl only refers to *National Geographic Magazine* articles and Waldemar Dreyer's popular history of 'natural people' (1898) (6.5.1-2). It thus seems more likely that Heyerdahl had only read easily accessible popular scientific works at the time, rather than that he was intentionally positioning himself against the University. Heyerdahl's popular science readings definitely included Bryn's *Menneskerasene og deres utviklingshistorie* [The Human Races and Their Development History] (1925).

#### *6.4.1 Bryn's History of the Human Races and the Kon-Tiki Theory*

In this book, Bryn strongly advocated that human beings shared a common origin but had developed into separate 'species' (races) over time through isolation (Bryn 1925:7-16). He further divided human racial history into three different levels, with 'the pygmies' representing the oldest and lowest level, followed by two separate groups of inferior and superior races, which were then further divided into 'sub-races'. Bryn's *inferior races* included the 'Austro-Melanesiske' [Australo-Melanesian], 'Nigritiske' [sub-Saharan Africans], 'Dravidiske' [Dravidian], 'Samiske rase' [the Sami race], and the 'Indo-amerikanske rase' [Indo-American

race] (Bryn 1925:45-107). The Indo-American race – a term hardly found outside of Bryn's work – was said to include populations of the Malay Archipelago, Eastern Asia, the Ainu population of Japan, all the populations of the Americas (including Inuit populations), and the Polynesians. Bryn claimed that the race had later undergone considerable intermixture with the 'Pre-Mongoloid' and 'Mongoloid' races. He traced the origin of the 'Indo-American' race to 'Bakindien' [Farther India] – essentially mainland Southeast Asia – and claimed that it had been preserved in its purest state in the Indonesian archipelago and in South American jungles (Bryn 1925:80-101). For Bryn, human migrations had predominately occurred over ancient land-bridges, and racial division had developed as a result of isolation, through waterways, oceans, mountain ranges and the disappearance of older land-bridges (Bryn 1925:107-120).

As the quote from the *Who's who* manuscript above illustrates, Heyerdahl more or less directly copied Bryn's idea of the Indo-American race's migration for his early race discussion. Heyerdahl's use of the term 'Indo-American', as well as borrowing other terminology like 'isolation centres', further highlights the connection between his ideas and Bryn's. Heyerdahl also referred to the Indo-American race in his 1952 *American Indians*. In this later work he favoured the term 'the yellow-brown race' rather than 'Indo-American', but pointed out that it was referring to the same thing, with reference to Bryn's *Menneskerasene* (Heyerdahl 1952:17). The background for Heyerdahl's racial theory can therefore be traced with reasonable confidence to Bryn.

Even though Bryn's Indo-American race seemingly was central to Heyerdahl's early outline of the racial component of the Kon-Tiki theory, there are some interesting discrepancies between the two men's thoughts on the subject. For instance, the white bearded men from the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1948a) and *American Indians* (1952) do not occur in Heyerdahl's early draft of the race section of the theory; instead, as quoted above, he claimed that the culture group which had populated Easter Island and the Marquesas Islands was a branch of the Indo-American race, which in his race tree was mixed with 'Middelhavsfolk' (Mediterranean people), and seemingly not directly racially affiliated with 'Aryans' (Heyerdahl n.d.c; see Ill. 23). This idea does not feature at all in Bryn's work, which suggests that Heyerdahl used Bryn's work for the background and defining the out-of-Asia origin for the Polynesians, but then started to modify Bryn's racial migration hypothesis. Heyerdahl also deviates from Bryn by suggesting that both migrations into Polynesia had been transoceanic. This is probably due to Heyerdahl's belief in the relatively recent settlement of Polynesia and his background at

Oslo University, where he had been made aware of zoogeographical scepticism towards land-bridge and sunken continent theories (chapter 4) which were a key component of Bryn's racial isolation and migration theories (Bryn 1925:80-101). Therefore, the settlement of Polynesia was rather different in Heyerdahl's theory than in Bryn's, even though Heyerdahl's manuscript still had Bryn's Indo-American race settling Polynesia.

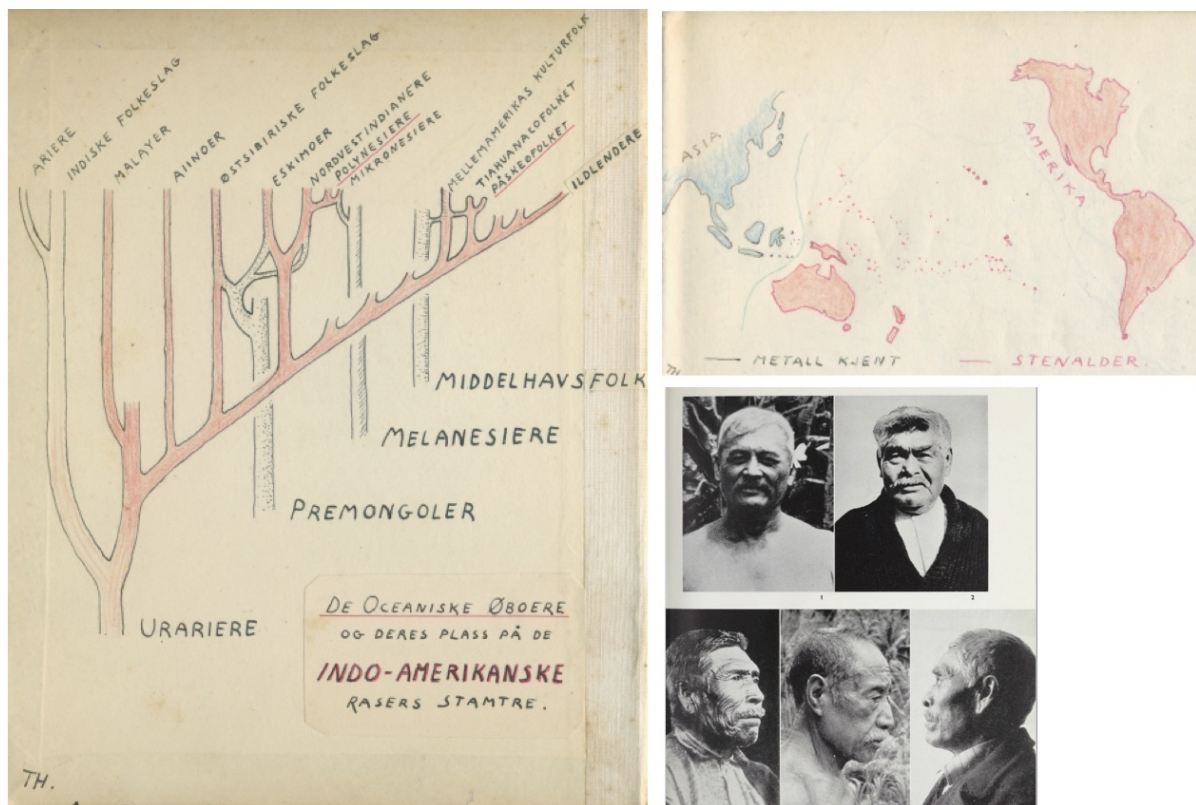


Illustration 23: Left: 'The Oceanic islanders and their position on the Indo-American race tree' from Heyerdahl's 1938-1939 manuscript *Hvem er Hvem av Polynesiere og Indianere?* (Heyerdahl n.d.c.). Right top: Map from the abovementioned manuscript illustrating the spread of Stone Age culture (red) and metal-working (blue) at the time of the settlement of Polynesia or possibly at the time of European discovery of Polynesia. Bottom right: Example of race comparison in Heyerdahl's *American Indians 1952* (Plate III), comparing Polynesian types (Teriieroo (top left) and Tei (bottom middle)) and Pacific Northwest Coast types. Drawings courtesy of the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive, Oslo. ©. Photograph of page from *American Indians in the Pacific* (1952).

## *6.5 Early Material Culture Comparison, the Marquesan Collection and Ivar Fougner's North America*

There is nothing to suggest that Heyerdahl set out to develop the theory directly upon his return to Norway. His initial months back were intensely busy, with a short lecture tour and starting to write the travelogue (see Appendix II). In addition to these undertakings, Heyerdahl also purchased a house in Lillehammer, which according to his tax return was renovated; it seems that Heyerdahl had finally given up on his idea of a primitive life and had a modern bath installed in his new house (Heyerdahl 1939a). In October 1938 Liv gave birth to the couple's first son, Thor Jr. (actually Thor III). The year 1938 was filled with happenings that would have kept Heyerdahl from commencing work on his theory. As is often the case in the Heyerdahl legend, the decisive moment seems to have happened by coincidence. In the latter part of 1938, presumably in conjunction with the issuing of his travelogue, Heyerdahl was invited by the Norwegian public service radio to give a broadcast lecture. The broadcast was heard by a farmer living not far from Heyerdahl. A few days later, the farmer ran into Heyerdahl and started to discuss the lecture. He told Heyerdahl that an elderly relative of his, who was then staying at his farm, had collected artefacts in North America of the type Heyerdahl had talked about in his lecture. Heyerdahl was invited over to see the artefacts (Bell n.d. r5/s1/p.3-4; see also Jacoby 1965a:79-99; Kvam 2005:227-247).

The farmer's elderly relative was Ivar Fougner (1870-?), who had emigrated from Norway to Canada, where he had lived in the Bella Coola area on the Canadian Pacific Northwest Coast. Fougner had worked as an 'Indian agent', and through his work had become familiar with local indigenous groups and their material culture (Andersson 2011; Barman 1996:136, 148, 2003:182-185; Faa 1994; Jacoby 1965a:79-99; Kelm (ed.) 2006:28-30, 65-67, 253 (with photograph on p. 30); Kvam 2005:227-247). According to Heyerdahl, he immediately recognised similarities between Fougner's collected artefacts and the ones he had collected on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa. He also saw similarities between photographs he was shown of residents in the Bella Coola Valley and people he had met in Polynesia (Bell n.d. r5/s1/p.3-4). The material seems to have had a very strong effect on Heyerdahl as he decided to travel to Bella Coola to further investigate these similarities.

The impact of Fougner's material on Heyerdahl's theory can also be seen in a manuscript

entitled *Indianerne på Sydhavssøiene* [South Sea Indians] (Heyerdahl n.d.a, TR23). The manuscript features an index of some 30 pages of material culture comparison between the Pacific Northwest Coast and Polynesia. The majority of the pages show only different photographs and illustrations; the manuscript could thus be said to be primarily a picture compendium.

The material listed in the manuscript was organised into a comparative structure, with one page showing material from the Pacific Northwest Coast and the next material from Polynesia. The material compared is not directly listed, but certain artefacts can be identified from the brief descriptions; for instance, the perforated stone discs from Fatu Hiva (Melander 2019a:nos.106-112). Several petroglyphs are also mentioned, as well as stone figurines and statues seen by Heyerdahl on Fatu Hiva and Hiva Oa. The listed Northwest Coast material includes wood carvings, artefacts and petroglyphs; the majority of the entries feature comments such as 'photographed by Fougner' or 'found by Fougner' (Heyerdahl n.d.a). In this way almost the entire scope of the comparison includes material either from Heyerdahl's own collection of artefacts or from Fougner's, illustrating that the entire framework of Heyerdahl's location of the Maori-Polynesians to North America (1.4.1) rested on his own material comparison between his own collections and experiences and those of Fougner. Heyerdahl did not start to develop his experiences in the Marquesas into the Kon-Tiki theory until he met Fougner.

### *6.5.1 The Zoo Director Waldemar Dreyer*

There are also a few mentions of photographs and illustrations from published sources; in this case the *South Sea Indians* manuscript actually includes identifiable indirect or direct references, which is rare in Heyerdahl's work in this period. The key reference used by Heyerdahl in the *South Sea Indians* manuscript was Waldemar Dreyer's *Naturfolkenes liv* [The Life of Natural People] (1898).

Dreyer (1853-1924) was a Danish physician and zoo director who authored several popular books on the world's animal life (Bøving-Petersen & Dreyer 1902-1904). He also wrote popular accounts of ethnology (1898) and Danish archaeology (1900) and published an account of colonial history entitled *Den hvide Races Sejrsgang* [The White Race's Victory March] (1909-1910). Although Dreyer was an amateur researcher in his field, his work was

popular in the Scandinavian countries in its time (Bøving-Petersen 1924; Wolff & Jørgensen 1979-1984).

Heyerdahl's referencing of Dreyer's work shows his lack of knowledge of ethnography and archaeology in the period. Rather than using contemporary scientific studies or material from scholars of the different areas involved in his study, he relied on a 40-year-old popular account of the world's 'natural people' for comparison. He does not seem to have considered the reliability of Dreyer's statements questionable, as Dreyer's work featured in the bibliography of *American Indians* as well.

Heyerdahl's *South Sea Indians* refers on three occasions to material from Dreyer's chapter on Northwest Coast Indians (see Dreyer 1898:125-140). Even though, according to Heyerdahl's listing, at least one of the references should be an illustration depicting an object similar to the Marquesan drill weight, nothing of the sort can be identified in Dreyer's book. It is in general hard to see what Heyerdahl could have found to be similar to his Marquesan artefacts and experiences among the writing and illustrations in Dreyer's book. One of Heyerdahl's references to 'Northwest Coast Indian domestic utensils' (Heyerdahl n.d.a) is most likely a reference to an illustration in Dreyer's book entitled 'Northwest Coast Indian domestic utensils' (see Dreyer 1898: Fig. 80, TR58). However, what it was in this illustration that Heyerdahl found to be similar to his Marquesan material is difficult to say. The vast difference in execution, function, content and purpose of the material culture between the two areas does not aid the understanding of Heyerdahl's comparison, and his brief comments do not make matters any clearer.

On the other hand, Dreyer's description of 'Australasia' and Polynesia (Dreyer 1898:337-438) includes some interesting comparisons for the state of Heyerdahl's theory at the time. Dreyer claimed that the region (Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia) was inhabited by two different races, one dark (Papuan) and one fair (Malays), the first being the more ancient. He believed the Polynesians to be of Asiatic Malay origin (1898:337-338) and claimed that similarities between the different Polynesian groups indicated that they must have departed from an original source at a rather recent date (1898:359). Dreyer did not give a precise date but stated that the 'Hawaiki' of Maori legends was the same as the Samoan island of Savai'i (1898:392) and that New Zealand had been settled no later than five to ten centuries earlier (1898:393). He thus suggested a date from around AD 1000 to 1400 for the settlement of New Zealand. This was important for Dreyer as he had noted that when the Polynesians





Since Dreyer's writings about Polynesia include several statements which, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, were not known to Heyerdahl in 1937-1938, it seems unlikely that Heyerdahl could have read Dreyer's book before the Marquesas journey. For instance, Dreyer wrote that the paradisaical image of the early explorers was heavily exaggerated and that in fact Tahiti and other parts of Polynesia were not a paradise (Dreyer 1898:361-362). He also wrote that dogs, chickens and pigs were well known to the Polynesians prior to European contact (1898:366), something Heyerdahl was not familiar with in 1937-1938 (5.5.2.1). Dreyer also mentioned the extensive collections of Polynesian artefacts in the Ethnographical Museum of Copenhagen (1898:387), which would have been of interest to Heyerdahl had he been drawn to Polynesian archaeology and ethnography prior to the Marquesas journey. It therefore seems that Heyerdahl had not even read this type of popular ethnographical encyclopaedias prior to the journey. However, he came to rely heavily on such information when he decided after his return from the Marquesas to focus his attention on Polynesian migration patterns. This also highlights Heyerdahl's meeting with Fougner as the pivotal moment for Heyerdahl transforming his Marquesas experiences into the Kon-Tiki theory. It was after he had met Fougner that he started to look for literature on archaeology and ethnography.

### *6.5.2 National Geographic Magazine's Influence on Heyerdahl*

In addition to Dreyer's *Naturfolkenes Liv*, there are three further indirect, but identifiable, references in the *South Sea Indians* manuscript, listing images from Tiahuanaco, Mexico – according to Heyerdahl a 'Stone relief, mysterious ancestors of the Zapotec' (TR50) – and 'Florenze', Arizona. All of these illustrations come from editions of the *National Geographic Magazine* from 1929 and 1930 (see Heyerdahl n.d.a).

The reference to petroglyphs from 'Florenze' (Florence in original) in Arizona can be sourced to an article by Frederick Simpich (1878-1950). The article *Arizona Comes of Age* is about the contemporary state of Arizona, but features a photograph of a man investigating petroglyphs at a large rock in 'Florence, Arizona' (Simpich 1929:12). As with the references to illustrations in Dreyer's work, it is hard to see what in the imagery Heyerdahl could have found similar to his recording of petroglyphs on Fatu Hiva.

The Mexican stone relief is presumably one of those depicted in several different



photographs in another article by Simpich in the 1930 July issue of the magazine, entitled *North America's Oldest Metropolis* (Simpich 1930:72-73, 78). One illustration of a step-pyramid structure features a caption claiming that masks with 'markedly Egyptian features', as well as other masks of 'mongoloid' and 'negroid' features, had been found in the pyramid (Simpich 1930:78).

The third reference is to A. F. Tschiffely's description of his two-and-a-half-year journey by horse from Buenos Aires to Washington D.C. (Tschiffely 1929). The article features several photographs from Tiahuanaco (Tschiffely 1929:158, 168-169). The captions describe the 'cyclopean stone pillars' of Tiahuanaco as a mystery on which one could only speculate in vain (Tschiffely 1929:158). Inca and pre-Inca masonry is further described as made with unbelievable precision (Tschiffely 1929:168-169). The same terminology of 'cyclopean stone carvers' in the Tiahuanaco area is used by Heyerdahl in early publications (see further 7.2).

None of the abovementioned references were included in the bibliography for *American Indians*. However, Tschiffely's article references another publication in *National Geographic Magazine* about Tiahuanaco, S. E. McMillin's *The Heart of Aymará Land* (1927), which feature in the bibliography of *American Indians*.

#### 6.5.2.1 Tiahuanaco and the Kon-Tiki Theory

McMillin's paper includes several connections to Heyerdahl's work. It does not mention the legend of Con-Ticci Viracocha but talks extensively about sun-worship in relation to the monuments at Tiahuanaco. The Akapana structure is described as a step-pyramid, and the stone slabs erected at the sites are compared to European 'Menhirs and dolmens' (cf. Heyerdahl 1941a:21; 7.2). It is also pointed out that the Tiahuanaco slabs differ from the European ones in having anthropomorphic carved features; at the bottom of the page, either the editor or the author 'recommended for comparison' Katherine Routledge's 1921 contribution to the magazine about Easter Island (McMillin 1927:218). The article also features a colour plate (No. I.) of balsa boats on Lake Titicaca, similar to those Heyerdahl later used for the *Ra Expedition*. The caption states that balsa boats needed to be brought up on land to dry out, otherwise they would eventually sink (cf. Heyerdahl 1948a:7-17:7.4.2.2).

McMillin also categorised the Tiahuanaco site into two different cultural phases: an original 'high culture' to which all 'advanced' stone work was attributed, as well as pots with 'swastika'

patterns, and a second group, a violent and destructive warrior people from whom the contemporary Aymará population was directly descended, which had invaded the site and destroyed the old culture (McMillin 1927:246). It is worth noticing the difference here between McMillin's interpretation of Tiahuanaco's prehistory and that of Posnansky (5.5.2.3), as well as how the Kon-Tiki theory's suggested historical development for Tiahuanaco (1.4.1) closely corresponds to McMillin's sequence.

As this illustrates, McMillin's article includes several central themes and ideas later expressed by Heyerdahl. Since there is no direct reference to the paper in Heyerdahl's early manuscripts or his 1941 *International Science* publication (which does not feature a bibliography, 7.2), it is uncertain when Heyerdahl acquainted himself with McMillin's article. However, it is certain that he did read it, as it features in the bibliography for *American Indians*. From the connection to the articles Heyerdahl did reference, and the kind of material he was reading in the period, it is reasonable to suggest that Heyerdahl also read McMillin's article at an early stage of his development of the Kon-Tiki theory. Expressions used to describe stone statues at Tiahuanaco, referring to them as 'menhirs and dolmens' and 'cyclopean' in McMillin's article, were also used to describe the same features in Heyerdahl's first publication of the theory in 1941 (7.2). This further suggests an intertextual (dialogism) connection between Heyerdahl's early publications and manuscripts and McMillin's article.

In general the direct connection between the Marquesan temple-people and Tiahuanaco is somewhat more enigmatic in Heyerdahl's writing than his connection between the Polynesians and North America. It does not appear at all in *Searching for Paradise*, but was defined as a part of the theory by 1941 (7.2). His race tree (Ill.23) in the *Who's who* (Heyerdahl n.d.c) manuscript suggests a racial connection between the 'Tiahuanaco people' and the 'Easter Island people', illustrating that this idea was part of the theory already in 1939; evidently, though, still without the white bearded men part of the theory. Heyerdahl's later material culture comparison to Tiahuanaco centres around the so-called Bennett monolith (Heyerdahl 1952:347-423), which was discovered by archaeologist Wendell Bennett (1905-1953) in 1932 (Bennett 1934). The discovery of the Bennett monolith and the abovementioned articles in *National Geographic Magazine* illustrate a contemporary popular interest in the Tiahuanaco site (see also Scarborough 2008) and thus also the possibility that Heyerdahl decided on Tiahuanaco as the origin for the temple-people due to it being one of the few sites in South America he was familiar with. In *American Indians* Heyerdahl mentions

several other South and Central American sites with anthropomorphic stone statues (Heyerdahl 1952:347-423), but none of these are mentioned by Heyerdahl before that, suggesting that he gained knowledge of the sites while doing library studies in the US and Canada in the 1940s (chapter 7). This of course also includes San Agustín in Colombia, which Heyerdahl in 1974 claimed to have been introduced to by Lie (5.5.1.1). The Tiahuanaco origin of the *temple-people* is thus likely to have come, if not directly from McMillin's article, then at least from similar sources.

## 6.6 Summary and Conclusion

After returning to Norway in 1938, Heyerdahl kept busy with a lecture tour, finding a home for his family and writing his travelogue. The book, focused on the escape from civilisation theme and Heyerdahl's criticism of modern civilisation, seems to have done fairly well for a debut work by an unestablished writer. On the other hand, it includes very little material to suggest that Heyerdahl had reached any advanced stage in the development of his theory at the time.

This indicates that Heyerdahl started working on the theory first in the latter part of the year 1938, which questions the idea launched in recent criticism of Heyerdahl being influenced by the race theorist Günther after they met briefly in February 1938. In any case, the possible influence on Heyerdahl's theory by Günther can be firmly disputed as Günther's thoughts on race clearly deviate from Heyerdahl's. Heyerdahl was most likely oblivious of Günther's ideas or failed to understand them. Apparent similarities between the two men's Nordacist ideas cannot be said to indicate a direct connection. However, Heyerdahl could have picked up such ideas from his own social circle.

The early manuscripts and drafts of the Kon-Tiki theory that exist can instead be demonstrated to show an evident influence from one of Günther's peers, the Norwegian amateur physical anthropologist Bryn, and his work on the history of human races. Several connecting points in the early outline of Heyerdahl's theory can be found to Bryn's work, above all the idea of isolation centres and the migration of the Indo-American race, which Heyerdahl would later connect to his second Pacific migration wave of the Maori-Polynesians. Still, Bryn's work seems mainly to have provided the background for Heyerdahl's theory and he already took steps away from Bryn's theory at this stage, especially

through his emphasis on migration over the seas rather than across no longer existing land-bridges. This connected both to the zoogeographical ideas Heyerdahl had gained from his time at the University and to the late chronology he imagined for the settlement of Polynesia.

Heyerdahl seems to have adopted this late chronology from the work of the Danish zoo director and popular ethnographer Dreyer. Heyerdahl's early manuscripts, as well as his discussion as late as *American Indians*, show Dreyer's influence in Heyerdahl's argument that the existence of a late Stone Age culture in Polynesia excluded a possible migration from Asia.

The fact that Dreyer's work includes information that Heyerdahl was unaware of during the Marquesas journey and at the time he wrote his travelogue – for instance, the occurrence of dogs in Polynesia prior to European contact – suggests that Heyerdahl did not read Dreyer's book until after the travelogue manuscript had been finalised.

The decisive factor in the period therefore seems to have been Heyerdahl's meeting with Fougner. As is indicated by Heyerdahl's early outlines of the theory and the biographical narrative, Fougner showed Heyerdahl photographs and artefacts from British Columbia. Heyerdahl found these to be identical to the people he had met and the artefacts he had collected in Polynesia. The connection the early manuscript shows between Heyerdahl's meeting with Fougner and his readings of Dreyer and Bryn's popular ethnology and anthropology work suggests that the meeting with Fougner gave Heyerdahl the idea that the Polynesians, the second wave of migrants to arrive in the Marquesas, had come from North America. It therefore seems that it was only after this realisation in late 1938 that Heyerdahl decided to engage more deeply with the question of Polynesian origins, first by compiling information from popular scientific work available in Norway, and then by organising an expedition to British Columbia to investigate the matter further. It also seems that around the same time, Heyerdahl drew a connection between the stone statues of Eastern Polynesia and those of the Tiahuanaco site of modern day Bolivia through reading various adventure articles in *National Geographic Magazine*. However, there is still no mention in Heyerdahl's work of white bearded men by this stage in the latter part of 1939, suggesting that the theory was far from finished at that time. In the following chapter Heyerdahl's further development of the theory in the US and Canada in the 1940s will be discussed in more detail.

## *Chapter 7 – Science Fiction: The Development of the Kon-Tiki Theory 1940-1952*

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, Heyerdahl does not seem to have been fully content with his debut as author, *Searching for Paradise* (6.2). Neither did the actual Marquesas journey fulfil his expectations. In his correspondence with Schreiner and Wollebæk in 1938 and 1939, Heyerdahl expressed plans for a new journey to the Marquesas Islands on several occasions. The purpose of this second journey was apparently to obtain more extensive zoological and archaeological/ethnographic collections (Heyerdahl 1939b, 1939d). To ensure a successful outcome for this enterprise, Heyerdahl considered it necessary not to live like a savage (Heyerdahl 1939c), he had fully given up on his ideas of a primitive life after the journey. In a letter to Schreiner, it also becomes evident that Heyerdahl considered the conflicts he had got into with the Fatu Hivan population and French authorities (4.3) as personal insults. He wrote to Schreiner that a second expedition would allow him to get 'revange' [revenge] on the Polynesians (Heyerdahl 1939d). The correspondence material also discloses that in early 1939 Heyerdahl was working with the development of his Pacific migration theory. Interviewed by Bell, Heyerdahl said that he had started his studies of Polynesian origins in the Oslo University Library upon his return from the Marquesas Islands (Bell n.d. r5/s1/p. 9) – most likely after meeting Fougner and referring to the works of Bryn and Dreyer discussed in the previous chapter. In March 1939, Heyerdahl wrote to Schreiner and asked if he were aware of any physical anthropology connections between American and Polynesian populations (Heyerdahl 1939b). Around the same time, in a letter to Wollebæk, he wrote 'I would claim that the key to unlocking the riddle of Polynesian origins lies hidden in the Marquesan jungle' (Heyerdahl 1939b,TR13). By this time Heyerdahl seems to have decided to pursue his Pacific Migration theory. Even if the correspondence material suggests that Heyerdahl was interested above all in returning to the Marquesas, he instead ended up following Fougner's lead and started to arrange for an expedition to British Columbia. Heyerdahl left Norway in September of 1939, together with his wife and newborn baby. Equipped with a letter of introduction from Bonnevie (Bonnevie 1939), Heyerdahl had the opportunity to do archival research at the Provincial Museum of British Columbia. He also briefly visited Kwakiutl tribes in the Bella Coola valley and made recordings of a few

petroglyph sites in Bella Coola (Kvam 2005:227-246). Unfortunately for Heyerdahl, the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the German occupation of Norway in the Spring of 1940 would make it difficult for him to proceed with his plans. What the actual plans of the expedition really were, other than visiting Kwakiutl groups and the petroglyph sites Heyerdahl had been informed of by Fougner, is not completely clear from the archival material. The scrapbook indicates that the journey might have been undertaken partly due to the Heyerdahls wanting to get away from Europe and the impending War (Heyerdahl & Torp- Heyerdahl n.d.).

Heyerdahl's relocation to the North American continent also meant that he started to publish in English-language journals. This chapter will examine the development of Heyerdahl's theory during the 1940s by looking at the articles and papers he published, but also by discussing his manuscript *Polynesia and America* (Heyerdahl n.d.b.). The chapter will also address the sale of his ethnographic/archaeological collection from the Marquesas Islands and its importance for Heyerdahl, and finally the chapter will briefly outline the development of the theory after Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki Expedition* in 1947.

## 7.1 *Turning Back Tides*

In 1940, Heyerdahl's replies to a questionnaire on the status of the environment, nature preservation and human and cultural conditions in the Pacific islands formed part of the proceedings of the sixth Pacific Science Congress (Heyerdahl 1940). This was Heyerdahl's first publication in another language than Norwegian. The volume was edited by the Swedish botanist Carl Skottsberg, who would later debate Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki theory (7.5). In this questionnaire Heyerdahl presented a gloomy picture of the future for the Marquesan population (Heyerdahl 1940:545-546). He said that the practice of traditional culture was limited to one 70-year-old man (1940:544), presumably Tei Tetua. Heyerdahl blamed the loss of culture on modern civilisation and particularly the missionaries, whom he also considered partly responsible for the miserable health conditions he had encountered (1940:544-545; 4.3.2; 4.3.4). The questionnaire gives no indication of his ideas on the origin and migrations of either people or botanical or zoological material, and in general shows strong similarity with his anti-modernity and escape from civilisation ideas prior to the Marquesas journey.

In September 1940, an article about the Marquesas journey was accepted by *National*

*Geographic Magazine*, and was published in the January 1941 issue. According to Kvam, the language editing was done by Doris Milligan, a Canadian journalist employed by the *Vancouver Sun* (Kvam 2005:255-256). The article was still very much in the style and content of Heyerdahl's anti-modernity ideas of the period (3.2), heavily focused on the romantic escaping civilisation part of the journey, and even though the last pages include some mention of troubles in paradise (Heyerdahl 1941b:135-136), the text's emphasis was on presenting an idealised and romanticised picture of the journey as the couple's 'honeymoon' and jungle adventure. In general the article follows the content of *Searching for Paradise*, and the 28 printed pages included as many as 34 illustrations, all photographs by Heyerdahl and Liv.

The Nazi occupation of Norway in April 1940 meant that the Heyerdahl couple could no longer receive money from their parents. They found themselves in a type of financial hardship they had never experienced before. Their financial difficulties forced Heyerdahl to take temporary jobs with a Canadian mining company and later at the Baltimore shipyards (Evensberget 1994:47-60; Jacoby 1965a:100-182; Kvam 2005:227-280). It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the article was written mainly out of financial necessity. However, it is also possible that Heyerdahl thought of *National Geographic* as a real scientific journal of some importance. He had already used articles from the journal in his research (6.5.2) and according to Kvam, the *National Geographic* article 'Turning back tides in the South Seas' was originally intended to include discussion of Heyerdahl's theories of Polynesian migration, but the section was eventually cut before publication (Kvam 2005:255-256).

## 7.2 *International Science*

Even if declined by *National Geographic*, Heyerdahl would get a chance to publish his ideas in 1941, as a paper entitled 'Did Polynesian Culture Originate in America?' was accepted for publication in the first (and only) issue of the journal *International Science*, released in May 1941. The journal was started as an outlet for European scholars in exile, and Heyerdahl was not paid for his contribution. That he had been asked in the first place was due to a newspaper controversy over his theory with noted Pacific ethnographer Margaret Mead (1901-1978) (Kvam 2005:258).

There is no doubt about *International Science*'s status as a serious scientific journal. The editorial board consisted of Gustave E. von Grünebaum (1909-1972), an expert on Arabic

culture and later professor at the University of Chicago and the University of California (Rosenthal 1973); Adriaan J. Barnouw (1877-1968), translator and literature scholar, whose research included studies of cultural interactions in the Dutch colonial realm (Lammers 2013); Paolo Milano (1904-1988), professor of literature and literature critic for the *New York Times* (Anon. XVI. 1988); and well-known ethnologist/archaeologist Robert von Heine-Geldern (1885-1968) (e.g. Jettmar 1969; Kirchhoff 1969). The advisory committee included other famous names such as Franz Boas and Max Horkheimer (*International Science* volume 1, number 1, 1941). It was therefore an auspicious environment for the presentation of Heyerdahl's theory, especially since he lacked an academic degree.

The paper, around 6,500 words in length, did not feature a bibliography or standard academic referencing practice, and completely lacked subheadings. In addition, it jumped from one topic to the next without any clearly detectable order. It thus gives an overall impression of careless presentation and scholarship. Heyerdahl's lack of formal academic training is evident. More interesting is the state in which the theory was presented, and the development it had taken after Heyerdahl left Norway in late 1939.

### *7.2.1 The Kon-Tiki Theory in 'Did Polynesian Culture Originate in America?'*

The dual settlement of the Marquesas that Heyerdahl had suggested in *Searching for Paradise* had reached a stage, some three years later, where the origin of the first mysterious settlers could be revealed. Heyerdahl wrote that he was able, after a year of fieldwork and other studies in Bella Coola, to present evidence for a dual migration which explained the settlement of Polynesia:

(1) A Pre-Incan civilization, with its centre near Lake Titicaca and along the Peruvian coast below, seems to have swept the islands at a comparatively early period, via Easter Island; while (2) a later immigration, the descendants of which dominate the present Polynesian race, reached the islands via Hawaii from the Bella Coola area of British Columbia about 1000 A. D. (Heyerdahl 1941a:18).

Heyerdahl held on to these two pinpointed places of origin throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This illustrates that his theory was in large part developed in the period between 1938 and 1941. The paper also summarised his studies up to that point. Already on the first page, while



posing the Polynesian problem, Heyerdahl concluded that earlier theories of land-bridges and sunken continents had been firmly disproven by geological and zoological studies (1941a:15), thus connecting to the ideas he had encountered at Oslo University (chapter 2). Further connection to theories he had been exposed to at Oslo University can be seen in Heyerdahl's emphasis of the importance of trade winds and ocean currents, particularly the Humboldt Current (Heyerdahl called it the 'Peruvian current' in the paper, for reasons unknown) off the Peruvian coast (1941a:20).

The influence of Dreyer's and Bryn's popular works on ethnology and physical anthropology (chapter 6) is also evident. Heyerdahl, following Dreyer's discussion, concluded that the similarities among different Polynesian groups prevented their separation from being very ancient; instead, Polynesia had been populated recently (1941a:16). He argued that the Polynesians were undoubtedly of an Asiatic racial and linguistic origin, but claimed, following Bryn's idea, that a split had occurred when the Malay Archipelago was still attached to the Asian continent, and from their Southeast Asian homeland, the race had migrated in different directions, some down to what would become the Malay Archipelago, others all the way across the Bering Strait to the American continent (1941a:16, 20). A migration across the Pacific Ocean from the Asian continent or the Malay Archipelago was impossible due to the Austro-Melanesian race border (1941a:15). Just as in the preceding manuscripts (Heyerdahl n.d.a, n.d.c), and later on in *American Indians*, Heyerdahl based his argumentation on Dreyer's idea that the Stone Age stage of Polynesian culture suggested a split at an early phase from the race's Asian homeland. He argued that since the Polynesians were Stone Age people and had a sea-oriented culture, it was extremely unlikely that their culture had been preserved in isolation in the interior of India or another inland Asian area until the recent date they had ventured out into the Pacific island world; instead, they must have left early and occupied another coastal area before reaching Polynesia (1941a:16-17).

Of the utmost importance for Heyerdahl in the paper was the chronology. He presented a similar chronology to Dreyer's, claiming that the two migration waves had reached Polynesia between AD 500 and AD 1000. These late dates excluded the idea of land-bridges or sunken continents as possible migration paths. The late chronology also meant that the lack of Stone Age culture on the Asian continent made it impossible that the Polynesians had migrated directly from Asia (1941a:16-17). He further claimed that the corresponding material culture that was found in Polynesia and the Americas was thousands of years older in the Americas,

and therefore could not have been the result of a Polynesian influence on the Americas (1941a:17). The claim was illustrated by Heyerdahl's statement that pottery had only been found in Polynesia on Easter Island, which suggested to him that pottery was not a part of the later Polynesian culture, but of an older culture of a Peruvian origin (1941a:21). It has not been possible to verify what source Heyerdahl based this claim on; pottery is not known from any archaeological assemblage on Easter Island. A similar claim was made for the existence of the *rongorongo* script; Heyerdahl described it as a sort of hieroglyphic writing and considered the Easter Island culture too young to have been able to develop it naturally (1941a:22).

This older culture from Peru was only outlined very briefly in the paper. Heyerdahl mentioned that the people of the Peruvian culture were 'superior workers of cyclopic stone'. It is uncertain what Heyerdahl actually meant by the term 'cyclopic'. It is likely that he borrowed the term from the description of masonry and stone statues in Tiahuanaco in the *National Geographic* articles he had studied back in Norway, showing the influence of these sources on the early development of his theory (6.5.2). Heyerdahl further argued that the architectural remains (stone statues and platforms) of the 'superior workers of cyclopic stone' could be found in various places in Polynesia, and as far off as Kusaie [Kosrae, Caroline Islands, Micronesia]. The territory of his *temple people* therefore seems to have expanded beyond the Easter Island and Marquesas Islands limitation in the manuscripts from 1938-1939 (6.4, 6.5). Heyerdahl further wrote that the stone statue makers had originally come from the Lake Titicaca area, as the architectural remains resembled the statues of Tiahuanaco and the Akapana step-pyramid; he also compared the different areas' 'dolmen and menhirs' (cf. 6.5.2.1) and postulated a connection between the 'sun-gate' at Tiahuanaco and 'the gate of Tongatabu' (1941a:21), more commonly known as the Ha'amonga 'a Maui<sup>3</sup>.

### 7.2.2 *The Importance of His Own Experiences*

In the comparison of stone monuments between the two areas, Heyerdahl's paper reveals an important aspect of his argument, namely the value he placed on his own experience and ability to recognise parallels between objects and remains. Heyerdahl's argument for the

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<sup>3</sup> Currently being considered for UNESCO World Heritage status as part of the 'Ancient Capitals of the Kingdom of Tonga' nomination (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5167>). Accessed 9 Mar. 2019.

cultural connections between Polynesia and Tiahuanaco rested on the sentence: 'Remarkable resemblance [sic.] which I have observed indicate a pre-historic connection between the statues of the two areas' (1941a:21). The similarity of the stone statues was solely based on his own observations and his opinion. Heyerdahl did not try to present any argument, method, or criteria allowing others to confirm or challenge his observations. This has an obvious parallel in the story of Bonnevie's photograph of an elk or a reindeer (2.1). Heyerdahl thought that his own observations were sufficient to prove the prehistoric connection.

Heyerdahl's use of his personal opinions, observations, and recordings does not just occur in this instance but is actually found throughout the paper. Even the reason for writing the paper was based on his own experience:

When, in 1937, I carried out excavations in the Marquesas group of south-eastern Polynesia, I found certain evidence which led me to believe strongly in an American origin of those early islanders. Returning to Europe I decided to take this question up for further examination, and today, after a year of research along the British Columbian coast, I believe to possess [sic.] sufficient material to trace two separate migrations from the American mainland into the Polynesian island-world (1941a:18).

What this evidence was that Heyerdahl had found was not presented in detail in the paper; however, as he wrote, it made him 'believe in an American origin'. Heyerdahl became a believer in the theory in the Marquesas Islands. His personal experience had formed the idea, which of course is not unusual, but it is odd that his experiences and beliefs, as mentioned above with the stone statues, also formed the evidence he presented. A further illustration can be found in Heyerdahl's discussion of the physical anthropological or racial similarity he believed to exist between Northwest Coast American populations and the Polynesians: 'In my own experience of these peoples, having sojourned both among these Indians and the Polynesians, I have noted the remarkable similarity between the two in physiognomy, structure and intellectual characteristics' (1941a:20)'. The racial connection suggested by Bryn was mentioned in Heyerdahl's paper, but the key evidence was still Heyerdahl's own observations of the similarity between the 'Indians' and the 'Polynesians', which he had gained from 'sojourned', that is to say *being there* (1.6.1). On this point, it is worth noting that other contemporary studies also deployed 'expert gaze' opinions of this kind (e.g. Howes 2013:37-38, 187-188, 207; Sysling 2016:2-8; see also 6.3.1.1).

The Melanesian 'somatological' component among the Polynesians, which Heyerdahl claimed to be 'indisputable', was likewise explained using his own judgement and perception

of the capacity of Melanesians as sailors:

It is, however, quite evident that the Melanesians, who are poor sailors, could not, in the face of the prevailing winds, discover and settle upon islands so widely separated as those of the Hawaiian Group, Easter Islands [*sic.*] and New Zealand. I would therefore suggest, basing my idea upon various traditions and other evidence, that the Melanesian elements were brought into the Eastern Pacific island-world by the early superior workers in cyclopic stone who left their architecture on various Polynesian islands (1941a:20-21).

This statement further illustrates Heyerdahl's biological determinist thought process. The Melanesians were prevented from settling Polynesia by what Heyerdahl saw as their inferior biological characteristics (1.4.2.1, 1.6.4). His racist personal opinion that Melanesians were poor sailors led him to the conclusion that they could not have been the discoverers of Polynesia but could only have been brought there by a superior people.

Personal observations are also found further on in Heyerdahl's material culture comparison between Polynesia and Northwest Coast America (1941a:23) and in his comparison of petroglyphs between the two areas: 'During my research in the two areas, I uncovered several groups of petroglyphs, particularly on Fatuhiva Island, these latter showing a marked resemblance to the Many petroglyphs of the Bella Coola Valley' (1941a:25). Similar to his statements about the stone statues, Heyerdahl did not describe or argue for how or why the petroglyphs of the two areas were similar to each other; he was satisfied with the accuracy of his own observation.

He also wrote that he had recorded place names which he found to be identical between the Americas and Polynesia (1941a:22). Again, he did not present any of the material or discuss possible problems with it; instead, he was satisfied with the credibility of his own observation, his own experience.

As mentioned above, Heyerdahl's lack of formal training shines through in the paper; he is not arguing for his theory but listing his observations. These are supposed to be acceptable not because of any intrinsic value, but because they were made by Heyerdahl. His subjective experiences and personal observations, from *being there* in the various locations, were the primary foundation on which he wanted to build the theory.

### 7.2.3 Referenced Literature in 'Did Polynesian culture...'

Given that Heyerdahl had spent a year in Canada prior to the publication, it is not surprising that his work was focused on material culture comparison between North America and Polynesia, while the South American comparison in the paper was limited. However, his comparison of Polynesian material was also weak, and the paper lacks references or indications that he had any larger degree of familiarity at this stage with key works on Polynesian archaeology. The references that can be detected, either through direct or indirect mentions in Heyerdahl's article, show that he had researched new material while he was in Canada, but that this material generally dealt with Pacific Northwest Coast archaeology.

Heyerdahl used the former woodsman, and later Berkeley professor, Ronald L. Olson's (1895-1979) (see Drucker 1981) 1927 M.A. thesis on Northwest Coast housing, canoes and adzes (Olson 1967 [1927]) for material culture comparison with his own collection from the Marquesas (Heyerdahl 1941a:18-20, 23). He also referred to A. P. Niblack's *The Coast Indians of Southern Alaska and Northern British Columbia* (1888); this title appears in the bibliography of *American Indians*. Its author, the American Navy admiral Niblack,<sup>4</sup> had no known connection to scientific institutions. His work would most likely only have been available to Heyerdahl through archival studies in Canada. Heyerdahl further made reference to the work of linguist Pliny Earle Goddard (1869-1928) (see Boas 1930; Kroeber 1929) and ethnologist Charles Hill-Tout (1858-1944) (see Hill-Tout & Maud 2014a-d; Robinson 1945); apparently he met the latter in person (Heyerdahl 1941a:20). Similarly, Heyerdahl referenced the work of controversial Canadian ethnographer/anthropologist Marius Barbeau (1883-1969) (see Harrison 2014; Nowry 1995; Nurse 2001), with whom he would later be in contact (7.4.2.2), and the New Zealand-born grand old man of Canadian anthropology/archaeology Diamond Jenness (1886-1969) (e.g. Collins 1971; Helmer 1983; Kulchyski 1993; Moreau 1972; Richling 2012). Even so, these scholars were only referenced for minor details claimed to support Heyerdahl's theory. None of them had any significant influence on the actual theory.

At this time, mid-1941, Heyerdahl also seems to have started to read the works of exploration voyagers. He mentioned Cook, Marchand, and Dixon (Heyerdahl 1941a:24), all of course connected to British Columbia. To illustrate the importance of ocean currents,

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4 [https://www.si.edu/object/siris\\_arc\\_84402](https://www.si.edu/object/siris_arc_84402). Accessed 26 Nov. 2018.

Heyerdahl used Captain Bligh, commander of HMS *Bounty*, and his drift voyage to Timor as an example (Heyerdahl 1941a:20).

Direct references to Pacific archaeological or anthropological material, on the other hand, were still scarce among the detectable sources. Heyerdahl did reference, above all as a linguistic source, Fornander (3.3.2.1), but did not seem to have been particularly impressed or inspired by Fornander's work. In addition, he mentioned Elsdon Best (3.3.2.1), suggesting that at this stage he had started to read material on New Zealand. Linguistic studies by Stucken, Dieffenbach and Keane were also briefly mentioned (Heyerdahl 1941a:23-25). Heyerdahl's discussion of Melanesian elements in the physical anthropological composition of Tahitians, Hawaiians and New Zealanders, and of Melanesian traits in the style of Easter Island and Marquesas Islands art, suggests that some sort of physical anthropology study on Polynesia must have been part of his readings, possibly a work by Louis R. Sullivan (1892-1925), which would later be of importance for *American Indians*. However, Heyerdahl's discussion of such material is too limited to allow a direct identification of the source. The mention of Melanesian elements in Easter Island art might be sourced to the works of Routledge (1919, 1921). The topic and titles of Routledge's books and papers would doubtlessly have attracted Heyerdahl, but there is no direct confirmation that he had read them at the time.

The key Pacific materials which Heyerdahl seems to have added to the mix in 1941 were instead the works of Georg Friederici and Augustin Krämer.

Friederici (1866-1947) was a German ethnologist. His work included travels and studies in North and South America, Oceania, and China (Griffin 2008:1-8; Trimborn 1948, 1961). Some of Friederici's work discussed cultural parallels and possible connections between populations on the American continents and those of Oceania (e.g. Friederici 1929). However, just as with Krämer (see below), Heyerdahl cannot really be said to have been inspired by Friederici's work. Rather, he used it predominately to show that he was not alone in his thoughts, and that vaguely similar suggestions had been made by others in the past.

Krämer (1865-1941) was a German ethnologist who had participated in several expeditions in the Pacific area between 1890 and 1911. He is best known for his work in Samoa and Micronesia (Damm 1944, 1965; Krämer 1902, 1903; Mönter 2010, with bibliography p. 236-253 on Krämer's work; Nevermann & Krämer 1938; Paret 1951; Thilenius (ed.) 1917, 1919, 1926, 1929a-b, 1932, 1935). Since Heyerdahl's paper includes no direct references, it is hard to tell exactly which of Krämer's books or papers he had read. In the *International Science*

paper Krämer is referenced twice: once for his comparisons of obsidian weaponry from the Lake Titicaca area and Easter Island, and once for comparing Samoan houses to Lake Titicaca houses (Heyerdahl 1941a:21, 25). The bibliography for *American Indians* includes two papers by Krämer, *Der Wert der Südseekeulen für Völkerbeziehungen* (1904) and *Hawaii, Ostmikronesien und Samoa* (1906). It is likely that these were the works Heyerdahl had familiarised himself with at the period.

As with Friederici and the Pacific Northwest Coast scholars, it cannot be said that Heyerdahl was directly inspired by Krämer's theories and ideas. He merely referenced them for details, generally failing to see the wider picture of the comparisons being made; for instance, some of the comparisons between America and Polynesia in the works of Friederici, Krämer, Jenness, and Barbeau were made in order to discuss environmental impacts on material culture, or on human practices in general. Heyerdahl, on the other hand, interpreted these comparisons as direct discussions of cultural impact. He seemingly grabbed at every straw he could, no matter how weak the case might have been.

As this analysis of Heyerdahl's first scientific publication from 1941 shows, his knowledge of Polynesian archaeology was still limited at this stage. His theory was mainly based on the popular works of Dreyer and Bryn, and above all on his own observations. Following his introduction to Fougner and his studies in Canada, his discussion of the different migration waves had located the origin of the later Polynesian migration wave in British Columbia. The first migration wave was described as the 'superior Tiahuanaco people', but they had not yet received their transatlantic origin, and Heyerdahl at this time only believed them to have been a South American branch of the 'Indo-American race'. His discussion of the 'sun-gates' and sun-gods of Tiahuanaco lacks the legend of Con-Ticci Viracocha; seemingly he was not yet aware of it. At the time of his first scientific publication, his theory was therefore still very much in development.

### *7.3 Finding a Peruvian Sun-god in a Shipyard in Baltimore*

After the publication of *Did Polynesian...* it would be another six years before Heyerdahl published anything on the theory again. As noted above (7.1) and in previous biographical work, the War imposed financial restrictions on the Heyerdahl couple's lifestyle, and Heyerdahl had to take various jobs to put bread on his family's table. He had initially worked

for a mining company in Canada, but in summer 1941 he left Canada and started working in a shipping yard in Baltimore (Evensberget 1994:47-60, Jacoby 1965a:100-182, Kvam 2005:227-280). Despite now having a full-time job and two small children to care for, Heyerdahl continued work on his theory.

In notes taken on the sides of letter-papers from the Bethlehem shipyard in Baltimore, where Heyerdahl was employed in late 1941 and early 1942, the name 'Con-Ticci' was marked out in capital letters with reference to Lewis Spence's book *Myths of Mexico and Peru* (1913) (Heyerdahl n.d.b). These notes are important since they suggest that it was during this time that he became acquainted with the myths of Con-Ticci Viracochoa.

The Scottish author Spence (1874-1955) published extensively on themes concerning the sunken continents of Lemuria and Atlantis, as well as various occult themes, North, Central, and South American mythologies, Egypt and Mesopotamia; he frequently used the word 'mystery' in his book titles (see Spence 1907, 1914, 1925a-b, 1926, 1929, 1930, 1933, 1943, 2010 etc.).

Spence's book on myths from Mexico and Peru (1913) and its predecessors also featured ideas and themes employed by Heyerdahl in his work. For instance, Spence claimed that a 'Caucasian' element in the civilisations of Mexico and Peru had been of the utmost importance for the development of these civilisations. He based this directly on legends of 'fair skinned, blue eyed, and bearded men' in Central American mythologies, and attempted to connect these myths with transatlantic crossings referred to in Welsh, Scottish, Irish and Scandinavian legends, seemingly in order to claim that 'Celtic people', or Scotsmen like himself, had been responsible for bringing culture to the Americas. Of importance for Heyerdahl's theory are Spence's claims that Quetzalcoatl and other figures occurring in Central and South American mythology were not gods but originally real men, 'culture heroes' (Spence 1907:71-78, 1913). Whether Heyerdahl obtained this idea directly from Spence or through an indirect route, it was of the greatest importance to him, not just for the story of Con-Ticci's migration, but also in his later works on Odin for instance (1.3, 1.4.2.2). It is evident, as with his use of Bryn, Dreyer, and *National Geographic* articles, that Heyerdahl's inspiration for central themes and ideas of his theory did not come from scientific studies, but from popular science and speculative interpretations by amateur researchers, journalists, or novelists.



### *7.3.1 Herbert Spinden and the Sale of the Marquesas Collection to Brooklyn Museum*

Having to provide for himself and his family also forced Heyerdahl to sell his ethnographical collection from the Marquesas Islands. As has been illustrated earlier in this chapter and the previous, the collection was of the utmost importance for Heyerdahl's development of the Kon-Tiki theory. It was comparison of his collected artefacts with information from Fougner that led him to place the origins of the Polynesians in North America (6.5). However, this scientific interest in the collection was originally of secondary interest for Heyerdahl. From newspaper interviews and correspondence with Wollebæk at Oslo University around 1938-1939, Heyerdahl's initial interest in the collection was clearly financial, and he tried to sell it to fund new travels (Anon. XIII 1938; Den Stundesløse 1938a-b; Heyerdahl 1939b-c; Stroller 1938; see also Heyerdahl 1938e; Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b). After meeting Fougner, Heyerdahl changed his mind and decided to bring the collection with him when he and Liv travelled to North America in late 1939. Heyerdahl then lugged the collection around Canada and the US, until it was eventually sold in 1942 to the Brooklyn Museum in New York City, through the mediation of the Museum's curator Herbert Spinden.

The collection was sold, almost intact, to the Museum in April/May 1942. An initial offer was made on 20 April 1942 for a sum of 1,000 USD (BRM 1942a). However, the final decision was not taken until 13 May (Montgomery 1942a). Heyerdahl received a 50 USD advance on 22 April, and of the remaining amount, 150 USD was to be paid to Heyerdahl's benefactor Thomas Olsen (probably settling a debt) and 800 USD was to be paid out in eight monthly instalments of 100 USD to Liv Torp-Heyerdahl (BRM 1942b). The distribution of the sale price to Olsen and Liv strongly suggests that Heyerdahl sold the collection out of financial need.

At the time of the sale the Brooklyn Museum was hosting an exhibition on Pacific Art. A letter from Heyerdahl to the Museum's director Laurance Roberts (see Pace 2002) shows that Roberts had invited Heyerdahl to the opening of this exhibition on 28 May 1942. Heyerdahl responded saying that he was looking forward to meeting Roberts and Spinden in person (Heyerdahl 1942c).

Spinden (1879-1967) had been a prominent voice in North and Central American archaeology from the 1910s onwards (e.g. Spinden 1975, 2012 etc.). In 1929 he became

curator of Brooklyn Museum's ethnographic collection, a position he held until he retired in 1950. In addition to his archaeological projects, Spinden apparently worked as a spy for the American government in Latin America (Browman 2011; Harris & Sadler 2003:270, 285-287; Rosoff 2005). Although he seems to have helped Heyerdahl establish himself in the US in the 1940s (7.4.1), and Spinden's 1937 paper 'Water Flows, Wind Blows, Civilizations Die' could easily have been the catchphrase for Heyerdahl's work, there is actually no evidence of direct scholarly connection between the two. Some biographers have claimed Spinden as the role model for Heyerdahl's satirical portrait of the academic world in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1.1; Heyerdahl 1948a:18-22; Jacoby 1968:150-151; Kock-Johansen 2003:32; Kvam 2005:369-370). However, it is questionable whether Spinden was ever shown a manuscript by Heyerdahl or informed of his theories (7.4.2.2).

In a letter sent on 16 April 1942, Spinden offered to lend his New York City apartment to Heyerdahl for free between 20 April and 10 May, while he was travelling in Mexico (Spinden 1942). Since the dates coincide with the purchase of the collection, it is possible that Heyerdahl, finding out about the Pacific Art exhibition, had contacted the Museum offering the collection for sale, and had consequently been invited to New York by Spinden for the museum staff to examine the collection, and possibly negotiate a deal.

The only object from the collection that seems to have been displayed since its acquisition over 75 years ago is an elaborately carved sinker (Melander 2019a:no. 125), which was included in the *Art of the South Pacific* exhibition at the Hudson River Museum in 1974 (Anon. XVII. 1974: Cat. no. 183). However, a letter from the director's secretary to Spinden about the finalisation of the acquisition indicates that several of the objects were on display in May 1942 (Montgomery 1942a). A photograph in the Kon-Tiki Museum Archive also shows that Heyerdahl had had parts of the collection displayed in a local bookshop in Larvik in 1938 (Ill. 22). With these exceptions and some brief mentions of the objects in Heyerdahl's *American Indians*, the collection has had a relatively anonymous existence after its sale to the Brooklyn Museum.

## 7.4 *The Escape from New York*

In July 1942, shortly after the collection had been sold, Heyerdahl joined the Norwegian overseas army (1.3). The period directly leading up to Heyerdahl joining the army was

intensely busy for him. While staying in Spinden's apartment in New York, Heyerdahl wrote to Liv that he was doing 15 hour shifts in the New York libraries. He claimed that he was working as hard as he could to finish his monograph before he joined the army (Heyerdahl 1942b). In mid-June, while still in New York, he wrote to Liv that he had substantially altered and revised his work from *Bella Coola* (Heyerdahl 1942d). This suggests that Heyerdahl's theory underwent important changes between May 1941 and July 1942, most likely including the discovery of the legend of Con-Ticci Viracocha (7.3).

Heyerdahl's time in the army caused a hiatus in his work. However, he continued his studies to the degree it was possible even while serving in the army. In January 1944, for instance, he wrote to Liv that he was now studying physical anthropology (Heyerdahl 1944a). By the 1940s the theory had come to be the gravitating spot for Heyerdahl and its acceptance among Pacific scholars a main objective. In June 1944 he wrote to Liv: 'First we have to get my South Seas theory acknowledged. We cannot be truly free until the theory is accepted, first there and then can we start to live a full life' (Heyerdahl 1944c). Heyerdahl put life on hold for the theory, and not even the raging World War could come between him and his theory.

#### *7.4.1 Friends in Need – Heyerdahl and Brooklyn Museum 1945-1946*

Heyerdahl was relieved from his military service in July 1945. A few months later his family returned from the US (Kvam 2005:369-386). The Heyerdahl family had emerged from the War without casualties. In a letter to Spinden, Heyerdahl wrote that even his and Liv's home in Lillehammer had survived the War, although it had been used (through Heyerdahl's mother) as a regional base for the resistance movement (Heyerdahl 1945).

Heyerdahl wasted no time after the War and was already in contact with Spinden in December 1945. He expressed his gratitude for Spinden's help during his last visit to New York, suggesting that the purchase of the Marquesas collection was probably partly due to the sympathy of museum staff. Liv had already written to Spinden in 1943 to thank him for all he had done for her husband (Torp-Heyerdahl 1943). Clearly Spinden's efforts went beyond what was expected for a business transaction. As with his publication in *International Science*, the solidarity among researchers during the War years was very beneficial for Heyerdahl, putting bread on the table in harsh times and giving him a foot in the door to the scientific community. In his letter Heyerdahl also informed Spinden that he had resumed his Polynesian

research and planned a trip to New York the following summer to continue his studies. However, he faced one major obstacle, the restriction placed on currency exchange, and was therefore again asking Spinden for practical assistance (Heyerdahl 1945).

Spinden reassured Heyerdahl that the Museum would do everything in its power to assist him (Spinden 1946). In September Heyerdahl utilised this offer, asking – and receiving – help to obtain permission to exchange currency (Heyerdahl 1946a-b; Zimmern 1946b). In the associated correspondence it becomes clear that Heyerdahl's credibility as a scientist, the reason he was allowed to exchange currency, depended on the Marquesas collection. The assistant curator at Brooklyn Museum wrote on Spinden's behalf to the Royal Norwegian Information Service:

I should like to recommend that a grant be made to Mr. Thor Heyerdahl in connection with his studies in the United States and Canada. We have followed his work with much interest and know that the collections which he made in the Marquesas Islands were of excellent quality (Zimmern 1946a).

This again highlights the immense importance the ethnographic collection and his contacts with the Brooklyn Museum had for the early stage of Heyerdahl's career. The collection was viewed as a testimony to his competence. Brooklyn Museum's support of Heyerdahl, in good faith, sanctioned his position as a researcher and gave credibility to his work.

#### *7.4.2 Polynesia and America 1946*

Heyerdahl arrived in New York in the middle of June 1946 and spent most of his time there engaging in library research. In a letter to Spinden he wrote, 'I have spent the summer doing supplementary work at the local libraries, where I have received great help from Dr. Schuster' (Heyerdahl 1946a).

Carl Schuster (1904-1969), an American art historian, spent his life collecting iconographic parallels in art, disregarding geographical or chronological borders, in search of an original human expression (Cammann 1972; Carpenter 2006; Schuster 1951; Schuster & Carpenter 1996; see also Heyerdahl 1948a:20-21). Schuster's work might be said to have walked a fine line between genius and lunacy, but his open-minded attitude to cultural parallels and his large collection of so-called similar artistic expressions between various regions would doubtless

have appealed to Heyerdahl. It is less likely that Schuster had any direct influence on Heyerdahl's work; however, Heyerdahl would have gained much from the acquaintance, especially in terms of finding and providing possible cultural parallels and source material.

Heyerdahl's studies in New York resulted in the circulation of a new draft of the theory, entitled *Polynesia and America* (Heyerdahl n.d.b). The manuscript included the work Heyerdahl had done after his 1941 publication in *International Science* up to his studies in New York in summer 1946. The manuscript features some 590 hand-written pages in a very rough state, filled with corrections and edits made directly on the pages or through cut-outs and attached pieces of paper. The manuscript shows some structural similarity to the later publication *American Indians* but lacks several of the chapters and themes of the latter. The most noticeable difference is in the bibliography. For *Polynesia and America* Heyerdahl only listed around 145 works, compared to the approximately 1000 papers and books in the bibliography of *American Indians*. *Polynesia and America* was very much a work in progress.

In contrast to *American Indians*, the *Polynesia and America* manuscript actually includes a summary of Heyerdahl's theory. In *Polynesia and America* the theory follows a similar structure to Heyerdahl's 1941 *Did Polynesian...* paper (7.2). However, Heyerdahl greatly expanded on details about the origins of the migration waves, which were identified as the Kwakiutl tribes of British Columbia and the 'Tiahuanaco empire' in Bolivia. The South American migration party was also mentioned in connection with the Central and South American legends of Quetzalcoatl and Con-Ticci Viracocha. They were also now defined as transatlantic, blue-eyed, fair-skinned men with beards (Heyerdahl n.d.b:560-590).

#### *7.4.2.1 Alpheus Hyatt Verrill and Science Fiction Writing*

The discussion of white bearded men in Heyerdahl's *Polynesia and America* relies heavily on references to the American travel and science fiction writer Alpheus Hyatt Verrill's (1871-1954) *Old Civilizations in the New World* (1930), which Heyerdahl presumably read around the same time as Spence's work.

Heyerdahl's dependence on Verrill is perhaps most evident in the summary/conclusion section of the manuscript (Heyerdahl n.d.b:560-590). In this section there are 13 marked out references – several including lengthy quotations – of which no fewer than 11 are to Verrill's *Old Civilizations*; the other two are to Fornander and an unidentified work presumably by the

American folklorist Martha Beckwith (1871-1959), who worked on Hawaiian material among other things (Luomala 1962). In comparison, the first 30 pages of Heyerdahl's discussion on Viracocha myths in *American Indians* (Heyerdahl 1952:217-346, sample on p. 217-248) references around 55 different works by 47 different authors, including several direct references to Spanish exploration voyagers and post-1947 publications by Bennett, Julius Bird and Peter Buck. In addition, he also referenced personal correspondence with Reed, Ferdon and Bird. In later parts of this section in *American Indians* Heyerdahl referenced Verrill's *Old Civilizations* (e.g. Heyerdahl 1952:282, 347-423). This clearly illustrated that Heyerdahl kept working on his theory after the *Polynesia and America* manuscript.

In *Old Civilizations in the New World*, Verrill outlined his theory of how the ancient civilisations of South and Central America had been created by Sumerian transatlantic voyagers. His argumentation was based on amateur linguistic comparison compiled by himself and his wife, and by his readings of myths and legends about 'white bearded gods', particularly one called Wira Kocha (Verrill 1930, 1953:1-21, 292-315). The book was reissued in 1953, with Verrill claiming that much new evidence had emerged to support the theory since it was first published. Among this new evidence he listed Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (1953:xv-xvii, 16).

In the preface to his new edition, Verrill indicated that the book received harsh criticism and ridicule when first published (1953:xv). He took a similar martyr's position in relation to established science as Heyerdahl frequently did in his work, and wrote the following about his methods and theories:

In writing this book I have been guided mainly by my own first hand studies and observations over more than an average lifetime, and by my familiarity with the living Indians of Mexico, Central and South America, and my understanding of their psychology, mental reactions, superstitions and craftsmanship. I have been guided by common sense, logical conclusions, and obvious facts rather than by the assumptions and theories of others. If my conclusions are sometimes at variance with those of some archaeologists, the question of who's right is up to the reader to decide (Verrill 1953:xvi)

Verrill's position and approach is very similar to Heyerdahl's in favouring subjective experience over established methodologies or scientific toolboxes. The travel writer's authority over the scientific specialists is claimed through the practical experience of *being there* (1.6.2). It is the author's ability to distinguish what is right that guides the work, rather than finding ways to make the argumentation objective and retraceable for others. Believing

the accuracy of the theories of Verrill or Heyerdahl requires accepting and praising the value of their subjective judgement. Neither man argued for his theory; instead, both narrated their personal opinions and experiences. Verrill's statement, that it was up to the reader to decide whether the archaeologist or the amateur researcher was right, might seem noble, but since he also stated that his work was based not only on years of living with Indians – *being there* – but on 'common sense, logical conclusions, and obvious facts', the implication is that any reader who does not accept his conclusions does not believe in common sense, logic or fact. Verrill was not accepting any questioning of his own observations; his theory was not debatable, and scientific dissent (the archaeologist of a different opinion) was lunacy. Verrill's writing is similar to Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* travelogue and his suggested murder mystery approach to the question of Pacific migrations (cf. 1.1; Heyerdahl 1948a:18-19). Both men deploy the ethnographic travel writing trope of ridiculing the armchair scientist to highlight their own authority gained from *being there* (1.6.2).

Heyerdahl's and Verrill's aggressive, anti-scientific specialisation stance was not about questioning established doctrines or methodologies, but about defending the value of their own experiences and opinions. Heyerdahl's choice to base his work on a writer such as Verrill, even at a time when he had the opportunity to study scientific works, exposes his dilettantism.

In Verrill's and Spence's work, Heyerdahl found the last piece of his theory, the white bearded men, Con-Ticci Viracocha and the transatlantic, Mesopotamian, Old World origin of the culture bearers who had settled the Marquesas Islands and Easter Island before the Polynesians arrived. As with Bryn, Dreyer and *National Geographic Magazine*, Heyerdahl favoured popular works by amateur researchers over scientific publications. All influences on the formation and development of the Kon-Tiki theory can be traced either to Heyerdahl's own subjective experience and opinions, or to studies by people sharing Heyerdahl's approach. The comparison made above between *American Indians* and *Polynesia and America* illustratively shows how Heyerdahl greatly expanded on his theory over time, adding in readings and supportive material to thoughts developed from more questionable source material such as Verrill's *Old Civilizations*.

#### 7.4.2.2 *The Scientific Evaluation of Polynesia and America*

The *Polynesia and America* manuscript holds a special position in the Heyerdahl narrative, as

it was with this manuscript that Heyerdahl tried to gain scientific acceptance (Heyerdahl 1948a:18-21, 1998:211; Jacoby 1968:150-151). He turned again to *National Geographic*, writing to the magazine in November 1946 to inquire about the possibility of having his manuscript published. He claimed to have referenced some 200 books and papers – still only about a fifth of the amount of titles that would appear in *American Indians* six years later. However, the main purpose of the letter was to investigate if the magazine was interested in funding the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (Heyerdahl 1946d).

The magazine promptly replied, declaring its interest in the expedition, but suggesting that the manuscript was more suitable for an anthropological journal (Hildebrand 1946). However, a later letter from the journal to Björn Rørholt (acting on behalf of Heyerdahl, by then in Ecuador preparing for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*) indicates that *National Geographic* actually declined to publish *Polynesia and America* because of the controversial nature of the theory. The magazine did not want to take sides in the discussion and subsequently also refused Heyerdahl funds for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (Grosvenor 1947).

That Heyerdahl in 1946 thought that *National Geographic* was a suitable publisher for his theory suggests that he actually believed that it was a scientific journal of some importance. In addition to *National Geographic* the manuscript was also sent for evaluation to anthropology professor Fay-Cooper Cole (1881-1961) at Chicago University (see Eggan 1962, 1963; Jennings 1962), anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) at Columbia University (see Caffery 1989; Mead 1974), and Barbeau at the National Museum of Canada (Heyerdahl 1946e). Apparently these three were the only ones to receive a copy of the manuscript, as Heyerdahl wrote to his benefactor Olsen that Spinden and other 'old archaeologists' only knew of the theory in broad and general terms (Heyerdahl 1946e).

Heyerdahl seems to have had unrealistic ideas of his own importance and the interest in his theory at this time. In his letter to Olsen, he complained that even though it had been several weeks since he sent his manuscripts out, he had only received a reply from Cole (Heyerdahl 1946e).

Parts of Cole's response is quoted in the letter to Olsen, indicating that Cole had offered encouraging and constructive criticism. Cole thought that Heyerdahl's work was too subjective, and that his reluctance to address contradictory material made him a 'special pleader' (cf. 7.5.2). This criticism was not well received. Heyerdahl wrote to Olsen: 'I told him that if that was the case, then the same could be said for everyone else in the field' (Heyerdahl



1946e, TR46). Heyerdahl's response to Cole's criticism and the lack of interest in his theory suggests that he had not expected to encounter any criticism but believed he would be welcomed with open arms. That he was instead criticised and not given immediate recognition seems to have provoked aggression and cynicism, with Heyerdahl comparing the scientific community to 'Böygen' (a mythological giant snake of Norwegian folklore, causing trouble and preventing people from reaching their goals) and declaring that in America he would need to cause a 'sensation' to be listened to.

In a later letter to Olsen, sent in January 1947, Heyerdahl gave an update on the status of his manuscript. By this time Benedict had apparently started to read the manuscript – whether she ever commented on it is not known – and he had received a response from Barbeau (Heyerdahl 1947d). Heyerdahl, a largely unknown amateur researcher, had thus succeeded within a few months in convincing three of the leading anthropologists in the US and Canada to read and comment on a rough manuscript outlining a highly subjective theory; a remarkable achievement and an indication of the scholarly generosity of Cole, Benedict, and Barbeau.

In mid-November 1946, Heyerdahl wrote to Barbeau to ask if he had had time to review the manuscript; at the same time Heyerdahl apologised for the rough state of the manuscript and said that it needed to be proofread (Heyerdahl 1946c). The letter seems not to have received a response, as Heyerdahl wrote again to Barbeau in December with essentially the same query (Heyerdahl 1946f). Barbeau's response, sent after Christmas 1946, includes similar comments to Cole's. Barbeau wrote that he was impressed by Heyerdahl's presentation of the South American connection and supportive of his idea of a migration from North America through Hawaii, saying that he considered Heyerdahl a leading expert on the subject of Pacific migrations. However, Barbeau strongly objected to Heyerdahl's decision to identify particular Kwakiutl tribes from which the Polynesians had originated, considering this unscientific and a complete misunderstanding of the historical process. He also criticised Heyerdahl for not having done enough research, and suggested that he looked further into the matter, particularly by reading works published by himself in the last decade (Barbeau 1946). Heyerdahl did not mention most of this criticism when he updated Olsen a week later but did note that Barbeau had called him an expert in American-Polynesian migrations (Heyerdahl 1947d).

In contrast to his response to Cole, Heyerdahl wrote Barbeau a grateful and appreciative

reply, expressing how highly he valued Barbeau's advice (Heyerdahl 1947c). His correspondence with Barbeau also reveals another interesting perception Heyerdahl seems to have held at the time:

The only serious and frequently repeated argument against the theory is that the Peruvians in pre-Columbic time possessed no craft but their sail-carrying log-raft (apart from the reed-boats), which capacity for trans-oceanic voyage is strongly doubted among ethnologists. (Heyerdahl 1946c).

Disregarding the criticism his manuscript had received from Cole, Heyerdahl was convinced that the only major obstacle to his hypothesis gaining acceptance was the lack of proof for the seaworthiness of Peruvian log-rafts. To prove this would then be the final piece of the puzzle. This again highlights how Heyerdahl tended to ignore scientific literature in favour of his subjective experience and opinions. He seems to have believed that if he could only prove the transoceanic capacity of Peruvian log-rafts, then his theory would be accepted.

## *7.5 Rafting into Science: Heyerdahl's Development of the Theory and Publications 1947-1952*

By the time Heyerdahl was corresponding with Barbeau the wheels had already been set in motion for the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*. The actual rafting part of the expedition was carried out between April and August 1947 and has been extensively covered by earlier biographical and scholarly work (e.g. Andersson 2007a, 2010; Jacoby 1965a; Kvam 2005). Even though Heyerdahl might have thought of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* as the last piece of the puzzle, and it made a world-wide sensation, the scientific value of it for Heyerdahl was also limited. The *Kon-Tiki* travelogue only featured a brief, more personal presentation of the theory and its importance for the expedition (Heyerdahl 1948a:8-17). In *American Indians* the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* was, even if featured in the book's title, hardly mentioned at all.

On the other hand, the period directly following the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* was very important for Heyerdahl. In this period he started to appear with more confidence and greater determination to bring his theory into a scientifically accepted framework. He put more emphasis on reading and referencing contemporary scientific work and discussions.

This new order can already be seen in three early publications after the expedition

(Heyerdahl 1947a, 1948b-c). In these papers Heyerdahl spoke predominantly of the expedition and the idea of replicating ancient Peruvian vessels. But he also focused on botanical evidence, above all the sweet potato discussion (Heyerdahl 1947a:102, 1948c:1-2; see also Allen & Ussher 2013; Ballard et al. (eds.) 2005; Dixon 1932; Green 2005; Ladefoged et al. 2005; Langdon 2001; Montenegro et al. 2008; Roullier et al. 2013a-b; Srisuwan et al. 2006). Heyerdahl's theory had by this time become centred on the mythological figure of Kon-Tiki, the Peruvian sun-god and creator, and his white-skinned people (Heyerdahl 1947a:102, 1948b:267, 1948c:3).

### 7.5.1 Heyerdahl's Scientific Papers 1949-1950

While in Santa Fe in 1949, Heyerdahl wrote collectively to the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* crew, saying that he was finally back on track with the work on his theory. He had written two scientific papers, one about to be sent to the Royal Geographical Society in London, and one already sent to the Swedish Geographical Society (Heyerdahl 1949g). The first paper, which in the letter is mentioned under another title, eventually came out in the *Geographical Journal* in 1950; the second was published in the 1949 yearbook of the Swedish Geographical Society. A third paper came out in the second volume of the 1950 series of the journal *Ymer*, also issued by the Swedish Geographical Society. The papers were developed out of necessity, as Heyerdahl had ended up in several intense debates in the wake of the expedition over his briefly outlined theory and its limited scientific component. These debates were almost exclusively carried out in Scandinavian newspapers and originated in the Swedish Geographical Society's decision to award Heyerdahl a medal for scientific merit. The decision was controversial as Heyerdahl lacked an academic degree and had no scientific publications to support his claims (Anon. XIX 1950; Anon. XX 1950; Bolinder 1950a-c; Selling 1950a-c). In consequence, Heyerdahl's debates with the Pacific botanical specialist Skottsberg (1880-1963), Swedish archaeologist and South America expert Stig Rydén (1908-1965), and Finnish ethnography professor Raphael Karsten (1879-1956) were strongly polarised over whether Heyerdahl's ideas could be considered as science or not (Evensberget 1994:102-108; Heyerdahl 1949b-f, 1950d-e; Kock-Johansen 2003:35-41; Karsten 1949a-d; Kvam 2008:60-73; Rydén 1949, 1950; Salomaa 2002:91; Skottsberg 1949a-b). The most intense debates in Scandinavia over the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* were therefore above all about the Swedish

Geographical Society's arguably poor judgement (see further Melander *in press.*). In his defence, Heyerdahl argued that since he had not yet had the chance to publish a scientific work on his theory the debate was unfair (Heyerdahl 1949b-f). This argument was accepted, for instance, by Skottsberg and Rydén, who also encouraged him to present such a work (Rydén 1949; Skottsberg 1949b).

The three following research papers represented a scientific turn in Heyerdahl's writing, with a more organised structure and disposition of the theory. This is especially evident in the two papers written in Norwegian and published by the Swedish Geographical Society (Heyerdahl 1949a, 1950c; both non-peer reviewed). The English-language paper published in the *Geographical Journal* had a greater emphasis on the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, presenting the key scientific arguments for the theory in an appendix (Heyerdahl 1950b:32-38); it also included a bibliography of around 100 titles. In this paper Heyerdahl thus managed to get down on a few pages most of the information he had included in the 1946 manuscript of close to 600 handwritten pages. This more efficient approach might have been a result of closer association with the scientific community after the expedition. Heyerdahl's personal relationship to American archaeologists Ferdon (see 1.3; Anon. XVIII. 2003; Solsvik 2016) and Reed (1.3; Browman & Williams 2013:421; Jefferson & Whittlesey 1996:95-103; Steen 1981) at the Museum of New Mexico and Santa Fe seems to have been particularly important.

In the early 1950s Heyerdahl also started corresponding with Emory at the Bishop Museum. In the generally friendly correspondence, Emory provided Heyerdahl with information about his excavations (Emory 1951a-d; Heyerdahl 1951a-b; see also Kirch 1992; Krauss 1988). In *American Indians* Heyerdahl occasionally referred directly to radiocarbon dates and other information received from Emory through this correspondence (e.g. Heyerdahl 1952:33).

These connections with established professionals seem to have pushed Heyerdahl's work into a more contemporary frame. For instance, he began referring to results from recently developed methods such as radiocarbon dates and distribution studies of blood-types. He also labelled his theory as diffusionism, a tendency that is not noticeable in his earlier drafts and publications.

In spite of this, the emphasis in the papers published between 1949 and 1950 was still on the white bearded men from Tiahuanaco and their leader, the culture hero Kon-Tiki. In his paper in *Svenska geografiska sällskapets årsbok*, Heyerdahl wrote:

The name 'Kon-Tiki', or 'Sun-Tiki', was given to the raft and the expedition to commemorate the Incas' legendary culture hero, the white priest-king and sun-god Kon-Tiki (with the additional name Viracocha), who ruled over the bearded, white, and long-eared men of Tiahuanaco by the shores of Lake Titicaca. He and his people were eventually expelled from their lands by the Pre-Incan warlord Cari, after losing a battle on an island in Lake Titicaca. Kon-Tiki escaped his persecutors, and according to Inca legends, he fled across the western ocean, never to be heard of again. All over the Polynesian island world there are legends of 'Tiki', the first chieftain and divine forefather of all islanders (Heyerdahl 1949a:214-215, TR26).

The 1938 *temple people* from Puamau had passed through a brief period as a cultural branch of the Indo-American race to become, eleven years later, the blue-eyed, white-skinned, bearded people of Spence and Verrill's racial interpretations of Central and South American legends. And Heyerdahl had rafted halfway across the Pacific in celebration of the culture hero who had ruled these white bearded men.

It is also noticeable that at this point the white men of Tiahuanaco had attained another distinctive physical feature, their long ears, which suggests that Heyerdahl at this time had become aware of the mythological material from Easter Island. In his 1950 publication in *Ymer* he furthered this point by drawing a direct connection to the legend of Hotu Matua'a, the mythological first settler of Easter Island, seemingly suggesting that Hotu Matua'a and Kon-Tiki could have been the same person (Heyerdahl 1950c:120; see also Heyerdahl 1948a:9-11, 1949a:208; Routledge 1919:277-280). It therefore seems that Heyerdahl only began to familiarise himself extensively with Polynesian source material after the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*. By this time, however, he had long settled on the outline of his theory.

### *7.5.2 The Publication and Reception of American Indians in the Pacific*

The success of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* and the many different projects surrounding it – lecture tours, a documentary film, articles, the travelogue, and even a legal case with his Tahitian mistress (Kvam 2005:386-455, 2008:16-124) – kept Heyerdahl from publishing his theory until 1952. As discussed above, this period saw some substantial changes to the drafts and versions he had worked on during the first half of the 1940s, in particular the addition of readings, references, material from conferences he had attended, and correspondence with his new-found friends in science. Heyerdahl worked intensely on the theory during a stay of

several months in Santa Fe in 1949. After this he had a period of hiatus, before returning to work on the theory again in the second half of 1950. For several months in the early part of 1951 he isolated himself in the English countryside to work on the theory, with his new wife Yvonne Heyerdahl (née Dedekam-Simonsen) (1924-2006) acting as his secretary. He claimed to have finished the manuscript on 1 December 1951 in Karlstad (Western Sweden). The greatly expanded version of his theory was finally published on 12 August 1952. The publication was celebrated in style with Heyerdahl organising two separate press conferences, one in Oslo and one in London (chronology compiled from Kvam n.d.).

The overall reception of *American Indians* was much more friendly and positive than Heyerdahl made it seem in later life (e.g. Heyerdahl 1998:186-213). Heyerdahl's use of travel writing tropes and cartoonish portraits of academia to present himself as a lone crusader against an elitist conspiracy of desk-bound archaeologist and anthropologist (1.6.2) cannot be confirmed by contemporary reviews in scientific journals (for a more extended discussion on the topic see Melander *in press.*). Without any major exceptions, Heyerdahl's book was welcomed and his cross-disciplinary approach (1.4.2) was viewed as a positive addition to the field. However, some reviewers did point out the impossibility of being an expert in all fields (e.g. Bennett 1953). As an example, a review by New Zealand archaeologist H. D. Skinner (1886-1978) ended by criticising a 'small detail', namely Heyerdahl's discussion of the distribution of *patu*. Skinner pointed out that Heyerdahl had completely misunderstood the distribution, was not at all familiar with the research literature, and that his illustrations of supposed *patu* also included several adzes, pounders, and other objects (Skinner 1953).

Heyerdahl's limited knowledge of details, and above all the selective way in which he approached these details in *American Indians*, was the main recurring theme in the reviews, generally comparing it to Heyerdahl's over-enthusiasm for his own conclusion (e.g. Linton 1954:123; Nordbeck 1953:93). Archaeologist Gordon Ekholm (1909-1987), for instance, wrote:

An extraordinary amount and variety of anthropological, historical, and geographical evidence has been gathered together by Heyerdahl to validate this thesis of Polynesian origins. His attempt to bring the findings of diverse disciplines into focus on a major problem is a commendable procedure, but in many ways he has allowed his enthusiasm for his "theory" to cloud his judgement of conflicting evidence. Marshaling all possible support for his contentions, he minimizes or neglects evidence that should lead to an opposite view in a manner that leans toward the legalistic (Ekholm 1954:308).

Two recurring subjects brought up by reviewers to highlight Heyerdahl's selective approach were Peruvian pottery and the linguistic discussion. Linguistics was an essential part of the archaeological/anthropological discussion in the Pacific area at the time, and Heyerdahl's cavalier and uninformed approach to the subject was seen as very compromising by reviewers (Bennett 1953; Ekholm 1954; Linton 1954; Ross 1953 see also Schuhmacher 1976).

Heyerdahl's lack of consistent argumentation was addressed by several reviewers, who noted that he found it completely unlikely that cultural traits such as pottery making could have been lost by Malay-Indonesian groups, but considered it reasonable to suggest that pottery making could have been lost among Peruvian groups (Bennett 1953; Ekholm 1954; Firth 1953; Linton 1954; Skinner 1953).

Even though there was considerable opposition to Heyerdahl's uncontained enthusiasm and selective approach, the same qualities were also praised, and all reviews can be said to end on a positive note (e.g. Harrison 1953; Smith 1953). In his review anthropologist Edward Nordbeck (1915-1991) made sure to state that his concluding praise should not be viewed as a standard of the genre, but as a true expression of appreciation:

It is a common practice in reviews of works which controvert prevailing theory to throw the author a consolatory bone by saying that his work stimulates reexamination of the problems and theories in question. I do not think the author's theories are so violently in opposition to general anthropological opinion as he appears to believe, and I wish to do more than throw him such a bone. Finally, I view this work as a contribution and wish its author good speed in his present venture in the Galapagos Islands (Nordbeck 1953:94).

Reed and Ekholm praised Heyerdahl's chapters on Peruvian navigation techniques (Ekholm 1954; Reed 1953); Marian Smith (1907-1961) spoke admiringly of the *Kon-Tiki Expedition's* potential importance for anthropology (Smith 1953); Skinner stated that the publication of *American Indians* was 'an important event in the study of Polynesian history' (Skinner 1953:83); and Bennett wrote: 'The quantity and quality of the materials which Mr. Heyerdahl has assembled are too great to be ignored. Henceforth, American contributions to the Polynesian cultures will have to be considered' (Bennett 1953:BR1). Heyerdahl's theory was not greeted with intense hostility but welcomed into the Pacific discussion with friendly encouragement. Putting the Americas back on the map as a possibility for Polynesian origins was received as an appropriate position to take – not surprisingly, as the question had been on the table for a long time (e.g. chapter 1.). Through his book, Heyerdahl had been able to show his reviewers that the question still deserved serious attention. In this sense *American Indians*

was most definitely a success. However, none of reviewers had been convinced by Heyerdahl's theory; his methodological approach was questionable, his argumentation speculative and one-sided, and his lack of knowledge on important details was compromising. The concerns against the Kon-Tiki theory were similar to those raised by Rydén, Skottsberg and Karsten in the late 1940s (7.5.1), by Cole and Barbeau on the *Polynesia and America* manuscript (7.4.2.2), and even by the editorial board of *International Science* in 1941 (see endnote Heyerdahl 1941a), it was not about the actual feasibility of Polynesian-American connection but about Heyerdahl's failure to turn his own experiences and opinions into a scientific argumentation. As Smith wrote in a later review on Heyerdahl's *Aku-Aku* (1957): 'Scientists are glad to accept Heyerdahl's facts and willing to revise their theories accordingly. But they are highly sceptical and frankly suspicious of that bearded redhead in the background' (Smith 1958:386). Heyerdahl's self-created separation of the prehistory of the Marquesas Islands had developed into the Kon-Tiki theory during the 1940s, but Heyerdahl had failed to develop his own skill set. He failed to transform his own personal experience into scientific arguments, he remained a travel writer.

## 7.6 Summary and Conclusion

Heyerdahl's first publications after he had moved to North America were still mainly on themes related to his anti-modernity and nature romanticism from before the Marquesas journey. This is illustrated above all by Heyerdahl's 1940 article 'Turning back tides' in *National Geographic Magazine*.

In 1941 he had the opportunity for the first time to publish his ideas on Pacific migrations in the newly founded journal *International Science*. The jumbled paper, entitled 'Did Polynesian Culture Originate in America?', showed Heyerdahl's lack of formal academic training. His dual migration theory was outlined in the paper in a similar way to his manuscripts from 1938-1939. The paper's content illustrates the importance of the works of Dreyer and Bryn for the outline of the theory, but above all the emphasis Heyerdahl placed on his own experience and personal opinions.

The few references that can be detected in the paper illustrate that Heyerdahl was still unfamiliar at this time with the Polynesian and South American source material. On the other hand, following his stay in Canada he had started to familiarise himself with Pacific



Northwest Coast archaeology and seemingly also with the writings of European exploration voyagers.

Correspondence between Heyerdahl and Liv illustrates how he greatly rearranged and expanded on his theory through library research between 1941 and 1942. In this period he was introduced to the works of writers Spence and Verrill and their works on the white gods of Aztec, Maya and Inca legends. Through these sources Heyerdahl was introduced to the legend of Con-Ticci, which would be instrumental for his theory's development. The choice of source material, like Heyerdahl's use of Dreyer and Bryn's work, illustrates his preference for ideas and arguments found in the works of amateur researchers, journalists and novelists.

In 1942 he sold his ethnographic/archaeological collection from the Marquesas Islands to the Brooklyn Museum. The sale would greatly benefit him after the War as it provided him with scientific credibility, allowing him to continue his studies in the US despite War-related restrictions.

In 1946 Heyerdahl tried to have his expanded version of the theory, presented in a manuscript entitled *Polynesia and America*, accepted by leading anthropologists in the US and Canada. His lack of success in this enterprise seems to have led him to conclude that he needed to prove the seaworthiness of balsa rafts to obtain acceptance for his theory; he consequently proceeded with the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* in 1947.

Even though his dual Pacific migration theory had all of its major components in place by about 1946, it still underwent major revisions after the expedition in the period 1949-1951, with Heyerdahl greatly expanding on the bibliography, attending scientific conferences, and corresponding and discussing with archaeologists like Emory, Ferdon and Reed. The full extent of the revised version of the theory was finally presented with the publication of *American Indians* in 1952. The Kon-Tiki theory had come full circle.

In the early 1950s, when Heyerdahl published his theory, the reception was restrained, but generally encouraging. Heyerdahl's argumentation and methodological approach were found to be one-sided, speculative, and lacking knowledge about important details. On the other hand, his fight to bring the Americas back into the discussion of Polynesian origins was welcomed and praised. He was said to have shown that the question should be taken seriously, but his amateurism prevented him from convincing the Pacific scientific community that he had provided the answer to the origin of the Polynesians.

The following and final chapter of this thesis will provide summaries and conclusions on the

material and themes presented and discussed in chapters 2 to 8, highlighting the importance of various travel writing tropes defined in chapter 1 for Heyerdahl's creation and development of the theory.

## *Chapter 8 – The Coming of the White Bearded Men: The Origin and Development of Thor Heyerdahl's Kon-Tiki Theory*

In a debate article on the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, Skottsberg rhetorically asked, 'who dare say that they [*Moai* of Easter Island] depict white red haired men?' (Skottsberg 1949a, TR22). In his rebuttal, Heyerdahl answered, 'I do' (Heyerdahl 1949c, TR22). By 1949 there was no doubt in Heyerdahl's mind that the *Moai* of Easter Island really were representations of white men with beards, the transatlantic Caucasian race he had envisioned as the first settlers of Eastern Polynesia.

The aim of this thesis has been to analyse the events that led up to this confident statement – the origin and development of the Kon-Tiki theory. In chapters 2 to 7 sources and events that inspired the theory's creation, as well as influences added during the theory's development process, have been presented and discussed. Above all Heyerdahl's first journey to Polynesia in 1937 has been targeted as the central event in the theory's creation, especially focusing on Heyerdahl's interaction with the people of the Marquesas Islands and his discovery of the islands' material culture and archaeological remains (1.8).

In the introduction chapter, three distinguishable ethnographic travel writing tropes were identified as reoccurring themes of importance for Heyerdahl's own narration of his development of the theory (1.1, 1.6). These included the necessity of *being there* to be able to extract ethnographic knowledge. However, Heyerdahl's writing suggest that this was not enough; for ethnographical knowledge to be comprehensible, it also needed to be physically and psychologically experienced (1.6.1).

The second trope was identified in Heyerdahl's connection between societies' development stages and racial affiliation, the idea that only white people could possess so-called advanced cultures (1.6.4).

The third identified trope of importance was Heyerdahl's self-proclaimed struggle against scientific specialisation and dogmatism, particularly how Heyerdahl used the idea of an omniscient traveller as a contrast to the armchair specialist scientist (1.6.2).

In the introduction chapter it was also emphasised that Heyerdahl's biography needed to be deconstructed to retrace an accurate chronology of events for each given moment. This is

especially the case since Heyerdahl's writing found itself engaged in a continuous dialogue with his earlier works. His narrative was thus continually transformed into new, altered or bettered contexts, consequently masking original intentions over time (1.6.3).

Heyerdahl's description of the Kroepelien Library and his alleged studies of it in the mid-1930s is a primary example on this. From the 1974 *Back to Nature* and onwards, Heyerdahl claimed that he had gained a complete knowledge of Polynesian ethnology through studies of the Library. In this narrative, his journey to the Marquesas in 1937 marked the crescendo of these studies (3.1). However, if this particular narrative or story is deconstructed and chronologically retraced, it becomes an impossibility. In 1936, Heyerdahl wrote that some minor material had been made available to him through (presumably) Kroepelien. The Library was not mentioned in *Searching for Paradise* (1938a) or the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (1948a). When summarising his literature studies to date in *American Indians* (1952) Heyerdahl did not mention the Library. In fact the Library does not appear in Heyerdahl's narrative of the theory's origin until Jacoby's 1965 biography, and then still in connection to Heyerdahl's zoology studies. The Library itself was not a research library, and none of the key works on Polynesian archaeology and ethnography published at the time were in the Library when Heyerdahl had the chance to study it. This story therefore only illustrates how Heyerdahl reinvented and improved on his biography over time (3.1). Once he felt that he needed a research background, various events from his earlier life were rearranged and exaggerated into the narrative Heyerdahl wanted for persuasive purposes. The Kroepelien Library transformed from a collection of South Seas romances into a research library, the world's largest private library on Polynesian topics (3.1). Similarly, in the same period, Heyerdahl's Marquesas journey was transformed from his and Liv's 9 months honeymoon trip to a 16 month long archaeological survey (5.2.5). The knowledge Heyerdahl later gained from years of studies in American and Canadian libraries in the 1940s (chapter 7) was over time inserted at the start, transformed from a development process into an omniscient knowledge planted in Heyerdahl from day one. Heyerdahl had not developed his ideas, he knew it all to begin with.

This is obviously all false, a creation of new interpretation of meaning from dialogues between Heyerdahl's various texts (1.6.3). The source material clearly illustrates Heyerdahl's complete lack of knowledge about Polynesian archaeology and ethnography long into the 1940s. This is illustrated for instance by his colourful description of sites and phenomena in the Marquesas (chapter 5). Heyerdahl claimed that sites he visited and artefacts he uncovered

were sensational discoveries unknown to science, even though the same sites and artefacts had been mentioned in all studies made to that date. Heyerdahl's exaggerated belief that artefacts he collected were impossible to obtain, unique, and of a high scientific and economic value, further illustrates his lack of knowledge of Polynesian material culture and archaeology in the 1930s. Identical types of artefacts could be found in museum collections around the world, including museums in Norway, Denmark and Sweden (5.2.3-4). Since Heyerdahl tried to argue that the only ethnographical collection of Marquesan artefacts in the vicinity of his homeland was found in Berlin, he was still oblivious of the existence of these Scandinavian museum collections as late as the 1970s.

Heyerdahl erroneously believed that dogs had been introduced to Polynesia by Europeans (5.5.2.1). This was a factual error he could have easily corrected, as the contrary had been written by exploration voyagers, in popular ethnographical books and even romantic travelogues. But he did not. This further illustrates Heyerdahl's complete ignorance of archaeological and ethnographical topics in the time before, during and directly after his journey to the Marquesas.

## *8.1 Discovering Archaeology – The Origin of the Theory*

This lack of knowledge is not at all surprising. Throughout his career, Heyerdahl emphasised the practical experience of *being there* rather than the preparatory literature/material study. Knowledge was gained through physical interaction, not through preparation or analysis. For Heyerdahl's interest in the settlement of the Pacific island world, the turning point was the Marquesas journey: the direct physical introduction (chapter 5). In the Marquesas he was directly introduced to spectacular archaeological sites and artefacts. That these sites and artefacts were engulfed by the tropical jungle further bestowed them with an irresistible appeal to the young aspiring explorer. This sensation was heightened by his ignorance of the contemporary research discourse. His lack of knowledge made him feel like he had stumbled upon a lost civilisation which had never before been brought to the world's attention (chapter 5).

For Heyerdahl the discovery included more than just sites and artefacts, in fact it can be said that he discovered prehistory and archaeology themselves. At the starting point of the journey he and Liv built their camp on an archaeological site, chosen because of its

favourable location. But from the point at which they started to find artefacts around the site, a new dimension opened for Heyerdahl, as if he realised for the first time that there was a past, and this past was not just an abstraction but something that could be touched and seen (chapter 5). The direct interaction or experience of *being there* marked the pivotal event for Heyerdahl's interest in prehistory.

His and Liv's visit to the Ipona *me'ae* site, about half way through their journey, included a second step in Heyerdahl's newly discovered interest in archaeology. He was no longer satisfied with ocular inspection – crawling into caves, crevices and graves was not enough. At Ipona, vegetation needed to be removed and the soil dug through; Heyerdahl seems to have envisioned that the real discoveries were to be found hidden away in the ground.

### *8.1.1 Separating Time*

This discovery of archaeology went hand in hand with another lesson learned from his direct interaction or experience of Polynesia, namely Heyerdahl's realisation that his pre-journey vision of Polynesia and the Polynesians did not correspond to reality.

Before the journey Heyerdahl held romanticised and idealised ideas about nature. These ideas of Heyerdahl's were phrased in a conservative world-view, with distinct connecting points to German conservative philosophy (3.2). Heyerdahl imagined nature as a direct contrast or binary opposition to the modern industrial democracy. His writing suggests that he believed that modernity was a giant step away from humanity's pure and natural state (3.2.1). For Heyerdahl this natural state of humanity did not feature technologies and tools connected to agricultural societies. He believed that humanity was meant to wander around nude in the tropics, eating fresh fruit off the trees (3.2.1.1).

Heyerdahl envisioned Polynesia as the ideal setting for this natural state of humanity. Polynesia's paradisaical environment was the antidote to modern civilisation. On sunny, coconut-covered South Seas islands, even modern people like himself could live on fruit and return to nature – a thought echoing that of the likes of Engelhardt (3.2.2.1).

Heyerdahl was also under the impression that the Polynesians were a remainder of the world's last true natural people. Before the journey Heyerdahl described the Polynesians as an almost Nordic race with commonly known virtues of generosity and hospitality, and an equally well-known laziness and carefree attitude. Heyerdahl stated before the journey that it

was one and the same race that inhabited Polynesia, from the Marquesas to Samoa (3.2.1.2). Together with Liv, he defined the intention of the journey as being to return to nature, to a perceived lifestyle of the forefathers, seemingly represented by the Nordic Polynesian of Heyerdahl's vision (3.2).

However, Heyerdahl had never been to Polynesia or met anyone of Polynesian ancestry. His vision was created solely from indulging in tropes of South Seas romanticism. The cliché of free, happy people on sun-drenched tropical islands, who fought the adversary of the white shadow (colonialism) to preserve what they could of their pure state of nature, was fed to Heyerdahl by contemporary travel writers and South Seas cinema (3.2.2-4). Like the sailors in the 1935 free film adaptation of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, Heyerdahl wanted to jump ship and return to nature in Polynesia.

As these clichés or tropes were larger than life representations, exaggerations and even pure fabrications, they were not suitable representations to build a world-view on. Their deceptive nature is illustrated, for instance, by Melville's use of ethnic ventriloquism. Melville expressed his own contempt towards European modernity and colonialism through the agency of the Polynesian. This created a false image, where the Polynesian appeared as a civilisation critic even though it was in fact Melville's words and thoughts that were expressed by using the Polynesian as a puppet, a mask to lend authority to Melville's own thoughts (3.3.1). This type of deception, woven into the noble savage trope expressed by Melville and others, was essential for Heyerdahl's idea that the Polynesians were remainders of humanity's natural state. Heyerdahl's perception of a *natural man* existing in Polynesia originated in the contrast, or the binary opposition, he created between the trope of the noble Polynesian savage and the elements of modern civilisation he did not find to his liking. By believing in the tropes of South Seas cinema and travel writing, Heyerdahl consequently created or became convinced of a reality for his imagined natural people. However, Heyerdahl never asked the Polynesians themselves whether they corresponded to his perception of humanity's natural state or shared his views (chapter 4).

Since Heyerdahl's idea about Polynesia had been created out of these kinds of larger than life deceptions, naturally the real-life version of it could not live up to his expectations. In interviews Heyerdahl made it clear that it was not the environment but the people that had failed to live up to his vision (4.3.5). The setting was right, but there was something seriously wrong with the characters on the stage. During his and Liv's stay in Polynesia, they came into

conflict with almost everyone they met. Their failure to understand and adhere to local customs, language and social practice created hostility between themselves and local inhabitants on Tahiti and in the Marquesas (4.3). According to Heyerdahl, the Polynesians, who turned out to be nothing like he had imagined, had become corrupted by modern civilisation. Through interracial sexual relationships, the Christian Church, and overconsumption of alcohol, they had become 'degenerated browns' (chapter 4). Heyerdahl's emphasis on degeneration caused by interracial sexual relationships illustrates the eugenics framework of his thoughts. In Heyerdahl's mind the Polynesians were a sick, impotent and dying people. The personal experience of *being there* had changed it all for Heyerdahl. Instead of being his romanticised, almost Nordic natural people, the Polynesians turned out to be the opposite; instead of the pure, complete, white forefathers, they were degenerated, incompetent people of colour (4.3.5).

The Polynesian reality had turned out to be something different, and the Polynesians turned out to be people not very different from those back home. However, rather than facing the difference between fiction writing and reality, Heyerdahl went to great lengths to preserve his vision. He had not been wrong, it was the world that had changed. His imagined Polynesia was not a creation of his imagination but a historical phase destroyed by modernity in the shape of French colonialism and various Christian Churches (4.3.2). Since Heyerdahl had never been to Polynesia before, this interpretation rested solely on his own opinion. He consequently altered the portrait of people he met to strengthen his own assumptions and preserve his vision. The motorcar-enthusiast, colonial servant, and progressive statesman Teriieroo was turned into a noble savage, sentimentally talking about the purity of the old days before the white shadow (4.1). Similarly, the pious pipe-smoker Tei Tetua was turned into the last cannibal of Fatu Hiva, a man so old that he had been around since the dawn of time and still knew about the Polynesia that had once been. He was one with Polynesia, as Heyerdahl wrote (4.2).

As in the concept of ethnic ventriloquism (3.3.1, 4.1-4.2), Heyerdahl altered the portraits of Tei and Teriieroo to use the two men as puppets, authorities behind which he could express his own ideas of contempt towards the people he had failed to form relationships with.

Interestingly enough, Heyerdahl did the same thing to the Norwegian copra farmer Lie, who was also turned into a puppet to support Heyerdahl's contempt towards the 'browns'. In the 1930s Lie appeared in Heyerdahl's narrative as the only white man (which was far from the



truth) in the world of the browns, and through the narration of Lie's resentment towards the young Marquesans (even though that would have included members of his own family), authority was given to Heyerdahl's own observations (5.5.1). Heyerdahl's idea that Polynesia had lost its natural past and become degenerated due to its interaction with modernity was given authority by Heyerdahl placing his words in the mouths of Tei, Teriieroo and Lie. By altering the portraits of people he met during the journey to make them fit with his own vision, Heyerdahl created his own *chronotope*, his own larger than life reality.

### 8.1.2 *Interpreting Archaeology*

By refusing to acknowledge that he had been mistaken, Heyerdahl created two binary entities, on one hand the present Polynesians, 'the browns', and on the other hand his imagined, almost Nordic natural people of the past. He claimed that he and Liv were the true primitive people of Fatu Hiva, the ones who lived as the Polynesians should (chapter 4). He thus positioned himself and Liv closer to his imagined natural people than the Polynesians.

This separation between Polynesians and Norwegians, between Heyerdahl's vision of Nordic natural people and the degenerated browns, between present and past, was also applied to the archaeological remains and material culture Heyerdahl encountered. For Heyerdahl the impressive scale of the archaeological remains had come as a surprise, and the admiration he felt for the Ipona *me'ae* site was not compatible with the contempt he felt for the Marquesans. The two stood in great contrast to each other and Heyerdahl evidently imagined them as separate entities. In contrast to Heyerdahl's problems with interacting with people in the Marquesas group, he claimed that he immediately felt connected to the people who had made the adzes and other artefacts he found. The Marquesans, or the 'brown ones', were too docile and degenerated to have ever been able to create something so profoundly admirable as the stone statues of Ipona. He concluded that the statues must have been made by someone else (5.5). Heyerdahl actively created not just contrasts through these polarisations, but also several connections. His vision of humanity's natural state was contrasted to the Polynesians he encountered; his and Liv's experiment of primitive life was contrasted to the life of the contemporary Marquesans; and in his experiment Heyerdahl felt connected to the people who had made the artefacts and archaeological monuments of the Marquesas Islands, who in the meantime were depicted as a complete opposite of the contemporary Marquesans. In this way

Heyerdahl's discovery of archaeology was merged into a system of binary oppositions which placed himself, Liv, Lie, and his romanticised natural people on one side, and the Marquesans on the other. The racial character of the Marquesans, which Heyerdahl had defined from the contrast between his pre-journey vision and the people he had met in contemporary Polynesia, prevented them from being the creators of the Ipona *me'ae* site. He argued that the monuments were too advanced for the Polynesians as a race; they had to have been made by another race, one that shared the character of Lie, Liv, and himself (5.5.2.3).

As this illustrates the connection Heyerdahl made between so-called advanced cultural practices and racial affiliation, the white civilisation trope cannot be linked to a colonial discourse, even though it shares direct similarities with such ideas (5.5). Instead it developed out of the complete opposite, Heyerdahl's resentment towards colonialism. The division of Marquesan prehistory into two cultural phases, one advanced and one primitive, was created by Heyerdahl out of his own conclusion, from his polarisation of the present population he despised and his admiration for the monuments of the past. This type of reasoning was guided by Heyerdahl's own values and his relationship to Ipona and the Marquesans, which positioned them as opposites to each other. The contrast, which rested solely on Heyerdahl's personal judgement, created a divide impossible to bridge, paving the way for the *temple people*, the pre-Polynesian stone statue-makers of Ipona.

Heyerdahl's argumentation rested on an anti-colonial framework where modernity or colonialism had rendered the Marquesans empty vessels by depriving them of their culture. This anti-colonial framework originated in eugenics-inspired arguments, where interracial sexual relationships had led to degeneration among the Marquesan population, illustrating Heyerdahl's biologically determined perception of humanity. Heyerdahl's writing suggests that he thought that each race form should be kept apart to cultivate its pureness. The Polynesian culture which he saw as primitive and inferior could not defend itself from the more evolved, technically and biologically superior European culture (4.3). Colonialism could therefore not be justified by any means as it unavoidably implied integration between races, and consequently degeneration and destruction.

This perception of Heyerdahl's was also applied to the pre-historical sequence. According to Heyerdahl, brown people did not have the intellectual capacity to make stone monuments, they were less intelligent and docile by their biological composition and therefore incapable of such achievements. In Heyerdahl's mind, biological inferiority was what prevented the

Polynesians from making stone statues; Ipona's monuments could not have been made by brown men (5.5.2.3). The central concept here in Heyerdahl's argumentation, his belief in distinguishable biological races which could be sorted into a value hierarchy based on mental and intellectual capacities, meets all criteria postulated in the introduction chapter to define a racist idea (1.6.4). Consequently, the essence of Heyerdahl's separation of the Marquesan pre-historical sequence was, in plain English, racism. This hierarchy between human skin-colour, which can be directly traced to Heyerdahl's interaction with the Polynesian people and his discovery of archaeology during the Marquesas journey, would later be one of the key building blocks of the Kon-Tiki theory – the *biological ethnology* component of the theory defined in chapter 1 (1.4.2.1).

Interestingly enough, Heyerdahl directly used his so-called excavations to verify his racist assumption of an advanced and a primitive cultural sequence. A carving on the foot of one of Ipona's statues that he unearthed during his visit was interpreted as a dog. Heyerdahl argued that the dog carving demonstrated the existence of the *temple people*. He claimed that since dogs had not been known to the Polynesians, but had been introduced by Europeans, and since the Polynesians (the browns) were biologically incapable of making stone statues, a dog carving could only have been made by a pre-Polynesian, non-brown people. Heyerdahl would later retract the idea that dogs were unknown to the Polynesians (5.5.2.1), efficiently removing his only supportive argument for the existence of the *temple people*, and leaving the racist idea of brown people's mental and physical capacities as the only argument for a division of the Marquesan pre-historical sequence. An idea Heyerdahl had developed out of his own experiences and their contrast with his pre-journey visions. This illustrates how various irrational assumptions, such as racism, needed to be accepted for the theory to be feasible. It also shows how highly Heyerdahl valued his own interpretations and experiences.

The removal of the dog carving argument without implication for the theory also demonstrates that the racist background of Heyerdahl's theory was deeply rooted in his perception of humanity and the world, as an unquestionable truth or dogma. This helps to explain why Heyerdahl kept to this theory throughout his life, no matter what objections towards it he was presented with.

Just as Heyerdahl wrote in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, the Marquesas journey was the seed for the Kon-Tiki theory and its dual race settlement hypothesis. The separation of the settlement of Polynesia into two distinctively different races originated in his interpretation of

Marquesan prehistory. Heyerdahl developed this separation out of ignorance of the research discourse, erroneous beliefs, personal experiences, and his racist resentment towards the Polynesian people for their failure to live up to his vision of them and their way of life.

## *8.2 The Development of the Theory*

Even though archaeology and ethnography were not topics that Heyerdahl had researched prior to his journey to the Marquesas, the *geographical ethnology* aspects (1.4.2.3) of his theory – his use of trade winds and ocean currents – can be connected to the type of zoogeographical discourse he was introduced to during his years at Oslo University in the mid-1930s. In the period, the borders between zoology and anthropology were diffuse and zoogeographical concepts and theories were also applied to anthropological questions.

Heyerdahl's emphasis on transoceanic migration and sea-bridges can also be connected to the debunking of land-bridge theories seen among scholars at Oslo University (chapter 2).

Heyerdahl's years at the University also offered him a connection to Christophersen, through whom he gained an introduction, not just to natural history research literature on the Pacific, but also to scholars active in the field (2.4.3). Through Christophersen he was introduced, for instance, to the work of botanist Brown, something Heyerdahl still emphasised in the 1990s as crucial for the development of the Kon-Tiki theory (2.4.4). Brown's work is also the only source of archaeological or ethnological information detectable in Heyerdahl's writing prior to the Marquesas journey. As is illustrated by the letter of recommendation he received from Bonnevie in 1939, and her later attempts at getting him a PhD position in the US (2.1.1.1), Heyerdahl also benefited from the University and his connection to Bonnevie after the journey. Heyerdahl's studies of anthropology, on the other hand, were developed in isolation, that is to say outside of the established academic institution.

In his writings from 1937 and 1938, Heyerdahl never explicitly stated where the two settler groups of the Marquesas had come from; their origin was simply unknown to science (6.2.1). There is no indication that Heyerdahl started to develop the theory directly upon his return to Europe. He was busy with writing the travelogue, giving a lecture tour and creating a home for his family. Instead it seems that his coincidental meeting with the former British Columbia resident Fougner marked the beginning of his work on the theory. Fougner showed Heyerdahl photographs of inhabitants, petroglyphs, and material culture from the Bella Coola Valley on

the Pacific Northwest Coast. Heyerdahl envisioned a similarity between the material he had collected in the Marquesas and the material Fougner had showed him. The connection was again supported by his personal impressions and expert gaze. To him, the Polynesians resembled the people of Bella Coola (6.5). The imagined similarities made Heyerdahl theorise that the Polynesians could have come from North America. During the latter part of 1938 and 1939 he started investigating the matter. He drew up plans for a new expedition to British Columbia and started browsing available literature to find supportive evidence for his hypothesis.

His ideas were presented in two rough manuscripts (Heyerdahl n.d. a, n.d. c). These early manuscripts show the origin of the first source material for the theory: the amateur ethnological work of Danish zoo director Dreyer, from whom Heyerdahl got the idea of the short Polynesian chronology, and the spread of the Stone Age culture in the Pacific area, both central arguments for the *cultural ethnology* aspects of the theory (1.4.2.2, 6.5.1).

Heyerdahl further used the amateur physical anthropology work of army physician Bryn, whose history of the human races argued that the Americas and Polynesia had been settled by the Indo-American race through lost land-bridges (6.4). Heyerdahl's early manuscript does not just illustrate the influence from Bryn, but also indicates that Heyerdahl actively modified Bryn's ideas to fit with Dreyer's late chronology for the spread of Stone Age culture, and the zoogeographical objection to land-bridge theories Heyerdahl had picked up at Oslo University (6.4.1).

The early manuscripts also demonstrate that Heyerdahl was influenced by adventure stories in *National Geographic Magazine* (6.5.2). In these articles he found descriptions of a vanished advanced high culture of 'cyclopean stone workers' in the Tiahuanaco area of the Andes, which Heyerdahl connected to his Marquesan *temple-people* (6.5.2, 7.2).

Heyerdahl first presented his hypothesis of a dual Polynesian migration in the paper 'Did Polynesian culture originate in the Americas?', published in the 1941 inaugural issue of the scientific journal *International Science*. In the paper, the theory was presented in a similar state as in his abovementioned manuscripts from roughly 1939. Heyerdahl's argumentation relied heavily on Dreyer's late chronology and spread of Stone Age culture in the Pacific. The two different migration waves were said to have been of Bryn's Indo-American race, which had migrated from an Asian homeland across the Bering Strait to the Americas. The settlement of Polynesia was then divided into two different waves; an earlier wave of a purer

Indo-American racial composition setting out from Tiahuanaco; and a later wave of an Indo-American and Mongoloid racial admixture setting out from Bella Coola and reaching Polynesia through Hawaii (7.2.1).

The paper also illustrates that Heyerdahl had commenced more extensive studies and started to include research literature in his discussion. Following his time in British Columbia, the research literature was naturally devoted above all to the North American connection, and only used for supportive argumentation (7.2.3). The paper also shows that Heyerdahl was still relying primarily on his own experience; he was not arguing for his theory, he was stating his opinion (7.2.2).

By 1941 Heyerdahl had fully developed the concept of the dual migration hypothesis. However, he was still under the impression that both of the migrating parties shared the same racial origin in Bryn's Asiatic Indo-American race. The paper noticeably lacks the culture hero Kon-Tiki and Heyerdahl's idea of a Caucasian or white heritage for the first settlers of Polynesia.

This idea, the emergence of the white bearded men and Kon-Tiki, the direct connection not just between advanced culture and an advanced race, but between advanced cultures and white people, was instead developed after the publication of his first research paper. Heyerdahl reworked his theory after library studies in the US in 1941-1942 (7.3). At this time Heyerdahl was introduced to the work of Scottish travel-writer Spence and the science fiction writer Verrill. Both authors wrote about mysterious white deities in Inca, Aztec and Maya legends, among them the white Sun-god Con-Ticci (7.3, 7.4.2.1). Heyerdahl's dependence on authors such as Verrill and Spence illustrates that even when scientific literature was available to him, he still favoured popular accounts, amateur research, *National Geographic Magazine*, and the work of novelists. Following the work of Verrill and Spence, Heyerdahl altered the origin of the first settlers of Polynesia; they were no longer an advanced branch of the Indo-American race, but a Caucasian race that had reached Central America from across the Atlantic. The white bearded men therefore had their origin in libraries in the US rather than in the works of Nazi scholars as some later critics have suggested (6.3, 7.3).

The altered and expanded theory was presented in a manuscript entitled *Polynesia and America*. In 1946, Heyerdahl tried to get the manuscript accepted by leading scholars in the US and Canada. Even though he received encouragement, he did not find acceptance. His dependence on personal opinions and experiences failed to impress the reviewing scholars.

His amateurism kept Heyerdahl from convincing others of the theory's relevance (7.4.2.2), a pattern that was also repeated when his *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, and later full presentation of the theory in *American Indians*, were reviewed (7.5.2). However, rather than attending to these shortcomings in his methodological approach, Heyerdahl reached another conclusion. He started to show resentment towards the scientific community, suggesting that specialist scientists had been blinded by their details and could not see the truth. He convinced himself that it was not his amateurism that was the problem but the disputed sea-worthiness of South American pre-Columbian vessels. He jumped to the conclusion that the only thing needed for his theory to gain acceptance was for him to prove the seaworthiness of Peruvian balsa rafts (7.4.2.2).

### 8.2.1 *The Gentleman Traveller*

According to Heyerdahl, the polarisation between the omniscient traveller and scientific specialist, which he used as an explanation for his conflict with academia from the late 1940s and onwards, had developed already at the University of Oslo. Heyerdahl emphasised that his years at the University had no impact on him. The only thing he had learnt at the University was the dogmatic nature of specialisation of scientific disciplines. He claimed that his experience of the University had made him realise the direct polarisation between omniscient knowledge and scientific specialisation (2.1). However, an examination of the research conducted and the scholars active at Oslo University at the time gives no support for Heyerdahl's claims. Bonnevie, Broch, Werenskiold, Økland, Christophersen and Wollebæk were all favouring cross-disciplinary approaches, stressing the importance of independent thought, experimentation and fieldwork (chapter 2). The same attitude can also be found among Heyerdahl's fellow students. This particular idea can therefore be defined as a trope of its own in the particular period and context (1.6). Heyerdahl's possible development of these thoughts at the time was not in opposition to the ideas of the department, but in line with and presumably inspired by them.

Heyerdahl's early publications and manuscripts did not feature this particular conflict. In these texts Heyerdahl was engulfed by the actual theory and its arguments; there are no indications at this time of a conflict with academia. This is not surprising, since Heyerdahl had not encountered any particular opposition in the early 1940s; he had developed his

thoughts in isolation from academia, and had not yet presented them to the public for review. The conflict was fully expressed in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, where Heyerdahl, in accordance with the travel writer trope, drew an antiquated portrait of the scientific institution as arcane and detached from common sense (1.6.2). He also presented a polarised idea of what science was by suggesting that the Polynesian problem could be approached as a detective riddle (1.1).

The hostility Heyerdahl expressed towards Pacific scholars and scientific institutions in correspondence with Olsen in the period leading up to the *Kon-Tiki Expedition* (7.4.2.2) is the first confirmed inclusion of this idea in the archival material, suggesting that his fierce polarisation between scientific specialisation and omniscient knowledge originated in the criticism his *Polynesia and America* manuscript received. The reason for Heyerdahl's utilisation of this trope therefore most likely developed as a type of self-preservation, to defend his opinion (the Kon-Tiki theory) from criticism. In contrast, the reviews and reception of Heyerdahl's theory illustrates that it was not the theory per se that was criticised but Heyerdahl's dilettantism, his failure to argue beyond personal opinions.

This marked polarisation in Heyerdahl's writings on his relationship to academia can also be connected to his abovementioned dogmatic belief in race hierarchies (8.1.2). For Heyerdahl there were dogmas, things that could not be questioned, and if these laws of nature were followed the one and only truth would reveal itself – the murder mystery approach of the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue. His decision to stick with the *temple-people* interpretation, even though his supportive argument on the introduction of dogs to Polynesia turned out to be inaccurate, illustrates his belief in an underlying truth of unquestionable nature. For Heyerdahl science was static, there was no need to adjust or approach new material, all literature studies or other methods were not data to draw or review conclusions from, but means to support or visually illustrate the hypothesis reached from the dogmatic interpretation. For Heyerdahl the objections his theory received from scientists were unthinkable questionings of the laws of nature. His theory was based on the truth, and questioning the truth was to him unthinkable, especially when this questioning came from people who according to Heyerdahl had never been to the field, the actual location, to see for themselves.

Heyerdahl's emphasis on *being there* as the source from which he wanted to draw authority is already noticeable in his 1941 'Did Polynesian culture...' paper. The paper was guided by his personal opinions, and the value of these opinions rested on the notion of *being there*,



expressed for instance through his claim that he could suggest a similarity in racial characteristics through his 'sojourning' among both Polynesians and the Indians of North America (7.2.2). Nonetheless, the emphasis on the importance of *being there* to extract ethnographical knowledge is more evident in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue and later works.

In the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue Heyerdahl extracted new meaning out of several of his experiences from the Marquesas journey a decade earlier. Tei, in 1938 the last cannibal living in isolation, was turned into a key ethnographical source. Instead of highlighting Tei's isolation as a means to criticise Polynesia's new generation, his isolation was instead highlighted for the knowledge of the old days Tei had preserved. In the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, as well as in the later *Back to Nature*, Heyerdahl used Tei as the isolated lost world discovery to which only Heyerdahl had gained access by travelling to Tei's hermitage at the end of the world. Through Tei, Heyerdahl had gained access to a source of information purer than anything else, and as the discoverer of this source he held the exclusive rights to it. This was something which Heyerdahl used and reused throughout his writing career, but he continually changed the subject on which he wanted to draw authority from Tei. In the 1930s Tei was used to support Heyerdahl's ideas of modernity's evils. In the 1940s Tei was that special isolated source of information that had provided Heyerdahl with the insight that led to the Kon-Tiki theory, and in *Back to Nature* and later works Tei was the special source which verified the ideas Heyerdahl had come to the Marquesas to prove (4.2). For the latter narrative it is of importance to note that Tei's ethnographical information to a larger degree had come to include recordings which cannot be proven to have been made by Heyerdahl, but which found their way into Heyerdahl's books through his dialogism with the works of American ethnographer Handy (4.2.1).

When Heyerdahl returned to the Marquesas journey in the 1947 *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, he did so with a new agenda; he was communicating with the journey from a new context, and consequently modified his experiences in the Marquesas to fit with this new agenda. Instead of being his escape from civilisation, the journey became the origin of his theory. Heyerdahl consequently altered the portraits of the people he had met during the journey as he was extracting new meaning from the journey and the experiences he had gained there from the new context.

In Heyerdahl's writing, both Tei and also Lie in later renditions were transformed into the special discoveries of the *being there* trope of ethnographic travel writing (1.6.1), used by

Heyerdahl to make it seem as if his ideas had come from truly spectacular sources of information which no one but him, the adventurer, had been able to gain access to. This of course was not even remotely true, as all of what Tei said already existed in print when Heyerdahl visited him, and Lie had collaborated with Handy and Linton. Heyerdahl's altering of these portraits can be said to have been done initially to give support for his anti-modernity ideas and when re-approached to create a legend of the uniqueness of the information he had retrieved.

Heyerdahl's approach was identical to that of the travel and science fiction writer Verill. They both relied on their own observation and ability to see the true nature of the research question at hand. Both men also claimed their authority from *being there*: they had gained their expertise by visiting the place and people they discussed. Both Verill and Heyerdahl then used their alleged knowledge gained from *being there* to contrast themselves to the armchair specialist scientist, who was further characterised as an alienated figure unable to understand logic (7.4.2.1).

That Heyerdahl's and Verill's personal opinions and overall impressions were not immediately hailed as genial discoveries was interpreted as a personal antagonism; the scientific community was against them. The criticism Heyerdahl received for his methodological shortcomings was turned into a struggle between the lone truth-teller and structural oppression, by using established rhetorical devices and tropes (1.6.2). The imagined idea of the specialist bound to his/her desk was included to portray them as ignorant of the topic discussed; they had not *been there*, they could not know.

However, just like the utilisation of this trope in travel writing in general, Heyerdahl drew on antiquated caricatures (1.6.2); they were not up to date. The people Heyerdahl criticised, whether it was Bonnevie, Handy, Buck or others, were all experienced fieldworkers. The Norwegian scientific tradition following Nansen was based on expeditions and experiments (2.2), on *being there*. As can be seen with the Bishop Museum's expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s, so was the Pacific ethnography/archaeological discourse (2.3). Scholars like Emory, Buck, Shapiro, Linton and Handy had to a much larger degree *been there* than Heyerdahl had. Heyerdahl's use of the *being there* trope to claim authority in polarisation to the armchair scientist belonged to another generation of practice and knowledge. Heyerdahl was not talking about the era of Emory, Handy and Christophersen, but that of Melville and Dreyer, when gentleman travellers had been the ones who did the fieldwork, while the scientist remained at

his or her institution (1.6.1). Heyerdahl's self-chosen isolation from the scientific institution also positioned him in another generation of knowledge (1.6.3).

### 8.2.2 *The Experiment*

The anti-dogmatic stance Heyerdahl argued for can be said to have developed out of a trope of anti-dogmatism and emphasis on fieldwork, experimentation and expedition at Oslo University in the mid-1930s (8.2.1). However, there is a direct contrast between how Heyerdahl utilised this trope and how his peers did. For the scholars (Christophersen, Bonnevie, Broch and Schmidt-Nielsen), anti-dogmatism was a quality of the scientific discourse, one that separated it from popular opinion or personal emotions. Heyerdahl, on the other hand, utilised the same trope to distinguish the special nature of his own knowledge, which had developed in contrast to science.

The knowledge Heyerdahl had gained from the drifter Bjørneby, unattainable to others, had made him an omniscient scholar of nature (2.1). Through *being there* with that especially distinguishable source of knowledge (Bjørneby) and living by Bjørneby's primitivist example, Heyerdahl gained an omniscient knowledge not attainable for the scientific specialists at the University. The second part here anticipates the Marquesas journey, in Heyerdahl's emphasis not just on *being there* but also on the importance of *going native* or physically and psychologically experiencing nature or primitivism (1.1, 3.2). One could not just study nature, or experience it by fieldwork and experimentation, one also had to live in it to be able to comprehend it.

The escape from civilisation idea, which dominated Heyerdahl's early writing, can be clearly defined from archival material and interviews as an imagined experiment with a fixed time limit (3.2). Even if Heyerdahl viewed it as a partly scientific experiment, obviously the escape from civilisation plan cannot objectively be seen as such; it was not rooted in any sort of study or material, but simply in Heyerdahl's own perceptions of a natural past for humanity (8.1.1-2). He can therefore be said to have wanted to perform an experiment based on a hypothesis developed by his own fantasy. He reinforced this fantasy as real by altering the portraits of the likes of Tei and Teriieroo to authenticate his own assumptions. His fantasy therefore did not just create the experiment but also presented it with supportive argumentation. The final verification of the accuracy of the experiment was then delivered

through Heyerdahl also fulfilling the experiment by performing it. Of course this creates a high level of subjectivity when suggesting that this particular experiment was needed for gaining and comprehending ethnographical knowledge. If another individual was to gain this knowledge then he or she needed to live a primitive life the way Heyerdahl had envisioned it. Any deviation would imply a failure to be truly attentive to this knowledge, implying that Heyerdahl in fact dictated the terms of what true knowledge was.

The *Kon-Tiki Expedition* illustrates a similar structure, with Heyerdahl creating an experiment out of his own imagination. The idea of a transoceanic migration party reaching Polynesia from the east had no empirical material to support it. Instead, it was solely based on a hypothesis Heyerdahl had developed out of his own experiences and his racist interpretation of Marquesan prehistory. It was supported as correct by a portrait of Tei altered to correspond to the particular idea of the experiment (4.2). Heyerdahl himself then created the raft and crossed the Pacific, that is to say he himself actively performed the evidence. In this way Heyerdahl created another level of *being there*. It was not enough to just do fieldwork or visit the particular place; to truly understand the knowledge conveyed, there was also a need to perform experiments developed out of Heyerdahl's imagination. Rather than attempting to gain specialised knowledge, to turn his hypothesis into a scientific framework, Heyerdahl created his own fields of specialisation, by *being there* in various experiments developed out of his own imagination.

### 8.3 Conclusion

Just as Heyerdahl himself repeatedly wrote before the 1960s, his journey to the Marquesas Islands in 1937 was the seed for his Kon-Tiki theory. He had ventured to Polynesia to collect zoological samples and embark on an experiment with primitive life, together with his then wife Liv, trying to re-enact his perceived vision of humanity's natural state. Heyerdahl had modelled this vision out of his own resentment towards modernity and his indulging in the tropes of romanticised South Seas travelogues and cinema.

However, the Polynesia Heyerdahl came to encounter did not correspond to his romanticised visions at all. He was forced to realise that his vision was not in correspondence with reality. But instead of accepting that he had been wrong, Heyerdahl instead went to great

lengths to save his vision. His self-proclaimed realisation from the expedition, namely that there were no tickets to paradise and that human beings living in their natural state were nowhere on earth to be found, illustrates that Heyerdahl did not step away from his vision but instead moved it from the present to the past; it became a historical question. He had not been wrong, he had just come too late. He claimed that Polynesia was not what it had once been. But Heyerdahl had never before been to Polynesia, thus his conclusion rested solely on his own judgement of the contrast between his vision of Polynesia and the Polynesia he came to encounter. His search for paradise – his vision of humanity's natural state – had to be moved from its pre-journey contemporary frame into a historical one.

Fittingly, during the journey Heyerdahl had encountered the rich and evocative archaeological record of the Marquesas Islands. The admiration Heyerdahl felt for the Marquesan archaeological record and the contrast it made to his resentment towards the present population created a divide in his mind. This unbridgeable gap between present and past, despised and admired, led Heyerdahl to separate the Marquesan pre-historical sequence into two distinct entities: one advanced, associated with the material Heyerdahl admired and connected to; and one inferior, aggressive and degenerated, connected to the Marquesan population he despised.

The separation was firmly rooted in Heyerdahl's anti-modernity, eugenics, and anti-colonial thoughts. However, his original intent does not seem to have been to draw a distinction between advanced and primitive but between a *true primitivism* (one that corresponded to his vision) and a *degenerated primitivism* (one that differed from his vision). During the Marquesas journey he wrote that he and Liv were the *true primitive* people of Polynesia, as they corresponded to his vision. His separation of Tei as something special and different than the other Fatu Hivans, even though he was exactly the same as the others, illustrates that the separation rested solely in Heyerdahl's own personal judgement; he decided who and what represented *true primitivism*, it was only about correspondence to his vision.

Over time, this thought about a separation between true and degenerated primitivism slid step by step into a more commonly found expression of the polarisation between advanced and primitive. For Heyerdahl this thought originated in a racist understanding of humanity. Working with stone was in his opinion an aspect of advanced cultures, which he believed impossible for brown people due to their biological limitations. The *temple-people*, Heyerdahl's mysterious first settlers of the Marquesas, were therefore described as a separate

race to the Polynesians. In 1939-1941 they appeared as a purer form of Bryn's Indo-American race, described as a high culture people from Tiahuanaco superior to the brown racially mixed Polynesians and the inferior Melanesians. However, the definitive connection between advanced culture and white people cannot be detected in Heyerdahl's theory until he read the works of novelists Spence and Verrill in the early 1940s. From their work Heyerdahl adapted the idea of a Caucasian race of transatlantic civilisation creators. The bearded, red-haired, white man and sun-deity Kon-Tiki of Heyerdahl's theory was introduced as a secondary addition to the theory but was quickly made into the face of the theory. Heyerdahl's choice of a figurehead closely resembling himself and the almost Nordic Polynesian forefathers whose lifestyle he had tried to mimic during the Marquesas journey illustrates an intimate connection between Heyerdahl's *true primitivism* and his white bearded men. His envisioned natural state of humanity was the culture of the white bearded men. The Kon-Tiki theory originated not just in the Marquesas journey but specifically in his escape from civilisation experiment.

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The inclusion of the white bearded men in Heyerdahl's theory is part of a repeated pattern for how he worked to develop the theory. He came to his own conclusion based on his own experiences. He relied first hand on his own ability to recognise similarities and differences through polarised and simplified comparisons. Stone statues could not have been made by brown people because Heyerdahl had racist biases and found that impossible. Stone statues in South America were similar to stone statues in Polynesia and not to stone statues in Asia because Heyerdahl thought so. His reasoning always relied on his own expert gaze and literature studies were only used to find coincidences that could support his hypothesis. When Heyerdahl discovered something that fitted with his vision it was included, otherwise not. In this regard it is not surprising that Heyerdahl, even at times when research material was available to him, favoured the writings of amateur researchers, adventure stories and novelists.

Heyerdahl continuously sought credibility in his enterprise from the travel writing trope of *being there*. His opinions and judgements were valuable because he had *been there*. He, the adventurer, had travelled to the end of the world and discovered hidden sources of knowledge unattainable for or overseen by others. He had attained ethnographical knowledge from the last cannibal on Fatu Hiva (Tei Tetua); he had been told about Ipona by an intellectual not even Gauguin had mentioned (Henry Lie); he had even gained a complete knowledge of Polynesian ethnology in 'the world's largest private book collection on Polynesia', a Library that he had discovered (Kroepelien Library). His sources were special sources that only he had gained access to by *being there*. Heyerdahl utilised the travel writing trope of *being there* to create a source material of value. The special nature and unattainable qualities of these materials were meant to provide them with uniqueness, and consequently Heyerdahl's theory was unique as it was created from these special sources. However, the Kroepelien Library was not a research Library, and had nowhere near the content of university and museum libraries in the US and Europe; Tei's ethnographical information was already known and published by others; and Lie had not been discovered by Heyerdahl but had earlier worked as an informer for Handy and Linton.

To provide additional credibility to his special knowledge, Heyerdahl paired it with a ferocious stance against dogmatism. Throughout Heyerdahl's writing this was modelled after an idea that scientific specialisation implied that the scientist would never go into the field, but simply get lost among the bookshelves in his sombre office in the tower of Babel. The contrasting pair of the armchair ethnographer and the gentleman traveller had once existed, but not in Heyerdahl's days. The scholars Heyerdahl encountered at Oslo University were all anti-dogmatic individuals encouraging independent thought and experimentation, and all had a substantially larger degree of experience of *being there* than Heyerdahl did. The same was true for scholars like Mead, Rydén, Karsten, Buck, Linton, and Skottsberg, with whom Heyerdahl would debate during the 1940s; even Spinden, on whom Heyerdahl allegedly based his armchair scientist caricature in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue, had extensive experience of fieldwork. Deconstructing Heyerdahl's anti-dogmatism narratives illustrates that this was not so much about his actual objection towards perceived dogmatism in science as it was about portraying the scientific community as a corrupt elitist conspiracy to highlight himself as the lone crusader for the truth. Heyerdahl chose this approach instead of attending to the methodological criticism his theory received. Similar to his choice to try to save his vision of

Polynesia from the contrasting reality he had encountered during his Marquesas journey, Heyerdahl chose to save his theory at the expense of the contrasting reality it encountered; he was not wrong, everyone else was.

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The most spectacular way in which Heyerdahl utilised the *being there* trope to describe how he had gained special knowledge is found in the second layer he attached to the trope, the way he created his own fields of specialisation through experiments developed out of his own imagination. This is noticeable already in his criticism of Bonnevie as a specialist scientist. For all the knowledge Bonnevie held on zoology, she had not attempted to live as one with nature, therefore she could not fully comprehend nature, she had not *been there*. Heyerdahl, on the other hand, had lived as one with nature through his wilderness expeditions with Bjørneby, at least as Heyerdahl imagined it. Through this type of reasoning, Heyerdahl built a corpus of knowledge that only he had access to as he was the one carrying out the experiments. He dictated the terms of true knowledge.

The ethnographical knowledge Tei provided Heyerdahl with could very well have been written before, but Heyerdahl stated that it could only truly be understood by someone who had lived the *true primitivist* lifestyle. If one had not been through an escape from civilisation experiment the way Heyerdahl envisioned it, one would never be able to grasp the true nature of ethnographical knowledge. Heyerdahl deployed another level of *being there*, it was not just a question of the physical space but also about a mental state.

A similar case appears with the *Kon-Tiki Expedition*, which lacked scientific background; it was a figment of Heyerdahl's imagination. By creating a fictitious raft (that is to say, none existing in known source material) and reenacting a fictitious journey (no known source material to support its existence), Heyerdahl developed his own field of expertise, and in this field, by *being there* and performing the experiment, he had gained a specialist knowledge that no one else came close to.

His escape from civilisation or *true primitivism* experiment worked in a similar way. It was created out of Heyerdahl's imagination, and was nothing else than his own vision of what life



had been like at dawn of humanity. Heyerdahl's own imagination of humanity was of course a field in which he was the leading expert. But by bringing his imagination out into the world through his self-conceived experiment, he could create a field where his expertise was unquestionable. He obviously held an advantage here, as none of his critics had rafted across the Pacific or attempt to live a primitivist life the way Heyerdahl had imagined it; he had created his own specialist field of expertise. It was not Heyerdahl's experiments per se that were the problem; rather, the problem was that he himself not just created them and participated in them, but then also went on to study them. In this way Heyerdahl did not study Pacific migrations, he created his own version of them, which he then went on to study. The Kon-Tiki theory originated in Heyerdahl's envisioned natural state of humanity, a creation of his imagination, and then developed out of his will to preserve this vision from a contrasting reality.

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# Appendix I – Translations and Notes on Translations

## TR1

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1948a:18-19

**Original quotation:**

Slik var det nok begynt, ved bålet på en Sydhavsøy hvor en gammel innfødt satt og fortalte slektens sagn og historier. Mange år senere satt jeg sammen med en annen gammel mann, denne gang på et mørkt kontor oppe i etasjene på et stort museum i New York. [...] Veggene ellers var fylt av bøker. Noen hadde én mann skrevet og neppe ti menn lest. Den gamle mannen som hadde lest alle disse bøkene og skrevet en del av dem, satt hvithåret og godmodig bak arbeidsbordet. [...]

— Argumenter, sa han. De må ikke behandle etnografiske problemer som en slags detektivgåte!

— Hvorfor ikke, sa jeg. Jeg har basert alle konklusjoner på egne observasjoner og de fakta vitenskapen har lagt på bordet.

— Vitenskapens oppgave er ren gransking, sa han rolig. Ikke å prøve å bevise hverken det ene eller det andre. Han flyttet varsomt det uåpnede manuskriptet til side.

**Translation:**

That was how it all got started, by the campfire on a South Seas island, where an old native told me his ancestors' legends and history. Many years later I found myself sitting next to another elderly man, this time in a dark office on the top floor of a large New York City museum. [...] Everywhere you looked there were books. Some of them had been written by one man and read by less than ten men. The old white-haired man, who had read all of the books and even written some of them, sat in good faith behind his desk [...]

- Arguments, he said. You cannot approach ethnographical problems as if they were murder mysteries!

- Why not? I asked. I have based all my conclusions on my own observation and the facts science has put on the table.

- The purpose of science is not to prove this or that, but to review, he calmly said, while carefully pushing the still sealed manuscript to the side of the table

**Comment:**

The word *godmodig* is somewhat difficult to translate, as it is not beyond doubt certain what Heyerdahl wants to express. The word can have both an positive meaning similar to English expressions as 'kind', 'patience', 'friendly' 'good-natured', but can also be used to express very negative meanings as 'gullible', 'passive', 'submissive', 'weak'. The English expression 'in good faith' was found as the most suitable translation, and closest to, at least in the author's opinion, what Heyerdahl wanted to express.

*Detektivgåte* literary meaning 'Detective riddle' has been translated as 'murder mysteries', as this was found to be the closest corresponding English expression.

Heyerdahl's original uses the phrase *vitenskapen har lagt på bordet* (translated as 'the facts science has put on the table'), literary meaning 'what science has placed on the table' that is to say what science has made available for examination by presenting in the open to the public. This seems to be a wordplay by Heyerdahl connecting to his description of the hidden away office with all of its books hardly anyone has read, and the ageing scientist sitting behind a large desk – the Norwegian word for desk is *skrivebord* 'writing table' – and connects to next sentence where the ageing scientist pushes Heyerdahl's manuscript to the side, that is to say Heyerdahl placed the manuscript in front of the scientist, who pushed it aside without looking at it. In this way Heyerdahl seems to suggest that he was approaching the facts on the table, while the scientist simply pushes them to the side. This more intricate phrasing is lost in translation.

## TR2

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1948a:11-16

**Original quotation:**

vår egen rase som freidig kalte seg oppdagere av øyene, de fant dyrkede marker og lands byer med templer og hytter på hver eneste beboelig øy. Ja, på noen øyer fant de endog gamle pyramider, brolagte veier og ut hogde stenstatuer så høye som et fireetasjes hus i Europa [...] Her hadde et ukjent folkeferd en gang levd og grunnet en av verdens selsomste kulturer, før de plutselig en gang i forliden forsvant som var de drevet bort fra Jordens overflate. De levnet etter seg enorme menneskelignende stenstatuer som minnet om dem på Pitcairn, Marquesas og Påskeøya, og mektige trinnformete pyramider make til dem på Tahiti og Samoa. [...] De fortalte spanjolene at de kolossale monumentene som sto så forlatt i landskapet var reist av en rase av hvite guder som bodde der før inkaene seiv tok over makten. Disse forsvunne byggmestrene ble skildret som vise og fredelige læremestere, som opprinnelig var kommet nordfra en gang i tidenes morgen. og hadde instruert inkaenes primitive forfedre i byggekunst og åkerbruk, så vel som i seder og skikker. De var ulik andre indianere fordi de hadde hvit hud og langt skjegg, og dertil var de bøyer av vekst enn dem seiv. [...] Inkaene seiv tok over makten i landet, og de hvite læremestrene forsvant for alltid fra Sør-Amerikas kyst og i vestlig retning rett ut over Stillehavet [...] var det hele familier som stakk seg ut ved sin påfallende lyse hudfarge, rødlig til blondt hår, blågrå øyne [...] Polyneserne seiv var ellers gyllenbrune i huden med ravnsvart hår [...] De rødhårete individene kalte seg seiv «urukehu», og sa at de slammet direkte fra de første høvdinger på øyene som var hvite guder, slik som Tangaroa, Kane og Tiki.

**Translation:**

Our own race, who claimed to be the discoverers of these islands [Polynesia], found cultivated lands and villages with temples and houses on every single inhabitable island. On some they even found old pyramids, paved roads and carved stone statues tall as four storey buildings in Europe [...] Here [South America] an unknown people had once lived. They founded one of the world's most peculiar cultures, before they suddenly vanished, as if they had been driven off the face of the earth. They left behind them enormous anthropomorphic stone statues which resembled those found on Pitcairn, Marquesas and Easter Island, and huge step-pyramids similar to those on Tahiti and Samoa [...] [The Incas] told the Spaniards that the colossal monuments, which were found dispersed around the landscape, had been made by a race of white gods who had lived there before the Incas seized power over the lands. These vanished master builders were depicted as enlightened and peaceful teachers. They had come from the North at the dawn of time and had taught the Incas' primitive ancestors how to build and farm the land and all their customs. They had been different than other Indians, with white skin, long beards and tall stature [...] The Incas took power over the land, and the white teachers disappeared for ever from South American shores, westward bound straight into the Pacific [...] [In Polynesia] there were entire families that separated themselves from the crowd through their noticeable pale skin-colour, red to blonde hair, blue-grey eyes [...] The Polynesians in contrast had golden brown skin and raven black hair [...] The individuals with red hair called themselves 'urukehu', and said that they descended directly from the islands' first chiefs, Tangaroa, Kane and Tiki, who had all been white gods.

## TR3

**Source:** Baessler 1900:213

**Original quotation:**

Nach Ansicht des französischen Residenten hat sich diese in der letzten Zeit so schnell vermindert, dass er annimmt, dass bereits im Jahre 1930 keine Polynesier mehr auf den Marquesas-Inseln zu finden sein werden

**Translation:**

According to the French Resident, the native population has so quickly diminished in recent times that he assumes that by the year 1930 not a single Polynesian will be found in the Marquesas Islands.

## TR4

**Source:** Brøgger & Rolfsen 1896:214.

**Original quote:**

Det er ikke paa krigens bane, at de smaa nationer kan hævde sin plads og forsvare sin selvstændighed. Det er paa kulturens, paa civilisationens, paa videnskabens og kunstens felt, som ligger aabent for alle, det er der, de bør søge sin udmerkelse og tilkjæmpe sig de store folks agtelse

**Translation:**

It is not through warfare that small nations can leave their mark and assert their independence. It is through fields open for each and every one, like culture, civilisation, science and art, that the small nation can strive for the recognition of its people's greatness.

**Comment:**

The last paragraph has been somewhat freely interpreted in line with overall content. The sentence implies, rather than the strive being for the recognition of each nation's people's greatness, that the strive was for each nation to have its people recognised as one of the great people. The difference has been considered as minor for this work but should be noted.

## TR5

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1998:73-74

**Original quotation:**

Allerede den første dagen på universitetet lærte jeg altså noe viktig: Det å være spesialist er ikke det samme som å være allvitende. Tvert imot. [...] Her hadde jeg gledet meg til å lære mer om dyrenes liv av en professor i zoologi enn av en fjellkar som Ola Bjørneby, og så kunne ikke landets fremste ekspert på dyr se forskjell på elg og rein uten å titte dem opp i neseborene.

**Translation:**

Already on my first day at the University I learned an important lesson: to be a specialist is not the same as being omniscient. It is actually the complete opposite [...] I had been looking forward to gaining a deeper knowledge about animals from a professor in zoology, than what I had previously learned from a mountain man like Ola Bjørneby; but to my surprise the country's leading expert could not tell the difference between a reindeer and an elk without looking up its nostrils.

**Comment:**

The term *fjellkar* literary means 'mountain man' or man from the mountains. The Norwegian term refers to a person from a mountain area or a person with large experience of outdoors activities in the Norwegian mountains (hunting, trekking, bivouac building etc.). Heyerdahl does in his paragraph refer to the latter. The English terms 'woodsman' or 'outdoorsy' might also be suitable to avoid confusion with the English expression 'Mountain man' referring to a particular type of frontiersmen in North America during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the lifestyle practice by Bjørneby could be argued to have been similar to that of the North American 'Mountain men' a direct translation of the original Norwegian expression has been kept for the translation. Heyerdahl did of course also somewhat romanticise the life choice of Bjørneby (who was of a wealthy family and had chosen his way of life rather than being forced to live the way he did), the English terms 'vagrant', 'bum' and 'tramp' might also be relevant as describing Bjørneby's occupation.

## TR6

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1948a:10-11

**Original quotation:**

Han satt og tenkte, gamlingen. Han levde for fortiden og var knyttet til den med alle band. [...] Gamle Tei Tetua var den siste gjenlevende av alle de utdødde stammene på Fatuhivas østkyst. Hvor gammel han var, visste han ikke, men hans rynkede, barkbrune lær hud så ut som var den tørket i sol og vind i

hundre år. Han var sikkert en av de få på disse øyene som ennå husket og trodde på sin fars og bestefars historiske sagn om den store polynesiske høvding-guden Tiki, solens sønn. [...] den natten, spøkte gamle Tei Tetuas beretninger om Tiki [...] Jeg fikk ikke sove. Det var som om tiden ikke mer eksisterte og Tiki og hans sjøfarende menn nettopp nå var i ferd med å gjøre sin første landgang.

**Translation:**

The old man sat thoughtful. He lived for the past and was by all means tied to it. [...] Old Tei Tetua was the last survivor of Fatu Hiva's eastern tribes. He did not know how old he really was, but his wrinkled, bark brown leathery skin looked as if it had been dried by the sun and the wind for a century. He was probably one of the last people on these islands who still remembered and believed in his father's and grandfather's legends about the great Polynesian chief and deity Tiki, the son of the sun [...] that night I was haunted by Tei Tetua's stories of Tiki [...] I could not sleep. It was as though time had ceased to exist and Tiki and his sea-voyaging men at that very moment were about to make their first landfall.

## TR7

**Source:** Semb-Johansson 2009c

**Original quotation:**

det ikke er i bøker og samlinger, men ute i den fri og levende natur vår viden må søke sine kilder

**Translation:**

sources should not be sought for in books and collections but from the free and living nature

## TR8

**Source:** Semb-Johansson 2009c

**Original quotation:**

naturlig livsinnstilling, helt dogmefri og uortodoks

**Translation:**

natural approach to life, unorthodox and free of dogmas

## TR9

**Source:** Bonnevie 1936

**Original quotation:**

problemer angående isolasjonens betydning for artenes omdannelse, om samarbeidet mellom miljø og arv under den ejendommelige tilpassning til spesielle forhold, om menneskenes og kulturens innflytelse på den fri naturs dyre- og plantesamfund, kort sagt – en slik isolert øygruppe byr på en mengde interessante problemer.

**Translation:**

Questions on the significance of isolation for species evolution; the relationship between environment and heritage in adaptation to extreme conditions; human impact on flora and fauna. An isolated island group of this type offers many problems that could be addressed.

## TR10

**Source:** Semb-Johansson 2009b

**Original quotation:**

Sverg aldri til magisterens fane!

**Translation:**

Don't follow your teacher's word

**Comment:**

In Semb-Johanssons' version of Broch's catch phrase the word *fane* meaning 'banner' is used, but in two interviews from 1952 Broch is quoted using the word *ord* meaning 'word'. The difference between the two is however negligible since the point remains the same. For the translation the latter has been used as it is quoted directly from Broch.

## TR11

**Sources:** Anon II. 1952.

**Original quote:**

På professorens skrivebord la Thor Heyerdahls verk “American Indians in the Pacific”, med en varm dedikasjon fra forfatteren, også en av professorens elever.

-Det er bare amatører som bryter nye baner, sa professor Broch som et svar til den som har betegnet Heyerdahl som bare amatør. En skolert videnskapsmann får skylapper på, han kjører videre på den linje som andre har trukket opp. Hvis han viser seg så stor at han finner frem til en linje for seg selv, kaller videnskapsmennene ham amatør – men er bare amatøren tilstrekkelig stor, aksepterer videnskapen ham som en fjær i hatten. Personligen setter jeg Thor Heyerdahls bedrift i samme klasse som Fridtjof Nansens, tilføyet professor Broch. Heyerdahl hører til de av mine elever som ville tenke selv, ikke sverge til magisterens ord, og det er riktig. Det er lærerens oppgave å meddele eleven sin virkelige viden – ikke sin tro – og stille eleven fritt overfor oppgaven. Tro inneholder tvil – tvil er tillatt i tro, men aldri i videnskap, erklærte professoren. Å søke inn til den hele, uavkortede, kompromissløse sannhet, det er videnskapens sak.

**Translation:**

On the Professor's desktop lay a copy of Thor Heyerdahl's *American Indians in the Pacific*, the cover was signed with a hearty greeting from the author, one of the professor's former students.

- It is only amateurs who can break new ground, said Professor Broch in response to the accusations of amateurism in Heyerdahl's work. A trained scientist has his eyes covered, he follows an established path, drawn up by others. If someone comes forth with a path of his own, the scientists will call him an amateur – but if the amateur's hypothesis is big enough, the scientists will accept it, like a feather in one's hat. Personally, I regard Heyerdahl's achievements to be in the same division as Fridtjof Nansen's, Professor Broch added. Heyerdahl belongs to a group of my students who could think for themselves, who refused to blindly trust the statements of their lecturers, and they were right to think so. It is the teacher's obligation to transfer his real knowledge – not his beliefs – and let the students judge for themselves. Belief includes doubt – doubt can be accepted in belief, but never in science. To search for the complete truth, beyond compromise and doubt, that is the purpose of science, the Professor exclaimed.

## TR12

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1936a:3

**Original quotation:**

Den litteratur jeg har kommit over har jeg fått bl. a. v. hj. a. konservator Erling Christophersen, som selv har arbeidet i Stillehavet for Bishop Museum

**Translation:**

Literature has been made available to me through curator Erling Christophersen, who has previously worked with Pacific material for the Bishop Museum.

## TR13

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1939b

**Original quotation:**

Jeg vil f.ex. påstå at nøkkelen til sydhavsfolkets gåte ligger i Marquesas jungle.

**Translation:**

I would claim that the key to unlocking the riddle of Polynesian origins lays hidden in the Marquesan jungle.

## TR14

**Source:** Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.

**Original quotation:**

Vi vill reise til Otaheiti

**word by word:**

We want travel to Otaheiti

**Comment:**

*Otaheiti* of course refers to Tahiti. The expression *Otaheiti* in various spelling, is (or at least was) in Norwegian as well as in Swedish also used to refer to a very far and distant exotic place (Språket 29 Mar. 2011). Liv's use of it in the scrapbook is probably in reference to both Tahiti and to a far and distant exotic place.

## TR15

**Source:** Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.

**Original quotation:**

På förmånd var planen sånn, Thor skulde dra over land og sjö, til en Sydhavsö, med napta, glasser og utstyr, skulde han samle de rare dyr.

**Translation:**

It was planned that Thor would go to a South Seas island, with equipment and all, to collect rare animals.

**Comment:**

Liv's writing is on verse. No attempts at transferring the lyrical style has been made for the translation. The translation thus solely focuses on the content. The style also means that some words are used in a technically incorrect way, for instance Liv uses the word *Sjö* (lake) rather than *hav* (ocean) to refer to Thor's planned travels over the oceans. The word *napta* makes no sense, but this could be a handwriting interpretation mistake made by the author, it should probably be a 'f' rather than a 'p', thus *nafta* (meaning oil, petroleum), which seems reasonable in relation to content – referring to the preservation fluids Heyerdahl brought with him.

## TR16

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1974a:10

**Original quotation:**

Jeg delte min fars begeistring for naturen og min mors lidenskap for zoologi og “primitve” stammer, men kunne ikke forstå deres beundring for det moderne menneskes kamp for å bryte alle bånd med naturen. Hva ville de flykte fra? Var de skremt av apemennesket som Darwin hadde malt bak dem? De hilste hvilken som helst forandring fra sine egne forelders verden velkommen og kalte det “fremskritt”, uansett hva forandringen kunne være. “Fremskritt” var det samme som å fjerne seg fra naturen.

**Translation:**

I shared my father's zest for nature, and my mother's passion for zoology and 'primitive' people but could not for the life of me understand their admiration at modern man's attempt to cut all ties to nature. What was it they tried to get away from? Had they been spooked by Darwin's ape-man ancestry? Head-on they saluted everything that broke with the world of their parents and called it 'progress'. 'Progress' was apparently to remove themselves from nature.



## TR17

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:5

**Original quotation:**

En prikk som verden hadde oversett, et eneste bitte lite fristed for civilisajonens jernhårde grep. [...] 'Et liv med bare nevene, som våre aller første forfedre, uten civilisasjonens hjelp, det stillet store krav til naturen som omgav en.'

**Translation:**

A small spot that the world had forgotten about, a single little overlooked safe haven which had not yet fallen into the claws of civilisation [...] Where we could live with nothing to rely on but our own two hands, just as our very first ancestors had done, completely without the aid of civilisation. This of course meant that we needed to find a place where the environment would provide us with the possibility to do so.

## TR18

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:6

**Original quotation:**

I ett med naturen

**Translation:**

At one with nature

## TR19

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:7

**Original quotation:**

Der kunde vi gjøre vårt eksperiment. Vende tilbake til skogene. Forlate vår tid. Kulturen. Civilisasjonen. Springe tusener år tilbake. Til de første menneskers levevis. Til selve livet i sin fulle og enkleste form. Vilde det gå? Ja, teoretisk. Det interesserte oss ikke. Vi vilde se det i praksis. Vi vilde forsøke om vi to, mann og kvinne, kunde opta det livet våre første aner forlot. Om vi kunde rive oss løs fra vårt kunstige liv. Fullt og helt. Stå på egne ben. Uavhengige av civilisasjonens minste hjelp. Uavhengige av alt undtagen naturen.

**Translation:**

At this island we could go through with our experiment. Return to the woods. Escape our time. Culture. Civilisation. Travel back thousands of years in time. Back to the ways of the first humans. Live life in its full and purest form. Was it possible? Theoretically yes. But theory was of no interest to us. We wanted to experience it, live it. We wanted to see if the two of us, man and woman, could live the life our ancestors had left behind. If we could truly abandon our artificial lifestyle. Stand on our own, cutting all ties to modern civilisation. To be free of everything, except for nature itself.

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl's term *kunstige* (strange, odd) has been translated as *artificial* in line with the overall content of the paragraph.

## TR20

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:9

**Original quotation:**

Vi hadde innøvet en tahitisk sang under reisen. Vi skulde stemme i med den når de første kanoer kom myldrende mot oss. Vi vilde vise at vi var like lykkelige og fri som dem. Ingen civiliserte overmennesker, men naturlige folk som forstod dem. Som beundret dem og deres liv i solen.

**Translation:**

We had practiced a Tahitian song during the journey. We had planned to start singing it as soon as we

saw the first canoes of Tahiti coming up to the ship. We wanted to show the Tahitians that we were as free and happy as them. That we were not superior beings of civilisation, but natural people like them. That we deeply admired them and their way of life under the tropical sun

**Comment:**

In the translation 'Tahiti' and 'Tahitian' was used instead of Heyerdahl's original less specified 'them' and 'there'. As it is from the overall content evident that Heyerdahl was referring to Tahitians and Tahiti – it would of course make no sense to practice a Tahitian song for a welcoming if you were travelling anywhere else than Tahiti.

Heyerdahl's use of the term *overmennesker* is somewhat ambiguous to translate, as it is not exactly clear what Heyerdahl is referring to with the term. From the content he is quite obviously referencing a sort of racial hierarchy between the Tahitian (inferior, 'savages') and 'white Europeans' (superior, 'civilised people') which he and Liv wants to break with and show that they had come to live and be like the 'pure savages of Tahiti'. The Norwegian word used is the same as the translation of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, however, it is questionable whether Heyerdahl was in any way referring to Nietzsche's concept. The term can quite commonly be found in Scandinavian languages, and even if it originates in Nietzsche's concept, it is seldom directly related to Nietzsche's original concept. To not be misleading the term was translated to the somewhat clunky 'superior beings of civilisation', to avoid any misleading connotations to Nietzsche, or in the case of the most common English translation of Nietzsche's concept 'superman' connotations to the term's modern association within American popular culture. 'Superior beings of civilisation' is also in line with the criticism Heyerdahl wanted to express in his book.

In the last section, the word 'tropical' was added to Heyerdahl's original *solen* (sun). This was done to clarify that Heyerdahl in this case is not just referring to 'the sun' in general but to a particular place where the sun is consistently warm and shining, as opposed to for instance Scandinavia with cold and dark winters.

## TR21

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1948a:8-9

**Original quotation:**

Kanskje begynte det hele vinteren forut på et museumskontor i New York. Eller kanskje begynte det allerede ti år tidligere på en liten øy i Marquesas-gruppen midt i Stillehavet [...] Jeg husker så godt en bestemt aften. Den siviliserte verden virket så ubegripelig fjern og uvirkelig. Vi hadde bodd som de eneste hvite på øya i nesten et år, og hadde med vilje forlatt sivilisasjonens goder sammen med dens onder. Vi bodde i en pelehytte vi hadde bygd oss under palmene nede ved kysten, og spiste hva tropeskogen og Stillehavet kunne by oss. Vi fikk innsikt i mange av Stillehavets forunderlige problemer ved å gå i en hard men praktisk skole, og jeg tror at både fysisk og mentalt så fulgte vi ofte i sporene til de første primitive mennesker som nådde disse øyene fra ukjent hjemstavn.

**Translation:**

Perhaps it all started last winter at a museum office in New York City; or perhaps it had started already ten years earlier on a small island in the Marquesas group in the midst of the Pacific Ocean. I can still vividly recall one evening. The civilised world seemed so unbelievably distant and unreal. We had, as the only white people, spent almost one year on the island. We had purposely left civilisation's good and bad sides behind us. We lived by the sea, in a cabin raised on poles, which we had built ourselves, and only ate what the jungle and the Pacific ocean provided us with. The harsh and practical experience gave us insight into many of the Pacific's enigmatic research questions. I do believe that we both physically and psychologically closely followed a trail trodden by the first primitive people to reach these islands from an unknown homeland.

**Comments:**

The quotation includes several modified statements about Heyerdahl's time in the Marquesas. The expression *forunderlige problemer* [strange/mind boggling problems] has been freely translated as 'enigmatic research question'.

## TR22

**Source:** Skottsberg 1949a; Heyerdahl 1949c

**Original quotation Skottsberg:**

vem vågar påstå att de föreställa vita rödhåriga män?

**Original quotation Heyerdahl:**

<< vem vågar påstå att de föreställa vita rödhåriga män? >> Det gör jeg.

**Translation:**

who dare say that they depict white red-haired men? I do

## TR23

**Source:** Heyerdahl n.d.a,

**Original title:**

*Indianerne på Sydhavsøiene*

**translation:**

South Sea Indians

## TR24

**Source:** Title of Erling Tambs' *Fribytterfred til fjerne farvann*

**Original title:**

*Fribytterfred til fjerne farvann*

**Translation:**

Freewheeling travels in foreign shores

**Comment:**

The title is somewhat hard to translate, especially the term *fribytterferd*. In Norwegian the term *fribytter* refers to an independent person or ship with permission from their 'home nation' to plunder enemy ships in times of war, a form of legalised piracy, but not the same as being a pirate. According to *Det Store Norske leksikon* the term originates in the Low-German *vributer*, meaning a person free to take plunder. *Ferd* means journey or travel. The author is not certain what exactly Erling Tambs wanted to express by the title, other than the independent notion of his travel to far and distant shores. Tambs constructed a sail-boat of his own and travelled around the world. The term 'freewheeling' was found to be somewhat close to the concept of Tambs' title and thus used for the translation. There are also English editions of Tambs' book (not exactly the same work, but compilation of Tambs' works) these generally only use titles like *Cruise of the Teddy* etc. and has very little to do with the Norwegian title chosen by Tambs or his publisher.

## TR25

**Source:** Title *På jakt efter paradiset* of Heyerdahl's 1938 travelogue from the Marquesas Islands expedition.

**Original title:**

*På jakt efter paradiset*

**Translation:**

Searching for Paradise

**Comment:**

There are several different existing translations of this title. In Jacoby's (1968:45) biography the title *In search of Paradise* appears. Andersson did in his work chose the title *Pursuit of Paradise* to convey the aggressive linguistic nuance of the word *jakt* (hunt), and its connection to Heyerdahl's colonialist

behaviour (Andersson 2007a:62 note 134). Andersson is correct in addressing the possibility to translate the word *jakt* as the more aggressive 'hunt' but fails to mention that this word is commonly used in Scandinavian languages to also imply 'looking for', 'searching for', 'pursuing', 'chase' etc. without implying any excessive amount of aggression. As the theme of the book is on Heyerdahl's search for a still existing Garden of Eden, the English word 'Search' has to be considered as the most accurate translation, as the protagonist is obviously trying to find out whether or not there still was a paradise on Earth, rather than chasing after an established Earthly paradise as would be implied by 'pursuit'.

The title of the book was apparently chosen by the publisher rather than the author (Kvam 2005:218-219), and it is significant that Heyerdahl did not reuse it for any subsequent publications or versions of the travelogue (see Heyerdahl 1941b, 1974a-b, 1991). The title *Progress from Paradise*, which Heyerdahl had suggested for the 1974 version *Fatu Hiva: Back to Nature* (Coughlin 2016:247), is more in line with Heyerdahl's ideas of the period (see chapter 3) and he could very well have wanted a similar title for *På jakt efter paradiset*. In view of this, Andersson's suggestion that the title of the 1938 travelogue represented Heyerdahl's aggressive colonial behaviour (2007a:61-62) seems somewhat obsolete.

In line with Heyerdahl's own ideas of the period a reissue of the travelogue in English would preferable have used a title like 'Progress from Paradise', 'Turning Back Tides', 'Back to Nature' or 'There are no Tickets to Paradise'.

## TR26

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1949a:214-215

**Original quote:**

Navnet 'Kon-Tiki', eller 'Sol-Tiki', fikk flåten og derved ekspedisjonen til minne om inkaenes legendariske kulturhelt, den hvite prestekongen og solguden Kon-Tiki (med det senere tilnavnet Viracocha) som hadde sitt sete blandt skjeggete, hvite og langørete menn i Tiahuanaco ved Titicacasjøen, inntil den før-inkaiske høvdingen Cari slo ham i et slag og tilintetgjorde hans folk på en ø i Titicaca. Kon-Tiki rømte ifølge inkaenes overleveringer ned til Stillehavskysten, og forsvant for alltid over havet mot vest. Over hele Polynesiens vidspredte ø-verden beretter legendene at "Tiki" var navnet på menneskenes første høvding, øboernes guddommelige stamfar.

**Translation:**

The name 'Kon-Tiki', or 'Sun-Tiki', was given to the raft and the expedition to commemorate the Incas' legendary culture hero, the white priest-king and sun-god Kon-Tiki (with the additional name Viracocha), who ruled over the bearded, white, and long-eared men of Tiahuanaco by the shores of Lake Titicaca. He and his people were eventually expelled from their lands by the Pre-Incan warlord Cari, after losing a battle on an island in Lake Titicaca. Kon-Tiki escaped his persecutors, and according to Inca legends, he fled across the western ocean, never to be heard of again. All over the Polynesian Island world there are legends of 'Tiki', the first chieftain and divine forefather of all islanders.

**Commentary:**

For discussion on Heyerdahl's use of the word *kulturhelt* 'culture hero' see chapters 1 and 7.

The 'white bearded men of Tiahuanaco' is in the paragraph also described by Heyerdahl as *langørete*, that is to say that they had 'long ears' it has been presumed that this refers to mythology from Easter Island which speaks of 'the long ears'.

## TR27

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1953

**Original quotation:**

slask

**Translation:**

Piece of crap

**Comment:**

Condescending term which does not translate very well to English. Roughly comparable to 'a piece of crap'. The Norwegian term does refer to something wet and unpleasant but could also imply something similar to the English expression 'slapdash'. Nonetheless, to be referred to as a *slask* is not particularly flattering.

## TR28

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:16

**Original quotation:**

Jeg skal gi ut en bok engang her på Tahiti. På polynesiske. Den skal handle om Nordhavsparadisiet og være like sannferdig som sine konkurrenter fra syden. Jeg skal skildre Norge, drømmenes land, hvor vikingene sitter på isflak og slår ild med flintesten, mens kvinnene danser halling i bjørneskinn og føder levende unger med ski på bena.

**Translation:**

One of these days I will publish a book here in Tahiti. Written in Polynesian. It will be all about 'the North Seas paradise' and as truthful as its counterparts from the South Seas. I will write about Norway, a land of adventure, a dream, where Viking men sit around on icy lakes, striking fire with flint, while their women dance *halling* dressed in bearskins and give birth on skis

**Comments on translation:**

The translation of Heyerdahl's *drømmenes land* as 'an adventure land, a dream' is a free translation based on the content of the quotation, the literary meaning of 'drømmens land' is 'land of dreams' or 'dreamland'. The expression 'eventyrland' (adventure land) is frequently used by Heyerdahl as well as Ørjan Olsen in his contemporary travelogues from the South Pacific. The use of 'adventure land' in the translation can thus be said to be in line with the sarcastic comment about South Seas travel writing Larsen was aiming to make in the quotation.

*Halling*, is a traditional folk dance in the Norwegian inland and central western Sweden. It is a quick paced dance, with acrobatic components. In contrast to Heyerdahl's use of it, it is actual traditionally performed by men (either solo or in a troupe) and not by women.

The last expression *og føder levende unger med ski på bena* can be interpreted in two different ways, either that the women gave birth while on ski, or that they gave birth to children with skis. The satirical intent of the expression remains whichever way is chosen.

## TR29

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1998:84

**Original quotation:**

høvding Teriieroo, far til den skjønne Tuimata og den mektigste av Tahitis sytten høvdinger. Stor og ruvende både i ånd og legeme. En fullblods etterkommer av Polynesiens gamle høvdingslekter. Med medbrakte gaver fra Bjarne Kroepelien ble vi mottatt med åpne armer og ble automatisk en del av familien. Fire uker skulle det gå før det kom melding med bussen om at en skonnert skulle seile til Marquesas. I mellom tiden hadde vi gått en god skole, begge barbeinte og i fargerike pareu - Liv med Faufau og husets kvinner rundt glohaugen på kjøkkengulvet, og jeg med høvdingen og hans sønner i skog og mark.

**Translation:**

Chief Teriieroo, father of the notorious beauty Tuimata, was the most powerful of Tahiti's seventeen chiefs. Grand and towering in both spirit and body. A full-blooded descendant of the ancient Polynesian line of chiefs. We brought with us gifts from Bjarne Kroepelien and were welcomed with open arms into the family. It took four weeks before a message came that the schooner was sailing for the Marquesas. While waiting, we received the best education imaginable, both of us dressed in richly coloured *pareu* – Liv with Faufau and the household's women, bent over the earth oven in the kitchen

floor, and me with the chief and his sons out in the jungle.

**Comments:**

The expression *i skog og mark* refers to being outdoors (in a none settled area) and not particularly to the 'woods' 'forest' or as in the chosen translation 'jungle'. The choice of 'jungle' is in reference to Heyerdahl's description of the situation as preparation for their stay on Fatu Hiva.

Heyerdahl's reference to the word of the schooner's arrival coming by *bussen* (the bus) has been excluded as the means of the message transportation was found unnecessary for the content of the sentence. For similar reasons Heyerdahl's use of *barbeinte* (barelegged, without clothing covering the legs) has been excluded, since being barelegged is basically implied by wearing a *pareu* (*pāreu* (or sometimes *pareo*) is a type Polynesia clothing, similar to a sarong).

Heyerdahl's word *glohaugen* literary means 'the coals' or 'sparking pile', 'glowing pile' 'heap of hot stones' etc. from the context Heyerdahl is obviously referring to heated stones used in an earth oven, hence the translation as 'earth oven'.

## TR30

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937j

**Original quotation:**

strålende utgave av den gamle solide polynesiske rase!

**Translation:**

pure descendant of the good old Polynesian race

**Comment:**

The meaning of the word *strålende* is depending on context, and can for instances mean glowing, brilliant, marvellous, gorgeous etc. In this case the Heyerdahl wants to portray Teriieroo as a magnificent example of the characteristics of the Polynesian race. As Heyerdahl's idea of 'magnificent example' of races is throughout his works defined in relation to the purity of the race the expression 'pure descendant' has been used for the translation, since it was interpreted the as closest phrase to what Heyerdahl wanted to express.

## TR31

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937a, 1938a, 1974a and other places

**Original quotation:**

de brune

**Translation:**

The browns/ brown people/ Fatu Hivans/ Polynesians/ Marquesans etc.

**Comment:**

The term *de brune* is continuously used by Heyerdahl when referring to the inhabitants of Polynesian Islands such as Fatu Hiva in his 1938 travelogue and contemporary newspaper articles. The term also appears in his 1974 travelogue. The term is somewhat hard to directly translate as it simply means a 'brown person' or 'brown persons'. The term, and the way it is used by Heyerdahl, does on the other hand include a strong racist implication of lack of individuality among whichever group is referred to under the concept. In this way it deviates from other terms to describe 'people of colour' in the period. The term is continuously in Heyerdahl's travelogue used to deprive above all Fatu Hivans of individuality, as single individuals are otherwise when of importance for the story presented by their actual names. 'De brune' is thus not a term which is synonym with Polynesian, Fatu Hivan, person of colour etc. but a term that only has negative connotations, and only is used to describe a group people without individuality or character. In this way it deviates from for instance the contemporary use of the word 'negro', which is just descriptive of a persons physical characteristics. Periodical writing could for instance have phrases such as 'The negro John was the most brilliant man I ever met'. The term 'de brune' is never used in this way, it is thus not just a descriptive term of the period, but a strong racist

expression, used by Heyerdahl to show his contempt towards the Fatu Hivan population.

## TR32

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:74-75

**Original quotation:**

Tragedien i landsbyen blev hurtig glemt bak rekker av sorgløse dager. Solen stekte i frukttrærne. Regnet smalt i palmetaket. Månen seilte sin nattlige runde og blinket i trollskogens blanksvarte blader.

**Translation:**

After a couple of carefree days in the sun, we quickly got over the tragedy we had witnessed in the village. The fruit trees basked in the sun. The rain hammered on the palm-leaf roof. The moon took its usual tour and shone on the enchanted jungle's black leaves.

**Comment:**

The word *sorgløse* literally means 'free of sorrow', the meaning of the term is however closer to the English phrase 'without a care in the world/ not a care in the world' and is commonly used to describe someone or something which is completely carefree, hence the chosen translation.

The expression *trollskogen* (troll forest or goblin forest) does not necessarily refer to a forest full of trolls, but to a thick and mysterious forest, in line with Heyerdahl's phrasing the word 'enchanted' was chosen for the translation rather than 'mysterious', the connotation of enchanted also more closely connects to Heyerdahl's original meaning with the description of the moon lit jungle.

## TR33

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937m

**Original quotation:**

I det hele tatt syns den tahitiske befolkning å ha beholdt sine gode sanseegenskaper i langt større grad en marquesierne. De allre fleste marquesierne har direkt hvite fedre, og det er en opvoksende bastardrase som bare har eneste interesse her i verden: penger.

**Translation:**

In the larger scheme of things, the Tahitians seem to have kept their characteristics better than the Marquesans. Most of the Marquesans have white fathers, the new generation is a pure race of bastards, and money is their only interest in the world.

**Comment:**

It is somewhat questionable how the term *sanseegenskaper* should be translated, from the content Heyerdahl seems to refer to an idea of 'racial characteristics' and therefore the term 'characteristics' was chosen for the translation, as it is the character of the Marquesans people he is discussing.

## TR34

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938e

**Original quotation:**

Vi har begge samme forakt for alt som er fransk. Et falskere, uhøfligere og mer ukultivert folk kan ikke finnes så snart man har med den jevne borgerstand å gjøre. Fransk høflighet og dannelses finnes bare i de aller beste klasser og ikke hos den almindelige franskmann. Vi har fått livsvarige komplekser mot det landet. Skittent uoplyst, egoistisk, umoralsk og uhøflig i alt undantagen fraser og ord. Det var en så stor overgang å komme over grensen till Tyskland så det er nesten ikke sandt. Renslig, elskverdig, hjelpsomme, opplyste og høflige. Du sier vel "fysch a mig" du mama, men jag mener det virkelig. Vi har truffet mange mennesker under reisen, og det har vært en ubeskrivelig kontrast på engelskmenn, amerikanere, tyskere og skandinaver på en side mot franskmenn, spanjoler og polynesiere på andre side. De første virker karakterfaste, ærlige og reale, mot de siste hvis gode egenskaper vi ikke har funnet. Det gjelder selvsagt ikke fuldt ut, men vi har ikke funnet andre

undtagelser enn René Hamon men hun viste seg heller ikke å være ærlig. Engelskmenn liker vi veldig godt, kanskje ennu bedre enn tyskerne da de mangler de sistes uniformsgalskap, men du aner ikke for en vidunderlig overgang det er å komme til en karakterfast rase etter å ha hatt så mye med Frankrike å gjøre. Vi kommer aldri til å tåle Frankrike.

**Translation:**

We both share the same contempt for everything French. It is impossible to imagine a people more rude, impolite, and unrefined than the French commoner. French courtesy and good manners can only be found among the most prominent social classes. The common Frenchman has not an ounce of decency. Our experience has left us with an everlasting resentment to everything French. It is an uneducated, egotistic, immoral, and rude shit country in all respects. It was such an incredible difference crossing the German border, almost unbelievable. The Germans were clean, loveable, educated, helpful and polite. I guess you are cursing at me now, mother, but I really mean it. We have met many people during the journey, and it has continuously been such a contrast between Englishmen, Americans, Germans and Scandinavians on one side, and Frenchmen, Spaniards and Polynesians on the other side. The first have character, honesty and pride, qualities we had not once encountered among the others. Maybe we have just had bad luck, but we have not seen any tendency to prove us wrong; we thought Renée Hamon was an exception, but she also turned out to be dishonest. We like the English very much, perhaps even more than the Germans; the English are not as obsessed with militarism as the Germans are. After having had so much to do with the French, you cannot imagine what a magnificent difference it is to be able to deal with a race of such firm character. We have nothing but contempt for the French.

**Comment:**

Several of the power-expressions used by Heyerdahl do not naturally translate with ease to English, and in general the closest term in English or the one closest in line with Heyerdahl's overall statement has been chosen.

The word *renslig* has been translated as 'clean' in relation to overall content of the paragraph, but the word 'proper' should also be considered as an appropriate translation.

The expression "*fysch a mig*", which Heyerdahl implies that his mother (who was an outspoken anti-nazi) is saying when reading the letter, has been translated as 'I guess you are cursing at me now mother' in relation to the implication of the expression; 'shame on me'/'shame on you' would also be an appropriate translation of the expression.

The word *uniformsgalskap* used by Heyerdahl has been translated as 'militarism', the word is a combination word or new-word consisting of the two words *uniform* meaning a soldier or other persons uniform; and *galskap* meaning madness or lunacy. From the content it is quite obvious that Heyerdahl is referring to German militarism in the period, which interestingly enough, in relation to the otherwise strongly pro-German statements of the paragraph, criticises the Third Reich.

## TR35

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:133

**Original quotation:**

For en hvit som har bodd en menneskealder blandt de brune her i ensomheten, han får de brunes fulle sinnelag. Han «går innfødt» i all sin tankegang

**Translation:**

A white man who has spent a lifetime alone amongst the browns unavoidably starts to pick up the browns' vices. He becomes native in his behavioural pattern and thoughts.

## TR36

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:51

**Original quotation:**

Hvis ikke hytte ferdig idag, vi komme igjen imorgen, trøstet loane. Og loane holdt ord. Hver dag kom



han igjen, i tre lange uker. For vennskaps skyld lot vi dem drive på. Det er ikke som med primitive negrer at det nytter å slå i bordet og være Bwana. Da er det åpent fiendskap. De føler sig ikke under de hvite, men tar det som en tjeneste å gjøre lønnet arbeide. For de behøver det ikke. Og vennskapet måtte bevares her alene blandt de brune. Da vi omsider fikk drevet dem ferdig, ventet de takk og betaling og gåver. Og kjøkkenet måtte vi bygge seiv ved siden av huset.

**Translation:**

“If the cabin is not finished today, we will come back tomorrow”, Ioane said comfortingly. And he was a man of his word. Every day for three long weeks he came back. We could not rush them; surrounded by brown people, we needed to keep things friendly. In the Marquesas it is not like with primitive Negroes, you cannot just put your foot down and be *Bwana*. Then you end up in an open conflict. They do not bow down to the white man. Since they don't need paid work, they consider it a favour to the contractor. For the sake of friendship, we had to let them go on at their own pace. When we finally got them to finish the project, they expected heartfelt thanks, payment, and gifts. And the kitchen, well, we had to build it ourselves.

**Comment:**

For translation of *de brune* see above TR31; note as well the differences Heyerdahl makes between *de brune* and 'primitive negroes', suggesting that Heyerdahl at this period believed in a set value hierarchy between people based on the colour of one's skin.

The phrase *slå i bordet*, literary 'bang the table' or 'hit your fist on the table' has been translated as 'put your foot down' in relation to the overall content of what Heyerdahl wants to say. The phrase is used to express a determined action, an exclaiming of 'enough is enough'.

Heyerdahl does in the paragraph deploy a sort of wordplay between the words *drive* (in the first part of paragraph, referring to the pace the workers went on in), and *drevet* (in the end of the paragraph, referring to how he and Liv pushed the workers to finish the project); this wordplay is hard to translate, but basically implies that the workers went along slowly like *drift* wood on the ocean, while he and Liv finally *drove* (pushed, rushed) the workers to finish the project.

The sentence *De føler sig ikke under de hvite* is also somewhat difficult to translate, and has here been translated as 'They do not bow down to the white man' in relation to the content and what Heyerdahl seems to have wanted to say, which from the overall expression seems to have been that the Marquesan did not feel inferior to the 'white man', they did not accept his dominance, like Heyerdahl claimed that Africans did.

The word *Bwana* is a Swahili word of Arabic origin meaning 'Lord', 'master', 'boss', etc.

## TR37

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:113

**Original quotation:**

Ioane og de andre brune hadde tatt oss grundig ved nesen. De hadde bygget hytten av grønn og umoden bambus og visste så inderlig vel at den blev spist op av borende biller. Gul og moden skal bambusen være og helst ha ligget en uke og trukket i saltvann. Men de vilde ha hytten smuldret bort, så de fikk reise en ny for god betaling.

**Translation:**

Ioane and the other brown ones had swindled us thoroughly. They had built the cabin out of unripe bamboo, and they were very well aware that it would be eaten and destroyed by insects. The bamboo should have been ripe and should preferably have been soaked in saltwater for a week before the construction started. But they wanted the cabin to crumble, so they could come again and offer to build a new one for even more money.

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl uses the phrase *hadde tatt oss grundig ved nesen*, which literary means 'had thoroughly pulled our noses', the corresponding English expression is 'pull someone's leg', this expression is however more commonly used in relation to jokes and pranks than to the full blown swindle which is implied by the Norwegian 'pulled nose' and by Heyerdahl's paragraph, hence the choice of 'swindle' for

the translation.

See above TR31 for translation of the expression *de brune*.

Heyerdahl's *borende biller* presumably refers to a particular type of insect which could not be identified from the available information. *Biller* just refers to beetles (*Coleoptera*) in general.

## TR38

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:132-133

**Original quotation:**

De mønstret oss kritisk. De kjente den hvite rase. For dem er det tre slags hvite. Uniformene som de ser op til, turistene de ler av og kopraarbeiderne som de inderlig forakter. En uniform betyr for dem regjering og makt. En som lager lover og sender dem i fengsel på Tahiti. En turist er toppen av alt som er dumt. Han tilbringer livet med å svinse rundt og strø penger om sig som en uvettig. Han gir gjerne fra sig hatt og dress og blanke penger for å få en gammel, sprukken stengud. Ingen kan spørre mere vanvittig. Han ser ikke forskjell på fei og bananer, og må ha mindre kunnskap enn årsgamle krek. Han ser ikke engang på planke hytter og pene klær når han kommer i land. Han stiller sig op i tomme skogen og sier at der er det vakkert. Men turistene er iallfall millionær. Verre er det med kopraarbeiderne. De er hvite, men enda fattige som lus. Vel har de mere i skolten og spør sig ikke ihjel. De kan nok også mestre kokospalmen som en av deres egne og tåle like meget kokosvin i deres drikkelag. Men de er ute for å suge penger og ikke for å gi. Turister og regjeringen behandler dem også nedad. De er ikke fine nok. De lever ikke flott nok disse hvite. Det kan ikke være skikkelige mennesker.

**Translation:**

They looked us over from top to toe. They were familiar with the white race. To them, there were three types of white: 'The uniforms', whom they admired; 'the tourists', who made them laugh; and 'the copra workers', whom they despised. A uniform was to them a symbol of governance and power; someone who made the rules and could send them to jail in Tahiti. A tourist was to them the essence of stupidity. The tourist spent life jetting from one place to the next, spreading money around like a madman. The tourist would gladly give up his own hat and all the shiny coins in the world for an old broken stone idol. No one could ask such silly questions as the tourist; he could not even tell the difference between fei and banana; he possessed the knowledge of an infant. The tourist did not care for modern houses or fancy clothes but went straight out to the jungle to praise its beauty. However, in all of his stupidity, the tourist was at least a millionaire. The copra worker, on the other hand, was white but penniless. He knew the ropes, and did not ask stupid questions; and surely, he could drink coconut wine like a real Marquesan. But they just wanted to suck the white man's wallet dry and had nothing to give in return, so the copra worker was of no use to them; and in addition, the copra worker was despised by the government and the tourists. A white man without money was not a real man to them.

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl's *De mønstret oss kritisk* has in relation to content and expression been translated as 'They looked us over from top to toe'; the literary translation would be 'the critically assessed us'.

The idiom *fattige som lus* literary means 'poor as a lice' for transformation to English the expression 'penniless' has been used.

Heyerdahl's sentence's *De kan nok også mestre kokospalmen som en av deres egne* has been translated to the idiom 'know the ropes' as the content and what Heyerdahl wants to say is that the copra workers were familiar with local customs and how things worked in the Marquesas. Literary the sentence says that 'the copra workers could climb a coconut palm like anyone of them'.

The expression 'suck the white man's wallet dry' is a free interpretation of Heyerdahl's *Men de er ute for å suge penger og ikke for å gi* ('They are aiming to suck money, not to give away things'), as Heyerdahl wanted to imply that the Marquesans was only interest in the white man's money, which they wanted without giving anything in return. It is also possible that Heyerdahl is referring to the copra workers and the Marquesans view of them; if this was Heyerdahl's intention the overall content

and the choice of translation for the end of the paragraph covers such an interpretation of Heyerdahl's intent.

Heyerdahl's lengthy ending of the paragraph has also been freely translated as 'A white man without money was not a real man to them' as this is the statement Heyerdahl wants to make, instead of the lengthier original *De er ikke fine nok. De lever ikke flott nok disse hvite. Det kan ikke være skikkelige mennesker.* (They [the copra workers] are not fancy enough. They do not have an enough excessive lifestyle, these white people. They cannot be good people).

## TR39

**Source:** Stroller 1938

**Original quotation:**

I det hele tatt skuffet naturen på Marquesasøiene mig ikke. Den er herlig. Fantastisk deilig som et paradys. Det er menneskene det er galt fatt med, og det de har sloppet løs av farlige sykdommer og insektplager”

**Translation:**

In the greater scheme of things nature on the Marquesas Islands never disappointed me. It was great. Completely wonderful, like a paradise. It was the people that were disappointing, and all of the dangerous diseases and the insect plague they had brought to the islands

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl's expression *Det er menneskene det er galt fatt med* is somewhat difficult to translate as he in this way makes both a general statement and a specific statement. He specifically attacks the Marquesans, but also those Europeans that had brought diseases and other plagues to the Islands. The statement also has a general aspect in which Heyerdahl presents criticism to humanity in general, as if the specific groups were apart of a larger problem of humanity's behaviour in general. From the overall content of the interview and the statements made by Heyerdahl it is however obvious that he was talking about his experience in the Marquesas specifically and not humanity in general, which is for instance made clear by the following quotation (see TR40).

## TR40

**Source:** Stroller 1938

**Original quotation:**

De ekte polynesiere er det ikke mange igjen av. Det er mest bastarder nå. Og de er blitt uhyggelig degenerert siden de kom i forbindelse med civilisasjonen. Alle dens dårlige sider har de tatt imot uten å kunne tillegne sig noen av kulturens goder. Overdreven alkoholnyttelse og sykdommer gjør ende på befolkningen. Veneriske sykdommer, tuberkulose og elefantsyke brer sig med rivende hast. De fleste av øiene i denne gruppen er uten læge, og forsiktighet finnes ikke. Hele familien, syke og friske spiser av samme kar. Der bodde engang omkring 100 000 mennesker på øiene. Nå er det bare ca. 2000 igjen. Mennene er i de fleste tilfeller impotente, og da det bare er bermen av de hvite som søker de innfødte kvinner, kan man tenke sig hvad slags barn det er som kommer til verden. Men ur-befolkningen har nok vært anderledes.

**Translation:**

There is not much left of the true Polynesians. Today they are mostly bastards. And they have become extremely degenerated since they came into contact with civilisation. They have adopted all of civilisation's bad sides and none of the good. Excessive alcohol consumption and diseases kill off the population. Venereal diseases, tuberculosis and elephantiasis are rapidly gaining ground. Most of the islands in the archipelago are without medicinal practitioners, and there is no consideration for sanitation; entire families, healthy and sick, eat from the same tray. Once there were 100,000 people in the islands, now there are only 2,000 left. Almost all Marquesan men are impotent, and since it is only 'scum of the earth' white men who enjoy native women, you can imagine what kind of children are conceived in such unions. But the natives were once different.

**Comment:**

The word *bermen* (*berme*) used by Heyerdahl to describe which of the white men that had sexual relations with Marquesan women, is a condescending term referring to leftovers from production of yeast beverages and is used to describe low-life characters of human society, the English word 'dregs' or the expression 'bottom of the barrel' is probably closest in meaning. For the translation the phrase 'scum of the Earth' was chosen instead of 'bottom of the barrel' as it represents a more powerful expression, more in line with the impression Heyerdahl wanted to make.

**TR41**

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:59-60

**Original quotation:**

Ofte var smerten i foten så vond at vi lå. Men når vi haltet ut i skogen efter mat, merket vi til vår forbauselse at det var lite å finne. Banantrær og fei som bar frukt, var hugget ned, og brødfrukten hadde en hvilesesong. Vi var sultne. Når klokkeren av og til kom opom med fisk, gjorde det mektig inntrykk.

**Translation:**

Our feet hurt so badly that we could do nothing but lie down; and when we eventually limped out to get some food, we noticed to our horror that there was none. The fei and banana trees had been cut down, and it was not breadfruit season yet. We were starving. It was such a powerful experience when the sexton now and then stopped by with fresh fish

**TR42**

**Source:** Anon. XIII 1938

**Original quotation:**

ondskapsfulle og vemmelige på alle måter var de

**Translation:**

Vicious and in all ways despicable

**TR43**

**Source:** Stroller 1938

**Original quotation:**

'Det er løgn og forbannet dikt. Fredric O'Brien, som har skrevet 'Hvite skygger' er verdens verste skrønemaker

**Translation:**

Lies and goddamn fabrication. Fredric O'Brien, who wrote *White Shadows*, is the world's worst liar

**Comment:**

The word *dikt* means poem, but can also mean 'made up story' / 'fabrication' / 'unreal depiction of event' etc. It is in this second meaning that Heyerdahl uses the word.

The word *skrønemaker* means creator of fabricated story or a person who tells wild and unbelievable stories which obviously are fabricated; for the translation the word 'liar' was found to be the most suitable translation.

**TR44**

**Source:** Anon. XIII. 1938

**Original quote:**

dypt betatt av sydhavsøyenes prakt og paradisklima, - men fylt av skuffelse over deres degenererte, lavstående mennesker

**Translation:**

deeply moved by the magnificence of nature and the paradisiacal climate; but filled with disappointment and resentment towards the islands' degenerate and sub-human people

**Comment:**

The word *lavstående* literary means 'low standing', referring to something on a lower step on the evolutionary ladder, for the translation the English term 'sub-human' was found to be most appropriate in relation to the content of Heyerdahl's statement.

## TR45

**Source:** Stroller 1938

**Original quotation:**

På den annen side har oppholdet overbevist mig om, at kulturmennesket idag ikke noe sted på kloden kan vende tilbake til den absolutte naturtillstand

**Translation:**

The expedition has convinced me that there is no place on Earth where civilised man can return to his pure natural state.

## TR46

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1946e

**Original quotation:**

Jeg svarte ham at hvis det var så, så kunde det samme sies om alle tidligere forskere på området

**Translation:**

I told him that if that was the case, then the same could be said for everyone else in the field

## TR47

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:167

**Original quotation:**

Han er den siste av fortidens menn, forklarte Tioti. Han hører forfedrene til. Han er den siste av dem som spiste menneskekjøtt

**Translation:**

He is the last of the men of old days, Tioti explained. He belongs to the ancestors. He is the last of the man eaters.

## TR48

**Source:** Stroller 1938

**Original quotation:**

gammel raseren polynesier, den siste kannibal på Marquesas. Han var på mange måter en kjernekar. Han løi aldri og stjal ikke, hvilket er helt enestående der nede

**Translation:**

An old pure race Polynesian, the last cannibal in the Marquesas Islands. He was in many ways a real rock. He never lied or stole, remarkable qualities down there.

**Comment:**

The expression *kjernekar* refers to man that is all through honest and real, a reliable solid piece, hence the translation 'real rock', someone that could be trusted no matter what.

## TR49

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937l

**Original quotation:**

Han er en med Polynesien

**translation:**

He is one with Polynesia

## TR50

**Source:** Heyerdahl n.d.a

**Original quotation:**

stenrelief fra zapotekernes ukjente forgjengere

**Translation:**

Stone relief, by the mysterious ancestors of the Zapotec

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl writes *ukjente forgjengere* which has been translated as 'mysterious ancestors' in line with content. However, *forgjengere* is not exactly the same as 'ancestor', but refers to something preceding, in this case Heyerdahl could refer to a group of people who inhabited a Zapotec area prior to the Zapotec without being directly related to them, that is to say in the same way that he envisioned the prehistory of the Marquesas Islands.

## TR51

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937m

**Original quotation:**

Under det lange oppholdet på Hivaoa gjorde vi en rekke intressante opkjøp. Vi kom bl. a. over en komplett kongedrakt av menneskehår, en kongekrone fantastisk utskåret av stortt skildpaddeskald med gudeskikkelser og mønster. Likaså endel miniatyrarbeider av øredobber i menneskeben, et par gamle gudebilder m.m. Man må være meget forsiktig i sine kjøp, da de infødte lager store mengder nye forfalskninger, graver dem ned et par måneder og selger til svimlende pris som gamle. Prisforlangende på 10-15000 franc hos de infødte forbauser oss ikke stort mer.

**Translation:**

During our long interlude on Hiva Oa, we were able to purchase several really interesting artefacts. Among many other things, we were able to acquire a complete king's costume made out of human hair, and a king's crown, skilfully carved out of a large turtle shell, and ornamented with depictions of gods. We also got hold of several small ear plugs made from human bone, and some idols and other things. But you have to be very careful with your purchases down here. The natives produce forgeries which they bury in the ground for several months to make them look old, and then they pass them off as ancient and sell them for absurd prices. It does not surprise us any more when they ask for as much as 10,000 or even 15,000 francs for artefacts.

**Comments:**

Heyerdahl refers to the human hair costume as a *kongedrakt* (king's costume) and the *Pae'Kea* as a *kongekrone* (king's crown). Throughout this work the term 'dancer's costume' has been used in relation to ethnographic sources, it is however not unthinkable that the costume might have been worn by a chief for instance. Heyerdahl's referring to the *Pae'Kea* as a king's crown does most likely come from a debated issue over how the headdress was supposed to be worn, upwards resembling a European medieval king's crown, or downwards. The latter has been documented in ethnographic material (see further Handy, E. 1923; Kjellgren & Ivory 2005; Linton 1923). Heyerdahl can however be seen in contemporary images wearing the *Pae'Kea* upwards like a crown.

The term *et par* (a pair) can be somewhat misleading as even though literary meaning 'a pair' it is commonly used in Scandinavian languages to refer to more than two, more similar to the English 'a few'.

## TR52

**Source:** Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.

**Original quotation:**

Je Soussigne, Mr. Kaimoko, que j'ae vendu à Mr. Thor 2 couronnes kakiu (ca fait une Pane Kea et une couronne de dents), 3 Pavahina, 1 Potona, 2 Poeima, 1 Poekooi, Toute pour la somme de 2000 francs (deux milles francs).

Je atteste que toute cettes caoses sont de la familie, reste toujours dans la maison, ce n'ai pas trouvez dans le Paepae. Resu 2000 francs, Atuona, Hivaoa, 16/8-1937. [signed] E. Kaimuko

**Translation:**

I, Mr. Kaimoko, certify that I sold to Mr. Thor 2 *Kakiu* crowns (one *Pane Kea* and one crown of teeth), 3 *Pavahina*, 1 *Potona*, 2 *Poeima*, 1 *Poekooi*, all for the sum of 2000 Francs (two thousand Francs). I certify that all of these objects are family possessions and have always been in our house. None of them were found on a *Paepae*. Received 2000 Francs, Atuona, Hivaoa, 16/8-1937. [signed] E. Kaimuko

## TR53

**Source:** Den Stundesløse 1938b.

**Original quotation:**

Nu skal jeg for det første skrive en bok om Fatuhiva, dernæst har jeg med mig gudebiller og andre gjenstander for minst 20 000 kr, som jeg skal sælge, flere museer er interessert i det dertil kommer foredragsturneer og slikt – så det er ikke tvil om at slike opdagelsesreiser kan bli bra levevei for dem som har lyst til det og trang til slikt.

**Translation:**

Now, I will first write a book about Fatu Hiva, after that I am going to sell my collection of idols and other artefacts, they are worth at least 20,000 Kroner, and there are already several museums interested in purchasing the collection; and in addition, there will be lecture tours and other small things. I do not doubt for a second that exploration voyages of this kind could become a very profitable business.

## TR54

**Source:** Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.

**Original quotation:**

Par lettre du 10 février courant vous m'avez demandé l'autorisation de séjourner avec votre femme environ un an dans l'île Etu-Hiva (archipel des Marquises) pour y étudier la zoologie.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître qu'en application de l'article 3 de l'arrêté du 3 juillet 1936 limitant le séjour des étrangers dans l'archipel des Marquises je vous accorde l'autorisation que vous sollicitez de séjourner pendant environ un an dans l'île Fatu-Hiva. J'en informe le chef de la Circonscription des Marquises. Agréez, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma consideration distinguée.

**Translation:**

In a letter received on the 10<sup>th</sup> of February you have asked for permission for you and your wife to enter into and stay on the island of Etu-Hiva (The Marquesas archipelago) for one year to conduct zoological research. I am glad to announce that in accordance with paragraph 3 of the decree of 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1936, which limits access for foreign visitors to the Marquesas Islands, I have granted you and your wife permission to stay one year on Fatu-Hiva. I have taken the liberty of informing the head administrator of the Marquesas Islands of your arrival. Please accept, dear sir, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.

## TR55

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938e

**Original quotation:**

Atuona på Hivaoa, hvor vi leiet et innfødt plankehus av prinsessen og spiste hos kineseren og oplevde flere eventyr, det største var vel at vi kom i besiddelse av et stykke av en gammel hodeskalle i en hule, et bruddstykke som beviser gamle Teitetuas beretninger om doktorene som lappet hull i hodet med kokusskald! Vi har også smuglet med oss to almindelige kranier og et eldgammelt hode inneflettet i et nett av kokustråder, som trollmannen har hatt hengende om livet.

**Translation:**

In Atuona on Hiva Oa, we rented a native house from the princess; ate at the Chinese restaurant and had many new adventures. The most amazing thing was that we came into possession of an old skull, which we found in a cave; the fragmented skull has had a head-wound cured by attachment of a coconut shell! it proves that the stories old Teitetua told us about ancient medicine men are true. We have also managed to smuggle out two regular crania and an ancient skull braided into a net of coconut threads that the medicine man used to wear hanging from his waist

**Comment:**

The phrase *plankehus* has no direct English translation. It refers to a building made out of wooden planks, and is in the context most likely used by Heyerdahl to refer to what he perceived to be a 'non-authentic' style of housing, even though it is said to be *innfødt* (native).

The term *kineseren* has been translated as 'the Chinese restaurant', however the term literary refers to 'the Chinaman' or a person of Chinese heritage, presumably Heyerdahl refers to a person of Chinese origin in Atuona who kept a local shop and served food to tourists.

Heyerdahl's use of the word *doktorene* (the doctors/ medicinal practitioner) has been translated as 'medicine men' to avoid confusion with the meaning of the modern term 'doctor'. Heyerdahl does not mention 'trepanation' in the letter but simply states that the fragmented skull had been cured from a head-wound by a technique of attaching a piece of a coconut shell to the wound, this technique was practised by medicine men according to Tei Tetua.

As with other translations the phrase *eldgammelt* has been translated as 'ancient'.

The term *trollmannen* has been translated as 'the medicine man' as Heyerdahl keep referring to the same figure as his previously been discussing. The English word 'wizard' or 'magician' is however a more accurate translation of *trollmannen*.

## TR56

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:76-77

**Original quotation:**

Vi stod overfor store videnskapelige verdier. En spesialist kunde finne ut meget av denne store samlingen med gamle kranier. Jeg hadde en koprasekk på ryggen, men det var ikke råd å samle en bensplint for den brunes vaksomme blikk. Hvert skritt, hver minste bevegelse vaktet han. Da fikk vi en lys idé og la planer sammen på norsk. En mann er et menneske på Fatuhiva, mens en kvinne er en kvinne. Hun er bare til på grunn av mat og kjønn. Ellers regnes hun ikke med. [...] I mellemtiden var Liv alene i tempelruinene, og da jeg kom tilbake med mitt klebrige følge, stod koprasekken bugnende full som av kålrabi. Det var ikke snev av mistanke i vår fangevokter, og glad og lettet fulgte han oss ned i dalen.

**Translation:**

In front of us was material of great scientific value. A specialist could make great discoveries from such a large collection of crania. I was carrying a copra sack on my back, but the brown one's watchful eye made it impossible to take as much as a single bone fragment. He was watching my every move. But we had a bright idea and started scheming in Norwegian. A man is a human being on Fatu Hiva, but a woman is only a woman. She exists only for food and sex; otherwise she is of no importance [...] In the meanwhile Liv was left alone in the temple ruin. When I returned, closely followed by my



watchman, the copra sack looked as if it was completely filled with turnips. Our jailer did not suspect a thing, and merrily he followed us back down the valley.

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl writes about the women of Fatu Hiva, that they *Hun er bare til på grunn av mat og kjønn* which literary means that their existence was solely due to 'food and gender/genitalia', Heyerdahl's use of the word *kjønn* (gender/ genitalia) in this context is obviously a sexual references and thus the English expression 'sex' was found to be a more suitable translation of what Heyerdahl wanted to express.

Heyerdahl describes the skulls Liv put in the copra sack as *kålrabi* referring to the English expression 'swede' or 'Swedish turnip', the less species defined term 'turnip' has been used for the translation as writing that the copra sack was filled with 'swedes' (as a metaphor for human heads) was found both misleading and confusing. In the 1974 version of this account Heyerdahl used 'coconut' as metaphor instead of 'turnip'.

## TR57

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1939d

**Original quotation:**

Den franske regjering har streng straff for det minste forsøk på å redde disse videnskaplige verdier, mens vi selv var vidne til at en stor samling meget gamle kranier blev brent og tilintetgjort av de innfødte ved en bestemt anledning, for at vi ikke skulde stjele dem.

**Translation:**

Any attempt at saving the scientifically valuable material is harshly penalised by the French authorities. We have seen with our own eyes how the natives burnt and destroyed a large collection of skulls, and they did this for the sole purpose of preventing us from stealing the crania

## TR58

**Source:** Heyerdahl n.d.a, and Dreyer 1898: Fig. 80

**Original quotation:**

Husgeråd hos N. W. Inidianerne (Heyerdahl n.d.a)  
Husgeraad fra Nordvestindianerne (Dreyer 1898: Fig. 80).

**Translation:**

Northwest Coast Indian domestic utensils

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl's phrase is obviously a direct note and translation into Norwegian of Dreyer's caption. *Husegeråd* means the loose practical inventory of a household, the English 'domestic utensils' was found to be closest corresponding expression.

## TR59

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937a

**Original quotation:**

Da månen lyste over jungelen lå vi lenge våkne på sengebrisen i bambushytten. Vi tenkte på de døde stenfigurene som danset der oppe i måneskinnet. Vi tenkte på det døde ukjente folket som engang hadde hersket over disse øyene herifra og syd til Påskeøya. Et folk hvis herkomst ennå er en uløst gåte. Og vi ante vi vilde finne mere i de øde junglene her på Fatuhiva, øya som er efterglemt av videnskapen

**Translation:**

At night the moon shone over the jungle, but we were still awake. We were thinking about the silent

stone figures, dancing over the rocks in the moonlight. We thought about the mysterious people that once had ruled an island kingdom, reaching as far south as Easter Island; a people of unknown origin. But we could feel that out there in the deserted jungles of Fatu Hiva, the island that science had forgotten, important clues were to be found.

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl describes the petroglyphs *stenfigurene* [lit. Stone figures] as *døde*, meaning 'dead', which is then contrast to them *danset* (dancing), this alludes to a tale of ghosts, spirits from the past returning from the grave in the moonlight, something dead but actually moving. For the translation the word 'silent' was used instead of 'dead', this changes the connotations of the paragraph a bit, the choice was however made to connect to Heyerdahl's idea of a mysterious people from the past as the creators of the petroglyphs. By such suggesting that the petroglyphs were enticing the imagination but silent about their origin. This decision for the translation was considered to true to what Heyerdahl wanted to express but also more comprehensible in English than the original wording.

The use of 'island kingdom' in the translation is a free interpretation of Heyerdahl's claim that the mysterious people once had ruled *disse øyene* (these Islands), *og syd til Påskeøya* (and south to Easter Island), whatever actual governance the mysterious people had is not specified as a kingdom by Heyerdahl.

## TR60

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937a

**Original quotation:**

en flokk brune

**Translation:**

A pack of browns

**Comment:**

A very derogatory expression by Heyerdahl. For discussion on how Heyerdahl's expression the 'browns' has been translated see TR31. The word *flokk* is equivalent to the English words 'herd' or 'pack' and used to describe a group of animals, like a 'buffalo herd' for instance. Expressions like this rather evidently illustrates Heyerdahl's racist and condescending attitude towards the people of Fatu Hiva.

## TR61

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:97

**Original quotation:**

Da støtte vi på en høi og mosegrodd mur inne i tykningen. En iling av spenning jog gjennom oss. Svære tilhugne stenblokker var bygget op til manns høi mur. Jeg heiste mig forsiktig op på muren, og Liv og klokkeren kom efter. Vi stod på en stor opbygget plattform, nøiaktig sammensatt av tunge stenblokker. Krattet over oss gjorde det dystert og mørkt. Jeg stod og undret mig over hvordan det primitive gamle folket hadde maktet å frakte og heise op slike stenkolusser, da klokkeren satte i et voldsomt utbrudd. Han hadde funnet noe. Borte på plattformen lå det to store blodrøde sten plater, hvelvet mot hverandre som mønet på et tak. De var nesten dekket av torv og røtter. Vi rev dette forsiktig løs. De omhyggelig formede stenheller var dekorert med eldgamle skulpturarbeider. Guder eller djevler, det vet vi ikke. Det var groteske skikkelser. Noen stod grublende med hånden under haken, andre med armene i kors, andre hevet dem jagende i været. Noen hadde store, strittende ører og lignet mere på dyr. Mellom disse demoniske vesener stod en kunstnerisk liten dobbeltperson, to festlige figurer stod side om side på samme sokkel, nøiaktig like med armene i kors.

**Translation:**

When cutting through the vegetation we encountered a large overgrown stone wall. We were struck with excitement. Large dressed boulders had been stacked on top of each other to a man's height.

Carefully I climbed on top of the wall; Liv and the sexton followed. We found ourselves standing on a large platform, built by skilled masons. The surrounding vegetation engulfed the platform in a dark and gloomy atmosphere. I was baffled how these primitive people had been able to transport and lift these massive boulders. All of a sudden the sexton screamed in fright; he had discovered something. On the platform there were two large blood-coloured slabs; they rested against each other like a roof-ridge. The slabs were almost completely covered by turf and roots. We carefully removed the vegetation. The painstakingly dressed slabs were carved with ancient figures; we could not tell if they were Gods or Demons; grotesque creations nonetheless. Some stood, as if they were pondering, with their hands under their chins; others had their arms crossed; and some seemed to have their arms raised to the skies. Some had large bristling ears, which made them look almost like animals. Between these demons was a double-headed figure, of high artistic quality. The two figures stood side by side on the same pedestal, identically made with their arms crossed.

**Comment:**

In his 1930s writings Heyerdahl continuously uses the term *eldgamle* (lit. 'as old as fire') when discussing artefacts or sites. The term has no direct match in English but refers to something being very old, hence the term 'ancient' has been used in translations.

The word *skulpturarbeider* (lit. Sculptors work, or work made by a sculptor) has simply been translated as 'figures' as Heyerdahl uses the term to refer to the figures he saw on the stone slabs.

## TR62

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938d and 1938a:99

**Original quotation – Heyerdahl 1938d:**

De demoniske stenfigurer som danset på gravkammerets tak skulde nok holde onde ånder borte fra graven. Og de ondeste ånder i Stillehavet er de hvite, så jeg krabbet mig op av gravkammeret og lot den gamle sove i fred.

**Heyerdahl 1938a:99** - De demoniske stenfigurer som danset på gravkammerets tak skulde nok holde onde ånder borte fra graven. Og de ondeste ånder i Stillehavet er de hvite, så jeg krabbet mig op av gravkammeret og lot den gamle sove i fred

**Translation:**

The carved demons on the burial chamber's roof had probably been made to keep evil spirits out of the tomb. In the South Seas the most vicious spirits of all are the white ones, so I decided to slowly crawl back out of the tomb and let the old one sleep in peace

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl actually writes *Stillehavet* (Pacific Ocean), it is however from the phrasing clear that means the Pacific Island world and not the actual Ocean, for consistency the term 'South Seas' was used for the translation.

This quotation appears word by word both in a newspaper article by Heyerdahl and in his travelogue (both from 1938). This suggest that Heyerdahl probably used his newspaper articles as base for the travelogue, on occasion re-using entire paragraphs. Andersson has been able to document the same methodology in later publications by Heyerdahl (see Andersson 2007a:23-74); which suggests that Heyerdahl would use the same original-text for several different publications. His re-editions of the Fatu Hiva travelogue in 1974 and 1991 are another example of this, particularly the 1974 version of the travelogue features long sections, which has been directly lifted from the original 1938 travelogue. Another examples of Heyerdahl's re-use of previous publications is compilation works such as *Sea Routes to Polynesia* (1968a-b), *Early Man and the Ocean* (1978) and *Let the Conquered speak* (1992, 1999c). It seems that this technique was developed by Heyerdahl already in the 1930s, which is rather interesting as it suggests that Heyerdahl already by this stage was preparing himself for bulk writing, he and Liv also in their scrapbook and in official contexts often referred to themselves as journalists (see Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

## TR63

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:100

**Original quotation:**

fylt av eldgamle uthulte trekrybber, fulle av hoder og sprikende ben. Hvite filler av tapastoff var viklet om de grinende skaller og knokler. Tapa tøiet laget de gamle ved banking av eutetreets bark. Nu var eutetreet utdødd. Fra taket av hulen hang det ned lange, flettede hårpisker av kullsort menneskehår. Bak de gamle krybbene som var hult ut av tunge stammer ved hjelp av ild og stenredskap, stod en kasse av sammenspikrede bord. Europeiske klær med knapper var viklet om et enslig skjelett. Vi grøsset. Kanskje var det en sjømann som engang var forlist blandt de glupske kannibalene

**Translation:**

covered with ancient wooden vessels, filled with human skulls and cracked bones. Old tapa rags were wrapped around skulls and bones. Tapa cloth was made in the old days by beating out the fibre of the mulberry tree. The mulberry tree is now extinct. There were also long pitch-black braided bundles of hair hanging from the cave's ceiling. In the corner, behind all of the wooden vessels that had been dug out from great logs by use of fire and stone tools, stood a nailed box. European clothing and buttons were wrapped around a solitary skeleton. We shuddered. What if it was a sailor who had once been marooned here among the hungry cannibals

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl uses the word *trekrybber* meaning cribs or cradles made out of wood, the term 'wooden vessels' was chosen for the translation since it was found to be most accurate in relation to what Heyerdahl is describing.

Heyerdahl uses the Norwegian *eutetreets bark* to describe the bark used for making *tapa*, I have failed to find a direct translation of the term. As *tapa* is made out of paper mulberry bark the word was translated as 'mulberry tree' as this would have been what Heyerdahl wanted to express. If he really was familiar with the proper tree type can however not be said for certain due to the difficulties of translating his expression. It is somewhat questionable as Heyerdahl in the next sentence claims that the particular type of tree had been extinct. Nonetheless, he could still buy some *tapa* cloth on Fatu Hiva in 1937.

The word *glupske* used to describe the 'cannibals' does not really mean 'hungry' but rather some one with a disproportional appetite, the implication of 'hungry cannibals' is however the same as Heyerdahl original intent with the sentence.

## TR64

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:145

**Original quotation:**

Djevlesk groteske står de der. Urørlige, mektig ruvende i terrenget. Røde i kroppen, med øine så store som vaskevannsfat og et gap som griner fra øre til øre. De minner om klumpete troll. Digre og runde i hodet med små og krokete ben og nevene fremme på maven står de og griner på den åpne tempelplassen. Noen er styrtet i bakken. Hjelpeløst ligger de og glør med sin djevelmaske mot stjernene som går sin gang. Det er gudene fra Poamao. Vi stanset med et rykk da vi dukket ut av krattet og stod på denne gamle tempelplassen i skogen. Plassen var dannet av murer og store stenterrasser hvor gudene var reist. Overnaturlig store raget de røde kolossene op. Bydende stirret de mektige maskene ned på oss, som vilde de tvinge oss i kne. De var nok vant til å aktes og dyrkes av menneskekryp. De var guder for det første mystiske folket på øene.

**Translation:**

They stood looking out over the temple grounds like grotesque demons, frozen, towering over the terrain. Red bodied, with eyes the size of washbasins and broad mouths stretching from ear to ear. They reminded me of bulky goblins, with huge round heads, small bent legs and their hands on their stomach. Some had fallen to the ground. They lay there helpless, staring through their devil's mask at the stars passing over the temple grounds. They are the Gods of Poamao. When we first saw them

coming out of the thick jungle vegetation, we halted in awe. The temple ground was surrounded by great stone walls and platforms on which the statues had been erected. The red giants rose out of the ground like supernatural phenomena. The powerful masks glared imperiously on us, as if they wanted to force us to our knees. They must have been used to being worshipped by cowering humans. They were the gods of the island's first mysterious people.

**Comment:**

The term *vaskevannsfat* refers to an older type of washbasin shaped like a tray or plate, for the translation the English term 'washbasin' was used as it was considered the closest responding English term.

There is no really good translation for *klumpete troll*. *Troll* is in various Scandinavian mythologies and legends a type of evil creature that lives in the forest or in the ground, similar but not identical to the English terms 'troll', 'elf', 'goblin' or 'ogre'; while *klumpete* refers to a large and clunky size.

The phrase *menneskekryp* a combination of the words *menneske* (human) and *kryp* (a degrading term for a small crawling being, similar to 'bug') does not translate very well to English. The point Heyerdahl makes is that the gods (stone statues) were used to seeing petty human beings crawling in front of them as inferior insects. For the translation 'cowering' was used as somewhat similar to Heyerdahl's intent.

## TR65

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:146

**Original quotation:**

Hist og her i buskene blandt dem av gudene som nu var brakket i bakken, lå andre stenkolosser. Påbegynte guder som ikke var ferdig og aldri blev reist. For polynesiernes kanoer kom over havet fra sitt ukjente hjemland og jaget tempelfolket op i fjellene hvor de snart døde ut. [...] Like uforståelig som hvordan blokkene i Egyptens pyramider er heist op, like uforståelig er det hvordan disse kolossene er fraktet og reist. Blodrød sten er ikke å finne ved tempelplassen, men langt oppe i dalen ligger det gamle bruddet hvor klippestykkene er hugget ut av fjellet med økser de laget av den hårdeste sten. På en mystisk og fullstendig uforklarlig vis har det primitive folket fraktet blokkene ned gjennom dalen, hvor de er hugget ut til guder og reist på tempel plassen. På samme måte var mektige rullesten fraktet nedenfra kysten for å bygge terrassene.

**Translation:**

Here and there among the fallen stone gods in the shrubs we could see other large stone giants. Statues of gods started but never finished. They were the remains from the time when the Polynesians had arrived from their unknown homeland, and chased the temple people up into the mountains, where they eventually perished [...] It is just as hard to understand how these large stone colossi were transported and erected, as it is to understand how the Egyptians build their pyramids. The blood-red stone cannot be found near the temple site. It comes from far up the valley, where the old quarry can still be found. In the quarry large boulders were cut out of the mountain with stone adzes. In a mysterious and completely unimaginable way, these primitive people transported the boulders through the valley, all the way to the temple site, where the boulders were carved into the temple's gods. In the same way the great boulders of the platforms had been brought to the temple site from the coast

**Comment:**

Heyerdahl uses the word *rullsten* to describe the boulders taken from the coast to build the platforms. *Rullsten* actually refers to stone from eskers, which of course is something that can be found in Norway but not in the Marquesas. For the translation 'boulder' was used as it seems most likely that Heyerdahl failed to understand the geological implication of the term.

## TR66

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:148

**Original quotation:**

det var en hund. Og det var rart. For hunden var ukjent på øen da dette folket levde og laget de eldgamle guder. Den kom til øen med de hvite. Hadde de engang sett sin modell i fjerne og ukjente land? På en mur ved siden av fant vi uklare tegn da vi grov i jorden. Var det skrift? En slags hieroglyffer? Ingen vet.

**Translation:**

It was a dog. And that was strange. The dog was unknown on the island in the days of the people who made the ancient stone gods. The dog was brought to the Marquesas by white men. But maybe the ancient people had seen the model for the carving in a far distant land. When digging next to a wall, we noticed some mysterious signs hidden underground. Could it be writing? Some sort of hieroglyphs? No one knows.

## TR67

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:148-150

**Original quotation:** Over tempelplassen raget en av de hvasse piggene op som er typisk for øene her. Den minnet om Motonui, «Den Store Sten». Henry Lie fortalte om denne merkelige toppen hvor ingen hvite hadde vært. Engang klatret han op for å nå den sylhvasse piggen. Men like ved toppen gav han op. [...] Og like utenfor muren gikk det to tunneler ned i fjellet, som i vinkel munnet ut i fjellsiden. De lå fylt med menneskeben og grinende skaller. Sultedoden hadde vunnet. Et folk var gått til grunne. Aldri skulde det reise sig. En ny kultur vokste op i dalene. Idag blev den seiv fortrengt. Av vår egen rase. Men ingen ny kultur vokser op i de øde dalene

**Translation:**

Above the temple site rose sharp peaks and rocks, which are characteristic for the Marquesas. It reminded me of Motonui 'the great rock'. Henry Lie told me about the peculiar peak, where no white man had ever been. He had once tried to climb up to the razor-sharp peak but gave up his efforts close to the top [...] Just outside of the wall were tunnels down into the mountain. The tunnels were filled with human bones and skulls. Starvation had conquered. A people had perished. They would never rise again. A new culture had come to the valleys. A culture which at present is being destroyed by our own race; and no new culture will ever come to the valleys again.

## TR68

**Source:** Anon. XIII. 1938

**Original quotation:**

Ikke bare en men to kulturepoker kjener man. Den siste er polynesernes kultur, som altså nå er gått i vaske

**Translation:**

Not only one, but two culture phases are known. The latest is the Polynesian culture, which now has gone down the drain.

## TR69

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:144-145

**Original quotation:**

Borte på stranden så vi et lys fra en hytte. Dette var reisens mål, her levde nordmannen Henry Lie som hadde øgruppens flotteste kokosplantasje. Vi slengte oss av hestene, stive i alle lemmer, og banket på. En duft av speilegg seg ut gjennom sprekkene i hytten. Døren blev revet op, og en flom av lys slapp ut over oss som stod der med hestene. Nordmannen stod i døren med en parafinlykt hevet og gransket sine nattlige gjester. Det gikk nok måneder og år mellom hvite visitter her, og da kom de ikke fra fjellene. Bonjour, sa han kjapt. Godaften, svarte jeg på norsk. Mannen rykket tilbake

**Translation:**

Down by the beach we could see our destination, a single lighted cabin, the home of the Norwegian Henry Lie, who owned the island group's finest coconut plantation. We heaved ourselves off the horses, every joint was aching from the long ride. We knocked on the door. From the cracks in the boards came a smell of fried eggs. The door was pulled open, and a spark of light enveloped us. The Norwegian examined us closely in the light of his raised kerosene lantern. It was months, if not years, between each time he had white visitors, and no whites ever came across the mountains. He was satisfied with a short "Bonjour"; I replied "Godaften" in Norwegian. He stepped back in astonishment

## TR70

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1937m

**Original quotation:**

Det var en underlig klok og tiltalende personlighet. Han erfaringer fra Marquesasøerne var: Infødingene har den tanken at det gjelder å få mest mulig ut av europæerne. Han likte dem absolut ikke

**Translation:**

A strange, but intellectual and pleasant personality. His experience of the Marquesas was that the natives had only one thing in mind, and that was to figure out how they could get as much out of the Europeans as possible. He did not like them at all.

**Comment:**

There is no direct English translation for the word *gjelder* it needs to be translate in relation to the context of the sentence.

## TR71

**Source:**

Heyerdahl 1938a:154

**Original quotation:**

Jeg har bodd her i tredve år, sa Lie en dag. Men jeg har ingen venn blandt de brune. De tør ikke skade mig, for jeg har dalens forretning i kjelleren. Og jeg har penger nok og frukt på min egen plantasje. Men en hvit kan aldri komme innpå dem. Ingen. Jeg har sett mange forsøk. De har ingen bruk for de hvite. De har en eneste tanke når de ser en hvit: Ham gjelder det å få mest mulig ut av. En innfødt gir ofte bort en kylling. Fordi han venter å få en okse som takk. De er ialfall blidere av gemytt på de andre øene, sa Henry Lie. Han vilde aldri ha ektet en Marquesanerkvinne.

**Translation:**

"I have lived here for thirty years," said Lie one day. "But I have no friends among the browns. I have the valley's only store in the basement, so they do not dare to hurt me. And I have money and enough fruit on my plantation. But a white man can never get close to them. No one. I have seen some try. But they have no use for the whites. They only have one thought when they see a white man; we have to get as much as possible out of him. One of the natives might give you a chicken, but it is only because he expects to get an ox in return. It is not like that on the other islands," Henry Lie said. He would never have married a Marquesan woman.

## TR72

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1938a:155

**Original quotation:**

Men sydhavsparadiset, sa jeg. Hvad sier De om det? Han lo så han ristet da han svarte: Når man vet hvilken suppe publikum liker å spise, så koker man selvsagt den.

**Translation:**

“But what about the South Seas paradise,” I said, “What do you think about that?” He cracked a big smile and answered, “If you know what kind of soup the customers like, then of course you serve that soup”.

## TR73

**Source:** Heyerdahl n.d.c

**Original quotation:**

Fra sit opprinnelige isolasjonscentrum i Bakindien har den indoamerikanske rase bredt sig i to retninger: 1. Ut over hele det Malayiske arkipel i en tid dette var en landfast helhet i ett med Bakindien, adskilt fra det Austromelanesiske kontinent. 2. Langs kystregionen mot nordöst. Via Sibir og Alaska, som dengang var landfast kom rasen til det nuværende Amerika, og bredte sig uhindret over hele dette kontinent som Amerikas urinvånere. En senere invasjon av mongolske folk, likeledes via Sibir, har blandet sig mere eller mindre med de nordligste av disse indoamerikanske folk. Efter blandingsens styrke, og ved senere isolasjoner, er eskimostammene og bl. a. nordvestindianerne opstått. En gren av det nordvestindianske fiskerfolk synes i senere tid å ha kommet over til Hawaii, og videre med nordostpassaten i ryggen til Savaii på Samoa. Herfra har rasen befolket hele det ubebodde polynesiske arkipel, og New-Zealand. Bare på øene lengst i øst, (Påskøen og Marquesasgruppen) måtte de fortrenge et nylig ankommet kulturfolk, sansynligvis utløpere fra den indomaerikanske kulturrase i Peru. Mot vest stødte rasen på den Austromelanesiske rasemur, og ved raseblanding her opstod den mikronesiske øbefolkning.

**Translation:**

The Indo-American race migrated in two directions from its original isolated centre in Southeast Asia: 1. Throughout the Malay Archipelago. This migration took place in a period when the Malay Archipelago was still attached to the Asian continent, but separated by the sea from the Austral-Melanesian continent. 2. Along the Asian east coast all the way to the northeast, and then via a land-bridge existing at the period between Siberia and Alaska over to the American continent; where the race spread out over the entire continent, making up the aboriginal population of the Americas. At a later stage, a mongoloid race group invaded the American continent, using the same Siberia-Alaska land-bridge. This group mixed with the most northern of the Indo-Americans. It is from this later intermixture that the Eskimos and the Northwest Coast Indians have developed. One branch of the Northwest Coast Indians, specialised in fishing, seems to have got over to Hawaii in more recent times, and from there on, with the Northern trade wind in their back, reached Savai'i on Samoa; from where the race populated the entire uninhabited Polynesian Island world, and New Zealand. It was only on the islands furthest to the east (Easter Island and the Marquesas Group) that they came into contact with, and had to fight off, another group of people; a recently arrived culture people, most likely of a culture-bearing branch of the Indo-American race, from the area around modern Peru. To the west they encountered the Austral-Melanesian race barrier; intermixture in this area created the Micronesian Islanders.

**Comment:**

The term *Bakindien* is a outdated term describing an geographical area south of China and east of India, roughly but not directly similar to the modern 'Southeast Asia'. The most accurate translation would perhaps be 'Far-India' as in 'the Far-east', but as no such concept is established in the English language, the term has been translated as 'Southeast Asia'. The reader should take notice of the minor discrepancies between the geographical areas implied by the different terms.

The term *isolasjonscentrum* comes from Halfdan Bryn's work, for a full explanation of the meaning of the term see Bryn (1925).



Heyerdahl does not directly use the term 'land-bridge' but speaks of areas as being *landfast* which means that where there today is sea was in the time discussed land. The term 'land-bridge' has been chosen for consistency and as relevant to the point Heyerdahl wanted to make.

Heyerdahl uses the term *mongolske folk* to describe the second group to come to the Americas. The term would directly be translated as 'Mongolian people', it is however not likely that Heyerdahl was referring to the people of the present republic of Mongolia, but to the common term in race research of the period of 'Mongoloid people' or 'Mongoloid race', which has been chosen for the translation as the most accurate translation of Heyerdahl's intentions.

## TR74

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1974a:207-208

**Original quotation:**

Det var en markert forskjell mellom den aktive Henry Lie, alltid i sving med å utvide sin store plantasje, og disse bedagelige polyneserne som ikke hadde noe ønske utover å fylle maven og å elske. Aletti forklarte at de bare satt der og ventet på att kokosnøtterne skulle falle ned av seg selv.

**Translation:**

There was a remarkable difference between the active Henry Lie, always working to expand his great plantation, and these lazy Polynesians, who had no other ambition than to fill their stomach and make love. Aletti explained that they just sat around and waited for the coconuts to drop.

**Comment:**

The word *elske* literary means 'to love' but the way it is used in the sentence suggests that the English term 'make love' or 'to mate' is a more proper translation for what Heyerdahl wanted to express.

Aletti was Henry Lie's son, of a partly Marquesan descendant.

## TR75

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1974a:208

**Original quotation:**

Kjempene i den bergkranste Puamau-dalen sto i slik kontrast til det dorske, dovne folket nede på stranden at spørsmålet uvilkårlig meldte seg: Hvem plasserte disse røde steinkoloene der, og hvordan?

**Translation:**

The giants of the mountainous Puamau Valley stood in such contrast to the docile and lazy people down by the beach, that they created an unavoidable question: Who had made these red stone giants, and how had they done it?

## TR76

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1974a:209

**Original quotation:**

Jeg tok til å få mistanke om at et energisk kulturfolk som hadde for vane å resie steinkolusser, hadde nådd frem til Hivaoas østre odde før de polynesiske fiskerne kom padlende. Også polyneserne var fulle av kraft og pågangsmot i gamle dager, men deres hu sto til sjøen, til krigsstien og til treskjæring. Disse monumentene hadde sikkert en annen historie å berette.

**Translation:**

I started to suspect that an energetic people of high civilisation, who had the habit of erecting giant stone statues, had reached Hiva Oa's eastern shores before the Polynesian fishermen came paddling in. The Polynesians had also once been full of power and ambition, but their efforts were directed to the sea, to warfare and to wood-carving. The stone statues of Puamau had another story to tell.

**Comment:**

The term *kulturfolk* (culture people, people of culture) poses some problems to translate as this type of terminology is not found in the English language. It is, like in the German language, forming a binary opposition pair with the term *naturfolk* (nature people, people of nature). The basic concept has its origins in 19<sup>th</sup> century racial discourse splitting human populations into either *kulturfolk*, that is to say people of culture or civilisation, or *naturfolk*, that is to say people of nature 'primitive people' – basically people not living a modernity type of Euro-American-Chinese-Japanese life style with cities, written language, monetary systems etc. This type of idea also includes contrasts between corrupted (*kultur*) and pure (*Natur*), civilised/primitive, intelligent/non-intelligent, rational/irrational and so on. Heyerdahl's white bearded men in his own writing however commonly found to be somewhere in-between, they are a *kulturfolk* but generally (presumably due to their racial pureness) presented as possessing the virtues of a *naturfolk*. For the translation the phrase 'people of high civilisation' was found to be the closest responding English translation, the above discussion does however need to be taken into account in this case.

Heyerdahl's use of the word *padlende* has a double meaning in this sentence which does not translate all that well to English. He is of course referring to an idea that the Polynesians had arrived to Hiva Oa paddling canoes; but that he is purposely leaving out the canoe means that *padlende* also implies that the Polynesians came 'flapping about' as if they were just aimlessly out at sea and came to Hiva Oa by accident. It is also worth to take notice of how the Polynesians are contrasted to *kulturfolk* (culture people/civilised people), there is an evident value hierarchy between *kulturfolk* and *Polynesiere* in this sentence, illustrating that Heyerdahl still in the 1970s kept to the racial hierarchy ideas he had developed in the 1930s and 1940s.

## TR77

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1942

**Original quotation:**

eventyrets grønne baand

**Translation:**

Green ribbon adventure stories

## TR78

**Source:** Heyerdahl 1936d. Propaganda stamp on postcard.

**Original quotation:**

*Erfülle Deine Luftschutzpflicht!*

**Translation:**

Fulfil your air raid defence duties!

**Comment:** Translation provided by Hilary Howes, ANU.

## *Appendix II – Marquesas Journey and Collections Timeline*

### **1935 – October**

Thor Heyerdahl and Liv Coucheron-Torp are introduced (re-introduced) to each other through common friends Liv Lier and Yngvar Hagen, at the Nightclub Røde Mølle (Moulin Rouge) in Oslo (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; see also Melvold 2003).

### **1936 – August/September**

First mention of the Marquesas journey in the scrapbook. A collage shows Heyerdahl and Liv reading about the Marquesas Islands (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1936 – September 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv visit Thor Heyerdahl Sr. to convince him that Liv should come with Heyerdahl on the journey. Time was short as Heyerdahl Sr. was leaving for Germany (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1936 – September 26<sup>th</sup>**

In a letter, Kristine Bonnevie, professor of Zoology at Oslo University, expressed both concerns and encouragement for Heyerdahl's planned zoological expedition to the Marquesas Islands. A possible expedition had been discussed by Bonnevie and Heyerdahl on an earlier undated occasion (Bonnevie 1936).

### **1936 – October 6<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were engaged to be married (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1936 – October 22<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl sends a postcard to his mother from the German harbour town Saßnitz (Heyerdahl 1936c).

### **1936 – October 25<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl sends a postcard to his mother from Berlin. He expressed excitement over a visit to a large greenhouse and seeing palm-trees. Heyerdahl also wrote that he had been in contact with the German zoologist Bernhard Rensch (Heyerdahl 1936d).

### **1936 – November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Heyerdahl gave a presentation on the journey's zoological objectives at Oslo University's Zoological department. Present was a panel of the Department's leading researchers Professor Bonnevie, Doctor of Zoology Frithjof Økland, and curator of the zoological collection Alf Wollebæk. In his presentation Heyerdahl gave a general introduction to the Marquesas Islands. He informed that he had gained access to literature on the subject through the University's botanical curator Erling Christophersen and an unnamed resident of Oslo (presumably Bjarne Kroepelien). Heyerdahl also suggested that he might have been in contact with American botanist Edward P. Mumford. Heyerdahl did not mention his trip to Germany (Heyerdahl 1936a).

### **1936 – December 15<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl received a 'Bon Voyage' greeting in his and Liv's scrapbook from the editor in chief of the conservative Oslo based Newspaper *Tidens tegn* [Sign of the times] Rolf Thommessen. Heyerdahl would send articles to the newspaper during the journey (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n. d.).

The same day *Tidens tegn* published an article on Heyerdahl and Liv and their journey. In the interview Heyerdahl said that the journey would last for two years and that the purposes were to

collect zoological samples and show that modern Europeans could live like primitive people (Anon. VII. 1936).

#### **1936 – December 17<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl received 'Bon Voyage' greetings from Erling Christophersen and Alf Wollebæk in his and Liv's scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

The same day the article published by *Tidens tegn* appeared in an edited form in *Bergens tidene* [Bergen Times]. The article informed that Heyerdahl would also send articles to *Bergens tidene*. (Anon. VIII. 1936).

#### **1936 – December 20<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl received a 'Bon Voyage' greeting from Bjarne Kroepelien in his and Liv's scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

Heyerdahl's and Liv's passport was issued in Oslo, it was valid for two years (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1936-1946).

#### **1936 – December**

In the scrapbook a 'Bon Voyage' greeting with a drawing signed 'Pol Gauguin' appears, presumably from the Oslo based artist Pola Gauguin, son of Paul Gauguin (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1936 – December 24<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were married. Among the wedding guests were Heyerdahl's friend from the University Yngvar Hagen, woodsman Ola Bjørneby and later *Kon-Tiki Expedition* crew-member Eric Hesselberg (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1936 – December 25<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv departed for Polynesia. The trip went by train from Breivik to Oslo and then to the southern Swedish harbour town Trelleborg, where they caught the ferry to the German harbour town Saßnitz and from there on by train from Hamburg, en route of Cologne and Paris, to Marseille. The scrapbook features pages from their presumably overnight stays in Hamburg and Cologne (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1936 – December 28<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv have reached Marseille and boarded the ship *Commissaire Ramel* which would take them to Tahiti (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1936 – December 30<sup>th</sup>**

*Com. Ramel* in Algiers (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1937 – January 12<sup>th</sup>**

*Com. Ramel* reached Guadeloupe. Three greetings appear in the scrapbook from this date, two unidentified, the other from one 'Josep Mathieus' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1937 – January 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Com. Ramel* reached Martinique. Two greetings appears in the scrapbook from this date, one in French possibly signed 'Maue Hyaienthe', the other in English possibly signed 'David M. Dowden' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

#### **1937 – January**

*Com. Ramel* passed through the Panama Canal (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*Com. Ramel* crossed the Equator. The occasion was celebrated by several elaborate drawings in the scrapbook by French artist Jean-Paul Aluax, who also was travelling to Tahiti (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – January 31<sup>st</sup>**

*Com Ramel* reached Tahiti on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1936-1946). Heyerdahl and Liv stayed in Tahiti for roughly four weeks (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; Heyerdahl 1937j).

**1937 – February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Teriieroo a Teriierooiterai signed a message in the scrapbook. Heyerdahl and Liv had been 'adopted' by this stage as Teriieroo calls them Teraimateata Tane and Vahine (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 7<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were in Papenoo on Tahiti, with Teriieroo (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 10<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl wrote to the local authorities to ask for permission to enter into and collect zoological samples in the Marquesas group (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 12<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl received permission to enter into and collect zoological specimens in the Marquesas from local authorities. Their address was listed as the Hotel Tahiti in Papeete (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

The same day a personal message from 'Axel Larsen' appears in the scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 15<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv received a greeting from Teriieroo's son in the scrapbook, the message is signed in Papenoo (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were still in Papenoo. Several messages from Teriieroo and his family appears in the scrapbook, including from Faufau (Teriieroo's wife), Teriieroo's son Emile and from 'Bjarne Kroepelien Teriierooiterai' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 24<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were in Papeete awaiting transport to the Marquesas. In the scrapbook they received three greetings, one in Polynesian from an unidentified person, one in Swedish signed 'Swenson, Papeete 24 February, 1937', and the third message might possibly be signed 'Santino Petrovich' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – February 26<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were still in Papeete. They received three personal messages in English in the scrapbook. One is signed 'Halligan', the second was signed by Electa Johnson, an American writer who together with her husband Irving Johnson made several trips around the world in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. The third is signed 'Richard Johnson' who seems to have travelled with Heyerdahl and Liv on the *Com. Ramel* to Tahiti. On the 27<sup>th</sup> a fourth message from one Lee Chang (owner or employee at the Restaurant 'Too Fat' in Papeete) appear in the scrapbook. Chang and his countrymen are mocked through various racial stereotypes by Heyerdahl and Liv in their scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – March 1<sup>st</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv had boarded the Schooner *Tereroa* and come half way to the Tuamotus (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – March - 5<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv were on board the schooner *Tereora* which had reached the Tuamotus; the Islands of Takapoto and Takaroa were called upon before the schooner headed for the Marquesas. According to the scrapbook they encountered heavy seas outside Takaroa (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – March 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>**

A note from Henry W. Lie appears in the scrapbook (unknown date presumably in the period 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of March). Heyerdahl and Liv received a greeting in the scrapbook from the captain of *Tereora* W. Bander, the note is signed Omoa, Fatu Hiva, 17 March, 1937. Heyerdahl and Liv were set ashore on Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – March 19<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv lodged in Omoa village with Willy Grelet, the son of the Swiss settler Francois Grelet. (Heyerdahl 1938a:43-60; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.)

On 19 March they made their first entry in their field-journal for zoological specimens, the location of the find was at Willy Grelet's place (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 20<sup>th</sup>**

A second sample was recorded in the field-journal, caught at Omoa beach (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937)

**1937 – March 21<sup>st</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal, caught at Willy Grelet's place (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

An additional sample was recorded in the field-journal at Willy Grelet's place (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937)

**1937 – March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

No less than seven different recordings were made in the field-journal, all at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937). 'Our place' refers to Heyerdahl and Liv's bamboo cabin. They had started to look for a place for themselves after a couple of days in Willy Grelet's house and decided upon a *Paepae* site some 4 km up the valley. The site was located next to a road running from the village by the sea up to the mountains. The land was rented from Ioane Naheekua of Omoa village. The lease was set for one year and the rent to 250 francs (50 NOK). As Heyerdahl and Liv failed to build a hut for themselves, Ioane and a few other men and women from the village offered to build them a house on the abandoned platform; the workers charged 17.5 francs (3.5 NOK) a day, and the house was finished around the 4-5 of April (Heyerdahl 1938a:43-50; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937, n.d.).

**1937 – March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples were recorded in the field-journal, one at Willy Grelet's place and one at 'our place'. (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 25<sup>th</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal at 'Our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 26<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples were recorded in the field-journal at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937)

**1937 – March 27<sup>th</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal at 'Our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 28<sup>th</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal at 'Our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 29<sup>th</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal at Willy Grelet's places (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – March 30<sup>th</sup>**

Recordings in the field-journal of one sample at 'our place', one at Willy Grelet's place, and two at 'our spring' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937)

**1937 – March 31<sup>st</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv seem to still have been living in a tent from information in the field-journal. Four recorded samples at 'our place' noted in the field-journal and one at 'Omoa beach' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – late March/ early April**

An influenza outbreak kills several of the inhabitants of Omoa village (Heyerdahl 1938a:73-75).

**1937 – April 1<sup>st</sup>**

Two zoological samples were recorded at 'Willy Grelet's place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

No less than seven samples recorded in the field-journal at 'our place'. The samples were found underneath rocks and roots. An additional sample was collected at Anaoti beach. From information in the field-journal Heyerdahl and Liv were still living in a tent (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Three samples recorded at 'our places' in the field journal (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 4<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv went for an excursion to the Tahaoa beach site with local resident Tioti as a guide. Tioti was referred to as the 'sexton' in the travelogue and was according to Heyerdahl together with the local priest Pakeekee the only protestants on Fatu Hiva. In the travelogue Heyerdahl describes how Tioti taught them to eat raw fish. Two samples were recorded in the field-journal at 'Tahaoa beach' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April, indistinguishable date between 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> April**

Heyerdahl and Liv open the visitors log for the Bamboo cabin by entering their own names, they list their profession as 'journalists' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – April 5<sup>th</sup>**

A sample was recorded in the field-journal 'at our place in our house' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937). Suggesting that bamboo cabin had been complete on the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> of April.

**1937 – April 6<sup>th</sup>**

Eight samples were recorded in the field-journal all at 'our places' and several caught inside the cabin. An additional sample was recorded at Omoa village, making the day's total nine (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937)

**1937 – April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Four recordings in the field-journal of samples collected at 'our place', an additional sample was found in a bag brought from Willy Grelet's place and a sixth sample collected at Tahaoa beach site (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937). The visit to Tahaoa and the mention of the bag, makes it possible that this was the day Heyerdahl and Liv collected human skulls from a platform site in the mountains between Omoa Valley and Tahaoa beach. They were accompanied during the trip by a local resident called Keo or Veo (Torp-Heyerdahl 1938a; see also chapter 5).

**1937 – April 8<sup>th</sup>**

Three samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 9<sup>th</sup>**

Three samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 10<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 11<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Eight samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 13<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 14<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 15<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 16<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 17<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937). Heyerdahl wrote a letter to Bjarne Kroepelien outlining the early part of the expedition (Heyerdahl 1937j).

**1937 – April 18<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 20<sup>th</sup>**

Five samples collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).



**1937 – April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our place', and an additional one collected 'north of our place' at a hill or mountain site (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 22<sup>th</sup>**

Eight samples collected at 'our place', and an additional one described as just 'Omoa Valley', altitude the same as 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Six samples collected at 'Omoa beach site' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 25<sup>th</sup>**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of April the schooner *Moana* called on Fatu Hiva. The painter Jean-Paul Aluax, whom Heyerdahl and Liv had become acquainted with on the journey to Tahiti, visited the island while the schooner was at anchor. With the schooner was also the catholic missionary Père Victorin, with whom Heyerdahl and Liv did not get along (Heyerdahl 1938a:80-82; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – April 26<sup>th</sup>**

In total 15 recorded samples were made in the field-journal on this date. One was collected at Omoa beach and the other 14 at Tahaoa beach. The samples at Tahaoa were collected not just at the beach but also at sea and in the woods, suggesting that Heyerdahl and Liv had travelled there by canoe, presumably accompanied by Tioti (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples were recorded in the field-journal, one at 'our place' and one in Omoa village (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 28<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 29<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – April 30<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 1<sup>st</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Two samples collected at 'our places' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Their visitors log notes that their camp was visited by 'Tiothi Wishmann', Tahitian citizen from Omoa village. Tioti was the second person after Jean-Paul Aluax to sign the visitors log (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – May 4<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at 'our place' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

In a letter from this date sent by Liv to her parents she discussed human remains collection and suggests that Schreiner at Oslo University had sent them equipment for human remains collection (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937d).

**1937 – May 5<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at Omoa village (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 6<sup>th</sup>**

One sample collected at Omoa village (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 10<sup>th</sup>**

Three samples collected at Omoa village (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – May 14<sup>th</sup>**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of May their camp was visited by 'Taih[uma] Tion [?]', a Marquesan from Omoa village, who had arrived from Ouia by canoe (possibly the girl called 'Tahina Moma' in the travelogue) (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – May 17<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv visited a petroglyph site in Omoa Valley. The day is presumably marked as it was the Norwegian National day (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl called 'Brev fra paradis' appears in *Tidens tegn* and one called 'Drømmen om Tahiti' in *Østlandsposten*, and a third called 'Tahiti er fremdeles Tahiti' *Bergens tidene*, all seemingly based on the same material (Heyerdahl 1937c-e). That Heyerdahl could publish basically the same article in several different newspaper was due to the fact that the newspapers did not directly compete with each other, being based in separate geographical areas.

**1937 – June 4<sup>th</sup>**

Six samples recorded in the field-journal at a site called 'Mountain plateau no.1' roughly 600-700 m above sea level (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – June 5<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples recorded in the field-journal at a site called 'Mountain plateau no.1' roughly 600-700 m above sea level (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

**1937 – June 6<sup>th</sup>**

Two samples recorded in the field-journal at a site called 'Mountain plateau no.1' roughly 600-700 m above sea level (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937).

In a letter to her parents Liv describes how she and Heyerdahl had stolen human remains from burial sites (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937e). Suggesting that the human remains collecting act described in the travelogue occurred somewhere between mid-April 1937 and early June 1937.

**1937 – June 7<sup>th</sup>**

In between the 17<sup>th</sup> of May and Mid-June, Heyerdahl and Liv accompanied by Tioti, probably made two or three trips to Hanavave Valley; one trip went over the mountains by horse and on at least one other occasion Hanavave was reached by canoe. In the field-journal, 10 collected specimens were registered between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of June on a site called 'mountain plateau no. 1', presumably Touaouoho, between Omoa Valley and Hanavave Valley. Either on this trip or one in direct conjunction to it, Heyerdahl and Liv visited archaeological sites in Hanavave Valley and purchased artefacts from the valley's inhabitants. Both a *paepae* site, were Heyerdahl climbed into a burial, and a cave-burial site in the mountains were visited. From Heyerdahl's travelogue it seems that all of this, as well as a visit to a water filled cave called Vai-Po in the Taiokai area on the northern tip of Fatu Hiva, was accomplished in the same day, possibly 7 June (Heyerdahl 1937l, 1938a:93-107, 1938b-d, 1941b; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1937, n.d.)

### **1937 – June 8<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl wrote a letter to his parents about the excursion to Hanavave, the progress of their journey and their plans to move to Ouia to avoid the conflicts they had got engaged in in Omoa Valley (Heyerdahl 1937l).

### **1937 – June 20<sup>th</sup>**

Their camp was visited by 'P[...]au Hafizi', Marquesan citizen from Omoa (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1937 – June and July**

Heyerdahl and Liv seem to have suffered from tropical diseases in this period.

### **1937 – July 6<sup>th</sup>**

Their camp was visited by 'Tie' (?) and Paho, Marquesan citizens from Omoa (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1937 – July 13<sup>th</sup>**

Their camp was visited by 'Teitetua', Marquesan citizen from Ouia, he arrived in a canoe (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). As is disclosed in the letter from 8<sup>th</sup> of June (Heyerdahl 1937l), the Heyerdahls already knew of Tei before this visit, suggesting that he could have visited at earlier occasion as well.

### **1937 – Mid or late July**

The crossing to Hiva Oa that Heyerdahl described in his travelogue (1938a:123-131) must have occurred in July, since the French Journalist Renée Hamon and her cameraman (stationed on Hiva Oa) both wrote in Heyerdahl and Liv's scrapbook in July 1937 (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). Heyerdahl and Liv stayed on Hiva Oa until the later part of September – during this period they seemingly bought a substantial quantity of artefacts in and around Atuona village; made a lengthier call on Henry Lie (whom they had been introduced to already in March) in Puamau Valley, which included visits to the famous archaeological site Ipona (Oipona) (Baessler 1900:235-237; Chavallion & Olivier 2007:113-119; Heyerdahl 1965; Linton 1925:159-173; von den Steinen 1928a:79-86), and to a fortress site in the mountains. On their return to Atuona from Puamau, Heyerdahl and Liv also briefly visited Hanaiaapa Valley (Heyerdahl 1938a:132-161; Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). It is possible that they also visited Hanatekua Valley on their return from Puamau.

### **1937 – August 7<sup>th</sup>**

An article by Liv on Algiers and Martinique called 'Vi går i land i Algier og på Martinique' was published in *Varden* (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937a).

### **1937 – August 14<sup>th</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl on the Takapoto visit called 'Sydhavsferd og rutebil' was published by *Tidens tegn* and as 'En sydhavsferd med hvite seil og rutebil' in *Østlandsposten* (Heyerdahl 1937b, 1937f).

### **1937 – August 16<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl purchased artefacts from the Kaimoko family in Atuona. The price was 2,000 Francs (400 NOK) (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

### **1937 – September 20<sup>th</sup>**

A lengthier letter from the local doctor on Hiva Oa features in the scrapbook, describing the health situation in the Marquesas group. The letter was signed Hiva Oa 'Septembre 20 1937' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1937 – September 21<sup>st</sup>**

Heyerdahl purchased 'Gauguin's rifle' from Willy Grelet, the receipt is signed Omoa Village 21<sup>st</sup> of September 1937 and the price was 2,000 Francs (400 NOK) (Grelet 1937).

**1937 – October 14<sup>th</sup>**

Kristian Schriener head of the Anatomical department at Oslo University wrote to the Dean of the University trying to gain permission for Heyerdahl to collect human remains on Fatu Hiva, after he had been informed by Heyerdahl that human remains were burned or thrown into the Ocean by local residents (Schreiner 1937).

**1937 – October 16<sup>th</sup>**

In a letter on this date Liv wrote to her parents and mentioned that she had written to 'tante Maggen' in response to the request for human skulls from Fatu Hiva she and her husband Hans F. K. Günther had sent Liv (Torp-Heyerdahl 1937f).

**1937 – October 19<sup>th</sup>**

Tei Tetua's reciting of a Polynesian creation myth is recorded in the scrapbook (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). It is included in the 1938 *På jakt efter Paradiset* travelogue but does not match with the one described in the *Kon-Tiki* travelogue (see chapter 4).

**1937 – October 20<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl wrote to Kroepelien from Ouia Valley to inform him on the progress of their expedition. Heyerdahl also wrote about purchasing artefacts in Atuona village, his visit to Puamau Valley, and his newly found interest in archaeology. Letter contains first known mention by Heyerdahl of another people than the Polynesians settling in the Marquesas (Heyerdahl 1937m).

On the same day Heyerdahl also wrote to his parents to wish them a merry Christmas (Heyerdahl 1937n).

Heyerdahl collected entomology samples in the Mountain ranges of Omoa Valley (Bakke 2017: Appendix 17) – Information comes from a label on zoological samples held in Oslo Natural History Museum. The label was not made by Heyerdahl, it is thus questionable if the date is really accurate as the abovementioned letters have him in Ouia Valley both the day before and on the date of 20 October.

**1937 – October 22<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl collected entomology samples in Ouia Valley (Bakke 2017: Appendix 17).

**1937 – October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl collected several entomology samples in Ouia Valley (Bakke 2017: Appendix 17).

**1937 – October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl about the bamboo cabin, called 'I bambushytte på de gamle kanibalers ruiner' was published by *Tidens tegn* (Heyerdahl 1937h).

**1937 – November 6<sup>th</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl on Henry Lie called 'En trønders sydhavseventyr' was published by a newspaper called *Adresseavisen* (Heyerdahl 1937g).

**1937 – November 13<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl collected entomology samples in Ouia Valley (Bakke 2017: Appendix 17).

**1937 – Mid November**

On an unknown date, presumably in mid November, Heyerdahl and Liv left Ouia after a conflict and hid out in a cave at Tahaoa for 'a few weeks' (Heyerdahl 1941b:136), until they caught the schooner back to Hiva Oa. They were stationed in Atuona and Hiva Oa for an additional few weeks before they

started their journey back to Europe a couple of days after Christmas. While in Atuona, they did on at least one occasion collect human remains from a burial-cave outside the village (Heyerdahl 1938e).

#### **1937 – Mid November to Early December**

Heyerdahl and Liv were back on Hiva Oa. They rented a house from 'the princess' and ate 'at the Chinese restaurant' (Heyerdahl 1938e). The Island Montane was probably briefly visited during the crossing from Fatu Hiva to Hiva Oa.

#### **1937 – December 4<sup>th</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl entitled 'Sydhavsfolket dør i overflodens land' was published by *Tidens tegn* (Heyerdahl 1937a).

#### **1937 – December 27<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv left the Marquesas. Their homeward trip went from Hiva Oa to Tahiti and then by Panama, Curacao, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Madeira, Gibraltar, Marseille and Berlin (Heyerdahl 1938e).

#### **1938 – February 4<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv returned to Marseille (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl 1936-1946)

#### **1938 – February 6<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv reached Berlin after travelling by train from Marseille (Heyerdahl 1938e).

#### **1938 – February 7<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv briefly met with Hans F. K. Günther after spending the entire day searching for his residence (Torp-Heyerdahl 1938b).

#### **1938 – February 12<sup>th</sup>**

An article by Heyerdahl called 'jungelstrøk hvor ingen tør sette sin fot' was published by *Tidens tegn*, *Østlandsposten* and *Bergens tidene* (Heyerdahl 1938b-d)

An article by Liv called 'Livet på Sydhavsøyene' was published in *Varden* (Torp-Heyerdahl 1938a)

#### **1938 – February 25<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl is offered a book deal with Gyldendal. The contract was made official with the same deal a couple of weeks later (15<sup>th</sup> March), and meant that Heyerdahl would receive a minimum of 2,500 NOK for the book with 12.5% on sales for the first 3,000 copies, 15% for the next 2,000 copies and then 20% on sales for every sold copy in the third print; the deadline for the text was set as 1 August 1938, and was limited to 200-250 pages with a maximum of 32 illustrations; all in line with the standard format for travelogues (Gyldendal 1938b).

#### **1938 – March 4<sup>th</sup>**

The newspaper *Aftenposten* reported that Heyerdahl and Liv had returned to Norway (Anon XII. 1938).

#### **1938 – March 15<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl signed a book deal with Gyldendal (Gyldendal 1938a).

#### **1938 – March 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>**

The newspaper *Morgenbladet* published interviews with Heyerdahl and Liv two days in a row (see Den stundesløse 1938a-b).

#### **1938 – March 18<sup>th</sup>**

An interview with Heyerdahl appears in the newspaper *Dagbladet* (Anon. XIII. 1938).

**1938 – March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Heyerdahl gave a lecture in Oslo. The lecture was called 'Vårt villmannsliv på Sydhavsøen Fatuhiva: I bambushytte på de døde kanibalers ruiner' [Our primitive life on the South Sea's island Fatu Hiva: In a bamboo cabin on ancient cannibal's ruins]. The advertisement said Heyerdahl would show some 150 'lysebilder' [Images of light – projected slides of drawings and photographs]. Tickets were 3, 2 or 1 NOK (presumably depending on seat) and the lecture held at 'Aulaen' (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). According to his tax-return (Heyerdahl 1939a) Heyerdahl made 886 NOK on the lecture, thus at least 300 spectators must have attended.

**1938 – March 24<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl gave a lecture at Munken in Larvik (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). The ticket prices are unknown but according to the tax-return he earned 488 NOK (Heyerdahl 1939a) from the lecture, thus there must have been a decent crowd at his hometown location as well.

On the same day his lecture in Oslo the night before received a favourable review in *Tidens tegn* (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1938 – March 25<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl gave a lecture in Skien (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.). According to the tax-return this lecture only earned him 109 NOK (Heyerdahl 1939a).

**1938 – March 29<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl gave a lecture in Breivik (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.), Liv's hometown. According to the tax-return the profit was 106 NOK (Heyerdahl 1939a). Two additional lectures on unknown dates were according to the tax-return held in Hamar and at Drammen tekniske, the profits from these lectures were more even modest at 100 NOK for the first and only 60 NOK for the second (Heyerdahl 1939a). Suggesting that the interest for Heyerdahl's lecture might have been the largest among friends and family.

**1938 – May 9<sup>th</sup>**

In a letter sent on this date, the curator for the University of Oslo and the Museum of Natural History Alf Wollebæk confirmed the institution's intent to purchase Heyerdahl's zoological collection. The University agreed to pay Heyerdahl 400 NOK. The payment would be divided into two separate instalments of 200 NOK each (Wollebæk 1938).

**1938 – August**

Heyerdahl purchased a house in Lillehammer for 3,000 NOK (Heyerdahl 1939a).

**1938 – Late September**

Heyerdahl gave a lecture on Norwegian public radio, which earned him another 100 NOK (Heyerdahl 1939a).

**1938 – September 26<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv's first child Thor Jr. was born (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.).

**1938 – Late October**

Heyerdahl's travelogue *På jakt efter paradiset* was published by Gyldendal. The book received several favourable reviews (Heyerdahl & Torp-Heyerdahl n.d.; Kvam 2005:213-225; see also Anon. XIV 1938; Gyldendal 1938-1939a-d; Jacobsen 1938; S. L. 1938).

### **1939 – January 27<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl wrote to Wollebæk to inquire over progress with the analysis of his zoological collection. Heyerdahl also informed Wollebæk about correspondence he had had with the Bishop Museum (Heyerdahl 1939b).

### **1939 – January 31<sup>st</sup> to March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In a response to Heyerdahl's letter from the 27<sup>th</sup>, Wollebæk informed Heyerdahl that matters were a bit more complicated. The museum had on its own initiated contacts with the Bishop Museum through Erling Christophersen, and it was also through entomology curator Leif R. Natvig in contact with experts in Germany. The slow progress of getting the collection analysed was, according to Wollebæk, due to the fact that none of the contacted experts had agreed to the university's conditions. Wollebæk also wrote that the museum was trying to get Ørjan Olsen's collections from the Cook Islands, Tahiti and New Zealand analysed at the same time (Wollebæk 1939a; see also Heyerdahl 1939f; Wollebæk 1939b). In his correspondence with Wollebæk Heyerdahl spoke of plans for a new expedition and stated that the key to the Polynesian riddle was hidden in the jungles of Fatu Hiva (Heyerdahl 1939c).

### **1939 – March 4<sup>th</sup>**

In a letter to Schreiner, Heyerdahl spoke of connections between Indian populations and Marquesas old culture, he wanted to ask Schreiner if he knew of any such link in skeletal material. He furthered stated that he wanted to arrange a new trip to Fatu Hiva with better gear so that more extensive collections could be obtained, and Heyerdahl could get his revenge on the Marquesans and the French (Heyerdahl 1939d).

### **1939 – August 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>**

Heyerdahl wrote to Wollebæk to inquire if the University would be interested in funding a trip for him to the Bishop Museum. He also wanted to take some of the zoological samples with him on an upcoming expedition to the Pacific Northwest Coast (Heyerdahl 1939e). In a reply on 31 August, Wollebæk informed Heyerdahl that he could not take samples out of the country and that the University had no means or interests to fund a trip for him to the Bishop Museum as they were still negotiating a deal for getting the collection analysed (Wollebæk 1939c).

### **1939 – September 26<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl and Liv departed for Canada (Kvam 2005:227-283).

### **1942 – April 20<sup>th</sup>**

Brooklyn Museum decided to purchase the ethnographic/archaeological collection (BRM 1942a). In a letter sent on 16 April 1942, Herbert Spinden offered to lend his New York City apartment to Heyerdahl for free between the 20 April and 10 May, while he was travelling in Mexico (Spinden 1942). Spinden's generous offer was presumably in relation to the Museum's acquisition of the collection.

### **1942 – May 13<sup>th</sup>**

Brooklyn Museum makes the final decision to purchase the collection for 1,000 USD (Montgomery 1942a). Heyerdahl had received a 50 USD advance on 22 April, and of the remaining amount, 150 USD was specified to be paid to Thomas Olsen (probably settling a debt) and 800 USD was to be paid out as 8 (100 USD) monthly instalments to Liv Torp-Heyerdahl (BRM 1942b). The actual transfer of the money from the transaction dragged out over time. A letter sent to Heyerdahl from the Museum director's secretary on 2 June 1942, notes that the transaction had not been finalised at this time (Montgomery 1942b). The exact date the transaction went through is unknown but must have presumably been before Heyerdahl joined the Norwegian Army in July.

**1942 – May 21<sup>st</sup>**

Heyerdahl was invited to the opening of Brooklyn Museum's Pacific Art exhibition by Museum director Laurance Roberts (Heyerdahl 1942c).

**1942 – May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Brooklyn Museum opened its Pacific Art exhibition (Heyerdahl 1942c).

**1942 – July 9<sup>th</sup>**

Heyerdahl joined the Norwegian army (Kvam 2005:283-370).



## Appendix III – South Seas films

The 14 films with 'Söderhavet' titles released in Sweden between 1928 and 1936 were: *White Shadows in the South Seas* (1928); *The Pagan* (1929); *The Devil's Pit* (1929); *Hell Harbour* (1930); *The Sea God* (1930); *Chez les mangeurs d'hommes* (1930); *Let's Go Native* (1930); *Never the Twain Shall Meet* (1931); *The Painted Woman* (1932); *La melodía prohibida* (1933); *The Narrow Corner* (1933); *Legong* (1934); *Pursued* (1934); and *Red Morning* (1934).

In addition, seven short documentaries from the Swedish South Seas expedition, shot by Gustaf Boge, were released between 1926 and 1927, and in 1935 another short. *Manéa, Söderhavets son* (1935), was issued. It is also worth mentioning that other films able to market themselves without thematically chosen titles, for instance *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935), were also released in the period. The titles have been compiled from the Swedish Film Institute's database which is publicly available through <http://www.svenskfilmdatabas.se>. It is fair to assume that releases on the Norwegian market followed a similar pattern. The Norwegian Film Institute's database (available through <https://www.nfi.no/>), however, does not feature data for comparative analysis.