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‘The Paradise of the Southern Hemisphere’

The Perception of New Zealand and the Maori in Written Accounts of German-speaking Explorers and Travellers 1839-1889

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this research is to examine the much neglected body of writings on New Zealand and the Maori by German-speaking explorers and travellers during the colonising period of the 1840s to 1880s. To the nineteenth-century breed of visitor from Germany and Austria, 'Old' New Zealand often presented itself as an unexplored field of scientific curiosities, from botany and geology to ornithology and ethnology, at the same time as a paradise for immigrant workers. The investigation begins with an evaluation of the eighteenth-century account of Georg Forster, who accompanied Captain Cook on his second voyage to the South Pacific. Forster's account is entrenched in the early racial stereotypes and theories of the 'savage', and provides the first major primary source for all of German-speaking Europe up to the period under investigation. The second main source to be considered is the dominant 'paradise' image which evolved out of the propaganda of the New Zealand Company and continued right through the colonising era.

The principal figures to be examined include Ernst Dieffenbach, the official Company naturalist, Friedrich August Krull, the first German Consul in New Zealand, Ferdinand von Hochstetter, the resident geologist on the *Novara* expedition, Julius von Haast, the founder and director of the Canterbury Museum, Andreas Reischek, the taxidermist and collector, as well as other notable visitors including Max Buchner, Franz Reuleaux, Otto Finsch, Alexander von Hübner and Robert von Lendenfeld. Thus, it is the goal of this investigation to analyse the perception of New Zealand and the Maori in selected works by German-speaking explorers and travellers who arrived in the colony between 1839 and 1889 through, first of all, confronting the prevailing stereotypes and images inherent in the philosophical attitudes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards the 'savage' and those present in the 'paradise' rhetoric of the British campaigners of colonisation, and secondly, examining the origins, patterns and evolution of their respective perceptions, impressions and opinions in order to reveal the true extent of their non-British 'Germanic' viewpoint.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

AaW	Aus allen Welttheilen
AES	The Auckland Evening Star
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
Ausland	Das Ausland
AZ	Allgemeine Zeitung
CNZ	The Cyclopedia of New Zealand
DNZB	Dictionary of New Zealand Biography
DRfGS	Deutsche Rundschau für Geographie und Statistik
EEEE	Enzyklopädie der Entdecker und Erforscher der Erde
LT	The Lyttelton Times
MAGW	Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien
MaJPGA	Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt über wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geographie von Dr. A. Petermann
MKKGG	Mittheilungen der Kaiserlich-Königlichen Geographischen Gesellschaft
MOVW	Mittheilungen des Ornithologischen Vereines in Wien
NDB	Neue deutsche Biographie
NZer	The New-Zealander
NZH	The New Zealand Herald
NZJ	The New Zealand Journal
NZJS	The New Zealand Journal of Science
ODT	Otago Daily Times
ST	The Southland Times
SW	Sterbende Welt
TPNZI	Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute
VZBGW	Verhandlungen der Zoologisch-Botanischen Gesellschaft in Wien
WIDM	Westermanns Illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte
YIM	Yesterdays in Maoriland

INTRODUCTION: New Zealand as a Destination for German-speaking Explorers and Travellers in the Nineteenth Century

As the Austrian explorer, Andreas Reischek, fondly remembered his time in New Zealand in 1892, he gave the colony the title of ‘Paradise of the Southern Hemisphere’. Over the nineteenth century he was not the only German-speaking visitor to harbour these same feelings. For European scientists and explorers in the mid-nineteenth century, New Zealand was a mostly unexplored group of islands on the opposite corner of the globe, whose potential for local resources was largely undiscovered, its mighty peaks in the South not fully conquered, and its recorded natural history still incomplete. For curious travellers without necessarily scientific intentions in mind and immigrants looking to start over, the country also presented itself as a promising British colony that combined the natural wonders of the Hot Lake district with the economic wonders of independency and skilled labour. It was 1773 when the first Germans set foot on New Zealand soil, then accompanying Captain James Cook¹ on his second circumnavigation around the globe. Since then German and Austrian visitors have been among the most influential contributors to New Zealand’s early history of science, and history in general, although this is not always recognised today.² The rapid period of progress which characterises the first fifty years of New Zealand’s colonial history from 1840 was therefore witnessed first hand by not only the dominant British populace at large, but also a distinct group of German-speaking visitors and settlers, the latter of whom formed the second biggest immigrant group behind the British in the nineteenth century. Many of these people were in fact well-educated observers, including prominent scientists and explorers, museum directors and collectors, naturalists and ornithologists, alpinists and biologists, geologists and geographers, ethnologists and philosophers, botanists and zoologists, engineers and medical doctors, diplomats and consuls, merchants and businessmen. Of those who returned with the intention of compiling an account of their achievements or reports of scientific findings and those who simply wanted to send back word of their adventures, many produced narratives which found their way into various German-language journals or were reproduced in book form to the delight of future visitors and scholars.

¹ See, for example, Nicholas Thomas, *Discoveries: The Voyages of Captain Cook*. London: Allen Lane, 2003; Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog: Captain Cook in the South Seas*. London: Allen Lane, 2003; J. C. Beaglehole, *The Life of Captain James Cook*. London: Black, 1974.

² See James Braund, “German-speaking Scientists in New Zealand 1773-1951: Research Past, Present and Future”, in: *New Zealand and Europe: Connections and Comparisons*. Eds. Bernadette Luciano and David G. Mayes. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2005, 173-88.

This collection of travel writing is not only a record of ‘Old’ New Zealand as they saw it, but, more importantly, an alternative record to the overriding perspective of mainstream British travel literature.

The resulting first-hand observations of New Zealand and its people by German and Austrian visitors³ during some of the most important periods of the country’s history offer something that the ethnocentric British accounts cannot, and that is valuable non-British insights and social commentary which are neither dependent on the endorsing of needless propaganda nor the upholding of abstract British ideals, and therefore in certain situations could also form a counterbalance to the dominant views of New Zealanders themselves. The latter half of the eighteenth century saw the rise of the belief that the German people, with their lack of a vested interest in colonial pursuits, possessed a more objective and disinterested viewpoint, as well as a “sense of moral superiority, a moral highground for judging the performance of others”⁴ due to their being supposedly untainted by colonialism or the ‘excesses’ committed by other European nations. As a result, German scholars assumed the role of the impartial ‘scientific observer’ sorting through, systematising, collating, evaluating and authenticating the material gathered from the various voyages of the seafaring nations, which was made accessible for all levels of the bourgeois public, whilst at the same time critiquing the endeavours of other colonial ventures often through correcting previous misconceptions about indigenous peoples, with whom they generally sided, placing native behaviour within historical rationale, and creating alternative modes of “polite” or “civilized colonial interaction”.⁵ In fact, it was these so-called “colonial fantasies”, Susanne Zantop argues, which served as “*Handlungersatz*, as substitute for the real thing, as imaginary testing ground for colonial action”, in both general travelogues and fictionalised scenarios, allowing them in the process to fashion their own national identities as

³ The only known Swiss explorer to have an account of his New Zealand travels published is Jakob Lauper (1815-91). In his narrative he relates his arduous and dangerous journey through the Southern Alps and the death of his host, John Henry Whitcombe. After his return it was translated for the local newspaper in 1863 (Jakob Lauper, *Over the Whitcombe Pass: The Narrative of Jakob Lauper, reprinted from the Canterbury Gazette, July 1863*. Ed. John Pascoe. Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1960). The original German version is held at the Alexander Turnbull Library [=ATL], Wellington, MS-Papers-0348. Louper Stream and Louper Peak were misnamed after this Swiss mountaineer and guide, but were not officially corrected to Lauper Stream and Lauper Peak until 2003 (Hans-Peter Stoffel, “Ein Giffenser am anderen Ende der Welt: *Ein Freiburger Familienname auf neuseeländischen Landkarten*”, in: *Freiburger Nachrichten (Sens)* 12 Aug 2003; “Wer war der Giffenser Jakob Lauper? *Neuseeland setzte dem Deutschfreiburger ein Denkmal - eine Bergspitze*”, in: *Freiburger Nachrichten (Bezirke)* 18 Aug 2003 <<http://www.freiburger-nachrichten.ch>>), even though the mistake was earlier discovered by John Pascoe in 1960. Louper Bivvy, however, still remains as a backcountry hut.

⁴ Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1997, 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 35, 38-40.

“better” colonists, and their own ‘Germanic’ national characteristics as distinct from “the perceived racial, sexual, ethnic, or national characteristics of others, Europeans and non-Europeans alike”.⁶ On a more personable level, Michael King, for example, notes the Austrian mentality in particular which led to both their generally favourable treatment of and by local New Zealanders during the nineteenth century:

The difference was due in part to the supra-national character of the Austro-Hungarian Empire itself; and to the fact that social life in Vienna was a stage for many of the world’s living cultures, while the Imperial Museum was a growing repository for exotic or dead ones. These factors had conditioned Austrians to view cultures other than their own with a minimum of prejudice. In addition, Austrian and German visitors to New Zealand had modes of communication that were different from those manifested by Britishers. The former were more gregarious in social relations, more philosophical in reflection, less solemn about the trappings of British authority and less judgmental about Maori life and behaviour. Relations between Maoris and Austrians were especially easy, as the visit of the chiefs to Vienna had demonstrated⁷ – both groups displayed an extravagant and rhetorical manner of speech, a willingness to debate serious questions at length, a mischievous sense of humour, a propensity for bursting into song, a strong sense of hospitality. The Anglo-Saxon British (as distinct from the Celts) were markedly less enthusiastic on all these counts: Hügel had noted as early as 1834 their lack of graciousness and absence of conversation.⁸

While the early image of Australia in German literature was researched a decade and a half ago,⁹ until now, New Zealand has not been the subject of its own study, which is surprising considering the impact of German-speaking colonists and visitors on the nation as a whole. Admittedly, New Zealand has not enjoyed the same profile in early German fiction as Australia has, with the only real offerings appearing somewhat sporadically over the years and spanning

⁶ Ibid., 6f.

⁷ See Chapters Five and Six.

⁸ Michael King, *The Collector: A Biography of Andreas Reischek*. Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, 29f. The Austrian botanist, Karl Freiherr von Hügel (1795-1870), visited the Bay of Islands in 1834 as guest scientist on board the British warship *Alligator*. Unfortunately, his diaries were never published. His handwritten journals from his eleven months of travel in Australia and New Zealand are, however, held on microfilm in the ATL, as well as a translation by Reuel Lochore (73-034). At present only the Australian section has been published, albeit in English, but the New Zealand section is now in the process of also being published. (See, for example, Baron Charles von Hügel, *New Holland Journal: November 1833 – October 1834*. Translated and edited by Dymphna Clark. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1994, 1-13; Christian Schicklgruber, “Karl Alexander Anselm Freiherr von Hügel – Soldat, Gartenbauer und Forscher”, in: *Die Entdeckung der Welt – Die Welt der Entdeckungen: Österreichische Forscher, Sammler, Abenteurer*. Ed. Wilfried Seipel. Wien: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2001, 189-201; Dietmar Henze, “Hügel, Karl Freiherr von”, in: *Enzyklopädie der Entdecker und Erforscher der Erde* [=EEEE]. Vol. 2. Graz: Akadem. Druck- u. Verlagsanst., 1983, 647f.; Helmut Dolezal, “Hügel, Karl Alexander, Naturforscher”, in: *Neue deutsche Biographie* [=NDB]. Vol. 9. Ed. Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1972, 731f.; Braund, “German-speaking Scientists”, 176f.; King, *Collector*, 24.)

⁹ Alan Corkhill, *Antipodean Encounters: Australia and the German Literary Imagination 1754-1918*. Bern; Frankfurt a/M; New York; Paris: Lang, 1990.

different genres,¹⁰ but the wealth of notable German-language travel literature is another matter. To date, however, it has only been within the last decade or so that the Germanic connection with New Zealand has significantly come to light,¹¹ yet relatively little research has been produced which focuses on the representation or perception of New Zealand and the Maori in this literature. As a result, nineteenth-century travel writing by German and Austrian scientists, visitors and explorers is a predominantly untapped phenomenon, one reason being the lack of German expertise of many New Zealand scholars, especially in the field of science, whose reliance on English translations limits their scope of research. Another reason is the understandable overlooking of ‘German only’ texts in favour of British travel literature due to the monolingual and Anglocentric approach of local scholars,¹² in conjunction with the misconception that due to the majority of these monographs being written by scientists they do not therefore contain a definitive travel narrative, which is, on the whole, characteristic of a greater trend in post-war New Zealand to forget its many nineteenth-century arrivals from German-speaking Europe. Furthermore, it is often ignored that the German and English versions of the same account do not always share the exact same content, especially concerning official English translations meant for different audiences, not to mention that various additional German-language articles and publications, which were written purely for the German-speaking public, could also include criticisms that might be omitted from English versions.

¹⁰ New Zealand has been used in a variety of ways in German-language fiction. The earliest instance of this fiction is the juvenile adventure novel, including Friedrich Gerstäcker’s novella *Die Schoonerfahrt* from his collection *Aus zwei Welttheilen* (1854), Joseph Spillmann’s *Liebet eure Feinde! Eine Erzählung aus den Maori-Kriegen auf Neuseeland* (1891), Kurt Heyd’s *Flegeljahre im Busch: Christophs Abenteuer in Neu-Seeland* (1938), and more recently Anja Welle’s *Magnus: Fünf Zufälle aus Neuseeland* (1999). Another use of New Zealand has been as a literary symbol for social distance in Bodo Kirchhoff’s *Das Kind oder Die Vernichtung von Neuseeland* (1979) and Adolf Muschg’s short story “Christel” from his collection *Der Turmhahn und andere Liebesgeschichten* (1987). A third way has been the fictional representation of New Zealand deriving from well-known New Zealand authors, such as Maurice Shadbolt, Frank Sargeson and Katherine Mansfield, in Gerhard Köpf’s *Bluff oder das Kreuz des Südens* (1991) and *Der Weg nach Eden* (1994), Erwin Einzinger’s *Kopfschmuck für Mansfield* (1985), Evelyn Schlag’s *Die Kränkung* (1987) and Christa Moog’s *Aus tausend grünen Spiegeln* (1988). (See James Braund, “Literary points of contact”, in: *Out of the Shadow of War: The German Connection with New Zealand in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by James N. Bade with the assistance of James Braund. Melbourne; Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998, 80-85.) Finally, the ethnographic novel from the indigenous perspective has also lately been produced in the form of Tancred Flemming’s Marama trilogy – *Marama* (1994), *Kia Ora, Moana* (1996) and *Wahine Toa Maori* (1998).

¹¹ The standard works for research into the Germanic-New Zealand connection in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are: *The German Connection: New Zealand and German-speaking Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Edited by James N. Bade with the assistance of James Braund. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1993); *Out of the Shadow of War* (Ed. Bade et al., 1998); *Eine Welt für sich: Deutschsprachige Siedler und Reisende in Neuseeland im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Edited by James N. Bade with the assistance of Gabriele Borowski and James Braund. Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1998); *Im Schatten zweier Kriege: Deutsche und Österreicher in Neuseeland im 20. Jahrhundert* (Ed. Bade et al., 2005).

¹² A case in point is Lydia Wevers’ recent study *Country of Writing: Travel Writing and New Zealand 1809-1900*. (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002).

The methodological approach used in this study can be described, for the most part, as imagological, in which ‘image’ in this instance is used primarily as a synonym for ‘perception’. Imagology, or image studies, is based on the premise that it is not necessary to view national characteristics in terms of their being “correct” or “wrong”, as “an imagological reading is strictly *textual* in that it stays within the (inter-)textual confines of perception and representation.”¹³ In other words, as national stereotyping is founded on an intertextual tradition of source material, i.e. repeats and cites earlier texts, imagologists concern themselves solely with ‘how’ and ‘why’ specific images and stereotypes are formed, rather than the ‘truth’ and ‘correctness’ behind them. Understandably, perception of foreign cultures is not a purely objective experience as early explorers liked to believe, rather a confrontation between the preconceived knowledge, cultural values and subjective experience of the ‘auto-image’, i.e. the ‘self-image’ of the observer or author, and the perceived differences of the ‘hetero-image’, i.e. the ‘other-image’ of the observed. The fundamental approach I have employed here is what Joep Leerssen refers to as the ‘pragmatic-functional’ model.¹⁴ This entails not only examining and observing the genesis, evolution, appearance and effect of common images, stereotypes, clichés and preconceptions within the relevant socio-historical and literary context, and according to the background and attitudes of the author, but it also considers such issues as who the target audience is, and to what extent the text caters to the needs and expectations of this readership, in conjunction with its general reception and impact.

The overall aim of this research is therefore not so much concerned with how different the perceived ‘Germanic’ perspective is from the dominant British-New Zealand viewpoint or how valid these perceptions are, but rather how they have evolved in German and Austrian discourse over a timeframe of more than a century, with specific emphasis on the first fifty years of New Zealand’s colonial history, what forms they take, and what underlying factors have led to this change, if indeed there is a significant development. Although it is strictly speaking outside the scope of imagology, I will investigate the validity of specific images and stereotypes where appropriate, i.e. when a comparison proves valuable or even necessary, in order to better distinguish between this perceived Germanic perspective and the ‘reality’ of general British views of New Zealand and the Maori. The primary selection criteria for this case study is the dual

¹³ Joep Leerssen, “Echoes and Images: Reflections Upon Foreign Space”, in: *Alterity, Identity, Image: Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship*. Eds. Raymond Corbey and Joep Leerssen. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991, 130.

¹⁴ See Joep Leerssen, “The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey”, in: *Poetics Today* 21:2 (2000): 267-92.

necessity of the various published accounts, journals, articles and works to have been written by known German-speaking explorers and travellers who visited or emigrated to New Zealand between the years 1839 and 1889, and for these texts to contain significant contributions on the representation of New Zealand and the Maori. For the purposes of this research, the texts have not been limited to those written wholly on New Zealand, but also include relevant sections within larger works on Australasia or the South Pacific. As a result, the texts have first and foremost been chosen for their relevance to the perception of New Zealand and the Maori ahead of the renown of the authors, which necessarily places respected and influential writers alongside less accomplished individuals, although in most cases it is those with established international reputations who have made the most important contributions, and chapters are weighted according to the relevance and volume of the material. As it is not always possible to gauge the size of the readership or numbers of copies sold, especially in the case of lesser known contributions, I have, for the most part, restricted the scope of public response and the influence of the texts to only recognising facts which are available in secondary literature, and acknowledging when works have had a particular influence in popular thought, in their respective fields, and among the authors themselves under investigation. Furthermore, in an effort to limit the scale of the content and also follow the evolution of similar strands of perceptions, I have structured the chapters according to the two main 'images' of New Zealand, on the one hand, and the Maori, on the other, which form a main emphasis, if not the primary focus, of the analysed accounts.

It is necessary here to also define certain recurring terminology. By 'Germany' and 'Austria', I do not simply refer to the geographical boundaries of today, as the borders in Central Europe constantly fluctuated beyond these confines during the age of expansion and power politics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For much of this period there was no Germany as such, rather a dysfunctional collection of independent states within the loose and fragile construct of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation' which dated back to medieval times and was under the predominance of the Habsburg dynasty (Austria). This empire on paper, however, belied the presence of unity where there was only intense rivalry, particularly between the Protestant-Germanic Prussia and the Catholic-Austrian monarchy, the latter of which increasingly looked to its eastern territories (more than half fell outside the 'German Nation') and had its own distinct set of political, social and cultural values. This 'empire' lasted until 1806 when it collapsed at the onset of the Napoleonic wars, and was replaced in 1815 by the German

Confederation, which retained the same borders as the former model. Ironically, in both cases those Germans living in the eastern Prussian provinces were excluded from ‘Germany’, while numerous non-Germans were included. With the defeat of Austria at the hands of Prussia in 1866, the two rivals finalised their separation in 1867 to form, on the one side, the ‘North German Confederation’, followed by the ‘German Empire’ in 1871 (which was in many respects more an extension of Prussia than a united Germany), and, on the other side, the dual monarchy of the ‘Austro-Hungarian Empire’. Thus, in this context ‘Germanic’ denotes the common German origins and language of both Germany and Austria, while ‘European’ is used here in a wider sense to include both continental Europe and Great Britain, in contrast to the German usage of ‘europäisch’ which at times referred only to ‘Central European’, and ‘Engländer’, which was generally used as a synonym for ‘British’ instead of today’s common usage, repeated in this study, as the combined population of the United Kingdom.

Thus, it is my intention to identify and assess the literary representation and perception of New Zealand and the Maori in the selected works of German-speaking arrivals between 1839 and 1889 through initially examining the impact, influences and evolution of contemporaneous European philosophical beliefs and entrenched racial stereotypes, in conjunction with the ‘paradise’ motif of the early colonial propaganda in New Zealand, in order to analyse the changes in perceptions, impressions and opinions of the country as a whole and its inhabitants, and ultimately determine the extent to which they were able to achieve a credible Germanic perspective in the face of New Zealand’s history of dominant British stereotypes and images. Chapter One begins with an evaluation of the prevailing myths and stereotypes of the Maori and New Zealand which existed in the minds and pens of eighteenth and nineteenth-century European travellers, while Chapter Two concludes with a section on the influence of Georg Forster on the perception of New Zealand in Germany during the pre-colonising period in the late eighteenth century. Chapters Three to Seven focus on New Zealand during the colonising era in three main stages of its early European history: 1839 to 1849, 1850 to 1869 and 1870 to 1889. Chapter Three centres on the prominent writings of Ernst Dieffenbach, a German naturalist under the employ of the New Zealand Company at the beginning of the colonising period. Chapter Four introduces the published letters of Friedrich August Krull, the first German Consul in New Zealand in the 1860s, while Chapter Five offers a combined section on the works of two of the most influential German pioneers of New Zealand science, Ferdinand von Hochstetter and Julius von Haast, whose efforts are still felt today. Chapter Six then deals with the duality between the

reconstructed posthumous diary of the Austrian naturalist, Andreas Reischek, and his own published material from the 1880s, which has contributed to the present controversy surrounding his name, followed by Chapter Seven, which concludes the study with an examination of the lesser-known literary contributions of Max Buchner, Franz Reuleaux, Otto Finsch, Alexander von Hübner and Robert von Lendenfeld.