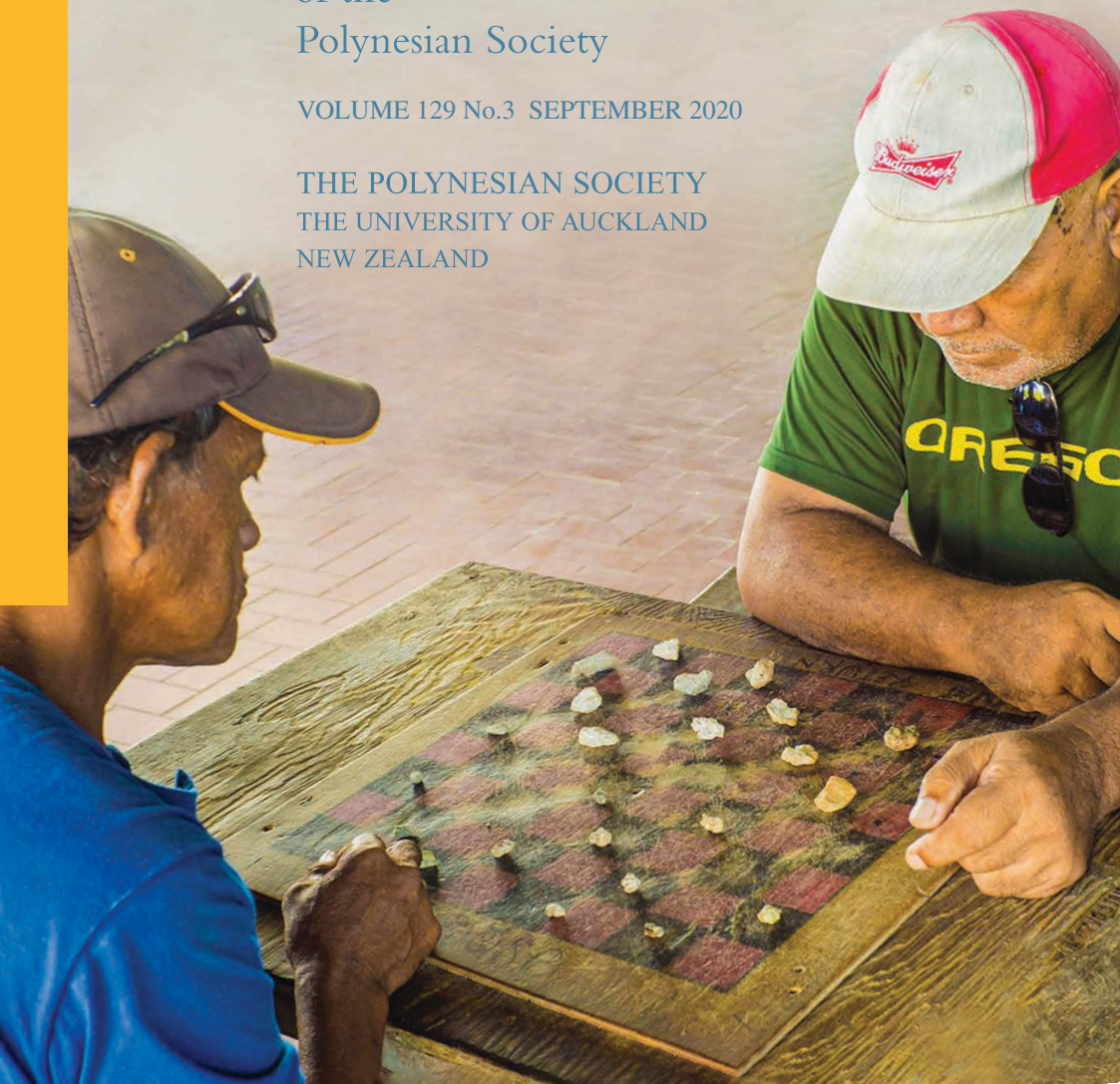
JPS

The Journal
of the
Polynesian Society

VOLUME 129 No.3 SEPTEMBER 2020

THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY
THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
NEW ZEALAND



AUTHENTICITY IN ANALOGY BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT: TOWARDS AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF CULTURAL CHANGE

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ABSTRACT: The question of authenticity emerges in contexts of cultural innovation when people question whether innovative expressions of culture imply discontinuity with the past. In this article, it will be argued that this modernist concept of authenticity is alien to Pacific modes of thinking about cultural innovation and change. It draws on extensive fieldwork in Māori society of Aotearoa New Zealand, where people rarely, if ever, refer to cultural practices as inauthentic. Instead, they focus on analogies between the past and the present, for instance in kinship terminology and aesthetic practices such as tattooing. In so doing, they defy connotations of inauthenticity and sometimes even cultural change at large. This is not to say that change is denied as it is implied in the comparative analogy between past and present that aims at accounting for cultural change. Thus, Māori somehow characterise change as continuity. Although analogies in Māori society are distinctive in cultural terms, speaking to the continuance of cultural practices irrespective of the disastrous impact wrought by colonisation, it is suggested that this understanding of change is more broadly applicable, e.g., as a means to understanding home-making strategies of youngsters in a migration context.

Keywords: analogy, authenticity, continuity, anthropology of cultural change, interculturality, Aotearoa New Zealand Māori

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The question of authenticity emerges in contexts of cultural innovation when people question whether innovative expressions of culture imply discontinuity with the past. As such, it invariably invokes the connotation of unreal or spurious traditions that are not genuine (Handler and Linnekin 1984). An analysis of the historical emergence of this meaning of authenticity in western thinking brings to light that the concept proceeds from a dichotomy between tradition and modernity that has been deeply embedded in western models of sociocultural change since the Enlightenment, ranging from Marx and Durkheim to Hobsbawm (Shils 1981). An important assumption of this view is that change can only take place in one direction, namely the direction of modernity (Bendix 1966). At the same time, it is assumed that traditions themselves cannot change. They can only be lost and not retained in changed form. Ultimately, most traditions are expected to be replaced with modern counterparts.

In this article, it will be argued that this modernist concept of authenticity is alien to Pacific modes of thinking about cultural innovation and change. This argument will draw on my fieldwork among Māori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand, who rarely, if ever, refer to cultural practices as inauthentic. Instead, they focus on analogies between the past and the present, thus defying connotations of inauthenticity and even cultural change at large. After all, by drawing analogies between past and present, changes that have taken place in the interim are neglected by an exclusive emphasis on continuity. This is not to say that change is denied as it is implied in the comparative analogy between past and present that aims at accounting for cultural change. As such, Māori may mark change as continuity. I begin by revisiting the Māori renaissance that originated in the late 1960s and not only entailed a revival of so-called "traditional" cultural practices but also generated a debate about the authenticity of the widespread reintroduction and renewal of Māori "traditions".

MĀORI RENAISSANCE

The colonial history of New Zealand had dramatic consequences for the Māori, the indigenous population of the country. During the first century of contact with Europeans, they were gradually eclipsed by a foreign majority of western colonists and other migrants, which simultaneously resulted in a large-scale dispossession of their territory. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, they had lost 94.1 percent of their lands following wars, confiscations, misleading deals and other types of "legal" alienation (Kawharu 1977: 35). A tragic ramification of the entire process was the decimation of some 60 percent of the original population, resulting in a figure of only 40,000 Māori people remaining in 1896 (Pool 1991: 76). This small minority of indigenous people had little option but to search for employment in wider New Zealand society. Over the years, many Māori therefore moved to the cities, with approximately 85 percent residing in urban areas towards the end of the twentieth century. In contemporary New Zealand, the vast majority of Māori hold an underprivileged position, with many locked in a vicious circle of poverty: leaving school at an early age and often without any qualifications, lower-paying jobs and high unemployment rates, poor health, high crime rates, including domestic violence against women and children, and a life expectancy that is significantly lower than that of their European counterparts (Ministry of Social Development 2016).

Since the early days, Māori have never ceased seeking redress for the alienation of their lands, but protest against their dispossession and marginalisation was reinforced towards the end of the 1960s. Initially, it focused mainly on the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi, a covenant signed between Māori and the British Crown in 1840 that protected Māori

customary rights, including their rights to land, but which was systematically violated and abused by the New Zealand government. In 1987, however, the Treaty of Waitangi was finally recognised after a number of court victories about a range of different claims. Subsequently, a settlement process was initiated to redress Māori colonial grievances. This process is still ongoing.

An upshot of Māori protest in the context of the claims settlement process is that a tremendous revival and revaluation of Māori culture and traditions has taken place since the 1970s. This cannot be seen in isolation of a worldwide revival of local traditions in response to globalisation, but Māori culture and traditions received a particular boost during the hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal that was set up in 1975 to investigate Māori claims.[1] During those hearings, the loss of land has consequently been linked to a loss of cultural traditions, which in indigenous cosmology are intimately connected to the land (Sorrenson 1989). Thus, the scope of Māori claims far exceeds the alienation of Māori land. Indeed, the underprivileged position many Māori occupy in contemporary New Zealand not only is explained with reference to the loss of their lands and natural resources but is intrinsically related to a lack of recognition of Māori culture. Not only will the land have to be returned, but in order to reshape New Zealand into a country in which the indigenous population holds an equal position to that of settlers, their different cultural values and traditions will have to be accepted and appreciated as well.

Māori campaigns for change focus on all dimensions of society, although from the outset priority has been given to education. In view of the high number of Māori children leaving school with lower or without any qualifications (Ministry of Social Development 2016: 84), education is assumed to provide the key to change (Benton 1988). In this context, it is interesting that the plea to improve education is focused on the introduction of bilingual education and the incorporation of cultural programmes into the curriculum in order to make schools more amenable and therefore also more accessible to Māori children. The assumption of this strategy is that teaching the Māori language and offering Māori cultural programmes will enhance the self-esteem of Māori youngsters, which is believed to influence their school performance in a positive way.

In 1983, Māori campaigns to improve education received a first impulse with the introduction of so-called *kōhanga reo* 'language nests', kindergartens in which preschool children are immersed in Māori language and values. This programme was important since in the early 1980s the majority of fluent speakers of the Māori language were older than 50 years of age, with only 4.5 percent of children being raised in the Māori language (Reedy 2000: 158). The establishment of kōhanga reo aimed at bridging the gap between the ageing generation of "native speakers" and the fast-growing generation

of young children. Twenty years later some 700 kōhanga reo had been set up, teaching more than 13,000 children the principles of the Māori language and the values conveyed with it (Reedy 2000: 159). The impact of Māori-language immersion kindergartens, however, should not be overestimated, because for children it is equally important to further develop their language skills at primary school. For that reason, too, some 60 bilingual primary schools were set up, especially in smaller towns in which a majority of the population was Māori. Towards the end of the 1990s, approximately 15 percent of all Māori children were taught bilingually at primary schools. In five places, bilingual high schools were set up. At the same time, more and more young Māori people moved on to higher education, where courses offered by the rapidly expanding departments of Māori studies became very popular (Reedy 2000: 161; see also Gallegos *et al.* 2010).

In 1987, the growing recognition of the Māori language culminated in the Māori Language Act, offering the language a legal status. This act not only made the Māori language the only official language in New Zealand, as English never received that status officially by law, it also entailed an obligation for the government to publish official documents both in English and in Māori and also to facilitate the introduction of Māori radio channels and television stations. Not unimportant either was the changing presentation of all government institutions with bilingual and often also bicultural logos. An implication of this transformation was that many government institutions also hired Māori consultants in order to avoid accusations of "window dressing". Needless to say, this had an unprecedented impact on government policies as well.

In sum, then, it may be argued that in recent decades significant progress has been made with the recognition of Māori language and culture as an inherent part of New Zealand society, ranging from education and health to economics, politics and justice. As a corollary, socioeconomic indicators of the Māori population have also begun improving, although the gap between the indigenous people and European New Zealanders is still a cause for concern. Yet optimism is generally prevailing since in contemporary New Zealand it has become unavoidable to take into account a so-called Māori perspective on a broad range of policy issues. Recognition of Māori cultural traditions is especially apparent in the public domain. Official meetings or even seminars at universities usually begin and end with a Māori *karakia*, often translated as 'prayer', although 'incantation' would be a better term since traditionally they call for inspiration or blessings from ancestors. They indicate that the renaissance of Māori culture and traditions has gradually transformed New Zealand into a society that is aware and even proud of its location in the South Pacific, far removed from England, its original coloniser. At the same time, it evokes the question regarding the

contemporary meaning of culture and traditions that have been revived as part of the Māori renaissance that paralleled the political struggle of seeking redress for the illegal dispossession in the nineteenth century.

THE DISCOURSE OF "INVENTION"

From the early 1980s, the global revival of local traditions has attracted the attention of numerous scholars. In 1983, the historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger published the classic collection of essays entitled *The Invention of Tradition*. This volume offered many anthropologists and other social scientists inspiration with some great stories about national symbols, rituals and other traditions that are represented as ancient traditions in order to promote national unity or to legitimise the existence of particular institutions or the use of cultural customs. One year before this illustrious and influential collection appeared, the anthropologists Roger Keesing and Robert Tonkinson (1982) published a special issue of the Australian journal *Mankind* with a strikingly similar title: "Reinventing Traditional Culture: The Politics of Kastom in Island Melanesia". Contributions to this issue also described a revival and revaluation of cultural traditions, foremost in resistance to (post)colonial domination, all with a focus on Oceania. Indeed, the use of the term "reinvention" inevitably suggested similarities with the central concept of "invention" in the book by Hobsbawm and Ranger.

The independent appearance of these two publications in short succession indicated that a sense of fundamental cultural change was emerging. As a consequence, many anthropologists, including myself, began focusing their research on the revaluation and politicisation of cultural traditions. After I had finished field research for my doctoral dissertation, I was surprised to attract a large audience to my first post-fieldwork seminar at the Australian National University with the catchy title "The Re-invention of Māori Tradition" (Van Meijl 1989). With my thesis, too, I attempted to contribute to the emerging discourse about the political meaning of cultural traditions in New Zealand and wider Oceania (Van Meijl 1990). In the early 1990s, this debate culminated in a large number of prominent publications (e.g., Jolly and Thomas 1992; Linnekin 1992; Linnekin and Poyer 1990; Norton 1993; Sahlins 1993; Thomas 1992; Van der Grijp and Van Meijl 1993; White and Lindstrom 1993).[2] Interestingly, however, the question of what these analyses of the revaluation and politicisation of cultural traditions have contributed to anthropology at large has rarely, if ever, been addressed.

A preliminary reflection on the debate about the reconstruction of cultural traditions, however, brings to light that, first, it is argued that cultural traditions are primarily expressed by people who resist the continuing influence of a colonial or postcolonial worldview in their societies (Tonkinson 2000: 169). A revival of cultural traditions is furthermore assumed to facilitate

the construction of a distinct cultural identity that is believed to be under threat, especially in societies that are still struggling with a colonial past. This particular meaning of traditions for the expression of autonomous identities in postcolonial circumstances was also thought to clarify why culture and identity are not infrequently constructed and reconstructed in opposition to stereotypical representations of former colonisers, usually from western societies (Norton 1993: 741). The political aspirations that inspire the revaluation of cultural traditions for the construction of distinctive cultural identities were also contended to make clear that not in all cases is a linear continuation of historical practices involved (Handler and Linnekin 1984; Linnekin 1983). The absence of cultural continuity, finally, was argued to explain why cultural traditions that are politically motivated are generally also being reified and essentialised (Norton 1993: 742).

All insights into the cultural renaissance in the Pacific notwithstanding, two high-profile debates in 1989 and 1990 brought to light that some assumptions of the discourse on the politics of culture, traditions and identity are highly problematic. In 1989, Allan Hanson published a controversial article about the making of oral traditions in Māori society, such as the myth of the migration of the Great Fleet of seven Māori canoes to Aotearoa and the narrative about the introduction of the supreme god Io. He documented in some detail that these stories had initially been constructed by European scholars, after which they were incorporated into Māori oral traditions. Hanson's reconstruction was far from original among scholars with expertise in Māori studies, but still his article was reviewed in the *New York Times* (Wilford 1990), which in turn attracted the attention of a New Zealand journalist who summarised the academic paper with the provocative headline "Modern Maori Image 'Invented' " (Freeth 1990). Needless to say, Māori were offended by the suggestion that their culture would not be authentic (Nissen 1990; see also Hanson 1991; Langdon 1991; Levine 1991; Linnekin 1991a).

In the same year, Roger Keesing (1989) published a remarkable article in the first issue of the now renowned journal *The Contemporary Pacific*, entitled "Creating the Past". He contended that traditional culture was primarily reinvented in societies with a colonial past in which people idealised their precolonial traditions in order to resist the continuing influence of their former colonisers. The Hawaiian academic and activist Haunani-Kay Trask (1991) fiercely criticised Keesing and reprimanded him as an arrogant male who mainly buried himself in colonial libraries because he could not listen to indigenous peoples (see also Keesing 1991; Linnekin 1991b).

The indigenous response to these anthropological analyses of cultural traditions suggesting, directly and indirectly, that revitalised cultural practices might not be authentic made immediately apparent that for the time being the discipline lacks deep insight into intercultural conceptions

and experiences of cultural change. Obviously, anthropologists have drawn conclusions from the unintended offense that was caused by some writings. The concepts of "invention" and "reinvention" were immediately abandoned since it is beyond doubt that continuity is invariably involved in discontinuity (Otto and Pedersen 2000, 2005). The precise relationship between continuity and discontinuity, however, continues to be subject to empirical inquiry. In addition, the connotation of inauthenticity that was evoked by the concepts of "invention" and "reinvention" has been rejected explicitly (Goldsmith 1992). The search for particular histories of traditions is after all based on a problematic equation of self-consciousness with inauthenticity and, by implication, unself-consciousness with authenticity (Jolly 1992), but self-conscious, counterhegemonic reifications of traditions should not simply be dismissed as inauthentic.

In spite of these key contributions to the debate about the revival of cultural traditions, I would argue that the underlying cause of the controversy about the concepts of "invention" and "reinvention" and their suggestion of a putative absence of authenticity has not been resolved completely. In my view, the fundamental problem is that since the Enlightenment the concept of tradition is invariably placed in a dichotomy with modernity, and also in the debate about the cultural renaissance that has taken place since the 1980s but that ended in a deadlock with the controversies around 1990. With the rise of so-called modern society following the beginning of industrialisation in the second half of the eighteenth century, a rigid opposition emerged between tradition and modernity (Bendix 1966). Underlying this dichotomy is a model of change that is based on a conception of traditional and modern societies as relatively autonomous social systems that can change in one direction only. This unilinear model of change conceives of all forms of change as a transition, in the sense of progression, from traditional societies to modern societies, involving declining traditionality and rising modernity.

This dichotomy between tradition and modernity has been expressed in many different ways by numerous influential thinkers, including Edward Tylor (primitive versus civilised), Karl Marx (precapitalism versus capitalism), Ferdinand Tönnies (*Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft*), Émile Durkheim (collective versus individual), Talcott Parsons (particularism versus universalism) and, for example, Robert Redfield (folk society versus urban society; cf. Bendix 1966: 307). How deeply rooted the dichotomy between tradition and modernity is in widely shared perspectives on colonial history came to light again when it was reintroduced by, amongst others, Hobsbawm and Keesing. These scholars held in common the view that so-called "invented traditions" not only were shaped by politics but also that they are characteristically modern, which, in turn, was based on the assumption that the emergence of modernity is omnipresent and irreversible.

As such, they equated the contrast between tradition and modernity with the distinction between an era before the arrival of western colonists and an era after the arrival of western settlers. Although in postcolonial societies it is unavoidable to make a distinction in periods before and after the beginning of colonisation, it is incorrect to assume that no changes were taking place in non-western societies before the arrival of voyagers, missionaries, explorers and other western colonists (Anderson *et al*. 2014). The distinction between precolonial and postcolonial periods should therefore be considered as a point of departure for academic analysis only, and not as a conclusion of inquiry into social and cultural change. The parallel between, on the one hand, the distinction between precolonial and postcolonial and, on the other hand, tradition and modernity explains nevertheless why some anthropologists were confused when in the course of the cultural renaissance it became obvious that traditions not only can be lost but that they can also be retained in a new form, that they can even change and acquire new meanings. Indeed, the positive meaning of cultural traditions in recent decades is new and unprecedented, as in the colonial past traditions were frequently rejected as negative. Thus, one of my informants, James, a wood carver, appeared to be ahead of his time when he remarked on the very first day of my arrival in the field that Māori people "are changing their traditions by using them".

IN ANALOGY WITH THE PAST

In this article, I would like to revisit and revitalise the debate about the renaissance of cultural traditions by elaborating on a remark made by Francesca Merlan (1998, 2005), who drew attention to another important presupposition underlying the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, that is the assumption that societies operate and change in relative autonomy (see also Keesing 1989; Sahlins 1993, 1999; Thomas 1992; cf. Van Meijl 2011). Indeed, after two centuries of colonisation and sweeping changes it can no longer be assumed that postcolonial societies are genuinely autonomous in generating and innovating cultural practices. It seems more likely that colonial and noncolonial dimensions, or indigenous and nonindigenous, are intrinsically connected in intercultural relations and that both domains of postcolonial societies use, borrow and apply aspects of one another's worldview in social and cultural interaction.

Merlan elaborated on the notion of interculturality with reference to the concept of dialogue as introduced by the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin ([1975] 1981, [1929] 1984) early last century. Bakhtin also struggled with dualist thinking, including the distinction between synchrony and diachrony. He found a solution for this dilemma in the concept of dialogue, which he used in order to explain the dialectical interplay between the reproduction of language codes and the transformation of language following

individual variations in speech. Quite some time ago, this insight also demonstrated that social structure and social meaning do not function as relatively closed systems, but that both continuously attune to one another in mutual interaction. An intercultural explanation of change that takes into account the interaction between societies also exceeds the boundaries of culture by focusing on the constant exchange of cultural differences and similarities (Merlan 2018).

The implication of this argument is that in postcolonial societies change does not take place autonomously but in the form of an interactive dialogue with former colonisers. Contrary to the argument made in the discourse about the "invention of traditions", Merlan (2005) demonstrates that postcolonial societies do not simply derive aspects of culture from their colonial rivals, nor do they shape and reshape indigenous forms of culture exclusively in opposition to their counterparts. Instead, she suggests that very frequently analogies are made between indigenous and nonindigenous cultural practices, which simultaneously offer the opportunity to minimise external influences and emphasise indigenous values, or to combine and unite the best of both worlds. In both cases, cultural change follows an intimate interaction between two different societies and value systems. Cultural change, in other words, comes about in a process of dialogue between interactive practices that are compared and contrasted both negatively and positively.

The focus on intercultural interaction and the role of analogies in the comparison between cultural practices of different societies not only is useful for explaining intercultural change but also offers suggestions for improving insight into indigenous experiences and accounts of change in postcolonial circumstances that may also be characterised as intercultural or multicultural. The cultural renaissance in Māori society, for example, shows that in highly dynamic situations people draw analogies not only with other societies but also with cultural traditions in their own society. An analogy between past and present enables people to highlight continuity in cultural values and practices without taking into consideration all forms of possible discontinuity. Accordingly, I would argue that analogies are crucial in indigenous accounts of change and associated strategies for coping with changing cultural practices, especially when a lack of control over change is experienced. Yet, to my knowledge, the concept of analogy has never received any serious attention in anthropology (Van Meijl 2011, 2013b). For that reason, too, I will briefly explore the etymology of analogy and the meaning of the concept in other academic disciplines.

The vague status of the concept of analogy in the social sciences, including anthropology, is very different from the central position of analogies in linguistics (Barfield 1967; Biggs 2006; Hofstadter and Sander 2013) and above all in the natural sciences, including mathematics, physics and

biology, in which it is a key concept (Lorenz 1974). Just as Archimedes spontaneously formed the idea behind the law of communicating vessels when he sat in a bathtub, many scientific discoveries have been spawned by observing analogies that had not been noticed before. In the natural sciences, analogies are used to formulate hypotheses or to suggest the existence of a certain principle or even a law, in particular when it seems possible to make a comparison between the functions of elements in two different systems. Thus, Darwin ([1859] 1948), for example, made a great leap from geology, via biology, to demography in his theory of evolution. The role of analogies in these sorts of scientific comparisons is in line with the etymological meaning of the concept that is derived from the Greek *analogia*, which means, literally, 'proportion' or 'similarity' (Philippa *et al.* 2009). In this way, this term was used exclusively in a mathematical context, but under the influence of philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato the concept of analogy was gradually also used for the explanation of ambiguous relations in terms of unambiguous relations.

In his magnum opus *Let mots et les choses*, the French historian Michel Foucault (1966: 32–40) demonstrated compellingly the change in meaning of the concept in the Middle Ages. In those days, the universe was characterised as an order that was structured in such a way that the macrocosmic pattern of the whole was assumed to be reproduced in the microcosmic pattern of its parts. The analogies between the whole and its parts made it possible to draw conclusions from a part about the whole. In the late Middle Ages, monks accordingly observed the existence of God in visible signs of God's presence in the natural environment. The parallels thus drawn were not considered as mere allegories or illustrations but as substantial evidence supporting a scientific argument about a range of aspects of medieval societies, in which God occupied a central position.

In medieval analogies, functional similarities were more fundamental than proportional and therefore did not require methodological procedures of verification. Following this way of thinking, however, the concept of analogy began evoking the connotation of ambiguity in theology and also in logic. Ambiguity proceeded from the fact that unknown phenomena were increasingly clarified and explained with reference to phenomena that were already familiar, but in this form analogies are misleading to the extent that differences between phenomena are neglected in the comparison. Precisely this aspect of a comparison on the basis of an analogy has become characteristic of the contemporary meaning of the concept: similarities are emphasised, whereas differences are ignored. In other words, an analogy is usually based on superficial similarities between phenomena or structures that are different in origin and that also have different meanings. Nonetheless, it seems sheer impossible to process new information without drawing a

comparison in the form of an analogy. In the cognitive sciences especially, it is widely known that analogies are crucial to processing and understanding information with which individuals are unfamiliar (Hofstadter 2001; see also Gentner *et al*. 2001).

Against this background, it is interesting to examine the role of analogies in indigenous accounts of cultural change. During my fieldwork in New Zealand, I was repeatedly struck by the frequent analogies formed between the old world and the new world in order to downplay differences between past and present. By using analogies in historical comparison, cultural phenomena were presented as relatively timeless. Changes were, however, not necessarily denied in analogies between the old and the new since they were presupposed in the comparison on which the analogy was based, but analogies enabled a construction of timelessness that made it possible to defy and resist changes that have taken place in the interim. Let me illustrate with a number of examples.

TRIBAL RELATIONS

The colonial history of New Zealand had dramatic consequences for Māori sociopolitical organisation, including kinship relations. At present, some 50 percent of the Māori population no longer identifies in terms of traditional tribes, simply because they do not necessarily play a significant role in their predominantly urban lives (Durie 1998; Kukutai 2011; Walker [1990] 2004). From the beginning, too, many Māori married Europeans, and increasingly also members of other tribes, but in spite of changing marriage patterns an idiom of kinship is still ubiquitous in contemporary Māori society, although it is phrased in different terms (Rosenblatt 2011: 413).

In response to my many questions regarding kin relationships in the community in which I conducted field research I usually received a standard response: "We are all related". Even elderly people, who were usually rather talkative and eager to teach this student of anthropology, appeared unmotivated to explain kinship relations in more detail. At a funeral ceremony, for example, I asked one of the *kaumatua* 'respected elders' whether he was related to the deceased person. With a straight face he responded: "Yip, we are all related. We all come from Rangi and Papa", or the sky father and earth mother from whom all life originates in Māori cosmogony (Grey [1854] 1971). In a nutshell, this answer makes clear how changes that have taken place in consanguineal and affinal kinship are pushed aside by drawing an analogy with the creation myth and thus emphasising kinship among indigenous Māori. Two centuries after the introduction of Christianity, references to the genesis of genealogical relations among human beings in the cosmos illustrate that in spite of all changes an ethos of kinship is being continued.

The analogy between genealogical kinship of all Māori in the creation myth and ethnic relationships among the indigenous people in New Zealand that are not directly characterised by consanguineal or affinal kinship is expressed especially in the frequent use of kinship terms in all kinds of social relations. Male friends, for example, commonly address one another as "bro", which is short for "brother", while girls and young women refer to each other as "sis" or "sissie", from "sister". When intimate relationships have not yet been established the term "cuz", from "cousin", is often used. During first meetings, it is also noticeable that Māori often try to establish connections by positioning one another in a network of tribal relations, and frequently they succeed by informally determining an indirect relationship which enables an instant representation of the stranger as "cuz".

The frequent use of words such as "bro", "sis" and "cuz" is not restricted to young people, but it is also rather common among middle-aged people and to some extent also among the elderly, Christians in particular. Thus, I heard two men referring to one another as "brothers", but I was certain they were not brothers in the biological sense of the term, and thus I asked whether they were perhaps brothers-in-law. In reply, I received a smart pun: "No, we are not 'brothers-in-law'; we are 'brothers-in-Lord' ". Indeed, among those for whom religion is an important part of their lives, kinship terms are commonly used to address one another as "brother" or "sister", while members of the older generation are consequently addressed as "uncle" or "auntie". The latter terms are not restricted to networks of religious associates, for that matter, since almost all children in Māori communities address almost all people of middle age and older as "uncle" and "aunt", including the residential anthropologist and his partner.

The frequent designation of individual, ethnic relations in terms of analogies with kinship relations may to some extent be explained by classic Māori kinship organisation, in which ambilineal rules of descent and ambilateral patterns of affiliation were historically characterised by a high degree of openness, dynamics and flexibility (Firth [1929] 1959). A preference for an idiom of kinship in the designation of relationships that cannot be classified as consanguineal or even affinal, however, is also present at the level of social groupings. Thus, the concept of *whānau* 'extended family' became very popular in the course of the Māori renaissance. Although Māori society was traditionally organised around *hapū* 'sub-tribes' (Van Meijl 1995), the concept of whānau has become so popular in Māori discourses, which are predominantly articulated in the English language, that it is now also used in untranslated form by many non-Māori (Metge 1995: 308). This change is remarkable since in the course of colonial history almost 90 percent of Māori families have adopted the European pattern of living in restricted or nuclear families (Walker [1990] 2004). The meaning

of the term whānau has changed accordingly, since nowadays it is frequently also used in reference to restricted families. The new use of the concept of whānau indicates an analogy with the extended families of the past. As such, Māori aspire to maintain the central values of kinship relations, in which distinctions between nuclear and extended family, and distinctions between parents and grandparents, are not nearly as significant as they are in western societies.

The analogy between new forms of social organisation and extended families also appears from the frequent use of the term whānau in relation to groupings that are not at all organised on the basis of descent rules. Thus, the concept of whānau has also been used in designing a model for transferring Māori children from residential youth care institutions to Māori foster families, which is assumed to be advantageous for the development of a strong and positive cultural identity (Culpitt 1995). In bilingual schools, the term whānau is also used to describe the different social relations and atmosphere that in a bilingual environment are supposed to be characterised by values derived from Māori kinship relations, including *aroha* 'love', *manaaki* 'care' and *utu* 'reciprocity' (Metge 1995: 293–312). In this context, kinship terminology is used to represent friendship relationships as relations that entail a certain kind of responsibility, just like kinship relationships do.

The Māori concept of *iwi*, which since the influential publication by Raymond Firth ([1929] 1959) has been translated as 'tribe', is also attributed new meanings in analogy with traditional tribal relationships. Thus, larger groupings of Māori who have been living together in the same suburbs in New Zealand cities for longer periods of time refer to themselves as "tribes"—Ngāti Poneke, for example, which literally means 'the descendants of Wellington', the capital city of the country (while in other cases the concept of whānau serves as a valuable alternative for urban groupings, e.g., Te Whānau o Waipareira in West Auckland). In the 1990s, some of these groups even registered as charitable trusts in order to obtain the status of corporate tribe. In view of new government policies to return land and other types of natural resources to Māori ownership as part of the process that aims at settling violations of the Treaty of Waitangi, they subsequently went to court to seek legal recognition of their status as pan-tribal groupings in urban environments. In 1992, one of the first settlements was signed between Māori and the government, when the latter decided to redress the dispossession of the Māori of their fishing rights. The government purchased fishing quotas and planned to return these to the indigenous population. Since a precedent was lacking for such a deal, the government negotiated an agreement with four chiefs, who in line with traditional protocol had received a mandate at a ceremonial meeting (*hui*). They argued that fishing rights had been alienated from tribal ownership, and for that reason they also had

to be returned to tribal organisations, despite tribal connections of some 50 percent of the population having dwindled following their migration to urban environments. The representativeness of the four chiefs was immediately disputed by pan-tribal organisations in the cities who argued that they were also iwi, referring to the etymological meaning of the term iwi, literally meaning 'bone' (i.e., ancestors) or 'people'. In the end, this objection was not only acknowledged and accepted by the Waitangi Tribunal (1998)[3] that investigates Māori claims and makes recommendations about its findings to the government, but also by the High Court, the Court of Appeal and even the Privy Council in London, the highest judicial body in states that are part of the Commonwealth of Nations (Van Meijl 2006a). Thus, the analogy between pan-tribal organisations and traditional tribes received, more or less, juridical confirmation.

Analogies between contemporary organisations and their traditional tribal counterparts, in spite of the absence of genealogical affiliations, are suggested not only by astute intellectuals who may be thought to advance historical comparisons for political purposes but also by young people with little or no schooling. I witnessed a moving example during the funeral of a "bikie", or a member of a motorcycle club, who was the victim of a tragic accident. As a member of a so-called gang, he was not in regular contact with his family, but still after his death it was decided in consultation with his "mates" to give him a traditional funeral wake followed by a burial on the ancestral mountain Taupiri.

Nowadays, the *tangi* 'funeral wake' is undoubtedly the most emblematic Māori ritual that is still organised on a regular basis (Mead 1991; Sinclair 1990; Wilson and Sinclair 2016). A tangi takes place in an ancestral meeting house on a *marae* 'ceremonial centre', where usually during three days and nights the casket is displayed with an open lid so that the bereaved family and all other relatives and friends can pay their respects to the deceased person. All guests are welcomed ceremonially with speeches and extensive ritual greetings by means of *hongi*, when people press noses and foreheads in order to share one another's breath. Afterwards, all guests are offered a meal to remove the *tapu* 'religious restrictions'.

The tangi of the "bikie" created a special atmosphere on the marae as his friends from the motorcycle gang added a distinct colour to the ceremony. They formed a guard of honour with their bikes when the casket was carried onto the marae. And for the locals it was a moving experience to press noses (hongi) with a large number of young men who had been alienated from their cultural roots. On the final evening an extraordinary event took place in the ancestral meeting house.

The final evening of a funeral wake, the *pō whakamutunga*, colloquially also referred to as "fun night", is the evening on which the extended family,

all their friends and many members of the local community gather together in the ancestral meeting house to bid farewell to the deceased. During this evening, anyone can stand up to address a few final words to the dead person and his or her surviving relatives. Later on some participants in the ceremony may try to entertain the bereaved family in order to relieve the final farewell during the funeral that takes place in the morning. After a special request from one of the elders, one of the leaders of the gang eventually got up to address his "mate" and wish him all the best. Subsequently, he endeavoured to bridge the gap between the gang and the marae community by drawing an analogy between his bike and a canoe, or *waka* in the Māori language, which is not only a traditional vehicle for transportation but also a metaphor for all descendants of one of the canoes that reached the shores of Aotearoa from the Pacific. As such, a waka is usually translated as a confederation of tribes or even a super-tribe. When the gang member compared his bike to a traditional canoe, he said:

> Just like our ancestors travelled in their canoes, so we drive our bikes to go out to meet people and have a good time.

Pointing to his leather jacket with the gang's patch on the back, he resolved one of the salient differences between the ancestors and the members of the motor club:

> We may be wearing a different style of clothes you fellas don't like, but we are still people! We all have mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters. We only don't have a job, and that's why we stick together.

At the end of his contribution to the exceptional evening he carried the analogy between gang and tribe through by referring to their "pad" as "our marae". He said:

> ... as a marae is always open to anybody, our pad is always open too. And we like to invite yous [*sic*] all to drop in sometime when you pass by.

This remarkable analogy between gang and kin groups in Māori society emphasises the similarities in social functions of both types of groups, while the differences in historical origin and social organisation are disregarded if not denied. The concepts of canoe or waka, people, tribe or iwi, and marae are used in a timeless manner in order to enable analogies between historical and contemporary forms of social organisation. In these analogies, continuity is stressed and discontinuity downplayed, which in the end makes it possible to render current forms of social organisation, including gangs, as normal, as authentic. Thus, traditional concepts continue to play an important role

in indigenous accounts of social and cultural change. The metaphorical use of waka, iwi and marae is characteristic of postcolonial Māori organisations that are not directly based on descent or other forms of kinship, but that do aspire to rehabilitating sociocultural as well as political and economic functions of traditional tribes, and also, in the case of gangs, to the quality of social relations and interactions that are associated with traditional modes of organisation. This representation and revaluation of classic values as central aspects of Māori organisation demonstrates that contemporary cultural practices can only be understood against a background of cultural continuity, in spite of their discontinuity.

The scope of the argument that analogies are crucial in indigenous accounts of change reaches far beyond the ethnographic examples presented in this article. Teresia Teaiwa (2006) has also argued that the distinction between present and past becomes blurred in analogies that are drawn in order to highlight continuity above discontinuity in historical comparisons throughout the Pacific.[4] And as noted earlier, Michel Foucault (1966) demonstrated in his early work how since the Middle Ages a focus on comparability has made it possible to emphasise similarities between past and present in order to neglect the incomparability of historical differences. In the footsteps of medieval monks he subsequently used the concept of analogy successfully in the development of his genealogical method of conducting historical research (Gross 2001). Still, the concept of analogy provides only a new point of departure for research into cultural change since the suggestion of analogies with the past by the gang member cited above also evokes new questions. For example, how do young people growing up during the Māori renaissance relate to the revitalisation of cultural practices that are alien to their own experiences and life worlds so that questions about authenticity come up once they become involved?

THE FUTURE OF MĀORI YOUNGSTERS

Over the past two decades, I published a series of articles about my research into the cultural identification of Māori youngsters who feel left out by the Māori renaissance (Van Meijl 1999, 2001, 2005, 2006b, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2013a). My interest in the subject was raised when I worked as a volunteer at a Māori training centre for school dropouts, who qualified for an allowance on top of their unemployment benefit when they enrolled for training in vocational skills. This training centre was located on a marae, and for that reason training in cultural skills was an obligatory part of the curriculum, including training in the Māori language that was focused in particular on the making of speeches and the performance of traditional chants as part of Māori ceremonies. Most young people had little or no experience with marae ceremonies, and so the lessons they received at the training centre involved a first introduction to classic forms of Māori culture.

Initially, all Māori youngsters were interested in learning "their own language and culture" since they were embarrassed that they were unable to express their Māori identity in a so-called "traditional" manner. Soon, however, it became apparent how difficult it is to acquire competencies in a "new" language and in highly cultivated ceremonies. After several weeks, most realised that they would never achieve the proficiency in cultural skills that is required to fully participate in the ceremonies, let alone to pass them on to their children and thus carry marae protocol forward into the future. The awareness never to succeed in "Māori culture" and become a so-called "certified Māori" was a real burden for most youngsters. They were stigmatised as Māori who were not "good" Māori, and as such they were also made responsible for their failure in society since a strong cultural identity was deemed necessary for societal success (see also Poata-Smith 1996).

I interviewed dozens of youngsters about their lives, what they find important, and how they view their future and the role of Māori cultural traditions therein. The most striking summary of the dilemma they are facing I received from a young mother of four with an unemployed husband. Eventually she confided that at the training centre she had realised for the first time in her life that she was Māori only because she had a dark skin. When she realised that she would never be able to catch up with her lack of skills in Māori cultural traditions, she shared that "being Māori doesn't come from my heart … I think that in Māoritanga everything is going backwards instead of going forwards, but I just want to go forward."[5]

This moving confession formulated the cultural dilemma of many Māori youngsters not surprisingly also in terms of a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Indeed, an analysis of the mediation of the dichotomy between tradition and modernity in the frequent analogies between past and present should address the question of how young people who are growing up in culturally diverse circumstances deal with cultural differences and cultural change. It is beyond the scope of this article to address this question in detail (see Van Meijl 2013b), but one example may illustrate that youngsters also use analogies to cope with change.

In the movie *Once Were Warriors* (1994, dir. Lee Tamahori), after the controversial novel by Alan Duff (1990), we see both the best and the worst of two clashing cultural environments. Jake "The Muss" Heke, the unemployed father of the family that features in the movie, drinks too often too much, and when he is drunk he becomes aggressive. The film portrays the tragic decline of the family in a gripping way. The oldest son, Nig, joins a gang and adopts a facial tattoo to express his loyalty to the club. The second son, Boogie, is removed from home after a few minor offences and put in a residential youth care institution, where he is also trained in cultural traditions in order to enhance his self-esteem as a Māori boy. Nic and Boogie meet again at the funeral for their sister, Grace, who committed

suicide after having been raped by a drinking mate of her father's. Boogie admires the tattoo of his brother, who asks him whether he would also like one. His answer is telling; pointing to his heart, he says: "No, I am wearing mine on the inside."

This analogy between a traditional tattoo and the inner conviction that traditions occupy a central position in Māori culture may offer a key to understanding the enormous revival of so-called tribal tattoos among Māori youngsters in recent years. Twenty-five years ago, Māori with a traditional tattoo were few and far between. Only men with a history of imprisonment were sometimes tattooed, but then usually rather unprofessionally, whereas their symbols were far removed from cultural traditions. The recent revival of tattoos, applying traditional tribal symbols in a professional way, may not necessarily be remarkable in view of the global revival of tattoos (DeMello 2000). The revival in New Zealand, however, is obviously connected to local history and must be understood in the context of the cultural renaissance, which raises the question regarding the contemporary meaning of tribal tattoos for Māori youngsters.

The hypothesis that I would like to launch here is that many Māori youngsters may have adopted traditional tattoos to express their Māori identity in order to seek connections with the Māori renaissance, which after all has cast Māori culture in a different light in recent decades. This idea is based on the observation that tattoos are especially popular among Māori who face difficulties in expressing their cultural identity in a traditional manner, e.g., by making a ceremonial speech or playing a leading role in the performance of chants on the marae. Tattoos offer them a kind of "time out" from the moral pressure to conform to the classic model of Māori culture and traditions, while at the same time they function as a visible symbol of a Māori identity. And, as Boogie indicated in *Once Were Warriors*, tattoos may be considered in analogy with the power of Māori culture in the past. By means of tattoos, analogies are, in other words, created with the vitality of Māori culture, albeit without necessarily living up to the moral pressure to be fully conversant in the Māori language and traditions that has emerged in the course of the Māori renaissance.

The conception of tattoos as strategies to cope with cultural change is also apparent from the ambiguity with which young people legitimise the tattooing of indelible Māori motifs on their bodies. They are usually proud of their tattoos, but at the same time they are reticent to talk about them, which also appears from the paucity of anthropological studies of the cultural meaning of tattoos (but see Higgins 2004: 233–319; Robinson 2012; Te Awekotuku *et al*. 2007). Some associate their tattoos with pain and suffering in their lives, whereas others express pride and point to cultural continuity (e.g., Neleman 1999). These contradictory emotions converge in tattoos,

which also indicates that tattoos function as analogies between past and present. Tattoos enable all Māori to focus on the similarities between past and present so that young people who previously were unable to connect to the orthodox renaissance of cultural traditions may also appeal to the strength of Māori culture, which nowadays does offer the necessary inspiration and bravery in their search for cultural innovation.

* * *

Research into cultural change has been central in the history of anthropology ever since it emerged in the nineteenth century. The introduction of ethnographic field research in the twentieth century, however, has pushed theoretical debates about change to the background. Chris Hann (2009) has described this process as the "theft of anthropology", in analogy with the renowned book *The Theft of History* by Jack Goody (2006). Indeed, it seems time to advocate for a reintroduction of the comparative study of cultural change in anthropology, which is above all important to leave behind permanently the unfruitful debate about a lack of authenticity in cultural innovation, especially in the lives of young people. For that reason, too, it may be clear that the scope of my argument reaches far beyond the Pacific. Around the globe, many youngsters, especially those with a migration background, are growing up in multicultural circumstances often entailing a search for a balance between "two shores" (Lee 2003), which is frequently framed in terms of a dichotomy between the present and the past. I would argue that the concept of analogy offers better insight in their struggle to bridge cultural differences and to deal with cultural changes. On the one hand, migrants draw analogies between cultural habits in their home country and cultural customs in their new country in order to bridge cultural differences in the comparison. On the other hand, analogies are frequently drawn between contemporary events and comparable phenomena in the past, in which differences are neglected by highlighting similarities. Thus, the concept of analogy offers insight into the way in which past and present converge in a range of different cultural experiences among people living in societies that are characterised by cultural diversity and change.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful to the community of Waahi Pa Marae, in Huntly, that offered legendary hospitality during many stays and short-term visits over some 36 months in total since 1982. They genuinely changed my perspective on the world. *Ka nui ngā whakamihi ki a koutou katoa!* Furthermore, I would like to thank two anonymous reviewers for numerous useful suggestions. Needless to say, however, all remaining errors are mine.

NOTES

1. Although it has been suggested that the law in some settler colonies might influence the production of the past in the courtroom (e.g., Hamilton 2009), there is no evidence that the construction of indigenous difference and discontinuity in New Zealand was triggered by the legal setting of tribunal hearings. Instead, I would argue that the hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal offered a platform for the expression of long-standing grievances (see also Williams 2013).
2. In 2011, Daniel Rosenblatt published an analysis of the "indigenization of modernity" (cf. Sahlins 1993) in contemporary Māori society.
3. What complicates my argument here is that the Waitangi Tribunal (1998) offered Te Whānau o Waipareira Trust, which was one of the main claimant urban groups in the country, negotiating status with the government as "iwi". In their claim to the Tribunal, the "whānau" from West Auckland had argued: "Waipareira is not an iwi but is iwi" (p. 6), and the Tribunal accepted that "[t]oday, 'iwi' can mean either the people of a place or a large tribe composed of several dispersed groups" (p. 18).
4. See, for example, Friedman (1993) on the continuity of kinship relations and social organisation in Hawai'i. The revitalisation of language and tattooing also feature very strongly among the Kanaka Maoli or the indigenous people of the Hawaiian archipelago.
5. I should like to emphasise that this statement cannot be considered as representative of all underprivileged Māori youngsters in New Zealand. Over the past few decades, New Zealand has changed considerably, especially with respect to the place of Māori culture in wider society and the question of whether it has a future. As a consequence, cultural experiences and practices, too, have diversified enormously (see, e.g., George 2012).

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