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"THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE DREAMS LIVE":

PORTRAYALS OF THE SOUTH SEA IN GERMAN LANGUAGE TOURIST BROCHURES

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Applied Science
at
Lincoln University

by
Matthias Schellhorn

Lincoln University
1998
ABSTRACT

Abstract for a dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M. Appl. Sc.

"THERE IS A PLACE WHERE THE DREAMS LIVE":

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Matthias Schellhorn

The promotion of places for tourism involves the projection of selective sets of images. Destinations often shape their cultural realities to match successful marketing images. Tourism and its promotion, therefore, generate transformations of a physical and symbolic nature. Beyond their manipulative and stereotyping promotional role, tourist brochures are agents in the ongoing commodification of natural and cultural environments. Tourism-related commercialisation is often viewed as a degenerative process. An alternative perspective acknowledges the risks involved yet also focuses on opportunities to promote cultural identity. Taking such a situational approach, I critically read eighteen German language travel catalogues. The South Sea's core place image emerges as the enduring dream of a feminised, exotic yet comforting paradise. This Fernweh dream occupies the outermost margin of eurocentric symbolic and geographic imagination. My analysis confirms the identity strengthening elements of ritual, myth and utopia as being core symbols of Central European holiday culture. For South Pacific service cultures, I note the risks inherent in perpetuating a romanticising, sexist, essentially neo-colonial place image, exemplified by the patronising portrayal of local women as available objects of male sexual desire.

Keywords: Image, place, geography, sociology, promotion, cultural identity, gender, South Pacific, paradise, myth, tourism marketing, tourist brochures.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Without the interest, critical comments and stimulating thoughts of colleagues and friends, this dissertation could not have become the fascinating project it has been. Despite his demanding work schedule, Dr. Harvey Perkins provided all the essential ingredients of constructive and supportive supervision: critical guidance, stimulating discussions and uplifting cups of “real” coffee. Our meetings, thus, kept my mind analytically focused, theoretically challenged and, last not least, always amused by his great sense of humour. These discussions also reconnected me to the field of human geography, a discipline I have always been drawn to.

Andrea Schöllman’s comments on the final draft were much appreciated. Trudy Jones and Rachel Kirkbride provided constructive feedback on my critical analysis of representations of Pacific women. My flatmate Pauline Fallon met endless discussions of South Sea topics with a most remarkable endurance and many constructive thoughts. The challenging skepticism of Col Pearson, usually expressed over the rim of an ‘after midnight cup of tea’ at the ‘control tower’, represents the special contribution of a good friend.

Special thanks goes to my partner Riitta who continuously encouraged me in this long delayed academic pursuit - even so it meant much time spent apart. I value her constructive interest in my research and the critical contributions she made, particularly when commenting on third world gender issues. If Riitta would not have offered to take over my work commitments as a tour leader, this research project might not have been possible. Most of all, however, I treasure her emotional support.
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Preface

"... we will discover a genuine natural paradise, where dreams become reality". With these promising words I concluded my proposal for a commercial nature tour visiting various South Pacific Islands. In 1994, when I wrote these lines to my employer, I was working for a tour operator based in Switzerland who wanted to extend her repertoire of long haul travel destinations. The South Sea\(^1\) made an obvious choice for my proposal for an 'exotic' hiking tour. At the time of writing, these rather poetic words seemed to naturally flow out of my pen. Despite the fact that I had visited only a few of the many South Pacific islands myself, I never doubted that this remote corner of the globe would hold everything an exotic dream destination could possibly promise to an adventurous European mind.

What did I actually know about these distant islands? Well, I had seen a couple of popular movies, read the odd novel, looked at travel magazines, heard about the tales of early explorers, contemporary travel writers and travelling friends. I had, of course, also consulted travel guide books and gazed at the glossy catalogues of European tour companies. All these sources of information had obviously added to the image I firmly held in my mind. The reports and documentaries which I received in New Zealand occasionally painted a less paradisal picture of these islands. The media often investigated political, social and environmental issues or reported natural disasters from South Pacific islands. But even these reports obviously didn’t significantly change my own romantic South Sea dream.

When I revisited Melanesia and Polynesia in 1995, the region was facing a major political and environmental conflict. The French government had just announced its intention to start another series of nuclear tests at the Moruroa Atoll. During my visit, I made new friends in these islands and I also became acutely aware of the region's diverse problems. Western Samoa was battling in an effort to clean up the damage two powerful tropical cyclones had left behind. My travel experiences had clearly revealed another side of paradise and I was now ready to look at these islands from a more realistic perspective. I also became increasingly interested in the place images of the South Sea in order to explore this powerful dream which, subconsciously, I had helped to perpetuate.

\(^1\) Throughout my dissertation I use the term “South Sea” in preference over the customary plural expression “South Seas”. As the literal translation of the German word “Südsee”, this singular English form represents more accurately the uniqueness implied in that original German noun.
CHAPTER ONE

TOURISM AND PLACE PROMOTION: A THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This research project is the result of my growing interest in the place images of the South Sea. My dissertation investigates how the South Pacific islands are represented in tourism promotion materials printed in the German language. Eighteen representative “South Sea” brochures currently published by German, Swiss and Austrian travel agencies serve as a case study for this purpose.

Travelling to warm climate beach destinations has long been an important holiday pursuit for many Europeans. Mediterranean and Atlantic islands such as the Balearics or the Canaries have developed large tourist spaces to cater for a massive annual influx of predominantly Central European visitors. During the last two decades, resort destinations further afield have become increasingly popular. Each year, more German speaking tourists decide to spend their annual vacation on a tropical island. Modern jet travel has brought the famous resort areas of the Caribbean Sea or the Indian Ocean within convenient reach of a day’s journey.

Certainly in a geographical sense, the islands of the South Pacific Ocean represent tropical destinations which, for Central European travellers, could hardly be more remote. Since only two international carriers serve the region, air connections from Europe are rather sporadic and the trip to the “South Sea” still involves a very long and sometimes complicated journey. Yet an increasing number of European outbound tour operators are now offering tours and booking arrangements for travel to these remote islands. The agents are presumably responding to a perceived demand for such services. What, then, motivates a German, Swiss or Austrian vacationist to embark on such a tiring and expensive journey? What is it that lures her or him to the unknown other side of the world?

In the capacity of a tour leader, I have guided Swiss and German tourists on hiking tours through various islands in Samoa, Vanuatu and Fiji. Being able to share in the tourists’ immediate experience of the other, the holiday world, has further fuelled my analytical curiosity. I also spent the first half of my life in
Germany, prior to emigrating, and this has added personal experience to my professional interest. My pursuit of these research questions seems a natural yet challenging choice.

The following section will provide the reader with a background to my dissertation. I shall briefly discuss literature related to place promotion research. My discussion will delineate a theoretical frame for the research and provide the basis for the formulation of a central research question.

Research Background

The tourism and travel industry uses multiple methods, techniques and media to promote a most diverse array of products. No other medium, however, combines such a wide range of promotional objectives in one single operation as the tourist brochure. Because of this strategic efficiency, but also due to their wide distribution and market effectiveness, brochures have been described as representing “tourism advertising par excellence” (Dann, 1993:893). Considering this important promotional role, it is surprising that until now comparatively few researchers have closely examined the content of travel brochures.

In his concise overview of brochure research, Dann (1996) refers to this field of study as a young tradition since scientists didn’t take brochures very seriously until the early 1980s. A notable exemption is the study of Buck (1977) on the phenomenon itself, the “ubiquitous tourist brochure”. Sporadic examinations of brochures followed and these included works on the portrayal of Nova Scotia (Papson, 1981), Indonesia (Adams, 1984) and Japanese tourism (Moeran, 1983).

In an article on representations of New Zealand adventure tourism, Cloke and Perkins (forthcoming) describe the tradition of analysing brochures as an emerging one. Recent contributions to the genre of place image analysis support this claim of a developing analytical process (see: Crick,1989; Bruner, 1991; Hughes, 1992; Corkery and Bailey, 1994; Cohen, C. B., 1995; Crang, 1996; Selwyn, 1990, 1993, 1996; Dann, 1993, 1996).

Two studies will be of particular relevance to the proposed project since they both deal with island images and consider the associated notion of paradise.
Wilson (1994) examines the changing image of the Seychelles by comparing various historical periods representing discovery, colonisation and economic development of the islands. He discovered that certain myths and stereotypes resulted from an ongoing image construction and manipulation. He further identified some stereotypes as ideological products which clearly reflect the interests of white Europeans in support of dominant power structures. This study also showed that sexual imagery can play a key role in the promotion of island destinations.

Goss (1993), examining advertising materials of Hawaiian Islands, identified specific recurrent elements of place-meaning. His analysis concentrated on the themes of earthly paradise, marginality, liminality, femininity and aloha. These “topoi” or place-meanings frequently reflected perceptions of singularity and otherness. Such notions are of obvious relevance to my research topic, since, from a European perspective, the South Sea region represents the most distant and remote of all island destinations. Whether these islands also hold the image of being the “most exotic” of all destinations is one of the questions the proposed analysis of promotion materials will endeavour to investigate.

Theoretical Background

The following section will explore the theoretical background to the research study. In my endeavour to review relevant literature, I shall draw primarily from tourism-related sociological, geographical and anthropological sources.

Travel Motivations

The topic of authenticity has been one of the central themes in the sociological discourse on tourism. MacCannell’s (1976) neo-Durkheimian perspective viewed the tourist as a secular pilgrim searching for identity through authentic experiences in the Other. This search has been further interpreted by Graburn (1989) whose notion of a sacred journey illustrated the radical contrast between ordinary lives and tourism experiences. MacCannell built upon Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical front and back regions to develop the concept of staged authenticity which suggested that the tourism establishment generally stages pseudo-authentic experiences in order to manipulate the identity-seeking tourist. This process leads to the gradual development of a tourist space, a contrived sphere removed from the ordinary local life.
Cohen's (1972) early contributions to the genre of tourist motivations focused more on the role of the unknown Other in determining the tourist experience. This concept viewed tourism not so much as a misled secular pilgrimage into a pseudo-authentic world of staged attractions but rather as a conscious exploration of difference. For Cohen (ibid.:165), the experience of unknown sights, customs and cultures represented an appreciation of strangeness and novelty "valued for their own sake".

If the earlier discussions of tourism motivation factors provided one important insight, then it is the recognition that the tourist as a uni-dimensional ideal type clearly does not exist. The various social, cultural and psychological influences on recreational behaviour are too diverse to allow an interpretation of tourism experiences within the structural confines of just one motivational paradigm. Recognising this typological diversity, Cohen (1979) developed a "phenomenology of tourist experiences". This pioneering paper presented five tourist types striving for different recreational experiences according to their subjective ideal position relative to the center of their home societies. The other (holiday) world of a strange encounter now constitutes merely one end of a motivational spectrum. Cohen's model stretches all the way from familiarity to strangeness, from the organised mass tourist preferring familiar holiday surroundings to the wandering drifter who seeks immersion in a strange host culture.

Cohen's early work opened the door for a much broader exploration of tourism's sociology. During the 1980s, writers began to investigate tourists' motivations and desired experiences from differing angles. Various authors linked notions of otherness and playfulness as two important motivational factors (Wagner, 1977; Moore, 1980; Gottlieb, 1982; Cohen, 1985). The tourist pilgrim is now perceived as engaging in the playful quest for an inversion of ordinary everyday life experiences. Those aspirations and values which cannot be fulfilled at home are instead pursued in the more or less contrived world of tourist attractions. The new pilgrimage is acted out in a ludic manner.

Tourism in Post-Modern Perception

Analysing the changing nature of tourist attractions, Cohen (1995) notes the increasing popularity of attractions which are unnatural, often reconstructed, imaginary and, therefore, less place-bound. In his opinion, the current trend
towards contrived attractions reflects the emergence of a post-modern ethos. He reaches the following conclusion:

If the culturally sanctioned mode of travel of the modern tourist has been that of the serious quest for authenticity, the mode of the post-modern tourist is that of a playful search for enjoyment (Cohen, 1995:21).

In recent years, post-modern themes have strongly influenced the sociological discourse on tourism (see MacCannell, 1992; Selwyn 1990, 1996; Urry, 1990; Cloke and Perkins, forthcoming). The enjoyment of surfaces, sensations, spectacles and simulations is generally seen to perpetuate superficial cliches and fetishes. In MacCannell’s (1992) interpretation, the prominent quest for shallow enjoyment encourages radically individualistic ideologies. Tourist travel has become a symbolic search for the true self.

Selwyn (1990:24) focuses on the transformational effect these processes have on tourism destinations. He recognises that for many tourists, travel sites are no longer sources of biographical and historical meaning. Instead, they have become placeless and atemporal “centres of physical and emotional sensation”. The (post-modern) outcome implies that many attractions become progressively similar disregarding whether they are natural or contrived (Urry, 1990; Cohen, 1995). The world of tourism is perceived as an increasingly homogeneous yet constantly reinvented cultural construct.

While the authenticity debate continues to unearth critical aspects of post-modern tourism development, these should not be interpreted as inevitable expressions of cultural degeneration. In this assessment, I share Cohen’s view. Commenting on the fact that Disneyland has over time developed to a landmark of American culture, he argues that “a contrived attraction no longer automatically implies that it is meaningless” (Cohen, 1995:16). Consequently, he rejects the view of the post-modern tourist as being a naive, unwitting or unconscious traveller. Instead, Cohen (ibid.:25) suggests an inherently reflexive attitude when he paints the picture of tourists as “sophisticated individuals who choose not to discern, though they are aware of the possibilities of distinction”. This perception differs significantly from that of earlier critics such as Boorstin (1964) who ascribed to the mass tourist the hopelessly undiscerning attitude of a cultural dope.

The theme of reflexivity features strongly in the writing of Urry (1990, 1995). This work is based on the Habermassian tradition (1981) which emphasises the fact
that individuals consciously assess conditions of their (modern) life-world. Such reflection is usually seen as involving either a cognitive or a normative process. Urry (1995:145), however, highlights a further dimension: “... reflexivity can also be aesthetic. This involves the proliferation of images and symbols operating at the level of feeling and consolidated around judgments of taste and distinction about different natures and different societies”. When visiting a destination, therefore, a tourist experiences not just the physical place but also perceived representations thereof. For Urry, the underlying concept of reflexivity is crucial to our understanding of tourism as a cultural practice. He points out that this aspect of modernity has been largely ignored by previous tourism researchers.

Urry focuses on daydreaming as an important aspect of most consumption processes and suggests that it holds a central role in much holiday-making. This form of daydreaming, however, is not purely an individual game but rather a socially organised activity reinforced by such practices as advertising and photography. As the subconscious recipient of diverse symbolic messages, Urry's traveller is acting out aesthetic reflexivity in a mainly visual manner through the process of a “tourist gaze” (Urry, 1990, 1992).

The role which tourist advertising images hold in the context of gaze anticipation, place representation and actual tourism experience is important for my research. In order to further fathom the theoretical dimensions of place image, the following sections will focus on the cultural aspects of tourism transformation processes in a more systematic manner.

Theoretical Perspectives on Place Promotion

Studying the social foundations of leisure, Lengkeek (1995:28) suggests that the orderly structure of our everyday life results in a constant search for new meanings. Consequently, we create other realities which allow us to experience life in a separate context. “The other world might be radically different from normal life, opposing everyday values, indifferent to them, broadening our possibilities, or simply reflecting everyday habits within a mirror of a completely different setting”. Lengkeek (ibid.) proposes the term “counterstructure” to describe these constantly (re)constructed worlds.

Since they are based on shared experiences, these “counterstructural realities” become sources of commercial exploitation. As tourism enterprises search,
cater for and eventually control newly emerging market niches, the leisure dreams of many tourists depend increasingly upon commercial products (Dietvorst and Ashworth, 1995). The tourist pilgrims become victims of the orderly everyday logic from which they initially hoped to escape.

The tourism production process, then, has significant effects beyond the economic realm. Investigating this process, Dietvorst and Ashworth (1995:4) offer the concept of tourism transformation as an analytical device. This model is based on the assumption that producers and consumers transform the original tourism resource continually through activities and interventions of a material or symbolic nature. The symbolic aspects of transformation provide a stimulating focus for my study.

The construction and marketing of place images constitutes an important element in the tourism production process. Consequently, tourism destinations are not exempt from the influences of global marketing processes. Since personal interpretation plays an important part in the acquisition of product information, it becomes the target sphere for place-marketing. Producers manipulate people's perceptions by controlling the mental images tourist places evoke. In his investigation of “social spatialisations”, Shields (1991:60) describes place images as “... the various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality”. Once stereotyped and labelled in this way, places become identified in terms of strong core images. Widely shared sets of such place images collectively compose a "place-myth" (ibid.:61).

Such image-coding indirectly changes the physical structure of the original tourism resource, which on a material level may already have been transformed (Dietvorst and Ashworth, 1995). Producers transform tourism resources, therefore, not only on a physical level through direct management actions but also on a symbolic level through place-marketing. Furthermore, the physical and the symbolic elements of tourism-led changes are often made consistent with successful marketing images of places (Shields, 1991; Cloke and Perkins, forthcoming). A similar claim is made by Lewis (1979:21) with specific reference to promotional travel literature acting as an “agent of landscape change”. The author cites the upgrading and sanitisation of the French Quarter in New Orleans as an occasion where tourism advertising has become a “self-fulfilling prophecy". 
Writing earlier, MacCannell, (1976:110) pointed out that “usually, the first contact sightseers have with a sight is not the sight itself but representations thereof”. Markers which function as visual, locational or contextual designations take the role of authenticating advertised information about a destination. The Indonesian case study by Adams (1984) illustrated how select cultural markers, such as funeral celebrations or buffalo sacrifices become ethnic stereotypes through which advertisers indicate authentic tourist experiences. Singled out and packaged, these stereotypical markers provide a “mental grid” through which travellers filter their perceptions (Adams, 1984:469). On site, the tourist’s expectations and the tour operator’s corresponding programme reflect these preconceived images. Anticipating myths have become (staged) realities.

What then is the purpose and what are the origins of such myth-making? The literature distinguishes between “organic” and “induced” place images (see Britton, 1979; Dann, 1993), the former being derived from traditional sources such as the media, literature, education or popular culture. Induced or projected images usually result from conscious promotion efforts.

Garcia (1988) points out that many promoted myths pre-date the tourist literature and some are rooted in films, books and romantic fiction. Examining changing brochure images of the Seychelles, Wilson (1994) traces some of the more prominent markers more than 100 years back to early colonial records of then dominant cultural and social conditions. During her study of Toraja attractions, Adams (1984) discovered mainly reworked indigenous ethnic markers, albeit in highly modified and often hardly recognisable permutations.

These case studies indicate that the organic and projected image categories are not discrete. Many images induced in the conscious effort of promoting places draw their myths in fact from sources of organic imagery. As producers of tourism brochures convert resources into products, they interpret places (Dietvorst and Ashworth, 1995). Such interpretations may reflect particular historic, often ethnocentric perspectives. Tourism transformations obviously involve processes of symbolic cultural interchange which transcend both spatial and temporal dimensions.

To further illustrate the purpose and origins of promotional myth-making I shall briefly examine an important image set which is specifically relevant to tropical island settings. Arguably the ancient theme of an earthly paradise has, at least
in the South Pacific Islands, become the most widespread and influential of all touristic place-myths (Cohen, 1982). This powerful core image seems particularly relevant to my study, since the symbolism of paradise clearly dominates much of the promotional discourse on the South Sea.

The Myth of Paradise

In a paper titled "The Pacific islands from utopian myth to consumer product: the disenchanted paradise", Cohen (1982) offers a comprehensive exploration of paradisal symbolism in the tourism context. Drawing on earlier works of Eliade and of Turner, the author identifies the nostalgic longing for paradise as an archetypical human condition. The original mythical paradise symbol carries a multivocal meaning since it blends the Center and the Other, two archaic structural themes fundamental to all human consciousness. The Center as "the source of the socio-moral order" and the Other as "the unformed, primordial and undifferentiated unknown" have both inspired humankind's imagination throughout history (ibid.:2). In providing the best of both worlds, the earthly paradise symbol holds the unique power to overcome the tension which inherently exists between these two basic spheres of human longing.

Through secularisation, the paradise symbol lost much of its original religious meaning. Cohen suggests that, while the archetypical paradisal longing still exists, it has taken various new directions in the modern world. One significant expression of such longing today manifests itself in tourism interpreted as the search for a benign Other. Commercial enterprises, of course, respond to this longing by creating symbolic images of touristic paradises which invoke deep unconscious cultural motives. The new paradisal symbolism, however, promises foremost commercially appealing secularised experiences. Cohen (ibid.:7) describes these commercial constructs as "marginal paradises". Being geographically and culturally remote, the touristic paradise offers a temporary refuge from an intensive, complex and essentially unnatural modern life. The quest for paradise has successfully been transposed from the realm of religion to that of mass consumerism.

The change in the paradisal experience is matched by a change in its symbolic meaning. Originally, paradise represented the archetypical and ultimate utopia which derived significance partly from its unrealisability. As this symbolism transforms into a consumer product, however, the ultimate utopia becomes a
disenchanted ideal. What has previously been beyond reach can now be experienced. In this context, Cohen (ibid.:9) reminds us:

The important point to note about “realised utopia" is that its “realisation" is made possible not only, and sometimes not at all, by an approximation of social reality to the ideal; but also, and often primarily, by a vulgarisation of that ideal;

Cohen (1982:10) notes that international advertising, reflecting a traditional link in Western philosophical thinking, has applied the paradise notion most often to islands. To him “the pacific islands are one of the most outstanding examples of such an evocation and exploitation of an ancient theme for the development of modern tourist destinations”.

Studying the history of the mythical image in this context, Cohen describes a series of modifications to the ancient multivocal theme. In the course of interpretation and re-interpretation by discoverers, popular writers and artists, an impoverished, univocal version of the traditional Judaeo-Christian myth has survived until today.

Cohen (ibid.) points out that the modern myth on which the tourism industry has built its regional place-marketing consists of two contrasting yet complementary images. A gentle paradise representing the benign aspects of the Other is the dominant theme in the marketing of Polynesia. A primeval wilderness image representing a rather threatening aspect of the Other characterises eastern Melanesia where Papua New Guinea is seen as the last frontier of primitive culture. Of particular interest in this context is the tendency of islands to match their touristic realities to the image projected upon them.

Obviously, the gentle paradise theme sells better to the predominantly older middle class tourist most island governments wish to attract. Consequently, comfort has become a major element of the contrived paradises many islands have set out to construct. The resulting transformational impact is profound and Cohen (ibid.:16), citing the “pseudo-polynisation” of Fiji, provides an interesting example of such cultural adaptation. As this country's tourism industry is embracing the dominant image of a gentle flower heaven normally associated with Polynesia, the indigenous Melanesian-Fijian culture is changing accordingly.

Cohen (1982) observes a similar process in Tahiti where modern (French) lifestyles have profoundly altered the Polynesian island. As the gap between image and island reality widens, new versions of the earthly paradise are
artificially reproduced. This is the only way the island can continue to provide a refuge for the unfulfilled mythical desires and utopian fantasies of modern people. By matching these touristic expectations, the (re)constructed paradisal realities facilitate the transformation of utopian myth to consumer product.

The Commodification of Places

It seems evident from the literature that the construction and promotion of place-myths clearly benefits the selling efforts of tourism enterprises (Dann, 1993; Selby and Morgan, 1996). Earlier research indeed confirms a strong link between the perception of a destination and the purchase decision of the consumer (Pearce, 1982).

The studies of the place image of developing countries discussed hint at a further, more subtle effect of place related myth-making. While place images change over time they remain remarkably supportive of local power structures, hereby reflecting the forceful realities of political contexts. In a wider sense, these mutating image constructs also signify that tourism constitutes one of the most dynamic of all cultural practices (see Urry, 1995).

Various authors emphasise the role promotion materials hold in the ongoing commodification of tourism places (Hughes, 1992; Goss, 1993; Corkery and Bailey, 1994; Cloke and Perkins, forthcoming). Interpreting from a post-structuralist viewpoint, Selwyn (1993:127) describes commoditisation in the context of tourism brochures as “the gathering of everything, from sites to emotions to persons, into the cash nexus”.

King and Stewart (1996) analyse the marketing process in its powerful role beyond the initial shaping of tourist anticipation. The authors conclude that the promotion and consequent commodification of tourist places has far reaching effects not only on the economic but also the socio-cultural realities of host communities. The promoted images and (resulting) expectations held by tourists are seen to be central to this transformation process:

In many ways, travel opportunities have come to be packaged experiences that are sold as commodities to a consuming culture. Not only can adventure be packed into two weeks, but the well defined expectations are guaranteed! .... The tourists come to the host community not only with their expectations, but also with the economic power to fulfil them (ibid.:295).
The asymmetrical economic relationship between hosts and guests has been interpreted in various ways. A diverse range of socio-economic repercussions have been suggested. In the context of less developed countries, alleged consequences include perceptions of tourism as a form of imperialism (de Kadt, 1979), as an agent of neo-colonialism (Britton, 1982) or as an obstruction to development (Lea, 1988).

Tourism and Social Control

In his analysis of the socio-linguistic dimensions of tourism, Dann (1996) presents a similarly pessimistic perspective. Based on a comprehensive review of research literature, he develops his concept of tourism as a language of social control. Dann argues that the tourist reality, based on false images, bypasses the true atmosphere of a place. In their impulsive search for a new and better existence, tourists fall victim to the lure of stereotypical fantasies perpetuated by commercial interests. The quest for self identity, therefore, will always remain an illusion.

For Dann (1996:76), tourism is a concrete commercial reality built around massive movements of people combined with “consistent and robust patterns of growth”. The need for order is evident, not just because of the sheer size of global tourism operations based on an insatiable demand but also due to tourism’s potential for social corrosiveness. There is a requirement for control, both in an organisational but also in a political sense since tourism operators want to secure their economic interests. Investigating major components of the tourism system for evidence, Dann emphasises the industry’s controlling power. Focusing on promotion materials, he also shows how mechanisms of control translate into the language of tourism and, thereby, assume “code-like qualities” (ibid.:77).

To be effective, mechanisms of control must be carefully balanced against the constant necessity to reassure that the customer in the holiday realm is in fact granted unrestricted freedom. Dann (1996) argues that the desired balance is best achieved by treating the tourist as a child and that this strategy is widely employed by the tourism industry. He draws many examples for this symbolic socialisation process from interpretive analyses of brochure materials.
Recognising mechanisms of control, in my opinion, implies taking an important step towards a critical tourism awareness. To this point, I support Dann's position. Such recognition of tourism's repressive potential, however, should not prevent us from exploring the cultural opportunities which many tourism developments may offer. In the final section of my literature review, I shall, therefore, develop a more pro-active theoretical approach.

Tourism and Cultural Identity

Some authors approach the commodification of places within the wider context of cultural change. Cohen (1988), writing on tourist intrusion into the host culture, detected a shift from intrinsic customary values to artificial exchange values. Lea (1988) suggested that many indigenous cultures disapprove of their traditional life sustaining practices being transformed into service activities. Viewed in a wider anthropological context, commodification affects a host culture in a most ambiguous manner. While the commercial intrusion alters the way people view their living places, it also affects the way people perceive themselves (King and Stewart, 1996).

Studying the effects tourism has on cultural identities in host and source regions, the Swiss researchers Müller and Thiem (1995) offer a perspective which explicitly rejects cultural pessimism. In their search for progressive potential, these authors follow Benjamin's (1973) line of cultural analysis. While acknowledging tourism's inherent risks, Müller and Thiem suggest that Western holiday culture, in particular, could vitally contribute to the strengthening of cultural identities. This empathic perception is based on Pestalozzi's (1987) broad perception of culture as “what is typical of a human community in a specific region” (lecture quoted in Müller and Thiem, 1995:15).

As a structuring framework, the authors offer the four-culture model illustrated in Figure 1. Taking the two affected cultures of the tourism source region and the destination region as a starting point, they propose two further analytical categories: the holiday culture and the service culture. Drawing from Jafari's (1982) earlier work, Müller and Thiem (1995:15) define holiday culture as that which “characterises tourists during travel”. Correspondingly, they introduce the term service culture to describe those elements which “characterise the people affected by tourism”.

This model acknowledges that tourism destinations tend to develop alongside their organic native culture a further "autonomous tourism specific culture". Recognising the commercialisation aspect of such service cultures, the authors explore the fundamental question of how tourism affects the three core essentials of cultural identity: pluralism, security and activity. Müller and Thiem claim that, as long as the inhabitants of destination regions view commercialisation generally in a positive light, major inherent risks are matched by significant opportunities to strengthen cultural identity. Social mobility and the taking of control by locals, in particular, are seen as empowering expressions of tourism related opportunities.

Exploring the diverse role of holiday culture, Müller and Thiem reluctantly accept the basic notion of travel as a form of temporary escape from an unsatisfactory world. At the same time, however, they maintain that this “flight thesis” is an unrealistically narrow and restrictive perception of tourism in the industrial age. Their approach, therefore, goes further by interpreting travel as an image, a symbol or metaphor. Viewed in this light,

holiday culture in the specific form in which it has recently developed in the Western countries has taken over vital functions concerned with the establishment of identity. In particular, it satisfies basic needs in the sensual and emotional spheres for which industrial society makes virtually no provisions - *myths, ritual and cyclical processes, positive Utopias* [sic]. (Müller and Thiem 1995:16) [emphasis mine].

The mythical character of the holiday culture manifests itself in the realisation of non-material needs - a dimension readily exploited by the advertising industry. Through the quest for sensuality, happiness, freedom and peace, the tourist culture is seen to promote pluralism. Rituals associated with vacations such as travel behaviour pattern are perceived as reducing complexity, structuring time and fostering community feelings, thereby promoting security. Common to all
cultures, utopias represent dreams of better realities. As a form of temporary escape, dream holidays are more than just commercial advertising constructs: once deciphered, these images and dreams may also offer concrete opportunities for positive activity. Since it addresses the basic human needs of pluralism, security and activity, the holiday culture strengthens cultural identity in a tourism source region (Müller and Thiem, 1995).

In a Pacific Island context, the anthropological study of Vilavilairevo (Fijian fire walking) conducted by Stymeist (1996) advocates a similarly positive cultural perspective. Discussing commodification, authenticity and alienation as important issues in the interplay of culture and tourism, the author rejects a purely normative evaluation of staged folklore events. Instead, he proposes a situational approach firmly grounded in historical analysis which places a particular event in its past and current socio-cultural context.

In the case of Fijian fire walking, Stymeist found that the old ritual, transformed through commercialisation, has become re-contextualised by (current) touristic practice. Consequently, the modern event still held important symbolic and cultural meanings for hosts and guests. Stymeist notes that meanings constructed by the tourists differ significantly from those the event conveys to the Fijians. He argues that these alternative perceptions provide significant cultural opportunities since they segregate performers and viewers into inhabitants of different worlds. The Vilavilairevo event now functions partly as a signifier of cultural alterity, thereby strengthening the identity of both the holiday and the service culture.

The ongoing identity debate highlights tourism's ambiguous role as an agent of both degenerative or constructive cultural change. My literature review, then, clearly indicates that only a multi-dimensional theoretical perspective can do justice to the burgeoning socio-cultural phenomenon of island tourism. My analysis of tourist brochures, therefore, will not just amount to a critical reading but also search for the cultural potential these promotion materials could offer. Consequently, I shall identify obvious areas where this potential is not being met and propose options for counteracting these shortcomings.
Theoretical Conclusion

The diverse theoretical approaches to tourist motivations have shown that the ideal-typical tourist simply does not exist. I do not, therefore, perceive the actual holiday experience as the definable result of a one-dimensional quest for identity. Rather, I view this experience as one expression of many diverse and culturally complex explorations in the Other. The actual mode of exploration may reflect an active search for authenticity, strangeness or novelty. Particularly in the industrialised world this search may often be fuelled by the subconscious need to escape from an unsatisfying reality. On the other hand, this recreation experience may constitute no search at all but rather entail an indiscriminate desire for a playful, pleasurable and often passive “time-out”. Only a holistic analysis of tourism processes will fully capture all these dimensions.

As vehicles for the construction and manipulation of place images, tourism brochures hold a crucial role in generating initial customer appeal during the early stages of destination choice. Beyond this marketing role, brochures are agents of the ongoing commodification of natural and cultural environments. Tourism researchers generally evaluate the commercialisation associated with tourism as a culturally degenerative process. An alternative perspective focuses on various opportunities to promote cultural identity through the mythical, ritual and utopian dimensions of holiday cultures.

The empathic cultural perspective of Müller and Thiem (1995), supported by Stymeist’s anthropological fieldwork in Fiji, offers a constructive and, therefore, stimulating analytical direction for my dissertation. Both studies reject the sweeping normative approach critics have often adopted when they criticise the tourism-led commercialisation of cultures. Acknowledging instead tourism’s cultural potential, they propose that transformations be more creatively appraised by identifying opportunities as well as risks for each concrete situation. The ongoing search for identity which characterises travel as a socio-cultural phenomenon provides a helpful focus for these situational appraisals of tourism events and processes.

The theoretical discourse on the role of image construction hints yet at a further dimension of place promotion. This relates to the role of brochures in stereotyping tourists’ perceptions. The place-myths represented in brochures influence not only the traveller’s place expectations but also the behaviour of
hosts and guests. Ultimately, these projected image-sets alter the physical and symbolic appearance of places. The image mechanisms at work reflect the multi-layered and dynamic process of cultural change. The resulting symbolic transformations not only manifest themselves in new economic realities but also fundamentally change the meanings places hold for both the consumers and the hosts of tourism services. Since they alter peoples' symbolic perception of places and also have significant physical impacts on tourism resources, destination marketing images clearly warrant the attention of tourism researchers.

South Sea Brochures: Towards a Constructive Research Direction

My analysis of tourism brochures will concentrate on deconstructing the images and myths which are being sold in a particular place promotion context. In this analysis, I will inevitably investigate the deceptive role of tourist brochures as promotional mechanisms for commercial control. In doing so, however, I shall not dispute the progressive potential many tourism experiences hold. Against this background, the mythical, ritual and utopian character of travel and its specific contribution to modern cultural identification provide an appropriate and stimulating analytical focus.

In my study, I shall take a situational approach similar to that advocated by Stymeist (1996). While the critical field-based evaluation of projected place images clearly reaches beyond the limited scope of a Masters dissertation, I shall still explore dominant aspects of the South Sea's place images in terms of the cultural potential they offer. In this I will be guided by those core symbols of activity within society which Müller and Thiem (1995) have identified. The degree to which host populations take control over areas of their life, in particular, I consider as an important indication of the degree to which tourism promotes cultural identity within a destination region.

The issue of local control seems particularly relevant to the South Pacific situation for several reasons. First, the vulnerability of small island states to external influences has been pointed out by several tourism researchers (ref. Britton, 1987; Wilson, 1994; Wilkinson, 1994). Furthermore, research on the place promotion of islands confirms that advertising images are generally controlled by external marketing forces (Cohen, 1982, Goss, 1993; Wilson, 1994, Cohen, C.B. 1995). Second, the ongoing international debate on general
development strategies places strong emphasis on the building of capacities in less developed countries. Accordingly, regional Pacific organisations have adopted several policies to empower their communities and to improve the situation of local people, women in particular (ref. UNDP, 1994). Third, for the growing “eco”-tourism sectors of the South Pacific, such democratically grounded policies have become central strategies. Consequently, island states are currently supporting several ambitious village-based tourism projects which encourage local people to take control of their own tourism resources.

Finally, I must mention my own academic and professional experience which adds personal concern to this pragmatic interest in the issue of democratic control. My studies towards the Master of Applied Science have introduced me to various concepts of community-based tourism. At the same time, my work as a leader of nature tours has exposed me to several encouraging village projects in Fiji and Samoa. My personal concern, therefore, arises mainly from the realisation that the demands for increased democratic control, so far, have not been extended to the influential field of place-marketing. This concern shall become evident in the final conclusions of my dissertation and the recommendations contained therein.

In this context, it is important to recognise the inherent analytical limitations that a study focusing on tourist brochures entails. Limitations result primarily from the fact that my analysis is not grounded in field research. Essentially, my study deals with the pull factors of place promotion. It deconstructs the images and myths employed by commercial interests in order to achieve commercial goals. Just how far these promotional constructs reflect (or even play on) actual push factors will largely remain open to debate. Even more challenging is the question of whether the underlying tourist motivations actually represent generalisable personal needs. Whatever the answers to these questions may be, only further research will provide the final answers.

This concise review of selected literature on travel motivations, image theory, place commodification and cultural identity promises a rich and stimulating field for further analytical exploration. It also raises a number of interesting research questions for my dissertation. The following chapter will develop these in more detail.
CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH: DIRECTION, METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

Research Questions

The practical limitations of a masters dissertation necessitate a narrowing of the research perspective. My analytical focus is on the key research question listed below. At the same time, however, the dissertation framework encourages an exploratory examination of relevant and related issues. These are presented in the form of associated research problems which help to identify the direction of the proposed research and thus establish its boundaries.

This dissertation explores the following key research question in the context of several Pacific Island travel destinations:

• Which elements of place-meaning can be identified in South Sea brochures distributed to the German speaking tourism market?

In support of this main research direction, I shall address several related problems. The following questions set an initial frame for this exploratory process:

• What are the historical roots of the promoted place images and/or place-myths?

• Do the promoted place images realistically reflect the socio-cultural conditions at the travel destinations they represent?

• How are Pacific Island people portrayed in the brochures and which obvious cultural opportunities or risks result from these representations?

Having delineated the analytical direction of my study in the form of these research questions, I shall now discuss my methodological approach to achieve these research goals. This working approach, I felt, should reflect my personal preferences for an interpretive analytical writing style. The following section will briefly outline the process which led to my final methodological choice.
During a visit to Europe in 1997, I obtained a sample of 18 representative brochures\textsuperscript{1} and advertising catalogues from several travel retail shops in Austria, Switzerland and southern Germany. In order to study the visual and textual messages of these promotion materials, I decided to combine quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The final analytical strategy evolved from a critical evaluation of the following methodological devices:

- Content analysis, "a scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative, and generalizable description of communication content" (Kassarjian, 1977:10);

- Discourse analysis which, according to Parker (1992:22), has the advantage of reframing "the object, and individual's psychology, and allows us to treat it not as truth, but as one 'truth' held in place by language and power";

- Deconstruction, a more recently developed "style of post-modern critical analysis originally applied to texts" (Soule, 1995:137); and

- Scoping, an exploratory method to establish the analytical boundaries and provide direction for the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Initially, a descriptive content analysis "led me" into my research data. This process focused on the photographs contained in the "South Sea" sections of each brochure. In total, I systematically categorised 986 photographs. Paying special attention to the meaningful creation of analytical categories, I followed the recommendations of Kassarjian (1977:12): "Content analysis is no better than its categories, since they reflect the formulated thinking, the hypotheses, and the purpose of the study. The categories are, in essence, the conceptual scheme of the research design". My content analysis concentrated on the visual representation of people but also incorporated built and natural landscapes. The examination of visual materials provided a working typology of detected themes and, hereby, helped me to identify specific promotional items such as images and myths.

\textsuperscript{1} In line with other research studies, I use the customary term 'brochure' in my dissertation. It should be noted, however, that these advertising booklets were sometimes as long as 400 pages, divided into several sections. Usually one such section carried the title "South Sea".
Following the initial visual survey, I cross-checked and supplemented this data by critically analysing representative brochure texts contained on 365 brochure pages. The post-structuralist interpretive technique of deconstruction facilitated this process of secondary analysis. In an endeavour to criticise received ideas, deconstruction “focuses on language, author, reader, text, history, interpretation, meaning, and context” (Felsenmeier and MacKay, 1996:39). Since they question emerging authority, deconstructionist techniques are obviously well suited to the critical examination of the symbolic tourism transformation processes described earlier. In this analytical context,

... deconstruction is being employed as a means of inquiry to examine the politics of image, to reveal destination marketers as ‘authors’ of this image, and to provide a framework for uncovering the implications of reconstructing destinations based on idealised images (ibid.).

The analytical techniques described provided a solid methodological frame for my research but at the same time allowed for a flexible and multi-dimensional study approach appropriate to a masters dissertation.

I have already pointed out some of the theoretical limitations of my study when I discussed the complex theme of tourist motivations. This overview of my methodologies would be incomplete without also mentioning the analytical limitations of my research. Firstly, I was unable to investigate the social and institutional context of brochure production and their reception. In order to ascertain how far professional strategies and/or personal views influenced the advertising discourse, I would have needed to interview production staff. Secondly, in order to establish how the brochures are actually received and interpreted in the course of holiday planning, I would have needed to interview readers. My study, therefore, must be seen as a limited but conscious research step into the fascinating and challenging arena of tourism place-meaning.

To present and discuss results, I choose a narrative writing style since this best reflects the open and qualitative nature of my particular research project. The sequence of chapters in this dissertation follows the “natural flow” of my analysis, thus showing how the study actually evolved. Consequently, I begin the following discussion by presenting the results of the initial quantitative survey of brochure photographs (Chapter 3). This leads on to a brief historical and interpretive examination of the discovery theme (Chapter 4). I then concentrate on main topoi associated with the myth of paradise (Chapter 5) before focusing on the central theme of the South Sea dream (Chapter 6).
CHAPTER THREE

THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE

Chapter Outline

Tourism promotions construct place images from various physical and human elements. This chapter illustrates how the surveyed brochures represent local people to fabricate a distinctive island image. Women, in particular, are shown to play an important part in the marketing of the South Sea as an exotic holiday destination.

The Brochure People

The most obvious result of the quantitative analysis of visual brochure content is the human absence in the majority of photographs (refer table 1). Almost two thirds of all photographs surveyed don’t feature any people at all. This result is consistent with the marketing-image of an untouched, unspoilt paradise noted in other studies of tourism brochures (Wilson, 1994; Dann, 1996; Goss, 1993).

A closer examination of the remaining ‘people photographs’, however, reveals some interesting differences from earlier studies. In the 358 photographs of South Sea brochures which actually show people (refer table 2), the local population is strongly represented: locals appear in more than half of all pictures in this sub-category. More significant, still, is the fact that about 42 per cent of all ‘people photos’ contain locals only. Let’s have a closer look, then, at the visual and written representations of the local population.

Happy Service People

The local population is promoted as one of the islands’ prime tourist attractions. Indeed, numerous text passages make reference to the islanders’ laid back, happy friendliness. These texts include locals as tourism resources, often listing them amongst other natural or, as the following example shows, even climatic features: “Bula - welcome to the island realm of Fiji. Where the smile and the leisurely life rhythm of the people are so pleasantly obvious as the sunshine and natural beauty” (Hotelplan¹, 1997/98:75)

¹Full references for all brochure citations are given in the appendix.
Table 1
*Human presence in brochure photographs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>no. of photos</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No people</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
*People in brochure photographs (n = 358)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>no. of photos</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourists only</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locals only</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists and locals</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
*Local people in brochure photographs (n = 149)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>no. of photos</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solitary woman</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women only (2+)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary man</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men only (2+)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary child</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children only (2+)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed group</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residents and their cultural practices are also *used* as compensation measures for inferior service standards. Consider the apologetic tone of the following brochure text:

Pardonable weaknesses in service are made up for by natural friendliness and whoever seeks the reality of the South Sea, will find it here, where the village head still governs like a chief, where old rituals and customs are often still part of daily life (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:169).

Obvious mental attributes such as happiness are touted as tourist attractions and are expected expressions of the South Sea's wider service culture. I shall investigate the purpose of this service concept in chapter five.

Less than ten per cent of the photographs featuring people illustrate tourists and locals together, a result consistent with earlier research (Dann, 1996). The brochure photographs clearly segregate hosts and guests. This promotional strategy reflects the nature of the advertising materials surveyed, since all the brochures are designed to sell packaged holidays. On most occasions when photographs show a cross-cultural interaction, the local people hold the role of smiling service providers or folkloristic entertainers.

Only in a few instances do photographs display local-tourist interactions of a recreational character. These, then, occur either between a tourist and a group of local children or else between a solitary male tourist and one or two young, local females. Several such photos show male tourists conversing privately with local females, often subtly suggesting an erotic holiday encounter. I shall return to the important topics of inter-gender relations and sexual imagery later in this chapter. For the moment, let's have a closer look at the brochures' portrayal of the South Sea's female population.

The Brochure Women

Table 3 presents a quantitative categorisation of those brochure photographs which show local people only. Solitary women are the largest of various gender based groups, nearly twice the size of the solitary men category. There is, however, not just a quantitative difference in the portrayal of unaccompanied local women and men. The local male is usually depicted within an active, lived context, often engaged in professional or ceremonial activities. Thus a 'brochure man' might be fishing, working the gardens, climbing a coconut tree, mixing a kava bowl or patrolling in a police uniform.
The stereotypical solitary ‘brochure woman’, on the other hand, is almost exclusively depicted as inactively ‘just being there’, often portrayed in close up form posing for or smiling at the camera (and, ultimately, the brochure reader). She might be lying at the beach or standing in the ankle deep waters of a turquoise lagoon. Occasionally, she sits in front of a hotel room or on a guest bed. In the few exceptions when a solitary woman is portrayed as working, she holds the role of servant, usually smiling over a tray of exotically decorated drinks. The photographs reproduced in Figure 2 present a cross-section of female representation in the subcategory of solitary woman and contrast these images with the depiction of the solitary man.

While leading hiking tours in several South Pacific islands, I frequently walked through local garden plots. On these occasions, I have often seen village women engaged in hard physical labour. Women take a very active role in the local economy, particularly in the trading of market produce. At the same time, females carry the major burden of home work, family care and child rearing. Women also frequently contribute their time to community projects. This triple role of women, which has been noted in the literature on gender and development (Moser, 1993), means that the South Sea’s women are in fact very active and in most cases work harder than their male counterparts. Not so the stereotypical brochure woman. As I have shown, the advertisers clearly represent local women as passive objects. The following sections will investigate the purpose of this inaccurate portrayal in some detail.

Women as Authentic, Available Attractions

In most of the 39 photographs featuring solitary local women, the person depicted has some of the following attributes. She is young (33 cases), wears a flower or plant ornament (32 cases), her bronzed shoulders are uncovered (30 cases) or she might wear a topless outfit (3 cases). The solitary local woman is not preoccupied, her portrayal as the smiling, attentive and, therefore, attractive host indicates more than just genuine hospitality. Equipped with the ornamental and sensual markings of an ‘exotic other’, this feminine host image also signals a ‘genuine availability’ which obviously extends to the realm of male sexual fantasy.
Figure 2. **Active Men** - passive women: visual representations of solitary local people (brochures, all photographs original size).


(continues)
Figure 2 (cont.) Active men - passive women: visual representations of solitary local people.

Sometimes markers of authenticity accompany a woman’s portrayal. The
solitary female might be holding a giant seashell, a colourful fish or some other
exotic signifier of her truly tropical origin. The opening page on Tahiti,
reproduced in Figure 3, illustrates how a photo montage is used to create a
deceptive image. Under the headline “Tahiti - the dream islands”, a map of
French Polynesia establishes some geographic reference. Next to the caption
“Information”, we see a misty aerial perspective of a coral atoll and the crystal
clear portrait of a smiling, long haired, young local woman. Both photographs
place this tourist destination within an ‘exotic’ physical context. As if to provide
authentic proof, a French Polynesian stamp is partly superimposed on the map
and the portrait, while a set of current coins provide further evidence of cultural
authenticity. Not only does the woman physically mark the destination’s identity,
but her image also becomes tourism’s symbolic equivalent of island currency.

The accompanying text, translated in Figure 3, lists “dancing islanders with
flower leis” amongst other island attractions. The text also promises that “reality
surpasses the fantasy in many ways”. The interpretation of this ambiguous
statement is left to the imagination of the brochure reader, but further stimulated
by mentioning the “rough seamen” of the Bounty and artist Gauguin as historic
examples of those who succumbed to Tahiti’s magic (feminine) spell. Similar
references to European artists, writers, early sailors and discoverers occur
throughout the surveyed brochure texts. These authoritative personal markers
clearly point towards historic sources for the South Sea’s organic image, which I
will discuss later. For the moment, however, I shall focus on a more subtle yet
ambiguous aspect of the brochures: seduction.

Women as Geographical Markers

The South Sea and its islands are often feminised in the brochures. Many
written and visual images illustrate this strategy. Under the heading “Bora Bora
- Worth knowing”, for example, we read the following opening line: “Probably
more has been written about Bora Bora than about any other South Sea Island.
Even from a distance she reveals her overwhelming beauty” (Pacific Jet,
1997/98: 80) [emphasis mine]. The text is framed by a map of the island and a
photograph. The photograph does not, as one might expect, show the island’s
dramatic landscape but instead features the exotic image of a lightly dressed
Polynesian women.
Tahiti
Die Traum-Inseln

Tahiti: The Dream-Islands

Only very few island names stimulate the imagination the same way as the names Tahiti or Bora Bora. In front of the mental eye appear pictures of tropical islands with beautiful beaches and cool waterfalls, dancing islanders with flower leis as well as rugged mountain sceneries and small coral atolls.

Tahiti and French Polynesia actually offer all of this! Yet reality surpasses the fantasy in many ways: Even the rough seamen of the Bounty and the artist Gauguin fell for the magic spell of Tahiti.

One just has to see and experience these pearls of the Pacific (source: Pacific Jet, 1997/98:72).

Figure 3. Tourism currency (brochure, 68 per cent of original size).
The dream of the South Sea paradise - French Polynesia with Tahiti and its islands. Adventurous explorers such as James Cook, globe trotting authors such as Jack London, artists such as Paul Gauguin and actors such as Marlon Brando - they all were enthusiastic about the charm of the graceful, happy people and the fabulous landscapes. One hundred and thirty sometimes hilly, overwhelmingly tropical isles amidst turquoise lagoons and coral reefs, sometimes very flat coral atolls with palm fringed white sandy beaches and inner lagoons which are connected to the open sea, sun bathe in the Pacific ocean, half way between America's West Coast and Australia. Five of these we have selected for you: Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, Huahine, Rangiroa - Embodiment of South Sea magic and romance (source: Hotelplan 1997/98:77).

Figure 4. Women as geographical markers (brochure, 60 per cent of original size).

Translation of German text:

Tahiti - Sailing Cruise with the Wind Song - Worth Knowing

Placing the photograph of a local woman next to a map is a common practice in the South Sea brochures. In some instances, the female image is actually pasted into the map where it appears amongst (other) island symbols. Figure 4 provides an example of this technique. The entire photo montage places the natural attractions of these islands within a distinct female context. These manipulative graphics, however, don't just emphasise a feminine place identity, but in the process also degrade the female Polynesian to an aesthetic landscape feature - an essentially geographic tourist attraction.

The German language distinguishes between masculine, feminine and neutral nouns and signifies this grammatical gender through the use of an appropriate attribute (der, die or das). Thus 'the South Sea', translated as 'die Südsee', carries the singular feminine attribute. All brochures surveyed prefer to use this prosaic term over the more geographic and male gendered descriptor 'der Süd pazifik' (the South Pacific). The South Sea is distinctively feminine, even in a grammatical sense.

Islands of Seduction

Having established and marked the destination gender through the use of female imagery, the brochure texts proceed to project the reader into the role of seduced connoisseur. Thus he (?) will visit an island world where “nature presents herself in accomplished beauty” (Tischler, 1997/98:18). The outcome of this journey seems pre-designed in an almost irreversible fashion: “You too will succumb to the charm of this island” (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:82). “Let yourself [therefore] be seduced by the diversity and variety of French Polynesia’s island world...” awaiting you with a “... unique spectrum of natural beauties and recreational activities” (Feria, 1997:6). The use of a local language greeting creates a suggestive human link in the following tour description: “Bula! You will often hear this welcome greeting of the friendly Fijians during your stay. In the early morning you arrive at Viti Levu, the main island of the Fiji Islands. Look forward to five beautiful days on the island of gentle seduction” (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:212) [emphasis mine].

To extend these notions of availability and seduction into the realm of male sexual fantasy may appear to be a far-fetched interpretation, which could be attributed to my own (male) analytical perspective. The photograph presented in Figure 5, however, leaves little doubt about the suggestive intent of the
destination marketers. This opening page on the Cook islands, which appeared in the 1995/96 brochure of Austrian long haul travel specialist Jumbo Touristik, goes one step further in its blatant exploitation of the indigenous feminine image. Under the heading “Information Polynesia / Cook Islands" we view the photograph of a European male, by implication a tourist, wading the crystal waters of a lagoon while holding hands with two young women who wear nothing apart from a tiny bikini slip. The women's head dresses of exotic flower garlands suggest that they are locals. The same brochure features a similarly blatant shot on the preceding "Tonga" page. This time, however, two topless, flower adorned women wander along a coral key on their own. Between their bronzed bodies is just enough open space to allow the reader's fantasy to project itself into the picture.

Figure 5. Islands of seduction (brochure, 75 per cent of original size).

Translation of the introductory paragraph:

Information Polynesia/Cook Islands

Once arrived, one is greeted with flower leis and a friendly 'Kia Orana', which means as much as 'may you have a long life'. These islands belong to the few places on earth which still are truly unspoilt. There are no skyscrapers or traffic lights here. The Cook islanders are renowned for their honest, unspoilt manner and their uninhibited lifestyle. Many natural beauties await the stranger, competing with the islanders' friendliness for the favour of the visitor (source: Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:76).
There is a stark contrast between these images of European fashion and the local bathing culture. On Pacific islands, local women very rarely wear Western style swimming costumes. They certainly never walk immodestly along a beach in a topless outfit. Instead, local girls commonly swim wearing a lavalava, the traditional wrap around dress which covers most of their body. Even as a male visitor, I was made aware of the local dress code when I last visited Tonga's main island a few years ago. A friendly policemen pointed out to me that my singlet was an unacceptable attire for the public spaces of his country. "It is against our custom" was his short explanation which I, somewhat surprised, hastily accepted.

The South Pacific Handbook (Stanley, 1993:312-313) makes the following comments about dress standards in Tonga:

Like Victorian English, Tongans often go swimming fully dressed - most of them don't even have bathing suits. For a Tongan woman to appear in a halter top and miniskirt is almost unthinkable, and female travellers too will feel more accepted in skirts and long pants than in shorts.

An official publication of the Cook Islands Tourist Authority (1997:2) devotes a special paragraph to dress:

Although the dress code is informal, we do ask that brief attire should not be worn when visiting town or villages. A respectable standard of dress is required when attending church services. Nude or topless sunbathing will cause offence.

The feminine island image of inhibition, availability and seduction presented in the surveyed brochures is a myth which permeates much of the advertising discourse on the South Sea. The following section explores this myth of the 'seductive South Sea' in closer detail by tracing its historic origins.
CHAPTER FOUR

SOUTH SEA: THE PLACE OF GENTLE DISCOVERY

Chapter Outline

Focusing initially on selected historic accounts, this chapter establishes early European perceptions of the South Sea, its landscapes and people. The historic analysis leads on to a general examination of the discovery theme in the context of brochure advertising. Further dimensions of the South Sea's place image are made explicit by deconstructing the promotion myth of a gentle island world.

Historic Discovery

Brochure texts frequently refer to the famous European explorers of the South Pacific, foremost to Captain James Cook, who visited the island of Tahiti several times during his three voyages. In order to trace the historical origins of the South Sea's place images I took a closer look at the various diaries which were written during early European explorations of the region. I concentrated my investigations on the first four original descriptions of Tahiti which have been widely popularised by secondary literature such as the two titles reproduced in Figure 6. In the following section, I shall briefly outline the core place images which the colonial discoverers brought back to Europe towards the end of the 18th century.

Captain Cook and his crews were not the only Europeans who felt they had landed in paradise when they explored the shores of Tahiti. Englishman Samuel Wallis was the first European explorer to sight the island on the 6th of June 1767 from his schooner Dolphin. A few days later the ship's master noted in his journal that "... the country had the most Beautiful appearance it's possible to Imagine" (Robertson, 1955:24). He also commented on the erotic appeal which the Tahitian women had to the eyes of the Dolphin's crew: "... all the sailors swore they never saw handsomer made women in their lives" (ibid.:57).

No other explorer, however, is more explicit in his praise of the Tahitian landscape and its inhabitants than the French Captain Bougainville who reached the Society Islands in 1768. For the first time, an island of the South
Sea was declared an earthly paradise in the following original entry of Bougainville’s journal:

I have often, in company with only one or two of our people, been out walking in the interior parts of the isle. I thought I was transported into the garden of Eden ... A numerous people there enjoy the blessings which nature showers liberally down upon them. We found companies of men and women sitting under the shade of their fruit trees: they all greeted us with signs of friendship: those who met us upon the road stood aside to let us pass by; everywhere we found hospitality, ease, innocent joy, and every appearance of happiness amongst them (Bougainville, 1772:228-229) [emphasis mine].

Not just the Tahitian landscape but also its inhabitants are being associated with the Judaeo-Christian myth of paradise in this particular narrative. Bougainville was more specific in his use of mythical imagery, still, when he described Tahitian women. One encounter, in particular, is often cited by the secondary literature and many analysts accredit it with the birth of the legend of Tahiti (ref. Cameron, 1987). Whenever the French ship La Bordeuse anchored in a Tahitian bay, it was approached by Polynesian craft and, recording such an incident, Captain Bougainville noted:

The periaguas were full of females; who, for agreeable features, are not inferior to most European women; and who in point of beauty of the body might, with much reason, vie with them all. Most of these fair females were naked; ... It was very difficult to keep at their work four hundred young French sailors, who had seen no woman for six months. In spite of all our precautions a young woman came on board, and placed herself upon the quarter deck ... the girl carelessly dropped a cloth, which covered her, and appeared in the eyes of the beholder, such as venus showed herself to the Phrygian shepherd, having, indeed, the celestial form of that goddess ... At last our cares succeeded in keeping these bewitched fellows in order, so it was not less difficult to keep the command of ourselves. (Bougainville, 1772:218-219).

This original journal entry illustrates particularly well the mystification of the Tahitian female by associating her, in this particular instance, with the pre-christian Greek mythos of Venus. The quote also hints at yet another commonly alleged personality trait of the Polynesian woman, namely that of the polygamous erotic seducer. Bougainville (ibid.:257) dwells on this topic repeatedly with remarks such as this: “The very air which these people breathe, their songs, their dances, almost constantly attended with indecent postures, all conspire to call to mind the sweets of love, all engage to give themselves up to them”.

Descriptions such as the examples quoted earlier occur throughout the journals of the South Pacific’s early European explorers. Romanticising portrayals of the Polynesian female are not just evident in the written records of colonial discovery but also in many of the paintings produced by artists on board these voyages. The two book titles reproduced in Figure 6 indicate how such colonial art works continue to be widely publicised throughout the 20th century. These book covers also illustrate how modern literatures link these old artistic images to the persistent South Pacific themes of 'paradise' and 'dream'. Most colonial narratives and pictures endow Tahitian women and, as I shall argue, consequently the island itself and the South Sea at large, with an irresistible erotic power. My analysis of tourist brochures suggests that to date this theme of seductive power is still being perpetuated by much of the discourse on South Sea place promotion.

In 1777, Captain Bougainville’s original diary was translated into the English language by the German scientist Georg Forster who, incidentally, was a member of the ‘Society for Promoting Natural Knowledge at Berlin’. Forster himself travelled to the South Sea as a naturalist on board the Resolution during Cook’s second voyage. Even this rational Prussian mind seems immediately sensualised upon its first encounter with the Tahitian landscape:

It was one of those beautiful mornings which the poets of all nations have attempted to describe when we saw the isle of O-Taheiti, within two miles before us ... a faint breeze only wafted a delicious perfume from the land and curled the surface of the sea. The mountains clothed with forests, rose majestic in various spiry forms ... On their foot lay the plain, crowned with its fertile bread-fruit trees, over which rose numerable palms, the princes of the grove (Forster, 1777:253).

This poetic passage is of particular interest as it focuses on the famous volcanic island land forms which, as I shall document later, are still often emphasised by current tourist brochures. Obviously these steep and wild mountain ranges immediately and deeply impressed the German scientist. Forster also describes several times the Tahitian people, referring to them in the concluding pages of his journal as “... the happier tribes of the Society islands, beautifully formed, placed in a delightful climate, which supplies all their wants ... and accustomed to gratify their senses, even till they lead to excesses” (ibid.:606). The Tahitian women attracted the attention of the Prussian scientist too and he commented that “... their unaffected smiles, and a wish to please, insure them mutual esteem and love” (ibid.:111).
Figure 6. The topoi "paradise" and "dream" in popular literature (book jackets, 90 per cent of original size).

The jacket illustration of "Tahiti - A Paradise Lost" features a partial reproduction of Tahitian Seascape painted by William Hodges, artist aboard HMS Resolution on Cook's second voyage (1772-1775).

(cont.)
Figure 6 (cont.). The topoi "paradise" and "dream" in popular literature

The jacket illustration of "A Dream of Islands" features a partial reproduction of *Tahiti Revisited* painted by William Hodges, artist aboard HMS Resolution on Cook's second voyage (1772-1775).

(Source for both titles: MacMillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand).
Forster's description of the Tahitians as "... contended with their simple way of life ... free from cares and happy in their ignorance" (ibid.: 112) resounds with the general tone of the travel accounts which reached Europe towards the end of the 18th century. These romantic portrayals of the South Sea's inhabitants clearly supported the theories of the noble savage advocated strongly by contemporary philosophers of the French Enlightenment such as Rousseau and Diderot. The widely publicised travel journals, furthermore, provided a fertile base upon which stereotypical images of the exotic South Sea landscape and people could grow throughout Europe.

Having identified historic roots of the South Seas feminine place image in the context of male colonial perceptions, I shall now investigate the ways in which tourist brochures currently use the topos of discovery in their advertising discourse.

Islands of Romantic Discovery

The theme of discovery features prominently in South Sea brochures, particularly in the descriptions of vacation cruises. Readers are encouraged to identify with the colonial explorers: "Aboard the luxurious cruise vessel 'Reef Escape' you experience wonderful days and romantic nights. Only from the water will you experience the South Sea in the same way as the early explorers did" (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:52).

As readers are invited to follow early European routes of discovery, both, the colonial voyages and the (neo-colonial) tourist journey are being romanticised. The description of a three day sailing safari promises that "... you will feel your mind being turned back to the period of the legendary sailors. As in those days discover the blue lagoons, palm beaches and peaceful islanders, the true Fijians await you " (Pacific Jet, 1987/98:53). That the true Fijian males of pre-missionary times were often in fact fierce warriors remains an untold story in this particular narrative.

By romanticising colonial voyages, the brochures tell a partial truth which simply ignores all the historic confrontational encounters between the Pacific people and early European explorers. Many of these historic conflicts ended in a tragic loss of life for both the colonisers and for the colonised. Notably, the voyager
who features most prominently in the brochure texts, Captain James Cook, was clubbed and stabbed to death on a Polynesian beach in 1779.

Discoverers and the Discovered

Unlike colonial times, however, there is never any doubt today that exploring tourists will always be welcome, whether it is the cultural or natural environment that attracts them. Readers are assured that in fact the "... island diversity invites discovery" (Feria, 1997:7) and "... picture book villages, white dream beaches with crystal clear waters and turquoise lagoons await you" (Tischler, 1997/98:10). Even more explicit is the suggestion that "... lovely landscapes, thundering waterfalls and picturesque villages want to be discovered" (Imholz, 1997/98:97) [all emphases in this paragraph mine].

My experiences as a hiking guide in places such as Western Samoa, Fiji and Vanuatu suggest that the discovering of "picturesque villages" is a rather sensitive issue. Local custom requires that visiting strangers follow certain behavioural rules. Thus, some form of symbolic exchange or a traditional welcoming ritual such as a kava ceremony may be asked for. The village, represented by its chief, performs a very active role in such an event. The aspiring visitor, on the other hand, would be best advised to behave in a rather passive and humble manner. Unsolicited village explorations would almost certainly be considered disrespectful and careless sightseeing could easily amount to cultural affront.

The brochures, however, make no mention of such cultural etiquette. Instead, they promote an active form of discovery based solely on the principle of recreational enjoyment: "Even Captain Cook was inspired by the beauty of Moorea. Lush vegetation, steep rock walls. Enjoy once more the magic of the South Sea. Whatever you feel like doing, just do it" (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98: 213) [emphasis mine].

Contrary to the ritual traditions described above, brochure texts present local villages and their inhabitants generally as the willing and passive hosts of tourist activities. Village life, central to local cultural identity, is often characterised as being a museum exhibit. This introduction to Huahine island is particularly explicit: "Small villages with simple colourful houses, the lakeside village of Maeva, an open air museum par excellence" (Hotelplan, 1997/98:80).
The uninhibited tourist gaze is openly encouraged, while the sightseeing promoted doesn’t seem to concern itself with boundaries of privacy. The traditional open *fale* found in Samoan villages does not offer walls to protect inhabitants against prying tourist eyes. In local custom, passers-by are encouraged to ignore discretely the private scene he or she might encounter when entering a village - not so the newly arrived tourist in the Feria brochure (1997:7):

Talofa - welcome to Samoa. This is how the friendly Samoans greet every guest and friend. From the airport the road takes you to Apia, past palm coves, gently rising hills and Polynesian villages which *offer a direct insight into family life* [emphasis mine].

Portrayed as “forgotten paradises” (Hotelplan, 1997/98:82) waiting to be discovered, enjoyed, gazed at and ultimately consumed, the islands (and their inhabitants) hold a distinctively passive role in the brochure’s representations of tourism. This portrayal corresponds to the connotation of passive femininity discussed earlier. Resembling colonial times, the brochures leave no doubt as to who is doing the discovering and who is being *discovered* ...

Islands of a Gentle Nature

The selective narrating of the local peoples’ stories finds a parallel in the one-sided portrayal of the South Sea’s natural history. Thus, the following brochure text reassures modern day discoverers of a gentle and almost sensual experience, no matter where their Fijian explorations will take them:

Fiji - already the name sounds like soft light and water temperatures, which don’t chill but caress. It is hard to believable, that amongst sailors these more than 100 gentle islands were once ill-famed as ‘cannibal islands’. Whoever spends a holiday here today, is astonished at the diversity in species and landscapes which, for the Pacific region, is unique. The lush rainforest and volcanic mountain ranges of the interior are ideal for trekking tours and white water trips. And the underwater world of coral reefs is amongst the most beautiful and richest of the South Sea (Kiwi Tours, 1996:50).

Talking about species diversity, the narrative focuses on the South Pacific’s rich underwater world. Incidentally, this diverse marine environment also includes various species of shark including the larger tiger shark whose attack on a snorkelling New Zealand tourist has recently made headlines (Keenan, 1997).

Shark attacks attract much media attention. Other, often far more hazardous dangers of Pacific waters, however, are less publicised. In their extensive
treatise of Pacific health dangers Rudkin and Hall (1996) list a number of poisonous marine animals such as stonefish, stingrays, jellyfish, fire corals and sea snakes to which the famed turquoise lagoons of the travel brochures offer an ideal habitat.

In my experience as a tour guide, painful tissue infections are one of the most common health problems which European tourists encounter in Pacific Islands. Serious ulcers often develop from minor scratches, cuts, bites or stings. Lonely Planet's "Travel Survival Kit" to Samoa traces such infections to the warm, moist conditions of the tropic lowlands and the microbiotic fauna of the Pacific Ocean in particular:

Since the waters of the Samoas are full of staphylococcus bacteria, it is best not to swim with an open wound. Staph infections are miserable and are very difficult to treat. Sadly, many villagers in the Samoas die of such infections that have ulcerated and spread to vital organs (Swaney, 1994).

In the glossy travel brochures, stories such as these naturally remain untold, since they would darken the crystal clear waters of the gentle island world which the tourism marketers wish to promote.

For the same reason, the promotional discourse on the Pacific's species diversity stops short of mentioning the region's diverse insect fauna. Insects, however, are animals which all visitors to the South Pacific will definitely encounter during their vacation. The diverse insect fauna of the islands includes a number of dangerous mosquito species, including the transmitters of the Dengue Fever, a painful disease endemic to the South Pacific. Even more ill-famed are the Malaria carrying *Anopheles*, well established in many of the Melanesian islands. The *South Pacific Handbook* (Stanley, 1993:697) issues a special "Malaria Warning" to tourists considering to visit the Solomon Islands. The travel guide book informs its readers that

Guadalcanal is the most heavily malaria-infested island in the world ... the number of cases has increased steadily to almost epidemic proportions, and health officials no longer talk of eradication, only control. ... [Malaria] is found everywhere in the country below 400 meters altitude, including Honiara.

What exactly, then, is this contrived gentle island world of the South Sea? The Kiwi Tours brochure's opening page offers us a detailed answer to this ambitious question:
THIS IS THE SOUTH SEA
The Heaven on earth - today exactly as 5000 years ago

The South Sea is the last region of the earth which was settled by humans. About 5000 years ago the first seafarers risked an adventurous voyage across the ocean. They probably came from South East Asia, had simple wooden canoes, let themselves be guided by the shining image of the stars. What they found after dangerous weeks and months at high sea, was a slice of heaven on earth. Green islands surrounded by white sand, where there are neither snakes nor beasts of prey. Yet there are clear seas with rich fishing grounds, lush flowers, juicy fruits. The first Europeans came 4500 years later, gushed about a paradise regained where gentle, friendly people live. Officially the region is called Oceania. It encompasses the three island worlds Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia. Until today the South Sea has remained a paradise. With first class hotels. Peaceful and safe. Here ranks as rich, who gives, not who owns. Maybe that is why the islanders have maintained their cheerful, relaxed life style. Take a slice of it home with you. (Kiwi Tours, 1996:40-41) [Headline emphasis follows original layout].

This introduction stands out from most other brochure texts, since it acknowledges indigenous people as the true discoverers of the South Sea, albeit within a factually distorted narrative. For the moment, however, I shall not concern myself too much with the anthropological or bio-geographical accuracy of the text. It should suffice to mention that several island groups of Oceania are home not only to the (harmless) Pacific Boa but also to various species of venomous land snakes. Most zoologists would be inclined to classify the Saltwater Crocodile, which abounds in Eastern Melanesia, as a rather fierce predator. Once again, such biological realism may have been considered counterproductive to the lucrative myth of a gentle and safe Pacific heaven which characterises not only this particular text but much of the tourism advertising discourse on the South Sea.

The portrayal of the South Pacific islands as an earthly paradise runs through the brochures like a dominant thematic thread. The next section will focus on this topos in closer detail.
CHAPTER FIVE

A BRIEF ANATOMY OF THE SOUTH SEA PARADISE

Chapter Outline

Paradise represents a religious myth deeply embedded in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of Central Europe. This chapter reviews the diverse dimensions of the paradisal theme in the brochure context, making explicit the transposition of this ancient myth from the realm of religion to the world of commercial advertising.

Heaven on Earth

The South Sea is indeed a heaven on earth. The travel brochures never leave the slightest doubt of this. Feria offers some glimpses into this paradisal world right at the outset of its catalogue. Under the bold heading “Every island a paradise” the brochure features an initial double page description of various island groups, beginning with the ambiguous suggestion: “Let yourself be seduced by the diversity and variety of French Polynesia…” (Feria, 1997:6).

The paradise theme is carried over to the next double page reproduced in Figure 7. This time the heading reads “Well informed into paradise” and is followed by a list of basic travel technicalities (“South Sea from A to Z”). Colourful images hint at some dimensions of the paradisal island world promoted. The ubiquitous Polynesian seduction, insinuated in the text of the previous page, features in the form of two young flower-adorned women. Partly covered by a Tahitian pareu cloth, these colourful exotic models perpetuate the erotic cliché of the sensual, passive and available female host discussed in chapter three.

Gentle explorations of an exotic nature are further implied by the photograph of a deserted coral beach. Viewed across the tranquil waters of a shallow lagoon, this scene conveys feelings of peace and serenity. An outrigger canoe sets the stereotypical image of a white beach into a vague cultural context. A palm leaf partly obstructs the view, providing the observer with an impression that s/he is about to step into a perfect peaceful world. While this tropical prospect hints subtly at an exotic adventure, the picture’s relaxing ambience leaves little doubt that the forthcoming discovery will be of a rather gentle kind.
Figure 7. Well informed into paradise (brochure, 48 per cent of original size) (source: Feria, 1997:6).
The image of a deep red tropical flower provides a stark colour contrast complementing the image of exotic natural beauty which features on the opposite page. The classic Garden-of-Eden theme is represented by the central photograph of a lush green jungle setting, where a tall banana tree and a wild waterfall tower above a lonely tourist couple. The virginal nature scene resembles a modern day version of the age old Adam and Eve myth. In the photograph directly above this fairy-tale-like image, the children of paradise smile at us. Innocence, fun and play are the unmistakable qualities written on the exotic faces of three little girls.

The largest photograph presented on these introductory pages of the Feria catalogue presents an aerial image of the French Polynesian island of Moorea. Tahiti, just recognisable in the distance, lies across the turquoise waters of the Sea of the Moon. White clouds cling to the green mountaintops and drift along the concave horizon line, placing these islands at what appears to be the outer margin of our planet. The clouds also create a dream-like ambience which transposes this artificially recoloured ocean scene in a symbolic sense: are we in fact gazing at the outer margins of our fantasy?

If these visual images share a common theme, it is the promise of a genuine and unspoilt paradise beyond our everyday reality. From this interpretation my brief anatomy of paradise derives its initial focus and analytical direction.

Paradise on the Margin

The term "South Sea" is a rather vague descriptor for the islands of Oceania since it is geographically undefined. While some brochures include in this region the Hawaiian Islands, eastern Melanesia and sometimes Micronesia, others place the South Sea closer to the centre of the Polynesian triangle and western Melanesia. Obviously, the term carries more of a symbolic than a defined geographic meaning.

Advertisers commonly mystify the geographic location of the South Sea and sometimes place South Pacific islands "...half way between Australia and America" (ref. Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98:102). On the other hand, the brochures often mention the infinite wideness of the Pacific and highlight the fact that the islands spread over a large area of water. Glowing tropes frequently support such mystifications, as this introduction to the region illustrates:
"Like stars on the nocturnal firmament, more than 25 000 islands are spread out over the endless expanse of the Pacific" (Klingenstein, 1996:116).

Visually, the mystification effect is reinforced by 108 aerial photographs, most of which show an entire island surrounded by vast ocean waters. Often, these images depict atolls and their colourful lagoons from a far distance. The geographic mystification is taken to an extreme, however, by the photograph reproduced in Figure 8. This reconstructed satellite image shows the South Pacific Ocean on such a large scale that most islands can’t be located. White cloud bands add a further touch of mystery while the accompanying text encourages readers to “experience the magic - not just in the fantasy!” (Jumbo Touristik, 1996/97:61).

The South Pacific islands are marginal to Central European perception in many ways. Located near the international dateline, the islands occupy the margins of its time sphere. The brochures also marginalise the South Sea in temporal terms by portraying their traditional societies as socio-culturally less developed. Furthermore, the exotic island images described earlier represent an alien and distant world which challenges European cultural concepts. In many ways, then, the brochures’ representations of paradise transcend our everyday reality and reach for the outer periphery of imagination. Thus, the image of the South Sea, as constructed by the brochures, addresses itself primarily to that mental realm we reserve for a utopian dream. Only there can we expect a paradise intact.

Paradise Unspoilt

Overall, 22 brochure photographs (ref. table 3) feature local children, usually adorned with flowers. Their joyful faces convey the impression of lightness and playfulness associated with the “real and genuine South Sea paradise” the brochures want to sell (Rast Reisen, 1997/98:13). These smiling children also promote an image of innocence and purity associated only with an intact paradise. Brochure texts, accordingly, reinforce notions of unspoiltness, referring not only to the islands’ physique but also to their populations: “Here you still find real, unused Polynesia with all its fascinating myths and the natural friendliness of the inhabitants” (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:84) [emphasis mine].
Informationen


DIE SÜDSEEINSELN


Figure 8. Mystified geography (brochure, 80 per cent of original size).

Translation of German text:

Information - South Sea

From an ocean, larger than the world's entire land mass, thousands of small islands stand out. This part of the world, called Oceania or the South Sea, has always been the destination of globetrotters and adventurers - and this for good reason: these heavenly islands of the South Sea have been spared from industry, terrorism and the illnesses of civilisation.

THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS

When ‘Michener’ named his novel about the South Sea ‘Adventure in Paradise’, he meant other adventures than those of today. He couldn’t have chosen a better name for his journey through this exciting, remote part of the world. Romanticism, discoveries and adventures are fitting words.

to see more... ...to experience more

Still the grand scenery of nature resists the biggest of all equalisers: tourism. Yet the many island groups increasingly have become destinations for inquisitive tourists, who are offered a diverse scenic and cultural beauty. Crystal blue seas, flower white sand beaches, a fantastic flora and fauna, as well as sincere and uninhibited people await you. Many Europeans who have once been here, never stop to gush about this idyll. Experience the magic - not just in the fantasy! (source: Jumbo Touristik, 1996/97:61).
The islands' inhabitants become yet another signifier of paradisal pureness, as indicated by the following cruise promotion: “Blue Lagoon is a special experience. One experiences skin deep the untouched island world of the Yasawas and gets in contact with the unspoilt South Sea people” (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98: 99). This particular group of 16 main volcanic islands has featured in two romantic films which, produced in 1949 and 1980, helped to romanticise them. The films' title “Blue Lagoon” since became the trademark of Fiji's most popular tourist cruise.

The Yasawa islands, similarly described in another brochure as “still untouched and almost devoid of people” (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:202) actually support a population of about 2000 inhabitants. Having seen most and hiked some of the group's main islands myself, I shall suggest that the Yasawas' landscape has been severely modified through deforestation. Remnant pockets of the original forest cover are restricted to steeper slopes while secondary grassland appears to be a dominant vegetation type elsewhere. Contrary to the glossy brochure image of an untouched paradise, this impoverished cultural landscape indicates a history of severe resource exploitation.

Since arable land is limited, several of the Yasawas' villages today derive their income mainly from tourism (Kay, 1993). The South Pacific Handbook advises travellers wishing to stay in the Yasawa island of Tavewa in the following manner: “... there is tremendous jealousy and rivalry among the families of Tavewa. One group often berates the other to visitors - don't let yourself be taken in by it” (Stanley, 1993:536). Obviously, tourism development is showing some impact on community relations. The resulting social conflicts shed a different light on the “unspoilt host” image the brochures suggest.

While theft is not considered a serious social problem in the Pacific, tourism related criminal offences are on the increase as Short (1992) reports for the Cook Islands. According to the Lonely Planet guide book, this trend also applies to the outer islands of Fiji (Kay, 1993). Concern about the country's tourism image seems to have motivated a Suva judge when sentencing a local tourist attacker. According to a newspaper report, the chief magistrate wanted “... this court to ensure that our tourists feel free and safe to go anywhere they please without being robbed”. The judge, therefore, told the offender: “You are a disgrace and affront to the friendly image of our people and you must be locked away for a long time” (Foster, 1995:5). It appears that, contrary to the
image of an “unspoilt paradise”, theft and violence are becoming part of life in the South Sea.

Paradise Beyond Time

To emphasise Oceania’s unspoilt image, the brochure writers frequently suggest that time has stood still in this remote corner of the globe. The advertisers differ in their assessment as to when this temporal vacuum could have begun. Suggestions range from “heaven on earth - today exactly as 5000 years ago” (Kiwi Tours, 1996:40) to much more recent dates, such as in the description of Maninoa as “... a still unspoilt Samoan village, where life hasn’t changed much over the past one hundred years” (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:103). In the most extreme scenario, however, time simply doesn’t exist at all:

*Die zeitlosen Inseln* - ‘the timeless islands’ is the somehow free translation of our title. But Vanuatu is a place where the time really doesn’t make any difference, a place for relaxation ... to visit Vanuatu is not a time lost, experience the timeless land, we invite you to an unforgettable journey” (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98:109).

The image of timelessness moves the South Sea paradise beyond the constraints of current affairs. In a timeless land, there is no room for conflicts and politics. Brochure readers, accordingly, are invited to visit a peaceful heaven: “Experience the paradisal unconstrained lightness and enjoy the heavenly peace. You will feel how yesterday and tomorrow melt together” (Studiosus, 1997:368).

Ironically, the term ”melting together” assumes an entirely different meaning in the more profane light of Oceania’s recent political history. A fusion of an explosive kind thrust the region into press headlines during 1995 when colonial France conducted a final nuclear test series below the Moruroa atoll, a mere 1200 km southeast of Tahiti. Worldwide protest soon met this controversial decision and, in Papeete, led to a state of serious public unrest. During a period of several days, the international airport came under siege by protesters, forcing some airlines to suspend scheduled arrivals. These events prompted the regional magazine *Pacific Islands Monthly* (October 1995) to feature the title page headline “Riots in Paradise”. Within a matter of a few weeks, the colony’s entire tourism industry came to a virtual standstill.

Political developments in Fiji over the past decade indicate that racial conflict has firmly established itself in this multicultural society. The term ”melting
together”, here also, assumes a rather explosive meaning when applied to the critical relationship between this country’s two dominant ethnic groups of Indians and indigenous Fijians. The two political coups of 1987 clearly showed the world that the tourist brochures’ image of a “timeless peaceful paradise” is built on an outdated stereotype. The ongoing political controversy over leased agricultural lands proves that racial tension remains unresolved in contemporary Fijian society. A recent newspaper article reports that

Land is a racial and political issue in Fiji where about 90 per cent of the land is owned by native Fijians [sic] but leased to farmers who are mostly of Indian origin. The 30-year leases began expiring in September (Fiji leaseholder decision, 1997).

Time, obviously, is very meaningful for these particular islands of paradise.

Paradise as the Exotic Escape

Withstanding political realism and drawing pictures of an unspoilt, untouched and timeless paradise instead, the brochures make their readers believe that they are about to visit the “last heaven on earth” (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:66; [emphasis mine]). This experience, so the advertisers promise, will have a profound effect on the traveller. CA Ferntouristik (1997/98:202) provides us with a vague idea of the potential outcome:

The quietness, tranquillity and lucidity of this little paradise with a total population of 18 000 inhabitants, a smiling face where ever you arrive, hospitality and a relaxed atmosphere let us recommend the Cook Islands as the tip of the South Sea. You will leave these islands relaxed and refreshed on body and soul and will have only one wish: to return as soon as possible [emphasis mine].

To have this refreshing and magnetic effect on visitors, the islands presumably provide some contrast to Austrian, German or Swiss everyday life. As we have seen, the brochures leave no doubt that “... your little place in island paradise” (Meier’s Weltreisen, 1997:72) indeed is worth aspiring to. It is this powerful lure of ‘the exotic Other’ on which my analysis, so far, has focused. The brochures, however, give various indications that their readers may also want to escape from certain aspects of their daily lives. I shall turn my attention to this phenomenon.

An Austrian brochure explains the appeal of Oceania stating that “these heavenly islands of the South Sea have been spared from industry, terrorism and the illnesses of civilisation” (Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:61). Other texts
present the islands as an antithesis to the frenzy or “busy bustle” of everyday life (Pacific Jet, 1997/98:56). More detailed is the following description of the Cook Islands:

In this island group are some of the few South Sea islands still preserved in their natural beauty. No T.V., no traffic lights or high rise buildings disturb the picture of this unique island world (Rast Reisen, 1997/98:78).

Brochures set the South Sea apart not only from physical aspects of modern civilisation but also in terms of lifestyle contrasts. Thus “... the supposed seriousness of life seems to have bypassed Moorea completely unnoticed” (Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:72). Differences in mentality are sometimes presented as challenging alternatives to Central European attitudes: “It shouldn’t be overlooked that the Western demands on service and especially on speed are often not met and also don’t even want be met by the locals. Stress and hectic activity are preferably left to others “ CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:180) [emphasis mine].

The ubiquitous romanticising of the islanders’ lifestyle doesn’t stop short of poverty: “We visit a long established family home and you will be surprised how one can live a rich life without money” (Klingenstein, 1996:292). Many such references to local lifestyles and attitudes serve to extend the tourist journey beyond the physical to a mental level, hinting at possibilities for personal growth or even adjustments to inner values.

Descriptions of cruise holidays often stress their relaxed nature. Thus life on board becomes “free and easy” or “unconventional and splendidly uncomplicated”. Rast Reisen (1997/98:13) is more specific in its cruise promotion: “Experience 4 days South Sea magic in an unconstrained atmosphere without dress code” [emphasis mine]. A rather hedonistic outlook on life is implied by the following text:

For one week you visit paradise, see magical Polynesian islands with mystical mountain tops ... whether Tahiti, Bora Bora, Huahine or Raiatea - the philosophy is: ‘To live means to enjoy’ (Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:73) [emphasis mine].

The escape from ordinary life to the promoted holiday world amounts to little more than a fast and smooth transgression. The reader of the Imholz catalogue (1997/98:86) is assured that “... after only 30 Minutes flying from Nadi you find yourself again in a world of blue lagoons and palm fringed beaches, far away from any frenzy” [emphasis mine]. Thus “... the worries of everyday life fade with
the first tropical sun downer drink at the sea!" (Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:72).

The metaphoric dive promoted by a German study-tour operator carries a more pronounced post-modern undertone still:

Escape into the wonder world of the Pacific islands, enjoy beautiful beaches, tropical plants and a grand underwater world. *Dive into the myths of a legendary people* - and into crystal clear water (Studiosus, 1997:368) [emphasis mine].

The prospect of returning from paradise, similarly, doesn't pose any problems. According to this brochure writer, coming back just involves a simple transfer:

At a farewell dinner you have the opportunity to reminisce about the diverse impressions of this wonderful journey until, shortly before midnight, the aeroplane will take you back into everyday life (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:212).

That the average transfer between a Central European home and a South Pacific paradise amounts to a tiring journey of seldom less than 30 hours one way, remains untold by these glossy narratives. A glance at air timetables also reveals that many of the flights between island states arrive and depart at late night hours. Most of the advertised multi-island tour itineraries, therefore, involve sleepless nights spent in transit. Under those circumstances the exotic South Sea experience could easily prove quite unsettling to a stressed and dislocated traveller.

Too much strangeness could threaten brochure readers. To counter this suspicion, the tourism promoters must reassure prospective clients that their journey to the exotic Other will in fact provide a safe experience. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall investigate how such reassurance is being transmitted.

Paradise as Strangeness Overcome

My personal experience with Swiss and German cultures leads me to propose that these densely populated, industrialised and highly structured societies have a firm commitment to planning, organisational perfection and social security. Anyone who has ever visited a German or Swiss railway station will also have experienced an unparalleled time efficiency. The Swiss commitment to professional life finds legal expression in an official 42 hour working week. To be left without the security of various personal insurances and a multiple state-guaranteed retirement scheme would simply be incomprehensible to the average citizen of this country.
The lifestyles and attitudes to be found on the geographically and culturally remote islands of the South Pacific’s cyclone belt, indeed, pose a challenging antithesis to the orderly Swiss or German life plan. The brochure writers recognise this fact and meet the resulting potential for Angst with promises of security, comfort and reliability. Countless photographs of luxurious resort complexes, well appointed hotel rooms and smiling hosts all serve as promotional proof to this effect. Even crossings of the international dateline are carefully interpreted for the time-anxious Central European mind: “Twice the dateline is being crossed, days are ‘won’, days get ‘lost’ and yet you reach home just at the right time” (Marco Polo, 1997:272) [emphasis mine].

The tourism promoters must ensure that the exotic image of the South Sea that they are determined to uphold matches the expectations of a conventional market. The Imholz catalogue (1997/98:88) illustrates this promotional challenge, with the rather suggestive offer to provide “… exactly what you always wanted - to get to know the South Sea romance yet not forego a certain comfort!”. The critical bridge between image and expectation is not always easily constructed. Again, island residents hold an important role in this promotional effort. The locals sometimes become unsuspecting agents of tourism enterprise, as indicated by this description of Rarotongan attractions:

Hugh Henry knows everything and everyone in the Cook islands and he knows well how to create a connection between the original South Sea romance and civilisation. In Avarua, the small capital, one quickly finds contact to the inhabitants, for example in the Banana Court Bar, the weekend ‘Insider club’ of the locals (Pacific Jet, 1997/98: 66) [emphasis mine].

Where shortcomings in service are unavoidable, these are usually explained by the “mentality typical of the country”. Customers are then asked to “… accept insufficiencies with a smile. The friendliness and the happy life style of Tongans should be more important for the recreation seeking guest than perfect organisation” (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:184). Obviously the local people are not only portrayed as available attractions but also become part of tourism’s service periphery. Such labelling serves the purpose of transposing comfort expectations from the practical service level, where they obviously can’t always be met, to the realm of the tourists’ psychological well-being. Mental attributes of the local people, therefore, function as key strategic elements in the advertisers’ marketing of a safe and comforting paradise.
Occasionally, brochure texts draw from the multivocal nature of the paradise myth which Cohen (1982) has described in some detail. In the brochures surveyed, however, the wild, savage and dangerous side of the exotic Other is merely hinted at. These darker, almost hellish aspects of wilderness, serve primarily to build dramatic tension. Overall, the tranquil, sensual and comforting image of paradise clearly dominates the advertising discourse. The following narrative shows how readers are made to feel at ease, in this particular case, by appealing to their sense of international friendship:

The sharply filed teeth of tradition conscious Fijians should remind you that their ancestors loved to devour their visitors - but the flattering melodies of the ukelele, the flower leis and the naturally charming hospitality of the Polynesians not only welcome you in the Cook islands, in Fiji and in French Polynesia but also in Tonga, *where ties to Germany play a very important part* (Meier's Weltreisen, 1997: 73) [emphasis mine].

The tension between the symbolic lure of romantic adventure and the desire for conventional customer comfort provides travel agents with yet another chance to advertise their own organisations. At the outset of the Feria catalogue (1997:2), this travel agency clearly emphasises its important role as efficient service provider: “The South Sea is simply fascinating and adventurous. So much more important is a good travel planning, care on location and perfectly organised transfers”. The headline statement “Well informed into paradise” (ref. Figure 7) conveys the same message. Oceania specialist Knecht appeals to the readers’ sense of trust in the following manner:

> It is no coincidence that the South Pacific, since the era of the first daring discoverers, has become a dream destination for many people. For many years we have successfully guided our customers into our ‘second home’ at the ‘most beautiful end of the world’ (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98:9).

These advertising narratives present travel agencies as the key link to the realisation of a distant holiday dream. In doing so, they reassure readers that this daringly exotic journey into paradise, overall, will still be a very safe experience:

*To bid farewell to the western civilisation* in Los Angeles and immerse oneself in the world of the South Sea islands ... a paradise of turquoise blue sea, coral reefs, volcanoes, glittering sand beaches and charming people. *To slowly return to ‘our world’ after three weeks of timeless enjoyment. This is the stuff from which dreams are made!* (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98:8) [emphasis mine].
By temporarily bridging the gap between the exotic Other and the familiar Center, the journey itself reaches beyond pure hedonistic escape. The symbolic process implied by this discourse contains all the ritualistic elements of liminality which Goss (1993) found in his study of Hawaiian tourism. In this process, an individual is removed from his or her familiar society to a strange place where learned roles and rules are temporarily replaced by situational social and cultural arrangements. The traveller, eventually, returns into the familiar social world having gained a higher status.

My analysis of South Sea brochures, however, points at yet another symbolic dimension of the liminal experience. As a deeper meaning, the flight to the South Sea represents the ritualistic search for a distant land of myth and utopia. This profoundly symbolic journey, then, reflects indeed an ancient human dream.
CHAPTER SIX

‘You don't sell a product; you sell a dream’ (Glasser, 1975:23)

THE STUFF OF WHICH DREAMS ARE MADE

Chapter Outline

The fabrication of consumer dreams is demonstrated to be central to the promotion of South Pacific Islands as exotic tourism destinations. I examine major expressions of the South Sea dream and illustrate how these serve the consumption of tourism products. An interpretation of representative photographs exposes the South Sea’s core place image in the form of three central symbolic meanings. This chapter makes explicit the correspondence between promotional image, symbolic interpretation and tourism reality.

Dreams of an Exotic Other

Under the heading “The dream islands of the South Sea”, the Kuoni brochure (1997/98:81) introduces the region in the following manner:

In the beginning there was the ocean and the volcanoes. But over millennia the magical South Sea were created from these. Already the discoverers - Captain Wallis, Captain Bougainville and Captain Cook related the fascination and the indescribable beauty of the Pacific island world. Who doesn't think there of the glittering sand beaches, turquoise lagoons and colourful orchids. The islands of the South Sea - this is the stuff of which dreams are made [emphasis mine].

This text provides a helpful direction when researching the origins of the legendary South Sea dream. As discussed earlier, some historical answers may be found in the travel journals of the European voyagers who ventured into the distant South Pacific towards the end of the 18th century. Now I shall examine more recent and current expressions of the legendary South Sea dream in closer detail. In doing so I shall focus once again on the textual and visual content of tourist brochures.

If one promotional metaphor dominates the brochure texts, it is the theme of ‘dreaming’. Dreams are omnipresent: the phrase features in all brochures, often in form of metaphoric word constructs but also as a dominant descriptor for the whole region itself. Brochure readers, thus, will encounter ‘dream beaches’ and
‘dream ships’ in the ‘dream islands of the South Sea’... Various operators offer marriage services for tourist couples such as the “dream wedding in Fiji” arranged by Austrian agent Tischler (1997/98:10). The Swiss hiking tour specialist Baumeler (1997:200) even went so far to name its Oceania tour “Hiking Dream South Sea”.

The metaphor has obviously also left a few marks on local maps and charts. German tour operator Marco Polo (1997:272) will take you to the Fijian “Daydream Island”, while Austrian company Pacific Jet (1997/98:63) challenges prospective customers to “explore the great diving grounds of northern Fiji such as the ‘great white wall’ or the ‘golden dream’”. There is no doubt: dreams can be found everywhere in the South Sea.

From Fantasy to Consumption: Dreams Become Reality

Creating customer dreams is only the first step in the successful promotion of a destination. To achieve their ultimate marketing goal, however, the brochure designers must also convince readers to turn their imaginary dream journey into actual travel. Once created, dreams are placed in a particular geographical or cultural setting where they can be localised and, hereby, ultimately consumed. Often a dramatic writing style supports this strategy. An excerpt from a Swiss brochure:

Volcanoes, hills and mountains which rise above exotic tropical forests. Emerald lagoons, sparkling white beaches fringed by palms swaying gently in the wind ... A dream? No! - the legendary islands of Tahiti. Illustrious names such as Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, Huahine and Rangiora ... (Rast Reisen, 1997/98:80) [emphasis mine].

Most brochures elevate the South Sea dream to the level of a universal longing which every reader naturally experiences and, therefore, ultimately must realise. Thus, to dream of the South Sea seems natural, almost fashionable, despite the region’s geographic remoteness. Rhetorical questions are typical of this type of suggestive narrative: “Who doesn’t dream of the South Sea - of the small islands within the endless expanse of the Pacific ...” (Feria, 1997:10). Those caught unaware of this universal longing will probably feel inferior when they read an introductory paragraph such as this:

Some names have long had a strong attractive power, images arise in the mind, dreams and longings awake. Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora. Who doesn’t know them, these names? (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:186).
Hotelplan (1997/98:72) endows the promoted dream with a subtly erotic, subliminal power by promising that “… everything matches your most secret South Sea dream, from the attentive service or the exclusive and undisturbed recreation to sport activities” [emphasis mine]. The Kuoni brochure (1997/98:81) also reassures all those who finally fall for such subconscious powers that their craving has not been in vein: “Whoever eventually succumbs to the longing in order to convince oneself of the South Sea magic, will find that nature has truly created something grand here”.

Advertisers use various techniques to transpose the South Sea dream from the diverse spheres of fantasy to the concrete world of commercial consumption. The most commonly employed strategy lures potential tourists with the prospect of a status enhancement. A German study tour operator challenges brochure readers with the following imperative phrase [emphasis mine]:

This all encompassing Pacific study tour introduces you to the many faces of the South Sea dream. Here you still are sincerely welcomed … Move from being a South Sea dreamer to becoming a witness of this so different wonderful world (Studiosus, 1997:368).

Some brochures grant a special status to customers with travel experience: “For advanced South Sea travellers and South Pacific repeaters the islands of Western Samoa and Tonga should be mentioned” (CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:169). Whoever eventually gains entry to the illustrious circle of South Sea connoisseurs will be rewarded with personal entry to one’s own dream land. Only then the shift from fantasy to consumption will have been successfully completed and, naturally, it will amount to nothing less than a trustworthy ‘dream deal’. Consider the opening lines to the catalogue of Switzerland’s market leading Oceania specialist:

Dear Oceania friend, excuse this salutation - but let’s just assume, that you have discovered your heart for these fantastic countries - or even have visited there once. We wish that you finally get to know your dream land - personally - of course. And this at dream-like prices. Promised! (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98: 21).

As we have seen, the game of status elevation plays a key role in convincing people to fulfill their most distant dreams. To the same effect the brochures often associate the South Sea dream with famous or popular personalities, therefore endowing it with some elusive authority. I shall briefly examine this promotion strategy in closer detail.
Famous Dreams

In his historic analysis of the mythical South Sea image, Cohen (1982) points to the influence artists and writers had in popularising life on the South Pacific Islands. He mentions such famous names as Paul Gauguin, Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Jack London and James Michener. Cohen claims that the tourism industry, as it penetrated the South Pacific Islands, could build its advertising campaigns upon an already popularised romantic image. The findings of my brochure analysis clearly support this claim.

Brochures frequently refer to famous personalities from Europe and North America associated with the South Sea. Such references usually authenticate the natural and cultural attractions of the region. The following quotation is typical:

Adventurous explorers such as James Cook, globe trotting authors such as Jack London, artists such as Paul Gauguin and actors such as Marlon Brando - they all were enthusiastic about the charm of the graceful, happy people and the fabulous landscapes (Hotelplan: 1997/98:77).

None of these stereotypical claims, however, acknowledge the fact that many authors who visited the South Sea in search of its paradise image actually returned disillusioned. Jack London was one of them. Travel writer Paul Theroux’s book “The Happy Isles of Oceania”, a recent contribution to the Pacific adventure theme, traces various other famous South Sea dreams and suggests that many resulted in bitter disappointment.

In 1842, a mere 73 years after James Cook had first anchored there, Herman Melville visited Tahiti. His personal account of Papeete as a sleazy, inert and essentially sad Pacific port stands in strong contrast to the romantic picture he later painted of the Marquesas in his famous novels Typee and Omoo. The first of these book takes readers to a remote valley on Nuka Hiva Island and, there, introduces them to the beautiful Fayaway in the following manner:

The easy unstudied graces of a child of nature like this, breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer and nurtured by the simple fruits of the earth; enjoying a perfect freedom from care and anxiety, and removed effectually from all injurious tendencies, strike the eye in a manner which cannot be portrayed (Melville, 1861:94).

This poetic introduction by the author of his main Polynesian character is particularly interesting for several reasons. It reminds us, clearly, of the exuberant descriptions we find in some early colonial journals. Themes like
“perpetual summer” or “freedom from care” also still resound in the advertising narratives of modern tourist brochures. The last point also illustrates well that in Europe, until today, Melville is not so much remembered for his disillusioned accounts of post-missionary Tahiti but more for his vivid perpetuation of a persistent island dream.

Famous Nymphs

This famous dream is, indeed, most impressively recalled by this character of Fayaway, who represents the stereotypical image of a beautiful and innocent Polynesian nymph. In a concise biographical treatise of Melville’s life in Polynesia, Daws (1980:84) summarises this promotion effect of popular culture well:

... Fayaway naked in the canoe with her tapa sail was remembered for the rest of the century, looked for on the spot by well-read travellers, painted at a distance from imagination by artists who never saw the Marquesas. She was the stuff of the eternal South Sea dream, and she guaranteed the success of Melville’s book.

Melville’s books were indeed successful. Typee was launched in 1846 in America and England simultaneously and sold very well in both of these countries. The second book Omoo followed only one year later. By that time the South Sea dream was firmly established on both sides of the Atlantic.

Another famous dream seeker was the artist Paul Gauguin who painted his best known works in French Polynesia. Gauguin reached the shores of Tahiti about 50 years after Melville had left in deep disillusionment. The artist’s intention was clear, expressed most vividly through his own words quoted by Daws (1980:95): “These nymphs, I want to perpetuate them with their golden skins, their searching animal odour, their tropical savours”. Gauguin soon became familiar with the darker aspects of colonial Tahitian life, and, deeply disillusioned, wrote the following lines:

Many things that are strange and picturesque existed here once, but there are no traces of them left today; everything has vanished ... There is so much prostitution that it does not exist ... one only knows a thing by its contrary, and its contrary does not exist (ibid.).

Gauguin, too, went on to live in the Marquesa Islands where he hoped to still find the aesthetic dream which he had come to search. It is this powerful dream, or rather a romanticised distortion thereof, for which the artist has been remembered ever since his expressive paintings first reached the famous art
Figure 9. Art as tourism’s cultural marker (brochure, front cover, 70 per cent of original size).

Translation of caption: Paul Gauguin: “NAFEA faaipoipo” (When will you marry?), 1892, oil on canvas, Rudolf Staechelin family trust, Basle. Colour photograph: Hans Hinz. The French painter Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) lived several years in French Polynesia, where he created some of his best known paintings, amongst them the one featured on this FERIA brochure cover. FERIA sincerely thanks the family trust Rudolf Staechelin for the permission to reproduce (source: Feria, 1997:1-2).
galleries of Europe. Seldom mentioned, however, is the fact that none of the Polynesian nymphs portrayed in Gauguin’s paintings ever smiles (ibid.). A significant meaning of one of his last and most thought provoking paintings, consequently, is often ignored. That particular painting of a nude Polynesian woman with her sad expression carries in its very title an unmistakable prophecy: “Nevermore”.

The tourist brochures I surveyed are no exception when it comes to romanticising Gauguin’s art work and Polynesian experience. The famous painter plays an important part in the cultural marking of Tahiti in particular. The island itself is sometimes likened to the artist’s paintings. Visitors are encouraged to take a stroll through the city of Papeete “… in search of the wonderful world of colour which once enchanted Gauguin” (Jumbo Touristik, 1995/96:70). Another brochure opens its Tahiti page with the bold headline “In the footsteps of Paul Gauguin …” (Knecht Reisen Ozeanien, 1997/98:102). The German travel agent Feria goes one step further still by choosing a famous Gauguin painting of two young and beautiful Polynesian girls for the front cover of its South Sea catalogue (Figure 9). In this instance, art has become a cultural marker not just for Tahiti but the entire region. Gauguin’s life and work, conveniently romanticised, indeed represents the most famous dream of the South Sea paradise.

According to the brochures, the islands always deeply influenced their famous visitors. The apparent fascination with Polynesia is often likened to a magic spell. The text reproduced and translated earlier in Figure 3 (page 29) illustrates how this constructed fascination serves to justify not only the powerful myth of a romantic paradise but also the ever present cliché of an erotic dream destination. Obviously, there is no resisting the magic spell of the South Sea dream, not even for the famous Paul Gauguin.

Let us, then, finally have a look at this exotic and wonderful dream world of the South Sea to establish its wider symbolic meaning. For this purpose, I shall again turn to the visual content of the brochures.

Symbolic Dreams: Towards a Conclusion

Three larger than average photographs offer some convincing answers to the complex question what the South Sea dream actually represents. I have
chosen to focus on these particular photographs for several reasons. First, each image opens the South Sea section of a particular brochure. The pictures, therefore, dominate not only through their size but also by means of their placement. Second, each visual image is accompanied by an introductory text on the region which specifically promotes the 'South Sea dream'. Finally, each photographic sample serves particularly well to highlight a distinct symbolic aspect of the dream metaphor. These aspects, in turn, represent three core elements of the advertising discourse on the South Sea. They are the symbols of ritual (ref. Figure 10), myth (ref. Figure 11) and utopia (ref. Figure 12). I shall briefly describe each of the images and, in doing so, bring my analysis of the dominant dream metaphor to a final conclusion.

Figure 10. South Sea as ritual dream (brochure, 80 per cent of original size).

T A H I T I


Figure 11. South Sea as mythical dream (brochure, 86 per cent of original size).

Translation of German text:

TAHITI

Tahiti and its islands, officially known as French Polynesia, extend over 4 million sq km in the eastern South Pacific. The 130 islands and atolls, amidst the huge ocean, enchant with a diverse marine fauna, many bird species and a lush colourful vegetation. The mild climate, the paradisal landscape with a happy, hospitable population has contributed to the fact that the ‘dreams of the South Pacific’ now have concrete names.

Tahiti ... the legendary island ‘above the wind’, which great seafarers have already compared with the Garden of Eden and the natural wonders of which have influenced the works of the famous painter Paul Gaugin [sic].

Moorea ... the enchanting and wildly romantic island, with an impressive almost breath taking landscape and with the most beautiful bay of the world, Cooks Bay, still attracts artists from all over the world.

Bora Bora ... the probably most famous of the Society islands. This ‘pearl of the South Sea’ represents the European ‘dream of paradise’ (source: Tui, 1997:198) [emphasis in last sentence mine].
SÜDSEE

Die Trauminseln der Südsee

Der Pazifik ist der grösste aller Ozeane. Mit seiner Ausdehnung übertreffen er die gesamte Landfläche unseres Planeten. Er bedeckt mehr als ein Drittel der Erdoberfläche und in seinem Gebiet liegen etwa 30 000 Inseln. Sie machen von von väterlichen Augen bis zu greisen Vulkanen, die sich aus dem Meere hervorheben. Abenteuerliche Entdeckungsreisen und wunderbare Romane brachten die Runde von den sonntägigen Inseln und den unzähligen Menschen bis auf die gegenübersiegende Seite der Welt.


Figure 12. South Sea as utopian dream (brochure, 50 per cent of original size).

Translation of German text:

SOUTH SEA

The dream islands of the South Sea

In the beginning there was the ocean and the volcanoes. But over millennia the magical South Sea were created from these. Already the discoverers - Captain Wallis, Captain Bougainville and Captain Cook related the fascination and the indescribable beauty of the pacific island world. Who doesn’t think there of the glittering sand beaches, turquoise lagoons and colourful orchids. The islands of the South Sea - this is the stuff of which dreams are made.

The pacific is the largest of all oceans. Its dimensions make it larger than the world’s entire land mass. It covers more than a third of the earth surface and over this region are spread about 30 000 islands. They range from tiny atolls to large volcanoes rising from the sea floor. Adventurous journeys of discovery and uncountable novels brought knowledge of the sunny islands and the graceful people to the opposite side of the world.

The islands of the Pacific Ocean became synonymous for a part of the earth, far away from civilisation, "where the world is still intact". Today the South Sea is a paradise for luxury holidays. Yet despite extensive infrastructures and increasing tourism, the South Sea still offers a scenic backdrop as in a picture book and the inhabitants have conserved their natural charm.

Whoever eventually succumbs to the longing in order to convince oneself of the South Sea magic, will find that nature has truly created something grand here (source: Kuoni, 1997/98:80).
The Ritual Dream

In the photograph of Figure 10, we look at a group of flower adorned female dancers who seem to float on the blue waters of what is presumably a hotel swimming pool. The image appears under the large heading “South Sea” and is subtitled with the brief caption “Dreams become real”. The photograph illustrates how the promised realisation of the touristic dream will be achieved through the ritual staging of a pseudo-event. Fronted by two Polynesian Tiki statues, the stage itself resembles a sacred water temple where smiling goddesses perform an ancient cult of feminine seduction. In the background, we can only just decipher the blurred images of tourists who, in the role of spectators, participate in this ritual enactment of ‘their’ dreams. Magic is an obvious element in this particular form of ritual dream realisation. Visually, such magic is conveyed by the imaginative staging of the event.

The introductory text directly below this photograph hints at yet another, more tangible dimension of the magic involved. The paragraph opens with the rhetorical questions “Who doesn’t dream of a visit to the South Sea? Who has never yet visualised the picture of beautiful islands, palm fringed sand beaches and rugged mountain ranges?” (Imholz, 1997/98:82). Having delineated the South Sea dream in terms of its physical appearance and, more subtly, its potential for status enhancement, the paragraph finally suggests how South Sea dreams should be realised: “Let yourself be enchanted by this paradisal island world through Imholz” (ibid.). This simple imperative solution reveals the advertiser as the true magician who controls not only this particular marketing approach but also the entire game of ritual dream realisation.

The Mythical Dream

The largest German tour operator Tui opens the South Sea section of its catalogue with the impressive image of a French Polynesian beach scene reproduced in Figure 11. While the page heading reads ‘TAHITI’, the photograph directly beneath actually displays the central volcanic plug of Bora Bora, the western most island in the Society group. The caption to this illustration hints at the reason for this deceiving choice of motive: “Bora Bora ... probably the most famous of the Society islands. This ‘pearl of the South Sea’ stands for the European ‘dream of paradise’” [emphasis mine]. The same text, completely translated in Figure 11, also informs us that the “dreams of the South
Sea" today have concrete names. The islands of Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora are then listed and briefly portrayed as wild, romantic and paradisal.

In the context of this narrative, the photograph functions as the visual representation of the promoted paradise. The dramatic landscape features of this volcanic island hint at a pristine, unspoilt and wild nature world. Soft reflections in the calm lagoon water, at the same time, create a peaceful atmosphere. The soothing shade of a palm tree invites the viewer to lie down where ripe coconuts promise a garden of plenty. The sailing yacht anchored in the distance hints at the prospect of gentle discoveries. This inviting scene, then, represents the brochure’s dream of paradise. In a wider symbolic meaning, however, it also reflects the ancient human longing for a distant land of myth.

The Utopian Dream

The catalogue page reproduced in Figure 12 presents the classical cliché of a South Sea landscape. Under the heading “The dream islands of the South Sea”, we view a turquoise lagoon set amongst the outer reaches of a coral atoll. So daringly close appears the Pacific horizon that, no doubt, the viewer’s mind instantly transposes itself to the very margin of our geographical world. The text directly below the photograph, translated in Figure 13, carries this theme further still by referring to the South Sea as the opposite side of the earth, a place “... far away from civilisation, where the world is still intact” (Kuoni, 1997/98:80).

Directly above the picture we read the line: “The islands of the South Sea - this is the stuff from which dreams are made” (ibid.). It is helpful to remember to whom these brochures address themselves. In this particular case, we are looking at a travel catalogue designed by Kuoni, the largest travel agency operating on the Swiss market. For most residents of land-locked Switzerland, the colourful and mysterious picture of a Pacific atoll would promise far more than just another island scene. In a symbolic sense, this image of a marginal paradise represents nothing less than a distant fantasy. Utopia, then, is the stuff from which the dreams are made in this particular instance.
Analytical Summary: Where the Dreams Live

The ubiquitous dream metaphor is the most persistent common denominator of the brochures' advertising narratives and connects the South Sea’s core image to an ancient myth. The promise of a distant paradise, utopian in character, builds upon a romanticised organic image which continues to be popularised by artists, writers and popular culture. Through tourism advertising, however, the utopian myth is being converted into a marketable consumer product. For this purpose, dreams have to be traceable, paradise has to become discoverable, utopia must be realised.

No analytical summary could illustrate this symbolic transformation process better than the brochures themselves. Under the heading “Sea of Dreams”, Kiwi Tours (1996:46) expose the tourism product of a South Sea paradise more imaginatively than I ever could:

> There is a place where the dreams live. Where nature lavishes herself in beauty. Where white beaches draw a sparkling circle between the intense turquoise of the lagoons and the deep green of the palms. South Sea - the name alone sounds like warm wind and soft sea water. On this journey you will experience the pearls of the Pacific: Hawaii, Fiji, Cook Islands and Tahiti. Joyful, friendly people will greet you with fragrant flower leis. To take a deep breath and simply let oneself fall. Welcome to paradise.

The realisation of tourists’ dreams, however, depends not only on transformations of a symbolic nature. To meet customer expectations, promoted dream-images must also be matched by the physical reality of the tourism resource (Cohen, 1982; Cloke and Perkins, forthcoming). Figure 10 very impressively illustrates how the South Sea dream is re-enacted within the ritual of a staged event. The ways in which tourism-led changes are made consistent with marketing images is also signified by a typical element of French Polynesia’s resort architecture: the overwater bungalow. The first hotel rooms suspended above the waters of a lagoon originated in the island of Moorea, according to the brochure of CA Ferntouristik (1997/98:192). Figure 13 presents a photograph of an overwater bungalow village. A wooden access bridge leads the viewer’s mind towards the Pacific's blue horizon, literally beyond the land’s outermost margin, to a comfortable holiday home. In a physical sense, one could not get further away from everyday reality. In a symbolic sense, however, one could not get closer to the enduring utopian dream of a South Sea paradise.
Figure 13. Beyond the margin: the overwater bungalow (brochure, original size) (source: CA Ferntouristik, 1997/98:197).
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Place Image: Where Dreams Persist

My main goal in this dissertation was to identify the South Sea’s dominant elements of place-meaning in a particular context of tourism promotion. My critical analysis of German language brochures has sketched a core place image for the South Sea. This centres around the enduring dream of a feminised, exotic yet comforting paradise which occupies the outermost margin of eurocentric imagination and geography. Built upon an already widespread, alluring myth, this image strongly reflects the romanticising influences of colonial exploration, high art and popular culture. The South Sea’s place image gains its dynamic power, however, from the tension which constantly arises between the separate realities of a familiar Center and the exotic Other.

Recognising this tension as a marketable symbolic item, the tourism industry sells places to people by promoting temporary and safe experiences of the exotic Other. Thus, the enduring dream of an earthly paradise, refined and adapted to the requirements of a mass tourist market, plays a key role in the promotion of the South Sea as a travel destination. Cohen (1982:8) explains that this branding process involves the disenchantment of the original religious myth:

> Abetted by the industry, the modern man’s quest for paradise was transposed from the realm of religion to that of mass consumerism. The industry’s main achievement in this respect consists in its success in creating the impression that the once unattainable delights of paradise are actually procurable at a price well worth paying. If the oldest tenet of marketing is, as Glasser (1975:23) claims, that ‘You don’t sell a product; you sell a dream’ in the case of paradise a dream was actually turned into a product, but is advertised as a dream come true (Cohen, 1982:8) [italics in original].

In general, my research confirms the five dimensions of place-meaning discussed by Goss (1993) in the context of the Hawaiian Islands. In particular, the topoi of an earthly paradise, marginality, femininity and liminality prove to be important characteristics in the marketing of the South Sea. *Aloha*, a further distinctively Hawaiian topos, is paralleled by the mystifying representation of the traditional South Pacific cultures and societies as easy going, uninhibited happy service people. Thus, as their feelings are being exploited and commodified,
local residents are expected to supply not only their physical labour but also their emotions for the profit of the tourism industry (Urry, 1990). This emotional contribution also plays a crucial role in overcoming the tourist's subconscious Angst of strangeness, since it promotes the promise of a gentle welcome to the exotic Other.

My analysis points at yet a further important advertising topos for the South Sea since the brochures consistently promote these islands as the "place where the dreams live". This overarching theme I shall now label 'Fernweh dream' in order to reflect my analytical focus on German language brochures. As the antithesis to homesickness, the German term 'Fernweh' implies the longing for a distant Other and, therefore, expresses well the symbolic significance of place-meaning.

Place Promotion: Where Dreams Are Transformed

I fully agree with Goss (1993:672) in his conclusion that the advertisements "... tell us more about the culture that produced them than about that which they attempt to sell". Thus, I consider tourism to be an important factor not only in the ongoing commodification of host places but also for the shaping of cultural identity in source regions. I take a wider perspective, however, when interpreting the underlying process of cultural reproduction. For Goss (1993:686), "... tourism becomes merely the reading of touristic signs emptied of all meaning except the signification of difference. [Consequently,] ... a place or region is reduced to a signifier of alterity". In my interpretation, tourism and the reconstructed geographies it produces also help to re-contextualise elementary human longings otherwise neglected in modern everyday life.

In particular, my critical reading of the brochures has confirmed the elements of ritual, myth and utopia as three core symbols of Central European holiday culture. The enduring appeal these symbolic elements hold for the human consciousness has been instrumental to my analysis of this holiday culture. The power of myth, ritual and utopia I consider crucial also to a deeper understanding of the transformation processes from which imagined geographies, such as the South Sea dream, arise.

Myth, ritual and utopia have always been important factors in the formation of cultural identity. To this extent, I support Müller and Thiem (1995) when they
suggest that. In the context of the South Pacific Islands, however, my experience and understanding of European holiday culture cautions me towards a critical judgement regarding tourism’s role in this formative process. The core place image of the South Sea, reconfirmed by my analysis, is indeed build upon an ancient myth, namely that of an earthly paradise. As Cohen (1982) has pointed out, however, this myth is not indigenous to the South Sea but rather derives from a distant Judaeo-Christian tradition. The place image which is forced upon the people of the Pacific, likewise, is eurocentric not only in origin but also in its alleged contribution towards an improved quality of life. It is, therefore, imperative to acknowledge that the place images promoted in the tourist brochures reflect European myths, European rituals, European utopias, European Fernweh and, ultimately therefore, reinforce a eurocentric cultural identity.

Place Expectations: Where Dreams Become Real

If it holds true, as Cloke and Perkins (forthcoming) suggest and my research confirms, that modern day marketing images create corresponding social realities, the South Sea's still young tourism sectors are currently perpetuating a romanticised, distorted and essentially neo-colonial service culture. This culture, in turn, reflects, amongst other influences, the outdated expectations forced upon it by the sexist attitudes evident in tourist brochures. In this context, the increased incidence in tourism-related prostitution, reported from Tonga (Urbanowicz, 1977) and confirmed for the Cook Islands by Short (1992), should be alarming for tourism planners. Citing Tahiti as an example, Short expresses specific concern about the role of tourism advertising in constructing the South Pacific as a place of female promiscuity and readily available sex.

This concern I share. Not withstanding that, I shall introduce the perspective of Douglas and Douglas (1996) on social and cultural change in the South Pacific. The authors point out that tourism-related impacts do not occur within a vacuum but belong to a complex web of current and historic influences. For this reason, they argue, it is pointless to segregate tourism as one distinctively profound and independent social influence in the Pacific Islands. While the scope of my dissertation precludes a detailed discussion of this issue, I still consider this perspective pertinent since it highlights the need for a multi-dimensional approach to assessing transformational impacts. Obviously, one cannot isolate the effects marketing images have on a destination's touristic identity from all
those other factors which may determine an island's service culture. Consequently, tourism marketing strategies should be integrated with the general goals of regional planning.

Unless tourism destinations match the promoted dreams of external, often distant holiday cultures by pro-active and empowering strategies for cultural revival, innovation and self control, the risks in tourism development will outweigh the opportunities gained. These inherent risks include the promotion of anonymity, insecurity and inactivity, discussed by Müller and Thiem (1995).

My research indicates that these risks are evident in current tourism advertising practices, as exemplified by the culturally inappropriate and patronising portrayals of South Pacific women in the brochures surveyed. Not only do such representations create false expectations (and possibly corresponding social realities such as prostitution), but they also contravene indigenous development policies. In 1994, at a conference in Suva, fourteen Pacific countries set directions for the future development of their region. The agreed upon policies included the advancement of women. The same strategy paper also advocates the promotion of participatory and community based development as a key policy (UNDP, 1994).

Where Dreams Become Constructive: Towards a New Marketing Approach

The development of tourism can profoundly affect a place. Few people would ever dispute this fact. Less often acknowledged, however, is the influence which marketing images have on the identities of service cultures. Decisions relating to the development of tourism are often made without consulting local communities to ascertain the direction of change they wish to follow. Consequently, many residents feel that they have no influence on decisions affecting their local environment. This sense of loss of control stands at the centre of much community concern about tourism development (Simmons, 1994). I suggest that the same concerns apply also to the lack of control local communities have in determining the commercial images of their own places.

If my analysis of brochures points at one obvious role of current place-marketing, it is that of securing profits for tourism operators based outside the destination region. The brochures and the commodified images they promote, therefore, signify the controlling power of the European tourism industry. Clearly this power extends well beyond an operational role, influencing not only a
destination’s economy but also it’s service culture. An influential tour company, therefore, acts not merely as travel agent but becomes also one of the many agents of social and cultural change.

I am not suggesting that tourism induced commercialisation will always have a degenerative influence on host cultures. Rather, I agree with Stymeist (1996) when he advocates a situational analytical approach. My analysis of brochure images, in fact, has shown that commercial place promotion can offer definite opportunities for the constructive revival of holiday cultures in particular. At the same time, my study points at significant risks associated, mainly, with the sexist neo-colonial stereotyping of place images. The distribution of opportunities and risks, then, to some degree reflects the uneven distribution of marketing input amongst the respective societies of tourism source and destination regions.

The myth of an earthly paradise still survives as the most pervasive expression of the European South Sea dream. Pacific communities themselves, however, may well hold different views of how they wish their islands to be represented. Clearly, this area of concern warrants further field-based analysis. Another research deficit exist in the conceptual field of place promotion. Researchers should investigate the requirements of an innovative marketing approach which recognises not only the preferences of visitors and the travel industry but also respects the aspirations of host communities.

In recent years, academic scholars and planners alike have increasingly recognised that tourism quality cannot be measured in economic terms alone. The integration of the quality service concept with the demands of environmental control, social wellbeing and cultural integrity has been widely discussed (ref. Müller, 1994). Little attention, however, has so far been given to the idea of applying these democratically grounded quality demands to the burgeoning field of tourism place promotion. Summarising my recommendations, I shall propose, therefore, that strategies aimed at advancing sustainable tourism development in the South Pacific region also promote the integration of indigenous values in the marketing process.

These suggestions gain additional significance if we were to recognise that place-marketing has become particularly important in a placeless world (Urry, 1995). Even if we do not subscribe to post-modern pessimism, we should
acknowledge the significance of diverse indigenous values and cultural integrity. Promoted place images, consequently, should reflect more than just the dreams of those cultures who construct them. Imagined geographies must also represent the aspirations of those who have to live (with) them. Holiday dreams, then, may result in desirable realities.
REFERENCES


Short, S. (1992) 'What tourism is doing in the Cook Islands'. Unpublished graduate report, Department of Management Systems, Massey University, Palmerston North.


APPENDIX

REFERENCE LIST OF SURVEYED TRAVEL CATALOGUES


Imholz (1997/98) Australien Neuseeland Südsee, April 97 bis März 98.


¹Note: None of the surveyed travel catalogues states the place of publication or the author(s).


