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## Tahitian and French Influences in Easter Island, or the Zoopal Mystery Solved Thanks to Grant McCall

Francesco di Castri

### INTRODUCTION

I am very grateful and indebted to Grant McCall for his personal communication (28 July 1999, through Georgia Lee), where he stated about the 'Zoopal' question as follows: *Englert in his annotated copy of "La tierra de Hotu Matu'a", which I read in the church in 1972-4, noted that this was a misreading of the original treaty or agreement. It should be "To'opae" or councilor. In the late 1880s, Rapanui society was organized along Tahitian lines, at least for outsider consumption...*

I have been long puzzled about the denomination of 'Zoopal' that appeared in the annexation act of 9 September 1888 for nine out of the twelve Rapanui signatories, the other three being the Ari'i Atamu, Rupereto, and Pederiko Tadorna. This puzzle has represented for some colleagues and for me the *Zoopal mystery*. I have often interrogated local Rapanui people about the significance of the term 'Zoopal', getting contradictory and varied interpretations, none of them corresponding to the very convincing clarification of Englert and McCall.

Since my first contacts with Easter Island in the early sixties, at that time dealing mostly with sheep ranching (di Castri et al. 1962), later with ecological aspects (di Castri 1964 and 1968, di Castri and Hajek 1976), and at present with scenarios for tourism development in an information society (di Castri 1997, 1998a, 1999), I have been convinced of the importance to explore and to deepen understanding on three rather unrelated aspects as follows.

*First*, a clarification of what really happened that day of 9 September 1888, as a basic element to understand current forces in decision-making. *Second*, a critical analysis of the use and abuse of ecological concepts and principles, as applied to the peculiar microcosm of Rapa Nui, in order to debunk myths obscuring development issues. *Third*, an understanding of the long lasting influences from Tahiti (and more indirectly from France) on Rapanui culture, social organization, and land use, as an element to build-up future scenarios.

On the *first aspect*, I am pleased to know that Grant McCall intends to do a special paper on the treaty. This would be very timely at present, when a new distribution of lands to the Rapanui people is about to happen, although one can wonder whether and to what extent the small extensions of five hectares (*parcelas*) to be distributed, with uneven fertility potential and almost no infrastructures, can be settled, cultivated, and exploited.

On the *second aspect*, which corresponds better to my own scientific background on ecological management as a basis for development and decision-making (di Castri et al. 1984a and 1984b, di Castri 1998b, di Castri and Glaser 1979, di Castri and Younès 1996, Brookfield 1980), several concepts and principles should be critically revisited in Easter Island. Concepts include those of carrying capacity of local populations (past and

present) and of tourists, sustainable development in the context of an open global society, demographic pressure and distribution, economic-ecological modeling, surprise-rich and non-linear scenarios of development, usable and non-usable knowledge, technological innovation as an adaptive feature, and -above all - natural resources as a time-, space-, human-use-, and value-dependent anthropocentric concept. Two articles on "Decision-making in Easter Island" and "Debunking ecological myths on Easter Island" are in preparation.

The *third aspect* is in line with my own Tahitian and French cultural attachment, acquaintance, and bias. It deals with the reciprocal influences of the Tahitian, French and Rapanui cultures. Grant McCall underlines in his statement that the Rapanui society in the 1880s was organized along Tahitian lines. The equivalent councilors in Tahiti at that time were largely designated by the French administration, as well as the Ari'i in Rapa Nui (Atamu means Adam) was selected on the ground of his Catholic attachment, with a likely sponsorship of the French ecclesiastic authorities of Tahiti. This article covers some issues related to this third aspect.

### THE PERIOD OF TAHITIAN INFLUENCE (1862-1888)

During a part of the last century, particularly in the period between 1862 and 1888, there have been in Tahiti and in Easter Island several points of contact that shape a kind of *convergent history*. This phase of the historical period of Rapa Nui that could be called *the period of Tahitian influence*, intimately intermingled with a French presence, has been comprehensively reviewed and discussed by Corinne Raybaud in 1993 (see also Conte Oliveros 1994, McCall 1980, Porteous 1981, and Rochna 1996). Only a few points will be underlined, synthesized and interpreted in this article, for the sake of looking forward to their consequences on the present and future of Easter Island.

I argue here that this influence, for the best or the worst, has extended up to recent times and even at present, by modifying to a very large extent Rapanui memory, culture, language, folklore and—above all—environmental perceptions and social aspirations. From 1944 to 1958, 41 Rapanui tried to escape their island prison in open fishing boats in the direction of Tahiti and the Tuamotus, and half of them disappeared at sea. Still in the middle of 1960s, most Rapanui people considered Tahiti as a kind of lost paradise. The larger Rapanui Diaspora, of several hundreds of persons, still lives in the Pamatai quarter of Faaa (near Pape'ete). Almost all Rapanui islanders have close relatives in Tahiti or other parts of French Polynesia. They share with them the aspiration towards a greater autonomy, or the rejection of the past French nuclear policy in the Pacific.

The autochthonous Rapanui cultural patterns, partly or largely superimposed with the Tahitian ones during the last 150 years or so, but still keeping a Polynesian nature, are at present

flooded by Chilean cultural influences. This is mostly because of the overwhelming impact of Chilean media, the progressively vanishing Rapanui-Polynesian language, the increased rate of migration of Chilean people from the continent to cover service activities related to an expanding economic growth, the larger number of Chilean tourists, and also the effects of the Chilean indigenous law (*Ley Indígena*), which is considered to be more favorable for local people than equivalent laws in French Polynesia. The value system of the Rapanui society is shifting accordingly from a Polynesian to a Chilean one. In this respect, it is interesting to note some dichotomy that emerges in the appreciation of the present social and economic situation of Easter Island, between Rapanui living in the island and their French-Polynesian Diaspora in Tahiti (see also Barria 1999).

Following Buck (1938), I take the Tahitian coverage in a broad sense as applied to all Society Islands, not only Tahiti and the Windward Islands, but also the Leeward (Sous-le-Vent) Islands, including Ra'iatea (called also Hava'i, *fanau'ra fenua*, the birthplace of lands of all Polynesians). This is the center of the Polynesian triangle, of which Rapa Nui is the apex. Sometimes, the sense is even broader, covering the rest of French Polynesia (Gambier, Austral, Tuamotu and Marquesan Islands).

#### CONVERGENT AND DIVERGENT HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

As regards the *convergent* historical aspects during the period of the strongest Tahitian influence (1862-1888), they are of a political, economic, cultural, religious, social, demographic, and environmental nature. *Divergent* aspects do occur at the same time. Convergent and divergent cultural evolution of Tahiti and Easter Island is a leitmotiv to help understand present patterns.

The impact of such influences on the Rapanui culture has been particularly strong and pervasive, because of four main factors.

The Rapanui population was very reduced at that time (100-200 persons, and with a low proportion of females). Being below a minimum critical size of vulnerability, this population could not show resistance and maintain resilience vis-à-vis of outside influences. This vulnerability to alien cultures would have been even higher, in the case of an extremely long isolation of the original Rapanui population (from 300-400 A. D. to 1722), as postulated by most scholars.

Because of many events, among them the internecine wars and the resource-base degradation, the traditional Rapanui culture was already strongly undermined at that time, and the memory largely lost, thus facilitating the incorporation and assimilation of new cultural patterns. This was even easier considering that both cultures showed affinities and belonged to the same large Polynesian base.

This Rapanui population was soon concentrated in the sole southern-western side of Easter Island, with no spatial heterogeneity concerning the possible diffusion and dilution of external influences.

These cultural influences were carried towards Easter Island together with the weight of economic forces (the emerging large inter-islands farming and ranching in Polynesia), po-

litical forces (the concurrent colonial expansion of France), and religious forces (the very powerful congregation of the Sacrés-Cœurs, with headquarters at Rue de Picpus in Paris).

As a consequence, the original cultural patterns are more forgotten and absent in Easter Island, and more difficult to be retrieved, identified and recuperated, than nowhere else in this vast region. The records obtained from the Rapanui survivors are the poorest in all inhabited Polynesia (Buck 1938, Métraux 1940). Even the memory of comparatively recent events, (e.g., contacts with the first Europeans or Captain Cook's voyages) is absent in Rapa Nui, while it is very present in minds of people from Tahiti, Huahine or Hawai'i, where Cook is still called *Tute*. No native population in Polynesia has been subjected to such a succession of disintegrating influences as the people of Rapa Nui. In addition, memory in Polynesia is primarily linked to land occupation and possession. Rapanui people have lost their memory, not only because of internecine wars and Peruvian slavery raids, but also because of land dispossession by Tahitian farmers, Catholic missionaries, the Chilean government, and the sheep ranching company.

The *political* convergence refers to the role played by France at that time in the southern-eastern Polynesia, and the attractiveness of its power. In 1842 (by the way, it was a 9 September too!) the French protectorate was established in Tahiti, and the French flag flew over Easter Island at the time of the French adventurer Dutrou-Bornier (an ephemeral king, see also Putigny 1994) and his Rapanui Queen Koreto. At least three times, in 1871, 1874 and 1887, France rejected the local request to extend its protectorate to Easter Island.

The annexation of Tahiti by France occurred in 1880, and that of the Sous-le-Vent (Leeward) Islands in 1887. A General Council and groups of Councilors, somewhat related to the social organization of Easter Island at that time, were established in Tahiti in 1884. It was 1888, the year of the political repartition between large colonial powers. France transferred half of the New Hebrides to the United Kingdom, while it gave a green light to the Chilean government for the annexation of Easter Island. Only at that time a political divergence begun between Tahiti and Easter Island.

Considering the political situation at that time and the search for an equilibrium between colonial forces, the historical bifurcation or alternative for Easter Island was not between independence or annexation by Chile, but inevitably between annexation by Chile or annexation by France (much more unlikely by the United Kingdom). Furthermore, the independence and freedom of Rapanui people was very relative at the time of the annexation, with their social structure and their cultural identity so weakened, and the overwhelming economic presence of large farmers from Tahiti. Accordingly, the Chilean government and Policarpo Toro did not care too much about local islanders at the moment of the annexation, occupied as they were to explore the willingness of large powers, and to buy lands and livestock to Tahitian farmers and to the French Catholic diocese of Tahiti. The Chilean government considered Easter Island as *res nullius*, belonging to nobody (see also Vergara 1939), with no other Nation-State (specifically France in this case) claiming to

exert, or willing to exert sovereignty over the island, and the local population being unable to exert such sovereignty. This was under the colonial attitudes and international legal rights prevailing at that time in the world. According to present standards, Rapanui people have unquestionable rights to land.

Understandably, present Rapanui leaders (see Hotus 1988) try to demonstrate that there was at that time a firm political organization and a social cohesion in Rapa Nui. This internal cohesion would have justified the existence of a real—albeit not written—treaty between the Chilean government and the Rapa Nui king and chiefs, as postulated by them (and not only the laconic annexation act). Nevertheless, even according to Rapanui tradition, the idea of the Reimiro flag of Rapa Nui—a symbol of sovereignty—was also inspired by the vicar apostolic of Tahiti, José Marie Verdier. This flag was apparently manufactured in Tahiti, and sent to Rapa Nui soon before the annexation act. Kingships in Tahiti and in Rapa Nui were partly driven by Christian missionaries and ecclesiastic authorities.

It is perhaps difficult for some of us to understand the moral and legal principles prevailing at that time, the *historical logic* of that period, even when they were applied by the best intentioned and cultivated persons and priests. The original letters in French sent from Tahiti by Tepano Jaussen, Bishop of Axiéri (from September 1871 to February 1872), and by the vicar apostolic Marie-Joseph, José Marie Verdier (November 1887), to the Father Augusto Jamet in Santiago, show the following points:

They were, above all, interested to sell conveniently Church's properties and goods in Rapa Nui to the Chilean government, and to put an end to their continuous worries related to the permanence in the island. By selling their goods, it was implicit that not only the ecclesiastic jurisdiction, but also the political sovereignty, would have been transferred to Chile.

No mention is made in these letters of a Rapanui king and chiefs to be at least consulted before annexation.

Tepano Jaussen did not care about the possibility that the totality of the remaining Rapanui population in the island (some 160 persons in 1871) be transferred to Tahiti for work in plantations. Rather, Jaussen and later Verdier thought that Rapa Nui was quite convenient for an entire colonization by families of Chilean farmers coming from the South-American continent.

The potential of Rapa Nui was considered in terms of conventional ranching and farming (or as a possible concentration camp of prisoners from Chile), disregarding completely the cultural aspects (archaeological and ethnological heritage) and the human rights of the native population.

The *economic* convergence happened because of the concurrent emergence in Tahiti and other parts of Polynesia of large farms or ranches (see *La Grande Plantation* by Albert t'Serstevens, 1952), with products inserted in what was at that time a global market economy, and closer contacts with Australia and the United States. Easter Island was a kind of extension of the Tahitian farms that implied exchanges of products and mostly of manpower (few foremen and stewards from Tahiti to Easter Island, much more numerous manual workers from Easter Island

to Tahiti and Mangareva). Captain Cook is considered to have been the first ambassador, on the ground of his tolerance and understanding, for introducing a global capitalistic economy in Polynesia (Sahlins 1985). In this respect, it should be stressed that Tahiti exerted great attraction vis-à-vis of all other Polynesian islands, as the only commercial metropolis of Polynesia at that time. It was the one island that offered prerequisites for trade relations such as security, friendship and trust, familiarity with exchange procedures, a demand for imported goods, and an export surplus of sufficient volume. For instance, during the 25 years from 1802 to 1826, New South Wales (Australia) imported about 3 million pounds of salt pork coming from Tahiti, but also produced elsewhere (Maude 1959). Tahiti was a few decades before all other islands when western-like progress is considered.

The *cultural* convergence with Tahiti and other parts of what is called at present French Polynesia, deals with the pervasiveness of the Tahitian over the Rapanui language, since power, cultural extension and attraction played in favor of Tahitians, in addition to the existing linguistic affinity as a facilitator. During the first years of the Chilean annexation, there was a concern in Santiago to send a mission to Easter Island (never materialized to my knowledge) in order to recuperate the memory of the ancient Rapanui language, before it could totally vanish and merge into the Tahitian one. This was spread out or imposed by Tahitian farmers and their assistants, French and Tahitian catechists, and Rapanui people coming back from Tahiti.

Folk singing and dancing in Rapa Nui have been strongly modified by this Tahitian influence, and have little resemblance with those described by early European voyagers. The present annual festivities in Easter Island (*Tapati*) are structured along the same lines than those of the Tahitian Tiurai (July) Heiva, with allegoric floats and sport events. The specific Rapanui part of *Tapati* is likely to be a recent folk reconstruction, rather unrelated to old traditions.

Even the Polynesian name of the island, Rapa Nui, originated at that time (probably in 1863 by Tahitian sailors), in a comparison with the smaller but environmentally similar Rapa or Rapa Iti (at present, in the Austral Islands, French Polynesia).

To illustrate present cultural attachment, one can see many more books on Rapa Nui in the small bookshops of Pape'ete than in the larger ones of Santiago (or in Easter Island itself).

As regards the *religious* convergence, this was strengthened by the role played by the Sacré-Cœur "Picpusian" congregation (in full, *Congrégation des Sacrés-Cœurs de Jésus et de Marie et Adoration perpétuelle du Très-Saint-Sacrement, dite de Picpus*), approved by Pope Gregory XVI in 1840, and very active in the Pacific, mostly in French Polynesia and Hawai'i. Missionaries from this congregation started their evangelistic activities in 1860 in Tahiti and in 1864 in Easter Island, keeping close contacts under the aegis of the French diocese of Tahiti. At the end, the French Bishop of Tahiti, Tepano Jaussen, and later his successor José Marie Verdier, promoted and facilitated the political annexation by Chile, as well as the transfer of Easter Island to the diocese of Santiago (later of Valparaíso). Conversely, a large divergence lies in the fact that in Tahiti and French Polynesia, with the exception of the Marquesan Islands,

the various protestant cults prevail over the Catholic faith in local populations.

The *social* convergence has being already referred to. Admittedly the Tahitian-like social structures, as for instance the 'Zoopal' councilors, were never deeply implanted in Easter Island. Furthermore, there was no Rapanui king equivalent in prestige and charisma to that of Pomare Vahine IV, the Tahitian Queen who died in 1877 after 50 years of kingdom, as an element to keep some social cohesion.

Unlike the previous aspects, divergences between Tahiti and Easter Island dominate the demographic and environmental aspects.

Concerning *demography*, it is true that a demographic collapse happened also in French Polynesia, but not to such an extent as the one in Easter Island (with the notable exception of the Marquesan Islands), and not exactly because of the same causes when slavery, migrations and diseases are considered. Peruvian slave raids occurred also in French Polynesia, for instance in the Tuamotus in 1863, but not with the same intensity. By the way, as a convergence, they were stopped mostly because of the French diplomatic pressure on Peru. Inter-islands migrations were common at that time, but in the case of Easter Island they were almost unidirectional towards French Polynesia (mostly Tahiti, Mangareva, Mo'orea, Tuamotus). The Rapanui Pamatai quarter near Pape'ete begun at that time. Rapanui stone carvers built the beautiful Catholic Church of the Sainte-Famille near Haapiti (Mo'orea). European-borne diseases ravaged all Polynesia, but they were better controlled in Tahiti than in Easter Island (or the Marquesan Islands). Present demographic (and tourist) pressure in Easter Island is lower than in the Society Islands, but higher than in the Marquesan Islands.

Nevertheless, the most outstanding (and divergent) demographic pattern, which obscures all the other ones and makes impossible a valid comparison between Easter Island and other parts of Polynesia, is the different distribution between urban and rural population. Because of historical events, that is to say, the concentration of almost all Rapanui people in only one site, promoted first by the Tahitian farmers and the Catholic missionaries, followed by the *Compañía Explotadora de la Isla de Pascua* (Williamson, Balfour and Co.) and later by the Chilean Navy, Rapanui people are now urban at a level of 97%. Conversely, even Tahiti (with its small metropolis of Pape'ete) or Bora Bora (with its massive international tourism) still keep an important rural population. And Huahine, where massive tourism is wisely controlled, has more than 56% of the active population working in agricultural activities. Above all, if the Tahitian language is revived in French Polynesia, the Rapanui one is almost dying as a currently spoken language. The Rapanui extreme urbanization is having and will have deeply negative implications on social structure and cohesion, cultural attachment and identity, as well as on sustainability of tourism and economic development within a living culture. A symptom of social destabilization in Polynesia is a prevailing mistrust (Panoff 1970), a mistrust so spread out in the relations with and within the Rapanui population (di Castri 1999).

As regards *environment*, it is true that the ecosystem functioning reflects in both islands an inherent fragility vis-à-vis of

alien species and biological invasions (di Castri 1989, 1990). However, the aggressively invasive guava shrub, for instance, is more spread out and more poorly controlled in Easter Island than in Tahiti. Above all, there is no equivalent in all Polynesia of a continuous and total grazing by sheep during almost a century, from the Tahitian-based farmers Dutrou-Bornier, Brander and Salmon since 1871, up to the end of the Chilean Navy rule in Easter Island in the late 1960s. This implied, in addition to social reclusion and exclusion, overgrazing (the livestock charge in Easter Island had reached the highest levels ever recorded in the world, more than four sheep per hectare), massive erosion, repeated fires to improve the grass palatability for sheep grazing, complete species replacement of the herbaceous cover, repeated biological invasions from abroad to an increasingly fragile environment, total extinction of the last shrubs and trees, and also the removal of stones from *ahu* to build fences and other ranch constructions.

Even the final extinction of the Toromiro tree (*Sophora toromiro*) is imputable to this period of sheep exploitation, and not only to deforestation by ancient Rapanui people. Thor Heyerdahl found the last specimen of toromiro in 1955. If principles and laws of plant population dynamics and genetics mean something, it is highly presumable that several stands of remnants existed in somewhat protected places of Easter Island during the previous 200 years or so. These remnants would have kept a possibility for natural forest regeneration and recovery, once disturbance removed. By the way, the energy and matter extraction from local ecosystems is much larger in the case of 70,000 sheep than when 3,000 or even 6,000 humans are considered.

What is totally unclear is the present policy for environmental restoration in Easter Island. Is it to protect the eroded and degraded environment left by sheep exploitation as the most familiar to the planners and to the local population, to transform it into a kind of Central Chilean landscape with eucalyptus and Hereford cattle, to shape a Tahitian-like landscape by introducing coconut palms, frangipani and pandanus (that are totally unfamiliar to the Rapanui biology), to restore a landscape as similar as possible to the original one of Rapa Nui with natural trees and well-cultivated fields, or to have a hazardously shaped patchwork of all landscapes and plants of the world, as it seems to happen at present?

*Sustainability* depends mostly on a culturally-viable human adaptation to change and on an adaptive management of ecosystems (di Castri 1995, Holling 1996). The following example, where the situation of the French Mediterranean island of Porquerolles is evoked (see Brun 1997, Conservatoire Botanique National Méditerranéen 1998), illustrates how much a wise or unwise human touch can increase or decrease accordingly sustainability and carrying capacity, and how much management is specifically site-dependent and largely history-dependent. I am acquainted, involved and committed in both Porquerolles and Easter Island, and their respective National Parks, but it would be totally inappropriate to extrapolate planning and management practices as such from one to the other island. Porquerolles, an island of some 6,000 hectares, receives a million visitors every year, almost 3,000 visitors per day as an

average. Conversely, Easter Island, of some 17,000 hectares, has a flow of some 20,000 tourists per year. Furthermore, human occupation is much more ancient in the Porquerolles Island, around 3,000 years B.C. Human pressure, including tourist pressure, should be therefore 150 times more intense in Porquerolles than in Easter Island, that is to say, 50 times more visitors in a surface that is about three-fold smaller, even not accounting for the pressure over time. Still, Porquerolles is known as being one of the best examples of sustainable tourism, and its pristine terrestrial and marine environments are both very well preserved. Conversely, sustainability of tourism in Easter Island is under threat, mostly because of the *decision-making crisis* existing in the island, poor service facilities, unwise urban management, and environmental degradation (di Castri 1999).

Sustainability and carrying capacity are non-linear and non-mechanistic principles and terms, which elude generalization. Absolute figures on demographic and environmental parameters, with no qualification in space and time of their level of specificity, and considered out of a proper social and economic context, lack of predictive power and may lead to abusive conclusions. Ecology is, above all, an *historical science* that tries to define such a context and to place constraints in due perspective.

#### RAPANUI CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN FRANCE AND EUROPE

Reciprocally, the Rapanui culture has played at the distance some role in shaping attitudes and inspiring cultural and artistic movements in France and Europe.

First of all, the French writer and sailor Pierre Loti (the art pseudonym of Louis-Marie-Julien Viaud, 1850-1923) who visited Easter Island in January 1872 as midshipman of the French ship *La Flore*, published in 1899 the book *Reflets sur la sombre route* with his evocative drawings on life and archeology of Rapa Nui. Pierre Loti helped create in Europe for Rapa Nui the collective "imaginary" and the symbol of death, hopelessness, inherent fear and mistrust. This dimension (*l'imaginaire*) should be understood as a whole representation of behaviors and fantasies typical of a group, whereby the real, the imaginary and the symbolic are inextricably intermingled.

It is interesting to note that another Frenchman, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, created for Tahiti the opposite imaginary of love (in 1768 he called Tahiti the New Cythera, from

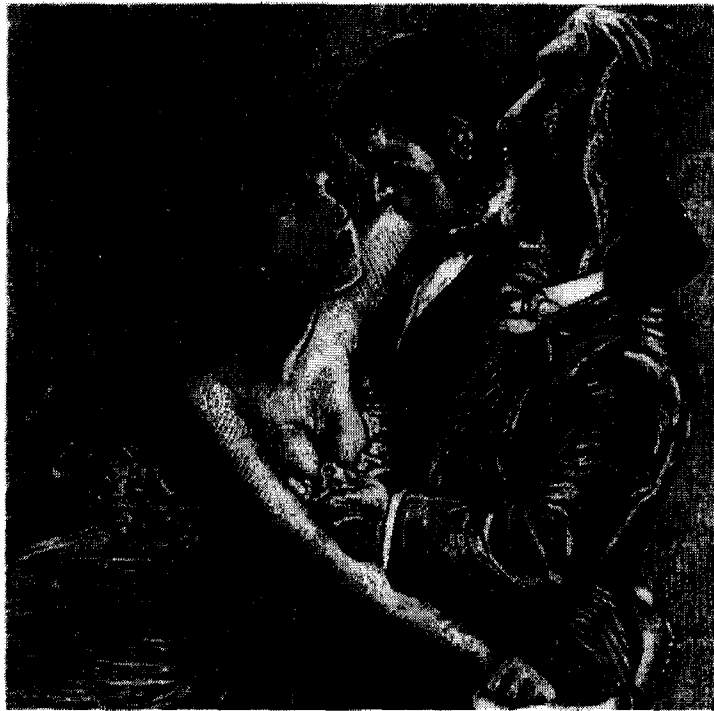
the Greek island of Venus) and of *joie de vivre* (see Taillemite 1972). Soon after Bougainville, the French philosopher Diderot interpreted the Tahitian society as the true expression of a life close to nature. A third prevailing imaginary in Europe is also of a Polynesian origin, that of Pitcairn (and of the mutiny on the *Bounty*), as a symbol of the fight for freedom and human rights (see Nordhoff and Hall 1934). Therefore, the Polynesian route from Tahiti to Pitcairn and Easter Island covers, for many Europeans, the three imaginary symbols of life (and love), freedom, and death (and silence). These symbols have no full ground on historical and ethnological truth, but they still represent a very strong psychological motivation, a powerful evoking mechanism of faraway sensations and distant horizons, and an additional incentive for traveling (or dreaming) there.

Furthermore, the Rapanui arts and beliefs, and in general the Oceanic art (Kaepler *et al.* 1993, Meyer 1995), have strongly influenced a widespread revolutionary movement in the arts, the *Surrealism*, promoted by the French poet André Breton (see his *Surrealism Manifesto* published in 1924, and Nadeau 1964). Alfred Métraux himself was in close contact with surrealists, as I have learned from talking with his brother Guy Métraux and with his friend Michel Batisse, both of them colleagues of mine at UNESCO

in Paris (Alfred Métraux also worked at UNESCO for several years, before being "punished" by the Rapanui curse).

For surrealists, the world of the unconscious mind, as expressed also by fantasies and dreams, has a reality and a force superior to that of the phenomenal exterior world, in a similar way to what *mana* means for Rapanui people. The surrealist Dream Revolution has influenced a conspicuous part of the modern artistic creation in France, Europe and elsewhere, involving directly or indirectly writers and poets such as Guillaume Apollinaire, Jean Cocteau and Louis Aragon, sculptors such as Alberto Giacometti, photographers such as Man Ray, film-makers such as Luis Buñuel, and mostly painters such as Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Joan Miró (the three Great Catalans), Giorgio de Chirico, René Magritte, Max Ernst, Paul Klee, the Chilean Roberto Matta Echaurren, and to a certain extent Marc Chagall.

Nothing is more similar to a *Moai kavakava* than some of the stylized statues of the Swiss-born Alberto Giacometti (see Bonnefoy 1991). With them, Giacometti wanted to express the



Collage by Max Ernst from *Une Semaine de Bonté* from his surrealist novel of 1934. Dover Publications, 1976.

fundamental sense of human spiritual isolation, out of exterior realities. His remarkable statuette called *The Invisible Object* (sculpted in 1934) resembles strangely a feminine *Moai papa*. It is a kind of hallucination, the materialization of a ghost, like a Rapanui *Aku-Aku*.

Furthermore, some pages of the book *Jazz* published in 1947 by the French painter Henri Matisse, mainly the *Planches des Images*, as well as some symbolism of Joan Miró, strongly evoke Rapanui hieroglyphs and scripts. Incidentally, Paul Gauguin, who is not a surrealist, was also inspired by the talking tablets *rongorongo* (Danielsson and Danielsson 1975). Rapanui influences on a precursor movement of fantastic magic art, *Dadaism*, are more debatable. A recent book (Paredes Gaete 1998) highlights how much Rapa Nui has been a source of artistic inspiration.

Conversely, surrealist thinking can give us a key for the interpretation of some aspects of the Rapanui mentality, the way from rational to irrational, from facts to dreams, from a phenomenal world to a magic universe, that of *mana* and *aku-aku*. It is commonly concluded, from a western perception, that the key cultural categories of Polynesians are "ambiguous," "contradictory," or "logically unstable" (Sahlins 1985). But the mental universe of Rapanui people, and of other Polynesians, is neither illogic nor inconsistent. It responds to its own logic, out of time, out of the phenomenal world, with the mind becoming forcible through *mana*.

Accordingly, there is a kind of Rapanui impregnation in some aspects of the French culture. In more prosaic terms, this helps to promote French tourism to Easter Island. French citizens are among the most numerous tourists to Rapa Nui in absolute terms (close to the Chileans), and they represent some 50% of European tourists and more than 25% of the total foreign tourism in the island.

Incidentally, artistic creation, mystery, unconsciousness, fiction, fantasies, legends, and myths (so used and misused in the case of Rapa Nui) are at least as important as the scientific truth for driving a cultural tourism. Two fiction movies, *Mutiny on the Bounty* in 1962 (one of the six movies on this same subject) and the so-criticized and artistically weak *Rapa Nui* in 1994 (the latter being perhaps less historically wrong than the former), have nevertheless strongly promoted tourism in Tahiti and Easter Island respectively.

On a different dimension, the adventure aspects play a similar role in promoting the involvement and the sense of attraction on a given problem or a given place, as demonstrated by the series of Commandant Cousteau (for Easter Island, see Sérafini 1995). And the adventures of Thor Heyerdahl in Fatu Hiva in 1936 and, above all, with the *Kon-Tiki* in 1947, although they do not provide firm scientific evidences, have originated in the world an unprecedented impetus and boost towards a greater Polynesian interest and attachment.

At the interface between adventure and art, Hugo Pratt, the creator of the so esoteric and baroque universe of the *Corto Maltese* cartoon, took inspiration from Easter Island for his last book *J'avais un Rendez-vous* (Pratt 1995), containing several evoking watercolors of Easter Island. Some plots of actions are placed just where Jean-François de la Pérouse landed in 1786.

Pratt has found in Easter Island some personages typical of his artistic creation (Le Fur 1996, Maliarevski 1996).

Tourism activities in Easter Island, to be world's competitive and sustainable, should lead to a kind of *magic tourism* (Socias 1999), to magic moments of enchantment, wondering and bewitchment. Most tourism material on Easter Island is inappropriate to promote such a fascination, except the *Uncommon Guide* of Georgia Lee (1990). Only a magic tourism could confront the *surrealistic reality* of Easter Island.

#### CONCLUSIONS

As pointed out by Grant McCall, the 'zoopal' councilors of Rapa Nui in 1888 corresponded to a Tahitian-like social organization. This provides the point of entry for this article, where it is postulated that the Tahitian influences in Easter Island, at that time (1862-1888) and later, were embedded so deeply and so intricately in the original Rapanui culture--through convergent historical patterns--that they shaped all together a fairly distinct and peculiar Polynesian culture concerning language, folk, and perceptions.

Strong divergences also originated at that time. They refer mostly to demographic and environmental patterns that are specific to Easter Island, that is to say, the human concentration in nearly only one site (a kind of complete urbanization) during the last 130 years or so, and the environmental degradation due to long-lasting (nearly a century) overgrazing by sheep ranching over almost all the island.

Some French influences are also discussed, while they are mostly of an indirect nature and carried through the Tahitian dimension. Conversely, some Rapanui cultural influences on French and European art movements, particularly surrealism, are also illustrated.

At present, this Rapanui-Polynesian culture is strongly threatened by an almost unavoidable process of "Chilenization". An exaggeration of this process would be harmful for both the economic development of the local Rapanui people and the political aspirations of the Chilean Government. Cultural tourism, which is practically the only viable development issue for the island, would not be sustainable in time, if it is not inserted in a peculiar living culture. Furthermore, the understandable and worthy aspirations of Chile towards a Pacific opening up, in this time of economic globalization, information society, culturally-driven development, and emerging indigenous rights (di Castri 1996), would be better supported by promoting cultural identities and by strengthening a dual Polynesian and Chilean vocation. Geopolitically, Rapa Nui can be either an asset or a constraint for Chile, according to the policy adopted by this country, by enhancing the Polynesian culture, or conversely fostering the process of Chilenization. ❖

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