

DIVERSITY & EXCLUSION

WHO LIVES IN THE PACIFIC ?

The Brash Nautilus

This is the inauguration of a new column to revitalize your favourite newspaper.

It is dedicated to socio-cultural and intercultural events in the Pacific, and the others... Behind the satirical note, we'll pose serious issues and observations to broaden our perspectives.

The Nautilus is our emblem to remind us that sometimes we also must go against the tide to find better spaces. Hope you'll enjoy your reading in a Pacific Way!

*Would you like to take part?
Contact us at swimagainstthetide@unc.nc*



When ? Where ? Why ?

3 days, 19 conferences, 12 universities and 5 goals posted, it was the ambition of the symposium entitled **"Celts" in Pacific?** held at UNC on October 23rd, 24th and 25th, 2024.



UNC, an european enclave in the Pacific?

Creating bonds between academic researchers and some Caledonians (Breton, Irish, Scottish or Welsh descent) or UNC students was ambitious but what if **there were no translation services for the public?** What kind of links when francophone people translate systematically into English but this is not mutual? Did the academic speakers be informed that non-English-speaking people could come?

Anne-Laure Dotte, a UNC teacher and researcher who introduced some researchers, told us **these situations are complicated. It alters individual performance and self-esteem.** What can we say about the students who don't understand a symposium "made for them"?

Only one researcher spoke and wrote his presentation in French. Because of this situation was uncomfortable for English-speaking-only people, we hope it helps academic people **change their work practices and think more about accessibility.** How can we think about perspectives for further research if the field is restricted? There is almost an increase in academic research about exclusive groups either of academics and/or white academics. These researches show **the different ways of excluding those we claim to want to include.** The symposium was a snapshot of this. One student researcher told us that she was disgusted at least to some extent with research because of this symposium.

A yawning gap between some conferences...

“Can Celts teach us how to live with Kanaks?”. It’s problematic even if the title was modified to “Can Celts teach us how to live with Kanak(a)s?”. It’s worrisome how the researcher tried to wash her hands of her own choice telling “Don’t shoot me, I am the messenger”. It doesn’t work like that. **Researchers have to be held accountable and argue about their choices.** When she concluded with her question “Can Celts teach Kanak(a)s how to live among us or with us?”, we wondered: Who is “us”? We understood: she spoke to white academic people, settlers or convicts of descent. **What a lack of regard for all those non-white students and researchers. When will they be considered in these university spaces?**

Hopefully, there were some conferences with **interesting subjects**, (Palming the Shamrock: Irish Writers, Oceanian Universities and Pacific Literature by Matthew Hayward and Maebh Long ; Boudicca: how is the Celtic queen received in the Pacific? by Hélène Roelens-Flouneau in french) **unconventional approaches** (Stéphanie Geneix-Rabault with musicology and Amandine Bornet-Aiglehoux with a workshop about Breton) and **the viewing of a documentary film** An Dubh ina Gheal: Assimilation produced by Paula Kehoe.

With Matthew Hayward...

Conference was about how students make a difference in literature courses at the University South Pacific (USP). USP has been criticized for teaching in only one direction, learning with literature written in imperial center and shipped in islands and the need to decolonize literature. Matthew Hayward spoke about adapt material and build their own literature. He also credited Albert Wendt several times to make links between anticolonial struggles and the *political function of poetry*.

With Paula Kehoe...

Paula Kehoe is a genuine woman and filmmaker. She hasn’t hesitated to say that so-called Australia has always been, is and always will be an Aboriginal land. This is so significant and related to the Kanak struggle. In her film, she remind us that Irish people had suffered but they had also benefited from the colonial massacres of the Aborigines. What a tough job she made ! Paula’s film is as emphatic as political. It really deserves further local screenings. People need to reflect more about that.

With Peter Kuch...

A supposed French aristocrat woman who was teased by Maoris who said she looked excellent to eat. Irony, mischief, play on credulity, or all three, we don’t know. It reminds us that writings of frightened settlers are the reflection of people full of racist narratives. They also chose to perpetuate it, feeding the colonial mechanism of annihilation. People have just tasted the humor of the indigenous people, who probably laughed (and still do) at the credulity of those who don’t want to know who they are.



Who keeps the Pacific alive?

We’ll keep in mind that there are **historical interlinking, family bonding, lost mythologies and reconstituted mythologies**. There also is a deep issue: the university and its researchers and teachers still need to review the processes of knowledge transmission and sharing.

We have to get off our chests some words by John Palene at the Study Day called “Ecrire autrement”. There are two conceptions: transcendence and immanence. **Transcendence is an occidental way, immanence a Pacific one.** We have to decolonize the symposium and make our own *Sympoceanium*.

For now, let these words sink in and smile because as we leave the symposium, we’re relieved to find our hearts resonating with the songs and dances of the Lanika residence. *Our hearts?*

