Sangam Skm College-Nadi

Lesson Notes- Week 1

Subject: History   Year: 12

Strand	Time, Continuity and Change
Sub strand	Imaging of the Pacific
Content Learning Outcome	Appreciate the role of visual evidence in History.

Definitions:

Art	Representing a scene, person or event by drawings.
Draughtsman	An artist employed on a voyage to draw views of the coast and harbours as a guide to sailors who come later.
Film	Representing a scene, person or event in a moving image.
Imaging	The process of creating, capturing and constructing a representation of a person, scene or event.
Landscape	A style of painting – a view of the countryside.
Pantomime	A performance on stage – without dialogues, mostly with dance and music and with an added recipe of comedy and action.
Partial	Means only part of the full story is being shown.
Perception	The way in which people view an event, scene or person, or an image.
Photography	Capturing an image in paper which began in 1839.
Representation	Creating an image by choosing the content and subject matter.
Theatre	Play performed on stage, often using light, sound, dance and images. *(mostly co-defined with pantomimes in this case)*

Introduction

- In this topic you will look at four ways that Europeans created images of the Pacific:
  - i.   Art
  - ii.   Photography
  - iii.   Theatre
  - iv.   Film
- The Europeans used these images to relate the history of the Pacific Islanders.
- The first art to portray Pacific people and the islands began with the early European exploration. One of the first drawings was from 1606 during a voyage led by Spanish Captain Luis Vaez de Torres. This was the drawing of the natives of New Guinea. The historian Bernard Smith claims that this was one of the first attempts to draw the Pacific Island people.
- The art of voyages was mostly done between 1750-1850. Theatres in Europe portrayed the Pacific. The writers of the pantomimes used explorers diaries, journals and art. Then photography became important in the late 19th and early 20th century.

- These four ways were important because they helped people outside the Pacific to know what life was like in the Pacific.
- The general public in Europe obtained the early knowledge about the Pacific and its people from the art of the early voyages.
- These images affected missionaries, scientists, traders and colonial administrators. In the modern era, these images continued to influence tourists, donors, NGO's and international agencies such as the UN and World Bank.
- However, Historians argue that these <u>early images</u> were partial, inaccurate and often misrepresented. This is due the fact that in those days there was no other way of documenting history. This early art was the only way to tell the people around the world about the Pacific people and their culture. Therefore, the early art was all about using drawings and paintings to show the Pacific.
- This unit is therefore about images – <u>who they were created by, why they were created, and their use and influence.</u> Later, we will examine images as accurate or inaccurate attempts to portray the Pacific.
- During the "Age of Exploration", European expeditions were coming to the Pacific to discover new land, people, landscape and vegetation. Professional and amateur artists were hired to come onboard and draw images of these new things. These artists were known as "<u>draughtsman</u>". The following are the names of some of these draughtsman onboard the voyages in the Pacific:
  1. <u>Sydney Parkinson</u>, aged 23 onboard of captain James Cook's Endeavour. His main work dealt with drawing the Tahitians. His main interest was in landscapes and everyday life of the Tahitians. He used get very frustrated due to such moments when he claimed that mosquitoes would actually eat the paint straight out from the canvas he was drawing on.
  2. <u>William Hodges</u>, aged 28 onboard Captain Cook's second voyage. He was very popular among the islanders in Tahiti. Tahitians would carry around his painting portfolio for him.

By Diego Prado de Tovar, an officer on the Torres expedition along the coast of New Guinea in 1606

Review Questions:

1. Define the term "imaging" and explain its importance in the study of Pacific history?
2. Who were the "draughtsman" and why were they given so much importance on voyages? Name any two draughtsman from this lesson.
3. Study the painting drawn by Diego de Tovar given above and give your general view how realistically it may have portrayed the islanders of 1606.

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Content Learning Outcome	Critically analyse images as evidence.

Definitions:

Conventional	To be normal, following the general style of normal painting.
Depict	To use art to describe an event, person or place.
Engraving	Making an exact copy for printing, by etching the image on metal or wood.
Gallery	A collection of images for display.
Icon	A perfect example of an image, or the way in which an image is well known.
Iconic	To have the qualities of being an icon or in this case, the qualities of the image in study have resemblance to something.
Picturesque	A style of painting that depicts the beauty of nature and wide-angle views of scenery.
Portrait	A representation of a person's appearance.
Portrayal	To use art to describe an event, person or place. (same as depict)
Misrepresentation	An image that does tell the truth or accurately record an event, person or place.
Stereotype	Relying on a simple image to represent a complex situation, idea or event.

- During the "Era of exploration and discovery", Europeans were fascinated by the people of the Pacific. This was the time when Europeans were seeing the Pacific for the first time through the paintings drawn.
- These artists or draughtsman used **conventional** styles to depict the Pacific.
- They used certain images which became **iconic** for the Pacific and often used and reused by other artists. For example, white sandy beaches and coconut trees became iconic images to display the Pacific. These images were also displayed through **picturesque.**
- The artists also tried to show images of Pacific people through drawing **portraits**. They drew portraits of individuals to show the different features of the people such as hairstyle, jewelry, scars, tattoos etc.
- By drawing such images in the form of picturesque and portraits, the artists attempted to show what the Pacific was all about. Most of these images were **stereotyped** and not necessarily told the true story about the Pacific.
- Therefore, we can conclude by saying, although the artists may have tried their best to depict the Pacific through their art, it may have been subjected to **misrepresentation** in many ways. For instance, an image showing white sandy beach does not necessarily mean all the beaches in the Pacific were beautiful.

- These types of picturesque images were also used in advertisements to make the Pacific look attractive and beautiful, in order to lure tourists. The following image is a good example:
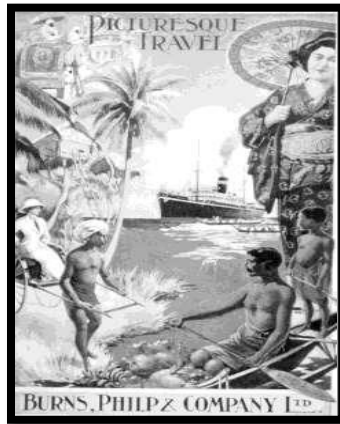
- **Case Study: A Portrait of Abbe Thule**
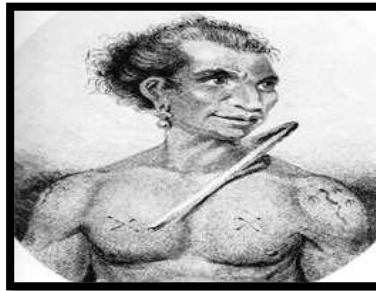
- The historian Bernard Smith explains how the portrait of Abbe Thule was created. It was painted by an artist, Arthur William Davies during a trading voyage on the Antelope to Palau in Micronesia in 1783.
- Davies was a draughtsman, an artist employed by the navy to draw coasts, harbors and mountain ranges. After Davies had drawn this portrait, its **engraving** was used over and over again based on the original painting.
- This image of Abbe Thule was an attempt to show his characteristics as a "noble Savage". Abbe Thule's character as a warrior is shown by his scars and weapon but his innocence is shown by his facial depiction. Therefore, this single portrait was used to show the common characteristics of Pacific people.

Review Questions:

1. Identify two iconic images from the Pacific.
2. Differentiate between a "landscape" and a "portrait".
3. How reliable were picturesque images in telling the true story about the Pacific and explain why such images were drawn?

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Content Learning Outcome	Understand the motivation of artists who painted the people of the Pacific.

- The voyages in the Pacific began in 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan from Spain. The period from 1750-1850 was known as "The Age of Discovery". Ships carried artists on board and most of the drawings were done during the voyage back home. And some were not completed until many years later. Most of the art was never seen by the general public. It was stored away and only available for the rich people or in museums. When Europeans saw this art, they believed it showed what the Pacific really looked like.

- Historians argue today that this art did not show the real Pacific. They say it is mostly a representation. Representation could be defined as creating an image by choosing the content and subject matter.

- Representation in the art of the early voyages was motivated by what the artists were seeing and experiencing. But it was also about;

  (i)   what the artist thought he was seeing,
  (ii)   what he wanted to say because of his religious belief,
  (iii)   his previous study of scientific theories.

- At this point, it should also be noted that on the early voyages, all the artists were men.

- Furthermore, the ability of these artists to portray the Pacific was reduced because of their lack of skill. Either they were professional or amateur; they were not skilled in distance, shapes, light and color of the tropics, or in making a portrait or landscape. Therefore, they created art that was close but failed to perfectly portray Pacific people, events and places.

<u>Case Study 1: Painting Village Life in the Pacific</u>

- In 1804 when the Russian exploring expedition visited the Marquesas, the village of Taiohae (source 2, page 28) did not look like this. E.g. the village may not have been located beside the beach.

- The artist may have seen these things elsewhere in different villages or even on different islands in Marquesas.

- Perhaps the artist drew all these activities, views and people together in one spot to make it easier to educate people back home in Europe about life in the island of Nuka Hiva.

- This process is called "**collage**" – assembling parts of different images and placing them together to make a new image. The placing of different images together allows artists to present a <u>new message</u>.

Case Study 2: Meeting, Exchange and Conflict

- It was difficult for artists to portray a large, busy, moving, excited and violent crowd when two groups met on a beach. So artists tried to focus our attention on one or two key people.
- It was also common to show the Pacific people as xenophobic in nature, meaning hostile and savage behavior.

Review Questions:
1. List the factors which may have motivated the artists to portray the Pacific in the way they drew the Pacific during the "age of discovery".
2. Define the process of "collage" and explain why this process was used by the artists?
3. Based on your understanding of the topic so far, how reliable were the images drawn by the artists on the early voyages in studying Pacific history?