

## CULTURAL TOURISM

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### The symbolic dimensions of a scientific journey: The road to the Antipodes

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#### Abstract:

This work discusses the subject of a scientific trip from a semiotic perspective. It presents the scientific congress (AIESEP World Congress 2014) and a critical review of it; a journey of cultural symbolism; and remarks and impressions of staying in a distant country. In addition, a meeting with the proto-forms of martial arts and considerations concerning the social reception of martial arts in today's New Zealand justify the purpose of this trip also in terms of martial arts tourism, though not to practise, but for research. The authors suggest a schematic approach to the symbolism of the stages of social development, in which resignation of the noble principles leads to moral and civilizational regression. Additionally, some contemporary fashionable ideologies cause regression in the spiritual development of humanity and go back to the typhonic level on K. Wilber's scale.

#### Introduction

Scientific tourism is a part (or a kind) of cultural tourism, with special values. These journeys require extra effort, not only with regards to research or teaching duties. They give the traveller opportunities to confront, test and evaluate their own research results and outlook with new listeners in new locations, in different environments. This travel especially applies to the foreign environment, a situation that presents high degrees of professional and scientific challenges, resulting in increased contributions and activity to a specific field of science [cf. West 2008; Cynarski 2010; Kosiewicz 2011].

On the journey to the Antipodes the first author used several means of transport. First, he set off at 4 am. on 6th February by car from his home to Rzeszów, then by bus to Warsaw. He met M. Lenartowicz at Warsaw Airport and from then on both Polish delegates to the AIESEP Congress travelled together. They arrived at night in Dubai, spent the night in the hotel and flew on to Auckland, via Melbourne in Australia. They arrived at the hotel in Auckland, New Zealand on 9<sup>th</sup> February in the evening local time.

Let us trace this journey from the point of view of semiotics, emphasizing its symbolic and archetypal dimensions (in the understanding of C.G. Jung and K. Wilber).

#### Congress in Auckland – case study

The AIESEP (*Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieures d'Education Physique*) has existed since 2006. There are about 120 institutional and individual members of the AIESEP worldwide. The first author has participated in congresses and conferences in Jyväskylä, Sapporo, Pensacola, A Coruna and Warsaw. And now in Auckland.

The AIESEP World Congress 2014 in Auckland was held from 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2014 in the Owen G. Glenn Building, the Faculty of Education at the University of Auckland. The main idea of this Congress was “Educating for active healthy citizens”.

The Congress Opening Ceremony took place on Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, at about 4 pm. The introduction consisted of Maori folklore: language-singing-calls and dancing, followed by presentations by Prof. Pilvikki Heikinaro-Johansson (Finland), President

(photo 1), and Prof. Marc Cloes (Belgium), General Secretary of AIESEP.

The first keynote lecture was delivered by Prof. Brendon Hokowhitu from Canada, a descendant of the Maori (probably on his father side). In the paper *Body-Logic* he spoke mostly about the history of the Maori. He presented the thesis that Maori rugby is a form of expression of their traditional “philosophy” and the factor of self-identification, a sense of cultural and national identity.

Thematic sessions concerned various issues such as: the relationship between physical education and physical activity, especially the recreational one; estimated ratings of motives (pedagogy of physical activity); educational programmes; sports training and health. There were also thematic symposia, which actually meant sessions with one introductory lecture and a long discussion, lasting 90 minutes. The level of these discussions was varied.

The second plenary speaker was Prof. Stephen Silvermann from the USA (Columbia University). He discussed the development of the concept and methodology of sport and physical education in the United States between 1970-2013. He quite rightly postulated the need to take greater account of qualitative and mixed research methods

The Science was also accompanied by the ideology of political correctness, gender, etc. Gender equality was maintained because after the already mentioned two keynote lecturers there were two female speakers: Jan Wright and Heather Sykes (Jan in Polish is a boy's name). It turned out that both are specialists in feminism and gender. Jan Wright presented the traditional Cagical lecture (the most important lecture of the AIESEP congress) entitled “Young people making ‘choices’ about physical activity: taking a necessary biographical approach”. At times it was interesting. The paper by Sykes: entitled “Queer bodies: homophobia, transphobia and fatphobia” (4<sup>th</sup> keynote lecture in this Congress), was rather a manifesto of *gender and queer* rather than a scientific work in the field of pedagogy.

In turn, the honorary membership of AIESEP granted to Prof. Marie-Paule Poggi from Guadelupa, seems well deserved. However the professor was not present at the Congress to collect the or his diploma in person. Following a 35-year-old tradition of AIESEP the title of *AIESEP Fellowship* was awarded to 46 scientists from 20 countries.

As it often happens, the most interesting works are found in the last sessions. Their content is often “outside the box”. This time, ( in a very subjective evaluation,) an example, was the session conducted by Prof. Richard Light (Australia), which opened with a lecture by W. J. Cynarski (Poland), entitled “Polish achievements in the theory of physical



**Photo 1.** President AIESEP – P. Heikinaro-Johansson, and President IMACSSS – W.J. Cynarski during the World AIESEP Congress 2014 in Auckland.

education and the approach of holistic pedagogy”. It presented the perspective of the development of the Polish theory of physical education from 1805 and the new directions and ideas. The proceedings of this session were closed by R. Light (master degree holder in *karate, iaido* and *kick-boxing*) with a lecture entitled “*Mushin: Re-conceptualizing learning technique in sport as a process of uniting mind and body.*” The concept of *mushin* is derived from the samurai tradition of *kenjutsu*.

This kind of congress can be viewed as a form of ritual, due to a number of characteristics including its cyclical nature, the celebrations, festivity, and the participation of masters of ceremony (the main organizers, the leaders of the organizations). It is usually a cathedral, a stage or a podium focusing the attention of the people gathered [cf. Cynarski, Obodyński 2004]. The place of the ceremony makes it is even more important what the contents values are promoted in such a solemn moment.

In the Congress in Auckland 350 participants from around the world took an active part. There were elections for a new, four-year term. Prof. Marc Cloes was elected the new president of AIESEP. For the last eight years (since the Congress in Jyväskylä 2006) Prof. Pilvikki Heikinaro-Johansson has been the leader. The following AIESEP Congress is to be held in four years in Istanbul, but next year it will be possible to meet at a conference of the Association in Madrid.

In addition to the new knowledge and exchange of views, great value was placed on meeting friends and acquaintances. Abstracts of the work or the papers were not published. The website contains general information on the Congress. The participants only received a programme. However,



at least three full papers will be published in our “Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology”.

### Symbolic meanings of travel

The symbolism of a place is the set of distinguishing items which specifically identify its symbolic culture; it concerns the place of your own or a foreign one. Generally, tourism involves visiting other foreign places, travelling and the process of overcoming alienation.

The first author, for example, was born and raised in a small town, with a cross and a mast with the Polish flag on one side of the hill (Żarnowska Mt) and on the other side, the tower of the Roman Catholic collegiate church. Between them in the market, there is a statue of St. Michael the Archangel, as depicted on the coat of arms of the town.

The city of Dubai was visited by the author by night. Actually, there are no old buildings, but they have a few the most impressive, the highest, the most expensive etc. places in the world. This may not be the world of fairy tales, but petrodollars have undoubtedly been very useful to the citizens of the UAE. The relationship of this country and its people with the religion of Islam is *ever-present*, which is expressed in clothing, architecture (minarets next to mosques for example) and the functioning of society (a father, several mothers or wives and a bunch of children). The public space is also full of religious artifacts.

The airport in Dubai is impressive in its opulence and style. The hotel was supposed to be right next door. From the map it appeared to be on the other side of the road. But the ring road was



Photo 2. Prof. Dr Michał Lenartowicz and first author by the hotel in Dubai.

separated by a wall, and could only be reached by taxi. Obviously in order to get out of and back to the airport it was necessary to have a United Arab Emirates visa. After breakfast at the hotel (photo 2), a shuttle bus took us back to the airport.

Auckland is the biggest city in New Zealand. It is a port city, rich and modern. A guidebook to Auckland describes the various attractions of the city and its surroundings. Significantly, there is a lack of any information which would allow the city to be associated with Christian and Latin culture [see: *Auckland A-Z*, 2014].

The logo of the Congress contains only a graphic element: the Islands of New Zealand arranged with fern leaves. It may probably be connected with ecology, and it may also be a decorative Maori and New Zealand theme. The emblem of the University



Photo 3. By the University campus

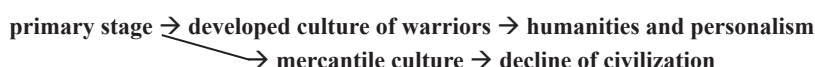


Figure 1. The symbolism of the stages of social development [source: own research]

of Auckland is richer: 3 kiwi birds, 3 stars and an open book (photo 3) symbolizing education, or a kind of “temple of knowledge”. The University, as a social institution derives from Christian Europe and is a kind of link between this young country and the ethos of European civilization.

What is meant here by authors is the fact that high culture, intellectual elitism and spiritual aristocracy grew in Europe from the roots of Christian culture, and the knightly and clerical ethos, and out of respect for knowledge, diligence, man himself and his dignity, and the pursuit of truth and justice.

Knightly status was a manifestation/form of the highly developed culture of warriors. It was a culture of an ethos of the love of truth, respect for the principles of honour and responsibility. However, where society was dominated by a mercantile culture, there has been a significant change in the social teleology. Noble aspirations, values and objectives have been replaced by strictly economic ones. An extreme manifestation of this is the principle that one should “sell well”.

When the Decalogue and natural law are replaced by the ideology of consumerism and post-modernism, and progress is measured by the introduction of further social experiments, it is followed by civilizational regression (Figure 1). Doesn't the community following extreme selfish hedonism, along with neo-pagan environmentalism and recognizing identity through the sense of sexuality, regress in this way to our simian ancestors? Among the followers of gender ideology the criterion for human identity is sexual orientation itself [Kuby 2014].

In the symbolic language of energy, defining capabilities/levels of spirituality, these are the lowest *chakras*. It is followed by the description of the cultural archetypes [Wilber 1981]: Typhon (Satan) – in general, symbolizes the period of early *homo sapiens*. Typhonic man lives in a world of emotional and sexual energy, at level 2 and 3 *chakras*. Typhon's world is the sphere of magic and dreams. The Great Mother was the target of the bloody rituals of agrarian cultures. Ritual sacrifice served to intensify the fertility of the earth. In the minds of agrarian society there was a link between sex and murder (murder of the mythical, original god) in the worship of fertility demons. Murder meant sacrificing the life of another human to keep one's own. The exemplification of the ritual in honour of the Great Mother is the killing of non-believers. The attributes of a ‘Devouring Mother’ are shown in the Indian goddess Kali.

Could it be true that in New Zealand the only remains of the culture of warriors, are rugby matches, with the traditional *haka* performed by the All Blacks (the national team, the world champions) before each match (photo 4)? Obviously the culture of Maori warriors is still there.

### The issue of hospitality

The authors wondered whether it would be better not to refer to the issue of hospitality from the Congress hosts. However, it is a basic concept in studying and working in the tourism and hotel industry. In Auckland one could speak about a lack of hospitality as understood by the standards of



Photo 4. *Haka* before a rugby match [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, www.mfat.govt.nz]



Central Europe. There were no greeting of guests, no special attention given, no tours, no conference materials (presented abstracts were not published), nor printed certificates of participation (it was supposedly connected with ecology and saving paper). The whole event was not however at all inexpensive. Moreover, there was no one to turn to in order to solve some logistical issues, such as catching a plane after one's own oral presentation.

A free glass of wine in the hotel, advertised on the Internet turned out to be a one-off attraction. A kind of control in a hotel room has never been experienced by the first author before. It was supposed to be a way of checking guest-satisfaction with the services. And where is the confidence in the guest? Is it possible to develop the tourism and hotel industry without an adequate level of social trust?

The main expression of positive hospitality was a banquet at the Pullman Hotel for Congress participants. Nevertheless, it ensured that participants did not commit the sin of gluttony by serving salad, one main course and one scoop of ice cream for dessert.

### **Impressions, surprises and interesting facts**

The first, a very pleasant surprise, was a bonus from Emirates Airlines. On the journey between Warsaw and Dubai we were upgraded to business class. But this comfort is demoralizing. Later, a person experiences a kind of injustice when they have to stay in economy class.

There was a landing in Melbourne, just an hour's transit stop with nothing interesting, apart from additional luggage checks. Here we met colleagues (members of AIESEP) from Turkey and Italy.

The image of New Zealand in the first author's mind was formed by the locations from the film trilogy "The Lord of the Rings". Wasn't it a place where the elves, who departed from Middle-earth, arrived? This vision of paradise on earth began to crack, however, when even before landing we had to write a customs declaration listing any articles, which are prohibited (fruit, sports equipment, etc. [Ministry of Primary Industries]). The author thought that this was a strange formality. Yet, apples, tangerines and sausages carried in luggage, are extremely dangerous for New Zealand, and were thrown into a rubbish bin. Anyway, before the author's luggage was checked and deprived of provisions (the author took some things as he did not expect any excessive hospitality), about two hundred people were waiting for over an hour at the airport's luggage reclaim.

Anyway, we managed to finally reach our destination hotel. It was Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> February. After more than two days on the road. We arrived in New Zealand where almost everything is "upside-down": February is the middle of summer, there is a 12 hour time difference and they drive on the left. Even the electrical sockets are different here from the rest of the world. To charge the battery in his laptop, the author had bought a Chinese plug; however it worked only when connected to a UK plug, which by chance the author had with him.

A single large statue of one of the kings of Tolkien's Middle-earth in the lobby of the airport (photo 5) was a source of pleasant associations with Peter Jackson's films for the author and an indicator of the development of film tourism. The official Guide to Auckland [Auckland AZ] does not mention Middle-earth. However, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade publication [2004: 42-42] there are two pages (out of 88) devoted to the film adaptations of "The Lord of the Rings". The fantasy world of Tolkien and Jackson attracts tourists, but it is very hard to see that today's local hobbit enthusiasts aspire to noble and lofty goals [cf. Cynarski 2008]. They take up whole new, fashionable ideologies.

Significantly, in the vicinity of the Quadrant Hotel (photo 6) the first author visited a Catholic mission, where in addition to church duties (chapel) priests and volunteers help people in need and for example, give the poor a free night's stay. They also run a library. Religion although pushed to the



**Photo 5.** One of the kings of Middle-earth. Airport in Auckland.



**Photo 6.** The view of the bay from the hotel room and a stuffed kiwi bird as a souvenir.

margin here (what a contrast with the UAE where society manifests its religious devotion), still exists in an institutionalized form and through the active strength of people of good will.

### **Martial arts tourism – a journey through time**

Let us examine the described scientific trip as a form of martial arts tourism, i.e. from the perspective of the concept of this type of tourism associated with studies and research in the field of martial arts science [Cynarski, Kubala 2013]. It is at the same time both a scientific congress and martial arts tourism.

The Expedition in both the physical and geographical space, was accompanied in a way by a sense of a journey through time thanks to Maori folk history. Their *haka* dances and shouts look like animated archaeological excavations going back fifty thousand years. Men beat their thighs and chests (as if they were King Kong), they show angry facial expressions and poses, stick out their tongues, stomp and shout. This is certainly a demonstration of power.

If rugby is a combat sport [Obodyński, Cynarski 2006] or something similar to combat sport, the Maori version of rugby (with a war dance *haka*) is similar to a martial art, or rather a proto-form of martial arts. Hokowhitu recognizes Maori rugby as the expression of their soul and body logic, a form of self-identification, reinforcing a sense of cultural and national identity.

The *haka* itself has a symbolic value, as a remnant (living fossil) of the culture of the first warriors. Watching this kind of demonstration is like a journey back in time to the warriors of the original (tribal) community, to the birth of the warrior culture, where martial arts did not have a structure, only simple forms and the skills of using primitive weapons [Figures 1, cf. Pawlik 2009a, b].

Studying martial arts is conducive to learning about foreign cultures, a kind of cultural dialogue [Cynarski 2006; Tokarski 2011]. In this case, it was a meeting of the indigenous Maori culture, but not only that. For the author it was a trip to research the field of martial arts science, to find co-workers for the study, as well as to assess the popularity of martial arts in this country. There was such a meeting and an agreement with Prof. Light (5 dan *karate*, 1 dan *iaidō*) from Australia, a collaborator on the Editorial Board of “*Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology*” and a member of the IPA Dan Committee.

In Thailand royal boxing *Muai Thai* is advertised on large posters even at the airport in Bangkok. They seem to be proud of their centuries-old tradition. And how is it in New Zealand? The author was looking for any trace of practising martial arts in Auckland. He only found one small leaflet advertising a section of *aikido*, a very pacifist martial arts, actually (late version of Morihei Ueshiba) an art of movement harmony. Could the reason be that in a country so afraid of European apples, martial arts are considered too dangerous? However they still play rugby here (photo 4).

### **Conclusions**

The paper presents an account of the Congress, in which the scientific content (pedagogy of sport, physical education) mixed with the ideology of gender. It describes the experience of travelling between Europe and New Zealand. The author suggests a schematic approach to symbolism of the stages of social development, in which resignation of the noble principles leads to moral and civilizational regression. Additionally, some contemporary fashionable ideologies cause regression in the spiritual development of humanity and go back to the typhonic level on K. Wilber's scale.

Perhaps distance from the roots of Christian culture makes people seek some substitutes for religion. When viewed from the public arena of Auckland the material and spiritual heritage of Christianity appears to have been amputated from all offers targeted at tourists.



Perhaps Christian ethics interfere with consumption and a comfortable life of enjoyment. In addition, the author discovered facts pointing to a low level of care of foreign visitors, which calls into question the principle of hospitality a constituent part of the function of tourism.

Field studies of martial arts helped to identify the presence of proto-forms of martial arts in the culture of the Maori, and actually the absence of martial arts in today's sports culture of New Zealand.

Photos 1-3 and 5-6: courtesy of M. Lenartowicz.

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## Symboliczne wymiary podróży naukowej: droga na Antypody

**Słowa kluczowe:** turystyka, semiotyka, Auckland, Dubaj, Nowa Zelandia, haka

### Abstrakt

Z perspektywy semiotycznej podjęto zagadnienie wyjazdu naukowego. Przedstawiono kongres naukowy (World AIESEP Congress 2014) i jego krytyczną recenzję; podróży wśród symboliki kulturowej; uwagi i wrażenia z pobytu w odległym kraju. Ponadto spotkanie z praformą sztuki walki i namysł nad społeczną recepcją sztuk walki w dzisiejszej Nowej Zelandii stanowią uzasadnienie dla traktowania tego wyjazdu także w kategoriach turystyki sztuk walki, chociaż nie dla ich praktykowania, ale dla badań. Badania terenowe sztuk walki pozwoliły stwierdzić obecność praform sztuk walki w kulturze Maorysów, i właściwie brak obecności sztuk walki dzisiejszej w kulturze sportowej Nowej Zelandii.

Autorzy zaprojektowali schematyczne ujęcie symboliki etapów rozwoju społecznego, w którym to schemacie rezygnacja ze szlachetnych zasad prowadzi do regresu moralnego i cywilizacyjnego. Ponadto niektóre modne dziś ideologie powodują regres w duchowym rozwoju ludzkości – cofnięcie do poziomu tyfonicznego (w skali K. Wilbera). Podczas Kongresu w kluczowych referatach treści naukowe (pedagogiki sportu, teorii wychowania fizycznego) pomieszano z ideologią gender. Być może oderwanie od korzenia kultury chrześcijańskiej powoduje, że ludzie poszukują jakichś substytutów religii. Ale z przestrzeni publicznej Auckland i oferty kierowanej do turystów jakby amputowano materialny i duchowy dorobek chrześcijaństwa. Być może etyka chrześcijańska przeszkadza w konsumpcji i wygodnym życiu dla przyjemności. Ponadto autorzy stwierdzili fakty wskazujące na niski poziom zaufania dla zagranicznych gości, co poddaje w wątpliwość zasadę gościnności – konstytutywną dla funkcjonowania turystyki.