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## Career Moves: German-speakers in the ethnographic field

George Forster's account of his voyage with James Cook elevated him to the most popular writer in Germany, and Germans became prominent among European scientific travellers. In many cases the entry into the ethnographic field proved to be a fruitful career move, opening opportunities for upward social mobility in a popular mood where *Bildung* opened the path to gentility and redemption. Here I trace some individual careers to examine how some of the best known German scientists built solid careers on their travelling and collecting in the empires of other European nations.

This study is located within a larger research project that seeks to examine the dynamics of influence of German speakers in the British colonial field. The German colonial empire was truncated to barely more than three decades (late 1880s to World War I) but German-speakers were far from peripheral in the Australia/Pacific field. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a string of scientific journals like *Das Ausland* (1829), Globus (1862), Verhandlungen der Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthroplogie (1867), Zeitschrift für Ethnologie (1868) or Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie (1888) kept a keen eye on explorations and activities in the European empires. Das Ausland was a weekly 20-page quartsheet under the scientific direction of Friedrich Ratzel, drawing on international literature to bring scientific, ethnographic and exploratory activities to the German-speaking reading public. Many of these journals accepted contributions in several languages, and the missionary journal Anthropos (1905) announced its sub-title in six languages (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Latin). German-speaking scientists actively participated in the scientific exploration of non-German colonies and contributed a wealth of research on indigenous body morphology, life-ways and culture, and to anthropology in general. English mission societies were inspired by German Pietist movements and relied strongly on German recruits. Missionaries were among the first ethnographers, and German-speaking missionaries acquired a particular profile for their philological and cultural endeavours. My larger project explores the degree to which fundamental differences in the ethnographic approach are discernible between German- and English speakers, and to explain these differences in terms of different histories of national and colonial development, and different intellectual traditions and networks.

The German empire (*das Deutsche Reich*, *Kaiserreich*) was primarily an inward-looking enterprise focused on forging a nation out of disparate states. Susanne Zantop observes that not having a colonial empire of their own, Germans actively participated in the colonial projects of other European powers and felt "free to critique" them, inspired by a "colonial fantasy" imprinted by a substantial romantic literature. This critical view often informed observations about the state of indigenous peoples. As in all early sciences, personal connections and contacts contributed to the cohesion of an emerging field, so that it is interesting to trace the personal connections between some of the better known 18<sup>th</sup> century professional travellers: the Forsters, Alexander von Humboldt, and Adelbert Chamisso, and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century scientist Georg Neumayer and collector Amalie Dietrich. In these biographies the changing field is also reflected as a rupture between "global travellers" of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the more discipline-specific and area-specific professional activities of scientists, collectors and missionaries.

# 18<sup>th</sup> voyagers of the Englightenment

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the era of post coaches institutionalised travelling and fostered a new culture of travelling, collecting and travel writing. Educational and scientific travels (*Bildungsreisen*, *Forschungsreisen*) gained in popularity and played a strong role in the German Enlightenment. Travelling to distant lands to reap specimens, notes, experiences and accounts became the trademark of advancing the empirical frontiers of knowledge. Voyaging was a pathway into a career, and usually resulted in a rise in status and upward social mobility. It also invoked at

transcontinental citizenship where Germans might be found in the service of French, Spanish, Russian or English expeditions, and Frenchmen like Baudin employed by the Austrian empire. Thus we see the two Forsters on Cook's voyage into the Pacific, Alexander von Humboldt assigned to one of Nicolas Baudin's scientific voyages<sup>3</sup>, and Adelbert von Chamisso on an American-French-Russian expedition. In the Forsters, Humboldt and Chamisso we also see a genealogy of direct personal contact and influence most clearly.

### **George Forster** (1754-1794)

George Forster, though of an inauspicious background, became Professor of natural history at age 25 on the strength of his account of a voyage around the world with James Cook<sup>4</sup> which made him the most widely read author in Germany.<sup>5</sup> His professional reputation derived solidly from travelling and collecting rather than formal study – his formal schooling was limited to eight months in St. Petersburg, after which he became his father's lifelong apprentice. His first scientific journey was through Russia in 1765, at age 10, with his father Johann Reinhold Forster, a Lutheran pastor from Prussian Poland who turned gentleman naturalist.

The elder Forster had a great thirst for social advancement and recognition, but to his constant detriment, according to his biographer Michael Hoare, "regarded directness as a virtue". His commissioned report on the situation of the 27,000 Germans settled on the Volga at the invitation of Catherine the Great, was frank, truthful and critical. It found so little favour with the Tsarist court that the promised remuneration was withheld. The family then moved to England in an emerging period of "Anglomania among German men of letters" (1763-80) facilitated by the royal Hanoverian connection.

On his arrival in London the elder Forster did not speak English, and he retained a lifelong dependence on his son George, so that the work of the father and son is difficult to disaggregate. Forster Snr was, at least during his early scientific career, an ardent supporter of Carl Linnaeus and soon befriended Linne's former assistant Daniel Solander in London. Solander and Joseph Banks, on their return from Cook's first voyage in 1771, became "the toast and gossip of town". In the following year Forster Snr became a member of the Royal Society, having just translated into English the account of the Pacific voyage of Louis Bougainville (1766-1769, translation published in 1772). In the same year he was at short notice invited to replace Joseph Banks as the naturalist on James Cook' second voyage to the Pacific (1772-75), to which he again brought his son George, now 17-years old.

Their association with the crew and patrons of the journey was not entirely amiable and ended in dispute about the extent of the Forsters' participation in writing the official account of the voyage. George Forster prepared an account of the voyage from his father's journals which appeared six weeks prior to the official account in 1776, but without illustrations. It was a commercial failure, but in 1778, George published a German version which attracted much public attention as the first German account of the voyage. The greatest part of the account was dedicated to ethnological observations, influenced by the German rationalist idea of *Erziehung* (education, cultural formation) and emphasising psychological and cultural factors above climatic and environmental ones. Johann Gottfried Herder praised it as a model to study the history of men in other parts of the world, and both J.F. Blumenbach and Isaak Iselin took much notice of Forster's account. It looked for interrelationships between systems at a macroscopic level, such as the relationships between geographical, altitudinal, and climatic factors of plant zones. This perspective is seen as a forerunner of Humboldt's *Kosmos* and Charles Darwin's macro-level theory.

As a result of this success the Forsters repatriated to the Continent. They had acquired a substantial natural history collection which became the basis of many professional contacts. George took up a professorship at Wilno in 1784, and in 1785 took his doctorate in medicine from the University of Halle where his father was now a professor of natural history. In 1790, Forster Snr launched the *Magazin von merkwürdigen neuen Reisebeschreibungen*, which he used as a platform to bring the most up-to-date and outstanding voyaging accounts to the German public, including Governor Phillip's account of Botany Bay (1789), Thomas Gilbert's voyage from New South Wales to Canton (1789), Lesseps' account of the *La Perouse* voyage (1790), and William Bligh's narrative of the *Bounty* mutiny (1790). To such translations, Forster Snr added his own editorial observations, always with the

directness that was his trademark. In translating Phillip Gidley King's New Holland report in 1794 he remarked that he had omitted the "weary details", and all vocabularies, because

everyone knows how incorrectly the English are wont to adapt words from foreign languages and how difficult it is for them on account of their imprecise vowel notation to represent what they have collected. Such vocabularies are naturally barren of results. <sup>10</sup>

He did welcome the contribution of Dr Schotte from Hesse 'on the state of Senegal' as an invaluable source of information, in refreshing contrast to

the proud British, engrossed in wretched gain [who] only have before their eyes the one intention of becoming rich, and often forget to contribute something to the history of mankind and nature in little known lands. 11

This is an apt expression of a German "sitting on the fence" of empire, and such expressions gained Forster Snr the reputation as a quarrelsome man. George was unable to quite extricate himself from the influence of his father who held on to the valuable specimen collections they had gathered together.

When in October 1792 the French captured Mainz, Worms and Frankfurt in the Rhineland, George Forster was working in Mainz, and he became a member of the Rhineland Convention, the unofficial government seeking union of the Rhineland with revolutionary France. He was accused of high treason and had to flee Germany in 1793. He was abandoned by his family and friends, even by his father. In 1794 he died alone and impoverished in Paris. George Forster's sympathies with the French Revolution ensured his marginalisation in Germany until he was lionised in the German Democratic Republic. One source refers to him as one of the most outstanding German ethnologists, developing it into a separate branch of science, and another source posits him as the progenitor of a new type of travel literature, a literary work with scientific aspirations, integrating objective descriptions and subjective judgements 12. However, this credit must surely be shared between Forster Snr and Jnr.

Forster Snr lived to age 70 and died in 1798, referred to by one of his colleagues at Halle University as "a doctor of every faculty except theology", and "the first polyhistor" of the 18th century. <sup>13</sup> For both Forsters we might say that their career was built on the reputation arising from their voyaging.

### **Alexander von Humboldt** (1769-1859)

George Forster was to become the role model of a scientific traveller for Alexander von Humboldt. Forster had married the daughter of Carl Gustaf Heyne, who was one of the young Alexander von Humboldt's professors in Göttingen. Through this connection Humboldt met Forster, and in 1790, Forster (age 36) and Humboldt (age 21) embarked together on a tour down the lower Rhine to England through an area of revolutionary forment. Forster had by now a substantial background in voyaging both on the continent and in the Antipodes, and great success as an author as a result. Humboldt went on to study languages at Hamburg, geology at Freiburg, and law at Jena before embarking on his extensive voyages. Hoare notices a "striking resemblance" between the methods, procedures and ideas of Forster and Humboldt.

Humboldt narrowly missed out on voyaging with Nicolas Baudin who was to become a feted explorer of Napoleonic France. In 1795, the Museé National d'Histoire Naturelle commissioned Baudin to retrieve a valuable botanical collection from Trinidad which had been stranded there when Baudin was shipwrecked while in the service of the Austrian royal botanist Franz Boos. Among the four scientists appointed by the museum to accompany the expedition, were the botanist Aimé Bonpland and Alexander von Humboldt. However, in September 1796 the expedition was interrupted at Teneriffe, and Bonpland and Humboldt obtained Spanish permission to accompany a 1799 voyage to South America, from which Humboldt returned in 1804.

This voyage established Humboldt as a scientific traveller of note whose name became inscribed in many American topographies. Sometimes referred to as the last all-round scientist, he became the author of the thirty-volume *Kosmos* (1845-1862) that was to profoundly influence German science, reflecting what we might now call an ecological view of nature, consisting of integrated and

interdependent systems. On his return to Germany in 1827 as political advisor in Prussia, Humboldt's public lectures overfilled the halls in which they were held, and when the first volume of *Kosmos* appeared in 1845, it was sold out within two months. His was another spectacular success based on bringing the insights of voyaging to the reading public.

### Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838)

Humboldt in turn was an inspiration for Adelbert von Chamisso. Chamisso is perhaps not very widely known in Australia<sup>16</sup> – but in Germany his name conjures the romantic period in Berlin where he was a prominent member of artistic circles and salon culture. His literary work, particularly the story of Schlemihl who sells his shadow and acquires seven league boots, has entered German and English folklore. Some years ago a Canadian academic asked in Berlin whether Chamisso was seen primarily as a poet or as a botanist. This led to a volume of essays from Hawaii, Estland, Berlin, Alaska, Canada, Australia, Austria, and Russia, but without closure on this question. <sup>17</sup> Chamisso is 'owned' in different ways in different places. Whereas the director of the Berlin Herbarium told me that 'of course' Chamisso is primarily a botanist, the continuing fascination with Chamisso seems to rest neither on his literary nor on his botanical work, but on his ethnographic observations.

The Chamissos were an aristocratic family, exiled by the French Revolution. Adelbert grew up in Berlin and became a "border crosser", <sup>18</sup> swinging between Prussia and France where he joined the circle of Madame Germaine de Staël and compiled a collection of French Revolutionary chansons. In Paris, around 1810, he met Humboldt, who was now age 41 and writing up his extensive travel accounts. Their age difference was almost exactly the same as that between Humboldt and Forster. It was here that Chamisso "decided to turn to the sciences". <sup>19</sup> He started to study botany and medicine in Berlin in 1912, though "mostly in the countryside" and in 1815, a month after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo, he joined a Russian Trading Company expedition to find a north-east passage from the Russian controlled north Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. Chamisso reminisced that in his childhood Cook had lifted veil on a fabulous beckoning world, and that he used to only ever think of Cook "in a gleam of light". (Cook, of course had become accessible to Germans through Forster.) But by the 1830s postal steamers offered passive tourists cheap fares to retrace Cook's steps, and a journey around the world had become a minimal part of a learned education. At least he had been the first Berliner to undertake such a trip, Chamisso consoled himself in his 1836 Prologue. <sup>20</sup>

His situation on the journey was a pale shadow of that of Banks and the Forsters who had been scientists appointed by the Admiralty and whose work was a matter of national strategic interest. Forster had always felt that compared with Banks he was not paid enough, and not given enough privileges. But Chamisso, though he assumed the title of naturalist, was entirely unpaid and found himself merely tolerated aboard the *Rurik* under Otto von Kotzebue. On several occasions his collections fell prey to the sailors' general clean-up on board, and one of his sets of dried plants was used as a mattress before it was lost in a storm. But it was a voyage around the world, and that was all-important. They went to Teneriffe (like Humboldt), Brazil, Chile, Kamchatka, California, Hawaii (November/December 1816), the Marshall Islands, and the Philippines (two months in 1818) and back via the Cape of Good Hope, leaving in 1815 and returning in 1818. In San Francisco Bay they visited the new Russian fur trading communities at Bodega and Fort Ross, and Chamisso famously named the California Poppy after his friend Johann Friedrich Eschscholtz. His botanical collections contributed to St Petersburg and the Berlin botanical gardens.

When Kotzebue's official account was published in 1821 Chamisso felt grossly misrepresented because too many errors crept into his part of the account and his relationship with the publishers was strained. According to Chamisso, Koetzebue's entirely forgettable account, pasted together from published sources, received only one positive book review, which however ignored Chamisso's contribution.<sup>21</sup>

Twenty years after the journey Chamisso published his own account, considered a masterpiece of travel literature. <sup>22</sup> Heinz Schütte sees it as a true product of the Enlightenment firmly based on empirical observations which yet reads like a "novel of disillusionment" (Desillusionsromantik). Schütte points out that Chamisso had a keen eye for historical change. On Hawaii he noticed how the alliance between a local chief and the traders was impoverishing the local people. In Manila, he found the Spanish past

in arrested development, unable to grasp the future. Schütte argues that Chamisso was a threshold personality, straddling the *ancien regime* and the modern world of global markets and Chamisso recognised this position in many others whom he met (Lafayette, Sir Joseph Banks and "Tameiameia", better known as Kamehameha, the Hawaiian "Napoleon of the Pacific").<sup>23</sup>

At this time Humboldt's *Kosmos* was still not published and Forster is usually cited as the role model for Chamisso's travel account. But if "man" is at the centre of Forster's account, at the centre of Chamisso's travelogue, Chamisso is firmly planted. Indeed, his Prologue recommends this as a narrative technique, an account that "denied entirely the scientist", and focused on himself being in a strange environment. Scientific travelling here becomes the entertaining story of a member of the chattering classes in Wonderland.

Chamisso's deep romanticism led him to critique colonialism, to ignore his own role in it (though he participated in high level diplomatic negotiations between Spanish California and Russian colonial ambitions), and to harmful interventions, such as on the Marshall Islands where he sought to reduce warfare by enriching the food supply with exotic plants and animals. In the process of planting the garden a breadfruit tree was felled, a fence erected, and a war narrowly avoided. The goats and pigs introduced by the *Rurik* succumbed to the climate and hunting before they could cause lasting damage, but the cats further reduced the bird population and caused the extinction of some species.<sup>24</sup>

Chamisso's reputation is not solely built on voyaging, he was also one of the most popular German poets of his time, and started his court career at age 15 as a pageboy (for Frederike Luise, Queen of Prussia). But as a result of this voyage Chamisso became an adjunct in the Berlin botanical gardens, and later director of its herbarium. His voyaging assisted his successful transition from the declining ancien regime into the new world of the bourgeoisie, also a successful career move.

In Chamisso's own account we see how the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought on a very different world for Europeans. Whereas the Forsters impress with the rapidity of their publications, and the direness of their financial circumstances, Humboldt was able to take forty years to ripen the fruits of his observations. This luxury was afforded to him by having independent means, but also by living to age 90. Had he died at age 40 like George Forster he would have left barely a trace. Had he died at age 57, like Chamisso, he would not yet have been a political advisor in Prussia. When the first of the *Kosmos* volumes appeared he was 76 years old. Humboldt, the "last all round scientist", had inhabited a different world from his 19th century successors, when being a polymath was no longer a valid qualification.

# The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

By the mid-19th century the plethora of trading companies undertaking regular shipping services into what had been uncharted fields fifty years earlier had detracted from the romance and glory of scientific voyaging. In the 1870s and 1880s a range of published directives for scientific travellers became available, indicating that scientific travelling and collecting was becoming so widespread an activity that its principles were no longer primarily imparted through direct personal instruction. These directives generally enjoined travellers to observe and collect only and leave the interpretation to theorists at home. <sup>25</sup> Collectors were no longer the voyaging pioneers - they became underlings in a scientific enterprise whose contribution often went barely acknowledged.

Women also joined the ranks of collectors. In south-west Australia Georgiana Molloy (1805-1843) worked quietly in the background, supplying Captain Mangles with valuable specimens (1836-1843) without expecting acknowledgement, happy only to contribute to the advancement of science, knowledge and mankind. The Austrian woman Ida Pfeiffer (1797-1858) on the other hand made a late career out of travelling, collecting specimens, and publishing her travel accounts. Pfeiffer first travelled to the Holy Land (Constantinople, Jerusalem, Cairo) in 1842, then to Iceland for six months, and around the world in 1846, and became a well-known author as a result. When she announced a further round-the-world trip in 1851, she received offers of free transportation from railway and steamship companies who wanted to advertise their services to the reading public. She claimed to be the first European admitted to the territory of the Batak people in North Sumatra and emphasised their reputation for cannibalism in her final bestseller *A Lady's Second Journey Around the World*. If

Chamisso had already shifted travel accounts into the field of *belles lettres*, the story of a woman circumnavigating the world twice must surely have signalled a transformation in the meaning and function of travelling around the world.

The differentiation of disciplines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ended the era of the savant, naturalist and all round scientist-philosopher. Royal Societies were disaggregated into libraries, museums and botanical gardens as separate institutions, and travelling and collecting became a discipline-specific training ground. Still we see personal support operating between scientific travellers like Humboldt and Neumayer, and Neumayer and Dietrich.

### **Georg Neumayer** (1826-1909)

Propelling the development of discipline-specific training was Georg Balthasar Neumayer, one of the leading scientists in Germany who has a German Antarctic research station and a moon crater named after him. He was knighted in 1900 by the Bavarian King, so his full title became Wirklicher Geheimrat (Most Privy Councillor), Prof. Dr. Georg Balthasar Ritter von Neumayer. In Germany Neumayer is mostly remembered for his promotion of Antarctic research. He initiated the international polar year in 1882-83 and established an international network of polar researchers.

My interest is in his role as the editor of the German instructions to scientific travellers published in 1875, the year after the British Association for the Advancement of Science had released its instructions to scientific travellers. Neumayer's volume became the German explorer/traveller's guidebook and influenced the way German-speakers abroad conducted scientific investigations and reported their results. <sup>26</sup> It was aimed at non-specialist yet highly educated travellers, with liberal use of English, French, Latin and Greek. Barbara Murray notices some interesting differences between the German and the British instructions. Like its 17<sup>th</sup> century predecessors (such as by the Royal Society of London) Neumayer's collection emphasised the recording of observations "uncontaminated by theory". But unlike the British and earlier instructions, that tended to focus on individual species and phenomena, Murray notices an emphasis on ecological views, on plant communities, geological contexts, relationships of organisms, and webs of interrelated information. The 1888 edition also contained chapters by Adolf Bastian on ethnology and by Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) on anthropology addressing itself to the capacity of missionaries to inform, collect and research. Bastian favoured a hermeneutic approach with his warning – delivered in characteristically floral prose - that

when dealing with the natives of a foreign country, the first task for the traveller remains . . . in the exchange of thoughts . . . to understand the often strictly logical reasoning in its concatenation of its connection, in spite of seeming non-reason.<sup>27</sup>

The idea to enter into other peoples' ways of thinking rather than see them as objects of study and explore their prejudices and ignorance, did not enter into the BAAS guidelines until more than thirty years later, in 1912.<sup>28</sup> Neumayer, as editor of this volume, selected the most outstanding German researchers in each field to propel scientific investigation into a distinctly German enterprise at a time when Germany was becoming a colonial power.

The volume also contains directions for photography by the Berlin anatomist and anthropologist Gustav Fritsch (1838-1927), who introduced a differentiation between ethnographic and anthropological photography, where the latter must refrain from artistic intervention to capture physiognomic characteristics of the subject while the former conveys information about culture and lifestyle. This differentiation reflects the early bifurcation into cultural and physical anthropology and manifested itself in much sober and visually uninteresting photographic material in the major collections.<sup>29</sup>

For his own career, Neumayer also drew on voyaging, combining a university education in physics, astronomy, and engineering with practical training in seafaring. He attended the navigational college in Hamburg and his first sea voyage in 1850 was to Brazil. His first visit to Australia was as an ordinary seaman on Godeffroy's *Reiherstieg* in 1852, which was deserted by its crew heading for the Victorian goldfields, where Neumayer spent eight weeks. He returned to Australia in 1854 as second mate on

Godeffroy's *Sovereign of the Seas*. In 1855 to 1856 he undertook magnetic surveys in various parts of Germany.

Neumayer's third excursion to Australia in 1856 was well funded with scientific equipment worth £2,000 to establish a geophysical observatory in Victoria. The Melbourne observatory was financially supported by the Bavarian King Maximilian II. 30 Alexander von Humboldt also lent his support and Godeffroy gave free passage to Neumayer and his equipment. 31 During eight years in Victoria he became a member of the Victorian Exploration Committee, conducted a complete magnetic survey of the colony, and became director of the Flagstaff Hill observatory. On his return to Germany in 1864 he already enjoyed a substantial reputation. He became the hydrographer in the German Admiralty (1864-1876), co-founded the German Hydrographic Office (Hamburger Seewarte) and became its director (1876-1903).

Neumayer maintained a close relationship with Godeffroy and Sons, the German "Kings of the South Seas" who were Germany's de facto East India company, but went bankrupt just four years before Bismarck's Germany took possession of New Guinea in 1884. Johann Cesar Godeffroy, a Hamburg senator, attached a private museum of natural history to his trading empire in Hamburg in 1861.

In 1861 and 1862 the published accounts of the Austrian frigate *Novara* displaced Humboldt's *Kosmos* from the top of the bestseller list of popular science. The *Novara* was a manifestation of the newly formed Austrian navy and had completed the first world circumnavigation by a German-speaking ship, including a month in Australia late in 1858.<sup>32</sup> There clearly was an avid market in accounts from distant lands, and Godeffroy, after some detrimental speculative investments, was by now looking to diversify the company's income base.

The Godeffroy museum was well connected with leading German scientists like Karl Müller (1818-99) Adolf Bastian and Rudolf Virchow, and became one of the most distinguished private museums in the nineteenth century - "it would surely not be too much to say that only with Cesar Godeffroy do the South Seas become scientifically accessed". The museum published its own lavishly produced journal (1872) and started to send professional collectors into the field who were instructed to obtain multiple specimens, if possible 25 to 30 each, that could be profitably traded. Among the museum's professional collectors were the American Andrew Garrett (1823-87), Jan Stanislaw Kubary (1846-96) from Poland, and the Swiss zoologist Dr Eduard Graeffe undertook the scientific management of the collections. In 1862, after considerable hesitation, a woman was recruited for a ten-year contract in Australia. Neumayer became "the most eloquent advocate" of this woman, Amalie Dietrich.

#### **Amalie Dietrich** (1821-1891)

Amalie Dietrich spent almost a decade in Australia to gather a most extensive collection of Australian natural and ethnographic specimens. She was in every way an outsider: a woman in a male dominated profession, a German in a British colony, an uneducated artisan in a learned society. This paradoxical position imprinted itself on Dietrich's life and on her reputation. Her father was a glove-maker and her mother a herbalist in the small village of Siebenlehn near Dresden. She lived at home until she married an apothecary ten years her senior, Wilhelm Dietrich, from a well known family of botanists. Combining her mother's herbal and her husband's pharmaceutical knowledge she began to collect professionally to sell specimens to medical and botanical schools and pharmacies. They extended their market for plants, insects and minerals from Saxony to northern Germany, Belgium and Holland, Dietrich travelling usually alone with the specimens loaded on a dog cart when other travellers enjoyed the comfort of a horse. Her marriage fell apart when she was forty (1861). By all accounts she had a difficult and frugal life.

The Germans who knew her describe Dietrich as kind, modest, and knowledgeable. As a social personage she appears unimpressive, with "threadbare clothes" and "worn-out canvas shoes". Sumner uses the term back-woods dweller, no doubt a literal translation of *Hinterwäldler* (bushie), with brusque and ungracious manners. On her return to Hamburg she availed herself of free lodging at the Godeffroy Museum until Godeffroy's went bankrupt (1879) and then moved into a municipal women's home a working class suburb, returning to remedial medicine to treat cancer and other conditions . She

became an embarrassment for her son-in-law Pastor Bischoff and was invited neither to her daughter's wedding nor to her grandchild's baptism.

Her professional collecting life brought her into contact with many naturalists and professors, from whom she eagerly learned, having acquired the skills of preparing and identifying specimens in the Linnean system from her husband, and during her Australian period (1863-72) she found entry into social circles that would have otherwise been closed to someone of her background. In Brisbane her work was facilitated by the prominent merchant Johann Christian Heussler who was Godeffroy's agent for Brisbane and Queensland's immigration agent for Europe. Heussler recruited over 6,000 German immigrants to the new colony and with the proceeds built Fernberg House, since 1909 Queensland's Government House. Dietrich stayed for a year with the Hess brothers at Lake Elphinstone (320 km inland from Mackay) and enjoyed a period of comparative luxury, even employing botanical assistants, one of them a former assistant of the Director of the Hamburg Zoo.<sup>39</sup> Her life was now quite unrecognisable from her dog-cart beginnings.

Dietrich arrived in Brisbane 1863 just as Robert Towns was bringing the first shipment of South Pacific workers into Queensland, rekindling debates over slavery. She settled in the suburb of Moorooka to start collecting, then moved on to Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay and Bowen, all new frontier towns. Queensland had only become a separate colony in 1859 and violence at the hands of squatters and native police characterised its race relations, erupting in a public inquiry into the Native Police in 1861. From her Rockhampton period (at some time between 1865 and early 1866) stems her ill reputation in Australia. According to the lore of the Archer family of Gracemere near Rockhampton, during a visit at Gracemere Dietrich suggested to an employee of the Archers to shoot an Aborigine as a specimen, a request that so infuriated William Archer that he had her taken back to town immediately. 40 This anecdote was told to Ray Sumner for her 1993 book, probably to Charles Barrett who mentions it in *The Sunlit Land*, and possibly also to Henry Ling Roth who lived in Mackay from 1878 to about 1885 and published a history of Mackay.<sup>41</sup> In the German-speaking accounts, this incident is either ignored or treated with circumspection. But in Queensland, particularly among indigenous researchers, it remains the dominant image of this woman. Learning to shoot was part of Dietrich's training as a Goddefroy collector. What was said, with what intention, under what circumstances cannot be reconstructed. But it seems clear that Dietrich hit a sore point in a society that had a burning problem, and she had received clear instructions in January 1865 to procure some human skeletons, which she managed to do in Bowen. 42 The image which has appended itself to her in Queensland aptly expresses a *Hinterwäldler* with rough ungracious manners and high aspirations and owes much to Dietrich's position as a social misfit.

The sheer size of her collections make Dietrich one of the most important collectors in Australia, but Australians remained unaware of her botanical, zoological and ethnographic collections in Germany: the taipan which she collected in 1866 and was named *Pseudechis scutellatus* by Professor W. Peters in Berlin was declared a new species 57 years later by an Australian specialist.<sup>43</sup>

For her collecting she enjoyed a great respect and had the support of leading scientists like Neumayer. She joined the German Society of Naturalists and Doctors (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Naturforscher und Ärzte*) and the natural history club (*Verein für naturwissenschaftliche Unterhaltung zu Hamburg*) founded by Godeffroy's curator Schmeltz. There is a curious anecdote about her, that after her return from Australia she unexpectedly turned up during the anthropological congress in Berlin, and the attendant announced "a poorly dressed woman asking admission". The chairman Professor Rudolf Virchow, on hearing that it was Amalie Dietrich reputedly sprang up and ran to the door, introducing her as "Amalie Dietrich, who I believe deserves a place of honour amongst us." <sup>44</sup>

The real beneficiary of Amalie Dietrich's travels appears to be her daughter Charitas Bischoff who turned her mother's life into a bestseller in 1909, that enabled her to buy a house in Blankenese, an elegant quarter of Hamburg. Of course this book is silent on the Gracemere anecdote, and its wide appeal stems as much from its fictional character as from its claim to authenticity. Those who had known Amalie Dietrich politely called it a novel. Charitas had not travelled and knew little about her mother, and less about science. She had attended an expensive boarding school and grown up in the care of a bourgeois family with refined tastes. She destroyed most of her mother's correspondence, invented some, and copied freely from published accounts especially Carl Lumholtz's *Among Cannibals*. Ray Sumner's biographical detective work reflects the difficulty of teasing a credible biography out of Bischoff's account of Dietrich's life.

Despite, or perhaps because of its fictional character, it was an outstanding success and appeared in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition in 1980. 46 Sumner finds that a veritable "Dietrichiana" has emerged from Bischoff's fictional account, first in the Third Reich and finally through feminist historiography: "the elements of the story fitted well with the Nazi ideology – a simple representative of the Volk, a life of unremitting hard work and sacrifice for a higher ideal, little financial reward, but dedication and great service to science and, hence, to the achievements and fame of the Fatherland." In the wake of the International Women's year of 1975 Dietrich moved into the pantheon of Communist feminists. 48 Practically every source on Dietrich since 1909, including her *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry, is based on Bischoff's fiction. In Siebenlehn a memorial and permanent exhibition honour her memory and serve as a platform for introducing Australian studies into the school curriculum so that Siebenlehn children now produce dot paintings in their art classes.

#### **Conclusion**

The colonial dynamic of scientific and exploratory travelling and collecting is well understood and has often been remarked on. But the very personal and direct benefit of this enterprise, which represents an internalisation of the colonial endeavour, might easily disappear from view. In all these biographies, travelling and collecting made a profound difference to the lives of the travellers. It provided upward social mobility to persons from inauspicious backgrounds, it compensated for a limited formal education, and it became the foundation for publications which could build a substantial academic career and lasting reputation.

Travelling and collecting fulfilled a range of aspirations for individuals, scientific communities and nation states. That European science was vastly enhanced and propelled by travelling did not escape the notice of missionary societies that were formed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the debates leading to the establishment of a Pietist mission centre in Basel in 1815 one of the founders exclaimed 'Shall not the Christians learn from the scientists, who have invested much into travels abroad and gained much from them?" The mission founders also recognised that a successful intellectual endeavour required the support of adequate educational institutions, good communications between the field and the centre, publications, and reliable travel. 50

Whereas the function and meaning of scientific travel changed vastly from the eighteenth to late nineteenth century, it remained a substantial building block of career advancement. The social elevation associated with scientific travel shows most clearly in the careers of the Forsters and Dietrich. Both George Forster and Amalie Dietrich were able to compensate for a meagre formal education with extensive voyaging experience. But even among the aristrocrats we see Humboldt developing a substantial reputation and a new conception of science out of his travels, and Chamisso resting his economic security on it. Neumayer's scientific reputation and his eventual knighthood is also substantially based on his early travels.

Personal connections also run through this genealogy of scientists, facilitating, assisting and inspiring the efforts of succeeding investigators. In my narrative the lineage begins with the Forsters travelling together and the younger learning from the older, and is continued in the common journey of George Forster and Alexander von Humboldt which is reflected in similar ways of seeing and ordering. Although Humboldt did not himself enter into the Pacific, he holds a key position in the scientific lineage. Chamisso was inspired by Humboldt to 'turn to the sciences' where such great insights and challenges could be found, and Neumayer was supported by Humboldt in his scientific expedition to Australia. Neumayer in turn influenced and consolidated a German-speaking scientific endeavour with the publication of his *Instructions*, and lent support to Dietrich.

The German-speaking scientific exploration of the Pacific was substantial, and able to draw on a wide domestic market and interested scientific community for its publications and exhibitions. This early participation, despite a short-lived colonial experience, remains manifest in the ethnographic collections and Oceania Studies curricula and publications of German-speaking institutions that have much to offer the researcher.

<sup>2</sup> Zantop, Susanne *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and National in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*, Durham: Duke University Press 1997, Introduction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> German Moravians and Lutherans were recruited by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and the Church Mission Society formed in Australia in 1825. Meanwhile the Catholic Church pursued its own propaganda, not only through French, Spanish, and Portuguese possessions, but also through Irish connections in British colonies, sometimes anticipating a firm British foothold, such as with the hasty declaration of a bishoprice at Port Essington just before the British abandoned that short-lived outpost (1838-49). Germans were among the first to successfully maintain an Australian mission station beyond the short-lived influence of a single central figure. The Moravian station at Ebenezer lasted for 43 years, at Ramahyuck 33 years and German missionaries from Hagenauer at Ramahyuck to Schwarz at Hopevale, from Strehlow at Hermannsburg to Raible in Broome have left strong impressions in Aboriginal memories.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> His *Wikepedia* entry claims that Humboldt was to accompany Baudin on his voyage of circumnavigation of New Holland. That voyage however commenced in 1800, while Humboldt was already in South America (1796-1804), and only after Baudin had established his reputation for scientific voyages with an expedition to Trinidad. The Trinidad voyage was commissioned in 1795 by the Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris which selected four savants for the voyage. This voyage was delayed at Teneriffe in September 1796 due to storms and continued some months later. On his victorious return in July 1798 Citoyen Baudin was feted in the streets of Paris displaying the botanical collection from the East Indies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> A Voyage round the world in his Britannic Majesty's sloop Resolution, commanded by Capt. James Cook, during the years 1772, 3, 4 and 5 (1777). Published in 1778 and 1780 in German.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Hans Werner Gille, "Kalenderblatt vom 10. Januar 2000: 10. 1. 1794: Johann Georg Forster gestorben" www.br-90nline.de/wissen-bildung/kalenderblatt (sighted 10/10/2005)

<sup>6</sup> Michael Hogge The Tandage Phills Januar 2000: 10. 1. 1794: Johann Georg Forster gestorben" www.br-90nline.de/wissen-bildung/kalenderblatt (sighted 10/10/2005)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Michael Hoare *The Tactless Philosopher: Johann Reinhold Forster* (1729-98) Melbourne: Hawthorne Press 1976:19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Hoare 1976:68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Hoare 1976:69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Hoare 1976:149.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> J.R. Forster, *Magazin von merkwürdigen neuen Reisebeschreibungen*, XI, 1794:iv, cited in Hoare, 1976:317.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> J.R. Forster, Beiträge zur Völker- und Länderkunde I, 1781:39, cited in Hoare, 1976:241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Wikipedia, and Alois Payer, www.payer.de/religionskritik/forster01.htm

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Anon., 1795, cited in Hoare 1976:308.

George Forster Ansichten von Niederrhein von Brabant, Flandern, Holland, England und Frankreich
 Hoare 1976:118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The Australian literature on Chamisso is dominated by German expatriates, like Dirk Spennenmann, Klaus Neumann, Heinz Schütte and myself. Spennenmann found that neither the *Sydney Gazette* (1803-1829), nor the *Australian* (1824-1843) nor the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1842-1945) mentioned Chamisso, and his diary was only translated into English in 1986. Dirk Spennenmann 'Adelbert von Chamisso in der Welt der kleinen Inseln' in Treziak et al 2004:159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Treziak, Ulrike et al. *Mit den Augen des Fremden. Adelbert von Chamisso – Dichter, Naturwissenschaftler, Weltreisender.* Berlin, Kreuzberg Museum, 2004.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Schütte, Heinz 'Adelbert von Chamisso and the South Pacific' in Talu, Alaima and Max Quanchi (eds) *Messy Entanglements: the papers of the 10th Pacific History Association Conference* (Tarawa, Kiribati), Brisbane: Pacific History Association, 1995:16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Schütte 1995:16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Adelbert von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt*, 1836, Prologue. Republished by Rudolf Mingau, Berlin 1985

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Chamisso 1836, ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Chamisso, 1836.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Schütte 1995:17ff.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Spennenmann 2004:143-159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Barbara Murray has identified significant differences in the directives given to scientific travellers by the British Association for the Advancement of Science (1874) and those designed by G. B. Neumayer (1875) and F. von Richtofen (1886), where the German texts tend to privilege an ecological approach to nature inspired by Alexander von Humboldt's *Kosmos* (1845-1858) and a hermeneutic approach to culture inspired by Herder and Goethe. Murray, Barbara 'Georg Balthasar von Neumayer's Directives for Scientific Research' in Walter Veit (ed) *The Struggle for Souls and Science – Constructing the Fifth* 

Continent: German Missionaries and Scientists in Australia, Strehlow Research Centre Occasional Paper Number 3, Alice Springs 2004:130-142.

- <sup>26</sup> Murray 2004:130.
- <sup>27</sup> Bastian, 1888:236, cited in Murray 2004:138.
- <sup>28</sup> Murray 2004:138.
- <sup>29</sup> Theye, Thomas '... ein Blick für alles Bemerkenswerthe ... 'Einige wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Aspekte der Queensland-Photographie Amalie Dietrichs in der anthropologischen Sammlung des Museums Godeffroy' Jahrbuch des Museums für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig Volume XLII 2004:180ff.
- <sup>30</sup> Pollichia E.V Verein fuer Naturforschung und Landespflege. Neumayer was once president of this naturalists' club in the Palatinate, founded in 1840. www.pollichia.de/arbeitskreise/neumayer.
- <sup>31</sup> Sumner 1993.
- <sup>32</sup> Theye 2004:213.
- <sup>33</sup> Karl Müller 1876, cited in Theye 2004:167.
- <sup>34</sup> The other collectors were Eduard Dämel, Franz Hübner and Johann Kleinschmidt. Scheps provides biographies for all the Goddefroy collectors. Scheps, Brigit Das verkaufte Museum: Die Südsee-Unternehmungen des Handelshauses Joh. Ces. Godeffroy & Sohn, Hamburg, unddie Sammlungen "Museum Godeffroy". Keltern-Weiler: Goecke & Evers 2005. Sumner 1993:61.
- <sup>36</sup> Her life is difficult to reconstruct, because it was appropriated by her daughter Charitas Bischoff, who in turn made some kind of career out of her mother's voyaging by publishing her life story. Those who had known Amalie Dietrich referred to it as a novel. Charitas had not travelled and knew little about her mother, having been separated from her since age 15. She destroyed much of her mother's correspondence, invented some, and copied freely from published accounts like Lumholtz's Among Cannibals. Ray Sumner has accomplished an outstanding feat of detective work to tease a credible biography out of Bischoff's account of Dietrich's life.
- <sup>37</sup>Among Dietrich's relations was a botanist brother, a cousin at the Jena University herbarium and an uncle who authored a ten-volume dictionary of gardening and botany and was Goethe's gardener at Weimar assisting him in his 1790 essay on the metamorphosis of plants. Scheps 2005:88.
- <sup>38</sup> Sumner 1993:72,78.
- <sup>39</sup> Sumner 1993:35, 37.
- <sup>40</sup> Sumner 1993:44.
- <sup>41</sup> Barrett 1947:40, 165; Roth 1908:81, Sumner 1993:44.
- <sup>42</sup> The human remains no longer exist, since the Godeffroy collection was purchased by the Leipzig ethnographic museum which suffered a direct strike in the bombing of Leipzig on the night of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1943. But the catalogue entries have survived, published in Journal des Museum Godeffroy Vol. X by Rudolph Virchow (posthumously), Hamburg 1902, and previously by J. Schmeltz and R. Krause Die Ethnographisch-anthropologische Abtheilung des Museum Godeffroy in Hamburg Hamburg 1881. Of the eight Bowen skeletons, one is identified as a 40-year old woman named Mammi, and one as the 35-year old male Wulure. There was also a skull each from Gladstone and Rockhampton. Information by courtesy of Dr Birgit Scheps, curator, Grassi Museum, Leipzig. Cf. also Scheps 2004:95.

  43 Sumner 1993:38.
- <sup>44</sup> Dr Alexander Sokolowsky, 1932, in Sumner 1993:62.
- <sup>45</sup> "A stranger pair than this mother and daughter together is hard to imagine: Charitas the daughter was a girl with a fine education, raised in the best manner of contemporary society; Amalie on the hand, peasant-like, rough, had something which made her seem like a foreign guest among civilised Europeans," Agnes Glaub, daughter of a Hamburg boat builder, unidentified newspaper cutting, in Sumner 1993:73.

  46 Editions were released in 1909, 1911, 1913, 1917, 1923, 1926, 1928, 1931, 1933, 1977, and 1980.
- An annotated edition is currently mooted by Bischoff's great-grandchildren in association with the Siebenlehn promotional association. <sup>47</sup> Sumner 1993:87.
- <sup>48</sup> Sumner 1993:87,89.
- <sup>49</sup>Rev. Dr Steinkopf, cited in Huppenbauer, Hanns Walter *Gottes nicht des Fürsten Sache tun!* Missionsmotive und Theologie in den Anfängen der Evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft in Basel Affoltern, Switzerland, 2005:69.
- <sup>50</sup> Buchanan, Claudius *Christian Researches in Asia* London 1811.

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