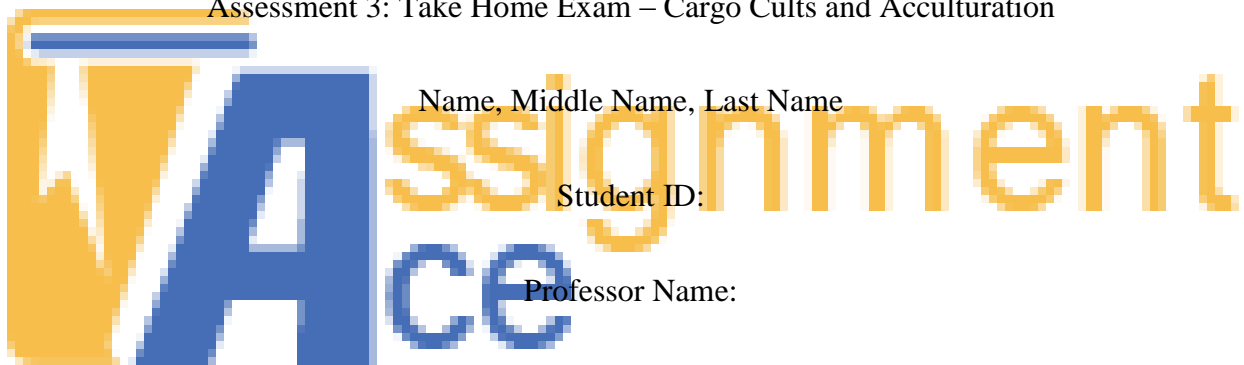


102344 – Different Ways of Being in the World: Introduction to Social Anthropology

Assessment 3: Take Home Exam – Cargo Cults and Acculturation



Name, Middle Name, Last Name

Student ID:

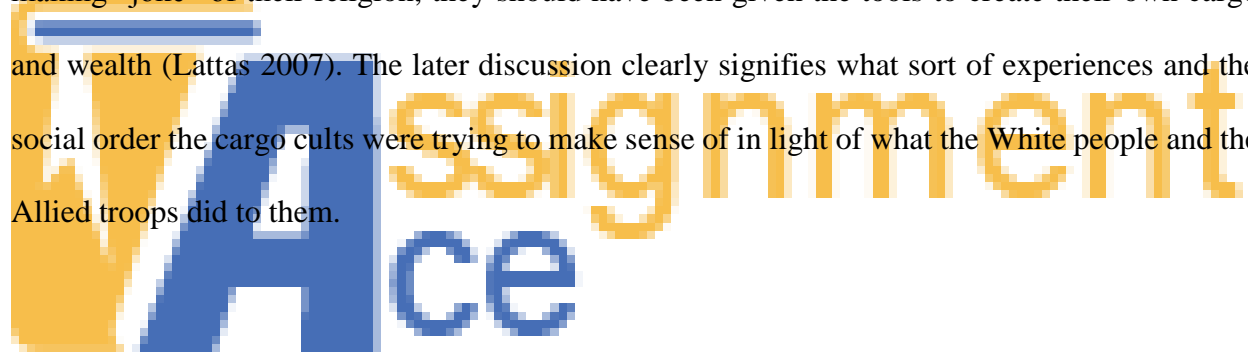
Professor Name:

Topic 1: Cargo Cults

A millenarian movement, Cargo Cult, encompassing a number of practices and occurred due to the contact of Melanesians with such societies that tend to be technologically advanced. Otto (2009) highlighted that this movement occurred because of Western Colonisation and more specifically because of the acquisition of Western Goods, “cargo”. Burrige (2001) mentioned that a number of Melanesians were significantly disturbed by the impact of the European economy and its respective influences on their indigenous economic arrangements. Burrige (2001) further mentions that their aspirations were purely economic and socio-political, however, in nature were known as millenarian. Worsley (1988) highlights that their activities were mostly targeted towards the attainment of a blessed state emphasising the access to free cargo – foodstuffs and cargo unloaded from the cargo of huge freight ships and recently from aircraft in this industrialised and contemporary world. During the WWII, Allied troops (White people) landed on many islands bringing with them jeeps, aircraft, medicine, electricity and all types of “modern waders” of which the native people could not ever think about. However, after the end of the WWII, the Allied troops left the islands along with their modern waders and this initiated the millennial movement. The cargo cults were in the belief that this cargo was sent by their Gods and ancestors and wanted it back. According to many scholars, they did many “maniac” things like clearing path of the jungles for runways, wearing military uniforms, making guns out of bamboo and marching the same way White people did and always looking at the sky hoping that someday their cargo will be returned (Schwoerer 2014).

However, a few years later, a number of US million troops passed through the islands of cargo cults while completely flooding the local inhabitants. This is what characterised by Worsley (2009) as an era of chaotic and meaningless changes in which the cargo was taken back from the

inhabitants and then completely swamping their lives. They were willing to come out of such a social order which was taking back from them their cargo, their lives and even their rituals – they destroyed their sacred rituals, demolished their gardens just for the sake that their cargo will return. Though the activities of cargo cults seem irrational, or more specifically “quaint stone-age ignorance”, they were not completely irrational. Despite the fact that they were completely naïve and existed because of misleading confusion between causation and correlation, they tried to make the best out of the things they possessed. They were actually having a faith that working hard will result in rewards they want to possess. This is the most obvious reason of cargo cults which social workers and missionaries should give attention to. Some anthropologists also argue that rather than making “joke” of their religion, they should have been given the tools to create their own cargo and wealth (Lattas 2007). The later discussion clearly signifies what sort of experiences and the social order the cargo cults were trying to make sense of in light of what the White people and the Allied troops did to them.

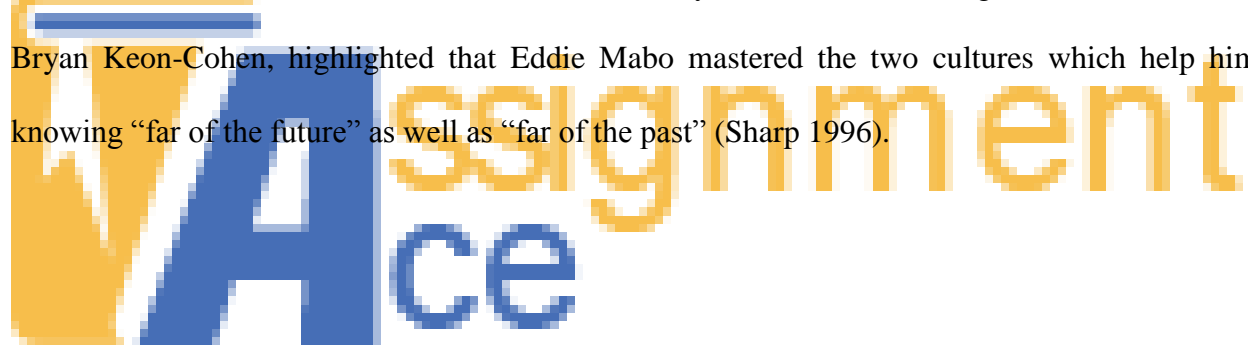


Topic 3: Eddie Mabo – Acculturation

Edward Koiki Mabo, also known as Eddie Mabo, is a Meriam Man from one of the most remote islands of Torres Strait, Murray Island. The decision of adopting the culture of Whites that existed in the society when it was dominated by Whites was taken in the early years of life. However, he also decided to not lose upon his original and ancestral language and traditions. He was able to build his own school in the village of Townsville for the local children just because of his courage, flaring determination and imagination (*First Australians - we are no longer shadows - episode 7* 2016). Using the same courage and determination, he fought for ten years with the Meriam High court and challenged their decision regarding the demand of their native title to the land. Mabo was interested in the opening school for the children in the village of Townsville and the vision was to integrate two cultures with the school; this can be regarded as a primary influence due to which Mabo adopted two cultures – a process also known as “acculturation” (Bell 1997). The objective of Mabo was to teach European skills, education and ideas along with the traditions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders culture. A number of academic scholars have regarded as the vision as courageous because Eddie Mabo believed that the integration of two cultures would results in the production of articulated and confident students; another influence behind the adoption of two cultures. Eddie Mabo was also believed in order for creating multiculturalism in Australia, the sharing and integration of both these cultures is a unique opportunity and necessary for the betterment of his people (Costigan 2014).

However, it should also be noted that though he bridged both of the cultures, he got hurt on a number of situations and also suffered deep hostility but with the help of his confidence and resilience did not lose his vision and mission to bring the people of his island close to the White people. Another influence behind the adoption of two cultures also lies with his vision of the school

(Loos 1998). The school, named the Black Community School, survived for twelve years despite facing a number of financial issues and at one time Mabo was forced to extend his knowledge about the White culture in order to maintain the existence of this school. Mabo became more of an activist and initiated to campaign advocating better access for the local Torres Strait islander to education, medical services and social services (Loos 2013). He recognised that Aboriginals in Australia are not enjoying their rights completely unlike the indigenous groups in Canada and Maori in New Zealand. In order to change the state of affairs, he believed that education is one of the major components. Summing up, it can be said that the major influence on the adoption of two cultures by Eddie Mabo was the betterment of his people and to raise voices regarding their rights to basic and essential services. After he died, the lawyer with which he fought the case for Land, Bryan Keon-Cohen, highlighted that Eddie Mabo mastered the two cultures which help him knowing “far of the future” as well as “far of the past” (Sharp 1996).



References

Bell, D 1997, 'In the age of Mabo: History, aborigines and Australia: In the age of Mabo: History, aborigines and Australia,' *American Anthropologist*, vol. 99, no. 2, pp. 450–451, DOI 10.1525/aa.1997.99.2.450.

Burridge, K 2001, 'Cargo Cults', in JD Wright (ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences*, Elsevier Science, Oxford, UK, pp. 1481–1484.

Costigan, L 2014, 'Edward Koiki Mabo: His life and struggle for land Rights', *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, vol. 43, no. 02, pp. 235–237, DOI 10.1017/jie.2014.28.

'First Australians - we are no longer shadows - episode 7' 2016, *YouTube*, 9 May, YouTube viewed 7 February 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CSADl_gXZY&feature=youtu.be>.

Lattas, A 2007, 'Cargo cults and the politics of Alterity: A review article', *Anthropological Forum*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 149–161, DOI 10.1080/00664670701438407.

Loos, N 1998, 'Edward Koiki Mabo: A personal perspective', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 29, no. 111, pp. 366–374, DOI 10.1080/10314619808596078.

Loos, N 2013, *Edward Koiki Mabo: His life and struggle for land rights*, 2nd edn, University of Queensland Press, Australia.

Otto, T 2009, 'What happened to cargo cults? Material religions in Melanesia and the west', *Social Analysis*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 82–102, DOI 10.3167/sa.2009.530106.

Schwoerer, T 2014, 'The Red Flag of Peace: Colonial Pacification, Cargo Cults and the End of War among the South Fore', *Anthropologica*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 341–352.

Sharp, N 1996, *No ordinary judgement: Mabo, the Murray Islanders' land case*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, ACT.

Worsley, P 1988, *The trumpet shall sound: A study of 'cargo' cults in Melanesia*, 2nd edn, Schocken Books, New York, NY.

Worsley, PM 2009, *50 years ago: Cargo cults of Melanesia*, viewed 7 February 2017, <<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/1959-cargo-cults-melanesia/>>.