

In many parts of the world the 'white man' is perceived as an instigator of globalisation and an embodiment of modernity. However, anthropologists have paid little attention to the actual heterogeneity and complexity of 'whiteness' in specific ethnographic contexts. This study examines cultural perceptions of 'other' and 'self' as expressed in cargo cults and masked dances in Papua New Guinea. Indigenous terms, images and concepts are contrasted with their western counterparts; the latter partly deriving from the publications and field notes of Charles Valentine. After having done his first fieldwork more than fifty years ago, this 'anthropological ancestor' has now become part of the local tradition and has thus turned into a kind of mythical figure. Based on anthropological fieldwork as well as archival studies, this book addresses the relation between western and indigenous perceptions of self and other, between tradition and modernity, and between anthropological ancestors and descendants. In this way the work contributes to the study of whiteness, cargo cults and masked dances in Papua New Guinea.

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