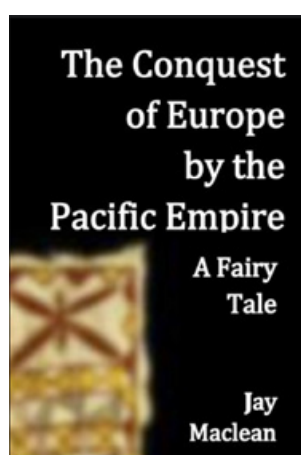


Jay Maclean, other writings

Found, lost, paved and sunk: Paradise

The western Pacific that was, is, might have been, and probably will be

Two new e-books by Jay Maclean look at the history and future of the tropical western Pacific from different perspectives.



In the first, he turns history upside down and explores how Pacific traditions and culture could have transformed Europe instead of vice versa in an e-book entitled *The conquest of Europe by the Pacific Empire: A fairy tale*. The book is based on the awful truth that today, the Pacific islands reflect the best and worst in western society. On the one hand are the bravery and persistence of early European navigators, missionaries, and government officers; the early, well-meaning efforts by many westerners to help the islanders become 'civilised'; the assistance readily given in times of natu-

ral disasters; and the grants and concessional loans to help Pacific countries develop into independent economic entities, to name but a few. On the other hand are the persistence of the west in demolishing the islanders' tropical culture and turning them into unwilling citizens or dependents of temperate countries, like puppets; the arrogance of assuming that modern western democracy and societal norms, which date back but a few generations, must replace the islanders' far longer-standing societies; and the continuation of all these efforts to westernise them and their countries in the face of growing awareness in those Pacific countries of the value of their own well tried-and-tested lifestyles – to name but a few.

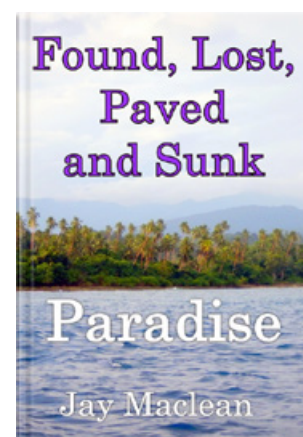
In short, the west took away the islands' culture and gave them diabetes.

What if history had gone another way? What if the Pacific islanders had taken over Europe instead? That would have been impossible, of course, or would it? Perhaps the Pacific Empire did conquer Europe in the 1600s in response to the prospect of being continually attacked by European adventurers. After all, Europe, particularly England, had just been swept by the third black plague; London was devastated by the Great Fire, and there were continuing, debilitating wars across the channel. Perhaps the islanders brought their lifestyle and biological knowledge to its logical conclusion in a European context, resulting in a peaceful, healthy and harmonious Europe, until, in a prophetic Brexit, Britain broke away. The rest is history, perhaps...

The second book, *Found, lost, paved and sunk: Paradise*, deals with the reality of tropical island history, in the context of the elusive search for paradise. It explores the mind set of artists, beachcombers, colonial administrators, developers, explorers, hermits, missionaries, mutineers, philosophers, scientists and writers, not to mention the native residents who were already living in the paradises that the 'aliens' sometimes describe. The contents include the mechanics and problems of living in a paradise, dealing with neighbours both onshore and offshore, housing, water, and health; the fate of paradises under colonialism and climate change; and last but not least, the opinions of other animals as well as plants; where is their paradise?

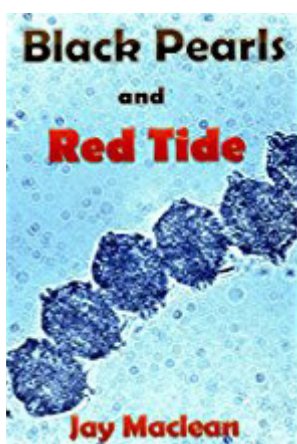
Jay worked for nearly 10 years on the book, beginning with the question: Where is paradise on earth? Somewhere far from the maddening crowds, the cold, the politics, and work, of course. People have been searching for paradise even before taxation was invented. The stories of those who wrote about their exploits often reveal more about themselves than the nature of the paradises they sought and sometimes found. Did you know that Sir Walter Raleigh was the world's first pusher of paradise real estate? Or that among the explorers of tropical paradises, the infamous Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* was quite humane and considerate? Or that Captain James Cook was the first westerner to get a tropical, full body massage – and was pretty coy about describing it? That the original Shangri-La paradise was a mix of ascetic monks on top of a Tibetan mountain and a tropical village of loose women at its foot? That Thor Heyerdahl and his first wife honeymooned for a whole year in a remote tropical paradise, leading to his Polynesian migration theory and the Kon Tiki expedition?

The evidence from past writings builds a convincing case for placing *the* earthly paradise in the tropical western Pacific. The biological and ecological evidence is also compelling – more kinds of fauna and flora, per square kilometer live there than anywhere else. Certainly, it is a paradise for fish, as revealed by the Coral Triangle Initiative. Using some basic math, Jay estimated that Pacific islanders may eat on average about 80 billion fish over their lifetimes, more than 1 billion



fish per year. Some philosophical questions tackled include: Where and how does paradise fit into the Pacific future? And finally, what does it all really mean? The book is punctuated with tongue-in-cheek tips for paradise seekers but is entirely factual and extensively referenced with about 200 sources, from exploits of early explorers and travelers to the writings of prominent scientists and philosophers.

Jay Maclean has been working on the edge of the Pacific, in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines, for more than 40 years, researching and writing about fisheries and aquaculture and tropical ecosystems. Other works that may be of interest to workers in the region are:

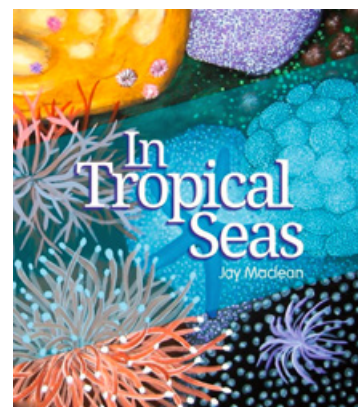


Black pearls and red tide, which follows his research in the 1970s in Papua New Guinea on red tide, and oyster and pearl oyster culture, updated to the present and with projections into the future. The story begins with the strange deaths of three young children in a small coastal village in Papua New Guinea in 1972. They did not rate a mention in the territory's annual report that year to its Australian governors – let alone make a ripple in international ponds. Yet, it was an event

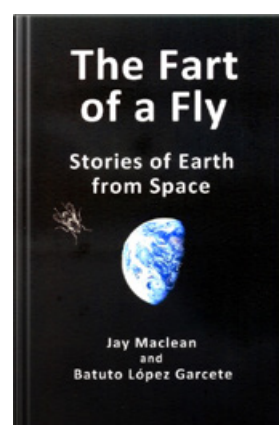
of incredible proportions. It marked the end of a chain of traditional knowledge that extended back more than 45,000 years; it heralded the beginning of an era of immense, baffling phenomena and disasters around the world; and it marked the rise of a deadly toxin from the seabed that would spread from country to country. It encompasses much of the globe, from the Pacific islands to Asia – Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines – to the Middle East – Persian Gulf and Red Sea, and the Egypt of the Pharaohs – to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of the Americas, and to Australia and Antarctica.

It is a detective story, about who or what killed the three children, involving searches in helicopters, light planes, speedboats and a naval patrol vessel; and underwater explorations. It is also a romantic saga, spanning a period from the tail end of the Paleolithic era, pausing for less ancient events, the exodus of the Jews from Egypt and Cleopatra's dinner with Marc Antony; and leap-frogging through events over the following two millennia via connections with Spanish kings, Napoleon Bonaparte, and the most famous pair to play the part of Cleopatra and Marc Antony in modern times: Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Finally, it is the story of the author, then a young scientist sent unknowingly as a spy into Papua New Guinea shortly before its independence. How did he find himself enmeshed in the threads of this strange puzzle and what did he discover?

In tropical seas (Manila, Zobel Foundation, 2014; 48 pages, out of print) is a densely illustrated introductory book on coral reef ecosystems for youth, applicable around the Indo-Pacific. It describes the food chain aspects of these ecosystems and takes the young reader along to fossick on a rocky beach, to wade in the intertidal zone and then in the mangroves and seagrass meadows, to snorkel in the shallows and finally to pretend to be a scuba diver and explore a reef drop-off. 'Traditional' fisheries are described and a short section on the future of tropical seas ends the book. The book is set for reprinting in English and Filipino this year as part of a school project in the Philippines.

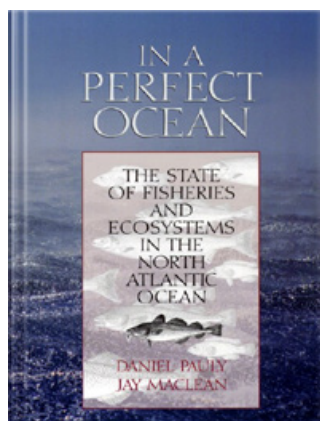


A new book of short stories, *The fart of a fly: Stories of earth from space*, coauthored with Batuto López Garcete and launched in May 2018, addresses broad environmental and social issues, along with a little humor. A kindly visitor from another galaxy arrives to find Earth in a bad state. Humans have overrun the planet and are living on a knife edge, supported by increasingly higher technology to maintain life while the climate changes around them and even the gas from the fart of a fly could tip them off the edge. *The fart of a fly* story itself deals with population and greenhouse gases, pointing out the wisdom of the old adage: save gas – fart in a jar.



Other stories are set in plausible futures as warnings of where we humans are heading, and 'healing' essays on simple changes to our way of life that promote better futures for both the planet and its peoples. Our visitor from space also takes us on humorous or mysterious sidetracks when he finds something interesting for his readers back home.

Of particular interest to some Pacific readers is a story on *The painter of the last coral reef*, about ‘rescuing’ the last coral reef, through an enormous painting, set in a possible future in which the reefs have all succumbed to climate change. In the end, the book reminds us we are part of, not apart from, nature. Consequently, most of the advice in the stories boils down to the principles of love and respect, not only among humans but across the living planet as a whole. Those principles, incidentally, echo the theme of a book by Philippe Cury and Daniel Pauly¹). The authors conclude that *Life is one; we must reconnect to the cycles of life, otherwise, life may continue without us*.



Daniel and Jay wrote an earlier book together, on the overall health of an entire ocean, entitled *In a perfect Ocean: The state of fisheries and ecosystems in the North Atlantic Ocean*. (Island Press, Washington DC, 2003). It was a landmark study, the first of its kind to make a comprehensive assessment of an ocean's ecosystems. As the impacts of climate change begin to be felt at an accelerating rate, particularly in the Pacific, where populated atolls have already been submerged and others inevitably

will in the near future, it is not too late to consider such an assessment for the tropical Pacific. The intimate relationships

of humans and the sea, vis-a-vis the North Atlantic, imply that the assessment would contain a large human component. It would not be a baseline, but at least a reference point, on which to gauge future ecosystem change and the emerging societal consequences.

All these books (other than *In Tropical Seas*) can be seen online. By way of an apology, nearly all were intended to be and originally appeared free-of-charge (except *In a perfect ocean*) on a subsidiary website of MacMillan, but the site folded and an independent publisher took over the same role this year (consequently all the books are dated 2018); however, books had to have a minimum price of USD 0.99. They are on:

Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_pg_2?rh=n%3A283155%2Cp_27%3AJay+Maclean&page=2&ie=UTF8&qid=1522031856

Kobo at <https://www.kobo.com/us/en/search?query=jay%20maclean&fcsearchfield=author>

iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/author/jay-maclean/id529096285?mt=11>

¹ Cury P. and Pauly D. 2013. Mange tes méduses ! Réconcilier les cycles de la vie et la flèche du temps. Odile Jacob, Paris, 216 p. Updated in English in early 2018 and to be published soon.