display of arrogance and contempt and outright inhumanity. The alternative is clear: the Pacific for the pacific, in both senses of that word.

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James Clifford knows a lot. Not since Kenneth Burke was producing torrents of work in the 1940s and 1950s has such a wide-ranging perspective been brought to bear on contemporary social questions. There is a cost, of course; by the time I finished The Predicament of Culture every reference book I own had been dragged from the shelf to my desk. And I'm still puzzled by his use of certain terms and phrases, such as "relational," "essentializing," "topos," "privileged armatures," "post-symbolist poetics of displacement," and "redemptive metahistorical narrative." Since the book is a collection of essays written originally for a very broad range of audiences, I suspect that readers from other fields will scratch their heads over phrases and concepts that gave me no trouble whatsoever.

For students of the contemporary Pacific, I think, the significance of Clifford's work lies in his illuminating, and sometimes disturbing, accounts of culture as a living, throbbing creation, and of the peculiar ways in which scholars try to mount it in museum cases and the pages of ethnographic treatises.

There is a considerable body of resistance to modern culture theory among one wing of Pacific scholarship. These meat-and-potatoes types want to see the hard evidence of political economy, demography, and geomorphology. While they may find themselves a bit uncomfortable with Clifford's style, many will nonetheless enjoy his dissection of anthropological mannerisms in the chapters titled "On Ethnographic Authority," "Power and Dialogue in Ethnography," and "On Ethnographic Self-Fashioning."

In the first of these, he explores the means by which "the predominant mode of modern fieldwork authority is signaled: 'You are there . . . because I was there' " (22). In the second he portrays the extraordinary arrogance of Marcel Griaule, who bullied and cajoled and expropriated his way across the Sudan, and generally exemplified the European presumption (which Clifford uncovers again and again as he shifts targets) that collecting accounts of people's lives is of far greater importance than the lives themselves. In the third we learn how Malinowski and Conrad used their experiences in, and visions of, the tropics in order to convert themselves from expatriate Poles into proper Englishmen.

Another wing of Pacific studies (for whom, I suspect, I am writing this review) will be quite comfortable with the hermeneutics, discourse analysis, and deconstruction Clifford employs. While others might read "On Ethnographic Authority" as an exercise in
debunking fieldwork, these scholars will be heartened by his sympathetic treatment of “this peculiar amalgam of intense personal experience and scientific analysis,” which he reformulates “in hermeneutic terms as a dialectic of experience and interpretation” (34).

The second section of the book, “Displacements,” is an intellectual history of France between the wars. My own attention was drawn to a chapter on Michel Leiris, who launched one of the earliest concerted attacks on the colonial underpinnings of anthropology. Unfortunately, Clifford’s emphasis on style draws him away from meat-and-potatoes history—but then, I suppose, one does not turn to French cuisine for the mundane.

In “Histories of the Tribal and the Modern” and “On Collecting Art and Culture” (which make up the third section) modern North American and European museums are placed under the microscope. Here some of the themes evoked in the earlier essay on power and ethnography are extended. Clifford challenges museum practices which systematically exclude history “that may signal the life, not the death, of societies” and portray the non-Western world as “always vanishing and modernizing” (201–202). Again, the anthropological habit of collecting cultures is skewered with a reprinted 1932 letter from Margaret Mead, who reports that she and Reo Fortune “are just completing a culture . . . . They have no name and we haven’t decided what to call them yet” (230). (These are the people who were ultimately to be immortalized as “the Mountain Arapesh.”)

“Identity in Mashpee,” in the final section, strikes me as Clifford’s most powerful essay. This is perhaps because I am an ethnographer, and it is here that he comes the closest to doing ethnography. He distinguishes history (and he identifies himself as a historian) from anthropology by reference to sources. “History is thought to rest on past—documentary, archival—selections of texts. Ethnography is based on present—oral, experiential, observational—evidence” (340).

This chapter, unlike any other, is an eyewitness account—heard, experienced, and observed by Clifford—of a trial in Massachusetts. The appearance of real people, engaged in living real lives, provokes an immediacy that only occasionally flickers through the rest of the work. The North American Indian people of Mashpee, a town on Cape Cod, were attempting to establish, in court, their status as an Indian tribe. The opposition argued that acculturation and assimilation had turned them into one more ethnic group, like the Irish-Americans and the Italian-Americans, who had no more claim to Indian culture—and a privileged legal status—than any other.

There are some important lessons here for students—and perhaps for some of the peoples—of the Pacific Islands. In the face of their assertions about their own Indianness, the Mashpee were confronted with the overweening views of American law and society:

 Indians had long filled a pathetic imaginative space for the dominant culture; they were always survivors, noble or wretched. Their cultures had been steadily eroding, at best hanging on in museumlike reservations.
can societies could not by definition be
dynamic, inventive, or expansive. (284)

Since the arrival of the first Europeans
in the Pacific, we have heard a
steady litany of regrets about "dying
cultures." This is precisely why metropo­

tilian audiences are repeatedly
astonished when enough French blood
is spilled to draw attention to the
Kanak resistance, or Fiji is banned
from the Commonwealth for Colonel
Rabuka's apocalyptic behavior.

The importance of this book lies in
its persistent recognition that informed
social history must (or as Clifford has
it, is "condemned to") oscillate between
tales of homogenization accompanied
by loss and emergence along with
invention (17). Political economy and
demography tell us of the mighty forces
now squeezing the lives being lived in
the contemporary Pacific. But in a pro­
cess that is perhaps analogous to the
transformation of coal into diamonds,
such pressure may also meet with lapi­
dary toughness and brilliance.

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* * *

The Law of the Land, by Henry Rey­
nolds. Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books
Australia, 1987. xii + 225 pp, notes,
bibliography, index. A$12.95

I've explained it to white people, I've said,
"Look, say I built a tent on your lawn.
What would you do?" "Oh," he said, "I'd
get the police and move you off." Well,
there you are . . . you'd run to the law. You
want things exactly according to the law.
But when it comes to the Aboriginal land
right you disregard the law. *

Henry Reynolds, known for his pio­
neering work recognizing the long­
ignored Aboriginal perspective of Aus­
tralian history, returns to the white side
of the frontier in his latest book on
Australian land and law. In exploring
the Australian application of nine­
teenth century European law, Rey­
nolds reveals the deep contradictions
and legitimizing myths central to the
colonizer's claims of land ownership.
His conclusion is painstakingly docu­
mented and startling: the European
invaders, by their own then-applicable
standards of domestic and interna­
tional law, never achieved legitimate
land tenure in Australia. Non-Abori­
ginal claims to land ownership in
present-day Australia are, all the more
certainly, a fraud.

It is one thing to
make this claim using appeals to higher
morality or to Aboriginal concepts of
ownership—the political appeal famil­
 iar in anticolonialist movements. It is
quite another to make this claim, as
Reynolds has, from within the mindset
of the colonizer. Foregoing the rhetoric
of moral discourse, Reynolds meets the
mind of the colonizer. He accepts the
colonizer's worldview. He then shows
how the Australian newcomers failed
to achieve legitimate title even under
their own, presumably self-interested,
laws. One suspects Reynolds of mak­
ing his proof gleefully, although the

text sticks primarily to documentation,
leaving the silent exclamations to the
reader.

Reynolds presents a convincing
statement on the European law of colo­
nial land acquisition at the time of Aus­
tralian settlement. Citing leading legal
texts, government documents, interna­
tional law, and the proclamations of