

NEW OPEN ACCESS EDITION

REMEMBRANCE of PACIFIC PASTS

AN INVITATION TO REMAKE HISTORY

Edited by **ROBERT BOROFSKY**

An illustration of a woman with dark hair and a white flower in her hair, wearing a purple dress and a red lei. She is shown from the waist up, sitting and holding a needle and thread, creating a white lei. The background consists of soft, rounded shapes in shades of pink, purple, and orange.

EDWARD SAID
JAMES CLIFFORD
ALBERT WENDT
MARSHALL SAHLINS
GREG DENING
PATRICIA GRACE
EPELI HAU'OFA
W. S. MERWIN
GYAN PRAKASH
RICHARD WHITE
and others

Endorsements

FOR NEW OPEN ACCESS EDITION OF
Remembrance of Pacific Pasts

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts' new open access edition is a liberating read. It serves as a powerful platform for decolonising hegemonic scripts of Pacific pasts through the incorporation of both western and indigenous pacific scholars interpretations. The Longue durée outlined in Remembrances helps us to excavate the 'middle ground' as the current indigenising of historical and economic forces of modernisation and development, and in so doing liberates the indigenous agency in the shaping of Pacific futures. Malo lava!

MELANI ANAE, QSO

*School of Māori Studies and Pacific Studies, Te Wānanga o Waipapa,
University of Auckland*

This new open access edition reaffirms why Remembrance of Pacific Pasts continues to provide an essential platform from which to launch a multi-vocal, critical and engaged Pacific history. The range of authors, the breadth of their interests, and the fluency of their writing reflect the kinds of histories that we need in the Pacific, in conversation and in contestation with each other.

CHRIS BALLARD

*Senior Fellow, School of Culture, History & Language,
Australian National University*

As the chair of the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture and someone who travels extensively throughout the region, I believe this an important book for anyone interested in learning about the Pacific through an indigenous lens. It puts Pacific Islander framings of the past on equal footing with those of Western academics. This book encourages each of us to bring together diverse framings and sources of the region's past into narratives that add meaning and purpose to our lives. This is a must read!

THE HONORABLE KALANI ENGLISH

Senate Majority Leader, Hawaii State Legislature

Pacific pasts are remade anew with each generation. As Borofsky writes in the new introduction to this volume: “history lies less in the teller than in the dialog the teller shares with his or her audience. It lies in the conversations.” In reissuing this book as an open access text, its editor and authors multiply conversations that can be provoked, goaded and guided by the deep thinkers who have contributed to *Remembrance Pacific Past*. The volume presents a confluence of ways Pacific Island pasts have been narrated, and it provides a valuable resource for those who will fashion Oceanic pasts and futures.

NOELANI GOODYEAR-KA'ŌPUA

*Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Political Science,
University of Hawai'i*

I initially encountered many of these essays and authors as a graduate student and still recall my excitement at seeing such a powerful, eclectic set of writings gathered under one umbrella. More than a decade later, this collection continues to resonate around the region, bringing together many of the peoples and papers that shaped 20th century Pacific studies.

ANNE PEREZ HATTORI

*Professor of History, Micronesian Studies, and Chamorro Studies,
University of Guam; President, Pacific History Association;
Co-Editor, The Journal of Pacific History*

The most engaging treatment yet of history and anthropology's predicament regarding the interaction between indigenous understandings and western/academic approaches in the Pacific. This edited volume is exceptional, its multidisciplinary, multivocal and multiperspective chapters; insider and outsider views of the Pacific pasts are included and interrogated to produce improved holistic historical analyses. Borofsky's combination of clarity, and intellectual reflections on objectivity, representation, and narration in academic literatures of the Pacific helps us transcend the imaginary boundaries of history and culture. The new open edition should make this book accessible to a wide audience.

SA'ILIEMANU LILOMAIAVA-DOKTOR

*Associate Professor of Hawaiian-Pacific Studies,
University of Hawaii-West Oahu*

Borofsky enables readers to surf the cultural waves that crash down upon recorded Western perceptions of the Pacific's colonial and post-colonial period. Realizing many histories, many truths, abound in Oceania, readers can ride these waves recognizing that only through engagement with our varied histories can we truly negotiate a better future for Oceania wherein we can represent our stories while also honoring those of others. Accept Borofsky's "Invitation" to remake history and you will find yourself navigating through Pacific Island histories as never before.

IAN 'AKAHI MASTERSON

*Coordinator for the Ocean Education Academy,
Windward Community College*

The new open access version of *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* reminds us of why it remains an important and path-breaking work. Departing from strict chronology or discipline, it is more than an edited collection or anthology: it is a meditation on the very nature of historical experience and understanding. Woven together by historians, anthropologists, critical studies scholars, poets, writers, activists and artists, the voices here arise to shape pasts that are fully resonant in the present. Widely praised and debated, *Remembrance* is an "invitation" to consider how the dynamics of encounter, exploitation, empire, memory, and the geopolitical worlds of the Pacific Islands shaped and continue to shape the making of the region's history.

MATT MATSUDA

*Professor of History and Academic Dean of the Honors College,
Rutgers University-New Brunswick*

In an overwash age of accelerating and intensifying scholarly publication notable for the resulting paradox of diminished attention to foundational volumes, it is past time to remember *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts*. Current and emerging scholars engaged in the study of Oceania across disciplines will find this volume as generative and, somehow, still radical in its vision of historians' labors as a ceaseless remaking rooted in Oceanian epistemologies and temporalities in the here-and-now as when it was first published.

ALEXANDER MAWYER

*Associate Professor, Center for Pacific Island Studies,
University of Hawai'i; Editor, *The Contemporary Pacific:
A Journal of Island Affairs**

Deconstructing Whiteness is one way to describe this book, so is prophetic and inevitable. What's powerful about Remembrance is the 'one-truth' epistemology gets revealed, and hermeneutics - the massive potential and purpose of interpretation - gets activated. There's no telling what will happen next. Science calls it Complementarity in the Quantum Physics field. I call it mutual self-emergence within a mana moana evolution vital for world-wide awakening. Enjoy reading this book! Ho'oulu lahui o moana-nui-akea!

MANULANI ALULI MEYER

*Professor of Education, University of Hawaii West O'ahu;
Indigenous Epistemologist*

For many years I have valued this book for the conversations it opens, the questions it asks, the curated juxtapositions that it provides and the way it connects Pacific histories with 'views from afar'. It invites historians of the Pacific to look outwards and those looking towards Oceania to appreciate the worlds of history it contains. It is a vital tool and reader for teaching about Pacific histories, and approaches to them, which repays repeated visits.

ADRIAN MUCKLE

*Senior Lecturer, School of History, Philosophy, Political Science,
and International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington;
Co-Editor, The Journal of Pacific History*

My father is a whaikōrero (oratory) expert. He can recall the histories of tribes in Aotearoa. He can connect people through their whakapapa (genealogy). He can make you feel like a vital part of a story. I will give him this book. I know he will inhale Wendt's 'Inside us the dead', contemplate Sahlin's 'Kingdom and kingship' and cunningly bypass, some of the more academic pieces that I quite like that are too important to remain confined to the private domain of conventional scholars. Let us celebrate the open access launch of Remembrance of Pacific Pasts. The book encourages Pacific academics to select new mediums of knowledge and understanding that will enhance their work in local communities.

MARAMA MURU-LANNING

*Senior Research Fellow and Director at the James Henare Research Centre,
University of Auckland*

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is a text that, with open access, will bring the talent and insights of an older generation of magnificent writers to both younger and wider audiences. It will also remind us of the dynamic spirit of an earlier age when the wisdom and insights of a Dening would be confronted by the clear and implacable voices of Native sons and daughters: Wendt, Grace. Teaiwa, Diaz, Hereniko. This is a book to be re-read.

JONATHAN KAY KAMAKAWIWO'OLE OSORIO

*Dean of Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge,
University of Hawai'i*

The invitation to remake Pacific history this book first declared over a decade ago remains an open opportunity for us today. Open too, is its offering of diverse views and phrasings from scholars young and old to envision indigenous and non-indigenous ways of narrating the past vis-à-vis one another. The Pacific past very much matters to us today. It will continue to matter in our shared future. Even as the terms and narratives of our history-making are contested time and time again, the contributions in Remembrance offer enduring value. Its embracing of diverse voices, diverse narratives, is something to mark. It draws us to read and reread the book.

DAMON SALESA

*Pro Vice Chancellor (Pacific) and Associate Professor of Pacific Studies,
University of Auckland*

Originally published more than a decade ago, this extraordinary book was ahead of its time. Combining scholarly pieces, creative work and interviews, the book set the standard for new approaches to Pacific history that foreground indigenous voices and epistemologies and that take non-European ontologies not as anthropological curios but as important accounts of history memory and culture. And while focused on history the collection raises questions about multi-vocality that extend into every discipline that engages with indigenous life. Taken together, these essays stand as a foundational text for Pacific studies and must be read by everyone interested in the field.

PAIGE WEST

*Claire Tow Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University;
Director, Center for the Study of Social Difference, Columbia University*

Endorsements

FROM ORIGINAL PRINTED EDITION OF
Remembrance of Pacific Pasts

For many, the image of the Pacific is a foggy, sentimental distillation of Robert Louis Stevenson, Herman Melville, Paul Gauguin, and Marlon Brando's Fletcher Christian. As such it is on the periphery of the academic vision. *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts*, edited ingeniously by Robert Borofsky, blows away this fog and situates the region and its history at the central crossways of contemporary discussions on colonialism and post-coloniality, memory and forgetting, altern and subaltern histories.

BENEDICT ANDERSON,

*Aaron L. Binenkorb Professor of International Studies,
Government & Asian Studies, Cornell University*

Many of the key historical movements over the past millennia have happened in the Pacific during a more condensed and more recent period of time than in any other region of the world. As a result, students of history interested in microcosmic case studies of exploration, cultural contact, colonial control, and post-colonial politics will find much insight in turning to the Pacific and specifically to *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts*. It is an exciting, important book offering scholars of diverse appetites much food for thought.

ALFRED CROSBY

*Professor of History, Geography, and American Studies,
University of Texas*

The selections in *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* are truly excellent. The cumulative impact conveys a sense of conversation, dialogue, and argument that moves us beyond "conventional" historical styles of writing about a period.

ROBERT DARNTON

*Shelby Cullom Davis '30 Professor of European History,
Princeton University*

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is brimming over with new ideas about how history can be found, rethought, understood, and told. The worlds of the Pacific emerge over several centuries in the hands of these talented writers, some celebrated historians and anthropologists, some just making their mark. Whether set in Samoa, Fiji, Hawaii, Papua New Guinea or elsewhere, each fascinating essay has resonance for questions being asked by scholars everywhere. Rob Borofsky's edited volume is multicentered, dialogic history at its best.

NATALIE ZEMON DAVIS

Henry Charles Lea Professor of History and Director of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies, Princeton University

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is an invaluable anthology that brings trans-disciplinary depth and cosmopolitan insight into debates over colonial and post-colonial politics and culture. It is simultaneously a welcome antidote to Europe-centeredness and an exhilarating compendium that communicates what is at stake in the history of the Pacific. Borofsky's timely challenge is not only to existing histories of that region but to future historians of our planet.

PAUL GILROY

Charlotte Marian Saden Professor of Sociology and African American Studies, Yale University

With an impressive array of contributors and a brilliantly innovative format, Remembrance of Pacific Pasts makes a crucial invention not only in our attempt to understand the Pacific but also in our attempt to refashion cultural and historical study. This multi-faceted volume is a model for a whole new interpretative practice, a practice based not on monolithic claims but on multiple voices, shifting perspectives, and open-ended critical conversations.

STEPHEN GREENBLATT

John Cogan University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is a unique contribution to Pacific literature in the way it attempts to transcend the artificial boundaries between academic history and living culture. This book should be read by a wide audience.

BRUCE HILL

Presenter of the afternoon edition of ABC Radio Australia's Pacific Beat

History is always interpretation. The French Revolution as told by an aristocrat and by a sansculotte are not the same. The problem is how to bring these different views together in a way that makes sense of the whole. Rob Borofsky wonderfully succeeds at this difficult task. He turns widely different points of view into an asset. The narrative ceases being linear. We have instead a multidimensional history that the reader must approach from several angles and the meaning of which, like that of a musical piece, is apprehended globally. *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* is a very impressive and important work.

CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS

Member of the Académie française, Chair of Social Anthropology at the Collège de France between 1959 and 1982

This dazzling collection offers a new and provocative set of interpretations that enliven the reader's understanding of multiple and conflicting Pacific histories. It also provides a daunting template for reordering our vision of the whole of the post-colonial world. It embodies an eclectic selection of materials from both within and without the Pacific, from a stunning range of academic, polemical, and fictional perspectives. Borofsky's deft and wise introductions and connections infuse and synthesize the whole.

DAVID LOWENTHAL

Fellow of the British Academy, Professor of Geography, University College, London

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts fulfills an important legacy of the "Writing Culture" critique better than any other work on history we have read. It is a book that anthropologists and historians should read and ponder whatever their regional specialization.

GEORGE MARCUS

Joseph D. Jarnail Professor of Anthropology, Rice University and

PATRICIA SEED

Professor of History, Rice University

There is much in *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* that is very fine stuff indeed. With its concern for multiple points of view in a part of the world much too rarely studied, it raises issues that we all need grapple with whatever our area of specialty.

WILLIAM MCNEILL

Robert A. Milikan Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago

Finding Middle Ground

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE OPEN ACCESS EDITION

Robert Borofsky

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is a book of both empowerment and hope. It draws people with diverse perspectives to engage with one another in ways that collectively encourage them to compose richer, more subtle, and fuller historical narratives of the Pacific. We are led to consider a number of questions: What are the strengths (and weaknesses) of Western senses of the past vis-à-vis Pacific Islanders' senses of the past? Do the Western senses dominate because they are more accurate, more effective at recounting the past? Or is this dominance mostly a matter of continued Western power in another form? The fact that the question is often expressed in terms of written versus oral history (or some variant thereof) suggests that we tend to oversimplify the issue. Many professional Pacific historians are uncertain about how Pacific Islanders acquire and validate their historical knowledge (note Borofsky 1987). As such, it is long overdue that Pacific historians and islanders address their differences and discuss the ways they "make" history. Dare I suggest that such conversations would help improve how both groups convey the region's past to others?

To understand the region's historical narratives, one has to understand the contexts within which they are told. In a very real sense, the Pacific islands cannot, as yet, be viewed as decolonized. Since this statement may seem problematic to some—given that the region has a number of independent countries and decolonization is a thriving field of study in the Pacific—let me explain what I mean.

General histories of the Pacific by Howe, Kiste, and Lal (1994), De-noon (1997b), Campbell (1996), and Scarr (1990) emphasize that the energy behind decolonization came more from the colonizers than from the colonized. Wesley-Smith, for example, in discussing Australia's and New Zealand's decolonizing efforts, observes: "In Papua New Guinea, Niue, Tokelau, the Cook Islands, and to a lesser extent Western Samoa, the colonizer rather than the colonized set the pace of change. In all cases except Nauru, the colonial power bestowed a greater degree of political autonomy than the people themselves sought at the time. Political freedom was returned to these colonial peoples in the 1960s and the 1970s essentially for the same reason it was removed in an earlier era—to meet the needs of the colonial power" (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:220–221).

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts clarifies the ways Islanders continue to economically depend on external powers—whatever their level of

political independence (see pp. 303–313, 443 ff.). As Said states, “the postcolonial period has not really occurred” (p. 443). Kiste observes: “While the [Micronesian] Compacts of Free association provide . . . sovereignty over both internal and external affairs . . . it is an understatement to suggest that the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are heavily dependent on the financial arrangements [with the United States] provided by the compact” (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:254; cf. Scarr 1990: 299). Part of the problem is that many Islanders enjoy a relatively high standard of living thanks to government services and wages that cannot be funded by the island governments themselves. As a result 30 percent of the Cook Island’s national income, and 36 percent of Western Samoa’s national income, comes from outside funding (Scarr 1990:340; cf. Denoon 1997b:388). Increased “development” has often meant increased dependency. “Far from decreasing with the passing of time,” Campbell notes (1996:214), “the need for assistance to Pacific island economies increased.” Indeed, Nkrumah observed long ago that to become a nation-state under the terms offered by the colonial powers often generates another form of colonialism. We need understand how various narratives of the Pacific past operate within this political/economic framework.

What we perceive in this perpetuation of economic dependence/colonialism is the type of hegemonic framework Antonio Gramsci described in his *Prison Notebooks*. (He recorded his ideas in more than 30 notebooks from 1929–1935 while in an Italian prison.) For Gramsci, hegemony is a form of subtle control, “the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group”—which, in this case, is the dominant political and economic powers in the Pacific (1971:12). And so, while many in the Pacific might embrace the idea of decolonization, the underlying economic/political hegemony means the decolonization is often more appearance than substance.

To see how this hegemonic structure shapes historical narratives in the Pacific, let me add one more concept—paradigm—as interpreted by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. While Kuhn uses the term in various ways, I focus here on paradigms as a “constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared [to a certain degree] by members of a given community” (1970:175). Kuhn perceives paradigms as providing “models from which spring coherent traditions” (1970:10). (Elaboration of this point is found in Borofsky 2019:27 ff.)

Given the above political/economic context, Epeli Hau’ofa and, more broadly, subaltern historians ask: How has colonial domination shaped the region’s historical narratives? (Cf. Hau’ofa 1994c, this book pp. 453–454 ff.) This is the question Prakash raises when he writes: “[N]ationalist historiographers accepted the patterns set for them by British

scholarship” (1990:388). Chatterjee suggests that nationalist history had “no choice but to choose its forms from the gallery of ‘models’ offered by European and American nation-states” (1993:9; see also Spivak 1987:97 and Dirks 1992:15). In respect to the Pacific, Banivanua Mar calls both “colonization and decolonization . . . imperial projects” (2016b:461).

Many Pacific historians would agree that “history-making”—representing past times today—is an imperfect process. As I note in the book’s introductory chapter, materials abound for writing about the Pacific past. There are official and unofficial documents, diaries, memories, chants, artifacts, and landscapes waiting to be discovered (or rediscovered). Yet a major complication concerns how to organize and prioritize them. How does one weave a coherent narrative out of the many materials without denying their differences, ambiguities, and complexities?

History-making for many Western-trained Pacific historians means something akin to supporting an historical narrative with a range of documents wherein readers can evaluate how and why the author developed the conclusions she or he did. But as Grafton observes: “Only the relatively few readers who have trawled their nets through the same archival waters can identify the catch in any given set of [foot]notes. . . . For most readers, footnotes play a different role. In a modern, impersonal society, in which individuals must rely for vital services on others whom they do not know, credentials perform what used to be the function of guild membership or personal recommendations: they give legitimacy” (1997:7–8). If Western-trained Pacific historians accept each other’s footnotes on faith, as clearly happens, what is the difference between oral and written accounts? Provocatively, Smith writes that “the archive reveals ‘rules of practice’ which the West itself cannot necessarily describe because it operates within . . . rules [which] . . . are taken for granted” (1999:44).

Let me compare how two groups construct their narratives regarding times past: Pukapukans—Polynesians dwelling on a northern Cook Island atoll—and professional Pacific historians. (This comparison is elaborated upon in “An Invitation,” the book’s introductory chapter; see pp. 7–9.) Both groups value primary sources; eyewitness accounts are seen as better than secondhand recountings of an event. Both groups believe that one should not take a person’s testimony at face value; it needs to be scrutinized for both biases and unstated personal advantage. Both groups also analyze the contexts within which testimony is presented in order to ascertain the validity of that testimony. For example, accounts that cite numerous details—especially details about which others are only vaguely familiar—often suggest that the accounts’ authors are knowledgeable about a subject. Moreover, both groups are impressed when testimony is presented in public forums that other authorities do not contest, since public consensus often conveys that the assertions being made are true.

Also, both groups rely extensively on recognized experts, though how they determine expertise is a complex process, given that they themselves often lack sufficient subject knowledge of the subject to assess that expertise. But in both cases, the evaluation tends to support existing social hierarchies.

It should be noted that the credibility of a narrative, for both Pacific historians and Pukapukans, may well change over time depending on the contexts in which it is presented and who else supports it. Historical narratives are not invariant truths. What we call history—the study of times past, as well as what remains of these times in the present—gains credibility through others providing additional information that confirms an author’s assertions. Without such confirmation, assertions about the past remain just that—assertions.

To summarize: there are two patterns in the paradigms many professional Pacific historians and Pacific islanders use in their constructions of times past. (1) History-making is not a clear-cut process. There are ambiguities, uncertainties, and divergent interpretations of historical material. Various people, with various agendas, will perceive the material in different ways. And (2), the ways Pacific historians and islanders—certainly Pukapukans—resolve such ambiguities often overlap. Neither group can claim to present the whole truth of an event or period. What makes Pacific historians confident in their history-making, and critical of Pacific islander history-making, is their willingness to ignore significant ambiguities in their own historical narratives—while pointing out ambiguities in the accounts of Pacific Islanders. This faith in their paradigmatic perspective reflects the hegemonic control Western powers have today in the region. Conversations among Pacific historians and islanders regarding how their accounts overlap and diverge could help to illuminate for the historians ways their views could more accurately reflect islanders’ experiences. This could help to soften the confidence Pacific historians feel about their narratives—which in turn could soften the hegemonic control they hold in depicting the region’s history.

TWO PARADIGMS

The hegemonic framework that shapes the region politically and economically, the paradigmatic efforts—which, in principle, seek to “decolonize” Pacific history—often end up supporting the existing colonial framework to a certain degree. As Antonio Gramsci observes, those opposing a set of hegemonic structures often are unable to think outside the “box” created by these structures (see Crehan 2002:104). To explain this point, let me suggest two general paradigmatic perspectives that frame “decolonization” in the Pacific today: a more Western version, often termed “island-centered” history; and a more indigenous one, which seeks to separate itself from the decolonization process. Of course, just

as beauty resides in the eye of the perceiver, the meaning of “decolonization” differs for each perceiver.

“Island-centered history” largely developed out of James Davidson’s research program at the Australian National University (ANU). To quote Howe (1984:xii–xiii): “As colonies became decolonized, so historians began to decolonize history. . . . [T]he history of the Pacific islands had consisted of a history of imperial agents—explorers, missionaries, administrators—in the islands. And their activities were viewed from the mission, commercial and government headquarters in England, the United States, Germany, or France.” Matsuda concurs:

The “formal” institutional historiography of Pacific history is conventionally traced to the inauguration of the first chair in “Pacific History” at the Australian National University by James Davidson in 1954. This self-declared new history, famously “centered not in Downing Street but in the islands,” was a project shaped by “the general postwar spirit of decolonization” and organized around an attempt to combat a literature dating from the nineteenth century [that included the “fatal impact” of Western contact] (2006:764–765).

Davidson emphasized two key points in his inaugural lecture at ANU: (1) “To understand the history of colonial government in the Pacific, it has been necessary to shift the centre of interest from the metropolitan capitals to the islands themselves” (1966:14) and (2) the policies and practices of the Western powers and various Western groups in the Pacific “are still subjects that demand . . . attention; but they must take their place . . . alongside . . . analyses of the indigenous forces that have similarly contributed to the making of the contemporary Pacific” (1966:21). Focusing on the indigenous residents of the region and their attempts to resist Western domination became the paradigm’s mantra. It dominated Pacific History in the 1970s. Hempenstall observes that ANU “controlled the terrain of the subject area . . . through institutional patronage of postgraduate students, possession of *The Journal of Pacific History* and a productive publishing programme” (1992:61).

Without doubt, much good has come out of this island-centered focus. ANU produced a small but steady stream of scholars who emphasized Pacific-oriented courses and perspectives in Australia and New Zealand. American universities, such as the University of Hawai’i, followed suit. This island-centered focus also helped facilitate the academic appointments of a number of Pacific Islanders (and those of mixed descent). To name some: Sione Lātūkefu, Albert Wendt, August Kutuui, Helen Morton, Brij Lal, Majorie Crocombe, Vicenta Diaz, Malama Meleisea, Damon Ieremia Salesa, Tracey Banivanua Mar, Epeli Hau’ofa, Helu Konai Thaman, Vilisoni Herniko, David W. Gegeo, Caroline Sina-

vaiana-Gabbard, Teresia Teaiwa, Katerina Teaiwa, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Haunani-Kay Trask, Ty Kawika P. Tengan, Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, and Jon Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio. "The increasing participation of Pacific Islanders in Pacific-related research, teaching, and administrative positions is clearly an important development," Wesley-Smith writes. "While Pacific Islanders are still markedly underrepresented in Pacific branches of key disciplines such as history and anthropology, Islanders now staff and direct many, but not all, of the specialized programs for Pacific studies. More and more Pacific Islanders participate in Pacific-related academic conferences" (2003:120–121).

Clearly there have been positive steps. But it is far from clear whether the region's history departments accept more indigenous-centered history-telling on equal footing with island-centered telling. Pacific islanders' perspectives are usually framed in Western terms and for Western audiences.

Damon Salesa's *Racial Crossings* offers a possible explanation. It asks: Why, with Britain seemingly in "a new age of the individual and equality," having banished slavery following the Reform Act of 1832, did racial distinctions become more important? (University of Auckland, n.d.). Salesa observes that, by the 1870s, racial amalgamation, or mixed racial marriages, was viewed in positive terms. He notes that central to the understanding of

racial amalgamation was a broadly conceived intermarriage of fusion of races under a unified domain of sovereignty, government and law. What made racial amalgamation . . . distinctive, however, was that it was not just any kind of crossing. Racial amalgamation was not just any combination. A proper amalgamation did not combine two races into a "new" race that was substantially mixed or intermediate; rather the process of amalgamation projected, very baldly, the *disappearing* of one race into another" (2011:242).

He continues, "Racial amalgamation was an *inclusion* through which the other race would be consumed or absorbed, ceasing to exist yet still visible and practically different. The inclusion was unequal, and its processes and mechanisms fashioned and enabled continuing inequities" (2011:242).

This "inclusion" parallels the problem Vilsoni Hereniko faced in publishing *The Woven Gods* with the University of Hawaii Press (see" p. 18 of the text). In a review in *The Contemporary Pacific*, William E. Mitchell states that Hereniko's work "is not a conventional ethnography. . . . [A] short time ago it would have been unpublishable by a university press because it violates established editorial principles for a scholarly monograph. . . . By privileging his anthropological self," Mitchell writes, Hereniko

feels he “he had failed to connect with his fellow Islanders. In a reverse way,” Mitchell continues, “by privileging his Rotuman and fiction-writing selves . . . he has failed to connect as effectively as he could with his anthropological audience” (1997:280–281). Mitchell calls it an unsuccessful experiment in ethnographic writing.

Both Salesa’s analysis and Mitchell’s review raise important questions: Is real difference—in terms of emotion, multiple voices, and alternative presentation styles—barred? Are Western scholars only willing to embrace Pacific Island intellectuals when they express themselves in Western terms? When, we might ask, is a difference embraced in its own terms, allowing us to grow beyond our present paradigmatic understandings so as to honestly engage with perspectives different from our own?

The alternative decolonizing paradigm to island-centered history calls for a stronger Pacific islander presence. While a range of “outlander” (in the book’s phrasing) university-based historians embrace it, the paradigm takes much energy from Pacific islanders seeking to represent islander perspectives in their own terms.

Given that the first paradigm seemingly embraces indigenous perspectives while often reframing them in Western terms, one thread of this alternative paradigm seeks to downplay Western perspectives. Lilikala Kame`eliehiwa suggests: “Natives have often wished that white people would study their own ancestors . . . instead of us, whom they generally misunderstand and thus misrepresent” (1994b:112). “For Hawaiians,” Haunani-Kay Trask asserts, “anthropologists . . . are part of the colonizing horde because they seek to take away from us the power to define who and what we are, and how we should behave politically and culturally. This theft testifies to the stranglehold of colonialism and explains why self-identity by Natives elicits such strenuous and sometimes vicious denials by members of the dominant culture” (1991:162, see also 1985:786–787). L. T. Smith writes, “Coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges. The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things” (2000:258–259).

Pacific islanders have a point regarding the myopic and biased perspectives of outlanders. Consider the classic exchange between Keesing and Trask. Keesing suggests many “colonized peoples have not only incorporated and internalized conceptualizations . . . of colonial discourse at the level of thought . . . but . . . have valorized elements of their own cultural traditions . . . as symbols of the contrast between those traditions and Western culture” (2000:240). To this, Trask replied—as quoted above in full—“the colonizing horde . . . seek to take away from us the power to define who and what we are” (1991:162).

There is merit in Keesing’s view that any group’s traditions are framed

and reframed in relation to the changing social contexts. But acknowledging this point does not mean that Westerners can become the arbiters of what is and is not a group's "proper" traditions. Keesing ignores the disempowerment his assertion conveys. In this respect, Trask's response is spot-on.

This is why *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* embraces conversations across differences. No group wants to be intellectually and emotionally disempowered by another's pronouncements—neither "colonizers" nor the "colonized." But this is not to suggest that Pacific islanders have a monopoly on the construction of Pacific pasts. Outlanders have an important role to play as well, since their different perspectives on the region's past can be illuminating. For example, consider Gordon Wright, an American historian of modern French history, for whose work the French government awarded him the *Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*. He was also an honorary, corresponding member of the *Academie des Sciences Morales Politiques*. The French establishment clearly found his publications valuable and insightful vis-à-vis those of many French historians.

There is a softer, more powerful, phrasing of this alternative paradigm. The most famous example is Epeli Hau'ofa's conceptualization of Pacific identities in terms of "Our Sea of Islands." The boundaries that we presently draw in the region, he suggests, tend to obscure salient dynamics by which Pacific Islanders craft their senses of self through movement within and beyond the region. He writes: Pacific islanders live in "a world of social networks that crisscross the [Pacific] ocean. . . . [I]t is a world we have created through our own efforts, and have kept vibrant and independent of the Pacific islands world of official diplomacy and neocolonial dependency" (2000:113).

Tracey Banivanua Mar, author of *Decolonization and the Pacific*, suggests indigenous people have reconfigured independence "as a state of being, as a social and cultural structure that transcends borders and exceeds the constraints of colonial legal systems. It lies in their reformation of decolonization as a stateless, albeit fragile and contingent form of sovereignty and independence" (2017:461). Building on this, Gerard Prinsen and Séverine Blaise suggest a new form of sovereignty in the Pacific: "[A]nalyzes have found that non-self-governing islands tend to have much better development indicators than sovereign islands. Perhaps unsurprisingly, since 1983 no non-self-governing island has acquired political independence. [We argue] that rather than merely maintaining the status quo with their colonial metropolises, non-self-governing islands are actively creating a new form of sovereignty" (2017:56).

Chris Ballard seeks to widen our sense of history: Anthropologists from a number of locations around the world have converged on the term

“historicity” to express the broad field of their inquiries into culturally specific forms of consciousness of the past (2014:100). . . . So we apprehend the world and recall the past through all of our senses, combining our understanding of location or setting, with a parallel appreciation of our auditory, olfactory, and tactile surroundings. And we then draw on this same range of senses to communicate that past, through what Greg Dening calls a “dramatic unity” of performance (1991:361): “We dance our histories, we paint them, sing them, picture them, film them, mime them, as well as write them” (1997, 426) (2014:100, 108).

Matsuda similarly suggests, “Pacific histories remain narrations formed at the confluence of different tides from academic scholarship, political activism, and creative arts and literature. The Oceanic vision is composed by document and fiction, archives, film, poetry, chants, dances, novels, and writing by island researchers, writers, and scholars” (2006:779). Various authors in Remembrance embrace this broader paradigm. One need only look, for example, at the chapters by Albert Wendt, Teresia Taiwiwa, Greg Dening, Klaus Neuman, Vilsoni Hereniko, Vincent Diaz, and W. S. Merwin. They seek to widen our collective sense of the region’s history and how it is rendered.

Where do we go from here? We have two paradigms, both of which focus on presenting post-colonial accounts in a colonized Pacific. In disrupting the first paradigm’s framework, the second paradigm has intellectual momentum behind it. It has thus had considerable impact, both within and beyond the academy. An array of publications by Pacific islanders with the University of Hawaii Press and Duke University Press supports this momentum with books that both derive from and reach beyond the outlander/islander divide. As highlighted in Hereniko’s *Woven Gods*, the tension remains: phrasing one’s historical narratives in Western academic terms so as to foster publication and academic status, versus emphasizing more indigenous narrative styles and frames of reference.

Despite the noted progress, the colonial powers that dominate the region’s universities and academic publishing houses lean toward the first paradigm. We see this particularly with David Armitage and Alison Bashford’s academically acclaimed *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (2014). This book seeks to be inclusive, by which the editors mean bringing together “the histories of the Pacific Islands, the Pacific Rim, and the Pacific Ocean” (back cover). But except for a chapter by Damon Salesa, the collection offers few indigenous voices, perspectives, or styles of history-telling. Instead, prominent Pacific historians describe the region’s past in mostly Western, academic terms.

If we step back a bit, to gain a broader perspective, we can see a dynamic at work that has been ongoing in the region for centuries.

STRUCTURES OF THE LONGUE DURÉE AND THE “MIDDLE GROUND”

The “*longue durée*” view of history was first conceived by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre in the 1930s and 1940s. In the late 1950s, Fernand Braudel expanded the construct perceiving structures of the *longue durée* as operating within a set of geographic/ecological parameters. They extend beyond hegemonic formations which come and go with kingdoms, empires, and generations of rulers. In Braudel’s words, “The *longue durée* is the endless, inexhaustible history of structures and groups of structures. For the historian, a structure is not just a thing built, put together; it also means permanence, sometimes for more than centuries. . . . This great structure travels through vast tracts of time without changing; if it deteriorates during the long journey, it simply restores itself as it goes along . . . and in the final analysis its characteristics alter only very slowly” (1980:75). They involve “certain geographic frameworks, certain biological realities, certain limits of productivity” 1980:31).

Braudel writes about these structures in the Mediterranean world. Bailyn and Gilroy discuss them in the Atlantic world. Taking a cue from their work, let me suggest four structures of the *longue durée* that have played out in the Pacific in recent centuries.

The first structure of the *longue durée* concerns the enormity of the Pacific Ocean. Exactly how enormous it is varies according to assessments regarding its boundaries with the Indian, Arctic and Southern oceans, as well as whether one includes the South China Sea, the Sea of Japan, and/or the Sea of Cortez. However one divides it, the Pacific covers roughly a third of the earth’s surface. Europeans have found crossing it to be problematic—much more so than crossing the Mediterranean or Atlantic. The travel logs of those intrepid European explorers, and the traders who followed them, make clear the difficulties of crossing such a large body of water with the limited technology they possessed. (The fact that Pacific Islanders traversed vast areas of the Pacific in open boats using celestial navigation centuries before Europeans ventured there continues to awe navigators and readers alike.)

The second structure of the region is its plethora of islands. There are perhaps 25,000 islands, the majority in the South Pacific. (Sadly, with sea levels rising from global warming, the number of islands is decreasing.) Until well into the twentieth century, crossing the Pacific usually meant stopping at one or more islands along the way. For the earliest explorers in need of supplies to WWII American military in need of refueling, islands and Islanders have played a central role in taming the Pacific’s vastness. Crossing the Pacific meant visiting Pacific islands and interacting with Pacific islanders.

The third structure of the *longue durée* concerns how, comparatively speaking, these islands possessed less of the resources, products, and markets that stimulated aggressive Western intrusions in other regions of the world. As such, traders in search of new markets for Western goods, or new resources to transform into Western goods, would turn to China before considering, for example, the Cook Islands. But while the commodity resources that Westerners valued were not ubiquitously plentiful, the pleasant climate undoubtedly was—as were Western desires for what seemed to be a more easy-going lifestyle.

The Pacific islands' comparatively limited resources lead to an important insight. Baudet (1965) suggests that Western explorers viewed a number of foreign locales—notably in the New World, China, and Polynesia—in quite positive terms, at least at first. But in many cases, these positive images turned sour with increased contact. I suggest that it was not contact per se that caused this. It was what followed in the wake of contact: Western entrepreneurs—working within Western mercantile and capitalistic systems—sought resources, products, and markets that would generate wealth for themselves. Where the economic possibilities were considerable—as in the New World and China—the economic conflicts were greater. We see this in the Pacific as well. The Pacific was not without wars; note, for example, the New Zealand wars of 1845–1872 and the New Caledonia war of 1878–1879. On these islands there was substantial wealth to be had in respect to land and resources and Westerners violently competed with indigenous populations for them. Western writers rarely portrayed this competition in glowing terms, especially when the conflict turned violent.

If we view the Pacific as a whole, its perceived commercial wealth is comparatively less and so the intensity and duration of conflicts over its resources has tended to be less. These combined with beautiful vistas and easier-going lifestyles have produced, I would suggest, the enduring image of Polynesia we see on travel posters today (see Borofsky 2004).

The final structure of the *longue durée* involves the regions' rims—the United States, Canada, and Latin America on the east; and China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia on the west—where valued resources, products, and markets abound, driving trade across the Pacific.

Drawing various threads together, we can see that these structures of the *longue durée* played a central role in the history of the Pacific. While both outlanders and islanders may have wanted to dominate the other, for centuries neither could do so completely. Western accounts often convey that Western technology made them the dominant competitor. But, reading between the lines, we can see that such control was far from absolute. It is true that Western weaponry could intimidate; Boenchea (in Corney 1913:333) referred to the “terror and dread in which . . . [the Tahitians] hold our weapons.” But it should be stressed that this intima-

tion rarely prevented Pacific Islanders from challenging Europeans; they simply took a more indirect approach: theft.

Western accounts indicate that thievery was ubiquitous from the time Westerners first arrived. And the longer outsiders stayed in port, the more theft increased. As Greg Denning writes, “Thieving by the Polynesians almost drove the sea-captains to distraction. The ingenuity with which handkerchiefs and hats and goods were stolen out of cabins, grappling irons from under boats, even nails from wood with bare fingers far surpassed the ability of the Europeans to guard against these” (1966:40).

One might perceive such “theft” as a “ritual of possession”—as Pacific Islanders’ effort to negotiate positions of power vis-à-vis European explorers and traders (see Borofsky and Howard 1989:250–260). Polynesians of high status continually demonstrated their power so as to affirm (and retain) their status. Much of the contact literature suggests that Polynesian chiefs played a role in fostering theft. The more theft that went on, the more explorers were drawn into relying on chiefs to stop it. Ultimately, theft reinforced European dependence on island chiefs, facilitating a constant supply of gifts—or tribute—to them.

These complex interactions constitute a form of “middle ground.” Richard White writes in *Remembrance* (p. 170–171):

The middle ground as I formulated it was a process of mutual invention among Indians and Europeans. . . . It depended on the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force. Those who operated on the middle ground tried to understand the world and reasoning of others in order to assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes. That they often got this exotic reasoning terribly wrong mattered less than that the other side, for similar reasons, reciprocated. Each side would gladly have coerced others into obeying their rules if they could, but they could not, and so instead they built surprisingly durable worlds from mutual misunderstandings. (See also White 1991, especially ix–xv.)

At first glance, this middle ground may now appear to be receding. Technological innovations have reduced the need for boats or planes to stop en route when trading and travelling between the two rims. And yet the “middle ground” remains very much alive today. Pacific islanders are gaining new powers vis-à-vis the West.

The Pacific now plays a major role in tuna fishing. The Pew Charitable Trusts reports: “The Pacific Ocean is the source of about 70 percent of commercially landed tuna and 65 to 70 percent of the global value of tuna at both the dock and the final point of sale” (Pew Charitable Trust 2016). This commerce involves billions of dollars. The 200-mile fishing zones around the islands teem with financial possibilities.

Even more dramatic is the increased economic, political, and military presence of China in the South Pacific. In contrast to the Japanese invasion of the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea during World War II, China is challenging Western regional dominance in a less violent form. Headlines in the *British Guardian* observe: “Huge increase in Chinese aid pledged to Pacific. Beijing poised to outstrip Australia as largest donor for the first time, with Papua New Guinea the major beneficiary” (Lyons, 2018). *The New York Times* (Oct. 16, 2019) reports:

The island of Tulagi served as a South Pacific headquarters for Britain then Japan, and during World War II, its natural deep-water harbor made it a military gem. Now, China is moving in with plans to effectively take control. Under a secretive deal signed last month with a provincial government in the Solomon Islands, a Beijing-based company with close ties to the Chinese Communist Party has secured exclusive development rights for the entire island of Tulagi and its surroundings. The lease agreement has shocked Tulagi residents and alarmed American officials who see the island chains of the South Pacific as crucial to keeping China in check and protecting important sea routes” (Cave 2019).

Fairfax Media reports “China and Vanuatu are in negotiations to allow China to open a permanent military base on Vanuatu. China is funding the construction of a new wharf on Espiritu Santo, which Australian government officials believe could be used to host naval vessels” (Wroe 2018).

In other words, the middle ground continues. World powers still clash for regional dominance—just as the French and British once did. Following Braudel’s structures of the *longue durée*, we might suggest, “*Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*”—the more things change, the more they remain the same.

AN INVITATION TO REMAKE HISTORY

When *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* was first published, its effort to decolonize Pacific history was praised by a number of prominent scholars such as Natalie Zemon Davis (Princeton), Stephen Greenblatt (Harvard), William McNeill (Chicago), Robert Darnton (Princeton), and Claude Lévi-Strauss (École pratique des hautes études). Many of the new endorsements (found in the front matter) do so as well. Escaping decolonizing paradigms, the book stresses, involves intellectually escaping the colonial structures that frame the decolonizing process.

Natalie Zemon Davis asks:

Does the West own history? That is, must the subjects, con-

cepts, categories of analysis, and narrative models emerge from western historical writings in order to count as “real” history? . . . The historian should welcome historical inquiry beyond the profession, engaging with it critically whenever needed and facilitating constructive research by others. When done well, non-professional history has much to teach not only its practitioners and their publics . . . the questions asked about the past by people with training other than our own—the things they notice in the evidence—can be startling and enlightening. . . . There are always multiple claims [to history]. It is a gift that can only survive through debate (1989:24, 27–28,34).

We need to step outside the oppositions framing Pacific history as Hau’ofa and Banivanua Mar have done. That is the value of the Clifford, White, Prakash, and Said commentaries in the book. They draw us toward new possibilities beyond the standard familiar frameworks. They ask us to navigate new possibilities, new narratives.

A key contribution of *Remembrance* is that it puts Pacific Islanders’ constructions of the region’s past on equal footing with more Western-framed accounts. Pacific islander narratives have not been absorbed by Western accounts. Pacific islander narratives stand on their own terms with their own styles of presentation—even when translated into English. Decolonizing Pacific history calls for stepping outside the hegemonic frame of dominance.

Another key contribution of the book is that it fosters engaging with those who perceive the past differently. It involves White’s sense of a middle ground. There need not be harmony. There may well be heated arguments. But it is an engagement in which the parties to the interaction— Islanders and outsiders—meet on equal terms and, whenever possible, create empowering narratives that positively engage with each other’s differences rather than just talking abstractly about engaging with them. In addition, the format encourages readers, in thinking through these differences, to formulate their own narratives.

In closing, let me highlight three points that are elaborated at greater length in the book. They emphasize why, if embraced, *Remembrance* is a book of hope.

First, recountings of times past, however seamlessly ordered, are always incomplete. Narrators curate—selecting this, silencing that—to build an account whose coherence lies, not in the material itself, but in the words (and mind) of the narrator and his or her audience. Books such as *Remembrance* can only provide points of reference for thinking about or reflecting on the region’s past.

Second, “history” is more than a product to memorize. It is more than

a set of facts—collected and organized by others—that one should dutifully learn in order to be conversant with times past, or to affirm a connection to those now dead. Presenting historical narratives is an active, participatory process. Exploring “the past” is more than a professional calling. It is also a personal, participatory, empowering experience. History-telling belongs to a much wider audience.

Third, history-telling lies less in the teller than in the dialog the teller shares with the audience. It lies in the conversations across different perspectives. Despite the politics of polarization, we often see today, we need to remember that Islanders and Outlanders share not only centuries of overlapping, interwoven pasts but often overlapping standards for judging accounts about these pasts. We need to listen to these conversations across our differences.

Remembrance provides points of historical reference for readers to think with. It offers tools to assist readers in weaving further narratives and developing further conversations about the region’s past. The book, as its subtitle affirms, represents “an invitation to remake history.”

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Remembrance of
Pacific Pasts

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts

An Invitation to Remake History

EDITED BY Robert Borofsky
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To

Lynette Cruz, Greg Dening,
Epeli Hau'ofa, Marshall Sahlins, and Albert Wendt,
whose writings and words
inspired this volume

Follow one word, back
“Mai” Come.
from Hawai‘i
Back across the wide green water
all the way to Indonesia . . . “Mai”
Means, “Come” in Bahasa Bali, the old tongue
Think of them leaving
Men and women on boats laid low with pigs,
Coconut, yams, tapioca, taro root, a pregnant dog.
That last real Indonesian on the way to becoming
The first Hawaiian
By what river of current crossing?
Stopping along the way to become Maori, Samoan, Fijian,
Tahitian . . .
Who chartered them with bamboo maps to Easter Island?
They took Gods, Goddesses, seeds and pottery which
breaks,
Like clay postcards.
This baby has no English yet.
“Mai” he sings, sweeping a fat hand toward his heart.
“Come, come to me.”
Follow one word forward,
Follow one forward from each new child who speaks.

“Mai” by Robin Lim, reprinted from *bamboo ridge: A Hawai‘i’s Writers Journal* 73, Spring 1998 (Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge Press): 225.

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Preface: In the Beginning

The Story of Latmikaik

Cheldecheduch er a Latmikaik

So you want to hear the story of Latmikaik

Ng soam el orrengeles er a cheldechedechal a Latmikaik

Belau was completely empty and there were no people in it

A Belau a mle bechachau e ng diak a chad er ngii

Uchelianged [Foremost of Heaven] looked out at it, looked at this expanse of sea, both on the surface of the water and underneath the water

A Uchelianged a ullumes er ngii e ng omes er a tia el klou el doab mo er a bab el daob er a eoa el doab

The voice of Uchelianged said: let a land rise up, let a land rise up

A Uchelianged a ngerel a melekoi ua sei loluchel a ta er a beluu loluchel a ta er a beluu

There arose to the top of the sea what we call Lukes, which lies between Ngeaur and Beliliou today

Ng merael a mei me er a bab a se el domelekoi er ngii el ua sei a Lukes el ngar er a delongeles a Ngeaur me a Beliliou er a chelechang

A Belauan Story of Creation by Ngirakland Malsol of Ngeremlengui, told on October 13, 1978. Recorded and translated by Richard J. Parmentier.

And so there was a clam which was created there

Ng solai ng ngar er ngii a kim el dilubech er ngii

This clam grew bigger and bigger, and so did the soft insides of the clam

Tia el kim a merael el mo er klou e ngar er ngii a dmengel a kim

The insides of the clam grew bigger and bigger, like a pregnant woman with a large belly, a very large belly

Se el dmengel a kim a merael el mo er mo er klou e ng mo ko er a chad e ng mo mo er dioll e ng klou a dillel ng kmal el klou a dillel

But she was not able to give birth

Ng diak el sebechel el omechell

Uchelianged saw this and said: Let there be powerful waves and heavy swells; and so a strong running sea shook the clam and she gave birth

A Uchelianged a ullumes er ngii e solai ng melekoi el ua sei ng mo er ngii a mesisiich el brius er a daob e ng mo mesisiich er a brius er a daob me a bekerurt el a daob e ng mengetengtik er ngii e ng omechell

After the birth there were many, many fish

A Imchell a ngikel e ng kmal el betok el betok el ngikel

And so these fish in turn gave birth and gave birth until the sea was crowded

E solai a ngikel a mo omechell e ng omechell di omechell e ng mo meseked a daob

The sea was so crowded that Uchelianged said to Latmikaik: Go tell your children to collect rocks and coral and carry them to the surface of the sea so that you will be able to climb out, since the sea is so crowded

Ng mo meseked a daob e a Uchelianged a melekoi er a Latmikaik el ua sei mmelekoi er a ngelekem el lbo lomuut er a bad me a merangd e me me er a bebul a daob a lbo lsebechui el tuo mo er ngii e ng mla meseked a daob

So they cleared a place next to Ngeaur and carried the rocks and coral up to the surface of the sea

Te mo mengiut er a bita er a Ngeaur e ngmai a bad me a merangd e merull er ngii me me er a bab e me er a bebul a daob

Uchelianged said: Make it so that you will be able to travel to the heavens

A Uchelianged a melekoi el ua sei mmerull er ngii e ng mo sebechuu el merael el me er a eanged

Latmikaik said to her children: Make it long enough so that we can be near the heavens and ask for earth from the heavens to connect it together so that we can travel to the heavens

A Latmikaik a melekoi er a ngelekem mmerull er ngii el mo keke-mangel el sebeched el kmeed er a eanged e olengit er a chutem er a eanged e omech er ngii el mo sebeched el merael el mo er a eanged

The meaning of this is that this Babeldaob is the heavens and these creatures are creatures from within the sea

A belkul el tia el tekoi a kdu el ua se tia el Babeldaob a eanged e tireke el chad a chad er a chesel a daob

They built it up so that it was very tall, but it was also a bit tilted

Me a lorull er ngii a mo mo kmal el kek-mangel e ko er a telkib el dullokl

He notified Latmikaik that it was not going to be able to stretch all the way to the heavens and that it was going to tip over

Ng ouchais er a Latmikaik el ua se ng mla mo diak el sebechel el mo kmeed er a eanged e ng di mla mo dullokl

Latmikaik said to her children: Go get a rule and let me take a look at it

A Latmikaik a melekoi er a tir el ua sei bo mnguu a telkelel el mei el kising

She took the rule and measured it and realized that the end would come to Oikull if it fell over

Ng ngmai a telkelel e msang el bong e tia el omukel er a Oikull a ullebongelel

So she said, this is the end, and she kicked it and it fell over and the rubble became Beliliou and all the rock islands all the way to Oikull, next to Irrai, at the end of the rock islands

*Ng dilu e merekong e sobekii e mukel e mo sobekii e mukel er ngii
a Beliliou me a betok el chelebatcheb e ng mo mo er a Oikull er a
bita er a Irrai el ullebongel el a chelebatcheb*

And so now the children of Latmikaik were able to walk all the way to Babeldaob

*Ng solai ngmai sebecel el merael er ngii a rengel el a Latmikaik e
me er a Babeldaob*

And so they walked and walked until the land of Belau was crowded, and the villages filled with these creatures.

*Ng di merael merael e ng mo mesekid er a chutem er a tia el Belau
ng meseked er a beluu er a chad*

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An Invitation

Robert Borofsky

Bengal must have a history, or else there is no hope for it.
Who will write it? You will write it, I will write it, all of us will
write it.

—Bankim

How does one make sense of the Pacific's varied pasts? Materials abound for the project: There are writings, memories, chants, artifacts, and landscapes waiting to be discovered (and rediscovered). Yet a major complication exists: how to organize and prioritize what one reads, what one hears, what one discovers? The past—in our ambiguous knowing of it—does not proclaim its meanings in a single voice. There are multiple voices. Which ones deserve primary attention—in what ways, for which contexts? How does one weave a coherent narrative out of the many materials without denying their differences, ambiguities, and complexities?

This introduction begins by discussing three interconnected issues involved in examining the region's varied pasts—regarding objectivity, representation, and narration. The three are examined at some length, not to discourage readers, but because many authors acknowledge the problems surrounding these issues, stress their importance, and then subtly shelve them in presenting their particular accounts. The problems will not go away with the wave of a pen. They need to be addressed. And if readers consider them as they move through this volume, not only will the volume make more sense, but they should find it—dare I say?—more provocative.

Searching for Objectivity¹

There is always selectivity in describing the past. One has to make sense of a host of ambiguous, multiple, and (not infrequently)

¹Readers interested in exploring additional references relating to points raised in this section might consult the following (page numbers refer to particularly relevant parts

contradictory accounts as best as one can. The available data to peruse can be staggering. Writing about the material relating to Europe's early contacts with the "New World," Greenblatt observes:

Journals, letters, memoranda, essays, questionnaires, eyewitness accounts, narrative histories, inventories, legal depositions, theological debates, royal proclamations, official reports, papal bulls, charters, chronicles, notarial records, broadsheets, utopian fantasies, pastoral eclogues, dramatic romances, epic poems—there is in the sixteenth century a flood of textual representation, along with a much smaller production of visual images that professes to deliver the New World to the Old.

When I contemplate this torrent of words and images, I feel overwhelmed—a lifetime would not suffice to grasp what was disseminated throughout Europe in the first few generations alone. (1991:145)

Also, many of the materials do not necessarily speak to us—across gaps of time—in self-evident ways. We often must make inferences, offer interpretations, in the process of understanding them. Even a

of the reference): **history's constructed nature:** Dening 1988a:xi, 93–116, 1988b:4–5, 27, 99–101, 1992a:281, 366, 372; Trouillot 1995:13, 58–59; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:18, 1992:22–25, 38; Greenblatt 1991:23, 121; Browning 1997:10; King 1997; **plethora of sources:** Heller 1993; **historical importance of silences:** Trouillot 1995:49; Chakrabarty 1992:21; Chatterjee 1993:154; Said 1993:267; Lucas 1997:8; Bhabha 1994:160; **exploring the dynamics of silences:** Trouillot 1995:27–28; Steedly 1993: 30, 177; Chatterjee 1994:214; Said 1993:265; Thompson 1963:55; **additional examples of silences:** Gutiérrez 1991:xvii, 50; Laracy in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:153–154; Thomas 1994:159; Schell 1997:17; Seed 1995:15; Chatterjee 1993:156; Guha 1989:304; Pels 1997:178; Binney 1996:114; King 1997; and Lourie 1997; **no final reading of history:** Lacquer 1997:5; Lal in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:402; Said 1993: 3; Craig 1997:20; and Trouillot 1995:19, 131, 140; **question of standards:** Haskell 1998 especially 57–223; Nagel 1996; Novick 1988; Ranke (1824, 1973); **problematic nature of historical objectivity:** Greenwood, Neumann, and Sartori 1995:8; Roberts in Greenwood, Neumann, and Sartori 1995:130; Pandey 1992:50; Feierman 1995:52; Guha 1989:214; **application of history to non-Western cultures:** Lätükefu 1992:15; Salmond 1985:259–260; Binney 1997:5; Nagel 1996; **problems in establishing credibility:** Steedly 1993:35, Trouillot 1995:8, 11, 158 fn.4; Shapin 1994:xxv–xxvi, 48, 83, 123–124, 212, 218, 250, 307; Greenblatt 1991:6, 22, 30–31, 35, 122–123, 147; Seed 1995:191; Borofsky 1987:106–130 ff., 1997; Wright 1979; Stoler 1992a:183; Salmond 1985:249–254; **oral versus written accounts:** Finnegan 1977; Portelli 1997; Lord 1960; Fielding 1996; Manoa 1997; Humphreys 1997:100–101, 330–332, 339–380 ff., 388–397 ff.; Seed 1995:170; **alternative forms of history writing:** Manoa 1997; Fabian

single vote—a vote on which everyone agrees regarding the tallied result—can be highly problematic. Constitutionally, the American annexation of Hawai‘i needed a two-thirds majority by the U.S. Senate to pass. The result of the Senate vote was 42 “aye” and 21 “nay.” Everyone agrees on that. But did this vote constitute a two-thirds majority? Coffman writes: “Of those who voted, exactly two-thirds voted yes, but nearly a third of the entire Senate ducked out of voting. As a result, America’s annexation of the previously sovereign nation of Hawai‘i rested on the votes of fewer than half the members of the United States Senate” (1998:311). This raises a significant question: Was the American annexation of Hawai‘i, therefore, an illegal act? It is a matter of heated debate.

There are, moreover, “silences” in describing the past—selections that, in emphasizing one set of materials, ignore (or downplay) another. Silences are central to the tellings and retellings of history and, critically, to the messages historians seek to convey. They allow one to transform a cascade of data not only into coherent narratives but into coherent narratives of one’s liking. Trouillot (1995) notes the Haitian Revolution—the first successful slave revolt in the New World—was perceived as too revolutionary by many revolutionaries in Europe and America. Important aspects of the revolt were ignored as a result—were silenced—in European accountings of the event. Renan provocatively proposes: “to forget and—I will venture to say—to get one’s history wrong, are essential factors in the making of a nation” (1939: 190). “Without oblivion,” Grafton adds, “history could not continue to be written” (1997:230).

Exploring the hows and whys of silences often produces valuable

1996; Evans 1997; Steedly 1993:75, 238; Fielding 1996; Lerner 1997; Finnegan 1977: 241–275; Lord 1960; Keesing and Tonkinson 1982; Scribner 1985; Keller and Keller 1996:159–179; Reilly and Heke 1995:204 (cf. Gunson 1992:4); **imperialism’s impact on the construction of knowledge**: Thomas 1994:25; Asad 1994:78–79; Cohn 1996: 10; see also chapters by Neumann and Hempenstall (Section One) and “Colonial Engagements” (Section Three); **power and storytelling**: Trouillot 1995:28–29; Steedly 1993:176, 198; Shapin 1994:403; Thompson 1963:552, 761; Greenblatt 1991:146; Herzfeld 1997:5, 65; Grant 1995:156–163; Appadurai 1996:15; and Said 1991:22; **power and “truth”**: Trouillot 1995:6, 56; Stoler and Cooper 1997:21; Handler 1994: 3; Seed 1992:10; Chatterjee 1994:3; Herzfeld 1997:5, 91; **history as a negotiated conversation**: Roberts 1997; Denoon 1992:xv; Binney 1997:7; Said 1993:3; Shapin 1994: 351–353.

insights. Maier's *American Scripture* (1997), for example, shows Jefferson's framing of the American Declaration of Independence was not necessarily the heroic act it sometimes is conveyed to be. She uncovered ninety other declarations of independence Americans adopted between April and July 1776. What has been silenced—presumably in lionizing Jefferson—is the context in which Jefferson wrote his “American scripture.” Many others were formulating similar documents at the time and Jefferson, it turns out, had ready reference to George Mason's draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights in writing the American Declaration of Independence.

Because those who write about times past not only belong to different periods, places, and persuasions but also possess different standards for selecting, interpreting, and silencing material, there is always flux in how the past is presented in the present. Different people make sense of the past in different ways. To assert the past has a single, fixed, interpretation—that everyone concurs on through time—is to rob it of the one thing we can be certain about, the past's contingent, negotiated, changing nature. “Our view of the past can never be a permanent one,” G. Craig observes. “Revision is part of the historical process” (1997:20).

STANDARDS

We can reasonably ask, however, if everything is fair game: Are there no standards by which readers can judge how differing authors select, interpret, and silence material? Behind this question is a tension framing two intellectual traditions within the West, often referred to as the Enlightenment and Romantic Counter-Enlightenment. Let me leave aside that these movements have been interpreted differently in different times (so that, again, ambiguity and flux surround perceptions of them; e.g., see Darnton 1997). It is fair to say, however, that central to the tension between the two intellectual traditions is the degree to which certain concepts—such as reason—constitute universal (or at least transnational) standards for assessing divergent beliefs and behaviors. For Enlightenment writers such as Voltaire, Diderot, and Condorcet, Berlin suggests, there was “only one universal civilization” or standard of judgement. For the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment writer Herder, Berlin states, there was “a plurality of incommensurable cultures” (in Gray 1996:122). Juxtaposing the two perspectives one to another raises important questions: Is the past a foreign country (to quote Hartley)? Can we understand it despite its differences

from us? Need we follow Foucault (1980:131) in believing “each society has its régime of truth . . . types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (“another power, another knowledge,” he asserts, 1978:226)? Or can we apply “our” standards to “others”—separated though they be from us by time, space, and context?

In the early 1970s, an important exchange took place between Munz and Davidson related to this issue: Could Pacific Islander accounts of the past be viewed as “history”? Davidson suggested that history “is a methodology for the study of society through the analysis of change over time” (1971a:119–120). It represented a methodology drawn from the European past but one that need not be limited to Europe. It had broad application. Munz questioned whether non-Europeans could have history—as he knew it—if they did not have time reckoning schemes that could be placed on a broad, comparative grid regarding what happened when, and, importantly, if others could not evaluate the primary source material. For Munz: “History as we have come to understand it . . . is a way of viewing the past of a particular set of societies which harbour a certain set of thoughts. . . . In societies where there are no recorded facts or where the facts recorded are the precipitate of a different form of thought, history in our sense of the term is not possible” (1971:16–17).

In working our way through this issue, it seems appropriate, following Darnton, to first point out that the Enlightenment did not represent—as some postmodernists suggest today—the totality of eighteenth-century Western thought. By viewing the Enlightenment “as a concerted campaign on the part of a self-conscious group of intellectuals, one can reduce it to its proper proportions” (1997:34). It constituted a historical nexus of people who aspired to visions (and actions) that carried them beyond the parochial worlds they lived in. To quote Darnton again: “It had neither borders nor police. It was open to ideas from everywhere. . . . No one in it . . . conceived of the idea of nationalism” (1997:37, cf. Roche 1998). Its sense of universalism might be described in the same way we describe the twentieth century’s two great wars as “World Wars.” The description overstates. But behind the overstatement is a stress on the disruption of old boundaries, the widening of the universe of discourse. There is moreover a subtext in both cases—the implied dominance of Western civilization.

We also need to note that standards commonly applied today in examining Pacific pasts contain important contradictions. “Every

schoolboy knows—at least every German high school student once knew—what scientific history is and who invented it,” Grafton writes. “Scientific history rests on primary rather than secondary sources: Leopold von Ranke . . . was its first famous practitioner . . . Ranke became the academic historian par excellence” (1997:34). Ranke’s goal was to write history (in an often-cited phrase) “wie es eigentlich gewesen”—as it really was. (There is a politics behind the phrasing: In criticizing the work of other scholars, such as Guicciardini and Sismondi, Ranke not only established the importance of primary sources but also his skills as an historian.) Yet, as just noted, the past does not speak to us in one clear voice. It speaks in many voices, through a host of primary sources. Ambiguities, uncertainties, contradictions abound about what happened, when, how, and why. To describe a piece of the past “as it really was” is to impose an order on that past it never had—even for those who lived through it. Ranke implicitly realized this. He never produced all the documentation available regarding a particular period, nor even all the documents he himself used. “Nobody would want to publish the whole archives,” he said. “But he insisted that intelligent readers should work through at least the documents he did print” (Grafton 1997:51–52). (It turns out Ranke was not always precise in his citations, a point Heinrich Leo made.) Writing history “as it really was” meant, then, something more akin to supporting a historical account with a range of documents that others, if they worked their way through them, could use to evaluate how and why the author developed the conclusions he or she did.

There is also a problem in current efforts to deconstruct earlier constructions of the past. That political and cultural perspectives shape constructions of the past has become gospel for many postmodernists. But how can we “prove” this to be true? To emphasize the constructed nature of our narratives and then, at the same time, to criticize the biases of other accounts opens us up to a crucial contradiction. What lets us—to follow Weber’s famous criticism of Marx—remain inside the “cab” of historical constructionism, emphasizing the constructed nature of historical understandings while, at the same time, seeming to alight from it as an objective, outside observer? Why is our “post-modern perspective” not simply another construction, responding to another set of political structures? Or, alternatively, acknowledging it is just that, what suggests this position is verifiable?

The point is that we need to approach our present “standards”—our “Western standards”—with a critical eye. Still, that does not mean

we cannot cross cultural communities or intellectual perspectives in using them. Not only do *Islanders* (a loose term for early residents of the Pacific Islands) and *Outlanders* (a still looser term for those who settled in the region during the past three centuries) share overlapping pasts—that is to say, their recent pasts involve each other in significant ways—but, importantly, they share many standards for exploring these pasts. (The reason this is not always recognized is because Islander standards for evaluating divergent claims are often framed in terms of fallacious stereotypes. They are rarely investigated.)

Islander and *Outlander* are far too broad as categories, of course, to facilitate productive comparison. But we can compare subsets of each: Pukapukans—Polynesians dwelling on a northern Cook Island atoll—and professional Pacific historians. (When I say Pukapukans, I refer only to the 230 Pukapukans I interviewed in 1977–1981—see Borofsky 1987:xix–xx.) Both groups value primary sources. Eyewitness accounts are seen as better than secondhand or thirdhand recountings of an event, for example. Both groups also believe that one should not take a person’s testimony at face value. It needs to be scrutinized for biases, for unstated personal advantages sought. Both groups analyze the contexts within which testimony is presented to ascertain its validity. Is there something in its telling, or the contexts of the telling, that lends credibility—or doubt—to the testimony? Citing lots of details—especially details about which others are only vaguely familiar—often conveys, for both parties, that a person is knowledgeable about a subject. Both groups moreover are impressed when testimony is presented in public forums and other noted authorities do not contest it. Public consensus—the broader the better—suggests, for both, that “truth” is at hand. And both groups rely extensively on recognized experts. That is to say, they believe some people are quite knowledgeable about a subject and others should generally defer to them. How people conclude someone is an expert—given they themselves possess limited means to test an expert’s expertise—is a complex process. But in both cases, the evaluation tends to support existing social hierarchies.

There are other more subtle similarities between Pukapukans and Pacific historians we might also note. Take the commonly stated opposition between oral and written accounts. Professional Pacific historians place far more stress on written reports than Pukapukans do. Yet as Maude asserts (1971:12), most written records in the Pacific are Eurocentric. They were generally written by westerners—Western

explorers, Western missionaries, Western merchants—involving a Western bias (even when they claimed to describe Pacific Islanders). De-emphasizing oral accounts, questioning their reliability regarding times past, emphasizes a point Shapin makes: Credibility assessments often support the status system of the assessor (1994:93). What is intriguing is that most academic scholars take most academic documentation on trust. Rarely do they check one another's footnotes or sources. Few of the twenty-nine reviewers of Obeyesekere's *Apotheosis of Captain Cook*, for example, actually went back and examined his documentation (see Chapter 28). Fewer still, I believe, have checked Sahlins' 1995 documentation, despite the praise the book has received for its meticulous scholarship. As Grafton observes, "Only the relatively few readers who have trawled their nets through the same archival waters can identify the catch in any given set of notes. . . . For most readers, footnotes play a different role. In a modern, impersonal society, in which individuals must rely for vital services on others whom they do not know, credentials perform what used to be the function of guild membership or personal recommendations: they give legitimacy. Like the shabby podium, carafe of water, and rambling, inaccurate introduction which assert that particular person deserves to be listened to . . . footnotes confer authority on a writer" (1997:7–8). If professional Pacific historians accept each other's footnotes on faith, as clearly happens, what is the difference, then, between oral and written accounts?

Take another case. Many Pacific Islanders, such as Epeli Hau'ofa, Vili Hereniko, John Pule, and Albert Wendt, voice an uncomfortableness with the more structured forms of Western history writing. In turn, various academic historians express uneasiness with the poetry, plays, performances, and novels Pacific Islanders use as forms of history telling. Yet we should not overdraw the differences involved. Notable examples exist of history and literature overlapping in the West. *The Great War and Modern Memory*—which won the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Emerson Award from Phi Beta Kappa—is one such example. Its author, Fussell, writes: "I have tried to understand something of the simultaneous and reciprocal process by which life feeds materials to literature while literature returns the favor by conferring forms upon life. And I have been concerned with something more: the way the dynamics and iconography of the Great War have proved crucial political, rhetorical, and artistic determinants on subsequent life. At the same time the

war was relying on inherited myth, it was generating new myth, and that myth is part of the fiber of our own lives” (1975:Preface).

In respect to the historical validity of literary accounts, the Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa writes in *The Truth of Lies*: “The reconstruction of the past in literature is almost always false in terms of historical objectivity. Literary truth is one thing, historical truth another. But although it is full of lies—rather, because of this fact—literature recounts the history that the historians would not know how, or be able, to write because the deceptions, tricks, and exaggerations of narrative literature are used to express profound and unsettling truths which can only see the light of day in this oblique way” (see Parini 1998:B5).

This is not to say there are no differences between Pukapukans and professional Pacific historians in their standards of judgment. There clearly are. Pukapukans, for example, are open to a wider range of sources than professional Pacific historians. Both mine written texts and genealogies for information, but Pukapukans pay more attention to chants, folk tales, and landscapes as important sources of data. There is also a greater concern among Pukapukans with the interpersonal contexts that produced a piece of information. Questions such as “Did the person look you straight in the eyes?” or “Did the person smile while telling the story?” are important in assessing a person’s testimony. Professional Pacific historians—even those emphasizing the postmodern concern regarding the role of the knower in the known (to borrow M. Polanyi’s phrasing)—are largely focused on texts. One hears little about the smiles or the personalities of informants (only about the smiles and personalities of historians).

OBJECTIVITY AS A PROCESS

Let me draw this section to a close with four points. First, it is clear complications and contradictions abound in how we make sense of the past. Selecting, interpreting, and silencing information is rarely a straightforward process. And our claims of how we go about doing it are, at times, at odds with the reality of our practices. “Knowing the past,” Kubler states, “is as astonishing a performance as knowing the stars” (1962:19). Our changing styles for exploring the past, the complexities of how we discover and weigh information through time, means there will always be a contingent, changing aspect to our understanding of past events.

Second, tensions encapsulated in the conflicts between the Enlight-

enment and the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment—between the degree we can use *a* set (or our set) of perspectives to cross cultural borders—frame today’s history-telling debates. But we need remember that each position possesses unstated complications. The Enlightenment, for example, in seeking to tear down parochial boundaries, affirms a form of imperialism that implies one perspective applies (or should apply) to many (if not all). And the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment’s bounded nationalism impedes any crossing of borders, perpetuating the present’s parochialisms rather than challenging them. Still, and this is crucial, such problems do not mean that—in practice—significant overlaps do not exist between professional Pacific historians and Pukapukans regarding how to make sense of the past. The fact that Islander and Outlander styles for exploring and for assessing the region’s pasts overlap in significant ways means that we need not be paralyzed by abstract philosophical arguments.

Third, the standards people apply to evaluating accounts of the past—even with such overlaps—remain very much embedded in contexts. That is why historical accounts change with changing perspectives, changing audiences, and changing times. I am not suggesting that standards for assessing credibility are continually in flux. (Shapin 1994 makes clear some Western standards—such as judging a person’s statements by his past actions—have endured for centuries.) I am saying their application in specific contexts or the weighing of one standard against another often fluctuate with the teller and/or the teller’s audience. We need be sensitive to how contexts shape content. The fact that many professional Pacific historians stress the need for Islander perspectives but tend to include only token Islander representation emphasizes the power imbalances remaining in the “post-colonial” Pacific. And the fact that many Islanders silence differences within Islander communities to lend greater authority to their own perspectives illustrates that the power plays are not all one sided. “In a war between unequals, especially when the more powerful side is rampantly duplicitous,” a recent *New York Times* editorial asserts (discussing the controversy surrounding the historical authenticity of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*), “we expect that truth will be on the side of the innocent” (December 17, 1998). I am suggesting that, in our tellings and retellings of the past, there are no “innocents.” We need to be sensitive to contexts—all around.

But fourth, it is clear that we can still strive for objectivity under these conditions. Objectivity, while an incomplete project at best, is

something many (perhaps most) history tellers aspire to as they analyze how others (or justify how they) select, interpret, and silence information. This holds true for Pukapukans as well as professional Pacific historians, for writers of the Romantic Counter-Enlightenment as well as the Enlightenment. Objectivity always remains a work in progress. It is an ever continuing, ever incomplete effort because it does not reside in the rhetoric or in the appearances of objectivity. It resides in the arguments and counterarguments—in the continuing conversations—of people through time. What we call *history*—the study of times past with what remains of these times in the present—gains greater credibility, gains greater objectivity, through challenges and counterchallenges. We saw this with Ranke. He criticized the work of Guicciardini and then, in turn, was criticized by Leo. We never discover “how it really was” in the European pasts Ranke discusses. But their back-and-forth conversations/arguments allow us to sift through the material discussed, refining our understanding of it. As Shapin observes in *A Social History of Truth* (1994:338), the circulation of knowledge in public space has been critical for assessing knowledge claims. Davies’s *Europe: A History* (1996) provides a case in point. The book has been reviewed favorably in the *New York Review of Books* (Evans 1997) and has over a hundred thousand copies in print. Yet Rabb, in the *New York Times*, asserts: “Without looking anything up, this reviewer spotted inaccuracies, on the average, every other page. Things go so bad that eventually I counted seven wrong dates in 11 lines” (1996:16). Objectivity, in other words, is not something to be proclaimed with stylistic displays, rhetorical assertions, or publishing numbers. It is a process of negotiation involving conversations across divergent perspectives, with challenges and counterchallenges. Without such conversations, we cannot move toward any reasonable sense of objectivity. To claim otherwise is innocence indeed.

The Politics of Representation²

The politics surrounding who claims the right to speak about the Pacific’s pasts means that one’s ability to entertain broad conver-

²For further references see: **the problem of communicating across difference**: Reilly 1996:404; **using difference to unsettle the accepted**: Hempenstall 1992:74; Nero in

sations—across a range of different perspectives—is not a simple process. Listen to some statements regarding the issue: Kame‘eliehiwa suggests “Natives have often wished that white people would study their own ancestors . . . instead of us, whom they generally misunderstand and thus misrepresent” (1994b:112). “For Hawaiians,” Trask asserts, “anthropologists . . . are part of the colonizing horde because they seek to take away from us the power to define who and what we are, and how we should behave politically and culturally” (1991: 162). A *New Zealand Herald* headline, for a story regarding Hanson’s “The Making of the Maori” (1989), reads: “US Expert Says Maori Culture Invented”—this at a time when the New Zealand government’s compliance with the Treaty of Waitangi was the subject of an ongoing investigation (see Linnekin 1991a:446; cf. Levine 1991; Hanson 1991). Hereniko (in this volume) asks: “Do outsiders have the right to speak for and about Pacific Islanders? . . . Westerners seem to think they have the right to express opinions (sometimes labeled truths) about cultures that are not their own in such a way that they appear to know it from the inside out. Most seem to think they have the right to speak about anything and everything.”

We need to be sensitive to the contexts surrounding such statements. They challenge the existing structures for framing (and authorizing) explorations of the region’s pasts. More is involved than what Gellner termed “kicking the dead dragon of colonialism” years after its official demise (see Wrong 1999:5). We might, more perceptively, regard these challenges in relation to recent reservations regarding the development paradigm—in which a rising tide of Western capitalism was supposed to lift all (or most) “Third World” boats. Now decades into the project, its limitations are clear. “Whatever progress has been achieved has been inadequate in relation to basic human needs,”

Denoon 1997b:439; Borofsky 1987:145–156; **history as a double construction**: Denning 1988a:xi, 93–116; 1988b:4, 27, 99–101; Thomas 1994:108; *New York Times* editorial October 20, 1997; Keesing and Tonkinson 1982:297–301 ff., 370–372; Mendelsohn 1997; Kaplan 1997; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:1–14 ff., 247–259; Hereniko in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:424; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:12; and Gordon 1997: B5; **value in questioning accepted accounts**: Luttwak 1997; Shapin 1994:338, Greenblatt 1991:127; Smith 1997; Binney 1997:9, 523; Reilly 1996:404; **opening up history to others**: Douglas 1992:98–99; Lal 1992:230; Trouillot 1995:21; **not leaving history simply to “professional” historians**: Shea 1997:A21; MacCarthy 1997:36–37; and Trouillot 1995:21, 25.

Mehmet writes in the *Harvard International Review*. “The bottom line is that the promises of mass prosperity made in the 1950s and 1960s to justify Western intervention have not been realized” (1998/99:54). As noted in a later section on “Postcolonial” Politics, development has tended to become another form of dependency. In acknowledging the limits of the development paradigm, we are led to an important question: What forms of cultural, historical, and/or intellectual independence might be effectively asserted by Third (and Fourth) World countries today?

There is another context, as well, that shapes the politics of representation: the tendency to view people as grouped into homogeneous cultural units or “blocks.” In opposing “the West,” many Third World intellectuals present their perspectives in terms Western audiences understand. Oppositions such as Hawaiians versus haoles, Maoris versus Pakeha, and Islanders versus Outlanders are intelligible to these audiences because the implicit frame of reference—involving the overlapping of political and cultural identities—relates to the ideology of nationalism in Western history.

But there is no denying important differences existed (and still exist) within Islander communities that should not be skimmed over in such cultural “blocking.” Wilcox and Nāwahi, for example—important leaders of the Hawaiian community during the protests against American annexation of the archipelago—opposed the concept of a Hawaiian monarchy (which is to say, Queen Liliuokalani’s right to rule: Coffman 1998:238; see also 103–104). And the British government, in its conflict with the Maori leader Te Kooti, often relied on other Maori for military support—“a deliberate and remorseless unleashing of tribal hostilities by the government,” Binney suggests (1997:165). Neither Hawaiians nor Maori, then, marched in a collective lockstep during key periods of Western intrusion. (From the traditions that have come down to us, the same might be said for pre-contact times as well).

We need also note that pervasive hybridities muddle any neat demarcations between groups. *Borderlands* is a term frequently used for emphasizing the ambiguities that disrupt the easy association of cultural borders with national borders (e.g., see Rosaldo 1989; Alvarez 1995). But it would be fair to say there are hybridities all across the board, not just at the borders. They exist at the center as well as the periphery. Symbolic of such hybridities, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) defines Hawaiians—for purposes of partic-

ipation in OHA affairs—as those claiming to possess *some* degree of Hawaiian ancestry. (This degree of ancestry is left ambiguous—it can range from 100 percent to less than 10 percent—and, by and large, rests solely on the individual’s self-accounting of his or her ancestry). “No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions,” Said writes. “But there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was what all human life was about” (1993:336). “For good or evil,” Denig observes, “these past 400 years of cultural encounters in Oceania have so bound-together black and white that now there is no black without white, no white without black” (1995:75). And Narayan suggests (as a “native” anthropologist), “a person may have many strands of identification available, strands that may be tugged into the open or stuffed out of sight” (1993:673).

One result of the tendency toward cultural blocking is that certain reviewers of this book will look closely at the proportion of Islander contributors. By my account, fourteen (or 40 percent) of the contributions involve Islanders: Balaz, Diaz, Grace, Hau’ofa, Hereniko, Highland, Kituai, Lee, Malsol, Molisa, Rasmussen, Teaiwa, Thaman, and Wendt. (If we exclude Prakash, Said, and White—who are offering comparative perspectives, as outsiders, on the Pacific—the percentage goes up to 44 percent.) Some might query if an appropriate number of pages, not simply contributions, is allowed Islanders. (Many Islander contributions are shorter in length because of their poetic form.) This question leads to others: Should all contributions be the same approximate length? How many Outlander poems need be included to provide a sense of symmetry with Islander poems? Clearly, things tend to get murky as we move further into the politics of cultural blocking.

And how should we classify various authors? Take for example Vicente Diaz: His father’s father is indigenous “Filipino,” his father’s mother is half Spanish. His mother’s father is Ponapean, his mother’s mother indigenous “Filipino.” His parents moved to Guam from the Philippines following World War II, and Vicente was born and raised there. Does that make him a Pacific Islander? If one focuses on genealogical connections, he is mostly “Filipino.” Would that put him outside “the Pacific” (as it is generally conceived of by Pacific historians)? If one focuses on the contexts within which he grew up—and clearly relationships and behaviors play an important part in many Pacific Islanders’ definitions of themselves (see Howard 1990)—an “Islander” classification seems appropriate. (I would add that Vicente’s mother

affirms strong Ponapean connections through family narratives.) Or take Helen Morton. She was born in England and raised in Australia. She married a Tongan, had a child by him, but is now divorced. To what degree can she be said to be an Islander in terms of relationships—especially as she still works closely with Tongans in her research (see Morton 1996)? Brenda Lee describes her background as Hawaiian, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Inca Indian, and English. (Her husband is a Hawaiian homestead land lessee.) If she is, as she says, “heavy duty” Chinese and Hawaiian, does that make her more Islander or Outlander? It all depends on to what degree one includes immigrant Chinese within “the Pacific.” I would add that grouping Michel Panoff and Klaus Neumann together as Outlanders while separating Marshall Sahlins and Vicente Diaz by the Outlander/Islander distinction ignores important intellectual differences (in the case of the former) and similarities (in the case of the latter). Ambiguities, subtleties, and complications abound, in other words, in trying to classify contributors in these stereotypical terms. Outlander and Islander are, at best, constructed notions that leave out as much as they include.

Still, there is no denying the politics and polarizations involved in these classifications. Opposing Outlanders offers a ready way to mobilize Islanders—silencing the differences that separate individuals and communities from one another. It becomes a call to action against “others.” For Outlanders, the polarization frames ambivalences regarding their dominance of the region. It nourishes a sense of liberal guilt. It also sidesteps coming to terms with the specifics of this control and the political structures reinforcing it.

STEPPING ON SILENCES

A way to dig deeper into the political tensions surrounding cultural blocking today is to recognize that people in both groups, if I might speak in very general terms for the moment, tend to step on—disrupt—the other group’s silences. Outlander accounts—by their form of presentation (as published books) and their concern for “objectivity”—imply a certainty they rarely possess. Credentialing for professional Pacific historians involves publishing. Pacific historians often are aware of the uncertainties in their publications. But they rarely emphasize them. They are usually allocated to passing, cautionary phrases early on in a book. If authors emphasize these uncertainties too much, publishers might question publishing their work. (Why not wait until more is known?) It is, ultimately, a matter of scholarly salesmanship. For

those unfamiliar with this rhetorical posturing, the writing style conveys an air of arrogance. It implies—whatever the realities of academic life—that few spaces exist for alternative accounts (and for alternative forms of credentialing). Binney writes: “Maori objections to Pakeha dominance in historical writing have been intended not so much to claim an absolute ownership or monopoly over their history, nor to claim a right to censor . . . but rather to ensure that Maori understandings and values be given their full weight. The debate is about the narrating of history in ways which are meaningful to Maori. For while written historical accounts can usually inform, misconceived assumptions about who possesses ‘the truth’ and what are the appropriate ways of assessing, analysing and judging have been set up and perpetuated with the pre-eminence of European historical writers” (1997:5).

I would add that professional historians frequently face another problem as well. Many professional historians remain uneasy regarding how historical nonfiction often trips over into historical fiction. We noted above Mario Vargas Llosa’s remark concerning the “truth of lies.” “Writing is an art, and art means artifice, the artificial,” Joyce Carol Oates observes. “That we are keenly aware of this today testifies to our higher standard of truth no less than to our diminished expectation of encountering it. The contemporary predilection for ‘nonfiction’ in the form of . . . ‘memoir’ testifies, perhaps, to our desperate wish that some truth of the spirit be present to us though we know it’s probably invented. We want to believe! We are the species that clamors to be lied to” (1998).

Caught between a narrowing base for purely academic writings and the widening base for popularized—less precise, more dramatic—accounts of the past, professional Pacific historians often appear edgy and defensive when faced with Islander objections to their writing styles. Why do more people not read our accounts, many historians ask? And to fend off the answer, they often establish a border of credentialing around “proper” academic writing to give it a sense of professional authority. The other silence of academic writing in the Pacific, then, is that few read Pacific historians’ books. Munro (1996a: 57) writes that Pacific history “is becoming isolated and marginalised *within* the Pacific . . . the very place where . . . [it] ought to be emphasized” (see also Munro 1995:83). In their heated critiques, Islanders may be paying proportionally more attention to the work of professional Pacific historians than many Outlander audiences do.

Various Islanders have their own silences. Islander writers fre-

quently read by Outlander audiences may hold marginal positions within their own natal communities. They are often hybrids: Educated in the positionings and posturings of Western academics, they may be partially alienated from the world in which they grew up. The basis for their authority—as representatives of a particular community—consequently remains unclear. Not infrequently, their authority derives from positioning themselves in the borderlands between Islander and Outlander communities. Outlander anthropologists and historians—who by living in a particular community come to know it in an intimate way—undermine and compete for this same borderland authority. Look again at Trask's critique of anthropology: "For Hawaiians, anthropologists . . . are part of the colonizing horde because they seek to take away from us the power to define who and what we are" (1991:162). What is left unsaid in Trask's statement is that diverse voices exist within the Hawaiian community, and many take strong exception to her views.

We might place this issue in perspective by noting the ambiguity surrounding the position of the noted intellectual Frantz Fanon. He remains highly regarded in the West. Sartre, in his preface to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, wrote: "The Third World finds itself and speaks to itself through his voice" (in Fanon 1963:9). Yet Fanon's status remains unclear in the Third World, certainly in Algeria, the country with which he is often associated. Born to a French mother in Martinique, he was viewed as an outsider by the Algerian revolutionaries with whom he sought to associate. They tended to see him as a European interloper. The authority he had came not primarily from Algerians but from straddling two audiences—Algerian and French—who were in conflict with one another.

While noting the silences Outlanders and Islanders step on, we need also take note of the silences that are *not* disrupted in their exchanges—which silences remain silent. Significant among these is a sense of liberal tokenism that allows Outlanders to gain a "taste for 'the Other'" (in Dominguez's 1994 phrasing) without seriously disrupting Outlander political dominance. The strategy draws a select number of Islanders into elite Western circles of status—as artists, for example—while keeping most Islanders at arm's length. This is not to say that these Islanders do not benefit. For the highlighted individuals, Dirlik observes: "Postcolonial discourse is an expression not so much of agony over identity . . . but of newfound power" (1994:339). One might suggest, then, that the two parties—despite their conflicts,

despite their rhetorics—are at times drawn into the rhythms of a shared “postcolonial” tango that neither fully acknowledges.

MOVING BEYOND POLARIZATIONS

Let me suggest three possibilities for working our way through these problems.

First, bringing different perspectives to bear on our understandings of times past is essential for recognizing the shape of our constructions and strategic silences. Without such differences to confront, we tend to live comfortably within our own complacencies. Without differences we have a rather limited sense of perspective, of “objectivity.” We go galloping about on our rhetoric unappreciative of the silences that speed us along.

Mitchell’s review of Hereniko’s *The Woven Gods* emphasizes a key problem in this regard. Mitchell comments that Hereniko’s book “is not a conventional ethnography. While its level of scholarship is high, a short time ago it would have been unpublishable by a university press because it violates established editorial principles for a scholarly monograph. . . . To read the book is to veer clumsily among a farrago of data and styles. . . . By privileging his anthropological self,” Mitchell writes, Hereniko “notes that he had failed to connect with his fellow Islanders. In a reverse way,” Mitchell continues, “by privileging his Rotuman and fiction-writing selves . . . he has failed to connect as effectively as he could with his anthropological audience” (1997:280–281). Mitchell calls it an unsuccessful experiment in ethnographic writing. Mitchell’s review raises an important set of questions for Outlander academics: Can Western scholars only embrace Third World intellectuals when they express themselves in First World terms? Is real difference—in terms of emotion, multiple voices, and alternative writing styles—out? In learning the lingo of Western intellectuals, do Third World authors become First World hybrids (as Fanon did)? When does a difference, borrowing Bateson’s phrase, make a difference? And when is a difference embraced enough as a difference that it allows us to grow beyond our present understandings—letting us, so to speak, alight from the cab of historical constructionism and perceive other perspectives?

Second, in trying to move beyond the present polarizations, we need to remember that exploring “the past” is more than a professional calling. It is often a personal, participatory, empowering experience for humans. It adds meaning to life not only by explaining

what “was” but by putting what “is” in perspective. History telling can be a deeply political process. To quote Chatterjee: “Reviewing the development of historiography in Bengal in the nineteenth century, Guha shows how the call sent out by Bankimchandra—‘We have no history! We must have a history!’—implied in effect an exhortation to launch the struggle for power, because in this mode of recalling the past, the power to represent oneself is nothing other than political power itself” (1993:76). In a related vein, Lowenthal writes: “Identification with a national past often serves as an assurance of worth against subjugation or bolsters a national sovereignty” (1985:44). History telling, in other words, extends beyond professional historians. It belongs to a much wider audience. It is something we all can—indeed should—participate in to personally place ourselves within the continuum of time.

Such participation, of course, disrupts the easy silences we live with regarding professional history telling. It returns us to Oates’s comment about people seeking meaning as well as “facts.” (How do we deal with that?) If we are “the species that clamors to be lied to,” what does that portend for professional tellings and retellings of times past? We need to remember that “history” always involves a double construction. The documents used to construct the past had a particular politics of construction—were directed toward a particular audience—when they were first recorded (decades or centuries ago). And there is another politics of construction, involving another audience, in the assessing and ordering of these earlier constructions today. Viewing history telling as a solitary, individual experience denies one of its central components. It occurs among people, for people, by people—in their interactions with one another through time.

Hersh’s *The Dark Side of Camelot* (regarding the presidency of John F. Kennedy) illustrates what can happen when we step outside the confines of academic writing. We find credible writing styles that challenge the notion history can only be written by people with doctorate degrees. What do academic historians make of “a reporter with a professional style notoriously similar to the single-minded ferocity of the wolverine, a meat-eater of the north woods known among fur trappers of yesteryear for its ability to tear its way through the log wall of a cabin for a strip of bacon . . . Hersh does not write history in the usual sense of the term, but he makes life difficult for historians by digging up just enough about distressing matters so they can’t honestly be ignored” (Powers 1997:13). The message of Hersh’s

work is not simply about the foibles of an American icon but also about the foibles of leaving history only to professional historians.

“Professional historians have made good use of the creation of the past as a distinct entity,” Trouillot writes, “a creation that paralleled the growth of their own practice. The more historians wrote about past worlds, the more The Past became real as a separate world. But as various crises of our times impinge upon identities thought to be long established or silent, we move closer to the era when professional historians will have to position themselves more clearly within the present, lest politicians, magnates, or ethnic leaders alone write history for them” (1995:152).

Which brings us back—and this is my third point—to shared conversations. I have emphasized that Islanders and Outlanders share overlapping standards for assessing credibility in the Pacific as well as more than three centuries of overlapping pasts. Together these offer a foundation for meaningful conversations across differences of representation, differences of silence, differences of perspective. Finding a way to productively engage in such discussions constitutes the essence of critical history telling. We need to broaden our conversations, our audiences of participation, if we are to move beyond the politics of polarization and learn something new about ourselves and our pasts, as well as the pasts of others.

Narratives³

“The grand narrative,” Lyotard writes in *The Postmodern Condition*, “has lost its credibility” (1984:37). The clarity of vision, the ordered trajectory of unfolding events espoused by such narratives of world history as Marxism, Christianity, and Progress seem less credible today. Many scholars are attuned, instead, to the fragmented, contradictory accountings that disrupt the coherence and power of these panoramic histories. No single narrative today seems to fit all sizes, all contexts, all perspectives regarding how times past merge into the present.

³For further references see: **human narration**: Todorov 1984:x ff.; Geertz 1997; Steedly 1993:29; Assman 1997; **history as narrative**: Le Goff 1992:116–119; Greenblatt 1991:2; Campbell 1992:54; Trouillot 1995:2, 55; Steedly 1993:15; Stoler 1992a: 152–153; Pandey 1992:41; and Said 1989:221.

And yet, Lyotard's statement needs to be qualified in an important way. Humans are born storytellers. They are addicted, as part of the human condition, to telling narratives. Morris suggests: "When confronted with situations of inexplicable impasse, our brains are predisposed to the creation of narrative. . . . Narrative . . . is not just something we *can* do but something we cannot *help* doing. It is as if the human brain cannot rest until it has produced a verbal explanatory structure—employing whatever resources are available in the culture—to account for what it cannot know" (1998:254–255). The psychologist Bruner asserts: "The most natural and the earliest way in which we [humans] organize our experience and our knowledge is in terms of the narrative form. . . . We impose coherence on the past, turn it into history" (1996:121, 144). Human beings, the anthropologist Carithers writes, "perceive any current action within a large temporal envelope, and within that envelope they perceive any given action, not as a response to the immediate circumstances or current mental state of an interlocutor or of oneself, but as part of an unfolding story" (1992:82). (De Certeau 1988, Rosaldo 1989, and White 1973 discuss variations on this theme.)

Two examples illustrate the problem this gets us into. Take recent critiques of "whiggish history"—critiques of the writing of history as progress. Many today would challenge the notion that the past always unfolds into the future as ever increasing progress. But the critics of whiggish history face a problem: In suggesting that their critiques improve on earlier whiggish narratives, they are, in fact, also participating in a progress narrative themselves (but with different players at the top). The critique finds itself caught up, in other words, in the hegemonic framework it seeks to disrupt. And what are we to make of the fact that, in these postmodern times of disrupted narratives, memoirs—narratives that claim not to be invented but (as Oates notes) occasionally are—have become one of the more popular forms of reading (and writing)? There seems no getting away from narratives—even today.

We might note that the broad histories of the Pacific tend to follow a narrative format. Reaching beyond the specifics of this or that event, they offer coherent stories—with political implications—regarding Islander-Outlander interactions. Oliver (1989 [1961]), for example, focuses on the transformations in the region from Western contact through 1950. While not denying indigenous agency—the active role Islanders played in the process—the emphasis is on the changes

wrought by the West. Through brief case studies, he examines particular impacts (such as depopulation) and particular foreign enterprises (such as missionaries and sugar production). Howe (1984), in contrast, emphasizes indigenous agency in the face of Western intrusion, how Islanders played key roles in transforming the region prior to colonial control. Where Oliver focuses on topics, Howe describes indigenous developments on particular archipelagoes. The rise of the Pomares, for example, is examined in Tahiti; changing British-Maori relations are considered in New Zealand. The authors in Denoon (1997b), in focusing on political and economic trends, balance between these two positions—noting Islander agency without denying Outlander impacts. Denoon, in a chapter on “Land, Labour and Independent Development,” states, for example: “Throughout the nineteenth century, ambitious Pacific Islanders saw a variety of chances to transform their lives and their production and exchange. Several formed alliances with foreign adventurers, to extract or exploit resources. As the balance of political power tilted against the chiefs, however, it became increasingly difficult to retain land, labour, and autonomy” (1997b:152).

I would add two final—but critical—points. Narratives are not simply *about* “the past”—about the content or analysis of this or that event. They constitute ways for people to *think with* “the past.” They involve engagement. They help conceptualize the present in terms of the past and the past in terms of the present. They constitute active orderings in and of the world. And second, stories are told in contexts. They are not only presented but listened to. Storytellers and audiences tend to collectively participate in the unfolding of a narrative (see Finnegan 1977).

“Pacific Histories”⁴

With this broad framework in place—regarding objectivity, representation, and narration—let me turn to the specifics of “Pacific history.” (The quote marks emphasize that it is a self-constructed field that, as Denning 1989 reminds us, leaves ambiguous whether it is a

⁴For further references see: *Pacific history’s history*: Howe in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:xi–xiii; Gunson 1992:2, 4, 10–11; Denoon 1992:vii; Lal 1992:x; Macdonald 1996:23–26; Munro 1996a:47, 51; Shineberg 1996:10; Moore 1997:194; *Pacific his-*

subject unto itself, the perspective of a region, or a location where broader historical perspectives are brought to bear on an array of events.) The field has an interesting history. One might say it began in 1950 when Davidson arrived at the Australian National University (ANU) to assume the chair of Pacific History. There had been various accounts of Islander-Outlander and Outlander-Outlander interactions in the Pacific prior to this, but they were generally framed by dynamics beyond the Pacific—such as Masterman’s *Origins of International Rivalry in the Pacific, 1845–1884* (1934). (By contrast, anthropological accounts such as Buck’s *Vikings of the Pacific* [1938] focused on Islander oral traditions.)

Davidson emphasized two key points in his inaugural lecture: (1) “To understand the history of colonial government in the Pacific, it has been necessary to shift the centre of interest from the metropolitan capitals to the islands themselves” (1966:14) and (2) the policies and practices of the Western powers and various Western groups in the Pacific “are still subjects that demand . . . attention; but they must take their place . . . alongside . . . analyses of the indigenous forces that have similarly contributed to the making of the contemporary Pacific” (1966:21). Pacific history, he asserted, needed to focus more on the residents of the region. This became the mantra of the discipline as a whole during these early years because, as Hemenstall notes, ANU “controlled the terrain of the subject area . . . through institutional patronage of postgraduate students, possession of *The Journal of Pacific History* and a productive publishing programme” (1992:61).⁵

But there was a major problem. Many Western residents left

tory’s present problems: Campbell 1992:48; Howe 1992:226–229; Denoon 1997a: 405; Hemenstall 1992:70; Macdonald 1996:24, 35, 37; Munro 1995:83; Munro 1996a:46, 49–51, 57; Chappel 1995:318, 326; Diaz 1995:160; Teaiwa, Nicole, and Durutalo 1996:273; Spate in Daws 1979:125; **limited Pacific resources to attract outsiders’ attention to the region:** Macdonald 1996:29; Herr in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:296; Henningham in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:135; Bennett in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:41; **broadening perspectives beyond the Pacific:** Aldrich 1992:91; Howe 1992:231; Macdonald 1996:30–32, 34–35; Munro 1996a:45, 53; Firth in Daws 1979: 127; **problems of history writing in the Pacific:** Munro 1995:94–95; Moore 1997: 200; **the Pacific as a construct:** Denning 1989; Dirlik 1992:58–59, 65–67; Macdonald 1996:28.

⁵We might add a silence about Pacific history’s history. Davidson and Howe—key figures in the field’s early development—both strongly criticized what they called “impe-

written records of their experiences. Few Islanders did. How then to grasp indigenous perspectives—through oral narratives, archeological excavations, Western accounts of Islander views? The question emphasizes an abiding difficulty with the Davidson perspective: Despite its rhetoric, it was oriented more toward Pacific Islands than Pacific Islanders.

In the early 1980s, with the Davidson school in decline, Dening and Sahlins—both outsiders to the school—reignited Pacific history. Focusing on Islander metaphors (Dening) and Islander ritual structures (Sahlins), they suggested new ways to analyze Islander perspectives. Dening—exploring the “history of Strangers in their ships, of Natives in their islands, of their possession of one another” (1988b: 29)—considered the metaphors each used to incorporate the “other” into their respective worlds. Sahlins focused on indigenous structures—as manifested particularly in rituals and myths—and how they were transformed through time as Islanders applied them in contexts of contact. (“The great challenge to an historical anthropology,” Sahlins writes, “is not merely to know how events are ordered by culture [in contact situations], but how, in that process, the culture is reordered,” 1981:8.) A productive tension exists between the two friends: Neither doubts there were indigenous structures and metaphors that framed native and stranger relations in the Pacific. But to what degree they tended to guide action (more Sahlins’s position) versus tended to provide contexts for meaningful action (more Dening’s position) remains the question.

The field has entered troubled times in the 1990s. Intellectual attention now seems focused on other regions. With the bloom off the field, so to speak, we can see some of its limitations. It has been caught in a contradiction of its own making. In turning away from European framings to regional concerns, it has been able to establish

rial histories”—histories of empire. But neither Davidson nor Howe ever elaborated in significant detail regarding who the authors of these works were. The only person cited at length was Moorehead (1966). But his work was meant for a popular audience, and the telling quote—that is usually held up for criticism—comes from the book’s dust jacket (presumably written by the publisher’s public relations staff). One might infer that John Ward, who held a chair of history at Sydney, was an intended target of both Davidson and Howe. But he is never mentioned—in print or in their bibliographies. The critique of imperial history, then, remained rather vague and focused on a straw man.

an identity of its own, apart from European history. But in embracing the local, it has often seemed constrained by local perspectives without ever being able to effectively include the perspectives of the real “locals”—Pacific Islanders. Pacific history—with the exception of Sahlins’ and Dening’s work—rarely seems to influence work done in other regions of the world. As Munro writes, “The Pacific has always been the marginalised backwater of non-European studies” (1993:88). Part of the problem perhaps is that the region’s resources have not been in particularly high demand compared to those of Asia and South America. There has, as a result, not been a particular rush by outsiders to the region to understand its historical dynamics. But equally significant, I would suggest, the field has tended to stick to its local roots—focusing on regional concerns and island-specific studies. As early as 1979, Howe complained of how scholars were “finding out more and more about less and less. Few writers seem able to pull back from the microcosm to consider the implications, if any, for a broader or macrocosmic view of islands’ history” (1979:83). Leckie calls it “a lack of synthesis” (1992:151). Trends that sweep the social sciences beyond the Pacific—such as subaltern history—tend to only slowly move into the region’s scholarly writings.

Returning to a point suggested above, we need to remember that the field’s self-defined area of study—the “Pacific”—is a constructed artifact of the discipline. Why, for example, should Pacific historians study large Pacific islands such as New Zealand and New Guinea but ignore the Philippines and Indonesia? (Why is Australia included in some accounts but not in others?) For those living in Hawai‘i, the “Pacific” refers to the islands lying within “Melanesia,” “Polynesia,” and “Micronesia” (constructed categories themselves). For others on the West Coast of the United States, the “Pacific” usually includes the Pacific Rim—China, Japan, and Korea. Edmond observes: “Until the end of the eighteenth century the Pacific was more commonly known as the South Sea. By the middle of the nineteenth century this latter term was obsolescent, except when used adjectivally for romantic or picturesque purposes. Spate [1977] explains this shift mainly in terms of geography and trade. As exploration of the Ocean extended northwards and trade followed in its wake, with Honolulu becoming an important centre of commerce, the name became inappropriate” (1997: 16). Dirlik suggests “it was the activity of Europeans . . . that constituted the region”—the “demands of the nascent capitalist order” (1992:65–66; cf. Lewis and Wigen 1997).

Whatever the problems in defining the region, whatever the ambivalent localisms that inhibit the field's development, there is still no denying the field's strengths. It has an amazingly rich body of Islander-Outlander interactions stretching over centuries. "One of the . . . beauties of Pacific history," Scarr notes, "is the richness of the documentary material" (in Daws 1979:126). Even a cursory examination suggests the vast literature that exists on the subject. Dening's (1980) study of the Marquesas, for example, contains more than 950 references; Gunson's (1978) study of South Sea missionaries over 750. These references are full of the hybridities, the mimicries, the ambivalences that are at the heart of recent postcolonial analyses (e.g., see Bhabha 1994). They constitute a rich source of data for cross-regional comparison. And while the field has tended to be theoretically parochial, it does not mean that various scholars have not been interested in developments elsewhere. Hempenstall, for example, advocated a greater concern for subaltern studies as early as 1992 (1992:74). And Douglas has called for a "strategic appropriation of others' concepts. . . . We cannot ignore the insights of critical theory, structural linguistics and hermeneutics" (1992:106). One can see the field's strengths in another way: Stoler and Cooper in their recent *Tensions of Empire* emphasize that "imperial elites may have *viewed* their domains from a metropolitan center, but their actions, let alone their consequences, were not necessarily *determined* there" (1997:29). This has been Pacific history gospel since the 1950s. Elsewhere, Stoler refers to a "second wave" of intellectual development concerned with identifying "the active agency of colonized populations as they engaged and resisted colonial impositions" (1992b:319–320). She cites Rosaldo (1980), Taussig (1980), Comaroff (1985), and Roseberry (1986)—all books published in the 1980s. This has been Pacific history gospel since the 1960s.

Whatever the limits of the field's "local" understandings, whatever the regional politics of representation, one need only read the arguments being played out in other regions of the world to see the intellectual and emotional sophistication many writers—from diverse backgrounds—bring to their overlapping discussions of the region's pasts. As early as 1989, Dening suggested: "History surely is not something to be learned so much as to be made. . . . For strangers of Pacific outlands and natives of Pacific islands to have a bound-together present means that we share a dead past. Neither of us can say to the other: You have no history to make. Our histories might be

different. Our histories will always be political. But we each must say to the other: My past is your past and you must make sense of it as you can" (1989:137, 139).

In respect to specific historical studies of "West-Rest" interactions, Binney (1997) and Salmond (1991b) represent the state of the art—for any region. They offer in-depth accounts that broach the "us"/"them" divide to provide subtle, multifaceted analyses of key dynamics at work in these engagements. And significantly, given Munro's previous comments, both *Islander* and *Outlander* audiences enthusiastically embrace these works as part of their own pasts. They provide material in which people—across the board—find space to craft their own narratives.

The Volume's Vision⁶

A central question arises out of the collective concerns discussed in this introduction: Can *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* do more than simply reproduce and reinforce the scholarly status quo?

On the one hand, we should note that many Pacific historians have made genuine efforts at addressing the problems discussed. Howe's *Where the Waves Fall* (1984), for example, includes more *Islander* perspectives than Oliver's *The Pacific Islands* (1989). Denoon's *Cambridge History of the Pacific Islanders* (1997b) includes *Islander* voices and, developing this further, Greenwood, Neumann, and Sartori (1995) emphasize the centrality of such voices to the region's history tellings. Greenwood, Neumann, and Sartori's *Work in Flux* (1995), Denoon's *Emerging from Empire?* (1997c), and Munro's *Reflections on Pacific Island Historiography* (1996b) all grapple with postcolonial and postmodern critiques in an effort to rethink the discipline.

On the other hand, progress seems to merge into stasis at times—problems tend to be more acknowledged than addressed. (Plus ça

⁶For further references see: **history as incomplete**: *New York Times* editorial October 20, 1997; **history as a participatory process**: Shapin 1994:xix; Keller and Keller 1996: 174; *New York Times* editorial October 12, 1997; Gunson 1992:4, 11; Steedly 1993: 237–238; *New York Times* editorial August 28, 1997; Limerick 1997; Luckacs 1997; **history as a negotiated conversation (again)**: Roberts 1997; Denoon 1994:xv; Binney 1997:7; Said 1993:3; Shapin 1994:351–353.

change, plus c'est la même chose.) In the Sahlins-Obeyesekere dispute regarding the apotheosis of Captain Cook, for example, Obeyesekere (1992) repeatedly emphasizes the ambiguities of the data but then, in turn, defends his hypotheses against all comers (Obeyesekere 1993, 1994; Borofsky 1997). Howe stresses Pacific Islander agency in *Where the Waves Fall*, but Islander concerns tend to be perceived through Western prisms. Their agency is the agency Western writers define for them (cf. Chappell 1995:318, 326). And in an introductory chapter to *The Cambridge History*, Linnekin stresses the importance of subaltern historiography (1997:31). But neither Linnekin nor the volume's other contributors then use it in subsequent chapters. (The references Linnekin cites regarding subaltern historiography are even left out of the volume's bibliography.) Regarding the politics of representation in New Zealand history, Reilly observes: "Too often the only response of Pākehā [i.e. Outlander] historians . . . has been to encourage talented Māori scholars to address Māori topics and issues. Though entirely laudable, this assumes that such intellectuals will want to restrict themselves, in a sort of latterday knowledge ghetto, to a Māori topic. Such a decision also allows Pākehā not to engage with or even encounter mātauranga Māori: they no longer have to wrestle in their intellectual work with the language or its associated cultural values" (1996:404).

How then to proceed? *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* emphasizes three interrelated principles as a way out of the current maze.

First, recountings of times past—however seamlessly ordered—are always incomplete. Narrators select this, silence that, to build an account whose coherence lies, not in the material itself, but in the words (and mind) of the narrator and his or her audience. How could one bring together the plethora of materials—the 950 references of Denning (1980), the 750 references of Gunson (1978), for example, with the hundreds of references of hundreds of other books (not to mention additional unpublished chants, memories, and artifacts)—to form a "complete" account of an island, of a period, or of the region itself? Books such as *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* can only provide points of reference for thinking about or reflecting on the region's pasts.

Second, "history" is more than a product to memorize. It is more than a set of facts—collected and organized by others—that one must dutifully learn to be conversant with times past or to affirm a connection to those now dead. History telling is an active, participatory

process (as the epigraph by Bakim at the beginning of this chapter emphasizes). To deny history-telling's empowering elements is to deny the politics of representation as well as the politics of history making. In the democracies and quasi-democracies that span the region, history telling is too important to leave to a coterie of select (and often unread) Outlander scholars. It is a part of ordinary citizenship. History telling invigorates the present; it charts identities. It affirms who we are by describing what we have been. It inspires what we might yet become.

Third, history telling lies less in the teller than in the dialog the teller shares with his or her audience. It lies in the conversations—involving challenges and counterchallenges—that embrace differences that make a difference (to quote Bateson again). Both Islanders and Outlanders strive for a sense of “objectivity” that suggests their accounts are more than glib pronouncements or casual assertions. Despite the politics of polarization, we need to remember that Islanders and Outlanders share not only centuries of overlapping, interwoven pasts but often overlapping standards for judging accounts about these pasts.

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts does not provide the complete account, then, of the region's pasts. It cannot. But it does provide points of reference for readers to think *with*. It offers tools to assist readers in weaving further narratives and developing further conversations. The book, as its subtitle affirms, represents “an invitation to remake history.” The sectional introductions point out what others have written on the subject so readers can build productively on them and the chapters that follow in framing their own narratives.

It is not hard to perceive how the professional dynamics of specialization have tended to fragment scholarly conversations. It is harder to see how academics can work their way out of the hole dug by asserting others should become more like themselves. I have noted the narrow readership for most books in Pacific history and the concern this has spawned, within the discipline, regarding its limited relevance to others of the region. Outlander scholars need to open themselves up to broader conversations about history making—to the challenges and counterchallenges of wider audiences. Outlander academics have nothing to lose but their chains (to quote Marx).

Remembrance of Pacific Pasts, in summary, seeks to cut through the Gordian knots entangling Pacific history telling today. It emphasizes the need for conversations across differences—involving challenges and counterchallenges drawn from overlapping audiences with

overlapping perspectives—as a way of collectively thinking *with* the region’s varied pasts, as a way of weaving new narratives and new conversations. But this is, and only can be, a hope. It will take daring readers—who are willing to remake the region’s histories—to turn promising words into reality.

SECTION ONE

Frames of Reference

To help make sense of the chapters that follow, a few general remarks are in order. *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* is divided into four sections. The first, this one, builds on themes developed in “An Invitation.” As its title suggests, it offers frames of reference for reading the volume as a whole. The second section considers the dynamics of Islander-Outlander contact. It examines how people on each side of these early encounters sought, in their different ways, to possess—to meaningfully order and control—these encounters in terms advantageous to themselves. The third explores the contours, concerns, contradictions, and controls of colonial engagements. Following the theme of section two, this section considers how Outlanders sought—with ambiguous success—to more formally possess Islanders and their Islands. The fourth discusses the cultural politics of the “postcolonial” period. Because it remains unclear how distinct the “postcolonial” is from the colonial, the word is given quotation marks. The section explores the multiple ways residents of the region today

strive to possess and/or repossess the region's varied resources.

Each section contains its own introduction. The introductions offer framing remarks that allow readers to meaningfully weave a section's chapters together. Sections Two and Three also include dates for placing the chapters and the events they describe in chronological perspective. (References are included with the dates so interested readers can investigate them further.)

Since the background for this section has already been covered, I will add here three additional remarks regarding the book's organization.

First, in focusing on Islander-Outlander interactions, the volume may appear to fall prey to the problem Hau'ofa critiques in his epilogue: the implication that before Western contact there was only "pre-history" (cf. Reilley 1996:394.) I would stress, as I did in "An Invitation," that *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* is incomplete in the conversations it seeks to engender. Rather than spreading itself thinly across a broad range of times and topics, it focuses on a few central ones. The issues covered are those where historical conversations tend to be the most heated. The volume's epigraph and the Preface's creation story emphasize there was (or perhaps better phrased, *is*) a beginning before this book's beginning. Everdell in a review of Fromkin's *The Way of the World: From the Dawn of Civilization to the Eve of the Twenty-First Century* (1999)—a book that covers its subject in 253 pages—observes that in history telling: "The art is in deciding how to cut . . . all the while facing the overwhelming odds that truth [he puts no quotation marks around it] will be left on the cutting room floor. 'Telling one story necessarily means not telling another,' Fromkin writes" (1999:9). Focusing on one set of issues, I would add, does not necessarily mean others do not exist.

Second, in developing each section I collected seminal pieces that—when juxtaposed one to another—highlight central themes and debates regarding a period. If pieces were available, I chose those. If they were not, I commissioned new ones. While all the pieces are written by important authorities in the field, the stress is less on individual chapters than on how the chapters relate, one to another, in a particular section: how they collectively illuminate

the seminal issues surrounding a particular topic or a particular period. In several cases, I did not assume new was necessarily better. Some pieces—such as Denning’s “Possessing Tahiti,” Wendt’s “Inside Us the Dead,” and Sahlins’ “Hawaii in the Early 19th Century: The Kingdom and the Kingship”—have retained their value through time. That is what makes them classics. They constitute enduring works of scholarship.

Third, three sections contain a concluding “A View from Afar” that seeks to broaden the frame of reference. Readers will find in them much food for thought. Presented often in the form of interviews, experts from beyond the region offer comparative perspectives regarding a period’s dynamics.

The Selections

“Frames of Reference” is divided into two parts. The first involves four chapters under the heading “Making Histories.”

Albert Wendt’s “Inside Us the Dead” affirms that *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts* seeks to do more than simply reproduce the status quo. Positioned first, it stresses—up front—that history telling is not simply about facts and events, but about people. And history can be something within you—something quite personal, something poetic. (History need not only be written in academic prose.) History telling charts identities. In framing the past in terms of the present, it adds meaning to life.

Peter Hempenstall’s “Releasing Voices” and Klaus Neumann’s “Starting from Trash” elaborate on issues relating to narration and objectivity. We see the politics of history making close up. For Hempenstall, releasing voices of participants—silenced in standard accounts—opens up a more multidimensional, richer, deeper (and yet more ambiguous) sense of events. We see Samoan history less in terms of simple oppositions, less in terms of individual heroes and villains. We gain instead a more complex, denser understanding of the dynamics at work. Neumann considers how one can write about the colonial past without reproducing the colonial perspectives that were part and parcel of that past. He suggests paying more attention to history’s trash—to the seemingly irrelevant and marginal—that does not fit neatly into narratives of orderly

progression. The fissures, contradictions, and ambiguities—the trash silenced in standard accounts—presents tools for forging histories that subvert established frames of reference.

In “Indigenous Knowledge and Academic Imperialism,” Vilsoni Hereniko deals with the politics of representation. He comes at the same issue as Neumann but from a different angle. The focus is on overcoming the frames of reference that restrict history telling to a coterie of Outlander academics. History telling, Hereniko emphasizes, involves more than theoretically inclined prose. It involves a range of performances, a range of activities. Hereniko also raises a pervading question of this volume: How can Islanders and Outlanders make a go of it together in rendering, interpreting, and finding meaning from their overlapping pasts?

The second part of this section, “Valuing the Pacific,” addresses the earlier noted concern regarding the Pacific’s marginal intellectual status vis-à-vis other areas of the globe. James Clifford highlights why readers, especially those interested in cultural studies, might take note of the Pacific. He perceives the region—with its cultural complexities and interweaving of categories and spaces—as a representation of the future.

A question readers might ponder in this section is:

- *How would you frame a narrative of the region’s pasts?*

It is relatively easy to critique present forms of history telling. The more challenging task is to offer fuller, richer, more complex narratives that build, that improve, on those in *Remembrance of Pacific Pasts*.

1
Inside Us the Dead

Albert Wendt

Prologue

Inside us the dead,
like sweet-honeyed tamarind pods
that will burst in tomorrow's sun,
or plankton fossils in coral
alive at full moon dragging
virile tides over coy reefs
into yesterday's lagoons.

1 Polynesians

Inside me the dead
woven into my flesh like the music
of bone flutes:

my polynesian fathers
who escaped the sun's wars, seeking
these islands by prophetic stars,

emerged
from the sea's eye like turtles
scuttling to beach their eggs

in fecund sand, smelling
of the sea—the stench of dead
anemone and starfish,

eyes
bare of the original vision, burnt
out by storm and paddles slapping

the hurricane waves on, blisters
bursting blood hibiscus
to gangrened wounds salt-stung.

These islands rising at wave's edge—
blue myth brooding in orchid,
fern, and banyan; fearful gods
awaiting birth from blood clot
into stone image and chant—

to blind their wounds, bury
their journey's dead, as I
watched from shadow root, ready
for birth generations after they
dug the first house-posts

and to forget, beside complacent fires—
the wild yam harvest safe in store houses—
the reason why they pierced the muscle
of the hurricane into reef's retina,
beyond it the sky's impregnable shell;
and slept, sleep waking to nightmare
of spear and club, their own young—
warriors long-haired with blood
cursed, the shrill cry
of children unborn, sacrificed.

No sanctuary
from the sun-black seed
inside the self's cell—
coral lacerating the promise,

self-inflicted wounds at the altar
of power will not heal.

2 Missionaries

Inside me
the Sky-Piercers terrible as moonlight
in black and winged ships breaking

from the sun's yoke through
the turtle-shell of sky
into these reefs,

miraculous iron barking
the sermon of Light, in search
of souls in the palm-milk child.

My fathers'
gods, who had found voice
in wood. Lizard, and bird,

slid
into the dark like sleek eels
into sanctuary of bleeding coral,

but were exorcised
with silver Cross harnessing
the sun's beauty, burning, burning.

And my fathers, in the pulpit's
shadow bowed, slept
the new sleep, waking to men

of steel hide exuding
a phosphorescent fear, and learnt
to pray the litany of sin—

the Fall
in a woman's thighs,
the papaya feel

of her gift
and phallus
sprung.

All was sin.
The Kingdom was come in

Calico. Axe. Words
captured in print
like bird footprints
on the white sand
of my breath.

Beads. Tobacco. Knives.
Nails for each palm cross.
Promises of eternity beyond
the reefs of the sun
to be paid for with the foul
bandages of Lazarus.

The new way is the Cross.

3 Traders

Inside me the dead: a German,
my great grandfather, booted
sea-captain in a child's
book, in a schooner ploughing
the fables of Polynesia from
a cold Europe, his glass eye
focused on exploding stars, selling
exorbitant wares for copra
and women. Bearded with luxuriant
dreams of copra fortune
and the "noble savage," but greying
with each fading horizon—
the next atoll holding only
"thieving natives and toothless
syphilitic women." Too late
for a fortune, reaped a brood
of "half-castes" and then fled
for the last atoll and a whisky death.

His crew tossed him to the sharks
and sent home only his blue glass
eye—crystal ball of Europe—which
my grandfather buried under
a palm, a fitting monument
to his father's copra lust.

No prayers
were said for him I hope.
I want to imagine him
an atheist adventurer wormed
with the clap, dispersing snakes
into every missionary eden.

My grandfather—
and I can only describe him from
a photograph cobwebbed in my
father's cupboard—died
too of whisky, at thirty-six.
“Tall, dark and handsome” is apt
for him. No glass eye for
this hollywood trader marooned.
Arrogant gleam in his eyes
with nowhere to sail
without a ship,
Straight junker nose inhaling
the bitter serenity
of failure,
Thick polynesian lips shaped
for wine, whisky
and fierce infidelities.

White-suited in a cane chair,
the kaiser—of whisky come-courting
the camera, in love with Bismarck,
burdened with the failure of Europe,
heir to the cold crystal eye.

4 Maternal myth

My mother, dead since
I was twelve, spider-high.

Memories of her are flamboyant
 blooms scattered across
 pitted lava fields under
 the moon's scaffold, or fish
 darting among fabulous seaweed.
 Escape from the grasp of my tongue,
 images shatter into dust
 from which myth rises
 to elixir air at the rim
 of my skin:

In her years
 of scarlet ginger flower snaring
 bumble-bee, I remember

In her lilt fingers
 in scent of moon,
 plucking
 my clumsy tongue to butterfly
 hymn; my mind, white
 as spider lily, to morning
 pigeon in tavai, cooing;
 my eyes to vision of her fatal
 human face that knew
 the bravery of tears.
 She was the fabric of fairy tale,
 the golden key to each child's
 quest for the giant's castle.

Dead, she walks the miracle
 of water-lily stars, more moonbeam
 than flesh, the sinnet of myth
 I weave into my veins.

5 The ball thrown up

An engineer, inspired like a juggler, derives
 his essence from earth's ores. Stone,
 iron, lava, sale, fuel to construct
 bridges between his nimble feet
 and the angels:

a mathematical universe wired
to his computer fingertips,
the planets tick to his vision
of designing, the ball thrown
up will not come down.

That's what my brother wanted
to be—feet in iron, head
in the rainbow, rewinding
the moon.

The final time
I saw him, moon pouring up
from the sea, he was side-stepping
into a midnight plane,
albatross guitar round his neck.

With a roar, the silence
scattering, he was winging
off towards temperate sun
and snow, the darkness
falling on all paws
on the tarmac.

“The black dew,” said
my pastor uncle, the pulpit
juggler, at his funeral,
“does not discriminate
between jugglers
and engineers.”

My brother was brought
back from the snow in
an oak box polished to see
your face in, designed
to lock gravity in.

No spider's-web bridge
to rainbow strung,
he had slipped off
an ordinary

highway built
 for ordinary mortals,
car buckling in, like
a cannibal flower, to womb
him in
death,

 petrol fumes rising—
a cat uncurling to lap
the milk sky,
 the wheel spinning
spun the white dew
 of prophecy: the ball
coming down
to stone,
(breaking).

2

Releasing the Voices Historicizing Colonial Encounters in the Pacific

Peter Hempenstall

Historians are doing it tough today. For the first thirty years after World War II they were accustomed to dealing in empirical realities, constructing typologies of empire, analyzing discrete processes of social and political change, painting word portraits of the human actors engaged in the great confrontational dramas of empire. Or they were flexing ideological muscles, taking on imperialism as an economic and political idea, tying Third World development into world systems, and tracing the genealogies of national independence movements. The field was seemingly theirs by common assent, cozy, and not much contested.

But the 1980s began an unsettling period as a range of new, influential discourses percolated through an increasingly angst-ridden profession. Appropriation of the Other; discursive strategies of power; hegemonial textualizations; the politics of representational practices—these phrases have developed in the 1990s as the typical currency of exchange in symposia and monographs about colonialism. Discussion has left behind the study of colonialism as a clearly demarcated, historical object, a “thing,” and moved into the realm of the meanings embedded in texts about colonial relations. The work of historians has been overshadowed by historical anthropologists, literature critics, and cultural studies scholars. Their highly theorized texts delight in deconstructing the authority of traditional positivistic narratives of history.¹ The politics of scholarship permeates everything that is written and how it is written: the fear of continuing colonialisms in narratives built around Western power, always threatening to reproduce relations of dominance, outsiders still controlling the production of knowledge about the colonized world. Authors can no longer escape the self-consciousness that goes with this incessant demand for reflexive, self-critical history. They are pursued by post-

modern philosophies that proclaim the flimsiness of reality, the “death of the subject,” and the centrality of the text. All these developments have taken their toll on the confident narrative writing that was the hallmark of the historian.

The juggernaut has not proved totally irresistible. The newer discourses are themselves charged through with internal debate about their potential and their limitations. Dissenters point to the tendency to generalize and homogenize colonialism, to see it and its agents as “an abstract force, as a structure imposed on local practice. The terms colonial state, colonial policy, foreign capital, and the white enclave are often used interchangeably, as if they captured one and the same thing” (Stoler 1989:135). It is all too easy to speak of the “Other,” “settler societies,” “the German empire,” and so on without interrogating the diverse lineaments of each, where and when they operated. A restricted range of evidence suffices in order to make sweeping statements, so that theory triumphs over heterogeneity, interpretive wholism rides roughshod over empirical diversity. Another danger is that the new theorizations about colonialism are composed of an interdisciplinary hotchpotch, a wildly intersecting set of discourses claiming equal validity, a situation that can lead to a “relativist permissiveness” that is disabling in its failure to judge among their explanatory power (Thomas 1994:19). At the end of the day, the historical experience of colonial encounters “gets lost in the elegant new textualism of colonial discourse studies” (Dirks 1992:175).

Historians of colonialism therefore need not be nervous about their craft’s credibility. They remain in a position to reassert history’s particular forms of textualizing the human past, for it exerts a power to story human lives that can be a form of critical action against continuing colonialisms. “Story” is the important concept here. For though historians have traditionally clung to a belief that the texts they create are bound, through the evidence they use, to a material world that defies those texts, they are also sensitive to the power of the texted narrative to make meaning for humans. They are generally therefore loath to stray too far from linear narratives that constitute the explanatory structures of their discourse upon the world. They share Michael Taussig’s view that “people delineate their world . . . in stories and storylike creations and very rarely, if ever, in ideologies” (Taussig 1984:494).²

At the heart of these operations is the belief in what Richard Campbell calls “the historicity of human being” (Campbell 1993:7). By this

he means that humans constitute themselves through and by means of their actions in finite, situated contexts. "Human being is a self-making or self-constituting process" (8), not in the sense of self-consciously creating an individual self or image (which is a modern, Western concept), but as a dialectical—or better, dialogic—process in which humans are challenged to realize freedom in their own unchosen contexts by engaging in a never-completed dialogue between "finitude, naturally and historically given, and the potentially infinite possibilities which can be entertained in thought."³

This is the focus of the historian's intellectual—and emotional—activity: to attempt to describe this engagement in all its richness of possibility and its poverty of failure. The knowledge produced is not about empirical objectivity, but rather epiphanal in quality, disclosing, as the Australian historian Charles Manning Clark puts it, answers to the deeper questions of life by knowing more about the past, "the mystery at the heart of things" (1976:44). By that very fact, it is personal to the historian's sense of self and to the structures of conditioning that shaped the values he or she puts upon the world. "For history cannot be told without expressing the historian's view of what makes for human flourishing, its glories and its failures" (Campbell 1993:10).

Such a description of the historian's task, though itself culturally situated, does not confine the legitimacy of historical analysis to one culture only. It can deal with infinite varieties of human experience because it proceeds from a notion of unfixed, dynamic human nature (Campbell 1993:12). People act out their attempts at "radical self-transcendence" (which may not have anything to do with the concept of the autonomous self) in dialogue with their own historically situated cultural context. Of course, processes in self-understanding differ from culture to culture and need to be taken into account. We must "listen to the voices of those others, and try to hear them in their otherness," writes Campbell, "if the 'horizon of meaning' within which they speak is to extend and become fused with our own" (13).

For Pacific historians of colonialism, these possibilities built into the discipline can mesh productively with the insights of the newer discourses, with their changed angle of interrogation. The emphasis by anthropologists, especially, on colonialism as a cultural process encoded with signs, metaphors, and narratives and powered by interlocking networks of knowledge and power is suggestive of a much denser framework of interpretation. Nicholas Thomas has most re-

cently summed up this approach by describing colonialism as a “project,” a concept that “draws attention not towards a totality such as a culture, nor to a period that can be defined independently of people’s perceptions and strategies, but rather to a socially transformative endeavor that is localized, politicized and partial, yet also engendered by longer historical developments and ways of narrating them” (Thomas 1994:105).

History’s discourse is well placed to deal in this currency, for history has a refined power of storytelling about complex, contexted encounters between human beings and their situations. History recognizes there are no neat boundaries defined by the will and intention of colonizers on the one hand, and clear perspectives and actions of the colonized on the other. Instead there are a series of “messy entanglements”⁴ within colonizing and indigenous communities and between them, back and forth, that encompass unities and cleavages, alliances and conflicts, contradictions and adaptations, half-successes and failures, willful action and misread responses. Colonial life was, to paraphrase Henry James, all inclusion and confusion. It is art that discriminates and selects.

History’s gift is, paradoxically through this art, to pluralize colonialism’s existences and its meanings for both then and today. It avoids reducing colonialism to totalizing formulas about the exact nature of power relations and the systems of dominance and resistance that constitute its operations. It describes and analyzes messy encounters, highlighting moments of unpredictable, rolling drama and performative confrontations. For, as Dening argues, encounters with otherness in the Pacific are occasions of theater, wherein language and gesture, European charades, and Islander mimicry are played out in complex and ambiguous relationships (Dening 1992:4).

Historians excel in exploiting the moment of greatest display. Once, that meant fixing on the elite actors at the front of the stage, making them bear the weight of explanation for the history of colonialism. If older fashioned colonial history marched with the European proconsuls and missionaries, the newer anticolonial history simply reversed the polarities and raised up Islander chiefs and Big Men as the new, empowered agents of history. But agency itself has been subverted and converted into a much more “messy” concept. David Chappell has shown how active agency and victimhood work together in overlapping ways that increase the messiness of historical encounters: “Victims need not be passive, nor the passive weak, nor actors free

agents, for history to happen” (Chappell 1994:10). The real challenge for Pacific historians, says Chappell, is to be aware of the contradictions of agency within our narrative histories, to work in a “‘middle ground’ of interaction in cross-cultural situations, a contested but functioning discourse of partial understandings that allows groups in contact to negotiate their relationships” (11–12).

Of course, Pacific historians still have to choose and create their narratives, which always run the risk of perpetuating vastly unequal power relations with colonized communities. Representations of encounters with humans from other cultures that are constructed around the passing of our Western kind of time are filled with power that may unconsciously serve political ends. Outside accounts can control knowledge, both there and here, by speaking *for* Islanders, by locking them into value-laden categories as exotic if modern agents, functioning on another plane of existence from rationalist, chronology-plotting westerners. Historians may be seeking confirmation of their ideological concerns or pursuing a more personal politics. Johannes Fabian asserts that “our ways of making the Other are ways of making Ourselves. The need to go *there* (to exotic places, be they far away or around the corner) is really our desire to be *here* (to find or defend our position in the world)” (1991:209).

We may wish to feel some kind of union with other cultures, searching for it in island cultures today during fieldwork. But there is always a gap between the sympathy that unites and the Western analytical tendency to stand at a distance from the object to be known in order to understand it. Barry Hill, speaking through a personal confrontation with Australian Aboriginal society, argues that the history of colonialism lies between these two poles (1993). So, I would argue, does the *historying* of colonialism.

* * *

There are thousands of “stories” underpinning colonialism, thousands of ways historians and others have constructed the native through their texts. One of the most consistent historiographic examples in the Pacific is the colonial history making that has gone on around the Samoan people. Samoans have been appropriated by scholars as the exemplary Pacific community caught up in the history of Western imperialism. Their islands drew the three Great Powers of the late nineteenth century—Britain, Germany, and the United States—into a contest for economic and diplomatic control that almost ended in war.

Though the islands were partitioned in 1899 between Germany and the United States, the Western Samoans never accepted the situation and fought a sustained war of political resistance against the Germans and then the New Zealanders, until their group gained independence as the Pacific's first modern nation-state in 1962 (Masterman 1934; Keesing 1934; Davidson 1967; Kennedy 1974; Field 1984; Hemenstall and Rutherford 1984).

Traditionally, a central place in this story goes to the movement of noncooperation and alternative government of the 1920s and 1930s known as the *mau*. This struggle against the New Zealand colonial administration, which involved large numbers of Samoans (though not all), has become part of the myth of political nationhood, in particular the events of Black Saturday, 28 December 1929. An unarmed Samoan crowd was fired upon by New Zealand police, killing eleven Samoans including Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, a "royal" chief and one of the leaders of the movement. In Tamasese's dying words to keep the peace, Samoans received the rallying cry of their independence movement.

Tales of the *mau* usually have embedded within them, as part of the movement's genealogy, an earlier movement of resistance—Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe's *mau e pule* of 1908–1909. Lauaki was from Safotulafai in Savai'i and was generally acknowledged as Samoa's greatest orator chief of the nineteenth century. His organizational skills and rhetoric were at the heart of campaigns to find a "royal" leader for Samoa who would give the Samoan islands stability in the face of encroaching European pressure for annexation. Historical storytellers, both European and Samoan, have dwelt upon Lauaki as a romantic rebel, the real mischief-maker of Samoa, a man of "a thousand tongues" (Braisby 1932–1933:1:21) with no love for the *papalagi*, the white-skinned strangers who burst from the clouds. When the Germans annexed the western islands he would not submit. He became the controlling figure of a resistance movement that was the direct precursor of the national independence movement of the interwar period. The mythic tale runs broadly as follows.

Lauaki, whose whole life revolved around political activity, was not prepared to accept the role of spectator forced on him by the German governor Wilhelm Solf. Lauaki resented Solf deeply for suppressing the great cartels of orator chiefs, *Tumua* and *Pule*, which had traditionally controlled the contest for the four highest titles between the leading "royal" families, Sa Malietoa and Sa Tupua. *Pule*

was the confederation of talking chiefs based on Savai'i districts and the island of Manono; *Tumua* was based on Upolu districts. Though his support had been crucial to Samoans' acceptance of Mata'afa Josefo of the Tupua lineage as holder of the high titles in 1899–1900, Lauaki was at heart a Malietoa man, and he looked to the day when a Malietoa should succeed to the apex of Samoan politics. When Solf was absent on leave in 1908, Lauaki took the opportunity to construct a united front of chiefs to bring *Tumua* and *Pule* back to the center and work for a Malietoa candidate to succeed Mata'afa. When Solf's deputy, Schultz, learned that Lauaki wanted a crowd of Samoans to meet Solf on his arrival back and put their requests (*mau*) en masse for a restoration of the old power brokers, he forbade Lauaki to go to Apia.

Lauaki could not afford to lose such face and continued to mobilize the most important political districts of Samoa by capitalizing on his own status as the leading orator chief of Safotulafai in Savai'i and the virtual spokesman for *Pule*. He traveled anyway to the main island but lodged himself outside Apia until Solf returned and ordered him back to Savai'i.

The first of two personal confrontations with Solf took place in Safotulafai in November 1908, where Solf warned Lauaki of the vengeance of Germany. The second occurred in Vaiusu, not far from Apia, where Solf and his aide de camp met Lauaki surrounded by hundreds of his war-blackened supporters. In the trading of impassioned speeches, Lauaki turned the tables on Solf, accusing Mata'afa of being the evil genius behind the movement and begging forgiveness for his own ignorance. Solf could take no action without compromising his paramount chief and inflaming a war between Samoan parties. A stalemate ensued, broken only when Solf lost hope he could control the situation and called on the German navy for help. Cruisers arrived after six weeks of tension and only delicate negotiations prevented Lauaki and his supporters taking to the bush to begin a guerilla campaign. On 1 April 1909 they surrendered to the Germans and some seventy Samoans—Lauaki, his closest supporters, and their families—were promptly exiled to Saipan in the German Mariana Islands in the North Pacific. There they remained until released by Japan and New Zealand in 1915. Lauaki failed to see his home shores again, dying of dysentery in Tarawa on the return journey.

This story is the product of a number of accounts controlled by the colonizers. In each Lauaki is a device in a historiographical agenda

driven by the political economy of contemporary questionings. German governor Wilhelm Solf, Lauaki's adversary in 1908–1909, began the process in a running collection of reports, essays, and letters stretching over several years. His explanation to Berlin in 1909 of what the *mau e pule* was all about sets the tone (10.5.09, file 30, Solf Papers; Braisby 1932–1933:2:123–220). This report creates a very coherent account of a highly structured encounter. Lauaki is a formulaic creature of culture, locked into rebellion for reactionary ends. He had Solf trapped in their two great confrontations. At Safotulafai, Solf found “a large majority—alone nearly the whole of Fa'asaleleaga—taking Lauaki's side and ready to follow him anywhere” (Braisby 2:130). Solf had the courage to call him a liar and an agitator, but it was impossible without military assistance to arrest Lauaki from out of the middle of his followers and bring him to Apia. Lauaki was the great orator and statesman of Samoa, whispered to be gifted with *mana*.

Vaiusu, according to Solf, was the climax of this personal trial of strength. Again Lauaki controlled the situation, asking Solf to wait for the people of Tuisamau to foregather, clearly drawing Solf's attention to the number of his supporters. His speech on this occasion was, Solf admitted, “a masterpiece of Samoan rhetoric and diplomacy” (Braisby 2:136), painting himself as the unwilling tool of Mata'afa's intrigues and daring Solf to humiliate the old chief in front of such an emotionally charged audience. Solf's reply, as he told a senior colleague in the Colonial Department, could only take the high road of gubernatorial authority in order to outmaneuver Lauaki. He accused him of being “a contemptible coward” (Solf to Schnee 3.6.09, file 131, Solf Papers) and warned him that punishment was unavoidable. He could, said Solf, hear the young men outside practicing their war cries and chided Lauaki that such impoliteness was un-Samoan. Immediately it was still and, observing the working of his speech, Solf seized the moment melodramatically to tear up a letter from Lauaki that Solf had interpreted as a declaration of war. It was, he implied, enough to allow him to escape, and he made Lauaki swear his oath on the Bible that he would send his followers back to Savai'i and remain peaceful.

Solf's report is a retrospective creation caught up in the self-justificatory discourse of Germany's colonial politics, a weapon in Solf's hands against criticism in the German media and against pressure for changes in Samoa coming from European settlers; Lauaki ironically saves Solf's governorship. It is also part of Solf's mythmaking about

himself. Solf is colonial superman, who beards the clever but inflexible native in his den and by skillful diplomacy escapes triumphant—a more successful General Gordon of Khartoum. As such he is deserving of political reward, on which Solf, like all colonial governors, always had one eye fixed. The reward came extravagantly in 1910, when Solf was made minister for colonies in the kaiser's Germany.

Contemporary colonial politics continued to determine the lines that the Lauaki story would take from the past into the present. In the struggle with the *mau* in the interwar period, it was imperative for the New Zealand government to show the League of Nations—as well as convince itself—that opposition to its colonial rule was wrong-headed and illegitimate. That task was performed repeatedly, by blaming the Samoans themselves for causing the devastating deaths that the flu pandemic of 1919 wreaked among the population (Tomkins 1992), by punishing dissent through bannings, exile, and the stripping of titles, and by dismissing the local complaints that emerged from the hearings of the Royal Commission into the administration in 1927. A particular prehistory of the *mau* was constructed by A. L. Braisby, the New Zealand inspector of police during the time of the *mau*. In 1932–1933 he compiled a set of documents from German and New Zealand sources to show the organic connection between Lauaki's movement of 1908 and the *mau*. This collection, and Braisby's interpretive comments, were designed to prove that New Zealand was dealing with an irrational movement in the 1920s, driven by the same stone age tendency that drove Lauaki—"the Samoan national trait to periodically rise in political upheavals every 5 or 10 years" (Braisby 1:37). Because the Samoan was "petrified in his notions that are born with him and die with him" (Braisby 3:336), Lauaki and those who came after him were incapable of imagining a new stage of political life. Braisby's extraordinary three-volume effort is a clear exercise in defense of New Zealand, and of himself as police chief, during the clash in 1929 that led to Samoan deaths.

The most recent and detailed story of Lauaki's movement is my own (Hempenstall 1978:55–64). It presents Lauaki the resistance fighter struggling to come to terms with a formidable new concentration of colonial power under the Germans. He represented a tragically attractive figure for me, an echo of the kind of protests I had witnessed during my student days, in an atmosphere of struggle over civil liberties, of student revolution on the German campuses where I studied, and of anti-Vietnam War protest generally. Lauaki appeared the per-

fect parallel to the giants of West and East African resistance I was made aware of during my studies in Commonwealth and African history. I went looking for him to demonstrate that a variety of resistances to colonial rule—from everyday protests to formal movements—ran like a thread through the history of German colonial empire, and also that the Pacific Islands' story of colonialism had its own peculiar plotlines compared to Africa and Asia.

All these accounts characterize the *mau e pule* as a contest between two giant protagonists in History, Lauaki and Solf. Both are stylized figures representing their cultural groups. In the stories by *papalagi*, Lauaki particularly emerges as a cardboard cutout, seemingly voiceless representative of “the Samoan type” rather than a complex and interesting human being. He must needs carry a heavy burden of explanation for the *mau e pule*: confident, clever, slightly sinister, and ultimately inflexible, Lauaki is the key sign of Samoan rebelliousness; the whole event, the story.

The repetition of the story down the years in mainstream history making about Samoa has continued a tendency to colonize the Samoans via the Western imagination. The *mau e pule* and Lauaki's role in it have been absorbed into History, which reduces colonialism to a monolithic institution, a thing of blacks and whites. Entanglements are straightforward, reducible to set-piece contests between elite agents. Dramas are melodramas, the actors easily recognizable in their cultural costumes. Any account of “radical self-transcendence” is focused on Europeans, whom we “understand.” Lauaki's “historicity as human being” is veiled, his identity shrouded in whispers and rumors, the nature and extent of his agency a constant riddle.

This may be ultimately the price we pay as Western tellers of stories about complex intercultural encounters. As Albert Wendt asserts, the *papalagi* [or Outlanders] can write about Samoans but not from inside them (Wendt 1987:89). At best we can strain for that gap between identification and distance wherein the history of the colonized can be told. How to write in that gap is one of the problems with which the waves of critical theory confront the historian of the 1990s, by making us aware of the controlling power of representations derived from generations of repeated interpretations. One answer to the problem—and it is only one of several—is to break down the History into a plurality of ambiguous histories by rereading with a new self-consciousness, and a renewed awareness of their embedded politics, the evidences from which the dominant texts take their cue. Reexamine

the moments of greatest display and look beyond the self-chosen elite players. Strive to release the *voices* of others (in however a mediated fashion), express their multiple dramas, and increase the density of the historian's contexted encounter.

When Solf and Braisby and Hempenstall—and their sources—are reread in this spirit, they are seen to contain a series of puzzles about Lauaki's behavior and a multitude of other voices beside Solf's and Lauaki's. These suggest a more baroque quality to their encounter and an atmosphere of open possibilities not conceded in the seamless History. The efficient Germans lodged an array of enclosures with their reports to Berlin, of diverse nature and origins, some of them letters from Samoans, some the transcripts of interviews, even the occasional photograph. A rereading of this documentation is capable of producing a cast of thousands who mute Lauaki's strident tones.

But we must see them, or hear them. Historians and storytellers are drawn to giant actors, easily identifiable personalities, those highly individualized figures policed in community memory and in the records. If we reread these records pretending that someone like Lauaki does not exist, then we discover a much wider cross-section of Samoan elites emerging from the pages to harass the German administration and resist Solf's plans to reshape the power structure away from traditional Samoan groups toward German controlled elites. The thousand tongues Lauaki was accused of possessing were actually the uncontrollable, ambivalent voices of many Samoan chiefs and the din of the villagers surrounding them.

Mata'afa himself is clearly implicated. Though presented in History (including my own) as a distant figure quickly growing irrelevant to the colonial history of Samoa, Mata'afa emerges strongly from a rereading, possessed of an active record of challenging German policies, even as they acknowledged him the paramount chief of their protectorate. In 1900 he ignored Solf's instructions to balance the native Samoan administration with chiefs from outside his own party. He wrote what Solf termed "a series of improper letters" (Braisby 1:17), trying to bully Solf into recognizing Mata'afa's victorious party (*malo*) as the legitimate government cooperating with—not subordinate to—the German Reich; he tried again in 1904, attempting to extract financial information about the administration and higher salaries from Solf. Mata'afa was also the figurehead and active agent of the attempt the same year to form an indigenous copra cooperative to compete with the large companies. In January 1905 he and the chiefs

of his *malo* dispatched a petition to the kaiser complaining that Solf was discriminating against a legal Samoan venture (Hempenstall 1978:45).

The *mau e pule* appears matter-of-factly out of Mata'afa's sorrow for the loss of his power and Solf's downgrading of the "royal" title-holders. And from the beginning it involved whole districts and the ghosts of great chiefs. Lauaki was quite specific on this point and even claimed to have rebuked the old Mata'afa: "What are you crying about? Was it not you who were instrumental in breaking the power of the old Government at Mulinu'u? Of the Ta'imua and Fai-pule who have gone, none passed away satisfied with the manner in which you had condemned the Government which sat here in former times" (Braisby 3:281–282). It was on the strength of Mata'afa's urging that Lauaki arranged for leading chiefs of many districts to assemble in Apia to greet Solf with his new wife. The ostensible purpose was to offer gifts, but—Lauaki was candid—they hoped to have an opportunity to submit Mata'afa's proposal that his *malo*, banned from Mulinu'u since 1905, be returned there with full honors. "The Governor was the father of Samoa," said Lauaki, "and he might feel disposed to accede to our wishes" (282).

When Lauaki learned from Schultz that he was not to proceed to Apia, he found himself in a dangerous place. Lauaki had gone ahead to plan with the permission of the district administrator on Savai'i, the Irishman Richard Williams. "If the matter were to fall through at that stage, we would become the laughing-stock of all Samoa, and our people would be made the subject of jests about 'Savaii and the presents' " (Braisby 3:286); if they were turned back now it would look like they *were* planning a demonstration. The pressure on Lauaki was collective, the dignity of his district's people in the balance. It was so great that he set off for Apia anyway, accompanied by long-boats crowded with supporters.

The following account of proceedings by Lauaki himself lies quietly among the European documents and has rarely found its way into the dominant records of that event. It is the transcript of a statement Lauaki made to Williams at Fagamalo, Savai'i, a month before his exile (file 30, Solf papers; copy in Braisby 3:274–303). Ostensibly it is about the causes of Lauaki's *mau*. Though the account begins with Solf's return to Samoa in November 1908, the first part deals not at all with the *mau e pule* but with a ceremonial journey (*malaga*) by Lauaki and people from his district to districts and villages on Upolu,

explaining the *malo*'s actions and exhorting people not to think back to olden times.

I then left for Siumu, on my way to Falealili. On arriving at Siumu, I was asked by the people how the government was progressing, and to what extent our own methods of doing things had been affected. I replied that the reason our own power had suffered was that the *Faipules* agreed to whatever proposals the Governor chose to make. At the same time, however, I said that I thought we were fortunate, on account of the fact that the new power had been so kind to the Samoans. The government was not strongly established, and it was not too hard on the Samoans—except in respect of those who committed offences; and that had the effect of ensuring that offenders would be punished and brought to realize the power of the law.

We left Siumu for Vaovai, Falealili, where the people laughed at us and joked about the trifling things we had brought over from Apia. The government was not discussed at all.

From Vaovai we went to Lotofaga, but no mention was made of the laws of the government. (Braisby 3:278)

In Siumu the tour was caught up in crisis “as the result of a man from our *malaga* party eloping with a married woman belonging to the village” (278). Angry villagers damaged Lauaki's canoes, which led to repeated arbitration and the presentation of fine mats to a reluctant Lauaki, who accepted responsibility for his party's delinquency.

What emerges from this story is a dynamic local politics broader and more complex than the issues between Samoans and the colonial community, concerned more with village stability, relative status, and ceremonial reciprocity than with the niceties of colonial power sharing. Lauaki disappears into the background of this much denser encounter. Other voices share front of stage—those of Alipia, Toelupe, Lelei, Ti'a, Solia, and Faumuina, chiefs chosen as deputies (*Faipules*) by Solf; Onofia, Talouega, and Tuatagaloa of Satale, Alapapa of Tafitoala, and Taa and Lutu of Vaie'e. Lauaki's voice is just occasionally the clearest in a choir of strong voices, dressed as victim as well as agent. The story is about intervillage connections and traditional relationships. The historical narrative that represents this historical situation must needs be a fractured, twisting presentation of multiple individual and group histories. It must take account of swirling, incomplete adaptations.

Lauaki's voice in this long document is a less hectic, less confi-

dently self-assertive voice than Solf's reports claim, more reflective in its slightly puzzled account of a complex, unfolding situation, seen through a glass darkly, with no clear beginning and uncertain ends. The gradually deteriorating relationship with the German regime emerges as a story of confusion and doubt on Lauaki's part—confusion at the contradictory signals from Mata'afa and other chiefs, doubt about how his actions would be interpreted by Solf. At every turn other voices are advising Lauaki, searching for a way to fulfill both traditional Samoan imperatives and remain within the borders of the new colonial law. His explanations, mediated though they are by Williams, remain plausible in our Western terms as well as in terms of his self-understanding. He is a player caught in a trap, driven by events, not driving them, limited in how far he could act as a free agent against both the colonial machine and the diverse agency of other Samoans. The pressure from *Pule* to go to Upolu and confront Solf was intense. Lauaki was their emblem, their spokesman. To deny *Pule* was difficult. "Death and exile in some foreign land is all alike to me, but my fear towards Faasalaleaga and *Pule* is hard" (Braisby 2:168). The group rules, not the individual.

Likewise, the personal tussles with Solf are painted by Lauaki in a wider palette of colors than the black and white chosen by Solf. Solf's visit with his wife to Safotulafai was surrounded with traditional Samoan courtesies, feasts, and speeches of honor. Lauaki's speech was defensive, acknowledging that he had "committed adultery with thy spouse which is the *tulafono* (the Law)" (Braisby 3:325), and if he were to die it would be standing on the village *malae*, not in the forest or the ocean. The same sense of in-betweenness is present at Vaiusu, where—rather than aggressive challenges—the talk appears more a three-way discussion between Lauaki, Mata'afa, and Solf, with both Lauaki and Solf swearing oaths to affirm their words. One senses that Lauaki is under siege, as well he might have been because chiefs from hostile districts in Upolu were baying for his blood. Pagoa of Leulumoega and Molio'o of Faleapuna wanted him hanged (293). Even in his home district of Safotulafai, one of the most powerful chiefs, Leilua Taumei, was his committed opponent and kept Lauaki under virtual surveillance for Solf (Davidson 1976:296). In the end, Lauaki begged not to be sent away, "because I am afraid about all that. I will do everything that was stated. In your oath on the Bible [you said] that I am pardoned and that all *Pule* also is pardoned. All is at an end" (Braisby 3:338–340).

Of course, a more attentive rereading of German and New Zealand records will not automatically deliver a revolutionary postcolonial history. But an awareness of the politics that have constructed the History and an openness to multivocal storytelling and to the unresolvable ambiguity in colonial encounters will help to identify the gaps and silences within “standard accounts.” Lauaki’s statement to Williams contains its own suspicious uncertainties. It was, after all, an interview in Samoan, transcribed and translated by Williams into written English. Nothing of the relationship between Williams and Lauaki inhabits the document, though Williams was known to have good relations with the chiefs of Safotulafai. Nothing is known of the place or the atmosphere or the dramatic performance that produced Lauaki’s statement. Yet it is atypical of the documentation that surrounds and creates the History of the *mau e pule*. It is a long, conversational piece with none of the structuring of one of Sol’s compressed reports to Berlin; it does not appear to be edited. It contains no easily identifiable rhythm, switching from event to person to place to issue, but there is a remorseless attention to issues that moved Samoans rather than those important to the German administration. It is full of signs rather than clear directions. This very ambiguity and disorder gives it a voice to challenge the confident analytical certainty of European judgements upon Lauaki and the movement identified with him.

And its construction of a Samoan story to rival the European is corroborated by the one Samoan written account of the *mau e pule* that has been carried down through the generations. In 1962, Tofa I’iga Pisa, Lauaki’s lieutenant in 1909 and the last of his chiefly comrades left alive, wrote his own account of the *mau e pule* from the inside. I’iga Pisa’s history was a story of affirmation and pride in Samoa’s national struggle on the morning of her birth as a nation-state. It was designed to show how Samoans had always desired their independence, an independence grounded firmly in traditional custom and politics. Lauaki is the embodiment of that conservatism, his struggle a natural link in a chain that stretched from the time before Europeans arrived, all the way to 1962 (Pisa 1962; Hempenstall 1997). To that extent, I’iga Pisa’s politics match those of the dominant History, reinforcing a continuous line of political development, even if his emphases are at the opposite end of the ideological spectrum. But I’iga Pisa’s story also departs substantially from the canons of significance that European colonial and anticolonial tales adopt. His his-

tory explores ancient district ties and family alliances stretching back to Samoa's "time of darkness" before the coming of Christianity. Lauaki emerges out of complex cultural and political events that only at points become enmeshed in European affairs. It is a history embroidered with poetry and powerful oratory, the elegies proclaimed at the death of great ones, the bravery of warriors in war.

Lauaki's lieutenant, with no guilt to exorcize half a century after the events, continues to insist that Lauaki was not the cause of the *mau e pule*. He was the servant of Mata'afa Josefo and of his devotion to the Malietoa line. He was the victim of new chiefly power brokers collaborating with the German administration. Their names are scattered throughout I'iga Pisa's account—Leilua Taumei, Tuala Silivelio, Afamasaga Maua, Te'o Tuvale, Tolo Sooalo, Laupu'e, Moe-faauo, Lelei Tavina. Lauaki is cornered by the onrush of events, his obedience to the great chiefs dubbed rebellion, and he is cast into exile as a sacrifice for the emerging Samoan nation.

Unfortunately, I'iga Pisa's rendition of events is not well known in Samoa and has never been published. In any case, we would be naive to accept his creation, or Lauaki's blandishments to Williams, at face value. Lauaki was not simply an honest broker between the districts who realized that his behavior was rebellion only when the warships arrived. There is evidence from Europeans and Samoans (Braisby 2: 174-88, 3:275; Solf 10.5.09; I'iga Pisa) that his challenge to Solf's control over Samoan politics had its roots in a decade of resistance to the pretensions of foreign powers and that he truly resented Solf's humiliation of *Tumua* and *Pule* since 1900. But if the stories of colonial encounters are told with all their messy entanglements, then agency and victimhood merge in the telling.

Samoans are not the only people whose stories need retelling. Wilhelm Solf, too, was entangled in the webs of meaning connecting Samoan district politics and the colonial culture that he embodied. Though he presented himself to his Berlin masters as the keystone of a successful, nonviolent "native policy," Solf was not the master of his own destiny in wrestling with Samoan aspirations. That his contest with Lauaki and others lasted over more than three months of meetings, letter writing, and tortuous maneuverings demonstrates that Solf had to be careful. He could not simply pluck Lauaki from his defenders but had to seek to keep the peace among many parties, leaving Lauaki to keep the peace in his own domains. Solf admitted to a friend that he and his aide had been genuinely terrified during the meeting in Vaiusu. Memories flashed through both their minds of

a German district officer in South-West Africa who in 1904 was shot in the back in just such a gathering as he bargained to keep the peace before the colonial war that decimated the Herero (Solf to Schnee 3.6.09, file 131, Solf papers). Solf's rhetoric may have been effective in Vaiusu, but it began in panic—not in the confident swagger that went with the moral power of the colonizers. It was justified panic, for Samoan witnesses testified that hostile chiefs were ready to kill him, or let him be killed by the crowd, had they not perceived that he gave in to Lauaki by swearing on the Bible (Braisby 2:193). And if the threat of general insurrection were not enough to occupy him, Solf had also to protect his back against the knives of settler colonials in both Samoa and Germany.

Solf's European colleagues were the third element of an already complex equation, a roll call of businessmen, planters, and drifters described in Solf's jaundiced reports as slanderers, drunkards deranged by tropical influences, morally degenerate and dangerous. Solf's conviction that these people were seditious collaborators in Lauaki's movement was another simplicity. The Samoan community had shown ample proof that it would use disaffected Europeans for its own political and commercial ends (Hempenstall 1978: 49, 64–65).

The “messy” stories that complicate the histories of Samoa contain equally ambivalent accounts of the settler community. The settler community was riven by its own conflicts and contradictions, full of accusation and counteraccusation about complicity with the Samoans and attempts to discomfort Solf (Braisby 1:62, 75–80). A heart of darkness shadowed their racist and moral feelings of superiority over the “natives.” Like George Orwell's protagonist, Flory, in *Burmese Days*, the Europeans feared that they were living a lie, trapped in and yet irrevocably part of an alien, hated land, pursued by their “slimy white man's burden humbug” (Orwell 1967:39). The potential to be defiled by the savage was never far from the surface of their anxieties, heightened in Samoa by the settlers' ambivalence toward a large and powerful mixed-race community that both repelled and attracted. The colonizing community was haunted by the fear that “the colonizer would not remake a colonized space but be remade himself as a native” (Thomas 1994:167). Solf himself spoke these fears for himself and others in his reports on the small settlers (e.g., Solf to Reichskolonialamt 1.11.07, RKA 2953). This anger with one another needs its stories as well.

Historicizing colonial encounters for the present demands not the discovery of hidden caches of documents, but the releasing of voices that were previously muted or ignored (including that of the author), so that the storytelling that is history attains a fresh honesty and richness. The History of colonialism that has dominated renderings of the Samoan past assigned definitive identities to selected individuals and encompassed the history of colonialism within the boundaries of their constructed conflicts, conflicts rehearsed and repeated through generations of interpretation. Solf had indeed attempted to obliterate from the discourse that he established about Lauaki any memory of an alternative tale, not only by ignoring Lauaki's own version in his reports, but by buying up every negative of every photograph of Lauaki and his exiled comrades and having them destroyed (Braisby 2:237, 3:377). This made it easier for an official account of the *mau e pule* to triumph and for it to develop, with changes in the politics of historiography on Samoa, into the history of Lauaki as the harbinger of independence, the freedom fighter and protonationalist. And it explains why Lauaki comes down to us in History as a series of gestures only.

The creation of spaces where other voices can be heard creates alternative histories, more inclusive histories. Other individuals emerge and the chosen protagonists of the History, like Lauaki, become less visible, more tentative, always becoming caught in other people's struggles as much as fashioning their own world. Whole groups previously invisible also claim an identity so that the story of intercultural encounters becomes more untidy and ambiguous. Was the *mau e pule* an Olympian contest between two men or a mass movement, as is often simply assumed by historians because of the number of faceless Samoans who figure in the records as supporters of one side or another? Were large groups really involved or just spectators of a drama about colonial power that brought some interest into their lives? Was it an anti-German independence struggle or a purely Samoan movement that got out of hand, something that Braisby, under the pressure of the 1920s *mau*, claimed could be explained via the Samoan psyche and its tendency to recycle a limited stock of political ideas at regular intervals (3:338)?

Why not all of these things in unequal measure? Conspiracy and accident, the same people agents and bystanders, perpetrators and victims. Perhaps no one could say ultimately how the drama would turn out. The Germans had the power to map distinctive relationships

of power with their subjects, to peg out claims to authority and deference. But spaces remained in between for twists of the plot, for resistance and autonomy, for traditional imperatives and assertions of independence. The identity of the colonizers was a less confident and more ambivalent thing than they would have us believe from their stories, while the colonized did not adhere to the identities assigned them by these same stories. As Johannes Fabian says, why not allow human beings to be normal and crazy at the same time (1991:67)? A critical storytelling history that recognizes its own politics can make such allowances—and in the telling be both explanation and art.

NOTES

1. Examples include Barker 1985; Biersack 1991; Fabian 1991; Gates 1985; Linnekin 1991b; O'Brien and Roseberry 1991; Pratt 1992; Roseberry 1989; Thomas 1994.

2. A crucial element of that storytelling on the part of historians is to determine what happened, not just why it happened. It is in this context that they must attend diligently, indeed obsessively, to the nature and range of evidences available to the telling. Other considerations also lie heavily upon the historian's work, such as what makes some events, structures, and people of historic significance and not others, the description and evaluation of context around the events and persons under interrogation, the searching for recurrent patterns as part of the narrative explanation, and the rhetorical functions of presenting a tale that is persuasive to one's audience. This is a task more comprehensive than a mere analysis of cause and effect.

3. Campbell sees this engagement as a *dialectical struggle*, a phrase I deliberately wish to avoid because of its constrained, Western, binary assumptions about the human condition across cultures.

4. The phrase is taken from the title of a session at the 1994 Pacific History Association conference in Kiribati, which explored the ambiguities of colonial encounters. The proceedings were published as *Messy Entanglements*, edited by Alaima Talu and Max Quanchi (Brisbane: Pacific History Association, 1995).

3

Starting from Trash

Klaus Neumann

How to construct the colonial past of a Papua New Guinean people without perpetuating that past by means of its very construction? I must be careful about the first words, the first sentences I choose. If anything, they provide me with an opportunity to catch my readers unaware. They set the tone—I may not find it easy to override the readers' initial presumptions after having conditioned them with my opening paragraphs. Novelists seem to be more consciously aware that their enterprises hinge on how they establish first contact with the readers and set them on a particular track. When reading, "I was born in the city of Bombay . . . once upon a time" (Rushdie 1981:11), only to be provided with the exact minute of the narrator's birth a few lines further down, we can expect to be in for some fairy-tale magic and frequent leaps from the mystical to the mundane and vice versa. "You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*," begins Calvino's novel of that title (1982: 9), and *Out of the Line of Fire*, a novel by Mark Henshaw, who is thus foreshadowing his ample use of, and frequent reflections upon, other people's writings (1988:3).

How to begin a history of Papua New Guinea? By convention historians often tie their accounts of the past securely to a "where-it-all-started" point in time, so that from there they can spin their thread, forward toward the present, providing the past with the coherence of the linear time scale. Authors of "general histories" especially seem to prefer starting their books and articles at the beginning of the chronology they want to cover. Most of those who have written general his-

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tories of Papua New Guinea agree that they need to render the past chronologically but argue about the thread's point of departure. In 1971, Robert Langdon chose the following beginning for his article "A Short History" in *Papua New Guinea: Prospero's Other Island*: "When European voyagers first chanced upon New Guinea in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the natives of many parts of the island, particularly in the west, were already familiar with travelers from overseas. Indonesians, Malayans and Chinese had visited and settled on the island from time to time—the first known reference to the island in literature dating back to the eighth century A.D." (1971:42).

Three years earlier, Biskup, Jinks, and Nelson began their book *A Short History of New Guinea*, designed for Papua New Guinean teachers and tertiary students, quite differently: "Man has been in New Guinea for a long time. More than 10,000 years ago and possibly up to 50,000 years ago the first men entered New Guinea. During this period the level of sea was lower than it is today and mainland New Guinea, Australia and Tasmania were all part of the same land area. However the main islands of Indonesia were already separated and it was from here that early man came" (1968:1).

It has become a commonplace to say that history changes according to who tells it when, where, and to which audience. It changes according to whether it is told from a European's or from (a) man's point of view. History is constantly altered to accommodate for present needs and interests. Yet how often do historians self-critically probe the contexts that make them come up with their very own constructions of the past and choose particular styles and particular beginnings? How often do they manage not to take for granted the techniques and styles employed in their narratives—styles and techniques embedded in the murkiness of academic conventions and intellectual traditions, and crucial for their identities as professional conveyers of other pasts?

A Iangigu Iosep ToVetenge

I decided to start my history of the Tolai (Neumann 1992a) with a Tolai man's voice. "My name is Iosep ToVetenge. I will tell you about this court case we had."¹

A iangigu Iosep ToVetenge. For ToVetenge, this is a most appropriate beginning. He asserts his knowledge of an aspect of the past

that he regards to be important. This is not only a history, it is *his* story. ToVetenge not only claims ownership. He also takes responsibility. “I am Luelen Bernart” (Bernart 1977:7). “I, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, am here setting forth my history” (Herodotus 1987:33). Why do today’s academically trained professional historians often shy away from similar assertions? Why are so many of them afraid of the first person singular?

“My name is Iosep ToVetenge. I will tell you about this court case we had. I have forgotten which year it was. It was about the piece of land called Tokota.”

He actually said: “*A iangigu Iosep ToVetenge. Io, boina ma, gon p’ina tur pa ra tinata nina dari ba ure go ra kot nina ave ga pait ia. Bea, pa iau nunure go ra kilala—ure go ra pia Tokota*” (“Well, thank you, this is that I will start the talk which is about that court which we did. I do not know that year—about the land Tokota”). Even this is by no means a literal translation.

“We began it like this: we knew that when Mrs. Wolff was killed at Tabaule, they confiscated this particular piece of land without paying for it. The land they paid for was Tabaule, where Mrs. Wolff lived. Well, we killed Mrs. Wolff, that is ToKilang and ToVagira did.”

He is talking about a piece of well-established history. It happened in 1902, on 3 April, to be precise, Hedwig Wolff her name was, and they killed her baby son, too. It is all in the records of the German colonial administration: letters Wolff to Foreign Affairs of 8 April; report Wolff of 5 August 1902; letter Hahl to Eberlein of 11 August 1903; and so on (Neumann 1992:263n3).

“They had a meeting where they decided that they would kill Mrs. Wolff. After they had killed her, boundary markers were planted to mark out the land which was seized, that is Tokota, Toma I and Toma II. We saw this happening and said: ‘Hey, wait a minute! They had already killed those women, and they had killed those men, and they had killed those pigs and chickens and they had burnt down those houses.’ So we asked: ‘What does the law say about this? They seized our land, and they killed women and they killed children and they killed men and they burnt down houses and they killed pigs and chickens—and all that as a payback for one woman, for one white woman?’ That’s what we asked the court. We went to court, the first time in Rabaul. . . . We argued that according to our knowledge of the law, if one person were killed by two people, those two would be killed in return. The ones who had killed would be killed, and that’s

it. And in this case, many men were killed, and houses were burnt, some women were killed and some children and so forth. We asked the government and we asked the court: ‘How come there was only one woman, just one white woman, but they have retaliated many times?’ The court replied that in those days people were not enlightened. ‘It was probably done in order to prevent them from taking up arms again.’ We said: ‘If they had killed only ToVagira and ToKilang, there would have been no more hostilities.’ That’s what we told the court. There would not have been another war. Because the people would have known. That is, we knew that our ancestors fought with wood and Germany arrived with the rifle. They just took up position in the distance, shot, and the man was dead. . . . The court heard our arguments and put them into the right words. They ruled that this particular piece of land, Tokota, be returned to us, because it had been seized illegally as just another compensation for Mrs. Wolff.”

Is this an imprecise rendering of a ruling in which Chief Justice Mann of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea “on 17th June 1963 made an order setting aside the final order of the Commissioner of Titles and directing that the certificate of title issued in pursuance thereof be rectified by restoring the date that the Custodian’s original certificate bore and that it should bear in addition an endorsement appropriate to the practice of the Registrar of Titles to signify that an encumbrance created by the operation of the *New Guinea Land Titles Restoration Ordinance* had arisen by virtue of this final order in favor of the native community in question and constituted unrestricted ownership and right to use and enjoy so much of the land as was therein specified and that this be followed by a dealing appropriate to the practice of the Registrar of Titles recording that this portion of the land had by operation of law and by the direction of the Court become vested in the Director of Native Affairs as a native reserve on behalf of the said communities entitled to the land by law and by native custom”? (*CLR* 1964–1965:319–320)

“The payback for Mrs. Wolff was to have been ToVagira, ToKilang, some men and women and some animals. . . . After the court admitted that we were right, they announced it in the news, and we listened to it, and we were happy, we were really happy. They broadcast in the news . . . that the people of Tagitagi No. 1 would take possession of the land Tokota and that the land Tabaule which had been bought would remain with the *masta*. So far, so good. The *masta*, Tom Gar-

rett, heard the verdict and appealed in Australia to the High Court. We collected one hundred pounds to support me, or rather, to assist the government which paid for my air fare, so that I could attend the court case at the High Court in Australia.”

ToVetenge and I were sitting in front of his house at the Toma Junction. He was casually telling me about his visit to Sydney in 1964. I knew little about this court case. I did not know that a Tolai had attended the hearing. I was scandalized by what the old man told me. I kept asking him for more details, which ToVetenge, talking of the episode matter-of-factly and at times somewhat amused by my curiosity, patiently tried to provide, guessing the meaning of my questions perhaps as often as I was guessing the meaning of his replies. I probably kept questioning him about it the next time I went to see him, and one day asked him once more for the whole story to tape it. Imagine two men sitting under a shady tree, talking, trying to check each other out, laughing, falling silent, chewing betelnut, the younger of the two struggling to overcome anxiety, tension, and nervousness, and grappling with a foreign language. In order for me to introduce my history of the Tolai in another voice I had to record ToVetenge's words in a staged repeat of our earlier conversation. I turned his talk into written words, translated and edited it. Once history is written in a language other than that of the oral accounts on which it is based, it becomes even more difficult adequately to convey the spoken word, and to resurrect what Walter Ong calls the transient reality of the spoken as against the permanent unreality of the written word. (1977:21)

“I arrived in Australia at night-time. They put me up in a hotel. I slept. In the morning, a white man by the name of Mr. Brown met me at the hotel and accompanied me to the court. I arrived at the court. The court proceedings began. I sat there. I did not say anything. My lawyer did the talking. I did not say anything. The court was adjourned. We rose, we knocked off. On the next day we went to the court again. Only the lawyer spoke. I just sat there like an idiot. Nobody interpreted for me, so that I would know what was going on and could say something. Nothing. I just sat there. I simply sat there.”

Talking on behalf of ToVetenge and others was a certain J. R. Kerr, QC, whose fame stems from a controversial decision he took at a later point in his career. He argued, albeit to no avail, that “the position would appear to be that there was a code of law

which did provide for the way in which the land could be acquired from the natives. No one has suggested that there was any law nor is there any indication of the existence of any law which permitted confiscation, punitive expeditions or any expeditions by way of reprisals.” (CLR 1964–1965:324)

“On the third day, a Friday, we went again to the court. I sat there again and did not speak. I just sat there. Nobody interpreted for me or asked me to speak. No, I just sat there until they wound up the court proceedings. And they told us to get ready to return to Rabaul. We rose. Mr. Brown, the white man who was taking care of me, told me that I would return to Rabaul. His wife prepared something to eat at their place. We had a farewell meal, and in the afternoon between five and six o’clock I boarded the plane. We traveled all night and arrived in Moresby at daybreak, at six o’clock. We changed planes for Rabaul. I arrived back in Rabaul and then went to my village, to Tagitagi No. 1. The people asked me: ‘So what? Did we win?’ ‘Oh, I was like a statue, I did not say anything. I just sat there with my eyes wide open. Like a piece of wood I sat there. Just like a statue. I did not speak.’ The people were furious, and they walked on the plantation Toma I. They occupied it. They did not occupy Tokota. They just did it out of anger, they just walked on the plantation here, Toma I. Some *kiaps* came and calmed them down. And that was the end of it.”

Trash and the Smooth Flow of Events

I could have started, in Langdon fashion, with Carteret or Dampier sighting New Britain. I could have started, in Biskup, Jinks, and Nelson fashion, with an account of Tolai man migrating to New Britain. There are several reasons why ToVetenge’s account could be unsettling to a reader’s expectations about how a history of the Tolai should have begun: He is talking about personal experiences that were not necessarily shared by many others, he is vague about dates (whereas most Western-trained historians would strive for utmost precision when it comes to relative chronology and absolute dates), and relates seemingly irrelevant facts. The oral performance on which the text you just read is based was probably governed by something we may term *Tolai aesthetics*—aesthetics that are different from those informing my writing of historical narratives. ToVetenge prevents me, the author, for some time at least, from asserting my own authority

vis-à-vis the audience I am addressing. Having seemingly been lured into taking the reality behind his words for granted, I am enticing my readers to accept ToVetenge's recollections as pieces of hard evidence in my roundabout representation of the so-called Varzin land case.

Whether to derive the present from the past, or whether because historians empathized with the past from a victor's point of view (as nineteenth-century historicists did so convincingly), the dominant approaches in Western historiography over the past 150 years have, however unintentionally, provided an explanation of the present by means of an unraveling of the past. Many, if not most, have opted for a representation of the past as some kind of linear progressive change. "Trash of history"—that is a tag Walter Benjamin used in his *Passagenwerk*, the Arcades Project, apparently in an attempt to put in order his notes on what Susan Buck-Morss called "a philosophy *out* of history" (1989:55). "Carry the montage principle over into history" and "detect the crystal of the total event in the analysis of the simple, individual moment," Benjamin demanded in one of the notes he provided with this tag (1983–1984:6). "Trash of history"—that is a tag that sprang to my mind when I listened to ToVetenge talking about justice and the law and about the 1964 High Court hearing in Sydney. Trash of history: that is, bits of the past that cannot possibly be used to support the notion that the past leads inevitably to the present or that the present could be fully deduced from the past. Trash of history: that is the irrelevant, the insignificant, the marginal, and the negligible.

ToVetenge's statement could be used as a quarry for one-liners to flavor the historian's narrational rendering of the Varzin land case. But do we really have to make other people's histories into our own history when constructing their (and our) pasts? ToVetenge's narrative does not require a dissecting analysis; neither does it call for a probing into its deeper meaning. The analysis that Benjamin had in mind need not necessarily come as a separate commentary. All that may be required is listening to the story attentively and reading it carefully to understand it as a history with its own explanatory value. "Poetry is oral history and oral history is poetry," Dennis Tedlock says. For "conventional narratives themselves traditionally classified as prose turn out, when listened to closely, to have poetical qualities of their own" (1983:109). Hubert Fichte, who had a lot of wonderful things to say about the professionals who represent and scrutinize pasts and cultures, insisted: "Poetry is analytical" (1987:196; cf Neu-

mann 1991). At least it can be, depending also on the historian's commitment and ability to listen to these narratives closely and to retain their poetical qualities when translating them into a written text.

Taken as a piece of history (which needs to be complemented and juxtaposed by other pieces, slivers, and splinters of history, by spillage, by more trash), ToVetenge's account is disturbing. Being so personal, and being so insignificant for the dominant image of the present and its coming-into-being, it disrupts the imagined flow of events by squatting like a blot on pages reserved for a comprehensive and accurate account that traces chronologically the history of the Varzin land case from 1952 to 1964 and beyond; and for interpretations and analyses that put into order and explain why Mrs. Wolff was murdered and why the people of Tagitagi No. 1 were in a position to dispute the *masta's* claim that he (in this case, actually she, Nora Ellen Richards, who inherited Tom Garrett's, her late husband's, property, the historian in me feels urged to point out) rightfully owned Tokota Plantation; and how the successful High Court appeal contributed to the Tolai's disenchantment with the Australian administration and the emergence of the Mataungan Association. Does ToVetenge attach too much import to his nonimpact in Sydney? Do I attach too much import to an old man's recollection when making him tell my readers about it?

When representing the flow of events, Ian Downs, commissioned by the Australian government to write a history of the Australian trusteeship in Papua New Guinea, notes in his account of the Varzin land case: "Melanesians do not gracefully accept adverse decisions by the courts on land matters" (1980:170)—as if there was not meant to be any unexplained residue lingering on in the reader's mind. You might raise your eyebrows when reading such a blunt attempt at establishing a link between race and behavioral patterns, or be strongly reminded of Downs' earlier novelistic account of a Melanesian land rights movement (Downs 1970). Yet have not this and similar statements been appealing because their explanations are more comprehensive and more assuring than the pairing of accounts of ToVetenge's silence in Sydney and the occupation of Toma I Plantation after his return could ever be? It is tempting to go for an easy solution—that is, for a history that has a commanding grasp of the past and puts it into order and the present into perspective.

At times I have to make an effort to work against my desires to control my subject matter (here: the colonial past of a non-European

people) by way of writing about it. To what extent do I, too, long for a predictable future that is to be the direct and smooth outcome of the present? To what extent do I allow myself to be seduced by the idea that the present could explain the past because the past—represented as a narrative chain of causes and effects—is needed only to explain the present? To what extent am I disturbed by unexplained residues?

Representations of the past fulfill useful functions in the present. Histories can serve to critique the present by highlighting the legacies of the past in the present: the skeletons in the closet. Alternatively, they can serve to confirm positive streaks in the present. Here I am more concerned with seemingly irrelevant pasts and useless histories: with the trash of history. Trash of history, that is the stuff I should be looking for when attempting to write about colonial pasts. I must avoid invoking a linear time that proceeds seamlessly from the past to the present to the future and shun the model of a future that is contained in the present that is contained in the past. If I was writing a history that merely explained the present, I would account for and legitimize the present. However critical my explanations may be, such a writing of history, where things happen only in order to make other things happen, would amount to an apology of the present—it would sanction both the present and whatever made the present become the present. The point here is not to distinguish between desirable and undesirable historical progress, but to construct a past that is, although telescoped through the present, incompatible with it. Enter Walter Benjamin:

The appreciation or apology strives to cover over the revolutionary moments in the course of history. It aims at establishing continuity. It cares only for those elements of a particular work which have already become part of its effect. [The apology] misses the rough outcrops and jagged prongs which provide a hold to whoever wishes to get beyond [the work].(1974:154)

From what are phenomena rescued? Not just or not so much from the illrepute and contempt into which they've fallen, but from the catastrophic way in which they are very often portrayed by a certain form of transmission, by their "value as heritage".—They are rescued by the demonstration of the fissure in them. There is a form of transmission that is catastrophe. (1983–1984:21)

I should be looking for a past that seems useless in the sense that it cannot be used to delineate the present. Looking for trash—that means

looking for fissures and contradictions. These fissures, breaking up the continuity constructed between past and present (and that always means, between present and future), enable us to glimpse the otherness of the past and the potential otherness of the future. By identifying fissures and breaks in the past we may be able to envisage fissures that prevent the present smoothly continuing into the future. By zooming in on the trash of history we focus on the disturbing ambiguity of the past—that is, its irrelevance for the emergence of the present and its potential relevance for images of a future not necessarily contained in the present. So maybe history needs to be a shocking assemblage of what supposedly was and of what supposedly never can be—and of what is but must not be, of course. It needs to be more than simply an explanation of the present and rummaging in a past that has not become present. Yet such a history would bring the past into an *immediate* relationship with the present.

To Vetenge's account of his nonimpact in Sydney: trash of history. I could have also begun my history of the Tolai colonial past by borrowing IaOra's voice: IaOra, putting into words her memories of a visit to Kokopo in her childhood, must have been close to 100 years old when I met her in Ngunguna in 1987. She saw the head of ToVagira, infamous instigator of the 1902 Wolff murder, nailed to the wall of the colonial government offices. Were these the insignificant and unconfirmed ramblings of an old woman? You should not include her picture in your book, my editor advised me, reminding me of its doubtful relevance both for the events of 1902 and for their reconstruction. Indeed, neither the picture nor her memory of an image from her childhood could serve to sustain an argument related to the progressive flow of Tolai history early this century. They constitute unwelcome, unwieldy trash.

The trash of history can be found in everyday historical discourse (which historians are often not trained to recognize): in histories produced not in form of written texts or oral traditions, but in form of jokes, anecdotes, or gossip; in histories not produced in university offices or in front of the ethnographers' or historians' tape recorders, but casually, informally, by chance acquaintances when traveling on a bus or queuing for the only functioning public phone for miles around; in histories the European student of Papua New Guinean history might pick up during a game of cards, when helping to make copra, by listening to school children, or overhearing women chatting at the market.

The trash of history is comprised of instants, of images flitting past,

of the unspectacular and the nonmomentous. Historians are often only too happy to ignore them, prone to identify grand historical moments and to think of the past in terms of processes, developments, and courses. I would like to dwell on them, not the least because they disrupt the continuous flow of history. As if they were weightless for all their insignificance, they seem to float in mid-air, unaffected by the suction the present exerts on the past in the usual rendering of past into history. Let us dwell on an image of Iosep ToVetenge, sitting like a statue in a Sydney court room, and on IaOra's childhood memory of a black man's head nailed to the wall of the buildings of the German colonial administration in Kokopo. Timeless instants those pieces of trash appear to be, too—having no time of their own that could be compatible to the historical time we ascribe to progress. I believe Walter Benjamin was thinking of this kind of trash when he demanded in his fifth thesis on the philosophy of history to capture the past as an image that flashes up in the moment of its discernability, only never to be seen again (1968:257).

What kind of value do we need to assign to trash? When Benjamin talks of detecting “the crystal of the total event in the analysis of the simple, individual moment,” we must not let the metaphor he uses irritate us. These crystals need not be glittering, precious fragments, elegantly proportioned, but may be inconspicuous, or too ugly to be noticed. I need to be open-minded and use all my senses when looking for them. Let the historian sweep up the trash—certainly not dispose of it quietly or recycle it beyond recognition into a historical narrative. Let the historian imitate those workers employed by local councils to pick up the litter in parks, diligently and skillfully applying a metal claw that extends the reach of their arms and storing the trash in a bag as if they were collecting a treasure. Recalling Lévi-Strauss' intriguing portrayal of the *bricoleur* in *La Pensée Sauvage* (1966:16–33), I am envisaging a “savage” history.

Looking for Anticolonial Histories of Sorts

Method of this work: literary montage. I need say nothing. Only show. I won't steal anything valuable or appropriate any witty turns of phrase. But the trivia, the trash: this, I don't want to take stock of, but let it come into its own in the only way possible: use it. (Benjamin 1983–1984:5)

Many decades after trash-collecting Walter Benjamin and the artists who inspired him, historians and ethnographers are rediscovering the art of montage. They are experimenting with multivocal, montage-like texts that try to juxtapose the author's subjective observations with bits of transcribed oral testimony, excerpts from archival records with visual images of people and place, representations of the present with representations of the past, statistical data with excursions into the philosophy of history.

Writing anticolonial history is not simply a matter of deconstructing the univocal historical narrative by adding more voices, more narrative threads, and by breaking up linear chronology. Neither is it simply a matter of empathizing with the oppressed other and focusing on anticolonial resistance. In a talk on the Columbus Quincentenary, Michael Taussig observed:

In focusing on violence and resistance in the Americas we do too easily project onto others unproblematized notions of violence and resistance that rightfully begin with us. Thus I want to ask what it means to turn the question away from Others, especially poor and powerless Others, and onto ourselves and our own quite violent practices whereby we figure ourselves through the creation of objects of study. Instead of making more knowledge industries about violence and about resistance, what about the politics of violence and resistance in the way we construct legacies and thereby generate power from the great gamut of stories, official and unofficial, of the violent American past? (1992:38)

This is not to deny the achievements of anticolonial historians of Papua New Guinea who emphasized, and empathized with, Papua New Guinean resistance to colonialism—at a time when such empathetical emphasis challenged dominant colonial notions about the colonial past and expectations about the colonial future of Papua New Guinea, and when there was little chance of evading the Manichaeic dichotomies created and reproduced by colonialism. Turning my attention now to my own and my discipline's intellectual traditions and to my perceptions and representations of the colonial past may be one step toward escaping the role of the anticolonial colonizer (cf. Newmann 1994). Only by critically probing the texts produced by Pacific Islands' history and the "relations of production" that made these texts possible, and in particular, the modes employed to represent the past of Pacific Islanders, can I begin to identify narrative styles and

lines of inquiry that might be worth trying out to overcome the colonial legacy of academic history.

I shall pay particular attention to language. What do I do to oral poetry when writing it down? What do I do to the transcription of a Tolai or Binandere or Melpa narrative when translating it? Do I apply only my aesthetics when editing transcribed oral statements? How do I translate the informants' discourse into my own academic discourse? How often do I smother the meaning of a statement by wrapping it tightly in my interpretations? Let us be more sensitive to the corrupt nature of academic jargon: How do we actually go about taking control of our subject matter when we write about it? Needless to say, perhaps, there is no innocent, uncorrupted language I could use instead of the ones I make do with now. The best I could do is to expose their colonialist, fascist, or male chauvinist undertones, and put into words my longing for an uncorrupted language that has not been and could not be used to colonize (cf. Neumann 1995).

In talking about working on the language of the center and about the difficulties of transcribing and translating oral narratives, I am not arguing for a purist solution, as if it was possible to keep alive the aural propensities of oral narratives after they have been transcribed. For me it is impossible not to corrupt ToVetenge's voice, or to write in English about Tagitagi, ToVetenge's village, from a native Tolai speaker's point of view. Why should I strive to write in a "traditional" "Tolai" style anyway (and here, clearly the second attribute, *Tolai*, is at least as problematic as the first one, *traditional*)? Instead of pursuing the mirage of authenticity, I want to focus my attention on the nature of the hybridization involved when translating Pacific Islanders' pasts into my narratives and make the processes of those very translations transparent.

Anticolonial history (or counterhegemonic history, to use a term grander still) has been written against the current colonial (or dominant) version of the past. In 1968, with independence for Papua New Guinea barely yet in sight, Biskup, Jinks, and Nelson were successfully writing anticolonial history. In 1971, Papua New Guineans taught by Biskup, Jinks, and Nelson were in a position to denounce Langdon's account of their past as inadequate and as a typical expression of some expatriates' conviction that Papua New Guinean history began at best with written records, but more likely with significant European involvement. In the late 1960s, "anticolonial" came to equal "nationalist Papua New Guinean." Biskup, Jinks, and Nelson's nationalist

assertion of a “historical” Papua New Guinean past pointed out the long tradition of human settlement on the island of New Guinea and the active role the inhabitants of New Guinea played in their encounters with Europeans. In 1971, when Eurocentric versions of the Papua New Guinean past still abounded and were widely listened to, it seemed to matter little that accounts emphasizing, for example, the agency of Papua New Guineans, still fell back on a historical methodology and adhered to an epistemology tried and tested by those authors who were to be contradicted. Twenty-two years later, John Waiko, the first Papua New Guinean to write a general history of his country, subtly distanced himself from his predecessors and emphasized a new beginning when quoting the poet Kumalau Tawali in the epigraph of his first chapter:

I have come from 50,000 years
So they think.
Others say I was born on 16 September, 1975.
Let my arrows fly another 50,000 years.²

It was inherent in the nature of the colonial project that there was supposed to be an authoritative view of the colonized’s past. To counter this notion it was useful *for a while* to assume that there was a Papua New Guinean (or a Tolai, or a Vunamami) view of things that needed to be pitched against the dominant Eurocentric interpretation of the past. Rather than identifying the new masters that need to be confronted, let alone the good cause that’s worth fighting for, I wish to work on the forms and style of my supposedly anticolonial histories. I need to realize that many of my knee-jerk responses to colonialism are either indebted to the colonial discourse or very much a part of it. Having become sensitive to the dangers of writing for a postcolonial master by writing against the colonial *masta*, historians (and historical ethnographers) may focus their attack on new hegemonic constructions of the past, picking up trash as they career in different directions, no longer sketching a grandiose alternative History, but nagging at History, subverting the one capital H with many lowercase h’s.

I propose to conceive of history as a container of histories, histories that do not always lead to the present and are not always told by myself. I should be looking for Papua New Guinean constructions of the past that contradict the flow of events that I have been brought up to desire establishing. I should be looking for histories that cut the

ground from under my feet. I propose to mistrust those bits of the past that neatly fit into accounts of historical progress and to watch carefully my own attempts to order and construct the past. By starting my history of the Tolai with a Tolai man's voice, I did not try to deceive my readers by deflecting their attention. To the contrary: I thereby hoped to be myself more conscious of, and alert the readers to, the propensities of *my* voice. Starting my history with another man's voice was meant to put up a warning sign at the very beginning, cautioning the reader to beware of and not to take for granted the author's voice, the historian's emphasis on significance and relevance, and the rendering of histories into History and of the past into the pre-present. Breaking up the historical narrative perhaps provides the reader with space to interject and admonish me, the author: "Language!" The least I can do is to coax my readers into turning their head now and then to adjust to whoever is talking. This time at least they did not get a chance to follow the author hard on his heels on a journey from man's or the explorers' arrival in New Guinea to the present. "Take your time," I want to tell them, "linger in the past, dwell on the seemingly irrelevant, become addicted to the trash of history, trivial and horrendous, which alone may portend redemption from the course of History."

Postscript

The account of the Toma killings that became History owed much to the viewpoint of the German colonial administration. It was written down in history books and made the title that Tom Garrett held over Tokota Plantation appear legitimate. The history of the High Court case was established through transcripts and rulings. It seemed appropriate to disturb these colonial histories by recording and then publishing ToVetenge's story. Several years after I talked to ToVetenge, who is long dead, his narrative has taken on a life of its own. It has appeared in my own writings (1992a, 1992b), in John Waiko's history (1993), and now in this chapter. Recently two Tolai, one of them a prominent former member of national parliament, have produced a ten-page document in which they recount my recounting of ToVetenge's recounting of the events in 1902. They thereby intend "to remind the German government of its Human Rights Obligation to respect the lives of our ancestors [and] to pay us (the descendants) for the lost [*sic*] of their lives, their properties and the sufferings

they encountered [*sic*]—and to support a massive compensation claim” (ToLiman and ToVovore 1995:10). By now, ToVetenge’s narrative has truly become History.

NOTES

I am grateful to the late Iosep ToVetenge for generously sharing with me his histories of the Varzin land case. This article is dedicated to his memory.

1. I recorded ToVetenge’s history on 22 October 1987 at Ravae in Tagitagi No 1, East New Britain, Papua New Guinea, in the Tolai language; Paul ToSinot and I made a transcript, which I translated into English. The version I am reproducing here is slightly shorter than the one with which my *Not the Way It Really Was* opens (cf. Neumann 1992a:1–4).

2. From a mural, created in 1984 at the University of Papua New Guinea, quoted in Waiko 1993:1. Papua New Guinea became independent on September 16, 1975. Incidentally, Waiko deals extensively with the killing of Mrs. Wolff and the ensuing reprisals in 1902 and quotes most of ToVetenge’s account (1993:48–52).

4

Indigenous Knowledge and Academic Imperialism

Vilsoni Hereniko

Growing up in Rotuma, I was never taught Rotuman history from a textbook. Nor was I ever tested on how much I had learned and whether I could remember the facts and dates when important events were supposed to have happened. When I reached secondary school and later went to university, I found myself having to study history, largely the history of the British Empire, and had a difficult time remembering historical information that did not seem to have any relevance to me whatsoever. But I was good at “cramming” and somehow always managed to pass these history tests, although if you had asked me for the same information a month or so after the examination, I would have had a hard time remembering. None of my history teachers knew how to make history come alive and I never did find out why facts about who did what to whom and on what date were so important.

This chapter examines my love-hate relationship with the discipline of history as defined and taught by Western academics. My hope is that such scrutiny will lead to a better understanding of some of my reservations; I hope also to stimulate discussion that will enhance the teaching and learning of Pacific history. I begin with the ways in which Rotumans acquired knowledge of their past, followed by a critique of academic practices that work against the emergence of an indigenous historiography. I conclude with some thoughts on how the discipline of history could be made more meaningful and relevant to indigenous people. In a number of places where academic practices are discussed, the term *scholars* refers to historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists.

My earliest experience with Rotuman history came in the form of fictional stories called *hanuju* that my father used to tell me when I was growing up. Some of these stories have come to be labeled myths

and legends by westerners, the implication being that they are not true stories. Other stories, I learned later in life, were fairy tales that he had picked up in Fiji where he spent some time. With hindsight, it seems easy to tell by the setting of the stories, the images and symbols, and the names of characters whether they were Rotuman or foreign. Irrespective of their place of origin, these stories were used by my father as avenues for teaching his children human values he wanted us to embrace.

Dates were never important in my father's stories; if they were mentioned at all, it was in the general category of "long ago." Some of these stories were based on historical events—such as battles fought between religious factions in the 1870s—but the focus was always specific to place and characters: where the action took place, who were the main players, what was the order of events, and what were the consequences of their actions. My father was a good storyteller who knew how to engage my emotions, and I was often moved to tears by his stories, many of which were about cruelty, kindness, fairness, generosity, obedience, or tyranny. As I grew older, I realized that some of his stories about ghosts and disobedient children were intended to frighten his children so we would go to sleep or remain in the house at night.

Then there were stories that could be labeled gossip. These were about people who were living then: where their ancestors came from, why they looked or behaved in a certain way, and the possible reasons for their good or bad fortune. These stories were often told when men or women got together to perform certain functions, such as weaving mats, preparing food for a wedding, clearing plantations, or sitting around waiting for arrivals or departures. Some stories were malicious in intent, particularly if they were whispered in secret and were about illicit affairs, real or imagined. Rotumans also reveled in humorous tales, usually at other people's expense, but sometimes at their own.

More prevalent than oral narratives in day-to-day interaction were dance and song. As repositories of the past and present, dance and song were performed as part of rituals, ceremonies, or other public events, and therefore were more reliable sources than stories that were shared informally and confined mainly to families or small groups. Songs could be about anything: migrations, the underworld, genealogies, loved ones who had passed away, unrequited love, the beauty of the island, or important people, events, and places. Some

songs were nonsensical but reflected the Rotuman sense of humor. Choreographed and performed, either as part of a *tautoga* (traditional mass dance involving men and women) or part of a *fara* (singing and dancing troupe) during the period Rotumans call *av manea* (time to play), song and dance displays often occurred when young people traveled around the island during the Christmas season (see Hereniko 1995). Many of these songs were well known, their lyrics reminding Rotumans about the past; sometimes they dealt with the present and imminent future.

Theatrical enactments were also arenas for communicating historical information. Dramatic sketches, usually no longer than thirty minutes, were often performed by village or church groups. A dancing troupe might perform a number of songs and dances, with a theatrical item added on at the end. Such a piece might be a retelling of a myth or legend, or about a contemporary issue, or perhaps a scene from the Bible. These performances were usually unscripted, rehearsed beforehand, and intended to entertain. However, they often contained valuable information about historical events that had shaped and continue to influence the social and cultural life of the island and its people.

The natural world had its own constellation of proverbs and sayings that captured the special natures of plants, animals, and birds, some of which are extinct today. I heard these words of wisdom during important speeches, sermons on Sundays, and sometimes in the course of everyday conversations. The metaphors and allusions were better known to the older and wiser folks, but by listening carefully to the contexts in which they were used, I could often figure out the meanings of these proverbs (see Howard and Rensel 1991).

Certain peculiarities in the physical environment, names of people, places, birds, animals, genealogies of chiefly families, and anecdotes of personal experiences gave credence to historical narratives in much the same way that Western scholars use footnotes as evidence. Over time historical narratives evolved into differing versions of the same story, not all of which contained the same elements or emphasized the same details. Some of these conflicting accounts resulted in disputes that were usually resolved sooner or later. Rotumans understood competing versions to be politically motivated but were usually prepared to let the more persuasive orator win, believing that the ancestral spirits would punish anyone who was dishonest.

The stars, the moon, the sunset, the behavior of birds and animals,

the blossoming of certain flowers, and the direction of the wind (to mention only a few) communicated messages for human beings. No doubt these messages were based on proven patterns over many years. For example, very hot dry spells during December and January might be interpreted as signs of a developing hurricane. When low-flying frigate birds were seen flying toward the west, Rotumans would begin reinforcing the roofs of their houses and preparing for a storm. Incidents of rats devouring pillows were taken as a sign of imminent death, a ring around the moon signaled the time for harvesting sea urchins, and so on.

The early period of contact with Europeans is humorously captured in what Rotumans call *te samuga*. Each clan theoretically had a *te samuga* that derived from a stupid or humorous act committed by their ancestors. One clan, for example, was *fun pan rau* (tobacco fryers) because on encountering tobacco for the first time, their ancestors thought it could be fried as food and did so. The *hao peskete* (biscuit planters) clan was supposed to have planted biscuits, which they wrongly assumed grew on trees. My clan's *te samuga* is a *rais* (rice eaters), because some Chinese blood from my mother's side was supposed to have made us impure. At weddings, the *han maneak su* (woman who plays the wedding), who is chosen by the bride's relatives, may be heard announcing the *te samuga* of the groom's relatives. Occasionally I have heard an exchange of *te samuga* at an informal gathering (such as during card games or a beach picnic) accompanied by mock anger and peals of laughter. In this way, family history was imparted and perpetuated. This social institution was also a cultural way of deflating pomposity and ensuring humility among the inhabitants.

Knowledge about custom and tradition was communicated during ceremonies and rituals, such as during a wedding or a funeral. Observers carefully watched how things were done and stored the information in their memory for future use. Sometimes there was controversy over correct protocol or the accuracy of certain procedures or customs. When conflict arose, the views of knowledgeable elders were consulted and obeyed. Sometimes the parties concerned might simply agree to disagree, because there was no uniform and compulsory form that was enforceable for the whole island. At one time, the Rotuman Council, the island's governing body, tried to standardize procedures for important ceremonies but was met with resistance and because there was no consensus, the idea was abandoned.

As in other parts of Polynesia, poetry contained historical information that was not always understood by the general public, largely because it used archaic expressions, metaphors, and figures of speech. There were two forms, one, *fakpeje*, was performed during public ceremonies when *kava* (piper methysticum) was presented. Like the lyrics of songs, *fakpeje* often made references to historical events and important chiefs or kings. The second kind of poetry, *teme*, was chanted at secret gatherings held by male elders in the evenings. These poems concealed special knowledge about the group's history and identity. Today, probably only a few individuals are left who can remember snatches of *teme*; the nightly gatherings for recitation have also ceased.

Dreams also played a more prominent part in Rotuman life when I was growing up than they do now. When a relative said that a dead ancestor came to him or her and imparted certain information about the past (or present or future), it was taken seriously. The dead were never far away, and it was common then to hear individuals talk about having seen the ghost of a dead relative at such and such a place. Certain haunting grounds were close to the village. Sometimes the names of dead ancestors were invoked during rituals to act on someone's behalf. Of course, the missionaries frowned on practices that honored the dead; nonetheless, dead ancestors were often seen as more readily accessible than the Christian god, and many Rotumans secretly courted their favors even as they publicly declared their Christian affiliation.

All the various contexts mentioned are important sources for knowing about the Rotuman past and present (see also Plant 1977b; Churchward 1940; Gardiner 1898; Howard 1985). Although I have focused on Rotuma, other Pacific societies share these sources (and more) to varying degrees, depending on the extent of colonization and missionary influence. Yet, when I read historical accounts by Western scholars about the Pacific, I am often surprised by the lack of serious analyses of these sources, particularly the oral narratives and performance. There are some notable exceptions, but they are few in number and unlikely to destabilize the status quo (for examples, see Howard 1985; White 1991; Nero 1992; Mitchell 1992).

Chief among the reasons for pushing indigenous sources of knowledge to the margins is the process of colonization, particularly the usurpation of oral narratives by the dominant culture's narrative fiction: fairy tales, myths and legends, short stories, novels, and biblical

stories. The school and church are institutions that work hand in hand to colonize the mind. As native people were taught to read and write, they paid less and less attention to oratory. This process, which Rupe-raki Petaia has likened to being kidnaped and Albert Wendt has called “whitefication,” radically altered islanders’ perceptions of themselves. When I went to school and learned to read and write, I came to value English fairy tales, Greek mythology, and biblical narratives more than my father’s *hanuju*. Later in high school and university, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Shakespeare, and Ibsen became my models as the importance of Rotuman *hanuju* faded into the background. Only in recent years have I been wise and brave enough to realize the significance of these stories to my identity and well-being as a Rotuman. To have been able to write a dissertation that displaced the stories of my colonizers and replaced them with those of my ancestors has been the most gratifying experience for me as a scholar. Decolonizing the mind, however, is not easy, and in my case has only just begun. I know students, either in metropolitan universities or at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, who are still struggling to find their island voices.

When I was made head of the English Department of a Methodist school in Fiji in 1984, I decided to introduce Pacific literature to my students and encouraged other teachers to do likewise. I was excited about this shift in orientation, and so were my students and some of the staff, who found much that they could identify with in the poetry of Konai Thaman (1980, 1981) or the short stories from the Pacific published in *Lali* (Wendt 1980)—until one day, when the gatekeeper of English literature in this school, an elderly teacher from England with strong Christian convictions, marched into the library where I was reading and shouted at me: “You are employed to teach English literature, which means literature written by the English!”

Why was this well-meaning European so upset that I should teach Pacific Island students the stories of their own people? I found this difficult to understand until I read Edward Said. “The power to narrate,” he wrote, “or to block other narratives from forming or emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them” (1993:xiii). Fortunately, progress is being made in the Pacific regarding the restoration of indigenous stories to their proper place in the curriculum, although the belief still lingers among many expatriates and some locals that Pacific fiction or poetry is unworthy of the label “literature.”

The ways in which schools, colleges, and universities value the written word over and above oratory is another cause for concern. When the mode of teaching or testing is primarily in the written form, indigenous ways of being are marginalized. Many island students fail not because they are stupid, but because the formal education system works against indigenous ways of learning or evaluating knowledge. I have often wondered why those students who excel at singing, dancing, composing, telling stories, and so on are rarely given the option of being tested in one or more of these modes. Does this have anything to do with the fact that although Western education has been operative in Fiji for more than a hundred years, the system has produced only a handful of Ph.D. graduates?

Furthermore, the written word has undermined the fluidity of indigenous history. Oratory allowed for debate and negotiation. On the other hand, the written word fixes the truth. Genealogies, land titles, customary practices, secret rituals, disputes, religious beliefs (and so on) that were previously embedded in social relations are no longer subject to change or modification. An example from Rotuma should make this point clearer. For many years, a plot of land was under the jurisdiction of a certain family (I shall call A). They would cut copra from it, graze their cows on it, and plant on it. But recently, it was discovered that according to the written records kept by the district officer at the government station on the island, the land belonged to a different clan (I shall call B). This knowledge came as a surprise to both A and B. When I was on the island in 1992, I was told by B that in spite of the written record, her clan does not feel that the land belongs to them because it has been in A's care for so long. On the other hand, A feels bad that her family has "stolen" someone else's land all these years and does not want to have anything to do with it anymore. Both sides are uncertain about the veracity of the written record, although in Rotuma, as in most places around the world, it carries more authority than the oral word. Rotumans, like many other Polynesians, believe the land has "eyes and teeth" and is capable of wreaking havoc in the lives of those who engage in deceitful schemes. In this instance, the written word fixed the "truth," and the response of both parties was to leave the plot of land alone in order to ward off any bad luck. If things had been left in the realm of oratory, jurisdiction over the land in question could have been discussed and resolved satisfactorily to both parties.

Besides undermining oratory, the written word encourages the view

that there is but *one* truth, and this truth can be discovered through rigorous research. Since the written word is more reliable than oratory, so the argument goes, the historian who has access to all the written sources and can interpret them accurately can find that one truth. Anyone who thinks that “truth comes from a multiplicity of sources and perspectives” (Katz 1993:366) is therefore a threat to this school of thought, as evident in the next example.

In a speech given in 1993 by Eric Hobsbawm at the Central European University in Budapest, entitled “The New Threat to History,” he made a number of points pertinent to the concerns of this chapter. According to him, the ability to distinguish between fact and fiction is fundamental for a historian (1993:63). He went on to say that contemporary novelists who base their plots on recorded reality are “fudging the border between historical fact and fiction” (62), implying that there is a difference between the two. He claimed that there is nothing unambiguous about the fact that Elvis Presley is dead. Maybe so, but this is dull history indeed if this is all that matters to the historian.

By focusing on external reality, historians marginalized emotional truth, which is the essence of literature, oral or written. A Fijian elder has put it this way: “People [outside researchers] do not understand the unseen, which is the reality of our lives; they do not realize its power. They look only at the seen, which is illusion” (Katz 1993:294). The more important question therefore is not whether Elvis Presley is dead, but how he died, where he died, his motivations for taking his life (if indeed it was a suicide), and the impact of his death on his family and the music world. These are questions that history texts do not answer because their focus is on when and how certain events took place rather than the emotional landscape of the individuals responsible for those events. On the other hand, novelists are concerned with the unseen as well as the seen and, if they are good at their craft, give better insights into history in its totality than social scientific accounts in textbooks.

Hobsbawm also charged those engaged in identity politics with “attempts to replace history by myth and invention” (1993:64). He wrote that the responsibility of historians is to “stand aside from the passions of identity politics” and to tell the truth even if it makes them unpopular (63). The problem with his advice is the false premise that there is only one truth. Like Epeli Hau‘ofa, I believe truth to be “flexible and negotiable” (Hau‘ofa, this volume). Also, certain ques-

tions must be asked before deciding whether one's truth should be made public. What kind of truth? Whose truth? Will the truth favor the colonizer, the colonized, men, women, or perhaps an elite minority among the natives? These are difficult questions that a "feeling" historian must address.

Another thorny question that has to be considered is: Do outsiders have the right to speak for and about Pacific Islanders? I was brought up to believe that the right to speak in public is not God-given. In certain contexts, only the chiefs or men could speak. In matters to do with women, the men remained quiet. On the other hand, westerners seem to think they have the right to express opinions (sometimes labeled truths) about cultures that are not their own in such a way that they appear to know it from the inside out. Most seem to think they have the right to speak about anything and everything; many even think they have the right to coerce natives to divulge secrets about their cultures to them (see Osorio 1995:12). I have been in numerous situations where natives sit and listen while white academics discuss and analyze their cultures and people in an objectified fashion. Challenges have been made by incensed natives about the right of outsiders to speak for them, yet the practice still continues, particularly in institutions of higher learning. It is time for Western scholars to realize that legitimacy, or the right to speak, has always been an issue for Pacific Islanders, who do not necessarily believe in the First Amendment. The least that outsiders can do, if they wish to speak as though they were some authority on Pacific societies, is to invite indigenous Pacific Islanders, whenever possible, to share the space with them, either as copresenters or as discussants or respondents. Not to do so is to perpetuate unequal power relations between colonizer and colonized.

Gone is the time when nonnative scholars can afford the luxury of an intellectual debate with each other about native issues and ignore the native perspectives. Yet recently we have the Sahlins (1995)-Obeyesekere (1992) squabble: an American from the University of Chicago and a Sri Lankan from Princeton University, each claiming to own the truth. The American claims that Native Hawaiians believed that Captain Cook was the fertility God Lono; the Sri Lankan claims that the Hawaiians were not that stupid; the American has written another hefty tome to consolidate his original stance. What next, I wonder. Native Hawaiians stand by and watch as two foreigners fight

over “fodder” that does not even belong to them. This struggle for the “truth” evokes the title of Kame‘eleihiwa’s book *Native Land and Foreign Desires* (1992). Both Sahlins and Obeyesekere say their ultimate desire is that native voices be heard, but how can we hear those voices when they are screaming at each other so loudly?

In recent years, particularly in relation to scholarship about Hawai‘i, native professors are challenging interpretations of their history and culture by non-Hawaiian scholars such as Marshall Sahlins, Jocelyn Linnekin, and Roger Keesing. On the whole, the works of these three scholars are highly regarded by their peers. The Keesing-Trask controversy is well known, and I will merely refer readers to the sources in the bibliography (Keesing 1989a, 1991; Trask 1991, 1993). A more recent example is the Sahlins-Kame‘eleihiwa-Dening discord.

Marshall Sahlins is perhaps the best-known anthropologist in Pacific studies, one whose writing and research I have valued in the past. Greg Dening, author of that remarkable book *Islands and Beaches* (and whose humble attitude to writing and research I admire), wrote in a review forum of Kirch and Sahlins’ *Anahulu* (1992), that Sahlins’ contributions to Pacific studies are “brilliant” (1994:212) and the man himself a “genius” (213). Dening sang of the “state-of-the-art scholarship” of these two authors and asserted that they “make a reference point by which all scholars who follow them in Pacific studies must measure themselves” (212). His “review” was immediately followed by the remarks of Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, historian and professor in the Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai‘i, who debunked a number of key points in Sahlins’ interpretations (Kame‘eleihiwa 1994a). By the end of her review, Sahlins’ contribution was no longer the “reference point” that Dening claimed it to be, but bad advice from a “knowledgeable” foreigner about a culture not his own, and therefore to be rejected. How can two responses by two respected scholars—one an outsider, the other an insider—be so different? How does one account for these opposing reactions to the same work? Does the outsider have the right to engage in and publish research that portrays native people in a negative light? Do studies of Cook’s death, by their very nature and focus, inevitably objectify or reduce Hawaiians, thus perpetuating racism and racial stereotypes?

Certain conventions in academia also foster an imperial approach

to Pacific studies. First is the reverence given to theory and theorists by some in the humanities and social sciences. Theory that is appropriate illuminates; when this happens, we are better informed and the quest for knowledge is advanced. However, many scholars tend to use theories that have originated in the West to understand the unfamiliar. When this happens, the local situation is subsumed under mainstream paradigms as academics who theorize in this manner end up talking to each other rather than to the people about whom they are writing. Theory, in such instances, becomes an intellectual game that has little bearing on the realities of the native lifestyles (see also Meleisea 1987:144).

Theory ought to be informed by practice, by which I mean a commitment to the well-being of those being researched (see also Murphy 1992). Giroux and McLaren referred to this as a “struggle in the interests of greater human freedom and emancipation” (1991:162). Without such involvement with the concerns of the local population, theory serves only the needs of the researcher, and sometimes the dominant culture that he or she usually represents. It will no longer do to claim “objectivity” or “impartiality” in the name of academic integrity. The researcher in the Pacific who is not committed to empowering the native people as they struggle to transform social injustices and inequalities is, ultimately, an agent of the status quo.

The scholarly practice that says that the first to publish certain facts or information about a culture has “ownership” over that material ensures that knowledge that belonged to indigenous people, like their land in many cases, is slowly appropriated by the colonizers. It does not matter that indigenous people have owned certain secrets or principles about their cultures since time immemorial. If a native reveals certain knowledge to a researcher, who publishes it in a book or journal, the researcher is the one cited in the works of other academics. Until Western scholars are taught to cite their oral sources of information in much the same way they acknowledge written sources, and until academics are willing to admit that much of what they know about Pacific societies is common knowledge to the elders of these cultures, they will continue to pass off as their own what is really native property (see Bennett 1987, who cites her oral sources).

The focus on written sources in academic research marginalized the importance of performance to Pacific cultures. Dance, drama, public rituals, and ceremonies communicate multiple messages about a cul-

ture simultaneously. These messages, however, are not overt, and often go unnoticed by academics, who are more adept at reading between the lines on a page than reading the messages implicit in the kinds of costumes being worn, the way space is negotiated, the arrangement of dancers, the hand, feet, and facial movements, and other elements of performance that embody a culture's aesthetics and values. Now that more and more Pacific Islanders are moving into film and video to comment on their societies, scholars will need to learn how to "read" nonprint media if they are to gain a better understanding of the contemporary Pacific.

The tendency to write in an aloof, detached, and jargonistic style is a smoke screen that disguises academic biases, ignorance, and insecurity. Many monographs or books specialize in sentences that are long, polysyllabic, tangled, and obscure. The implication is that if the author is not understood, then the reader cannot be smart enough. Fortunately, native scholars—such as Hau'ofa, Trask, and Wendt—are secure enough not to play "protective camouflage." If all Pacific scholars pledged to write clearly about their research findings and their motivations for doing research in the Pacific, Pacific studies would no longer be the monopoly of a privileged elite minority.

Knowledgeable as they are, outsiders can never truly know what it is like to be a Samoan, a Papua New Guinean, or a Marshallese (see also Osorio 1995:13). As Wendt has written: "They [outsiders] must not pretend they can write from inside us" (1987:89). This is good advice, because history has shown that neither Margaret Mead nor Derek Freeman really knew how the "natives" think. I would like to see more books like De Vita's *The Humbled Anthropologist* (1990), where scholars may be encountered without their masks. Unfortunately, most ethnographies and histories hide the biases and limitations of the authors so well that they appear to contain "the truth, and nothing but the truth." Hau'ofa astutely summed up the response of Pacific Islanders when they come across this superior attitude by the outsider, whether in personal encounters or in monographs: "We often accede to things just to stop being bombarded, and then go ahead and do what we want to do anyway" (in this volume).

Sometimes native scholars like to claim that they know their people better than foreign scholars by mere virtue of their being insiders. I wish this were always the case. But common sense tells me that if I have been away from Rotuma for a decade, then I must be a

decade out of tune. The foreign anthropologist who has recently returned from the “field” is likely to have a more accurate picture than I of the present situation there. Yet there are certain matters, largely to do with intuition, emotion, and sensibility, that the outsider may never fully grasp, for these are things in the realm of the unseen, acquired through early socialization in the formative years, and perhaps inherent in the Rotuman gene pool. As a friend has said of the outsider who visits a place for a while: “Just because you went into a garage, that doesn’t make you into a car!” The result of all this is a complex picture of insiders and outsiders, depending on who we are talking about, how well they are integrated into the native community, and their ability to empathize with the native population.

Similarly, I cannot claim to know what happened in Rotuma on a certain date a hundred years ago simply because I am a native Rotuman. On the other hand, Professor Alan Howard, an anthropologist who has studied my culture for more than thirty years, and who has a copy of just about everything published about Rotumans as well as his field notes over the years, may be in a better position to answer such a question. It all depends on the kind of research being carried out. In most cases, however, there is much to be gained by collaboration, on equal terms, between the white scholar and the native person.

In one of the few research projects on indigenous practices and beliefs among Pacific Islanders that I find exemplary, Richard Katz elaborated on the need for a collaborative approach between the researcher and the researched: “The people who share their lives to make research possible must exercise that power and control in these areas. It is up to them to make known their wishes in regard to the uses and goals of that research. As a precondition to hearing their agenda, we must insist that the one-way ‘coercive’ process of research change into a two-way process that is entered into freely. We can then commit ourselves to devoting as much energy to giving as historically has been devoted to taking—and more” (1993:367).

Katz rightly asserted that all research is political. Scholars—native or otherwise—must therefore examine their motives every time they publish their research findings, review or endorse a book by another academic, or write or say things about Pacific peoples and cultures that might be used to justify oppression, in whatever form, by those in power. This is not a time for purely academic pursuits. Whenever

those of us who teach or carry out research in the Pacific promote and foster academic practices that are imperialistic in design, we become agents of a power structure that is oppressive and lacking in a social conscience.

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VALUING THE PACIFIC—AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES CLIFFORD

• *Robert Borofsky*: Can you explain the intellectual trajectory that brought you into the Pacific? You have mentioned that it was almost by accident that you became interested in the region.

• *James Clifford*: Initially, I had no intention of studying anything connected with the Pacific. I was doing graduate work in Paris on the history of French anthropology at the Musée de L'Homme, and I stumbled on a little book of homages to Maurice Leenhardt. I was intrigued because Leenhardt was untypical: He was a French anthropologist who did a lot of fieldwork and, moreover, had done it as a missionary. At first I thought that he might constitute half a chapter in my dissertation. But then I stumbled into his private papers and never really came out. I wrote my dissertation on Leenhardt and later, based on that, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World*.

Writing about his life plunged me into the history of New Caledonia. I encountered a brutal colonial history and, at the same time, a remarkable, exemplary history of cultural survival and transformation. Kanaks, the island's indigenous inhabitants, were said to be dying out. Yet they have persisted. And one of the ways they have survived is by becoming Christian. But conversion, as Leenhardt put it, turned out to be a complex process of acculturation in two directions. Melanesian Christianity turned out to be a different, a new kind of Christianity and, in fact, has been a way of continuing to be Kanak in a new context. What I got was a remarkable sense of something both very old and very modern cobbled together in a strategy of survival.

I came to see Melanesia, in a certain sense, as the future—not as the past. Because of the Kanaks' resourcefulness and ability to work with innovation, I gained a better sense of culture as interactive pro-

cess, an understanding enhanced by reading Roy Wagner who, at the time, was writing about the invention of culture in Papua New Guinea. What I perceived among the Kanaks was the politics of culture in an unequal colonial situation. While I developed and applied this processual perspective in other contexts later on, this is really where I first grappled with it.

After my encounter with Melanesian history, I passed through post-structuralist critiques of ethnography to postcolonial theory and cultural studies. The writing of Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson had been crucial to me in graduate school, and I was able to build on that in transnational contexts through the work of Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Hazel Carby and many others. The evolving British tradition of cultural studies, with its concern for post- (and neo-) colonial relations, for subaltern diaspora cultures, and for complex formations of “identity” seemed another version, differently spatialized, of what I saw in Melanesia.

Following the thinking of Stuart Hall, for example, I acquired analytical tools that could have helped me with the interactive self-fashioning of Leenhardt and his “converts,” and particularly with the articulation of contemporary forms of “traditionalism,” with the emergence of an islandwide “Kanak” cultural and political identity. These are, of course, processes of cultural and political mobilization that, in different settings, are active throughout the Pacific. But I always had the sense that “Pacific cultural studies” would have to be different in important ways from the North Atlantic varieties. So now I am examining how various theories need to be adapted and rethought in contexts historically and culturally distinct from that which generated the British and North American work.

- *RB*: Despite your own enthusiasm for the Pacific, the region rarely seems to attract the same amount of intellectual attention as do various other areas of the globe. What do you think accounts for the region’s intellectual isolation?

- *JC*: It is something that puzzles me and has puzzled me for a long time. In Euro-Atlantic contexts of intellectual work, I try to bring up Pacific examples that I think are particularly provocative. But most of the time people simply glaze over.

I’m something of a booster for the western Pacific—a deeply complex and fascinating part of the contemporary world. For me it’s still a mind-boggling place. For example, I often bring up the fact that the island of New Guinea—Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya—contains,

by some counts, nearly 20 percent of the world's total languages. People let this astonishing news just slide past. They can't see why it would render an emerging "nation" like Papua New Guinea something incredible to imagine.

New Guinea presents a peculiarly "postmodern" image. It's not just a backward place catching up—moving "from the Stone Age to the Modern World in a few generations," as popular common sense has it. Its overlaid temporalities are not captured by the familiar evolutionist or developmentalist projections. Its cultural dynamics are current in a peculiarly hybrid and broken yet connected way that needs to be considered in analyzing cultural formations and conglomerations today. In my view, places like Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia are exemplary contexts for thinking about the fractured, sutured, overlaid, incredibly diverse and yet hooked-up complexes of local, regional, national, and transnational forms, the articulated sites of an unfinished (post)modernity.

One can, of course, find plenty of places in the world to do this kind of thinking. But for me the Pacific has a special clarity. In a strange way, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and such places are in a kind of time warp. Everyone knows the Pacific is out there. It has never been seen as modern. I actually think that is one of its great advantages, as it were, to think with. Once one takes it out of its past tense and places it in a contemporary context, it becomes possible to see its stories, its narratives, its history and historical change as only tenuously linked to linear modernist histories of progress and development. It becomes possible to see what I might call a progressive narratives of modernity. It is both politically and empirically quite important to think about these types of narratives.

I think the way the Pacific comes into the contemporary, comes into the postmodern—I use *postmodern* as a stopgap term here—without the baggage and assumptions that came with the modernist vision of liberal capitalism and anti-imperialism is important. It comes without the notion that all histories must move through certain kinds of national liberation struggles. The Pacific comes into the contemporary from some other place, a place no one can locate because it is lost out there in a timeless exoticism. Using the Pacific as a resource, we can see the politics of cultural process in a more complex way.

- *RB*: One of the ways the Pacific remains distinctive is in how it embraced decolonization, or perhaps more precisely phrased, how decolonization embraced it. It involved a more complex, ambiguous set

of processes than occurred say in Africa or Asia. I know this intrigues you. Why?

- *JC*: It really is the timing of decolonization in the Pacific that interests me. Changes in political sovereignty mostly came in the 1970s and the 1980s or basically a full decade and a half or more after the classical cases of African independence. Occurring later, decolonization in the Pacific took place in a different climate, in a different historical context. For one thing, the notion that political independence under the leadership of nationalizing elites would lead to certain kinds of liberation, certain kinds of social justice, was pretty definitively exploded by then in many parts of the world.

And secondly, the world system, the capitalist world system, went through some crucial mutations in the 1970s—in that period which is variously called postmodernism, or post-Fordism, or whatever—so that the very idea, the very word of “independence” began to have quotation marks placed around it. The notion of sovereignty—that sense of control over borders, over culture, over economy that the word *sovereignty* implies—had been exploded. Perhaps “exploded” is too strong a word. It became complicated by the fact that no nation now has control over its economy, not even the most powerful ones. The same holds true for borders. The movement of populations across borders has been dramatic. Even ideas of citizenship and identity seem now to be complexly divided between places. One can be born and live in California, for instance, and still be connected to Samoa.

Such dynamics may well have existed previously. But it was not at all clear to people in the 1960s. There remained a traditional notion of nationhood, of drawing lines around a particular territory and building an imagined community within it. Creating a national consciousness, a national culture in Africa classically involved reducing or opposing tribalism, which was depicted as reactionary. Nation building was portrayed as progressive.

But things are more ambiguous today. Pulling against such attitudes now are strong notions of the tribal and the local. Indeed, we have a capitalist world system that is involved, some have suggested, in actively producing the local—in actively encouraging regional articulation.

In this kind of context, political sovereignty in the Pacific is taking all sorts of different forms. Stuart Firth’s essay [in the section on “Postcolonial” Politics in this volume] is a very useful opening to these sorts of questions. Because decolonization comes later to the

Pacific, when sovereignty is a much more ambiguous and contested concept, we are seeing worked out different forms of national identity. The Pacific contains new and different sorts of negotiations among the local, the regional, the national, and the global.

This makes the Pacific a very clear laboratory for looking at processes now taking place in Europe and elsewhere. There are all sorts of complex couplings and uncouplings going on. The Pacific has a kind of clarity and exemplary nature in this regard.

- *RB*: One of the Pacific's interesting aspects is its "Sea of Islands," to use Epele Hau'ofa's phrase (discussed in the introduction to "Post-colonial" Politics). What is your impression regarding this multiplex, overlapping, interactive sense of "islands" as a way of conceptualizing identity?

- *JC*: I am very taken with Hau'ofa's vision and his struggle to get Islanders to see themselves and the spaces between them not as islands in a distant ocean but as a sea of islands in which they themselves participate. I am very struck by the way he is able to connect very old and very new things—that temporal disjuncture has always interested me about the Pacific. We are reaching back to voyaging canoes and, at the same time, telling stories about mobility by jumbo jets. It is an updating and reconnecting of very old traditions of inter-island contact with now something very current. Tongans, Samoans, and Hawaiians, for example, now go back and forth to Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

It represents a kind of indigenous cosmopolitanism. More than simply unmaking the concept of "the native," it is complicating it. I have learned a lot from Teresia Teaiwa regarding this. What is needed is something more than the postcolonial theorizing of Appadurai or even Gupta and Ferguson. The image in their writings is of a native possessing an imprisoned, enclosed identity that is now being broken out of and, as a result, generating a kind of multiple-located, continuously de-centered, postcolonial structure. It seems to me, though, that with the traveling native, if you can call him or her that, in the Pacific this sort of categorization breaks down. Here—both in the past and today—there is an inherent, indigenous cosmopolitanism. It has been an ongoing process, an ongoing part of Islander identities, for centuries.

- *RB*: In our conversations together, you have referred to the work of Stuart Hall on the articulation of cultural elements. Could you elaborate on what you find interesting about Hall's concept and how it relates to your comments here regarding the Pacific?

- *JC*: The politics of articulation for Stuart Hall involves an updating of Gramsci. It involves a sense of politics which does not depict good and bad guys neatly lined up on one side or another of a line. Rather, one sees a continuous struggle over a terrain, portions of which are captured by different alliances, hooking up different elements in different ways. There is a lot of middle ground and a lot of political and cultural positions which are not firmly anchored on one side or the other but, instead, are up for grabs.

Articulation, of course, suggests discourse or speech. But more importantly, it also suggests connections in the sense that a joint is an articulation. Something that is articulated or hooked together can also be unhooked, disarticulated. So that when you look at something like a cultural formation, looking at it as an articulated ensemble does not allow you to fall into an organic model—the notion of a living, persistent body that is continuous and growing through time. Articulation is more like a cyborg. The elements are more contingent; there is no natural shape to it. A body could have three arms or one arm depending on the context. It can hook elements of its structure onto elements of another structure often in unexpected ways.

To me, that is a very useful way of thinking about conversion to Christianity in the Pacific. The creation of these rather strange ensembles is what first fascinated me about the region. There are elements of Christianity to which people hooked on rather easily, and there were other elements that they transformed.

In articulation theory, the whole question of authenticity or inauthenticity is set aside. There is no problem in picking up and rehooking to your structure something that had either been blown off, knocked off, or had been taken off for tactical reasons. You can reconstruct yourself. This to me is a more historically contingent and more historically precise way of talking about what is often termed “invention.” It avoids the whole language of invention, in fact.

It also avoids the language of hybridity. Hybridity has an organic sense built into it, even though it is about mixing differences, different forms. Articulation is more tactical and political. As people in the Pacific know, the question of the invention of tradition is a highly contested one. Much smoke has been generated as well as a certain amount of light. But a lot of what is referred to as invention should be rethought in terms of the politics of articulation, bypassing the whole question of authenticity. It seems to me we are on much better, firmer political grounds. The whole notion of custom looks quite differently when seen this way. The question of what is authentic and

what is inauthentic, what is borrowed from here or there, does not matter as much.

Articulation theory does have problems; you can only go so far with it. You can get to the point where every cultural form, every structure or restructuration, every connection and disconnection has a fundamental contingency as if, at any moment, anything is possible. That is a misreading of Hall on articulation. He is quite clear that these connections and disconnections are highly constrained at any possible moment. It is more that various connections are never guaranteed.

One of the constraints that needs to be brought into the picture, and this is where the Pacific proves valuable in rethinking Hall's work, is in respect to the question of land. When one thinks about articulated sites of indigenization, the appeal to land is more than simply a discursive one. There is a nondiscursive reality of attachment and belonging as well. Even when expelled from certain land, it often remains in one's memory, is often part of one's exiled condition. This attachment to land, this grounding, adds a sense of continuity to the diasporic hookings and unhookings that have occurred with Christianity, modern technology, commercial commodities, tourism, and so on. There is a kind of nexus, a persistent and continuous nexus, that Hall's theory does not really leave space for.

In bringing Hall and Gilroy into the Pacific, one can see the Caribbean contexts underlying their versions of diaspora. With only minor exceptions, the indigenous is destroyed in the Caribbean. It is gone. Everyone's roots are cut. As a result, everyone is more or less a recent arrival. The space of the indigenous, that landed space, is not nearly as salient as it must be in the Pacific.

- *RB*: You referred, before the interview, to an anecdote regarding your fieldwork in the Pacific. Would you mind sharing it?

- *JC*: When I was writing the Leenhardt book, *Person and Myth*, I traveled in New Caledonia. I was taken around by Jean-Marie Tjibaou, who at that time (in 1978) was just coming into prominence as an independence leader. He took me to the country up around Hienghene in the north of the island, which was his home area. In New Caledonia you have steep valleys and villages on small hill-tops with symbolic trees, palms, and special plants all dispersed and arranged in a very beautiful way.

We were in one of these villages lying around on a lawn talking and just feeling comfortable. I had been in several of the houses in

the village. They were concrete structures that were mostly bare with only a few newspaper clippings here and there on the wall. So I asked Tjibaou: "Look at this village in this valley—everything is so beautifully laid out. And yet inside the houses, it remains bare and barren."

"Yes, you are right," he said. "But, of course, here people do not spend much time indoors." Then he looked around and made a sweep with his hand that took in the village, the valley and the mountains. "This is our house," he said. I thought, yes, there is a particular sense of space and centeredness in the land.

Thinking more about Tjibaou, reading his political writings, and better understanding what his vision was for Kanak life at the village level, at the valley level, at the islandwide level, and even beyond, because he was very much tied up with pan-Pacific kinds of cultural festivals as well as the United Nations, I gained a sense of what he meant. The sweep of his hand—saying all this represented a Kanak's house—involved a grounding that was centered in that village and in that valley, but it also went beyond them. It took in the whole Pacific and, in a way, the whole planet. In that sweep of the hand was a kind of inclusive ambiguity—but one still rooted, still based, in the land as a house. This is the sense of cosmopolitanism I am referring to.

SECTION TWO

The Dynamics of Contact

For some, there is a certain romance in the “contact” experience—as Pacific Islanders and Western explorers (or Outlanders) meet for the first time, as each learns something about the other in their fullness, beyond the dreams and myths each had of those that dwelt beyond their own ken. One might term these liminal experiences—when both lost the security of past understandings and had to, in their own distinct ways, incorporate the differences they saw before them into new understandings of their worlds. Others view this contact in less rosy terms. With the help of historical hindsight, they perceive, in these encounters, a host of tragedies about to unfold. Dramatic changes followed contact on several archipelagoes. Regarding the Marianas, Oliver notes there was a drastic reduction in population from roughly sixty or seventy thousand to thirteen hundred in little more than a hundred years (1989: 90–92; cf. Campbell 1996:152–154). Crosby writes regarding New Zealand: “In 1870—one century after a British

citizen had first seen New Zealand . . . this land had 80,000 horses, 400,000 cattle, and 9,000,000 sheep, and a pakeha [Outlander] population of a quarter million, as against one-fifth as many Maori" (1986:265). Clearly, there are different ways for interpreting first contact. First contact, I would add, was a drawn out process in the Pacific—lasting from Magellan's encounter with inhabitants of the Marianas in 1521 to Australian interactions with residents of the Papua New Guinea highlands in the 1930s.

General Texts and Themes

The most widely read general histories of the Pacific—Oliver (1989), Howe (1984), Campbell (1996), Scarr (1990), and Denoon (1997b)—emphasize two themes regarding Islander-Outlander contact. The first concerns the movement of European explorers into the region. Imperial history—now out of vogue in specialized monographs—remains part of these panoramic accounts. In the roughest of terms, the sixteenth century in the Pacific is portrayed as dominated by Spain, the seventeenth by the Netherlands, and the eighteenth by England and France. Each nation sent out explorers who then claimed (or "possessed") certain islands, certain people, for the European power sponsoring the voyage. (No explorers claimed the islands for themselves.) Each power is portrayed as focused on a particular mission (cf. Seed 1995): the Spanish on controlling and converting people; the Dutch on trade and profit; the British and French on expanding knowledge while, at the same time, probing for ways to expand commerce (especially if the fabled Southern Continent or a Northwest Passage between Europe and the Pacific could be found).

The second theme emphasizes the Davidson school's concern with Island-centered history and Islander agency. Comparatively speaking, Oliver downplays this theme in relation to Howe, Campbell, Scarr, and Meleisea, and Schoeffel (in Denoon) and, again comparatively speaking, Meleisea and Schoeffel highlight Islander agency in relation to Howe, Campbell, and Scarr. In contrast to Oliver, for example, Howe examines Tahitian reactions to the successive visits of Wallis, Bougainville, and Cook. Drawing

on Pearson's (1969) analysis of explorer's log books, Howe suggests that one explorer's visit built on the next: "Tahitian chiefs, intimidated by English firepower [during Wallis' visit], . . . discovered an effective way of placating the strangers [during Bougainville's and Cook's visits]. Tahitian . . . women of low birth were ordered to prostitute themselves as a political strategy. Not only did this ensure the goodwill of the . . . [Europeans], it also brought considerable economic advantage [in trade goods] to the chiefs" (1984:88). Meleisea and Schoeffel (1997) use indigenous accounts of contact to place Western narratives in perspective. Building on Campbell (1994a), for example, they critique a view widely held by Western scholars (e.g., see Howe 1984:85): that Islanders took—or, for Europeans, "stole"—Western goods off ships because they lacked the general European sense of private property. Meleisea and Schoeffel point out "many (possibly all) Island societies had very clear ideas about property: thieves were often severely punished, which demonstrates that their actions were understood as thefts, whether from other Islanders or from strangers" (Meleisea and Schoeffel 1997:135, cf. Campbell 1994a:225–226).

One can perceive the progressive change from imperialistic to islander-centered views in the authors' respective descriptions of Captain Cook, as well. Cook is deemed a humane and skilled navigator in Oliver's accounting; for Howe, he is an important but somewhat tarnished hero. Campbell generally praises him. Scarr refers to Cook's specific interactions with Islanders, side-stepping any assessment of Cook himself. Meleisea and Schoeffel place Cook within a discussion of how various Pacific Islanders perceived European explorers. Only a passing phrase affirms his qualities as a navigator.

Overlapping these general histories, one with another, not only illuminates key themes of contact, then, but also key trends in the historical writing about this contact. The imperial narrative remains in all five accounts though in an increasingly abridged form (from Oliver to Meleisea and Schoeffel), and while the Davidson island-centered perspective is emphasized in Howe, Campbell, and Scarr, it moves toward a more islander-centered focus with Meleisea and Schoeffel.

Broadening Perspectives¹

How might we build on these general works? We might begin, first, by learning more about the rituals and myths Islanders and Outlanders both brought to their encounters and how these influenced their respective actions and subsequent accountings of them. One of the more interesting points regarding accounts of the contact period is how modern scholars generally assume the motives of European explorers are relatively transparent and comprehensible: They seem readily understandable. Many Islanders today hold the same view regarding past Islander actions. Yet both sides of the contact encounter—embedded in the past as they are—remain quite distinct from us today. We should be cautious in glibly jumping from one time frame to another without understanding the different contexts that surround them.

Few of the European “rituals of possession” brought to the Pacific, I would note, have been systematically examined. To gain a sense of their significance we might turn to Seed’s *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640*. What Seed makes clear is that different European countries had different rituals for “possessing” those they encountered, rituals embedded in each nation’s past; a simple enough idea perhaps, but it

¹For further references see: **the politics of describing others**: Schwartz 1994:3–5, 11–12; Gutiérrez 1991:82; Yared 1996; Greenblatt 1991:124; Seed 1995:163; Lestringant 1993:135–136; Denning 1994b:478; **Europeans describing others in European terms**: Greenblatt 1991:54, 95, 117, 134; Hulme 1994:173; Hanlon (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:93, 97; Pagden 1993:86; Cohn 1996:78; Gutiérrez 1991:44; Helgerson 1992:27; **silences involved in accounts**: Zamora 1993:2; **early “conversations”**: Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:231, 1992:245; Greenblatt 1991:93, 96–98; Seed 1995:58–59, 66–67, 70; **the politics of early exchanges**: Gutiérrez 1991:51–52, 63–64, 300; Greenblatt 1991:102, 110; Seed 1995:154; Hereniko (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:410; Hanlon 1988:26; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:161; **European “myths”**: Smith 1960:1–116; Beilharz 1997:63–96; Clendinnen 1993:14, 24, 28–29, 35–36; **variation in European “rituals of possession”**: general—Seed 1995:1–15, 179–193; English—Seed 1995:16–40 (for Cook see 1995:35–36); French—Seed 1995:41–68; Spanish—Seed 1995:69–99; Portuguese—Seed 1995:100–148; Dutch—Seed 1995:149–178; **credibility of explorers’ accounts**: Greenblatt 1991:22, 94–95; Seed 1995:191; Fuller 1993:221, 223; Lestringant 1993:128.

opens up important insights. “Unlike the English belief that fixing stationary objects such as fences, houses, and gardens transparently conveyed rights of possession, or that the actions of ordinary agriculture could do so, Frenchmen appear to have entertained the notion that a different set of actions—processions, cross-planting, and staging theatrical performances—transparently conveyed possession. The reasons for the ceremonial character of French possession lay deep within the French political tradition [regarding the crowning of monarchs] and within the uniquely French meaning of the word *ceremony*” (Seed 1995:48).

Cook’s transporting of cows, sheep (and a peacock!) to Tahiti—and his concern that several Spanish priests had left livestock behind from their visit—takes on new meaning within this context (as does Crosby’s statement above regarding New Zealand). Seed observes that the French, in the New World, repeatedly used the word *joy* in describing native responses to them (1995:60). It emphasized the indigenous populations’ appreciation of the French and their willingness to form alliances with them. Bougainville’s joyful account of Tahiti takes on new significance in this context: We perceive him following in the footsteps of other French explorers. (It also emphasizes he was orienting his account very much to French audiences.) “While it may not have been possible to define what was distinctly English about political practices at home,” Seed adds, “it was possible to observe it overseas” (1995:11).

We can gain insight into Islander dynamics as well by examining their rituals at contact. In the case of Cook’s visit to Kealakekua Bay (Hawai’i), for instance, we see a Hawaiian “ritual of possession.” The priests of Lono were not simply addressing Cook when he visited their heiau (temple) at Hikiiau, they were incorporating him into a Hawaiian religious/social hierarchy.

One might perceive Islander “theft” as another “ritual of possession”—as an effort by Pacific Islanders to negotiate out positions of power within indigenous hierarchies vis-à-vis European explorers (see Borofsky and Howard 1989:250–260). Polynesians of high status were continually drawn into demonstrating their power, their potency, to affirm (and retain) status. Challenges and counter-challenges constituted a basic element of the political process. Theft can be seen as part of this—as an attempt to

challenge European potency, as affirming the position and power of chiefs vis-à-vis captains. (Much of the contact literature suggests Polynesian chiefs played a role in fostering the thefts.) In Hawai‘i and Tahiti, the more theft that went on, the more explorers relied on chiefs to stop it. Theft reinforced European dependence on chiefs, in other words; it facilitated a constant supply of gifts/tribute to them.

The literature indicates Europeans were drawn into Islander hierarchies in a variety of ways. Te Taniwha, describing his recollection of Maori reaction to Cook (on his first voyage), stated: “When the old men saw the ship they said it was an *atua*, a god, and the people on board were *tupua*, strange beings or ‘goblins’ ” (Salmond 1991: 87). Among the Koiari of Papua New Guinea, Bolame remembers people’s first reactions to Hides and O’Malley as: “We had never seen such creatures before and thought they must be *remo* (ghosts). The first thing we noted was their strange smell” (Josephides and Schiltz in Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991:208–209).

Analyzing European accounts of these encounters proves instructive. They are full of paeans to European technology. They stress European power: Repeated references exist to both Islander desires for Western products and to Islander fears of Western weapons. Left underplayed, however, are the problems with Western shipbuilding, food storage, and disease prevention that made visiting islands almost mandatory. Ships lacked the technology to store fresh food for lengthy periods of time. And while it is certainly true that Western weaponry could intimidate—Boenchea (in Corney 1913:333) referred to the “terror and dread in which . . . [the Tahitians] hold our weapons”—it should be stressed that this rarely prevented Pacific Islanders from indirectly challenging Europeans. Bougainville (1772:226) observed: “Even in Europe itself, one cannot see more expert filchers than the people of this country.” (The longer Europeans stayed in port, I might add, the less value their goods tended to possess.)

The dates that Europeans emphasize in their contact—that chronologically affirm their “possession” of an island vis-à-vis other European powers—ignore an important fact. Rarely, if ever, were the Europeans the first visitors to arrive. They were one among many visitors and, as Schieffelin and Crittenden note (in their chapter), they might not be remembered if they did not return again. Our whole orien-

tation toward contact—suggesting that before contact little change occurred, after it much—affirms the importance of Europeans while downplaying the dynamic nature of island societies. European contact needs to be seen within a broader Islander context—involving other contact and other change (e.g., see Hanlon 1988:26; Campbell 1996:47). We should also perceive European paeans to themselves as more than simply self-glorification. They constituted myths that encouraged European exploration—encouraged Europeans to explore, that is to say, despite the significant limitations of European technology.

Analyses of European encounters in the New World suggest new ways for analyzing European encounters in the Pacific. New World contact accounts, for example, have been examined systematically as texts—as not simply recordings of what particular explorers saw but as statements regarding the explorers' states of mind and the contexts that shaped them. Greenblatt notes what is “striking is how confident the early voyagers were . . . in their ability to make themselves understood and to comprehend unfamiliar signs” (1991:93). Columbus, for example, in giving the Requirement—the ritual summons asserting Spanish claims (that has Islamic roots, Seed 1995:88)—states he was not contradicted in his claims by the Arawaks. But how could he be? “The abyss between the two parties remains so overwhelming,” Greenblatt observes, “that Columbus's claim that he was not contradicted seems absurd” (1991:59). Neither spoke the other's language. One perceives the self-centeredness explorers often brought to their encounters. We need to remember that both parties in these encounters were orienting their interactions toward audiences they were not directly addressing. (European accounts of contact were generally framed for audiences thousands of miles away.) They were reiterating their understandings of themselves to themselves in these interactions.

There was also much ambiguity and ambivalence on both sides of these encounters. Reading these early encounters—as individual events—is intensely complicated: Cook is tolerant one moment, violent the next. Bougainville praises Tahitians while losing six anchors (forcing his early departure). We see in these encounters Outlander tolerance and praise for Islanders as long as they perform according to the European script—as long as they appreciate European power. This script, however, contains

its own ambivalences. The Europeans, Greenblatt notes, “oscillate between the motives of exploitation and conversion: they have a simultaneous interest in preserving difference—hence maintaining the possibility of grossly unfair economic exchange—and in erasing difference—hence both Christianizing the natives and obtaining competent interpreters. They want the natives to be at once different and the same, others and brothers” (1991:108–109; see also Denning 1994b:476; Hulme 1994:173).

The way through these various problems, I would suggest, is to move toward more processional perspectives (following Pearson’s and Howe’s lead)—seeing, that is to say, Islander-Outlander interactions through time as responses to one another. It is all too easy to overinterpret one event, one encounter. But as one encounter is placed next to another, we start to perceive certain trends. We begin to gain a reasonable picture of how both groups reaffirmed themselves in their interactions with the other. But we also see something else: We see both groups being changed by their interactions. In comparing accounts of Columbus’ and Cook’s voyages, we see changes in how Europeans “possessed” those they encountered. We see Renaissance views remade during the Reformation and remade, again, during the Enlightenment (e.g., cf. Schwartz 1994:4–5; Lestringant 1993; McGrane 1989). One example might intrigue readers: While Renaissance explorers routinely described “natives” as believing Europeans were supernatural beings, Enlightenment explorers did not (see Hamlin 1994, 1996; Borofsky 1997:277).

The Selections

The chapters in this section are divided into two parts. The first, “Possessing Others,” explores how each side in their early encounters sought to “possess” the other (in Greg Denning’s phrasing)—the ways in which they sought to control, physically and symbolically, the strangers they dealt with. Focusing on each sides’ rituals and myths of possession subverts the old opposition of Outlander versus Islander agency. We gain a deeper, fuller sense of the actors involved in these encounters and how they constructed themselves in relation to one another. We see, that is to say, each group in action.

Greg Denning’s “Possessing Tahiti” and Edward Schief-

felin and Robert Crittenden's "Remembering First Contact" form a pair. They lie at opposite ends of the contact's continuum—almost two hundred years and an ocean apart. Examining them together, we perceive the similarities and differences in Islander and Outlander styles of possessing others. Dening explores how Tahitians and the British sought to conceptualize and control each other: Tahitians incorporated the British flag into their symbols of power. The British incorporated Pūea into their stories about themselves as "civilizers" of others. "Possessing Tahiti was a complicated affair," Dening writes. "Indeed, who possessed whom? Native and Stranger each possessed the other in their interpretations of the other." Schieffelin and Crittenden emphasize early contact encounters involved more than simply different individuals interacting. They also involved different cultural conceptions regarding "strangers" and, critically, rituals for controlling them. We should not forget that historical contingencies were involved as well. There was chance in how Hides and O'Malley encountered particular Highland Papuan groups and, as a result, how these groups responded to them. And there was also happenstance in the fact that, years later, the Strickland-Purari Patrol was recalled as a romantic, ennobling adventure by many Australians but barely remembered by particular Papuans.

The documents that have come down to us today, on the Western side of these encounters, allow us to explore the politics of Western myth making. In "Constructing 'Pacific' Peoples," Bernard Smith suggests Captain Cook was caught in a capitalist contradiction between nurturing trade and demonstrating control. As a result, he periodically used violence in ways that undermined his popular (and mythic) image as a nonviolent "civilizer" of others. Cook's solution, reasonably enough, was to shape what was reported about him. Smith suggests Webber was directed to give Cook's interactions with Islanders a "Pacific" slant.

The second part of this section, "A View from Afar" by Richard White, provides a comparative perspective from North America on these dynamics. White's concept of a "Middle Ground" in North America is useful for exploring Pacific contact encounters. In both cases, the different sides sought to control each other and would have coerced the other if they could. But neither side was able to reach that level of control and so, by necessity, was forced into

negotiated resolutions of their conflicting interests. (Dorothy Shineberg made this point some years ago in respect to sandalwood traders.) This “middle ground” seems to have lasted for a much shorter period of time in the Pacific. We might wonder why. And it is certainly intriguing to hear that the Pacific seemed more controlled—in its aggrandizing schemes and violence—than North America. Such comparative comments provide food for thought.

A question readers might ponder in this section is:

- *What do the ways these different groups sought to “possess” each other convey about the people involved and the cultural worlds they lived in?*

Focusing on the dynamics by which each group sought to “possess” the other offers an opportunity to make sense of early contact in new ways. We see individuals on both sides of these encounters as active agents—as seeking to structure, to control, their relations with strangers.

Relevant Dates

- 1519–1521 Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe, first European crossing of the Pacific Ocean, visited Guam [Portuguese sailing under the Spanish flag] ([Magellan] 1874; Beaglehole 1966:15–38)
- 1567–1568 Medaña visited the Solomon Islands [Spanish] ([Medaña] 1901; Beaglehole 1966:39–57)
- 1595 Medaña's second voyage, massacre of Marquesans, revisited the Solomons [Spanish] ([Medaña] 1901; [Quiros] 1904; Beaglehole 1966:58–80)
- 1605–1606 Quiros visited the Tuamotus, Northern Cooks, Vanuatu. Torres, a lieutenant, visited Papua New Guinea and passed through the Torres Straits [Spanish] ([Quiros] 1904; Beaglehole 1966:81–107)
- 1615–1616 LeMaire and Schouten visited Tuamotus, Tonga, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea [Dutch] ([Le Maire] 1906; Beaglehole 1966:127–137)
- 1642 Tasman visited Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, New Britain [Dutch] (Tasman 1898; Beaglehole 1966:138–164)

- 1722 Roggeveen visited Rapanui/Easter Island, Samoa [Dutch] ([Roggeveen] 1919; Beaglehole 1966:180–184)
- 1767–1768 Wallis visited Taumotus, Tahiti, Marianas [British] (Robertson 1948, 1973; Hawkesworth 1775; Beaglehole 1966:200–206)
- 1766–1769 Bougainville visited Tuamotus, Tahiti, Samoa, Vanuatu, Solomons, Papua New Guinea [French] (Bougainville 1772; Beaglehole 1966:213–228; Brosse 1983:24–32)
- 1768–1771 Cook's First Voyage of Exploration (among the islands visited: Tahiti, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Papua New Guinea) [British] (Beaglehole 1955, 1962, 1966:229–260)
- 1772–1775 Cook's Second Voyage of Exploration (among the islands visited: Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, Rapanui/Easter Island, Marquesas, Tonga, Vanuatu, New Caledonia) [British] (Beaglehole 1961, 1966:261–284)
- 1776–1780 Cook's Third Voyage of Exploration (among the islands visited: Aotearoa/New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, Hawai'i) [British] (Beaglehole 1966:285–315, 1967)
- 1786–1788 La Pérouse's voyage (among the islands visited prior to being shipwrecked: Rapanui/Easter Island, Hawai'i, Samoa) [French] (La Pérouse 1799; Beaglehole 1966:318–319; Brosse 1983:77–92)
- 1789 Bligh visited Tahiti (his crew mutinied, set Bligh adrift, and returned to Tahiti before some eventually sailed on to Pitcairn) (Bligh 1790, 1937; Denning 1992a)
- 1930 Leahy and Dwyer crossed Papua New Guinea from north to south [Australian] (Willis 1969; Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991:43)
- 1935 Hides and O'Malley expedition [Australian] (Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991)

5
Possessing Tahiti
Greg Denning

There is a ceremony performed nowadays at Tahiti each year in the Bastille Day holidays. At the *marae* Arahū Rahu, reconstructed for tourists and “folkloric” celebrations, the “King” and “Queen” of Tahiti are invested with a *maro ura*, a wrap or girdle of red feathers. It is a symbol, like a crown and scepter, of their sovereignty for the time of the celebrations. Thousands are there to see the ceremony.

These signs and symbolic actions enjoy some continuity with the past, they have some cultural presence, yet they establish different realities. They are “Tahitian” in character, but present distinct expressions of what being “Tahitian” might be. In a metaphor of the Pacific, the symbols of the past are *cargo* to the present. The present possesses the relics of its past with all the invention and conservation with which cultural artifacts out of time and out of place are received across a beach. How does one write history as if that were true?

For that the *maro ura* is very pertinent. If young George III of England needed a crown to be king in 1760 and to sit on the Coronation Stone of Scotland and Ireland, then a twelve-year-old Pomare of Tahiti needed the *maro ura* to be *arii nui*, chief, in 1791 and to stand on the robing stone of his *marae*, that sacred preserve of his titles. His *maro ura* was a feather wrap, 5 yards long and 15 inches broad. The brilliant red head feathers of the parakeet and the whitish yellow feathers of the dove were sewn to a woven backing. The black feathers of the man-of-war bird bordered the wrap, top and bottom. The *maro ura* has come to be called the “feather girdle” in the way archaic words

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get some establishment in the history of things. The girdle was always unfinished. The bone to sew it was left in the weave. The social moments of chieftaincy, sacrifices, wars, and peace all found their register on the girdle with added feathers and folds. In the feathers was a history of sovereignty, more mnemonic than hieroglyphic, capable of being read by priests who had the custody of the past (Rose 1978; Oliver 1974:763).

Tahitian politics turned around the feather girdle. There are uncertainties about the girdle. There were two of them; maybe Pomare's was a third; maybe there were more. The two we know from legend and myth were the *maro tea* and the *maro ura*, the yellow and the red girdle. Pomare's girdle we know from a number of descriptions of European visitors who saw it and from William Bligh who drew it. The descriptions are all agreed that Pomare's girdle was made of both yellow and red feathers. That Pomare's girdle might be a third sacred *maro* and in concept be syncretic of both *maro tea* and *maro ula* belongs to our later story. There were more syncretisms more immediately important. Its distinction from the traditional sacred *maro* of Tahitian polity did not put it outside the paradigm of Tahitian politics. That paradigm allowed a distinction between power and authority. Power was recognized to rise and fall independent of authority. The feather girdles were the currency of authority. They conferred title and rank, which it was the consensus of powerful and weak alike to recognize (Oliver 1974:1213–1216, 1279).

If the feather girdles were the sacraments of authority—in that they signified authority and established it at the same time—it was because they were the sign of the god 'Oro. 'Oro, the god of sacrifice, had always been part of the Polynesian pantheon, but in the eighteenth century 'Oro had begun to play a special part in Tahitian politics. He had begun to emerge from his island of Raiatea, first to Porapora (Bora-Bora), then to Tahiti.

There was an element of mission or colony in 'Oro's expansion. His priests would establish a new sacred place with some stone transported from an original temple. These places sacred to 'Oro all shared a common name: Taputapuatea, "Sacrifices from Abroad." They were all close to the sea and stood opposite some passage through the reef to the open sea. The rituals at Taputapuatea always focused on canoes and their arrival with sacrificial victims. Tahitians, like all Polynesian peoples, had some preoccupation with the origins and voyages of their ancestors and with strangers who came from

beyond the sky. 'Oro himself was incarnated in a log or a clublike basket of sennit covered in feathers, more abstract in his representation than anthropomorphic. He himself was a voyager around their islands in an ark or feather basket coffer set on a canoe called *Rainbow*. He had first come to the Tahitian islands on a rainbow that joined sky and land. As the *Maohi*—the native islanders of the whole Society group—saw it, the great celebration of 'Oro at his birthplace of Opoa on Raiatea was a time of commitment to alliances that stretched beyond the bounds of their individual islands (Henry 1928: 157–177; Green 1968).

Under 'Oro's patronage functioned the only group in the islands who called on loyalties wider than tribal and local divisions. They were called *arioi*, a privileged group who traveled and played. "Comedians" was an old missionary word for them that caught the topsyturvy carnival that was structured in their role. They would play the clown to established authority: they overturned the rules of proper behavior and danced and played without responsibility. The masters of the different *arioi* lodges wore their own *maro ura* of red-tinted tapa cloth.

The Taputapuatea were places of sacrifice. They were also treasure houses of the sacred paraphernalia of 'Oro. The representations of 'Oro were kept there in special feathered containers, as were the sacred *maro* and the other accoutrements of priests and chiefs. Pomare kept his *maro* in a sacred spot to the southeast of Matavai. Tarahoi, it was called, and Taputapuatea. It stood opposite the passage in the reef through which the European vessels first and subsequently entered Matavai. Pomare's *maro* had been brought there in 1791.

Bligh commented that the Tahitians had sewn into the feather girdle a thatch of auburn hair belonging to Richard Skinner, one of the *Bounty* mutineers who had elected to stay at Tahiti when Christian went on to Pitcairn. Skinner was the ship's barber. He had astounded the Tahitians on the arrival of the *Bounty* by producing a barber's model head with its latest hair fashions from London. In Tahitian eyes, Skinner was somebody special. As barber, he had a special power to touch *tapu* places. And his own head was *tapu* red, as special as a feather. One could wave it to catch 'Oro's attention in prayer; one could sacrifice it to Pomare's sovereignty (Bligh [1791] 1976: April 28; Mackaness 1960:41).

Collected in this sacred place of 'Oro where Bligh saw the girdle

was other cargo. There was also a portrait of Captain James Cook painted by John Webber. Like the *maro ura*, the portrait was an unfinished document. The Tahitians would take it to each ship that visited the island for the captain to sign a message on the back. The portrait was wrapped in red cloth and all made bare-shouldered deferences to it when it was uncovered. For years after Cook had given them the portrait and a huge box with lock and key to keep it in, the Pomares, fathers and sons, took it with them on important expeditions, unveiled it on special ritual occasions, had it present whenever they offered formal hospitality to Stranger captains (Morrison [1785] 1935:85, 114–116).

Bligh saw something else in the *maro ura* besides Skinner's auburn hair. It was the most famous thing of all. He saw a British red pennant sewn into the body of the girdle, as a lappet or fold of its own. "Red Buntin" he calls it on his drawing. It was the pennant that Samuel Wallis, captain of HMS *Dolphin*, had erected on a pole on June 26, 1767, when he took possession of Tahiti for King George III. The Tahitians had taken down the symbol of sovereignty and incorporated it into a symbol of sovereignty of their own (Rose 1978:9–15).

Tarahoi was a Tahitian museum of their contact with the European Stranger. The hair, Cook's portrait, the red bunting were cargo. They were Strangers' things remade to Tahitian meanings and kept, as in some archive, as documents of past experiences that were repeatedly read for the history they displayed. They were products of the ethnographic moments between Native and Stranger, interpretations transformed into things and read for their meaning in ritual actions that displayed them and preserved them.

Pomare's *maro ura* was a parable in feathers and red bunting of the translating process. Its expression was Tahitian, in the language of 'Oro, of sacrifice. Pomare was a boy of ten when the feather girdle was wrapped around him for the first time in 1791, a year before Bligh saw it. He took title at that moment to a status his father never had and could never reach. His father with all the others became bound to all the deferences owed Tahiti's most sacred person—his son. He was *arii nui*, "king," because what he wore, his *maro ura*, took him back to 'Oro and the beginning of title, but what he wore as well, the red bunting, took him back to the beginning of a new time. This new time, the coming of the Stranger, was enclosed in the

old times, the coming of 'Oro. The feather girdle was as much an invention of culture as an invention of the past (Green 1968:79; Morrison [1785] 1935:114–116).

* * *

Captain Samuel Wallis of HMS *Dolphin* was in bed when he took possession of what he was pleased to call King George's Island in honor of His Britannic Majesty. Wallis and many of his men were sick—they thought deadly sick—of scurvy and its many complications. In the scurvy's painful lethargy, the island they stood off taunted them. Its sweet smells wafted to them and they knew it to be more beautiful than any island they had ever seen. For five days they had slowly moved along its northern shore, probing the reefs for an entry and an anchorage, looking for a beach where they might land without wetting their muskets. Their contact with the islanders had been good and bad. The islanders who had come to the ship were full of antics, made speeches at the sailors, threw plantain branches into the sea, made small gifts of food. But when the ship's cutter went closer to survey the bottom, the canoes crowded in threateningly. Already the "Dolphins" had killed and wounded some islanders to show the force of the musket and to drive off the great double-hulled vessels that could easily overwhelm their cutter. In the wardroom the officers deliberated whether they should risk a landing or hurry on to Tinian, 4,000 miles away, and let the Pacific do its worst to them in the shortest possible time (Wallis 1776:June 19, 1767 ff.; Gore 1766:2 June 1767 ff.; Robertson 1948 [1766]:138 ff., Hawkesworth 1773: 2/213 ff.).

They really had no choice. Their bruised bodies, their suppurating gums, their swollen faces told them that. They had to stop their own rot with fresh food and get water in quantity before they went on. Matavai was their saving. The bay lay calm and deep behind the reef. A river curved behind the bend of the black sand beach.

"Port Royal" they called it, with half a dream for a British Pacific Main that never was to be, but Matavai, its native name, in the end held the day. They had a scare as they ran aground on a reef inside the bay. Once off they were soon at anchor undamaged except for a scrape on the *Dolphin's* new and experimental copper sheathing. Around them stretched a panorama engraved forever as paradise on the European mind. The "Dolphins" saw the panorama more pragmatically. Their cannon could sweep it all, from off the port bow at

what was to be later known as “Point Venus,” for the planet observed there, to “Skirmish” or “One Tree Hill” or Tahaara, two miles around on the starboard side.

At Matavai the score of the first meeting of European Stranger and Tahitian Native came to its counterpoint. The bits and pieces of contact became dramatized, staged for the understanding it gave them of one another. In the calm of the bay, the ship’s people and the land’s people could organize their confrontation and in that sense make it meaningful. Captain Wallis could have simply fed his men, watered his ship, and gone on. But he needed to “make history” by “taking possession” of the island he had “discovered.” For that, proprieties needed some play. The Tahitians, to believe their later legendary memory, saw their prophecies of being visited by canoes without outriggers fulfilled, but they also began to collect themselves in Matavai for a more dramatic reception that made more mythical sense to them (Driessen 1982).

The “Dolphins” prepared their ship with the suspicion that they might be attacked and the expectancy that if they were to get food and water they must discover a trade. Their preparations for fighting were well practiced. They divided into four watches, loaded the great guns with shot and grape, armed every man with pistol and cutlass. They varied in their count of the canoes around them, but they were agreed these numbered between four and six hundred. Perhaps four thousand natives manned them. No doubt the “Dolphins” were apprehensive, but they had also smarted a little under the captain’s instructions to “test the temper” of the natives in the days before. They had suffered the indignity of cuffs and rough treatment and uncomprehending exchanges and now were not averse to teaching the natives a lesson.

There was, as well, an ambiguity in the situation. The “Dolphins” had an etiquette for killing when they fought. They fought with rules—about prisoners and prizes, about surrender and the niceties of chivalry. But on the edge of this battle, the Natives were other. Their otherness was nowhere so marked as in the wanton antics of the girls who stood on the prows of most of the canoes. The girls lifted their wraps and flaunted their nakedness. They made unmistakable gestures and responded to the ribaldry of the seamen as if sex had its own language of natural signs.

In the middle of this sea of sexuality, and in a canoe that everybody noted for its magnificence and for the “awning” over the plat-

forms that joined its double hull, was some sort of native director. The “Dolphins” guessed he was one of the “principal inhabitation.” He was wrapped in red-stained tapa cloth. He offered bunches of red and yellow feathers. It was he, someone said, who gave the signal with the wand in his hand. Thousands pulled pebbles from the ballast of their canoes and showered the *Dolphin* with painful accuracy. The *Dolphin* responded with awful effect. “It would require Milton to describe,” her master wrote. The canoes were smashed with round shot. When the natives rallied after the first shock and seemed to be returning, the three-pounders were loaded with seventy musket balls apiece and when the canoes were within 300 or 400 yards they were sprayed with “considerable loss.” The great guns concentrated on the large canoe. It was the “King of the Island,” the “Dolphins” thought. They admired the courage of those in the five or six canoes who stayed with the king even though he became the target of their firing. They will think us gods, some of the crew said, and others worried what revenge the natives might take if they came with fire-brands. By nightfall the powder smoke had gone and the officers discussed whether it was spices they now smelled on the warm heavy air. They would marvel later how little effect all this killing seemed to have on the natives. It seemed to justify their own carelessness. The realpolitik of discovery and possession meant the Native was not owed the ordinary etiquettes of war. The “Dolphins” could think of nothing better to do in the aftermath of the slaughter than to “act haughty” to the Tahitians and teach them to trade more sensibly (Robertson [1766] 1948:154–158).

How the natives saw the Strangers is, by any standard of objective discourse, nothing more than informed guess. Yet to say that the meeting on the part of the natives was a coordinated and dramatized reception seems certain. That it was invented for the novelty of the conditions also seems certain. Their invention was suffused with their own old cosmological familiarities. It was not a “natural” scene just because the Strangers saw it suffused with their own familiarities. The coordination of the natives’ attack was not at the hands of the “king of the island.” There was no “king of the island,” and later there was a strange silence about this incident of violence among those who had ambitions to be “king of the island” when the European visits became more frequent.

It made no sense in the Tahitian way of things to see the “king of the island” as a chief performing a political or territorial role, no

matter how natural it seems that they should have been defensive against an invading “other.” The “other” of their wars and battles was always territorially specific—other alliances, other islands. The “other” of this encounter was much more generic to their categories of identity. The women performing “wanton tricks” in the canoes were a clue that something other than battle or ambush was in their minds. We know something of Tahitian war at sea. They had their etiquettes of killing too. They had their ceremonies of engagement and disengagement. In none of these were women performing “wanton antics.” But in other circumstances, especially in the rituals of ‘Oro, women’s dancing was a sacramental to the presence of the god. Like the tufts of red and yellow feathers, women caught the eye of the divine to focus it on prayer or an offering. Indeed, failing these, abuse of and aggression toward the gods were not unknown. Tahitian gods were not so distantly divine, even ‘Oro, that they could not be tested and contested. There was no great contradiction seen in raising the attention of the gods by arousing their lust or making them angry (Oliver 1974:1221–1225, 93, 332 ff.).

No doubt it is commonsensical on our part to read the hurled pebbles and the signaled attack as ordinary ambush. A keen perception by the Tahitians of the lust in the seamen’s eyes might have led to a strategy of subterfuge in staging the women’s dancing. The Tahitians had no experience of cannon and were not necessarily convinced of the power of the musket. Native greed, Strangers’ callousness, misread signs are thus the commonsensical history of the event. But they are not, and it is commonsense that is the deceiver. Greed, callousness, and misread signs have their play, but the “king of the island” was likely to have been an *arioi* master of a lodge or a priest of ‘Oro. His double canoe was no battleship. It was likely to have been *Rainbow*. The awning he stood under was likely to have covered the ark of ‘Oro’s accoutrements, and who knows, the *maro ura*. What the Tahitians saw on the *Dolphin* were Tahitian gods, divine in the Tahitian way. Their agnosticism, their relativism was a long way off, long after the *Dolphin*’s going, long after the supposedly humanizing effect of the “Dolphins’ ” very ordinary behavior. Tahitians were adept at seeing the divine in the human, whatever the contradictions. It is a Stranger’s view, not a Native’s, that there is a necessary contradiction between commonsense realism and mythical understanding. Missionaries would later be scandalized at idolaters’ irreverences to their idols, as if reverential piety were a measure of belief. Cook, and later Bligh,

was cynically convinced of the superficiality of Native beliefs because each had seen the Natives' distracted, formalistic behavior in rituals. Natives as well as Strangers, ourselves as well as others, easily bridge apparent contradictions between myth and commonsense. The insider knows that myth and commonsense answer different questions.

What always embarrasses the Stranger's effort to understand the Native is the Stranger's insistence that the Native perceptions should be literal, while the Stranger's own perceptions are allowed to be metaphorical. So the Tahitian Natives' supposed belief that the European Strangers were gods "from beyond the sky" is seen as a belief of literal equivalence between man and god, easily dispelled by the very ordinary behavior of lusty, cantankerous seamen—whereas the Stranger's more typical understanding of themselves is that they hold things in their varied meaning, so that there is for the Stranger no difficulty in taking "he is a god" into any number of metaphors about perfection in physical beauty or intelligence or morality without any necessary incarnational literalness. Thus if one argues that the Native Tahitians received the *Dolphin* in a dramatic play that made sense to them out of their cosmology of 'Oro, there is a half expectancy that the illogicality or contradiction in the experience should have destroyed the literalness of their understanding. Their consequent make-believe in the face of contradiction was either a sign of native simplicity or they were by this forced into a cultural agnosticism that was the seed of change.

History, myth, sacrament, ritual do not work that way. They all colligate the past and make understandings that bring order to the present. They do not prophesy what will happen or give a rubric for future behavior. They make sense of what has happened by economizing the wealth of possible causes of events down to principal determinants that really matter. To suggest, as I do, that the Tahitian Natives put the arrival of the European Strangers into the context of their beliefs about 'Oro with all the resonances those beliefs had in politics, religion, and society is not to write the history of their contact. What "actually happened" is inevitably reduced in the story of it to a finite mixture of infinite actions and meanings. What significantly happened for the Tahitian Natives was much simpler. The arrival of the *Dolphin* was the occasion of another 'Oro incarnation or materialization and all the Tahitian associations of sovereignty and sacrifice, of colony and coming from "beyond the sky," of alliance and title, were at work. It did not matter that the Tahitians were soon

to discover that the “Dolphins” were very much flesh and blood and strange. We know, from later observation, that they coped fairly well with the flesh and blood qualities of deified chiefs and the man-made quality of deified things. Their transformations of their past and present experience were about a much more real and immediate world beneath the appearances of things.

The *Dolphin* sailed into Matavai by what might always have been—but certainly by her entry became—a sacred passage off the *marae* Tarahoi. She was, by any measure the Tahitians had, a special ship, of the quality of *Rainbow*, even perhaps of the quality prophesied when news of similar vessels that had visited other islands reached Tahiti. She streamed with the magnificent decoration of white sail and bunting and flag. The Tahitians offered her, from the moment they saw her, ‘Oro’s token human sacrifice. The plantain branches they offered her, the inducement of naked dance and sexual gesture by which ‘Oro’s presence was attracted to his sacred *marae*, spoke the metaphors by which they grasped the novelty of her arrival. Slain pigs, the bunched red and yellow feathers, which no doubt meant that at some Taputapuatea a human sacrifice was lying, made the novelty familiar. If the tone and direction of myths of ‘Oro collected later are any indication, the *Dolphin* came like the marvelous canoes of old from afar, and Tahitian expectancy would be that she would make a landing, be the center of sacrifice, be the occasion for rein-statement and investiture of the *arii rahi*, be the circumstance for alliance and treaty and the establishment in them of some hegemony. The arrival at Matavai was true to the myth of how ‘Oro would arrive to colonize a new place. It had happened at Tairapu long ago and more recently at Ata-Huru. The novelties did not matter, nor even the contradictions. The Tahitians were entertained by its simple meaning.

June 26 was the day for possession, the first of many such days for Tahiti as it turned out. Wallis took possession of Tahiti in the name of George III with a pennant and a pole, a turned sod, a toast to the King’s good health, and three British cheers. Nine months later, Comte Louis Antoine de Bougainville buried an oak plank inscribed with the message that Tahiti belonged to the French. He left the names of all his men in a bottle. Then the Spaniards, when they came, set up a Holy Cross, processed to it with lighted candles, sang their litanies, said a mass, fired their muskets and their guns, and wrote a solemn little convention to themselves.

Wallis, being in bed ill, sent Tobias Furneaux, his second lieutenant, to take possession of Tahiti. When Furneaux lined up eighteen able seamen, a sergeant with his twelve marines, and three “young gentlemen” or midshipmen on the black sand of Matavai bay, he was making ritual. He was making signs about authority and power, dominance and proper order; authority, power, dominance, and proper order were established in the making of the signs of them. Presumably Captain Wallis could have shouted out from his sickbed, “This island belongs to us,” but that was not “the right way of doing things.” That did not contain the double-talk of straight lines, smart appearances, silence in the ranks, snapped orders, reverences to the flag. The ritual occasion is marked off from everyday actions by special languages, formal postures, the slow motion of meaningful gesture, the fancy dress of formal occasions, careful etiquette. There is always a “priest” at ritual moments, someone who knows the established ways of doing things, someone who plans and marshals the actions. Or there is a book of rubrics, a permanent record of the order of things. Of course in social actions of a symbolic kind, it is always, in the phrase made famous about the thick description of them, “wink upon wink upon wink.” The actions are a text in which the abstract realities are mythically read, certainly, but the participants are also observing many levels of meaning. A ritual about possession might be at the same time a ritual about the hierarchy of authority between seamen, midshipmen, sergeant and second lieutenant, or as in the case of the possession of Tahiti, it might have been telling the sailors about the wardroom divisions of their superiors. This was not the first time that the first lieutenant of the *Dolphin*—“Mr. Growl” they called him—was absent and the running of the ship and its occasions had fallen to the young and willing Toby Furneaux. Standing at attention, looking with a fixed gaze, feeling the ambience of sight and sound, even perhaps sensing the irony between their bedraggled condition and the solemnity of the symbols, they made ritual of never-ending amplification in its meaning (Wallis 1776:June 26, 1767; Robertson [1766] 1948:162).

Tobias Furneaux marshaled his guard on the beach. Behind him in the bay were three boats, Mr. Molyneux in charge. Their musketoons were trained on the small crowd of natives gathering on the far side of the stream. Behind the boats was the *Dolphin*, cannons trained on the same target. The guard set a pole and a pennant, or “pendant” as was the navy’s word. The pole was nothing grand or permanent, a

spare spar, but tall enough to let the tapering colors stand free, and firm enough to hold them stiff in the breeze. The colors were red. James Cook saw them years later and simply called them “British Colors” and, as we have seen, William Bligh sketched them and called them “red bunting.” Whether red, then why red, might seem idle questions, but being curious about symbolic action is more complicated than idle. Furneaux would have asked his wardroom colleagues and then his captain which was correct, or he would have known that British colors were more appropriate than naval colors in acts of possession. And if accidents affected proprieties—say that they had none of the proper bunting to spare—its replacement would not have been made because only the “Indians would see.” Who saw it was themselves and the proprieties observed were a currency in their own relationship, about being responsible, about being a good officer.

There is a phrase we use when we see other people doing something memorable or beating some record or doing things for the first time. We say they are “making history.” Contained within the phrase is a sense that what is remembered will change the environment in which others will act. They will have to respond in some way to the history that has been made. Samuel Wallis and Toby Furneaux were “making history” in taking possession of Tahiti. They did not impose any system of ownership on Tahitian land. They did, however, leave a historical marker. They acted out events done with proprieties that they expected others to recognize. That memory of an act of possession was meant to change the relations of other sovereignties to this land now possessed. When James Cook came to Tahiti later and found that the Spaniards had written *Carolus Tertius Imperator* on their Holy Cross, he scratched it out and wrote *Georgius Tertius Rex* there instead. The Spaniards were furious for years. The Viceroy of Peru constantly tried to get another expedition together to scratch out Cook’s inscription. It was not as if Wallis began British empire in the Pacific: He left no delegates, he built no forts. He simply “made history” with the presumption that the history he made would hold others to the efficacy of his symbolic acts (Beaglehole 1967:1372; Corney 1913:3:401).

Wallis left a concrete historical marker at Tahiti. He left his flag on its pole. By the time Furneaux had read his proclamations and hauled the pennant to its place, a crowd of four or five hundred Tahitians had gathered on the bank of the river that divided them from the beach. They each held a plantain branch, a forest of a crowd, a crowd

of sacrifices. If a flag might stand for something else—for nation, for legitimate power—if gestures around a flag might stir moods and sentiments of loyalty and pride, then so might a plantain branch. Cook remarked three years later how ever present was the symbol of the plantain—and how effective. It was a sign of peace, of deference, of sacrifice, *Ta'ata meia roa*, “man long plantain” it was called when a branch was offered to a god or to a chief as substitute for a human offering. Pulled from its natural environment where it abounded in rich variety, the plantain branch could calm an angry man, placate a god, legitimate a chief—given the conditions in which the sign could be read. As a flag could stir a manly bosom given martial music, a solemn tread, and a supportive crowd, so a plantain branch might raise reverential awe, given the smell of rotting sacrifices, the shade of sacred trees, the beat and tone of a temple drum, the call of sacred birds, and the deferences of bared torsos and averted faces. It was the ambience of ritual action that made an environment in which the symbols worked. This was not easily experienced by Strangers. Instead of being entertained—held between the ordinary movements of social experience in a space to read the meanings of actions—the Strangers were the observers, catching the symbols but not the signs, translating the conventionalities of the Other's signals but not their meaning. To the Strangers, the forest of sacrifices looked like a Palm Sunday procession and was depicted as such in Hawkesworth's publication of Wallis' voyage (Hawkesworth 1773:1:243).

The Tahitians had their own layers of meanings, their own “wink upon wink upon wink” to discern in the Strangers' ceremonies on the spit of land between sea and river. The Native Tahitians were intrigued for more than twenty-five years at the symbols of the Strangers' flags and their ceremonies about them. During Cook's stay at Tahiti as well as Bligh's, bored as the Tahitians became with the exotic behavior of Strangers, they would collect nonetheless for their evening parades and their ceremonies about the flag. Even the *Bounty* mutineers erected their flagpole and on Sundays would have large crowds to see them haul their flag. Before such fundamentalisms of authority, Tahitians never ceased to have an anthropological wonder. On the occasion of *Dolphin's* arrival in 1767, whatever else the Tahitians saw, they interpreted it as a moment in which sacrifices were owed and they came with their forest of plantain branches to make them (Morrison [1785] 1935:81).

When the “Dolphins” left the beach and returned to the ship, they

saw the crowd of natives approach the flag tentatively. With many gestures of deference, the islanders laid plantains at its foot and an offering of pigs. They were startled at the movements of the flag in the breeze. An old man came nearly all the way to the *Dolphin* in a canoe and made a formal speech. The sailors did not know its meaning, but it seemed to concern the flag. He threw a plantain branch into the sea and made an offering of pigs to the people on the ship as he had done to the flag. He would take nothing in return but went back to the flag as if he had struck an agreement. With others he took the flag down and carried it away. That night the “Dolphins” saw many large fires along the shore and on the sides of the hill (Robertson 1948:161).

Next morning early, a crowd of several thousand processed along the coast. In the midst of them a young man held the flag aloft on a pole. They seemed to be making for a cluster of canoes near the *marae* Tarahoi. The “Dolphins,” worried that it augured a repetition of the day before, broke up the crowd with a few cannon shots, then harassed them with grape, and destroyed the canoes. When the remnants of the crowd collected at Tahaara, “Skirmish Hill,” the “Dolphins” fired their cannon again so that the crowd could see the balls bouncing across the landscape, ploughing through the trees. The cutter was sent in to the canoes and the crew finished with axes what the cannon had not done.

Perhaps the “Dolphins” were correct in surmising that the flag was being taken to the canoes. We cannot know. It was unlikely that there was to be another attack, however. Right-handed processions like those of the *makahiki*, described by Sahlins for Hawai‘i, were rituals for acknowledging sovereignty. Later, other British flags acquired by the Pomares were carried at the head of these processions. In all probability the Tahitians were making for some canoe, some other *Rainbow* of ‘Oro. We know they were soon to take the flag to the other side of the island, to the district of Pajara, to a *marae* called Mahaiatea then being built or about to be built by the chief of the Landward Teva, Amo, and his wife, Porea. Amo and Porea were about to make an invention. Amo’s name meant “Wink.” They were indeed about to put “wink upon wink upon wink.”

Porea, or “Oberea” as a much wider English public began to know her, was about to enter the stage of history. How they invented her belongs to the story of how Native and Stranger became symbiotic to one another, how they possessed one another. Indeed one has to say,

even if the complications become confusing, the inventing of Porea did not end with the eighteenth century. Inventing Porea has been part of a long historical process and is illustrative not merely of the ways Native and Stranger become environmental to one another but also the ways the past becomes environmental to the present (Oliver 1974:1200).

Porea, for example, appeared as “Oberea the Sorcerer” in a pantomime at Covent Gardens in December 1785. The pantomime was called “Omai, or a Trip around the World” and proved to be entertainment in all the senses of the word that we have used. “Omai,” wrote the critic in *Rambler’s Magazine*, was a “school for the history of Man,” and the *Times*, which reviewed nearly every performance, said:

The stage never exhibited such a combination of superb and various scenery—enchancing music and sheer fun. The scenes, characters and dresses being, except a few, novel and foreign to this country, contribute much to heighten the delight, for what can be more delightful than an enchanting fascination that monopolizes the mind to the scene before the eye, and leads the imagination from country to country, from the frigid to the torrid zone, shewing as in a mirror, prospects of different climates, with all the productions of nature in the animal and vegetable worlds, and all the efforts of man to attain nourishment, convenience and luxury, by the world of arts. It is a spectacle worthy of the contemplation of every rational being, from infant to the aged philosopher. A spectacle that holds forth the wisdom and dispositions of Providence in the strongest view.

The pantomime was a “beautiful illustration of Cook’s voyages.” It was a translation in entertainment of an ethnographic moment (Joppien 1979; Allen 1962, 1965, 1966; Huse 1936; Mayer 1969; *European Magazine* Dec. 1785; *New London Magazine* Dec. 1785; *London Chronicle* Dec. 1785; *Universal Daily Register (London Times)* Dec. 1785).

The characters in the pantomime are names snatched from the common records of the European encounter with the Tahitians. There was Omai, the living curiosity who had come to England and returned to Tahiti with Cook. But he had been transformed into the son of “King” Otoo and made heir to the Tahitian throne. There was Oedidee, known by successive visitors to Tahiti, but now transformed into the rival of Omai and the protégé of Oberea. Oberea (Porea) was

now a menacing sorceress bent on raising Oedidee to the throne of Tahiti. She tried to foil the marriage of Londina to Omai. Yes, Londina, the daughter of Britannia, was promised by her mother to Omai to join the two kingdoms of Britain and Tahiti. Omai's rival to Londina's hand was the Spaniard Don Struttolando, and it was the Don's pursuit of the lovers that set up the helter-skelter trip around the world: to Kamchatka, to the "Ice Islands"—Arctic or Antarctic does not matter—to the Friendly Islands, to the Sandwich Islands, to Tahiti.

In Tahiti, the denouement took place. Omai was rescued from Oberea's evil spirit. Her famous palace was burned down. Omai was installed as king. Then to Matavai, "the Great Bay of Otaheite," came a procession of all the peoples of the Pacific islands that Captain Cook discovered or visited—Tahitians, New Zealanders, Tannans, Marquesans, Tongans, Hawaiians, Easter Islanders—and Tehutzki Tartars, Kamchatkars, Eskimos, Indians of Nootka, Oonalaski, and Prince William Sound. They acclaimed Omai as King. "Know all that Omai is the master of fifty red feathers, master of four hundred fat hogs; he can command a thousand fighting men and twenty strong handed women to thump him to sleep!" An English captain steps forward and gives a sword to Omai.

- Captain:* Accept from mighty George our Sovereign Lord
In sign of British love, this British sword.
- Oberea:* Oh joy! Away my useless spells and magic charms
A British sword is proof against the world in arms.
- Captain:* Ally of Joy! Owhyee's (Footnote: The island where
Captain Cook was killed) fatal shore
Brave Cook, your great Orono (Footnote: A Demigod or
hero and distinguished title with which the natives hon-
ored Captain Cook) is no more.
- Indians:* Mourn, Owhyee's fatal shore
For Cook, our great Orono, is no more! (O'Keeffe 1785)

At that moment the huge painting of the Apotheosis of Captain Cook began to descend on the stage. Cook, looking a little anxious it has to be admitted, was in the clouds over Kealakekua Bay where he had been killed and was being crowned by Britannia and Fame. The voices of the peoples welled into a great chorus:

Ye chiefs of the ocean your laurels throw by
Or cypress entwine with a wreath.
To prove your humanity, heave a soft sigh

And a tear now let fall for his death!
 Yet the Genius of Britain forbids us to grieve
 Since Cook ever honour'd immortal shall live.

The hero of Macedon ran o'er the world
 Yet nothing but death could he give
 'Twas George's command and the sail was unfurl'd
 and Cook taught mankind how to live.

He *came* and he *saw*, not to *conquer* but to save
 The Caesar of Britain was he:
 Who scorn'd the conditions of making a slave
 While Britons themselves are so free
 Now the Genius of Britain forbids us to grieve
 Since Cook ever honour'd immortal shall live
 (O'Keeffe 1785)

It is a folly at such a distance and with such sparse evidence to say what was happening, what social realities were being established by these dramaturgies. Let me say what occurs to me. I think that, in the ambience of entertainment, mood and meaning were reduced to simplicities. In “Omai” the absurdities and make-believe of the pantomime were blown away by the reality of the truth of the last scene. With music and chorused voices and staged solemnity to set the soul aqiver, the humanism of Civilization was set beside the quaintness of the Other. In that humanism was known the benignity of power, the good intentions of the end that will justify the means. It was (as it always is) the realisms of empire that properly bound Native and Stranger together. On the other hand, the Natives were more quaint than threateningly different. There was the quiet put-down of the new “King” Omai's power in fifty red feathers, four hundred hogs, and twenty thumping women. But the unreal quaintness of kings-who-are-not-really-kings was set in an entertainment in which the audience was convinced it was watching a science of reality. Director Louthembourg's talent was to make illusions realistic. The whole night long the audience saw the mildly make-believe and ahistorical persons—Omai, Oberea, Otoo, Oedidee—clothed in the realisms of their environment—their houses, their ornamentation, their sacred places, their exotic customs, their language. And the realisms of this unfamiliar environment were made the more certain by the realism of more familiar environment—of Kensington, of Margate, of Plymouth; that is why

the audience could come away certain that they had been at a “school for the history of man,” when in the history of men and women the pantomime was an extravagant hocus-pocus.

* * *

I tell Porea’s story as if the events of the past are disconnected with the present, as if our meeting with Porea was somehow direct. We know that is not so, of course, but we are adept in seeing the past “as if” it were unmediated by its relics. Like physicists who see through the material qualities of the world around them to its nuclear structure, like botanists who see the classification of a tree, not the poetry of it, we too, by tone and tense and supportive agreement make “as if” we are in touch with the past. The ambiguities are too many, the lateral pursuits too frequent, the operational judgments too complex for us to be anything but pragmatic. It is the present with which we are in touch. The past is mediated to us by all the inventions that have happened in between.

Porea and the whole context of her life comes to us through a chain of inventions and possessions by an infinite number of Strangers and by Porea’s own Native descendants, who in time became Strangers to her as well. The inventions of the Strangers came by way of their own historical reconstruction and out of many references, direct and indirect, made by later seamen and missionaries. Mostly these were a jigsaw of references to Tahitian men and women connected to Porea by marriage and descent. Much of it was in the way of reflections by the likes of Cook, Forster, and Bligh, correcting the misinterpretations of one another. Its history, like all history’s inventions, were made by what has been called colligation—the drawing together of the bits and pieces of many pasts of many discoveries (Oliver 1974; Beaglehole 1967; Gunson 1963; Newbury 1967a, 1967b, 1980; Rose 1978; Green 1968).

Among the many little inventions of Porea, however, there has been one large one. It came a hundred years after her death, and it came from an unexpected pen, that of Henry Adams, American historian. Wounded by his wife’s suicide, inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson’s wanderings in the Pacific, Adams arrived in Tahiti in 1891. There he was more bored than enchanted, but in his last days as he looked for a ship to get away he met with an old woman of nearly seventy years, Arii Taimai. He met her, as it chanced, at the ceremonial opening of a bridge. The bridge had been built with the stones of the dismantled

marae Mahaiatea, the sacred place that Amo and Puraea had built for their son in 1767–1768 in the days of their high ambitions. The old woman was pleasantly garrulous, full of the legends her father had taught her. Arii Taimai was of the Teva clan. Her great-grandfather had been Amo's brother. For days on end in 1891 Arii Taimai talked to Henry Adams through the interpreter, her daughter Marau.

Later in America Henry Adams, speaking in Arii Taimai's voice, wrote of Puraea: "If a family must be ruined by a woman, perhaps it may as well be ruined thoroughly and brilliantly by a woman who makes it famous." As the Teva clan remembered her, Puraea upset proprieties by demanding acknowledgment of her social superiority in symbolic ways. Her son, a boy of eight or nine in 1767, was the most highly titled person in Tahiti, the possessor of both the *maro ura* and *maro tea*. In their polity, Tahitians had no difficulty in distinguishing the deference they owed to higher titles and the deference they owed to the politically dominant. Deference to high titles they paid at the sacred places of these titles, at the Taputapuatea in the case of titles that were owed sacrifice. Deference to political dominance they showed in submissive ceremony to symbols of extended authority. Submission ceremonies surrounded the acknowledgment of some sign of dominance as it was processed around the island. Political power was expressed not so much by the person and the presence of the *arii* as by the extension of his person in his symbols and by his messengers. It was acknowledged by gift and sacrifice. Puraea's downfall occurred over her effort to equate the titled dominance of her son with the political dominance of herself and Amo. As the Teva told it, it was an affair of women. Puraea in building the *marae* Mahaiatea imposed a *rahui*—a prohibition on food and behavior that was the right of *arii rahi* alone to impose. To obey it was to acknowledge superiority. Two women, a sister and a brother's wife to Puraea, challenged the *rahui* by paying formal visits to Puraea. These formal visits demanded hospitality and therefore the lifting of the *rahui* between equals. The rift that followed Puraea's refusal to acknowledge the women's equality and raise the *rahui* was said to be the cause of battle and then of the defeat of Puraea that followed (Adams 1947:44).

Different sources put the matter differently. After the investiture of Teri-i-reree at Mahaiatea, Amo and Puraea were said to have demanded the ceremonial submission that came with the procession of symbols around the island. Submission by the Seaward Teva was refused and in the battles that followed, Amo and Puraea were defeated and the

maro ura of Teri-i-reree moved to a new (but older) sacred place in Ahuru. This attempt by Amo and Porea to establish political hegemony over the whole island of Tahiti followed the Tahitian possession of the Wallis flag and its incorporation into a *maro ura*. The sources say quite explicitly that it was not the British jack that was paraded around the island but some other symbol. The most knowledgeable of modern historians of ancient Tahiti, Douglas Oliver, says that he favors the view that the British flag was incorporated in an already existing *maro ura*. It is, let there be no doubt, a question of guess and probability. Let me invent another sort of past out of what I see as a different set of likelihoods (Oliver 1974:1221–1235).

The *maro* with the British colors was a new symbol. Descriptions of those who saw it say it was made of both red and yellow feathers, not just the red of the *maro ura* or the yellow white of the *maro tea*. There is a logic in the combined colors that says that this *maro* had the qualities of all the others. The drawing Bligh made of it showed the bunting to be at one end. It seems finished. The rounded tassels that were essential to the sacred wrap were attached to the bunting. If the bunting had been added to an existing *maro*, one would expect twenty years of sacrifices (1767–1788) to have enclosed the bunting with lappets of feathers. Let us say that the British flag, possessed by the Tahitians in the context of their 'Oro beliefs and seen by them as a symbol of political dominance and sovereignty after their violent disaster, was taken by the people of Amo and Porea to Papara. There it was constructed into a *maro ura* (the term is used generically by the Tahitians as well as specifically) that symbolized a different sort of title to a different sort of sovereignty.

Their translation was certainly some extension of the potentialities of their own symbol system. It was neither a totally new nor a totally old way of doing things. This new *maro ura* was in itself a history of the first Native encounter with the Stranger. It was a document, a text to be read by those with immediate knowledge of its meaning. It gave institutional continuity with all the structures and roles of its preservation and its ritual re-presentation. Perhaps Amo and Porea had already begun to build their new *marae* Mahaiatea before the *Dolphin* had arrived. Perhaps the new *maro* demanded a special place. Certainly Mahaiatea was grander and more ambitious than any other sacred site on Tahiti and could have been something new for something new. The procession around the island demanded submission to a new sort of authority. That the Wallis flag itself was not processed

is of little significance. They had only one flag. When they possessed more than one flag they did process with it, as they did at Pomare II's investiture. When they had several flags they attached them as well to their most sacred vessels, such as *Rainbow*, 'Oro's canoe. It makes sense to see the British possessing Tahiti in their flag and their violence, and Porea inventing an interpretive document of those events and making it symbolic of the new hegemony she claimed.

Possessing Tahiti was a complicated affair. Indeed, who possessed whom? Native and Stranger each possessed the other in their interpretations of the other. They possessed one another in an ethnographic moment that got transcribed into text and symbol. They each archived that text and symbol in their respective cultural institutions. They each made cargo of the things they collected from one another, put their cargo in their respective museums, remade the things they collected into new cultural artifacts. They entertained themselves with their histories of their encounter. Because each reading of the text, each display of the symbol, each entertainment in the histories, each viewing of the cargo enlarged the original encounter, made a process of it, each possession of the other became a self-possession as well. Possessing the other, like possessing the past, is always full of delusions.

6

Remembering First Contact Realities and Romance¹

*Edward Schieffelin and
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Stories of the first encounters between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea have had a particular fascination for both Europeans and Papua New Guineans alike. To the Western popular imagination, these accounts are contained in stories of exploratory expeditions moving into unknown regions beyond the borders of “civilization.” In these tales, the explorers, after suffering hardship and danger, come upon hidden valleys that hold promise of wealth in valuable resources and are populated by exotic peoples who have never seen Europeans before.

To the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea, on the other hand, the arrival of the first outsiders is usually recalled as an exciting but deeply unsettling event of apparently cosmological import: Strange Beings broke into their world from outside its known horizons. Sometimes these Beings were thought to be the return of the ancestral dead or of mythical heroes coming back to the lands of their origin (Connolly and Anderson 1983; Wagner 1979a). The people were filled with astonishment, fear, and wonder. Sometimes they decided that the arrival of the strangers was the portent of dire world upheaval.

These encounters derive many of their special qualities from the fact that they were not encounters between individuals but between cultural systems. First contact in Papua New Guinea was always a matter of comparatively large, complexly structured expeditions encountering organized communities of people living in their normal region. Each expedition brings along its own cultural context, em-

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bodied in its purposes and internal organization, and it is this that comes to bear on the encounter. The group provides a reference point and support system for its members and has a much greater capacity to maintain its own perspectives and carry out its purposes in the face of opposition. In effect, it is a community that confronts a community.

These encounters, however dramatic, were in turn the outcome of particular historical conditions. The exploratory journeys of Australian patrol officers into the interior of Papua during the 1920s and 1930s were motivated by the desire to locate undiscovered natural resources (such as gold or petroleum), to open new regions to the sphere of Western political and economic influence, and to bring Western civilization and the rule of law to people generally regarded at the time as primitive savages. The cultural-historical situations of the Papuan peoples they encountered varied according to the nature of their particular cultures and their local social and political circumstances. Although many Papuans regarded the first patrols in cosmological terms as coming from outside the human realm, what they thought the encounter meant and how they reacted to it was also conditioned by local history of alliances and animosities and the general social and political situation among them at the time.

This chapter focuses on one of the last modern-day experiences of first culture contact. The Strickland-Purari patrol was one of the final great expeditions of tropical exploration in the Pacific. It was organized and dispatched by the Papuan colonial administration in 1935 to examine the vast, remote tract of unknown country between the Strickland and Purari Rivers, now known as the Southern Highlands. Headed by two Australian patrol officers, Jack Hides and Jim O'Malley, the party consisted of forty Papuan carriers and police. The expedition left Daru on the Gulf of Papua on January 1, 1935, and headed inland up the Fly and Strickland Rivers by steam launch and then canoe. Reaching the limits of navigation 650 km (385 mi) inland in the middle of February, they abandoned the canoes and proceeded on eastward through the tropical forest on foot. Weeks later, crossing a remote mountain barrier, they emerged into the grassland valleys of the Papuan highlands. There they encountered a large and hitherto unsuspected population—peoples who had never seen Europeans before and who were still using a technology of stone. The first groups they encountered received them warily. As the patrol proceeded southeastward along the Waga Valley and the Nembi Plateau, the

local people became increasingly unfriendly. The patrol ran out of supplies near the site of present-day Nipa, and the local people refused to sell them food. Shortly thereafter, patrol officer Hides became seriously ill. Hungry and increasingly beleaguered by aggressive warriors, the expedition eventually had to resort to rifle fire to force its way through to the Erave River and the Samberigi Valley. There they found a native trade route to the coast and finally emerged, exhausted and starving, at the government station at Kikori on June 18, 1935.

During the journey the patrol suffered tremendous hardship. Forced to fight for their survival, Hides and O'Malley reported that they and their police killed at least thirty-two men in skirmishes along the way. The patrol itself lost two carriers and a policeman to sickness and starvation. In the four months since they had left the Strickland, they had passed through more than 1,800 km (1,100 mi) of country unknown to Europeans and discovered extensive populations whose cultures were quite different from those of the peoples hitherto known in Papua.

The Strickland-Purari Patrol

The killing of more than thirty people by a single patrol had not been seen in Papua since the days of punitive expeditions under the administrations of MacGregor and LeHunt back at the turn of the century. Subsequent patrols into the Tari Basin and the Waga and Nembi Valleys a few years later encountered difficulties from time to time, but they never experienced the level of persistent harassment and bloodshed involved in the Strickland-Purari patrol. In fact, violence and treachery were unusual in most first-contact situations in Papua. What, then, happened with this expedition?

Perhaps the single most significant factor affecting the Strickland-Purari patrol was that, unlike subsequent patrols through the area, Hides and O'Malley had to operate for the last month of their journey under conditions of near starvation. In part, this was the result of two crucial miscalculations. The first was that Hides abandoned half his supplies on the Papuan Plateau before he ever entered the highlands. At the time, this was a calculated risk. Following a hostile brush with local Etoro warriors, Hides wished to reduce exposure of his carriers to ambush as they relayed the rice through the tropical forest. He expected on the basis of his experience that he would be able to trade for food from local populations he met farther down the line.

For various reasons, this expectation was not realized and the patrol eventually had a severe shortage of food.²

The hunger of the patrol was aggravated by their physical exhaustion. When Hides and O'Malley arrived in the highlands amidst the Huli people, they and their men were worn out from three months of hard travel. Their situation might be compared to that of Champion and Adamson on the Bamu-Purari patrol a year later. Champion and Adamson arrived on the southern portion of the Papuan Plateau after three months of hard travel in about the same condition that Hides arrived in the highlands: exhausted and with their men beginning to show symptoms of beriberi. Unlike in the highlands, however, the local population was sparse, and they preferred to hide in the forest rather than confront the patrol. Though timid, they were familiar with the use of steel and eventually proved willing to trade pigs and garden produce for it. Under these circumstances, Champion was able to rest his patrol for two weeks at the hamlet of Ewelo and allow his men to recuperate. Hides and O'Malley did not have this luxury. They emerged in the highlands to find themselves amidst a heavy population of assertive and warlike people unfamiliar with steel and unwilling to accept it as trade. The standoffish attitude of the Hulis and their reluctance to sell any food meant that the patrol had to keep moving.

Once in the highlands the Strickland-Purari patrol had so little rice that it became almost entirely dependent on the local people for food. Hides was an experienced officer and this was not the first time he had faced this kind of situation, but the difficulty in obtaining supplies for his men in this case was unusual. The most common explanation for Hides' difficulty points up his second miscalculation: The patrol was carrying steel axes for trade rather than mother-of-pearl shell, which was what the highlands people wanted. Indeed, some highlands informants, recalling the lack of this item, thought the patrol had brought no trade goods at all. The lack of pearl shell in turn exacerbated the effects of other factors.

In the Huli region, people lived in dispersed farmsteads and many who visited the patrol's camps came from some distance away. They did not own the gardens in the immediate vicinity of the camp and could not sell food from them even if they had wished to. Further on, the Nembi frequently suffered chronic food shortages because gardens were often destroyed in their constant fighting; they may not have had much food to eat themselves. In other places one gets the impres-

sion that the people did not sell food to the patrol because they feared it and wanted it to go away (Etoro, Onabasulu). Elsewhere, when the patrol was manifesting clear signs of exhaustion, illness, and starvation, the warriors may have refused to sell them food in hopes of weakening them further (Wola, Nembi).

The absence of pearl shell had a further consequence for the Strickland-Purari patrol. Without it, Hides and O'Malley had very limited means of forming a common ground for friendly relations with the local tribesmen, which undoubtedly contributed to the embattled nature of their passage through the highlands. No subsequent patrol experienced this degree of harassment. In part this may be because the warriors had learned about firearms from Hides and O'Malley's police and so were reluctant to enter an armed confrontation with later patrols. But that is not the whole story.

Hides and O'Malley were attacked for several different reasons. At least twice the patrol was mistaken for an enemy raiding party. At other times hostility may have resulted from resentment over police and carriers filching from gardens. Unlike any subsequent patrols, however, Hides and O'Malley and their men were hungry and weak and ill. Treachery is unusual (on first contact), O'Malley later explained, "but here it was different; here were sick and starving men. [We] were just bait for the taking. . . . These people realized the position we were in and although they had plenty of food, they did not give it to us; . . . they waited for us to drop" (Sinclair, personal correspondence). The Huli, Wola, and Nembi were, moreover, hardened to violence and scornful of weakness. They were used to responding aggressively to something they feared if they thought they could get away with it. The weakened physical condition of the patrol seriously compromised its ability to project the appearance of men who could handle themselves competently in the face of force. It invited harassment by warriors seeking to locate its vulnerable points. There is no contradiction between informants' recollections that they were frightened of the patrol and the conviction of Hides and O'Malley that the tribesmen perceived their weakness and deliberately attempted to prey upon it.

Jack Hides had always found it natural and easy to form good relations with Papuans he knew on the coast, and he was confident he could do the same with Papuans he met anywhere. Handling first-contact situations required a certain skill. An officer patrolling into new country had to project a calm, confident, and reassuring manner

in the presence of excited, frightened, and wary people—and be able to stand his ground with restraint in the face of hostile demonstrations. Jack Hides had these qualities. He knew that the people he met had never seen Europeans before, that they sometimes thought he and his men were not beings of this world.

Unfortunately, he seems not always to have been able to apply this insight usefully. Hides liked Papuans and seems to have extended himself to them with a real, personal warmth. And he expected, assuming the patrol had done nothing provocative or threatening, that once the immediate shock of surprise and fear had been allayed and some gifts perhaps distributed, the local people would relax and offer hospitality and friendly treatment in return. If, despite all this, warriors refused his friendly overtures and gifts; or if they first seemed friendly and later turned hostile; or if they tried to direct the patrol along impossible paths or lead it into ambush, Hides didn't always see this as a frightened people's attempts to keep Strange Beings away from their lands and families. Rather, he tended to take it as treachery and deceit—a betrayal of his offers of friendship. It was as if, in extending personal warmth to new peoples in the process of peaceful contact, there was too little distance between his professional activity and his romantic imagination: between the procedure for making peaceful contact and the personal warmth and outgoingness that he naturally extended in the effort. As a result, he often responded with anger and resentment to what he saw as native perfidy rather than with gestures aimed at calming and reassuring excited, fearful, and uncertain people.

To add to the complications, the patrol often received strikingly different receptions from one group to another, especially among the Wola and Nembi peoples. Some groups greeted him with openness and generosity, others with arrows and hostile demonstrations. The fragmented political organization and constant warfare among neighboring alliances inclined Nembi and Wola to be suspicious of or alarmed by unknown parties approaching from adjacent territories, especially if it was from the direction of present enemies. But these social and political implications of the patrol's movement do not seem to have occurred to Hides.

Newly contacted people often didn't know what the patrol was or where it came from. Most believed that it was from the cosmological peripheries of their worlds, such as the land of the dead, or that its members were fierce and capricious spirits (Huli), sky people (Wola and Nembi), or ancestral ghosts (Kewa). Most felt initial astonishment

and fear toward the patrol. All felt it was a potentially dangerous unknown to be approached warily. Beyond this they were also consumed with curiosity, though they acted in different ways. The Etoro and Onabasulu of the Papuan Plateau fled into the forest after a brief confrontation and left the patrol largely alone to pass through their countries unmolested. Among the Huli, the local politics of influence played a significant part. Established leaders tried to head the dangerous *dama* spirits away from their domains, while an ambitious younger man following another traditional scenario attempted to form an alliance with the *dama* to gain power for his own ends. A common response from all the peoples the patrol encountered was to follow it along the route partly out of curiosity, sometimes trying to offer it gifts of food, at other times probing its vulnerabilities to see what it would do, or simply harassing it to keep it moving along out of their territory. Occasionally they attempted outright attack. Harassment increased as the patrol passed through the Wola country and was especially severe among the Nembi, who pressed harder as they perceived the patrol to be increasingly debilitated and weak. Hides' response was always to keep moving, to avoid areas of heavy population, to fire warning shots if warriors approached too close, and to shoot the warriors themselves if they attacked or seemed about to in a dangerous situation.

The locals' refusal to sell food likewise seemed to have several sources. The Etoro and Onabasulu feared that accepting gifts in exchange from supernatural strangers would bring about some kind of world disaster. Some Huli (mostly leaders) felt the same—that the strange (metal) objects offered would be somehow harmful. Whether or not they were short of food, the Wola and the Nembi charged outrageous prices. Like many peoples along a trade route, they were experienced bargainers and exacted high prices even among themselves. But they may also have inflated the price because the patrol seemed desperate and vulnerable and they thought they could get away with it. They certainly did this to later patrols through the area (see Lake Kutubu PR 9, 1938–1939). In any case, nothing the patrol was carrying was perceived as sufficiently valuable for them to go out of their way to trade for.

The Dynamics of Conflict

In the early part of its journey, when the patrol had just arrived in the highlands, it presented the Huli people with a relatively

confident, well-organized, and friendly aspect, consistent with the guidelines for peaceful engagement laid down by the Australian Papuan administration. The Huli, taken by surprise, frightened, and uncertain as to how to handle the situation, presented themselves as wary, standoffish warriors who tried to manipulate the patrol in various ways to neutralize (or utilize) its powerful presence in their midst. When the patrol arrived in the Kewa country several weeks later, however, it had been through nearly a month of starvation and hostility among the Wola and Nembi and was expecting to deal with more of the same. The Kewa, self-confident from recent success in war and apparently curious and excited by the arrival of the patrol, presented a relatively open and hospitable aspect to their visitors. They were confronted with an exhausted, beleaguered group of men, reduced to garden thievery, whose leaders, sapped by illness and hunger, were now primarily focused on survival while a vengeful police contingent were spoiling to take out their resentment on the local people. Hides by this time was severely ill and the stress of weeks of constant travel and harassment had impaired his judgement. His by now exaggerated expectations of native treachery and attack and the desperate condition of the patrol led him to misperceive the Kewa's intent and allowed his police to open fire on them on two occasions, resulting in seven or eight Kewa deaths.

This tragedy highlights the transformation in the relative positioning of the patrol in relation to the highlanders and demonstrates the degree to which the encounter was more than a matter of structures of cultural difference. The particular (culturally constituted) appearance that the patrol presented in its encounters during the journey was continually changing in relation to the events of the encounters themselves. The expedition thus provides a perspective on first encounters that does not easily emerge from accounts in which historically the explorers always remain in control of the situation or in which the events are seen too simply in terms of fixed cultural contrasts and relations of domination.

It is in fact partly because the Strickland-Purari patrol had such a difficult time and so many things went wrong that it is so instructive as an example of the process of exploration and first contact. When things run smoothly, it is often harder to see important subtleties and subplots of the process going on beneath the government officer's projection of supreme competence.

Patrols in the Papuan Service always tried to assume the upper

hand in dealing with the Papuans wherever they went, by never allowing Papuans to think a patrol was vulnerable. Patrols were better armed than local Papuans, had more disciplined organization, and were under the command of experienced leaders drawn from a powerful, complex society bent on expanding its hegemony. Their purposes, methods, and goals were precisely spelled out. Patrols that followed Hides and O'Malley in later years always carried sufficient food and the right trade to ensure that they would never be in a position of dependency in relation to the people they encountered. This situation of power and dependency was inverted for Hides and represented an anomalous situation for the highlanders he met. The Beings they feared were clearly hungry and weak. It was a situation calculated to bring out the most arrogant and abrasive aspects of the local warriors. At the same time, the patrol was still powerfully armed, and this could potentially bring out the worst in the officers or police. Although it is a tribute to Hides' leadership that the patrol was able to maintain restraint as well as it did, the situation reveals how the stresses (as well as strengths) inherent in the organization of administration patrols affected their behavior and illustrates the kinds of ambiguities local highlanders felt they faced (and that they also projected) in their own attempts to gain control of the situation and deal with the intruders into their domain.

Australian Reactions

After the expedition, while Hides and O'Malley were still in Port Moresby writing up their report, news of the Strickland-Purari patrol arrived in Australia. The discovery of an unknown land of carefully cultivated valleys hidden in the interior vastness of the Papuan mountains—peopled by allegedly light-skinned men wearing flower-bedecked wigs—naturally intrigued the popular imagination. The newspapers lost no time in picturing this as a new Arcadia and lighting it with a blaze of publicity.

It was not only the Australian newspapers that romanticized Hides' and O'Malley's expedition. Hides contributed to the process himself. During his hectic schedule of appearances and lectures in Australia after the expedition,³ he was hard at work editing his patrol report into the book *Papuan Wonderland*. With some pruning of events here, some heightening of the drama there, a paragraph or two of philosophical reflection in appropriate places, he molded the

overall effect of the narrative more cleanly to the genre of romantic adventure story that he thought it represented.

In the process, Hides couldn't resist mythologizing himself a bit. He downplayed his feelings of exasperation at the people he encountered and presented himself as rather more high-minded than he actually had been on patrol. In a favorite image that appears several times in the book, Hides pictured himself standing on some high promontory gazing out over newly discovered country and reflecting on its beauty, thinking of other great "outside men" who had gone before him to such regions as these or envisioning a future when the tropical forest would be tamed and planted in grain. In *Papuan Wonderland* (no less than in the newspapers), Jack Hides, patrol officer, becomes Jack Hides, Hero of the Quest.

Compared to most Australians in Papua at the time, Hides would have been labeled a "liberal." Although brought up largely in a narrow colonial milieu, his imagination had been inspired by Papua's unexplored wilderness and exotic peoples. He loved Papua and its peoples deeply. His writings are remarkable for their ability to communicate an intimate feeling for Papuan life, to evoke a sympathetic interest in its character and concerns. He genuinely liked Papuans and wrote with appreciation of Papuan men of courageous, generous, and straightforward character whom he met, whether members of the constabulary or warriors from the interior.

Nevertheless, Hides clearly shared the Australian administration's view of the inferiority of traditional Papuan culture (though he did think it had value), and he felt a liberal colonialist's paternalistic concern toward Papuans themselves. Like many of Australian administration's "outside men," he believed in the essential moral and civilizing mission of the Australian colonial administration to the people of Papua.

In a notably racist colonial society, Hides' attitudes were remarkably moderate. He paid some attention to skin color in his writings and sometimes seemed to correlate it with levels of cultural advancement. In an intriguing passage in *Papuan Wonderland*, he reflects upon "the light-skinned people of the Tari Furoro" (the Huli), picturing them as representatives of an enlightened culture once dominant over a wider region to the southeast, but now being driven back by darker others, forced to retreat.

The finely woven wigs of human hair [throughout the Wola and Nembu country]; the beautiful axes of stone; the extraordinary

method of advanced cultivation; all, I am sure, originated with the intelligent and artistic people of the Tari Furoro (the Huli). Possibly at one time they inhabited the whole of this gigantic tableland [the Waga Valley and Nembi Plateau] . . . and possibly the big Black Papuans [the Wola, Nembi, and Kewa], better fighters and a more virile type, entered somewhere from the east, to drive them continually back westwards across their roads and cultivations until today we can only find them in their sanctuary up against Mt. Jubilee, the Victor Emmanuel Range, and the great forbidding limestone barrier that all form the sides of their *Papuan Wonderland*. Whence came these pretty, light-skinned men is something that is not for me to answer. (Hides 1936:154)

Like many of Hides' ethnological speculations, this picture was largely imaginary. The Huli are not noticeably lighter skinned than other highlanders, are not relatively more artistic, and are certainly not inferior fighters. Yet in this passage are gathered in a single romanticized image all the contrasts—light- vs. dark-skinned, “civilized” vs. barbaric, artistic vs. warlike, superior vs. inferior—that formed the terms of racist discourse that preoccupied colonial Australians in Port Moresby. Here, however, it was the Huli that played the white man's role in the colonial Australians' worst fantasy: a light-skinned community increasingly beleaguered by threatening blacks.

With Hides' lecture tours and the impending publication of his book, the publicity that surrounded him began to concern the Australian Papuan administration. It was not good for the morale of the Papuan Service, it was thought, to have one man singled out for undue celebrity when many others could equally well have undertaken the expedition—or had already done similar exemplary work and remained unsung. According to Hides' biographer, a number of officers openly resented the attention Hides was getting. Some accused him of deliberately seeking the limelight. Others said that theirs had always been a “silent service.” The great patrols had always been carried out with no fuss and no publicity, and Hides was transgressing this grand tradition. Others perceptively noted, however, that the publicity surrounding the Strickland-Purari patrol had finally put Papua on the map by drawing world attention to this otherwise neglected corner of empire. But clearly, the amount of publicity Hides had received was becoming a source of embarrassment to the administration.

This was the general climate of feeling in Port Moresby to which Hides returned in January 1936 after his leave in Australia and the writing of *Papuan Wonderland*. Hides was a sensitive man, and he

was deeply wounded by the cool reception given to him by many officers he knew and respected in the Papuan Service. He became moody and depressed (Sinclair 1969:185). He was posted to Misima as assistant resident magistrate. On the way there, he learned that the administration had passed a regulation prohibiting officers of the Papuan Service from privately publishing any information gained about the country gathered in the course of their official duties (see Sinclair 1988:196). Hides felt this regulation had been aimed specifically at him. He plunged deeper into depression and began drinking so heavily that after a few weeks he was sent “in” for medical attention. He was given three months’ sick leave in Australia.

In the next few months, although he recovered his physical health, Hides’ spirits remained very low. Despite praise heaped by reviewers upon *Papuan Wonderland*, which came out at this time, he remained unhappy and resentful about his treatment by the administration. When his leave drew to an end, he resigned from the Papuan Service.

In June 1938, his health still not recovered from the effects of various hardships subsequent to the expedition, now exacerbated by alcohol, Hides contracted a severe case of pneumonia. Three days later he was dead. He was just short of thirty-two years old.

His companion on the Strickland-Purari patrol, Jim O’Malley, continued to serve as an officer in the Australian colonial administration until he retired at the rank of district officer. He died in 1975, the same year Papua New Guinea became an independent nation.

Papuan Reactions

The dramatic and often uncanny quality first contact seems to have had for many Papuans—and the challenge it potentially offers to their traditional assumptions and beliefs about the nature of the world—raises the question of what kind of lasting impact it may have had on their social experience. Objectively, of course, first contact was the harbinger of the (often extensive) social, political, and economic changes that followed as tribal peoples were brought under administration control. However, we are focusing on a different issue: To what extent did the experience of first contact itself affect the worldview of the Papuans who encountered the patrol, influence their understanding of their subsequent history, or affect their self-perception?

Of all the groups the Strickland-Purari patrol encountered, the most profound effects of first contact for subsequent reevaluation of self and

history are exemplified among the Huli. Here, however, it was not Hides' and O'Malley's patrol but another expedition that had visited the region a few months before that had the major impact. The Fox brothers were gold prospectors who first appeared in Huli country near a Huli sacred site called Gelote. The Huli regarded their passage across the Tari Basin as the escape of capricious *dama* spirits from Gelote into the world and regarded the event as the cause of the plague of troubles that subsequently descended upon them. (Hides and O'Malley were themselves seen as such *damas*.) These ideas were incorporated within the perspective of overall world decline already present in traditional Huli ritual (*dindi gamu*) lore, which was in part geared to restoring a legendary past prosperity. Thus reinforced, *dindi gamu* lore continued to shape Huli perspectives on events throughout the time of increasing contact, government consolidation, and expansion of missionary efforts. Although missionary efforts eventually succeeded in destroying the *dindi gamu* ritual complex, they have not deeply affected the *dindi gamu* outlook on life—which continues to contribute nostalgia and fuel dissatisfaction in the Huli understanding of the changes in their political and economic situation up to the present.

The cultural understandings and historical reverberations of first contact experience were far reaching for the Huli. What is interesting, however, is that the first-contact situation among many of the people Hides and O'Malley encountered seems to have had hardly any historical reverberation at all. If we look at the reasons for this, it seems that there is a positive dynamic involved in the failure of cultural assimilation of experience and that the social disorganization of knowledge may play an important part with historical memory and its effectiveness in a nonliterate culture.

One set of complexities has to do with the processes involved when historical activities and cultural structures do not easily articulate with one another. If we focus on the cultural aspects, it is clear that while a people's cultural views shape their perceptions of historical situations, the events of first contact may not always fit as easily into every people's key cosmological understandings as they did for the Huli. In other words, how resonant the events of first contact are likely to be for a people's postcontact history and self-perception depends to some degree on the centrality and importance of the cultural or cosmological ideas in terms of which they are understood.

The situation may be illustrated by the example of the Bosavi en-

counter with Champion and Adamson's Bamu-Purari patrol of 1936. The Bosavis regarded Champion and Adamson as beings from Helebe, the mysterious source of steel axes beyond the peripheries of their known world to the south. They principally remember the patrol for how frightened they were of it and for the large number of steel axes and pearl shells it distributed. But the significance of the story seems to go little further than that. They do not link it with the passage of Hides and O'Malley through the Onabasulu country nearby only a year before. Indeed, even though Bosavis now realize that Helebe was the first government patrol into their area, they do not associate it closely with the later patrols that explored and consolidated the region from the east (from Lake Kutubu). Rather, they tend to recall the arrival of Helebe as a separate, dramatic, but rather isolated event, a harbinger of things to come, perhaps, but not a precipitating force. The point is that little in the story seems to have revalued later thinking or action in regard to Europeans or the arrival of other large distributions of wealth (the first mission airdrop, the money for the second airstrip). This seems to be partly because, whereas the sacred sites and *damas* were central to Huli cosmology, ritual activity, and understanding of themselves, the notion of Helebe was peripheral to Bosavi worldview and social concern.

The Bosavi encounter with Helebe suggested few implications for new understandings of further historical developments or changing worldview because Helebe itself played so little part in their ordinary lives. Nor did subsequent historical events accomplish a significant reevaluation in the idea of Helebe itself in Bosavi cosmology. The Bamu-Purari patrol was the only patrol that ever approached the Bosavi region from the south, the direction of Helebe. If subsequent patrols had continued to come from this direction and had continued to be associated with Helebe, the idea of Helebe might gradually have come to assume more importance in Bosavi thinking. Such historically inspired changes in their worldview might then have more readily affected their understanding of events of their postcontact history. (For an example of this for the Wiru people near Pangia, see Clark, forthcoming.)

If we shift our focus to the historical aspects of the first-contact situation, we note that, even when the first-contact events are assimilated by central ideas in the worldview, the eventual outcome of the situation is subject to uncertainties of historical contingency. That is, although a people's central cosmological ideas may be involved in

framing their perceptions of the experience, it may also happen that subsequent historical events are so constituted that they disrupt or displace this understanding or reframe it under another set of ideas. This may bring about a new reevaluation of the original contact experience or reduce its relevance to later historical perception.

This seems to be in part what happened among the Etoro and Onabasulu. These people thought the Strickland-Purari patrol represented Spirit Beings approaching from the direction of the Road of the Dead (Etoro) or returning to the Origin Place at Malaiya (Onabasulu), both places of central importance in their cosmological landscape. Some feared that contact with these beings or acceptance of their gifts would precipitate a world catastrophe. The Etoro in the first instance tried to avert this disaster by confronting the patrol and, when that failed, by avoiding it altogether. The Onabasulu of Ogesiya, on the other hand, believed the Beings had been drawn to the area following the trail of their wayward “children” (i.e., steel axes and bushknives that had begun to filter into the area over the previous decade). They gathered all the steel implements in the area at Ogesiya with the intent of returning them so that the Beings would leave before disaster struck. The patrol, however, far from reclaiming its “children,” seemed inexplicably bent in leaving more of them around. In general, the Etoro and Onabasulu attempted to neutralize the impact of the patrol by their own activity. During its presence in the area, no one came out to greet it, no gifts were accepted, no food was offered or shared, and hence no obligations or connections were left outstanding. There was little left that might (at least from the Etoro/Onabasulu point of view) positively impel a connection between this set of events and any later ones.

The next patrol to approach the region came from the south, the direction of the Bosavi country, and was seen (by the Onabasulu) to embody quite a different problem: It was accompanied by their traditional enemies the Namabolo (Fasu), bent on obtaining restitution for a death. This was not a cosmological problem and the Onabasulu fled for fear of being killed by their enemies or “taken away” by their enemies’ strange allies from the government. This reaction had little to do with their previous experience with Hides and O’Malley, and no continuity was established between the two experiences. Later patrols (also from a southerly direction) established peaceful relations, and the Onabasulu, during the early contact period, came to view the government as principally concerned with the forbidding of violence.

Another factor determining whether the experience of first contact changed local self-perception or gave particular direction to Papuan understanding of subsequent historical developments was whether or not the arrival of the newcomers engaged in any important scenario of traditional action that incorporated them into the local cosmological framework.

Among the Huli, dealing with fearsome and capricious *dama* involved important ritual activities. The arrival of the “*dama*” required them to do something, and the Fox Brothers became the reasons for committed ritual action (i.e., pigs sacrificed) rather than simply regarded as subjects of amazement and speculation. It was precisely through this ritual action that Hulis committed themselves to a particular version of what the events meant and set the direction of their thinking for the course of their subsequent history.

On the Papuan Plateau, by contrast, there were no significant rituals associated with such important features of the cosmological geography as the downstream direction of the Road of the Dead (for the Etoro) or the Onabasulu Origin Place at Malaiya. Consequently, when the patrol passed through the area, it engaged no significant ritual scenario that would positively commit the local people to one understanding of the events over another. In the end, they didn’t know what to think of it.

These examples might be taken to imply that the assimilating scenarios must take the form of ritual activity, but there was no necessity for this. In other places in the highlands the same cosmological assimilation of the newcomers seems to have been accomplished simply by trading with pearl shell. Among the people of the Waghi Valley in the 1930s, trade in pearl shells was so bound up with people’s sense of self and the constitution of social relationships that trade in them by itself humanized the Leahy brothers and drew them into the Waghi world (Strathern 1988). The same might have been the case for the Strickland-Purari expedition had Hides been carrying pearl shell.

Another set of factors affecting the impact of first contact on subsequent history involves the perception of causal and temporal continuity between events and the way memories are preserved in the local sociology of knowledge. One of the reasons peoples of the Papuan Plateau see such a discontinuity between first contact and subsequent government patrols is undoubtedly due to the long hiatus that occurred between them. After first contact, the Bosavi and

Onabasulu did not see another government patrol for sixteen and eighteen years, respectively, whereas for the Etoro it was twenty-nine years (1964), fully a generation: long enough for the initial experience to have faded into story. By comparison, the Huli received visits from patrols every two or three years following first contact, keeping the experience alive and relevant and developing its cosmological implications and ideas. Today the Onabasulu speak of their experience with the Strickland-Purari patrol as a frightening, uncanny event but not as a watershed one. The period of important changes for their perception started with the second patrol to their area in 1953.

Finally, the impact of the experience of first contact on a people's understandings of their lives depends on the integrity of the social distribution of knowledge. This complicates our Etoro/Onabasulu example somewhat. Clearly, if a people's perception of a set of events is to continue to affect their understanding of their circumstances or of themselves, the community of people who know about it or shared the experience or for whom it is salient must remain to some degree intact. If, through various circumstances, the group suffers serious social disruption, becomes geographically dispersed, or is severely depopulated, the salience of their shared experience becomes questionable at the same time as the social distribution of their knowledge becomes disorganized.

Both the Onabasulu and the Etoro have suffered significant depopulation due to epidemics in the early 1950s, and the remnants of their populations have had to regroup in smaller, more mixed communities. The result has been a social fragmentation of the memory of the past and a reduced salience of such remembered events as first contact as referring to a collective condition. Among the Etoro, there was apparently no one living in 1970 who remembered anything in detail about the Strickland-Purari patrol (Kelly 1977:26), and there were only a few among the Onabasulu in 1976. The social disorganization of the memory of this event provides another reason why the Etoro and Onabasulu experience with the Strickland-Purari patrol has not had a more profound impact on their later perspective on their history or themselves.

The Impact of First Contact

In the final analysis, the experience of the Strickland-Purari patrol does not seem, by itself, to have had much lasting impact on

the worldview of most of the Papuans it encountered. However, it could arguably be said to have had one on the Euro-Australian civilization from which it originated. *Papuan Wonderland* and Hides' other books sold roughly twenty thousand copies—probably a greater number than Papuan individuals who actually saw the patrol—and were fairly widely read in England and America (Sinclair 1969:260). Hides' story of the patrol retains a respectable place in the mythographic literature of exploration and adventure. The images of hardy explorers, tropical forests, cannibal warriors, and lost mountain valleys fits comfortably into a familiar genre of real and romanticized writing. Hides had been a patrol officer in part because he could not get this sort of story out of his blood. Neither could his young readers. His books inspired a generation of young Australians to sign up for service as patrol officers in the colonial territories after World War II.

Beneath the adventurous surfaces of the story, *Papuan Wonderland* resonated with favorite images and scenarios of the time and the amour propre of Western culture generally. Hides' wonder and excitement over the discovery of the highlands populations evoked Western nostalgia for an unspoiled primeval world beyond the peripheries of civilization (cf. Rosaldo 1989). His general sympathy for Papuans (despite frustration and exasperation with them) suggested an appealing nobility of character and a responsible legitimacy for the mission of bringing Western civilization to the hinterland. His battles with the Wola and Nembi suggested the suffering and sacrifice necessary to bring this about—as well as confirming colonial stereotypes of Papuans as dangerous savages requiring government control (a message that was harder to draw from Champion and Adamson's experience, as they had always remained in firm control of their situation). All of this, in turn, drew its appeal from a still more fundamental level. Through vicissitudes and narrow escapes, Hides (and O'Malley as well) played out a scenario that is ever deeply enchanting to the Western imagination: the Quest of the Hero. From this perspective, the patrol is a version of an archetypal drama: the story of discovery and achievement through journey into the unknown, the affirmation of manly character through overcoming of formidable obstacles, the goal achieved or the treasure won through courageous struggle. Hides was himself captivated by these images, acted them out with creative energy for most of his career, and ultimately fell victim to them.

It was Hides' tragedy that his romantic imagination ultimately betrayed him. The tension between his romanticism and the expediencies

that he was forced to play out on his patrol exemplifies the problems posed by the Hero Quest as political practice. It was a tension that Hides felt keenly and that made it difficult for him to accept emotionally and to understand fully some of the situations he had to confront. As Hero he started out with the best of intentions but found himself increasingly faced with frustration and a sense of betrayal when the targets of his romantic embracement did not embrace back. The Papuan Others repeatedly refused to play the role he assigned to them, stubbornly retained their own agenda, and did not always share his assumption of the possibility of friendly openness or expectation of reciprocal good will.

NOTES

1. For a fuller analysis of the Strickland-Purari patrol and an in-depth discussion of the narratological and historiographic problems this kind of reconstruction entails, the reader is referred to Schieffelin and Crittenden (1991).

2. It is a simple exercise to estimate what difference it would have made if the patrol had not abandoned half its food. Traveling at half ration and supplementing with whatever they could obtain along the way, they could have made it most of the way to the Erave River before running out of rice. This would have brought them through the worst of the journey without undue privation, to the threshold of the less hostile Kewa country.

3. O'Malley disliked celebrity and early on withdrew from the limelight.

Constructing “Pacific” Peoples¹

Bernard Smith

It is generally agreed that Cook’s three voyages greatly enhanced the economic and political power of Europe in the Pacific. But before such power could be fully exercised, certain basic sciences and technologies, the efficient maidservants of power, had themselves to be enhanced. Cook’s voyages advanced astronomy, navigation, and cartography or, as he might have put it, geographical science. But there were other sciences of less direct concern to the Admiralty enhanced by his voyages, and these contributed also in their time to European domination in the Pacific—namely natural history, meteorology, and the emergent science of ethnography.

Important advances were made in all these sciences continually throughout the three voyages, but there were differences in emphasis. The first voyage is the botanical voyage, par excellence, the second is the meteorological voyage, and the third is the ethnographic voyage.

These changing emphases were owing largely, though not entirely, to contingent factors. On the *Endeavour* voyage, Banks, Solander, and Parkinson, with their interests centered on botany, made a powerful team. On the second voyage, Cook himself, his astronomers Wales and Bayly, the two Forsters, and William Hodges were all deeply interested in the changing conditions of wind and weather, light, and atmosphere as they traversed vast sections of the southern oceans. By the third voyage Cook had come to realize that both scientific and popular

A longer version of this chapter was published in *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, by Bernard Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 193–221. Readers are encouraged to refer to this piece for its rich set of plates from Cook’s third voyage.

interest had shifted to the native peoples of the Pacific; to the nascent science of ethnography.

All these sciences were descriptive sciences and depended greatly upon the production of visual records. Historians, dazzled by the abilities of men like Cook and Banks, have not done full justice to the abilities of their supporting artists. Yet it was their work, in engraved reproduction, that fashioned the images of the Pacific that etched themselves deeply into the European mind. Words are often forgotten, but images remain.

Yet none of the three professional artists—Parkinson, Hodges, nor Webber—who traveled with Cook was trained for the enormous task that confronted them. To have found and enlisted the versatility that the portrayal of the Pacific and its peoples required would have been impossible. Eighteenth-century art students were trained to fulfill special requirements: to draw plants and animals for natural historians; to draw maps and charts and topographic views for the army and the navy; or, higher up the social ladder, to paint landscapes and portraits or even history paintings of memorable deeds from scripture or the classics for Royal Academy audiences. But no one was trained to do all these things.

So the demands the voyages placed on their artists were quite unprecedented. It is surprising they coped as well as they did. The young Sydney Parkinson was probably as good a botanical draftsman as anyone practicing in England at that time. But with the death of the unfortunate Alexander Buchan, he had to cope with figure drawings as well, something in which he had obviously no training. Hodges had been trained superbly by Richard Wilson as a landscape painter, but on the voyage he had to train himself to produce portraits.

John Webber never succeeded in reaching the kinds of aesthetic quality that we find in the best of Hodges' work, but he was better trained for the job ahead of him than any of the others. He could put his hand to anything. Navigational views, plants and animals, portraits, landscapes, and something rather new, a sequence of drawings depicting historical events of the voyage. "We should be nowhere without Webber," John Beaglehole rightly observed, yet managed to do him less than justice.

They were all quite young men when they enlisted with Cook: Parkinson, twenty-three; Hodges, twenty-eight; Webber, twenty-four; and all in poor circumstances. One gains the impression that the Admiralty was not greatly interested in the appointment of professional artists

to its ships. Had it not been for the continuing influence of men like Banks and Solander, professionals like Hodges and Webber might never have been employed.

In our catalog of the artwork of the third voyage, Rüdiger Joppien and I have itemized and described over four hundred drawings made by Webber that relate to the voyage. What I should like to do here is consider that body of work as a whole. What kinds of drawings were made? Is there a consistent program of work being followed? Were there constraints on Webber, and how did they operate?

As to Webber himself there was the hope, innocent enough, that he would eventually be able to distinguish himself with “images of novelties.” But he was in Cook’s service, and it is to Cook’s perception of the uses that he could make of Webber’s skills that we must turn if we are to understand the visual program of work undertaken.

Cook was forty-eight when he embarked on his third voyage in 1776. He had just completed preparing the text of his second voyage for Dr. Douglas. His portrait had been painted by Nathaniel Dance. He was already the most famous navigator in the world, and he must have been aware of it, knew that he had already made history, that on the present voyage he would be making more history, and that he had in John Webber an artist capable of recording it.

It would also seem that he had developed a fairly clear idea how that history, the history of the third voyage, should be presented in publication. While at the Cape, returning to England on the second voyage, he had been mortified and distressed by the many inaccuracies in Hawkesworth’s account of his first voyage and by the attitudes attributed to him that were not his (see Beaglehole 1974:439–440). Nor did he appreciate the controversies that had arisen from Hawkesworth’s discussion of the sexual practices and freedoms of Tahitian society. On that issue he had written to Douglas in quite unequivocal terms, concerning the second voyage: “In short my desire is that nothing indecent may appear in the whole book, and you cannot oblige me more than by pointing out whatever may appear to you as such” (Egerton Ms. 2180, f. 3, British Library, quoted by Beaglehole 1961:cxlvi). This implies that Webber would not be expected to spend much time drawing naked savages in the Pacific, even though he may have spent time drawing nude men and women in his life class of the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* as a student. The test came early. From 24 to 30 January 1777, the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* haved in Adventure Bay, Van Diemen’s Land, to wood and water. Twice a party of

Tasmanians came out of the woods to greet the woodcutters, “without,” Cook recorded, “showing the least mark of fear and with the greatest confidence imaginable, for none of them had any weapons, except one who had in his hand a stick about 2 feet long and pointed at one end. They were quite naked & wore no ornaments, except the large punctures or ridges raised on the skin” (Beaglehole 1967:52). Webber appears to have made a drawing to record the second meeting on 29 January:

We had not be[en] long landed before about twenty of them men and boys joined us without expressing the least fear or distrust, some of them were the same as had been with us the day before, but the greater part were strangers. There was one who was much deformed, being humpbacked, he was no less distinguishable by his wit and humour, which he showed on all occasions and we regretted much that we could not understand him for their language was wholly unintelligible to us. . . . Some of these men wore loose round the neck 3 or 4 folds of small Cord which was made of the fur of some animal, and others wore a narrow slip of the kangaroo skin tied around the ankle. I gave them a string of Beads and a Medal, which I thought they received with some satisfaction. (Beaglehole 1967:54)

This was the first occasion on which native peoples had been encountered on the third voyage, and Webber’s little-known drawing, now in the Naval Library of the Ministry of Defense, London, provides an insight into the subsequent visual program that was closely followed during the whole third voyage. It is quite an ambitious composition for Webber to have begun so early in the voyage, but is obviously unfinished, and I suspect that it is unfinished because Cook felt that it would not be a suitable subject to be engraved in the official account. There seems to be little doubt that it was drawn on the voyage, because Webber included a drawing, under the heading “New Holland Van Diemen’s Land,” in his catalog of works submitted to the Admiralty on his return, entitled *An Interview between Captain Cook and the Natives*. What it would seem Cook did approve of was a drawing of a man and another of a woman of Van Diemen’s Land that would indicate nudity without actually representing it.

Although the *Interview* drawing was never completed or engraved, it does foreshadow what might be described as the official Cook/Webber visual art program for the voyage. Cook is shown meeting the local people in an atmosphere of peace and potential understanding,

offering them gifts and the hope of friendship. And as he began, so he continued. All of Webber's developed compositions constructed on the voyage and for the official publication seem to be saying the same thing: The people of the Pacific are indeed pacific people.²

They had not always been depicted as being so peaceful. In Hawkesworth's *Account*, for example, the first engraving ever to depict Tahitians, though it renders them looking like orientals, shows them engaged in a violent conflict with Captain Wallis' ships, and his guns reducing them to submission. In Parkinson's *Journal*, two Australian Aborigines are depicted "advancing to combat" as Cook landed in Botany Bay (Parkinson 1773:pl xxvii, fp. 134) and in the official account of Cook's second voyage, Hodges had published his painting depicting the violent reception Cook received when he attempted to land at Eromanga in Vanuatu in 1774.

Illustrations of this kind were bound to create controversy, and they did. On the second voyage the Forsters, father and son, had both been critical of the way in which native peoples were frequently treated by the members of Cook's crews. They saw themselves as independent, scientific witnesses who, though they greatly respected Cook's abilities, were not prepared to turn a blind eye to everything that happened. This itself caused resentment. Some of the tensions that developed on the voyage are implicitly revealed in George Forster's *A Voyage round the World*. After providing a detailed account of Cook's attempted landing at Eromanga, he wrote:

From his [i.e., Cook's] account of this unhappy dispute, Mr. Hodges has invented a drawing, which is meant as a representation of his interview with the natives. For my own part, I cannot entirely persuade myself that these people had any hostile intentions in detaining our boat. The leveling of a musket at them, or rather at their chief, provoked them to attack our crew. On our part this manoeuvre was equally necessary; but it is much to be lamented that the voyages of Europeans cannot be performed without being fatal to the nations whom they visit. (Forster 1777, 2:257–258)

Comments of this kind aroused the anger of William Wales, who felt deeply loyal to Cook whatever the circumstance and was also Hodges' friend. In his *Remarks on Mr. Forster's Account of Captain Cook's Last Voyage round the World*, he described Forster's description of the affair at Eromanga as "one of the most singular pieces of misrep-

resentation and detraction that ever dropped from a pen” (Wales 1778:71). This was characteristic of the vitriolic attack that Wales launched on the book as a whole. It caused Forster in turn to publish his *Reply to Mr. Wales’s Remarks* (1778). Concerning Eromanga he wrote in defense:

I had my information of this transaction from the mouth of Captain Cook and those who accompanied him, within an hour or two after the affair had happened. Suppose it disagreed with Captain Cook’s written journal, and printed narrative, and contained some particulars not advantageous to seaman;—what then? What reasonable man will not believe that Captain Cook would exactly relate the matter in the same order as he meant to write it afterwards; or that he would not, upon cool reflection, suppress in writing the mention of such facts as were unfavorable to his own character, even tho’ they could at most be construed into effects of unguarded heat. . . . The officer’s orders [i.e., to shoot] appeared to me unjust and cruel. Let every man judge for himself. So much I know, that the matter was discussed in my hearing, with much warmth, between the officers and Captain Cook, who by no means approved of their conduct at that time. (Forster 1778:34)

Cook had sailed on the third voyage before Forster’s *Voyage* and the resulting controversy was in print. But the heat that had arisen on his own ship over the affair at Eromanga may well have discouraged him from permitting Webber to portray violent confrontations with native peoples on the third voyage.

Cook had good practical reasons to suppress images of conflict. Not only did his instructions require him to cultivate friendship with native people, but the representation of conflict with natives could have had at that time the most unpredictable results. For the contemporary political situation in England was volatile. A week before Cook sailed out of Plymouth, the American colonies had declared their independence. Radical opinion seized upon Cook’s voyages as yet another attempt by England to dominate weaker societies. Cook had been instructed to return Omai to the Society Islands; the social lion had become something of an embarrassment.³ Satirists had seized upon his presence to lampoon the condition of English society. It would be surprising if Cook had not seen and read the most virulent of these satirical broadsides, entitled *An Historical Epistle, from Omiah to the Queen of Otahete; being his Remarks on the English Nation*, which appeared in 1775 while he was resident in London between his second

and third voyages. Omai is presented as a critic of European culture and attacks trenchantly those nations who

... in cool blood premeditatedly go
 To murder wretches whom they cannot know.
 Urg'd by no injury, prompted by no ill
 In forms they butcher, and by systems kill;
 Cross o'er the seas, to ravage distant realms,
 And ruin thousands worthier than themselves.

As a man of Empire, the representative of George III and the Admiralty in the South Seas, Cook, it may be assumed, was reluctant to allow anything to occur in the visual record of the voyage that could give credence to these kinds of sentiments.

* * *

Let us turn to Webber's second major set piece of the voyage, *Captain Cook in Ship Cove, Queen Charlotte Sound*. Cook is presented shaking a Maori chief by the hand, a European mode of greeting that it is unlikely he would have proffered since he knew well enough that pressing noses was the traditional Maori greeting. Nor does the scene confirm the written evidence of any of the journals. For, on entering Ship Cove on this occasion, Cook found the Maori afraid to come aboard, though many of them knew him well from his previous visits. They were afraid he had come to avenge the massacre of Furneaux's men, eight of whom had been killed and eaten at Grass Cove nearby, on the previous voyage. With Omai as interpreter, however, friendly relations were quickly established with the parties visiting the ships.

Yet there is no evidence that the obvious reading of this composition records an actual event. That is to say, Cook did not on this occasion come off his landing boat and go up and shake a Maori chief by the hand. By all accounts the portion of the beach they landed on was unoccupied—a natural precaution in any case—and it was not until a little later that a party of Maori came and set up some temporary habitations nearby. It is indeed true that friendly relations were established on this occasion quickly enough, and this may be credited to Cook's practical good sense; true, too, that all we should expect from a record of a historical event rendered in the mode of a history painting is the general spirit of the occasion, not evidence as to what actually occurred. But my point is that in staging the event in this way, Webber is addressing a British—indeed a European—audience.

Ethnographical information of great interest is being conveyed about the nature of the temporary habitations, the dress and adornment of Maori, but it is conveyed within the framework of a potentially political message: Cook the friendly voyager meeting his old friends the Maori.

A few months later in Lifuka, Tonga, Webber began another large history set piece. Cook and his men intermingle freely with a great crowd of Tongans as they mutually enjoy the boxing and other entertainments prepared for them. The painting may be identified with the work in Webber's catalog entitled *The manner of receiving, entertaining and making Captain Cook a present of the productions of the Island, on his Arrival at the Happi*.

So it continued throughout the voyage. Everywhere Cook goes in the Pacific his arrival is celebrated by Webber in scenes of joyful reception, in dancing, boxing entertainments, gifting, trading. Nothing must disturb this sense of peacefulness. Even Cook's own death, the great trauma of the voyage, is not drawn, nor will it be included in the official publication.

Webber got better at it as the voyage progressed. One of the finest of all his drawings surely must be his record of Cook's meeting with Chuckchi in northern Siberia. They were only on that icy peninsula for between two and three hours, yet Webber managed to make a number of delightful drawings on the spot (see Joppien and Smith, 1985–1987: 3:catalogue 3.272, 3.273, 3.274). Naturally suspicious of the newcomers, the Chuckchi refused to put down their arms—except upon one occasion, when a few of them laid them down and danced for Cook and his men. It was that moment of friendship that Webber chose to record in a beautifully balanced composition.

This then is the implicit message of the Cook/Webber program. Cook is the peacemaker, the philanthropist who is bringing the gifts of civilization and the values of an exchange economy to the savage peoples of the Pacific. Later, after Cook's death, the same message is spelled out to all Europe, in the sixty-odd plates, upon which enormous care and attention were spent, that were included in the Atlas to the official account.

True, these grand peaceful ceremonies and occasions did occur, they were high points in a long voyage and, we might agree, deserved to be recorded for posterity. They were, moreover, the kinds of events that suited Webber's medium. Watercolor drawing and painting with its broad washes of transparent color, its feeling of amplitude for the

breadth and depth of space, is an art surely suited to rendering peaceful scenes. Thus in this instance we might want to conclude, with Marshall McLuhan, that the medium is indeed the message (McLuhan 1967:15–30). Webber portrayed the truth, but it was a highly selective truth, from which all sense of violence and tension had been removed.

Consider for a moment what a modern television camera crew, with the right to film whatever they chose, might have selected, to send by satellite to Europe. They might have selected different events than the boxing and dancing receptions at Tonga for Europeans to remember the visit by. Consider, for example, these incidents recorded by the young midshipman on the *Resolution*, George Gilbert, concerning the stay at Tonga:

These Indians are very dexterous at thieving and as they were permitted to come on board the ships in great numbers, they stole several things from us. This vice which is very pervilent [prevalent] here, Captain Cook punished in a manner rather unbecoming of an European viz: by cutting off their ears; firing at them with small shot, or ball, as they were swimming or paddling to the shore and suffering the people (as he rowed after them) to beat them with the oars, and stick the boat hook into them where ever they could hit them; one in particular he punished by ordering one of our people to make two cuts upon his arm to the bone one across the other close below the shoulder; which was an act that I cannot account for otherways than to have proceeded from a momentary fit of anger as it certainly was not in the least premeditated. (Gilbert 1982:33–34)

It was Cook himself who on the previous voyage had named Tonga the “Friendly Islands.”

Nothing delights a camera crew so much as a conflagration; so they would have been very busy on Moorea on 9 and 10 October 1777. When the *Resolution* had left the Cape it must have seemed like, as David Samwell described it, a “second Noah’s ark” (Beaglehole 1967: 995). Cook had on board “two Horses, two Mares, three Bulls, four Cows, two Calves, fifteen Goats, 30 Sheep, a peacock and a hen, Turkeys, Rabbits, Geese, Ducks and Fowls in great plenty . . . for the purpose of distributing them among the Islands visited” (Gilbert 1982: 20). This was Cook in the role of philanthropist of the Enlightenment bringing the blessings of civilization to the Pacific. The livestock was to be distributed to the islanders, either as gifts to appropriate chieftains or in the process of trade.

Not every Pacific person understood the conventions of hierarchical gifting or of a market economy. So when one of the *Resolution's* fifteen goats was stolen in Moorea, Cook went on a violent punitive mission for two days, burning the local's houses and destroying all the canoes his party came in contact with, and he did not cease until the goat was returned. "The Losses these poor People must have suffer'd would affect them for years to come," wrote Thomas Edgar, the master of the *Discovery* (Edgar in Beaglehole 1967:231, n. 5). "I can't well account for Capt Cook's proceedings on this occasion; as they were so very different from his conduct in like cases in his former voyages," wrote young George Gilbert (Gilbert 1982:47).

Others since Gilbert have attempted to explain Cook's markedly changed behavior on the third voyage. The best is that given by Sir James Watt in his masterly essay on the "Medical Aspects and Consequences of Cook's Voyages" (Watt in Fisher and Johnston 1979:129–157). Watt brings strong evidence to show that Cook on the third voyage was a sick man and suggests that it may well have had the effect of changing his normal pattern of behavior. I would not question this, but it must be said that his illness did not curb his aggression when his authority was threatened.

It is not my intention here to address the whole question of Cook's changed behavior on the third voyage. I do not feel adequately equipped as a historian to attempt it. But I would suggest that those historians who feel they are might address themselves, without wishing to minimize the significance of Watt's findings (because historical causation is notoriously multiple rather than singular) to wider, more general, more countervailing forces acting upon Cook's behavior and personality during the later months of his life. What I am getting at might be summarized in such phrases as "the loss of hope," "an increased cynicism," "familiarity breeds contempt," "power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." By comparison with his contemporaries there need be no doubt that Cook was a wise, extraordinarily gifted, and humane commander. But his first duty was the survival of his crew and the success of his expeditions. That meant that his word must not be questioned, even when it could not be properly understood. When words were not understood, only brute action remained.

On setting out on his first voyage in the *Endeavour*, Cook had been given written advice by Lord Morton, president to the Royal Society. The Society, you will recall, had sponsored the voyage and

Cook gave to Morton's *Hints* a respect second only to his Admiralty instructions. They contained the most detailed set of instructions he ever received on how to treat native peoples encountered. Morton's *Hints* enshrined the high hopes of the philosophers of the Enlightenment for an eventual universal brotherhood of mankind under the leadership, it need hardly be said, of European man. Allow me to quote:

Have it still in view that shedding the blood of those people is a crime of the highest nature:—They are human creatures, the work of the same omnipotent Author, equally under his care with the most polished European; perhaps being less offensive, more entitled to his favour.

They are natural, and in the strictest sense of the word, the legal possessors of the several Regions they inhabit. No European Nation has a right to occupy any part of their country, or settle among them without their voluntary consent.

Conquest over such people can give no just title; because they could never be the Aggressors.

They may naturally and justly attempt to repell intruders, whom they may apprehend are come to disturb them in the quiet possession of their country, whether that apprehension be well or ill founded.

Therefore should they in a hostile manner oppose a landing, and kill some men in the attempt, even this would hardly justify firing among them, till every other gentle method had been tried.

There are many ways to convince them of the Superiority of Europeans. (Quoted in Beaglehole 1955:514)

That, indeed, was an Enlightenment vision of hope. But by 1777 Cook was an old Pacific hand who seems to have grown tired in the use of the many subtle ways in which indigenous people could be convinced of the superiority of Europeans. By 1777 he could cut corners brutally if the occasion arose. There is a sense of disillusion, of a loss of hope. On the first voyage, rather in the spirit of Morton's *Hints*, he had expressed an admiration for the simple life of the Australian Aborigines, "far . . . happier than we Europeans" (Beaglehole 1955:399). And on the second, in Queen Charlotte Sound, he expressed a fear that his very contact with Maori, since his first voyage, had degraded them: "Such are the consequences of commerce with Europeans and what is still more to our Shame civilized Christians, we debauch their Morals already too prone to vice and we

interduce among them wants and perhaps diseases which they never before knew and which serves only to disturb that happy tranquillity they and their fore Fathers had enjoy'd" (Beaglehole 1961:174-175). Yet on his third voyage, with his horses, cows, bulls, and goats, he was still playing the role of an official philanthropist of the Enlightenment, seeking to raise Pacific people from their savage state to a higher level of civilization. Did the growing realization of the contradiction between the philanthropist role he was required to play and his actual experience make him increasingly cynical and brutalize his behavior? By the third voyage he had become convinced that he and other European voyagers were bringing venereal and other diseases to the Pacific. In such cases of guilt it is not unusual to blame the victims. In Queen Charlotte Sound he wrote in his journal, "A connection with Women I allow because I cannot prevent it . . . more men are betrayed than saved by having connection with their women, and how can it be otherwise since all their Views are selfish without the least mixture of regard or attachment whatever" (Beaglehole 1967: 61-62).

The point I wish to make is this: Cook, in his lifetime, had absorbed enough of the hopes and expectancies of the Enlightenment to become aware by his third voyage that his mission to the Pacific involved him in a profound and unresolvable contradiction. In order to treat native peoples in the enlightened way that Morton had exhorted and in order to survive, he had to establish markets among people who possessed little if any notions of a market economy. The alternative was to use force from the beginning as the Spaniards and Portuguese had done, and eighteenth-century Englishmen prided themselves that they could behave more humanely than Spaniards.

There was nothing new about the working methods used for establishing more or less humane contact with primitive people, even when they were, as the ancient Greeks said, stubborn. The Greeks had borne gifts all the way down the Red Sea Coast to the fish eaters and others of the Arabian Sea (see Huntingford 1980). It was the acknowledged way of expanding a commercial empire. And if you wanted wood, water, and fresh food at each new landfall on a long voyage without immediately resorting to violence, there was no other way. So you had to establish markets, at the side of the ship, or on the beaches, as in Webber's fine paintings of the market Cook established at Nomuka, in Tonga.

To establish one's peaceful intentions one began by gifting. The

nature of gifting was more deeply embedded in primitive survival economies than the nature of property or the nature of a free market. So Cook took with him on his third voyage thousands of articles from Matthew Boulton's factory, Soho, in Birmingham—axes, chisels, saws, metal buttons, beads, mirrors, and so on—as presents and for trading (Beaglehole 1967:1492). The year Cook sailed (1776) was the year in which the principle of free trade, of the universal benefits of an international market economy, was given its classic expression in Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Cook was Adam Smith's first and perhaps greatest global agent. He opened a new third of the world to free enterprise.

Smith, the theorist of perfect competition, argued that market prices established themselves by the natural laws of supply and demand; if there was any control at all exercised by this beautifully delicate mechanism, it was best described as wrought by “an invisible hand.”⁴ But Smith drew his conclusions primarily from a study of developed market economies that had been in existence in Europe from ancient times. Cook, the practical man, had the grave problem of insisting upon the rules and conventions where they did not exist or existed at the fringes rather than the center of the primitive polity. There were, of course, markets in the Pacific before Cook, but at various stages of development, from the complete nonexistence of the concept among the natives of Van Diemen's Land⁵ to the astute Indians of Nootka Sound, of whom Cook wrote in chagrin on one occasion that it seemed that “there was not a blade of grass that did not possess a separate owner” (Beaglehole 1967:306).

So in the Pacific Cook had to play at being, as best he could, Adam Smith's god. If the laws of property essential to a free market economy were transgressed and a goat stolen, an act of the god must descend upon the whole community. If a law is not understood as a natural law, the best thing to do, if you possess the power of a god, is to make it seem like one.

What I would suggest, then, is that Cook on his third voyage grew more and more aware in his grand role as Enlightenment Man that he was involved in contradictions that he could not resolve. He had come to the Pacific to spread the blessings and advantages of civilized Europe. What the locals most wanted was the ironware that for so many centuries had made Europe powerful; what Cook's young sailors wanted even more than they wanted fresh food was the bodies of the island women, and it was the one universal product most often

offered, most readily available. So Cook increasingly realized that wherever he went he was spreading the curses much more liberally than the benefits of European civilization. The third voyage records not only his death but, before that, his loss of hope. For what Adam Smith's free market economy offered the South Seas was not really the difference between civilization and savagery, but the difference between exploitation and extermination. Those peoples who were sufficiently advanced to grasp the potential advantages of a market economy survived to become the colonial servants of their European masters; those who could not, because of the primitive nature of their societies, like the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego and Van Diemen's Land, in the fullness of the time of Adam Smith's invisible god, were exterminated—though in a few cases their part-European descendants lived on to cherish the sad tale.

The art of John Webber cannot, of course, speak to us of such things except by its very silences. And for what he does give us we should be grateful. It is an Arcadian Pacific and, for the most part, a pacific Pacific; a new region of the world to be desired by Europeans, sought out, converted to the true, Christian religion, rendered subservient, exploited. It is epitomized in Webber's portrait of Poedua, the daughter of Orio, chief of Raiatea. Here Webber builds upon that image of the Pacific that the preceding voyages had so rapidly and so successfully fashioned. The Pacific as young, feminine, desirable, and vulnerable, an ocean of desire. To her, during the next century, all the nations of Europe will come.

Now in all probability, though it cannot be established entirely beyond doubt, Webber painted Poedua's portrait during the five days during which she was held hostage in the *Discovery*. Raiatea was Cook's last port of call in the Society Islands before he sailed for the cold waters of the north Pacific. Two of the crew, enchanted by the island life, decided to desert. Cook, by now well versed in the art of taking hostages, had Orio, his daughter Poedua, and his son-in-law lured into Captain Clerke's cabin and a guard mounted, holding them prisoner. They should not be released but taken to Europe, old Orio was informed, unless he activated himself in getting the deserters back to Cook. It took five days.

Captain Clerke, who like William Anderson also secretly longed to stay in the Society Islands instead of going, as they did, to their deaths from tuberculosis in the cold northern seas,⁶ describes what occurred:

I order'd some Centinels at the Cabin Door, and the Windows to be strongly barred, then told them, we would certainly all go to England together, if their friends did not procure their release by bringing back the 2 Deserters. My poor Friends at first were a good deal struck with surprise and fear, but they soon recollected themselves, got the better of their apprehensions & were perfectly reconciled to their Situation. . . . The News of their Confinement of course was blaz'd instantaneously throughout the Isle; old Oreo was half mad, and within an hour afterwards we had a most numerous congregation of Women under the Stern, cutting their Heads with Sharks Teeth and lamenting the Fate of the Prisoners, in so melancholy a howl, as render'd the Ship while it lasted, which was 2 or 3 Hours, a most wretched Habitation; nobody cou'd help in some measure being affected by it; it destroyed the spirits of the Prisoners altogether, who lost all their Chearfulness and joined in this cursed dismal Howl, I made use of every method I cou'd suggest to get them away, but all to no purpose, there they wou'd stand and bleed and cry, till their Strength was exhausted and they cou'd act the farce no longer. When we got rid of these Tragedians, I soon recover'd my Friends and we set down to Dinner together very chearfully. (Beaglehole 1967: 1317–1318).

Whether you view the affair as a Pacific farce or as a Greek tragedy, it is not difficult to imagine how the camera crew of a not particularly friendly nation might have recorded the scene.

Everything points to the fact that so far as the visual events of the voyage were concerned, Webber was setting out quite deliberately to construct a peaceful image of the Pacific and of the peaceable relations of its peoples with the voyagers. Even when he drew portraits—for example, just as they left the Society Islands Webber drew a portrait of a chief of Bora-Bora with his lance, but when he made the finished drawing he removed the lance.

After Cook's death, the apparent desire for a suppression of all scenes of violence and conflict continues in the engraving of scenes of the voyages published in the Atlas of the official account. Even a face that might recall a scene of great violence is not included. We know that Webber painted a portrait in oils of Kahura,⁷ a Maori chieftain who was responsible for the killing and eating of Captain Furneaux's men at Grass Cove on the second voyage. Cook established beyond any reasonable doubt that Kahura was responsible for the massacre,

but instead of taking revenge, he developed a respect for his courage and the confidence Kahura placed in him (Beaglehole 1967:69). Dr Joppien has succeeded in identifying one of the portraits now in the Dixson Library, Sydney, as a portrait of Kahura (Joppien and Smith 1985–1987:3:19, 285). It is of interest that a portrait of Kahura was among those omitted in the list selected for publication in the Atlas. Perhaps the portrait of a notorious cannibal, however much admired by Cook, was not considered suitable for the official account of the voyage.

Nor was a representation of Cook's own death. And when Webber made his famous drawing, which was later engraved by Bartolozzi and published separately in 1784, the great navigator was presented in the role of a peacemaker, holding out a hand gesturing to his men in the *Resolution* pinnace to stop firing at the enraged Hawaiians.

If my analysis is correct, Cook on his third voyage, at least so far as the visual record was concerned, was constructing an image of himself as a man of peace in the Pacific, a man universally welcomed there by peaceable people. Representations of violent encounters were suppressed or ignored. He could not have known as he left the island of Bora-Bora that he would discover another great Polynesian society in the North Pacific unknown to Europeans, and that there he would be received as the very incarnation of a god of peace, as the returning god Lono, the god of carnival, of the *makahiki* festival.⁸ So it was that Cook was received, as few men have been, into an alien culture in a fashion that accorded with his own personal and most innermost desire; and the myth of Cook as the hero of peace and the harbinger of civilization in the Pacific was sustained in Europe and the Pacific long after his death. But it was myth, not reality. The reality lay in the hidden contradictions latent in establishing a free-market economy in the Pacific. To do that Cook had taken with him iron from a Birmingham factory that, when fashioned into daggers, was used to cut him down on Kealakekua beach. For when Cook, this man of peace, attempted for the last time to take a Pacific chieftain hostage—dealing once again in the coercive market in which captives are exchanged for stolen goods—the hidden hand of Kūkā'īlimoku, the Hawaiian god of war, struck him down and four of his marines. Cook had committed the fatal error of returning to the island when peace no longer reigned there, not even in myth. The course of history is littered with such ironies.

NOTES

1. In this chapter, I have drawn heavily upon the combined research of Dr. Rüdiger Joppien and me from volume 3 of *The Art of Captain Cook's Voyages* (1987) for many of the facts presented. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Joppien for his recent research on the early life and training of John Webber. In other cases where I have drawn directly on Dr. Joppien's personal research, this is mentioned in the notes. Apart from that, the opinions expressed are my own.

2. See Joppien in Joppien and Smith (1985–1987:3:193 et al.). The remainder of this chapter develops the implication of this initial insight of Dr. Joppien.

3. On Omai in general, see McCormick (1977).

4. "He intends only his own gain and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention" (Smith 1976:1:456).

5. "They received everything we gave them without the least appearance of satisfaction . . . they either retrieved it or threw it away without so much as tasting it" (Beaglehole 1967:52).

6. The story is told by James Burney, first lieutenant on the *Discovery*, who had it from Anderson. It is recounted in Burney's *Chronological History of North-Eastern Voyages of Discovery*, London (1819:233–234) and quoted in Beaglehole (1974:568–569).

7. See his manuscript "Catalogue of Drawing and Paintings on Oyl by Mr. Webber" under "Portraits in Oyl Colour. New Zealand. Kahowre a Chief." National Library of Australia, Canberra.

8. On these dark and profound matters of ethnohistory, see Sahlins (1980) and Denning (1982).

A VIEW FROM AFAR (NORTH AMERICA)
—A COMMENTARY BY RICHARD WHITE

A few years ago Patricia Limerick, who writes about the American West, suggested that historians of the American West join with historians of the Pacific to form a Peripheral Studies Association. Historians of the Pacific have a wider and vastly wetter domain, but historians of the American West, like the historians of the Pacific whom Rob Borofsky quotes, have often felt marginalized within their disciplines. Other historians regard their subjects as exotic backwaters, peripheral to the wider concerns of the profession. In part, both groups had brought this on themselves, but whatever their provinciality, it was more than matched by the provinciality of the historical discipline as a whole whenever Europe faced the “people without history,” as Eric Wolf mockingly said in the title of one of his books (1982).

Central to the regional experience of the American West and the transnational experience of the Pacific has been a contact experience: a meeting between peoples already present and powerful strangers who have traveled vast distances. Although the consequences were far from inevitable, colonialism and the destruction and creation of land, peoples, and cultures all flowed from contact. In the wake of contact there arose a shared conviction among virtually all concerned of the importance of that experience, as well as bitter disputes over representations of that experience. No moment in this whole experience has been more contested than that of contact itself: the sense that the participants made of each other, how they understood each other, and how and if we could recover and represent that experience and all that flowed from it.

In many ways the shift from imperial to Islander-centered histories has paralleled the evolving focus of studies in the American West in particular and North America in general. Studies of imperial or national policy have given way to studies of Indian peoples and how

they attempted to shape the context and direction of contact. Such studies, like those in the Pacific, suffer from a major deficiency: Virtually all the written records in this experience come from one side—the Europeans and their descendants.

In North America and, as Greg Dening has made brilliantly clear, in the Pacific, these records are neither simple nor transparent. Perhaps no scholar's work conveys the tentativeness, the invention, and the complexity involved in narrating contact than Dening, and no one conveys the elusive sense of it more brilliantly. The remnants, the documents and artifacts that survive from the past into the present, do not yield meanings easily; or rather they can often sustain multiple meanings and interpretations. Descendants of Europeans cannot claim a special knowledge of what their ancestors thought centuries ago simply because their ancestors in some collective sense created these documents, nor, I think, can descendants of native peoples claim privileged knowledge because of accounts of contact that survive among them.

We are left with guesses built on scattered, partial, and difficult to decipher evidence. Greg Dening's famous governing metaphor of *Islands and Beaches* (1980), as a way of understanding contact, has had immense influence on work in North America, particularly my own. European records give us an insight into what happened on the beaches, where people from different worlds first met. This account can be remarkably full and revealing in ways that I will explain, but it tells us far less about the islands, the interior of indigenous cultures and societies.

In these kinds of contact studies, the trick is to work with what you have. The sources tell you far more about the meeting, the process of making sense, than they do of the interior world of either group. In the evolution of contact, in the changing power relations, you see each side desperately trying to find versions of the other that will work. The "Stranger's things remade to Tahitian meanings" of which Dening writes had their parallels all across North America in what I have called the "middle ground." In my own formulation of the middle ground, I began with an epigram from another piece of Pacific history, Marshall Sahlins' *Islands of History*: "In action, people put their concepts and categories into ostensive relations to the world. Such referential uses bring into play other determinations of the signs, besides their received sense, namely the actual world and the people concerned" (1985:149). The middle ground as I formulated it

was a process of mutual invention among Indians and Europeans. It is a product of beaches. It depended on the inability of both sides to gain their ends through force. Those who operated on the middle ground tried to understand the world and reasoning of others in order to assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes. That they often got this exotic reasoning terribly wrong mattered less than that the other side, for similar reasons, reciprocated. Each side would gladly have coerced others into obeying their rules if they could, but they could not, and so instead they built surprisingly durable worlds from mutual misunderstandings. Both the Pacific and North America sustained rough balances of power long enough for such worlds to arise (White 1991).

The best example of such a rough balance of power in North America was the *pays d'en haut*, the upper country, which included the lands draining into the Great Lakes as well as lands stretching west to the Mississippi and south to the Ohio. Here, from the late seventeenth century until the early nineteenth century, Indian peoples remained strong enough to force Europeans to regard them as allies and trading partners rather than as subjects (White 1991).

The parallels of contact experience, of course, go only so far. The mutual invention, the impact of disease, the susceptibility of parts of the Pacific and North America to what Alfred Crosby has called "ecological imperialism," the substitution of a largely European biota for the native biota present at contact—all of these transcend the Pacific and North America and allow fruitful comparison, even if Alfred Crosby (1986) is one of the very few to connect even part of them in any detail. The very scale of the colonial encounter in North America creates differences. There are many natives and many strangers crowding onto the historical stage at a given moment. The more discrete and sequential and smaller scale contacts of the Pacific seem different. The imperial wars, which arrayed different combinations of Indian peoples and Europeans against other combinations of Indian peoples and Europeans, had few parallels that I know of in the Pacific.

Taking the histories together, what seems commonplace for imperialism in North America fails to hold in the Pacific, while much of the peculiarity of American history claimed by historians as unique seems far less so in light of the Pacific. These shadings emerge only when the two experiences are overlaid, one with the other. In North America, for example, the ability of first empires and then states to control the actions of their settlers seems initially far more circum-

scribed than in the Pacific. In the Pacific, certainly, whaling captains could indulge in freelance violence and sailors could settle among Islanders, but the filibustering expeditions, private arrangements for land cessions, and large-scale unauthorized movements into the interior typical of colonial settlement in North America appear more rarely. In the United States, historians tend to see the treaty relationship between the federal government and Indian peoples as unique. It appears far less so when compared to New Zealand. Similarly, the American combination of ecological invasion, rapid capitalist transformation of the landscape, and, nearly simultaneously, moves toward conservation and preservation seem simply a variant on British settler societies when compared to New Zealand.

I know that I would have looked at North America and the American West far differently if I had not read Pacific history. This volume makes clear both that I still have much to learn and that sometimes the most interesting things are happening on the periphery.

SECTION THREE

Colonial Engagements

At first glance, colonialism may appear a fairly straightforward historical process: a matter of outside domination backed by outside force. On closer analysis, however, things are more murky. When, for example, should one delineate colonialism as beginning—in the formal annexation of an archipelago by an outside power or, instead, in the varied interactions, over several decades, leading up to that annexation? As Thomas observes, “It is important to recognize that a variety of colonial representations and encounters both precede and succeed periods of actual possession and rule” (1994:16). Why should one limit “colonialism,” then, to only its most overt stage?

Nor should we be too quick to view colonialism as the sole or primary form of dominance directed at non-Western peoples. Klor de Alva notes in regard to South America: “The experience of colonialism, with the senses it has come to have today, primarily as a process of exploitation and dependent subordination to nonlocals, escaped those mestizos who came to form the majority of the popu-

lation of preindependence Americas, although these were nonetheless subjugated, abused, exploited, and often killed by other mestizo, mulatto, Indian, and criollo locals. . . . One does not have to be colonized to suffer" (1995:270).

And, critically, we need to consider how colonial control was carried out. It is particularly striking how few "colonials" there were in most colonial settings. In Tahiti in 1848, for example—following a failed revolt against the French—the ratio was approximately 1 to 17 (Newbury 1980:128). By way of comparison, in the Spanish Kingdom of New Mexico, the ratio of those capable of bearing arms was 1 to 50 (Gutiérrez 1991:133); in the British Raj of India, more generally, there were rarely more than a hundred thousand Europeans scattered among the indigenous population of 250 million (Meyer 1999:16). How were so few able to "rule" so many? The closer we look at colonialism, the more subtle, complex, and varied a phenomenon it appears to be.

A word of framing before proceeding further: Histories of the period make clear that focusing solely on the annexation period of colonialism misses central concerns of interest to Islanders and Outlanders alike. It makes colonialism seem to jump "full born" from the past, when in fact a range of complex, subtle, and violent events critically preceded formal annexation. We need to examine these events, as well, to understand colonialism as a process.

General Texts and Themes

Oliver (1989) and Howe (1984) portray the period's dynamics in different ways. Oliver examines the Western "invaders" who followed the explorers into the Pacific: whalers, traders, missionaries, planters, labor recruiters, merchants, miners, and administrators. One cannot help note the diversity of the "invaders" and their apparent agendas. Still a general trend can be discerned—the whalers, traders, and missionaries preceded and, to some degree, set the foundation for these other groups. By the mid-nineteenth century, Oliver notes that the era of the missionary "kingdoms" (Islander kingdoms markedly influenced by missionaries) and warship diplomacy (in which European warships enforced debt payments claimed by Western traders) "was about over, and a new era of more

pervasive colonialism and more officially approved annexation was ushered in. The haphazard plunder of Island resources by whalers and itinerant traders began to be supplanted by the more systematic exploitation of planter and resident merchant" (1989:59). What one perceives in Oliver are the processes by which the Pacific is drawn into a larger economic system with Islander land, labor, and authority becoming increasingly organized for others' profit.

Howe lays more emphasis on Islander agency than Oliver. In respect to the establishment of island kingdoms in Tahiti, Hawai'i, and Tonga during this period, he suggests: "Their monarchs were men who exploited customary status and authority structures within their own societies and the presence, techniques, and ideas of Europeans. Ambitious chiefs and Westerners both had vested interests in the aggrandizement and centralization of political power. Chiefs sought status, power, and wealth, missionaries desired dutiful Christian populations obeying [their] law and order, and traders wanted security, a reliable supply of produce, and labor, all of which could come from an entrenched monarchical government" (1984:125).

It is interesting to note that neither Oliver nor Howe directly explores the politics of colonial control. Oliver talks repeatedly about the transformations wrought. But while touching on colonial concerns, he does not assess the overall role of the colonial powers—preferring to focus instead on specific European organizations and events. Howe ends his history before formal colonialization. Still, colonialism remains there in the background: He ends several chapters with a "Denouement" that forebodingly suggests the colonial events yet to come.

Four other books, building on these narratives, explore the complexities of the period. Scarr (1990) highlights dynamics in particular locales as a way of suggesting broader generalizations: "The plantation vision [i.e., planting cash crops such as sugar or coconuts] was seen on pretty well every Island with suitable land where Europeans came ashore with capital or credit," he notes. "Hawaii, the model . . . contains the essential ingredients: ample fertile land, a biddable or buyable élite, a quiescent if complaining people, and proximity to a market" (1990:159).

Tides of History, edited by Howe, Kiste, and Lal (1994),

focuses on the twentieth century. Several chapters deal with “colonialism.” Hempenstall, for example, discusses general factors behind the formal annexation of many Pacific islands: “The geopolitical changes that occurred globally as British domination of trade and industry began to decline and other countries began to catch up . . . internal economic and political developments within metropolitan powers themselves . . . [and] relations between Europeans and Pacific Islanders” (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:30). Regarding Dutch, British, and German rule in Melanesia, Bennett observes that “the colonial ‘development’ goals . . . were ‘pacification’ for areas of economic potential, and marginal but controlled involvement in the cash economy” (64). In respect to colonial control in Micronesia, Hanlon notes, “as with religion and education, efforts at economic development were another vehicle through which colonial powers sought to direct Micronesian people and their resources towards the service of larger metropolitan interests” (103).

Campbell provides a general overview of the period. “Broadly speaking,” he asserts, “colonial policy was a continuation of pre-colonial policy. . . . France, which acquired part of its empire in indifference, governed it the same way; Germany, which was frankly concerned with exploiting and developing resources, got on with the job expeditiously; Britain, having lacked a positive policy previously, continued to be guided by *ad hoc* principles; [and] the United States of America created an environment for business” (1996:156).

Denoon (1997b) moves away from a chronological/regional ordering of colonialism’s dynamics to focus on how land, labor, and political authority gradually, and at times violently, moved from Islander to Outlander control. Chapters written by different authors explore the dynamics of the process; for example, how control over land and labor often became increasingly centralized, initially in indigenous hands and then, later, in foreign hands. Denoon states: “Only a few Islands bore the full brunt of mines, plantations, or depopulation; but at the other extremity, few retained control over their own land and labor. . . . The initiative was seized by colonial powers, seeking to reorder affairs in different ways to those which Islanders themselves developed” (183).

Oliver (1989), Howe, Kiste, and Lal (1994), Campbell (1996), Scarr (1990), and Denoon (1997b) all discuss World War II's role in transforming the Pacific. A colonial backwater of the 1930s, the region became, with the "War in the Pacific," a major focus of world attention. Money, technology, and change poured in as never before. Old shibboleths of colonial invulnerability evaporated in the battles, lost and won, between the Allies and the Japanese. The region, still colonial in 1950, was nonetheless a dramatically transformed colonial world. Firth writes: "Everything governments did after the war was on a vastly greater scale, and some of what they did was meant to prepare Islanders for independence in the remote future. The war heralded the coming of developmental colonization" (Denoon 1997b:322).

What is intriguing in these accounts is how a refined sense of imperial history—the history of imperial powers interacting with Islanders—has again become a central concern of Pacific historians. Once out of fashion, it is now very much in fashion.

Broadening Perspectives¹

Where should we go from here? Drawing on literature from beyond the region, I would suggest four areas for further refinement.

¹For further references see: **ambiguity in defining colonialism**: Klor de Alva 1995:241, 248, 269; Denoon 1997b:411; Apter 1995:315; Thomas 1994:97, 171; Cooper 1997:409; Doyle 1986:45; **silences of colonialism**: Said 1993:xiii, 50; Pels 1997:166, 178; Stoler and Cooper 1997:21; Cohn 1996:10; Trouillot 1995:83; Guha 1988a:40; Guha 1988b:45, 84; Guha 1989:299; Steedly 1993:134; Said 1995:34; **complexities of collaboration**: Hempenstall 1978; Memmi 1965:45–76; Bhabha 1984:85–122; Chatterjee 1993:197; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:244–245; Prakash 1990:397; Fox 1985:140–184; Stoler and Cooper 1997:20; **"tensions of empire"**: Pels 1997: 163, 173, 176; Stoler 1992b:323; Stoler and Cooper 1997:7, 19, 24; Cooper 1997: 406, 409; Steedly 1993:52; Gutiérrez 1991:96, 306, 336; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:183, 198–205, 212; Dirks 1996:xvi–xvii; Taussig 1987:134; Bhabha 1984; Pratt 1992:57; Stoler 1992a:183; **the culture of colonialism, more generally**: Hempenstall 1992:72; Belich 1996:278–450; Belich 1986:311–335; Said 1993:159; Thomas 1994: 167; Stoler and Cooper 1997:6, 9, 31; Dirks 1992:21; Gutiérrez 1991:102, 177–179, 198, 226; Greenblatt 1991:139; Stoler 1997:226; **colonialism in the metropole**: Cohn

First, we need to be sensitive to the implicit and explicit silences that pervade many accounts of the period. “We cannot just *do* colonial history based on our given sources,” Stoler and Cooper suggest. “What constitutes the archive itself, what is excluded from it, what nomenclatures signal at certain times are themselves internal to, and the very substance of, colonialism’s cultural politics” (1997:18). Following Chakrabarty, we might note that the gaps in history have their own history (1988:230). Spivak develops this point in her famous piece, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” It is not simply that few records exist regarding those of subordinate, or subaltern, status, especially those doubly subordinate—subordinated within indigenous hierarchies and, then, subordinated again within the colonial hierarchy. Often there are few vehicles for subaltern expression (cf. Thompson 1963:55). In the case of subaltern women, for example, Spivak notes that “both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (1988:287). One is left to infer her “voice” from a close, contextual analysis of particular actions. In “The Prose of Counter-Insurgency,” Guha explores the coded words that framed colonial records—“insurgents” became “peasants,” “defying the authority of

1996:3, 11; Thompson 1963:19, 42, 60, 177, 191, 212, 401–402, 685–687; Pandey 1994:198; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:285, 290, 293; Cooper 1992:210–211; Thomas 1994:66; Thorne 1997:238–239; **colonialism provides insight into the West and its dynamics:** Pratt 1992:6, 34, 36; Dirks 1996:xi, xvii; Stoler and Cooper 1997: 1; Wright 1997:326; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:267, 293; Young 1990:119, 139–140; Phillips 1995:105; Stoler 1995:3–12 ff.; **colonial control through structuring of knowledge:** Cohn 1966:8, 55, 61, 75, 162; Dirks 1996:x, xiii, xv, xvi–xvii; Said 1993: 100, 237; Guha 1988:70; Seed 1992:10; Spivak 1988:281; Thomas 1994:108; Pratt 1992:9, 30; Gascoigne 1996:107–108, 111; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:310; Chatterjee 1993:9, 56, 168, 223; **other means of relatively nonviolent colonial control:** Pels 1997:174; Thomas 1994:116, 119, 122; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:215–216; Hunt 1997:308; Colonna 1997:352–353; **perspectives on colonial resistance:** Hemenstall and Rutherford 1984; Chatterjee 1993:6, 26, 55, 132; Said 1993:223; Spivak 1987:97; Bhabha 1984, 1985; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:260; Sahlin 1994a:384; Silverblatt 1995:291–292.

the State” became “revolt against zamindari,” indigenous taxation officials (see 1988b:59). Resistance was softened, in other words; direct challenges to the State became reframed.

One of the categories often suppressed today is that of colonial collaborators. Collaborators played a critical role in maintaining colonial authority by acting as intermediaries in the ruling process. They allowed a colonial few to rule a colonized many. Robinson suggests that finding successful collaborators was often the key to imperial rule: Every stage of the imperial process from initial intrusion to decolonization “was determined by the indigenous collaborative systems connecting its European and Afro-Asian components” (1972:138–139). Today, the presence of such collaboration tends to be softened or silenced as an embarrassment—much as happened in France following World War II. The presence of colonial collaborators disrupts national narratives of resistance to outside domination.

Second, we should explore further the whole culture of colonialism: how it operated, what its tensions, conflicts, and ambiguities were. That metropolitan aims were imperfectly carried out along the colonial periphery is well known. But what is less stressed is that colonialism itself was full of ambiguities and contradictions that made it, even at its best, an imperfect project. Stoler, for example, explores one “tension of empire”: “the relationship among the discourses of inclusion, humanitarianism, and equality that informed liberal policy at the turn of the century in colonial Southeast Asia and the exclusionary, discriminatory practices that were reactive to, coexistent with, and perhaps inherent in liberalism itself” (1997:198; see also Mehta 1997). In a similar vein, colonial efforts at development and “progress” could either extend or limit colonial authority. Concerns over Fijian health became a way for extending colonial authority into traditional Fijian village life. “The British colonizing effort in Fiji,” Thomas observes, “proceeded through social engineering rather than violent repression, and appeared essentially as an operation of welfare rather than conquest” (1994:124). But the education system in French colonies such as Algeria, in affirming Western liberal ideals of shared equality, tended to encourage challenges to colonial hierarchies because they were inconsistent with French republican beliefs (cf. Colonna

1997). The working out of metropole ideals in the colonial periphery was a complex, contradictory process then. As Bhabha points out: “In ‘normalizing’ the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms” (1994:86). One can perceive this same ambivalence in the “anti-conquest” travel narratives discussed by Pratt: “European bourgeois . . . seek to secure their innocence [regarding conquest] in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (1992:7). Thomas suggests that colonialism was “a fractured [project] . . . riddled with contradictions and exhausted as much by its own internal debates as by the resistance of the colonized” (1994:51).

Third, we need to consider broadening the unit of colonial analysis. It is important to realize “colonialism” operated at home as well as abroad, in the West as well as the Rest. Working-class Europeans were subjected to similar regimes of control, partial inclusion, and partial exclusion that were prevalent in the colonies (cf. Thomas 1994:66). Fascism, Young suggests, citing Fanon and Césaire, “was simply colonialism brought home to Europe” (1990:125). E. P. Thompson’s *The Making of the English Working Class* makes clear colonialism was at work in Europe long before that. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the English working class “were subjected simultaneously to an intensification of two intolerable forms of relationship: those of economic exploitation and of political oppression” (1963:198–199). What Thompson describes for the metropole held, as well, for colonies: “The pressures towards discipline and order extended from the factory, on the one hand, the Sunday school, on the other, into every aspect of life” (1963:401; cf. Cooper 1992). (For an example of what it means to come out on the losing side of history—to have one’s history written by the winning side—refer to accounts of the Luddites; see Thompson 1963:484, 534, 552.)

We need to look at the colonies and the metropole, then, as a single analytical unit—comparing the dynamics in one with the dynamics in the other (cf. Said 1993:191). Often colonies constituted experimental theaters for projects at home. Wright (1997) discusses how the French, in the early part of the twentieth century, used their colonies for experimenting with architectural and urban

renewal relevant to France itself. (One might also note here that missionaries were often encouraged to initially attempt their “civilizing” efforts abroad rather than at home; Comaroff 1997:175, Thorne 1997:245, 248.) Cohn observes: “It is not just that the personnel who governed Indians were British, but the projects of state building in both countries—documentation, legitimation, classification, and bounding, and the institutions therewith—often reflected theories, experiences, and practices worked out originally in India and then applied in Great Britain” (1996:3–4). We might view the colonies as a lens for understanding the metropole. Comaroff and Comaroff observe that Africa “was like a camera obscura of British civilization, a virtual portrait of all that bourgeois refinement was not” (1992:290). Many Europeans perceived India, Cohn notes, “not only as exotic and bizarre but as a kind of living museum of the European past” (1996:78).

Finally, we should explore further the varieties of colonial control. Threats (and the realities) of violence often lay behind colonial authority. There was certainly violence in the Pacific—such as in the New Zealand wars of 1845–1872 and in the New Caledonia war of 1878–1879. But a host of strategies were often employed to move control from coercion toward consent. Without denying the violence in colonial rule, these need elucidation as well. Dirks observes: “Colonialism was made possible, and then sustained and strengthened, as much by cultural technologies of rule as it was by the more obvious and brutal modes of conquest” (1996:ix). Cohn’s (1996) *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (regarding India), is one of the preeminent works in this regard (though also note Pratt 1992 and Miller and Reill 1996). In seeking to establish laws based on Indian traditions, Cohn observes, the British ended up making Indian laws sound very much like British laws because of how the British reinterpreted ambiguous Indian traditions (1996:75). And in the construction of censuses, social categories were established that the British thought reflected sociological categories but that, in fact, generated them. What had been ambiguously fluid and abstract categories now became concrete in a double sense. History was another field made over by the British. What is intriguing about the colonial histories constructed, Guha notes, is that “the appropriated past came to serve . . . not only for the

colonizers, but ironically for the colonized as well” (1989: 212). (One is reminded here of how the British, in alliance with Fijian chiefs, constructed a set of Fijian “traditions”; see France 1969.) And yet, in drawing on British colonial renditions of the Indian past, many Indian elite reframed them to justify opposing Britain (cf. Fox 1985). Colonial control is more than a matter of resistance and accommodation, then. There are degrees of resistance, degrees of accommodation, with a host of subtle complications in between.

The Selections

The following chapters consider the central dynamics of the colonial worlds that dominated the Pacific for more than a century. These dynamics are framed in terms of four overlapping themes.

“Colonial Entanglements,” the first theme, addresses the question of Outlander vs. Islander agency (discussed by Oliver and Howe). We see the dynamics of the era as more than a formulaic framing of Islander accommodation and/or resistance, Islander-Outlander opposition, or simply Islander agency. Matters are more complex. The collaborations and conflicts of the period cross and recross these framings. Marshall Sahlins’ “Hawai’i in the Early Nineteenth Century” discusses how the ruling chiefs used foreign missionaries to deal with foreign merchants and gunboats. All the while, merchants fought with missionaries and the Hawaiian “powers-that-be” struggled among themselves. There was agency all around. As the Hawaiian monarchy contended with multiple demands, it drew on traditional resources. But in reproducing earlier cultural structures, such as the *makahiki*, Kamehameha also transformed his position. By 1840 the king reigned but did not govern. The royal rebellions failed—as much through Hawaiian as foreign resistance. In “Deaths on the Mountain,” August Kituai discusses the violence that helped perpetuate colonial rule. What is critical here is that at least some of the violence was carried out by Papua New Guineans on other Papua New Guineans. He observes that the native police were, in certain respects, “more colonial than the colonialists.” We catch a glimpse of the politics and pragmatics involved in working at the edge of colonial control.

“Tensions of Empire,” the second theme, explores the contradictions and conflicts that made colonialism an imperfect project at best—a project that often undermined its own objectives. (We also perceive the subtle ways colonies and metropolises, or centers of imperial power, were intertwined.) Nicholas Thomas’ “Colonial Conversion” discusses the contradictory structures by which missionaries incorporated Solomon Islanders into their Christian world. Islanders were seen as children within a family unit—a frame of reference that allowed for distancing, hierarchizing, and incorporating all at the same time. To attract support from the metropole, missionaries drew on narrative structures that demonized the pre-Christian era, praised the new Christian order, and stressed their “civilizing” role (in comparison to other European groups). We can see, in retrospect, that they rather overstated their case. Michel Panoff’s “The French Way in Plantation Systems” observes that colonial systems were not all alike nor, importantly, were they equally effective in carrying out their stated objectives. The French colonial “way,” Panoff suggests, fostered a certain degree of incompetency and dependency. One also sees that success was not a sure thing for many plantation owners. Failure was a real possibility. Without exploitation of islanders’ land and labor, many could not make a go of it.

“Styles of Dominance,” the third theme, deals with the ambiguities and contradictions of colonial control. Violence was certainly an important element (as Kituai and Belich demonstrate). But there were subtler forms as well. One was an ethnocentric way of dealing with difference that encouraged colonists to persist, even in the face of contradictory evidence, with a sense of their own superiority. James Belich’s “The New Zealand Wars and the Myth of Conquest” offers an important case study in this regard. Many Maori held their own against British troops. This fact was repeatedly denied, however, by the British. It would have brought into question their belief in their own racial superiority. Intriguingly, this faith in themselves constituted a contributing factor in their eventual success. The British persisted, adding more and more troops, until they won. Myth became reality. “Theorizing Maori Women’s Lives,” by Patricia Grimshaw and Helen Morton, explores the politics of representing others from a different angle. Europeans

depicted Maori women in evaluative terms that, again, tended to affirm European perspectives. But in giving free reign to their ethnocentric biases, there arose numerous contradictions in the accounts regarding the power of Maori women, their effectiveness as mothers, and their physical beauty. Such contradictions prove valuable today in opening up alternative—new—possibilities for representing Maori women. W. S. Merwin’s poem “Conqueror” considers a central question of colonialism: To what degree are the colonized transformed by colonialism? This question leads to others: If the colonized become just like the colonizers, are the latter then needed? Or phrased differently: Might we not wonder if many colonists had an investment in the colonized remaining different? Otherwise, what purpose would they, and the colonial system they operated, have?

World War II was a pivotal event in the region. Rather than summarizing the scores of battles that took place, this final theme considers what the war meant for particular participants in it. Sam Highland’s “World War II in Kiribati” discusses the war’s violence and destruction from an indigenous perspective. As in Belich’s chapter, we perceive victors described more positively than losers. This raises an intriguing question. If the allies had lost the war in Kiribati, would the Betio villagers have depicted them in such rosy terms, the Japanese in such negative terms? Hisafumi Saito’s “Barefoot Benefactors” makes clear the Japanese did not see themselves as villains. They affirmed a shared bond with Islanders—a relation of intimacy and concern founded on their common opposition to the West. There are, in other words, silences, myths, and contradictions in this colonial conflict that bear examining.

Gyan Prakash’s “A View from Afar” offers a subaltern perspective on the colonial process. His remarks regarding colonialism’s ambiguities and contradictions in South Asia are valuable for making sense of similar processes in the Pacific. And his remarks indicate the negative side of how Europeans exoticized Pacific Islanders. Europeans developed the impression that the region’s populations were a cultural tabula rasa to be inscribed upon by the West. That did not occur, to the same degree, in South Asia.

A question readers might ponder in this section is:

- *How did the dynamics—the collaborations, conflicts, contradictions, and controls—of the colonial period support and/or impede colonial domination?*

Clearly, colonialism was a conflicted process. Outlanders and Islanders came together in a range of complex combinations. Some dynamics without doubt reinforced colonial authority. What is intriguing to ponder, however, is the degree to which the colonists, in the very way they practiced colonialism, created contradictions that undermined the colonial projects in which they claimed to be engaged.

Relevant Dates

Hawai'i

- 1786 Beginning of American Northwest Coast–China fur trade with Hawai'i used as a stopover (Sahlins 1992:3; Oliver 1989:51)
- 1810 Kamehameha's unification of the Hawaiian islands (Howe 1984:158)
- 1810–1830 Prime period of China sandalwood trade (Sahlins 1992:3, 58 ff.; Oliver 1989:49, 51–53; Howe 1984:161)
- 1820 Arrival of missionaries belonging to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Oliver 1989:55)
- 1848 Mahele division of titles between the chiefs and the king leading to foreign ownership of land (Sahlins 1992:132–137; Oliver 1989:183)
- 1850s Peak period of whaling in the Pacific (Hawai'i often used as a major stopover) (Oliver 1989:49)
- 1893 Overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani by a "Provisional Government" of American businessmen (Denoon 1997:232–237)
- 1898 Hawai'i annexed by the United States (Denoon 1997:236; Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:249)

Papua New Guinea

- 1872 First recorded British trade station established in the area, followed soon thereafter by a German trade station (Oliver 1989:162)

- 1880s Development of coconut plantations in coastal New Guinea (Oliver 1989:163)
- 1884 Partitioned into the German protectorate of New Guinea and the British protectorate of Papua (Howe 1984:343)
- 1884–1845 New Guinea Company commissioned by German government to govern New Guinea (Denoon 1997:220; Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:53)
- 1899 New Guinea Company surrendered its mandate and New Guinea became a regular German colony (Denoon 1997:220; Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:53)
- 1906 Papua passed to Australian control (Denoon 1997:164)
- 1921 New Guinea became a mandate of Australia (following Germany's defeat in World War I) (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:56)
- 1926 Gold discovered on Mount Kaindi (Denoon 1997:266)

Solomon Islands

- 1840–1850s Peak period of whaling (with use of area for stopovers) (Bennett 1987:24–26)
- 1845–1847 Unsuccessful effort to establish a Catholic Marist mission (Howe 1984:290–291)
- 1850s Regular trading for tortoise and pearl shell (Bennet 1987:46)
- 1860s Beginning of “labor trade” (or “blackbirding”) involving transport of islanders to plantations in Queensland, Fiji, and New Caledonia as laborers (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:60; Howe 1984:329–330, 333–334)

- 1893 Became British protectorate (Howe 1984:343)
- 1898 Return of Catholic missionaries (Bennett 1987:61; Howe 1984:292)
- 1902 Establishment of missionaries belonging to the Australian branch of the Methodists (Thomas 1994:125–126; Bennet 1987:61, Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:60)

Vanuatu

- 1829–1830 Largely unsuccessful efforts to harvest sandalwood due to conflicts with Eromangans and disease (though efforts more effective in the ensuing two decades) (Oliver 1989:170–171; Howe 1984:285, 329)
- 1839 Murder of the missionary John Williams (Howe 1984:286–287)
- 1839 Arrival of Polynesian missionaries belonging to the London Missionary Society (Howe 1984:287)
- 1860s Beginning of “labor trade” (or “blackbirding”) involving transport of islanders to plantations in Queensland, Fiji, and New Caledonia as laborers (Oliver 1989:171–172; Howe 1984:329–333)
- 1887 Establishment of a joint British-French naval commission to safeguard the interests of both nationals (Oliver 1989:172)
- 1906 Establishment of joint British and French colonial rule in the form of a “Condominium” (Howe 1984:343)

Tahiti

- 1793 Start of regular Sydney trade (Oliver 1989:51; Howe 1984:92)
- 1795 Arrival of missionaries belonging to the London Missionary Society (Oliver 1989:54–55; Howe 1984:117)

- 1815 Pomare II's unification of Tahiti under his rule (Howe 1984:138–140)
- 1842–1843 France declared a protectorate over the Marquesas and Tahiti (Oliver 1989:142; Howe 1984:151)
- 1880 French annexation of “Tahiti and dependencies” (Newbury 1980:201)

New Zealand

- 1790s Whaling in New Zealand waters (Belich 1996:127)
- 1814 Arrival of missionaries belonging to the British Church Missionary Society (Oliver 1989:55; Howe 1984:118)
- 1840 Treaty of Waitangi signed between roughly five hundred Maori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown regarding an ambiguously defined “transfer of sovereignty” from the former to the latter (Oliver 1989:109–110; Scarr 1990:187–190; Denoon 1997:166)
- 1845–1872 New Zealand Maori Wars (Belich 1986:15 ff.; Scarr 1990:191; Denoon 1997:164–172)

8

Hawai‘i in the Early Nineteenth
Century

The Kingdom and the Kingship

Marshall Sahlins

In a series of letters describing conditions in the Islands in the mid-1840s to an American correspondent, the missionary Richard Armstrong observes again and again, and with a certain contempt for the “native character,” that the government of the kingdom by Hawaiians is doomed. The chiefs simply cannot cope with the growth of haole [or foreign] business. “The idea that this floating, restless, moneymaking, go-ahead white population can be governed by natives only, is out of the question” (AC: 11 Nov 1847). In fact, says Armstrong, the government is already out of Hawaiians’ hands. Since 1843,

the government has been going more and more into the hands of naturalized foreigners. . . . Some of these hold important offices under the good Dr. Judd. . . . Besides these we have pilots, harbor masters, collectors of imports, sheriff & constables, all *naturalized* foreigners, who act in conjunction with the native authorities. But such is the native character, so deficient in point of intelligence, faithfulness & enterprise in business, that the more important affairs, indeed I may say *all the* important affairs of the government, are now administered by these *adopted* foreigners. . . . The time has gone by for the native rulers to have the management of affairs, though the business may be done in their name. (AC: 18 Sept 1844)¹

This chapter is a slightly edited version of the last part of Chapter 5, entitled “Leviathan: Whaling and the State,” in *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii*, vol. 1, by Patrick Kirch and Marshall Sahlins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Bracketed comments are the editor’s.

Armstrong proved his point in 1848 by accepting the position of minister of public instruction, succeeding the veteran missionary William Richards. Richards had framed the Constitution of 1840—while holding an official appointment as adviser to the chiefs—and in 1843 he secured diplomatic recognition of the kingdom's independence from the governments of Britain, France, and the United States.² Yet neither of these two reverend gentlemen, nor others such as the missionary-turned-judge Lorrin Andrews, would match the influence of “the good Dr. Judd” in the affairs of the Hawaiian state (cf. G. P. Judd 1960).

Likewise originally attached to the American mission, and greatly favored by the chiefs, Judd for eleven years (1842–1853) held a variety of commanding portfolios in the government, including the presidency of the Treasury Board and, in succession, the ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, and Finance. “King Judd,” the merchant Stephen Reynolds called him, voicing common sentiments of the foreign-commercial community, “he rides us down to the dust. The king is nothing—nobody. Judd orders him as you would a boy” (G. P. Judd 1960: 109). Feelings against the “meddling missionaries” still ran high among the merchants. The sentiment was shared by a number of passing visitors, including Herman Melville, who was in the Islands in 1843. In an appendix to *Typee*, Melville described Judd as a “sanctimonious apothecary-adventurer” and castigated the missionaries collectively as “a junta of ignorant and designing Methodist [*sic*] elders in the councils of a half-civilized king, ruling with absolute sway over a nation just poised between barbarism and civilization” (1922:343–344).

The continuing antagonism of the merchants and the Protestant-cum-government ministers proves that the Hawaiian state was not yet the sleeping partner of the foreign bourgeoisie. Indeed by their own economic privileges and dispositions the ruling chiefs were opposed as a class to the oncoming capitalist interests. More and more they were being put at a disadvantage by enterprising Whites, who made no attempt either to conceal their sense of the “natives’ ” moral and intellectual inferiority. In the circumstances the official co-optation of members of the ABCFM by the chiefs was a kind of political defense. Nor was their strategy novel, except for these official trappings, inasmuch as the Ka‘ahumanu crowd [i.e., the effective ruling coterie of chiefs, led by the “queen-regent” and adopted mother of the king, Ka‘ahumanu] for upwards of two decades had been involving Hiram Bingham and his colleagues in the councils of the Hawaiian state.

This was a persisting “structure of the conjuncture,” allying the Protestant “brethren” with the *ali'i* against the Honolulu business community. As one historian put it: “Developments since 1820 had tended to polarize Honolulu, and by 1838 both the mission’s detractors and its champions exhibited true dedication to their opposite aims” (Greer 1977:8). And if in the 1840s Stephen Reynolds referred to Gerrit Judd as “King Judd,” for his part Judd, upon assuming high office in the kingdom, wrote to Henry Peirce in Boston: “You must know that I am at present the King Bingham of the Sandwich Islands” (F.O. and Ex: 1 Jan 1845).³

No doubt Peirce appreciated the allusion since in 1831, when he was in business in Honolulu, he wrote to his partner in Boston, James Hunnewell, complaining bitterly about the political machinations of the rival firm of “Hiram Bingham & Co.”: “From what has taken place and what is expected to come, I am now convinced that Hiram Bingham & Co. govern the religious and political part of this government; they are the jugglers behind the curtain, by whom the government persons or puppets are set in motion. The joining of ‘Church and State’ is the dearest wish of their hearts, and a religious despotism will be the consequence” (HC: Peirce to Hunnewell, 7 July 1831).

Of course one can say that the missionaries, preaching hard work, private property, honesty, and other such Protestant virtues, facilitated the reign of capital in the long run (cf. Gulick and Gulick 1918: 187–188). But for the moment, the ruling chiefs consciously and explicitly called in the Protestant missionaries to keep the merchants at bay.⁴ And on their part, Bingham and his colleagues were consciously and explicitly opposed to the reign of foreign capital. In a memorial to the ABCFM, the missionaries warned that if “foreign speculators” were allowed to exploit the economic advantages of the islands, they would lay waste to the people along with the country, “and at no distant period the mere moldering remnants of the nation only could be pointed out to the voyager” (AB: Memorial of Bingham et al., July 1836). Some years later Judd wrote that “the encouragement recommended to be given to capitalists, however much it might benefit the country, would, I fear, at no distant period, be the subversion of the present dynasty”—“unless,” he added, “their affairs could be directed by experienced foreigners” (letter of 3 Aug 1842, in *The Polynesian*, 26 Dec 1846). Led by the likes of Bingham and Judd, the American missionaries thus impeded and resisted attempts of foreigners to gain private titles to Hawaiian lands (Bradley 1968:279–282).

Yet at the same time the clergymen thus opposed the businessmen on economic grounds, the latter were convinced that they were promulgating the superior method of salvation. A hot and heavy ideological argument was going on between Christianity and commerce over which was the better means to the other—and to the higher end of the *mission civilisatrice* which they held in common. Hence the frequent complaint of the merchants that the missionaries, with their strange puritanical obsessions, were simply out of date. “They seem to be more fit to have lived a century and a half ago,” wrote Henry Peirce, “when the world was not so enlightened as it is at present” (HC: Peirce to Hunnewell, 10 Aug 1833). The bourgeois traders saw themselves as the modern successors of these outmoded priests in the great work of spiritual improvement. If, as Weber taught, Protestantism transposed redemption to a this-worldly, material plane, it followed that the capitalists were now the ordained ministers of human salvation. In their view, as Sir George Simpson observed, commerce was “the modern instrument of Providence for the moral and religious amelioration of mankind” (1847:2:101).⁵

Hence Sir George’s corollary observation about the missionaries and the merchants: “one half the strangers in this strange land are not on speaking terms with each other” (1847:2:158). Yet he notes how volatile is this structure of the conjuncture in which every now and then something happens to make friends of former enemies and enemies of former friends. For Simpson’s perceptive portrayal of current politics represents the culmination of relationships on the verge of change (158). Soon a kind of truce would be concluded between the residents [how the foreign merchants referred to themselves] and the missionaries—over the prostrate bodies of the chiefs and the people. As of the early 1840s, however, the *mishes*⁶ still lived in their own part of town, “a Goshen in the midst of Egypt,” hardly having anything to do with the merchants, who for their part “have not yet forgotten certain clerical proceedings directed against their amusements.” Between the merchants and the government there was likewise “some ground of difference or other,” since the “authorities [the chiefs] are always more or less identified with the missionaries.” Meanwhile, crosscutting alliances and discords in the mercantile community were sometimes pitting the Americans against the British, sometimes joining the two against the French in a disagreement that was correlated to the opposition of Calvinists and Catholics (see Wilkes 1845:3:389). Simpson concludes by showing himself a social

scientist of the classic Western functionalist persuasion: “In many cases, however, politics and religion are merely a cloak thrown over more sordid and unworthy motives. Rivalry in trade often lurks at the root of evil” (1847:2:157).⁷

Simpson does not discuss the international presence in this conjuncture—of which evil, trade was also at the root. The ruling chiefs had to call in the missionaries to deal not only with the haole residents but with the gunboats that came in these merchants’ wake. The political problems attending Hawai‘i’s position in the transpacific commerce are indicated by the direct relationship between the volume of mercantile shipping (including whalers) and the visits of so-called national ships, principally men-of-war. The flag was following trade—specifically, the American, British, and French flags, flying from the masts of warships come to protect the interests of their citizens in the Islands and their countries in the Pacific Ocean.⁸

Gunboat diplomacy had begun in 1826 when the U.S. ships *Dolphin* (Lt. John Percival) and *Peacock* (Capt. Thomas ap Catesby Jones) forced a settlement of commercial debts on the Hawaiian chiefs. The debts were still a common subject of the negotiations opened by naval vessels in the ensuing decades. But so were a variety of other issues: the protection of foreigners’ legal and property rights; demands for extension of haole rights in land; adjudications of commercial disputes between foreign merchants; demands (of the French on behalf of Catholic missionaries) for religious toleration; demands of monetary reparations for damages allegedly suffered by foreigners at Hawaiians’ hands; and demands for the trading privileges of the most favored nation, including abrogation of customs duties. All these negotiations effectively took place at the point of a gun. They bodied forth the violence of the European expansion, whether quietly or by the explicit threat of bombarding Honolulu—usually accompanied by advice, solicited or unsolicited, on the part of the foreign naval officer to the Hawaiian king and chiefs about how they should run their affairs. Often the negotiations resulted in treaties or conventions, the enforcement of which could well become the object of subsequent naval visits. For by an interesting dialectic of nationalism and imperialism, practically any private grievance of a resident haole could be magnified into an international incident. “Sir,” writes the British consul Richard Charlton in 1841 to Governor Kekūanaō‘a, “I have the honor to inform you that some person or persons are building a wall near the end of the bowling alley belonging to Mrs. Mary Dowsett,

thereby injuring her property and violating the treaty between Great Britain and the Sandwich Islands” (BCP: 8 Feb 1841).⁹

The most spectacular foreign interventions were those of Captain LaPlace of the French warship *L'Artemise* in 1839 and Lord Paulet of HMS *Carysfort* in 1843 (see Kuykendall 1968). The first exacted \$20,000 from King Kamehameha III as a guarantee of good conduct toward the French and several other important concessions. LaPlace secured freedom of practice for Catholics, ending the battle of the chiefs and Protestant missionaries against “papism” that had been going on for twelve years. He also ended the temperance movement of the Protestants by securing French wines and brandies against prohibition and high import duties. Lord Paulet came to enforce the supposed legal rights of British subjects, including a vexed land claim of the cantankerous Charlton—or else, said his Lordship, “I shall be obliged to take coercive steps to obtain these measures for my countrymen” (Kuykendall 1968:214). The negotiations failed to the extent that Paulet, without official authorization, obtained the cession of the Islands to Britain. Four months later, however, the sovereignty was restored to His Hawaiian Majesty by Paulet’s superior, Rear Admiral Richard Thomas. Meanwhile, William Richards was negotiating recognition of the kingdom by the British as well as the French and the Americans. As much as anything else, the rivalries of these powers gave the *aliʻi* and their missionaries some room to politically organize what was happening to them—for a while.

The effect was a mixed state, dominated at the highest levels by haole—and increasingly by haole interests—but at the middle and local levels by the Hawaiian aristocracy. The *aliʻi* were able to detain control of the chiefships of the districts and governorships of the Islands: an authority that was not distinguished from their proprietary rights and allowed them the continued disposition of Hawaiian lands, labor, and the surplus product. The kingship was also Hawaiian, but as an institution it could provide the common ground of the mixed state, legitimating at once the indigenous and the haole sectors. In the latter capacity it was increasingly decked out by white officialdom in the ritual trappings of a European monarchy. But the king was all the while losing his sovereign powers even as the kingship lost its Hawaiianess. By 1845, a passing Methodist tourist observed, a handful of high white functionaries constituted the government of the Sandwich Islands, whereas “the king in reality has no more power than one of his inferior chiefs. He says himself that he is

a mere ‘paper king,’ that his foreign ministers do the business, and bring him the papers to sign, and he has to obey them” (Hines 1851: 225–226). Still, the Hawaiian system of sovereignty did not go out without some spectacular moments of struggle, including certain rituals of rebellion, experiments in incest, and improvisations of dual kingship that owed more to the indigenous cosmology than to the political imports of the World System.

The diarchy actually began at Kamehameha’s death in 1819, when Ka’ahumanu proclaimed herself coruler with the young king Liholiho, the child of her royal husband and her own foster son (cf. Kuykendall 1968:63–64) (see genealogy in Figure 1). Ka’ahumanu assumed the office of *kuhina nui*, so-called premier, but the haole knew her as “the regent,” “the queen regent,” or “the old woman.” Liholiho took the title Kamehameha II, just as Kauikeaouli became Kamehameha III in 1825. But so also was Ka’ahumanu succeeded by closely related women, Kīna’u (1832–1839) and Kekāuluohi (1839–1845), who acquired her name, her office as *kuhina nui*, and her relation of “mother” to the king. Known respectively as Ka’ahumanu II and Ka’ahumanu III, Kīna’u and Kekāuluohi had succeeded to the social person of Ka’ahumanu—who had also been, not to forget, “that noble mother in Israel” (Anderson 1870:134). (Kekāuluohi was in principle acting in this capacity on behalf of the true heiress, Kamāmalu, the infant daughter of Kīna’u, who was *kuhina nui* during 1857–1862.)¹⁰ In sum, everything happened as if the kingship system had been frozen at Kamehameha’s death, as if ever afterward the successors of the principal royals would take on the personal names and relationships then in effect. This practice of “positional succession” created a dual kingship of a kind best known in East Africa. The leading royal woman

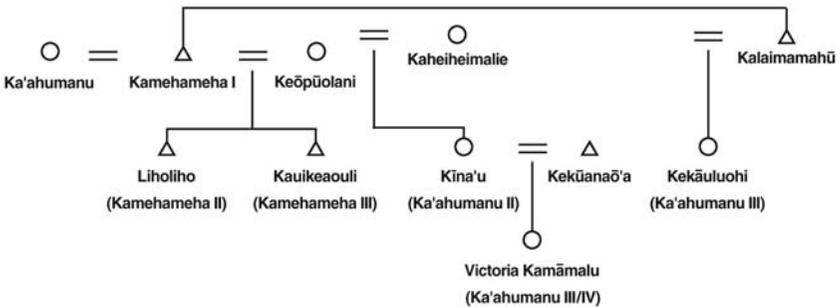


Fig. 1. Relation of kings and women rulers

is the king's "mother," despite that on genealogical grounds the attribution appears quite arbitrary: Kīna'u (Ka'ahumanu II) was the paternal half sister of the kings Liholiho and Kauhikaouli, while Kekāuluohi (Ka'ahumanu III) was their father's brother's daughter, thus a (classificatory) "sister" (fig. 1).¹¹ On the other hand, the designation of king's "mother," by its sense of genealogical ascendancy and by the implied control over the ruler, who was thereby maintained in his minority, perhaps better than "premier" expresses the share of royal power these women had acquired. Levi Chamberlain relates a conversation between Ka'ahumanu and one Capt. Hinckley, who had been given some land by the governing chief of Kaua'i, Kaikio'ewa, which land Ka'ahumanu ordered returned:

"Who is King?" [asked Hinckley]. She said, "*Owau* [I am]. The King is the head; but it is with me to direct." He then turned to Kaikioewa and asked, "Who is he?" She replied, "*he kanaka malalo iho o'u* [a man under me]." (L. Chamberlain, journal, 3 Oct 1831)

The king and the Ka'ahumanu chiefess were corulers: Neither could act officially without the concurrence of the other, an arrangement written into the constitution of 1840 (Bingham 1969:564–565). But the real political fact was that the ruling woman had taken over the royal land privileges, hence authority over the island governors—whose own political status had evolved from the sovereign's redistribution of lands and was incompletely distinguished therefrom—and control too of the kingdom's tributes. In 1836, the king referred to Kīna'u as the *ali'i mālama āina*, the "chief in charge of land" (L. Chamberlain, journal, 16 Nov 1836).¹² Commenting that her powers were greater than the king's, the French captain Vaillant confirmed that she had the exclusive charge of executing his orders, collecting tributes of all the lands, overseeing the governors, and presiding over the chiefs' councils. Moreover, "for anyone who knows the character of the king and that of the princess [Kīna'u], it is easy to judge that the latter is in fact the true sovereign of the country" (in De La Salle 1845:2:338–339; Vaillant, report). The historic kingship thus reproduced an ancient form of dyarchy, the distinction between an active executive chief and a gravitas ruler (cf. Valeri 1982), but only by means of a series of structural inversions that marked out for the king the traditional destiny of the deposed god.

The relation between the king and the royal woman reversed the

normal gender distinction between an active and public masculinity, a stable and domestic femininity. Andrews describes Kīna‘u as “his [the king’s] agent for transacting business” (AB: Andrews, 1 July 1833).¹³ “Business,” moreover, linked the female ruler to foreign powers, although classically the royal affines and maternal kin such as the Ka‘ahumanu people represented indigenous ruling lines, to which the king was stranger and usurper (cf. Sahlins 1981, 1985a). The transformations are consistent with Valeri’s argument that after 1819 and the overthrow of the sacrificial system in which women had been ritually disadvantaged, hierarchy came to depend primarily on genealogical-reproductive principles, wherein women figure decisively. “It is no accident,” Valeri concludes, “that female, not male, chiefs played the most important political roles after the abolition of the Old Regime” (1985:128). One only need add that, in the ultimate inversion, these women had taken charge of the ritual tabus—namely, the Protestant tabus through which Ka‘ahumanu and her successors ruled. It follows logically, as it now would historically, that the king represents the party of disorder—which is, paradoxically, the defense of the indigenous order. The king periodically revolts.

In the event, King Kauikeaouli brought the Hawaiian system full circle. In curious historical details, he lived the part of the superseded god Lono: the one who in the old saturnalian rituals of the New Year, the *makahiki*, came to reclaim the land, which was also to possess (or fertilize) it sexually. In another parallel register, Lono came for his abandoned wife, the sacred chiefly woman. But at the end of the celebrations, Lono was defeated and banished again by the ruling *ali‘i*, who thus appropriated the god’s generative progress for humankind (Sahlins 1985a; Valeri 1985). So in 1833–1834, King Kauikeaouli attempted to seize control of the kingdom and the lands from Kīna‘u and the pious chiefs, setting off a carnivalesque rebellion that proved to be the last hurrah of the ancient monarchy.¹⁴

This “commotion” (*haunāele*) was the final one in the series of royal revolts that had developed periodically since 1826–1827. Like the previous crises, the “commotion” broke out at the turn of the year, the ancient *makahiki* period.¹⁵ We have seen that in the earlier struggles of Boki and Liliha against the Ka‘ahumanu *mā*, the young king was as much the prize as he was the main protagonist. The events of 1833–1834 were distinctive for the leadership taken by Kauikeaouli and for his explicit claim on the sovereignty. Still, the decisive issue in all the revolts had been the restoration of royal privilege, focusing on

the right to redistribute the lands throughout the kingdom. The mark of the royalists' defeat would be the surrender of this right—and of some or all of their personal estates. In the meantime the festive dimensions of the old *makahiki* were revived. There was hula dancing in the streets of Honolulu and the return of the old games and amusements, including the sexual license that once heralded the return of Lono. In 1833 all this took place under the king's aegis—as ritually improved by the white man's rum.¹⁶

Clearly the *makahiki* is a structure of the long run, an enduring organizing principle of Hawaiian history. The expression of a total cultural order projected on the calendrical plane, it continued to inhabit the rhythms and content of Hawaiian social life long after 1819 when the old gods had been consigned to the flames. There it was: a recurrent cycle of meaning and affect, popular as well as priestly, that could be drawn on to represent forces of the conjuncture never dreamed of in the ancient philosophy. Not surprisingly, in the first years after the abolition of the tabus, the *makahiki* returned in barely disguised form. An outbreak of games of boxing in October 1820, followed by prolonged dancing in December presided over by the image of the hula god (probably Laka, sister and wife of Lono), gave the newly arrived missionaries some second thoughts about the supposed overthrow of the old religion.¹⁷ During Liholiho's reign, however, the attempt was made to transfer the celebration of the kingship to the annual memorial of Kamehameha's death. The anniversary was honored with considerable festivities on April 26, 1820, May 16, 1821, May 5, 1822, and April 24, 1823.¹⁸ But after Liholiho's funeral and the institution of a Christian polity by the Ka'ahumanu *mā*, the issue of kingship was again associated with the *makahiki*—and thus with a certain unruliness. By the same transformation that made the ruling woman Ka'ahumanu the keeper of the faith, Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) would be the prince of misrule. The truly Hawaiian sovereignty was now represented by the suspension of the tabu—that is, by outrages against the Protestant restrictions in the form of traditional practices. The king's rebellion of 1833 began with a popular epidemic of kite flying and was climaxed by a quasi-public act of royal incest, events that evoked the ideology of the ancient regime at the same time they defied the morality of the Protestant chiefs.

The *makahiki* was not simply royal doings, however. As a general and popular ceremony of carnivalesque dimensions, it was celebrated spontaneously by the people. This helps explain, on the one hand,

the efficacy of the king's ritual rebellions and, on the other, certain kinds of popular resistance of the later 1830s also linked to the *makahiki* but not directly connected with the kingship. Indeed, at the same time as the "commotion" of 1833 was gathering force in Honolulu, report comes from the remote district of Waimea, Hawai'i, of an unrelated celebration of the traditional festival: "January, 1833. Last week the people having heard it was some where near the beginning of a new year thought that they must pay some regard to a feast held formerly on this occasion which was to eat abundantly of all such things as they chanced to have & pray to Lono (Captain Cook). They did not observe it exactly in the same way now—some of them collected together & read & prayed—when told we had no such thing they were quite astonished" (AB: Lyons, 6 Sept 1833).

The *makahiki* period of 1833 turned into a practical-historical attempt on the part of the king to restore the kingship created by his father, Kamehameha I. Ka'ahumanu's death the previous June had opened the possibility. Kauikeaouli now proposed to free himself of her successor Kīna'u and the oligarchy of Christian chiefs. One of the proximate causes of the rebellion, appreciated as such by contemporary observers, was Kīna'u's refusal to pay for the ship the king had contracted to buy, the schooner *Bolivar Liberator*, for which he had promised \$12,000 (Bingham 1969:447; Reynolds, journal, 12 and 14 Jan 1833; L. Chamberlain, journal, 4 Feb 1833). Hence the contemporary issue in the king's demand for the land: He would thus take control of the main source of income from his royal "mother." Or as Bingham put it, the king wanted to establish "an absolute despotism" in place of what the missionary was pleased to call "the limited monarchy of his predecessors" (AB:ABCFM to Anderson, 20 Mar 1833). Bingham did not wish to characterize the kind of domination Ka'ahumanu had exercised since 1825. Yet it was relevant; indeed the missionaries had been anticipating some such coup on the king's part from the time of Ka'ahumanu's death. As late as November 1832 they were still congratulating themselves that nothing of the sort had happened (HC: Chamberlain to Hunnewell, 12 Nov 1832; Judd to Hunnewell, 29 Oct 1832). They were premature.

In December there seemed to be an unusual amount of hula and intoxication in Honolulu. But the rebellion effectively began in late January when, in a display such as had not been seen for years, a hundred kites were set flying over the town. The missionaries were scandalized by this frivolous—or was it intentionally seditious?—

mediation between earth and heaven (Reynolds, journal, 25 Jan 1833). “Report said Mr. Bingham told the Natives [at Sunday services] the king was Hewa [wicked], and it was good to bring him to the Church. Clark told them all who play with kites would die, etc. etc.” (3 Feb 1833). By the eighteenth of February, Levi Chamberlain was convinced that what he had feared from Ka‘ahumanu’s death was now coming to pass. “It is very certain,” he wrote, “that the steps of the king are in direct opposition to the cause of religion & morality and it is probable that he has adopted this course because he thinks his cause will be promoted by it” (Journal, 18 Feb 1833). Having heard from a Hawaiian informant some days later that the king planned to make a tour of O‘ahu with a company of hula dancers—another echo of the *makahiki*, perceived by Chamberlain as an “amusement of the wa naupo [time of darkness]”—there was little left for a Christian to do but pray: “Oh that the Lord would lift up a standard against this and all works of darkness that are perpetrated by the King and his adherents” (L. Chamberlain, journal, 28 Feb 1833).

On the other side of the haole fence, many of the foreign residents were taking delight in the missionaries’ disarray. In the developing correlation of forces, they were in sympathy with and sometimes direct support of the king, if they did not always join in his revels. What the pious chiefs called “commotion” and the missionaries a “return to darkness,” Henry Peirce appreciated as a glorious “vacation from the ecclesiastical tyranny.” It all had been brought about by Ka‘ahumanu’s “rule of iron” and the missionaries’ “unbridled influence over that old woman” (HC: Peirce to Hunnewell, 10 Aug 1833). Another of Peirce’s epistles to this effect provides a fair description of the heady atmosphere of Honolulu during the early weeks of the revolt:

The king and his party have thrown off all ecclesiastical restraint which they have been under for so long a time. All their ancient games & customs are revived again. We see the natives everywhere about the Village [of Honolulu] playing the games of the stone [*ulumaika*], the spear, etc., etc. Every evening large companys assemble to sing, & dance—all in their ancient way. Nothing has resulted from it yet except a few of the lower class of Natives spending their time in carousing & drinking to excess. But these and like excesses may be expected for a time after such a “Revolution.” They are no longer a priest-ridden people. The King has assumed that authority which naturally belongs to him. (HC: Peirce to Hunnewell, 11 Mar 1833)

Certain aspects of the attempted coup are not sufficiently conveyed in Peirce's report, let alone in the ill-humored chronicles of the missionaries: the several interrelated dimensions of collective *jouissance*, including the sexuality and the second historic declaration of the abolition of the tabus. "The utmost Satisfaction appeared to light the Countenances of the Spectators," Stephen Reynolds said about one of the early dances held in the compound next door to his. "The old people's Countenances wore such marks of Joy & Satisfaction at witnessing the Pastimes of their youthful days!" (Reynolds, journal, 28 Feb 1833; cf. AB: Andrews, 1 July 1833). Soon after, all the Christian-inspired laws except those prohibiting murder and theft were declared void by the king. Most notably the marriage laws and sexual interdictions were off. A crier was sent through Honolulu with the news that husbands and wives were free to leave each other (L. Chamberlain, journal, 9 Mar 1833). A summons was made on all the prostitutes of the town: They were to pay court to the king's mistress, to be her "inheritance" (12 Mar 1833). Freely lubricated by the rum purchased on the royal account from the king's merchant friends, all this "moral vacation," "commotion," or "return to darkness" was known to the participants as *le'ale'a*, "pleasure," and especially *noa*, "freedom from tabu."¹⁹ No characterization could better confirm than the last, *noa*, the people's perceptions of the Christian order from which they were thus freeing themselves.

The core of the king's followers were the young men he had been raised with and who were customarily expected to form the support of his reign. They were called Hulumanu, "Bird Feathers"—as it were, the living form of the glorious feather mantle that decorated and protected the royal person. A prominent role in the events was played by the king's special favorite, Kaomi (*Ka Hae Hawaii*, 11 Sept 1861; Kamakau 1961:335). Born in Hawai'i of a Tahitian father and a Hawaiian woman, Kaomi had been an early and brilliant convert of Bingham's and a personal teacher to Ka'ahumanu. He turned to sin after the latter's death and thereby achieved a certain secular power. For the king spurned Ka'ahumanu II (Kīna'u) by introducing an ironic form of the dual monarchy in which Kaomi was appointed the "engrafted king" (*ke li'i kui*). On March 15, 1833, the latter, in full-dress Windsor uniform, delivered a letter to Kīna'u informing her that "The King takes for himself all the lands conquered by Kamehameha his father, granting to all others the lands by their fathers taken in conquest; with him is life and death, right and wrong, the amusements, the laws and all doings, with him only" (L. Chamberlain, journal, 15

Mar 1833). Later in the same day, however, in a moment of weakness that effectively doomed the restoration of the kingship, Kauhikaouli publicly acknowledged Kīna‘u as the *kubina nui*, the active coruler.

The royal rebellion then seemed to subside through April and early May. It was revived, however, when the king demanded that Kīna‘u give up the commission of her husband Kekūanaō‘a, who as commander of the royal guard and the fort detained the main means of violence. War was bruited (L. Chamberlain, journal, 29 May 1833). Again Kīna‘u was able to maintain control and the revolt resumed its theatrical mode. “So much intoxication and disorder I have not witnessed since the early days of my residence in the Islands” (7 June 1833). The king evidently did manage to appropriate and redistribute certain lands (Kamakau 1961:335; AB: Bishop and Thurston to Anderson, 5 Nov 1834). But time and again he failed to establish the principle of sovereignty, which was the supreme right to the totality, *all the lands*. In the latter part of June 1833, for example,

he addressed the Chiefs in substance as follows: I have told you Chiefs, I want licensed Houses. I want the Lands, all the Lands. The Fort. That these I must have. Smaller things, we will settle by and by. Say you will give me these and I will go to Maui [where the chiefs were trying to put him out of the way]. Say you Aye? No one answered! Then I do not go. If you do not give me these, I am a poor man. I am King only in name. . . . Kinau spoke with warmth, and said I am in possession of the Lands and all the property. You do bad. When I see you do good, *then* I shall give you something. He said, then I am a poor man. (Reynolds, journal, 24 June 1833)

Perhaps the greatest political success of the king’s party was the dismantling of the Christian apparatus of schools and churches. Early on reports came in from O‘ahu and the other islands that church attendance on Sundays had fallen off markedly and the schools were being abandoned wholesale by students and teachers alike. The “peculiar school system,” wrote Rev. Dibble, “crumbled into ruins,” yet what could be expected of teachers who “were ignorant and already taught about all they knew” (1909: 249)? The peculiarity of the school system, as we know, was its direct link in organization and personnel to the *konohiki* system.²⁰ [*Konohiki* refers to the chiefs’ men in charge of their local lands.] In the same way, the local grandees had sponsored the construction of “meetinghouses” in the out districts, often

before there were any haole missionaries. Hence the declining curve of school and church attendance was an index of the weakening hold of the ruling chiefs on the local people.

In 1833–1834, half of the mission stations failed to report any so-called readers for the reason that school attendance was derisory to nonexistent.²¹ The reflections of several of the clergy on this alarming state of affairs evoke an argument we have made here: The people's conversion had been infirmly founded on the chiefs' coercion. Reverends Dibble, Lyman, and Goodrich report to the secretary of the ABCFM from Hilo, Hawai'i in October 1834:

The reception of Christianity by the people of these islands was not strictly a voluntary act. They embraced Christianity not because they had any conception of its nature or the least evidence of its heavenly origin, but in obedience to the commands of their chiefs. . . . The present condition of affairs at this station: the native schools depending more than any other of our operations upon the favors of the chiefs & the popularity of religion were the first to fail. Many of them soon became entirely deserted. . . . The congregations both at our center & out stations are very diminished. (AB: Dibble et al., 14 Oct 1833)

From the scale of the disaffection one may reasonably judge that the king's party—the party of the old order—was the more popular one. A missionary in Waimea, Hawai'i (Baldwin), observing an “increase in inequity” in the latter half of 1834, especially the heavy drinking, was told the reason by the people themselves: “It is through their anger at heavy taxes, oppression, etc to avoid Koeles [forced labor], etc” (SR: Waimea, 1835). Yet if the people were for the king and against the ruling chiefs, how many bayonets had this Lono? And perhaps even more important, Kauikeaouli did not have the stomach (*na'au*) for it—he had never been a god of war.

Through the latter part of 1833 and well into 1834, the royal rebellion more and more took on the air of symbolic gesture, and to the same extent it was becoming more desperate. The Kīna'u crowd gained firm control of kingdom affairs in Honolulu, though the disorder continued in many parts of the provinces. The king made a riotous left circuit of O'ahu in August and September of 1833, accompanied by a large and dissolute train of followers—“harpies” in the missionary discourse. In direction, character, and timing—before rather than after the *makahiki*—the circuit was the opposite

of that taken annually by the king in olden times, when he reopened the local temples with the appropriate ritual solemnities (Valeri 1985). The situation during the following *makahiki* months was quieter than the previous year, at least judging from reports out of Honolulu. And from March of 1834 the king took to putting some distance between himself and the *ali'i* at Honolulu by traveling often to Pu'uloa in 'Ewa. Here, however, his "vile conduct" continued (L. Chamberlain, journal, 29 Mar 1834). Worst of all from the Christians' viewpoint, he renewed a sexual cohabitation with his sister Nahi'ena'ena.

A critical conflict developed between Kauikeaouli and the sanctimonious *ali'i* over Nahi'ena'ena that almost cost the king his life and in any case amounted to the agony of the traditional kingship. Again it was a historically translated version of struggles of mythical memory, the issue being the disposition of the sacred woman and thus the distribution of power between the king and his chiefs—or the legitimate ruler and the usurper (cf. Sahlins 1985a). The king would marry his sister, keep the royal woman to himself, which was a legendary way of refusing to share power, as indeed it would endow the offspring of the so-called royal incest with unmatched sanctity (cf. Valeri 1972). Certain of the king's followers, notably Boki [classificatory younger brother and political rival of Ka'ahumanu, official guardian of Kauikeaouli], had been promoting this marriage for a long time, in the intention of bolstering the kingship against the Ka'ahumanu *mā*. In fact the king loved his sister and had been sleeping with her periodically for some years. So the governor of Maui, Hoapili, and the good Dr. Judd kept close watch on her when she came to O'ahu from Lahaina in the beginning of 1834 (Sinclair 1976:133 ff.). Especially the Christians were on guard when Nahi'ena'ena set off on tour of the island, accompanied also by Kauikeaouli and his Hulumanu companions as far as 'Ewa.²² After Nahi'ena'ena had completed her circuit of O'ahu, the king sent for her but she refused—because of her fear of Hoapili, according to Reynolds (Journal, 8 June 1834). The next day King Kauikeaouli, Kamehameha III, twice attempted suicide, first by drowning and later by trying to slit his throat.²³ Some weeks later, however, in a final gesture of royal defiance, which could also be taken as the ultimate reference to the tradition of the deposed god-king's search for his sacred wife, "the King took his Sister last Evening in a Public Manner before the chiefs at Pearl River" (Reynolds, journal, 22 July 1834). "This is indeed wickedness in high places," harrumphed Levi Chamberlain when he heard the news from

Kīna‘u (journal, 22 July 1834). It was also the effective end of the king’s rebellion.²⁴

Not long after, the visiting French diplomat Théodore Adolphe Barrot made an interesting assessment of Kauikeaouli’s relations to Kīna‘u *mā* and Bingham *mā* that also helps make intelligible his conduct in the recent events [*mā* is suffixed to a personal name to indicate the followers of the person concerned]:

giving himself up entirely to his capricious passions, he relinquishes the care of the government to . . . Kinau. She . . . is completely under the influence of the missionaries, and they govern in her name. . . . The king and his court are in open enmity with them. It is with reluctance that the King submits outwardly to their religious and police [i.e., political] regulations, and often does he shake off this yoke; but his desires for independence reach not to the determination of seeing clearly into the affairs of state, and it is his personal conduct only that he strives to withdraw from the investigation and censure of the missionaries. Thus there exists at present [1836], a sort of tacit agreement between the missionaries and himself; an agreement, so to speak, has been entered into between them, that he will not interfere with the government, on condition that no evangelical censure shall ever cross the threshold of his palace. (1978:67)

True that for years after the events of 1833–1834, the king continued to celebrate the New Year in an abridged form of the old *maka-hiki* festival. On January 1, 1838, for instance, the Reverend Baldwin reported to Chamberlain: “The King’s awfully wicked feast is now in progress. This is the third day of the doings. Sab[bath] was the 2d. . . . Whose hogs were the 800 to be eaten at this feast? All the coconuts of Lahaina were lawe wale [requisitioned without compensation] for it” (MsL: Baldwin, 1 Jan 1838).

Or again, on New Year’s Day four years later, Lorrin Andrews wrote to Levi Chamberlain: “The King is now holding his annual feast (Bacchanalian revel)—evil may be expected to follow, as before” (MsL: Andrews, 1 Jan 1842). However, Kauikeaouli was fast becoming a “civilized king.” After the death of his beloved sister in 1837, he had retired to Lahaina. Here he lived for eight years, watched (and worked) over by William Richards and the governing chiefs, while the Ka‘ahumanus (Kīna‘u and Kekāuluohi) and their haole ran the kingdom out of Honolulu. Periodically the docile king was summoned back to Honolulu to sign some agreement with the commander of a

passing ship of war, to return immediately thereafter to Lahaina where he was building a palace (never completed for lack of funds).²⁵ These were the years that evoked the reports that the king “was almost a myth” (L. F. Judd 1966:137).

Defeat and seclusion, however, were working a change in Kauhikaouli’s public character. Before 1837, he had been a king of billiards, a habitué of the game rooms and grog shops of Honolulu, a sovereign “without presence,” treated with familiarity as a good-time crony by his white drinking partners (Ruschenberger 1970:2:327–328).²⁶ But when he returned from Lahaina in 1845, he seemed fairly metamorphosed. Periodically taking “the pledge” and more-or-less regularly attending church services, he threw brilliant (if nonalcoholic) soirées at his newly refurbished palace, attended by *le tout* Honolulu.²⁷ Under the eye of the “Palace Chamberlain,” access to the king was restricted to certain personages and conducted according to the protocol established in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna (*The Polynesian*, 29 June, 20 July 1844). Formally enacted as a code of etiquette, the protocol gave the kingdom a pretentious roster of officials to go with its elaborate distinctions of conduct. Some years later, when all this was on public display at the funeral of Victoria Kamāmalu, Mark Twain was moved to comment that “In our country children play ‘keep house’ and in the same high-sounding but immature way the grown folk here, with the poor material of slender territory and meagre population, play ‘empire’ ” (1904:243). Indeed, since the establishment of the Royal School in 1840, the potential heirs to the Crown and the future high nobility had been well educated in the airs of European dignity. Kauhikaouli’s successor, Alexander Liholiho (reign 1854–1863), was as polished as any royalty of his day—and probably more intelligent.

But the ancient Hawaiian kingship was dead. In its place a “civilized” king reigned—but did not govern. From 1840, Hawai‘i officially became a constitutional monarchy. In principle, the king shared power with a Privy Council, increasingly dominated by whites, and a bicameral legislature composed of a House of Nobles and a Chamber of the People’s Representatives. The representatives proved ineffectual. Nor apparently did the common people put much stock in the democratic process, as witness the following report to the legislature of an election of popular representatives in Kaua‘i:

The Governor of Kauai then reported of the election of three districts in his Island as follows:

The First District said: “There is no use electing a Representative as the one we elected to the Legislature last time went there and passed a law making us pay \$1.00 tax on our dogs.”

The Second District said: “There is no use electing a Representative because the lands are being sold.”

The Third District said, “There is no use electing a Representative as he will get a swallow-tail coat.” (AH/HN: May 1847)

By now the common people had accumulated a considerable consciousness of their affliction, as well as a considerable history of resistance, that alienated them as much from the existing “civilized” state as the state was alien to things Hawaiian. In this connection, the royal rebellion of 1833–1834 can be reckoned as the first of a series of social movements by which the people-in-general demonstrated their disenchantment with the powers-that-be.

NOTES

1. “The prejudices of White men against the natives, on account of their color is very strong; and most of the foreigners unconnected with the Mission, seem to have little charity or sympathy for any who wears a copper-colored skin” (Lee/Letters: to Simon Greenleaf, 3 Mar 1849).

2. “He [Richards] is a grave, sanctified looking person of fair abilities and although an American I believe means well” (Simpson 1973:158).

3. Judd was referring to the aforementioned Hiram Bingham, the dominant and domineering figure among the American Protestant missionaries from 1821 to 1844.

4. Armstrong wrote that “unless things went to please foreigners there was trouble. Hence they called for help. The former premier Kinau told me 10 years ago, they were under the feet of foreigners & must have help. She said, ‘our people we can easily manage, but foreigners are too much for us’ ” (AC: 11 Oct 1847).

5. For a contemporary view from Hawai‘i of the complementarity of commerce and Christianity in promoting spiritual progress, see Jarves’ article (1943) in Hunt’s *Merchants’ Magazine*.

6. The text adopts Mark Twain’s characterization of the missionaries as “the mishes.”

7. Simpson also had a theory of Hawaiian ritual and religion that could have—indeed recently has—graced the pages of a modern anthropological journal: “The ancient religion was as unmeaning as it was bloodthirsty. Whatever its origin, it had practically degenerated into a mere instrument of the oppressive policy of the privileged class. The absurd and arbitrary taboos, which were venerated as oracles of the gods, had in effect, no other general end in view than that of schooling the bodies and souls of the people in an

unfaltering course of passive obedience. . . . In all probability, however, the pretended organs of the Hawaiian Molochs, at least down to the days of the discovery, were the dupes of their own impostures” (1847:(2)97).

8. “Property is much safer here now than formerly. The visits of the American, English & French Men of War during the last 16 months have established the inviolably [*sic*] of property & persons—and the natives taught & made to fear the ‘Laws of Nations’ & that a Sovereign & government came under the bans of laws as well [as] subjects of individuals” (HC: Peirce to Hunnewell, 6 Aug 1837).

9. During this time, Mrs. Gerrit Judd said of Charlton, “The English Consul boasted of a list of grievances long enough to reach around the palace” (L. F. Judd 1966:138). The U.S. commissioner likewise sent a list of grievances to Washington that was 208 feet long, or as Daws calculated, one foot of grievance for every eight haole in the kingdom (1968:111).

10. While in office, Kekāuluohi was called Ka’ahumanu (see LC/NR 11:29; or the petition to her so addressed in F.0. and Ex 17, Oct 1842). After her death in 1845, Keoni Ana (or John Young II), the son of John Young (Kamehameha’s most important *ali’i haole*), was appointed *kuhina nui*. But Keoni Ana was more importantly the minister of the interior. The co-kingship effectively lapsed after Kekāuluohi, and when Kamāmalu became *kuhina nui* in 1857, it was a moribund institution. For a legendary example of mother-son dyarchy, see Kamakau (1961:34). Valeri (1990) provides a general discussion of dyarchic tendencies in Hawaiian history.

11. Nonetheless, Chamberlain reported to Hunnewell in 1832 that Kauhākeauli had acknowledged Kīna’u as “makuawahine” (*makuahine*, “mother”), meaning she was recognized as coruler (HC: Chamberlain to Hunnewell, 12 Nov 1832). Similarly, Bingham refers to both Kīna’u and Kekāuluohi as the king’s mothers (1969:436, 533). At the death of Kīna’u the king issued a proclamation announcing that “the authority hitherto possessed by my mother [*ku’u makuahine*] is now transferred to my other mother (Miriam Kekāuluohi)” (USCD: Brinsmade, 1 July 1839; see Gilman 1909:49; Kekāuluohi, journal, 5 Feb 1840). The only way we can contrive a genealogical explication would be from Kamehameha’s occasional reference to his son Liholiho as his grandson, tracing to him through his mother Keopuolani, who was Kamehameha’s sister’s daughter as well as his wife. This mode of reckoning would also connect Liholiho with Maui ruling line and give him higher rank than Kamehameha could bestow. On such grounds, Kīna’u and Kekāuluohi would be a generation superior to Kamehameha’s sons, thus their “mothers.”

12. Alternately, but to the same effect, the king once said that Kīna’u was *noho hale* to him—meaning the “occupier of the house,” the one who has the charge for the “owner of the house” (*mea hale*)—and that she was *imi hale* as concerns the chiefs, the “seeker (or gatherer) of property” (L. Chamberlain, journal, 15 Mar 1833).

13. Although Ka’ahumanu, Kīna’u, and Kekāuluohi took active part in kingdom affairs, the *gravitas:celeritas* distinction, more normally corresponding to female:male, was recursively reproduced by the woman usually hav-

ing a junior male doing the business, as Ka‘ahumanu had Kalaimoku and Kīna‘u had Kekūanaō‘a.

14. The course of events can be followed from numerous accounts of the period, including Bingham’s memoirs (1969; see Dibble 1909:244 ff.), but on a detailed day-to-day basis they are best described in the journals of Reynolds and Levi Chamberlain. Andrews wrote an interesting account to the ABCFM (AB: Andrews, 1 July 1833), only the uninteresting end of which was published in the *Missionary Herald* (MH 30 (1834):286–287). However, the story can be read from the statistics of church and church-school attendance and the accompanying complaints, published in the *Missionary Herald* for relevant dates, or from local missionary letters and station reports (AB, MsL, and SR). See also Kamakau (1961:334 ff.).

15. The period in question is from about November through February, give or take a month on either end. See, for example, L. Chamberlain (journal, 20 Dec 1826–13 Feb 1827, various dates in Mar 1829, Jan–Feb 1831); Hunnewell (HC/Journal: various dates in Jan 1831), the *Missionary Herald* (various dates, 37–39 (1833–1835); or the pertinent dates in Reynolds (journal) and Bingham (1969). It should be noted that the *makahiki* festival had been celebrated in modified form since the 1820s, that is, after the abolition of the tabus. Indeed, the king’s New Year celebrations through the 1840s, at least, continued to include elements and sentiments of the ancient rites.

16. Richards early in 1832 was able to foresee the events. “It seems to me,” he wrote to Chamberlain, “the chiefs [Ka‘ahumanu *mā*] are giving up their authority, that the king will at no distant period have a powerful party, though he appears to me to be very weak at present” (MsL: Richards, 20 Feb 1832).

17. On October 21, 1820, the O‘ahu missionaries observed in their collective journal that “This is the season of the grand taboo, which has sometimes continued 40 days, and heretofore been celebrated by special sacrifices to the gods, and by games of boxing” (MH 18 1822:279). Interestingly enough, October 21, 1820 is calculably the fourteenth day (night) of the Hawaiian month Ikuwa, which in the traditional *makahiki* calendar opens the season of popular amusements (see Sahlins, ms). The missionaries indeed noted that boxing had commenced two days previously, though a game of boxing for the twenty-first was canceled. The hula, reported by the missionaries from about December 10 to 20 (MH 18 1822:203, 207), seems to have been going on for some time earlier. For December 3, Marin’s journal reads, “All the people drunk”; and the next day, “The people dancing” (Gast and Conrad 1973:244–245; see HC/Journal: 14 and 19 Dec 1820). There was also a feast on December 14 (Gast and Conrad 1973:245). All this would fall in late Welehu and early Makali‘i by the Hawaiian calendar, the time of the circuit of Lono and of the people’s dancing and feasting. Governor Boki’s preparations of houses and tributes for the king on November 22–23, moreover, would correspond to the traditional offering (*ho‘okupu*) of Welehu 17 (= November 23, 1820; HC/Journal: 22 and 23 Nov 1820).

18. The memorial rites may be followed in the *Missionary Herald* (MH 17 1821:133; 20 1824:208–209); Gast and Conrad (1973:234, 264, 277–

278); Tyerman and Bennet (1831:1:441, 445); Haskell (journal, 15 May 1821); LMS Letters (Ellis to Bruder, 25 Apr 1823); and Stewart's *Residence* (1970:114 ff.). All these days fall on the fourteenth or the fifteenth night of the moon, corresponding to death day of Kamehameha in May 1819; the 1823 date indicates that an intercalation was made that year in the Hawaiian lunar calendar.

19. On *noa*, see HC (Peirce to Hunnewell, 11 Mar 1833); on *le'ale'a*, Kamakau (1961:337), Hawaiian text, *Ke Au 'Oko'a* (7 Jan 1869).

20. The connection between local schools and local *konohiki* begun in 1825–1826 continued into the 1830s. Lyons in 1837 describes what he calls “an amusing adult school” in Waimea, Hawai'i, consisting of 120 *konohiki*, some of whom were women, since Paul's injunctions were not observed in the Sandwich Islands; on the contrary, says the missionary, women “often usurp authority over the men & hold the reins of government over large districts.” Lyons apparently found this school amusing because half the students could not read and only one-fourth knew any writing (SR: Waimea, 1837).

21. Waialua was a partial exception, as we shall see. Kamakau confirms this while noting that “in other places all over Oahu there were no religious meetings held, and the schools were dead” (1961:338).

22. “Hear from 'Ewa by Dr. Judd that the King's conduct is very vile & unbecoming. . . . In returning from bathing he seized upon women & chased them. He called for awa [kava] and used to excess a preparation of that root. Dr. Judd feels it his duty to keep close to the Princess [Nahi'ena'ena] & to attend her through the whole course of her tour around the island” (L. Chamberlain, journal, 29 Mar 1834).

23. This is from Stephen Reynolds (journal, 9 June 1834), who had the report from Dr. Rooke in 'Ewa. Reynolds also mentions various speculations current about the cause of the king's attempt, ranging from despair over the deaths of certain chiefs to “the chiefs refusing to give up the lands.” “All guessed,” said Reynolds, “none knew.” Levi Chamberlain says nothing directly about the king's attempted suicide, only that Judd and Bingham went to 'Ewa to see him, and from inquiries there Judd “satisfied himself that the king had been at least for a time in a state of mental derangement. The cause was probably excessive use of strong drink. This perhaps in connection with other things” (Journal, 11 June 1834).

24. I have given a detailed narration of the events in part to correct a lamentably inaccurate and oversimplified account—arising in a bizarre collocation of archival notes—of the sequence and relationship of Kauikeaouli's suicide attempt, his union with Nahi'ena'ena, and their respective tours of O'ahu, in Sahlins (1981:61).

25. In 1841, Lt. Wilkes noted that the king had storehouses in Lahaina to hold his revenues, consisting largely of heaps of tapa cloth. The king complained of being short of money, as his revenues were in tapa and produce of little value; and as he had so many hangers-on to feed and clothe, he was rendered “quite as poor as many of his subjects” (Wilkes 1845:4:237–238).

26. The king, said Vaillant in 1836 (report), “has so little *tenue* and

allows the chiefs and whites such familiarity with himself, that in Honolulu he is considered rather as a *simple individual* than as the sovereign of the Sandwich Islands” (see L. Chamberlain, journal, 27 Oct 1828). Likewise, according to Barrot, “Kauikeaouli spends all his evenings in a public billiard room, playing and drinking with the first one that comes” (1978:68).

27. “This evening his Majesty gave a ‘soirée’ at his palace which was brilliantly illuminated throughout for the occasion. It was more of a formal display, after civilised fashion, than I have ever before witnessed” (L. Chamberlain, journal, 6 Feb 1845). However, a European visitor at midcentury could still write that the king “was entirely conquered by the spirit—partly that of religion through the missionaries, partly that of cognac through the French” (Gerstaecker 1855:280). Meanwhile, the missionaries were sometimes congratulating themselves on the king’s apparent piety, sometimes grieving at his relapses (e.g., ABM: Armstrong, 31 Jan, 4 May 1848).

Deaths on the Mountain

An Account of Police Violence in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea¹

August Kituai

In 1930 nearly a thousand Papua New Guinean men served as police, just over three hundred in Papua and twice that number in New Guinea (Kituai, 1993). A major part of their task involved exploring the country and “pacifying” the people. And it was from this patrol work that the police won praise from their officers, the government generally, and a wider public (Lett, 1935; Murray, 1931:571–582; Hides, 1938). The policemen with their rucksacks, .303 Lee-Enfield carbines, close-shaven hair, fine physique, and their police uniforms walked into thousands of villages: They were the most numerous of the government’s agents. They were engaged in cultural exchanges and they brought to the villages aspects of their own and European culture. They took away with them the villagers’ songs, dances, house-building styles, magic, and fishing techniques (Panoff 1969:111–125). They interpreted what they could of the *masta*’s² ways to the villagers, and they demonstrated the value of some of the material benefits of the *nupela pasin*,³ the kerosene lanterns, fishing lines and hooks, and steel stools. All that was expected, but the police were also aggressive and enthusiastic agents of change. In other words, Papua New Guinea policemen did in fact act as civilizing agents, as interpreters and as middlemen of the colonial governments in particular and of Western influence generally to the villagers; yet, their excellent records were tainted because they used force and intimidation to expedite social change and government control.

It is this latter part of police work in Papua New Guinea that I wish to discuss in this chapter by analyzing one bloody shooting incident in Papua New Guinea’s central highlands in the late 1940s. But, first, it is essential to explain under what circumstances Papua New Guinea policemen were allowed to use force.

The Official Position

Sir Hubert Murray on October 1, 1909, issued a set of official instructions on how officers of the Papuan Armed Constabulary and their contingent of policemen should conduct themselves in the execution of their duties. His official directive was specific and condemned the use of unnecessary force. He conceded, however, that some force could be used under special circumstances:

1. Officers in command of Armed Constabulary are reminded that they can never, under any circumstances, be justified in firing upon natives by way of punishment. Without attempting an exhaustive statement of the law of homicide it may be taken that there are three, and, so far as officers of the Constabulary are concerned, only three cases in which life may lawfully be taken:

- (i) In self-defence, including the defence of police, carriers and others.
- (ii) For the purpose of preventing the escape of a person who has been arrested, or whom it is sought to arrest, upon reasonable suspicion of having committed certain offenses (including murder and manslaughter).
- (iii) In overcoming a forcible resistance to the execution of process or to an arrest.

2. The sections referred to do not justify the taking of life except in cases of necessity—that is where there is no other way of protecting the life of the person attacked, or of preventing the escape, or of overcoming the forcible resistance. The section should be studied carefully.

3. It should be borne in mind that these sections lay down the conditions under which life may, in extreme instances, be taken without incurring criminal liability; they should not be taken for guides as a matter of general practice, but should rather be regarded as danger signals marking the extreme limits of legality. Further, officers should never forget that it is the settled policy of the Government not to resort to force except in cases of necessity when all other means have failed, and that it by no means follows because an officer may have a good defence on a charge of manslaughter that his conduct will, therefore, escape censure.

4. Questions of the capture of fugitive offenders and of overcoming resistance to arrest arise less frequently than that of self-defence, and officers may take it that they will not be justified in opening fire, by way of self-defence, unless they have been actually attacked that is, unless arrows have been discharged or spears thrown. Even then they will not be justified unless their own lives

or the lives of others are actually endangered. Threats of attacks can rarely amount to a sufficient justification.⁴

*Kiaps*⁵ and cadets⁶ of the New Guinea Service were issued with a similar set of “Standing Instructions” in 1925.⁷ Officially, officers from both territories were instructed to use force only under special circumstances.

The Situation on the Frontier

To delve into the circumstances surrounding each case of coercion by officers and men during the colonial period would prove too difficult, time consuming and, in the end, perhaps futile given the documentary data at hand. It can be stated generally, however, that many Papua New Guinean men and women were shot dead, or suffered other forms of atrocities (hanging, flogging, whipping, imprisonment, etc.) at the hands of private persons as well as from colonial officers during the whole period of colonial rule. Nelson, in “The Swinging Index,” has an excellent treatise on the subject, revealing the nature of the crimes committed by Papua New Guineans, the types of punishments incurred, the frequency of their occurrence, and the extent to which officers and men encouraged severe forms of punishment for particular types of offenses during the period between 1888 and 1945 (1978:130–152). More recently, Connolly and Anderson calculated on the basis of documents that for the highlands region, “total casualties to gunfire directed by white prospectors and patrol officers [and their band of policemen] throughout the 1930s might conceivably have amounted to a thousand men, women and children.”⁸

Essentially, this was caused by the colonial government’s determination to establish its authority over tribesmen. They were imbued with the determination to spread the Pax Britannica, Australiana, and Germanica and impose their conception of law. That a few lives were lost was, in their view, a reasonable cost for the general advancement they eventually hoped to bring to the villagers.

Following is one example of police and officer violence. It is from the highlands region—by the 1960s the remaining major frontier of contact. I would like to describe this particular incident in detail because it allows us, firstly, to become aware of the extent of police and officer violence on the frontier and, secondly, to understand the pecu-

liarities and ambivalence of official laws/instructions to officials working on the edge of government control.

In July 1947, five innocent men from the Kouno area of the Central Highlands District were shot dead by a company of eleven policemen. The circumstances of the presence of the patrol party at Dika, the shooting of the warriors, an investigation by the Department of District Services and Native Affairs into the causes, and the resultant exoneration of those concerned is now told from available primary documents.

In early July 1947, the assistant district officer of Chimbu, John Amery Costelloe, received a complaint from Geru, leader of a sub-clan of the tribe of Karap in the general area of Kouno in the Chimbu subdistrict, that two women from the village, while attending to their gardens, had been chopped to pieces by men of their enemy tribe—the Dika. All previous attempts to settle the matter peacefully and to get the Dika to compensate the aggrieved families had failed. Instead, the Dika became more aggressive and challenged the Karap warriors to a duel to settle the score whenever compensation demands were raised. It had been a drawn-out affair and Geru, wishing to avoid another bloody confrontation,⁹ sought the protection of officer Costelloe.

Consequently, a patrol party consisting of Costelloe, *kiap* Craig Andrew John Symons, and eleven policemen gathered at Kerowagi and set off for Karap village on July 11, 1947, intending to arrange a peace settlement to the conflict between the two warring factions. While Costelloe was an experienced officer, Symons was new to Papua New Guinea and the Central Highlands. In fact he had only recently arrived from Sydney, after completing a program of instructions at ASOPA on February 17, 1947, and being posted to Chimbu District “for duty and further training” soon after.¹⁰ By July 11, 1947, he had been in the country for a little less than five months. It could therefore be said that Symons was young, inexperienced, and incompetent with *tok pisin*, “which is so essential when giving instructions to the police,” it being the lingua franca of most New Guinean policemen.¹¹

After receiving an urgent telegram message on the night of July 12, 1947, at Dimbin, Costelloe left for Moresby the following morning. He left Symons in charge with a strong warning that he could proceed slowly as far as Karap village but to go no farther until he returned.¹² In fact, he was warned in no uncertain terms of the “extreme danger to be expected” beyond that point.¹³ Symons was advised that

if he had to have an audience with the tribal leader of the hostile group he could do so only if Mek, the leader, came to Karap. At some stage after reaching the Kouno area, and before his departure, Costelloe issued fifty-five rounds of .303 ammunition to eleven policemen, but forty-four were returned, “leaving eleven rounds to be accounted for by Symons’ party.”¹⁴

On July 17, 1947, Symons and his entourage finally arrived at Karap village and for the next three days he tried in vain, through the assistance of messengers, to inveigle Mek of Dika to come to Karap. Mek continued to maintain his defiant stance and refused to come to Symons for a peaceful settlement with his enemy. Instead, he returned Symons’ messengers with loads of insult and the occasional present. Mek’s arrogance and his persistent refusal to obey orders from a government officer taunted Symons in no small measure. This is manifest in the correspondence, some of which is quoted below, that followed after the event, but more so with regard to his next move.

On July 21, 1947, against the strong advice of his superior officer and a suggested bravado (Costelloe’s letter quoted below), he walked to Dika “looking for trouble,”¹⁵ accompanied by his party of policemen and villagers from the aggrieved tribe. Consequently, five innocent Dikans lost their lives from gunshot wounds along the hillside of their once familiar territory.

Costelloe was understandably shocked when Symons told him of the tragedy after his return from Port Moresby on July 27, 1947. At least his letter to James Taylor soon after reflected this frame of mind:

I am sorry to advise that young Symons mucked things in Kouno and became involved in a totally unwarranted shooting affray, killing five men. . . . I instructed him to proceed as far as Karap, there to remain until I got back.

For some reason or other he *disobeyed* my orders. The usual insulting messages were brought to him and I guess that he took them to mean a reflection on his own courage—anyway he went looking for trouble. As he approached the hostile people, they laid down their arms and shields and fled. He had told the police to open fire if that happened and they immediately did so, shooting five men in the backs and killing them. *Most unfortunate and unjustified. There was no attack at all and the fact of them laying down their arms indicated their desire to parley. He then permitted his party to lay waste some banana patches—totally unjustified* [author’s emphasis].¹⁶

Taylor's reply to Costelloe was prompt. The reasons were contained in his letter forwarded two days later from Goroka on August 13, 1947. The relevant parts read:

Please advise a/Patrol Officer Symons:—

1. To submit a confidential report to you (pass to me).
2. That I shall not order an inquest; that if I were to do so and that the evidence produced indicated that natives were shot when his or the lives of his police were not in real and imminent danger and that he gave the order to fire, the coroner would have no alternative but to commit him and such police who fired, for trial upon a charge of unlawful killing.
5. Not to discuss the subject with anyone except yourself or write about it to his friends or other members of the service. Publicity may cause legal action with possible disastrous results to himself.
6. Not to worry. His error is one of youth and I shall protect him, but he is to obey lawful orders implicitly.¹⁷

Advised hence by Costelloe, Symons, with the incident fresh in his memory, bared it all, as he had done to Costelloe, and wrote down the facts as they had occurred at Dika. The thrust of his written admission was that, although the men had not contravened any official regulation, he had actually ordered his policemen to shoot the fleeing men in the back, under what turned out to be a false impression, that their actions were a “trick” to ambush his party.¹⁸ The indiscriminate shooting killed five men, namely: Denimp, Du, Kum, Manimp, and Waim.¹⁹ The report, written on September 7, 1947, was forwarded to Costelloe, as suggested in Taylor's letter of August 13, which was then delivered to Taylor in Goroka.

Strange as it might seem, after this correspondence the tragic fate of the five Dikans would have rested, if Taylor's letter to Costelloe of August 13 is any indication, had it not been for an unsubstantiated report of subinspector Bernard's inquiry into the Kouno deaths that triggered an official inquiry.²⁰ The probing of Australian newspapers the following year into the secrecy surrounding the whole affair also helped publicize the tragedy to an international audience.²¹ We do not know how the Australian newspapers came by their story, or who commissioned the little-known Bernard inquiry. What we do know is that Taylor's attempted cover-up of the Kouno deaths failed, resulting in the somewhat mysterious inquiry conducted by Bernard. This short-lived inquiry is important in one respect: Taylor got to know about it.

That the inquiry avoided him as a point of reference is no real surprise, but he acted swiftly, it seems, to get a head start on Bernard's

inquiry, and further to discourage what in his view might involve unnecessary and protracted court proceedings. He wrote to his most senior officer—the director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Mr. J. H. Jones,—and enclosed the correspondence between himself, Costelloe, and Symons regarding the deaths at Dika.

His letter ended with a strong plea not to reveal the contents of Symons' report to anyone who might be ill-disposed to use it as a vendetta against Symons in the future: "I draw your attention to the fact that Mr. Symons' report is a confidential one, perhaps induced by my memorandum to the Assistant District Officer, Chimbu, of 13th August 1947 (attached), and I submit that its contents should not be allowed to become known to any persons who might be concerned in a prosecution of that officer and who might use it in evidence should such a prosecution eventuate."²²

Fortunately, Taylor's enclosed correspondence between himself and his two subordinates was not swept under the carpet as he would have liked by the acting director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs. Instead, he circulated the three documents among the relevant authorities—the administrator, J. K. Murray, the government secretary, the acting Crown law officer, Mr. E. B. Bignold, and, through the advice of the administrator, the minister for External Territories, Mr. E. J. (Eddie) Ward, in Canberra. These authorities therefore reviewed the documents and, on prima facie evidence, agreed that neither Taylor nor Symons could not be let off lightly. In other words, their initial reactions agreed with the gravity of the situation—that five lives had been lost, and from the available evidence someone ought to be held responsible. For example, the reaction of the acting director of DDSNA on receipt of Taylor's earnest plea in his subsequent memorandum to the acting government secretary reads as follows:

It will be noted that the District Officer's letter to Mr. Costelloe is dated the 13th August 1947 whereas the report to this Department is dated the 10th October 1947. From this, and the general trend of the correspondence, it would appear that Mr. Taylor's original intention was not to report the case to this Headquarters, but deal with it as an administrative matter, taking the responsibility for such action upon his own shoulders. *Maybe Mr. Bernard's enquiry caused the District Officer to change his mind* [emphasis added].

If it had been an ambush affair, or a clash in uncontrolled territory against armed warriors, I would be inclined to support Mr. Taylor, but the reports make it quite clear that there was no

ambush, the natives shot were unarmed and in face of the fact that Mek voluntarily reported to the Assistant District Officer at the Government station Chimbu shortly after, no doubt to complain, it cannot be claimed that the area is uncontrolled.

Both Mr. Symons and Mr. Taylor were suspended from active duty pending the outcome of the official police inquiry headed by the newly appointed police inspector, Mr. J. H. McDonald.²³ He submitted the completed report to Mr. J. S. Grimshaw, the superintendent, Royal Papuan Constabulary, by December 11, 1947, and subsequently circulated it through his office to the appropriate authorities in Port Moresby and the minister for External Territories in Canberra. On the basis of this investigation, and the support it received from the various authorities, Symons and his policemen were exonerated from any charge.²⁴

This position was, of course, a dramatic reversal of their earlier decision that someone be held responsible for the deaths. In other words, when confronted with the raw evidence before the investigation, there was little doubt left in their minds as to who was responsible—but later, with the lapse of time, further reflection, and additional information, the guilty verdict was overruled.

What changed their minds?

This question necessitates a review of the various viewpoints arising from the inquiry; namely, those of McDonald, Grimshaw, the administrator, and the minister for External Territories. First comes the report of the inquiry. As his terms of reference, McDonald interviewed Assistant District Officer Costelloe, *kiap* Symons, four policemen, including Sergeant Bus of Manus, Constable Numibi of Heganofi (E.H.P.), Constable Waim of Chimbu, and Constable Gande of Western Highlands; and, with the aid of interpreters, three villagers, two of whom were Dikans, one being Mek, the Dikan leader. Claiming agonizing muscle pains, McDonald did not visit Dika, “but viewed it from some distance off.” In his report to the director of District Services and Native Affairs, he made known his position:

I have given this matter a great deal of thought and consideration and I desire to suggest that this Department take all possible steps to prevent this unfortunate young man being brought before the Court. If he is to face a charge of unlawful killing, I have no doubt that there would be no conviction, but as people are so prime to talk of such cases, he would probably carry this stigma for many

years in peoples minds, especially those who do not know the facts, and probably ruin the life of a very promising man, who was endeavoring to please his superiors.

The law says that all cases where the loss of life is involved are to be decided by the court, but conditions in the uncontrolled areas are such that our present staff of young Patrol Officers are in danger of these war like tribes every time they enter these areas.

It is my hope that this case and others of a similar nature, which are bound to follow, be kept an Administrative one, and prevent it becoming a legal action. If officers are to face charges of unlawful killing or other court action, young men of the type that this Administration desires to employ would not be forthcoming and parents would dissuade their sons from doing so.

One would have thought that McDonald's responsibility was to conduct an impartial inquiry, but this quotation reads as if his mind had already been made up well before it.

A good number of the policemen I interviewed indicated that there were times, in the absence of their *kiap*, when they abused the authority vested in them, but they never did this when their *kiap* was a member of the patrol party. Three of the four policemen—Sgt. Bus, Constable Numibi, Constable Waim—told McDonald during the inquiry that, as far as they could remember, Symons had in fact advised them, on the night before their trip to Dika, to do one of two things: either to make friends with the Dikans if they stood still and accepted Symons' appeasement speech on behalf of Karap villagers, or to start shooting if the Dikans did anything else—ran away; hurled or were in the process of hurling spears; or attacked them in some other way.²⁵ If the policemen had reacted to the situation following the previous night's orders, then, the killing of the five men was nothing less than premeditated murder. When one considers that a war of nerves had raged between Symons and Mek for three long days with Mek seeming to have the upper hand, it would not be beyond the realm of probability to assume that an inexperienced officer of the frontier situation would want to teach a lesson to the recalcitrants.

On December 24, 1947, the administrator, J. K. Murray, wrote to the minister for External Territories and aired similar opinions to those of Mr. McDonald. Two significant parts of his letter read:

It is my advice that the suspension of Messrs. Taylor and Symons be lifted, and that they should be returned to their duties in their respective posts. For this advice I accept the fullest possible responsibility.

I consider that Mr. Taylor should be severely reprimanded in connection with his confidential memorandum to the Assistant District Officer and which I quoted at the bottom of page 2 of my letter of November 8; and that Mr. Symons should be reprimanded for disobeying an order given by the Assistant District Officer, Mr. Costelloe.²⁶

Advised hence, the minister for External Territories gave the final official nod and approved the administrator's recommendations on January 2, 1948:

1. That Mr. Symons should be reprimanded for disobeying an order given by the Assistant District Officer, Mr. Costelloe;
2. That Mr. Taylor be reprimanded in connection with his memorandum to the Assistant District Officer dated August 13, 1947;
3. That in accordance with the Administrator's advice the suspension of Messrs. Taylor and Symons be lifted immediately and that they be returned to their duties in their respective posts.²⁷

Soon after, both these officers' suspensions were lifted and they were reinstated to their former substantive posts.

There are two final considerations. First, the result of McDonald's inquiry was the basis on which all subsequent decisions were made. In this inquiry, Symons substantially altered his earlier testimony of the incident to Costelloe. In September he wrote that he had actually ordered his policemen to shoot the fleeing men in the back. During the recorded interview with McDonald, however, he altered his earlier account and said instead that he *did not* order his policemen to shoot the fleeing tribesmen, nor did he know who ordered them to do so, or who fired the first shot.

Yet none of the authorities seriously questioned why there was a fundamental change in his account of the story from the original written version. Symons himself does not provide an explanation in the inquiry because McDonald, it appears from the content of the document, conveniently failed to ask him the most relevant question. The administrator took it upon himself to ask the relevant question and Symons denied any involvement—and the administrator accepted his denial: "I have read through the statements taken by Mr. McDonald from various witnesses and it does not appear from the statements that an order was given by Mr. Symons to fire. In order to clear this matter for myself, I saw Mr. Symons in my office and he denies that he gave an order to fire or that he was in a position to

give that order. I accept his denial because it agrees with the evidence as adduced by Mr. McDonald.”

The second conclusion reached then reflected the feeling of senior colonial officials, in particular McDonald and Taylor, that in the work of exploration and pacification the violent clash of two cultures was inevitable, particularly in “uncontrolled areas,” but the work must continue regardless of the shortage of staff or the intolerance of the people. Taylor, as his correspondence shows, remained adamant from the beginning that his junior officer had only committed an “administrative error,” which, under the circumstances of his work on the frontier of government influence, did not warrant an inquiry. In the opinion of the acting Crown law officer, Mr. E. B. Bignold, however, the Kouno tragedy should have gone beyond the McDonald inquiry:

The results of Mr. J. H. McDonald’s enquiry have been carefully examined by me and it is clear, unfortunately, that the account now given by Mr. Symons differs in very material respects from that originally given by him when less time had elapsed since the shooting which resulted in the death of the five natives.

It is believed by me that the unchallenged fact that the five natives who lost their lives were shot in the back is a vital factor in considering what should be done. I feel no doubt that the proper course is to charge this officer with manslaughter and further, in my view, there can be no legal justification for departing from this course on the information available.

In regard to Mr. Taylor, whilst I believe him to be an accessory, I incline to the view that it would be preferable not to charge him as such but to charge him with attempting to defeat the course of justice. This is a charge which in no way depends upon the prosecution or the result of the prosecution of Mr. Symons.

If these two officers were not [to] be charged it would seem to be a failure to administer the criminal law in force in that part of the Territory of New Guinea designated the Central Highlands.²⁸

In his final submission to the minister for External Territories in December 24, 1947, the administrator chose to overlook the acting Crown law officer’s advice, preferring instead opinions outside of the legal fraternity. In Symons’ case, he wrote:

I do not agree with the opinion of the Crown Law officer that Symons should be charged with manslaughter in view of the fact that it is the opinion of experienced officers that there would be

no conviction. I do not consider that a desire to find out details concerning an affray in which five natives were killed in July last would warrant placing a man on a charge of manslaughter if the charge is not likely to be sustained. Such a procedure might serve as a precedent whereby officers connected with fatalities resulting from measures taken to protect the safety of patrols will automatically be charged with homicide. Such a procedure might well be calculated to seriously interfere with the morale of the Directorate of District Services and Native Affairs.²⁹

Henceforth, after the second round of considerations, the matter of the fate of the five Dikans was closed.

The above then is an example of deaths resulting from government intervention in a tribal dispute. It also illustrates the extent to which Papua New Guinean communities (often the weaker ones) sought the support of the colonial governments to settle grievances against enemy tribes (Downs, 1986; Connolly and Anderson, 1987:250; Kituai, 1994). What is important for our purposes is—did these deaths occur within the framework of the cardinal principles of 1908 and 1925?

I interviewed twenty-eight ex-policemen between 1985, 1986, and 1989 and most shared the official view that a little force was necessary to keep belligerent individuals and groups under control.³⁰ Like their officers they were convinced that the people they dealt with were “primitives” who would only respond to stringent measures. Most also admitted that they used some form of force against carriers, laborers on stations, prisoners, and the communities they visited from time to time. Of the twenty-eight men interviewed, eleven admitted to having shot and killed one or more people. For instance, Amero Bega, a policeman from West New Britain, claimed to have shot dead fourteen people in Kainantu (Eastern Highlands) and Chimbu during his four years in the highlands, including one woman shot through the vagina in the Bena Bena area of Eastern Highlands, during an early morning raid.³¹ Many of these deaths seem to have taken place in the highlands region and during the period before the 1960s. Obviously this was because much of the highlands area was still considered an “uncontrolled area” prior to 1960.

The course of action the policemen took depended on the instructions they received from the *kiaip* as relayed to them by the senior noncommissioned officer (NCO). In the policemen’s experiences, there were two kinds of officers. Some officers were older men with many years of experience. They were conversant with official regulations

and ensured rigid observation. If a policeman was found to have exceeded his legal powers, he was either punished in the field or a recommendation was sent to the administrative center for his demotion or dismissal. Any policeman who worked under this kind of officer was careful not to go beyond the bounds of his given responsibility. At the other extreme, there were inexperienced officers who demonstrated a clear lack of understanding of the general government policies and the nature of their own duties. These officers depended on the expertise of the policemen to guide them through their early years in the field. In appreciation of their assistance and loyalty, the officers tended to overlook the errors of their policemen, which, in many instances, encouraged them to use their own discretion and act independently of their observation and guidance. If, for instance, a policeman had killed someone or committed other acts of violence without the officer's knowledge and the offended persons brought the complaint before him, the officer would invariably deny or excuse these allegations against his policeman. In almost all cases, the reasons the officers advanced for the untoward behavior of their men was that they had acted in self-defense. Villagers rarely questioned the *kiap* or challenged his decisions.

This might also suggest the sense of camaraderie and esprit de corps that existed among the *kiaps* and policemen.

The Source of Police Power: The Gun

One experienced policeman told me, "Under the circumstances in which we worked, the gun proved useful, it became our most important security. Without it the colonial government would have crumbled, and the policemen would have been virtually useless."³² The value of the gun became abundantly clear to the policemen before and after they joined the Police Forces. They were recruited to work for an alien power whose standing army (metaphorically speaking) consisted of a few aging administrators and equally few field staff officers, some of whom were inexperienced in dealing with people of other races. The policemen could see that numerically their employers were clearly in the minority. Surrounding them was a horde of people with alien customs and traditions. In the main, the people were suspicious of the intruders, regarding many of them as enemies who should be fought, as they had fought other strangers in the past, in order for a warrior to establish his position

in his society.³³ The policemen knew, from the knowledge they had of their own societies, that the village warrior was a fierce fighter who would struggle to the end to protect the honor of his tribe, family, and territory. That being the case, the policemen had to be prepared to confront the village warrior with an equivalent force, or with a more lethal weapon, in case the villager decided to attack.

Therefore, when a new recruit was introduced to the power and effectiveness of the rifle as a weapon during training, he was determined to become proficient at its use. He could see that the .303 carbine rifle³⁴ was more than a match for spears, clubs, and bows and arrows. And every day during training the recruits were encouraged to strive to be the best marksman, even if they were not always successful at first.³⁵ Needless to say, training was serious business in Papua New Guinea from the perspective of both the trainer and the trained. Only then were they to be considered valuable employees of the government. The colonial governments introduced this weapon, knowing it to be lethal and knowing that the people did not possess an equivalent weapon, and they demanded that the policemen be proficient at its use so that they could go among the people and demonstrate the might of the colonial government. It was hoped that the demonstration of the government's power would frighten people into submission. But, if the people did not submit and instead retaliated against the intrusion, then the rifle-carrying police force patrolled the bush to ensure that they did.

The gun served many useful purposes for the policemen. It gave them prestige, honor, and power over the village communities. It gave them confidence and a source of power that seemed to radiate from the rifle. It raised their status above those of their peers in the village. It gave them the strength, courage, and determination to "*Suvim het igo insait long ples bilong ol kanaka. Ol kanaka save pret long mipela polisman igat gun. Ol i suruk tru*" ("Force our way into the people's villages. The people were afraid of us policemen with guns. They were really and truly scared").³⁶ On their own admission, without the rifle and the impressive image it gave them, many of the policemen would not have been brave enough to work for the government, particularly on patrols. In the end, the rifle became one of their most valued possessions: They cleaned it every day, slept with it, and never let it out of their sight.³⁷ It became the policeman's inseparable "companion." Tigavu, a policeman of Gende (Bundi), in the present day Madang Province, said it eloquently:

When the gun was issued to me I was told that it symbolically represented my *big brother* back in the village. If I took good care of it and did not let it out of my sight, I would be saved and would be able to return home to see those people whom I loved. When I was armed with the rifle I felt big and strong. People jumped at my command. They got scared of me, not because I threatened them with it but because they had seen how dangerous it could be when used. Naturally, they held its owner in awe. So much so that in the areas that I worked, people held me in such a high esteem that my reputation and popularity as a policeman grew quickly. In the end I had the same reputation as some of my traditional fight leaders back home.³⁸

Summary

In the tragic shooting incident described, five warriors from the Dika clan died from police violence. Their death was not an isolated case. Many other Papua New Guineans had died in similar circumstances in the highlands as well as the coastal regions from 1884.³⁹ The context in which these tragic events took place can be explained in the following way. The *kiap* system and the colonial system in general required the police to be tough, dictatorial, and sometimes brutal. The *kiaps* may not have known about the details of how their policemen acted, but some of them created a general context in which the police were expected to be tough. The *kiaps* shouted at people, occasionally hit someone, and generally behaved as though they expected immediate compliance with orders. Also, the system was one of frequent surveillance by an armed party—sometimes with a *kiap* present, and at times with a senior noncommissioned officer and constables. Usually it was a brief inspection by a small group of superior officers.

In their methods the police shifted a long way from the proclaimed ideals of their officers, ideals generally known to the police. But their actions were in conformity with a general toughness practiced by many of their officers and inherent in the system itself. Researchers have been right to see the police as intermediaries, but in doing so they have underestimated the power wielded by the police and the extent to which the colonial state was imposed by violence and intimidation.⁴⁰

In the final analysis, then, only one short and unreserved conclusion can be drawn about the Papua New Guinean policemen of the time.

Despite all the hardships, traumatic experiences, humiliations of a master-servant relationship, disparity in wages and more, they lifted their heads high and performed with unquestioning loyalty and obedience. They were proud and possessive of wearing the government's uniform. As far as these men were concerned, some fanatical force seems to have radiated from the uniforms that drove them to perform sometimes beyond normal behavior to achieve results expected of them by the government. The uniforms were, of course, symbols of colonialism in Papua New Guinea. As such, policemen, by deeds and attitudes, acted more colonial than the colonialists, if not in intent then perhaps through ignorance or blind loyalty.

NOTES

1. I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments and observations of Ronald Huch, professor of history and chairman of the History Department of the University of Papua New Guinea, on a draft of this paper.

2. *Tok Pisin*: white men's ways.

3. *Tok Pisin*: New ways, innovation.

4. Quoted in E. B. Bignold, A/Crown Law Officer, "Shooting of five natives by an administration patrol near Kouno central highlands on 21st July, 1947" (Territory of Papua New Guinea, Australian Archives, ACT, CRS A518, Item W 841/1, 28 October, 1947).

5. According to James Sinclair, the word *kiap* is the pidgin (*tok pisin*) term for the patrol officers, districts officers, and district commissioners of the department of the old Papua New Guinea Public Service (1981:7). Although *kiap* was not a term used in Papua before World War II, it is now a convenient way of encompassing various ranks and designations, whether they were resident magistrates, assistant district officers, or *kiaps*. *Kiap* and patrol officers are both used in the article.

6. A cadet was considered an "apprentice" *kiap* who worked with a *kiap* for a number of years until he familiarized himself with the responsibilities involved, when he was promoted to the position of *kiap*, which entitled him to work independently (Reed 1943:165).

7. It was entitled Territory of New Guinea, District Standing Instruction, 1925. It contains precise information on when deadly force could be lawfully used, including illustrative examples of problems and appropriate lawful actions. It should be consulted for further confirmation of the above statements regarding the official administrative position in respect to force.

8. Connolly and Anderson, *First Contact* (1987:250). Also, my recently completed Ph.D. thesis, "My Gun, My Brother," has examples of further deaths occurring in Papua New Guinea during the period between 1920 and 1960. The policemen were responsible for many of these deaths.

9. On a previous encounter, ten lives had been lost, five men from each side. It was as a result of these deaths that the Dika inflicted a cowardly act, according to Geru, by taking the lives of the two women (from Craig Andrew Johns Symons' statement, referred to hereafter as "Symons: Statement," November 24, 1947, Australian Archives ACT A518, Item W841/1).

18. Attachment 1, "Portion of Memorandum Prepared by Government Secretary." This report was attached to a memorandum from the administrator, Colonel Murray, to the minister for External Territories, Mr. Eddie Ward, headed "Most Confidential." (Memorandum for: The Honorable the Minister through the Secretary, Department of External Territories, Canberra, A.C.T., 8 November 1947, Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

11. J. H. McDonald (inspector of police), "Investigation—Kouno area Central Highlands District." The Report of his findings was sent to the superintendent of police, Port Moresby on December 11, 1947 (Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

12. Costelloe did not return until July 23, 1947. In "Statement of J. A. Costelloe A.D.O. Chimbu" at Kerowagi December 2, 1947, taken by J. H. McDonald, inspector of police (Australian Archives ACT CRS A516, Item W841/1). To be referred to hereafter as "Statement, 1947."

13. Statement, 1947.

14. Statement, 1947.

15. Letter dated Kundiawa, August 11, addressed "Dear Jim" and signed with the initials J. A. C. It is from Mr. J. A. Costelloe, assistant district officer, to Mr. J. T. Taylor, acting district officer, Central Highlands (Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

16. Ibid.

17. See the letter dated Goroka August 13, 1947, from acting district officer [J. L. T. Taylor], Central Highlands, to assistant district officer, Chimbu (Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

18. This comes out clearly in Mek's record of testimony by inspector of police, Mr. McDonald, during the inquiry held between November and December 1947.

19. These names appeared in McDonald's Report of December 11, 1947, submitted to the director, Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Port Moresby.

20. There is not much said of this inquiry. It appears that it was abandoned prematurely in favor of the officially approved McDonald inquiry. The fact that there was a Bernard inquiry is mentioned almost in passing in Taylor's letter of October 10 to the acting director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Mr. J. H. Jones. It is also referred to by Mr. Jones in a "secret" memorandum to the government secretary on October 28, 1947 (both these correspondences are in Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

21. "Belated report of fatal Papuan clash last July" (*Canberra Times*, 21-1-1948); "Hush-hush on N.G. killings alleged" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20-1-1948).

22. "Taylor, Kouno Area, Chimbu—Deaths of five natives of names unknown." This letter, headed "Confidential," was sent to the director of the Department of District Services and Native Affairs, Port Moresby on October 10, 1947 (Australian Archives ACT CRS A516, Item W841/1).

23. Memorandum sent to government secretary by J. S. Grimshaw, superintendent, Royal Papuan Constabulary, titled, "Investigation by Mr. J. H. McDonald, Inspector of Police, in the alleged unlawful killing of 5 natives in the Kouno area, Central Highlands District," dated December 18, 1947, and Murray, "The Honorable the Minister, through the Secretary, Department of External Territories, Canberra, A.C.T.," dated November 8, 1947.

24. J. H. McDonald, inspector of police, "Kouno area—Central Highlands death of five natives." The report was submitted to the director of District Services and Native Affairs, Port Moresby, December, 11, 1947 (Australian Archives, ACT, CRS A518, Item W841/1).

25. Findings of McDonald's inquiry submitted to superintendent of police, Mr. Grimshaw, dated December 11, 1947 (Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

26. J. K. Murray, "The Honorable the Minister. Through the Secretary, Department of External Territories, Canberra, A.C.T. Death of five natives—Highlands Area," dated December 24, 1947.

27. Letter addressed: "The Minister. Territory of Papua-New Guinea. Death of five natives—Central Highlands Area." It originated from the Department of External Territories. Mr Ward approved the recommendations in January 1948. It was signed with the initials E. J. W. (Eddie J. Ward) (Australian Archives ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

28. E. B. Bignold, "Shooting of Natives at Kouno," letter addressed to the administrator, Mr. J. K. Murray, dated December 23, 1947 (Australian Archives. ACT CRS A518, Item W841/1).

29. J. K. Murray, "Death of five natives—Highlands area" (addressed to the Honorable the Minister, through the secretary, Department of External Territories, Canberra, A.C.T.), dated December 24, 1947.

30. Details on these interviews appear in my Ph.D. thesis, "My Gun, My Brother," Australian National University, 1994.

31. He said most of the killings took place during the course of patrols into unpacified territories, or on raids after attacks on other tribes or patrol parties. There is a possibility that sections of Amero's testimony are bravado—tough talk—as indicated by the shot through the vagina, but at the time of the interview he said, at this stage, he could not gain anything by exaggerating his accounts. He said his accounts were as they had happened (Amero: Interview, Nukakau village, Talasea, West New Britain Province, 2 March 1985).

32. These words rang from the mouth of a burly Eastern Highlander, ex-sergeant major Sarepamo (Interview, Okiufa village, Goroka, Eastern Highlands, July 25, 1985).

33. For Binandere examples, see Waiko's honors thesis: 1971 (?), in particular Chapters 4 and 5:76–88, 89–101.

34. Different varieties were used at different times (Giddings, July 1967: 9–11).

35. Papua AR 1908 (Appendix G, “Report on the Armed Constabulary”: 85).
36. Interview, Okiufa village, Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, July 25, 1985.
37. Sarepamo, Interview, July 25, 1985.
38. Tigavu of Yanderra village, Gende (Bundi), Madang Province, April 16, 1985.
39. See my Ph.D. thesis: “My Gun: My Brother,” ANU, 1994, particularly Chapters 1, 4, and 6.
40. Part of the summary is taken from Chapter 6 of my Ph.D. thesis, 1994 (ANU).

10

Colonial Conversions

Difference, Hierarchy, and History in
Early Twentieth-Century Evangelical
Propaganda

Nicholas Thomas

This chapter sketches out the paradigmatic features of missionary representations of human difference and of the missionary endeavor, with reference to Methodist propaganda concerning the western Solomon Islands. I do not deal with missionaries' private understandings of Pacific Islanders, nor do I attempt here to move beyond the propaganda to reconstruct the actual dynamics of conversion in the Pacific. Rather, I use the example of missionary imagery to establish that colonial culture was significantly differentiated and suggest that visual sources—here photographs and a film—enable historians to work toward a deeper understanding of colonial imaginings in the Pacific.

The central feature of mission discourse is the conversion narrative. Former savagery is dramatized and juxtaposed with a subsequently elevated and purified Christian state. This is not just a matter of religious change but of wider social transformation. The characterization of indigenous society as barbaric thus depends on general social markers, such as the low status of women and their treatment as beasts of burden and on practices directly associated with heathen religion: "All the filthy and degrading customs associated with idol-worship obtained. Sorcery and witchcraft flourished. . . . None died a natural death; all sickness was attributed to witchcraft; and the most

A longer version of this chapter was published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992):366–389. The original may be consulted for more extensive documentation and a wider range of photographs.

revolting and horrible cruelty was practised to extort confessions from the unfortunate women charged with the offence” (Goldie 1915:563).

Narratives concerning particular mission fields tended to dramatize one or two key practices with which the state of savagery or heathenism was identified: In Fiji, it was cannibalism and widow-strangling. In the western Solomons, headhunting was rendered emblematic, as it was in some official literature and in travelers’ accounts; but the manner in which this form of violence related to the characterization of a savage race differed crucially between these genres. Although staged photographs of warfare or cannibalism among Pacific Islanders are common, such practices are generally set at temporal distance in missionary collections. The viewer is not supposed to be titillated by the actuality of these horrific practices but interested in the work to abolish them. The missionary representation thus entails temporal marking and tends to convey a narrative of barbarism as past rather than as an immediate and persisting condition, which is often signaled by the presence of indigenous weapons in photographs of persons who are obviously converted inhabitants of a Christian order. Clubs, hatchets, and shields—intricately made and thus open to being aestheticized—are tendered as curios or specimens of native craft. But their inclusion is obviously not a matter of simple ornamentation. What stands out is that these things are no longer used: Their context of use has been abolished. Such articles are now instead the picturesque products of ingenuity and—more significantly—the tokens of a former order. The larger story of rebirth thus condensed is conveyed more fully in the film produced from the Solomons mission, *The Transformed Isle*.¹ The long opening sequence representing a headhunting raid explicitly offers a fictional reconstruction of horrific events supposedly typical of the time before the missionary arrived.

In contribution to a centennial review of Methodist work in the Pacific, John Francis Goldie, the head of the Solomons mission, predictably alluded to the horrors of the past and contrasted them with “brighter, happier days,” rhetorically asking, “Was it worth the while?” (Goldie 1915:573, 574). However, he distinguished the former state of the Solomons from that of certain other Pacific Islanders:

One navigator, who visited the group many years ago, avers that the natives of New Georgia “were the most treacherous and bloodthirsty race in the Western Pacific” and that “human flesh formed their chief article of diet.” This may have been true fifty years ago, but I much doubt the latter part of the statement. The

people of the New Georgia group were cannibals, but not in the same sense as the Fijians, who loved human flesh as an article of diet. Those who have taken part in these cannibal feasts tell me that in connection with human sacrifices and the great religious festivals human flesh was partaken of, but few liked it; to many it was so obnoxious it made them ill. The New Georgians were crafty and cruel; but they were also remarkably clever and intelligent. (Goldie 1915:563)

The last qualification makes it clear that the point of the passage is not ethnological discrimination but the separation of the subjects of conversion from the most extreme expression of barbarism. If savages are quintessentially and irreducibly savage, the project of converting them to Christianity and introducing civilization is both hopeless and worthless. The prospect of failure would be matched by the undeserving character of the barbarians, which is why mission discourse must at once emphasize savagery yet signal the essential humanity of the islanders to be evangelized. For writers such as Goldie, it was important to be able to differentiate one's own people from some other "real savages" at a convenient geographic remove and to suggest ambiguity by qualifying the image of barbarism and depiction of other dimensions of indigenous life.

The film has a parallel interest in the production of various types of artifacts among other aspects of the creativity and humanity of the Solomons people, who are seen engaged in ordinary work, playing, traveling in canoes, and fishing. This is the other side of the mode of constructing savagery on the basis of particular forms of barbaric practice: Missionaries did not suggest that in some sense part of the racial constitution of the Vella Lavellan or the Fijian was essentially savage, a cannibal at heart. The humanity of Solomon Islanders was in parts: Some parts were condemned to the past, while others were drawn into creating a new Christian Islander.

Because the depiction of artifacts is part of a project to convey a rounded, though obviously selective, image of native life, objects are often represented in association with people rather than as stable and symmetrical arrays in the manner of ethnologists or official publications. The point is not to display the weapons and implements of some bounded tribe or ethnic group, making a social geography visible for the state, but to prompt reactions of sympathy and empathy to coexist with those of horror and revulsion. Common human appreciation of artistry is clearest in the film, in which the maker of the tortoise-

shell ornament holds it up for his own regard as well as that of the audience.

The Story of Children

A few photographs that include both white and black children (such as Plate 1) most directly express the islanders' humanity. The remarkable "Study in Black and White," published as a postcard, differentiates the white girl, shown fully clothed, with a hat, from her two native friends, who are wearing only loincloths. Because all three appear to be barefoot, holding hands, and in the same basic group, the photograph seems to convey that they are all on the same level and in some sense have the same potential. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the picture shows only three children of more or less the same age and size. A similar message emerges from some larger, differentiated groups; but because these contain hierarchal differences based on age, the suggestions of friendship, voluntary association, and equality are submerged. It is, of course, difficult to see the picture in the way that a purchaser of the postcard in 1910 would have, but—



Plate 1. *A Study in Black and White* (Crown Studios, Sydney, c. 1908).

to put the proposition negatively—nothing in the image implies that the boys are in any way unsuitable playmates for the girl or that there is anything disturbing in the conjunction. The conclusion that the photograph essentially equates the three children represented in human worth seems inescapable.

Children carry a specific burden in the before and after narrative that dominates the understanding of change in a particular mission field. Another sympathetic photograph of a small boy appeared in the magazine (on a children's page) with the following text:

This picture is a photograph of a little boy born in a heathen land—the Solomon Islands. Until ten years ago, no missionary had been to the part where this boy's home is, and the people there were dark and cruel and wicked. But to-day, hundreds of them know all about Jesus, and many of them love Him. This little boy is now in one of our Mission Schools, and he, with scores of other children, is being taught the way of truth and purity. But there are thousands upon thousands of children in the islands of the Pacific still in heathen darkness. Their homes are full of evil, their lot is very sad, for they are surrounded by wicked people. We want *you* to help to make known to them the joys of the Christian faith (AMMR April 4, 1912).²

These stronger statements about native life before conversion have tensions and contradictions with the more positive side of native life shown, for instance, at length in the film. The above passage attempts to negotiate the disjunction between the imagining of native humanity and the evil nature of the past by focusing upon children, who seem to be naturally innocent: Under heathenism they might live among the wicked, in “homes full of evil,” but it is not suggested that they are wicked themselves or even degraded. Rather “their lot is very sad” because of surrounding circumstances. The projected child reader is invited to identify with these thousands of children who happen to inhabit the heathen darkness. The category of children is stretched beyond any particular culture, and the plight of those who (as it were contingently) live with “wicked people” is stressed. If the social circumstances change, these children can grow up being no less Christian than any others.

In an important sense the before and after story is thus generationally staged, a theme expressed with considerable redundancy. It is emphasized at many points that every school student is “the son of a head-hunter” (Goldie 1915:573); the image even provides the title for

R. C. Nicholson's biography of Daniel Bula, a prominent native teacher, *The Son of a Savage* (1924). Older people (and particularly young adults) are frequently assimilated into the category of children growing out of heathenism because all are referred to as "mission boys" or "girls," irrespective of age. A Roviana preacher, Boaz Suga, who was probably in his twenties, is described as "a Solomon Island boy. . . . Once a heathen . . . now a happy Christian lad" (AMMR April 4, 1912). The odd conjuncture of the temporal structure and the negative imagery of savagery is encapsulated in lines quoted by Goldie in order to stress the need for a broad civilizing project: "We are not dealing with people of the older civilizations of India and China, but 'Your new-caught sullen peoples / Half devil and half child'" (Goldie July 4, 1912:2).³

This tendency to regard indigenous people as infantile also, of course, contained a statement about the missionaries' relationship with them. This was clearly manifested in the various photographs in which the combination of the indigenous people and the missionaries (Plate 2) or their wives conveys the hierarchy and order of a family group. In this context, the sharp contrasts between this discourse and those



Plate 2. J. F. Goldie and some school boys (Crown Studios, Sydney, c. 1908).

which use sexual difference to understand racial difference is most apparent. Much other colonial discourse sees the difference between the civilized man and the savage as being as clear and irreducible as that between man and woman, grounding both kinds of physical difference in nature: A process of conversion is thus likely to have repugnant or dangerous results—hence the threatening parody of the native who is a “bad imitation” of a European.

Racial typification frequently operated through gender imagery: Asiatics and particularly Hindus were effete or effeminate; Polynesian women were voluptuous and licentious; Polynesian men were passive, idle, and languorous; Melanesians, on the other hand, were stereotypically cannibal warriors with clubs and axes. The evangelical project of incorporation relied less on such fixed race-sex categories than on a transformative familial metaphor. The mission postulates neither masculinity nor feminity but infancy, a protosocial condition from which Christian manhood and womanhood are imagined to emerge.

Shared Metaphors and Familial Practice

Missionary propaganda thus located the indigenous condition above all in the absence of enlightenment, rather than through positive markers thought to be characteristic of a particular stage of social development. In practice, of course, both missionary and official colonial interventions had to take existing institutions and relations into account, and Christian notions of underlying human equality were often placed in the background by hierarchizing practices or submerged by more specific ethnological discourses about the nature of particular societies and peoples. Although missionary propaganda is a distinct genre produced and circulated through visual media and publications that made a series of assumptions about their constituency, individual missionaries, especially from the mid-nineteenth century on, often wrote for geographical and anthropological audiences as well and were thus authors whose practical reactions and actions in the field reflected a diverse range of assumptions and influences.

This brings into focus a necessary qualification and elaboration of the argument developed thus far. I have argued that infantilization is a crucial feature of missionary culture, but it is apparent that such constructions of indigenous peoples as children or as immature have great generality. To refer merely to the approximate contemporaries of the missionaries discussed here, Dudley Kidd observed that

“one would no more think of giving the native a vote on European matters than one would think of giving fourth-form boys at school a vote in the management of lessons” (Kidd 1904:407). Neatly encompassing a series of unsocialized others, the administrator, M. V. Portman, said that he “often likened [the Andamanese] to English country schoolboys of the laboring classes” (Portman 1899:1:33). In evoking the half-infancy of the savage, Goldie was after all quoting not a theorist of missions but Kipling’s famous poem, “The White Man’s Burden.”

The distinctiveness of evangelical colonialism arises not from the terms or metaphors of its propaganda, if these are taken in isolation, but from narratives in which these tropes have specific meanings and from practices that were inflected, at least, by the terms of missionary rhetoric. Missionary work employed and enacted the notions of infantilization and quasifamilial hierarchy in a far more thorough way than any other colonial project: The construction of difference in terms of a familial relation was not a static condition but articulated with an attempt to implement a social change on the colonial periphery in a particular way. In several sequences of the film and in the literature in general, there is a great emphasis upon schooling and more generally upon the novel creation of a social order. It is as if these children are being brought up and socialized for the first time.

The mission, much more than “a house in the bush,” is a whole structure of institutions that reorganizes work and social life, ideally creating a novel order. Missionary postcards convey group images of various kinds of domestic and institutional order, with a particular emphasis upon the islanders at work, such as the hard labor of clearing a new plantation and “discharging Timber for Mission House at Vella Lavella.” These images are linked with the doctrine of the industrial mission that seems to have become the dominant view of how missions should be run among the Australasian Methodists in the early twentieth century. (This approach had its antecedents in Moravian missions and earlier in the nonconformist societies of the nineteenth century, including the Wesleyan Methodist Mission, from which the Australasian Methodist Church inherited the Pacific circuits. Moffat and Livingstone, among others, had closely identified the civilizing process and the promotion of commerce.) Goldie argued in a 1916 article that in other, unnamed missions, natives were allegedly Christians in name but lazy and dishonest in behavior; therefore, a broad approach to morality, work, and commerce was called for.

Is the Christianity we ask [“these savage islanders”] to accept merely a creed, and the nominal membership of a human society called the Church, or is it a new vision, new aspirations, and a new power to will and to do—in other words, a new life? . . . All Missionary workers will agree that the real objective in Mission work is certainly not the successful running of a commercial undertaking, however profitable, or merely the turning out of carpenters and boat-builders, however skillful. The chief business of the Missionary is not to make boats and plantations but to make men—Christian men. Not to build houses, but to build character. (Goldie 1912:2–3)

Despite the androcentric language, it should be added that this program definitely included women; and great emphasis was placed especially on sewing and garment making, which was directly linked to conversion because those who attended church necessarily did so attired in fabric skirts and blouses or sarongs, rather than in heathen dress. These activities, moreover, were regularized: Rather than being conducted individually or with friends at home in the interstices of a working day, mats and other such articles were prepared by groups working around the mission station during regular hours. *The Transformed Isle* presents the industrial mission in considerable detail, opening a segment with the claim that “a healthy vigorous young life is springing up because they are taught that there is no such thing as a lazy Christian”; we then see roads, a substantial wharf built by mission labor, and copra cutting.

The statements made through the film and photographs about this process of social growth and transformation do not relate merely to the story of the horrors of the past and the happiness of the Christian present. They also make claims about the mission’s role in the civilizing process: The mission, in fact, is identified as the sole author of positive social change in the islands, a point about which Goldie was quite explicit: “They are making model villages and improving the conditions under which they live. They are learning how to utilize their idle lands, and are making plantations of food and coco-nuts. We began this work amongst a purely savage people in May 1902. No track had been blazed, and we were the pioneers. We have not laboured in vain” (Goldie 1915:584).

But so far as commercially oriented native industry is concerned, many groups in the western Solomons had extensive experience of casual trading with ships before 1850, and in the second half of the

nineteenth century more systematic relationships with white resident traders developed, usually involving the production of copra and ivory nuts; barter of ordinary food for guns and various other articles; and the collecting of bêche-de-mer, pearl shell, and tortoiseshell. The plantations represented in the Methodist photographs circa 1910 were by no means the only ones then operated in the region. More significantly, given its prominence in mission rhetoric, the notion that the mission put an end to headhunting is totally misleading: This in fact resulted entirely from the work of the government, which had virtually pacified all the tribes of what became the Western Province several years before the mission entered the area.

Although the government's activities are invisible in *The Transformed Isle*, white traders do appear and are represented exclusively as criminal exploiters of the natives. The film creates a subnarrative around incidents supposedly typical of recruiting for the Pacific Islander labor trade and reflects the wider controversy between those engaged in the trade and their liberal opponents, principally the missions and bodies such as the Anti-Slavery Society. The critics used the term *blackbirding* and insisted that recruiting usually amounted to nothing other than kidnaping. The film shows us gullible islanders being lured onto a vessel's deck by unattractive thuggish-looking traders proffering strings of trinkets and hatchets. Despite their ignorance, the native people, wary and hesitant, are nevertheless enticed on board and below decks. After a certain number have gone below, the treacherous Europeans smartly bolt the hatch and chase the others overboard, using rifle fire to drive away the substantial crowd borne in canoes: "The brutal kidnapers weigh anchor and make for the open sea with their human freight." This scenario is rather out of place in the western Solomons, where the number of Melanesians who were ever indentured was minuscule. In any case, it ignores the point that once the trade had been going on for a few years, returned laborers were telling stories at home; and indigenous men thus almost always understood what sort of work they would be engaging in on what terms and had various reasons for voluntarily participating. Cases of kidnaping certainly occurred but were not typical of a system that entailed thousands of recruits and lasted for decades.

Although the larger inequalities of these relationships are quite inescapable, it is apparent that the missionary view seizes upon victimization by certain whites and ignores the active and collaborative character of the indigenous peoples' role in these exploitative relations.

This is not surprising, given the construction of natives as children, but underspecifies the motivation of the image. The characterization of white traders in exclusively negative terms is curious, for in practice these missionaries got on moderately well with most other white residents, but this is simply the correlate of the mission's attempt to construct itself as the only civilizing agent in the heathen land. The missionaries' industry derives purely from their endeavors in a place that was savage to start with. It is implied that there are no other plantations than the industrial mission's, but since it can hardly be pretended that there had been absolutely no other contact between Solomon Islanders and whites, this is represented as purely destructive.

Not only was the mission as an entity the key actor in a larger historical drama, but individual missionaries were presented not merely as adult parents who cared for and naturally supervised their native children but also as singularly transcendent and historically empowered figures in a different way. The head of the mission, John Francis Goldie, is seen in two intriguing pictures with a group of "mission boys" in one case, and what is evidently a school class in another. Everyone looks directly into the camera—except him. Perhaps Goldie merely had a personal aversion to watching the photographer, but the results convey a kind of wider engagement with and wider vision of the world that is not limited to the immediate circumstances. This implication is particularly strong in the picture of the school group, because we see a globe through the window directly behind and above the missionary.

The social process of conversion and the development of a new Christian society in the native land is thus represented as a dyadic affair: The missionaries on one side show the light and provide guidance, while on the other the islanders respond to the dawn and happily learn and work within the new order. The immediate reasons for this rather extravagant distortion of the actual situation are transparent: The mission had a constituency, so it needed to advertise its work, needed to raise funds, needed to convey satisfaction to those who had already made donations, and—not least—needed to engage in rivalry with other denominations, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists. The emphasis on the industrial nature of the mission was significant in the context of intermission competition because it could be claimed, perhaps accurately, that certain denominations did little more than secure nominal adherence.

At the same time there is clearly more to the project than differen-

tiation for the purposes of advertisement. It is quite crucial to the whole structure of this discourse that the mission was not simply a religious instrument but rather a total social fact. The mission created an entire social geography of stations and circuits, which in some cases reflected indigenous political divisions or trade routes but gave even these entirely new functions. It sought to impose a new temporal regime of work, leisure, celebration, and worship; and through education it offered a new global and local history marked by the life of Wesley, the foundation of the mission society, the opening of Pacific mission fields, major events of conversion, and the commemoration of martyrs. The mission produced not just a population of Christians but a people engaged in periodic plantation work who were notionally subject to rigorous behavioral codes and who had notionally brought their social and domestic habits into conformity with Christian norms. Within this effort, ideas of the location and transformation of familial life are projected in a number of ways that are not entirely consistent; in one context native existence may be deplorably nonfamilial; elsewhere indigenous families are shown to be imperfect but in the process of change; and in other cases, and particularly in the materials I have presented here, actual indigenous families seem almost dissolved within the mission station, which takes the form of a sort of macrofamilial institution.

The white missionaries are parents to native boys and girls, who are instructed and brought up not in specifically religious or technical training but in the whole field of practical, recreational, and spiritual living. The notion that the mission thus encompassed indigenous life was clearly to some extent a fantasy, but it is true that in many instances boarding schools and orphanages were created that did in fact give missionaries an enormous amount of control over children; and it is also the case that individual missionaries or missionary wives often formed close attachments with converts, especially privileged converts such as mission teachers, which the whites understood in familial terms. Needless to say, the indigenous views of these friendships are usually not accessible; most of the available recollections bearing on the question were compiled or edited by missionaries and are thus constrained in a predictable manner.⁴

Incorporation and Difference

In this case the attitude in missionary rhetoric toward savage peoples conforms with Fabian's depiction of premodern alterity: The

canonical other is not the primitive man or woman understood as an exemplar of a race that can be characterized in an essentialist manner but the heathen or pagan marked fundamentally by his or her lack of Christianity, a lack that can be remedied. The dominant movement of colonial history in this imagination is not the establishment of a fixed hierarchical relationship but a process of conversion that abstracts infants from the social milieu of savages and socializes them under the guidance of white missionaries.

Though the case considered here has its own peculiarity, it permits certain general claims to be made about evangelical discourse. In the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, missionary propaganda never displayed much interest in the project of differentiating and ranking various native populations—Hottentots and Kaffirs, Melanesians, and Polynesians—that so preoccupied ethnology and the secular discourses of evolutionism. Although the missionaries no doubt regarded Australian Aborigines and tribal peoples elsewhere as baser or more degraded than the heathens of Asiatic civilizations, the fundamental premise of the missionaries' efforts was an ethic of potential human equality in Christendom, which was particularly conspicuous in missions directing their efforts among slaves or other oppressed peoples. The Methodists' interest in children was replicated in many publications of the same period from the Religious Tract Society and other bodies dealing with India, Africa, East Asia, and elsewhere. There are broad similarities in ideas between all of these endeavors, but these are perhaps less significant than the recurrent conflicts between colonizing projects. Just as the Methodists in the Solomons were extraordinarily hostile to the white traders and labor recruiters, the Boers saw the Moravians (in the late eighteenth century) and the London Missionary Society (in the nineteenth) as entirely subversive forces that aimed to transform the native world in a revolutionary manner than would deprive them of their labor force: "The Boers firmly believed that the LMS harbored the 'Utopian idea of laying the foundation, under their own special priestly guidance, of a model kingdom of regenerated natives.' Not Moffat nor Philip nor Livingstone, for all the clarity with which they envisaged an Eden of the Spirit, could have better phrased the charter for their civilizing colonialism" (Comaroff 1989:678).⁵

The point is not that there was some intrinsic missionary hostility toward slave ownership or colonial servitude. If one is seeking an elementary structure of colonial discourse, it is not to be found at the level of a particular idea or metaphor but rather in the contradictory

character of the colonial objectives of distancing, hierarchizing, and incorporating: It is problematic to assimilate the other through the disavowal of hierarchy while implicitly sustaining the inequality that all colonialism presupposes. Hierarchizing and assimilating colonialisms are, on the surface, radically opposed; and this contradiction emerges practically in the struggles between missionaries and those whose models of colonization presuppose essential difference and fixed relations of dominance. But these models also each have internal contradictions, partly arising from the fact that each operation presupposes something of the other. The analysis here has not explored the full range of problems but does suggest that the missionaries had to confront a contradiction between the desirability of postulating human equality in certain contexts and their will to control the process of conversion and the localized theocracies that were occasionally effectively established. By imagining that others were part of a family, the mission was able to reconcile common humanity and hierarchy in a manner that was as natural and intelligible in the short term as it was insecure in the long term: After all, children grow up. That is also why this metaphor was part of the common ground of colonial discourse, yet also a resource to be valorized in a specific way in evangelical propaganda.

Although this inclusiveness and ambiguous egalitarianism might be attributed to missionary discourse in general, some features of the Methodist representation, such as the preoccupation with industry, are obviously not characteristic of all evangelical bodies or all periods. Some missions, such as Seventh-Day Adventists, made health and medical work central and presented the missionary as the healer of diseased and degraded native bodies. In other cases, as in the early-nineteenth-century London Missionary Society accounts of Polynesia and India, idolatry was the hallmark of heathenism, and the destruction of idols conveniently marked conversion. The implication of these figures of difference and forms of change was clearly different but shared a key feature with the case discussed: Savagery was a contingent state of heathenism, illness, or adherence to false doctrine, not an immutable character of a distinct kind of human being. The content and emphases of particular forms of missionary propaganda are thus variable; more important, the Methodist mission in the Solomons was peculiarly situated in relation to other forms of colonialism. Though the islands had been made a British protectorate, administrative intervention was very limited; the combination of indigenous dis-

inclination to engage in migrant labor and the fact that white settlement and expropriation were very limited made the mission a consequential player with much greater scope for implementing its projects than was possible in most other colonized areas, in which capitalists and the colonial state had a much higher profile. In comparison with the experience in Asia, where evangelists were mostly ineffective and marginal, missionaries gained acquiescence and compliance from the people; in Africa, conversion of course took place on a large scale on much of that continent, but missionaries there also had to confront and contest settler states and huge proletarianizing forces, such as the South African mines. From the perspective of these global patterns, the case of the Solomons seems marginal and idiosyncratic, but this very peculiarity enabled the mission to express itself more comprehensively—to understand the “transformed isle” as the outcome of its own work—even if the missionaries themselves inevitably overestimated the real effect of the missionary project.

This analysis has confined itself to the frame of European discourse and has attempted to delineate what is specific about one kind of colonial representation. The partial perspective of this sort of discussion must avoid recapitulating one central assumption of the discourses that it criticizes: that indigenous and colonized peoples are primarily passive recipients of Western impositions, rather than agents empowered to represent things in different terms and in some cases turn them to their own purposes. Hence, what I have analyzed does not specify what Christianity was or became for Solomon Islanders; it does not specify that what was given was the same as what was received; and although Goldie does seem to have been understood paternalistically as a big man by his Roviana boys, the hierarchical relations that the mission imagined were not necessarily those that the western Solomons people were prepared to collaborate with. More significantly, Methodism—and to a varying extent other forms of Pacific Christianity—has now been appropriated by Pacific Islanders and in Fiji is interwoven with the chiefly hierarchy and traditionalist nationalism. In the western Solomons, a substantial section of the Methodist population on New Georgia was captured in the early 1960s by the Christian Fellowship Church, an independent local charismatic sect led by the “Holy Father,” a man who claimed to be Goldie’s true successor (Harwood 1978:241). Although these developments cannot be explored here, the discourse that I have described needs to be understood as something imposed by Europeans upon

themselves. It was contingently related and practically mediated as a real imposition upon Solomon Islanders, and even when the restructuring of indigenous sociality was most effectively conducted, it never encompassed indigenous consciousness or indigenous understandings of colonial change.

Although this is thus a partial and incomplete analysis, I would affirm the importance and value of studies that restrict themselves to the European side of colonial culture. After all, popular and scholarly representations of the Pacific today may owe a good deal to their religious and secular antecedents. Don't we persist in seeing other societies in terms of what they lack—they are less developed? Doesn't applied anthropological and development research often embody a kind of assimilationism, seeking to give peripheral economies, if not pagan souls, the same cast as our own? I'm not suggesting that an echo of conformity with the enduring structures of imperialism makes anthropological or economic consultants into insincere conspirators who seek to subordinate rather than elevate those whose future they can influence; but I don't doubt either that John Francis Goldie was, in his own way, a good and sincere man.

NOTES

1. The forty-minute film was made under the direction of R. C. Nicholson, the missionary based on Vella Lavella from 1907. Some footage appears to have been shot during that year, but the version available to me incorporates later footage and appears not to have been put together until 1917 or 1918.

2. *Australian Methodist Missionary Review* (hereinafter AMMR).

3. Goldie is quoting from Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (see *Rudyard Kipling's Verse—Definitive Edition* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1940 and reprints], 323–324).

4. See, for instance, George G. Carter, *Tie Varane: Stories about People of Courage from Solomon Islands* (Rabaul/Auckland: Unichurch Publishing, 1981), which includes interesting if constrained life histories of a number of local teachers.

5. Comaroff is quoting George W. Stow, *The Native Races of South Africa* (London: Swan Sonnenschein), 268.

The French Way in Plantation Systems

Michel Panoff

On his conversion to *kolonialpolitik* [colonial politics] after being hostile to overseas expansion, Bismarck took care to emphasize that Germany would never adopt what he called the French system (Moses 1968:46). According to him the main features of this system were: taking action to occupy territories where no previous economic interests could have been an incentive; establishing garrisons or some sort of military bases; expatriate officers ruling the occupied territory with a view to attracting a sizeable national emigration.

In other words he held the view that France would have preferred or, at least, had resigned herself to a *tabula rasa* policy, giving priority to political sovereignty and military presence and aiming at peopling a conquered land rather than pursuing economic rewards. On the whole, in the alleged French schedule, trade and the development of local resources were to follow the flag, not the reverse.

While taking all circumstances into account and realizing that this simplistic picture was not offered without ulterior motive, one has to acknowledge that the so-called French system historically answered Bismarck's description well. That is not to say that the Paris government had willingly planned it from the outset or that actual events did nothing in shaping it in the end. The way in which the French started settling in Vanuatu (or the New Hebrides, as it was called prior to independence) is a case in point, as their first efforts in the 1880s were devoted to establishing army posts and enticing a few would-be settlers to the group, whereas John Higginson's grand design had so far yielded nothing much but large claims on paper. Ironically, though,

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even the Germans changed their minds as regards New Guinea in spite of their strong official statements to the contrary. In effect, they had begun by launching a project of colonization by numerous small settlers, an idea that, incidentally, Governor Hahl took up and attempted to work out in 1906–1907 by enlisting “farmers” from Australia and subsidizing them in the Baining area (see Hahl 1907; Sack and Clark 1980:113–114, 118). But, as is well known, nothing significant came out of those plans and only the Neuguinea Kompanie with its huge capital and its large-scale plantation system allowed Germany to claim the country as a possession.

Looking at the balance of power in the South Pacific over the last few decades of the nineteenth century, it is hardly surprising that France adopted the course of action considered so typical of her. She had to thread her way between the British, who had been dominating the region for so long and had all necessary supplies nearby in Australia and New Zealand, and the Germans, who had great ambitions and strong determination although they were newcomers. Little wonder then that French nationals in the Pacific felt they were in a tight corner and lacked self-confidence, especially as they were few, not wealthy, and not very enterprising (Scarr 1967:184). That is why they inevitably had to turn to state authorities in order to secure financial help, transportation, and protection against foreign economic competition. This was how contemporary witnesses saw them, an opinion to be widely endorsed by historians later. Among French residents, only the Catholic missionaries were likely to be taken seriously by both British and German nationals, especially in the rather limited province of multifarious influence over local peoples. But since these priests and lay brothers usually enjoyed more support from their fellow countrymen in the navy or the colonial service than did their Methodist and Presbyterian counterparts, they hardly represent an exception to the rule: namely that the French government distinguished itself by assisting its nationals continuously in the Pacific.

How far, then, can a certain style specific to France be detected in the plantation system as it was operating in the Pacific with its various aspects such as labor recruiting, land acquisitions, and planters’ way of life? I submit here that there did exist a French way in this respect and that plantations resulted in intensifying many features of the national character.

The four decades 1880–1920 seem to me to call for this kind of exercise, despite the widely held idea that only the early 80s were

truly typical of the Pacific labor recruiting and labor trade in its full-fledged state. Parnaby, for one, made this point clearly (1972). Between these two dates the whole history of German colonization in Melanesia took place, together with effective control and planned exploitation of Vanuatu and the irresistible ascendancy of *'afa tahiti* people (Euro-Tahitians) in the rural sector of French Polynesia (Newbury 1980:250–251). And 1890, 1905, 1913, and 1920 are the years when prices were highest for copra, a commodity that had become the main export of New Guinea, Vanuatu, and French Polynesia and had therefore given local plantation enterprises their ground rules.

In order to operate without going bankrupt immediately, a plantation had to be established on land acquired free of charge, or almost so (Panoff 1986). Whatever their citizenship, all planters started by resorting to the same devices: For an absurdly low consideration and through deception, they managed to be granted a permission to settle, which may have been certified by a cross marked on a piece of paper in lieu of signature. From the Bismarck Archipelago to Vanuatu, this was the way in which the first pieces of land were secured from Melanesian “sellers,” many of whom had no capacity to dispose of them. On the other hand, at a later stage when handling the registration of land transactions and issuing land titles in accordance with European law, the three colonial powers considered here behaved differently from one another. French authorities seem to have taken less care than their German and British counterparts to prevent the most serious malpractices. After examining all the testimonies of the time, one gets the impression that French officials were concerned first and foremost with facilitating the settling of their fellow countrymen by turning a blind eye to their abuses. Moreover, this was not to be the only occasion on which British nationals had grounds for envying their French neighbors in Vanuatu (Guiart 1986; Scarr 1967:176–251).

By the end of the period under review, a similar obligingness appeared under German rule, although circumstances were quite different—and so also was the scale of the favor involved. It was not a matter of a permissive attitude toward abuses in the French way, but a highly official proposal of land acquisitions on such profitable terms that Burns Philp hastened to purchase 5,000 hectares on Bougainville and transferred their subsidiary from the British Solomon Islands to the German Territory (Firth 1982:167). One cannot overlook how different Germany and France were as regards state interference in furthering colonization: The former resorted to means that resembled a

tender for an economic venture, while the latter was organizing a sort of implicit general pardon intended to protect everything past. In other words, the former aimed at going ahead and the latter was anxious to consolidate.

In respect of labor, another source of costs to be cut down by any means in order to achieve profitability, it is beyond doubt that French authorities had a specific policy. Whereas all British recruiting vessels had to get official licenses, to comply with strict hygiene and safety regulations, and were inspected at random by navy ships displaying their own flag, French recruiters enjoyed full freedom of action, a freedom that was limited only when Marquesas or Tuamotu Islanders—that is, French subjects—had been kidnaped (Maude 1981). But the most scandalous difference in British eyes related to the typically French tolerance of the trade in firearms and the recruiting of Melanesian women as prostitutes to be used on plantations (Scarr 1967: 139). Since only the British had to refrain from offering muskets to the relatives of their recruits and sex to their laborers on the compounds, they felt at a disadvantage. On many occasions these were two strong inducements for youths to move from their island communities to distant plantations. As a result, French recruiters were charged with unfair competition and with moral turpitude, the latter point being especially conducive to strong paternalistic action by Protestant missionaries on behalf of their indigenous flock. In Vanuatu it even happened that British planters asked to be looked after by the French government. This unexpected move to join and support France as the protecting power in the region sounds very much like the eager acceptance given by the first British settlers to Higginson when buying as many land titles or land claims as possible. Once again, France proved to be the lucky profiteer from her own neglect and unprincipled behavior.

As for the Germans in New Guinea, they could hardly be reproached for neglect. Despite Governor Hahl's belated endeavors at making all the planters realize that it was in their own interest to spare the Melanesian population in the same way a veterinary would treat livestock, German authorities constantly did their best to make labor recruiting more and more effective. Almost any means was considered good enough, from such planned action as outright kidnaping of reluctant recruits by certain *kiaps*, or through indirect pressure exerted by the head tax, up to the point of tolerating the uninterrupted efforts by planters to attract women from New Ireland to serve

as prostitutes on their premises. And if need be, the most brutal behavior was accepted. But in contradistinction to the French way, all such practices seem to have resulted from premeditation and often followed long and bitter discussions between officials and entrepreneurs. So it was something like social and economic engineering. If recruiters in New Guinea happened to be convicted of serious offenses, they were punished in the mildest possible way; usually a fine of a few marks was deemed sufficient. As Colonial Secretary Bernhard Dernburg plainly declared in 1907, the Germans were in the country to make money, and the aim of those government services on the spot was mercantilism pure and simple (Moses 1968:53; Firth 1982:90). Colonial officers and planters may have been at variance on the means to be resorted to in the local situation, but at bottom the former were always expected to serve the latter. That is why a comparison with the average French attitude is obviously appropriate here: On the one hand there was indifference to any long-term policy for economic development in Vanuatu—though there used to be one in Tahiti, thanks to William Stewart, twenty-five years earlier—while on the other, New Guinea had been provided almost from the outset with a lucid and indeed cynical project that was to be actually carried out. It is an open question, though, whether it made a significant difference to those subdued Melanesians facing one or the other colonial power.

The point is that in the day-to-day life of plantation laborers and the way they were treated by their employers, French and German authorities alike avoided interfering while explicitly basing themselves on two distinctive philosophies. In Vanuatu, for instance, there unquestionably existed permanent collusion between French officials and planters to tolerate any brutality toward laborers and then to prevent them from lodging complaints and securing redress (Adams 1986). In all likelihood, both shortage in government staff and sheer laziness did as much as true malice to surrender Melanesians to their employers' full discretion. As striking evidence of basic carelessness, the French government did not start inspecting plantations and paying attention to the workers' welfare until 1910 (Scarr 1967; Guiart 1986). By contrast, in New Guinea it was in the most official and straightforward way that the labor force was subjected to a quasi-military system that always gave the last word to the chief, that is the planter or his manager, in the name of discipline and efficiency. In the event of conflict or ill-treatment, European staff were supposed innocent and any unexpected behavior on the part of workers was labeled

“desertion” or “mutiny,” with all penal consequences. And even if it is true that the German government had long been short of staff—which did not number a hundred until 1913—labor patrols did take place from time to time on plantations but hardly resulted in significant improvement in the living conditions of the employees. As regards food supplied by planters, quantity and quality were repeatedly bound by strict regulations as determined by medical experts; but most employers were adamant in having their own way while vilifying bureaucratic interference (Panoff 1979:171; 1990:130).¹ Finally, wages paid in New Guinea under government supervision were very much lower than those paid in the British Solomon Islands and even a good bit lower than in Vanuatu.

To sum up, then, where the French government was implicitly colluding with planters and perhaps feeling ashamed sometimes of doing so, its German counterpart in all good conscience was declaring and trying to implement a system geared to reducing the New Guinean to powerlessness and exploiting his work in the extreme.

What was happening whenever planters went bankrupt in spite of their most violent efforts to cut down their operating costs? All available data suggest that both German and French officials usually made the same response, whereas the British and particularly the Australian attitude in these territories was altogether different. On the whole, either by drawing money from the treasury directly or by inducing a regular bank to give special credit, the state would manage to rescue sinking plantations in German or French territory, and Sydney-based merchants or private financiers would take over enterprises under British or Australian rule, provided in both situations the imminent bankruptcy was on a large enough scale. How the *Compagnie Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hébrides* and the *Société Française des Nouvelles-Hébrides* were rescued in turn, Ballande debts bought back, the *Neuguinea-Kompagnie* liabilities struck out and the gaining “farmers” subsidized—all are well known and suffice to exemplify the sort of action taken by the state when grand political interests, if not the very sovereignty of the nation, appeared to be at risk. But it was a commercial or an economic logic that probably lay behind most operations of takeover, merger, or joint venture affecting British plantations. The only exception I know of during the period under review is the settling of forty-seven people by the Australian government on Santo in 1904, all costs paid with public money (Adams 1986:49).

Turning now to the planters themselves, is there anything typically

French to be noticed about them? By and large it can safely be said that launching a plantation enterprise was an ordered adventure for many Germans and Britons, but not for French planters, whose beginnings clearly appear to have been foolishly unprepared. They expected wonders from this business that they undertook, out of a whim, on the assumption that tropical soil could not help but be tremendously fertile and bring very large returns without much work or investment.² Their lack of finance and technical skills was matched only by their naive imagination. (Of course a few exceptions could be mentioned, such as Ferdinand Chevillard on Efate [O'Reilly 1957:38–40; Adams 1986:46], a planter taken as an example over and over again, and Maurice Blanc and Fernand Largeau.)³ This assessment of French individual qualities and defects is confirmed by Higginson's large-scale operation, which is strongly reminiscent of Stewart's initiative in developing Atimaono in 1863: Had those two *British* businessmen not been cheeky and successful in forcing French officials' and politicians' hands, no real plantation enterprise would ever have existed in Tahiti, nor would French colonization have taken place in Vanuatu. Is it mere accident that the only two great achievements that made their mark in history were precisely due to non-French nationals?

By contrast, the other two nations present in the region seem to have been endowed with a more enterprising spirit and more common sense, the Australians sticking to thrifty habits and the Germans willing to follow technical guidance from the outset.

No less foolish was the way in which many French planters used whatever money they happened to make, especially in Vanuatu. Instead of saving it in case they collapsed later, or investing it in consolidating their businesses, they squandered it in sprees or in buying luxuries and other nonproductive items. In Tahiti too this kind of behavior, with bouts of gambling, had flourished two decades before and thereafter infected *'afa tabiti* people when they became wealthy. Neither Germans nor Australians seem to have surrendered quite so often to that temptation.

The attitude to their workers of the average French planters again distinguished them from their foreign counterparts. Theirs was a very ambiguous game: They could be brutal in the extreme and, alternatively if not simultaneously, quite familiar with their Melanesian "boys," to the point of eating and getting drunk with them. In the end many a Frenchman would indulge in living with a local mistress

(*popiée*) and perhaps “go native,” a fate rather rare among British settlers. To sum it up, a French planter was likely to behave in the same way as a boatswain among his men or a paratroop petty officer surrounded by his platoon, which is hardly a model for respectable entrepreneurs. This could explain why there was less racism on their part than among British or German planters, as exemplified for decades until today by the absence of segregation of half-castes in Tahiti and Vanuatu. Ultimately, French open-mindedness was to cause political disturbance after colonial rule had subsided, but that is another story.

Finally, if it is true that only hardship can show the real caliber of men, it is illuminating to look at what happened to those French planters in Vanuatu who had to take heavy blows—world prices for their export commodities collapsing, labor no longer available, and so on. Whenever they failed to hive off their liabilities to the state, they would leave their enterprises and take jobs in, mainly, the public service. More than half a century before, the so-called *colons militaires* (military settlers) had done the same in Tahiti (Panoff 1981). So, they reacted as if they had entered the plantation business on impulse or at the first opportunity and had then stayed for a while before entering a haven of listlessness and mediocrity. At this point one can see better a basic difference between the French pattern and the German one, in which state initiatives at times were decisive. While in the latter the government supported and supervised the plantation industry on the assumption that any good done to planters would necessarily profit Germany as a whole, in the former it would act like a system of social security, relieving the losers and the handicapped and thus fostering behavior typical of dependents.

NOTES

1. The same is true of the first years of the Australian mandate when the director of the Public Health Department, Dr. Raphael Cilento, had violent conflicts with the administrator and the planter community. See Rowley (1958), *passim*, for indications to the same effect.

2. Even the French planter Alphonse Bernier, though well educated and apparently of balanced mind, had flurries of such nonsense (see O'Reilly 1957:15–16).

3. Planters like Edmond Caillard, Georges Naturel, and the Rossis would qualify for this exceptional category only after the First World War.

12

The New Zealand Wars
and the Myth of Conquest

James Belich

In the mid-seventeenth century, the little island of Britain, rent by civil strife and internationally impotent, jostled a ravaged and fragmented Germany for the position of sick man of Europe. A couple of centuries later, Britain ruled large chunks of five continents and dominated the oceans in between. This rise from rags to riches, obscurity to world empire, ranks with that of Latin villagers and Mongolian nomads as a great imperial story. The ascent was shared to some extent by western Europe as a whole, and it was natural that Europeans should seek explanations for it other than mere accident. During the nineteenth century, for various reasons, the focus of explanation shifted from Christianity and civilization, institutions and geography, to a complex and sometimes ambiguous mythology of race and empire.

While nonviolent agencies—collaboration, conversion, and subversion—played important roles, war was always a key part of both empire and its myths. It was the “grand test” of racial fitness and imperial destiny, a leading tool of empire in the Pacific as elsewhere. Military history has a bad name in some scholarly circles, and many examples of the genre deserve it. But the fact is that you cannot understand empire without conquest and its myth. This chapter summarizes an earlier attempt to achieve some understanding through a

This chapter evolved from Chapters 14 and 15 in *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict*, by James Belich (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1986), which contains fuller documentation. References here are to the North American edition, *The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, the British, and the New Zealand Wars*, published by McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989.

particular case: the New Zealand Wars of 1845–1872 between the British, imperial and colonial, and the Maori tribes of the North Island. The main conflicts were the Northern War of 1845–1846 in and around the Bay of Islands; the Taranaki War of 1860–1861; the climactic Waikato War of 1863–1864 and its ancillary Tauranga Campaign of 1864; and the campaigns of the Pai Marire or “Hau Hau” Movement in 1864–1866 and of the great prophet generals, Titokowaru and Te Kooti, in 1868–1872.

* * *

At the beginning of these wars, the Maori seemed impossibly out-matched by the British in military technology, organization for war, economic resources, and simple numbers. In the end, it required eighteen thousand British troops, together with careful preparation and logistical organization, to defeat them in the Waikato War. Even then, the Maori were able to delay and limit British victory. After imperial troops were withdrawn, Titokowaru came within an ace of success against vastly superior colonial forces in 1868–1869, a result that might have reversed the decision of the Waikato War. Prior to this, the Maori blocked the British in the Northern and Taranaki Wars and regularly defeated forces several times their own numbers—forces that were not trapped or surprised, but that actually chose to give battle. How is the effectiveness of Maori resistance to be explained?

Broadly speaking, it can be said that three types of military resistance to European expansion were possible. First, indigenous methods of warfare could be used. These were generally traditional, but could include new local inventions. The heavy Zulu stabbing assegai, and the tactics associated with it, originated by Shaka as an improvement on throwing spears, represented a new but indigenous development. The second type was imitative, the comprehensive copying of the European system. The Sikh army of the 1840s is a classic example. Imported weapons could be incorporated into an indigenous system of war without necessarily revolutionizing it. Gun-armed tribal warfare still aimed mainly at coping with local enemies of roughly equal resources, and its military and economic character reflected this. The third type of armed resistance can be described as adaptive innovation: a system that ideally transcended both of the others and was specifically designed to cope with European methods—not as a copy of them, fighting fire with fire, but as an antidote to them, fighting fire with water.

The indigenous Maori system of war could not cope with British warships, artillery, and numbers through open battle or the defense of traditional *pa* (Maori fortifications). Guerilla techniques could be seen as a form of indigenous resistance, and they sometimes used them against the British, but usually only as a supplement to other forms. The mainstream of Maori operations falls outside any useful definition of guerilla war. The axiom that guerilla methods are the only effective way in which the weak can fight the strong is often parroted regardless of its applicability. Guerrillas usually pay a heavy price for their mode of war in social and economic dislocation and in the occupation of their more accessible centers of population. It is not normally a method of preventing conquest but of making it expensive to the conqueror. Leaders from Vercengetorix to Mao have therefore turned to it only as a last resort. The Maori had a system with which they could hope to protect their land, and they were wise to prefer it to guerilla methods.

The Maori also rejected imitative methods—not simply because they could not imitate. As early as the 1820s they had acquired cannon, and there are signs that the Maori King Movement, founded in 1858, began developing a regular army. In 1862, a Waikato missionary saw fifty uniformed Kingite troops who were “apparently equal to an English regiment as regards order and discipline.” An official knew of four similar companies and was told that the men received rations and were paid three pence a day—not a great deal less than a British infantryman’s pay after stoppages (Ashwell 1835–1880: April 14, 1862; Gorst 1862). There is no indication that this tiny standing force was ever employed as such in the Waikato War, and the Maori were wise to avoid the temptation. Their regulars were clearly too few to meet the British force in the kind of front-to-front combat for which they had been drilled.

As for artillery, the Maori used cannon against the British in the Northern War battles of Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka in 1845–1846 and at Meremere and Paterangi in the Waikato in 1863–1864. The Maori had competent gun layers among them—men trained on whalers and other vessels—and they sometimes had a limited amount of gunpowder to spare. But their cannon were old, with bores made irregular by corrosion and with makeshift carriages that made them difficult to aim and dangerous in the recoil. More importantly, the available projectiles—stones and pieces of scrap metal—were inadequate. These missiles made accurate and powerful fire all but impos-

sible. Such weapons were of little use in open battle, or even in the defense of *pa*. In the latter case, they were almost a liability because the essence of Maori strategy was the preparedness to abandon *pa*. A European-style reluctance to lose their guns might have proved fatal, and on the few occasions that they used cannon, the Maori derived little benefit and readily abandoned them.

The method to which the Maori actually turned was essentially innovative: It differed from both their traditional system and the British system. It was applied in a variety of ways according to the needs of a particular campaign, and it was progressively improved, but it was based on the same principles throughout the wars.

The Maori solution to British numerical superiority was to strike “attack” and “open battle” off their list of tactical options. Instead, they developed a new kind of fortification: the modern *pa*. To achieve their objectives, the British had to attack these positions. Originally, *pa* included a considerable amount of timber palisading, and it was often this that caught the observer’s eye. But in fact it was the earthworks that were always the most important, and some *pa* in Taranaki and Waikato included no timber at all. The crucial parts of the earthworks were those below ground level; tactically, modern *pa* were trench systems. As such, they were not an uncommon response to a situation in which high enemy firepower rendered the open battlefield almost untenable. Unlike traditional *pa*, modern *pa* did not contain noncombatants, seed crops, tools, equipment, or reserve supplies. They had no economic function and could readily be abandoned as required. Easily constructed, cheap, effective, and expendable, modern *pa* were the basic building block of the various Maori strategies.

The rifle trenches of *pa* protected the garrison from small-arms fire, but two tactical problems remained: protection from heavy artillery bombardment and the actual repulse of the assault. Armed mainly with muskets, the Maori had no reliable long-range weapons to keep enemy artillery at a respectful distance, and their *pa* were often so small that the British were able to lay down bombardments that were enormous in relation to the target. Using breech-loading guns throwing shells of up to 110 pounds each, the British fired roughly twenty times the weight of shell per square yard at Gate Pa (Tauranga Campaign), on April 29, 1864, as they did into the Somme battlefield during the initial bombardment of June 24–July 1, 1916 (Belich 1989a: 182–183; Keegan 1976:235–236). Even if generous allowance is made for the increased effectiveness of explosives and for the fact that some

shots fired at the Gate Pa missed their target, it is clear that the Maori underwent a heavier bombardment in one day than the Germans did in seven.

One method of counteracting the threat of heavy bombardment was to provide a false target for the enemy. At Puketakauere (Taranaki War 1860), the Maori placed their main firing trenches well in front of virtually unmanned stockades, and the British shells passed harmlessly overhead (Belich 1989a:91–98). But a more important protection from heavy bombardment was the antiartillery bunker, first used by Maori in 1845. The garrison would sit out the cannonade in their bunkers and then move, through communication trenches or passages, to their firing positions or rifle trenches. This is strikingly similar to the pattern on the Western Front in 1914–1918, where static battle lines made possible concentrations of artillery so large that trenches alone were inadequate.

The second major tactical problem with the defense of modern *pa* was the repulse of the assault. The ferocity, élan, and self-confidence of British troops made them extremely formidable in the attack—the conviction that they could not be beaten by inferior numbers of native warriors added an element that almost amounted to fanaticism. In some attacks on Maori *pa*, 40 percent of the assault party had to be shot down before the rest retreated. Added to this, modern *pa* often had to be relatively modest fortifications: low enough to avoid undue attention from artillery and small enough to be built quickly. The notion of British assault parties being hurled against massive ramparts or stockades built on precipitous crags is entirely inappropriate. Orakau (Waikato War 1864), which repelled five assaults, stood on a low rise and was only 4 feet high.

An even more important aspect of the problem of repelling assaults related to rapid small-arms fire, or rather, to the lack of it. The attackers' possession of rapid-fire small arms did not make a great deal of difference in assaulting trench-and-bunker systems. Much lighter defenses than were necessary to stop a shell could also stop a bullet. This remained true whether the bullet was fired by a musket, a breech-loader, a repeater, or a machine gun. In the later stages of the wars, British possession of rapid-fire weapons made little difference to attacks on *pa*. The point is not that the British attackers eventually got rapid-fire weapons, but that the Maori defenders rarely had them. They lacked what is usually regarded as an essential ingredient of trench warfare: the capacity to produce rapid long-range

fire. They had to seek ways of repelling determined assaults without the benefit of obstructive defenses or modern weapons.

Contrary to legend, the Maori were usually reasonable marksmen, insofar as good shooting was possible with a musket. This, together with good firing discipline, was important in the repulse of assaults, but the decisive factors concerned the construction of *pa* and the preparation of the surrounding battlefield. Carefully sited firing positions and salients for enfilading fire were regular features of *pa*. So too were light defenses like the *pekerangi*, a light fence that impeded an attacker and allowed time to shoot him. These devices were common in *pa* of the intertribal “Musket Wars” of the 1820s, but the heavy dependence on features that might surprise an attacker was a new development.

In some cases, the very survival of the garrison after a heavy bombardment had an important shock effect. The lack of damage to a garrison and its physical defenses was an unpleasant surprise for the British. Hidden and deceptively weak-looking rifle trenches might also prove decisive. False targets might distract assault parties as well as artillery. At Puketakauere, and at Titokowaru’s *pa* in 1868, the whole central position was a false target that fixed British attention and enabled the Maori to pick them off from rifle pits on the flanks. At Gate Pa, the interior of the *pa* was in fact a trap—a mazelike confusion of trenches dominated by hidden firing positions. The British were allowed in and shot down. In terms of protecting the garrison, modern *pa* were trench and bunker systems; in terms of repelling assault, they were carefully prepared killing grounds. These traps and deceptions, together with the basic features of *pa* construction, were functionally analogous to the defender’s rapid-fire small arms of later trench warfare. The Gate Pa would have done very well indeed as a tiny section of the Ypres Salient. Modern *pa* had wooden *pekerangi* instead of barbed wire and flax baskets of earth instead of sandbags, but the trenches and bunkers were essentially the same. In the long-occupied bunkers of the Taranaki War in 1861, the comparison extended to graffiti and the comforts of home.

The modern *pa* system did have its limitations. It was mainly defensive. Only Titokowaru was able to use it consistently to seize and hold the strategic initiative, and no leader was able to mount a really substantial tactical offensive and so annihilate a British army. The modern *pa* enabled the Maori to repel British assault parties, but these usually had ample reserves to fall back on, while the Maori

never had the numbers for counterattack and pursuit. This explains why casualties on both sides were disproportionately low for the intensity of the conflict. It is counterattack and all-out pursuit, the follow-up of victory, that causes really heavy casualties and destroys armies. In the New Zealand Wars, it rarely occurred. The British had the numbers but not the opportunities. The Maori had the opportunities but not the numbers. Finally, while sustained by a tribal social economy, the modern *pa* system's capacity to thwart superior forces was not infinite. Using it, the Maori could block continuous offensives by twice their own numbers or sporadic offensives by several times their strength. But they could not block the continuous offensive of an army several times as great as their own, and so they narrowly lost the Waikato War.

In military terms, the remarkable thing about the New Zealand Wars was not the eventual Maori defeat, but the degree of their success along the way. The key to this was the modern *pa* system; an innovative military method designed as an antidote to the British system, a form of counter-European warfare. While British possession of steamships for transport was quite important, the modern *pa* system meant that the British did not win the New Zealand Wars through superior technology, superior methods, or indeed through any kind of qualitative superiority at all. In the final analysis, they won for the same reason that the Goths beat the Romans: overwhelming numbers.

* * *

Though the Maori lost in the end, the level and nature of their successes along the way contravened some fundamental tenets of European racial and imperial mythology. The essence of their military achievement was therefore laundered out of contemporary British interpretations and, to some extent, out of history. The process was quite subtle. It was systematic but not deliberate or conspiratorial, and it did not preclude recognition—sometimes generous recognition—of such things as Maori courage and chivalry. It was never entirely effective; blatant facts persisted in poking out. But it worked well enough to consistently misrepresent the New Zealand Wars. Whatever their historical success, historiographically the British won the wars hands down.

The driving force behind this myth was an enormously powerful British expectation of victory. Sometimes it proved so strong that it simply overshot the evidence—given one element of an equation, com-

mentators would deduce the second from the principle that the British always won battles against savages. This tendency often acted in concert with a reluctance to credit the Maori with strategic finesse and the ability to coordinate the movements of two or more groups and with the propensity to exaggerate Maori numbers and casualties. The combined effect was the frequent creation of fictional victories and the still more frequent exaggeration of real ones. Historical molehills became historiographical mountains. The expectation of victory also meant that when defeats were recognized, they created a massive shock, an acid test for the myth of conquest. British responses to defeat basically consisted in an effort to absorb this shock; through some kind of palliative, which counterbalanced the disaster; through a satisfying explanation that softened the blow by providing acceptable reasons for it; or through a suppressive reflex whereby the defeat was played down, ignored, or forgotten.

One kind of palliative involved taking that aspect of a lost battle in which the British had been least unsuccessful and treating it as an autonomous operation. This ameliorated or even nullified the disastrous aspects. Another was the exaggeration of Maori casualties. The thin red line may have been worsted, but not before it had piled the ground high with Maori corpses. High Maori casualties might be deduced from “bloodstained trenches” observed after a battle or from the number “seen to fall.” British accounts were liberally peppered with both phrases. The former made a corpse from a cut finger, while the latter ignored Maori combat practice: When you were fired at, or about to be fired at, you instantly dropped to the ground. The British knew of this practice—some colonial units adopted it—but its implications for estimates of Maori losses were rarely acknowledged.

Hard evidence of Maori casualties was often manipulated. When Maori estimates of their own casualties were received, the British dismissed or discounted them or assumed that they referred only to chiefs. When Maori bodies were counted after a battle, it was assumed that many more had been carried off. This assumption was sometimes true, but more often it was both gratuitous and false. On one occasion, it was too much even for the colonial press: “It is generally supposed that the Hau Haus have been exterminated to the extent of something under 10,000, but with the usual tact and consideration that distinguishes these playful creatures, they have done their own undertaking and removed the entire lot” (*Punch, or the Wellington Charivari*: August 17, 1868). British exaggeration of Maori casualties

was important in the manipulation of victory, but it had its greatest impact as a palliative for defeat. The more damaging or embarrassing the defeat, the greater the tendency to inflate Maori losses. On some occasions high estimates of Maori casualties lacked even a frail basis in fact and were created purely by the need for them. "Their wounded are not more than 8," wrote one British commentator, "our wounded come to near 100. From this it will be seen that a large number of them must have been lost in the lagoon" (Maunsell 1850–1877:November 30, 1863).

Palliatives were important, but the main way of ameliorating the shock of defeat was to offer acceptable explanations for it. The first and most simple acceptable explanation was overwhelming Maori numbers. There was a tendency to exaggerate Maori numbers at all times, but immediately after British defeats it suddenly became acute. As with the exaggeration of Maori casualties, slender favorable evidence was accepted, strong contrary evidence was rejected and, on occasion, no evidence at all was required. The British were outnumbered because they were beaten, and they were beaten because they were outnumbered. The exaggeration of enemy strength is very common in war, and emphasis on it may seem to belabor the obvious. But the tendency was pervasive, influential, and persistent. The Maori achieved what they did with a quarter as many fighting men as most contemporary British believed—and half as many as most historians believe.

Another acceptable explanation was to credit Maori with "natural advantages" that were formidable but not admirable and that often acted in concert with an environment allegedly more hostile to Europeans than to indigenes. The "capacity to burrow like rabbits through the high fern" and survive gunshot wounds through the head are two of many possible examples (Carey 1863:118; Belich 1989b:34). It was often alleged that the problem was not beating the Maori but finding them. Sometimes this was true, and rough terrain was common, but most often Maori forces took up relatively accessible positions and waited to be attacked in them. Maori were skilled at bushcraft, but this scarcely compensated for the huge disadvantage of fighting full-time soldiers with part-time ones. Colonial conflicts are still often described as "wars against nature," but rain falls on black and white alike.

The third acceptable explanation of defeat was Maori imitation of Europeans. After perusing Maori Waikato War entrenchments, an

officer suggested that perhaps “the most studious of them have been reading our works published on fortification” (*New Zealand Herald*: January 15, 1864). European renegades were allegedly the most common conduits of civilized military knowledge. Sometimes they existed, but they were not asked for advice on modern trench warfare, which they could not have given anyway. More often they were invented to acceptably explain defeat. “The strength of the place [Ohaeawai Pa, 1845] has struck me with surprise, and I cannot help feeling convinced that the Natives could not have constructed it without some European assistance” (Despard 1845:1050, July 12).

Scapegoats provided a fourth way of acceptably explaining defeat. Maori allies were ideal scapegoats, but when they were not available British interpreters fell back on their own officers. Very few imperial and colonial commanders in the New Zealand Wars escaped severe criticism, often vitriolic. Failed leaders were seen as exceptions to the rule of British military excellence, rather than used to question the rule itself. One newspaper was “driven to a painful contrast between our commanders who imperil New Zealand, and those who saved our Indian Empire two years ago” (*The New-Zealander*: October 3, 1860). Some British leaders were mediocre; some were very able indeed, but still came to grief against the likes of Titokowaru. Able or not, their reputations were readily sacrificed by their countrymen on the pyre of defeat by blacks, screening it with smoke.

These explanations had two things in common: They were acceptable to the British, and they were inaccurate. What defined acceptability and precluded accuracy was a British stereotype of Maori military abilities. British commentators were quite capable of recognizing Maori courage, chivalry, dexterity at guerilla methods, and intuitive or traditional fort-building skill. But there were other qualities that they were reluctant to acknowledge. For some commentators, these included good marksmanship, discipline, and the capacity for sustained and well-organized physical labor. Collectively, this could result in quite serious distortion: Some Maori victories could not be explained without reference to good shooting, battle discipline, and high work rates. But a still more important aspect of the stereotype was the reluctance to credit the Maori with the higher military talents: the capacity to coordinate, to think strategically, and to innovate tactically and technically.

For some British interpreters, it was less a failure to perceive than a reluctance to recognize. In 1869, Colonel Whitmore, in commenting on a minor ambush set by Titokowaru, noted that individual scouts

had been permitted to pass unmolested. He suspected that the chief had done this intentionally to avoid springing the trap prematurely, but he expressed this conclusion quite tentatively: "If this surmise is too civilized a motive for his [Titokowaru's] movements, it is very difficult to understand why he permitted so many individuals traveling almost alone to pass . . . and reserved his attack for the strongest party likely to pass" (1869:12 March). Whitmore was no fool; he had recent hard experience of Titokowaru's abilities, yet he still hesitated to credit him with so simple a trick. The British stereotype of Maori military abilities created the limits within which the interpretation of events had to operate. According to the stereotype, certain Maori abilities did not exist and could not therefore be used to explain British defeats and difficulties. In particular, Maori strategic skill and field-engineering innovation, products of the higher military talents, were the last explanation to occur to a British observer. Since they were also the true explanation, the whole British interpretation was reduced to something not unlike an attempt to explain a football game without reference to the ball.

* * *

Some aspects of the British interpretation of the New Zealand Wars will be familiar to readers of military history. Contemporary accounts of most wars tend to be biased toward the writer's own party. But the natural predilection for reports favoring one's own side is not enough to explain the interpretative phenomenon sketched above. Unacceptable facts and implications were suppressed almost to the point of overkill, and the real explanation of British defeats was avoided with a desperation that might be described as psychotic in an individual. In the search for alternative explanations, the British did not stop short of stretching credibility to its limits or of sacrificing the reputations of their own generals. Why did this strong tendency to mythologize exist, and why did it have these characteristics?

The myth of conquest was the product of a dialectic between the stubborn blatancy of fact and the value placed on preconceptions. Some preconceptions were so widely shared and so highly valued that most British commentators protected them from threatening evidence. Protection took the form of converting the realities into the least unpalatable shape possible. It was a two-way struggle, and preconceptions did not always win; sometimes the evidence was simply too blatant to be suppressed or acceptably explained. But there was always a pressure to bring events into conformity with expectations.

Most of the relevant preconceptions were related to the body of thought known as Victorian ideas of race. An extensive literature exists on this subject, and no substantial examination is possible here, but it should be noted that Victorian racial thought was more complicated and less intentionally malign than is sometimes implied. The purpose here is not to castigate the Victorians for not being like us, but to assess the effects of their cherished preconceptions on a historical interpretation. The Victorians were neither the first nor the last group of people to see their success as evidence of inherent superiority and to look to racial and other hypotheses to rationalize this belief.

One effect of British racial attitudes was the totally unselfconscious use of an ethnocentric system of measurement; a culture-specific frame of reference. European styles of military organization and generalship were wrongly assumed to be the only effective forms. Te Kooti was believed to be the most able Maori leader partly because he adopted some of the accoutrements of European generalship. On horseback, “attired in a red shirt with boots and breeches, a sword suspended from his side,” communicating with his subordinates by orderly, Te Kooti seemed to control his forces in a way the British understood (British Parliamentary Papers 1868–1869:386–390). A more traditional Maori command system was not so easily recognizable. Similarly, it was difficult for the British to accept that the King Movement was an effective military organization. Where was the chain of command, the staff, and the commissariat? Equally hard to accept was the way in which sophisticated artifact technology, the European hallmark, was neutralized by superficially less impressive techniques. It was almost impossible for a Victorian to acknowledge that a wonderful scientific achievement such as the Armstrong gun was functionally inferior to an antiartillery bunker, a mere hole in the ground.

This ethnocentric frame of reference formed a passive backdrop to the interpretation of the wars, limiting the British ability to recognize Maori military achievements for what they were. But there were three other groups of ideas that played a more active role, joining the events themselves as the positive determinants of interpretation. The first was the conviction of British military superiority per se; the second was the notion that British victory over such people as the Maori was, by a law of nature, inevitable; and the third was the belief that most non-European peoples, including the Maori, lacked the intellectual qualities known as “the higher mental faculties.”

Military achievement was one sphere in which British convictions of superiority were particularly strong. Recent historians stress the

undoubted weaknesses of the British regular army, and it is easy to forget that, on the extant record, this army won four-fifths of its battles before the Second South African War of 1899–1902. Given this record, a belief in the superiority of British arms did not have to be based on anything other than empirical observation, and it both derived from and was reinforced by actual events. But the line of reasoning normally used went further than this. Military excellence was seen not as an acquired attribute of the British regular soldier but as a characteristic innate in all Britons, including settlers. The typical qualities of the British soldier were also those of Carlyle's John Bull: "Sheer obstinate toughness of muscle; but much more, what we call toughness of heart, which will mean persistence hopeful and even desperate, unsubduable patience, composed candid openness, clearness of mind" (Carlyle 1845:215). Not only was military excellence a constant; it was also a defining feature of the Briton. Consequently, though the notion of military superiority predated the nineteenth-century upsurge of interest in race, it lent itself easily to fusion with ideas of racial superiority.

The second group of ideas concerned the inevitability of British victory over the Maori. This belief was closely associated with the idea of Fatal Impact and, from 1859, with Social Darwinism. It was not derived simply from the fact that the British had more men and more guns, or indeed from the conviction that they were superior soldiers, but from what was widely perceived as a law of nature. A basic axiom of nineteenth-century racial thought was that Europeans in contact with lesser races would inevitably exterminate, absorb, or, at the very least, subordinate them. As with the conviction of military superiority, this belief arose from an amalgam of experience and theory. By 1830, the decline of aboriginal populations in many areas seemed to indicate that "uncivilized man melts 'as snows in the sunshine' before 'superior' capacities" (Bannister 1968:15). In an age without knowledge of bacterial and viral infection and immunity, there was a strong tendency to attribute this not merely to practical factors such as disease and alcohol but also to "some more mysterious agency" (Darwin 1906:418).

These two groups of preconceptions combined to create the powerful expectation of victory—and its inverse, the shocked reaction to defeat—that was the dynamic force behind the British interpretation. But it was the third group of ideas that set the limits within which this force could work. Though they might select the most favorable elements available, interpreters drew their particular stereotype of

Maori abilities from a general stereotype of the savage. A dislike of steady labor and the “excitability” that led to poor marksmanship were aspects of this, as were some “natural advantages.” But the most important feature of the stereotype was the absence of the intellectual qualities of scientific curiosity, inventiveness, and high reasoning ability. These were collectively known as the “higher mental faculties,” and their warlike manifestation was the higher military talents.

The European monopoly of the higher mental faculties was the inner tabernacle of Victorian racial attitudes. To question it was to question a whole worldview. When events did indeed cast doubt on it, as with evidence of Maori possession of the higher military talents, Victorian commentators avoided, misinterpreted, or suppressed them. Thus the real explanation for British defeats and difficulties in the New Zealand Wars was banished from the realm of the acceptable.

Maori military resistance to Europe may have been unusually effective, and the interpretative response it invoked may therefore have been exceptionally strong. But the racial preconceptions cherished by British interpreters of the New Zealand Wars were widely shared by Europeans and neo-Europeans. We may be looking at a widespread myth of European conquest that refracts the history of many conflicts, though the precise angle of refraction will vary. Scholarly disesteem has meant that the military history of contact and empire has not been revised as energetically as other dimensions, which may mean that a residue of myth survives in today’s received versions. Blatant racial denigration is easily eliminated, but battles are notoriously difficult phenomena to reconstruct, and it is tempting to draw on older works for the fundamentals of interpretation. Hints of a New Zealand interpretative syndrome are apparent in quite recent works on many wars of conquest, in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. The very phrase *colonial small wars* is arguably part of a suppressive reflex. Real conquest existed, of course, and it was important—though not all-important—to empire. But conquest coexisted and interacted with a larger shadow of itself: its myth. The myth may have helped determine history as well as refract it down to us. The European belief in their invincibility gave confidence, almost fanaticism, to their arms. If they failed, they tried, tried, and tried again, like Robert Bruce’s spider, convinced that racial destiny meant ultimate victory. The myth of conquest had some capacity to be self-actualizing: to create empire, as well as obscure the process of creation.

Theorizing Māori
Women's Lives:
Paradoxes of the Colonial Male Gaze
Patricia Grimshaw and Helen Morton

Joel Polack was an adventurer who arrived in New Zealand in 1831 and, like so many of his fellows, set out to make a good living wheeling and dealing in goods and land with Māori people, first in Hokianga and subsequently in Kororarereka. He became more notable than most early settlers, however, by writing of his experiences. His *New Zealand: Being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures . . . 1831–1837* appeared in 1838, followed by the two-volume *Manners and Customs of the New Zealanders* in 1840, the year in which the British claimed sovereignty over Māori and their lands. Polack gained a reputation as a land shark, a charge that he vehemently denied in the preface to his *Manners and Customs*. In 1838 he traveled to London to give evidence to a Select Committee of the House of Lords in support of the colonization of New Zealand, whence he returned for a period when the British took possession.

As was usual in early accounts of New Zealand travels, Polack attempted to describe Māori society for his English readers, and in doing so specifically addressed Māori women's life experience. His anecdotes and descriptions of Māori life, mundane or extraordinary, abound with details of Māori women as individuals. He told of women's active participation in all of the tribal groups' affairs, of their energy, their outspokenness, and their efficiency: "In New Zealand they eat with the men, accompany their lovers, husbands, relatives, and friends, to a feast or a war expedition, influencing the several tribes by taking an active concern in all business of life. They are consulted alike in public and domestic affairs, bring large dowers to their husbands, and even join the war council, which they at periods aid by their deliberations" (1840:2:94).

Yet, while capable of writing specific descriptions of female behavior that implied a significant status for Māori women, Polack

could as readily shade into negative generalizations, drawing upon a code of observation that was familiar to his British readers. This code placed Māori women's lives and their relations with Māori men within the context of a supposed scale of civilization that foregrounded the place of women in other societies, both European and non-European. In one passage Polack noted, for example, that the "forms of the young women are calculated to interest the traveler; but marriage, and the servitude with which it is accompanied in all barbarous states of society, cause early anility, and consequent decay" (1974:1:363). It was to the degraded state of women in these "barbarous" countries, he confidently told his audience, that "we"—that is, Europeans—"must attribute the unsocial habits of the people towards each other." He continued: "The example in New Zealand is not solitary; history has invariably taught us, from the deluge to our own times, that civilization has been dependent on the influence which woman has had on society; and it may be even asserted, that the absolute rise and decline of nations depend much on her conduct in social life."

The apparent paradox posed by Polack's shifting authorial position could be brushed aside as idiosyncrasy were it not for the fact that this ambivalence was such a marked feature of colonial writing on Māori women generally. Granted the need, so well established most recently by Nicholas Thomas in *Colonialism's Culture* (1994), that we consider the historical specificities of the creation of colonial discourses, just as we should at the same time presume variability within the observed indigenous communities themselves, perhaps we should not be surprised if there are puzzling inconsistencies within such literature. But colonial texts constructing images of Māori women, with their diversity within and between texts, are strikingly diverse and confusing and have given rise to subsequent contestations surrounding the position of women from the late nineteenth century to the present. What was the basis of this anomaly?

In this chapter we contribute to a discussion of this issue through a close examination of the writings of certain European men other than missionaries who traveled through or settled in New Zealand in the period of early British colonial expansion through to the 1860s. While the accounts written by missionaries during this period have been closely analyzed, less attention has been paid to the writings of this group. Many of these travelers and settlers lived for periods of time with Māori, spoke the language if haltingly, and sometimes established

temporary relationships with Māori women, becoming involved with their kin. Such mobility was not an option for European women, and hence the texts created from this style of intercultural encounter were predominantly male. Women's accounts of the early period, even those by missionary wives, seldom recorded close observations of Māori for a public readership. Although there are a number of books containing the reminiscences of white women from the early colonial period, they are remarkable for their lack of information on Māori women, or Māori men for that matter. In some accounts there is simply no mention of Māori at all. Those that do mention Māori people tend to describe women only as the pupils of the settler women, learning the British forms of domestic skills. Men are described in stereotypes: as frightening warriors, nuisance beggars, or comic characters. Female travelers also often ignored the presence of Māori people or described them as amusing curiosities (see Broome 1904; Butler 1886; Stewart 1908; Wilson 1894).

Among the most prominent of these male sojourners were, apart from Polack himself, William Brown, leader of a settler group advocating direct land sales from Māori; Ernest Dieffenbach, a German naturalist who worked with the pro-settler New Zealand Company for several years; Augustus Earle and George Angas, both of them English artists; and Francis Fenton, a lawyer who served as a magistrate in the Waikato and became native secretary in 1856. All these men benefited from imperial expansion and, though they might decry certain consequences, none opposed colonization. The overall thrust of the observations of these writers and others like them ranged from those who characterized Māori as ignoble savages unable to control their immediate impulses to those who portrayed Māori as noble savages, losing their best features to corrupting European influences.

The accounts of these men and others like them are important not only because many were widely read during the colonial period—often by prospective settlers whose preconceptions of New Zealand were partly formed by such literature—but also because they have continued to be cited in anthropological and historical studies through the twentieth century. As sources for ethnohistory, they are problematic not least in terms of their geographical vagueness. Many authors indicated that they traveled extensively through New Zealand, yet few troubled to specify which areas were being referred to in the text. Herbert Meade, a naval officer who traveled from Auckland to Lake Taupo in 1864, acknowledged that Māori of different areas “differ

much in habits and character” (1870:162), but this was most unusual. Our aim here, however, is not in this instance to enter into ethno-historical debates on traditional Māori culture, but to address instead the meaning of these men’s representations of gender.

We suggest that the signals to which British observers responded when decoding gender in Māori society were ambiguously reproduced because they at times coincided, and at other times conflicted, with the colonizers’ fundamental convictions about appropriate femininity derived from their own frames of reference. Certain aspects of Māori women’s behavior and appearance, and aspects of Māori men’s relations with Māori women, resonated positively with male, middle-class British expectations. Yet other aspects of Māori women’s lives seemed demeaning and oppressive when judged against an ideal model of the European woman. These writers negotiated a constant, sharp tension between their empirical observations of Māori women’s lives and the social theory that informed their efforts to situate those observations within a comparative context.

By examining particular aspects of the accounts we have chosen, we draw out this tension in order to show how the accounts can appear so paradoxical. In each of the three areas of representation discussed below—women’s position as wives and kinswomen, women as mothers, and women’s physical appearance—there are both positive and negative assessments of women, often within the same text. These varying assessments are based on different and often conflicting sets of criteria, yet they are always dominated by the basic agenda: to evaluate women’s overall status in accordance with contemporary European notions of ideal gender roles and relations. Before turning to the representations of Māori women, we briefly discuss these Western models, together with recent academic reassessments that have attempted to unravel the paradoxes they created.

Māori and the “Woman Question”

European intellectuals’ questioning of the social status of women dated from the Enlightenment and earlier. When French socialist Charles Fourier wrote in 1808 that “the extension of the privileges of women is the fundamental cause of all social progress” (1971:131), he gave enhanced currency to the notion that gender was a significant marker of social progress, an idea that would be reiterated by eminent social theorists throughout the nineteenth century,

Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, and Friedrich Engels among them. For European intellectuals the fundamental criterion by which women's standing would be assessed was the degree to which male power over women was structured through legal systems and social conventions and also enforced personally through direct physical violence.

English and American evangelical Christians, from the late eighteenth century onward, substantially enlarged the discourses, constructing models of ideal gender relations as they strove to exert influence over societies fast being transformed by industrialization and urbanization. The good woman, evangelicals asserted, was the core of a decent and moral family and community. The adult married woman was ideally a good helpmeet to her husband, the conscience and the stabilizer of the man. Chaste in youth, faithful in marriage, she was also an active mother, close to her children, watchful and prudent. Women certainly had work to do, since theirs was a utilitarian, not a decorative model of femininity, but not in hard physical labor: Their important work lay in the concerns of the family and the home (Davidoff and Hall 1987; Grimshaw 1989, 1994).

An excerpt from the account of a naval officer, William Marshall, who made two visits to New Zealand in 1834, illustrates something of this integration of notions of women's social status with women's personal behavior. He talked of Māori women as "everywhere the miserable drudges of society, except where the benign influence of Christianity has brought out their emancipation from the galling yoke of abject servitude to the other sex" (1836:12). Marshall noted approvingly the labors of the Church Missionary Society among Māori communities and applauded the presence of mission wives. His comment, in fuller detail, is revealing: "Among tribes of savages, where the women are unchaste, and neither gentle nor kindly affectioned, owing to the miserable state of degradation to which they have been reduced, the presence of Christian females, as well as of Christian men, is necessary to raise the morality of those tribes, by rescuing their wives, and sisters, and daughters, from the twofold degradation of social inferiority and personal impurity" (52).

The final phrase, "the twofold degradation of social inferiority and personal impurity," captures nicely the model of womanhood that blended questions of civil status with sexual purity and self-restraint. Marshall was pro-mission, and such attitudes we might expect from evangelical missionaries and their supporters. But while the male observers of our study displayed a range of intellectual and religious ori-

entations, most sustained similar standards to those of Marshall for evaluating the status of women, even if their personal attachment to these standards was unevenly or partially applied.

It is not surprising that European men on imperial frontiers who held such views could assess indigenous women in partially or wholly negative terms, given the culturally specific bases of their expectations. Most pertinent for comparative perspectives of Māori were the Australian colonies. Aboriginal women were among those whom settlers deemed most grievously oppressed, gazed at through this distorting mirror. Joel Polack was one of many who hastened to compare Māori favorably. In sad contrast with Australian Aborigines, Polack claimed, Māori women were “not held in the sole light as being creatures of convenience, and consequently victims to the unceasing caprice and ungovernable passions of men” (1840:2:130). The artist George Angas also stated that women held a far higher position among Māori than women in “the aboriginal tribes of Australia; by whom the sex are degraded and despised to the lowest degree—a sure mark of the inferior grade, of those people in the scale of humanity” (1967:317). Clearly, the destructive consequences of Australian settlers’ reports were reverberating widely (Grimshaw and May 1994).

As part of the debate on gender and colonialism, certain postcolonial scholars have suggested a central role for European assessments of the status of indigenous women in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (for example, see Sangari and Vaid 1990). To pursue this issue for Māori society brings us immediately to the paradox posed by Polack’s unstable speaking position, a paradox further exemplified in twentieth-century ethnohistorical writing on Māori. Two scholars in particular, Caroline Ralston and F. Allan Hanson, have in recent years illustrated the contested nature of writing on Māori by their striking revisionist interpretation of the position of women as established in early anthropological work of such scholars as Elsdon Best (1924). In this early anthropological work the emphasis was on women’s “polluting” nature, which was said to repel the gods and necessitate the restriction of women’s activities. We mention Hanson and Ralston here not to debate their claims but to draw attention to the ways in which sources such as those we are discussing have been used in differing ways in both early- and late-twentieth-century representations.

Hanson’s reinterpretation of the early literature on women in Polynesia, in his paper “Female Pollution in Oceania?” (1982), has been highly influential in Pacific studies. Hanson, with special attention to

Māori, challenged the “repellent thesis” found in earlier work, in which Polynesian women were seen as repelling the gods due to their inherently polluting nature. He suggested that this reading should be replaced with an “affinity thesis,” in which women were seen to act as conduits between the earthly and spiritual realms and therefore to attract, rather than repel, *tapu*. “*Noa*,” which had been translated as “profane,” should instead be seen as the absence of *tapu*.

In Hanson’s view, both women and men could be *tapu* and *noa* according to the circumstances, and certain high chiefs and priests of either sex were always *tapu*. Women’s association with the supernatural world was, in this revision, especially strong through their reproductive functions. The restrictions on women’s activities that had been noted since the earliest accounts were reinterpreted in terms of a careful controlling of women’s potency. Ralston has claimed that this revised view revealed “the misinterpretations and undervaluing of female power and participation” in earlier accounts of Polynesian women (1987:120).

Ralston’s argument in her 1993 article, “Māori Women and the Politics of Tradition: What Roles and Power Did, Do and Should Māori Women Exercise?” is informed by Hanson’s important paper, as is true for such Pacific scholars as Roger Keesing (1985) and Nicholas Thomas (1990), who also supported Hanson’s view. Ralston read the early sources from New Zealand specifically for evidence of women’s agency and power. She concludes that there is evidence of “the independent, politically active, and participatory nature of women’s lives in the early contact period” (38). Indeed, Ralston implies that strongly negative accounts of Māori women only began to emerge in the 1920s, with the early ethnographic work of Elsdon Best (33). It is these later, negative accounts that she sees as underpinning the present construction of tradition, particularly by Māori males. Ralston’s selection and interpretation of the early accounts needs to be understood in the context of a clear agenda, concerning “the way the denial of rights to speak on the *marae* is extrapolated to a denial or questioning of women’s rights to any leadership role in significant contemporary political, religious, and social affairs” (26).

It is clear that the questions posed by postcolonial scholars cannot have a simple answer, as shown by the highly ambiguous nature of the accounts of Māori gender relations by the British in New Zealand. We proceed now to look at the nature of their narratives of Māori gender through a closer examination of our chosen texts.

Wives and Kinswomen: A Share of Influence or Miserable Drudges?

In *Māori Marriage*, Bruce Biggs cites a Māori saying: “*He puta taua ki te taane he whaanau tamariki ki te wahine*” (“The battlefield for a man, the child bed for a woman”) (1960:60). In the early literature on Māori, it is certainly the first that predominates: men and war. Whatever early male settlers and colonists wrote about Māori women was embedded in accounts dominated by European responses to Māori men. Visitors were overwhelmed with the force and power of the men, and in particular, their capacity as warriors, their martial skills, their bravery, their ferocity. A Marist missionary, Chouvet, who lived in New Zealand from 1843 to 1846, wrote with resignation: “After having drunk a war-like temperament with their mother’s milk, they hear every day of their childhood, their fathers, their mothers and their neighbors praising the glory of arms, singing of the courage and deeds of warriors and applauding the massacre of their enemies. It is easy then to understand why men brought up this way think only of fighting” (1985:16).

Most of those outside the mission camp referred to this male bellicosity with a mixture of awe and admiration, which informed their descriptions of Māori male physique and personal appearance. The darkest side of Māori warfare, the practice of cannibalism, was spoken of with fear, but the men’s courage and manly bearing in war evoked widespread praise. It was not surprising that white male invaders of Māoriland would have their main dealings with—and hence form their most powerful impressions of—Māori men. Yet their texts also make clear that Māori women were visibly present and not to be ignored.

It must be emphasized that the early chroniclers often left unclear the status of the Māori women under examination, whether chiefly or commoner. They were quite clear about one matter: They insisted that slave women, along with slave men, were treated cruelly by all other Māori, male or female. According to the early accounts the slaves undertook the hardest labor, were denied basic rights, and led miserable existences. It was suggested, however, that the condition of slavery was a temporary condition, not a permanent ascriptive status. The majority of these texts referred to women who were not slaves.

The visitors and early settlers who described Māori society pointed frequently and with surprise to the important place of Māori women

and to the degree of influence and power they at times clearly possessed. Māori women, it seemed, were extremely significant socially, and seen so by their husbands, their children, their kin, and their tribal group. Wrote Brown: “The women are not held in bondage, but have a share of influence corresponding with the natural strength of their character” (1845:38). Dieffenbach saw Māori women treated by men “with great consideration and kindness, enjoying the full exercise of their free will, and possessing a remarkable influence in all the affairs of a tribe” (1843:11). Angas noted that Māori women often exercised “the greatest influence over their tribes; especially the widows of important chiefs, or aged women, some of whom are supposed to possess the power of witchcraft and sorcery” (1967:317).

Not apathetic or reticent spectators of any major occasion, Māori women organized resources, marshaled a labor force, and welcomed and entertained guests, visibly and volubly active participants. “On feasts being given or when a fishing party is proposed, the first wife is accounted mistress of the ceremonies, and is looked up to with deference accordingly” (Polack 1840:1:155). This pivotal role flowed from the active part women played in essential labor: in agriculture, preparing soil for planting, sowing and reaping, in cooking the food; and in weaving mats, cloaks, and baskets. Non-slave women appear to have undertaken similar work, whatever their age or standing. Many men reiterated the claim of the missionary Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society that female chiefs undertook physical labor, when on a visit in 1819 he observed the wife of the chief Hongi Heke digging a potato field. He expressed appreciation that “a woman of the first rank” would labor alongside her servants and children (Elder 1932:166). Others recorded chiefly women as principally overseers of their husbands’ lands, but certainly as not averse to incidental tasks of an apparently menial kind.

The strength Māori women displayed in work was portrayed as a reflection of their wider influence in their families and tribal groups. In European eyes the most remarkable demonstration of their courage—and their influence—was women’s involvement on the battlefield. Wives accompanied husbands to battle, spurring them on to deeds of valor, singing, shouting, and supporting their men in every way. Sometimes, indeed, they entered the fray themselves. The naval officer John Nicholas noted one chiefly wife who displayed “the most undaunted spirit, rivaling the boldest men in deeds of heroism, and selecting for her antagonist the most formidable she could find.” Such

warrior women were, he hastened to add, only “certain ladies of more intrepid character than the rest” (1817:1:199).

Earle, like so many writers, recorded the loyalty and devotion of women to their husbands. He described elderly couples who had married in youth, lived happily together all their lives, and “whose kind and friendly manner towards each other set an example well worthy of imitation in many English families” (1966:180). Whereas Dieffenbach described wives as their husbands’ “constant companions” (1843:39), Brown thought that married couples could sustain a disconcerting distance from each other, as though unrelated, and could be found sleeping separately quite soon after marriage. But it was rare, noted Brown, for married couples to quarrel and “still rarer for a husband to beat his wife” (1845:33).

The depth of wives’ attachment to husbands was said to be measured by their supreme bravery, when husbands died or were killed in warfare, in committing suicide, mostly by hanging or drowning themselves. The early observers claimed that the wives themselves took courageous initiative, apparently driven by their overwhelming grief and desperate wish to follow their husbands to the grave: No prompting or persuasion was needed. Stories were told of dramatic, public acts of suicide at the news of a husband’s sudden death and of agonized wives plaiting their suicide ropes as they kept watch at their husbands’ deathbeds. “The ardour of affection or rather devotion, that has been exhibited by the sex in New Zealand, has never been surpassed in any period or in any country,” thought Polack (1840:1:156).

Writers of these same accounts detailing the influence and status enjoyed by many Māori women frequently made starkly contradictory statements about women’s status when moved to offer generalizations. Many commented, after all this description, on women’s “degraded state.” Nicholas, while claiming that single women were equal to men in privileges and freedom, added that “when married, their freedom is at an end; they become mere slaves, and sink gradually into domestic drudges to those who have the power of life and death over them” (1817:1:180). He used this as an occasion to philosophize—as early as 1817—about the way in which women were treated more kindly the more civilized a nation was (2:301).

Within the early settlers’ and visitors’ texts, then, were observations of discordant elements in women’s roles as wives and kinswomen that writers sometimes tried to synthesize with these positive observations,

at other times not. Polack himself pointed to the dramatic feature of marriage that mesmerized this group of observers: that the errant wife risked instant death at the hands of her vengeful husband when she was found in an adulterous relationship. Māori women were praised for holding fidelity in marriage in high esteem, but the sanctions for transgression were certainly awful. “The favours of a married woman in New Zealand are fully as difficult of attainment as in any part of the world, the punishment of death being awarded as the penalty for an infringement of the nuptial bond, which is held by these people in as sacred a light as in the most civilised states” (1974: 1:369). The traveler Samuel Martin claimed that marriage was “regarded as a most solemn ordinance” in which “married women enjoy as much liberty and exercise as much influence as they do in Europe” (1845:304). But, he noted, “crimes on their part are visited with the sternness and cruelty of Eastern despotism. Infidelity is invariably visited with death.”

And so although casual domestic violence was rarely reported, writers emphasized that husbands sustained this overwhelmingly terrible right to kill outright an adulterous wife. There was no real reciprocity in sexual restraint, since polygamy was said to prevail. There was a great deal of confusion about the extent of polygamy. Some authors said it only occurred among chiefs, and yet others denied that it was common at all. Most claimed that men had legitimate sexual access to several women or wives. The reasons for polygamy seemed on the face of it to prioritize a man’s sexual interests while sustaining women’s fidelity through draconian penalties.

As to the origins of polygamy, Nicholas declared himself in favor of an economic explanation. The first wife was acknowledged as superior, subsequent wives inferior: “I am disposed to think that the chiefs take them rather for their manual services, than for the charms of their persons or the endearments of their society. Indeed they may be considered in no other light than as hard-working servants, having no honor assigned to them but that of distinguished drudgery” (Nicholas 1817:1:293). Not a few other observers similarly reported chiefs claiming that without wives’ work in overseeing and working in gardens, they could not sustain their agricultural enterprises at all.

But polygamy was also seen as the cause of many evils, largely arising from the jealousy of co-wives. Polack claimed that polygamy was “greatly abhorred by the females of the country” and that it caused “unhappiness and incessant brawling” (1840:1:147). Even if this was

not always so, these writers asked, did not polygamy of itself imply a low status for women, whatever the justifications? Observers occasionally noted that if men had the power of life and death over wives in these circumstances, they might well suffer retribution at the hands of their wives' relatives. Overall, however, the emphasis was on tales of swift, brutal, barbaric murder.

Women as Mothers, Women as Murderers?

In contrast to the Māori proverb claiming “the child bed for a woman,” European recorders placed Māori women most centrally as wives rather than mothers. Once again, however, when these observers did turn their attention to motherhood, they could write affirmatively of Māori women's maternal capacities. The women, it was said, greatly desired children. Indeed Francis Fenton believed that a woman was “usually held in respect according to the number of children with which she had strengthened the tribe” (1859:27). Childless wives were inconsolable, he said, and engaged in ceremonies to intercede with the gods to aid conception (30). Women's health and strength were emphasized in descriptions of the ease with which they experienced childbirth. Nicholas reported that women sat in the open air, surrounded by men and women, and gave birth “without uttering a single groan.” Thereupon the new mother cut the umbilical cord herself, and “rose up as if no such occurrence had taken place, and resumed her ordinary occupations” (1817:2:171; see also Dieffenbach 1843:24; Polack 1974:2:272). Babies were “nursed with affection and tenderness” (Dieffenbach 1843:26), and breast-feeding was said to extend as long as to the third year. Mothers showed their young a fierce loyalty, and children traced their all-important descent lines through mothers' as well as fathers' lineages. The children were introduced very early into the meaning of their place in a family. When a much-loved husband was killed in battle, a chiefly wife voluntarily resigned not only herself but her children to the victors, “to kill if they wished, as they had done to her husband” (Elder 1932:174). Within the collectivity of the marriage, the family, or the kin group, mothers fostered their children as precious and similarly loyal young people. There was no suggestion, as in some other parts of the Pacific, that mothers were “unnatural” and unable to care for their children “properly” (see Jolly 1991; Grimshaw 1989).

But motherhood, like wifehood, had its terrible aspect; and the two

were linked. At the feet of polygamy was laid the cause for a terrible act perpetrated by mothers: infanticide. Jealous wives were said to kill their infants to spite husbands who took new wives or offended them in any way. Brown wrote that “should a husband quarrel with his wife, she would not hesitate to kill her children merely to *annoy* him” (1845:41; emphasis in original).

In this case the wife’s act was seen as one of defiance, implying power, not as an indication of servility or degradation. Indeed, one reason given for the surprising observation that fathers, even great chiefs, could be seen carrying infants around on their backs for much of the day, nestled into their cloaks, was the fear that the child was in jeopardy from a revengeful mother (Polack 1840:2:93). For others, the Māori fathers’ care of infants and toddlers was in part touching and impressive, in part puzzling indeed. Why did grown men devote so much time to the very young? The Europeans knew of “wet nurses,” but they dubbed these fathers “dry nurses” (Polack 1974:2:273). What did this imply for the notion of Māori motherhood? Truly, both parents seemed amazingly indulgent of young children, scarcely ever correcting them and leading them with great kindness into the knowledge and skills they would need in adult life. The Europeans contemplated the “cheeky” questions and “pestering” behavior of children askance, but could certainly say that if babies survived their births, they could look forward to careful and loving nurture.

Infanticide, however, was by far the most widely discussed feature of Māori motherhood. Despite the fact that it was rare for observers to go so far as to claim that they had actually seen the act of infanticide, all claimed that it was common and confessed to by countless informants. William Yate, who served with the Church Missionary Society in the Bay of Islands, was one of the few to claim that he witnessed several cases of infanticide, which he, too, blamed on women’s jealousy of co-wives (1970:98). Other reasons for infanticide were canvassed, although these were similarly related to the issue of women’s status. Was infanticide weighted toward infant girls? Many observers asserted this to be the case. Marshall thought so: “The murder of the female infant after birth, is however often perpetrated by its own mother under a smarting sense of the indignities and sufferings to which every female is exposed, long before she arrives at womanhood, and generally to the latest hour of her life. . . . The fortitude of women, proof against everything but man’s neglect, may be overcome, until even natural affection cease to animate her, and the

love of the mother be absorbed in the misery of the woman. A greater proof of the degraded estate of the female sex in New Zealand cannot exist, than that which their very crimes, stated above, supply” (Marshall 1836:14).

Brown wrote that males being much more esteemed than females, “the latter are chiefly the victims, and are sacrificed that they may escape future miseries” (1845:41; see also Polack 1840:2:94). Earle elaborated on this, claiming the women’s excuse given for killing baby girls was “that they were quite as much trouble to rear, and consumed just as much food, as a male child, and yet, when grown up, they were not fit to go to war as their boys were” (1966:179). Again, Fenton reported that mothers killed daughters in order to flee enemies unencumbered, but spared baby sons since they would in time be warriors (1859:30).

Yet some Europeans denied that infanticide was prevalent, and others, such as Dieffenbach (1843:26), denied a distinction made by sex. Despite these conflicting reports, and whatever the truth of the matter, the existence of so many graphic and emotive accounts of infanticide meant that assessments of Māori women as wives and mothers were inevitably influenced negatively, affecting popular perceptions of Māori women.

(Promiscuous) Young Beauties and (Chaste) Old Hags

When Dieffenbach described Māori women as well treated, autonomous, and influential in tribal affairs as mentioned previously, he qualified his remarks with a description of the adverse physical consequences of their arduous work. Apart from the daughters of high chiefs, Māori women, he stressed, “are burdened with all the heavy work; they have to cultivate the fields, to carry from their distant plantations wood and provisions, and to bear heavy loads during their traveling excursions” (1843:12). He added that “early intercourse,” “frequent abortions,” and their prolonged suckling of children contributed “to cause the early decay of their youth and beauty and [were] prejudicial to the full development of their frame.” Most writers also found abhorrent the mature women’s *moko*, or tattooing on the chin.

Observers were unanimous that Māori women, occasional high-born women excepted, aged rapidly. Brown stated that “women arrive very early at maturity, and as early become old and withered” (1845:

38). As did many other observers, he claimed that girls married very early, and had lost their youth by the age of thirty (Angas 1967:311; Polack 1840:2:175). For some this rapid aging was blamed on their early “promiscuity,” and other women were said to be worn down prematurely through the physical toll exacted by their bountiful giving and nurturing of the lives of children, kin, and tribal group. Amazons, mature women were often called, even if at times there could be “a good-looking, self-willed sort of Amazon,” as when a woman saved a group of Europeans from death (Meade 1870:133). Meade reported that when his party was captured by Kingites and facing death, a Māori woman used her influence to help save them. He described her as “possessing no little influence, a well-made, rather good-looking person, but strong-minded and imperious” (87).

If the women’s labor was worthy, was it nice? Was it becoming? Nicholas observed women participating as equals with men in a canoe race and joining the vociferous singing at the race’s end; he found their exertions violent, inappropriate: “The distinction of sex appearing no longer visible, was completely lost in their convulsive excesses” (1817:1:363–364). Māori women may have often seemed to have some freedom of action in public domains; but even if this revealed power, did it go beyond acceptable limits for their sex? And could these public engagements all be justified if the end result was bodies marked by time, bodies that were masculinized?

This concern with women’s rapid aging and their “masculine” appearance and behavior reflects the preoccupation of many of the male writers with women’s sexuality. Women’s appearance is discussed as a measure of their sexual attractiveness to the white male observers. This and other aspects of their sexuality, such as their chastity (or lack thereof) and the extent of women’s control over their own bodies in sexual relations and in reproduction were often the predominant foci of accounts of Māori women.

The men who settled in and traveled through New Zealand, many of whom were only in their early twenties, were particularly interested in young chiefly women. Dieffenbach’s description of such women’s appearance as “handsome and attractive . . . heightened by a natural modesty and childlike naivete” (1843:12) echoed the many similar comments. The attractive Māori women who caught the male eye were young—often very young indeed. Many observers likened these women to beautiful gypsies (for example, Angas 1967:310; Dilke 1869:256), or, as in Polack’s description of a young girl he saw in the

Kaipara district, to Spanish women: “She was distinguished from the females of the village by her demeanor, which was dignified and graceful; her countenance was eminently beautiful, which was worthy, as to complexion and feature, of being put in competition with the beautiful women of Spain. Her delicacy of appearance was most prepossessing; and I imagined her disposition equally pleasing, from a succession of smiles hovering round her mouth, displaying teeth of unrivalled evenness and whiteness. Her charms were much enhanced by the modest and artless simplicity which evidently composed her usual manners” (1974:1:124).

Edward Markham, an educated and wealthy traveler, espied many such pretty young women when he was in Hokianga and the Bay of Islands in 1834. He wrote: “I have seen some very fine creatures and even beautiful. The breasts are uncovered in warm weather, and an unmarried woman takes it as a compliment for you to put your hands on them” (1963:40). He found it useful to attach himself to one such chiefly woman for protection “as they are always backed by their Tribe and you are not robbed or molested in that case; they become useful and very much attached if used well, and will suffer incredible persecution for the men they live with.” The Māori tried to marry off the girls at a young age, he claimed, because they would not “keep” (69).

Individual young girls with their fine figures, long flowing hair, laughing eyes, and delicate hands and feet were portrayed as lovely indeed, charming potential sexual partners and protectors of European men’s homes. But there was a problem here too, of course, when their availability was assessed within a context of women’s status. Young women were apparently not chaste, not chaste at all, according to these accounts. They were said to have a series of sexual encounters with Māori youth. Wrote Earle: “While they remain single they enjoy all the privileges of the other sex; they may rove where they please, and bestow their favours on whom they choose, and are entirely beyond control or restraint” (1966:180). Those living near ports exchanged sexual favours for European goods with apparent alacrity, although there was considerable disagreement among observers as to the extent of women’s willing participation and whether or not they were “naturally licentious.” Many said that at first these were slave women (Ollivier 1986:99); others declared any unmarried women except chiefly women were participating. Was this not sheer prostitution? And were not prostitutes of low status? But the women

who *were* chaste, their mothers and grandmothers, were viewed as singularly unattractive, unfeminine in appearance and demeanor.

Conclusion

In 1888 a colonist named Thomas Moser published a selection of sketches of New Zealand life, entitled *Mahoe Leaves*, that he claimed offered “a faithful delineation of Māori life and character” (Preface). He himself was, he pointed out, “a trifle higher in the social scale than a Māori” (83). The tract contains appalling racist sentiment. Note, for example, this description of an elderly Māori woman: “Look at her features, smoke-dried and shrivelled; her back half bent double; her wretched hands and feet attenuated and shrunk till they look more like the claws of some horrid bird than a human being. . . . Some Mummies that I have seen are Venuses compared with her!” (28) Such grotesque characterizations of Māori women in the late-nineteenth-century settler literature are not infrequent and certainly wounding.

Yet a fuller consideration of gender within colonial discourse in New Zealand suggests far greater ambiguities than feminist postcolonial scholars have suggested for other times and places. There is no doubt that decided strengths of Māori women’s position were widely canvassed. As Charles Wentworth Dilke wrote in his account of his travels (he had been to America, India, Australia, Ceylon), published in the late 1860s: “The delicacy of treatment shown by the Māoris toward their women may go far to account for the absence of contempt for the native race among the English population” (1869:270). Compare the drudgery, he suggested, to which American Indian women or Indian women were subjected: “It is the New Zealand native’s treatment of his wife that makes it possible for an honest Englishman, to respect or love an honest Māori.”

Here was a positive view of colonial attitudes to Māori. But others were not convinced that the settlers pouring into the country saw things the same way. Edward Shortland was one who, employed as “Protector of the Aborigines,” strove to defend their reputation. In January 1850 a writer in the *Edinburgh Review* claimed that some years before, a chief’s wife was hung naked by the heels before the whole tribe and beaten, and that she subsequently committed suicide. Brown, for one, had related this story in his account of New Zealand published in 1845. Now, in the early 1850s, it surfaced again. Short-

land declared in turn that he personally knew the story to be false: This was “a mode of punishing a female which I have never heard of as having ever occurred in New Zealand” (1974:64). The story was fabricated for one reason only, he said, to persuade European settlers to think unfavorably of Māori. He pointed at the same time to the description of Māori women’s onerous work. Māori men, not women, performed the largest proportion of heavy work; some privileged Māori women, by contrast, were principally engaged in domestic pursuits suitable to their sex. If other Māori women did perform heavy labor, he reminded his readers, this was true of many British women also.

With such defenders, Māori women would not emerge in this colonial discourse as totally oppressed victims. Yet in so many cases the early colonial writers raised affirmative descriptions of Māori gender only to discount them swiftly with alternative indications of status. It was these denigratory characterizations that settlers could emphasize as they systematically dispossessed Māori of lands and livelihoods. Yet the same ambiguous signals in the texts have opened the avenue to a far more positive evaluation of Māori women’s status emerging in modern scholarship.

14

Conqueror

W. S. Merwin

When they start to wear your clothes
do their dreams become more like yours
who do they look like

when they start to use your language
do they say what you say
who are they in your words

when they start to use your money
do they need the same things you need
or do the things change

when they are converted to your gods
do you know who they are praying to
do you know who is praying

for you not to be there

Reprinted from *The Rain in the Trees*, by W. S. Merwin (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1988), 62.

15

World War II in Kiribati

Sam Highland

World War II in Kiribati was confined mainly to the important government bases in Banaba, Tarawa, Abemama, and Butaritari. This paper is about the Tarawa campaign, one of the bloodiest battlegrounds in the entire war, and its impact on the Kiribati people, particularly the inhabitants of Betio village, which was the stage of the main conflict between the Japanese and the Americans.

Betio is an islet and village located at the southwestern extremity of Tarawa Atoll. Until the ravages of the war, the Betio people engaged in a subsistence lifestyle with some affluence. The land abounded with tropical fruits and crops, mainly coconuts, breadfruit, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, pandanus, papaya, and traditional root crops. The surrounding sea teemed with marine life, fish, and molluscs, readily available all year round. Life was easy, luxurious, and enjoyable before the threat of war came in the first week of December 1941. The population of Betio in 1941 was about four hundred, including a few expatriates.

The Japanese Invasion of Tarawa Atoll

The Japanese landed on the ocean side of the southwestern part of Betio at about 3 A.M. when the village was asleep. All the expatriates were captured, interrogated, and threatened unless they responded accurately to the demands of the Japanese. Everybody was rounded up near the post office, and some of the captives were tied up with ropes to coconut trees. The only food store on Betio, that of Burns Philp, was taken over by the Japanese and later destroyed. The

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Betio villagers had depended on the Burns Philp store for their basic needs other than traditional food. Curfews were set, and most movements were restricted. At about 4 P.M. that same day, when everyone had been gathered at the post office, the Japanese flag was hoisted and the Japanese commander declared Tarawa to be under Japanese jurisdiction. The Japanese left Tarawa that same day, leaving behind the Betio people, who were scared and worried about their lands and lives. They could do nothing to escape a war they had nothing to do with. They were confused, distressed, and totally lost.

Early in 1942 the Japanese returned to Tarawa. When they landed again on Betio, the villagers expected more calamity. This came true when the Japanese destroyed all sailing and fishing canoes to prevent the people from escaping. Crops such as *babai* taro (a prestigious root crop) and coconut trees were cut down and buried. Local houses and government staff quarters were destroyed. The whole islet was cleared of trees and houses in the first few weeks to make way for Japanese fortifications. People were forced to provide free labor and at times their personal belongings, such as clothing, were taken by the Japanese for their own use. Following several weeks of hard labor, the local people were forced to leave their home village and find shelter in North Tarawa where the majority had no lands to stay on. As war refugees they had to depend on the goodwill and generosity of others for their maintenance. The move to North Tarawa was made more difficult because of the destruction of canoes. The Betio villagers had to walk and navigate the 25-mile stretch of reefs and tidal passages, laden with whatever personal belongings they could carry. They believed it was the end of the world for them.

Once the Betio people were evacuated, the Japanese recruited the men for hard labor to complete the fortification of the tiny islet—the construction of war bunkers, the laying of concrete structures crowned with sharpened metal on the reef around the islet, the construction of the airstrip, which covered almost a quarter of Betio, and the Japanese quarters. As most of the traditional crops had been destroyed, the laborers had to find extra food for themselves.

A popular punishment for failure to carry out orders was to tie up a worker with ropes and place a stick of dynamite between his legs. Another was flogging. Two locals, both mental patients, were shot and killed by the Japanese for refusing to carry out orders. With these cruel and inhuman treatments, the Japanese exploited the gentle character of the Tarawa people.

During those days of hard labor, American bombers used to raid the islet of Betio. Usually occurring during the full moon when visibility was better, the raids caused great suffering. Where could the people hide from the shelling? The usual place became the hollows of the taro pits! Two I-Kiribati lost their lives during these raids.

The Arrival of the Americans

The Americans finally landed on November 20, 1943. After seventy-seven hours of bitter fighting, the Americans recaptured Tarawa from the Japanese. The British and American flags replaced the “flag of Nippon.”

A day after the Japanese surrendered, the Americans recruited over one hundred I-Kiribati to clear dead bodies and war debris on Tarawa. This time the local people experienced better working conditions. Heavy equipment was used, rations were issued in abundance, and those who were selected to work even earned wages. Free clothing was provided, and each laborer was paid about U.S. \$2 per day. The Americans established good relationships with the I-Kiribati, providing almost everything for their personal needs. Forced labor as experienced with the Japanese had ended. The Betio people’s experience during the American occupation was the opposite of what was experienced under the Japanese.

During the American and British joint administration, a Labor Corps was set up. People were recruited not only from Tarawa but from the rest of the islands as well. The main tasks of this Labor Corps were to clear the island of Tarawa and to reestablish the administration of this group of islands. Two companies from the Labor Corps were sent to the Solomon Islands to do similar work. Betio’s traditional way of life was gradually restored, but with great difficulty because of the extensive war damage. When the Betio villagers returned to their islet they were unable to enjoy again the pre-war subsistence lifestyle they had known because the islet had been ruined by the war. More corpses and war debris were evident than crops and trees on the tiny isle, which is about three miles long and a quarter-mile wide. The rehabilitation process was not easy. Lands Commissioner Harry Maude estimated that about 17,000 coconut trees had been destroyed on Betio to make way for the airstrip and that about 14,000 square feet of taro pits were buried on Betio alone. Maude calculated that the financial compensation due the Betio land-

owners for their loss of traditional crops was £42,600. Note that these figures relate to the Betio damage alone and do not include the cost of damage to Butaritari, Abemama, Banaba, and other parts of Tarawa (Bairiki and North Tarawa). The rich inshore fisheries of Betio were destroyed and contaminated by the war. Local fish traps were destroyed and fishing activities were disrupted for several decades. The lagoon and ocean areas were full of wreckage. Unexploded bombs and war debris of various descriptions made the marine life inedible. Instead, the Betio people had to depend on expensive, imported tinned foodstuffs for their survival.

The Effects of World War II on Tarawa

The war made a tremendous impact on the life and culture of the Betio people. It became clear to them that their splendid and serene isolation could not escape the ripples of international conflicts such as World War II. The Betio people never regained their traditional subsistence lifestyle. The ecological damage on the fragile atoll was so extensive and lasting that both land and marine productivity were affected severely. The people had to start life all over again. Taro pits took three years to develop before a crop could be harvested. Building materials had to be brought in across the lagoon from North Tarawa for the villagers to build their local dwellings. Countless material and psychological losses were sustained by the people of Betio. The restoration of the past is impossible, of course, but the development of their future appears also to have been set back by the impact of the war. The Betio people have struggled to remain a viable community against history and time. The lack of war reparations from the colonial administration and the urbanization process since the war have exacerbated the economic and social situation of the once happy and cohesive community of Betio.

16

Barefoot Benefactors A Study of Japanese Views of Melanesians

Hisafumi Saito

This chapter discusses the experiences of Japanese soldiers in Melanesia with special reference to their relationship with and their views of Melanesians. Contrary to my original expectations, Japanese were quite interested in Melanesians. This is reflected in the considerable number of documents I have collected that refer to Melanesians during the war.

Inhabitants Referred to by Materials

Records pertaining to the people living in the Wewak area of Papua New Guinea, including the Kairiru and Mushu Islands off Wewak, Prince Alexander Range, and the basin of the middle and lower Sepik River, are the most abundant. This is because many Japanese, after failing to attack Aitape in July 1944, survived the war by depending on food supplied by villagers, mainly in the southern slopes of the Prince Alexander Range. Though Japanese troops survived the war in Rabaul (at the eastern tip of New Britain) and in Bougainville (in the northern Solomons chain), only five sources refer to the people in and around Rabaul, and just four to those in the Solomon Islands. There do not seem to be as many Japanese who had close contact with inhabitants in both of those areas. In Rabaul the Japanese had established a “self-supporting system,” which made it possible for them to survive without commandeering villagers’ harvests. In Bougainville, Japanese could find few friendly inhabitants (except on Buka), largely because of the successful campaigns by the Allied forces.

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Intimacy

In the materials there are a number of episodes that speak of the intimate terms between Melanesians and Japanese soldiers. The authors are proud that they were good friends of Melanesians, and think that Japanese soldiers were fundamentally different from white men in this respect. "While white men discriminated against Melanesians and exploited them, Japanese were kind to and worked together with Melanesians." This is the view repeatedly expressed in the materials, sometimes as the words of Melanesians (cf. Izumi 1943:190–192, 194, 206–207; Suzuki 1982:61; Ochi 1983:121; Mitsukawa 1984:331–332; Murosaki 1984:177; Yamada 1985:165–166; Yamamoto 1985:252–253). Some of the materials insist that because the islands in the South Pacific are the birthplace of remote Japanese ancestors, the Melanesians are physically similar to the Japanese, and the Japanese have sympathy with the Melanesians (cf. Izumi 1943:193; Ochi 1983:223; Yamamoto 1985:252).

On the other hand, the Japanese thought, "We should not spoil Melanesians. We have to cure their characters stained by laziness, and raise them up to the point where they willingly obey Japanese. This is one of the aims of this war" (cf. Izumi 1943:193–197). The efforts at enlightenment and their positive results are recorded in some of the materials (e.g., cf. Kitamoto 1970:60; Arao 1975:208; Watanabe 1982:163; Yamanaka 1982:190). However, I have found no evidence that the Japanese army made enthusiastic and systematic efforts to make Melanesians "the Emperor's loyal subjects." For example, there are some episodes in which Japanese soldiers persuaded inhabitants to cooperate with them, but they appear only to have made irresponsible remarks to suit the occasion (cf. Izumi 1943:200–201; Kitamoto 1970: 32, 41, 45; Mitsukawa 1984:330–332, 356–357). The only feature common to most of their remarks is the desire to stimulate Melanesians' rebellious attitudes toward white men.

Hostility

The Japanese troops gave Melanesians many things, such as rice, tinned food, sugar, cloth, and so on, to win their favor. But these goods were rapidly drained and never resupplied. Starving Japanese soldiers gave inhabitants everything and did anything to get food.

Out of their small community, the Japanese troops were relatively

free from their own conscience and the military discipline that did not directly concern action and class system (cf. Kawamura 1988: 26–27). Contrary to military orders, soldiers frequently used their arms for hunting (e.g., cf. Yamada 1953:63–64, 87, 126, 192; Kitamoto 1970:30; Hirao 1980:70; Hoshino 1982:114). It was also common to expropriate Melanesian villagers' crops (e.g., cf. Yamada 1953:72, 86, 122; Kitamoto 1970:88; Fukuyama 1980:155). Some conscientious soldiers even thought that hunger was an adequate excuse for pillage (cf. Hoshino 1982:139–140). Although the headquarters in Wewak prohibited barter with individual Melanesians in order to regulate food supply (cf. Suzuki 1982:266–267; Murosaki 1984:167), starving soldiers continued adding bandages, watch chains, razor blades, tweezers, and grenades to their list of merchandise (cf. Ueki 1982:180; Mitsukawa 1984:248, 290; Murosaki 1994:147).

Plunder caused dispute in every corner of Melanesia under Japanese occupation (cf. Kitamoto 1970:70; Fukuyama 1980:145; Kitamoto 1984:158–159; Haneda 1985:205). Some Melanesians defended their gardens with arms (Ueki 1982:202; Murosaki 1984:52; Matsutani 1985:240), and many ultimately revolted against the Japanese (cf. Fukuyama 1980:179–180; Fuke 1982:16; Hoshino 1982:156–157, 168, 170; Suzuki 1982:271). For example, at the close of the war it was too dangerous for Japanese troops to approach Melanesian villages in the Wewak area (cf. Hoshino 1982:138, 177; Yamanaka 1982:221).

Conclusion

The materials referred to in this chapter were written by the Japanese who experienced the Pacific War in Melanesia. As a result, the information offered by them is biased. For example, they do not mention the fact that some starving soldiers ate Melanesians as well as soldiers of the Allied forces (cf. Hara 1987:151–152, 157–158; Miyakawa 1985:55–66; Nakazono 1986:43–46, 51–72; Tuzin 1983), though some cases where Japanese soldiers ate Japanese soldiers are recorded (cf. Kitamoto 1970:71; Suzuki 1982:242; Watanabe 1982: 177, 192; Ochi 1983:160–161).

However, I think these materials represent their views of Melanesians well. Though Japanese soldiers used discriminatory terms to refer to Melanesians, and thought Melanesians primitive and lazy, they had not always despised Melanesians. They found many good char-

acteristics in Melanesians and thought Melanesians similar to Japanese in some respects. For the Japanese soldiers who believed the ideology of the Japanese Empire, Melanesians were considered worth saving from “evil” white men for enlightening by Japanese.

Japanese were urged to the war by the dogma, “You should expel white men, and enlighten the people in Asia and Oceania.” Contrary to their intention, the soldiers in Melanesia ended up relying on local inhabitants for food. In the materials they repeatedly expressed their regret and thanks to Melanesians (cf. Kitamoto 1970:46, 70, 102, 104; Fuke 1982:17; Watanabe 1982:196; Mitsukawa 1984:308, 369, 394, 400, 433; Yamada 1985:172). Melanesians were generous benefactors as well as barefoot primitives for Japanese soldiers.

A VIEW FROM AFAR (SOUTH ASIA)— AN INTERVIEW WITH GYAN PRAKASH

• *Robert Borofsky*: One of the key questions regarding the colonial period is how to write about it. Both Sahlins and Kituai use colonial documentation to discuss the complex ways various parties were entangled. To what extent do you think it is possible to write about the colonial period without staying within the silences and framings of the data collected by the colonial regimes—without getting entangled, that is to say, in the colonial entanglements themselves?

• *Gyan Prakash*: To begin with, one cannot simply use colonial documents as repositories of information. One needs to take into account not only the purposes for which they were produced but also how and why they were preserved. Secondly, one must read them for the kind of knowledge they authorize, a point Sahlins and Kituai are both concerned with. One needs to pay attention to the ruling concepts of the documents, to what they render thinkable as well as to what they imply is unthinkable. If I were to put it in Foucaultian terms, one needs to consider the type of truth regime the documents establish.

Rather than claiming an all-seeing eye—that allows one to grasp what colonial officials could not—the intent would be to make the documents confront their own contradictions, their own silences. I do not mean the object should be to fill in the silences as a sort of compensatory history, to give the colonized a voice denied them by colonialism. Instead I would make the silences, contradictions, and ambiguities essential elements in the colonial story.

If I can offer an example from my own book on Indian labor bondage for a moment, the problem I confronted when reading colonial documents in the archives was that I found the history regarding this topic had already been written. The question of bondage had already been posed and answered. Free labor was assumed to be the natural human condition. And this assumption shaped inquiries con-

ducted both by colonial officials and others into the reasons for labor bondage in India. The frame of reference was: Given free labor, or freedom, is the natural human condition, why then does India differ from this universal pattern? I confronted this framework by treating the archive—and how documents were framed in it—as an inextricable part of the history of bonded labor itself.

The second step I took was to write about the visions of the past that these bonded laborers had. Their visions could not be accommodated within the same framework as existing historical documents. As a result, I discussed the nature of oral testimony, especially how its principles of construction differed radically from the kind of rationalist histories historians generally write.

In other words, my response to the silences and the fabrications of the archives about the people constituted as bonded laborers was not to recover a more authentic history. Instead, I argued that the bonded laborers' narratives of their past stood at odds with history as a discipline. The narratives were antidisciplinary, in a Foucaultian sense. Or to put it another way, the silences, myopias, contradictions, and failures of the colonial archive served as a basis for outlining forms of knowledge that were incommensurate with those within the archive itself.

- *RB*: Building on these comments, one of the common critiques of anthropology and history today is that they often succumb to certain essentialisms, certain simplistic oppositions, in discussing colonialism. Certain nationalist writers seem to do the same. What dynamics are at work, in your opinion, and to what degree does it seem possible to step outside of nationalist and Western essentialisms in writing histories of colonial entanglements?

- *GP*: Generally, I do not think the issue is essentialism versus nonessentialism. It is true that essentialisms of various kinds have served domination, both colonial and nationalist. But I think it would be too simplistic to just declare oneself against essentialisms. We are dealing with essentialisms with widely different historical functions and effects. Many writers—here I am thinking particularly of Partha Chatterjee, for example—have written about how nationalists employed many of the same essentialisms as the colonial rulers.

But it is also true they were employed with different aims and effects. The primary nationalist aim and effect, of course, was to overthrow the colonial rulers. In doing so, it is true the nationalists imposed their own elitist, majoritarian cultural definition of the nation

that rendered other definitions and other aspirations minor and subordinate. Even though Indian nationalism represented itself as universal and secular, for example, it was deeply colored by the Hindu ethos and symbols. I am not saying the nationalist essentialisms are better. I am saying they are different.

The general point I would make is that for students of colonialism, it is necessary to leave aside the essentialism versus nonessentialism question. Our analyses should focus on the nature and effects of the complicity between essentialism and domination rather than searching for a nonessentialist epistemology.

- *RB*: In discussing the tensions of empire, both Thomas and Panoff emphasize colonial regimes were never simple, unified affairs. One model did not fit all sizes: Each European country and each locale contained its own contradictions and ambiguities in respect to colonial rule. How would you suggest we go about trying to make sense—in a general way—of the differences, conflicts, and contradictions within colonial regimes?

- *GP*: I agree with both Thomas and Panoff that colonialism was not a uniform process. French differed from British colonies, German from American. The Spanish colonization of the Americas in the sixteenth century differed radically from the nineteenth-century Anglo-French pattern.

Nor were colonial regimes free from contradictions, as these authors also point out. One can see contradictions, variations, and ambivalences as essential characteristics of colonial regimes. Different interests were at work in different places and different times. Missionaries, businessmen, administrative officials, and military commanders frequently differed regarding the nature of colonialism's "civilizing mission." And Europeans in the colonies often found themselves split by class, rank, culture, and gender. A lot has been written about these complexities arguing that neither the colonized nor the colonizers were monolithic entities. Many motives, many interests were in play.

There is a tendency in the literature, however, to use these complexities to argue against and undo the colonizer-colonized divide—to argue that reality was far more complicated than the myth and ideology of the divide. Another version of this is to argue the Europeans subjected their own working classes and women to oppressions comparable to those experienced by the colonized. I do not disagree with this.

But I have a sense that this leads into a contest in victimhood: the

Europeans claiming they were as victimized as the colonized. What this overlooks is a crucial point about power. Namely, while the European working classes and women were subjected to various kinds of oppressions, they also were citizens. The colonized, on the other hand, were not acceptable as citizens but only as subjects. This is the point that Mahmood Mamdani makes in his book on Africa. It is a significant distinction.

So the issue is not whether regimes of power and discipline were not applied to Europe as well. Of course they were. But they were applied with different effects. That is one of the points that I would insist on in thinking about the complexities of colonial regimes.

If we come to the colonies themselves, for all the differences between the missionary and the colonial official, between the poor white soldier and the general, colonial ideology still mobilized them as the ruling race, however incompletely. Colonial ideology emphasized the poor tommy soldier, no matter how subordinate, was still part of the ruling race. And, as a result, he was expected to behave according to the standards of that race.

Different categories of Europeans may have held more or less positive views of the natives. But colonial power still authorized certain representations of the colonized. There is the example of Las Casas. Las Casas, in the famous 1550 debate with Sepulveda, held that American Indians were human and therefore possessed certain rights. But we should not forget that underlying this favorable view of the Indians was the proposition that the Indians were humans insofar as their conduct and beliefs suggested that they were potential Christians. To the extent that they manifested feelings and practices that he interpreted as religious, or to put it another way, insofar as they appeared as crypto-Christians, the Indians met Las Casas' standard of what constituted human. The point is that the power of representation still belonged to Las Casas. This is what I take to be the great lesson of Edward Said's *Orientalism*: It teaches us something about the power of representation and the power that authorizes such representation.

Keeping this in view, I would say the complexities, contradictions, and historical variations in colonial regimes have to be seen as processes that the colonial divide itself engendered and encountered as well as something that it sought to contain and control. I do not see the two as opposites. Contradictions and variations go together with the colonial divide.

- *RB*: The chapters by Belich, Grimshaw and Morton, and Merwin

explore colonial strategies of domination. Your own books, *Bonded Histories* and *Another Reason*, examine this subject as well, emphasizing the contradictory nature of the process. How would you suggest we approach the analysis of these ambiguous, ambivalent patterns of control—in South Asia, in the Pacific, and elsewhere? What guidelines would you suggest for assessing these controls' ambiguous effectiveness?

• *GP*: My response flows from what I have just said about the issue of contradiction. But let me put it in a slightly different way in the context of *Another Reason*—as a way of extending the points developed by Belich, Grimshaw and Morton, and Merwin. In *Another Reason*, I argue that various colonial contradictions and ambivalences do not negate the colonial boundaries of East-West, colonizer-colonized, or rational-irrational. Rather they are produced by these colonial dichotomies. The very exercise of colonial power creates ambivalences and estrangements. Homi Bhabha has made this point most eloquently, arguing that the pattern of colonial control alienates Western ideals. To rule despotically in the name of liberty is to estrange the very ideals of civilization that the colonial rulers said they had.

What I try to do in *Another Reason* is to suggest that these contradictions and estrangements become spaces not only for the reiteration of colonial power but also for its revision. They constitute zones and moments of struggle and resistance. To be sure, zones of hybridity unsettle colonial binaries. But I do not perceive them—as is sometimes seen—as a middle ground, as areas of convergence, accommodation, and cooperation. Quite the contrary: I view these hybrid zones as arenas where struggles ensue to rearrange power. I argue in *Another Reason* that the very colonial project of using what the British designate as “universal reason” constitutes a particular means of alien rule. *Universal reason* is used as a means for ruling over the colonized. This alienates the ideology of science's universalism. Science is unable to disassociate itself from Western power. And once it is framed in this fashion, science needs to adopt other guises and languages as well. In other words, its very functioning as an instrument of power requires its translation to other contexts. It is this translation or trafficking between the alien and the indigenous, between modernity and tradition that Indian intellectuals used to formulate ideologies and institutions directed to redraw colonial boundaries. I see the zone of hybridity—which in some interpretations is portrayed as a nice, soft, fuzzy arena—as an intensely conflictual, not consensual, arena.

The general point I would make is that these kinds of negotiations and revisions of colonial power do not cancel colonial dichotomies. Hybridity does not dissolve opposition. Difference does not cancel identity. Rather, one category enables the reformulation of the other. I see it as a kind of dialectical relationship.

All of this makes us see colonial power as kind of a dynamic field, a field in which the very reproduction of colonial power produces contradictions and revisions that can help overthrow it. So it is not that once colonial power is established, the rest is repetition of that original moment. The very need to reproduce it produces, in turn, all these contradictions. What I try to do in *Another Reason* is address this kind of dynamism, showing that colonial governance in India produced conditions under which emerged forces and ideologies that mirrored Western patterns and yet were undeniably different and challenging to them.

- *RB*: World War II was a critical event in reframing colonial politics. In India, it presaged independence; in the Pacific, a new kind of development. Without World War II, do you think the colonial era would have ended as it did?

- *GP*: I think in general that it is not just World War II but the entire interwar period that is important, that produced a kind of crisis in the liberal capitalist-imperialist order. World War II, of course, escalates it vastly. But a crucial part of the change was also the recognition by Western powers, during this period, that the colonized would no longer tolerate alien rule in the old form.

In thinking about World War II, one can see the old arrangements had gone into disarray. An important part of the disarray is the perception by colonial officials that the colonized themselves are making various demands that cannot be accommodated within the old kind of arrangement. Something new had to be done. The liberal capitalist-imperialist system no longer seemed to work as it had before.

- *RB*: Given your research on South Asia, what seems most striking and interesting to you regarding colonial entanglements in the Pacific? What do you think might be intriguing comparative issues—intriguing questions—to explore?

- *GP*: One thing is that the Pacific is vast. I would imagine things would change considerably in speaking about different places.

My general sense is that colonial dynamics in the Pacific seemed to have followed a much more violent and brutal course than in South Asia. Colonialism in the Pacific seems to have failed to evolve the stable, enduring sort of structures that it did in South Asia. Discourses

of nation, nation-state, governmentality of the scale that rose in South Asia appear to have been, from my reading of the colonial section, relatively less important in the Pacific. One gets a sense that colonial rulers in the Pacific saw populations in far more exotic and exoticizing terms than colonial rulers in India.

There is a difference in what Said calls orientalizing. Part of the reason may have been the scale of societies and the nature of polity that the colonialists encountered in the two places. But I think partly it is the result of a far more exclusionary version of colonialism in the Pacific. If I take a comparative example from Latin America, the contrast is striking with South Asia regarding how the notion of writing, the notion of memory, the notion of history were all systematically supplanted by European forms in the former but not the latter.

A comparative case Africanists note is that no matter how inferior the British considered Indians, they nonetheless acknowledge they had a civilization, a philosophy, and a religion. In Africa, the colonists viewed the colonized as a *tabula rasa*. They had nothing to offer. I got a similar sense reading the essays in the “Colonial Engagements” section. The British did not see the Maori, for example, as having anything valuable to offer. That is strikingly different from India. The only parallel to that I can think of is the way the British and then later on, after independence, the Indian government treated people called “tribals.”

I think the kind of comparative work that would prove valuable would be to inquire into how, out of different colonial experiences, the colonized created different kinds of structures. These structures might, in the South Asian case, lead to independence and to a kind of postcolonial state. In the Pacific, on the other hand, they lead to structures that appear much more under Western domination. Such comparisons would allow us to think about what “postcoloniality” actually means: How “post” is postcolonial today?

SECTION FOUR

“Postcolonial” Politics

In “Colonial Engagements,” we noted the difficulty in delineating colonialism’s precise beginning. In this section, we explore the difficulty in delineating its precise end. There are shades and degrees of colonialism today—even in nominally independent countries—that make a clear distinction between colonial dependence and postcolonial independence an uncertain matter at best. A central concern of this section is: To what degree is the “post” (in postcolonial) an appropriate label for the Pacific’s present politics?

General Texts and Themes

The panoramic historical accounts of the Pacific fall into two categories regarding the “postcolonial”: Oliver (1989 [1961]) and Howe (1984), published earlier, do not directly address the dynamics of the era. Scarr (1990), Howe, Kiste, and Lal (1994), Campbell (1996), and Denoon (1997b)—writing later—distinctly discuss it. The

region's history-telling efforts, in other words, have their own historical contexts.

Collectively, Howe, Kiste, and Lal (1994), Denoon (1997b), Campbell (1996), and Scarr (1990) underscore three central themes in their overlapping accounts of the "postcolonial" era. First, the energy behind decolonization came more from the colonizers than from the colonized. Wesley-Smith, in discussing Australia's and New Zealand's decolonizing efforts, for example, observes: "In Papua New Guinea, Niue, Tokelau, the Cook Islands, and to a lesser extent Western Samoa, the colonizer rather than the colonised set the pace of change. In all cases except Nauru, the colonial power bestowed a greater degree of political autonomy than the people themselves sought at the time. Political freedom was returned to these colonial peoples in the 1960s and the 1970s essentially for the same reason it was removed in an earlier era—to meet the needs of the colonial power" (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:220–221).

The ambiguities involved in delineating "decolonization"—given the colonizer rather than the colonized defined its parameters—is made clear in de Deckker's account of France's Pacific territories: "It may be argued that, strictly speaking, colonial rule is not maintained in . . . French overseas territories because each of them may attain constitutional independence by simply voting for it at election time and because they already have, or will soon have, some degree of internal self-government. However, at all levels, the economic, social, and even cultural systems are permeated by remnants of colonial domination" (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:273).

Second, all four texts refer to the continued economic dependence of Islanders—whatever their level of political independence—on external powers. Typical of the statements is Kiste's: "While the [Micronesian] Compacts of Free association provide . . . sovereignty over both internal and external affairs . . . it is an understatement to suggest that the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands are heavily dependent on the financial arrangements [with the United States] provided by the compact" (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:254; cf. Scarr 1990: 299). Part of the problem is that many Islanders are caught up in a relatively high standard of living, in respect to government services and wages, that cannot be funded by the

governments themselves. The result is that 30 percent of the Cook Island's and 36 percent of Western Samoa's national income, for example, comes from outside funding (Scarr 1990:340; cf. Denoon 1997b:388). Increased "development" has tended to mean increased dependency. "Far from decreasing with the passing of time, the need for assistance to Pacific island economies increased," Campbell notes (1996:214). As "the island nations were becoming more dependent on foreign assistance, their subsistence economies . . . [were becoming] less efficient. Wage labour, cash cropping, and a growing sense of individualism . . . all weakened the traditional mutual supports of village life, while urbanization has placed many outside it altogether." Schoeffel provides an insightful perspective on the dynamics at work: "Paradoxically, the more dependent the relationship between a Pacific Island country and a stronger power, the better off its population is, in terms of access to basic services and social indicators such as life expectancy. Dependency is a problem for the Pacific Islands mainly in terms of the *insecurity* of their links with the outside world. The small island countries that are building their links to larger, wealthier countries through emigration may ultimately have more durable and useful ties than those linked by the strategic concerns of the dominant powers" (Howe, Kiste, and Lal 1994:374–375).

Third, the four texts discuss diverse efforts at affirming cultural identity within the region. On the one hand, such efforts emphasize preserving cultural—if not economic— independence in a rapidly changing world. On the other, they emphasize the need to rethink present Pacific paradigms regarding colonization and decolonization. Hau'ofa writes in "Our Sea of Islands" (see 1994a for the full article; cf. Hau'ofa 1994b):

Nineteenth-century imperialism erected boundaries that led to the contraction of Oceania, transforming a once boundless world into the Pacific Island states and territories that we know today. . . . [People] were cut off from their relatives abroad. . . . This is the historical basis of the view that our countries are small, poor and isolated. . . .

The new economic reality made nonsense of artificial boundaries, enabling the people to shake off their confinement. . . . They strike roots in new resource areas, securing employment

and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods, and their stories all across their ocean. (Denoon 1997b:439)

The boundaries that we presently draw in the region, that is to say, tend to obscure salient dynamics by which Pacific Islanders craft their senses of self through movement within and beyond the region.

Broadening Perspectives:¹

How might we refine and enhance our understanding of these themes with work from beyond the Pacific? One step is to examine the writings of various subaltern theorists on India as a way of exploring the subtle (and not so subtle) ways colonial hegemonies persist in the present. The framing of independence in terms of nation-states, for example, accepts European colonial categories. Like Hau'ofa, subaltern historians ask: Why must former colonial categories remain the units of political governance? And further, why must the elite frame the history of independence in terms

¹For further references see: **ambiguity in distinguishing between colonialism and post-colonialism**: Petersen 1997:86–87; Larmour 1997:205–206; Nadile 1997:178; Thomas 1994:195; Firth (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:303; Macdonald (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:170; O'Regan 1995:184; Denoon 1997a:414; Jolly 1992b:51; Lal (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:440; Macdonald 1997:4, 7; K. Thomas (in Greenwood, Neumann, and Sartori) 1995:4; Hereniko (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:417; Dirlik 1992:65–66; Cooper 1997:426; Kabataulaka 1997:170–171; **Subaltern perspectives on this ambiguity**: Prakash 1995:5; Prakash 1990:399–400; Seed 1991:192; Guha 1988a:39, 43; Guha 1988b:47, 51–53, 59, 82; Guha 1989:212, 304–305; Chatterjee 1993:238; Chatterjee 1994:2; Said 1988:v; Spivak 1988:281; Chakrabarty 1992:1; Pandey 1992:41, 50; Dirks 1992:23; **nationalism as a politically constructed narrative**: Kelly 1995:257–258, 262, 268; Foster 1995:1–2, 26; Bhabha 1995:327; Parekh 1997:14; Otto and Thomas 1997:6, 11; LiPuma 1995:42, 44, 54; Chatterjee 1993:9–11; Firth (in Denoon) 1997b:287; Said 1993:267; **contradictions in nationalist narratives and attempts at their resolution**: Otto and Thomas 1997:10, 12; LiPuma 1995: 44, 48, 50, 56; Chakrabarty 1997:373; Chatterjee 1993:112, 132; Kelly 1995:266; Foster 1995:7; **silencing in nationalist narratives**: Chatterjee 1993:154, 238; Cooper 1997:406–407; Chatterjee 1994:49; Parekh 1997:15; LiPuma 1995:61; Foster 1995: 4; Thomas 1997:219; **dynamics involved in affirming nationalist narratives**: Foster 1995:15, 20, 24; LiPuma 1995:60, 62; Doyle 1986:371–372; Kaplan 1995:95, 118;

that emphasize their roles as leaders (cf. Hau'ofa 1994c)? This is what Prakash refers to when he suggests "nationalist historiographers accepted the patterns set for them by British scholarship" (1990:388), or what Chatterjee means when he suggests nationalist history had "no choice but to choose its forms from the gallery of 'models' offered by European and American nation-states" (1993:9; see also Spivak 1987:97 and Dirks 1992:15). As Chatterjee observes, framing the colonial/decolonial transition as national liberation often marginalizes subaltern voices who resisted the British and, yet, remain subordinated in the newly liberated state (e.g. 1993:156). "The historiography of Indian nationalism," Guha writes, "has for a long time been dominated by elitism . . . [that] originated as the ideological product of British rule in India, but . . . [has] survived the transfer of power and been assimilated to . . . neo-nationalist forms of discourse in . . . India" (1988a:37).

Jourdan 1995:127–128; **modernization as a political/cultural project**: Prakash 1990:404; Stoler and Cooper 1997:35; LiPuma 1995:43–44; Cooper 1997:406–407; Shapin 1994:412; Said 1995:35; Eagleton 1997:22; **problematic dynamics of the modernization project**: Lal (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:452; Chakrabarty 1997:373; Chakrabarty 1992:18, 21; LiPuma 1995:56–57; Otto and Thomas 1997:10; Foster 1995:1–2; Chatterjee 1993:219; Cooper 1997:425; Pels 1997:178; Knapman (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:326–328, 342; Cooper and Stoler 1997:16–17; **problematic dynamics of constructing identities of (quasi?) difference**: Lal (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:454; Jolly 1992b:52; Hereniko (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:423, 430; Cooper 1997:427; Chakrabarty 1997:373; LiPuma 1995:44, 54, 56–57; Foster 1995:1–2, 10; Sherry 1997:29; Useem 1997:A47; Firth (in Denoon) 1997b:254–255; Schell 1997:17; Chatterjee 1993:134, 155; Seed 1995:15; Spivak 1988:275; Hale 1997:574, 578; Thomas 1994:23; Said 1993:314; **ambiguities involved in erecting boundaries of difference**: Lal (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:441–442; Huggan 1994:125; Hereniko (in Howe, Kiste, and Lal) 1994:424, 429–430; Phillips 1995:100, 104–105, 114; Mintz 1997:36; Prakash 1990:383–384, 398–399; Steedly 1993:125, 176; Thomas 1994:185; Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:139; Greenblatt 1991:121; Bhabha 1994:112–114, 118–120, 207, 251; Reilly 1996:389, 400–401, 404; Said 1993:336; Said 1995:35; Narayan 1993:671, 682; Seed 1995:191; Binney 1995:524; Ballara 1996:133; White 1997:438; Hale 1997:568; Foster 1995:15; Reilly and Heke 1995:204, 210, 216; O'Regan 1995:183, 186, 189; **resisting hegemonies**: Guha 1989:220, 309; Prakash 1995:4; Prakash 1992:382; Prakash 1990:402–403, 407; Said 1988: vii–viii; 1993:13; Young 1990:173–174; Dirlik 1994:346; Hempenstall 1992:74; Cooper and Stoler 1997:16; Spivak 1988:171; Chatterjee 1994:3; **history telling as an empowering process**: Chatterjee 1993:76; Lowenthal 1985:44; Teaiwa 1995:72.

These points are central to rethinking the nationalist narrative of development because the narrative involves a critical dynamic that undermines the political effectiveness of newly formed nation-states, perpetuating their dependency on the West. Given the tendency for nation-states to be formed along colonial borders—involving disparate cultural groups—modernization becomes a central means for legitimizing the state’s authority. Modernization offers a means for overcoming internal divisiveness by promising progress toward broadly shared goals. In other words, newly independent nation-states are drawn into the modernization/development cum dependency framework as a way of establishing and maintaining their political legitimacy (cf. Chatterjee 1993:203; Ludden 1992:251; Cooper 1997:425). To become a nation-state under the terms offered by the colonial powers, as Nkrumah observed long ago, often generates another form of colonialism.

At the same time they are caught up in this cycle of modernizing/dependency—or, perhaps, in an effort to moderate the process—newly formed nation-states often seek to differentiate themselves from the West by emphasizing their cultural independence: to be modern but different, to paraphrase Chakrabarty’s phrasing (1997: 373). The problem is that, in many cases, this national culture has to be constructed in a culturally diverse environment using rituals of affirmation—at national celebrations and public schools—that in drawing on diverse pasts attempt to override them in forging a national unity. It is a contingent, constructed affirmation vulnerable to frequent disruption. The irony here, if one wants to call it that, is these nation-states are thus drawn into Western forms of nation building in asserting their difference from the West. That is why the West so readily understands the Rest’s affirmations of identity—they are framed in ways that reflect the West’s own history.

In seeking to separate themselves from the West—within this hegemonic framework—new nations often voice personal, subjective, and/or spiritual perspectives that affirm their worth separate from the West’s materiality or, phrased another way, separate from their economic dependency on the West (cf. Chatterjee 1993:6, 75). This involves being modern in one sense (i.e., culturally unified and developed) and, at the same time, not modern (i.e., “tradi-

tional,” not Western) in another. The tensions and contradictions embedded in this dynamic make the subject of who can speak for whom—that infuses current debates between Western and non-Western academics—a ready flash point for conflict (e.g., see Denoon 1997a:400; Trask 1991).

This brings us to the dynamics of history writing as an empowering process. “While some of us debate what is or was,” Trouillot observes, “others take it in their own hands” (1995:153). This is Fanon’s often cited point: “Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended. . . . It is a question of the Third World starting a new history” (1963: 252, 255; cf. Hempenstall 1992:73). It is Bankim’s point as well (written in 1880!): “Bengal must have a history, or else there is no hope for it. Who will write it? You will write it, I will write it, all of us will write it” (cited in Chatterjee 1994:4). History writing is often a deeply political process and, because of this, at times a deeply empowering one. Little wonder, then, the past has become a battleground of contention.

This returns us to issues of representation and the valuing of difference (discussed in “An Invitation”). Difference disrupts the seamless silences by which hegemonies perpetuate control. One cannot examine several of the poems in this section, for example, without a sense that they, in that famous Foucault phrase, are speaking truth to power. They upset the framings that neatly order the “postcolonial” world, the neat dichotomies and polarities that, in so many ways, collectively imprison “us” and “others” intellectually. The various chapters of this section allow us to question—to challenge—these frames of reference. The hope is that acknowledging and appreciating difference constitutes a self-perpetuating process—that one hegemony does not simply replace another. All of us in and of the Pacific face a critical question: How do we—who share an overlapping past and a bound together present—make a collective future, in the place we all call home, with our various history tellings?

The Selections

The chapters in Section Four are organized around three themes that can be viewed as related aspects of the same

issue: What forms of cultural and political independence—or more importantly, perhaps, interdependence—are viable in the Pacific today? Implicit throughout this discussion are the limited economic resources Islanders and Outlanders can draw on, within presently defined borders, to sustain high—that is, expensive—standards of living on particular archipelagoes. What forms of independence/interdependence are possible under such circumstances? It is a question that draws on Marxist perspectives: Given certain economic structures, what cultural structures may prevail? And it is a deeply historical question: Given the region’s past dynamics, what forms of “possession” and “repossession” are possible today?

The first theme, “Continuities and Discontinuities,” emphasizes that one cannot draw a clear line between the colonial past and the “postcolonial” present. They are intimately entwined. As Clifford noted earlier, the Pacific has a more complex sense of decolonization than in many regions of the world. In “Decolonization,” Stewart Firth observes that different perspectives can be drawn on to legitimize “postcolonial” power in the Pacific: democratic majority rule, ethnicity, descent, and/or attachment to the land. As a result, defining or defending a state’s (or a group’s) legitimacy can be a conflict-filled experience. “The paradox of decolonization” today, Firth writes, is that “Islanders want independence most where it will not happen and least where a genuine possibility . . . [for independence] exists.” It is one thing, Grace Mera Molisa adds in “Colonised People,” to support the liberation of colonized people at a distance. It is quite another to support it close at home. Are not Vanuatu women colonized, she asks? Why should they not be free as well in a decolonized Vanuatu? Konai Helu Thaman’s “My Blood” speaks to the opposition scenario that places Islanders and Outlanders on different sides of the “post-colonial” divide. More than Outlander exploitation, she suggests, the problem today is Islander betrayal of fellow Islanders. Margaret Jolly’s “Custom and the Way of the Land” discusses the ways in which colonial dynamics shape current views of the past. In Vanuatu, where the break with colonial forms of exploitation is clearest, the focus is on “postcolonial” cultural revivals that exclude European elements, that seek to recapture precolonial practices. In Fiji, there was less alienation of

land and, generally, a less harsh form of colonial exploitation. Here cultural traditions incorporate important European elements and stress continuities, rather than discontinuities, between the past and the present. One can see the chapter as building on a point developed above in “Broadening Perspectives”: The forms of “postcolonial” independence are very much shaped by the forms of colonial control. In “The Relationship between the United States and the Native Hawaiian People,” Brenda Luana Machado Lee suggests that the ties between colonizers and the colonized are not only political but also emotional and ethical—they constitute, in a sense, a form of marriage. She asserts that the way the United States treats Native Hawaiian constitutes a case of spouse abuse. Her poem draws us into reflecting on the moral obligations colonizers have.

The second theme, “Identity and Empowerment,” explores the forms of cultural independence possible today. As Hau’ofa emphasizes in his “Sea of Islands,” this entails reconceptualizing the present as much as changing it. Joseph Balaz makes this point in “Moe’uhane.” Instead of being lost—in the rush of modern times—the past can be nurtured in the way one lives today. Vicente Diaz in “Simply Chamorro” stresses that, while times and things change, it does not necessarily mean cultural traditions die out. Cultural traditions are not static. “How can signs taken for cultural demise be reread,” he asks, “as moments of survival and vitality?” One answer he offers is that we examine the ways nonlocal ideas are localized, are made meaningful, to Chamorros. In “Mixed Blood,” Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa discusses the hybrid qualities involved in defining identity. There are subtleties and complications that subvert easy delineations which place a person in this or that category. Patricia Grace closes the section with “Ngati Kangaru.” It builds on a point Prakash makes regarding victimhood. Rather than perceiving themselves as victimized by the colonial era, Islanders might reconceptualize past forms of exploitation as models for cultural empowerment. Regarding the New Zealand land grabs of the Wakefields, Billy observes: “out-and-out crooks, liars, cheats and thieves . . . he felt inspired.”

The third theme, “Integrating ‘the Past’ into ‘the Present’,” explores how we can come to terms, in the present, with the conflicts, injustices, and ambiguities that

remain from the past. Vaine Rasmussen’s “Our Pacific” discusses what it means to live in the Pacific today. She draws readers to ponder on the dynamics of being a Pacific Islander—coping with the present while listening to the past. Alan Ward’s “Treaty-Related Research and Versions of New Zealand History” examines the heated politics surrounding the Waitangi Tribunal’s attempt to right a set of past wrongs regarding land transactions. It highlights a number of issues. There is the problem, for example, of culturally relative versus nonrelativistic ways for judging evidence in important land cases (an issue raised in “An Invitation”). Whatever the cultural differences in perspective between various groups, it is interesting to note that Maori tend to accept the Crown’s colonial documents since they clearly affirm colonial abuses. Ward also notes that the process of reexamining the past can be divisive for Maori. It can resurrect old tribal conflicts forgotten during years of colonial exploitation. My piece on “Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins” considers one of the “hot” debates that has sparked recent academic interest. More is involved than whether Cook was or was not a “god” to Hawaiians. At stake is: Who can speak about (or for) whom in today’s polarized politics? Who has the right to represent the past in what ways?

Edward Said’s “A View from Afar” interview raises a number of critical points. He questions the use of “post-colonialism,” for example, to describe our present-day dynamics. And he is critical of the ideology behind cultural nationalism. It brings polarizations and abuses in its wake. Citing Fanon, he looks for something beyond cultural nationalism—equality, justice, and citizenship. He also returns to a theme discussed by Prakash—the way Europeans perceived the Pacific as a *tabula rasa*, as an empty slate to be inscribed upon as they saw fit.

The Epilogue concludes the volume. Webster’s *Third International Dictionary* defines *epilogue* as “the final part that serves . . . to round out or complete the design of a . . . work.” Epli Hau’ofa’s “Pasts to Remember” does this. Hau’ofa suggests developing alternative histories of the region to those now published by Western presses. What is striking about his concern for ecological time is how it reiterates a point Clifford makes—Pacific identity is grounded in the land. In considering how to remake histories, he also

touches on a point made in Section Three: Colonial hegemonomies, despite their claims to universalizing values, tend to be embedded in colonial projects full of contradictions—contradictions that open up alternative possibilities for history making. It is a thoughtful vision with which to end.

A question readers might ponder in this section is:

- *What are the viable forms of independence and interdependence in the region today—politically and culturally?*

Phrased one way, the question returns us to a previously asked question: How do we—who share overlapping pasts and a bound together present—make a collective future in the place we all call home? Phrased differently, we might ask: Following Hau‘ofa’s (and Kame‘eleihiwa’s) Austronesian vision of locating the past ahead of us, what might a postcolonial future (without quotation marks) look like? Or, rephrasing the question yet again: How do we build, following Said, a Pacific that emphasizes equality, justice, and citizenship?

17
Decolonization¹

Stewart Firth

Decolonization has one clear and unambiguous meaning in the history of the international system of states since World War II. It refers to the withdrawal of the colonial powers from direct legal and constitutional control over their territories. The process by which the modern states system of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands came into being is “decolonization” as envisaged by the United Nations in the 1960 decolonization resolutions, which were passed at the height of international enthusiasm for the dismantling of the colonial empires.

If we adopt this straightforward definition in writing a history of decolonization in the Pacific Islands, we start with the independence gained by Western Samoa from New Zealand in 1962, proceed to recount the withdrawal of the Netherlands, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand from their dependencies in the region up to 1980, move to the decolonization of American Micronesia, and end with the achievement of independence by the Republic of Belau in October 1994. We should also note New Zealand’s delegation of certain powers to the political leaders of Tokelau in 1994 and the preparations for an eventual act of self-determination in this tiny Polynesian territory (Levine 1995). A strictly constitutional definition of this kind underlay the classic surveys of Pacific Islands’ decolonization by J. W. Davidson (1982), Barrie Macdonald (1982), Peter Larmour (1983), and Yash Ghai (1983).

By this account, decolonization is a clearly identifiable process of transferring legal and constitutional power from colonial elites to the elites of newly formed sovereign states, with some limitations in the case of the five freely associated states. No further decolonization is thought necessary within these states because the colonized people are

deemed to have achieved freedom and self-determination. In the region as a whole the most obvious exceptions to this process are the French territories. New Caledonia and French Polynesia in particular fit the model of territories that the international community regards as requiring to be decolonized. They are territories under the control of one of the old colonial powers, France, which has retreated from much of the remainder of its empire and—so the argument goes—should quit its colonies in the Pacific as well. The process of decolonization is presented in Table 1.

The simple constitutional model of Pacific Islands decolonization in Table 1 no longer encompasses the complex reality of the issue. Decolonization now assumes a variety of meanings in a variety of contexts and is the goal of widely disparate political movements—traditionally anticolonial in the French territories, secessionist in Papua New Guinea and the Melanesian edge of Indonesia, redistributive and culturally assertive in Hawai'i, Guam, New Zealand, and Australia. Some Pacific Islanders who are not supposed to want decolonization agitate for it while others who might be expected to want national freedom prefer to keep territorial status. The rhetoric of decoloniza-

Table 1. Pacific Islands Decolonization

<i>Year of Independence</i>		<i>Colonial Power</i>
1962	Western Samoa	New Zealand
1963	Irian Jaya	Netherlands
1965	Cook Islands*	New Zealand
1968	Nauru	Australia
1970	Fiji	United Kingdom
1970	Tonga	United Kingdom
1973	Niue*	New Zealand
1975	Papua New Guinea	Australia
1978	Tuvalu	United Kingdom
1978	Solomon Islands	United Kingdom
1979	Kiribati	United Kingdom
1980	Vanuatu	United Kingdom and France
1986	Marshall Islands*	U.S.A.
1986	Federated States of Micronesia*	U.S.A.
1994	Belau*	U.S.A.

*In free association with former colonial power.

tion and sovereignty has become ubiquitous in the politics of the Pacific Islands.

Observers have noted the shift. Robert Kiste's (1994) survey of the U.S. role in decolonization includes not only the American withdrawal from the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands but also resurgent Hawaiian nationalism and the movement for a sovereign Hawaiian nation. In a companion study of New Zealand and decolonization, Terence Wesley-Smith examines Western Samoa, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau before adding a discussion of Maori political activism entitled "Decolonizing New Zealand" (1994). Numerous commentators on the Bougainvillean secessionist revolt have pointed to what Peter Larmour calls the problematic relationship in Papua New Guinea between "political system and territory" (1984:397), while the secessionists themselves have consistently appealed to the logic of decolonization by which every nation deserves its own state.

My purpose in this essay is to reflect on the state of Pacific Islands decolonization at the end of the century and to bring the diverse strands of the decolonization story together into a more general explanation.

Legitimizing the State

Pacific Islands decolonization is a subject bound up with strongly held beliefs about "nation," "race," and "culture" and therefore deeply rooted in ideology. The nation, as Benedict Anderson has famously phrased it, is an "imagined community," a projection of identity by individuals onto others who speak the same language or live within the borders of the same nation-state (1991); and while this sense of identity has a natural basis in ease of communication and the sharing of a homeland, it is also the artificial product of symbols, rituals, and histories promoted for the purpose of making people believe that they belong to this community and owe it loyalty. "Race" and "culture" are notoriously elusive concepts. Yet ideologies of race, nation, and culture possess a compelling reality in politics and constitute the legitimating underpinnings of the modern nation-state.

The other actor in the story of decolonization is easier to define. This is the state, the principal political legacy of colonialism and the characteristically Western and modern form of organizing political communities on a large scale. The state, that social organization which claims a monopoly of ultimate political authority within a defined ter-

ritorial area, needs sustenance in the form of legitimacy. It needs people to believe it has a right to rule. New states must seek legitimacy from new “nations,” that is, from the belief of citizens that their identity and destiny are bound up with those of others within the same newly defined political communities. At this point the tangible state, consisting of the government, the bureaucracy, and the forces of coercive authority (whether police or military or both), comes to depend on the far less tangible “nation” or “culture,” or in some cases, the ideologically potent idea of “race.”

By creating the modern state, colonialism redefines forms of political legitimacy. Whereas claims to political authority in the past might have rested on convictions about superior hereditary rank as in pre-colonial Hawai‘i or superior ability to amass wealth and distribute it as in precolonial Vanuatu, and even though such beliefs might persist, the new state elites nurture beliefs that are themselves ideological inheritances of colonialism. They must do so because, like everyone else, they are heirs to the nationalist idea expressed in the French Revolution. Governments in the early twenty-first century, of old states and new, base their right to rule on the claim that state and nation coincide and that the state is the expression in political terms of its cultural counterpart, the nation.

The rhetoric of decolonization in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific was inspired by the fiction that, after a period of foreign domination, an entity called the “nation” or the “people” was once again being permitted to rule itself; either that, or a new nation was being born. At independence ceremonies new states are “born” into the “family of nations” or, in a related analogy, they are children reaching adulthood and now permitted to make their own way in the world. President Reagan employed just such a metaphor in his speech to the peoples of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia when they were deemed to have achieved independence in 1986.

But what was the nation and who were the people?

In fact, they were the populations who happened to live within borders of the colonial territories that became new states and, more often than not, they were divided linguistically and culturally into antagonistic or competitive groups (Hobsbawn 1990:170–171). The colonial powers mostly ignored precolonial group identities when they partitioned territory. In addition, flows of migrant labor to service plantation and mining economies in the colonial era left a legacy of

culturally diverse populations at independence. Sometimes colonial powers could divide such territories before independence so as to achieve a better accommodation between self-identifying cultural groups and new states. When territories consisted of islands, already separated from others by the ocean, such divisions were easily made. The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was once supposed to succeed to statehood as one country. Under pressure from the Islanders, the United States partitioned it into four entities, which later became the Commonwealth of the Marianas, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. Similarly, Britain accepted the secession of the Ellice Islands from the Gilberts in 1976 and the formation of two independent states instead of one, Tuvalu and Kiribati (MacDonald 1994:186–187).

In the different cultural and geographical circumstances of Melanesia, where hundreds of language groups populated each colonial territory, such partitions were impossible. The same principle applied to Melanesian colonial territories would have produced a parody of the modern states system, with hundreds of microstates each corresponding to a self-identifying micronational group. The ultimate logic of the nation-state would have been fulfilled at the cost of absurdity. Decolonization was therefore much more successful in some parts of the Pacific than in others in creating a strong foundation for the political legitimacy of new state elites. Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea entered independence as multinational states susceptible to secessionist movements. The Western Solomons breakaway movement briefly threatened to split Solomon Islands at the point of independence in 1978, Vanuatu confronted a secessionist revolt on the island of Santo in 1980, and Papua New Guinea was torn by the Bougainvillean rebellion for a decade from 1988. West Papua has itself sought to secede since it was absorbed into Indonesia as the province of Irian Jaya in 1963 (Bennett 1987, Beasant 1984, Saffu 1992).

Secessions and Sovereignties

The region's two main secessionist movements have both occurred in Melanesia, one in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya and the other on the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville. Secessionists seek freedom from new forms of colonial domination created, ironically, by the decolonization process itself. Most of the Melanesian population of Irian Jaya, as far as we can determine, do not regard

their decolonization in the 1960s, when the international community acquiesced in their being handed over by the Dutch to Indonesia, as the achievement of self-determination. Quite the reverse: An armed struggle against the Indonesian authorities has been pursued ever since by the OPM, the Movement for Free Papua, a loosely knit collection of jungle guerrillas who regard Indonesia as a new colonial overlord that should be expelled from their homeland. The forgotten war in Irian Jaya has led to the deaths of ten of thousands of Melanesian villagers and should be seen as the most important nationalist revolt ever undertaken by Pacific Islanders.

For as long as Suharto was President of Indonesia, the Indonesian authorities maintained a tight grip on their easternmost province, suppressing any sign of pro-independence sentiment and arresting activists who raised the flag of Free West Papua. After widespread unrest forced Suharto to resign in 1998, his successor, B. J. Habibie, allowed the governor of Irian Jaya, Freddie Numberi, to meet West Papuans living in Papua New Guinea and to discuss their grievances. Numberi admitted that Suharto had made mistakes and that things would now improve. At the same time an unprecedented meeting occurred between representatives of the OPM and the head of the Indonesian military forces in Irian Jaya.² Yet none of these developments should be seen as prefiguring a change in Irian Jaya's political status. The official Indonesian position remains as it was: Irian Jaya was incorporated under UN supervision and with UN approval in the 1960s, and the armed forces will continue to treat secessionism as subversive. Only a genuine revolution in Indonesia offers any prospect of independence for Irian Jaya.

We tend to minimize Irian Jaya in the story of Pacific Islands independence. We are caught in a rhetoric of region that brings the South Pacific to an abrupt end along the Papua New Guinea–Indonesian border. The standard definition of the region embraces the twenty-two island states and territories of the South Pacific Commission area from the Northern Marianas to Pitcairn Island and excludes the western half of the island of New Guinea. And the standard definition of decolonization is that it can occur only once because new states by definition cannot themselves be colonizers. The doctrine is a politically necessary one for new states threatened by secession, and for this reason the international community has consistently endorsed a definition of decolonization that focuses on territories under the control of the old colonial powers. It recognizes first-stage decolonization move-

ments, those that seek freedom from the traditional colonial empires, while seeing second-stage decolonization movements in new states as threats to international security.

An independence rebellion of this second-stage kind threatened the political stability of Papua New Guinea for most of the 1990s, from the time secessionist rebels brought copper mining operations at Panguna to a halt in 1989. Myths of Bougainvillean nationhood competed with myths of Papua New Guinean nationhood. In fact both the island and the country are fractured along linguistic lines, neither is a nation, and political unity would be no more likely in an independent Republic of North Solomons than in Papua New Guinea as a whole, as fighting between Bougainvilleans themselves showed. Most Bougainvillean villagers suffered at different times under both the Papua New Guinea Defense Force and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and simply wanted peace and the restoration of government services, schools, hospitals, and public service salaries. Avoidable deaths caused by the withdrawal of services during the blockade of Bougainville by the national government numbered, by some estimates, as many as fifteen thousand. A split among leaders of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army finally produced successful negotiations for a peace settlement, which was signed in April 1998 and overseen by an unarmed multinational Peace Monitoring Force from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Vanuatu. Joseph Kabui and Sam Kauona signed on behalf of the BRA, leaving their former leader, Francis Ona, isolated in the hills and issuing orders to only a small remnant of his original following. The UN Security Council dispatched a representative to Bougainville to act as a catalyst for the peace process, which was continuing, though with uncertainties, at the end of 1998. Bougainvilleans remained divided about what kind of "independence" they could achieve, with some leaders still imagining a Bougainville separated from Papua New Guinea as an independent state.

Aboriginal Australians, Maori, Native Hawaiians, and Kanaks are a second group who favor wider definitions of decolonization in the Pacific Islands region. Australia, New Zealand, Hawai'i, and New Caledonia are the four places in the region where settler populations have outnumbered the original inhabitants, taken much of their land and constructed liberal democracies along Western lines. In each of these four societies a clash between different principles of political legitimacy lies at the heart of disputes over decolonization and sovereignty. New Caledonia illustrates the point. The French authorities

organized a referendum on the future of New Caledonia in 1987 and achieved a resounding vote in favor of French rule. But the result, supported by a large majority of those who voted, did not settle the matter. The Kanaks boycotted the referendum. Most Kanaks had lost land and become strangers in their own country. They were too alienated from the political and economic system to accept a decision based merely on numbers as represented by votes cast in a liberal democratic system: They stood for a different and conflicting political principle—rights—above all, rights to land and sovereignty said to belong by inheritance to the descendants of the original occupiers.

Rights to land have a clear place in the liberal tradition because they are a species of the rights of property so vigorously protected by Western law. Ancient, aboriginal rights to land are embodied in legal instruments such as the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand and were recognized in the High Court of Australia's landmark Mabo decision of 1992. While such rights are politically contested, they can be incorporated into the law of settler societies without difficulty and without calling the consistency of that law into question. Aboriginal Australians, Maoris, Kanaks, and Native Hawaiians have all asserted rights to land in recent years and, in varying degrees, they have all been successful.

Rights to sovereignty are a different matter. The liberal democracies of Australia, New Zealand, France (for the French Pacific territories) and the United States (for Hawai'i) embody a fundamental principle of universality in the way in which political power is legitimated. Citizenship by itself and without reference to ethnicity, descent, or original attachment to the land is the sole qualification for participating in the regular elections that confer legitimacy on the government. No doubt these societies are far less democratic than they appear: Political power within them is distributed much more inequitably than the ideology of democracy suggests, and wealth and descent are significant prerequisites for exercising such power. But the important point is ideological. Numbers matter because they are believed to matter. Those who assert claims to control the state on a different basis, such as descent from the original occupiers of the land, are not likely to get far unless they also have the numbers in terms of votes.

In most nonsettler societies in the Pacific the argument goes the other way. Here Europeans were a tiny minority and most people could claim descent from the original occupiers of the land. So rights to land and sovereignty based on descent went together with numbers.

“Descent from the original occupiers of the land” is synonymous with the “nation,” is used in a variety of definitions as one of the legal qualifications for citizenship in a number of Melanesian countries and qualifies people for the sovereignty that comes with decolonization. In the absence of large settler populations the two principles, numbers and rights, can be reconciled and can justify the political authority of the postcolonial state.

But where settlers have formed a large majority, their descendants, not the descendants of the original occupiers, are the ones who decide which principle legitimates political authority. In Australia, for example, the descendants of European and other foreign settlers are more than 98 percent of the population, and the special claims of Aboriginal Australians are being dealt with by land rights legislation enacted within the conventional political process. The significance of talk about decolonization in Australia does not lie in that possibility itself but in the political leverage created by such talk, as the Torres Strait Islands show. Torres Strait Islanders, who number about 8,500 in the islands and 15,000 on the mainland, have been calling for self-government since the 1980s. They resent the fact that federal funding for their community comes via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, an instrumentality that puts them together with Aboriginal Australians. By emphasizing a distinct ethnic identity, the Torres Strait Islanders hope to garner a greater share of resources from Canberra.³

New Zealand’s Maori represent a larger proportion of their country’s total population than do Aboriginal Australians (by one estimate, 18 percent compared with 1.5 percent), and they have successfully brought the issue of Maori self-determination to the mainstream political agenda. In response to Maori pressure, the Labor government strengthened the Waitangi Tribunal in 1985 and opened the way for a flood of Maori land claims going back to the original signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between Maori chiefs and the British in 1840. Briefly, before the Labor Party was defeated in 1990, the government tried to set up a version of Maori self-determination by delivering services through local tribal authorities, but the National Party has since reversed the experiment. From the point of view of most white or pakeha New Zealanders, their country was decolonized when it became a self-governing dominion in the British Empire early this century. But for many Maori, the decolonization of New Zealand remains incomplete.

In the heady atmosphere of protest that followed the New Zealand government's 1994 offer of \$NZ1 billion in settlement of all land claims—the so-called fiscal envelope—some Maori leaders called for sovereignty and an independent Maori nation-state. Maori activists disrupted the 1995 celebrations of Waitangi Day on February 6, the equivalent of America's Fourth of July, by baring buttocks, spitting, and tearing down the New Zealand flag. Soon afterward Maoris occupied Moutoa Gardens in the city of Wanganui and four other sites of Maori land claims. Then a mainly pakeha group of Wanganui citizens were also demonstrating, proclaiming a pakeha version of New Zealand nationhood defined in majoritarian terms, with banners saying "One Nation, One People" and "One Law for All People." The Maori occupations were meant to dramatize dispossession by the invading pakeha population in the nineteenth century, and, in the imaginations of some radicals, to prepare the way for the full decolonization of New Zealand under Maori control. Ironically, many Maori beliefs about race, culture, and nation have a Western intellectual heritage and are being pressed into service for the achievement of Western political goals.

New Zealand will not be "decolonized" in the conventional sense of the term. It will not become the sovereign state of Aotearoa under Maori domination. The Maori are too small a minority in the country of their ancestors, and few of them want a Maori nation-state in any case. Yet the resurgence of Maori demands for self-determination has critically influenced the political agenda in New Zealand and will continue to be one of the ways by which a dispossessed minority group, held together by a shared sense of history and cultural identity, will bargain for a fairer share of wealth and status in a westernized and capitalist society. Subgroups within Maoridom are now doing deals with the New Zealand government and receiving compensation for land long lost.

Hawai'i will not be "decolonized" in the conventional sense either. Like the Maori, the Hawaiians are a dispossessed minority who employ an idiom of decolonization in defense of claims to land and sovereignty. On January 17, 1993, a hundred years after the overthrow of the Native Hawaiian monarchy by Americans, fifteen thousand Hawaiians marched on 'Iolani Palace in Honolulu, shouting slogans such as *Ka Lahui Hawai'i* (the Hawaiian nation) and *'ea* (sovereignty). The fate of the concept of sovereignty in recent debate in Hawai'i exemplifies the clash between rights-based and numbers-

based principles of political legitimacy. A group of international lawyers and academics who constituted the People’s International Tribunal called upon the United States and the world in 1993 to “acknowledge the right of Lahui Kanaka Maoli to decolonize under provision of United Nations Resolution 1514,” as if it were possible for Hawai‘i to follow the example of nonsettler colonies such as Western Samoa and Kiribati and to gain sovereignty in the name of the nation. By this theory, the international community should support Hawai‘i in an act of political independence from the colonizing power, the United States. The Hawaiian sovereignty movement Ka Pakaukau, which organized the Tribunal, professes to see Hawaiian independence of this kind as a possibility that belongs to the real world of politics.

The vast majority of American citizens in Hawai‘i, many of them Native Hawaiians, do not support such a future for their Islands or regard it as remotely feasible. In the hands of other Hawaiian sovereignty groups, such as Ka Lahui Hawai‘i led by Mililani Trask, sovereignty becomes a more achievable goal, embracing reconciliation under an Apology Bill, the return to direct Hawaiian control of the Hawaiian Trust Lands, and the forming of a “nation within a nation” on the model of Indian nations on the mainland United States. The goal is redistributive justice for a dispossessed minority within an existing political system. The state government has embraced the rhetoric of sovereignty in order to ensure that it does not mean very much at all, or—to put it another way—to ensure that any entity called a sovereign Hawaiian government or nation is compatible with the rule of the majority in Hawai‘i. There has been talk of a plebiscite on the question of restoring a Hawaiian nation, whatever attenuated form that might take, but not of one on the question of restoring a Hawaiian state (Young 1995; Kame‘eleihiwa 1993). In liberal political systems with principles of legitimacy based on numbers, minority claims to land might be accepted, but minority claims to sovereignty based on rights will inevitably be resisted. Something given the name “sovereignty,” if conceded, will be a mere shadow of itself, with almost none of the significance it has in international law, yet with significance of another kind in the restitution of land and new entitlements to resources. Such will be the case in Hawai‘i.

New Caledonia represents a variation on the theme of settler colonies. Here history delivered an ambiguous verdict on the territory’s future. The original and settler populations are in rough balance. Settlers, consisting of French, Vietnamese, Wallisians, Indonesians,

and others, outnumber Kanaks but not by a huge margin. As a consequence, the outcome of the territory's dispute over decolonization has much less of the predictability that comes from the presence of a large majority of settlers. Australia, Hawai'i, and New Zealand do not fit the model of territories that the international community regards as requiring decolonization. Settlers there have long since overwhelmed original populations and, as far as the international community is concerned, the die is cast. New Caledonia is different. It is the territory of a European power on the other side of the world and part of an older colonial empire that once included Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Algeria, and a number of west and central African states, all of which have since achieved independence. The name of its principal independence movement, the FLNKS, recalls the FLN of French Algeria. Above all, the French government considered the FLNKS to be so serious a threat to its authority that it dispatched thousands of troops to the territory to keep order. When Jean-Marie Tjibaou talked of a national liberation struggle and an independent Republic of Kanaky, he was thought not to be posturing for effect but to be describing an achievable political goal. For these reasons, and under pressure from the South Pacific Forum, the United Nations voted in 1986 to put New Caledonia on the list of non-self-governing territories. New Caledonia conforms with the internationally recognized paradigm of a colonial territory.

The military raid in which French soldiers killed nineteen Kanaks on Ouvéa Island in May 1988 spurred the leaders of both sides to reach an agreement, the Matignon Accords, which have become the basis of what Stephen Henningham calls the "uneasy peace" in New Caledonia (Henningham 1993–1994). The essence of the Accords was that New Caledonia was given a breathing space of ten years before the territory's people voted again in a referendum on their political future in 1998, and that the French government spent public funds in the territory on an unprecedented scale. The French calculated correctly that an emergent Kanak middle class, given political responsibility and access to development money, would moderate its demands for independence. The independence movement split between those who profited from the French connection as disbursers of French funds and those who wanted independence, and the initiative moved decisively to the French government. Politics in New Caledonia lost much of its polarized, ideological character as the FLNKS splintered and was drawn into deals and cross-party arrangements.

From this political situation there emerged the Noumea Accord, signed by the FLNKS, the RPCR, and the French government in May 1998. The Accord is the first official recognition in the history of New Caledonia of the effects of colonization on the Kanak people, who, it admits, suffered a “lasting trauma” from their loss of land and identity, who were deprived of political rights, and whose cultural heritage was “denied or pillaged.” The Accord describes “decolonization” as “the method to rebuild a lasting social bond between the communities which live today in New Caledonia.” But “decolonization” in this context does not mean the imminent removal of French sovereignty from the islands; it means a process that will last between fifteen and twenty years, during which a New Caledonian citizenship will be created, political institutions recognizing Kanak culture will be established, and certain powers will be progressively devolved from Paris to the Pacific territory, though not those dealing with justice, public order, defense, or foreign affairs. A new referendum will take place in 2013 or 2018 to determine whether New Caledonia will achieve “decolonization” in the full sense of the term.

The Noumea Accord includes a fresh French commitment to land reform in New Caledonia. Except in the Loyalty Islands, where most of the land remained in the possession of the original inhabitants, the history of land in New Caledonia is like that of land in Australia. Settlers came, took land, and pushed villagers into reserves, and today just a thousand mainly French owners have about two-thirds of the arable land in the territory. The authorities have redistributed some land but, even under the Noumea Accord, a wholesale reallocation in the territory seems unlikely.

Fiji is a further variation on the theme of settler colonies, in this case an independent Pacific state with a history of British colonization and a sizable Indian minority whose numbers matched or exceeded those of the original Fijians from the 1940s after until the Fiji coups of 1987.⁴ Fiji Indians, who were targeted by the coup, cannot employ the rhetoric of decolonization in defense of their interests. Unlike minorities almost everywhere else in the region, they cannot claim land or sovereignty on the basis of the rights of the original occupiers. That is an argument that in the Fiji case belongs to those who are politically dominant, the Fijians themselves. So like the descendants of settlers in Australia, New Zealand, or Hawai‘i, the Fiji Indians have traditionally appealed to majority rule and race-blind citizenship as the principles on which Fiji’s system of government should be built.

Uniquely among the Pacific’s former settler colonies, and for spe-

cial historical reasons, Fiji is an independent state where rights-based legitimacy has prevailed. Under the postcoup 1990 Constitution, all parliamentary seats were communal in character, reserved for members of one ethnic group who were elected by members of that ethnic group. Thirty-seven seats were for Fijians, twenty-seven for Indians, five for General Voters (Europeans, Chinese, and so on), and one was for a Rotuman. The 1997 Constitution is a step away from communalism in parliamentary representation and, in a House of Representatives of seventy-one seats, provides for twenty-five open seats of the kind common to liberal democracies, twenty-three for Fijians, nineteen for Indians, three for General Electors, and one for a Rotuman. Equally importantly, the 1997 Constitution establishes a power-sharing system that, by giving smaller parties the right to participate in government, will ensure that, for the first time, a significant number of Indians sit alongside Fijians in multiethnic cabinets. But the rights of groups, and in particular those of the descendants of the original occupiers of the land, remain specially protected in Fiji's constitutional arrangements.

The Territories

After more than three decades since the Western Samoans became the first Polynesians to gain independence, the peoples of the remaining territories in Polynesia and Micronesia are not rushing to follow. Underwritten by subsidies from Washington or Paris, the standard of living is higher in American Samoa, Guam, and French Polynesia than in Western Samoa and Tonga, Kiribati or Tuvalu. It is higher in Palau or the Marshalls than in Kiribati or Tuvalu, at least as most people measure these things (though that does not mean that people are better educated or more healthy). The territories do better than the freely associated states, which in turn do better than the independent states. A direct or indirect connection with a metropolitan power, bringing subsidies and allowing out-migration, gives people more choices and life-chances than independence with foreign aid. Samoans and Tongans, for example, leave their independent homelands behind in order to enter the nonindependent territory of American Samoa, where employers pay higher wages. The paradox of decolonization in this part of the Pacific is that Islanders want independence most where it will not happen and least where a genuine possibility of such a fundamental change in political status exists.

French Polynesia might appear to be an exception. It is a territory

with a substantial Islander majority, a history of being used for nuclear tests, and a number of independence parties. Media images of Tahiti in September 1995, flashed around the world, suggested that French Polynesia was seething with anticolonial discontent. Following France's decision to resume nuclear testing for a final series in 1995 and 1996 and after sustained international protest that put French Polynesia in the spotlight as never before, the French detonated their first bomb beneath Moruroa lagoon on September 5. The following day, unionists called a general strike that quickly degenerated into a riot. Demonstrators occupied the runway at the international airport at Papeete, attacked an Air France DC-10 awaiting takeoff, and then stormed the terminal building with bricks, iron bars, and even a bulldozer, which someone commandeered in order to smash through the entrance to the airport terminal. The riots then spread to Papeete itself, where youths rampaged through the streets, looting, smashing shop windows, and setting numerous buildings alight. As the French authorities flew in extra security forces, including men of the French Foreign Legion, the rest of the world had its first chance to see modern Tahiti. What the world saw was a French colonial town ablaze, cars overturned, stores looted, and street battles between police and young Tahitians. In Australia, an ABC radio journalist reported the riots live against a background of regular stun grenade explosions, and in the print media subeditors chose headlines such as "Bomb ignites Pacific rebellion," "French provoke dormant independence movement," "explosion of independence," and the inevitable "Rebellion in Paradise." Oscar Temaru, the leader of the independence party Tavini Huiraatira, was quoted as saying: "Today you can hear the French firing on our people. . . . At this very moment we appeal to the entire world to call on Jacques Chirac to stop this madness. . . . The whole people of this country are there fighting against the French army. It is a decision made by the people themselves." International journalists queued eight deep to interview Temaru, whom they portrayed as a Polynesian Nelson Mandela leading his people to freedom.⁵

Despite these dramatic events, French Polynesia will probably remain part of overseas France well into the next century. The territory is not a modern equivalent of Vietnam or Algeria in the 1950s, and the 1995 riots have not proved to be the first steps on French Polynesia's march to independence, as the 1996 elections for the Territorial Assembly showed: More pro-independence candidates were elected, but, at eleven out of forty-one, they were still a minority.

Many rioters and looters appear to have been unemployed youths from the poorest parts of Papeete, venting their anger at having no jobs and being relegated to the bottom of the social pile. They are not the shock troops of a disciplined and widely supported movement for independence. In fact, many other Polynesians make sharp distinctions between opposing nuclear testing and opposing the French presence as a whole. A majority of the thousands who marched in a protest procession around the island of Tahiti in June 1995 wanted an end to testing but not an end to French rule.

The territory's income, after all, fell sharply when the nuclear tests were suspended in 1992. The French government recognized that the French Polynesian economy required a long-term solution founded on more than military francs. The result was an agreement approved by the French parliament in 1994 providing for continued infusion of French development funds until 2003. This is the Pact for Progress, based in part on a Development Charter drawn up by leading figures in French Polynesia soon after the suspension of the tests, when the need for French Polynesia to generate more of its own wealth became starkly apparent (von Strokirch 1995:145). During the years of nuclear testing (1966–1992), the French Polynesian independence movement in its different manifestations was constantly hampered by the fact that the French testing center brought money to the territory, money that underwrote the livelihoods of thousands of Islanders who were understandably reluctant to call for France to leave. Now it is hampered by the Pact for Progress, a less generous source of subsidy but a guarantee that France will continue to develop the territory for years to come. Under these circumstances, the 1995 riots are more likely to weaken the broad political appeal of Tavini Huiraatira in the territorial elections than to strengthen it.

French Polynesia has an “economy of transfer,” where money comes from far away in return for the provision of strategic services. In Bernard Poirine's formulation, an economy of transfer is one version of a wider phenomenon of “economies of rent,” and in this case the rent is for nuclear purposes (Poirine 1992:44). Territorial politics, as Karin von Strokirch has argued, operates on the basis of widespread patronage networks, in which jobs, services, and property routinely change hands in return for votes, and which is ultimately underwritten by financial transfers from France and by the lack of what might be termed “hard budget constraints.” An artificial economy, built upon the patronage of an external power that values the territory

for strategic reasons, thus becomes the conduit for patronage at lower levels, territorial and municipal. Under these circumstances financial responsibility is lacking, political allegiances tend to be flexible, and wider ideological considerations have traditionally played a small part in territorial politics (von Strokirch 1991). These traditional patterns of politics are likely to reassert themselves when the current French testing season ends. French Polynesia shows that, however much people might want to reassert their cultural identity in a decolonized setting, they fear the loss of a generous metropolitan patron more.

The American territory of Guam exemplifies a similar phenomenon but in a different way. Here independence is so remote a possibility that politicians can employ the stirring rhetoric of decolonization without any fear that it might actually occur. In Guam most talk of decolonization is strictly for nondecolonizing purposes. Representatives of Guam have appeared in recent years before the United Nations Decolonization Committee and the Subcommittee on Small Territories complaining of U.S. imperialism. When Joseph F. Ada introduced himself to the Clinton administration at the White House in 1993, he said he came as "Governor of the American colony of Guam" and that Guam was "unwilling to remain a colony" (Bettis 1994:173). Guam, he said, was like the thirteen colonies under the British in the eighteenth century. The implication might seem to be that Guam wants to sever ties with Washington and become independent. Yet in fact the Chamorro self-determination movement in Guam, at least in its widely supported form, seeks merely an alternative form of connection with the United States—as a commonwealth rather than an unincorporated territory. American citizenship, that envied resource endowment Guamanians have had since 1950, is not to be put at risk, and the calculation is that lands will be restored to Chamorros at the same time as federal funding continues to flow from Washington.

Reflections

Certain general conclusions suggest themselves from this analysis. Decolonization is an ideological as well as a political phenomenon. It is the mechanism of forming new states and is everywhere accompanied by new beliefs of Western origin about political legitimacy and the justification of authority. The new states of the Pacific Islands are supposed to be "nation-states" along Western lines, legitimated in Western ways. Applied to widely different cultural and

political circumstances across the region, this formula provides a foundation for political stability in some Pacific countries but a recipe for secession and civil strife in others.

“Decolonization” is a contested concept. Whether or not a territory deserves to be decolonized and whether or not a people deserve to be sovereign are not decided simply by reference to international law and UN resolutions; they are matters of opinion. Whereas the French authorities conceive of French Polynesia as naturally part of France, for example, the independence activists think of it as naturally an independent country, held back from its destiny by foreign occupation.

The language of decolonization and national freedom now serves a disparate array of anticolonial, secessionist, and sovereignty movements, some of which would regard independence as catastrophic.

None of the anticolonial and secessionist movements is likely to achieve decolonization in the traditional sense.

Rights-based arguments for land are being accepted in liberal democracies in the Pacific but, because the legitimating principle form of political authority in such societies is majoritarian, minorities there will not succeed with rights-based arguments for sovereignty in its classic sense of independent statehood. “Sovereignty” may come to minorities but only in an attenuated and redefined form, principally as greater freedom of cultural expression, official recognition of cultural symbols and practices, and a fairer share of resources—especially land. For some sovereignty movements, this will represent a partial realization of their original aims, which did not include independence in the first place.

Many Islanders in territories no longer want to be decolonized. The high tide of decolonization in the nonsettler Pacific Islands has receded. One reason for this development lies in international politics. For as long as powerful external states wanted Pacific Islands decolonization, it happened; now that the international community regards the decolonization of the region as virtually accomplished, the Islands’ political map is likely to remain unaltered. But another reason is that the distinction between colonial territories and independent or semi-independent states in the region is becoming blurred. Pacific Islanders have better lives and access to more services in most of the region’s territories than they do in independent countries. In territories such as French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, American Samoa, and Guam, as well as in the state of Hawai‘i, a decisive majority of Islanders want to remain firmly tied to the metropolitan patron that is the

source of their standard of living and would regard decolonization as a disaster.

What is left behind in this postcolonial and postdecolonial era differs from place to place. In parts of Melanesia, secessionism continues to inspire armed conflict. In island groups long since overwhelmed by settlers, descendants of the first occupiers call for land and sovereignty in the name of decolonization. In most of the remaining territories the majority of Islanders are wary of what they suspect is the false promise of independence. The path to independence for colonial peoples used to be seen as the march of history, temporarily delayed in some territories but ultimately inevitable. From the perspective of the turn of the century, this particular march of history begins to look like an artifact of a period and set of circumstances, and decolonization has lost its simple teleology. While the rhetoric of decolonization expands and diversifies, the reality of decolonization diminishes.

NOTES

1. I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments of Emeritus Professor Norman Meller in the preparation of this chapter.

2. Agence France Presse 1, Sept. 22, Nov. 27, 1998.

3. "Islanders may be given more economic say," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sept. 13, 1995.

4. Brij V. Lal (1988, 1992) has the best analyses from a liberal democratic point of view of the Fijian coup. Deryck Scarr (1988) is the best from a rights-based point of view. For a comparison of these approaches, see Stewart Firth (1989).

5. *Australian*, Sept. 8, 1995; *Weekend Australian*, Sept. 9–10, 1995; *Sydney Morning Herald*, Sept. 8, 1995.

18

Colonised People

Grace Mera Molisa

Vanuatu
Supports
Movements
for
the Liberation
of
Colonised people

Clear
articulations
of support
for
freedom fighters
in East Timor
West Papua
French Polynesia
and Kanaky

Vanuatu
Womenfolk
half
the population
remain

colonised
by

the Free men
of Vanuatu

Womenfolk
Cook, Sew,
feed, clothe
housekeep
homemake
childbear
healthcare
passively
following
orders
instructions
commands

Women
are treated
as if
having no brain
as if
having no thought
as if
having no feeling
as if
incompetent and incapable

This chapter was originally published in *Colonised People: Poems*, by Grace Mera Molisa (Port Vila: Black Stone, 1987).

Man's
colonial
domination
of Woman
is exemplified
in the submissive
subservient
obedience
to Man's rule
and authority
which takes
Woman Vanuatu
for granted
as
a beast of burden.

Nineteen eighty-six
statistics
at Vila Central
show
that Women
are treated
worse
than cats,
dogs and pigs.

When a pig
a domestic animal
is brutalised
there is
a hue and cry
and plenty toktok.

When a Man
husband
lover
boyfriend
betrothed
intended groom
de facto husband

bashes
batters
brutalises
kills
a woman
it is accepted
taken for granted
as the Man's right
therefore
hemi
bisnes
belong
tufala nomo
therefore
it becomes
confirmed
legitimised
entrenched
accepted practice
therefore
Vanuatu women
remain
colonised people.

From 10.01.'86
to 3.6.'86
Seventy-three cases.
a sample reads:—
struck
on the head
lost consciousness.

Six months pregnant
kicked
in the abdomen
punched
on the head
perforated eardrum
scalp lacerations
require suturing

kicked in the chest.
Semi conscious
scalp lacerations
severe haemorrhage
operation performed.
struck with wood
both sides of head
punched
on the mouth and nose
haematoma
deep penetrating wound,
fingers chopped off
epistaxis
orbital
haematoma.
whipped with stirrup
on back and buttocks
punched over truck
ruptured spleen
and (R) Kidney
2 major operations.
Pushed to ground
striking head
against table
haematoma
(L) eye,
ear and cheek
punched
on face and mouth
suturing
facial laceration.
bruising on hands
legs, buttocks,
laceration
back of head.
punched in face
struck on (R) forearm
kicked abdomen
(R) shoulder
and (R) hip

struck by stone
abrasions
and haematoma
on forehead.
scratches
limbs and back
kicked in axilla
punched (L) shoulder and arm
bruising on back
fractured ribs

At least
ten women a month
in Port Vila
alone
mostly
bashed
on the head
and kicked
in the abdomen
and thorax
while pregnant
are admitted
because
their battered bodies
require suturing
restructuring
reconstruction
for the next
onslaught and
slaughter because
Man is BOSS
Man i Kat Raet
therefore
in Vanuatu
IT IS RIGHT
according to
the THINKING
and PRACTICE
of Vanuatu

Leaders	potential
Preachers	to utilise
Chiefs	their own
Policymakers	brains
custodians	exercise
of culture	their own
and refinement	minds
in politics	think
in church	their own
in custom	thoughts
according to	express
the Melanesian	their own
values	feelings
of our extended	by
family system	Man's
according to	brute force
our Christian	which
principles	suppresses
according to	oppresses
our democracy	exploits
Man's freedom	and dictates
	Woman's
These practices	fearful
typify	submission
as well as	to Man's
exemplify	insensitivity
Man's	and Inhumanity
attitudes	to Ni-Vanuatu
and covert	Womankind.
colonising	
behavior	Colonialism
towards	is violence.
Vanuatu women.	Colonialism
	violates
Women	the spirit
are	the mind
prevented	the body.
from	Colonialism
developing	violates
their	the collective Right

of all Women
Colonialism
violates
individual right
Colonialism
violates
the Human Right
of Women
to Human Dignity.

Vanuatu
preaches
and supports
the Liberation
of Colonised people
Overseas
but at home
is not prepared
to consider
that
women too
are human
women too
are people
women too
have minds

women too
think
women too
have feelings
women too
have a right
to be counted
women too
have a right
to be recognized
women too
have a right
to be respected
women too
have a right
to Human dignity
Women too
have a right
to be Free.

Free to think
Free to express
Free to choose
Free to love
And be loved
as Women Vanuatu.

19

My Blood

Konai Helu Thaman

You tell me that I've been "exploited"
And that I must rebel NOW;
You tell me that I must be their equal
You tell me that if I don't
I am sick, apathetic and useless.

But why won't you face the truth?
Why are you telling me this?
You ride a big car, just like them
You booze, just like them
You love, just like them
You slaughter, cheat, and lie, just like them
Why should I hate them and not YOU?

You are a fraud
Squeezing the dry earth
For something to ease your guilt
Why won't you admit it?
You have lost your carefree nature
Your easygoing manner
Your humanity and sense of balance;
You have made academia, fame and money
Your gods
And you have let them rule you—
This you wanted all along

This chapter was originally published in *Kakala*, by Konai Helu Thaman (Suva: Mana, 1993).

Come, face your dilemma now, brother
For your pompous friends won't help you
They have too much to lose;
Your statesmen friends can't help you
They suffer from the same identity epidemic,
Why don't you give up?

My brother . . .
My problem is not "exploitation"
Or unequal pay, or unawareness:
My problem is that I
Have been betrayed and trampled on
By my own blood,
Don't forget YOU are their product
And YOU must sell.

Custom and the Way of the Land Past and Present in Vanuatu and Fiji

Margaret Jolly

Tradition always encodes a relation between past and present, but that relation may be constituted as continuous or discontinuous (see Handler and Linnekin 1984). Pasts are related to presents in different ways—at one extreme the past may be seen to flow effortlessly and continuously toward the present, at the other the past may be seen to be irrevocably separated from the present through a rupture, a break, which must be bridged through revival. Such differences in the construction of past-present relations are nowhere more apparent than in how the past is evoked in the politics of tradition in contemporary Pacific nations. Here I compare these processes in two independent Pacific states—Vanuatu and Fiji.

The terms *kastom* (“custom” or “tradition” in Bislama) and *vakavanua* (“the way of the land” in Fijian) seem to be local variants of a pan-Pacific concept of tradition. But these terms mark quite different articulations of past and present. *Kastom* is predicated on a sense of rupture and revival, *vakavanua* on a sense of continuity between past and present. *Kastom* tends more thoroughly to expunge European elements and is associated not just with a moral criticism of European ways but with more trenchant opposition toward foreigners in general and whites in particular. *Vakavanua* incorporates European elements—Wesleyan Methodism and British codifications of chiefly hierarchies and land tenure—that are now seen as part of the way of the land. This is in contrast to “the way of money,” associated not only with foreigners—Europeans and Indians—but also indigenous practitioners of “the way of money.” In Vanuatu, Christianity and colonialism are

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seen much more as a rupture with a heathen past, in Fiji (at least from the viewpoint of the eastern confederacies) as flowing continuously from ancestral practices (Toren 1988; cf. Lawson 1997).

This contemporary contrast in the meanings of these terms derives in part from a divergent experience of colonization and decolonization. In Fiji, tradition was in large degree legitimated and codified by the colonial state; in Vanuatu, for the most part, it was not. In Fiji, independence was attained without a struggle—self-government was peacefully conferred by Britain in 1970. In Vanuatu, independence was achieved after a protracted, complicated, and ultimately violent struggle. Britain, which had long wanted to divest itself of this conjoint colony with France, supported the nationalist movement from the early 1970s. But local and metropolitan French interests, American speculators, and indigenous secessionists opposed independence, culminating in violent struggles on Santo and Tanna in the year of independence, 1980.

If traditional cultures persisted in Vanuatu, this seems rarely to have been the result of deliberate European celebration of tradition but of economic and political limits—faltering colonial enterprises, contestatory French and British interests, and resultant administrative aporia. This is in marked contrast to the situation in Fiji, where many colonial officials (if not traders and planters) were committed to the preservation and codification of traditional culture and where colonial administration was characterized by greater intervention and surveillance of Fijian communities (Thomas 1990a; Jolly 1998).

Here I schematically suggest these divergent approaches to traditional culture in both places. I concentrate on the perceptions and strategies of colonial government in relation to land (and, in passing, labor). Although missionaries, traders, and planters displayed a negative attitude to many aspects of tradition and there were radical transformations of ancestral practices in both colonies, the attitudes and policies of colonial government toward “tradition” were discernibly different. From the inception of colonial rule in Fiji and in particular in the Gordon-Thurston period, Fijian culture was seen as something to be protected from the depredations of settlers claiming land or recruiting labor (France 1969:107 ff.). There were contests about the relative emphasis on preserving tradition as against encouraging progress through the gradual development of an individualist commercial spirit, and the policies of successive colonial governments oscillated between them. Moreover it has been argued for Fiji, as Mar-

garet Rodman does for Vanuatu (1984:64), that the perpetuation of tradition in fact served capitalist development (e.g., see Rutz 1987). But the differences in the policies of the colonial governments are still arresting.

In Fiji it was variously argued that communal traditions were to be safeguarded by keeping Fijians from labor recruitment and indentured labor (and instead importing indentured laborers from India and other Pacific islands), by restricting the movements of Fijian women, by specifying that taxes be paid in kind and not cash, and by incorporating chiefs in a system of "native government" or indirect rule. By contrast, despite anthropologists' admonitions, colonial officials rarely argued for the preservation of traditional culture in Vanuatu. Many men and some women went to Queensland and to Fiji as indentured laborers up until 1904, and throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries many also worked on plantations within the archipelago (see Scarr 1970:176–218; Jolly 1987). Opponents of the labor trade objected to it on several grounds—that it entailed kidnapping and slavery, that it exacerbated depopulation, and that it conflicted with mission projects by depriving them of congregations in the island and instilling preferences for worldly goods, grog, and guns rather than Christian values. It was rarely opposed as a threat to traditional culture, however. Similarly, those arguing for the confinement of women to their home villages desired to safeguard their chastity and enlist them in the new Christian projects of domestication and conversion, rather than to preserve traditional culture.

Finally, although the conjoint colonial authority of Britain and France did establish local chiefs and assessors to assist in the process of colonial control, both the achieved system of rank characteristic of most northern islands and the ascribed chiefly system of some central and southern islands were seen as unstable or fragile hierarchies, whose complications and uncertainties defied both European understanding and attempts at codification. Thus, there was nothing that approached the "native government" of Fiji either in its exertions of power, its centralism, or its codification. There was throughout the colonial period in Vanuatu a very weak colonial state, partly because of the Anglo-French rivalries. And insofar as colonial rule was implemented, this was more direct than indirect—European resident commissioners and district agents continued to govern alongside indigenous functionaries until very late in the colonial period.

Such divergent attitudes to tradition were preeminently manifest in

colonial land policies. In the next two sections, I recount in some historical detail how land was dealt with and how far customary land tenure was acknowledged and codified in these two Pacific colonies. In Vanuatu, despite some moral qualms on the part of the British, a rapacious policy of European land alienation was pursued. Preserving traditional culture and customary relation to the land was hardly a top priority in the workings of the condominium (the joint administration of Britain and France, see Van Trease 1987). On the other hand, it was the basic premise of British colonial policy and land law in Fiji (France 1969; Rutz 1987). Such differences in the historical processes of colonization (and subsequent differences in the character of the postcolonial state) perhaps partly account for the perceived differences today between *kastom* in Vanuatu and *vakavanua*, the way of the land, in Fiji.

Land Alienation and the Joint Court in Vanuatu

The early operations of sandalwood traders and missionaries in Vanuatu occasioned only small-scale alienation of land. From the late 1860s, land alienation intensified dramatically with the emergence of a plantation economy. Most of these plantations were small operations, cultivating cotton, maize, and sugar—seasonal crops that, unlike coconuts, did not seem to pose a threat of permanent alienation to local people (Van Trease 1987:19–20). By the end of the decade, these predominantly Australian planters were going out of business, and simultaneously French moves to claim land were intensifying. French settlers, unlike their British counterparts, had strong government backing and started cotton and coconut plantations on Efate, Epi, Malakula, and Santo. Of particular importance in this period was John Higginson, already a wealthy entrepreneur in New Caledonia, having opened up nickel mining there. In 1882 he founded the *Compagnie Caledonniene des Nouvelles Hébrides* (CCNH, later to become, after an injection of French government funds, *Société Française des Nouvelles Hébrides*—SFNH). This had a public goal of attaining not only land and labor in the New Hebrides, but French political control.

Higginson purchased land from the battling British and Australian settlers and from local owners on Efate, Malakula, and Epi. This aggressive French expansion occasioned a parallel response from British annexationists in Australia, such as the South Sea Speculation Company. In 1889 the Australian New Hebrides Company was established

by a group of wealthy and influential Australian businessmen, including James Burns and Robert Philp (Thompson 1980:68 ff.). This was given a New South Wales government subsidy to run a steamship service throughout the archipelago, trading copra for trade goods, and servicing the Presbyterian missions. It too aimed to encourage British settlement, especially in South Santo, but again the British and Australian settlers quickly fell into debt and had departed by 1892.

French intentions, meanwhile, had become far more serious. In 1886 two French warships were dispatched by the governor of New Caledonia. This threatening presence, if not actually aimed at French annexation, did hasten British agreement to French annexation of Tahiti and triggered a formalization of the rival colonial interest in the group. In July of that year the French proposed an agreement whereby the naval officers of both powers would act as a peacekeeping force to maintain order and protect the lives and property of British subjects and French citizens. The Colonial Office pressed for an amendment to safeguard native peoples against European aggression, but this was not included in the Joint Naval Commission of January 26, 1888. In subsequent conflicts, such as that between Higginson and Presbyterian missionaries on Epi, the Joint Naval Commission remained equivocal and did nothing to intervene.

The British had been pushing for some time for a full-scale land commission on the model of Fiji and Samoa. In February 1906 an Anglo-French Convention was held to adjudicate on the question of land and the sovereignty of the group. French and British approaches to the land question were diametrically opposed—the French wanted to restrict inquiries to the disputed areas, the British to do a full survey of the entire group. The British wanted an interrogation of the validity of the original transaction and a testament to actual occupation by the settler. The French wanted neither. At stake were the thousands of hectares claimed by SFNH to which titles were dubious and that were often uncultivated and unoccupied. The final regulations amounted to a vindication of the French position. European occupation was confirmed if the registered deed was more than ten years old. If less than this, the title deed was confirmed if there was a legitimate title deed or if there were three years of occupancy and improvement. Thus even if a recent title was defective, a settler could be confirmed in their title if there was evidence of development. If there was no dispute, the title could be registered—the indigenous owners did not even need to be aware of the claim.

Ultimately the British capitulated on all the major points and on February 27, 1906, the text was confirmed. By this convention, the group was declared a “region of joint influence with each retaining jurisdiction over its subjects and citizens, and neither exercising a separate control over the group.” It also established the machinery of the Joint Court—with one British and one French judge, and a third appointed by the King of Spain to act as president. This court had jurisdiction over land and the power to confirm titles if there was a deed or if there were three years of occupation. It established the Torrens system, whereby occupation was tantamount to title and where the proof of impropriety of a claim rested with the challenger. The bases for legal challenge were even fewer than those originally proposed in 1895: Basically, a title could be challenged only if it infringed an existing right that was registered. A native advocate was appointed to represent indigenous people and to declare native reserves if necessary, but no guidelines were established for either. The resident commissioners could themselves declare reserves and had an overarching authority over native affairs. Natives were defined as “aboriginal races of the Pacific” and were expressly not citizens or subjects of Britain or France.

With the operation of the Joint Court, the rivalry between Britain and France moved into the courtroom and the different approaches of the metropolitan governments to their nationals became even more obvious (see Van Trease 1987:63–91). One Englishman was crucial in the intensifying legal battle over land: Edward Jacomb, an English lawyer who came to the group as the assistant to the British resident commissioner but resigned and practiced privately as a barrister, supporting indigenous interests and protecting them against the excesses of both labor recruiters and planters. He assisted plantation laborers against their masters and defended cases for indigenous people in the Joint Court. Most of these were against the French—he also alleged the court was unduly influenced by French interests. From 1919 to 1927, the Court ceased to sit.

Struggles to exert control over newly alienated land were thus basic to the emergence of the condominium government. As in the parallel debates about the labor trade, the rival colonial powers had different ends and strategies—the French vigorously supporting their settlers and traders to secure their presence, the British reluctant to be there at all, but being pushed by mercantile interests and local settlers emanating primarily from Australia (Scarr 1967; Thompson 1980). Again,

as in debate about the labor trade, the British made rhetorical reference to the rights of the natives, but French will triumphed on all major points of land law (Scarr 1967:225 ff.). The Joint Court ratified massive land claims by individuals and companies, and European possession was tantamount to freehold title. Small native reserves were established but, until late in the colonial period, major mercantile companies had huge claims to uncultivated land throughout the archipelago. As Van Trease demonstrates, early attempts by ni-Vanuatu to challenge this imperial right were consistently thwarted (1987:128–133).

The decline of plantation profitability after the Second World War precipitated European incursions into the "dark bush"—areas long claimed through the Joint Court but never cultivated. This often provoked local resistance. Many ni-Vanuatu had by this stage themselves become commercial producers of copra as well as subsistence cultivators (see Rodman 1987). They had also, through their experience of Americans in World War Two, been exposed to other foreigners who seemed both more powerful and more generous than the British and the French (see White and Lindstrom 1990). Anticolonial movements predated the war but developed a more radical political stance as a result of the wartime experience. Getting rid of Europeans and returning land to indigenous owners was a central theme in movements such as John Frum on Tanna. There were some belated attempts by Europeans to return alienated lands in the 1960s, but anger about European alienation of land was crucial in the emergence in the early 1960s of Na-Griamel, a movement based in Vanafo, Santo, led by Chief Buluk and Jimmy Stephens, and in 1971 the New Hebrides Cultural Association, led by Donald Kalpokas and two Anglican priests, Father John Bani and Father Walter Lini. This later became the National Party (NHNP) and subsequently the Vanua'aku Pati.

Although the aims of the former were later compromised by deals with French colons and American speculators (see Beasant 1984; Van Trease 1987:166–168, 246 ff.), the return of land to indigenous people was supported by most politically active ni-Vanuatu, Anglophone and Francophone alike. It was the land issue that stimulated political demands for independence (Van Trease 1987:206–258). Despite many attempts by the French to impede independence, and foreign support of the organized resistance movements on both Tanna and Santo, independence was won on July 30, 1980, with Walter Lini leading a Vanua'aku Pati government.¹

By the terms of the independent constitution, “all land in the Republic belongs to the indigenous custom owners and their descendants” (Van Trease 1987:238). Foreigners’ rights to own land were thus abolished, but provision was made for long-term leases to be negotiated with customary owners to facilitate the continuous management of plantations, and, under pressure from the French, provision was also made for some compensation. The new Ministry of Lands established three classes of land: rural land “owned according to custom,” and urban and public lands, which were to be held in perpetual lease to the government. However, customary owners were entitled to revenue from this land and some control over its administration. The nature of customary tenure was not codified but instead left to determination by local communities. Many of the problems of the postcolonial state derive from this question of the nature and the extent of customary tenure (the political struggles in relation to urban land being one obvious instance).

The Native Land Commission in Fiji

The contrasts with Fiji are arresting: Here, efforts to establish and codify customary land tenure began very early in the colonial period. Rights of the indigenous inhabitants were initially guaranteed against the claims of European settlers and later Indian immigrants. Land assumes quite a different place in the ethnic relations and the political field of colonial and independent Fiji.

Fijian land was held to be inalienable by customary tenure, except for the period before Cession in 1874 and a short interlude from 1905 to 1908. Prior to the Deed of Cession in 1874, a number of Europeans had settled in Fiji—first the beachcombers, later sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer* traders and a few European settlers in Levuka, all of whom posed little threat to the indigenous attachment to land or local customs in general. According to France (1969), the arrival of missionaries from the 1830s, with their more hostile attitudes to tradition and their separate domestic establishments, posed the novel threat of land alienation and exclusive private property. This intensified with the arrival of planters from the 1860s. Whereas early settlers had been dependent on Fijian hospitality and local labor, increasingly these new agricultural operations were drawing foreign labor from Vanuatu and the Solomons. Estrangement from Fijian culture increased as did the pressure to alienate land (France 1969:41). Chiefly,

alienation of land increased beyond its precolonial limits with the promise of payments in trade goods, cash, or services by whites (1969: 51–54). This generated hostilities between chiefs and between chiefs and commoners.

The first attempts to centralize land policies and codify land alienation were made by American and British consuls (France 1969:55–72). But a centralized policy of land acquisition did not emerge until the establishment of native governments and the signing of the Deed of Cession with Britain in 1874. Native governments in Fiji were at first European creations. Consul Jones met with chiefs of seven *mata-nitu* at Levuka in 1865, and as a result the Confederation of Chiefs was formed under the presidency of Cakobau. It had aspirations to act as a central government but had no representation from the western regions, and its authority even in the east was uncertain. The government of Cakobau, set up in Bau in 1871, expressly served the interests of European settlers and sought to guarantee them through legislation. Large tracts of coastal land were claimed, including land of those Fijians who had been defeated in battles with Cakobau. The specter of thousands of Fijians being evicted from their lands was disagreeable both to Chief Secretary Thurston and Minister of Native Affairs Swanston (France 1969:98–101). But active opposition to European land alienation awaited the arrival of Gordon, the first governor of Fiji, after the signing of the Deed of Cession in 1874.

Gordon arrived in Fiji at a time of massive depopulation and proclaimed that the “continued existence of the Fijian race was dependent on the preservation of their traditions against the corrupting influences of the planter community” (cited in Rutz 1987:537). His policy was to insulate Fijian tradition against the disintegrative effects of a market in land and labor. He resolved to return all lands alienated prior to Cession to customary owners and to stop Fijians from being recruited for plantation work in favor of indentured laborers from India.

Gordon’s moves to formalize customary tenure were not smooth—since the Great Council of Chiefs he convened in 1876 to ascertain land tenure initially stressed the diversity and fluidity of Fijian concepts of land tenure. It was the threat of alienation in perpetuity that arrested their “confusion” and elicited universal endorsement for the coda, “true and real ownership of the land with us is invested in the *mataqali* alone, nor is it possible for any *mataqali* to alienate its land” (Rutz 1987:538). This cultivated orthodoxy about land also

relied on a codification of social units—lineage, clan, and tribe were neatly defined and marshaled into a segmentary system—a system far more bounded and less fluid than the precolonial counterpart.

The establishment of the Native Lands Commission entailed a codification of the concepts of lineage and land and their inherent attachment (France 1969:123–128). Since land was seen to be held communally for unborn generations, it could not be alienated and this trust in perpetuity was held to be immutable. This orthodoxy about eternal and immutable traditions of customary tenure, which Gordon initiated, was challenged by the administration of Im Thurn from 1900 to 1912 and, throughout the twentieth century, successive colonial governments tried to reverse Gordon's protectionist policies toward tradition, communalism, and chiefly hierarchy and to free up the rigid structure of landholding they had created (see Bayliss-Smith et al. 1988:67–81). Such reversals were opposed both by some administrators and by Fijian chiefs, such as Ratu Sukuna.

Colonial policies about land continued to be caught in the “confusing incompatibility . . . between the two official objectives of Tradition and Development” (Spate 1960:50). Several reports by outside analysts (Spate 1959; Belshaw 1964; Ward 1965) recommended radical changes—the individualization of land tenure, the encouragement of independent farming, and substantial modifications to protectionist protocols. But the major benefits continued to accrue to the chiefly elites, especially because of the control they exerted over land.

This entered a new phase in the 1940s with the establishment of the Native Lands Trust Board. The NLTB made inalienable land available for leasehold and, through a new ordinance in 1940, removed effective rights from lineages and placed them in the hands of the NLTB as the agent entrusted with administering all native land “for the benefit of the Fijian owners” (Rutz 1987:539). The NLTB thus became the sole agent for leasing native lands and granting concessions, and since this was dominated by chiefly Fijians, it “turned chiefs into effective landowners, an inversion of Fijian culture which places ownership into the hands of the commoners” (540; cf. Knapman and Walter 1980:205; Kaplan 1988:104).

In the postcolonial period in Fiji, the chiefly elite do seem to be successfully having it both ways in reconciling tradition and development. There has since independence been a discernible shift back to the orthodoxies about tradition and the village as the necessary base of Fijian life. Despite the enormous shifts of Fijians away from their

home villages and the emergence of a class of landless poor in the urban areas, the basis of tradition in village life and customary land tenure is still celebrated (e.g., see Ravuvu 1983). Even if, in the period beyond the coups, there was a new concern for Fijian representation in commerce and some new sources of disquiet about chiefly domination, the chiefly elite is still seen as having to maintain its roots in the land and in the traditional *koro*.

This thumbnail sketch of land in two colonial histories and the structure of landholding at independence is suggestive in terms of its impact on the present meanings of *kastom* and *vakavanua*. In Vanuatu, where customary tenure was neither recognized nor codified, land became the crucial issue in anticolonial and nationalist movements and was the basis both of hostility to Europeans and of an independent sense of ni-Vanuatu identity. There was not at the time of independence a preexisting chiefly elite that was poised to control the independent state, although an advisory council of chiefs (Malvatumauri) was created (see Lindstrom 1998). Problems of codifying customary land tenure have only been broached in the postcolonial state, as part of a national policy of reviving *kastom*. By contrast, in Fiji, colonial land policies early recognized customary tenure. The transformations of tenure entailed in its codification enhanced the power of chiefs so that by independence they were assuming a national and not just a regional role in controlling land and other resources. This was presented as a continuation of their hereditary rights in custom. What I want to stress here is the crucial significance of these different colonial pasts in the symbolic constitution of tradition in the present. In Fiji past and present are usually constituted as continuous; in Vanuatu past and present are more often constituted as discontinuous.

The Contemporary Meanings of *Kastom* and *Vakavanua*

The contemporary meanings of these two terms diverge in that *kastom* is portrayed as ancestral ways that were disrupted by the colonial presence and that are being consciously revived in the present. In Fiji, *vakavanua* is portrayed rather in terms of a continuity of practices, flowing ceaselessly from past to present.

As many authors have stressed, *kastom* is a polysemic and a contested concept (e.g., Keesing 1982). But whereas in this early

paper Keesing was inclined to stress the vacuity of the concept, recent writers have rather stressed its variety in different colonial histories (e.g., Jolly and Thomas 1992; Jolly 1992b). Within Vanuatu I discern a contrast between those in traditionalist heathen communities such as those of southeast Pentecost, where *kastom* is seen primarily as a whole way of life (see Jolly 1982; Jolly 1994a), and the majority Christian population, where *kastom* refers to a selection of ancestral practices. The traditionalists' view of an antithetical relation between *kastom* and its antinomy *skul* ("school," "Christianity," "European ways" in Bislama) (see Jolly 1992a; 1994a) differs from that of the Christian majority who have been trying to combine elements of the two—to achieve a blend of customary and Christian elements (see Tonkinson 1982b). Moreover, whereas the traditionalist minority stresses continuity, the Christian majority stresses rupture and revival.

This was especially marked in the period up until independence in 1980 and immediately afterward. The selective revival of *kastom* was a central part of the ideology of the Vanua'aku Pati and the independent state—elements of *kastom* and Christianity conjoined in the motto and logo of the new state: an image of a man dressed in indigenous attire and surrounded by pigs' tusks and cycas leaves, but underneath the motto, "Long God Yumi Stanap" ("In God We Are Independent"). Such creolisms were equally central to the iconography of anti-independence, secessionist, and resistance movements such as Na-Griamel and John Frum on Tanna. But importantly, this was typically seen as a revival of past customs that had been viewed negatively (see Tonkinson 1982a; Larcum 1982; Lindstrom 1982).²

For the state, this revival was a powerful expression of decolonizing sentiment. *Kastom* was expressly the reclaiming of a place against European occupation of the land and the reclaiming of a past that had been lost or abandoned. In the language of cultural nationalism, *kastom* was expressly used against foreigners—not just French settlers and American land speculators but other outsiders—foreign journalists, expatriate experts, anthropologists. In a poem by Grace Mera Molisa, all of these are portrayed as "transient scavengers" (1983: 15).³ At the national level, no less than the local level, this rhetoric had a strong element of primordialism—of reference back to an original state, of the condensation of people and place. Again in the imagery of Grace Mera Molisa's poetry, Vanuatu was "black stone"—solidified lava flow, immobile and eternal. In political debates in Bislama, a central concept was *man ples*—a condensation of person

and place. Such imagery was not only crucial in reclaiming the land as inalienably attached to the people of the place, but proclaiming local people as rightfully in control of it. The new constitution of Vanuatu provided for the return of all alienated land to the traditional owners.

But perhaps it was precisely because land was being reclaimed, both at the local and the national level, that the assertion was expressed in these terms. Such a claim to eternal occupation, to primordial possession, was a claim against the rupture of the colonial period. Colonialism was portrayed primarily as the theft of land, as the immoral occupation of the place by foreigners (e.g., see Plant 1977a; Sope 1974). Christianity was exempted from its association with colonialism and viewed positively, not negatively. Although introduced by foreigners, Christianity here as in Fiji has been indigenized and is viewed as intrinsic to sovereign statehood and personal independence: Witness the national motto, in Bislama, Long God Yumi Stanap. The national anthem echoes this sentiment with its stress on God as giving the land to local people, thus conferring on them strength and freedom and of Christianity as a source of national unity despite local diversity.

The national revival of *kastom* in association with Christianity has been paralleled by the revival of *kastom* in many local Christian communities. Many aspects of such revivals are, within the limits of Christian adherence, optional—revivals of the traditional rites of birth, marriage, funerals, pig killing, kava drinking, dancing and singing, and making artifacts. This is also the sense of *kastom* that has been fostered by the Vanuatu Cultural Center (VCC).

The work of the center both within Port Vila and on the outer islands has promoted perhaps a more restricted sense of *kastom* as material and immaterial property, as commodity rather than a cultural whole. The museum of the VCC is arguably the most successful museum in the Pacific, distinctive in its stress on a dynamic process of acquisition and reclamation for local people rather than a conservationist, curatorial function of assembling artifacts for expatriate and tourist viewing.⁴ Successive curators have promoted an active program of indigenous research and revival of *kastom*. Apart from a recent debate about whether *kastom* is exclusively a male codification, under male control,⁵ such work has tended to avoid problematic areas, focusing on areas of knowledge, art, and ritual politics, which are less contentious.

Three aspects of the national revival of *kastom* entail vigorous political debate: the incorporation of *kastom* leaders, or chiefs, as an advisory council within the state (*Malvatumauri*); the decentralization of justice through a system of island courts; and the return of all rural land to customary owners (see Lindstrom 1997). Larcom has focused on the problems posed by the decentralized system of Island courts in resolving questions about customary land tenure in relation to the Mewun of Malakula (1990).⁶

But in all contexts, the majority of ni-Vanuatu who are Christian see *kastom* as having been assaulted or abandoned in the colonial past and as being restored, recuperated, and revived in the present. They may select distinctive and locally appropriate aspects of *kastom* to revive. And even in those communities that insist they have been living *kastom* all the while, there have been, through the 1970s and 1980s, efforts to sculpt ancient masks, to revive yam-harvest rituals abandoned long ago, and even to reinstitute practices associated with male secret societies.

The contemporary meanings of *vakavanua* are, I think, different in terms both of how past-present relations are encoded and in the ethnic associations of tradition versus modernity. The past-present relation for most ni-Vanuatu entails a revival of past practices rather than a continuity insisted on despite transformations. Moreover, in Vanuatu the indissoluble identity of people and place is posed in opposition to Europeans, whereas in Fiji it is posed more in opposition to Indians than nonresident foreigners.

Kastom thus seems significantly different to the way in which Fijians construct the meaning of *vakavanua*. Here the concept is much more a process—the ways of the land seem to be subject to historical transformation rather than to be ancestral practices that have been lost and have to be revived. Moreover, the *tauvei*, or the people of the place, deal not so much with the colonizing European as the cohabiting Indian. Finally, intraethnic conflict is implicit in the differential relation of tradition and modernity for the chiefly and rich versus the commoners and the poor.

Toren (1988) in her study of Fijian tradition suggests that it is not perceived as objectified inheritance but rather as process, as a way of living and behaving. The concept of *cakacaka vakavanua* (“working in the way of the land”) encompasses both elements of a precolonial and a colonial past in relation to the present. The attitude to Christianity is evocative. Although conversion to Christianity is seen as a

radical disavowal of old ways, it is also thought that ancestral practice anticipated Christianity. Against this history, the Fijian notion of tradition as “acting in the manner of the land” makes the present flow smoothly out of the past; from this perspective, “the coming of the light” did not violate indigenous cultural practice but revealed the inherent Christianity of the Fijian people (697).

Christianity is seen to have purified these ancestral elements, divesting them of their devilish aspects and highlighting the inherently Fijian attributes of kinship concern, hospitality, and respect for the chiefs. The chiefly in particular are identified as embodying Christianity. But as well as this stress on continuity rather than a rupture and revival, there is also an important difference in the ethnic referents of the concept of the way of the land. The “way of the land” is contrasted to the “way of money,” and in this sense the Fijian way and the European way are counterposed and the latter devalued (Toren 1989). But there is not a comparable ethnic hostility toward Europeans—indeed, up until the period of the coups, Fijians were to maintain a broadly positive relationship to their erstwhile colonizers and to cherish the Royal Family in particular. Rather, insofar as these moral judgements become the basis for ethnic political identities, it is the Indians who are seen as pursuing the way of money.

Kaplan has demonstrated how this contrast between the communal traditionalism of the Fijians and the individual commercialism of the Indians derives from British codifications of their respective racial identities (1988:101–106; cf. Norton 1990). The preservation of Fijian tradition entailed the preservation of community and chiefly hierarchy. Colonial relations with Fijians were posited as relations with communities, mediated through chiefs, and land codifications attached kinship collectivities indissolubly to the land. Individual entrepreneurial spirit, pursuing the “path of money,” was thus constituted as a rejection of communal living, expressed in some anticolonial movements and later to churches like Seventh Day Adventism (see Thomas 1990b, 1991, 1992b), as well as independent farmers or entrepreneurs (Bayliss-Smith et al. 1988:74 ff.; Overton 1988).

On the other hand, and in dramatic contrast to colonial policies in India itself, the British treated Indians as canonically isolated individuals. In the period of indentured labor, Indians were conceived of as “labor units,” defined by an individualistic contract or *girmit* with the employer (Kaplan 1988:106; cf. Kelly 1991; Gillion 1977). Later, Indians were perceived by the British as disorderly and threatening, a threat to Fijian dominance, individualist, and disruptive of the foun-

dations of *vakavanua*—to indigenous ownership and control of the land. Both colonial policies and Indian appropriation of their colonial identity associated them with the path of money, although most were not wealthy businessmen but poor cane farmers, working land leased from Fijians.

But what of the fact that those canonical actors in maintaining tradition—the chiefs—are also seen to be pursuing the path of money? Some Fijians are critical of the chiefs as having it both ways (Toren 1989). Anti-chiefly sentiment has surfaced often in Fiji's colonial history. Most recently the shortlived Labor Party government and even some elements of the Taukei movement instrumental in the coups of 1987–1988 were openly critical of chiefly hegemony and economic control. But what is striking is the level of support for the chiefs among rural commoner Fijians, even in those areas of western Viti Levu where there was a long history of resistance to the colonial alliance between the British and the chiefs of the eastern confederacies.⁷

Village Fijians in general tend to see the way of the land as characterized by generosity and hospitality, by Christianity and by respect for the chiefs. It is not just autochthony that is the basis of the claim for Fijian paramountcy over Indians, but a way of life that is predicated on the perpetuation of chiefly hierarchy. Such associations are also made in national political rhetoric. Williksen-Bakker (1990) has shown the links between the values of *vanua* espoused by villagers, urban dwellers, and those proclaimed in rituals of chiefly inauguration in which politicians such as Ratu Mara and Ganilau were pre-eminent; when the latter was installed as Tui Cakau in 1988, he was “tied to the land” by a piece of bark cloth wrapped around his arm.

Kaplan has suggested that despite some anti-chiefly elements within the Taukei movement, Rabuka has consistently stressed that the way of the land must continue—meaning the dominance of Fijians over Indians and of chiefs over commoners (1988:109). Thus in the face of the palpable ruptures of coups, the manifest transformations of the constitution, and the patent reconfiguration of the political forces in Fiji, the rhetoric of the continuity of the past in the present is sustained.⁸

Some Final Thoughts

In this chapter I have contrasted *kastom* and *vakavanua* in the way that they posit the relations of pasts and presents—a stress on discontinuity and rupture rather than continuity and linearity. A newly

arrived national elite wresting sovereign control from the colonizers had perforce to stress the break and to seek an elusive national unity through an appeal to *kastom* as revival and recuperation. On the other hand, the national elite in independent Fiji was in many ways continuous with that created during the colonial period. Tradition had not been so seriously devalued and thus did not have to be so thoroughly revalued in the interests of national sovereignty. The chiefs were bequeathed a relationship to the land, to the Fijian people, and to the state that enabled them to perpetuate hierarchy, albeit in a transformed way (see Jolly 1994b).

It has been claimed that precolonially, the history of Pacific peoples was written on the ground (Douglas 1982), but we might also witness this condensation of time and space in colonial and postcolonial Pacific history. The telling of pasts in the presents of these two Pacific states is indissociable from the language of place and the stories attaching and detaching people and land.

NOTES

1. Donald Kalpokas was elected prime minister, heading a Vanua'aku Pati (VP) and National United Party (NUP) coalition, on March 31, 1998. Father Walter Lini, head of the NUP, was appointed deputy prime minister.

2. These historical shifts have been stressed by Ton Otto in his consideration of the Paliu movement, which has in successive phases devalued and then revalued *kastom* (1992). In a study of the John From movement on Tanna, Curtis (1994) suggests that the conversion to Christianity represented a denigration or an inversion of tradition (in the terms of Thomas 1992a), while the subsequent revaluation of that tradition in such anticolonial movements represents a negation of that inversion. Both thus stress the importance of self-conscious historicity on the part of indigenous actors.

3. Grace Mera Molisa was the personal secretary of the prime minister until October 1990, when she was sacked, ironically after opposing the deportation of two expatriates. As well as being an influential politician, particularly in relation to women's affairs, she has published several volumes of poetry. The phrase quoted is from the poem "Newspaper Mania" in *Black Stone* (1983).

4. This function, which is more obvious in the Fiji Museum in Suva, was arguably more apparent in the VCC in the first years after its establishment in 1961. The new orientation owed much to Kirk Huffman, who arrived in Vanuatu in 1976, but it has been continued by successive indigenous directors and curators, including Ralph Regenvanu in the present. For perceptions of the significance and character of the VCC and the salience of *kastom* in this

context, see Bolton (1993). A new museum was opened in 1995 with a mini arts festival that lasted five days and nights.

5. There have been criticisms of this by the National Council of Women and individual ni-Vanuatu women. A present project sponsored by the VCC and UNESCO is attempting to redress this by focusing on the relation of women to *kastom* as evinced in their production and exchange of mats. This involved a collaboration between Lissant Bolton, now an ARC Fellow at the Australian National University, and women from several regions of Ambae initially and subsequently from many other islands (see Bolton 1994).

6. In the earlier version of this paper, I had a long critical section on Larcom's argument about the "museological" conception of *kastom*. See also the discussion in Jolly (1994a; 1996).

7. See Kaplan (1989) for how people in these regions were constructed as marginal in relation to Fijian custom and threatening in relation to the colonial order. What was seen as pan-Fijian has often been inflected by the interests of the eastern confederacies—the "myth of cultural homogeneity" effectively obscured the linguistic and the cultural diversity within Fiji (see Lawson 1989). But both Kaplan (1988:109) and Thomas (1990b, 1992b) argue that despite a sense of linguistic and cultural difference, there is little radical sentiment in western Viti Levu.

8. I cannot here consider in detail the politics of tradition involved in the coups and their aftermath, though this has been explored in different ways by Thomas (1989, 1990b) and Kaplan (1988). On the coups, see also Scarr (1988), Robertson and Tamanisau (1988), and Lal (1988). After the extensive work of the Constitutional Review Committee, a new constitution was adopted in 1997.

The Relationship between the United States and the Native Hawaiian People

A Case of Spouse Abuse

Brenda Luana Machado Lee

Hawaii speaks out to the United States:

- I am Hawaii. Remember me? I was once a beauty. My body was that of innocence, and then I was discovered.
(My people were innocent and pure, and we had our religious beliefs. Our islands were virgin land, then Capt. Cook arrived and exposed me to the Western World.)
- I was naked, and so you came to clothe me.
(Your missionaries came to bring in a new religion.)
- I liked my beautiful new clothes.
(The religion they brought was cherished by my people.)
- You craved my love because you saw that I was beautiful, clothed as I was, and then you raped me.
(You overthrew the Monarchy of Hawaii, under Queen Liliuokalani, in 1893.)
- I was humbled and humiliated.
(My people began to develop inferiority complexes in the presence of your haole superiority.)
- Yet you meant me no wrong. You proposed marriage and courted me.
(Hawaii was annexed to the United States and became a Territory.)

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- We had a child out of wedlock.
(The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act was created by Congress in 1920.)
- You fathered that child, and yet you did not provide support payment for that child.
(No money was given to fund the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act.)
- And then to make our relationship legal, I badgered you, and so you married me.
(Hawaii became a State in 1959, a part of the United States.)
- By then you were taking full advantage of me, being entitled to my wifely possessions.
(You lost respect for my people. The Native Hawaiian people began to lose heavily, especially in the area of land possession.)
- You invited so many people into our home, entertaining them as you saw fit and you made up all the rules. I sat by submissively.
(People from all over the world reveled and played on the Hawaiian shores, coming to start their economic bases here—in the way of land investments, hotel building, etc. Slowly but surely our people were told to leave their ancestral grounds to make way for the newcomers.)
- We've been married close to 20 years now.
(Hawaii will celebrate its 20th year of Statehood in 1979.)
- Yet never in all these years have you given a penny to raise our child, who was born pre-maritally. He has suffered much, working his own way through life. He has given much of his life to please you.
(The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act was never funded and the government has used 44,000 acres out of approximately 200,000 acres. The federal government uses about 16,800 acres today. 30,000 acres are “missing.”)
- You have beaten me repeatedly.
(My people have been evicted slowly but surely from their homelands and have become dispossessed.)
- I have become so scarred.
(Ugly buildings and highways mar my once beautiful landscape. Kahoolawe has been bombed mercilessly.)
- I feel haggard and ugly.
(My people are weary and are feeling very bitter.)

- Fish that used to in the past, no longer come to play at my feet.
(Even the food is far out of reach of my people. Fish prices are so high and there's a poi shortage because our ancestral farmlands on which we grew taro have been denied water, which has been diverted to sugarcane lands. So much of what we eat is imported.)
- I will no longer pity myself but must stand up to you. I will take this treatment no more.
(I will resist you in these demonstrations.)
- You had better straighten up, America, give restitution or ship out!
(I give you a year to make reforms and show good faith. Do this or we will declare sovereignty—to be freed of your shackles.)
- I have options for the future. I could go to the police.
(I can ask the United Nations to step in-between us.)
- I could turn to the Women's Counseling Center.
(I could turn to my sisters in all of Polynesia.)
- And then, too, I could have an affair.
(Perhaps I can call Russia or the People's Republic of China to my defense. Or how about Cuba?)
- But then . . . I really wouldn't want to do that. After all, I do have my pride. So for now, I will just settle to be introspective and think things over.
(I will turn to my Native Hawaiian people to direct a course of action.)
- But I did want to let you know of my thoughts for now and of possibilities for the future, before I act on my convictions.

IDENTITY AND EMPOWERMENT

22

Moe‘uhane

Joseph Balaz

I dream of
the ways of the past—

I cannot go back.

I hike the hills
and valleys of Wahiawa,
walking through crystal
streams
and scaling green cliffs

I play in the waves
of Waimea,
and spear fish
from the reefs of Kawailoa.

I grow bananas, ‘ulu,
and papayas,
in the way of the ‘aina.

I cannot go back—

I never left.

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Simply Chamorro

Tales of Demise and Survival in Guam¹

Vicente M. Diaz

The “Precarious Cultural Position” of the Chamorro

In 1945, Mavis Warner Van Peenen described the contemporary Chamorro—the indigenous people of the Marianas—as teetering on a “precarious cultural position” (1974:41). Referring to the Chamorro in the ever-present masculine pronoun, Van Peenen wrote: “He walks the precipitous ledge of Past and Present, with the abyss of ‘Americanization’ waiting below to engulf him.”

From Van Peenen’s vantage point as wife of an American naval officer stationed on Guam right before the Japanese invasion in 1941, the precipice on which she saw the Chamorro balanced precariously was composed of a history of Spanish Catholic domination further weakened by the ravages of a recent war and reconstruction efforts on terrain and psyche. Below this ledge gaped an abyss into which the Chamorro was lured by the security of American benevolence and the hold of its material benefits. For Van Peenen, radical changes in Guam’s physical and cultural topography in the immediate postwar era, expressive of American interests in the region, signaled a virtual end to what she called Chamorro dreams of social independence. Such dreams were contained in prewar Chamorro legends that featured ancient heroes and heroines (“Our Before Time People”) whose epics were inscribed on the land (Gadao’s cave, Puntan Patgon, AluPang,

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Orote Point, and Fuuna Rock to name a few), or stories about ancestral spirits called *aniti* and *taotaomona*. There were also funny tales of island tricksters and pranksters, such as Juan Malo and his faithful *carabao* (water buffalo), who delighted in fooling Spanish colonial officials. There came a point in history, wrote Van Peenen, when wit, not arms, were the tools of the Chamorro struggle to endure foreign control. In the Juan Malo stories the Chamorro turned inward and laughed at a fledgling colonial presence (1974:v).

But Van Peenen's interest in the social independence of Chamorros did not concern questioning American sovereignty; it was rather to collect and preserve what she called the quaint and charming—indeed primitive—folklore of the Chamorros. She wrote:

When dreams of social independence die, efforts to conserve a folklore die also. There are many reasons why Guam's folklore will disappear. The carabao, that animal so necessary to the island, so symbolic of it, was killed by the Japanese and eaten for food, and soon exterminated. The family and neighborly groups which previously came together for an evening of storytelling and reminiscing now attend the movies. The young people speak English. They are Christians. The pretty Chamorro girls will find husbands among the thousands of American military men on Guam. Many of these girls will leave their Island with their husbands. Many Chamorro boys will join American Armed Forces and 'see the world' and settle in parts far from Guam. The time will come when few remember the stories told of 'Our Before Time Ancestors' and the Chamorro legends, uncollected, unwritten, will be forgotten, one by one. (1974:36–37)

In the face of sure death, Van Peenen the collector, the writer, arrives, as if to save the day.

Van Peenen's lament has kin in a parade of foreign observers who wrote before and after her. In 1820, Captain James Burney of the Royal British Navy described the Spanish legacy in the Marianas as "the descending . . . of a plague" that exterminated the hapless natives (1967:293). In the mid-1980s, social historians Peter Hempenstall and Noel Rutherford debated a "sorry tale of brutal extermination and demoralization of a mild island people" (1984:101). Though they concluded there was no official policy of extermination, they nevertheless declared that among what "failed (the Chamorros) *in the end* was the absence of a centralized political organization" (102).

Whether to assert and justify British imperialism, to document Pacific Island struggles and resistance, or to collect folklore from “primitive” societies thought to be on the wane, the theme of the destruction of a proud Chamorro society at the hands foreign agents and institutions has simply been a foregone conclusion.

Yet Guam’s history does not have to be understood as the definitive Euro-Americanization of the Chamorro people at the tragic expense of indigenous culture. Nor does Chamorro culture need to be understood in terms of an immutably bounded, neatly contained thing that was once upon a time characterized by essential qualities, pure and untainted, as in the ways that Chamorro culture has (a)historically been conceived and represented. Rather, the ideas of history and culture—and historiography and ethnography—can be conceptualized in alternative ways. They can be viewed as contested sites upon which local (and global) identities and communities are built and destroyed, in highly charged ways (Clifford 1988, 1992; Haraway 1989; Kaplan and Pease 1993; Neumann 1992a; Thomas 1991; Rafael 1988; Hall 1991). In addition, such a critical approach to historical and cultural studies foregrounds the partiality of any inquiry, whether of one’s ideological interest, or of the inevitable incompleteness of the analyses. In the latter sense, the idea of partiality also denotes the absence of an omnipotent vantage point from which to pronounce the definitive or the whole truth of any human practice or event. Instead, one always sees only a slice, at a given time, from a particular vantage point, of a fluid and uncontainable history or cultural practice.

Partial to such critical ideas, this chapter draws from a variety of sources (written, spoken, visual, aural, and imagined) and institutional practices (religious, secular, athletic, scientific) and “national” origins (Chamorro, Spanish, American) to challenge the hegemony of neo-colonialism in Guam today. For assistance, I recruit Van Peenen’s list of reasons for the demise of Chamorro culture but recontextualize the list within a field of possibilities informed by what I view as a legacy of Chamorro political and cultural resistance. This legacy is found in a fierce sense of peoplehood and place that is embedded in language, in moments of cultural recollection, and finally, from the rawness of everyday living in Guam. How can signs taken for cultural demise be reread as moments of survival and vitality and as signs of an eternal vigilance for future possibilities?

Tale One: Carabao Tales

Recall Van Peenen's first example: The carabao, "so necessary to the island, so symbolic of it, was killed by the Japanese and eaten for food, and soon exterminated."

In the early 1960s, Monsignor Oscar Lujan Calvo DD, better known locally as "Pale Scot" (pronounced "Pah-lee"), received the manuscript that was destined to be the first modern history of Guam (Carano and Sanchez 1964). A Jesuit-educated Chamorro priest, Pale Scot came upon the claim that carabaos had become extinct. "How can this be?" asked the priest incredulously (Calvo, pers. comm. January 12, 1991). Often in his pastoral rounds in the south, Pale Scot would have to stop in his path and wait for resident carabaos to cross. "Are my eyes lying to me?" he asked himself as he read the draft. For verification, Pale Scot phoned the government of Guam's Department of Agriculture and inquired into the status of the island's carabao population. The response was that there were several hundred carabao on the island, and that one pair had even been shipped to the San Diego Zoo in order to bolster its own collection of carabao.

Though it may no longer be the primary mode of transportation it once was to the Chamorros, the carabao is very much present today in local consciousness. For an update, I called a colleague, Dr. Jeff Barcinas at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and he perked up: "My friend, you want to know about carabaos? Let me tell you about carabaos. I got plenty of big, juicy, meaty carabao stories" (Barcinas, pers. comm., Mangilao, March 23, 1992). Let us wallow in the juicy stories.

First of all, to this day there is a herd of wild carabao roaming the valley known as Bubulao, in the restricted area near the U.S. Naval Magazine. Barcinas speculates that it was the ancestors of this herd that probably obstructed Pale Scot's own flock-tending duties thirty years ago. Barcinas was also grateful that the navy had fenced in and restricted the area for national security purposes, since it also provided the herd a place of refuge from hunters. This refuge and the increase in the wild herd's population has since converted this area into a popular off-roading spot for a local Safari Tour that caters to the Japanese tourist in search of something other than Guam's Waikiki-like Tumon Bay.

Barcinas adds that though they are not the indispensable beasts of burden they were in the prewar years, carabaos are not forgotten and

are prized possessions for their owners. In addition, carabaos are still used for *pugua* (betel nut)-collecting treks into terrain still inaccessible even to today’s four-wheelers. Collecting two *pugua*-laden sacks slung on either side of a carabao is still considered an excellent day’s work, and will bring a small fortune to the laborer. *Pugua*, of course, is Guam’s social glue, the bond that builds and maintains social networks among Chamorros.

Another favorite carabao pastime are the races held since time immemorial during village fiestas (feasts) in honor of the patron saint of a family or village. One spin-off of this, recalls Barcinas, were hilarious baseball games that required a batter to mount a carabao in order to round the bases. Incidentally, in the decisive game of the 1913 “mid-winter” baseball league sponsored by the U.S. Naval Government of (tropical) Guam, an all-native team beat an all-white team called “The Allies” (also once referred to as the “White Hopes”) to win the league championship. The native team’s name: the Carabaos.

But the juiciest, meatiest tale of all corroborates Pale Scot’s oral history on carabaos. I asked Barcinas if in his dealings he had ever heard of carabaos being shipped off to San Diego Zoo. He laughed and explained that in the late 1970s, as a college student, he took a vacation to San Diego with his elderly visiting parents. They wanted to go to the zoo. Jeff’s mother, *Tan* Rita Barcinas, was especially anxious to see if *her* carabao was still alive. This was how Jeff discovered that when his father was at the Department of Agriculture he had once sent a pair of carabao—the bull belonged to Jeff’s family—to zoo officials. In return the elder Barcinas received—and we quote his son here—“two stupid, undomesticated wild Anguses” that “I had to feed when I was a kid.” The wild, undomesticated cattle are dead now, but they bore offspring that bore offspring, and the Barcinas of Malesso to this day are distinguished islandwide for providing only the freshest, juiciest, and meatiest beef in their village fiestas.

In the prewar years, carabaos were everywhere, and even ambled into “most” photographs of this era (Farrell 198:80–81). But the carabaos were especially known as indispensable beasts of burden, much like today’s pickup truck, the virtual carabao of the late twentieth century. And so, if photos of the prewar years showed a carabao, then a postwar photo of any road (and off-road) scene on Guam today would inevitably capture the equally ubiquitous mechanical beast of

burden. Highly prized and equally worked too, the pickup truck—lowrider or four-by-four monster truck—is a cherished possession of cultural and social mobility that not only gets the Chamorro from here to there (an epic, too, on Guam’s roads) but does so with the customized signature of its owners.

In the prewar years, when the bicycle and the motor car gradually displaced the carabao on increasingly multiplying concrete pavements, the Chamorro stood and watched and participated in the change of geographical and social terrain. If carabaos are no longer common sights today, they themselves were, once upon a time, items of novelty. Introduced commodities, these new technologies of travel were just as quickly localized by the Chamorros of yesterday as in the way that the pickup truck has become a common local fixture of today. Working their ways into the heart and soul and stomach of the Chamorro, these affectionate beasts of burden themselves became much loved—indeed, became viewed as cherished icons of Chamorro identity and possession. Their virtual disappearance could one day mark, too, the virtual disappearance of the Chamorro culture as a whole.

But have the carabaos and the Chamorros disappeared? Definitely not on one particular pickup truck that is no less ubiquitous on the island’s roads today. Emblazoned on the doors of the Bank of Guam’s armored truck is an image of the ennobled carabao, the prominent motif of the bank’s logo. Hitching a ride on the “People’s Bank”—as the first Chamorro-owned and operated bank likes to call itself—the carabao continues to represent the cultural and material wealth of its owners. Here it takes its place as but one precarious symbol of the historical and cultural meandering of Chamorro identity.

Tale Two: Moving Island Images

“The family and neighborly groups which previously came together for an evening of storytelling and reminiscing now attend the movies.”

One of the first motion pictures shown on Guam featured a roaring train that, at one point in the movie, appeared headed straight for the camera and the audience. In a tale that is a classic in introductory film studies courses everywhere in the world, the image of the approaching train frightened all but the most courageous natives in the house, sending the rest scrambling for the exits (Carano and Sanchez 1964:213–214).

Before World War II moving pictures were intensely popular pastimes of leisure, if not powerful vehicles in the socialization and Americanization of the Chamorro people. "My father loved the movies," recalls Martha Duenas, whose father was among the throngs of young men who joined the navy before December 8, 1941 (pers. comm., Santa Cruz, CA, November 25, 1990), and who eventually settled their families stateside. Did the movies that Mr. Juan Duenas loved so much as a youth shape his decision to raise his family in the States? What was that love affair all about, that affair between Chamorros like Mr. Duenas (who still resides in a place called "Leisure World" in California) and the motion pictures as brought by military personnel for their own leisure in this tropical world? What was shown, and what was seen? What did Chamorros do with these artifacts?

How were they used? The title of one movie served as a code that probably saved the life of at least one Chamorro and his family. During the Japanese occupation, Mr. Tomas Tanaka was tending his store in Agana when Mr. Jake Calvo walked in. Calvo waited for Tanaka to finish with his customers when he winked and said, "So, 'Destry Rides Again,' huh?" Tanaka was shocked. The movie *Destry Rides Again* had just been shown, but what Calvo referred to cryptically was his knowledge that Tanaka was harboring George Tweed, the last American fugitive who had been hiding out from the Japanese, and over whose capture many Chamorros were being beaten and killed. In his autobiography, Tweed recalls that Tanaka hurried back to him and told him to leave his premises (1945:133). "Calvo runs around with a group of fellows, and if Jake knows, they know."

Moving pictures in the Islands: Why must Chamorro culture be visualized as necessarily at odds with the movies? What notions of culture prevail that make these things mutually exclusive? Why aren't there Chamorro movies? Are we sure there aren't? If we count video technology as films, then there exists a genre of Chamorro family films, of funerals, weddings, christenings, baseball games, of kids playing, parents talking, laughing.

Shortly after the return of the Americans in 1944, Pale Scot celebrated a Thanksgiving Mass in honor of the Americans and in memory of the Chamorros who did not survive the Japanese occupation. After Mass, Alvin Josephy (then a war correspondent) appeared with news photographers to take pictures of the people (1946:88). Josephy

recalls that the “young barefoot girls saw (the photographers) and scampered back into their huts. A few moments later they reappeared with their long tresses combed and filled with flowers and ribbons.” This scene irritated a photographer, who turned to a nearby Chamorro and asked, “What’s the idea? We came to take pictures of refugees, and they doll themselves up.” The Chamorro grinned, “They think some movie scout may see the pictures. . . . They all want to go to Hollywood” (1946:88).

Prewar Chamorro fascination with Hollywood and postwar possibilities of stardom, of fame, of glamour, frustrate the conventions of war correspondence and its inscription of heroic narratives of national history. There would be no image of war-torn refugees liberated by American freedom fighters in this particular scene.

Incidentally, while these Chamorro women were acting out of character, so to speak, Dr. Jeff Barcinas’ uncle and another companion had escaped a Japanese concentration camp in the south and paddled out on a canoe to an American ship anchored just beyond the reef. Once aboard, Chamorros thanked the ship’s captain for returning to liberate the islanders. The captain responded: “Liberate? We are here to flatten the rock” (Barcinas, pers. comm., Mangilao, March 23, 1992).

The story of Guam’s “liberation” by the Americans is about as dramatic and moving as any movie ever made. Every year on July 21, the island celebrates “Liberation Day” with a big parade, carnivals, beauty pageants, and increasingly, with moving films of the war experience. *Liberation Day 40* and *Man Libre* are two such videos, which also happen to be cosponsored by the Bank of Guam (Donner n.d.). Interestingly enough, the documentaries themselves use rare footage of prewar Guam taken from the home movies of the Felix Torres and Joaquin Sablan families (Souder, pers. comm., April 20, 1993). Combined with war and immediate postwar propaganda footage and present-day interviews with survivors, these images of a tranquil prewar island society wax nostalgic and heighten the villainy of the subsequent Japanese invasion and occupation as a prelude to the heroism of America’s return in 1944. This postwar narrative of Guam’s liberation relies upon these images—and Chamorro gratitude—to construct yet another powerful and compelling storyline: the American patriotism of the Chamorro. And yet, not all Chamorros equate America’s return to Guam with liberation (See Santos 1991; Hale’Ta 1993; Diaz forthcoming Ms.a).

Tale Three: “English the Chamorro Way”

Reason number three: “The young people speak English.”

The title for this reconstituted tale is pilfered directly from a local publication called *English—The Chamorro Way* (1987). The relationship between the English language and the Chamorro people precedes the American takeover of the island in 1898. Indeed, that earlier history was explained to Oscar King Davis, a special correspondent of the *New York Sun*, who traveled to the Far East with the “Army of Occupation” in 1898 (Davis 1898). At what is now called Apra Harbor, the boat that carried Davis and the American occupation forces was guided into berth by young Chamorro boys from the village of Sumay. Davis recalls the first encounter: One Chamorro “came straight out to the boat and said ‘Good morning’ in English, with a grin that showed a double row of betel-stained teeth. Everybody in the boat replied ‘good morning,’ though they were too much astonished at his use of English to say more at first. Then someone said ‘Where is the channel.’ The young Chamorro grinned and replied ‘Here. Plenty water’” (78). The young Chamorro was soon joined by others, also speaking English, who together guided the boat safely. They then took Davis and others on a tour of the village. In Sumay, Davis was introduced to brothers Vicente and Nicolas Diaz who said, in English, that in spite of their names they were full-blooded Chamorros. Davis observed that these Diazes “speak the best English in the village, and they explained how it is that every able bodied man in Sumay can understand and make himself understood in that tongue. They do it with the single word: ‘Whaler.’ They go on to say that for many years it has been the custom of whalers to come to Guam to get oarsmen. Along the beach in front of Sumay there are a score or more of fine whaleboats” (82).

He continued: “On the whalers the Chamorros learn to speak English more or less well. The Diaz brothers began that way and have kept it up by practice with the whalers, who have come to Guam. Since then they became sufficiently far advanced in property to quit such service. Now they trade with whalers and sell them pineapples, bananas, coconuts, limes and such things” (Davis 1898:82).

Davis’ chronicle provides a hint of some of the historical and cultural stakes involved in the early use of English for enterprising Chamorros. Yet the use of English or any other foreign language on Guam does not necessarily constitute the demise of the native lan-

guage. The history of English usage on Guam, to be sure, must take into account the ongoing colonial legacy under which it and all other non-Chamorro languages arrived and took hold among the Chamorros. English under naval administration was in fact made mandatory at the expense of the local vernacular. The effect of “English only” policies by the U.S. naval government played the key role in the devaluation of the Chamorro language and in the making of a generation of Chamorros who would abandon their own language and look down on it as an expression of backwardness.

But English—the Chamorro way, as filtered through the play of the indigenous vernacular through its inflections, glosses, accentuations, and so on—also suggests histories that exceed official naval and civil requirements and mandates. These histories are embedded in discursive practices that always betray a memory of the violence of an ongoing colonial past and a vigilance for new futures, for the new possibilities that contest prevailing rules.

For an illustration we might consider two items from the *Guam Recorder* in the mid-1920s. The *Recorder* was the organ of expression for America’s colonial presence among the Chamorros before World War II. The first is an extract from an article entitled “Cross Section of a Typical Hearing before the Chief of Police” (GR 1925: 42–43). A typical hearing:

Chief of Police: (*questioning a native charged with disturbing the peace*) “Do you speak English?”

Native: “Yes Sir.”

Chief of Police: “What’s the matter with you? Can’t you behave yourself?”

Native: “No Sir.”

Chief of Police: “What?”

Native: “No Sir.”

Chief of Police: “Why can’t you behave yourself?”

Native: “Yes Sir. I no understand very well what you are making me tell.”

There is anxious humor in the entanglement of English and the white law: It’s funny that the native doesn’t really speak English after all. Yet it is possible that the native in fact speaks English very well but plays the fool to get off free from the charge of disturbing the colony’s peace. Incidentally, “public whistling” and the ringing of church bells at 4 A.M. were among some of the island practices once prohibited by a naval governor precisely because they disturbed the peace.

The second example of the colonial imperative around the English language is a joke submitted by Jose A. Mendiola (GR 1925) in a bid to distinguish himself from other presumably ignorant and trouble-making Chamorros. The distinction lies in literacy and the ability to pun:

Teacher: "Peter, give me a sentence."

Peter: (thinking) "I is . . ."

Teacher: (interrupting) "You mean 'I am . . .'."

Peter: "I am the ninth letter of the alphabet." (1925:45)

In the humor of this exchange, the protagonist Peter (not Pedro!) completes his sentence that turns out to have been (initially) grammatically correct. In text and context the native not only demonstrates skill and competence in the colonizer's language, but also mocks the colonial presumption of native ignorance as illustrated in the authority figure of the English teacher.

Even Van Peenen herself unwittingly takes stock of other local histories of English. In a subsection titled "The Influence of English upon the Chamorro language" (1974:37), Van Peenen provides an anecdote that goes against what she asserts, revealing not the influence of English upon the Chamorro language but the Chamorro language upon English and Spanish, as articulated by an anonymous native Chamorro girl. Before she left Guam in October 1941, Van Peenen chanced upon two Spanish priests playing tennis in Agana. At that moment a young Chamorro girl happened by and inquired, "*Pale, haye kekeep score?*" ("Father, who is keeping score?")

Van Peenen rightly notes the simple phrase's historical complexity "right down," she says, "to the year 1941," although she misunderstands this history. She explains: "'Pale' [is] the Chamorro adaptation of the Spanish word 'Padre'; 'haye' [is] a pure Chamorro interrogative pronoun meaning 'who?'; 'kekeep' [is] an English word [whose] first syllable [is] reduplicated in the Chamorro manner to show tense, and finally, the word 'score' [is] a pure English word" (1974:38).

To be sure, this anecdote of discursive and linguistic play about play in Agana reveals an ongoing history. Against perceived notions of the purity of language or culture as noted by Van Peenen, however, this anecdote asserts not the ensuing demise of the Chamorro language, but its durability and tenacity in the colonial entanglements. Van Peenen should have called her section "How Chamorro people and the Chamorro language make Spanish and English work for their

purposes,” for it describes as much a process of Chamorro influence on how Spanish and English are used on Guam as on the “impact” of these languages on a passive people. Social practices and discourse around practices—even in trivial events such as playing tennis and asking scores—refract deep political histories. But for Spanish and American imperialism, could two Spanish padres be caught playing tennis by an American naval wife on the island of Guam?

From Van Peenen’s vantage point, this anecdote contains the essential truths of colonial history and indigenous demise, “right down,” she said, “to the year 1941.” The utterance “*Pale, haye kekeep score*” reveals a chronological colonial history in which Chamorro language (and culture) was passing from its purer forms, through hybridity with Spanish and English forms, to its present day “pure” English form as symbolized by the final term “score.” When Van Peenen says “pure,” she is referring not to how the term “score” is spared from being reconfigured, influenced, by the vernacular, but to the term’s supposed “authenticity” as an English word. Thus she was able to read this anecdote as an instance of outside influence upon the Chamorro language.

The idea of a historical passing (away) that Van Peenen saw in this Chamorro utterance is also precisely what inspired her to collect what she erroneously believed to be a vanishing corpus of Chamorro folklore. This idea was one of the reasons why she would point to the increasing usage of English as a sign of the demise of the Chamorro people.

The simple but complicated question “*haye kekeep score?*” can be repeated today in the spirit of re-presenting both the Chamorro past and present. An anonymous Chamorro girl’s interrogation can be reinterpreted as an utterance of persistence and resistance rather than one of demise. It reveals a political history of the subject(ificat)ion of English and Spanish terms by Chamorro linguistic rules, drawing from the specific materiality found in the twilight of World War II in Guam. It begins by addressing the priest properly, that is, in his vernacular as well as in the appropriate title “padre,” but through the flicking of a Chamorro tongue (*pale*). It pauses and then continues in Chamorro with its own interrogative pronoun *haye* (“who”), and then taps into the English term *keep*, subjected, however, to a persistent Chamorro rule of reduplication for tense (*kekeep*) for what is grammatically called “present tense.” The utterance ends with the *unadulterated* (vs. “pure”) English word *score*. In its procedure, the utter-

ance illustrates the persistence of the Chamorro language, especially as it subjects remnants of Spanish and American colonialism. At this time America had already abandoned Guam to an imminent Japanese invasion (Maga 1988; Farrell 1991); indeed, the supposed “liberation” of the Chamorros three years later was in fact only America’s return with a vengeance.

The utterance in 1941 is also more than an instance of a Chamorro discursive maneuver on the remnants of Spanish and American language and colonialism on Guam. It also provides a contemporary political commentary: Whose frame of reference will prevail—who gets to keep the score of the contest that features Spanish *padres* playing an American sport in the land of the Chamorros? Though it traffics on other languages, this interrogation insists on Chamorro conventions of discourse. “*Pale, haye kekeep score*” interrogates the priest through the discursive subjectification of Spanish and English terms in demand to know who is keeping score in 1941. In the form recollected by Van Peenen in 1941, the Chamorro language is still keeping score. In 1996, the phrase can be reconstituted as a veritable slogan, one that checks the score of other contests: How fares the Chamorro language in its historical usage of English? What of that generation of Chamorros who have learned English at the expense of their native tongue? What is the score there? And who is “keeping” score—in the present tense? In 1941 and in 1996, the practice of historical narration is not finished. The story of Chamorro culture is not to be spoken about in the past tense.

There are many postwar Chamorro parents who today regret their decisions to not teach their children the Chamorro language. The perennial parental desire to see one’s child progress farther than one was able to was expressed on Guam after the war by encouraging the command of the English language at the expense of the vernacular. This generation of parents, as children in the prewar years, was indoctrinated by lessons of the cultural superiority of America and the command of English as the primary vehicle to participate in that greatness. If English was the ticket to all the benefits that civilization has to offer, Chamorro took you in the opposite direction. The Chamorro language would come to be viewed as an impediment to individual and island development. That generation of Chamorros would decide not to teach their children the vernacular so that the children could get further ahead in life than their parents had been able to. What stifled that generation of Chamorro parents and grandparents, in fact,

was not their indigenous language, but stifling and condescending naval policies. But “Pale, Haya Kekeep Score” anyways?

Tale Four: Repositioning the Missionary

“The Chamorros are Christians.”

The history of the Spanish Catholic mission among the Chamorro people occupies a central role in the historiography of Guam. In that writing, the story of the arrival and adventures of the padres (*pale*) effectively structures the history of relations between the Chamorros and colonial ventures by the United States from 1898 to the present and the brief and brutal Japanese occupation between December 1941 and July 1944. The general history is structured as an opposition between a romantic, heroic celebration of the arrival of the West on the one hand and the bereavement of its tragic effects on the other. On the one hand, the arrival of Spain, and then America, signaled the beginnings of historical and cultural progress and civilization; on the other hand, it was the worst thing that ever happened to the Chamorros.

Though they are oppositional, these two narratives are in fact two sides of the same coin whose value, as it were, comes at the systematic expense of Chamorro “agency” in history. For better or for worse, the story is about the Euro-Americanization of a passive, hapless people. For Spanish Catholic historians and their sympathizers, the story is about the heroic effort to convert the Chamorro heathens; for others, notably French, British, and American secular historians, the story had been about the tragic destruction of an innocent and helpless island people—in the past tense.

Yet we need to rethink such narrow determinations and emplotments, to shift the focus onto the processes of mutual but unequal appropriations that exist between colonizer and colonized, indeed among a multilayered and restless colonized population itself (Diaz 1989, 1993). This entangled history is illustrated, among other ways, in a twentieth-century revival of a historic effort to canonize Blessed Diego Luis de Sanvitores, the seventeenth-century Spanish Jesuit who was martyred in the act of establishing the Catholic mission among the Chamorros (Ledesma 1981). Elsewhere I try to reposition the mission story as it is embodied in the historic and contemporary effort to canonize Sanvitores (Diaz forthcoming Ms.b). Beatified by Rome in 1985, the now “Blessed” Diego is on the penultimate stage to full

sainthood. Attention to the cultural and political stakes involved in the historical proceedings elucidates how the official canonization effort "works" the native to produce a saint insofar as the crafting of heroic narratives of salvation are performed at the expense of indigenous cultural and historical orders of difference. Yet the native can also be shown to "rework" the saint to produce what can be called new canons of "indigenous" selves, new narratives that often tend to disrupt extant notions—whether colonial or anticolonial. Within a deep and ongoing colonial and neocolonial legacy, local investment in the making of a saint in particular, as well as participation in a wider array of Catholic practices and rituals, have become powerful and troubled forms of native survival and political expression. At stake are the formation and re-formation of indigenous as well as exogenous cultural identities. Chamorro spirituality and its temporal and political benefits, now expressed in Catholic practices such as novenas, fiestas, and rosaries, are celebrated vicariously through the elevation of Sanvitores to the highest honors of the altar—but not without local contestation.

If the elevation of Sanvitores' singular story would elevate, too, the cause of Chamorro cultural survival and revival, then Spanish Catholicism can be deemed a virtual Chamorro domain, a kind of surrogate cultural space. As many others have argued, Christianity—Roman Catholic or other—can be seen not simply as the mark of indigenous death, but as a marker of all kinds of possibilities and limits (Rafael 1988; Hanlon 1988; Taussig 1987).

The theme of Chamorro continuity in Christianity is found in the work of the American anthropologist Laura Thompson, who visited Guam a few years before Van Peenen. In her portrayal of prewar Guam, Thompson wrote: "In the shadows of the early evening moves the cassocked figure of a priest, and a child runs toward him, stoops to kiss his hand. A dog barks and in the distance sounds the chant of a novena, primitive as a Chamorro folksong echoing through the ages" (1974:5).

Van Peenen herself describes another history of conversion than that which foresees the demise of indigenous folklore. Her observation on this particular facet of folk and lore, however, is structured in a schizophrenic narrative that cannot decide once and for all who are the subjects and objects of historical and cultural agency. First, she writes, it is the Chamorros who "did not completely abandon their own religious past" but instead took up the new religion "according to the infantile manner of primitive people" (1974:32). They were

“charmed,” she wrote, especially with the wood and ivory images of the Church. If they get to have agency, it is a primitive, infantile one that is short-lived anyway in the consciousness of the author’s intent. For Van Peenen, it was the missionaries who were “astute enough” to employ these artifacts in their efforts to “insinuate” the spiritual aspects of Christianity—especially with the women. Van Peenen asserts that “the most saintly women of the island *were allowed* [watch what we might call the “passivication” of native agency] to take turns guarding, in their homes, the excess images not at the moment used at the Church” (emphasis added). Continuing a narrative of external action on a passive people, Van Peenen writes that “the priests cultivated the idea of possession and personal interest in church figures.” Yet primitive agency prevails, especially for collectors of such lore. She writes: “The Chamorro people—who could never take a religion passively—were surrounding themselves with a personality which was particularly Chamorro. They made figures theirs by connecting them with the particular natural background of the island just as their ancestors before them had done with their gods. And they, like their ancestors, produced miracle legends which necessarily showed Spanish influence” (32–33).

Some forty years after Van Peenen, the late Archbishop Felixberto C. Flores—the first native Chamorro to hold such a position—gives testimony to the “necessary Spanish influence” on Chamorro dreams: “[The beatification of Sanvitores] brings to reality a dream the people of the Mariana Islands have prayed for. These islands . . . have retained many features of Spanish Catholicism. Fiestas in honor of our patron saints for each village, public processions, rosaries and novenas are all woven into our cultural traditions. All of these are a part of the legacy that Blessed Diego and his successors brought to us—the people of the islands they converted. . . . Today the faith that Blessed Diego brought to the islands is embraced by virtually all the local population of the Marianas” (Hezel 1985:5).

Tale Five: Moving Motherhood

“The pretty Chamorro girls will find husbands among the thousands of American military men on Guam.”

One must consider today the many “American” surnames on Guam, whose families’ “Chamorroneess” nobody can doubt: Underwood, McDonald, Pelkey, Dierking, Dudkiewicz, Meek, Wesley, Emsley, Johnston, Manley, Portusach, Surber, Payne, Thacker, Souder.

This is only a sampling of Chamorro surnames, some which span at least two centuries of interaction or intercourse with non-Chamorro men. They take their place among other Chamorro surnames that have arrived earlier and later: Chamorro surnames that are mistaken as European (for example, Pereira, Wilson, Anderson, Hoffschneider, Stein, Kaminga, Sgambelluri, Pellicani, Bordallo, Millenchamp); Spanish, Mexican, or Filipino (for example, Santos, Langas, Cruz, Candaso, Perez, Delfin, Munoz, Baza, Guerrero, Benavente, Artero, Manalisay, Lizama, Barcinas, Camacho, Dela Cruz); Chamorro surnames mistaken for Chinese or Japanese (for example, Ada, Ogo, Yamaguchi, Chaco, Tanaka, Shinohara, Unpingco, Quenga, Okada, Dungca, Susuico, Yamanaka, Won Pat); and Chamorro surnames that have persisted (for example, Taitano, Afaisen, Manglona, Taitague, Quitugua, Tainatongo, Aguon, Charfauros, Maanao, Terlaje, Goffigan, Finona, Pinaula, Manajane).

Local Chamorro women—patronized and stereotyped as “pretty Chamorro girls”—marry non-Chamorro men and produce Chamorro children. A powerful tradition of “motherhood,” locally called *Si Nana*, was responsible for the survival and revival of Chamorro families or the *familia* through what is called *Kustumbre Chamorro* (Chamorro Customs). With the population reduced to about 5 percent of its former size after the Spanish Chamorro wars (1672–1700) and the introduction of deadly diseases, primarily Chamorro women and some children survived. Chamorro women married non-Chamorro men under the Spanish and American regimes, assumed the names of the non-Chamorros, but proceeded to produce Chamorro children. *Si Nana* is best understood, according to Chamorro scholar Laura Souder, in the play of the Chamorro term *haga* (1985:5). Pronounced one way, *haga* means “blood.” Pronounced differently, *haga* means “daughter.” Combined, *hagan haga*, “blood daughter,” can be seen as the privileged term in a history of indigenous survival and revival. So, Spanish and American surnames do not mark the limits of Chamorro cultural survival. Rather, through the offices of *Si Nana*, the antes are raised in issues such as the antiabortion debate on Guam (Diaz 1993).

Tales Six and Seven: Traveling Culture and Moving Histories

“The pretty Chamorro girls . . . will leave their island with their husbands. Many Chamorro boys will join American Armed Forces and ‘see the world,’ and settle in parts far from Guam.”

These tales are about the spawning of vital Chamorro communities far away from Guam, about the travels and travails of Chamorro culture. How many of these young couples—married to each other or not—have spawned Chamorro communities in Hawai'i, San Diego, Long Beach, Fairfield, San Jose, or anywhere else in the world? In the summer of 1989 while away at school, I attended the first annual Chamorro Cultural Festival in Vallejo, California. The event was sponsored by the various Chamorro clubs of Northern California and the government of Guam. Subsequent fiestas in Long Beach, Fairfield, and then again in San Diego in 1992, were even bigger, with much more money involved. To anybody who questions the authenticity of the cultural festival, let me report the presence at the Fairfield festival of island politicians, in full force, with their white pants and handshakings two years before election time! The 1992 and 1993 festivals were so “political” that even the island’s politicians themselves opted not to get involved! Still unconvinced? The fiesta in Fairfield began with a Chamorro mass, celebrated by none other than distinguished visiting guest, Archbishop Anthony S. Apuron. Ancient Chamorro chants echoed historically through Spanish Catholic hymns sung in a northern California county park.

The viability of Chamorro communities outside of Guam is illustrated graphically in a banner that welcomed families and friends to the first festival in Vallejo. The banner featured the familiar sling-stone-shaped Guam Seal. What is interesting about this particular seal, designed by the “Bay Area Chamorro Kids,” is that behind the coconut tree and lateen sailboat, one finds not the expected Two-Lovers Point—the familiar and mythical landmark on Guam—but coastal points of San Francisco and Sausalito that are spanned by a bright orange Golden Gate Bridge. I find it usefully ironic that a mural that depicts a Chamorro *proa* heading in the direction of the Golden Gate Bridge stands as the emblem for a cultural event that served to finance the return of “Chamorro kids in California” to study at the University of Guam.

Children of far-flung Chamorros have been known to return to their roots; to reroute their roots. Often it is they and not those who have never left that hold the resources for reinvigorating Chamorro culture, provided they learn what has been made of Chamorro culture while they were away by those cousins who have never left the island. Can indigenous culture be defined by dint of its farthest point of travel (Clifford 1989)?

Unlike canonical cultural historiography, Chamorro history and

culture are not about the tragic death of quaint native customs. Rather, Chamorro history and culture are better understood as contested sites, local spaces here in Guam, and sometimes there, outside of Guam. The multiple origins and destinations that inhabit Chamorro culture are Chamorro by virtue of its discursive claims—that is, by virtue of Chamorro ways of speaking as well as unique Chamorro ways of doing things. The claims, however, work through the materiality of things and ideas that are non-Chamorro in origin. And where these claims are recalled, remembered, throated, invoked, and where these are worked upon in conscious (and unconscious) ways, there is Chamorro culture in struggle.

Struggle: Today, Chamorros continue to employ and to be deployed by a distinctive vernacular and a set of behavioral codes that struggle to maintain their hold over social and political affairs, indeed over the island itself. Other nations and governments may have claimed political sovereignty over Guam, but Chamorros have always maintained a level of control over their identity and their lands, always, that is, until the horrors of World War II and its aftermath, especially in the last two decades. There appears to be an unprecedented political and cultural predicament facing the Chamorros today: There are many non-Chamorros in the land while many Chamorros no longer have access to land. There are also more Chamorros in other lands than there are Chamorros in Guam. And there are many Chamorros, in Guam and elsewhere, who are not fluent in the Chamorro language. Chamorro survival appears especially urgent, and the stakes appear even greater today than ever before in Guam’s long colonial history.

This twentieth-century cultural crisis makes it even more important to rethink the reigning ideas of culture, politics, and history in places such as Guam. In spite of (or precisely because of) nearly four hundred years of ongoing colonial domination, we must scrutinize the historical processes by which the natives have learned to work within and against the grain of colonial intrusion. We might look at the ways that the Chamorros have “localized” the nonlocal ideas and practices, how they’ve sought to convert the dangerous into the pleasurable, the foreign into the local, the tragic into the comic; how they anticipate future possibilities. We might look at the ways in which the Chamorros have in fact built a kind of central political organization of resistance around, paradoxically, a polyglottal language—around ambivalent discourses of Chamorro culture—and in the process subverted reigning local conceptions of identity and community as well.

Island Amnesia and Other Forms of Remembrance

In her list of reasons, Van Peenen predicted that “the time will come when few remember the stories told of ‘Our Before Time Ancestors’ and the Chamorro legends, uncollected, unwritten, will be forgotten, one by one.” As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, in wanting to collect and document the remnants of such lore, Van Peenen hoped to salvage the memory of a folk from their eventual extinction. I will conclude with a final instance of (re)collection, and the possibilities of other forms of historical narration suggested therein, forms that I’ve tried to enact in the reconstituted tales I’ve spun here.

In a preface to a collection of photographs taken by Pulitzer Prize winner Manny Crisostomo, Chamorro scholar (turned politician) Congressman Robert Underwood recalls that growing up Chamorro was “extraordinarily simple, that is, until you asked simple questions” (Crisostomo 1991:14–15.). To ask simple questions such as why we had to go to so many rosaries, fiestas, weddings, and christenings was to invite lectures from the *manamko* (the elders) about how that person’s uncle’s son helped your brother’s friend’s sister during times of crises. To Underwood, what helped the curious youngster survive the lectures was the patience that the *manamko* exhibited in their dealings with such naive and simple-minded questions. Through Underwood’s memory, the careful listener will get a sense of what we might call the “complexity of Chamorro simplicity,” or, in reverse, the “simplicity of Chamorro complexity”—especially as these are contained in simple family stories of politically fraught historical narratives.

By way of keeping score—for this is as good a way to narrate Guam’s history as any other chronological accounting—let me suggest, then, not the collection of quaint lore of a primitive folk in doom, but the re-collection of island memories that sit restlessly in the ritual of everyday language of everyday island historical realities.

Acknowledgment

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NOTES

1. This chapter deals specifically with the politics of Chamorro cultural history in Guam and not in the rest of the Northern Mariana Islands. A good countercolonial study of Chamorro culture should pay attention to how Chamorros from Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands have been severed and governed separately. At the risk of colonial complicity, my exclusive focus on Guam stems from the limits of my own familiarity in and formal study about Guam, including a general ignorance of Chamorro cultural politics in the Northern Mariana Islands. Chamorro cultural politics has traditionally been highly local and fiercely competitive. The terms of its relations with others have always concerned the fortification of local identities and communities, through the means and materiality furnished by colonial intrusions.

24

Mixed Blood

Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa

They ask me
HOW
I
resolve
my identity.
As if it were a
problem.
... solve
my identity,
as if it were a
mystery?
... dissolve
my identity,
as if it were
soluble?

They ask me
HOW
I
negotiate
my identity.
As if it were a
contract.

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. . . initiate
 my identity,
 as if it were a
 neophyte?
 . . . appreciate
 my identity,
 as if it were an
 interest rate?

My identity
 is not
 a problem
 a mystery
 soluble
 a contract
 a neophyte
 an interest rate.

Mixed blood:

resolves
 solves
 dissolves
 negotiates
 initiates
 appreciates . . .

And again they ask me HOW?

Ngati Kangaru

Patricia Grace

Billy was laughing his head off reading the history of the New Zealand Company, har, har, har, har, har.

It was since he'd been made redundant from Mitre 10 that he'd been doing all this reading. Billy and Makere had four children, one who had recently qualified as a lawyer but was out of work, one in her final year at university, and two at secondary school. These kids ate like elephants. Makere's job as a checkout operator for New World didn't bring in much money and she thought Billy should be out looking for another job instead of sitting on his backside all day reading and laughing.

The book belonged to Rena, whose full given names were Erena Meretiana. She wanted the book back so she could work on her assignment. Billy had a grip on it.

Har, har, these Wakefields were real crooks. That's what delighted Billy. He admired them, and at the beginning of his reading had been distracted for some minutes while he reflected on that first one, E. G. Wakefield, sitting in the clink studying up on colonization. Then by the time of his release, EG had the edge on all those lords, barons, MPs, lawyers and so forth. Knew more about colonization than they did, haaar.

However, Billy wasn't too impressed with the reason for EG's incarceration. Abducting an heiress? Jeepers! Billy preferred more normal, more cunning crookery, something funnier—like lying, cheating and stealing.

So in that regard he wasn't disappointed as he read on, blobbed out

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in front of the two-bar heater that was expensive to run, Makere reminded him. Yes, initial disappointment left him the more he progressed in his reading. Out-and-out crooks, liars, cheats and thieves, these Wakefields. He felt inspired.

What he tried to explain to Makere was that he wasn't just spending his time idly while he sat there reading. He was learning a few things from KG, WW, Jerningham, Arthur and Co., that would eventually be of benefit to him as well as to the whole family. He knew it in his bones.

'Listen to this,' he'd say, as Makere walked in the door on feet that during the course of the day had grown and puffed out over the tops of her shoes. And he'd attempt to interest her with excerpts from what he'd read. " 'The Wakefields' plan was based on the assumption that vast areas—if possible, every acre of New Zealand would be bought for a trifle, the real payment to the people of the land being their 'civilizing' . . ." Hee hee, that's crafty. They called it "high and holy work".

'And here. There was this "exceptional Law" written about in one of EG's anonymous publications, where chiefs sold a heap of land for a few bob and received a section "in the midst of emigrants" in return. But har, har, the chiefs weren't allowed to live on this land until they had "learned to estimate its value". Goodby-ee, don't cry-ee. It was held in reserve waiting for the old fellas to be brainy enough to know what to do with it.

'Then there was this "adopt-a-chief scheme", a bit like the "dial-a-kaumatua" scheme that they have today where you bend some old bloke's ear for an hour or two, let him say a few wise words and get him to do the old rubber-stamp trick, hee, hee. Put him up in a flash hotel and give him a ride in an airplane then you've consulted with every iwi throughout Aotearoa, havintcha? Well, "adopt-a-chief" was a bit the same except the prizes were different. They gave out coats of arms, lessons in manners and how to mind your p's and q's, that sort of stuff. I like it. You could do anything as long as you had a "worthy cause",' and Billy would become pensive. 'A worthy cause. Orl yew need is a werthy caws.'

On the same day that Billy finished reading the book he found his worthy cause. He had switched on television to watch Te Karere, when the face of his first cousin Hiko, who lived in Poi Hakena, Australia, came on to the screen.

The first shots showed Hiko speaking to a large rally of Maori people in Sydney who had formed a group called Te Hokinga ki

Aotearoa. This group was in the initial stages of planning for a mass return of Maori to their homeland.

In the interview that followed, Hiko explained that there was disillusionment among Maori people with life in Australia and that they now wanted to return to New Zealand. Even the young people who had been born in Australia, who may never have seen Aotearoa, were showing an interest in their ancestral home. The group included three or four millionaires, along with others who had made it big in Oz, as well as those on the bones of their arses—or that’s how Billy translated into English what Hiko had said in Maori, to Hana and Gavin. These two were Hana Angeline and Gavin Rutene, the secondary schoolers, who had left their homework to come and gog at their uncle on television.

Hiko went on to describe what planning would be involved in the first stage of *The Return*, because this transfer of one hundred families was a first stage only. The ultimate plan was to return all Maori people living in Australia to Aotearoa, iwi by iwi. But the groups didn’t want to come home to nothing, was what Hiko was careful to explain. They intended all groups to be well housed and financed on their return, and discussions and decisions on how to make it all happen were in progress. Billy’s ears prickled when Hiko began to speak of the need for land, homes, employment and business ventures. “‘Possess yourselves of the soil,’” he muttered, “‘and you are secure.’”

Ten minutes later he was on the phone to Hiko.

By the time the others returned—Makere from work, Tu from job-hunting and Rena from varsity—Billy and the two children had formed a company, composed a rap, cleared a performance space in front of the dead fireplace, put their caps on backwards and practiced up to performance standard:

First you go and form a Co.
 Make up lies and advertise
 Buy for a trifle the land you want
 For Jew’s harps, nightcaps
 Mirrors and beads

Sign here sign there
 So we can steal
 And bring home cuzzies
 To their ‘Parent Isle’

Draw up allotments on a map
 No need to buy just occupy
 Rename the places you now own
 And don't let titles get you down
 For blankets, fish hooks, axes and guns
 Umbrellas, sealing wax, pots and clothes

Sign here, sign there
 So we can steal
 And bring home cuzzies
 To their 'Parent Isle'

Bought for a trifle sold for a bomb
 Homes for your rellies
 And dollars in the bank
 Bought for a trifle sold for a bomb
 Homes for your rellies and
 Dollars in the bank

Kiss Aue. Aue.
 Hi.

Billy, Hana and Gavin bowed to Makere, Tu and Rena. 'You are looking at a new company,' Billy said, 'which from henceforward (his vocabulary had taken on some curiosities since he had begun reading histories) will be known as Te Kamupene o Te Hokinga Mai.'

'Tell Te Kamupene o Te Hokinga Mai to cough up for the mortgage,' said Makere, disappearing offstage with her shoes in her hand.

'So all we need,' said Billy to Makere, later in the evening, is a vast area of land "as far as the eye can see".'

'Is that all?' said Makere.

'Of "delightful climate" and "rich soil" that is "well watered and coastal". Of course it'll need houses on it too, the best sort of houses, luxury style.'

'Like at Claire Vista,' said Makere. Billy jumped out of his chair and his eyes jumped out, 'Brilliant, Ma, brilliant.' He planted a kiss on her unimpressed cheek and went scrabbling in a drawer for pen and paper so that he could write to Hiko:

'... the obvious place for the first settlement of Ngati Kangaru, it being "commodious and attractive". But more importantly, as you know, Claire Vista is the old stamping ground of our iwi that

was confiscated at the end of last century, and is now a luxury holiday resort. Couldn't be apter. We must time the arrival of our people for late autumn when the holidaymakers have all left. I'll take a trip up there on Saturday and get a few snaps, which I'll send. Then I'll draw up a plan and we can do our purchases. Between us we should be able to see everyone home and housed by June next year. Timing your arrival will be vital. I suggest you book flights well in advance so that you all arrive at once. We will charter buses to take you to your destination and when you arrive we will hold the official welcome-home ceremony and see you all settled into your new homes.'

The next weekend he packed the company photographer with her camera and the company secretary with his notebook and biro, into the car. He, the company manager, got in behind the wheel and they set out for Claire Vista.

At the top of the last rise, before going down into Claire Vista, Billy stopped the car. While he was filling the radiator, he told Hana to take a few shots. And to Gavin he said, 'Have a good look, son, and write down what the eye can see.'

'On either side of where we're stopped,' wrote Gavin, 'there's hills and natural vegetation. There's this long road down on to this flat land that's all covered in houses and parks. There's this long, straight beach on the left side and the other side has lots of small beaches. There's this airport for light planes and a red windsock showing hardly any wind. One little plane is just taking off. There's these boats coming and going on the water as far as the eye can see, and there's these two islands, one like a sitting dog and one like a duck.'

Their next stop was at the Claire Vista Information Center, where they picked up street maps and brochures, after which they did a systematic tour of the streets, stopping every now and again to take photographs and notes.

'So what do I do?' asked Tu, who had just been made legal adviser of the company. He was Tuakana Petera and this was his first employment.

'Get parchments ready for signing,' said Billy.

'Do you mean deeds of title?'

'That's it,' said Billy. Then to Rena, the company's new researcher, he said, 'Delve into the histories and see what you can come up with for new brochures. Start by interviewing Nanny.'

'I've got exams in two weeks I'll have you know.'

'After that will do.'

The next day Billy wrote to Hiko to say that deeds of title were being prepared and requested that each of the families send two thousand dollars for working capital. He told him that a further two thousand dollars would be required on settlement. 'For four thousand bucks you'll all get a posh house with boat, by the sea, where there are recreation parks, and amenities, anchorage and launching ramps, and a town, with good shopping, only twenty minutes away. Also it's a good place to set up businesses for those who don't want to fish all the time.

'Once the deeds of sale have been made up for each property I'll get the signatures on them and then they'll be ready. I'll also prepare a map of the places, each place to be numbered, and when all the first payments have been made you can hold a lottery where subscribers' tickets are put into "tin boxes". Then you can have ceremonies where the names and numbers will be drawn out by a "beautiful boy". This is a method that has been used very successfully in the past, according to my information.

'Tomorrow we're going out to buy Jew's harps, muskets, blankets (or such like) as exchange for those who sign the parchments.'

'You'll have a hundred families all living in one house, I suppose,' said Makere, 'because that's all you'll get with four thousand dollars a family.'

'Possess yourselves of the homes,' said Billy.

'What's that supposed to mean?'

'It's a "wasteland". They're waste homes. They're all unoccupied. Why have houses unoccupied when there are people wanting to occupy them?'

'Bullshit. Hana and Gav didn't say the houses were unoccupied.'

'That's because it's summertime. End of March everyone's gone and there are good homes going to waste. "Reclaiming and cultivating a moral wilderness", that's what we're doing, "serving to the highest degree", that's what we're on about, "according to a deliberate and methodical plan".'

'Doesn't mean you can just walk in and take over.'

'Not unless we get all the locks changed.'

By the end of summer the money was coming in and Billy had all the deeds of sale printed, ready for signing. Makere thought he was

loopy thinking that all these rich wallahs would sign their holiday homes away.

‘Not *them*,’ Billy said. ‘You don’t get *them* to sign. You get other people. That’s how it was done before. Give out pressies—tobacco, biscuits, pipes, that sort of thing, so that they, whoever they are, will mark the parchments.’

Makere was starting to get the hang of it, but she huffed all the same.

‘Now I’m going out to get us a van,’ Billy said. ‘Then we’ll buy the trifles. After that, tomorrow and the next day, we’ll go and round up some derros to do the signing.’

It took a week to get the signatures, and during that time Billy and the kids handed out to park benchers in ten different parts of the city one hundred bottles of whisky, one hundred packets of hot pies and one hundred old overcoats.

‘What do you want our signatures for?’ they asked.

‘Deeds of sale for a hundred properties up in Claire Vista,’ Billy said.

‘The only Claire Vistas we’ve got is where our bums hit the benches.’

‘Well, look here.’ Billy showed them the maps with the allotments marked out on them and they were interested and pleased. ‘Waste homes,’ Billy explained. ‘All these fellas have got plenty of other houses all over the place, but they’re simple people who know nothing about how to fully utilize their properties and they can “scarcely cultivate the earth”. But who knows, they might have a “peculiar aptitude for being improved”. It’s “high and holy work”, this.’

‘Too right. Go for it,’ the geezers said. Billy and the kids did their rap for them and moved on, pleased with progress.

In fact everything went so well that there was nothing much left to do after that. When he wrote to Hiko, Billy recommended that settlement of Claire Vista be speeded up. ‘We could start working on places for the next hundred families now and have all preparations done in two months. I think we should make an overall target of one hundred families catered for every two months over the next ten months. That means in March we get our first hundred families home, then another lot in May, July, September, November. By November we’ll have five hundred Ngati Kangaru families, i.e., about four thousand people, settled before the holiday season. We’ll bring in a

few extra families from here (including ourselves) and that means that every property in Claire Vista will have new owners. If the Te Karere news crew comes over there again,’ he wrote, ‘make sure to tell them not to give our news to any other language. Hey, Bro, let’s just tap the sides of our noses with a little tip of finger. Keep it all nod nod, wink wink, for a while.’

On the fifth of November there was a big welcome-home ceremony, with speeches and food and fireworks at the Claire Vista hall, which had been renamed Te Whare Ngahau o Ngati Kangaru. At the same time Claire Vista was given back its former name of Ikanui and discussions took place regarding the renaming of streets, parks, boulevards, avenues, courts, dells and glens after its reclaimers.

By the time the former occupants began arriving in mid-December, all the signs in the old Claire Vista had been changed and the new families were established in their new homes. It was a lovely, soft and green life at that time of the year. One in which you could stand barefooted on grass or sand in your shorts and shirt and roll your eyes round. You could slide your boat down the ramp, cruise about, toss the anchor over and put your feet up, fish, pull your hat down. Whatever.

On the day that the first of the holidaymakers arrived at 6 Ara Hakena, with their bags of holiday outfits, Christmas presents, CDs, six-packs, cartons of groceries, snorkels, lilos and things, the man and woman and two sub-teenagers were met by Mere and Jim Hakena, their three children, Jim’s parents and a quickly gathering crowd of neighbors.

At first, Ruby and Gregory in their cotton co-ordinates, and Alister with his school friend in their stonewash jeans, apricot and applegreen tees, and noses zinked pink and orange, thought they could’ve come to the wrong house, especially since its address seemed to have changed and the neighbors were different.

But how could it be the wrong house? It was the same windowy place in stained weatherboard, designed to suit its tree environment and its rocky outlook. There was the new skylit extension and glazed brick barbecue. Peach tree with a few green ones. In the drive in front of the underhouse garage they could see the spanking blue boat with *Sea Urchin* in cursive along its prow. The only difference was that the boat was hitched to a green Landcruiser instead of to a red Range Rover.

‘That’s our boat,’ said Ruby.

‘I doubt it,’ said Mere and Ken together, folding their arms in unison.

‘He paid good money for that,’ a similarly folded-armed neighbor said. ‘It wasn’t much but it was good.’

Ruby and Alister didn’t spend too much more time arguing. They went back to Auckland to put the matter in the pink hands of their lawyer.

It was two days later that the next holidaymakers arrived, this time at 13 Tiritiroa. After a long discussion out on the front lawn, Mai and Poto with their Dobermen and a contingent of neighbors felt a little sorry for their visitors in their singlets, baggies and jandals, and invited them in.

‘You can still have your holiday, why not?’ said Mai. ‘There’s the little flat at the back and we could let you have the dinghy. It’s no trouble.’

The visitors were quick to decline the offer. They went away and came back two hours later with a policeman, who felt the heat but did the best he could, peering at the papers that Mai and Poto had produced, saying little. ‘Perhaps you should come along with me and lay a formal complaint,’ he suggested to the holidayers. Mai, Poto and a few of the neighbors went fishing after they’d gone.

From then on the holidaymakers kept arriving and everyone had to be alert, moving themselves from one front lawn to the next, sometimes having to break into groups so that their eyeballing skills, their skills in creative comment, could be shared around.

It was Christmas by the time the news of what was happening reached the media. The obscure local paper did a tame, muddled article on it, which was eclipsed firstly by a full page on what the mayor and councillors of the nearby town wanted for Christmas, and then by another, derived from one of the national papers, revealing New Year resolutions of fifty television personalities. After that there was the usual nationwide closedown of everything for over a month, at the end of which time no one wanted to report holiday items any more.

So it wasn’t until the new residents began to be sued that there was any news. Even then the story only trickled.

It gathered some impetus, however, when the business people from the nearby town heard what was happening and felt concerned. Here

was this new population at Claire Vista, or whatchyoum’callit now, who were *permanent residents* and who were big *spenders*, and here were these fly-by-night jerk holidaymakers trying to kick them out.

Well, ever since this new lot had arrived business had boomed. The town was flourishing. The old supermarket, now that there was beginning to be competition, had taken up larger premises, lowered its prices, extended its lines and was providing trollies, music and coffee for customers. The car sale yards had been smartened up and the office decor had become so tasteful that the salespeople had had to clean themselves up and mind their language. McDonald’s had bought what was now thought of as a prime business site, where they were planning to build the biggest McDonald’s in the Southern Hemisphere. A couple of empty storerooms, as well as every place that could be uncovered to show old brick, had been converted into better-than-average eating places. The town’s dowdy motel, not wanting to be outdone by the several new places of accommodation being built along the main road, had become pink and upmarket, and had a new board out front offering television, video, heated swimming pool, spa, waterbeds, room service, restaurant, conference and seminar facilities.

Home appliance retailers were extending their showrooms and increasing their advertising. Home building and real estate was on an upward surge as more business people began to enter town and as those already there began to want bigger, better, more suitable residences. In place of dusty, paintless shops and shoppes, there now appeared a variety of boutiques, studios, consortiums, centers, lands and worlds. When the Clip Joint opened up across the road from Lulu’s Hairdressers, Lulu had her place done out in green and white and it became Upper Kut.

After that hair salons grew all over town, having names such as Head Office, Headlands, Beyond the Fringe, Hairport, Hairwaves, Hedlines, Siz’s, Curl Up and Dye.

So the town was growing in size, wealth and reputation. Booming. Many of the new business people were from the new Ikanui, the place of abundant fish. These newcomers had brought their upmarket Aussie ideas to eating establishments, accommodation, shops, cinema, pre-loved cars, newspaper publishing, transport, imports, exports, distribution. Good on them. The business people drew up a petition supporting the new residents and their fine activities, and this petition was eventually signed by everyone within a twenty-kilometer radius. This had media impact.

But that wasn't all that was going on.

Billy had found other areas suitable for purchase and settlement, and Rena had done her research into the history of these areas so that they knew which of the Ngati Kanguro had ancestral ties to those places. There were six areas in the North Island and six in the South. 'Think of what it does to the voting power,' said Hiko, who was on the rise in local politics. Easy street, since all he needed was numbers.

Makere, who had lost her reluctance and become wholehearted, had taken Hiko's place in the company as liaison manager. This meant that she became the runner between Ozland and Aotearoa, conducting rallies, recruiting families, co-ordinating departures and arrivals. She enjoyed the work.

One day when Makere was filling in time in downtown Auckland before going to the airport, she noticed how much of the central city had closed up, gone to sleep.

'What it needs is people,' she said to the rest of the family when she arrived home.

They were lounging, steaming themselves, showering, hair-dressing, plucking eyebrows, in their enormous bathroom. She let herself down into the Jacuzzi.

'Five hundred families to liven up the central city again. Signatures on papers, and then we turn those unwanted, wasteland wilderness of warehouses and office spaces into town houses, penthouses and apartments.' She lay back and closed her eyes. She could see the crowds once again seething in Queen Street renamed Ara Makere, buying, selling, eating, drinking, talking, laughing, yelling, singing, going to shows. But not only in Queen Street. Not only in Auckland. Oh, it truly was high and holy work. This Kamupene o te Hokinga Mai was 'a great and unwonted blessing'. Mind-blowing. She sat up.

'And businesses. So we'll have to line up all our architects, designers, builders, plumbers, electricians, consultants, programmers,' she said.

'"Soap boilers, tinkers and a maker of dolls' eyes"', said Billy.

'The ones already here as well the ones still in Oz,' Makere said. 'Set them to work and use some of this damn money getting those places done up. Open up a whole lot of shops, restaurants, agencies. . . .' She lay back again with her feet elevated. They swam in the spinning water like macabre fish.

'It's brilliant, Ma,' Billy said, stripping off and walking across the floor with his toes turned up and his insteps arched—in fact, allow-

ing only part of each heel and the ball joints of his big toes to touch the cold tile floor. With the stress of getting across the room on no more than heel and bone, his jaw, shoulders, elbows and knees became locked and he had a clench in each hand as well as in the bulge of his stomach.

‘Those plumbers that you’re talking about can come and run a few hot pipes under the floor here. Whoever built this place should’ve thought of that. But of course they were all summer people, so how would they know?’ He lowered himself into the water, unlocking and letting out a slow, growling breath.

‘We’ll need different bits of paper for downtown business properties,’ said Tu from the steam bench.

‘Central Auckland was originally Ngati Whatua I suppose,’ said Rena, who lost concentration on what she was doing for a moment and plucked out a complete eyebrow. ‘I’ll check it through then arrange a hui with them.’

‘Think of it, we can influx any time of the year,’ said Billy. ‘We can work on getting people into the city in our off-season. January. . . . And it’s not only Auckland, it’s every city.’

‘And as well as the business places there are so many houses in the cities empty at that time of the year too,’ said Makere, narrowing her eyes while Billy’s eyes widened. ‘So we can look at those leaving to go on holiday as well as those leaving holiday places after the season is over. We can keep on influxing from Oz of course, but there are plenty of locals without good housing. We can round them all up, the solos, the UBs, pensioners, low-income earners, street kids, derros.’

‘Different papers again for suburban homes,’ said Tu.

‘Candidates and more candidates, votes and more votes,’ said Hiko, who had come from next door wearing a towel and carrying a briefcase. ‘And why stop at Oz? We’ve got Maori communities in Utah, in London, all over the place.’

‘When do we go out snooping, Dad?’ asked Hana and Gavin, who had been blow-waving each other’s hair.

‘Fact finding, fact finding,’ said Billy. ‘We might need three or four teams, I’ll round up a few for training.’

‘I need a video camera,’ said Hana.

‘Video for Hana,’ said Billy.

‘Motorbike,’ said Gavin.

‘Motorbike,’ said Billy.

‘Motorbike,’ said Hana.

‘Two motorbikes,’ said Billy.

‘Bigger offices, more staff,’ said Tu and Rena.

‘See to it,’ said Billy.

‘Settlements within the cities,’ said Makere, who was still with solos, UB, check-out operators and such. ‘Around churches. Churches, sitting there idle wastelands, wildernesses of churches.’

‘And “really of no value”,’ said Billy. ‘Until they become . . .’

‘Meeting houses,’ Makere said. ‘Wharenuui.’

‘Great. Redo the fronts, change the decor and we have all these new wharenuui, one every block or so. Take over surrounding properties for kohanga, kura kaupapa, kaumatua housing, health and rehab centers, radio stations, TV channels. . . .’

‘Deeds of sale for church properties,’ said Tu.

‘More party candidates as well,’ Hiko said. ‘We’ll need everything in place before the new . . . government comes in. . . .’

‘And by then we’ll have “friends in high places”.’

‘Have our person at the top, our little surprise . . .’

‘Who will be advised that it is better to reach a final and satisfactory conclusion than . . .’

‘“ . . . to reopen questions of strict right, or carry on an unprofitable controversy”.’

‘Then there’s golf clubs,’ said Makere.

‘I’ll find out how many people per week, per acre use golf courses,’ said Rena. ‘We’ll find wasteland and wilderness there for sure.’

‘And find out how the land was acquired and how it can be re-acquired,’ said Billy.

‘Remember all the land given for schools? A lot of those schools have closed now.’

‘Land given for the war effort and not returned.’

‘Find out who gave what and how it will be returned.’

‘Railways.’

‘Find out how much is owed to us from sale of railways.’

‘Cemeteries.’

‘Find out what we’ve saved the taxpayer by providing and maintaining our own cemeteries, burying our own dead. Make up claims.’

‘And there are some going concerns that need new ownership too, or rather where old ownership needs reestablishing. . . .’

‘Sport and recreation parks.’

‘Lake and river retreats. . . .’

‘Mountain resorts. . . .’

Billy hoisted himself. ‘Twenty or thirty teams and no time to waste.’ He splatted across the tiles. ‘Because “if from *delay* you allow others to do it before you—they will succeed and you will fail”,’ and he let out a rattle and a shuffle of a laugh that sounded like someone sweeping up smashings of glass with a noisy broom.

‘Get moving,’ he said.

INTEGRATING “THE PAST” INTO
“THE PRESENT”

26

Our Pacific

Vaine Rasmussen

There is not *one* Pacific
There are many
From the solid slopes of Mount Hagen
 and Porgera’s wealth in the west
To the Pearl locked islets
 of Tuamotu’s east
From the chilly tips
 of Maoridom south
To the borders of the Northern territories
 and her mysteries that span from equator
 to Cancer.

There is not *one* troubled region
There are many
Trade links and nuclear free zones
cohabit with foreign assistance
and internal discord
my sister does not speak with me anymore
and old ways of doing things are re-looked at
Children go to faraway places
and babai pits lie idle and still.

This chapter was originally published in *Te Rau Maire: Poems and Stories of the Pacific*, ed. by Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe, Ron Crocombe, Kauraka Kauraka, and Makiuri Tongia (Rarotonga: Rauranga Vananga and Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies 1992), 13.

There is not *one* Pacific
Only one common theme
That development is certain
Though foreign
And coconuts will continue
to fall,
The Pacific ocean will camouflage
superficial dreams
and the faint sound of drums
will still be heard
if we pause a while to listen.

Treaty-Related Research and Versions of New Zealand History

Alan Ward

Prodigious research efforts and outpourings of new writing on Maori-settler history have been associated largely with the enactment into New Zealand's statute law in 1975 of the Treaty of Waitangi. The treaty, signed between the British Crown and some five hundred Maori chiefs in 1840, had been drawn up by British officials and their missionary advisers for the purposes of securing Maori consent, under Article I of the treaty, to the transfer of sovereignty of the New Zealand islands to the British Crown. It was the act of two "executives" and, of itself, it had no force in domestic law, although it did influence British governments subsequently to uphold Maori rights to land, recognized in Article II. However, the treaty guarantee was not considered by New Zealand officials or courts to prevail against the Crown's prerogative rights, under British common law, to foreshores, harbors, and navigable waters (McHugh 1991:112–116).

The Crown's own dubious land purchases—from some but not all of the rightholders—caused Maori to begin to form supratribal combinations such as the *kingitanga* (the 'King movement') to control landselling factions. The anxiety of the settlers and British officials that colonization of the North Island would be effectively blocked caused the British army to be used by Governor Gore Browne over the Waitara purchase in Taranaki in 1860 and by Governor George Grey to attack the Waikato district, the heart of the *kingitanga*, in 1863 (Sinclair 1957). Thereafter New Zealand governments passed legislation through the settler-dominated parliament giving authority to confiscate Maori land and to take roads and surveys through it. Treaty guarantees could not prevail against these statutory powers. Even the *Native Rights Act* of 1865, which gave statutory authority to the third article of the treaty—according Maori the rights and privileges of British subjects—proved a double-edged weapon. It enabled Maori to

bring actions in the Supreme Court in defense of their legal rights and led, in 1867, to their representation in parliament; it also enabled the government to treat those who took up arms against them as rebels rather than foreign belligerents—and to hang them (Ward 1974: 167–193).

Meanwhile, sections of Maoridom had nurtured a different view of the treaty, the Maori-language version which was the one most had signed. In that version they had ceded to the British, under Article I, *kawanatanga* or "governorship"; under Article II they were confirmed in their *tinu rangatiratanga* or "full chieftainship" of their lands, and other *taonga* (valued things). The British did indeed intend to support the local authority of chiefs, then becoming Christian, but their efforts to define chiefly authority in the emergent state were miserable; indeed, beneath a patina of bribes and blandishments they set out to undermine chiefly authority in order to secure the land. Many chiefs who sought cooperation with the government were driven in the end to join the military resistance of the *kingitanga*, or of the politico-religious "prophets" whose guerrilla tactics carried the wars into the early 1870s (Ward 1974:194–223).

After the wars, Maori leaders attempted a whole variety of strategies to secure recognition of their *rangatiratanga*, and of *mana Maori motuhake*, "Maori self-determination." The *kotahitanga*, or "unity movement," had mobilized most Maori by the 1890s in a boycott of the Native Land Court, justifiably perceived as an instrument for recognizing Maori land rights only as a prelude to alienating them. They won some concessions in 1900 in the form of committees and councils to manage the remaining Maori land, but when these proved reluctant to alienate land, the land councils (renamed boards) were soon put under the control of their Pakeha members. Piecemeal land alienation, under the individualized titles awarded by the Native Land Court, continued; indeed the Maori Land Boards were given certain compulsory authority under new legislation to take control of undeveloped land and alienate portions of it (Williams 1969:33–129).

All the while, Maori involved in the *kotahitanga*—or those who brought actions in the superior courts—tried in vain to cite the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation of their rights in the New Zealand state. There grew up two histories of New Zealand, running parallel and rarely touching each other (Orange 1987a:159–225). The general settler and official version was that Maori had been given the full rights and privileges of British subjects from 1840 in a remarkable

effort at racial “amalgamation” and equality unique in British colonization. If this had exposed them to certain commercial risks, through the transformation of their customary land tenure into individual marketable titles, that was one of the hazards of entering into the modern world. And indeed, by 1900 some Maori had prospered, become farmers, gained education, graduated from universities, held seats in parliament, intermarried with the Pakeha, been ordained in the Anglican clergy, shared in the local sporting clubs and social venues. It was New Zealand’s proud boast, not entirely without foundation, that the age-old problem of intercommunal relations had been solved in a society where racial equality was real. Pakeha did not mention the treaty much in their discourses but, except for the few who got closer to Maori realities and viewpoints, they considered that they had honored it.

The majority Maori version of post-1840 history was very different. They had genuinely sought to engage with the incoming new world, the world of money and commerce and economic development, with the British settlers who knew about these things, and with the machinery of state that had undertaken to protect their *rangatiratanga* and their fair share of status and wealth in the new order. Instead they had found themselves fobbed off with tokenism and condescension. Economically, they had been systematically marginalized. Most Maori lived in rural slums, amidst harsh poverty and appalling health. Lacking access to capital, they had had to sell far more land than they intended in order to buy commodities and to start their own ventures. Caught in a debt trap, they had to sell yet more land. Factionalism and pseudo-individualization of titles enabled the purchasers to take advantage of inexperience and cupidity (Ward 1974:308–315). It was no accident that both the formally educated and traditional leaders at the turn of the twentieth century made demands for *hapu*-based rather than individual control of land and for capital for development, already available to Pakeha under the Advances to Settlers Acts. These modifications were grudgingly admitted by settler governments in respect of portions of remaining Maori land—about 4 million out of 64 million acres were left in the 1930s.

After the First World War, in which Maori soldiers fought alongside Pakeha comrades, a new effort to secure ratification of the treaty was made by the Ratana Church, founded by Wiremu Ratana after 1926, again with the traditional features of prophecy and faith healing, but looking always to gain access to modernization and genuine

socioeconomic equality. A remarkable compact between Ratana and the leaders of the emergent New Zealand Labour Party saw Labour choosing Ratana candidates as its nominees for the four Maori seats in parliament. By 1943 they had won all four and were crucial to Labour retaining office (Henderson 1963:85–106). Even so, Labour's policy, in its long period of government from 1935 to 1949, did not substantially alter the direction of policies toward Maori. Labour's Keynesian-style economics, its housing, medical, and family support systems, its extension of state secondary education to rural areas, benefited the Maori poor more than the Pakeha poor only because Maori were previously worse off. The *Maori Social and Economic Advancement Act* of 1945 revived the network of tribal committees to assist in the delivery of welfare and increased support for Maori farming (Orange 1987b). Some very limited payments were made to tribal Trust Boards in recompense for land confiscations, acknowledged by a commission of inquiry in the 1920s to be unjust. Full employment and state housing schemes enabled a massive Maori urban migration to occur relatively painlessly. From the non-Maori perspective, the integration of Maori and settler into one New Zealand society seemed entirely successful.

Most New Zealanders then were taken completely by surprise when this Maori hidden history erupted into increasingly fierce protests from the late 1960s. The trigger, appropriately enough, was a set of seemingly innocuous amendments relating to Maori land in the annual "wash-up" bill of 1967. Maori land titles had become increasingly fractionated as the Maori population burgeoned and the interests of one generation were divided among many descendants in the next. It seemed only sensible to the planners, including Maori planners in the Department of Maori Affairs, to pool these "uneconomic interests" and to convert some categories of "Maori freehold land" into "general land," able to be leased, mortgaged, willed, or even sold without any of the confused constraints that now applied to Maori land. But to Maori, the bill was an act of latter-day paternalism at best and threatened the remaining land interests of many Maori, hence threatening their identity. New Zealand was in fact on the eve of a vast Maori cultural resurgence. Protest was led by educated young Maori and by the official New Zealand Maori Council, formed in 1962. They were quickly joined by widespread urban and rural protest organizations (Kawharu 1977:251–293; Walker 1991:615–624). Land occupations began on blocks acquired (like Raglan golf course)

or about to be acquired (like Bastion Point in Auckland city) under planning legislation. A great “land march” from North Cape to the parliament in Wellington was organized by the protest groups and led by a venerable *kuia*, a leader of the Maori Women’s Welfare League, Dame Whina Cooper (Ward 1991:97–98). Meanwhile, the period of economic boom and full employment had given way to recession and unemployment. This intensified the problems of newly urbanized Maori. The social control exercised in semitraditional fashion in rural areas was not wholly reestablished in the cities, and crime and violence among young Maori rapidly increased.

In Parliament, Maori Ratana/Labour members continued to press for statutory recognition of the treaty as an important step toward recognizing Maori rights and needs (Orange 1987a:232–249). In 1975, “with the footsteps of the land marchers ringing in their ears” (as one Opposition speaker taunted), the Labour government accepted a bill proposed by Mr. Matiu Rata, minister for Maori Affairs, which provided that, henceforth, any Maori or group of Maori who considered they were prejudicially affected by any act of the Crown or its agents in breach of the principles of the treaty, could bring a claim to a new tribunal, the Waitangi Tribunal. This body, comprising three Maori and Pakeha members, would act as a commission of inquiry, investigate widely, and make recommendations. The *Treaty of Waitangi Act* was not retrospective, and many Maori groups—such as the Ngai Tahu of the South Island, who had for a century pursued their claims arising from the Crown’s acquisitions of the island in the 1840s and 1850s—were disappointed. Few claims were brought to the tribunal and major demonstrations, sometimes violent, continued, notably on Waitangi Day itself, established by Labour as a national holiday but rapidly becoming a focus of protest.

In 1982, however, Mr. Edward (“Eddie”) Taihakurei Durie became chief judge of the Maori Land Court and, ex officio, chairman of the Waitangi Tribunal. Durie began to use the tribunal’s investigations and reports to spell out the principles of the treaty, to develop a bicultural jurisprudence, and to review history that bore on the contemporary issues at hand. The Motunui report of 1983, for example, concerning the pollution of a fishing reef by sewage from the town of Waitara (the very same area over which war had begun in 1860) emphasized Maori spiritual and cultural values in relation to seafood and to water. It advocated a more genuine place for Maori in the control of such resources, as a treaty right. Subsequent reports spelled out the

historical relationship between Maori and settler in respect of planning and conservation and the impact of colonization on Maori resources and values, reaching back to 1840 (Oliver 1991:10–17; Renwick 1990:16–44). Largely the product of Durie's subtle mind and writing skills, which eschewed legalistic and jargonistic language, the reports evinced an essential reasonableness and powerful but gentle reminders of the engagements the Crown had solemnly and publicly entered into with the Maori.

Sensitive to its somewhat undeserved reputation for good race relations and bewildered by the escalating social problems and protests, middle-class New Zealand began to look to the Waitangi Tribunal as an avenue for reform. A huge *hui*, an "economic summit" in effect, convened at Ngaruawahia, the seat of the *kingitanga*, in 1984, called for a significant transfer of resources back to Maori ownership and control in order to relieve Maori marginality, unemployment, and sense of alienation in their own country. The concept was thus born of linking the resource transfer to the investigation and redress of historical injuries. In 1985 the Labour government of David Lange amended the *Treaty of Waitangi Act* to give the tribunal jurisdiction back to 1840.

The amendment—a two-line amendment to the principal act—reflected the ignorance of the Labour ministers (in particular the attorney-general, Geoffrey Palmer) of New Zealand history and Maori understandings of it. It was apparently assumed that the grievances would be relatively few and manageable—the land confiscations of the 1860s, taking of Maori land for public purposes and not returning it when it was not required, unfulfilled promises about reserves in Wellington and the South Island, for example. The legislators did not apprehend that for Maori, the key issue was the treaty guarantee of *tino rangatiratanga* and its erosion by myriad acts of the Crown since 1840. Most notably they did not apprehend that, in many Maoris' view, the Native Land Acts, while initiating a process of legalized transfer of Maori land, had seriously distorted or misconstrued customary rights. Under the *Treaty of Waitangi Amendment Act* of 1985, virtually all Maori land transfers could be reviewed.

Thirty or forty claims were lodged in the first two years after the amendment. Claims then grew rapidly to 88 in 1987, 216 in 1991, 289 in 1992, 360 in 1993, 442 in 1994, and 720 by 1998, at which date about 190 had been investigated and reported upon, 31 settled by direct negotiation with the government, and 19 withdrawn (Waitangi

Tribunal annual reports). Many claims overlap because of competing tribal or factional interests in the same land. The tribunal was expanded to seven members in 1985 and sixteen in 1988 (comprising senior Maori and Pakeha community leaders, as well as lawyers and academics), with several panels working simultaneously. Its research staff was also expanded, and claims were grouped and treated on a regional basis as far as possible. Even so, the researching and hearing of claims cannot possibly keep up with the applications if serious investigation is to be done.

The complexity of the process was revealed in the first major set of claims heard in the post-1985 process, those of the Ngai Tahu tribe of the South Island. The claimants used professional historians both to comb the documentary record and to assemble oral tradition. The Crown did the same, appraising the evidence of the claimants and adding much of its own. The tribunal itself also hired historians to appraise Crown and claimant evidence and to fill any gaps in the research. The exchange of argument, rebuttal, and fresh submissions went on for three years. Evidence and inference from evidence were very finely weighed. In the process, manifold different understandings were revealed that would delight any cultural relativist or “montage” historian.

It is perfectly obvious, of course, regardless of any tendentious selection or weighting of evidence to show the Crown guilty or innocent of wrongdoing in the great South Island purchases of the 1840s and 1850s, that various versions of what happened were genuinely held by different parties. What was “true” for one was not “true” for another. One of the great values of the Waitangi Tribunal proceedings is to enable Maori claimants to voice their understandings and concerns about land alienations before a tribunal of the state, including known and reputed Maori leaders. The satisfaction of voicing their long-submerged histories is one of the reasons for the outpouring of claims. An important outcome for non-Maori (for those who care, at least) is a much better understanding of Maoris’ sense of grievance and alienation, even if Maori claims are not found to be well grounded, or not wholly so.

But the Waitangi Tribunal, and the general public behind them, have not the luxury of merely noting different “discourses” or perceptions of the past and accepting the relativist position that the various Maori perceptions are as equally valid as one another or as the various versions delineated by Crown or tribunal historians. The tri-

bunal is obliged to try to disentangle fact from myth or misunderstanding as far as possible, even while acknowledging the multifaceted nature of "facts" and the reality of mythological and symbolic meanings. Its statutory obligation is to determine whether actions by the Crown breached principles of the Treaty—principles that were defined by the Court of Appeal in 1987 as including the duty of "active protection" of Maori rights (consistent with evident public necessity), consulting meaningfully with them on matters affecting them, and dealing with them reasonably and with the utmost good faith.

The task of disentangling and decoding the evidence was addressed again and again in the Ngai Tahu proceedings, in the seemingly small as in the great matters. Thus, among Ngai Tahu there was a belief that a British warship had conveyed the northern chief Te Rauparaha (of Ngati Toa) on his devastating raids on Ngai Tahu in 1830 in order to make them more amenable to land selling. However, there is a substantial documentary record to show that Te Rauparaha was conveyed south by a merchant captain, Stewart, in exchange for a cargo of flax, and that, far from condoning the incident, the authorities in New South Wales prosecuted Stewart in their courts. Notwithstanding the popular belief among Ngai Tahu that stems from a tendency to see the British Crown as the root of all their evils, the Crown was not to blame on this occasion (Ward 1990:151–152).

Important issues about memory and silence arose in respect of the Otakou purchase of 1844 for the settlement of "New Edinburgh," or Dunedin. The central issue was the extent of reserves promised to the vendors. In 1844 Governor FitzRoy was initiating a policy of reserving to the Crown a tenth of all the sections in subdivision sales as an endowment principally for Maori purposes. But the "tenths" had proved dissatisfying to Maori in Wellington, and in the tribunal the Crown produced evidence to show that in Otakou, Maori preferred reserves in three or four bigger blocks, in their own name—notably their own little township built with the whaling captains at Otakou heads. The claimants in 1987 argued that there were still unfulfilled promises of "tenths" in Dunedin itself, and that the Ngai Tahu had never ceased to press for these. There was, however, no sign of evidence in the documentary record of any early protest on the matter after 1844, despite detailed records of protest on other matters when the governor or a minister visited the area. Not until 1867 did protest really surface, and then it was over a particular canoe landing site and hostel in Dunedin (Waitangi Tribunal 1989, Document Wai 27,

T1:73–109). The tribunal found that there was no unfulfilled promise of “tenths” in New Edinburgh.

In subsequent discussion at the New Zealand Historical Association conference of 1990, some speakers alleged that the proceedings of the tribunal were Eurocentric in that they favored Pakeha written evidence over Maori oral tradition. Tribunal scholars argued that it was not a question of Maori or Pakeha, written or oral, but that the earliest evidence was preferred to evidence generated later, that evidence of the words and actions of the participants at or immediately after the events at issue were thought more significant for the purpose of assessing breaches of the treaty than the evidence of traditions or understandings that grew up subsequently (Ward 1990).

These matters also arose in respect of the Canterbury purchase of 1848. A key issue was whether the western boundary extended only to the foothills of the Southern Alps, or right across to the west coast, including the Alps in the sale. In February 1848, Ngai Tahu leaders had met with Governor Grey and made an offer that clearly referred only to the Canterbury plains and foothills. But in June 1848, the actual land purchase commissioner, Kemp, negotiated for all Ngai Tahu interests from coast to coast. Given that he had spent three days discussing the purchase with Ngai Tahu chiefs visiting his ship, given that he had drawn up and displayed on the deck a large map showing the western coast and place names on it provided by the chiefs, given also that several chiefs thereafter discussed reserves on a coast-to-coast basis, the tribunal rejected the 1987 assertion by the claimants that they had not included the mountains in the sale.

This discussion nevertheless yielded very important evidence of different cultural understandings about what “sale” meant within general boundaries. At a Commission of Inquiry of 1879 (when verbatim evidence had been taken in Maori), an elderly Ngai Tahu chief, Tiramorehu, said that he and his kinsmen had intended to keep the use of the swamps and streams and valley floors for their traditional economy, and named a range of such areas. When asked, “What land then did you sell to the government?” he replied, “The same land.” In other words, he considered that a number of different interests could coexist in the same land, held by different parties. That was the way of things in Polynesian tenure, not sharply defined zones and boundaries or the English concept of “exclusive possessions.” He had no difficulty including the Pakeha as graziers on the ridge tops (Ward 1994, reference to the evidence of Tiramorehu before the Smith-Nairn

commission, 1879). Fortunately for Ngai Tahu, the Kemp deed had reserved *mahinga kai*—places of hunting and gathering—to the vendors, and the tribunal upheld this claim and many others in the package of claims lodged in 1987.

The question of Maori understandings of *tuku* and *hoko*—Maori words generally used to translate the English "sale"—was heavily at issue in the Muriwhenua claims in the far north of the Northland peninsula, a remote region. Several noted New Zealand anthropologists—Dr. Margaret Mutu, Professor Anne Salmond, and Dame Joan Metge—presented submissions to the effect that Maori in the 1830s and 1840s could not have conceived of sales as complete and permanent alienations. They argued that a "*tuku whenua*" was a grant of use rights, conditional on good behavior and continued exchange of prestations, and with certain uses of the ground by the Maori group also continuing (Waitangi Tribunal 1991, claim Wai 45, Documents F-12 [Mutu], F-13 [Metge], D-17 [Salmond]). The basis of the anthropologists' argument was cultural structuralism, a delineation of traditional institutions, and historical evidence (Waitangi Tribunal, Wai 45, F-17) that Maori views of transactions persisted into the period of settlement and land "sales."

Rebuttal came from two directions. Ms. Lindsay Head, a linguist, basing her arguments on the Maori texts that accumulated rapidly when Maori became literate in the 1830s, showed considerable variation in the meanings of *tuku* and *hoko*. She considered the anthropologists' arguments to be altogether too reductionist and reifying (Waitangi Tribunal 1991, Wai 45, F-21). A historian for the Crown, Mr. Fergus Sinclair, then combed exhaustively the voluminous missionary records from the wider Northland region and showed that many Maori there had been involved in commerce for two decades and had very clear notions of full and permanent transfer. It appears that some deliberately sold land, in the European sense, in the 1830s, for a variety of reasons, often moving away from the areas sold and leaving missionaries or other settlers in undisturbed possession (Waitangi Tribunal, Wai 45, 1993, I-3). The tribunal reported on the Muriwhenua claims in 1997 and found strongly in the claimants' favor. Maori worldviews clearly operated at the time of the land transactions, and very few settlers arrived to disturb it before 1865 (Waitangi Tribunal, 1997, Muriwhenua Land Report).

The debate is far from finished, but taking a broader and more national perspective, the treaty-related research suggests at least three

main phases in Maori attitudes to land sales. Early “alienations” of huge tracts in the 1820s and 1830s in the South Island show very plainly that Maori were *including* the Pakeha into their own society and expecting them to behave accordingly on land that was still seen as under Maori mana. Then, in the 1830s and 1840s, especially in the north (with European shipping and settlement abundant), there appears to have been a phase of competitive selling between *hapu* who had overlapping interests in a relatively small area. One motivation appears to have been to sell before someone else sold the land from underneath one; selling was a kind of assertion of mana, with Maori perhaps not yet appreciating that (according to the British) they no longer had any rights in the land. Later, in the 1850s, there was a widespread revulsion against this trend, particularly in South Auckland, Hauraki, and Hawkes Bay. Throughout the North Island, tribal (not *hapu*) and supratribal organizations emerged to stop the competitive selling. In remote areas such as Poverty Bay, it began to be made clear to settlers that the earlier transactions there were not considered sales of absolute title, partly because not all rightholders had been involved and partly because Maori were not thinking in these terms anyway.

The main vehicle for this analysis is empirical history, focused by the claims brought against the Crown and informed and enriched by much better understandings of Maori values and institutions. In the process, the dichotomies between oral and written and Maori and Pakeha evidence break down. For example, Maori have become aware of the very rich stock of Maori-language documentation from the 1830s and are thronging the archives to find out what their *tupuna* wrote, or their words as recorded by others. The vast records of the Native Land Court, recording the *whakapapa* and other oral testimony of Maori leaders from 1865, are being tapped extensively (Dr. Angela Ballara’s book *Iwi: The Dynamics of Maori Tribal Organisation from c. 1769 to c. 1945*, Victoria University of Wellington Press, 1998, is a fine product of this research). Not much high theory is involved in this, but hermeneutic and semiotic understandings are habitually invoked in the detailed explication of “what happened” or of what was culturally constructed and understood. There is constant recognition that, as in the Ngai Tahu examples cited above, different understandings were sometimes held by various parties to the same action. Misunderstanding was obviously commonplace, but the evidence of mutual understanding between Maori and Pakeha actors on

an ongoing basis is also strong. Frequently it is plain that each understood the other all too well, and that the jockeying for control created an inexorably mounted pressure over twenty years as Maori or Pakeha sought to make the other conform, until the cataclysm launched in 1860 by Pakeha who recognized that an impasse had been reached and sought to enforce their system of land title and land purchase by use of the army.

Although there is increasing mention in anthropology departments of a distinct Maori epistemology, the tribunal's essentially nonrelativist view of history meets the current purposes of most Maori perfectly well because the research shows the Crown to have been in the wrong, again and again, in terms of Maori treaty rights and even of common-law rights. Apart from the *tuku whenua* debate, there is no widespread call for a general relativized view based on cultural dichotomy and "talking past each other," although that is apparent in specific matters. The tribunal's tendency to distinguish, where appropriate, between the understandings of the actual Maori parties to a land transfer and the modified understandings ("myths") that grew subsequently is not always pleasing to Maori claimants.

Another pressure toward a culturally sensitive but positivist view of the evidence of the past is the rapidly increasing competition between Maori groups for the same land or for the Crown's compensation payments. Historians and anthropologists alike have shown that Maori *whakapapa* (genealogy and associated stories) were quoted selectively by the tellers to support claims against rivals (Ballara 1991; Binney 1987; Salmond 1991). This was consistent with the constant flux in the human boundaries of *hapu* and *hapu* clusters. Traditionally, Maori society had happily used this process to maximize group strengths and control over resources. But of course it did *not* result in tidy boundaries between groups and their lands.

The contact period, the very fact of landselling, and the later process of proving claims in the Native Land Court after 1865 (with one group "winning" and the others "losing" in the Pakeha-dominated judicial process) produced a quasi-reconstruction of Maori social order. About forty major "tribes" were identified and maps drawn with neat "tribal" boundaries demarcating them. Scores of other *iwi* (tribal) or *hapu* names disappeared from the public record. The resulting orthodoxy, shaped by the Land Court and early Pakeha anthropology, came to be accepted by many Maori themselves.

The treaty processes have blown all this to the four winds. To the

puzzlement and sometimes the dismay of modern Maori leaders, the submerged traditional dynamics and complexity of Maori social order has reasserted itself with astonishing vigor. The Ngai Tahu “tribe,” for example, tenuously held together for the purposes of the claim by Sir Tipene O’Regan, has since produced fiercely independent claims by Waitaha *hapu* in the far south and Tuhuru *hapu* on the West Coast, with the latter represented by the able member of parliament, Sandra Lee, a constant irritant to Sir Tipene. In 1990, the Labour Government enacted a *Runanga Iwi Act* to empower local *iwi* councils and to replace the centralized Department of Maori Affairs with an “Iwi Transition Authority” (ITA). The intention was to decentralize expenditure and promote real self-determination at *iwi* level, but with positions and budgets on offer, Runanga Iwi proliferated across the country, absorbing development funds in fees and expenses. O’Regan jibed at the “add water, instant *iwi*” phenomenon and the integrationist Maori leader, Winston Peters, briefly minister for Maori Affairs in the National Government of 1992, abolished the Runanga Iwi and the ITA.

But the tendency toward reassertion of local *hapu* identity is real and fundamental nevertheless, and it constantly bedevils attempts at treaty “settlements.” Negotiations over valuable railway lands in central Auckland and central Wellington in 1992–1993 produced claims not only from Maori groups now resident in the area, but from groups defeated and expelled in intertribal war just before white settlement. They had left their place names and their dead on the land too, they argued; they too were therefore *tangata whenua*—people of the land. The conquering groups expostulated; the defeated parties might have certain sacred sites (*wahi tapu*) where their dead lay, they acknowledged, but *mana whenua*, the authority over the land, generally lay with the invaders. Yet, say the defeated, the invaders intermarried with us; we too can “*whakapapa* in” to those lands (Ward 1993:196–200).

Most recently the urban immigrant groups, now in their second and third generation of residence in the cities, have also begun to claim rights as *tangata whenua* of those lands. The terms “*tangata whenua*” and “*mana whenua*” have thus become problematic. Clearly there were various claims of right to land, but how were the priorities between them decided? Was it essentially a matter of dominant power? Or (as the Moriori of the Chatham Islands argue against their Maori conquerors of 1835) did conquest only give *mana tangata*, not *mana whenua*, which still lay with the first occupants? And when did rights grow so “cold,” by nonresidence, as to cease altogether?

These questions are so serious and so contentious for modern Maori (let alone for Pakeha administrators) that Chief Judge Durie has recently secured the cooperation of the New Zealand Law Commission to launch a research project, designed to run over four years, into Maori customary law. The project has since been taken over by the Law faculty of the University of Waikato. The research will be cross-disciplinary and biracial, involving Maori elders and Maori and Pakeha academics and lawyers. It was intended to focus on determining a Maori "jurisprudence"—that is, the principles and values underlying customary practices, as well as the customary practices themselves. The long series of meetings and discussion papers will involve Maori people throughout the community in what is hoped to be both an intellectual decolonization and to revive values and procedures that will enable Maori to resolve differences and work for mutual advancement in modern New Zealand. Similar research projects have been launched by the Maori Studies faculty of Massey University.

Meanwhile, efforts at transfer of resources to Maori have begun, notably in the area of sea fisheries. Maori claims to unextinguished rights in the sea and foreshore were greatly assisted by a 1986 decision of the High Court in the case of *Te Weehi v. the Regional Fishing Officer*. When charged with taking undersized shellfish, Te Weehi claimed to be exercising a customary fishing right. The trial judge referred to recent Canadian judgments such as Calder's case, Guerin's case, and Sparrow's case and found similarly: That unless expressly extinguished by legislation, customary rights survive the transfer of sovereignty. The superior courts also supported claims by the New Zealand Maori Council in support of Waitangi Tribunal findings in the Muriwhenua Sea Fisheries report, and ordered the Crown to negotiate with Maori representatives (McHugh 1991:130–132).

The negotiations came dramatically to a climax in 1992 when the giant Sealords fish processing corporation put much of its shareholding on the market. The government offered the Maori Fishing Corporation NZ\$150 million to purchase the shareholding, plus 20 percent of fishing quotas not yet allocated, as full settlement of Maori commercial fishing claims. Maori were deeply torn between accepting an excellent offer, including immediate ownership of much of the fishing industry, and signing away indefinitely their treaty claims to commercial fisheries. Given that the Crown would have contested further claims in the courts, it was sensible to accept. But the subsequent allocation of the quotas and interests between Maori has proved very divi-

sive, pitting the *iwi* (tribes) claiming customary control of long coastlines against the inland *iwi*, some very numerous, who seek a distribution mainly on a population basis. Well-organized urban Maori groups in Auckland, such as the Waipareira Trust, have also claimed recognition as *iwi*, entitled to share in the distribution of fishing quotas. Interim arrangements have been made, but the issues are repeatedly before the courts.

The intensity of feeling over the divisions of the fisheries has caused Maori leadership to be increasingly concerned about the basis of eventual distribution of remedy for historical claims about land. The New Zealand Maori Council was again successful in the High Court in an action regarding the sale of Crown assets in the government's privatization policy, launched in 1986. Crown lands and forests, coal, hydroelectricity, and geothermal power are assumed by Maori to be important sources of redress for historical injury. On behalf of claimants, the Waitangi Tribunal secured the addition of a clause in the *State Owned Enterprises Act* of 1986 requiring the Crown to act consistently with the principles of the treaty. The following year the Maori Council secured a High Court judgment to the effect that the Crown had a duty "analogous to fiduciary duties" to affirm those principles, the court noting that the duty of the Crown "is not merely passive but extends to active protection" of Maori people's interests in lands and waters. The Court again required the Crown to satisfy it that the Treaty obligation in the SOE Act would be complied with. The outcome was that memorials were placed in the titles of land sold by state-owned enterprises whereby the Crown would be obliged to buy back the land if it was determined necessary by the Waitangi Tribunal to remedy a grievance (Renwick 1990:57-59).

A similar question arose in regard to Crown forests, between 10 and 20 percent of which are estimated to be on land still technically Maori land or land acquired in breach of the treaty. The government established a Crown Forestry Rental Trust (CFRT) to receive rentals and cutting-rights payments, pending determination by the tribunal, of claims over forested land. The trust meanwhile was authorized to fund research by and on behalf of the claimants in respect of these lands (Renwick 1990:73-76). The CFRT is now by far the best-funded organization for research in New Zealand history. Not surprisingly, some of the most able young historians in the country are now working for tribal groups on CFRT funding. This, to some extent, has sapped the research skills of the tribunal itself, which is tied to public

service salary scales, with a resultant threat to the institutional knowledge of the tribunal.

Nevertheless, CFRT and tribunal researchers collaborate in the shaping of projects. Many of these fall within a program called *Rangahaua Whanui* ("Research Widely") launched by Chief Judge Durie in 1993. The purpose of this project was to supplement research done in respect of claims, which are inevitably somewhat capricious and incomplete in their coverage. Various themes, such as the operation of the Native Land Acts in the nineteenth century or of Maori Land Boards in the twentieth, have national application; projects on these themes relate to most or all local claims. By these means the tribunal is seeking to meet the research needs of treaty-related claims, increasingly numerous and complex as they are. Meanwhile, the Pakeha electorate and successive governments have been increasingly impatient of the proliferation of Maori claims and the high value of settlements sought by Ngai Tahu (on the basis of the exhausting tribunal report on their claim) and by the Tainui tribes, the core of the *kingitanga* whose claim for compensation for land confiscation the government has, in principle, acknowledged. Very high expectations have been generated among Maori by the 1985 amendment and the legislation affecting SOE assets and Crown forests. Estimates of the total value of Maori claims range as high as \$93 million, far beyond the capacity of the economy to bear. By 1994, with no agreement on a benchmark settlement and both government and Maori impatience rising, the government—guided by Mr. Doug Graham, minister for Justice and minister in charge of Treaty of Waitangi negotiations—sought to impose what it regards as realistic bounds on the whole process.

On December 8, 1994, amidst considerable fanfare, the government released a set of "Crown Proposals for Settlement of Treaty of Waitangi Claims." The essence of the proposal was a "Fiscal Envelope" or "Settlement Envelope" of \$1 billion, less the direct cost of the fisheries settlement, estimated to be \$170 million, and less research costs funded by the Crown since September 1992. This sum was fixed and nonnegotiable. All other settlements of historical grievances were to be met from this "fiscal envelope" over about a ten-year period. Each claim was to be individually negotiated and settled; there would be no "global" or pan-Maori settlement. The government would require to be satisfied that Maori negotiating parties were properly recognized representatives of their group; the Waitangi Tribunal or the Maori Land Court could hear objections on that point. A date by which historical claims should be lodged would also need to be agreed upon.

The proposal immediately met with concerted opposition from Maori. The government had hoped to oblige Maori to come to realistic negotiating positions, having regard both to the economy as a whole and to those groups coming later in the queue (rather than having Ngai Tahu and Tainui, for example, carry away the bulk of the recompense, leaving little for those who come after). From Maori points of view, however, the “fiscal envelope” invited an unseemly scramble for hopelessly limited payments. More seriously, many senior and moderate Maori leaders were affronted that the whole proposal had been determined without widespread formal consultation with Maori: They saw it as Pakeha paternalism again, diminishing Maori *rangatiratanga*.

Indeed, the proposal had about it the air of an attempt to stuff the genie back in the bottle, after another paternalistic and ill-considered act of government in 1985 had let it out. It is indeed understandable that government in the mid-1990s should try to bring within bounds the so-called “grievance industry” launched in 1985, but it has gone about it in a somewhat inept fashion. Just as Geoffrey Palmer and David Lange in 1984–1985 essentially bypassed much of the Maori leadership, so did Messrs. Graham and Bolger in 1994. They fear that the “grievance industry” is divisive of Maori against Pakeha, threatening to economic stability and indeed to civil order, since extravagant claims cannot be met and some Maori radicals have made threats to property if they do not get their way. But most Maori do not want instability either and are concerned about the increasingly fierce divisions *between* Maori that the claims have fostered. The government could well take them more into their confidence in addressing these matters. For Maori too have vested interests in the New Zealand economy. Either they are themselves entrepreneurs and farmers, or they know well that the horrendous unemployment among Maori needs to be reduced by economic development. More fundamentally, they are angry about being treated as junior players, not equal treaty partners, as the rhetoric of governments and judges since 1985 would have them believe.

Ultimately self-defeating too, probably, is the government’s determination to negotiate each and every claim, with a “global” Maori settlement ruled out. For many Maori are not tribal; at the last census some 20 percent could not name their tribe. Yet Maori as a whole were injured by the landgrab. A more flexible strategy is certainly called for, with particular injuries addressed but also the *systematic* and *structural* causes of marginalization, namely the advent of a

money economy—an economy based on capital investment among a people who could raise no capital except by selling land and who were then prevented by the divisive land laws and compulsory acquisitions from readily engaging in development themselves.

Some Maori leaders are urging that too much focus on the past is intensifying divisions and is wasteful of precious energies and resources, leading to exaggerated demands. They would settle for an adequate transfer of capital and resources to provide an economic base for each region, including interests in urban developments—a demand common to the whole Pacific region in fact. Generally, however, resource transfer to Maori remains linked to treaty claims.

Moreover, there have been some important settlements of claims. Within a week of announcing its proposals, which included the "fiscal envelope," the government announced that it had reached agreement with the Tainui tribes of the central North Island with regard to claims arising from the vast confiscations of land in the Waikato Valley in the 1860s. The settlement was for \$170 million, partly in land (including that upon which the University of Waikato has been built) and partly in cash. Although not all *hapu* were content with a settlement far below the current value of the land taken, Sir Robert Mahuta and the central leadership of the *kingitanga* (essentially a Tainui organization) believed that time was important: With capital of that order they could set about achieving their social, economic, and educational goals and buy back more land in the bargain. So far, their management strategies suggest that their optimism is entirely justified.

In 1997, Ngai Tahu also agreed with the Crown a settlement package of \$170 million in land and money. Ngai Tahu also won important rights of comanagement in the conservation estate, which is so important to both Maori and non-Maori in New Zealand's beautiful South Island.

In the light of the Tainui settlement and of research that has shown the level of claims settlements still to be faced, the coalition government that took office in late 1996 declared that the fiscal envelope of 1994 was no longer official policy and that existing levels of settlement would be regarded as a benchmark for future settlements. The Tainui (Waikato confiscation) claim is widely accepted to be one of the three or four biggest historical treaty claims. It may be assumed that others will be ranked against it.

Unfortunately, although the Waitangi Tribunal had issued more

reports favorable to Maori claimants (notably regarding Muriwhenua and the Taranaki district, where some 1.2 million acres were confiscated in the 1860s), no other major settlements with the Crown have yet been agreed to. This is largely because of the complex divisions within Maori society, where each *hapu* is jealous of its *mana* and reluctant to surrender the power of negotiation (and the assets that might follow) to an overarching central body. Yet if settlement funds and assets were divided among the many *hapu* in a district, the development opportunity offered by a substantial pool of capital and assets would be dissipated. The Waitangi Tribunal has power to mediate between contending *hapu*, but there is a growing need for it to be given a statutory power of arbitration as well, so that the rights of *hapu* are not overlooked by a central multitribal authority—but that an intransigent *hapu* cannot frustrate the opportunity for benefits to flow to the wider Maori community of the area.

The treaty claims process in New Zealand has evolved remarkably over the last ten years to the point that relevant systems of knowledge, both Maori and non-Maori, have been brought to bear very effectively to evaluate Maori claims regarding breaches of treaty principles. There have been enormous benefits from this in terms of understanding of Maori culture and Maori history—understandings that are seeping into the public consciousness and the formal education systems. Maori, too, have recovered a sense of their own identity, at *hapu* as well as tribal and national levels, and a much greater understanding of just what happened to them during colonization. As regards the retransfer of wealth by way of reparation for breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, it is almost as if Maori society had become *too* dynamic. Adjusting the traditional social order to the exigencies of the modern world has been a demanding and ongoing task since the eighteenth century. It poses difficult new challenges to Maori today, and there is some danger of polarization between the pragmatic Maori leaders who desire to reach swift settlements with the Crown and the traditionalists who assert a kind of tribal (*hapu*) fundamentalism, competing with their kin for large shares of the settlement assets. The controllers of knowledge systems in New Zealand have a huge responsibility to understand all sides of these complex processes and help their clients—in particular Maori students in schools and universities—to appreciate their history, their tradition, and the change in their society and thereby secure greater control over the choices that confront them.

Cook, Lono, Obeyesekere, and Sahlins

Robert Borofsky

The recent cause célèbre between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere involves more than a tempest in a teapot of exotic details. Behind the obvious issue—of whether Captain James Cook was perceived by Hawaiians in 1778–1779 as a manifestation of their *akua* (a term at times translated into English as “god”) Lono—are broader ones critical to both anthropology and history today: To what degree, for example, do the present cultural politics of identity demand a rethinking of anthropology’s ethnographic effort? Who has the right to speak for whom in politically volatile arenas today? Also: How does one evaluate conflicting claims about someone else’s past? Must politically charged events in other societies at other times generally remain enigmas to Western historians or can they, while outsiders, still make sense of them? And looking at the controversy from still another angle: Is academic scholarship mostly a matter of vexation and debate or is something approaching a common, cumulative understanding of other people in other times possible? However we frame the controversy, one point is clear: Behind the surface simplicities, behind the antagonizing arguments, illuminating issues exist that demand our attention.

Contexts

In contextualizing this cause célèbre, one might reasonably begin with a rarely cited piece by Sahlins (1977), sketching out an intellectual direction for anthropology in the 1980s. Here Sahlins first

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uses Cook's apotheosis as Lono to illuminate broad themes of cultural process in which efforts to reproduce the social order lead to changes in it. Or, as Sahlins later wrote in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*: "The great challenge to an historical anthropology is not merely to know how events are ordered by culture, but how, in that process, the culture is reordered. How does the reproduction of a structure become its transformation?" (1981:8) The events set in motion by Cook's visits to the Hawaiian islands in 1778–1779 became a prominent example of this thesis: Hawaiian efforts to cope with the anomalies of Cook's visit—by incorporating him into their cultural order—led, over time, to transformations in that order. While not necessarily stressed in key publications, Sahlins' discussion of Cook's identification with the Hawaiian *akua* Lono and his subsequent murder attracted much attention from others interested in understanding these well-known events. "The killing of Captain Cook was not premeditated by the Hawaiians," Sahlins wrote. "But neither was it an accident, structurally speaking. It was the [religious celebration of the] Makahiki in an historical form" (1981:24). In *Islands of History*, he added, "Cook's death at Hawaiian hands just [after the Makahiki could] . . . be described as [a] . . . ritual sequel: the historical metaphor of a mythical reality" (1985b:105–106).

In *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992), Obeyesekere sought to turn Sahlins' thesis regarding Cook on its head. Instead of interpreting Cook's apotheosis as Lono in terms of Hawaiian mythology, Obeyesekere interpreted it in terms of European mythology. Instead of focusing on Hawaiian rituals and symbols, he emphasized Hawaiian pragmatics. Critically, he asserted the Hawaiians did not see Cook as the god Lono; rather he was viewed as a chief named Lono.¹

At the core of Obeyesekere's analysis were two points. First, Obeyesekere stated that Cook's apotheosis was based on European, not Hawaiian, mythmaking: "To put it bluntly, I doubt that the natives created their European god; the Europeans created him for them. This 'European god' is a myth of conquest, imperialism, and civilization" (1992:3). And second, the plethora of sources cited by Sahlins (in confirmation of his thesis) could be interpreted in a number of ways. "The very possibility of a plausible alternative interpretation," Obeyesekere noted, "is at the very least a demonstration of the folly of attempting any rigid interpretation of symbolic form" (82).

Obeyesekere suggested that Western anthropologists such as Sahlins had taken away Hawaiian voices by portraying their cultural catego-

ries in a manner that separated rather than united them with Europeans. He pointed out that Hawaiians possessed as shrewd a sense of the pragmatic—what he termed “practical rationality” (i.e., “the process whereby human beings reflectively assess the implications of a problem in terms of practical criteria” 1992:19)—as Europeans did. Obeyesekere felt as a Sri Lankan—as one from a country only recently freed from colonialism—he had a certain insight into the colonial politics affecting Hawaiians in times past that let him grasp their experiences in ways that Western scholars such as Sahlins might not (8–9, 21–22).

Sahlins' first reaction was not to respond to Obeyesekere. He preferred leaving that task, he said, to reviewers (1995:ix). But the overall tone of the more than twenty-nine reviews of *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* that have appeared in print has been fairly positive. In fact, Obeyesekere won two awards for the book, the Louis Gottschalk Prize from the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies being the more notable. Clearly, if someone was going to defend Sahlins, it would have to be Sahlins himself. Only he knew the primary material in enough depth to answer the specific charges leveled against him. (Being unfamiliar with key aspects of Hawaiian ethnography, most reviewers tended to evaluate the controversy in fairly broad terms.)

How “Natives” Think: About Captain Cook, for Example (1995) was Sahlins' response. Hacking, in the *London Review of Books*, called it a “work of refutation and revenge, judicious and remorseless” (1995:6). It focused on two central themes. The first restated Sahlins' position regarding various specifics Obeyesekere questioned him on and sought to refute Obeyesekere's criticisms point by point. Sahlins considered a wide range of historical documentation involving, to quote Hacking, “an immense amount of detail” (9).

Sahlins' second theme related to broader issues raised by the controversy. Where Obeyesekere emphasized transcultural aspects of Hawaiian thought (in relation to practical rationality), Sahlins focused on its cultural-specific qualities. “Epistemologies,” he stated, “vary . . . with world views (cultural ontologies)” (1995:179). “Different cultures, different rationalities” (14). Sahlins also accused Obeyesekere of conducting “pidgin anthropology”—“substituting a folkloric sense of ‘native’ beliefs for the relevant Hawaiian ethnography” (60). “When I say . . . [Obeyesekere's] distortions amount to a ‘pidgin anthropology,’ I mean that they have the quality of ad hoc fabrications based on a sort of generic primitivism, like Fenimore Cooper Indians. They appeal to a popular sense of common average ‘native’ thought” (62).

Differing Readerships, Differing Styles of Knowing²

A careful examination of Obeyesekere (1992) and Sahlins (1995) suggests the two books are partly talking at cross-purposes. No matter how much data each presents to buttress his case, the other does not concur because each uses a different, but related, perspective to demonstrate different, but related, points.

Two central concerns pervade Obeyesekere's analysis. They are ones most readers today would readily accept. And for those not deeply familiar with the Hawaiian data, they are concerns that indicate Obeyesekere is "on target," so to speak, in his analysis.

The first emphasizes the problematic nature of the historical material. "One must probe into the hidden agendas underlying the writing of [historical] . . . texts," Obeyesekere notes (1992:66). In *The Work of Culture*, he indicates: "A text does not exist by itself; it is embodied in a context" (1990:130). For Obeyesekere, historical accounts "have to be *deconstructed* before they can be effectively *reconstructed* as reasonable history" (1992:144). Take Kotzebue's account of his Hawaiian visit, for example. While Kotzebue tends to be sympathetic to indigenous Hawaiians, Obeyesekere observes, the material cannot be accepted uncritically. To assess its value, one must carefully examine the account's contexts of production. Such cautiousness is particularly important in respect to "on the spot" reports written by the British during their stay. The unpublished journals and logs of the visit differ in significant ways from later published versions, Obeyesekere notes. Rickman's published account at times "widely deviates," for example, from Rickman's unpublished log (214, fn.73). Similarly, King's official account of the voyage differs from his original journal (124–125).

Second, Obeyesekere suggests that various agents of Western expansion—explorers, traders, and missionaries—misperceived Hawaiians' understandings of Cook. He asserts the apotheosis of Cook "was created in the European imagination of the eighteenth century . . . based on antecedent 'myth models' pertaining to the redoubtable explorer cum civilizer who is a god to the 'natives' (1992:3). The "idea that the European is a god to savages is . . . a structure of the long run in European culture and consciousness" (123). Also, accounts written by Hawaiians under missionary guidance as statements about the Hawaiian past—such as *Mooolelo Hawaii*—show considerable missionary influence, Obeyesekere suggests. *Mooolelo Hawaii* could be seen, he indicates, as "a mythic charter for the new vision of Hawai'i of the evangelical missionaries" (162). This is why Obeyesekere

kere, in various conversations, has suggested his book is more about European than Hawaiian society. It involves exploring the distorted lenses through which westerners see Hawaiians. In a way, certain of Obeyesekere's criticisms regarding Sahlins derive from this point: Sahlins, as a Western scholar, continues earlier European "myth models" of Hawaiians (177). Embedded in Obeyesekere's statements is a certain moral positioning. Given the gaps and silences that exist in various historical accounts, modern scholars need give new voice to indigenous perspectives, he says, by "reading across the grain" of previous history tellings. Obeyesekere states: "One of the disconcerting features of contemporary scholarship on Cook . . . is the cavalier manner in which bits and pieces from the missionary and *Mooololo Hawaii* narratives are taken to prove the hypothesis of the apotheosis. I think these procedures are endemic to the scholarship pertaining to nonliterate people who cannot strike back" (154). And later he adds: there is much in the *Mooololo Hawaii* "that is hidden, waiting to be brought to the surface . . . an examination of [the Hawaiian] Kama-kau's text with a gaze of suspicion sheds considerable light on the nature of an indigenous Hawaiian discourse that is the very opposite of the evangelical" (168).

In emphasizing these concerns, Obeyesekere seems more intent on creating doubt about previous analyses—and what else might be possible because of them—than in defending a particular position. Thus, for example, he questions Sahlins' interpretation of the initial "thefts" at Kauai (in 1778) based on Cook's limited knowledge of Hawaiian and notes "alternative interpretations are possible" (1992:70). He hazards his own "guess." But it is only a guess. He never suggests it as something definitive—presumably because he is sensitive to the ambiguities of interpretation (82). Again and again he questions earlier (especially Sahlins') accountings of Cook's visit (e.g., 86, 95). Again and again, he suggests alternatives with such phrasings as: "hence my hypothesis (78), "my own guess" (95), and "it is likely that" (103). Rarely, however, does he take a definite stand regarding the provocative possibilities raised.

Because Obeyesekere perceives a host of biases in the data, he is selective concerning what he does and does not consider reliable evidence. "I do not treat all texts the same way," he writes. "I am suspicious of some and treat others more seriously. I try to disentangle fantasy, gossip, and hearsay from more reliable eyewitness accounts" (1992:xiv). He relies, for example, more on Ledyard's than Rickman's

account of the British stay at Kealakekua Bay (215 fn.78, fn.83). Sahlins' reliance on accounts by Kamakau and Malo for a description of precontact beliefs he finds "untenable" (164). Obeyesekere is cautious about taking a host of sources and, despite their various limitations, piling one on top of another to get some overall sense of what transpired at a particular time. By the way he contextualizes sources, by the way he evaluates texts, it is clear he weighs the evidence with deliberation (cf. 67).

Finally, I would add that Obeyesekere's analysis often resonates with our own understandings and our own times. The notion that European explorers would see themselves as gods to Pacific Islanders (1992:123), for example, makes sense to many in the context of today's postcolonial critiques. When Obeyesekere suggests something "is therefore entirely possible" (e.g., 86), it is often a possibility that makes sense to many Western readers. When he uses other Polynesian chiefs to make deductions about the Hawaiian Kalani'ōpu'u's motivations, such deductions fit with anthropological notions of comparison within a common cultural area (see Salmond 1993). And when Obeyesekere talks of conspiracies (203, fn. 29), "shredding of damaging evidence" (216, fn.29), and a "cover-up" (112), I have discovered that many scholars think it makes perfect sense given our times.

Sahlins takes a different tack. On the surface, he appears less concerned with the relation between text and context and more interested in specifics of the evidence. "An anthropology that defines itself as 'cultural critique,'" he suggests, "too often dissolves into a 'pseudopolitics of interpretation'" (1994:41). He approvingly quotes Lucian: "This, then, is my sort of historian . . . in his writings . . . [he lays] out the matter as it is." Compared to Obeyesekere, Sahlins speaks with more confidence regarding what the documentary material suggests. There is less hesitancy, less guess and hypothesis: "It will be easy to show," he writes, "that, in word and deed, Hawaiians received Cook as a return of Lono" (1995:2). And in respect to the nature of the *makahiki* celebration at the time of Cook, he suggests it is "an empirical issue for the most part, to be settled by comparing the Cook documents with the later Makahiki corpus" (31).

In contrast to Obeyesekere's selective embracing of the documentary evidence, Sahlins seeks to be more inclusive. One can hardly read Sahlins (1995) without recognizing the enormous command he has over the material. One can see it in details. He points out that Obeye-

sekere's depiction of Lono's canoe, for example, is a misinterpretation based on a missionary mistranslation of a Hawaiian text (105, 109). One can also perceive it in citations. Sahlins repeatedly makes reference to a number of sources in developing a point: He cites Ellis, Mariner, Dimsdell, the Vancouver people, and Little, for instance, in respect to the role of Cook's bones in post-Cook *makahiki* celebrations (110). Seven lines later, in relation to Cook's divinity at the time of his death, he considers Ellis, Judd, Kotzebue, Bachelot, and Kamakau. (Sahlins' bibliography contains 316 references; Obeyesekere's 152.)

Rather than weighing one context of production against another, Sahlins weighs one piece of evidence against another to ascertain general patterns, to verify a particular assertion. Thus he notes that both the Cook journals and the *Moolelo Hawaii* "corroborate each other" in respect to Kalani'ōpu'u's fighting on Maui and both are "consistent with" the classic description of the *makahiki* calendar (1995:36). In discussing the historiography of the *makahiki*, he refers to Malo, K. Kamakau, I'i, and Kepelino, noting "none of them seriously contradicts the others or is in any way aberrant" (209). And in respect to two of Ledyard's assertions (regarding dismantling of a Hawaiian *heiau*'s palings for firewood), he states "neither . . . can be corroborated from other accounts and the second is clearly contradicted by later events" (268). Rather than dismissing this or that text because of biases in its production, Sahlins prefers to see textual biases as cultural information. He notes that "a report may be historically inaccurate . . . yet still structurally revelatory"—such as the claim by Hawaiians that Cook slept with the daughter of Kamakahēlei at Kaua'i (43, 280; cf. Beaglehole 1967:266).

Sahlins does not deny the problems that Obeyesekere deals with regarding the relation of text to context. But his weighing of information, his examining the contexts of production, tends to be more implicit than explicit or, perhaps better phrased, they are not so consciously tied one to the other as they are with Obeyesekere. Sahlins indicates in respect to the *makahiki*, for example, that "the evidence shows substantial continuity and regularity of the celebrations" (1995: 27). But he does not elaborate on the point in ensuing paragraphs. He waits until a few pages later to provide relevant documentation (31, 208). Similarly, in reference to the *makahiki* he uses the phrase "according to the classical rules," implying some sense of definitiveness is involved (37). On the next page, however, in another context,

we learn that “Hawaiians knew how to overcome their ritual scruples.” And later still it is clear that Sahlins is well aware that ritual can be flexible in nature (39, 251). The one notable exception to this general style of presentation concerns his replies to Obeyesekere’s criticisms. Here he looks very intently at the relation of text to context. In respect to Obeyesekere’s use of Chamisso (and Kotzebue) as sources, for example, Sahlins considers in detail the various editions of the text, even comparing English translations (99). And in defending himself against Obeyesekere’s assertions regarding the *makahiki*, he contextualizes the basis of various Hawaiians’ knowledge claims, especially K. Kamakau’s (208–209).

Sahlins’ assertions are commonly bold ones. He suggests that Cook’s return (on February 11, 1779), for example, “presented a mirror image of Makahiki politics” (1995:81). There are none of Obeyesekere’s qualifiers here. Later he states: “The Hawaiian schema of things can be understood as a unitary system of two dimensions” (167)—again, few cautions and hesitations. The use of “perhaps” and “maybe” does occur. Regarding the opposition between the Lono priests and “the king’s party,” he states (comparing accounts from Cook’s visit with those of Portlock and Dixon seven years later): “The opposition thus seems to have been recurrent, perhaps structural” (71; see also 24 fn.10, 83). In relation to Obeyesekere, however, doubt, qualification, hypothesis, and uncertainty are less central to Sahlins’ *modus operandi*.

It is here that Sahlins appears the most brilliant and, at the same time, the most vulnerable. His powerful syntheses allow others to make better sense of old confusions and complexities. He brings diverse material together in an insightful, thoughtful manner. But it is also this clarity of vision that sets off alarm bells in scores of post-modern scholars sensitive to the ambiguities of interpretation and the complexities of life. These alarm bells constitute a central element in Obeyesekere’s critique (e.g., see 1992:67). While Sahlins may seem out of step with current scholarly trends, a careful analysis of his work shows he remains sensitive to the ambiguities of interpretation and the flexibilities of structures. He simply does not emphasize them to the same degree Obeyesekere does. They are not, as noted, always closely enmeshed, one to the other. One needs to search a little—which is why, perhaps, a number of anthropologists continue to insist Sahlins seems insensitive to such issues. Yet a careful reading makes clear he is sensitive to them. Take, for example, Sahlins’ statement:

"Nothing guarantees that the situations encountered in practice will stereotypically follow from the cultural categories by which the circumstances are interpreted and acted upon" (1981:35). Or again: "Every reproduction of culture is an alteration, insofar as in action, the categories by which a present world is orchestrated pick up some novel empirical content" (1985b:144). Or again: "To say that an event is culturally described is not to say it is culturally prescribed. To conflate the cultural structuration of events with the necessity of one particular ordering is abusive" (1995:251).

Still, we might wish to ask Sahlins certain questions: When he states, "'Laying out the matter as it is' . . . [involves] the historical issue of understanding people's cultural constructions of events" (1994: 41), what pitfalls does he see to the process? How are they different from the one's Obeyesekere takes up? Why quote Lucian rather than Carr, Foucault, E. P. Thompson, or Denig as an anthropological model for history telling? Why not weave text and context more closely together?

Evaluating Conflicting Claims³

Given the different perspectives involved in the controversy, how do we make sense of the different knowledge claims? If one thing is certain, it is that we must move beyond first impressions.

One of the intriguing aspects of the controversy is that the differences between Obeyesekere and Sahlins—on certain issues—are not necessarily that great. This is true regarding Cook's status as Lono and the notion of "practical reason." It is a small step, for example, from saying Cook was perceived as a chief named Lono (Obeyesekere's position) to saying Cook was perceived as a manifestation of the *akua* Lono (Sahlins' position) if one accepts that some chiefs possessed divine qualities. Obeyesekere acknowledges "it is possible that Hawaiians had some notion of divinity inherent in chiefs of high descent" (1992:198; cf. 91 and Sahlins 1995:128). Valeri—who is well steeped in the material—perceives "no necessary contradiction between the view that Cook was Lono the chief and the view that he was Lono the god. A contradiction only arises when a non-Hawaiian view of 'divinity' . . . is introduced into the situation" (1994:126). To be a human chief, then, did not preclude the possession of divine attributes. Or to reverse the statement, to be seen by various Hawaiians as a manifestation of Lono did not mean Cook was perceived by these Hawaiians as somehow less human.

In respect to “practical rationality,” one might note that neither Obeyesekere nor Sahlins disputes that “magical” and “practical” reasoning can be entwined, one with the other (see Obeyesekere 1992: 15, 21, 205 fn.48; Sahlins 1995:6, 155). Nor would either disagree, I presume, with Obeyesekere’s statement that a “common humanity . . . [underlies] formal differences” (1990:218). But how does one give this statement concrete form? If one seeks specific examples of “practical rationality,” there is a rich literature in Polynesia on pragmatic perspectives (e.g., see Borofsky 1987; Howard 1970, 1974; Levy 1973; Marcus n.d.; Shore 1982). But isn’t such cultural specificity the very specificity that Sahlins stresses (e.g., see Sahlins 1995:155, 169)? The question really involves an empirical issue: How does a postulated pragmatic transcultural tendency work itself out in a specific island environment? What seems to be cultural-specific? What might be viewed as transcultural?

A careful reading of the published and unpublished accounts of the British visit to Hawai‘i makes another point: The British did not grasp everything that was happening around them (e.g., see Beaglehole 1967:506). Whatever their linguistic and ethnographic abilities, it is clear they did not fully comprehend certain Hawaiian perspectives and practices (cf. Sahlins 1995:275–277). Most sought to report events as they saw them—as was their task (cf. Smith 1960:2; 1992:25–26). But different people saw different things and people seeing the same event reported it differently at times. The result is a set of overlapping but divergent accounts. This means modern scholars can comb through the material, selectively choosing quotes here and there to support different arguments. While reading eyewitness accounts of centuries’ old cross-cultural events may impress some ethnographic historians, they need to be rather cautious about relying too much on any single account. Each account must be viewed within the context of the whole corpus of material. The plausibility of any assertion has to be judged in relation to what others reported at the same time in the same place (cf. Sahlins 1995:117; Obeyesekere 1992:203 fn.29).

Parenthetically, I would also add—and this is obvious to some but not others—that whether Obeyesekere’s or Sahlins’ analysis makes more sense to us is not the central issue. What we need ask is which analysis accords better with Hawaiian and British understandings of 1778–1779—as they have come down to us today (cf. Sahlins 1995: 127, 151–152). As one works one’s way deeply into the material—first in terms of the logic of each argument and secondly in terms of the supporting documentation—certain points, I believe, become clear.

First, there are serious problems with Obeyesekere's argument. Geertz's statement that Obeyesekere's argument follows the "beat-the-snake-with-whatever-stick-is-handly" (1995:4) strategy catches the sense of Obeyesekere's presentation. His subarguments do not necessarily tie together as a coherent, cogent whole. Important discrepancies and contradictions exist. Obeyesekere's central premise that a European myth of the long run depicts Europeans as gods to savage peoples' faces, for example, a basic contradiction. Both Sahlins and Obeyesekere agree that nowhere else in Polynesia did the British describe Cook as being taken for a god (Obeyesekere 1992:87; Sahlins 1995:178)—even where indigenous populations seemingly did hold such an opinion of him (e.g., see Salmond 1993:51). If Cook's apotheosis was a European myth (rather than a Hawaiian assertion), should it not have also been noted elsewhere as well? The one related example Obeyesekere notes for the Pacific—involving Wallis at Tahiti (1992:123; Robertson 1973:43)—is ambiguous and incomplete. It involves a single phrase. It needs to be supplemented by a host of additional cases, especially from the Cook voyages. The myth, I would add, also runs counter to a sense among many in England during this period—particularly among those of "middling" rank—that it was improper to place oneself at the level of God. What is intriguing is that documentation for this point—a frequently cited passage by Cowper (e.g., see Beaglehole 1964:289), a popular poet (see Davidoff and Hall 1987:92, 157)—is right in Obeyesekere (1992:126; cf. Sahlins 1995:200). One need not really reach beyond Obeyesekere's own volume, in other words, to counter his thesis! One simply needs to systematically sift through the data he presents. More generally, for a book that focuses on the dynamics of a European myth, relatively little space is taken up with examining the European contexts of the myth (120–137; cf. Robertson 1981). Which Europeans at what time adhered to this myth—before and during Cook's years of exploration—is left stunningly vague. Combining the Spanish Cortés with the British Cook (two and a half centuries later) is a fairly broad stretch, especially when so few other examples are given, especially when contradictory information clearly exists for Cook's time. A little investigation will also indicate to readers that, on various occasions, Obeyesekere uses the same source in contradictory ways. He notes that King's published account differs from his shipboard journal (68), for example, and uses this difference to discount a passage in Cook and King (1784), the official admiralty account. Yet on the page before

that, he indicates the shipboard journals might well be biased (67), and a few pages later he cites both King's journal and Cook and King (1784) in discounting Rickman's account (72). As for Rickman, Obeyesekere doubts his linguistic ability and reliability as a journalist (72–73) but then, shortly afterwards, cites Rickman as a definitive source (81). (Rather than citing Rickman's ambiguously reliable journal, in fact, he cites the still less reliable—by Obeyesekere's assessment—published account [217 fn.48, 71–72].) And he asserts S. M. Kamakau "has excellent accounts of native cosmology" but then indicates they possess a range of biases that makes Sahlins' reliance on them "quite untenable" (164). Yet Obeyesekere himself cites Kamakau in respect to pre-Christian Hawaiian understandings of *akua* (140).

Intriguingly, though these contradictions and gaps in argumentation are fairly self-evident (I selected these examples for that reason), few of the twenty-nine reviews of Obeyesekere's (1992) book that I have read refer to them. Of the reviews examined—Alter (1992), Levy (1992), Burce (1993), Ernst (1993), Hanson (1993), Gough (1993), Knauft (1993), Lamb (1993), Linnekin (1993), Martin (1993), Rose (1993), Salmond (1993), Smith (1993), Thomas (1993), Campbell (1994), Carter (1994), Frost (1994), Hanlon (1994), Kaeppler (1994), Kame'elehiwa (1994), Lindstrom (1994), Linnekin (1994), Modell (1994), Osborne (1994), Parmentier (1994), Thomas (1994), Valeri (1994), Friedman (1995), and Parker (1995)—only Linnekin, Parker, and Valeri discuss the second problem noted above and only Hanlon, Linnekin, Knauft, Parmentier, and Parker discuss the third. No one refers to the first. Part of the reason for this dearth of comment, presumably, is that reviewers must be highly selective, in the space allotted, regarding their remarks. But such a shortage of space cannot account, I believe, for the largely positive tone of most reviews—especially when such contradictions are reasonably clear on close reading. The dearth of critical comment on Obeyesekere's arguments, I suspect, stems from two other factors. The large number of citations of unpublished and/or unfamiliar material can be intimidating to reviewers. And, as noted above, Obeyesekere's style and perspective closely fit with current trends. The rush to review and the accepting of current scholarly trends, I am suggesting, tended to have a beguiling effect. It lulled many reviewers—particularly those unfamiliar with the primary documentation—into accepting on trust Obeyesekere's arguments. After all, they do make sense to us.

What of the specific details that few reviewers could readily delve

into? Obeyesekere (1992) contains much imprecise scholarship in this regard. Sahlins accuses Obeyesekere of "selectively ignoring or misrepresenting the primary documents" (1995:117; cf. 193). That is true in my opinion. Let me cite a few examples (leaving others to Footnote 3). Obeyesekere asks: "Who would have expected Cook, even in his first voyage, to be a bit of a crook" (23)? The reference is to Cook adding his two sons to his ship's rolls—a practice Beaglehole admits is "chicanery, but accepted naval custom" (1974:141). Obeyesekere, while citing Beaglehole's reference to chicanery (and paraphrasing the reference to accepted naval custom), emphasizes this practice was "in flagrant defiance of an act of parliament which threatened the penalty of permanent dismissal from the service" (23). The fuller quote reads: In wanting his sons able to be naval lieutenants before they were forty, Cook "was willing to follow the example of post-captains and admirals innumerable, in flagrant defiance of an act of parliament" (Beaglehole 1974:141). The fuller quote makes Obeyesekere's question a bit too dramatic. Cook seems much less "a crook" given the British context and period—with such a pervasive practice, with such distinguished company. And it makes the comparison (and generalization) that follows to "Italians and other Third World peoples" (23–24) puzzling, especially given that the above example appears the sole basis for Obeyesekere's analysis of eighteenth-century British morality as "moral familism." A closer study of British laws and their violation would be in order (e.g., see Hay and Snyder 1989; Linebaugh 1992; Gilmour 1992; Thompson 1963). Obeyesekere (206 fn.10) indicates that Beaglehole does not refer to the prize for discovering the Northwest Passage. That is incorrect. It is dealt with fairly extensively (1974:478, 484)—more accurately and in more detail, in fact, than in the reference Obeyesekere cites. Obeyesekere (44, 209 fn.118) quotes Beaglehole (1973:646) as indicating "it begins to look as if Cook . . . had lost touch with his men." Such a quote may exist. However, it does not exist on the cited page. Obeyesekere refers several times (e.g., 44, 53, 64) to Cook going "round and round" the island of Hawai'i. Beaglehole (1967: 268, Figure 8) and Cook and King (1784:3:map prior to page 1) indicate this is incorrect. The British sailed around the island once. And finally, Obeyesekere cites Todorov's *Conquest of America* as the "immediate intellectual precursor of Sahlins' own work" (16). Todorov's book was published in French in 1982—a year after Sahlins' initial major statement (1981)—and in English in 1984. (The reference

Obeyesekere cites for Todorov is a 1987 edition.) The statement makes no sense as presented.

Obeyesekere at times significantly misrepresents Sahlins' work. For example, he argues that: "Hawaiian culture . . . Sahlins says . . . is given to 'stereotypic reproduction'" (1992:55). Yet Sahlins actually says: "as for stereotypic reproduction, strictly speaking, it does not occur" (1977:23). And later, in a book Obeyesekere repeatedly cites, Sahlins writes: "I argue that . . . the theory [of stereotypic reproduction] is better reversed: plus c'est la même chose, plus ça change" (1980:7). When Obeyesekere finds data contradicting "stereotypic reproduction"—such as in regard to the *makahiki*'s ritual schedule in relation to Cook's visit (64–65)—he claims it casts doubt on Sahlins' position. It might more reasonably be construed as why Sahlins never held that position in the first place. On page 181, Obeyesekere states: "Sahlins has to alter the British accounts to make them fit his myth . . . Sahlins has to distort the evidence . . . [and] Sahlins again misunderstands the evidence." A careful reading of the cited references will indicate that none of these statements is true. Readers might perceive these commentaries, at first glance, as significant critiques of Sahlins' work. But a careful examination of the documentary material, reference by reference, indicates otherwise.

I asked Obeyesekere on two occasions why he wrote his book in such a polemical style (he agrees it is polemically written). And both times I received the same answer—to stir things up. Yet what he has done, more than simply stir things up, is show how academic scholarship often depends on appearance and trust, as the reviews make clear.

We are thus left with some significant questions: With so much going for him—in terms of general concerns most modern scholars would concur with—why did Obeyesekere frame his arguments and supporting data so much at odds with key portions of the documentary material? For someone so concerned with text/context relations, why did he take so much of Sahlins' work out of context? And why make *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* so polemical that the chance for meaningful dialogue with Sahlins—about a host of critical anthropological issues—was essentially destroyed?

Reexploring the Documentary Data

If we set aside the controversy's polemics and work our way once more through the documentary materials (and the contexts

within which they were produced), considerable headway, I believe, can be made in unravelling certain issues.

In respect to Cook as Lono, a few points shine through the data. First, there are a host of ambiguities regarding what "Hawaiians"—as some collective unit—thought of Cook. Let me provide a sampling of the uncertainties. Valeri suggests Lono may have been associated with the color black (1985:15) and Malo indicates the *makahiki* image associated with Lono involved white tapa cloth (1951:144). But there are a host of occasions in which Cook is associated with the color red—especially being wrapped in red cloth: Cook and King (1784:3: 5, 7, 13, 18), Beaglehole (1967:504, 505, 1195), Obeyesekere (1992: 46, 65), and Sahlins (1995:69, 224). What did it signify? Red may not have been specific to a particular *akua* (Sahlins 1995:54; Valeri 1985:390 fn.79), but Valeri suggests that it might well have been associated with the Hawaiian *akua* Kū (12, 15, 270, 322). Cook's identification with Lono in respect to color, in other words, is not necessarily clear cut. We might add, given that Hawaiian *akua* tended to be transcendent—appearing in various forms (Sahlins 1995:196; Malo 1951:83; Valeri 1985:325, 327)—a host of Hawaiians were presumably uncertain as to Cook's relation to Lono no matter what color he was wrapped in. Nor is the ritual ceremony at Hikiau involving Cook necessarily that clear in respect to Cook's association with Lono. The concluding rite, the Hānaipū, is definitely associated with Lono (see Sahlins 1995:55–58)—but the rites preceding this? That is less certain. They involved "most probably," Valeri states, "an *ad hoc* creation that combines the crucial rite in the cult of Kū with the crucial rite in the cult of Lono" (1994:129). Nor, as Kane (1994:19) points out, did chiefs prostrate themselves to Cook in the *kapu moe* position; only commoners did. In their gift exchanges, there was often a sense of equality (see Beaglehole 1967:513, 517–518). A careful reading of the documentary material suggests, then, that ambiguities exist concerning who believed what about Cook during which period of the British stay (cf. Obeyesekere 1992:65 and Sahlins 1995:65, 66, 279). The real problem here lies not with the data, I would suggest, but with our efforts to make sense of the data—with our believing Hawaiians possessed some consistent, collective "group mentality" regarding Cook.

But if not all people seemingly concurred on Cook's status, we need ask who, at Kealakekua Bay, would most people have turned to—or felt obliged to defer to—in respect to such matters? If a belief in the *akua* Lono existed among Hawaiians—and neither Obeyesekere nor

Sahlins has ever suggested anything to the contrary—then who had the authority to specify Cook’s relation to this *akua*? The documentary material makes clear the *priests* of Lono at Kealakekua Bay (e.g., Kanekoa, Kuakahela, Ka‘ō‘ō, Keli‘ikea, and Omeah)—because they were the priests of *Lono*—had this authority. They were, as Sahlins notes, Lono’s “legitimate prophets” (1985b:122). But I would add that, given the oppositions that clearly separated chiefs from priests (e.g., see Beaglehole 1967:510, 543, 560; Cook and King 1784:3:69; Sahlins 1995:80, 256–263; cf. Obeyesekere 1992:171), not all Hawaiians apparently accepted these priests’ authority all the time.

One other point seems clear. We know these same Lono priests continually supported the British—*both during and after the makahiki* at Kealakekua Bay. From repeatedly providing food (Beaglehole 1967:510; Cook and King 1784:3:14–15) to the returning of a piece of Cook’s “hind parts” (Beaglehole 1967:560; cf. Sahlins 1995:68), the British noted “the very extraordinary marks of attention & disinterest’d proofs that the fraternity of Priesthood had paid the Captain & we who liv’d on shore” (1967:560, also 509). It was these same priests, moreover, who continually reinforced Cook’s association with Lono: “Whenever Captain Cook came on shore, he was attended by one of these priests, who went before him, giving notice that the *Orono* had landed, and ordering the people to prostrate themselves” (Cook and King 1784:3:14). The documentary material indicates not everyone was so deferential or so loyal: “We had not always so much reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the warrior chiefs . . . as with that of the priests,” Cook and King states (1784:3:15). “In all our dealing with the former, we found them sufficiently attentive to their own interests.”

The controversy thus revolves around who among the “powers that be” had the power to objectify their interpretations of Cook (cf. Sahlins 1985b:121–122; 1995:65)? With the onset of the *makahiki*—especially if we follow both Obeyesekere and Sahlins and assume there was some flexibility in its scheduling (Obeyesekere 1992:99; Sahlins 1995:32–33, 220–222)—we might assume the Lono priests were at the relative apex of their power for the year. Many others deferred to their interpretations. After the *makahiki*—during Cook’s second stay at Kealakekua Bay—it was a more open matter. This would explain the varied attitudes toward Cook on February 13 and, especially, February 14. Cook’s status at this time was an open question for negotiation—not between the British and the Hawaiians, though that clearly

went on—but, in respect to Cook's relation to Lono, between the priests of Lono at Kealakekua Bay and other Hawaiians. The controversy thus hinges not on Western versus Hawaiian conceptualizations of Cook but on different Hawaiian conceptualizations of Cook. The British (and their mythology and/or rationality) had relatively little to do with it. Only a sense of European self-importance would suggest Hawaiians were the supporting characters in a British play rather than that the British were the supporting characters in a Hawaiian play at the Bay in 1778–1779. (For those interested, material indicates how the dynamics of this Hawaiian drama unfolded in ensuing decades: see Sahllins 1995:85–116, 134, 256–263; Valeri 1982.)

And yet, it is only fair to say, the British did have a part to play in this Hawaiian drama. They selected who—among the British—received deference from Hawaiians. When a Hawaiian chief (on December 1, 1778) came on board the *Discovery* looking for "our Arrona" (see Edgar's journal of this date), he, unbeknownst to himself, got the wrong ship. Cook captained the *Resolution*. Similarly, King and Bayly (Beaglehole 1967:504–506) were at the Hikiau ceremony, but neither of them reported they were the focus of Hawaiian attention. When Clerke was given various signs of respect/adoration (see Beaglehole 1967:1165), again, this did not upset the equation. From a British view, the British Lono had to be Cook. He stood at the top of the British social hierarchy.

In a way it would be fair to say—though space does not really allow for an elaboration of this theme here—that the British had a drama of their own to play out. There seems little doubt, for example, that the British—with their weaponry, astronomical navigation, and ability to manufacture daggers prized by Hawaiians—viewed themselves as technologically superior to Hawaiians. We see, on the colonial periphery, an important result of the industrial revolution. It gave Europeans a sense of intellectual superiority over others (cf. Adas 1989:7, 134 ff.). One might also note the British use of outward mobility—movement to the colonial fringe—as a means for upward mobility. Cook's explorations, Smith notes, "provided the material . . . [for] a new kind of hero . . . Cook is the self-made man. While hidden among the obscurity of the vulgar, he . . . raised himself above his station in life by assiduous application" (1992:225, 228). The British, in brief, were involved in a play of their own—regarding deference, technology, and social mobility (cf. Denning 1992). But such upward mobility had its limits and, most certainly in the late eigh-

teenth century, this mobility clearly stopped short of the divine—even when it was framed in terms of those on the colonial fringe. The closest one probably ever got—in the very best of circumstances—would be the “demi-god or hero and distinguished title” status given to Cook in *Omai* (see Dening 1986:114; cf. Obeyesekere 1992:129) or given to Nelson after his death. More would be offensive to most British sensibilities.

Deciding Who Can Speak for Whom

This brings us to one of the central as well as one of the most problematic aspects of the controversy: the way various people (including myself) claim insight into what earlier Hawaiians and Europeans thought. How can others evaluate such claims? What does a person need to know—to experience or learn—in order to possess such authority? Obeyesekere feels he can understand earlier Hawaiians through an intensive examination of the ethnohistorical sources, as well as through his Sri Lankan experiences (e.g., 1992:xiv, 8–9, 21). Sahlins feels he can understand them based on more than two decades of ethnohistorical investigation (see Kirch and Sahlins 1992:1:ix and references under Sahlins in 1995:299).

Such claims are not isolated, academic assertions. They occur within a broader context that complicates their clarity. The right of Western anthropologists to translate or speak for others (in Evans-Pritchard's sense, 1962:148–149) is very much under attack (cf. Asad 1986). Standing at the margins of one culture and speaking for those across the “borderlands” of difference in another—speaking, that is to say, for those who are deemed “different” from “us”—is not the politically innocent experience it was perhaps once deemed to be.⁴ A host of indigenous scholars now stand at these borderlands who find an anthropological presence intrusive. Western anthropologists compete for the authority these scholars would claim as spokespeople for others. Such is the case in Hawai'i. Anthropological authority in matters Hawaiian is often viewed with suspicion, is often questioned in the archipelago, particularly by Hawaiian activists (e.g., see Trask 1991; Kame'eleihiwa 1995).

The issue is further complicated by the fact that the intellectual authority to make statements regarding who can speak for whom across these borderlands is often based on criteria that explicitly or implicitly exclude others. It involves less a discussion among claimants; more a

setting up of barriers against others. Thus, for example, Obeyesekere implies his experiences as a Sri Lankan provide him with insights into Hawaiian behaviors that Sahlins lacks (1992:9, 21). And he suggests that key portions of Sahlins' argument cannot necessarily be taken seriously because Sahlins does not really consider text/context relations (67–73). Sahlins accuses Obeyesekere of misrepresenting historical documentation to such a degree that he "systematically eliminates Hawaiians from their own history" (1995:116; cf. 117, 193, 233). Both would speak for Hawaiians. And both would generally dismiss the other's claims to do so (e.g., for Obeyesekere see 1992: 21, 66–67, 155). As for Hawaiians, Kame'eleihiwa asserts: "Natives have often wished that white people would study their own ancestors . . . instead of us, whom they generally misunderstand and thus misrepresent" (1994:112; cf. Trask 1993:161–178). And Kane sees anthropologists mostly talking *about*, rather than *with* Hawaiians. He notes that anthropologists "seem to be in a system which rewards ability to spout current fad theory" (personal communication, 1996). He suggests Sahlins' (1995) book might be better entitled *How Anthropologists Think: About Polynesians, for Example*.

Such barriers mean little sharing, little conversation, takes place across the borderlands of difference. This is a shame because, first, there are serious issues to be addressed here. There is the question of to what degree being born and raised in a locale leads to effective knowledge of that locale's history. Reading references such as Denham (1912:259), da Silva Cosme (1990:279–280), and Abeyesinghe (1966:76–77) suggests ambiguities in Obeyesekere's assertion regarding Sri Lankans not treating Europeans as gods (see 1992:8–9). There is also the question of whether one should apply the same standards of morality to Polynesians as to Europeans. In discussing "terror" (xv–xvi), Obeyesekere, for instance, is fairly critical of British violence toward Hawaiians (e.g., 41). Yet he seems to downplay similar "terror" espoused by Hawaiian chiefs (e.g., see Beaglehole 1967:589; cf. 1992:29–32 in relation to Beaglehole 1967:101). There is, moreover, the intriguing situation of various modern Hawaiian scholars siding generally with Obeyesekere against Sahlins (e.g., Kame'eleihiwa 1994; Kane 1994) but siding with Sahlins in relation to key specifics against Obeyesekere (e.g., see Kame'eleihiwa 1994:116; Kane 1994:20). Kame'eleihiwa conveys both in print (117) and in personal conversation that Obeyesekere's perspective is acceptable to her as long as he attacks Sahlins. But he need tread more carefully—and with

more knowledge—if he is going to probe further into Hawaiian history and challenge other people's interpretations.

Second, we lose the ability to evaluate scholarly works. In the social sciences (especially in anthropology where few can “check” an ethnographer's observations), intellectual authority does not tend to reside in scholarly assertions. It comes from interactions of scholars with their audiences through time. It is something that gradually gets established through collective conversations, through “comparison, evaluation, and debate” (Kuper 1989:455). Without such broader discussion, without such interaction, we can only whistle in the dark, trusting our own impressions as to what is (and is not) credible. We saw this in respect to the reviews of Obeyesekere's *Apotheosis*. Reviewers mostly responded based on what made sense to them. Just as critical, the loss of conversation means we rarely learn from our differences with others. We become frozen into positions, we become less able to move beyond the complacency of our own constructions toward increased knowledge (Borofsky 1987:155). Scholarship then often becomes a matter of political positioning, of power and control. What can result can be seen with *Anahulu* (Kirch and Sahlins 1992)—one of the most sophisticated ethnographic histories ever produced in the Pacific (and arguably one of the best ethnographic histories produced anywhere in the last decade). By suggesting that the Hawaiian elite, as much as the foreign *haoles*, were responsible for the immiseration of the *maka'āinana* (commoners) during the nineteenth century, Kirch and Sahlins have run afoul of certain Hawaiian activists. Sahlins is now deemed to “misunderstand” Hawaiian culture (Kame'eleihiwa 1995:16). Before *Anahulu*, Kame'eleihiwa perceived Sahlins in much more positive terms; not now (see also Kame'eleihiwa 1994). The irony—tragedy would perhaps be a better word—is that as Obeyesekere is being drawn into the meatgrinder of Sahlins' determined scholarship—what Hacking calls Sahlins' “revenge”—Sahlins is being drawn into the meatgrinder of Hawaiian political correctness—where one might perceive Obeyesekere as having *his* “revenge.” Where will it end?

It might end with our conversations with one another—across our differences—to build common points of reference. What the Obeyesekere-Sahlins controversy (and the larger controversy regarding who can speak for whom) emphasizes is the need for common points of reference regarding how we might (or might not) judge the credibility of scholarly assertions about the Hawaiian past—or about any other

past (or present) for that matter. What are the common points of reference that unite us in evaluating divergent knowledge claims? What seems clear is that excluding others' accounts as less than credible based on one's self-appointed criteria, one's self-appointed authority, shuts down meaningful conversation. It becomes the chosen only talking to the chosen. In claiming to speak for others, we seem mostly to speak to and *for* ourselves—Kane's point.

I am not dismissing the pervasive presence of politics and power in intellectual controversies. But I am saying controversies such as this one cannot only be a matter of politics—because this destroys our ability, through shared, open conversation, to learn from our differences, to move beyond appearances of the moment to deeper understanding. The "real" issue behind this controversy, I would suggest, is not how deep cultural differences go—with Sahlins stressing difference, Obeyesekere, cross-cultural similarities (cf. Geertz 1995:5). It is, rather, to what degree we (and others) can converse across our differences—whatever they are, however deep they go.

The common points of reference are there to be built on. I suggested above that we can make considerable headway in clarifying the present controversy by focusing on three critical points: consistency of argumentation, comparison of particular assertions with material printed elsewhere, and paying particular attention to events people generally agree occurred (such as the Lono priests' consistent support of the British up to and even after Cook's death).

We are left with important questions for all of us—not just Obeyesekere and Sahlins: What should the role be of ethnographic history (and ethnographic historians) in this new "borderland" politics—now that indigenous scholars, from Hawai'i to Haiti, challenge the right of Western scholars to speak about "others" in other times? What should our collective points of reference be? How can we best "check on" each others' assertions? How shall we converse in ways that encourage shared learning?

NOTES

1. Obeyesekere did not acknowledge similarities between parts of his thesis and Friedman (1985). Rather, he preferred citing another predecessor—the part-Polynesian anthropologist Te Rangi Hiroa, Peter Buck (1992:75).

2. Readers interested in additional references on points raised in this sec-

tion may wish to consult the following: [1] **on Obeyesekere's perspective: historical data problematic:** 1992:xiv, 67, 69, 112, 116, 159); **Western misperceptions:** (1992:20, 120, 123, 137, 140, 147–148, 173); **creating doubt:** (1992:78, 86, 90, 98, 144); **selective:** (1992:154, 163, 182, 212 fn.54, 215 fn.78); one might also refer to Obeyesekere 1993, 1994, 1995; [2] **on Sahlins' perspective: concern for evidence:** (1995:2, 100, 115–116, 117); **command of material:** (1995:199–285); Geertz (1995:6); Hacking (1995); Fagan (1995); Powers (1995); Corrigan (1995); **weighing of evidence:** (1995:21, 27, 43, 45, 51, 71); **implicit concern:** (1995:8, 10, 11, 14, 32, 38–39, 86, 97); **explicit concern:** (1995:98, 100, 108, 174, 279–280); **bold daring:** (1995:22–23, 24, 45, 70, 71, 83, 218, 228); **ambiguities and flexibilities:** (1995:104, 106–107, 221, 222, 228).

3. Readers interested in additional references on points raised in this section might consult the following: **similarities, chiefs:** Obeyesekere (1992:86, 91, 197); in relation to Sahlins (1995:2, 99, 128, 144, 196; 192, 194 et passim, cf. 136); **similarities, practical rationality:** Obeyesekere (1992: 10, 18, 19); in relation to Sahlins (1995:152, 154, 169, 170); **divergent accounts:** e.g., Beaglehole (1974:674–675); Beaglehole (1967:547, 561, 567); cf. Obeyesekere (1992:234 fn.66); **making sense:** Sahlins (1995: 9, 118, 119, 121, 151, 152); **problems with Obeyesekere's arguments:** Sahlins (1995: 110, 192, 236); examples—[1] criticism without analyzing the context of Cook's "terror"—Obeyesekere (1992:xv–xvii, 27, 29, 30, 41, 80, 139); cf. Beaglehole (1967: 589); Rodger (1986:205–251); [2] the basis for choosing Obeyesekere's interpretations over others is unclear—e.g., (1992: 73, 155); in relation to (1992: 83–86); [3] the degree to which the Kāli'i was a coherent ritual and what constitutes "all sources" as the basis for deductions regarding the Kāli'i: (1992: 182); in relation to (1992:199); [4] the basis for perceiving and/or deducing major social divisions, such as between priests and "counselors" in Hawaiian society: e.g., see Obeyesekere (1992:91, 93, 171); in relation to Sahlins (1995: 72, 197–198, 227, 256–263); **Obeyesekere's imprecise scholarship:** (not tolerating resistance: 1992:6 vs. 27), (date of Sahlins' talk: Obeyesekere 1992:8 vs. Sahlins 1995:3), (1992:32—Cook's violence "unrecorded by any," also full Gilbert quote in relation to what is cited), (context of 1992:33–34 regarding Cook at *'inasi*, e.g. limited citation of quote involving fn. 47 in relation to Beaglehole 1967:151), (headshaving: 1992:36 vs. Cook and King 1784:2: 82), (1992:44 vs. Beaglehole 1974:648), (1992:45—Watts in relation to the more complete quote in Beaglehole 1967:479–480), (1992:49—"every biographer and historian," 1992:50 "most of these versions"), (1992:58—basis for statements regarding *makahiki*'s occurrence, especially in relation to later comments, e.g., 1992:95), (1992:116—"fabrication" overstates what Beaglehole reference asserts; while Ledyard's book is not cited Ledyard clearly is in Beaglehole 1974), (1992:159—citing of Stokes rather than actual, and full, quote by Dibble 1909:iii–iv), (1992:83–84—basis for assertions regarding Hikiau ritual, e.g., "it is clear," "it is reasonably clear"), (1992:198 regarding Denning in relation to Sahlins 1995:282–283), (1992:14—Cook's beatings in relation to Bligh, see full Denning citation 1988:22 or Denning 1992:61–62), (1992:14—"curse the scientists" in relation to full Zimmermann 1926:48

quote and context), (1992:203 fn. 29—basis of statements regarding “unreliable by modern standards” and “plagiarized” as a dismissal for Beaglehole 1967:ccviii–ccix, also the degree to which Obeyesekere then heeds such statements in documenting his argument), (1992:203 fn. 29—basis for “silent conspiracy” given citations relating to Cook’s role in his own death in Beaglehole 1967:clxxvi n.1, 537, 1536, Beaglehole 1964:305, and Gilbert 1926:11; see also Fisher and Johnston 1979), (1992:75–76—“not one of the ships’ journal writers” in relation to Samwell [cited same page], King [cited same page], and Clerke [cited in Beaglehole 1967:1536]), (1992:61—basis for deductions regarding appearance of [given Malo 1951:83; Valeri 1985:325, 327] and language spoken by Hawaiian *akua*); **misrepresentation of Sahlins’ position:** (1992:21—“not much difference between King Kalani‘opu‘u . . . and the god Kū”; also on what basis is Kalanio‘pu‘u interpreted as “king” rather than a paramount chief), (1992:53—implication that Sahlins indicated “rituals exactly paralleled”), (1992:56—“Sahlins does not explain why . . .”), (1992:59—Sahlins never indicated intra- and interisland *makahiki* variations did not exist), (1992:67—“virtually no instances in Sahlins’ corpus where a source is critically examined . . .”), (1992:67—“information from any text is used as long as it fits the structuralist thesis”), (1992:159—“if *Mooolelo* was a product of . . . as Sahlins implies”), (1992:177—“empirical accounts . . . have been subtly, and sometimes not so subtly rephrased or altered . . .”), see also Sahlins (1995:29, 49, 193, 239–240).

4. A host of people use the term *borderlands* in overlapping but slightly different ways (e.g., see Anzaldúa 1987; Rosaldo 1989; Thelen 1992; Alvarez 1995; Gutiérrez-Jones 1995). I would use it here in a general sense—as involving the ambiguous zone of transition between differences deemed important, as a zone where hybridity flourishes (cf. Bhabha 1994; Gilroy 1993), and as a zone where those who police border crossings—by others—assume much authority.

A VIEW FROM AFAR (MIDDLE EAST)— AN INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD SAID

• *Robert Borofsky*: In the first chapter of *Culture and Imperialism*, you write: “Appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded or whether it continues, albeit in different forms.” One of the key issues facing both the Pacific and the Middle East today—that is brought out in the Firth and Jolly chapters and the poems by Lee, Thaman, and Molisa—is to what degree colonial hegemonies of the past remain in place in what is often referred to as the postcolonial era. What is your opinion?

• *Edward Said*: First of all, I would not use the word *postcolonial*. As implied in several chapters, the postcolonial period has not really occurred. A lot of people ascribed to me the view that I am a postcolonial critic and that, in my books on *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, I played a role in establishing the field. But I do not think that is accurate, because my interest is in showing that there is a continuity between colonialism and postcolonialism. The people who were oppressed before are often still oppressed, though perhaps in different ways.

I think, then, it is very important to establish the continuities between colonialism and what follows it. In the 30s and 40s of this century, the people of India and Indonesia and various parts of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in the Pacific, were oppressed and directly colonized people. What used to be called by world historians “peripheries” are today still mostly peripheries. The dominant powers are still the Western powers.

Second, the issues considering native people, whether they are in the Pacific (in places like Hawai‘i and New Zealand) or elsewhere,

concern oppressed minorities and the degree to which they have lost their land and nationhood. Take the case of the Kurds, who have not had a nation for dozens if not hundreds of years, or the Palestinians. Their struggles still continue because a nationalist memory still exists and because, in my opinion, insufficient restitution has been given them.

- *RB*: Ward discusses the same issue regarding the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand.

- *ES*: Exactly. Do not forget that until very recently historians wrote the history of the New World from the point of view of Columbus, not from the point of view of the people who lost it. So I think that battle is still there. And within societies like the United States, if you take the case of American blacks, Afro-Americans, the issue of what is to be done about their long history of suffering, slavery, and injustice still continues because their descendants, those who are alive today, remain in subordinate and subsidiary positions.

The point I am trying to make, and is in both your and Ward's pieces, is the debate still goes on because there is not a consensus as to what happened. Most official historians, for example, would dispute Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*. If you compare Howard Zinn on the history of New England settlement with Bernard Bailyn or Oscar Handlin, both of whom are eminent historians, the latter emphasize a history of progress and development and enlightenment and what happened to the Native Americans is incidental. Whereas to Zinn, it is crucial. So I think whether on the level of education, on the level of the writing of history by professional historians, or on the level of teaching history, the whole thing is still up for grabs. There is still a debate going on.

- *RB*: One point that is brought up in the “Postcolonial” Politics Introduction—and implicitly runs through several pieces—is the problematic nature of nationalism and the nation.

- *ES*: That is correct. The nation is one thing. But nationalism, as you note, is quite another. Nationalism as I read it is fairly universal today. If you look at the ideology of nationalism, which generally I am very critical of, there is always a component in it of celebrating the nation, of making one nation central (versus other nations)—celebrating a particular national essence.

There is a certain kind of essentialism which seems to me constitutive of every nation and every nationalism. I feel we need ask: Has nationalism and building the nation for the common good actually

produced more problems than it has resolved? Personally, I think that it has created more problems.

- *RB*: There are certainly suppressions in nationalism.

- *ES*: Exactly. Take, for example, nationalism in, say, India in 1947. There was the great movement of national independence from the British. But central to it, we now know, was a movement of partition and separatism: It was not a message of “we are all Indians together” but rather “we are Muslims and Hindus.” Instead of living together in some new group we might call a nation, or at least one India, each wanted their own nation—a nation of Muslims and a nation of Hindus.

So one of the tendencies of nationalism, in other words, is not to unify but in some cases to suppress and other cases, in part because of imperial policy, to encourage separation and partition, divide and quit. On the whole, these tendencies have not been very healthy.

In nationalism, there is always an “other.” If you go back to Herodotus, there are the Greeks and the Barbarians. This opposition is absolutely central to all these things.

A lot of my work involves questioning the usefulness of this formulation. I am interested to show the history of it—that there is a long history going back to ancient times. The fact is that this sort of “we-they” opposition seems to be increasing rather than decreasing. That is what bothers me.

- *RB*: Some scholars suggest people in the Third World have tended to construct their social identities around Western notions of nationhood and, as a result, have become entwined within Western hegemonic frameworks even when opposing them.

- *ES*: I am not sure I agree with that. The argument is made by modern historians of nationalism who say the whole idea of the nation comes from the West. I am not sure that is true. If you look at, for example, the ancient Near East or Africa—if you read the work of Basil Davidson, Mahmood Mamdani, and other historians of Africa, there are clear instances of what appears to be nationalism and national identity well before it developed in Europe. On the other hand, the Europeans did add something to the idea of nationalism.

But the argument that some make that nationalism comes from the West I think is a flawed, partial, and really, in the end, a false argument. It is another example of the West imposing itself on others.

Or take the question of whether or not people have a “history.”

Everybody has a history. I would say to be human is to have and to make history. That is what distinguishes us from animals.

• *RB*: Let me turn to another theme of the “Postcolonial” Politics section. The prose pieces by Diaz, Grace, Ward, and myself as well as the poems by Balaz, Teaiwa, and Rasmussen revolve around questions of identity and empowerment. How does one make sense of the colonial past in a way that facilitates empowerment and identity today?

• *ES*: It is a central question these pieces raise. I am not so sure that simply asserting one’s identity is enough. Let me take the case of the Palestinians. We feel that we are threatened, so our cultural sense and even national survival is very important to us. I think that it is absolutely necessary to defend against your own extermination—whether as a people or as a nation.

On the other hand, as Fanon says, that often is not enough. Take Algeria. The French entered Algeria in 1830. Between 1830 and about 1850, the population of Algeria was decimated, almost literally. About 50 percent of the people of Algeria were killed. During that period of slaughter, there was resistance. The resistance continued right up until the official declaration of the Algerian revolution in 1954. After eight years of colonial war, the Algerians drove the French out. The Algerians may have lost militarily, but they won politically. The French were forced to negotiate with them. In 1962 a new Algeria was born, the nation of Algeria—independence. But look what has happened since then. Today, Algeria is in the middle of a fantastically bloody, murderous battle between religious extremists on the one hand and murderous military forces on the other, representing the authority of the state. The organizational authority that won the war against the French is now engaged in a murderous war against its own citizens.

So Fanon was right. Nationalism is never enough. Once you have nationalism in the form of independence and you win the war of survival, there has to be a new consciousness born. Fanon called it a social consciousness which transcends the national and sets about defining relationships between people on something other than the nation or nationalism—on class, on notions of equality or democracy, for example.

The same is true in Palestine. As a result of the peace process, Palestinians for the first time have something that is called a self-governing authority represented by Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. What has happened? For years we spoke of wanting a democratic state. We were going to be more enlightened than other Arab states.

Well, in fact, there are often summary executions. There is no basic law. There is no democracy. The newspapers are censored. Anybody who says anything critical is put in jail. All this to supposedly protect national identity. Well, I do not agree with that. It is not a reasonable excuse.

So I think there has to be something more than nationalism and national survival. And that has to be justice, there has to be a form, a concept of citizenship, which allows people to engage with other people in the same society on the basis of decent and fair participation. Unfortunately, that has not often been the case.

- *RB*: If we turn to literary forms of history telling—such as the poems by Lee, Thaman, Molisa, Balaz, Teaiwa, and Rasmussen and the short story by Grace—what role would you suggest such literary efforts play in empowering people vis-à-vis their pasts?

- *ES*: That is a very good question. In fact, I have written a presidential column for the Modern Language Association on that subject. First of all, I do not think that the classroom or the study of literature in the classroom ought to be a place where social and political problems are solved. One of the things that I noticed when I went to South Africa, just after apartheid ended, was the understandably triumphalist sense that injustice has been defeated. The old apartheid culture was to be replaced by a new culture, more inclusive of the oppressed black majority. I would be less triumphant. I do not think that literature or the classroom can be used for the settling of scores. On the contrary, I think the classroom ought to be protected.

Here we come to the study of literature. Students and teachers should be able to read the major texts of their own and others' pasts under the same heading—of humanity's general history. I think it is very wrong and invidious to say we should only study the Western tradition. I think the Western tradition by itself makes no sense because . . . it has a tremendous element in it of other cultures. So I am in favor of a more ecumenical sense of literature.

Second, there is no substitute for careful and close reading. I mean one of the problems that many of our students face, in the age of television, is that they have lost the power to concentrate and read carefully a text which is complicated—one that has figures of speech in it, different rhythms or ironies, different tones and voices. I think that is terribly important.

And third, it is incredibly important not to read literature—this perhaps is the most important point I can make—as if you were read-

ing a sacred text, in order to venerate it and its authority. Rather you should read it as a way of better understanding the human adventure and the cultural context from which it came. That can lead you to other literatures, other experiences.

And fourth and last, it should give rise in you to a certain critical sense. In other words, what the reading of texts should leave you with is an appetite for asking more questions—what you refer to in the book as conversations. How did this come about? Where did that come from? What are the uses to which it can be put? There is a sense that this remains an everlasting effort. You do not read to learn sacred truths and then walk out armed with them forever. Rather, reading creates in the reader a skeptical sense.

As a teacher, I believe it is absolutely central that my role is not to tell students to become my disciples. On the contrary, I should say what I have to say and encourage my students to question it. Only in the classroom can you have that. At the moment that you turn the classroom into a place where you expound on your philosophy and political ideas then, especially in the teaching of literature, that is horrible.

Let me give you an example from my own experience. I am not from the West. I am an Arab. I grew up in the Arab world. English and European literature are not “my” literature. But I have never taught anything else because it seems to me important to study it as carefully and in as disciplined a way as possible. I should not use the classroom as a way for pushing my identity and my background and my literature on to students who therefore become captives of my political philosophy.

- *RB*: In terms of the fragmented conversations you see academics having today—regarding the past’s relation to the present and the present’s relation to the past—what do you perceive as the cause? What is behind the obscuring, fragmented language that you discuss in your spring (1999) Modern Language Association Presidential Column?

- *ES*: The reason for the factionalization—that I think is the main problem—and the resulting jargonization is there no longer exists a consensus about the object of knowledge. For the last twenty or thirty years, there has been a steady erosion due to a number of factors regarding what it is we are supposed to be doing. For example, in a department of literature such as my own, a generation ago it was understood that if you studied literature, you studied principally

English literature. (I am talking about departments of English, now.) You studied English literature and the approach was largely chronological. You started with old English, you did Chaucer and middle English, then you went into the Renaissance, you studied Shakespeare and Milton and then you did the Restoration, the eighteenth century, the Romantics, and so on up to roughly the present. There was an agreement on who the major figures were. Every student had to have some knowledge of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton and so on. And there was an agreement on what was literary and what was not. There was a clear distinction made between literary writing and nonliterary writing. In the case of ambiguous figures like Burke or Gibbon, who were respectively a politician and an historian, there was some consensus that they were also literary figures because they wrote well and because their ideas merited that description.

In the last generation all this has disappeared. We no longer have, in my department, any agreement on what the required body of literature is. We do not have a chronological sequence. We do not have an agreement on the major figures. And we do not offer any standard curriculum. The reasons for that go across the board, including changes in the makeup of the student body, which is no longer willing to accept the notion that literature written by largely white men is literature.

The politics of identity, certainly feminism, has played a role here. But gender studies and gay and ethnic studies have also encouraged a revision of what is deemed literature. But with this expansion of the boundaries regarding what is deemed literature has come a suppression of previously studied books that are no longer considered interesting and important.

Second, there has been a dissipation of the consensus caused by critical methods which—whether you talk about structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, or any other such approach—suggests that the unit of study is no longer the literary work. You cannot say where the literary work begins and where it ends—or even if there is such a thing. Why should a pamphlet be less important than a novel? Why should a great novel be more worthy of study than a minor novel, which is perhaps more symptomatic of trends in demography and property?

And third, there is general isolation of people in the humanities from the outside world. Politics is no longer thought of as something that you do outside the university, for various reasons. Politics has

become too expensive. There is a general demotion of citizenship and participation. The media, in a sense, have taken over the role played by books and literacy. Today, people in the university confine their politics to academic politics. It is easier to be a Marxist inside the university than it is to be one outside. In a very sad way, the public sphere has become somewhat irrelevant to the much more amenable space within the academy, with its freedom and insulated comfort. It is a new kind of provincialism.

- *RB*: As the general introduction to the volume suggests, there is a need to broaden our conversations beyond the academy. What would you see as the role of public intellectuals today?

- *ES*: In *Representations of the Intellectual*, I tried to address the public role of the intellectual rather than the role of the public intellectual. Roughly, summing up the argument, I feel there is a difference, first of all, between a professional and an intellectual. An intellectual answers the demands not only of his conscience (or her conscience) but also a public cause relating to justice or injustice.

Second, in terms of language and accessibility, the intellectual has to use a language that is comprehensible, that is not technical, specialized or jargonistic, and must expose him or herself to public scrutiny and investigation.

And third, the intellectual has to be independent. There is a difference between alignment and complete conscription. I separate myself from intellectuals who think their role is to advise power. My conception of the intellectual is that of a dissenter, that of somebody who speaks the truth to power but is not of power, is opposed to it in some way, is independent from it.

And lastly, I suggest the intellectual ought to uphold universal principles even though they may hurt himself or his people. Let me use the example of the United States. If you condemn the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, then you ought, by the same token, to condemn all invasions—illegal and unjust invasions, including the invasion by the United States, for example, of Panama, Grenada, or Vietnam. You do not just limit it to attacking foreign devils. You begin at home and are critical of those you interact with where your role is the most important.

- *RB*: This brings me to the question of cultural sovereignty—a subject that arises in the Obeyesekere-Sahlins dispute regarding Captain Cook and frames the writing of history today in the Pacific and elsewhere. How do you make sense of cultural sovereignty beyond the Pacific, and the politics that surround it?

- *ES*: I think that it is often a dangerous formula for two reasons. Number one, cultural sovereignty often can be used as a way of giving people—to go back to South Africa or Indians on American reservations—cultural rights but no political rights. The idea is you can wear your costume, you can speak your language. That is what they have tried to do with the Palestinians. They have given them “autonomy,” which means they can teach what they like in the schools. They can speak their language. But they do not have real self-determination and remain without political sovereignty.

And number two, cultural sovereignty is often used as a club to beat other people: saying I want, in this territory of mine, that only certain languages, certain customs be observed. It is a way of curtailing independence and freedom. My interest is in expanding these. I think cultural sovereignty is very frequently a ruse of some authority to browbeat and bully minorities.

There is the whole question about minorities. What happens to them? I tend to think that we should really think about not so much the abrogation as the abridgement of cultural sovereignty in order to coexist peacefully with others. The moment that we start saying our goal is cultural sovereignty, then my God, there is no end to it. Then there are officially designated enemies, there are languages that are declared to be no good, and so on.

- *RB*: Let me draw our discussion to a close by asking: What do you think would be interesting comparisons one might make between the Middle East and the Pacific? What would be interesting questions to explore?

- *ES*: It depends, in part, on what part of the Pacific you are talking about. If you are talking about Hawai‘i, then you have almost exactly the same story as Palestine. Europeans come there and claim it is an empty place. They either destroy or subjugate the indigenous population. In other words, many places share a common history of colonialism.

There are also common histories of resistance. I think resistance is terribly important because in no place did people just give up and say: Okay, you can have the land, we are leaving. They always stood and fought. And with that resistance came a culture of resistance, a history of opposition. There was a notion of the indigenous peoples uniting to fight outsiders so as to preserve their identity.

Also, in the case of successful struggles—there are not too many of them—what happens after “independence”? To what degree is there

now a new kind of dependency between the newly independent nation and the former dominant power, or a new dominant power of the day. This is what we are witnessing with globalization. In the case of unsuccessful movements, what happens? How are they incorporated or marginalized?

And of course, in both instances, there is a similar stress on the need to hold on to the indigenous language. We are not going to learn English. We are not going to learn Spanish. We are not going to learn French. We have to concentrate on learning our own languages and the construction of a history, a narrative. These are part of what I call oppositions and resistances.

Epilogue

Pasts to Remember¹

Epeli Hau'ofa

Shatrugun spots the boy in the crowd; he is standing under a breadfruit tree at a distance from the watchers. All at once his hair turns to resin, his arms become boughs and his feet sprout roots that are driven miles into the earth. . . . Drive your roots deep enough and you end up in infinity, says the breadfruit tree. . . . But infinity does not nourish, retorts the boy-tree, and promptly withdraws his roots to a patch of land beneath the breadfruit tree. And then his roots are too close to the surface and he reverts to the condition of a boy-farmer with feet, and is instantly seasick.

—Sudesh Mishra in *Lila*

In an earlier publication (1994a), I offered a view of ourselves that is more optimistic than the currently prevailing notions of our present and future as peoples of Oceania. That view is tied to my firmly held belief that all social realities are human creations, and that if we fail to construct our own realities other people will do it for us. It can be said that this concern is much ado about nothing. I wish that this were true, but it is not. People with powerful connections have presented us in certain ways, which have influenced our self-perceptions and the ways in which we have been perceived and treated by others. In his book *Island Boy*, Sir Thomas Davis, former prime minister of the Cook Islands and prominent Pacific Islands regional leader in the 1970s and 1980s, says, in a telling statement of what could happen when we accept other people's representations of us, that:

Because we were told that small Pacific Islands states could never make a go of it without largesse from their former colonial masters, we did not try very hard to see the possibilities from our own points

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of view which had to be quite different from theirs [Australians' and New Zealanders']. . . . We therefore accepted largesse as a right without questioning the matter any further, and without the thought that one day it may not be forthcoming. (1992:305)

As I said at the beginning, I have tried to deal with aspects of our present and future. I propose now to look into our past. I believe that in order for us to gain greater autonomy than we have today and maintain it within the global system, we must in addition to other measures be able to define and construct our pasts and present in our own ways. We cannot continue to rely heavily on others to do it for us because autonomy cannot be attained through dependence.

Intermittently in the 1980s and through to the very early 1990s, I followed the discussions of ideas propounded by certain anthropologists about the constructions of the past and the politics of culture.² What these cultural constructionists are doing is what we have been doing all along—that is, constructing our pasts, our histories, from the vast storehouses of narratives, both written and oral, to push particular agendas. One of the more positive aspects of our existence in Oceania is that truth is flexible and negotiable, despite attempts by some of us to impose political, religious, and other forms of absolutism. Versions of truth may be accepted for particular purposes and moments, only to be reversed when circumstances demand other versions; and we often accede to things just to stop being bombarded, and then go ahead and do what we want to do anyway.

But cultural constructionists of a certain persuasion have gone beyond the bounds by arrogating to themselves the role of final arbiters of what is true or false in our societies: true history, false history; genuine culture, spurious culture. It is a new hegemony, or perhaps it is the old one in a new guise. Our chiefs and other leaders have been doing it, but we have ways of dealing with this sort of thing. Our freedom lies in part in the flexibility in all kinds of discourses on the nature of our societies and on the directions of our development. There are no final truths or falsehoods, only interpretations, temporary consensus, and even impositions, for particular purposes. Cultural constructionists aim to control and direct our discourses on our own affairs, which is unwarranted. It is also potentially dangerous, for these scholars could be politically influential, as Haunani-Kay Trask (1991) asserted.

Until recent years with the rise into prominence of historical anthro-

pology and ethnographic history, there has been a near-total domination of the scholarly reconstructions of our pasts by the Canberra school of Pacific historians. From their works we can see that fundamental to the conceptualization and writing of our histories is the division of our past into two main periods: the precontact and post-contact periods. The determining factor for this is the presence of Europeans with their traditions of writing and recording. Many years ago, while visiting a rural community in Papua New Guinea, I was invaded by a particularly virulent kind of lice. Some people call them crab lice, but these looked more like giant lobsters. I went to a nearby hospital run by a group of missionary sisters, one of whom told me in a serious and concerned manner to be very careful, for any slight body contact with the local inhabitants would cause much misery. Since then I have always associated the word *contact* with nasty infections. As used by historians and other scholars the term is very apt; it describes accurately the first and early encounters between Oceanians and European sailors as carriers of dangerous diseases that wiped out large proportions of our populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Within one hundred years the indigenous population of Hawai'i, for example, was reduced by more than 90 per cent. There was a real concern toward the end of the last century that we would vanish from the face of the earth because of rampaging introduced diseases. Ironically, a major concern in these twilight years of the twentieth century is that there are too many of us around.

Marxist sociologists, who began arriving at our university in the early 1980s, would not use the term *contact* because of its capitalist association. Instead they introduced a beautiful substitute, *penetration*, as in "capitalist penetration of the Pacific" or "get penetrated." This is also a very apt term for it connotes consummation without mutual consent. We should get rid of these words and use better ones like *meet*, *encounter*, and so on.

The point is that for Pacific scholars the main factors for the reconstructions of our pasts are events determined by Euro-American imperialism. Our histories are commonly structured on the temporal division of the past into precontact, early contact, colonial, and post-colonial or neocolonial periods. In this formulation, Oceania has no history before imperialism, only what is called "prehistory": before history. In many if not most of our history books, more than 90 percent of the period of our existence in Oceania is cramped into a chapter or two on prehistory and perhaps indigenous social organiza-

tion. These comprise a brief prelude to the real thing, history beginning with the arrival of Europeans. As it is, our histories are essentially narratives told in the footnotes of the histories of empires.

For those of us who want to reconstruct our remote and recent pasts in our own images, for the purpose of attaining and maintaining cultural autonomy and resisting the continuing encroachments on and domination of our lives by global forces aided and abetted by comprador institutions, this kind of history is a hindrance. Although it is very useful and essential for the understanding of vital aspects of our heritage, it is a hindrance in that it marginalizes our peoples by relegating them to the roles of spectators and objects for transformation into good Christians, democrats, bureaucrats, commercial producers, cheap laborers, and the like. It does not see them as major players in the shaping of their histories. The main actors are explorers, early traders, missionaries, planters, colonial officials and regimes, and so forth.

Pacific histories also marginalize almost all our pasts by considering them not history, or prehistory, to be dealt with by folklorists and a dwindling number of archaeologists and linguists. It can be argued that it really is the case that we have no history before imperialism. I cannot accept that, because we can argue that the much maligned oral narratives are as reliable or unreliable, biased or unbiased, as are written documents for sourcing history. We do know that all sources are contestable, else history is complete and closed, which is nonsense. Every generation rewrites its history, as the saying goes. Besides, main-line history is only one way of reconstructing the past, which has no existence without reference to the present. How one reconstructs the past, as history or whatever, is a political act, a choice from valid alternatives made for particular purposes.

When you view most of a people's past as not history, you shorten very drastically the roots of their culture, or declare their existence doubtful. It is not surprising then that many academics hold the view that the peoples and cultures of Oceania are inventions of imperialism. This view has attained the status of truth only because people have been sidelined from their histories and conceptually severed from most of their pasts. It has been used to frustrate our endeavors to attain autonomy by characterizing most of what we say or do as being borrowed from the "dominant culture." This is as if borrowing is unique to us. As far as I know our cultures have always been hybrid and hybridizing, for we have always given to and taken from our

neighbors and others we encounter; but the “dominant culture” is undoubtedly the most hybrid of all, for it has not just borrowed but looted unconscionably the treasures of cultures the world over. Like cultural constructionism, the prevailing Pacific historiography is hegemonic. It admits of no other than mainline historiography with only minor concessions.

Having identified the problem, we may ask: Where do we go from here? What should or could we do? If we are to go beyond adding our viewpoints to history as usual, we have to devise other methods, using our own categories as much as possible for producing our histories, our cultures. We could learn from the works of ethnographic historians and historical anthropologists, as well as from mainline historians, but we Oceanians must find ways of reconstructing our pasts that are our own. Non-Oceanians may construct and interpret our pasts or our present, but they are their constructions and interpretations, not ours. Theirs may be excellent and very instructive, but we must rely much more on ours. The rest of this chapter suggests some ideas for getting the ball rolling.

We may begin with delineating a new temporal dimension of history by doing away with the division of the past in which most of it lies outside history. Our histories did not begin with the coming of Europeans. If we continue to rely for the reconstructions of our remote pasts mainly on the works of archaeologists, linguists, botanists, zoologists, and the like, we will still be trapped with our pasts as pre-history. We must resort very seriously to our ecologically based oral narratives. Most historians, nurtured on written records and other kinds of concrete documentation as their primary sources, are leery of oral narratives, which they take to be free-floating tales disconnected from the physical world, impossible of verification, and therefore outside their purview.

A few years ago I came across the work of an Oceanian historical anthropologist, ‘Okusitino Mahinā, who argued very strongly that ecologically based oral traditions are as valid sources for “academic history” as are written documents (see Mahinā 1992). On reading Mahinā’s work, which is an entire history based largely on oral traditions backed wherever possible with the findings of archaeology and related disciplines, it dawned on me that here in the making was a new Pacific historiography by an Oceanian scholar. A few historians may be working along similar lines, but it is significant that Mahinā’s background is anthropology, the discipline that has spearheaded the

rethinking of Pacific historiography. The point at issue here is whether there are legitimate histories apart from mainline history. If there are, and I believe that there are, then our histories are as old as our remembered pasts.

Human events occur as interactions between people in time and space. First we look at people. In our reconstructions of Pacific histories of the recent past, for example, we must clear the stage and bring in new characters. We bring to the center stage, as main players, our own peoples and institutions. For this purpose we lay to rest once and for all the ghost of Captain Cook. This is not a suggestion to excise him entirely from our histories—far from it. Others, especially in New Zealand and Australia, will still consider him superstar, so he will be looming large on the horizon. As for us, we merely send Captain Cook to the wings to await summons when necessary to call in the Plague, and may recall him at the end to take a bow. As long as this particular spirit struts the center stage, our peoples and institutions will remain where they are now: as minor characters and spectators. Once we sideline Captain Cook it will be easier to deal with other and lesser intruders. As long as we rely mainly on written documents, and as long as Europeans, Americans, and similar others are seen to dominate our pasts as main actors or manipulators of local people to carry out their designs, our histories will remain imperial histories and narratives of passive submission to transformations, of victimizations and fatal impacts. There have been tragic and awful victimizations, but from a long-term perspective, which is the best kind of historical outlook, what is of more importance is how people, ordinary people, the forgotten people of history, have coped and are coping with their harsh realities, their resistance and struggles to be themselves and hold together. Patricia Grace's brilliant novel, *Cousins* (1992), is the best record I have yet read of how an ordinary Oceanian family struggles to maintain its coherence in the face of adversity. Until relatively recently, Pacific histories have generally been silent on resistance and struggles to cohere that went on, mostly unnoticed, through decades of domination and exploitation. Even in the late 1960s, Hawai'i and New Zealand were still touted as societies of multiracial harmony.

In order to bring into the center stage grassroots resistance and other unnoticed but important events for our peoples, we must refocus our historical reconstructions on them and their doings. The new knowledge and insights we could gain from this reversal of historical roles could open up new and exciting vistas. Let others do their re-

constructions of our pasts; we have dialogue with them, and form alliances with some. But we must have histories—our roots and identities—that are our own distinctive creations.

Second, we introduce into our historical reconstructions the notion of ecological time, which is perhaps both the egg and the chicken to a marked emphasis in our traditional notions of past, present, and future. Our modern conception of time stresses linear progression in which the past is behind us, and receding ever further, while the future is ahead, in the direction of our progression, which is an evolutionary process leading to ever higher and more advanced forms. Let it be clear that by “linear progression” I include the notion of cumulative development or modernization, which is equated with progress toward the capitalist utopia, the dream of the wretched of the earth. Lineality was not absent in our traditional notions. In fact it was particularly strong in Central and East Oceania,³ where it featured in genealogies, especially those of high chiefs and their deeds. Histories obtained from genealogies have a lineal emphasis, and they are also aristocratic histories. In West Oceania, where genealogies were relatively shallow, lineality was expressed in other ways. However, Oceanian lineality was neither evolutionary nor teleological, but rather sequential; it had much to do with assertions of rights for succession and inheritance, not, perhaps ever, with evolutionary development as we know it.

We can see our traditional nonlinear emphasis in the languages of Austronesian-speaking peoples, which locate the past in front and ahead of us and the future behind, following after us. In her remarkable book, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa says:

It is interesting to note that in Hawaiian, the past is referred to as *Ka wa mamua*, “the time in front or before.” Whereas the future, when thought of at all, is *Ka wa mahope*, or “the time which comes after or behind.” It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas. Such an orientation is to the Hawaiian an eminently practical one, for the future is always unknown, whereas the past is rich in glory and knowledge. It also bestows upon us a natural propensity for the study of history. (1992:22–23)

In the Fijian and Tongan languages, the terms for past are *gauna i liu* and *kuonga mu‘a*, respectively; *gauna* and *kuonga* meaning “time”

or “age” or “era”; and *liu* and *mu‘a* meaning “front” or “ahead.” When Fijian and Tongan preachers or orators point their fingers to the past, they never say *gauna i liu* or *kuonga mu‘a* and point to the back; that would only bring the Lord’s house down. They say the appropriate term and point ahead. And the further the past, the higher the finger points. But the finger never goes straight up for that would be the wrong direction and in any case, the Lord does not relish being pointed at by unbelieving preachers. The conception of the past as ahead or in front of us is not a mere linguistic construction. It has an actual historical basis in the documentation of our oral narratives on our landscapes. I say more on this later.

The terms *liu* and *mu‘a* may be used as verbs, as in *au sa liu* and *teu mu‘omu‘a*, meaning, “I am going ahead of you,” or more graphically in the popular Fiji English, “I am taking the lead,” which is the literal translation of *au sa liu*. The past then is going ahead of us, leading into the future, which is behind us. Is this then the case of the dog chasing its tail? I believe so. From this perspective we can see the notion of time as being circular. This notion fits perfectly with the regular cycles of natural occurrences that punctuated important activities, particularly those of a productive and ritual/religious nature that consumed most of the expanded human energy in the Oceanian past and still do in many parts of our region today. This is ecological time, an idea that we could use for the reconstruction of many of our histories. I shall return to this point shortly. But let me say here that the English language incorporates this notion of past as “ahead” and future as “behind,” as in “let us pay tribute to those who have gone before us,” and “the generations that are coming behind us.”⁴ But the main emphasis in Western and hence our modern notion of time is not circular, except in Christian calendrical rituals and festivals, but rather linear progressive and teleological, which might have been strengthened immeasurably by the rapid changes that have occurred since the Industrial Revolution.

That the past is ahead, in front of us, is a conception of time that helps us retain our memories and to be aware of its presence. What is behind us cannot be seen and is liable to be forgotten readily. What is ahead of us cannot be forgotten so readily or ignored, for it is in front of our minds’ eyes, always reminding us of its presence. The past is alive in us, so in more than a metaphorical sense the dead are alive—we are our history.

Where time is circular, it does not exist independently of the natu-

ral surroundings and society. It is very important for our historical reconstructions to know that the Oceanian circular time emphasis is tied to the regularity of seasons marked by natural phenomena such as cyclical appearances of certain flowers, birds, and marine creatures, shedding of certain leaves, phases of the moon, changes in prevailing winds and weather patterns, which themselves mark the commencement of and set the course for cycles of human activities such as those related to agriculture, terrestrial and marine foraging, trade and exchange, and voyaging, all with their associated rituals, ceremonies, and festivities. This is a universal phenomenon stressed variously by different cultures. With its unquenchable thirst for growth propelled by its mighty technologies, modern society, however, is disengaging itself from natural cycles, which, as we shall see, is the major factor for the global environmental degradation.

Time is so subsumed under these cycles and other more discrete events that precise dating, which is a main preoccupation of mainline history, is of no importance. In the past, as it is with many people today, it was not so much *when* events occurred but rather *where*, *how*, and in what *sequences* they occurred that was important. Of course our ancestors did not have the means to date events, which should not unduly concern us, especially when we are dealing with remote pasts. Moreover, when things occur or are done in cycles, dating, which is tied to lineality, is in fact not quite relevant. However, now that we have the means for dating we use them; but in our reconstructions, it is broad periods and the social and political implications for the present of remembered pasts that are paramount.

Of equal importance in the consideration of the relationships between Oceanian societies and nature is the role of technology. The driving force that propelled human activities was the knowledge and skills developed over centuries, fine tuned to synchronize actions with the regularities in nature. As it provided the vital link between society and nature, technology cannot be dissociated from or seen to be independent of either. It was a vital and compatible component of the cycles. This made for balance and continuity in the ecological relationship. "Living in harmony with nature" is a more popular way of putting it. For a genuinely Oceanian historiography, we could use this notion to reconstruct some of our pasts in terms of people's endeavors always to adapt and localize external borrowings and impositions, fitting them to their familiar cycles. In this way they actively transformed themselves rather than just being passively remodeled by

others.⁵ This has been the case since the early settlement of Oceania; it still holds true for much of our region today. Anthropologists, especially those who worked in the Papua New Guinea Highlands in the 1950s and 1960s, have in fact recorded such indigenizations among peoples who had just encountered westerners for the first time. And more recently, growing numbers of anthropologists are writing their works as historical anthropology and historians writing theirs as ethnographic histories.⁶

But things have not always fit into familiar cycles, which provides a problem that lies at the core of the study of social change and history. One of the cardinal tenets of modernization, a notion of linear progression that takes little or no consideration of natural cycles, is the necessity and hence the moral imperative of the *transfer of technology*. Modern technology is conceived of as independent of both nature and culture and could therefore be transferred anywhere in the world unencumbered with natural or cultural baggage. This has, on application, wreaked havoc on human lives and nature everywhere. The attempt to transfer high technology as the engine for modernization to societies that have for ages accommodated themselves to natural cycles of ecological relationships is like leading an elephant into a china shop.

But, it may be asked, what is the relevance of this view of history to the linear processes that presently dominate modern society, worldwide processes driven by transnational capital and the global economy? We have other means of dealing with this kind of situation and must use them. We should, however, keep in mind the fact that we live in societies with most of our peoples dwelling in rural and outer-island communities. Much of their existence revolves on their endeavors to cope with invasive technologies and to adapt them to their familiar cycles. Most of us who are urbanized and living in accordance with the demands of the contemporary global culture still maintain relationships with our nonurban relatives and are therefore entangled in the tussle between tradition and modernity, however defined. Their narratives are therefore ours, as has always been the case before modernization separated us. For the reconstruction and analysis of historical processes of this kind, we could use the notion of the spiral, which connotes both cyclic and lineal movements.

Most of our remote and so much of our recent pasts are not documented and therefore lie outside the purview of mainline history. We must in that case devise other methods, based on different perspec-

tives of history, to reconstruct such pasts to suit our purposes, including those of maintaining the depths of our roots and the strengthening of our autonomous identities. We have to bequeath to future generations more memories of our recent past and our present than we ourselves remember of our remote pasts. We must remember and reconstruct as much of our pasts as we can to present to the future.

This is not sentimental nonsense on the part of someone who is getting on and is reflecting on lost youth and idealized pasts; far from it. Recall Milan Kundera's immortal statement: "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Relationships of power such as those between nations, classes, and other groupings are often characterized by the dominant going out of their way to erase or suppress memories, or histories, and implant what they wish in order to consolidate their control. Take, for example, the history of England and the British Empire taught in colonial schools, in place of local histories, so as to direct human thought and therefore more easily manipulate the colonized. The near extinction of Celtic languages in the British Isles, and of New Zealand Maori and Hawaiian languages, were deliberately engineered to destroy memories and cultures and thereby to absorb the vanquished more smoothly into the dominant cultures. Fortunately this has not been completely successful; and a major feature of the Maori and Hawaiian struggles for sovereignty is the revival of their indigenous languages and histories.

Other examples may also be taken from Central and East Oceania where our aristocracies have for centuries encapsulated most if not all our remembered pasts. Most of our ancient and even our more recent oral histories are about the lives and heroic and horrific deeds of our great chiefs, their families, and kin groups. Our histories, cultures, and group identities are focused almost entirely on them. Without them we have only a few roots, because the lives and deeds of the majority of our peoples have been erased from memory. This is a pillar of the aristocratic power over us. We cherish and respect our connections to our aristocracies, mainly because we have no choice; and for the same reason "we love and respect our oppression," as a waggish colleague puts it. Nevertheless, they are the major component of our heritage and so we must carry them all, the good and the ugly, for only then can we learn properly from our histories.

In view of this, we have to take careful note of our indoctrination by our contemporary elite groups and ruling classes, of which we, the

senior staff of the university, are members. How and for what purposes are we directing our people's thinking and memories? What do we allow to be taught thoroughly, to be taught only cursorily, or not taught at all, in our schools and other institutions of learning? What do we read or not read, hear or not hear, see or not see in our mass media? Where and wherefore are the silences?

I am reminded here of a piece of advice by Machiavelli to his Prince, which was rather extreme so I do not advocate its being followed to the letter. Machiavelli said that when you kill someone, kill everyone else connected to him so that no one survives to nurse the memory and plot to do you in.

We cannot therefore have our memories erased, foreshortened, or directed. With weak roots we would be easily uprooted, transplanted, grafted upon, trimmed, and transformed in any way that the global market requires. With little or no memory, we stand alone as individuals with no points of reference except to our dismally portrayed present, to our increasingly marketized national institutions, to international development agencies, international lending organizations, transnational corporations, fit only to be globalized and whateverized, and slotted in our proper places on the Human Development Index. Let Eric Waddell have the final say on this:

I hear the same voices in the Pacific today: "It is forbidden to speak Fijian (Hindi, Cook Island Maori, Samoan, Tongan . . .) in the classroom and the school playground." Everything must take place in English (or French). On entering the school the child must take leave of his past, his present, his kin. The classrooms and corridors may be decked with flowers, the teachers smiling, the joys immense. But it is like a door which is sealed behind him, so that a new world may be designed afresh, unhindered by the weight of tradition, unmoved by the voices of the ancestors. And in this new world, . . . each child stands alone: small, remote and ultimately helpless. (1993:28–29)

I submit that this is not confined to our primary schools. It is characteristic of all our formal educational institutions and of our workplaces. In our educational programs we provide our students with materials most of which have been produced by people in the United States, Britain, and other leading countries of the global system. Ideas that we impart to our students pertain mainly to these societies, even though they may be projected as universal verities. We and our students digest these notions and then enter international discourses

on progress almost always on other people's terms. We play their games by their rules, and accept the outcomes as inevitable and even morally desirable, although these may, as they have often turned out to be, against our collective well being. We are thus eroding whatever that is caring and generous in our existence, sacrificing human lives and our natural surroundings in order to be competitive in the world market. We need therefore to be much more inventive and creative than we have been for our own humane development. Our vast region has its own long histories, its storehouses of knowledge, skills, ideals for social relationships, and oceanic problems and potentials that are quite different from those of large landmasses, in which hegemonic views and agendas are hatched.

In addition, we could use the notion of natural cycles and of our traditional ecological relationships to formulate our own philosophies and ideologies for resistance against the misapplication of modern technologies on our societies. We cannot do away with the global system, but we can control aspects of its encroachment and take opportunities when we see them in order to create space for ourselves. We could, for example, formulate a benign philosophy that would help us pay greater reverence and respect to our natural environment than we do today. I have touched on the development of traditional technologies to link natural cycles and cycles of human activities in enduring, total ecological relationships. As has been pointed out, one of our major contemporary problems is that linear progression is based on systematic and cumulatively destructive deployment of dissociated technology on dissociated nature and society, as required by the global economy. But if we believe that we are dependent on nature to tell us, as it told our ancestors, when and how to derive our livelihood from it, and how to care for it, we would think very hard before meddling with it for short-term advantages, knowing that our actions could break the cycles and probably do irreparable damage to ourselves. Earlier on I said something about the idea of the spiral as a model for historical reconstruction. We could go further and incorporate this notion in the formulation of an Oceanian ecological ideology, tying linear development to natural cycles, with the view of guiding the applications of modern technologies on our environment. Our long-term survival within Oceania may very well depend on some such guidance. Kalani Ohele, a Hawaiian activist, told me something that has been said before but is worth repeating here: "We do not own the land, we only look after it."

This leads us to the consideration of the relationship between his-

tory and our natural landscapes. I first came upon this in reading 'Okusitino Mahinā's thesis, although I later found out that this has been done for Hawai'i and that the New Zealand Maori have been working on it for quite some time. Most of our sources of history are our oral narratives inscribed on our landscapes. All our important traditions pinpoint particular named spots as landing places of original ancestors or spots from which they emerged, as arenas of great and decisive battles, sites of past settlements, burials, shrines and temples, routes that important migratory movements followed, markers of more localized mobility out of one's own into other people's territories, which made much of the land throughout our islands enduringly contested by parties deploying not only arms but also oral narratives, including genealogies, to validate their claims and counterclaims. Populations seem always to be in flux and so were the dispositions of land, providing much of the flexibility and motion to the operation of Oceanian societies. All of these are recorded in narratives inscribed on the landscape. Our natural landscapes then are maps of movements, pauses, and more movements.

Sea routes were mapped on chants. Nearly twenty years ago, Futa Helu wrote a series of articles on a particular dance chant, the *me'etu'upaki*, believed to be Tonga's most ancient. The chant is in an archaic form of the language that almost no one today understands, which is taken to be the indication of its antiquity. Helu's translation reveals that it is about a voyage from Kiribati to Tonga. The verses of this chant pinpoint places along the route arranged precisely in their geographical locational sequence.⁷ I believe that the chant is the chart of a long and important sea route that people used in the past. I once asked a very knowledgeable seaman how people of old knew sea lanes, especially between distant places. He replied that these were recorded in chants that identified sequences of landfalls between points of departure and final destinations. Distances were measured in how long it generally took to traverse them. I believe that the Australian Aborigines did similarly with their songlines that connected places all across their continent from coast to coast.

Our landscapes and seascapes are thus cultural as well as physical. We cannot read our histories without knowing how to read our landscapes (and seascapes). When we realize this, we should be able to understand why our languages locate the past as ahead or in front of us. It is right there on our landscapes in front of our very eyes. How often, while traveling through unfamiliar surroundings, have we had

the experience of someone in the company telling us of the associations of particular spots or other features of the landscape traversed with past events. We turn our heads this way and that, and right ahead in front of our eyes we see and hear the past being reproduced through running commentaries. And when we go through our own surroundings, as we do every day, familiar features of our landscapes keep reminding us that the past is alive. They often inspire in us a sense of reverence and awe, not to mention that of fear and revulsion.

These are reasons why it is essential that we do not destroy our landmarks, for with their removal very important parts of our memories, our histories, will be erased. It may be significant in this regard that in several Austronesian languages the word for *placenta* and *womb* is also the word for *land*. Among a group of people once well known to me, the Mekeo of Papua New Guinea, the dead were traditionally buried in front of their houses on the sacred ceremonial ground that ran through the center of their rectangular villages. The term for the ceremonial ground is *ango inaenga*, the “womb of the land.” The womb nurtures and protects the unborn child, as the land nurtures and provides security for humanity. At the end, the departed are returned to the womb of the land. From the womb we come and to the womb we return. It is a much richer and more ennobling image than “earth to earth, ashes to ashes . . . ,” in which there rings an inglorious destiny for our mortal remains.

This very intimate association between history and the natural landscape and between us and our Earth is, I believe, the basis for the oft asserted and maligned notion that we are spiritually and mystically related to the lands to which we belong. It is very difficult for the urban-born and the frequently mobile people to comprehend this kind of relationship. They have little or no appreciation of the fact that for very many of us, people and land are indivisible. Indigenous Fijians have always insisted that the word *vanua* means the land and its people. The Tongan terms for traditions and culture are *tala e fonua* and *ulungaanga fakafonua*, the “stories of the land” and “the way of the land,” respectively. People are one with their culture and land. This brings to mind an occasion in the late 1960s when a Tongan extended family was brought to Fiji and resettled on native land in western Viti Levu. It transpired that when the last surviving member of a particular “landowning” lineage passed away, the clan to which the lineage belonged searched for nonresident offshoots and located the only ones in Tonga. These latter were invited to come to the land,

awaiting its rightful complements. They belonged to it and vice versa, they went to it, and are still there today. No one else could have occupied it in the accepted manner. When I bought a house in Suva a few years ago, my colleagues who were from outside Oceania or were descendants of more recent arrivals commented on it as an act of property investment. On the other hand, indigenous Fijian and Tongan colleagues and friends said without exception, “so you are going to live here forever,” or words to that effect. To some I was acquiring a property, disposable at a good profit at some future date; any improvement I might make on it would enhance its sales value. To others I was establishing a home that would tie me to it forever; any improvement on it would be a further contribution for the benefit of my family, and the future generations. In saying that I was going to live here forever, my friends meant not just me but also my descendants.

There is a vast difference here that shows diametrically opposed perceptions of our relationship with our world: world as property, and world as lasting home. Home as a heritage, a shrine for those who have cared for it, and passed it on to us, their descendants. For those of us who hold this view, our relationship with our Earth is indeed spiritual.

Opponents and even some sympathizers of resistance and sovereignty movements in Oceania and elsewhere frequently express utter disbelief in and contempt for assertions of this kind of relationship, the importance of which is felt most acutely when your ancestral home lands are gone or are threatened. I recall having read a statement by a New Zealander who characterized Maori spirituality as so much mumbo jumbo. This could have been an expression born of ignorance, or an unconscious trivialization of something that is powerfully threatening. I once met a very liberal-minded person in Australia who talked of Aboriginal spirituality in a manner that was perfectly correct and no more. At least she was trying to come to grips with it. Whatever others may say, we need to include in our philosophy of reverence for nature a strong element of spirituality that we may borrow from our pasts, other people’s pasts, or even invent it ourselves, because our Earth is being subjected to intolerable pressures.

To remove a people from their ancestral, natural surroundings or vice versa, or to destroy their lands with mining, deforestation, bombing, large-scale industrial and urban developments, and the like, is to sever them not only from their traditional sources of livelihood, but also and much more importantly, from their ancestry, their history,

their identity, and from their ultimate claim for the legitimacy of their existence. It is the destruction of age-old rhythms of cyclical dramas that lock together familiar time, motion, and space.

Such acts are therefore sacrilegious and are of the same order of enormity as the complete destruction of all of a nation's libraries, archives, museums, monuments, historic buildings, and all its books and other such documents. James Miller (1985), the Australian Aboriginal educator best known for his book *Koori*, told me that his people, the Wonnarua, who once occupied the Hunter Valley all the way down to the central coast of New South Wales, have a history that dates back only to the beginning of the British settlement. Their lands are gone, and only a handful of the words of their original language are still in use. They have no oral narratives, no memory whatsoever of their past before the invasion and obliteration of their ancestral world.

We, who are more fortunate, cannot afford to believe that our histories began only with imperialism, or that as peoples and cultures we are the creations of colonialism and Christianity. We cannot afford to have no reference points in our ancient pasts, to have as memories or histories only those imposed on us by our erstwhile colonizers and the present international system that seems bent on globalizing us completely by eradicating our cultural memory and diversity, our sense of community, our commitment to our ancestry and progeny, and individualizing, standardizing and homogenizing our lives, so as to render our world completely open for the unfettered movement of capital and technology. We must therefore actively reconstruct our histories, rewrite our geography, create our own realities, and disseminate these through our educational institutions and our societies at large. This is absolutely necessary if we are to strengthen our position for surviving reasonably as autonomous peoples within the new international order.

We, who are more fortunate, cannot afford to let our own compradors continue to conspire with transnational corporations and others to strip and poison our lands, our forests, our reefs, our ocean. Many of the critical problems that we confront today are consequences of acts, such as large-scale land deals, committed by our very own ancestors. We must be careful not to continue repeating similar acts, thus bequeathing to future generations a heritage of misery. We cannot talk about our spiritual relationship with Earth while allowing ourselves and others to gut and strip it bare.

We need to strengthen cultures of resistance within our region. For

generations, our peasantries have resisted many if not most introduced “development projects” simply through noncooperation or through withdrawal of support as soon as they realized the harmful implications of such projects for their lives. In more remote eras our ancestors devised very effective and at times drastic methods of political resistance. For instance, the greatest fear of high chiefs in the past was the ever-present threat of assassination. The heads of despots everywhere in Oceania were taken regularly, in a literal and figurative sense. The Tu‘i Tonga, for example, were so often taken care of that they created a lower paramountcy to be a buffer between them and an oppressed and enraged population. Series of assassinations of these officials compelled them to establish an even lower paramountcy to take the heat. And so it went. And so we must follow and resist the erosions, the despoliations, and the exploitations that are going on in our region. We owe this much to ourselves and to the future.

I shall conclude with the following reflection on past, present, and future. Wherever I am at any given moment, there is comfort in the knowledge stored at the back of my mind that somewhere in Oceania is a piece of earth to which I belong. In the turbulence of life, it is my anchor. No one can take it away from me. I may never return to it, not even as mortal remains, but it will always be homeland. We all have or should have homelands: family, community, national homelands. And to deny human beings the sense of homeland is to deny them a deep spot on Earth to anchor their roots. Most East Oceanians have Havaiki, a shared ancestral homeland that exists hazily in primordial memory. Every so often in the hills of Suva, when moon and red wine play tricks on my aging mind, I scan the horizon beyond Laucala Bay, the Rewa Plain, and the reefs by Nukulau Island, for Vaihi, Havaiki, homeland. It is there, far into the past ahead, leading on to other memories, other realities, other homelands.

NOTES

1. The co-sponsors of the Pacific Writers Forum, the Program for Cultural Studies, East-West Center, and the Center for Pacific Island Studies, University of Hawai‘i, provided large amounts of uninterrupted time to think and write early drafts of this paper. I benefited very much from discussions with Sudesh Mishra, Nora Vagi Brash, Marjorie Crocombe, and Alberto Gomez outside Lincoln Hall. Vilisoni Hereniko, Geoff White, and Vimal Dissanayake were wonderful organizers, hosts, and stimulating company. Haunani-Kay

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2. See for example, *The Contemporary Pacific*. Vol. 1 Nos. 1 and 2, 1989; Vol. 3 No.1, 1991.

3. In order to do away with the racial/cultural connotations of the three-fold division of Oceania into Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, I have used the substitute terms: West Oceania (for Melanesia); North Oceania (for Micronesia); and East Oceania (for Polynesia). The renaming is geographic rather than racial/cultural; it reflects better the contemporary population compositions of our countries.

4. Tony Hooper alerted me to this, as well as to Oceanian lineality.

5. At a time when I was fairly despondent about developments in our region, Marshall Sahlins converted me to this view through personal conversations and in a University of the South Pacific 25th Anniversary Lecture he delivered in Suva in early 1993. He has since published this in his "Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History" (1994a). This is an essential reading for all of us who are concerned with the constructions of our pasts, our cultures, and with our future prospects.

6. See articles by historians and anthropologists in Brij V. Lal (1992a), Donald H. Rubinstein (1992), and Robert Borofsky (1994). An excellent piece of historical ethnography is Geoffrey White (1991). It is beautifully written in an accessible language and is about Santa Isabel in the Solomon Islands.

7. Futa Helu 1979 and 1980, "Tongan Poetry IV: Dance Poetry" (*Faikava* nos. 4 and 5). At the December 1994 conference on Pacific History: Deconstructing the Island Group, at the Australian National University, it was pointed out that voyagers from Central Oceania traveled to Kiribati and even as far as Pohnpei.

Abbreviations and Newspapers

AB	Correspondence from Hawaiian missionaries to the ABCFM. Originals in Houghton Library, Harvard University. Typescript copies, HMCS.
ABCFM	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston.
AC	Letters of Richard Armstrong from Honolulu to Reuben Chapman. Originals in the Library of Congress. Xerox copy, HMCS.
AH	Archives of Hawai'i, Honolulu.
AH/HN	Journals of the House of Nobles, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
BCP	British Consulate Papers, 1825–1843. Typescript of originals, AH.
DI	Department of Interior, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
F.O. and Ex <i>The Friend</i>	Foreign Office and Executive files, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH. Monthly Newspaper, Honolulu, Hawai'i.
HC	James Hunnewell Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University.
HHS	Hawaiian Historical Society Library, Honolulu.
HMCS	Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library, Honolulu.
<i>Ka Hae Hawaii</i>	Hawaiian Newspaper, Honolulu.
LC/NR	Native Register, Land Commission. Records of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
Lee/Letters	Letters of William L. Lee, 1847–1850. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
LMS/Letters	Letters received by the London Missionary Society from the Sandwich Islands, Donald Angus Typed Manuscript Collection. HHS.
LP	Legislative Petitions. Honolulu, AH.
MH	<i>Missionary Herald</i> (periodical), American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston; from vol. 16, 1820. Referred to throughout as MH.

MPI	Minister of Public Instruction files, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
MsL	Missionary letters, 1816–1900, HMCS.
PC	Records of the Privy Council, Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
<i>The Polynesian</i>	Monthly Newspaper, Honolulu.
SC	Records of the Supreme Court (Equity Law), Kingdom of Hawai'i, AH.
SR	Station reports of ABCFM missions, Hawai'i (not including Waialua).
USCD	United States Consular Despatches, Honolulu, vol. 1. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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Remembrance of Pacific Pasts is a book of both empowerment and hope. It draws people with diverse perspectives to engage with one another in ways that encourage them to compose richer, fuller historical narratives of the Pacific past. We are led to consider: What are the strengths (and weaknesses) of Western senses of the past vis-à-vis Pacific Islanders' senses of the past? In *Remembrance*, Islander and Western historians meet on equal terms. This engagement encourages readers to weave their own narratives, develop their own conversations, that foster new ways for embracing the region's past. As readers will see, *Remembrance* is an invitation to remake the region's history.

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