1992

Autobiography in the Pacific: reading post-colonial autobiography

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Recommended Citation

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Honours Masters of Arts (Post-colonial Literatures)

From
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ABSTRACT

Autobiography has a central role in Post-colonial literature, yet its features which are predominantly Eurocentric are not normally addressed in a critical reading. Western values attributed to individuality and personality need to incorporate an understanding of regional and cultural influences. This thesis examines autobiographical writing produced in the Pacific to evaluate how colonization transforms the notions of individuality and community within the narrative form. The assumptions of autobiography in the colonial scene are examined through the myth of Robinson Crusoe, and the naturalization of the superiority of western individuality is discussed in reference to colonial travel autobiography. Autobiography introduces different concepts of space and community to the Pacific Islanders who must confront values of privacy, nationality, and individuality in their life-story. Post-colonial autobiography must be read as a renegotiated narrative which conflates personal and national histories in the exploration of Post-colonial identities.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support of Dr. James Wieland who was enthusiastic and helpful at all times, and gave accurate and provoking criticism of the thesis drafts. I would also like to thank Dr. Paul Sharrad who introduced me to Pacific Literature, which I previously had little knowledge of. Anna Hayes and James Alpers were extremely supportive during the writing and proof-reading, and provided the moral support when it was needed.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my study, if it can be stated this simply, is to chart the process of the renegotiation of narratives, specifically the narrative of autobiography, both temporally (from colonialism to post-colonialism), and as a form of knowledge. In the literary field that is contested between post-colonial studies, new literatures, resistance literatures and so on, the project may appear to closely follow Lyotard’s concept of postmodernism - the breaking of major narratives - but with, however, agendas distinct and politically incommensurable from those which Lyotard implied. My interest in the relatively unrecognised area of autobiographies by Pacific Islanders is not to valorise their status, nor to exaggerate the eminence of their insights, but to understand how the writers accomplish the process of transforming ideas and narratives to complete the task of saying who they are.

In this sense the thesis examines the process of change through a spectrum of theory and literature that is a response to the area and the history.

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1 Lyotard, in Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984), examines the fragmentation of knowledge by postmodernism, and admits this is specifically a condition of the “Occident” (7). The fragmentation at the colonial scene occurs in a relationship of power I consider quite distinct from this.

2 The area I discuss is, generally, considered the South Pacific. That is, Polynesia (without Hawaii), and Melanesia (without Papua New Guinea), and I include a text from Guam, Micronesia. The area is determined more by texts available than specific geographic areas. I have excluded Papua New Guinea and New Zealand because both these areas, though often placed in the Pacific, can be studied exclusively. I have chosen to call the writers indigenous to the Pacific ‘Pacific Islanders.’ Admittedly, this does conflate various racial groups (the Melanesians, the Polynesians, and the Micronesians) and islander/tribal groups. However, I want to employ a term that is specific to this area, for ‘indigenous’ lacks this geographic grounding.
written by both colonial and colonised writers, rather than examining a specific
genre or historical moment of texts. Autobiography in the Pacific is intimately
informed by colonisation, in texts by both colonial and colonised writers, and it
is for this reason that I call the texts by Pacific Islanders 'post-colonial
autobiographies.' I employ the term 'post-colonial' because it foregrounds the
literature as a transition point in colonial history. The current climate of debate
which surrounds the use of the term 'post-colonial,' especially the criticism that
it groups together a vast array of literature that simply is not European,
American or English, may suggest that this is a risky thing to do, and I
certainly realise the danger of it. However, properly qualified, I feel the term
is adequate but by no means definitive. Firstly, it is important to note that I do
not propose a general theory for 'post-colonial autobiography,' one that would
suit any writer from the significant proportion of the world's population that
has experienced colonialism. There are different forms of colonialism which,
when matched with the colonised people's unique culture, produce a unique
result. The term 'post-colonial' should signify that the literature or culture is
under conflict and polymorphous, not that it suits a specific category. Most
criticisms of the term seem directed at its generalisation, that it does not
distinguish what it delivers. This argument neglects the consideration of the

3On the problems of finding a name for the subject, see Ashcroft et al, The Empire Writes
Back (London: Routledge 1989), pp 23-4. The adequacies and inadequacies of the term post-
colonial is widely discussed and has numerous criticisms: Hugh Webb, in "Doin' the Post-
colonial Story? Neidjie, Narogin and the Aboriginal Narrative intervention," SPAN 35
(1992): 32-40, considers the term implies colonialism has finished; Tom King, in "Godzilla
vs. Post-Colonial," World Literature Written in English 30.2 (1990): 10-16, argues it
envelops all 'native' literature into a relationship with colonialism. A cogent analysis of the
critical orthodoxy is made in Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra's "What is Post(-)Colonialism,"
becoming a purely textual phenomenon.
idea that any word is going to fail, and the issue is not strictly one of nomenclature, but the institutional generation of a field of knowledge.

Secondly, it is important to have a term that cojins the literature with colonialism; 'post-colonial' may not be the most apt, but it will suffice. That these texts occur in a 'literature' and are disseminated through publishing, academic, and cultural institutions expresses the profound influence of colonialism. 'Literature' was brought along with syphilis, cane-sugar, guns, and Christianity and should not be treated any different. Perhaps it can, with the Islanders' control, provide something of a beneficial role.

The process I am setting up is an examination of the spectrum of writing on subjectivity in the Pacific. The autobiographical text may not be a specifically western phenomenon, but the autobiographical narratives which inform subjectivity, the constructions of self and individuality, are a legacy of colonial society. The autobiographical text is so mired in western literary tradition that it is imperative to address both the theory behind this - concepts of individuality as well as literary reception - and the autobiographical writings produced in the Pacific. There is a specificity of Pacific colonisation which distinguishes certain aspects influencing colonial writing in the Pacific, aspects that determine this type of colonialism as unique and independent from other scenes of colonialism. From these many aspects two features are necessary to discuss: geography and history.

Geographically, the Pacific exhibits many opposites to Europe: it is antipodean; it is in the tropics, opposite to the European temperate climate; it is dominated by ocean, which affects not only the perception of size, but the technology needed to discover and control; the domination of the ocean also determines the technology of the indigenous cultures, for transport, food, myths, and social structure are influenced, in some way, by the ocean, as
opposed to Europe's agrarian based culture. Entirely new methods of communication, transport, and health measures, had to be invented to control this region. One point which I will discuss at length in reading the autobiographies is the politics of space, for the conflict over the land is implicit with an understanding of how the land is constructed, not only in language, but as a form of knowledge. Colonial geography was foisted on the colonised subjects who then had to re-situate themselves, both in a geographic and personal sense, into the new space that was allocated to them.

The second feature, history, marks the independence of every colonial scene. History, as a western concept, introduces strictures of temporality, evolution, and development, forcing all narratives to thread into a singular historical discourse. Western time now defines the ages of humans, the unrepeatability of actions, and the progress of 'civilisation'. The implementation of colonialism issues from the ideals and imagination of the Empire's mind which writes the history of the domain in order to justify its actions. The history of the Pacific is already written before the colonial powers wrote about what occurred before their arrival, for the area is excluded from 'civilisation.' The colonial discourses of geography and history determine the Eurocentric model in which Pacific autobiographies are written.

Obviously, the Pacific does not exist in these terms for Pacific Islander writers. Factors such as locality, village relations, and cultural practices provide more accurate definitions of 'the Pacific.'

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4 A relevant text which discusses the influence of language, especially naming, over a land's geography is Paul Carter, *The Road To Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1987).

autobiography is a document of cultural subjectivity, but it is a subjectivity that encompasses a colonial legacy and a Pacific culture. What is more, the concept of 'cultural subjectivity' occurs within European society's construct of individual. The development and authority of the individual is outlined in Chapter one. The fundamental nature of individuality in colonial ideology proposes that it is one of the strongest discursive forces of control, and is prevalent in any colonial scene. Compatibility between colonised subjectivity and colonial agendas will obviously aid in the project of colonisation. The individual is at the intersection of health, discipline, education, the law, and numerous other defining and controlling discourses. Cultural identity is subsumed under colonial institutionalisation. However, if there is something to be learned from Homi Bhabha's work, it is that these transformations are never successful, that any repetition or simulation of colonial authority becomes mimicry and thus "emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" ("Mimicry" 126). Colonial subjectivity will not be the Europeanised, seamless whole which the ideology claims it is, and this disjunction is one entrance to reading post-colonial autobiography. The ambiguity of success does not deter the colonial apparatus from enforcing forms of subjectivity onto the islanders to normalise the population.

Normalisation is not simply administered to the Islanders by the all-knowing colonisers, for the colonial agents are themselves in the midst of normative institutions and practices. The normalised self is symptomatic of a capitalist/colonialist culture which values individuality, Christian morality, and discipline. Colonial agents grant themselves ownership of the essentially 'natural' and objective position of individuality. One of the strengths of Foucault's discussion of State power is the realisation that State control is not relegated to outside forces working on subjects coercively, but that subjects
control and administer themselves. Hence, in what Foucault calls Pastoral power, the desire for one's individuality is covertly an entrance into a system of power. This manifests most clearly in many conservative autobiographical theories whose premise is that individuality is a freedom, not acknowledging that singularity and unity relies on a culturally implied system. It is this western individual that is naturalised or reified in autobiographical discourse. These theories of autobiography relate to colonial concepts of individuality, and in the Chapter one I will address how the theory and practice of autobiography has supported the colonial self, and theorised it as a universal figure. A brief overview of Georg Gusdorf's essay, "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," will expose the cultural assumptions specific to autobiographical theory, and hence to colonial ideology.

The desire to reduce subjectivity to a unity is a consequence, in part, of the assumption of realism in representation. Writing and documentation depends on the veracity of representation; a true self (in its represented form) can only occur in the unity of its image. Like pre-Saussurian constructions of language, autobiography binds the signifier to the signified in a static relationship; language becomes transparent. One's individuality becomes present, and owned, when it enters the stricture of memory, identity, written culture and history; life is made truthful by the word. Gusdorf speaks of this representation in terms of commodity, as an asset to be gained: "Under the guise of representing myself as I was, I exercise a sort of right to recover possession of my existence now and later" (44). The unmalleable relationship between signifier and signified, or person and text, is the keystone of the colonial hierarchy, because positions of power are made to be static. The production of a quality such as 'individuality' produces this stasis in society on a wide scale in an effort to control, conform, and normalise the population.
Individuality is not an intrinsic element in humanity, but a western concept with a privileged history. I will demonstrate the importance of individuality in colonial representation by recourse to Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, a model text which discusses early concepts of wealth, individuality, relationship to cultural others, and colonial practice, all within the discourse of autobiography. The myth of Robinson Crusoe shows his brand of endeavour depends on the construction of intrinsic notions of individuality, and innate forms of civility and discipline which justify his colonial practices.

Robinson Crusoe is a fantasy of colonial relations; it is the source of the narratives and ideologies that are negotiated in later colonial texts and autobiographies. Defoe's text was written at a time when England was struggling to rationalise its colonial commercial ventures with its inhumanity to non-Europeans. Many of the ideologies and hegemonic values that are accepted as natural in later colonial autobiographies are at their emergence in Robinson Crusoe. In discussing the text, I do not want to propose that it works as a model for colonial enterprise, for in the 250 years between Defoe and Pacific colonisation that is a context to the autobiographies much has changed. Rather, this is a point of contest in the text, because the status of colonial values was not fully 'naturalised.'

Some ruptures within Defoe's representation of cultural universalism carry through to more contemporary texts. In Chapter Two, colonial autobiography is discussed in the context of foregrounding language and writing as a dominant typography of cultural difference. There are numerous Pacific autobiographies by colonial writers, and a substantial genre has

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The popularity of writing while in the Pacific demonstrates the Western compulsion to write and record. The documentation of travel is to prove difference, according to the argument developed by Jon Stratton in his Writing Sites: travel writing "became the spacing of difference, the site of power, the trace of travel and, above all, the site of representation" (59). The possession of writing and the phonetic alphabet, Stratton writes, "signifies the limit of European civilisation marking the Other as oral" (61). This gives an insight into the traveller's need to write. Writing makes the traveller present, and dissociates him/her from the oral Others who are recorded by the writer. A cultural belief in expanding one's knowledge drove many Europeans and Americans to travel and, with such an epistemic emphasis, it is no surprise that the diary or memoir became a crucial item on the voyage. Yet, there is a twist. Those who wish to run away to sea, or to imagine the Arcadian delights of the islands are part of the relationship which, in structuring the numerous adventure/travel stories, circumvents a definition or an understanding of the self by substituting a discussion of otherness or foreignness.

I look at Isles of Illusion, written by Robert Fletcher under the pseudonym of Asterisk, because this text more than most is concerned with the issues of language and speaking, and their relationship to foreignness. The book is a collection of letters written by Fletcher to a friend in England while Fletcher was working as a plantation manager, surveyor and translator in the

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7Many of these texts may not fit the orthodox autobiographical genre, and are memoirs or travelogues. Written by colonial authorities, missionaries, or explorers, the titles tell much about their attitudes: Alfred St. Johnson, Camping Among Cannibals, (London: Macmillan, 1889); Julian Thomas "The Vagabond", Cannibals and Convicts: Notes of a Personal Experience in the West Pacific, (London: Cassel, 1886); H. Winfred Walker, Wandering Among South Sea Savages: In Borneo and the Philippines (London: Witherby, 1909). These are mostly quasi-anthropological accounts, normally detailing customs and emphasising the exotic nature of the voyage.
New Hebrides and Tahiti. Fletcher's attempts at maintaining difference through language, by keeping English as pure and untainted as possible, exposes a colonial appropriation of the (metaphysical) truth which the English language does its best to describe. By construing other languages, including competing European languages, as inferior or oral, English gains a position of dominance which manifests in communication, knowledge, and racial superiority. English is the sole vehicle, the dominant narrative, of this higher truth.

The universalisation of a singular access to truth, often wholly owned and used by powerful white men, has been met by wide ranging critiques of feminism, and race and colonial studies. A field of criticism exists which confronts the dominant narratives (individuality, patriarchy, racism, and so on) provided by colonialism. By discussing numerous critical standpoints in Chapter Three, I want to propose alternative reading formations and alternative narratives which address issues often ignored in post-colonial autobiographies. I take from Susan Stanford Friedman's essay, "Women's Autobiographical Selves: Theory and Practice," a constructive criticism of individuality that examines the possibility of group autobiography. Far from agreeing with Gusdorf's statement that autobiography is impossible in cultures which do not recognise individuality, to consider autobiography in these societies the 'conditions and limits' - to bastardise Gusdorf's phrase - must be reconstructed. Friedman considers the "collective relational identities in individual processes" (35) can provide an alternative reading in what she calls 'marginalised' autobiography. Her discussion of women's autobiography sheds light on how society and reality occur differently for women. Through recognising that marginal status is a plural position, "[a] mirror does not reflect back a unique, individual identity to each living woman; it projects back the image of WOMAN" (38), Friedman reverses the privileging of the individual over the
group. Friedman inserts a political agenda in the apparently apolitical field of autobiography, and provides a space for the marginalised voice.

The public, or group aspect has become hotly debated since Frederick Jameson decreed that the Third-World text is "always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public Third-World culture and society" ("Third" 69). The demarcation of public/private, and the ownership of the definitions does not describe an understanding of a text's culture, but employs a cultural and theoretical definitive space. What is often ignored as a benefit of grouping together a vast array of heterogeneous literatures under the term 'post-colonial,' is that it is precisely these homogenising acts which define, produce, and circulate much non-European/American culture. Just as the Pacific Islands have been refigured geographically, in terms of the modern atlas with its colonialist colours, so to many Pacific cultures must redefine themselves within their global context. Expanding the autobiography from individual to group rearranges the politics of space, one that delimits, borders, names, and assigns strength to space.

The dynamics of space is also a historical concern, for each historical context will supply a varied concept of space. My investigation of autobiographies written by Pacific Islanders is by no means exhaustive, and is concerned, instead, with mapping a history of the place of the self and the group within colonialism. Before Europeans and North Americans arrived

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8Space is widely studied in the field of postmodern theory. The important studies I have not used are Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon, 1969) and Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay*. Though I do not invoke any of Deleuze and Guattari's notions of smooth and striated space, I have worked alongside their ideas. In their *Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1983) the nomad who observes no boundaries, performs an important resistant action by constituting a 'smooth space.' Capitalism, for Deleuze and Guattari, works to striate, segment and polarise, to "work by diabolical powers of organisation" (*Thousand* 480), while smooth space is the space of movement and plurality.
there were undoubtedly oral narratives which described family histories, and perhaps autobiographies as well (though not in the European sense). The advent of writing proposed a whole new method of recording, and brought in new forms of communication and surveillance. It is the history of writing the self that I examine, specifically more recent narratives on autobiography. These texts are Gideon Zoleveke's *Zoleveke: A Man From Choiseul*, Sir Frederick Osifelo's *Kanaka Boy*, and Father Walter Lini's *Beyond Pandemonium*. There are three reasons why the area of study is limited. Firstly, emphasising later autobiography allows an understanding of the narrative of nationalism as an expanded space in which the autobiography occurs. Any contemporary understanding of autobiography in the Pacific needs to distinguish national identity from other specificities of identity. Secondly, an exhaustive study of all writings about the self would neglect the purpose of the texts; many are for limited audiences and are concerned with the circulation of history and not the expression of self. Subramani's study of South Pacific literature considers a dominant area of literature to be the "unpublished research of oral traditions, family history, genealogy and personal experiences. Much of this kind of writing is kept in the villages as 'family books'" (14). My purpose is not the appropriation of this knowledge, but an understanding of the Islanders' negotiation of colonialism. This relates to the third topic, the question of 'who speaks' or 'who writes' in the Islander autobiography. An intrinsic part of studying 'new' literatures, such as Pacific Islander literatures, is being conscious of who speaks, and being wary of appropriating the voice, or speaking for the 'other'. Gayatri Spivak, in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak," accurately analyses the methodology of representation of the colonised subject. She is especially critical of the intellectual spokespeople who "represent themselves as transparent" (275), a representation that will "slide
over ... the contrast, say, between a proxy and a portrait" (276). Examining an anthropological autobiography will distinguish the two projects that Spivak considers 'representing' can be, and keep the critical potency necessary for the field not to be subsumed into western knowledge. Reading autobiographies of independence should examine the implications of their space of enunciation, not substitute it for a specific reading.

The intention, then, is to highlight the limitation of autobiographical theory in the post-colonial context and propose alternative approaches to the culturally western critical assumptions. Pacific writers are not a tool to demonstrate a reading formation, but proof that post-colonial texts can provide an interesting, demanding, and enlivening passage of knowledge and cultural difference.
Chapter One

Part One: Western Autobiography and Colonial Practice

When Ian Watt considers Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as the vanguard of economic individualism in *The Rise of the Novel*, he does so without recognising its vital context: colonialism. Watt is quite accurate in attributing the value of individualism in eighteenth-century Europe to the ability of the novel to articulate realism; yet, the aspect of individualism which depends on a dynamics of self/other, and hence on a colonial ideology, is elided. Still, the basic premise of Watt's argument is persuasive, for he locates the initiation of fictional realism alongside the rise of the middle-class readers, and the concomitant change of cultural ideology to privilege individual pursuits. Realism is an artistic articulation of the new-founded middle-class who allowed the cultural concept of the autonomous self to appear in European history roughly in the period 1400-1700, in the Renaissance and Reformation, possibly as a response to changing economic practices.¹ Other writers have analysed this epoch in much greater detail than I will attempt here; instead I will focus on, firstly, the effects of the dynamics of the individual in autobiographical writing and how this determines the critical theory surrounding autobiography and, secondly, the repercussions of self-definition on the position of the individual in the colonial context.

¹There are historians who consider individuality began earlier than this period, such as Alan MacFarlane, in *The Origins of English Individualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978). The accuracy of this point is not, however, crucial to my argument. My interest is in the effects of colonialism on concepts of individuality.
As Stephen Greenblatt rightly points out in his discussion of the individual in the Renaissance, it was not that the individual suddenly appeared as a totally new concept, but that the autonomy permitted by society changed to a considerable degree. Greenblatt situates the centre of the change in the ability to self-fashion, the power to control one's identity. Personality became something that was not formed *a priori*, a structure that one is wedded to for life, but something that can be shaped. However, alongside the ability to change identity, Greenblatt states, is the "new dedication to the imposition of control upon those modes [of self-fashioning] and ultimately to the destruction of alternatives" (2). The mutability of one's form is not an expression of complete freedom, but is contained within a new social and State formation of power.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for Foucault, is the period which reflects the "great crisis of the Western experience of subjectivity and a revolt against the kind of religious and moral power which gave form, during the Middle Ages, to this subjectivity" ("Subject" 213). Greenblatt also discussed the movement from feudalism to despotism in terms of individuality, when he agrees with Jacob Burckhardt's conclusions that coterminously with developed models of individuality "a way of containing and channelling the energies which had been released" was formulated (162).

Foucault's describes this form of power as Pastoral. With its origins in the Christian church, and its culmination in the Reformation, Pastoral power displays a new political power based on the State. A new methodology oversees the dispersal of power to individuals within the containment of a society that works in a "tricky combination [of] the ... political structures of individualising techniques, and the totalisation procedures" ("Subject" 213). The change in applying power is relevant to autobiographical writing because
power impresses most dramatically on one's self perception, power is self-motivated, and not from an exterior coercive presence. This is not to say that the authorities suddenly disappear, instead their functions transform considerably. They do not enforce, they listen; they determine what is true and what narrative one's life takes. The scene of power now, according to Foucault, "cannot be exercised without knowing the insides of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets" ("Subject" 214). Every aspect of individuality is now under scrutiny, and must conform to the normative judgment of the authorities. The writer is not free to speak, but he/she is incited to speak in a normal fashion.

In locating the rise of the western individual, and the control mechanisms of individuality, in the European fifteenth and sixteenth century I do so to integrate the needs of western individuality with the economic and political controls of colonialism. Indeed, much of Greenblatt's discussion on Marlow, Shakespeare, and Spenser is framed by the colonial situation. Greenblatt argues that, for these writers, self-fashioning was necessitated by the presence of an alien, whose parody of order, or absence of order, was a threat to the very definition of themselves (9). These are not colonial Others, but often literary phantasms who threaten self-definition, and are in aberrance of individuality. It may be that these writers were preparing ideology for the confrontation with colonial values, rather than addressing colonialism directly; their writing is not responding to the foreignness of other cultures, but to the dilemma that is emerging from the colonial outposts. It is in this time, in the transition between mercantile freebooting and a developing colonial ideology that Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is written. And it is the incorporation of representing others with commercial activity that Defoe attempts; I will return to this topic in section two.
When Greenblatt discusses Freud's comparison of sexuality and colonialism, "Civilisation behaves towards sexuality as a people or a stratum of its population does which has subjected another one to its exploitation" (173), he not only emphasises the repression of other cultures in a manner as complex and dispersed as the control of sexuality, but places within this repressive movement a desire for the other. Hence the fear of the cannibals on Crusoe's island is as much a fear of being devoured by them as it is of becoming one of them. A point I think needs reinforcing is the continual instability of the colonial discourse, for it moves between fear and desire; fear is invented so that a defensive force can be built to guard against an uprising in the colony, and desire perpetuates a relationship that brings economic wealth to the colonial empire. A new episteme of individuality needed to be produced which could partake in colonial endeavour and produce both fear and desire.

The rise of individuality is more than the internal change in European social structure; it is a response to the need to define one's difference in the face of alien cultures. The need to unify a western subject finds its theoretical conclusion in autobiographical theory where individuality loses its cultural specificity and becomes universal. Though autobiographical theory is a relatively recent invention, it transforms centuries of social practice into a cultural knowledge that attempts to substitute itself as the verifiable fact of

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2 On various techniques of controlling sexuality, Michel Foucault's History of Sexuality (Ringwood: Penguin, 1987) is pertinent, namely, the incitement to discourse, and the deployment of a range of economic, political, legal and social discourses

individuality, attempting to universalise and naturalise the western individual as the *ur-text* of individuality.

It would be a vast simplification to situate the genesis of autobiography in the Renaissance, for this is but one of the numerous points of departure of the modern autobiography. The debate about whether the origin of autobiography resides with Augustine’s *Confessions*, or with Montainge, Plato, or W. P. Scargill’s *The Autobiography of a Dissenting Minister*, (which Olney concludes is the first text to use the word ‘autobiography’ in 1834 (5)), is largely unnecessary. For pertinent to autobiography in the colonial context is not the tradition which allowed it to occur, but the constraints which limit the space in which autobiography can occur.

Autobiography, like any genre, must exhibit powers of containment; as Frederick Jameson states in relation to genre, “genres are essentially literary *institutions* . . . whose function is to specify the purpose of a particular cultural artefact” (*Political* 106). Thus, when a definition of autobiography is stated, it normalises and privileges certain features of society which it wants retained. Philip Lejeune, in an early essay on autobiography, qualifies autobiography as a “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality” (4). Autobiography here is limited to several distinct areas, such as those who write, those who are considered real, those with personality, and specifically men. The ‘personality’ may only be considered worth reading if it belongs to those public figures who have some authority in society. Obviously,

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4Lejeune remedied many of these shortcomings in his “Autobiography of those who do not write,” in his *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1989). This quote is not intended to consolidate his position as an orthodox autobiographical critic, but to prove how definitions, though apparently harmless, are often limiting. The comparison between the colonial orientated ‘individual’ and the looser definition of autobiography will be discussed at greater length in the chapters on post-colonial autobiography.
every person must be considered real and with a personality, but the ideological weight of these terms determines their hegemonic reception. Although there are a great number of autobiographical writings in existence, we need only look at Lejeune's sifting of 90,000 texts or Misch's massive tomes of autobiographical history,\(^5\) to realise that admission into the genre takes more than adherence to the general rules. That feminist and Indian scholars, for example, have (re)found historical texts is more a consequence of institutional reception than literary output.\(^6\)

The declaration of personality and reality lean the narrative towards normalised perceptions of self in society, so that minorities, the oppressed, or those of different cultural beliefs are not perceived as 'real'. Thus in a colonial context the life of the 'native' to many of the explorers is shrouded by their perceptions of spirits and strange beliefs and practices that have no base in 'truth.' There are autobiographical writings by some of these 'natives,' but their admission to autobiography was made difficult by access to language, a lack of leisure time to produce these texts, and pedagogical institutions which may have deemed these pieces as curios, or as justifications for colonialism, and not as lifestories because they have no offerings of 'reality.' Historical periods are often only represented by those whose writings are read, and this is true of autobiography, whose history, for Georg Gusdorf, is a "series of masterpieces" (28) in which one can "locate autobiography in its cultural moment" (35). Autobiographical history is limited, generally, to those public figures whose

\(^5\)Georg Misch's historical overview, carried on posthumously, totalled nearly 4,000 pages (Olney 8).

\(^6\)On the development of Indian autobiography see Doireann MacDermott "Introduction," in *Autobiographical and Biographical Writing in the Commonwealth*, Ed. Doireann MacDermott (Proceedings of the EACLAS Conference, 1984. U Barcelona, Spain. 1984) 7-14. In the Pacific the autobiographies of 'native' ministers, which I discuss in Chapter Four, are such texts which were produced for colonial interest.
writings were allowed to circulate and gain currency. The history of autobiography bears no relation to the material existence of texts, and only to the institutional authority to delimit a genre.

Autobiographical theory has, in its early development and conservative fringes, supported this institutional reading. Much of this early work, such as that of Gusdorf, Olney, and Roy Pascal, was primarily interested in inventing definitions and refining categories that would focus autobiography on the 'masterpieces' of history. The definitive charter for these writers was that autobiography speaks from an essentialised voice which exhibits unity, coherence, development, and understanding. In other words, the proper autobiography was a normalised one.

There is something peculiar about the temporality of the normalised individual evident in this theory, suggesting a theoretical sidestep which attempts to cover an aporia - an aporia, I will suggest, created by the possibilities of other times and other histories. Georg Gusdorf’s "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," considered by many to be the seminal work on the critical reception of autobiography, writes of a unique truth arising from the reproduction of the writer's history. Gusdorf’s argument, mainly, is to divert criticism from the purely historical and factual verification of the autobiography text, to the artistic aspects of the narrative, that is, to move from the critique on bios, the structure of life, to an understanding of autos, the construction of self. Gusdorf sees the intention of autobiography as being "the effort of a creator to give the meaning of his own mythic tale" (48). The crux of the myth resides in the "truth of man" which is superior to the "truth of facts" (43). Tacitly, he is developing a space for the apolitical, unified text, reliant on truth becoming subjective. But a necessary condition is that subjectivity must be non-transmissible, it must not be simply what he or she
wants to be true, for Gusdorf implies a universal consensus in the background which he describes as "sincerity" (34), or as a "struggle with an angel . . . himself" (48). In producing subjective life-truths such as this, Gusdorf must also provide a temporality which allows the truth to always be present, and to never leave history; that is, to be present in a person who exists in time. However, and this is where colonial history enters, for the truth to maintain its metaphysical authority it needs a subjective temporality that is static and atemporal, that cannot be shown to be historically specific. In autobiography "[t]emporal perspectives thus seem to be telescoped together and to interpenetrate one another; they commune in that self-knowledge that regroups personal being above and beyond its own time limits" (44). The convergence of time and truth serve the purpose to "reconstruct the unity of a life across time" (37), to provide the writer with the singularity which, Gusdorf states, is the prime mode of self-perception in late western society. Clearly, Gusdorf is attempting both a static, essential truth and a subjective, temporal one. The process of history, though necessary for a life narrative, can destabilise the singularity of truth through the plurality of performance. At every point we may bring a different truth to our past, yet it is only the static autobiographical written truth that exhibits the 'truth of man.'

The uncomfortable aporia that truth, or history, can be plural confronts autobiography at the colonial scene. The paradox of Gusdorf's temporality explains a knowledge confronted by possible alternatives, and struggling to maintain the ownership of a single truth in face of its plurality. Gusdorf verifies his European history by demonstrating a lack of any other 'history.' The historical development of the individual is located in European society's divorce of mythical from historical understanding. History provides a linear temporality and singularity of events, because the alternative, myth, recurs and
repeats. In other words, the cultural thinking which allowed autobiography is the realisation, or the enforcement, of the singularity of European history and the singularity of goals, so that all events confine themselves to a great narrative, which is curiously at odds with the temporal perspective of personal truth. For, if the autobiography arises from the western concept of history, why is it given the privilege of not having to obey 'truth of the facts', as history apparently does and must do for autobiography to occur? Gusdorf is erasing the temporality of man\footnote{I use 'man' intentionally as I will use the male gender consciously for Gusdorf's criticism, because his universalisation normalises a male individual.} with the omnipotence of western representation; his history is not that of 'universal development' but of the control of representation.

Gusdorf uses the two historical events to explain how historical development achieves this method of representation. The Copernican revolution, where "mankind even brings the domain of the sciences into line with its own reckoning, organising them, by means of technical expertise, according to its own desires" (31) shows that nature, and especially time, is controlled by man. The mirror is the other historical signpost which firmly amalgamates representation with the individual. The mythic taboo of narcissism is replaced with a historical invention. The mirror makes the "primitive . . . frightened of his reflection", while the "child of civilisation [has] all the leisure necessary to make himself at home with the changing garments of appearances" (33). The mirror, like linear history, is a model for change and development wedded to a singular representation, so the child is at home with his change while the primitive is fused with its fear; while the western world progresses, the primitive world is static. Western history becomes global, Gusdorf writes, when the "old world is in the process of
dying" and is replaced by "the new lifestyle that whites have bought from beyond the seas" (29); they are in the process of "converting" their "consciousness" to individuality (30), which denies any possibility of hybridity, and moves from where their "lives are so thoroughly entangled that each of them has its own centre everywhere" to the singularity of the "civilisation" (29). It is here that the representation of colonialism manages to monopolise subjectivity. Many of Gusdorf's assertions are not cultural developments but responses to threats of power marking the 'primitive' with an impossibility to self-represent. Gusdorf's progression heals and constitutes a complete and reflected self in face of the split and fractured 'native' other for the colonial project by means of metaphysical ascendancy - isolating truth in an atemporal structure whose only representation is available to the individual.

Feminist critics have been quick to point out the bias inherent in Gusdorf's essay, especially the specific gender, race and class assumptions he makes. The historical accuracy of autobiography is criticised comprehensively in Sidonie Smith's Poetics of Women's Autobiography. She argues persuasively that autobiographical studies like Gusdorf's only trace a particular history, that of men of power: "autobiography and its history represent two more stories of origins that, as they privilege patrilineal descent and androcentric discourse, erase the matrilineal trace of women's subjectivity" (26). The teleology of western civilisation, which Gusdorf proposes as the solitary history, is a description of masculine consolidation of power. Smith's rereading of autobiographical history exposes that the 'humanism' of the Renaissance, which apparently provided the flowering of self expression and self-consciousness, denied these freedoms to women. The relaxation of the church's control of censorship, and the change of policing procedures within society to a more Pastoral model in the Renaissance, did little to provide a public domain
for women to speak. Smith traces this restriction to Platonic and Aristotelian politics which domesticated women and established a patrilineal heritage that dominated public speech (30).

Smith's critique demonstrates the power of the canonical formation, over the 'public domain' of speech. In a similar argument to Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Smith questions the purpose behind representation:

What precisely would it signify for a woman's life and her narrative to be 'representative' of a period? . . . [T]hose who have done so have more commonly been labelled 'exceptional' rather than 'representative' women. (8)

Much theory of autobiographical history describes only a social history of individuality of one particular section of the society as a normative, not individual expression. The task Smith sets for women's autobiography is to devise a poetics that realises the domain in which women speak and is aware of them as "speakers at the margins of discourse" (44).

Shari Benstock furthers the critique of the orthodox autobiographical canon by arguing that the figure at the centre of Gusdorf's reading cannot be the unified, complete male which he is considered. The unification of the subject, for Benstock, is an illusion, for the metaphor of the mirror, important to Gusdorf's argument, merely defers the radical split by imagining a unity, when the effect is more like "a recognition of the alienating force within the specular (the 'regard') that leads to the desperate shoring-up of the reflected image against disintegration and division" (15). Benstock uses the shock that the image in the mirror is an Other, a principle of Lacanian theory, to destabilise Gusdorf's images of 'unity across time.' Similar in application to Greenblatt's study of the alien in Renaissance literature, the figure of the alien
within is a destabilising response to self-unity: "self-fashioning occurs at that point of encounter between an authority and an alien that is marked for attack, and hence that any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss" (9). Crusoe figures distinctively in this criticism, for much of his fear on the island, as I will outline later, is the fear of his own representation.

Benstock further contaminates the purity of the individual by ascertaining that the split subject is "fenced in" by language (16). The gender construction of the language, as well as gendered narrative and genre, determines subjectivity. These limitations are quite the converse of Gusdorf's. However, Benstock considers in the unconscious realm there are gaps in the encompassing language that women are aware of because of their social position as 'other.' The autobiographical project, for Benstock, is the "process of simultaneously sealing and splitting that can only trace fissures of discontinuity" (29); the autobiographical space is the deferred and ruptured field of writing.

From here, investigation has often taken one of the two possible paths, preferring to problematise the cohesive identity of the ego (so that a singular T is a point of rupture, not conformity), rather than investigate the T as a culturally determined and demarcated position within a prefigured space. The first path problematises the agency of language as truth, and works to deconstruct identity and truth, while the second path foregrounds the cultural and historical specificity of people who say 'T.' It is this second path that I wish to follow, for the rupture caused by the enunciative split is symptomatic of contemporary, perhaps 'postmodern' society, whereas the politics of individual space in the community features in the numerous institutions and practices of colonial policy.
Susan Friedman criticises Gusdorf's paradigm of individuality's failure to address "the role of collective and relational identities ... in women and minorities" (35). These are points at which the marginalisation of women and the marginalisation of cultural others may be discussed similarly. The premise of much autobiographical theory discussed so far in this chapter is to normalise an image of the individual most suited to Western society. Gusdorf admits that in western man's "systematic conquest of the universe" autobiography has been "of good use" (29). The individuality of the west which, for Gusdorf, is the most advanced form, supersedes any subjectivity the colonised already possesses. The individual is sympathetic to the colonial project: it writes colonial history, plans its evolution, and designs its subjects. The vulnerability of the colonial project is best read at the colonial scene where the subject faces a crisis because the natural design of his/her culture is threatened. Apparent in the colonial autobiography is the need to deny the Islander representation, and assure that the hegemony of communication is solely determined in the colonial field. Gusdorf places the threat onto the 'primitive' who is frightened of the mirror, unable to understand its representation. Colonialism is justified because it controls the image and its representation, and the "old world [has not the] consciousness [to] question its identity" (29). Yet, as Feminist critics have argued, the colonial writers must speak from a split subject that is denied, and be situated in a group to maintain the hegemony of representation, which problematises their individuality.

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8Women are not the only group discriminated against by the discourse of autobiography. The normative function of autobiography normalises a cultural, as well as a gendered identity, and Smith's and Friedman's criticism of a masculine tradition of autobiography has, I consider, a distinct agenda to the ostracism of foreign cultures. The dynamics of gender relations cannot simply be transferred to cultural relations, as the configurations of power do not respond identically to the subjectification of women as they would to the subjectification of colonial others. The cross-influence between the discourses, which has proved valuable, must not simply adapt feminist insights to post-colonial insights.
PART TWO

The Crusoe Myth

If Gusdorf's dictum that the autobiographer is to "give the meaning of his own mythic tale" (48), then Robinson Crusoe by all accounts does this. That the Crusoe story can be used by many economic and social theorists - Adam Smith, Karl Marx and Jean Jacques Rousseau amongst them - proves that the story demonstrates features which are, or have been, considered accurate and true. That the text is fictional makes little difference, for it works as a model to justify real events, and Crusoe's actions in the colonial scene are considered demonstrative of Western individuality. Robinson Crusoe may not be a Pacific text, either, for it is set in the Atlantic, and Peter Hulme's reading, in Colonial Encounters, confirms its position as an expression of Carribean concerns. However, the system of representation it initiates, as Martin Green writes in The Robinson Crusoe Story, is transferred to the Pacific by the mid nineteenth century (111). Robinson Crusoe is useful because it articulates the dilemmas as much as the successes of colonialism, illustrating an ideology struggling to reach a justifiable viewpoint on colonialism while masking many of the aporia contrary to this. My concern is to outline the motifs and
narratives which recur in colonial discourse of the self, and are at their nascence in *Robinson Crusoe*. The formation of temporality, which is as much an artificial order to unify and reify a (colonial) history as a measurement of time, makes present and represents an individual who is attempting to homogenise numerous discursive fields in order to rationalise colonisation. The possibility of the fragmentation of colonial discourse in face of cultural otherness is delayed by the introduction of the unifying character of Robinson Crusoe.

A close inspection of the figure Crusoe reveals the flaws within its unification, for we see two distinct constructions of self: the western view of individuality as unity benefiting the economic and moral colonial experience; confronting this is the divided representation, the figure who grapples with the multiplicity of his subjectivity and questionable purpose on colonial terrain. An orthodox reading of the text highlights those factors which unite meaning and demonstrate singularity, the factors which support notions of western individualism. However, the text demonstrates numerous points of its failure. These points, I consider, are not literary or fictional mistakes but conscious enunciations of the failure of narrative to provide a unified individual when one is so desperately wanted. The basic premise of my argument relies much on Martin Green's study of adventure stories, which he considers were

> the energising myth of English Imperialism. They were, collectively, the story England told itself as it went to sleep at night; and, in the form of its dreams, they charged England's will with the energy to go out into the world and explore, conquer, and rule. (*Deeds* 3)

*Robinson Crusoe* is undoubtably a fantasy, but a fantasy of realism, none the less. The adventure story has a pivotal role in digesting colonial policy and reconfiguring this into a cultural response. Green is shrewd to correlate the
adventure with the dream which, to a certain extent, describes the social myth of Empire as unconscious fantasy, for the economic imperative of colonial economy is supplanted by fantasy and desire. The action of obscuring the economic discourse in the colonial scene is a central tenet of the discursive field of colonialism. Any assertion of the singularity of Crusoe's purpose must attempt to sidestep numerous other issues which are pertinent to presence on colonial terrain.

G.A. Starr's examination of the connection between the spiritual autobiography and *Robinson Crusoe* reduces the plot to a singular event: the conversion. Crusoe's conversion is a progression through stages conforming to narrative patterns set by the spiritual autobiographical genre according to Starr (106), and determined by the moment he changes, after which he reinterprets his life afresh. His life story is reduced to one narrative, and is contained within its logical conclusions. Not only is Crusoe's "belief or attitude" transformed, but "his overt behaviour is equally affected," so that he "goes about his tasks in a different manner" (117-8). His conformity to narrative has drastically influenced the narration of reality. Starr is exhibiting the 'telescoping of time,' which Gusdorf outlines, so time occurs in one instant and within a western context.

In a thorough study of the spiritual autobiographical tradition, William Paden has discerned a split in religious systems of behaviour when Protestantism developed out of classical Monastic control and the diary replaced the confession. Control did not become lax, but, as Starr points out, "[t]he need for constant, almost clinical self-analysis was generally recognised" (5). The diary was more a means of unification and self-definition than a product of individuality, which Starr discusses as a "habit" and a means of "observing and interpreting" (6), of bringing narrative coherence to life. The
diary works as a kind of subjective glue which constructs a written self. One of the most telling functions of the spiritual autobiography, says Starr, is to prove "the essential uniformity and sameness of Christian experience" (14). Having the autobiography integrated with religion makes life in the European Christian communities easier to understand for it brings a uniformity of experience and, as Gusdorf explains, a plan of history as "memory of humanity heading towards unforeseeable goals" (30). Yet, in the colonial scene, the united fabric of individuality cannot contain all the aporias forced upon it when history and individuality are plural. The new time regime of Robinson Crusoe, as Hulme points out, has many failings. The journal itself has numerous starts: his first experience on the island (36), his first journal entry (53), and later reminiscences (183). Each description of the same event is different. Hulme posits this is a "retreat from chronology and from geography into a moment that can in certain respects be called Utopian" (187), by which he means a colonial myth. The realism of the text, and here I extend Hulme's argument to include the realism present at the colonial scene is "the primary stuff of colonialist ideology" (186). Thus, in the translation from the 'real' story - Alexander Selkirk - to the mythic, time is warped to include the myth. The time Crusoe spent stranded on the island was twenty eight years; Selkirk, on whom Crusoe is based, was on an island for four and a half years. The extra twenty three and a half years Crusoe spent is marked in the text by the second wreck, from which there were no survivors. It is only after this second wreck that Crusoe meets Friday, and takes a subjective position on the island. Previously, Crusoe fills his time with numerous tasks. There is a necessity for Defoe to delimit the real time, that is Selkirk's time after the second wreck, Alexander Selkirk, generally considered to be the influence of Daniel Defoe's character of Robinson Crusoe, lived on an Island in the Juan Fernando group from October 1704 till February 1709, approximately four and a half years.
from the mythic time because the first twenty three years were only necessary as time: time for his wealth from the plantations to accumulate. The rupture of this sense of time is contained by Crusoe's work ethic. While waiting for his investments to mature, like waiting for salvation in a spiritual autobiography, the time must be spent usefully.10

The necessity for Crusoe to record everything in his diary, as he says, "like a debtor and creditor" (83), is such a use of time. Max Weber proposes in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that bookkeeping is one of the vital developments for capitalism (21). Starr also stresses the link between accounting and spiritual redemption as a form of the metaphor, "the trade of religions" (12), which is in use in the spiritual autobiography. The narrative account sets in place a discipline which ensures that no time is lost to leisure, Crusoe is determined to work all the time. The text is littered with examples of Crusoe performing the most laborious tasks for such little reward; he takes forty two days to make a shelf for his cave (85); after spending four months building a massive canoe, it is too far from the water to be floated and is left to rot. The amount of produce is irrelevant to Crusoe, it is the time spent in labour. The work ethic, fostered by the Protestant church, commodifies a 'valuable' western temporality which supports capitalist enterprise in the colonies. The spiritual autobiography conceives time as a "precious commodity, to be rationed and redeemed through vigilant attention to its expenditure" (Starr 9). The value placed on time does more than make it an exchangeable commodity, it introduces the necessity to work at every moment of living time. An idle mind is seen as dangerous, it allows time on Crusoe's Island for the cannibals to partake in the "merriment of sport" (189), inferring

109. The classification of Selkirk's time was brought to my attention by a seminar given by David Musselwhite, Curtin University, 1989.
that without western time, individuality, or at least a sense of the purposeful activity, is lost.

Crusoe's journal similarly keeps his mind occupied by placing him in a perpetual confessional relationship with what he writes. Where time becomes present as commodity, Crusoe's self is present in his representation in writing. The need for this procedure is so obviously strong in *Robinson Crusoe* that it undermines the realism of the text, for Crusoe states that the ink eventually runs out, "having no more ink I was forc'd to leave it off" (52), yet the journal is still written and Crusoe still speaks. The paucity of reality in the text highlights the dilemma for Crusoe in his mythic time: to ensure his representation. Just as the ink runs out, Crusoe's representation becomes problematic by having no 'other' to refer or relate to. Contradictory to the authority of presence, Crusoe's power on the island becomes greatest when he disappears, and leads the mutineers to believe he is the Governor, with fifty men under him. However, that his presence is not needed for the authority is both an asset and a danger because his subjectivity disappears beneath the weight of the greater project: control and administration. As Crusoe's presence is not needed in the first twenty three years for him to prosper, it is not needed for him to be powerful either. Rather, his presence is a problem to his economic and authoritative strength. The flaws of realism only confirm the text's role as unreal 'realism,' which, rather than accurately depicting a colonial scene, depict a colonial myth. Individuality, then, is not expression, but a symptom of causes, such as religion, writing, and work; the self is not a unity but a product of numerous discourses.

David Trotter's *Circulation* argues that Crusoe's representation is a function of an economy of circulation, used to describe the purpose of commercialism for Defoe. Trotter calls this a "discursive system" (3) which
organises and separates the economic sphere from the moral. In a detailed account of Defoe's seminal role in the cultural interpretation of transactions and economy, Trotter explains the metaphor of circulation provides a separate realm for the economy from the subject. He is describing Weber's second aspect of the birth of Protestant capitalism, the separation of family from business. Once the circulation of goods is separated from the circulation of the subject, morality and economy can seek different agendas. For Trotter, this is the importance of Defoe's work. Hulme reaches a similar thesis on *Robinson Crusoe*: the text is attempting to develop an allegory that heals the brutality of colonialism and slavery with the spiritual and moral economy. Indeed, the text plays out a subject that is split between these two spheres and is at once irreconcilably divided. Further, his presence exists only in the moral discourse where there is a need for his representation, while his economic representation can function without him.

The implication Hulme draws from the matrix of these two discourses is the failed suture of Crusoe's self-composition. In a passage where Crusoe receives a letter from his plantation partner, Hulme considers the partner, since Crusoe has none, is a double of Crusoe himself:

Crusoe's other self, his ghostly 'partner,' is developing those plantations built upon violently-extracted labour-power of slaves which will provide the capital to displace the moral economy with a less volatile mode of production. (221)

Crusoe is a character, says Trotter, of unfinished business; like Defoe's other characters they do not start anywhere, and have no place to return to: "No narrative and no sentence, will complete them. They are never wholly present, to themselves or to us" (51), and instead, "Crusoe's character for us is endlessly deferred, from first thoughts to second to third. He is nowhere present once
and for all, never held by any single 'unit of meaning'" (53). It is not peculiar, then, that the person Crusoe most fears is himself. Hulme outlines some moments when the "composed self is severely shaken" (197), the first two in particular deal with Crusoe frightening himself: the discovery of the footprint that is probably his own, and the voice of the parrot which calls out his name: "Poor Robin Crusoe, where are you?" (105). As if he wanted more presence, yet the result threatens his existence, Crusoe must be his own Other before he assigns the task to Friday, emphasising the necessity of the colonial relationship. Only at this moment can Crusoe prove the veracity of his presence and representation through the subjection of another culture.

Crusoe is in a position of healing two discourses, moral and economic, the very act of which threatens to implode under its inner contradiction. Colonisation did not occur to heal, or provide terrain for the European subjectivity to grow; rather, the economic significance of colonialism, the justification of slavery and appropriation of land was made easier if this economy was separated from the moral ideology. *Robinson Crusoe* exemplifies this split in the discourses which enables colonial appropriation. However, within this position is a subjectivity that is ruptured in the face of its own completion. The fractured subject, the economic morality, cannot speak simply of meaning from individual myths, nor unity across time when the conception of time and unity are impossible.

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11 The lack of 'other' can be seen in the characters' names: Crusoe escapes with a slave Xury, a name of the cross like 'Crusoe,' and the muttering sailor on the island is called Robinson. The repetition of his name proposes a lack of difference.
CHAPTER TWO

Colonial Autobiographies

Upon learning his ship is about to visit the Marquesean islands, Tommo, the narrator of Herman Melville's *Typee* has this to say:

The Marqueseans! What strange visions of outlandish things does the very name spirit up! Naked Houris - cannibal banquets - groves of coconut... *heathenish rites and human sacrifices*.

Such were the strangely jumbled anticipations that haunted me during our passage from the cruising ground. (4)

When writing of themselves in the Pacific, colonial writers promote fantasy, describing their thoughts as the colourful material existence of something completely foreign. More recently, Gavin Young writes:

The second stage of that adventure [to cross the Pacific] had its roots in my boyhood yearning to Run Away to Sea. It was a yearning born... watching the Atlantic breakers... and dreaming. (*Slow Boats* xiii)

For Young, the tales he reads by R.M. Ballantyne and Robert Louis Stevenson, among others, lead him to think of the "hypnotic glimmer of the ocean itself, the mysterious, irresistible highway to Robinson Crusoe's cave... cannibal islands... the South seas" (xiii). In Walter Gill's *Turn North-East at the Tombstone*, he writes:

So much for visions! Who but myself was to blame for mind-pictures of humid jungles... There would be brown men like birds of paradise, with shark-teeth necklaces, pearlshell charms and ivory amulets - men with nostrils pierced by bone. (24)
Indicative of any introduction to the South seas by European or American writers is a journey which fulfils a life-long desire that has some origin in fantasy. Consequently, the Pacific is positioned as a place needed, a commodity, which has its part in the economy of Western fantasy. The question implicit in these statements is what does the Pacific fulfil for the traveller? What, exactly, is being constructed?

Obviously, the images of the Pacific which Gill, Young, and Meville posit are extremely problematic. Though each of these writers acknowledges the fantasy of their ideas, and their probable unattainment, they do not consider the subjective values they bring to the images they describe, nor the stereotypical images of the indigenous people. While the images may be false and imaginary, the products of the thoughts have a material impact. It is the colonial fantasies, the European dreams, which draw the region into a relationship, ever subordinate, with the colonial empire. For Edward Said this relationship is of primary importance in understanding colonialism. In *Orientalism* he isolates an area of European knowledge which can control those areas under colonisation:

In a constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand. . . . The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he *could be there*, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part. (7)

The malleable and ever-powerful colonial discourse relies on maintaining its position through a knowledge and a desire, which justifies and validates the
colonial project. These two rubrics then promote a representation purported to be the real or 'natural' existence of the colonized area.

The field of colonial discourse has attracted increasing numbers of critical paradigms attempting to understand the power exercised by the colonial nations, and consequently, to criticise and dismantle this authority. The dream has featured in many discussions, most notably in *Orientalism*, which was perhaps the first text to criticise the European academic hegemony. Said considers the 'Orient' became a "theatrical stage" for the European imagination (63) which performed as a psychological knowledge to be appropriated by the west. Homi Bhabha has made an accurate criticism of this construction of Orientalism in "The Other Question," by refusing the binary of knowledge/fantasy in the colonial economy that enables the colonized subject to be fixed either through knowledge, or dreams and desires. Bhabha does this to disprove that "colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer" (158) and to expose the ambivalent presence in colonial discourse. In relation to this debate, Robert Young's comment that "at the centre of Orientalism there is not a single homogenising perspective, but a polarity" (141), includes in the program of colonial representation the colonial subject, whose effort to contain the colonized 'other' emerges from an unstable design of self. In this chapter I will apply this split to the colonial subject to locate in colonial individualism a project to implement a singular identity reliant on a singular truth of representation. Privileging the moral economy, obvious in *Robinson Crusoe*, is such a program that regulates and monopolises an access to a 'universal' humanity. The problem becomes for the colonizer, then, one of transforming an imaginary representation, a dream, to an assertion that one's representation of the truth, or the proper code of morality, is the most accurate
to what is 'real'. Robert Fletcher's *Isles of Illusion*\(^1\) engages this problem at the level of language, for the very order of English is used as a qualifier for this universal understanding.

Fletcher's text is only one of a plethora of colonial writing in the Pacific. Of the studies of European literature in the Pacific the two most successful and accurate are Bill Pearson's *Rifled Sanctuaries* and Bernard Smith's *European Vision in the South Pacific*.\(^2\) In reference to the colonial ideal of universal history, both these texts emphasise the importance of the science of evolution on the perception of the Pacific. For Smith, evolutionary thought supplanted neo-classical values as the dominant episteme, and became "a powerful anodyne for the suppression of guilt when dealing with 'lesser breeds' without the law" (ix).\(^3\) Pearson quotes from a lecture given by W.H.G. Kingston, who wrote more than twenty boys' adventure novels set in the Pacific:

> As far as it is permitted to man to comprehend the decrees of Almighty, we have reason to believe that the Anglo-Saxon race has been awarded the office of peopling the yet uninhabited portions of the globe, of spreading arts of civilisation. . . . (52)

Regardless whether the episteme was neo-classical, and favoured the noble savage model, or evolutionary, and created the survival of the fittest, colonial history was most definitely singular and linear. Two contributing factors supporting the rationalism of colonialism are given in Timothy Brennan's

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\(^{1}\) Hereafter cited in the text as *Isles*.

\(^{2}\) Smith's text does not focus strictly on fiction, for his major area of study is painting. However, he does examine various literary responses, from poetry to drama, in a method that was path breaking at the time of its first publication in 1960. Pearson's text is limited to European literature till 1900. The work on European views this century is small.

\(^{3}\) Perhaps the central thesis of Smith's book is the role of the Pacific as a laboratory in which numerous scientific experiments were performed. The study of the Pacific saw the invention of evolution by Charles Darwin, and transformed the state of botany, natural science, and navigation.

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summary of Imperialism: the 'scientific' creation of racial superiority, and European and North American 'progress' that collectively constitutes modernity (4). The conflation of these points is an emerging 'modern' man who monopolises subjectivity. The singularity of history in the scientific sense is assimilated into patterns of subjectivity when the colonial autobiographers assert a singular and chronological life. From the very start, the production and dissemination of knowledge was to have a pivotal role in the formation of colonial subjects.

The application of colonial values is discussed in Paul Sharrad's "Imagining the Pacific" in terms of two roles: the economic or political, and the "urge to 'colour in,' to efface the blank surfaces" (598). The word 'basin,' as in Pacific Basin, suggests Sharrad, describes these actions: the Pacific can be emptied or filled, it is a utensil that can be manipulated (599). As Sharrad states on Meville's incursion into Taipi: "the island world becomes a (white) blankness to be inscribed with the marks of contact and conflict occasioned by an authoritative Euro-American presence" (601). Hence there is a dual purpose in the singular inscription, to create a representational mark, and an economic market, when creating the Pacific area. As discussed in the previous chapter, while the economic motive is dominant, it cannot claim to be the singular impetus. Pacific images also work to control and monitor the viewer in a position of civility and natural superiority to constitute a controlled subject.

Of particular interest in Fletcher's Isles is the points of rupture in its moral economy. Isles is a collection of letters written from Fletcher to his friend, Bohun Lynch (who also edits the letters into their book form), between 1912 and 1920 while Fletcher was living in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and Tahiti. The letters describe Fletcher's various jobs, retell anecdotes of missionaries and colonial life, and describe his relationship with and child by a
young girl, aged about fifteen, who comes from the island of Aoba in the New Hebrides. As Gavin Young comments in his introduction on the honesty of Fletcher's sexual relationship, "Raw stuff, this, for the 1920's. From the leather-upholstered armchairs of England came outraged cries" ("Introduction" vii). Critically, however, it was popular and was said to be a "moving and convincing story" (vii). The soft reception of Fletcher's foibles, and the success of his text, which attacks many of the institutions central to British Imperialism, such as missionaries, plantations and indentured labour, is indicative of a new formation of colonialism; Said would see this as a positional move to consolidate superiority. Though Isles, on the whole, depicts an horrific and despairing view of colonialism, it does not disagree with the project. Martin Green has discussed the same reaction in Robinson Crusoe: "most adventures carry signs of anti-colonialism as a way to enlist reader's sympathy. [We] sympathise with acts of violence only when they are performed on the side of the underdog" (23). Isles, like Robinson Crusoe, is justified by a moral insistence on intervention. 'Native' subordination was based on the precept that it was better for the colonized subjects to be slaves than it was for them to be eaten by cannibals.

Fletcher, who flaunts the rules of British morality by fathering a 'brown' child, does not position his colonial superiority on his morals, though they are of utmost importance and still used as a power of subjection, but on his individuality. The British audience's reception of Isles can be explained by taking Stephen Muecke's understanding of the use made of Aboriginal literature to the white population:

4The text is mentioned in A. Grove Day, Pacific island Literature: One Hundred Basic Books, (Honolulu: UP of Hawaii, 1971), but fell into relative obscurity before it was 'refound' by Gavin Young who discusses it in his Slow Boats Home, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986). Possibly, as a result of Young's praise, Isles was republished in 1986.
By concentrating on the self, writers and readers can applaud the ethical reconstructions of autobiography precisely because they leave vacant the field of social determinations about production and consumption which would allow us to interrogate the persistence of specific colonialist and racist ideas. (416)

The autobiography belies the presence of colonialism by concentrating on individuality, but it is precisely the individualising power which is the core of colonialism.

Fletcher's colonial practice is not primarily his utilisation of idle land, though he does own and manage a plantation at different times, nor in his closer understanding than the French, Australians, or Islanders of morality, but the unifying and subjectifying power of his language. Fletcher makes nothing more obvious than his role of providing clarity in a fallen and barbaric world, a world where each island is "a babel to itself" (239). He always plays the part of mediator or healer: he is a doctor to the Kanaka labourers, a translator in court, a midwife, a surveyor, a translator of diaries, and a claim-maker for native land rights. Fletcher is an arbitrator largely because of his Englishness. His ability to speak to everyone and for everyone, made possible by his monopoly on knowledge and possession of the English language, give him a power to determine representation, and dictate the foreignness of other cultures.

Language is by far the greatest interest for Fletcher. He is continually discussing, interpreting, or elucidating on the translatability of language. In the opening letter, travelling on a French ship bound for New Caledonia, he explains the new, French table manners, being "entirely of the natural variety," which he must get accustomed to in the Pacific: "Any function of the body which tends to give more ease to the eater is performed unblushingly and without remark" (4). Around the table, where only French is spoken, the
language becomes guttural and bodily, it is no longer in the region of the mind. Similarly, it takes on a role of sexual representation; Fletcher says he “spent two days translating a certain sea ballad which you wot of into passable argot” and now the tune works as a “prelude to the [captain’s] ingenious pornography” (5). The position English has taken is clear because French has been categorised as an uncivilised language. The voyage gives numerous instances of the bastardisation of any semblance of purity in the French language. French swearing is characterised by “furious repetition (which seems to give as much force as the multiplicatives of the Arab) and an absurd bathos” (14). The repetition emphasises both its inability to articulate and its plurality, while its likeness to Arabic makes it exotic and foreign. Fletcher writes “[t]o begin by an enormous invocation of the unnameable, to pass through ghastly obscenity, and then to end up with ‘sort of goose’ seems to the English ears a little feeble” (14). Feeble, of course, to the strength of English. He also complains that all the talk on the ship is “French pornography or plantation profits” (8); the language is either immoral or economic. Already, Fletcher is consolidating the English language as a ‘civilising mission’ by connoting its purity and accuracy of expression. The treatment given to French in these early sections becomes important later when Fletcher is to fall back on these ideas to relegate all the horrors of the brutality of colonialism onto the French: their barbarous and repetitive language is likened to their colonial conduct.

When Fletcher considers the New Hebrides a Babel, the biblical trope of incommunicability describes the area as fallen out of the order of language, and split into incomplete fragments which have no understanding of each other. The most telling description of this is Fletcher’s translating job in court:

Every word spoken by Judges, Counsel, witness or prosecutors has to be interpreted in a loud voice by me. The court consists of a French judge,
an English judge, and a president, who is a Spaniard. The Public Prosecutor is a Spaniard. The Native Advocate is a Dutchman. The witnesses are chiefly natives who speak Biche-la-mar. The accused are mostly French traders. Can you imagine the babel? (67)

He later states his job is "all done in pseudo-legal French" (74). Far from the purity of the rational logos of English, French and the other languages are artificial and brutal, and it is within them that the negative aspects of a colonial empire occur. Fletcher posits throughout his letters that the evils of colonialism are French; the descriptions and stories he retells of the brutalities are spoken by people who "nearly always talk of their villanies in French" (43).

The position Fletcher grants English, however, is extremely problematic. English must avoid the tangled web of other rude and unexpressive languages, and remain aloof and separated from this sphere of colonialism. This is achieved by the colonial practice of naturalising: what Fletcher is at pains to announce throughout his letters is the foreignness of other languages both from English and from reality or truth. The natural ability for the English language to express what is real is the English colonial's natural right of ownership. Rather than representation becoming repetitious and reductive - the endless circulation of words around the courtroom - it is anchored to its binary: the English subject. Individuality uses the English language as a pure and unadulterated template to trace the logos of colonial

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5This state of affairs is discussed in Walter Lini's *Beyond Pandemonium* (Wellington: Asia Pacific Books, 1980). Pandemonium is taken from the name 'Condominium' used to describe the Colonial Government. The decision to provide two governments, English and French, plus a third local government, made the New Hebrides a bureaucratic nightmare, each office of duty having to be performed two or three times.

6The priviledged language is not English in general, but the educated, upper-class accent. Fletcher is highly critical of the Australian accent, calling it "Ostrayn".
meaning. The ability of English to describe, to represent, reality as it really 'is' determines a complete subject in the colonial scene.

The naturalising relationship is most powerful where it appears English has its greatest weakness: at the points of its untranslatability and its inexpressibility. The purity of English appears under threat when it cannot express fully. We see this when Fletcher's letters begin to blur the distinction of language as he slips into French or Spanish, stating "I find myself at an awful loss for words, for the mot juste rather" (260). The dilemma now, and a problem that is answered by subjectivity, is the expression of the inexpressible.

The force of Homi Bhabha's work is the realisation that at the core of any colonial binary, such as English language to foreign language, there resides an ambivalence. If Fletcher's evidence of colonial superiority is language, which is the unifying agent of his identity, then he is caught between knowing the 'truth,' and being unable to let the truth slip into other languages and other cultures, of having access to the 'truth' while denying anyone admission to it. Bhabha writes:

The threatened 'loss' of meaningfulness in cross-cultural interpretation, which is as much a problem of the structure of the signifier as it is a question of cultural codes (the experience of other cultures), then becomes a hermeneutic project for the restoration of cultural 'essence' or authenticity. ("Articulating" 206)

Bhabha highlights the discursive multiplicity of 'cultural essence'; the failure of the logos of language, the problem of the signifier, and the representational problem of cultural otherness must be constantly hidden and healed to allow universality. Consequently there is a restriction of translating parts of English because there is a loss of meaning, of logos, and a corresponding loss of power. Hence, there are certain things which Fletcher refuses to translate. The
languages of those who threaten English authority - the French, Spanish, and Indigenous languages - are the only ones translated. The main area not translated is individuality. What anchors the essence of language is the meaning of the individual, the 'expression of ideas' which can only issue from a genuine subjective position. The signification of representation becomes a personal 'experience' whose veracity depends upon essential qualities.

Fletcher has not left the Atlantic before he confronts the problem of the signifier, which he adopts as a part of his restitution of individual essence:

I can only hope that the people who have described tropical landscapes and tropical skies have been incapable of seeing what is really there. . . . Things that I feel most I cannot express. I think that the mere giving birth to the expression would kill all that it contained. (12)

The sanctity of the inexpressible must be recognised as a new colonial project for it constructs individuality. Rather than the subject confined by language, the essence of subjectivity is what cannot be spoken: the logos and truth. The metaphysical logos of the idea is separate from the 'babble' or 'jargon' of the word in the morass of language. The evidence of this rides on the concept of unique experience, as Fletcher states "I was laughing rather bitterly at my own powerlessness to express even my own emotions. . . . Am I always to see things and long to share them but to be unable through my own inarticulateness?" (15-6). The truth is situated in his emotions on a strictly personal level, never to be prised away. The apparent incompleteness in English is a fact of its ownership of representation: though the realm of transcendental truth is denied to the English, the English individual has the solitary mandate of its existence, they hold the secret command which will open the door.
Fletcher’s belief in the authority of a unified subject is clearest in his relationship with an Islander woman. He describes her as "the same as a four year old white child," and he finds a "constant source of joy in her naivete" (160), declaring his intention of leaving her eventually, saying, "I would not tolerate her in civilisation" (167). This adheres to Fletcher’s belief in a Darwinian view of race, that the English are naturally superior. The demise of the Islanders, for Fletcher, is due to colonialism: “The Kanaka ought to die, and is dying out under the glorious shadow of the Tricolunion Jack as fast as every other aboriginal race has” (147). The concept of ‘natural’ history is the powerful tool used to justify his position and his subjectivity; any opposing ideas, such as the French belief that half-castes can marry and become successful, he considers abhorrent. Fletcher attributes the French belief to their nationalism, commenting that “in that way Frenchmen are true to their national motto” (219); because of this, Fletcher’s identity cannot cross the bounds of his Englishness, for as much as he would like to identify his wife and child as equal, “some lurking doubt in me refuses to be silenced. I can’t become French in that respect” (244).

Fletcher’s son brings a crisis to this thinking. His first reactions are of indifference and hatred, for

one thing is certain. He is going to be brought up ‘native.’ No snuff and butter coloured citoyen francais for me. I really believe the English are the only race with proper ideas on the colour question. The French are quite unspeakable. (172)

His ideas are to change. The young child is next described as “a pretty little devil . . . the thought of the adolescent and fully grown metis, however, steels my heart” (193). He begins to call the child his ‘man Friday’ and grows more and more fond. Rather than disliking the child, he says “My fear is due to my
ignorance of what really composes Friday's distaff half” (219). Quite accurate to his belief in natural selection, the child is now split down the middle as to its subjectivity and Fletcher is justified in liking the good half, causing the colonized subject to be forever exiled from gaining subjectivity simply because of birthright. Just as there must be a purity in the language, certain parts which must remain inexpressible and untranslated, there are restrictions of racial purity on individuality. The civilising mission is not to provide identity, but to create a relationship of continual subjection, never transgressing purity. Hence the birth of Friday, for Fletcher, is reduced to the argument "I have sinned against nature - it is as simple as that, and there is no use mincing matters - and I am going to pay the price" (260). The artificial French law, whose babble cannot recognise natural justice, has not the natural ability to delimit areas such as racial purity. The scene of English colonialism is the mechanism of subjective purity, and ownership of the expression of this purity. The autobiography, then, is a validation of this, and an able way to enunciate the natural ownership of individuality.

Fletcher's book was first published in 1923 and, it is hoped, that in the seventy years since the racism, sexism and colonial values he espouses have disappeared, or at least have been drastically diluted. Fletcher's descriptions of the islanders as “vulgar and horrid and ignorant and petty-mined... [H]ideous, mis-shapen, lice-stricken savages” (42) should be inconceivable now. Yet, contemporary travel writing in the Pacific, and I speak specifically of Paul Theroux's *The Happy Isles of Oceania*, is still based on the need to fix the representation of the Pacific Islanders in a submissive relationship. Theroux's travel piece is based on ideas of cultural and racial superiority. Australians, who are “matey in an offensive way” (23) have the “improbable” magazines *Australian Thinkers* and *Australian Gourmet* (38). Among the numerous
generalisations of people and cultures, there is a description of New
Hebrideans as “small scowling knob-headed blacks with short legs and dusty
feet, and some were the nakeder I saw in the whole Pacific. . . . [They were] happy heathens” (188). His comments on Aborigines, partly to criticise the
racism in Australian society, works on his own racist perceptions. “Searching
for Aboriginals,” Theroux writes, “was a bit like bird watching” (41), for one
needs a trained eye. The reduction of Aborigines to fauna is not merely a
literary trope, but an attempt to capture an essence which Theroux
demonstrates in the description of his first sight of an Aborigine on a
Melbourne street:

It was not his smooth face or matted hair, his lopsided posture or broken
shoes. It was the very fact of his being there on the curb. Because there
were no cars on the street. Because it was his country. Because this
nomad was seeking permission to walk. (31)

The Aborigine is depicted as anachronistic to Australian society, outcast from
its rules and practices, and divorced from city life. The Aborigines to Theroux
are the stereotypical nomadic tribes, living in the desert and foreign to urban
life. Certainly, there are Aborigines who are desert-dwelling nomads, but they
are by no means ‘normal.’ The image of the Aborigine implied by Theroux
normalises an entire, diverse population into a single reflection. Similar to his
despondency at Islanders wearing T-shirts rather than traditional clothes, the
difficulty he has recognising that most of these cultures live in the present day,
and not in some fantasy of pre-colonial times, relies on the circulation of a
colonial image.

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7This is an example picked at random, there are literally hundreds of descriptions like this in Theroux's book.
Theroux constantly reverts to bland generalisations in an effort to reduce the vast area of his cultural others to a transmissible representation, and has led one critic, Greg Flynn, to comment, "At least Theroux is even-handed in his blanket dislike of most of the world." Theroux's dislike, it is necessary to point out, is not of all the world, for his text is certainly not misanthropic, but of foreign cultures. Not only is he normalising an antiquated view of Pacific Islanders (or an image of a culturally bereft society in White Australia and Pakeha New Zealand), he is also normalising his own cultural perspective as 'the truth.' Thus New Zealanders say "Na Zillun" for New Zealand (4), Australians say "Goodoh! How yer doin' mate, all right?" (23), while his American accent and figures of speech are phonetically normal. One Solomon Islander, writing in the Honiara Voice of Theroux's 'culture shock' of visiting the Islands, which I take from an article by Mary Louise O'Callaghan in the Sydney Morning Herald, comments:

He would have been more comfortable and perfectly at ease had he seen evidence of homelessness and soup kitchens, of drug sniffing youths . . . of armed police . . . of beggars . . . This was Mr Theroux's familiar world. And his culture shock was not finding it in Honiara.

When the generalisations of Theroux's writings are reversed onto the American culture, so its history and culture are reduced to one aspect, namely the treatment of the poor, the dynamics of his cultural representations become clear. Theroux is demonstrating Said's strategy of positional authority used in Orientalism. He wants to constantly be in the position to speak for the other, yet not present what they say.

When a Trobriand Islander Chief is telling Theroux some aspects of village life, he pretends to note down what the Chief says, but instead, he writes "Fun Run T-shirt, beach chair, shaven-head woman" (142), replacing
the Islander's voice with his own views in an insidious way. He was under no obligation to write what the Chief was saying, but that he describes to the reader how he fools the Islander, and describes what he considers is the true picture and not some Islander history, privileges the words from his pen over all other speech. The native voice is silenced then substituted. Theroux is acting out his desired method of writing: he wants to stay in the Presidential Suite of the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney, where he "toyed with the frivolous idea of writing a detailed profile of Sydney by sitting here in the penthouse, drinking champagne and looking at the city through this telescope" (35). Far from frivolous, he repeatedly demonstrates his cultural isolation from the people he views.

The kind of reading formation that allows Theroux to have access to truth is through the presence of his words - on numerous occasions he quotes directly from his notes, as if the first writings were somehow closer both in time and in representation - giving him the status of what Spivak has called an 'agent of knowledge.' Discussing this concept as a formative problem of neocolonialist knowledge in an interview with Robert Young, Spivak redraws the relations of colonial formations into a contemporary field that is "more economic and less territorial" (221). The question of the agency of knowledge is pertinent here, for Spivak's response to Young's statement that when colonial discourse theory "sees some form of resistance to western thinking, it will celebrate it, but it will never constitute that space as a space of knowledge as such" (237), is to express the lack of any recognition, or any subjective position for the colonial peoples; they are not the agents of knowledge. Instead, it is figures like Theroux who have the agency, with the power to both represent and speak for the colonial other. If Theroux does translate any
resistance, it is not to allow this resistance to speak, but to appropriate it. Young's statement highlights what Theroux denies to the colonized subject: a constitutive space for knowledge, an area where it can be inscribed and speak for itself. The ability for a knowledge to produce itself, so it can be 'celebrated' depends upon recognising the space where it is enunciated from, and this is to be the focus of my discussion in the next chapter on post-colonial autobiographies. A spatial reading is a means to redefine the space of the subject, to reorganise the limits of individuality, and the space of the shared identity, both in a geographic sense and a communal/familial sense.

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8One aspect of being an agent of knowledge shows in the many mistakes and incorrect facts in Theroux's book. The Australian reader can pick out numerous misuses of idioms; he places a Brisbane paper in Perth, states Australian immigration policy is assimilation (not multiculturalism which has been Government policy since 1974), and Bourke being four or five hours drive from Sydney (more like ten). The reason mistakes like this can stand is not bad research, nor sloppy editing, but that Theroux has the authority to speak the truth on these areas, and determines the reality of Australia to his American readers.
CHAPTER THREE

A Space for Post-colonial Autobiographies

If the project of post-colonial autobiography is to break the monopolistic presence of the colonised word, then one path, if we take the suggestion from Minh-ha, is to re-present the materiality, the bodies, those objects which have been subsumed under the weight of the western word; that is, to appropriate material existence for the group. Trinh Minh-ha describes this process when outlining the formulation of western perception into a system of power:

Meaningful language is confined to 'expression' and what appears significant to [the anthropologist] is its reduction to pure instrumentality: a minimum presence and yet an effective defence weapon. Words are solicited only for their effacement from the page. Their materiality, their glaring bodies must somehow sink and disappear from the field of visibility, to yield ground to the 'pure presence' or that which he attempts to capture and retain, which, however, always lies outside of words. (53)

It is around the perception of space that identity emerges from the colonial practices which were witnessed in Fletcher's account of the Pacific.

In the Preface to the revised edition of *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson discusses the issues of Third-World nationalism which forced him to correct his first version of the book. He became aware of "a significantly new contribution to thinking about nationalism - changing apprehensions of time patently lacked its necessary co-ordinate: changing apprehensions of space"
(xiii-xiv). Pertinent to the colonial impact on the Pacific, investigating the re-
situation of the colonised subject within the definitional colonial space leads to
new distinctions of autonomy and individuality. On a large scale, yet still
cohesively related, colonial space instigates individuality in terms of national
identity. When looking at the genesis of autobiographical practice, the
restitution of individuality is collaborated with national identity. I am not
proposing that nationalism is a required ingredient for de-colonisation, rather
that colonialism has forced nationalism on its subjects, which they then must
fashion into forms of identification and subjectivity. I will investigate in this
chapter the theoretical premise on which the space of colonialism is grounded,
and the consequence this has on subjectivity in an effort to understand how
colonised subjects can appropriate a space to speak.

As I have already discussed, the colonial perception of the space of the
Pacific was defined in economic terms (an area to be emptied or filled) or
epistemological terms (an area to be studied), both of which reduce a material
existence to a western representation of presence. Overwhelmingly, the Pacific
was a surface used to record the travels and explorations, to record the
continued lines and tracings across its surface by ships, products, exploration,
and education among other commodities of European movement. The surface
of the Pacific, the flat ocean occasionally dotted with islands, is the surface of
Gusdorf's mirror exactly: a recording surface which provides a memory of
white representation in the area. Anything conflicting with space disappears
into language, or is somehow constituted within this system. With colonial
space comes new methods of control, new cultural perceptions, and a new
dynamics of power. Colonialism forces onto the subjectivity of the Islanders
the authority of western space, one that divides, separates, and singularises as a
means to dominate. Groups are created where they previously did not exist,
disparate communities are classed together, and lines are drawn across the land. Robert Fletcher's idea of the Pacific demonstrates the power of the line as a form of knowledge:

Muller, who knows the Pacific like a book, says a strict line divides the South Seas Islands of Stevenson's flavour from the merely interesting islands inhabited by ugly semi-cannibalistic savages. The line is drawn from the south-west corner of New Zealand to Honolulu. (46)

The Pacific turns into a book, understood by a line that demarcates the literary interest from the feared other. A new meaning of space is inscribed.

It is extremely problematic to posit how space occurred for the Islanders before colonial incursion because all access to this history, invariably, is through colonial history. The remarkable achievements of the Polynesian navigators propose that geographic concepts, though distinct from their European equivalent, were as successful and practical. In terms of group identity, my focus is on the regeneration of hybrid space (which quite possibly employs residual spatial concepts that are not colonial-European), and not on the origin of these concepts, or what may be connoted as their pure forms.

Benedict Anderson's discussion of the study of Siam's emergence as a modern nation by Thai historian, Thongchai Winichukal, is informed by the renegotiation of geography and map-making to determine it as a country. The map became a logo for the country, which Winichukal calls a "new administrative mechanism" (qtd. in Anderson 174) providing a spatial reality for the people and institutions of Siam.¹ Implementing limits, construing a content and a community within an area, determines new modes of self perception not only on a shared, national scale, but in an individual and local

environment. As the Islander's land was carved up between the colonising powers, a transformation of identity re-situated the individual in a western nation and enforced a new space and surface for the individual, profoundly affecting narrative versions of self perception. The link between spatial coordinates and narrative accounts is in the reality they determine, the point of view which must alter because of the new epistemic conditions. The words must issue from a point in space, a point determined by colonial coordinates.

I want to take an example, which acts as something like an anecdote and allegory, from James Clifford's discussion of the person in his examination of the work of French missionary and Anthropologist, Maurice Leenhardt, in his *Person and Myth*. An often recounted conversation of Leenhardt's, which Clifford considers "turns upon Western mind-body dualism and finally unravels it" (172), deals with Leenhardt's concept of what colonisation has brought. In a conversation with a disciple Leenhardt states:

>'In short, what we've brought to your thinking is the notion of spirit' (or mind: *esprit*). To which came the correction: 'Spirit? Bah! We've always known about the spirit. What you brought was the body.' (172)

Clifford's explication of Melanesian concepts of the person show how fundamentally distinct they are from Western ideas. Leenhardt uses this example to move away from theories of the rationalism existing in the word, espoused by structuralists, such as Levi Strauss, who Clifford says were:

strip[ping] ideas of their affectivity and materiality to reveal their existence as contentless relationships. Totemism and myth are stripped of their bodily, experiential qualities and portrayed as productions of a nonsubjective universal mind. (178)

Imposed on the Islander's space was this distinction of the hierarchisation of mind over body which resituates their rationalism in the verbal and the
metaphysical field, leaving the body as a mere vestige. The colonial initiation of this distinction was to isolate the body as a scene divorced from the mind and culture. On the other hand, Leenhardt was to propose mythic thought as being "as much 'corporeal' as 'mental'" (182), and the process of the thinking mind was "without a centre, participating in a discontinuous variety of patterned occasions" (178). The body was very much involved in the cultural actions. The threat, or the form of resistance, to the western hierarchy was the transgression of mind-body dualism. This is evident in Fletcher's account of the French farting around their dinner table, when language became bodily and sonorous, it subverted Western rationalism in an act which is both a freedom and a threat. Not only is the purity of thought sullied, but the rigid terrain of the individual is invaded.

Clifford considers the "Western 'body'" an "ambiguous gift" to the Melanesians (172), but a necessity for modern life: "A body was, in effect, something to get around with in a drastically expanded existential space" (188). The introduction of the Western body not only initiated a realm of thought bereft of body, but a significant space which the individual occupies. Leenhardt states that space for the Melanesians previous to the implementation of the body was "a heterogenous ensemble of places whose existence is experienced through bodily presence," each having "time-spaces" that are juxtaposed and not linear (182-3). So the advent of colonialism, whose consequence Clifford sees was to enlarged the geographical space, also introduced individuation which could disintegrate the "intense affective communion" which gave an understanding to the world (188). The body was a gift which would undermine the solidarity of the community; it would interrupt
its plural space and constitute a singular and rigidly policed model of space. The control of space, its understanding, is a project which post-colonialism needs to confront.

Feminist autobiographical criticism has exposed the cultural assumptions behind individualism and promoted alternative formations of self in society. As I have already mentioned, Friedman's essay "Women's Autobiographical Selves" proposes an identifying feature of marginal autobiography as "the importance of a culturally imposed group identity for women and minorities" (34). She considers that this idea opposes the Freudian value that "a healthy ego is defined in terms of its ability to separate itself from others" (36), for the realm of the ego, as Freud would have it, is clearest in its isolation. If, on the other hand, the influence of the cultural determination of individuality is foregrounded instead of the personal/private ramifications, then the self works as an outward-going project, a practice that determines individuality within the public sphere and not by recourse to a private essence.

There are two issues that need clarification in the consideration of public and private space, issues which have remained central in discussion of Third-World or post-colonial texts. The first is the arbitrary assigned characteristic that Third-World literature is public, and First-World literature is private. This demarcation of literatures may appear as the simplistic basis of my argument, for the communality of the public, post-colonial text supposes that groups are symptomatic of Third-World writing, while individualism is symptomatic of First. Generated by Frederick Jameson in his essay "Third-

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2 The most relevant theoretical work here is Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), where Foucault argues the body becomes the docile site of the state's disciplinary procedures.

3 The terms 'First' and 'Third' are problematic even before their features are discussed. Many critics emphasise that the terms categorise all nations other than European/North American capitalist societies in an act of homogenisation from the first-world.
World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," the basis of this belief is that the Third-World text,
even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic necessarily project a political dimension in the form of a national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public Third-World culture and society (69).

The second issue is the debate which follows Jameson's assertion of what constitutes 'public,' that is the conceptualisation of a community and a nation, and what constitutes their formation and practice in the post-colonial world. National identity must be considered in an analysis of space, for the post-colonial identity is situated in an expanded field which sees the nation as a determining factor of post-colonial identity.

Jameson does not simply ascribe private to First-World and public to Third, but considers that First-World texts debate the private/public split, and are aware of it as a central problematic, while Third-World texts channel all their libidinal issues through the public; in other words, they have no narrative of privacy. The critical origins of Jameson's public/private divide in Third-World literature may be attributed to Deleuze and Guattari who, in Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, consider two fundamental attributes of what they call 'minor' literature are collective value and the dominance of the political:4

In major literatures . . . the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or background. . . . Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately with politics. (17)
There are, however, some fundamental differences between Jameson's and Deleuze and Guattari's approach. Jameson's project is to form a narrative which incorporates all Third-World texts, while Deleuze and Guattari look for how 'minor' literature assures its difference. Robert Young's commentary on Jameson in his *White Mythologies* isolates assimilation as a dominant agenda for much of Jameson's critical work, because he plans to support his Hegelian/Marxist ideal of History as a unified and fundamental narrative. A singular, Marxist history remains throughout Jameson's work which Young examines, from the conflation of Althusser and Sartre in *The Political Unconscious* to ideas on cognitive mapping in later works, including the "Third-World" essay.

Young criticises Jameson's dialectic opposition between First- and Third-World, because all texts not European or North American are dragged into a First-World aesthetic (114). And this is where Deleuze and Guattari and Jameson separate, for there are no redeeming features which make First- and Third-World literature compatible. Rather, as Deleuze and Guattari's study of Kafka was to demonstrate, there are only points of divergence and difference, where the 'minor' literature escapes the major and is 'deterritorialized.' The public nature of the Third-World is for Jameson part of the "obsessive return" to nationalism which is "long since liquidated here [In the United States]" (63); nationalism is an inadequate response to the developed social advancement of the west. Opposite to this, privacy for Deleuze and Guattari, is a matter of the

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4 Jameson's most obvious reduction to primary narratives is the claim that History, in his *Political Unconscious*, (London: Methuen, 1981), is the untranscendable horizon through which all readings must travel.

5 Deleuze and Guattari isolate a third characteristic: the deterritorialization of language. Deterritorialization is a complex theoretical construction which describes "the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory" (*Thousand Plateaus* 504), meaning to escape codes, conventions, and organisations. See especially *Thousand Plateaus* 508-10.
failure of movement, or the lack of proliferation, because the capitalist society
turns all desire back into familial units. Instead of being a positive
development, privacy is a consequence of the State's policing force. Public is a
matter of space and movement - taking language to the desert, as they describe
it - while for Jameson it is a lower stage of cultural development.

Aijaz Ahmad's response, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the
'National Allegory,'" finds Jameson's differentiation of First and Third
dependent on "something primordial, rooted in things far older than capitalism
as such" (12). The naturalisation of privacy into Marxist teleology attempts to
contain otherness within a singular, hereditary feature, and not address the
function or purpose of the text. Ahmad's essay also deals with Jameson's
prescriptive formulae and his constrictive categorisation of the 'Three-Worlds
Theory.' Ahmad talks of a geographic essence in First-World criticism which
determines a text's position within a map of the world. The conditions of this
space are singular, Jameson's theory is prescriptive for all texts, as Ahmad
outlines. The split public/private does not seem to have theoretical veracity,
either, for it "is distinctly located in the capitalist mode [in capitalist society],
but the absence of this split in so-called Third-World culture is not located in
any mode of production" (13). Where privacy is an effect of western history
and capitalism, public is an essential quality in the Third-World.

The spatial reading of post-colonial autobiographies is a criticism of
colonial constructions of the private, elucidating the experience of colonialism
through the almost schizophrenic position the colonised subjects are forced to
take. The institutions and practices such as colonial architecture, health,
morality and economy regulates and divides subjects into units and individuals,
while their indigenous culture affirms both their status as a member of a group
distinct from colonial individuality and as a cultural force drawn into conflict.
with the colonial apparatus. The space is a form of negotiation, not classification, for the writers. They must invent the space of their bodies, and of their community within the expanded geography of colonialism, in a two-tiered representation, where subjectivity is developed alongside, and often parallel to, national identity.

Of the recent spate of texts on Nationalism, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* is unique in that it attempts to understand nationalism as a 'cultural artefact of a particular kind" (4). By engaging a cultural reading, Anderson investigates concepts which provide a group status on an almost psychological level, and he does not rely totally on the institutions of politics and defence to define a country. Two propositions, which Anderson puts forward as instrumental in the development of nationalism further the ramifications which I have discussed of space in the application of nationalism in the autobiographies I study: the consolidation of a single, State performed vernacular, supported by a print media, which "offers privileged access to ontological truth" (36), and an apprehension of time which unifies the population through simultaneity, measured by the clock or calendar (32-5). Anderson utilises these concepts to demonstrate how a nation can only work via imagination, for the epistemes necessary for the unity of people, memory and space, are not naturally occurring. The cohesive unity of nationalism may seem to depend upon the singularity of narrative -- the horizon of Jameson's History. However, the assertion of an image of nation does not demand such a dominant and universal discourse as 'national' History. If this were so, the autobiographies written in the Pacific would all speak from a collective

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6 There has been a great interest in the 1980's on nationalism, and a list of books relevant to this area is given by E.J. Hobsbawm in his introduction to *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990): p 4.
history, and what is more, would be, as Jameson considers Third-World texts are, "conscious and overt: they imply a radically different and objective relationship of politics to libidinal dynamics" ("Third" 80). What Anderson's thesis is aiming towards, and this is a project which Bhabha's discussion of nationalism continues, is the internally conflicting space of nationalism.

Nationalism is an issue far too problematic to be only conscious; instead, it confronts its heterogeneity and its history when the people speak their nationality, for they must provide the image of the imaginary nation. The famous Ernest Renan's speech "What is a Nation?" speaks this dilemma when Renan considers the national history is produced by those (pedagogical) institutions who are "obliged already to have forgotten" a history (qtd. in Anderson 201). What fills history is not only the conscious history sanctioned and remembered by the state, but a memory that is brought into existence under the premise that there is a forgotten (yet present) history.

Where this point most resonates (and Anderson noted this) is the similarity between a national memory and a personal memory:

Against biology's demonstration that every single cell in a human body is replaced over seven years, the narratives of autobiography and biography flood print-capitalism's markets year by year. (204)

A narrative continually connects histories with the contemporary, without recognising the undeniable difference between the two events. As autobiographies of childhood are not described by the child, but by the adult who no longer sees the world as the child did, the nation lives from a past which is no longer in existence. History does not accurately address the perception of the past time, only the refigured status within the contemporary context. Anderson's idea that the transference of nationalism outside Europe was achieved through the transportation of nation and revolutionary models,
especially the French revolution, give rise to the possibility that the corresponding consciousness of national identity is also transferred. Yet, like any narratives of history, they are problematic outside their temporal sequence and cultural consequence, and this is where the work of Homi Bhabha and Partha Chatterjee is central: not only do the ambiguous notions of time and memory arrive but the radical split in the nation of the colonial country and the colonised cannot be healed. Chatterjee's work reminds us that nationalism is a Western model and attempts to cover over or transmogrify models already in existence in colonial states. Bhabha strikes at the core of cultural identity by foregrounding the ambivalent temporality of the subject, 'the people,' who exist on the boundary as the repeated performance of their identity.

Chatterjee argues, in his *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, that nation has become a privileged knowledge of liberal-rationalist western ideology, and a knowledge which is universalist (11). Ideas of Antonio Gramsci are introduced by Chatterjee to implement an Indian nationality that is not merely modular and European based. One particular relevant thesis of Chatterjee's, on which he says his model of post-colonial national development depends, is the presence of nationalism as a result of 'passive revolution,' a dynamics of change originally described by Gramsci but independently used by Indian nationalists. The passive revolution is a 'war of position' that would attempt a 'molecular transformation' of the state, neutralising opponents, converting sections of the former ruling class into allies in a partially reorganised system of government. (45)

Chatterjee argues that there are residual colonial aspects in post-colonial nations; however, the nation appropriates them, and provides "different fronts"

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7 The nationalists who Chatterjee considers work in opposition to western ideas of nationality are Mohandas Gandhi, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, and Nehru.
on which the battle is waged. That is, national development occurs through the occupation of various spaces, of forming syncetic subjects on the path to full national identity. Chatterjee admits this is not the most appropriate form of nationalism, but it does continue the process of transforming the thematics of nationalism. It is an argument which fits aptly into an investigation of Pacific autobiography because it replaces the rationalist discourse of the west, which is mostly unrelated to Islander concerns, with a dynamics of space as the scene of conflict. Yet, at this scene, as Chatterjee states, the local discourse is paradoxical because it is "one that is always dominated by another" (42). While allowing an indigenous nationalism, Chatterjee is quick to locate the subservience of this nationalism to the stronger western models. However, the fluidity of the positions which are adopted, and which continue the struggle on all fronts, allows for an expression and movement that is hybridised with that of the State.

It is this movement which Bhabha concentrates on in his discussions of nationalism, for the production of meaning must be seen on "the boundaries of that loss that generates meaning," as indeed Derrida sees it, "the process of writing is a form of survival, or living on the borderline of violence of the letter and its doubles" ("Question" 87). The nation, meaning, and the body, are all produced at the limits, defined by the line where they lose meaning. Hence it is the ambiguities of nation foisted on a community, the incommensurability of a pedagogically determined past speaking for the people, which become the scenes of transformation and resistance. The recurring thesis of Bhabha's ideas of nation is the failure of the metaphoricity of the nation: "The simultaneity of the nation - its contemporaneity - can only be articulated in the language of archaism, as a ghostly repetition; a gothic production of past-presentness" ("Question" 91). The tension between the performance of the nation, and its
history (like the problem of the adult writing of childhood), is manifest in the problematic of 'the people,' or the intriguing dictum for Bhabha of "out of many one" ("Dissemi" 294). For what this provides is not the unification of the nation, but its ceaseless repetition, and it is this repetition which, for Bhabha, introduces space: "We must always keep open a supplementary space for the articulation of cultural knowledges that are adjacent and adjunct but not necessarily accumulative, teleological, or dialectical" ("Dissemi" 313). National history, then, repeats in the narratives of people's history, mixing development, growth, and metaphoricity of self/nation that is not merely the representation of the public, nor the allegorisation of the nation, but the limits of the space; it is

marking the liminality of the cultural identity, producing the double-edged discourse of social territories and temporalities . . . in which emergent identifications and new social movements of the people are played out. ("Dissemi" 320)

The edges, boundaries, and liminality of the colonial space is the scene of fragmentation as much as it is the scene of power. In the autobiographies, identities are defined by the areas in which they situate themselves; the markings of the bodies and the land separate from the transcendental signifiers of the colonial figure. In the space between the national figure and the individual there emerges one of the fragments of the 'new social movement' which, though it is a departure from western identity, is always entwined and faced with the conformity of the colonial space.
CHAPTER FOUR

Pacific Autobiographies
Part One: Historical Contexts

There is an underlying assumption that most ‘new’ literatures start with autobiography, which implies that the entrance into the narratives of literature is self-conscious. This assumption constructs more than a point of origin for the literature, it is based on the premise that autobiography is a self-determined, natural reaction to the advent of Western literature. Rather than considering the emergence of literature and autobiography as a function of these essential qualities, I want to argue that literary emergence is determined within an institutional strategy. The functions of the pedagogical and national institutions, both complicit with the colonial apparatus, propose not a natural voice but a learned and administered response.

The possibility that autobiography is a statement of independence, however, must not be discounted. These texts must always achieve some degree of space clearing, of instigating narratives that can be manipulated in the future. Colonialism causes such a radical transformation of perception, from the notions of space to the body and individuality, that if one primary objective of any narrative is to place the self in a new environment, then the autobiography fulfils this by negotiating an identity historically, psychologically, and linguistically. This does not imply, as many critics will have it, that the autobiography demonstrates a freedom of expression, because the forces that invent and contain the narrative are ignored. Theorists such as
Valerie Smith, in reference to Black American narratives, have argued that autobiography provides “psychological autonomy” (2) which manipulates and questions the dominance of the white narratives. The strength of Smith’s manipulation relies on the literacy of the black writers, and thus she sees literature, and especially autobiography, as a symbol of resistance. The entrance into literature, then, becomes a prerequisite for legitimate resistance, and in her desire to draw political agency into literature she forecloses any alternative sphere of resistance. The function of post-colonial autobiographies is not solely their deconstructive or resistive power, but their adaptation and invention of narratives to constitute independent and hybrid discourses. The result may deconstruct colonial practice, but this is predominantly a practice of the interpreter or viewer, a production by the critic, whereas the written purpose of the text is to define an identity and sense of space in the emerging narrative.

Political acumen is not something simply there, as Stephen Slemon comments in his discussion of the “strangely untheorised position [of literary ‘resistance’]” (36). Though the appearance of numerous ‘new’ literatures surely questions the domination of literary narrative by the west, the literatures together do not map out a cohesive program, nor unified opposition, simply because the historical context and colonial specificity will dictate what the narrative is writing to. Autobiography has to carry more than individual perceptions because it works in a complex expanded field, and it is this backdrop which informs the autobiographical text.

Subramani, in his extensive study of the literature of the South Pacific, considers there is an “evolving tradition of autobiographical writing” (14) in the Pacific. Instead of analysing this field as a tradition, I will examine stages of both the colonial discourse and Islander expression to provide a historical
contextualisation of the autobiographical texts. The history of autobiography moves through institutional apparatuses which each configure space. I will outline four discursive spheres that are imbricated in the field of Pacific Islander autobiography: Missionary diaries, literary biography and autobiography, ethnological accounts, and autobiographies of independence. The categories do not perform as cohesive unities, but as markers to put on each historical and colonial context, and are influenced more by institutional practices than historical narratives. The categories are useful to understand the fundamental causes of the literature, and not their effects. Textually, I will focus my reading on the autobiographies of independence, where the politics of individuality and nationality in reference to independence are most critically relevant. The autobiographies by Sir Frederick Osifelo, Gideon Zoleveke, and Father Walter Lini are all by senior politicians who describe their personal history alongside the transformation of their nation.¹ The remaining three areas will be used to examine a history, a transition of colonial practices, and a field of cultural communication which is dominated by the colonial apparatus. The transforming perceptions of individuality adumbrate a gradual progression of the politics of space from exclusively colonial to questionably post-colonial.

Writing of the start of missionary activities in the Pacific, I.C. Campbell, in A History of the Pacific Islands, describes an incident in Tahiti that locates a transformation in institutional understanding. When Christianity began to become acceptable after the initial difficulties and failures, the new governments provided novel problems for the missionaries:

¹There is a similar group of Papua New Guinean politicians who have written autobiographies and discuss national independence: among the texts are Albert Maori Kiki's Kiki: 10,000 years in a Lifetime (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968), and Michael Somare's Sana (Port Moresby: Niugini P, 1975); both texts are discussed in Paul Sharrad's "Placing the Self." (U of Wollongong, 1992).
With the establishment of settled government the devout but ill-educated missionaries found themselves called upon to advise on constitution and law-making, and [had] to try to explain to a puzzled king that church affairs and matters of the government should be kept separate. (69)

Bringing religion to the Pacific not only created problems on a spiritual level, but instigated a whole reassessment of the site of authority and knowledge. From a Polynesian social system which intricately linked politics and spiritualism, the new colonial society erected borders and put regulations in place. The inseparable relationship between colonialism and missionaries, though the aims of the two may be reasonably distinct, brings an apparatus of power that refigures the situation of the individual. The missionaries' difficulty explaining their reluctance to act on government policy stems from the fact that the laws and policies which supported their position was not of governmental origin, but from the humanism and ideology of the western culture; they can authorise without the need of government legislation.

The main tool of the missionaries to promote their beliefs was writing, and it is no surprise to find the influence Missionary schools and education had on education. Campbell states that to "the missionaries is due the credit for reducing the languages of the Pacific to written form . . . thus preserving the linguistic heritage of the people" (74). Subramani similarly writes that the missionaries were instrumental to the invention of literature, for they introduced writing, and "reduced local languages to writing" (6).

Consequently, much like the segregation of the church from the government, the written text extradites the individual author from the shared culture and makes him/her perform in an isolated, personal environment. There is a sense of this when both Campbell and Subramani say the languages were 'reduced',

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and not translated, for the complexity of language is lost. The existence of written diaries by Islander missionaries exemplifies a change in subjectivity due to the inclusion of the individual.

The area of Islander missionary writings is limited; Subramani mentions two autobiographies: *Joel Bulu: The Autobiography of a Native Minister*, written by Joel Bulu and published in 1871, and Clement Marau's *The Story of a Melanesian Deacon*, published in 1894 (14). One further example, and a text I will to briefly look at, is a collection of letters by a Polynesian missionary, Ta'unga, edited by R.G. and Marjorie Crocombe. There are around thirty letters which Ta'unga wrote, some to his Missionary teacher and superior, Charles Pitman, others as descriptions of voyages or cultures he meets. In the preface to the text, R.G and Marjorie Crocombe ask, pertinently, why did Ta'unga write? (xvi). Initially they attempt to universalise this action, asking "Why does anybody [write]?" (xvi), but they then give a practical answer which is far closer to the conditions of writing; they explain writing was introduced to Ta'unga's island, Rarotonga, as a "highly prized skill," which had many functional purposes: to demonstrate the success of the missionaries' work, to inform on the affairs of Ta'unga's own mission, and to teach children the Christian faith (xvii). Further, the English missionaries were collectors of this writing and Ta'unga was probably requested to write his memoirs by one of these collectors (xviii). Deleuze and Guattari make an assertion about the teaching of English which it seems the Crocombes, who want to emphasise the self-determination of writing, are unwilling to consider; Deleuze and Guattari write:

[The Schoolmistress] does not so much instruct as 'insign,' give orders or commands. . . . The compulsory education machine does not communicate information; it imposes upon the child semiotic
coordinates possessing all of the dual foundations [ie. the binaries] of grammar. (Thousand 75-76)

The space which Ta'unga enters, if we are to believe Deleuze and Guattari, is not an expanded field of knowledge, for it is the relationship to authority that is transmitted, not the information. One particular letter exemplifies this:

I have not written about all of [the customs] lest you [Pitman] should not approve of these matters, and perhaps you may not be interested...  . . . What is the point of my writing this report to you? It is just to let know about these things. Then cast it aside. (111)

Curiously, it is not the information which Ta'unga wants to pass on, but the mere fact that he is writing, that he can demonstrate his ability to critically assess (from a Christian viewpoint) these other cultures. He is astutely aware of the propriety of knowledge and is careful not to usurp any from Pitman.

Ta'unga's role in his letters is the recipient of a relationship of power that places his interlocutor as an authority. Ta'unga is not describing anthropological details to enlighten his superior, but to demonstrate his progress in learning. The phrase 'colonial tutelage' employed by Pearson in Rifled Sanctuaries is apt here. Friday is always supplicating to Crusoe, Pearson considers, because of the colonial myth that assumes 'natives' were always pupils of western civilisation. Their pre-capitalistic, 'uncivilised' society positions them as uneducated and in constant wonder of the advancement of western civilisation. Another relevant model of relations is confessional, for as Foucault's History of Sexuality has cogently outlined, confession is the dominant means to exact truth, and to include people in the western system of Pastoral power. The confessor and teacher in the Pacific provided a system of surveillance which the native missionary entered through confession, and during confession, educated the 'native' in the rational discourse of the west.
Native writings explain the success of the colonial apparatus, they are more motivated by the desire to suppress indigenous subjectivity than to explore or discuss it.

Clearly, as Ta'unga's intermediary role emphasises, the European missionaries were attempting to make the Islanders inaccurate reflections of themselves, to teach them white subjectivity and naturalise white rationalism, as a means of disseminating the authority of the Missions through the population. Christianity, it appears, was merely a vehicle for the patterns of authority, the coordinates of space, of the colonial project. The concept of individuality that Ta'unga was admitted to was integrated in a western representation of self. He may have, as the Crocombes consider, provided insights into life on Caledonia "before white man ever lived there" (xvi). Yet, it must be acknowledged that his written record is from the viewpoint, from the subjectivity, of a white man. The consequence of the missionary writings was to imprison the Islanders within a colonial space that would stabilise their identity as other to the white missionaries. They have no 'celebrated' space of knowledge. Not until this relationship was challenged could the literature could emerge from this space.

A truly literary genre started, according to Subramani, with Johnny (Florence) Frisbie's Miss Ulysses From Puka-Puka in 1948, followed by The Frisbies of the South Seas in 1961, both texts being semi-autobiographical. The model of paternalism is useful to describe the space in which these texts emerged. Miss Ulysses was written by Florence at the age of sixteen with the help of her father, Robert Dean Frisbie, who wrote many novels based in the South Pacific. The Frisbies of the South Seas is written as a biography of her father, and while it concentrates on his life, much of Florence's childhood is described. The beginning of an autonomous discourse is complicit with the
regeneration of a literary discourse, and Florence Frisbie's books, as well as the second text I will look at, Chris Perez Howard’s *Mariquita: A Tragedy of Guam*, a biography of his mother in war-time Guam, must regenerate a literature for their specific space. In a provoking analysis of colonial poetry, Philip Mead proposes that the colonial writer, and here he writes of Charles Harpur, has a significant problem of origins: “Faced with his own firstness, which he was perfectly aware of in some ways, was it Harpur chooses to repeat - because he can never begin from nothing - as a way of beginning?” (281). To develop literary motivation in a field that has no literary precursor, they must invent their own history, but as a repetition of a previous history. The narrative of family provides a point which both repeats a familial (and often colonial) history, while initiating a point of origin for the ‘new’ literature. Sharrad’s review of *Mariquita* identifies the multivalent purpose of the text. He comments that the text is an “assertion of identity/inscription of presence/salvaging of history within adopted western culture” (67). There is a culture of absence, Sharrad writes, around the mother, and this is the nothingness that creates a new beginning. The ‘newness’ may be why the texts did not venture far from biography, for losing a factual grounding would separate the unimaginative text, that is, the text situated in the realm of fiction, from its space in the Pacific; it will be encompassed by the universalisation of western creativity. These texts mark a dynamic of writing at the point where autonomy is asserted amid a restrictive reading audience and production economy. The texts must shed their exotic otherness, formulated by western reading formations, to implement a subjective space that provides the Islander writer with narratives of history, family and self. These texts are at the threshold of creative and autobiographical writing, for they give an understanding of the subjectivity of the writer through compounding this figure
with the person who is the focus of the text, in a careful balance between history, subjectivity, and literature.

In an article on the writing of biography in the Pacific, Gavin Daws argues for the need to examine biographies not just with "commonsense remarks," or "politico-economic Imperial colonial terms" (297), but with a view to psychohistory: "the ways in which their subjects lived their lives in the Pacific" (297). Though his methodological approach may have shortcomings, such as universalising psychological repression (299), one feature suggested in Pacific writing is Freud's concept of the 'family romance,' a childhood fantasy of replacing one's parents with better ones: aristocrats, millionaires, and so on. The re-invention of family, isolated by Daws, can be discussed as a trope which provides a narrative to understand the self and the family, rather than to universalise the psyche. Howard writes his biography as a way to "discover another identity - my Chamorro self" (vi). He intends the story to work not only as a means to understand the occupation of Guam during the second world war, but "in writing this book I discovered the memory of my mother" (88). In subtitling the book A Tragedy of Guam, Howard incorporates the classical interpretation of tragedy as a further literary trope, so his mother's life becomes metaphor as well as an historical account. The text, then, invents the family, but only in a literary sense. The struggle for autonomy in these texts is to restitute a narrative which has been defined inappropriately for the writer, and to recuperate a history.

The restrictive nature of western literary narratives may be the reason that Florence Frisbie decided to make her father the protagonist of the novel, for he may be seen as a more legitimate character to write about. He was a white, published writer, and had written documentation of his life - his letters are constantly referred to and quoted throughout the text. However, this
assumption resides on the shaky ground of intentionality. What the text performs, on the other hand, is a description of childhood in the South Pacific that is unwritten in western literature. The subjects Frisbie deals with, including sexuality and Islander religion, demonstrate a marked difference from other childhood autobiographies; sexuality is not a covert and dramatic practice which produces much hushed discussion, but is merely what happens under the trees at night. The spirits of Motu Toto island are a reality to Florence, but she does not mention them to her father for "he would not believe my story" (148). Florence's unique viewpoint is continuously contrasted with her father's more conservative views; he does not allow her out after dark for fear that she will have sex, and he writes in a letter which Florence quotes, "I hope she will keep her stinking virginity for another three years" (90). His visions for the children were treated, according to Florence, as "a little suspicious," for he dreamed of the "four of us kids doing fantastic things and saying new English words we had never heard before" (139). The disparity between Florence and her father is like that between the source of literature and the emerging voice: paternalistic. Not only is the relationship close and strictly regimented in both the language and content, but there is a possibility for a distinctly new, yet familiar, narrative. The allocation of a new language is determined by the father, for it is his letters, his words, and his dreams that are spoken. The child must repeat the narratives, but in a new context.

The reconstruction of family history allows subjectivity to emerge in a unique context, but with residual aspects: primarily, the recourse to factual history and life-stories, rather than writing creatively. The space opened to these writers is, then, one of reporting, of providing a point of view where a familial narrative is enunciated that repeats history, but from a voice that is
unspoken in this history. The autonomy of voice moves towards the appropriation of a narrative that is outside colonialism.

Claiming texts can move out of the strictures of colonialism is reliant on the writers recognising the dynamic of their position, and the readers bringing values to the text which can understand this shift. The instability of the post-colonial terrain is due, in part, to the dependence the theory has on its culturally subjective position, enforcing all ideologies and beliefs to be contextualised. This is the fundamental flaw in the logic of post-colonial criticism: it must balance an homogenising impulse to conflate the political and epistemic aspects while valorising the dispersal and difference of cultural values. Any critical reading of texts within the post-colonial rubric must, then, paradoxically combine what it wants to distinguish. In the realm of Pacific autobiography this agenda is most obviously ignored when cultural difference is made to hypothesise an accessible cultural knowledge, namely the anthropological account of a life-story. Anthropological interest can be generated by explaining differing cultural models of individuality. However, the self invented is basically western, and the foreignness is designed to be not too different, allowing at least some form of universalisation to keep the parts in a relationship where the cultural other is manufactured into a topic of knowledge to be consumed by the west.

There is an unusually strong history of anthropological accounts of Pacific Islanders, quite possibly the legacy of the 'noble savage' myth that has survived from the first contact with the Tahitians in the 1770's, flowering with studies such as Margret Meade's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, and Bronislaw Malinowski's *The Sexual Life of Savages* (which, incidentally, Theroux reads on his Pacific tour). The example I use is R.M. Keesing's *'Elota's Story*, an anthropological account of a villager of the Kwaio tribe on the Solomon island
of Malaita. 'Elota's Story is transcribed from fifteen tapes recorded over a period of four months. Of the process, Keesing states "I have arranged and edited the instalments, but 'Elota's story is basically as he told it" (6). The accuracy of this portrayal, and exactly who is speaking has resonance beyond the text and in the field that I am investigating. The sense of the reading, its political application, may reside more thoroughly in the knowledge of the critic than the text of the writer. As Robert Young comments on Homi Bhabha's work:

while on the one hand Bhabha suggests that the ambivalence of colonial discourse allows its exploitation so that its authority can be undermined even further, on the other hand it seems also to be implied here that such slippage does not so much occur under the historical conditions of colonialism, but it is rather produced by the critic. (155)

The assumption here is that speaking for the person is as good as them speaking. The efficacy of the text is shifted from the space of post-colonial inscription to the critical formation. The argument I forward will not provide answers to this dilemma but isolate where the failures in representation are informed by the colonial project. Hence the topic is more colonialism's role, rather than alternative models.

The aim of this argument is to move the polarity of reading from what Edward Said has described as the premise of anthropology in his "Representing the Colonised": "To convert them [the indigenous people] into topics of discussion or fields of research is necessarily to change them into something fundamentally and constitutively different" (210), to a provision of space

which will energise Gideon Zoleveke’s request, in his forward to Zoleveke, that:

people might learn something from the trials, errors and achievements of a man from Choiseul; at least I hope that my efforts will encourage others to think a little more about themselves and their place in a rapidly changing world. (v)

Zoleveke’s intentions of making the readers aware of their context in the world, both of their individuality and their place, can be easily erased by the normalising actions of a viewer who merges all distinctions in the quest for universal values. In line with Zoleveke, Said argues in his “Representing the Colonised,” for the necessity of any viewer to be informed by the “historical and worldly context” (213), specifically referring to the anthropologist’s intimate connection to Imperialism:

To practice anthropology in the United States is therefore not just to be doing scholarly work investigating ‘otherness’ and ‘difference’ in a large country; it is to be discussing them in an enormously influential and powerful state whose global role is that of a superpower. (213)

The discussion is far more than a scientific topic of interest, it is the whole institutional/epistemic framework which allows the investigation to occur. The relationship determined by the anthropologist, who has objectivity and truth on his/her side, must be reconnected to the Imperial project; the role of observer, which Said cogently points out, cannot be equal to the role of the observed.

James Clifford provides an accurate history of the practice of the anthropologists’ power in his chapter “Ethnographic Authority” in The Predicament of Culture. He links the rise of their authority with the strength they usurped from the academic institutions, carried further by the assumed veracity of their approach: they become professional when “[i]ntensive
fieldwork, pursued by university trained specialists, emerged as a privileged, sanctioned source of data about exotic people" (24). Central to the innovations which ethnography provided was, as Clifford states, "an increased emphasis on the power of observation" (31). The role of observer, or as Said considers, "specular anthropology" (213) determines reality; as Clifford quotes Malinowski: "You are there . . . because I was there" (22). The role of the observer is supposedly to collect data from an objective position. However, as critics such as Said and Clifford emphasise, the interpretation and ownership of the knowledge which determines the resulting reading does not leave the realm of the west.

Trinh Minh-ha, in *Woman Native Other*, provides a reversal of this authority when she discusses the anthropologist by "referring to him in the third person . . . since he claims to be the spokesman for an entire human race. . . . I will further delete all proper names and use representative stereotyped appellations" (49). Malinowski becomes 'The Great Master' in Trinh's exposition of the false objectivity of anthropology. She undermines the space of the anthropological discourse in the western arena: "The 'conversation of man with man' is, therefore, mainly a conversation of 'us' with 'us' about 'them', of the white man with the white man about the primitive-native" (65). It is from this site that 'Elota's Story is told, for the purpose of the text is to detail anthropological aspects; lineages, currencies, and marriage festivals are described, but in the narrative framing which Keesing provides, and not by 'Elota. Keesing says that 'Elota "began to take shape as a central character" (10) in his study of the village. The village becomes a stage and the villagers a "cast of characters" (9) which Keesing views from the audience, negligent of his position in the village history. The surprising welcome he receives when he first visits the village is because, as Keesing discovers later, "I had come as a
fulfilment of prophecy" (9). The objectivity Keesing reckons he has is not verified by the text, for he is mentioned by 'Elota when he gives money for a marriage, and when he arrives. The "common humanity" (7) that is Keesing's central premise for publishing the story is really the 'humanity' of Keesing who designs, interprets, and speaks for 'Elota. The dramatic design he employs writes 'Elota's life into a western narrative, a space of the stage representing western ideas.

The function of character, providing personality, humour, life-stories, enables Keesing to employ narrative tropes to textualise the life story. Thus 'Elota is not left to describe his life, but Keesing speaks it in the preface with his statement: "Let me try to describe the man" (15). The proclivity for Keesing to overwrite 'Elota's voice, to appropriate his knowledge, is most exacting in its use of western science to assume the position of authority. When 'Elota dies, Keesing writes, "[h]e died because his ancestors were offended by a ritual violation; or was it emphysema?" (25-6). Recurring throughout the text are similar actions of overwriting the practice of the Kwaio villagers with anthropological and scientific justifications. The final text would have never been read by 'Elota (he could not read English, and died before the text was produced), nor any of his fellow villagers. The conversation that the text apparently records, as Trinh has stated, is between the white men. 'Elota's voice occurs in western space, as a point of reference for western knowledge.

Keesing's scenario is one that has to be avoided, but will continually crop up within academic researching of 'new' literatures. The focus of theory, then, tends towards a problematics of ethics: when is a reading appropriating the space of knowledge, and when is it allowed to be constituted on its own? Michael M.J. Fischer proposes in "Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory" a reading formation that allows "ethnic autobiography and
autobiographical fiction [to] serve as key forms for explorations of pluralist, post-industrial, late twentieth-century society" (195). Fischer wants anthropology to integrate literary mechanism into the reading of other cultures. The practice of fieldwork is seen now as inherently biased towards the western viewer, and can be abandoned for textual techniques which do not physically intrude on the voice of the cultural other. An autobiography, for Fischer, is valuable because it "juxtapos[es] two or more cultural traditions" (200). Anthropology moves from constructing cultural purity to understanding the consequence of cultural plurality. Of course, this is not the answer to our understanding of cultural difference, for there are still colonial and racial determinants in literary production, autobiographical narratives, and subjectivity; still, Fischer is correct to point out the value in developing ideas of the construction of cultural plurality and translation. The value of textual study is specifically in the area of the plurality of narratives which define and redefine subjective space. My textual study of three Islander autobiographies of independence will attempt to understand the nature and authority of these narratives, and their impact on the control of space.

The sixties and seventies was an era of massive change for the island states in the Pacific. During this time independence was gained by many island groups, and much of the colonial infrastructure was taken over by the indigenous population. The autobiographies that I have classed 'independent' are all attached in some way to this decolonising movement, and concentrate on the author's role in the independence movement and the autonomous government. The emphasis placed on nationalism ensures these texts are read in a field larger than the individual identity.
Part Two: Autobiographies of Independence

The study so far has concentrated on external factors, such as production and pedagogy, and has not attended greatly to what the writers say. My textual readings of the three autobiographies in this section will examine two aspects of the writer's stories: the politics of space demonstrated within the text, and the narratives renegotiated by the text. The plan is to outline individuality in practices and not in personal and emotional essences, and to formulate a design of person that relies on culturally specific narratives that fit the individual into a framework of cultural and national identity.

Autobiography must filter events, selecting very few of the occurrences in someone's life to carry the continuous narrative of the life story. The incidents chosen often express the memory of a greater period of time, and a larger relationship than the actual event told. The account can condense various features of the contemporaneous context into one scene, and though it may be factually inaccurate, it reproduces the system of power. There is a childhood account in Osifelo's *Kanaka Boy* that outlines the complex scheme of indigenous expression in an apparently simple incident. The clarity with which the event is remembered (conversations are stated with seeming accuracy, as are names and languages spoken), propose that it harbours significance reaching beyond the scenario played out. Osifelo tells the story from the narrative position of memory, and not in the plot of the life-story, implementing an ownership by controlling the retelling, ensuring the story issues from the mouth of Osifelo and is not subject to the events that moulded
his life-story. Memory repositions the authority of the voice from the plot structure, the epistemic order of life, to the speaker, the point within the order. The description starts with Osifelo looking down from his house, originally built for the (white) District Officer, over the town of Auki. He comments, "I never imagined that a Solomon Islander would ever be able to live in [this house]" (10). However, thirty years later, he does. He says:

I pointed down to where our leaf house used to be when that very house was built. I was about nine years old then. I remember vividly a visit to Auki by the High Commissioner. . . . It was treated almost like the Queen's visit with a long period of preparation. . . . [The guard area . . . had to be resurfaced with fresh soil and sand and then roped off to stop people entering the area. It was swept daily by prisoners. . . . During this preparation period . . . [I visited] the guard area and stood behind the rope and watched the four prisoners sweeping and collecting dead leaves. When they had finished, the guard area was as smooth and clean as a polished tile floor.

After they had left, I entered the area by lifting up the rope. I stood and looked around and suddenly saw the M.V. *Auki*, the only government boat in the Malaita district, at berth at the Auki wharf. With the edge of my [fishing] spear I began to sketch the ship on the smooth surface complete with a long straight line at the stern with a large hook and a big mamula fish caught on it. I began to sketch a figure at the front mast where the bosun, Aitaki, normally stood, when to my sudden surprise the District Commissioner, Mr Saunders, struck the ropes with his walking stick and said, "What are you doing in here, Fred? Get the hell out of here immediately." I replied in Pidgin English, "O! masta wait fastaem, iu lukim man ia, kapten Aitaki nao ia. . . ." This made the
District commissioner more furious. He did not listen to me but looked around as if someone was calling him. He turned back, looked at me and said once again, "Get the hell out of here, Fred." (10)

The colonial space, roped off and made artificially smooth, is invaded by the Islander who graffitioes the surface. Like an analogy for autobiography, young Fred writes in colonial space in an alternative form, using his method of representation.

One thing is apparent, colonial systems make their statements strongest in spatial terms. The effects and consequences of the colonial administration cannot be relegated to language alone, but to the historical and ideological coordinates attributed to that voice in space. It is not so much the words said, which will disappear, but the sites they speak about, and the spaces their language controls. Osifelo's scene plays out the modality of colonial power in a specific site as young Fred transgresses the codes and defiles the ambiguous purity of the guard's square. His ignorance of the various rules he breaks when crossing the rope and drawing, demonstrates the cultural specificity of the square's purpose. The significance and purpose of the square rely on colonial practices, which assign and designate authority onto the space, by performing two functions: firstly, the practices design an order whose representational system is based upon the ambiguity of presence, for at the core of the symbolic status of colonial power is the premise that the material substance achieves its authority through a dubious signification based on metaphysical presuppositions, much like Fletcher's method of asserting racial authority through his Englishness. Secondly, colonial practices surround the area with a multitude of actions, the cleaning, sweeping, guarding, exhibiting, and speaking, all of which use it as a surface of inscription, a place to materially encode institutional and cultural practices. In this two-fold action the space is
intensely scrutinised and policed, but only for the purpose of reifying its materiality into a system of disciplines and knowledge, all distinct from material practice. The rope, the dirt, the outline of the square have a specific cultural meaning only used by the authorities to create a natural and essential power. Fred's expression occurs in this as a point of rupture; he invades the ambiguous presence of the colonial space and writes, almost in competition, on the space.

Fred's action, then, is to question colonial representation by his utterance. This is not as an attempt to destabilise or disrupt it, rather actions and consequences become cultural values, as what appears to be truth becomes foreign. Separating the 'value' from the material questions the power of the colonial apparatus. An ambiguous vacancy pervades the scene of colonial authority, an absence that is manipulated as a modality of power for the colonial apparatus, but works as a point of rupture within its discourse. There seems an understanding of this dilemma of colonialism in the autobiographies. The square in which young Fred draws is empty; its demarcation is used exclusively to keep it vacant. Zoleveke describes a similar scene:

The District Officer's house was an enormous construction on top of the hill, which would cost a fortune if it were built today. No wonder the expatriate officers developed a colonial mentality, living alone in such huge structures, protected by policemen and served by prisoners. (41-2) Like the guard's square, the house is empty, but there still exists borders, and guards, practices marking the site as somehow important. The theoretical implications of this space are analysed in Bhabha's "Signs Taken For Wonders." Bhabha discusses the English book as a presence for power: "these discourses of colonial power cannot be represented as a plenitude of 'full' presence; it is determined by its belatedness" (150). Bhabha considers that the
English book is riven by this contradiction of power, providing, like the guard's square, an ambiguous presence. The power works, for Bhabha, because it is transparent:

Transparency is the action of the distribution and arrangement of differential spaces, positions, knowledges in relation to each other, relative to a differential, not inherent, sense of order. This effects a regulation of spaces and places that is authoritatively assigned; it puts the addressee into the proper frame of condition for some action or result. (151)

In essence, colonial power assumes a natural authority achieved through the transparent arrangement of the material effects, or what Bhabha sees as 'spaces, knowledges, and positions.' The power is not absent, but is energised by this absence; its potential is derived from its 'belatedness,' working as a threat that is always present. All three autobiographies tell of messages arriving from authorities they never see: Osifelo receives a letter telling of his knighthood from the Governor's police-driver; Walter Lini describes his leaving home

One morning while I was washing my face before going to school someone came with a message from the headmaster to tell me I was to leave that day to go to Vureas school on Aoba... I had never left home before so I was reluctant to leave. (12)

Authority is always strongest elsewhere, and its presence is in the numerous practices and authorities managing its borders. Constantly there is an intermediary who substitutes him/herself for the authority. When Osifelo is at Buckingham Palace to receive his knighthood, he notes with curiosity that "even the for last six to eight steps to reach where Her Majesty was standing the recipient has to be lead by an official" (57). Indicative of western
hierarchical systems of power, there is always a proxy in a chain of vertical power.

The colonial systems of power do not work only by superior technology or assumption of a better morality, but by measures such as narrative, memory, and myth. Monuments like the District Officer's house or the guard's square serve as points of unification by creating a disciplinary performance. Benedict Anderson gives an accurate understanding of this dynamic through the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. He writes:

The public ceremonial reverence [is] accorded [to] these monuments precisely because they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them. . . . To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busybody who 'discovered' the Unknown Soldier's name or insisted on filling the cenotaph with some real bones. Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind! (9)

Far from signifying a presence of a nation's memory, the tomb substitutes absence. The tomb functions, as does the Officer's house, as a memory of the government's power, for why else would they surround a nearly deserted house with police? Furthermore, what do the prisoners keep clean? Around the apparent void a history can be made present by the incessant practices that repeat and serve its reverence. Thus practices like cleanliness, discipline, and observation become virtues within the morals of the colonial power.

The morals, the artificial order imposed on the space of the colonial terrain, creates a reality of power and authority, into which the Islanders are inducted, but never completely. And this is where the texts question their role as cultural artefact. The writers confront the narrative, memory and myth of colonialism with their own concepts that hybridise these purities. The role the
texts play in the cultural meaning at the colonial scene is like Bhabha's impostor:

the repetition of the same can . . . turn the authority of a culture into its own non-sense precisely in its moment of enunciation. [The] culture's double returns uncannily - neither one nor the other, the impostor - to mock and to mimic. ("Articulating" 216)

The repetition of cultural meaning does not assure purity and truth, but instead devalues these meanings by opening them to plurality and hybridity in their translated expression. Osifelo hints at this when recounting the awarding of his knighthood. He speaks of the ritual as strangely unfamiliar, and he says K.B., meaning Knight Bachelor, stands for Kanaka Boy.

Remembering Bhabha's figuration of the nation, it is at the borders that meaning is generated, though only because the border is the threatened loss of meaning. These demarcations, the materials of the institutional definition of space, are where meaning is renegotiated. The presence of colonialism, it can be hypothesised, is most meticulously constructed not at the centre, which dialectic structures would suppose, but in the careful management of the margins and borders. As the colonial house is on the edge of the town, overlooking it, and as the ropes carry the colonial signification, colonialism maps powers of borders and fringes, its own liminality. Andrew Lattas criticises Deleuze and Guattari's centralisation of capitalism, with great clarity, by arguing that the margins, as the "institutional liminality" (110), empower the state. The patrols who guard the borders, the cenotaph's watchmen, are the surveyors of power whose task, amongst others, is to administer space, to keep the borders in existence and charge their presence with authority.

Discipline and education of language are two of the plethora of acts that form a regime of performance that administrates and regulates the space. They
shape both the meanings of the colonial space and the individuality of Islander expression. Immediately after Fred's inscription he enters a discourse of discipline. The culmination of Fred's writing in the square occurs when the District Commissioner says to Fred, "I am afraid, Fred, I must give you punishment, something for you to do, to keep you busy" (11). He is kept in the police barracks for about three weeks, where he must perform various chores. Punishment is an apparently immobile structure to the District Commissioner who appears to have no choice in its allocation. The task of 'keeping him busy' is a residue of the work ethic that has remained since Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Discipline is not a deterrent or a tool of exclusion, but a means of encapsulation and control. The whole structure of discipline in the colonial situation appears as a self perpetuating machine, for it is the prisoners who clear the area which leads to Fred's incrimination. The law is not implemented to standardise the relationship between the colonial and colonised cultures, but rather to assert a discipline over the colonised people. The law intervenes in the most private aspects of Islander life; Osifelo states that the most common offence of the prisoners was adultery, an action completely independent of colonial officers, yet included in colonial law.

While discipline functions to administer work and provide a space to effectualise the law, language's role is to support the intrinsic morality of this project. Within the pedagogical discourse, language provides a commodity that can be exchanged and a representation that is learned. This second discursive practice encodes and names the boundaries as a process of knowledge, but entirely within the realm of colonial discourse. As the exchange of language following Fred's drawing exemplifies, the guard's square is a talking point, or an object that must be spoken about, but only in English.
When the irate District Commissioner sees his area being trespassed and desecrated he speaks English, and young Fred Pidgin; there is no communication between them. The District Commissioner does not acknowledge Fred's words and instead "looked around as if someone was calling him" (10). He later explains, "I had told him to get out of here but he did not listen to me. I don't know what he is talking about" (11). Fred demonstrates his linguistic ability by replying to his father in Baegu'u, and the guard in Kwara'ae, implying he can speak at least three languages (the third is Pidgin), and though there is some translation between these three languages, there is none with English. English is privileged, for talking to the District Officer in pidgin was like "dropping a pint of kerosene into a fire" (10). Like Fletcher's incommunicable visions, translation threatens the loss of cultural significance for the ownership of discipline cannot be relegated to the language of the Islanders. Walter Lini describes a similar occurrence when he approached an education committee and asked them to consider putting more Melanesian culture into the curriculum; they replied to Lini that "they did not understand the point of my [Lini's] request" (15). Apart from providing a measure to avoid answering the questions, ignoring cultural translation allows English to remain dominant in order to ensure that its access to universal truths is unassailable. English is the boundary, the limit to meaning at these colonial scenes, yet can be overstepped by Islander expression.

Osifelo is as fascinated with language as Fletcher. Yet the purity and metaphysicality which Fletcher lauds, Osifelo shatters. There are numerous times Osifelo speaks of his misuse of English as humorous stories, and while overtly this demonstrates Osifelo's lack of understanding of English, the many puns and misuses subtly imply an inadequacy of expression. Implicitly, this is a readerly assumption, that the stupidity resides in the language (which, in an
example Osifelo gives, cannot differentiate between a metal file and a clerical file), not the speaker. Positioning the failure in the language provokes the sheer sensibility of the narratives of Empire to be turned, according to Bhabha, into a more ominous silence that utters an archaic colonial ‘otherness,’ that speaks in riddles, obliterating proper names and proper places. It is a silence that turns imperial triumphalism into the testimony of colonial confusion. (“Articulating” 203)

Each of Fred’s puns or misunderstanding in some way disrupts the bureaucratic structure. He gets the wrong sort of files (like throwing a spanner into the works), he waits all afternoon for a cigarette instead of working (after mistaking launch for lunch), and sits through a business meeting not understanding a word, “I could only nod my head in agreement but made no other contribution!” (41). He turns the efficiency of English against its commercial purposes and uses it to confuse colonial order.

The proclivity to mistranslate also has a sinister undercurrent which marks the misunderstandings with their full cultural implications: Osifelo and Zoleveke describe incidents during the war when villagers waved at passing United States’ aeroplanes who mistook their greetings as “inviting them to fight” (Osifelo 21). Zoleveke recalls that “as people recognised that the aircraft were American they waved and shouted gaily, and this may have been what first attracted their attention” (18). The planes strafed the area and dropped two bombs. The discrepancy between the results of mistranslation - either to miss work or to be bombed - is the authority language carries in its representational understanding. The role of cultural translator provides more than an interface between languages, it asserts a hierarchy of power bestowed upon the language. The hierarchy is made possible by its material inscriptions, in its spatial organisation that consolidates positions and places represented,
discussed, owned, and cared for. Where Osifelo brings foreign objects into colonial areas - a workshop file into an office - as an intrusion or disruption to the administrative practice, the bombing planes recode the land as a space of conflict that is determined by the allied forces. Suddenly villagers do not control their homelands and the bombings, as Zoleveke comments, "brought home the reality of war to people who had previously understood little of its implications" (18). The reality is that the islanders were caught in a warfare between two imperial armies vying for their land; the indigenous inhabitants are squeezed out. Each autobiography mentions the atrocities of war perpetrated by both sides: Lini mentions "the bombs the Japanese dropped" and the "concentration camp where the Japanese were kept ill-treated" (9), and Perez Howard criticises the "wanton bombing of [Guam] by the Americans" (88). The war expands the space of colonial conflict to a near global scale and relegates the significance of the Pacific Islands into part of the Pacific theatre - the stage where the war is played.

Language depends upon the support of the pedagogical system that both passes on a knowledge and includes the speaker in a disciplinary procedure. Education is a lure to engage Islanders in an institution that rigorously enforces practices of colonial authority, knowledge and space. The amount of knowledge allowed to the Islander population is carefully administered. Lini states:

[At school] we did not learn much . . . but we enjoyed the fun of getting together, listening to religious stories and stories of important people in history such as King George. . . . We were asked to write the word 'sugar cane' in the Raga language and then draw a sugar cane. (12)

Passed on in this education is the colonial hierarchy, the King, and the primacy of the economy, learning of sugar cane, the foreign cash crop introduced by
colonial plantation owners. The purpose of this education is to make the children more fruitful workers within the colonial empire, and not to make productive thinkers. Zoleveke comments on the unequal distribution of education when he describes a District Commissioner ill with malaria:

It was a serious case and I knew almost nothing about the disease and had no modern drugs, but had to do the best I could. . . . During the two critical nights spent in attendance at the District Commissioner's residence I bitterly regretted the policy of denying proper training opportunities to Pacific Islanders who had graduated from the Central Medical School. (41)

That this issue is spoken in reference to a colonial figure, and not an Islander, is evidence of the double-standards in colonial education. The irony of the distribution backfires on the colonial regime when it is suddenly at risk through its own bias.

Both Osifelo and Zoleveke express an economy of education vastly different from the colonial model, and even from Orientalist typology. Rather than the Orientalist system of the west controlling the colonial site through intense study, there is a reversal: education is exported from the west. Of course the knowledge that is exported is strictly censored and protected, but it is given as a commodity which will initiate an economy controlled through the educative apparatus. The west's knowledge and technology, which Jon Stratton makes clear in relation to travel writing (56), is present at most of the points of initial contact for economic use (white explorers always demonstrate the use of a compass, mirror, or tools to the 'natives'). The trinkets of technology, and we need only think of Robinson Crusoe's chests that were to provide such a profit for him, can buy land, gold, or other commodities.
The export of knowledge introduces a new economy of its production, and this is most noticeable in Osifelo's self education:

whenever I saw any typed draft of a letter screwed up and left in a waste paper basket, I salvaged and straightened it and kept it aside for my private study... I kept several files of those 'destroyed' papers that caught my attention. My study time was of great help to me, because whatever I had read, or copied out in handwriting into a different form of sentences [sic], remained fresh in my mind for the whole day. (29)

For Osifelo, there is a surplus of writing in the colonial government, and a lack within his own culture. The supply and demand model heavily favours the colonial system. Like Zoleveke's concerns about the education policy, Osifelo's dynamic of supply/demand formulates the Islanders in a position of lack. To go further, as Osifelo does, means to pick up the excess. To assure the presence of colonial power, the objects, such as the guard's square, and the disciplinary or education discourses, are all excessive. Each place is saturated with disciplines, hierarchies, and performances. In the government and bureaucratic field this excess is demonstrated by the amount of paperwork and files present, to the point that much of it is unnecessary. It is only from the discards or rejects that the colonised economy functions.

The excess offsets the ambiguous vacancy of colonial space by inscribing a plethora of representational possibilities that the colonial apparatus can now police. The perpetuation of colonisation is not threatened by the possible lack of meaning for there is now an oversignification, a collision of discourses, in the colonial space that discipline, educate, speak for, clean, and translate the colonial other. The politics that preside over and adumbrate this space of inscription demonstrate that a material situation, the guard's square, is a surface which numerous politics can assume a material effect, and anchor
their practice to the colonial scene. I now want to turn to the narratives to examine how the forces described by the Islander autobiographers are renegotiated. It is Fred's inscription in the square which expresses the politics and enunciates a history and a subjectivity in this area.

The moment of Fred's inscription marks a disparity between languages, for his expression is not verbal or written, but a drawing that performs as an indicator of his education. Initially, in the square, it is Fred's attempts to explain the picture to the District Officer that get him into trouble. Later, what finally resolves Fred to go to school is his admiration of his friend's drawing, the same drawing as Fred's in the guard's square: the ship M.V. Auki. Quite possibly, this is a point of condensation where the image of the boat is repeated in the context of education. Fred says, "as he completed the drawing, the doubts that previously filled my heart diminished and I accepted the fact that they had learned this sketching from Mage school" (16). In both instances, the drawing depicts a level of western education in Fred: it signifies his orality to the District Commissioner, and his lack of schooling to his friends. The drawing has an in-between quality, and works as a point of translation because it is outside colonial language yet within its area. The drawing forces Osifelo to be within the various performances and disciplines that define the square and, at the same time, in a position of difference to these practices. As a hybrid inscription it melds together issues of western education with indigenous expression such that the determinants of education are indigenous and not colonial. The drawing is one of many instances of a hybrid discourse, one that renegotiates narratives, translating colonial space for indigenous understanding.

The patterns and structures of autobiography used in forming memory and narratives do not occur logically, nor as a reflection of fact, but as the
application of cultural models. How events are told and ordered in an autobiographical text distinguishes a narrative that is both peculiar to the culture, and an application of western values of individuality. The dominant narrative in autobiography is the concept of plot development and chronological coherence, but there are other structures used to make sense of events. In the example of Fred's graffiti, the drawing is a point of articulation between indigenous expression and colonial intervention. His imprisonment, similarly, is a point of articulation; rather than perceiving of his internment in negatively, Osifelo describes the incident as a time of development and change. It is difficult to understand why the young boy would like being imprisoned, yet he speaks of the event with enjoyment. One possible reason is the cultural reading Osifelo gives confinement. The opening pages of *Kanaka Boy* details the process of childbirth on the island of Malaita. Osifelo emphasizes the importance of the expectant mother's exclusion from the village, where she must grow her own food which she cannot share; her nurse cannot be seen travelling to her, and there are stages of purification rituals before the mother is allowed back into the village. Any transgression results in losing the spirits' protection. Once the confinement is finished, the mother is purified by gift-giving and must reward her attendant by providing small presents and a feast for her.

Though Osifelo writes of these practices as tribal in origin, the dialogues of confinement and gift-giving continually recur in the text. Osifelo says of his internment at the Police Barracks, "[f]or about three weeks I slept in the police barracks and ate with them (13). Like the expectant mother, who must sleep and eat away from everybody else, Fred's exclusion is a cultural practice. After Fred is released the District Commissioner gives him a present, much like the exchange of gifts when the mother returns which he recounts in
detail: “My parcel contained one football, one leather belt, one shirt, two shorts, one pocket knife, and one singlet” (12). The ritual of childbirth and Fred's internment are not necessarily similar, it is the way in which they are compared that connects the two events. The structure implies that Fred's term in the police compound is a culturally constructed rite of passage, relating to a birth.

Osifelo uses gift-giving and imprisonment to form a narrative in his life. Gifts are used to rationalise actions: his education is prefaced by the gift of a school uniform from his father; his religious beliefs are determined by the gifts he receives from prayer: he asks for the rain to stop so he can watch a movie (37), for six medals at the Pacific Games (50), and he asks God for a large fish: "O God forgive me a sinful Child . . . without you I get nothing. . . . I Humbly ask you to give me that largest fish down there" (31). And the rationale is perfect: "Mark 11:24 'When you pray and ask for something, believe you have received it, and you will be given whatever you asked for',' and "James 1:5 'God gives generously and graciously to all'" (35). Religion is mistranslated, like English, in Osifelo's consumerist applications of Christianity to substitute a new economy, and a renegotiated narrative, in Christianity. Fred's religion becomes syncretic, mixing practices of Islander and colonial culture in a discourse that can translate practices to space.

Zoleveke's recurring criticism of colonial law in his autobiography, similarly is an in-between discourse that translates colonial rules to indigenous expression. For Zoleveke, his Christian name of Gideon is something that he is "very proud" of (1). The name is from the Biblical Hebrew judge who lead the Hebrews to victory over the invading Midianites, and must be seen as an allegory of colonialism. Zoleveke positions himself, like the Biblical Gideon, in opposition to foreign invasion: his father repels Paruku, a warrior from an
invading tribe; Gideon helps repel the Japanese, then the colonial administration, and finally, as Health Officer, repels diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria.

This belief is first introduced in the autobiography by a visit by some Solomon Islanders who investigate two deaths. This makes "a profound impression on [Zoleveke]" (6) because it introduces the legal narrative. "As a result of his inquiries," Zoleveke writes, "a man was later convicted of murder. Seeing the Pastors and Dr Bogese brought home to me very forcibly the advantages of having a higher education" (6). As the drawing of the ship brings education to Osifelo, the desire for justice brings it to Zoleveke. The relationship is, however, very ambiguous. Like the drawing, it means entering the realm of colonial space to use its surface as a record, even though it does allow expression within this area. For Zoleveke, the law negotiates the restrictive colonial space with indigenous expression. When a girl claims to be Zoleveke's fiance he resorts to "a civil action for defamation of character in the Auki Magistrates court" (49) to clear his name. Hence, in a private disagreement independent of the colonial authority, Zoleveke allows the law to enter and arbitrate his position for him. Even though Zoleveke uses the colonial law for his own benefit, he later criticises it when his houseboy, along with another young Islander, is hanged for murder in the last execution to be carried out in the Solomon Islands. We then learn that a local pupil had been murdered by an expatriate teacher and Zoleveke comments that he was only "sent back to an asylum in England" (54). Zoleveke's ambiguous use of the legal discourse is much like Chatterjee's construction of indigenous nationality; though indigenous nationalism is present, it is subservient to dominant western models. Zoleveke's use of the law, then, is a positional struggle, one that attacks the colonial institution on many fronts, and works to reconceptualise
the space of the conflict. Law expands the frame of Zoleveke's lifestory so that
the personal events detail national institutional changes. Life and nation
follow a similar path.

The parallel between a person and a nation is made possible through
narratives that heal their histories. A comparative fictional example is Salman
Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* which allegorises India's history into the life of
the individual. Just as Rushdie writes of Saleem Sinai, born at the exact time of
the birth of the Indian nation, his life allegorically following that of India,
Zoleveke and Osifelo are born upon termination of tribal warfare, as if their
births seemed to heal the tribal unrest, and their life is an allegory of the
emergence of the nation. Why would these writers model their life history off
their nation's history? Both autobiographies trace a rather classic history of the
Pacific since colonisation so that the autobiography becomes allegorical of
narrative origins. Having origins in local tribes, both situate their first
memories in village activities, such as Zoleveke's statement, "my earliest
memories are of working with [my father] in the gardens, fishing the reefs and
travelling by canoe to the beautiful islands of the Manning Strait" (1). The first
contact with white people, their strangeness and power, is a turning point.
Zoleveke recounts white men fighting, and Osifelo tells of the District Officer
on "the back of a huge animal with four long legs" (5). The writers then
describe the influence of missionaries before colonial administration became
overtly present, followed by education occurring alongside lessons of
discipline from colonial officers which demonstrate the power, and newness,
of the law. Next, the authors work their way through the colonial bureaucracy
before reaching strong official positions. While this is occurring political
parties and independence movements are being organised. As an allegory of
colonial history in the Pacific, the autobiographies constantly revert to national
and cultural beliefs on an individual and personal level. At all points the personality is told within a backdrop of national concerns. However, there is no lack, as Jameson may consider, in the distinction between public and private. Private moments are not excluded from either text: Zoleveke often quietly refers to his fascination with 'the other sex' and Osifelo admits his drinking problems (to the point where he could not read the Bible any more).

The reason personal and national history are conflated is that they both find a definition within the space of colonialism. The movement from village to national life is not a narrative of development or evolution, but a forced change due to the colonial administration. Education, economy and bureaucracy increase the number of connections between the village and other areas, till this extended relationship cannot be ignored. The impetus for the expanded narrative of individuality is colonialism which unwittingly unites its opposition in its otherness. Lini's first group, the West Pacific Student's Association, is made up of people from various Pacific Islands who were brought together "and put in touch with one another so that we would not feel lost in [New Zealand] cities" (15). They are united in their distance from New Zealand city life. The colonial administration expands this space, for school takes Zoleveke away from his village, and the colonial service makes Osifelo leave his town to work in the city of Honiara. Subjection to colonialism brings together authorities of various knowledges not recognised by the colonial powers. It is a mistake to consider, as many critics do, that this is a unified opposition to colonialism, a voice of the colonised others, for it is the space of the voices of 'the people' that remain heterogenous in the space of colonised enunciation.

The story of the nation, as Bhabha would consider it, is written more as a ghostly repetition of the voice of 'the people.' National history is a narrative
replayed in the lives of the population, but only as a fragment of the metaphor. Strictly, the stories are not allegories, but repetitions which are the knowledges that Bhabha considers are "adjacent and adjunct" ("Dissemi" 313), always supplementing but never whole and complete. The heterogeneity of the voice of 'the people' assures a difference from the singular western history, and formulates them into the problematic of the nation.

Walter Lini's autobiography is, in many ways, the logical conclusion to my argument. Though the book is considered an autobiography (it is stated in numerous parts of the text), very little of the text deals with Lini's life story (only fourteen of the sixty-three pages). The remainder comprises of articles written about the islands' history, the political system, the influence of the church, as well as policy statements, addresses, background notes, and reports given by various people. There is no singular author here. Though Lini is on the title page, there are at least another eight who have contributed, and this does not include the group of 'the editors' who write various pieces on the historical and political background, and Lini's sister, Hilda Lini, who assembled the text for production. Like the communal authorship present in Sally Morgan's My Place, which assembles different voices to speak a history, Lini's text goes further in bringing a variety of discourses, so life stories are juxtaposed with political accounts, historical accounts, and so on. Here, the life story repeats the national history. Anthony Haas writes in the introduction "His [Lini's] story traces the key political, social and economic, and international elements in a classic independence struggle" (5). The line between self and nation becomes indistinct as each chapter of personal reflection is contextualized by an essay which outlines the historical determinants, forcing each stage of life to be read as an effect of historical forces and not personal reflection and development.
The life story which, though only accurate for one person, works both as a repetition of the unification of the nation and a proliferation of the voice of 'the people.' While there may be obvious discrepancies between Gusdorf's perception of autobiography and Lini's text, these points of divergence enact the renegotiation of individuality in a post-colonial scene and a possibility for the voice of 'the people' not being anchored to a space that is dictated by western conventions. The space of the autobiography is never devoid of western limitations and conventions. At its best, it is only an articulation from a hybrid point of view. However, the hybrid voice provides alternatives to the limitations introduced by the colonial apparatus, limitations of education, discipline, and language, and replaces naturalised truths with the fragmented voice displacing any cultural authority.
Conclusion

James Clifford's critical legacy lies in his understanding of the assumptions all readers and viewers carry into the field of cultural translation. In his chapter, "On Ethnographic Authority," in The Predicament of Culture, he writes of the anthropologist, Renato Rosaldo who visited the Philippine highlands to write on social structure. "Again and again," Clifford says, "he was forced to listen to endless Ilongot narratives of local history. Dutifully and dumbly, in a bored kind of trance he transcribes these stories" (45). Only later did Rosaldo realise the stories' worth as a field of study. Appropriately, Clifford asks, who is the author? Rosaldo did not consciously search out these meanings, and the Ilongot certainly were not analysing their culture within western anthropology. The situation is not unique, for any transcription of narrative carries with it some trace of the original author and original intention, but transformed in the passage through different tongues and different pens. There is always something possibly monstrous, and something quite revealing when attempting to write both of, and for other cultures. The narratives are distributed, disturbed, mistranslated, and appropriated. They never reach the destination point in the same condition they left, and it is perhaps the willingness to be transformed that swings cultural studies from heavily policed western narratives to the fragmented, changing, and hybrid discourse of other cultures.

Rather than producing essences and truths about the generally accepted models of 'life' in western society, the possibilities of extrapolating the concept
of life becomes a knowledge to be understood. Autobiography can no longer contain the rigid structure of life-story and must encompass other histories and beliefs. To do this, rather than concentrating specifically on one space of knowledge, historical and ideological formations must be understood. The forces that bring autobiography into being are individually unique, yet they are part of cultural forces which provide cohesion between the different texts. Autobiography in the Pacific has many histories - colonial, western, tribal, and post-colonial/decolonized - each forming a distinguishing mark on the final product. There will always be a subjectivity, but one that is within the matrix of forces which creates an area of knowledge. To elaborate on the way Pacific Islanders say who they are may smother some of their views with academic viewpoints. However, critics will dutifully and dumbly pass on and disseminate the narratives they hear and read, and provide the audience the narratives desire. The only position to take is part medium, part translator, in awareness that any understanding will vacillate between these two poles.


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