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Discursive production of the pacific in Australian colonial discourse

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The Discursive Production of the Pacific In Australian Colonial Discourse

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the
degree

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Wollongong

by

Michael Hayes, B.A. Hons, M.A.

School of Communication and Cultural Studies
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1997

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This thesis is all my own work and has not been submitted for a degree to any other institution or university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Hayes', with a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Hayes
23-2-97.

Abstract

The Discursive Production of the Pacific in Australian Colonial Discourse.

The thesis examines the genealogy of Australian colonialism in the Pacific by examining the production of 'the Pacific' as an object of knowledge in a variety of texts, disciplines, and practices. In arguing for an Australian colonial discourse I propose a distinct Australian formation of colonialism, informed by particular systems of knowledges, concepts, and institutions, which function in agreement with discourses of nation. The primary areas of research for this thesis are adventure narratives, tourism, and academic study. The discursive production of the Pacific is validated by the Romantic concept of 'imagination,' which positions the west as able to intervene, and represent by 'imagining,' Pacific Islander cultures and terrains. Imagination is used in discourses of Pacific history to justify the construction of Pacific Islanders past by western academic discourses. I examine the institutional network in which Pacific history and anthropology are articulated by discussing the first school of Pacific history at the Australian National University. The historical context of the stereotypes of the cannibal Pacific Islander man and sexualised woman, particularly the complicity of the university in reproducing these stereotypes, is discussed. Finally, I turn to the tourist industry to examine Australian colonialism as a discursive practice. The economies and administration of colonialism can be introduced by regulating the activities, sights, and relationships with Pacific Islanders of the Australian tourist. Importantly, I argue that Australian colonial discourse is a contemporary discourse which is currently active in areas such as tourism and academic research.

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My greatest support has come from my partner, Anna Hayes, who has been able to offer advice on everything from page layouts to historiography. Anna has always been encouraging no matter what the circumstances, and to her I owe the greatest acknowledgment.

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Introduction:

The Discursive Production of the Pacific in Australian Colonial Discourse.

In a review for a book of photographs of New Guinea, *Where Masks Still Dance: New Guinea*, Susan Cochrane writes on what, for her, are the current difficulties of praising such a project. "Since its entanglement with postmodern theory," Cochrane writes in the opening sentence, "the reviewing of photographs has become fraught, especially the critique of so-called 'ethnographic photography'."¹ Later Cochrane voices her second criticism: "Contrary to popular opinion, the 'subjects' in the photographs are usually willing participants." What has drawn my attention to this article, and prompted me to introduce this academic thesis with a book review, is Cochrane's conflation and simplification of contemporary criticisms of colonial practice in Australia to the disquieting grumbles by 'postmodernists' and 'popular opinion.' Cochrane's review seeks to reposition representations of Pacific Islanders and Papua New Guineans outside colonial discourse by initiating a new opposition between what she sees as legitimate representations and the opposing critical force which may be termed 'political correctness.' This thesis, which examines the discursive production of 'the Pacific' in Australian colonial discourse, does criticise 'ethnographic photography'; it also examines the politics of the representation of Pacific Islanders, and the agency of Pacific Islanders in this system. I realise that using the term 'the Pacific' is problematic for I am reproducing the homogenisation of Pacific Island identities, nations and cultures articulated in colonial discourse. While I

¹ Susan Cochrane, "Black and White Ambassadors," rev. of *Where Masks Still Dance: New Guinea*, by Chris Rainier, *The Australian's Review of Books* Nov. 1996, 28.

want to interrogate the procedures which make this generalisation possible, this does not absolve my position, and this thesis's argument, from the practice of exercising knowledge as a power to comprehend and contain indigenous subjects - in this specific instance, Pacific Islanders - as subordinate to western reason. The theoretical location of my position is taken from the work of Joseph Pugliese who traces the (im)possibility of a decolonising practice for western academics,² for my attempt to devalue the authority and power of Australian colonial discourse simultaneously functions within this discourse.

It is in the environment of an increasing hostility to these criticisms, put broadly under the misnomer 'political correctness,' that I wish to address the continuing legacy of colonialism in histories of the Pacific. In calling examinations of colonial legacy 'popular opinion' or 'postmodern,' Cochrane's argument attempts to make invalid criticisms of colonial discourse and the legacy of colonialism, by inferring they are based on hearsay, popular opinion, or on theoretical fads. Criticisms of 'ethnographic photography' and the anthropologist's gaze must be contextualised in a reaction across numerous disciplines, a reaction which sees criticisms of neocolonial and eurocentric practices as the "resentment" (to coin a recent phrase by the Australian playwright David Williamson) of so-called "minority groups."³ In this climate there are numerous strategies which seek to annul the continuing effects of colonialism. By praising post-colonialism as a movement away from (and perhaps a

² Joseph Pugliese, "Parasiting 'Post'-Colonialism: On the (Im)possibility of a Disappropriative Practice," *Southern Review* 28.3 (1995), 345.

³ Williamson suggests that "identity groups" have taken away the focus on inequality from the "real disadvantaged," the low income earners, and as a result the "villains of society [are let off] far too easily." David Williamson, "Truce in the Identity Wars," *The Weekend Australian*, 11-12 May 1996, 25. Williamson has also recently bought into the Margaret Mead, Derek Freeman debate, siding with Freeman's view that identity is natural and instinctive and not culturally mediated.

completion of) colonialism ignores the power of colonialism in Australian culture. As Anne McClintock suggests, without considering who benefits from colonialism, nor how post-colonialism frequently consolidates a singular, eurocentric reading practice, "Colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance."⁴ Another strategy is to validate the representation of colonised peoples through a claim that knowledge of their histories and cultures will be mutually beneficial, as if knowing is equivalent to decolonisation. Cochrane's article employs both strategies.

Cochrane's review itself is informed, and reproduces in many ways, a politics of knowledge of the Pacific which is a legacy of Australia's colonial intervention. Though colonial relations are constantly erased or ignored and a new relationship of equality is proposed in the review, clearly marked by the title, "Black and White Ambassadors," Australia's colonial legacy is inscribed in the lexical registers, the eurocentric logic, and the romantic nostalgia of this text. The ambassadorial role of the photographs, for Cochrane, is in part their function as cultural preservation (Cochrane also suggests the ambassadorial role of photography is the control it gives to the subjects of the photographs; but more on this below). Quoting the photographer, Chris Rainier, Cochrane writes that this text will "capture on film some of the last of the Stone Age cultures before they were submerged in the rising tides of

⁴ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 11. McClintock's concerns are that post-colonialism is a "singular, monolithic term, used ahistorically and haunted by the nineteenth-century image of linear progress" (13). Also see, for example, Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'," *Social Text* 31-2 (1992), 99-113. Shohat is concerned with the homogenisation of various cultures into the same periphery and the complicity of post-colonialism with neo-colonialism. Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994), 328-56. Dirlik argues that the globalisation of post-colonial criticism can be considered in the context of global capitalism. For a critique specifically addressed to Australian concerns see Pugliese, "Parasiting 'Post'-Colonialism"; Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Post-Colonial Mind* (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991).

global industrial capital.” In this logic, Papua New Guinea invites the coloniser to record its culture before all is lost, and the knowledge is preserved by the benevolent west. The Papua New Guinean culture, termed by the western scientific archaism of ‘Stone Age,’ is static, on the threshold of disappearing into the voracious and ever-moving western culture. This statement articulates a fundamental strategy of colonial discourse: the telos of history is the western capitalist society which must ‘naturally’ overtake ahistorical other cultures. The logic of this ‘capture’ must be considered in the context of what Foucault has called a discursive statement, “the elementary unit of discourse” or the “atom of discourse,”⁵ in the discourse of colonialism. Thus cultural preservation, colonial historiography, and the pervasiveness of global capital are accorded the status of knowledge, “and makes of them objects to be studied, repeated, and passed on to others.”⁶ Cochrane, in reproducing this statement, agrees with the discursive formation that enlists a series of representations, myths and assumptions to validate colonial intervention and assume western superiority. The ‘diplomacy’ inferred by the title is, then, operating in a system of knowledges inflected by colonialism.

The landmass of Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya, containing numerous cultural groups, is conflated in Rainier’s title simply to ‘New Guinea,’ as if the name of the colonial territory to the north of Papua, which through colonialism has moved from German protectorate to Australian Trust Territory to independence, can lexically signal the ‘Stone Age’ cultures he seeks. The nostalgia for an untainted past is

⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 80.

⁶ Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982), 48.

emphasised in Cochrane's praises for the Papua New Guineans' apparent proximity to nature and distance from the west: the photographs "avoid [...] the intrusion of the west" and "evoke the presence of ancestors and spirits, whether in hazy presences or the haunting tone of sacred flutes"; the photographs celebrate nature: "the brooding magnificence of the skies and swollen rivers, the unrivalled jungles." This nostalgia can be placed in a genealogy of European philosophical beliefs and colonial discourses which seeks to represent non-western cultures as inferior to western 'civilisation,' history and commerce. By reducing Papua New Guinean culture to a simplistic representation of animist beliefs, or untapped natural resources, Cochrane gives status to the ideology of colonial discourse that has continued to function powerfully within Australian culture since the nineteenth century.

This thesis seeks to describe the history and function of descriptions such as these, in particular their operation in relation to Australian colonial discourse in the Pacific. To propose an 'Australian colonial discourse' demands some explanation. I am suggesting, in a rigorous Foucauldian sense, a discursive formation which defines a regularity, an order, and a dispersion of statements on Australian colonialism. Australian colonialism is not synonymous with the history of Australian rule in the Pacific,⁷ and is similarly not signifying the period of 1788-1901 commonly termed period of colonial Australia. Nor is Australian colonial discourse merely a 'minor' discourse or offshoot of a grander, seemingly more complete English colonialism;⁸

⁷ I borrow this point from Sara Suleri's discussion of the concept of English India being distinct from English rule. Her project, obviously, is different from mine. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992), 2-3.

⁸ Ron Blabler argues for this minor, or dependent role of Australia's orientalism in comparison to Britain. The Australian writer's "gaze," according to Blabler, "is constructed by and within the European gaze but is of lesser authority." Ron Blabler, "Australian Travel Writing about Asia in the 20s and 30s," *Westerly* 38.4 (1993), 46.

finally, Australian colonial discourse is not a unique discourse independent from Europe and America colonial discourses but intersects and cooperates with them. I take colonialism to mean the knowledges, practices, administrative processes, and legalities, which are used to dominate colonised subjects. Related, but distinct from imperialism, colonialism is more directly concerned with the intervention into colonial territory, and with managing a population (both the colonised and coloniser) through colonial practices, incorporating everything from the rhetoric, clothes, politics of observation, to labour administration. It is through these practices that the Pacific is produced in Australian colonial discourse, a production which structures and orients the representations of the Pacific to enable its appropriation and comprehension. These various practices of colonialism are regulated by a discursive formation which manages this domination. The use of the term 'manage' I take from Suvendrini Perera's *Reaches of Empire* in which she considers how novels from the English canon apparently unrelated to colonialism 'managed' colonial relationships through political and sexual configurations. Perera's point that "certain fictional practices - the ordering of empire in fiction - prepare for, or make possible a climate for receiving or accommodating empire" must be taken seriously.⁹ I concentrate my investigation on the period of approximately 1880-1920, for this time sees the most concerted political effort by white Australia to colonise Pacific territory. However, I do not attempt to periodise Australian colonialism, for colonialism cannot be relegated to the appropriation of material possessions and can involve contestations of representation, knowledge, and identity that still functions powerfully in contemporary Australian

⁹ Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire: The English Novel from Edgeworth to Dickens* (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), 7.

culture. Colonialism, thus, has not terminated but rather is ongoing, with contemporary effects in texts and practices. To emphasise McClintock's point, suggesting that colonialism has passed may be an insidious return of colonialism itself.

In suggesting an Australian colonial discourse I propose a distinct Australian formation of colonialism, informed by particular systems of knowledges, concepts and institutions, which function in agreement with discourses of nation; yet this is a discourse which simultaneously emerges from and validates the colonialisms of other western nations.

Through a close scrutiny of the discursive production of the Pacific in Australian colonial texts the aim I have for this thesis is to map Australian colonialism as a discursive practice. Australian colonialism operates in space and time on bodies with social consequences and is not just a mimicry or transference of British colonialism. By suggesting a materiality of practice I do not wish to imply a true, real, or positivist qualification of the examination, as if colonialism becomes apparent through 'hard evidence.' Rather I wish to connect the representational politics of colonialism to its corporeal, economic, and cultural consequences. To rebuke Cochrane, the critique of colonialism cannot be reduced to 'popular opinion' nor points of contest in contemporary theory, but must instead be situated in the burden of colonialism's commerce and the violence of its inscriptions. As I will detail, Australian colonialism is repeatedly ignored or depoliticised, particularly in current orthodox concepts of post-colonialism, in order to situate white Australia itself as a colonised nation or to occlude from Australian history the records of economic, cultural and military interventions in Pacific Island territories and cultures. Colonialism, quite obviously, is not a monolithic system but has, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes of relations of

power in terms of gender and 'race,' "multiple, fluid structures of domination ... while at the same time [a] dynamic, oppositional agency of individuals and collectives."¹⁰ In paying particular attention to the multiple and fluid structure of colonial discourse, I wish to examine its operation predominantly in areas outside government administration and official foreign policy. I will not ignore the historical events of Australian administration in the Pacific, but rather focus on the genres of literature, tourist ventures, and academic studies which disseminate Australian colonialism.

There are at least two reasons for this choice of research area. Firstly, detailed histories of Australian colonialism in the Pacific, with close attention to government policies, foreign relations, and juridical administration have already been published.¹¹ While this thesis is informed by the work of these histories, and frequently comments on the arguments and findings of them, I wish not to replicate this research. Second, in determining how the stereotypes of the Pacific have and continue to circulate in Australian culture today, I see that an examination of Australian colonialism must address institutions and genres which often problematically disassociate themselves from colonialism. The active disassociation of institutions, texts, and discourses from

¹⁰ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, eds. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991), 13.

¹¹ The primary texts in this area are Roger C. Thompson, *Australian Imperialism in the Pacific: The Expansionist Era, 1820-1920* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1980); Neville Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901-14* (Sydney: Sydney UP, 1976). There is much study on the Australian colonial administration of Papua New Guinea. See, for instance, J.D. Legge, *Australian Colonial Policy: A Survey of Native Administration and European Development in Papua* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1956); L.P. Mair, *Australia in New Guinea* (London: Christophers, 1948); Lewis Lett, *The Papuan Achievement* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1942); C.D. Rowely, *The Australians in German New Guinea, 1914-1921* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1958). Lett writes in his preface that "in the administration policy of Papua idealism and logic have stood always side by side, working with a unified effort towards the same objective" (viii). This statement, not so much an apology but an erasure of the violence of Australian colonialism, is typical of many histories of Australia's colonial administration.

colonialism is clearly articulated in Cochrane's review. On the one hand Cochrane, at numerous points, details how the text she reviews is not colonial: she claims photography can "avoid the intrusion of Western culture"; that photography is not simply "'The Gaze' upon 'The Other'"; that the photographed subjects are "willing participants"; and the photographer may "become accepted into the natural flow of events ... [and] become unobtrusive." Yet the conclusion situates Papua New Guineans as ethnographic subjects of an Australian study: "photographs and the personal text are supplemented with anthropological notes and references, expanding their multi-layered utility as documents of New Guinea cultures." Contradicting the 'avoidance' of western intrusion, the so-called 'preservation' of New Guinea cultures through anthropological documentation is utilised to interpret the cultures to the white Australian audience.

Like Cochrane's review which positions itself as providing agency for Papua New Guineans and thus avoiding colonialism, the main texts and institutions investigated in this thesis similarly set themselves as criticisms of colonialism, or as independent from colonialism. They are the university, the adventure narrative, and the tourism industry. These three, all with quite complex intersections of institutional power, economic forces, structures of knowledge, and generic, literary, and rhetorical conventions, demonstrate a degree of complicity with colonial discourse, yet often declare an independence from the governing of a colonised terrain. This thesis is compelled to examine a diverse and often dispersed range of institutions and texts precisely because colonialism has a globalising reach inscribing itself across a number of heterogeneous texts. What makes colonialism such a powerful discourse is the multiplicity of practices it marshals to 'manage' colonial subjectivity, and this multiplicity operates

through a range of texts, bodies, artefacts, knowledges, archives, and so on. Reducing colonialism to political and economic administration, or strategies of particular texts, can elide addressing the fundamental strength of colonialism: that it reaches across a diverse range of objects, and works on multiple levels. In mapping these relationships of power, this thesis must traverse discourses such as tourism, history, and popular fiction, and examine their rhetorical, mercantile, and political configurations. In particular, the seeming disjunctions within this multiplicity imply a discontinuity between colonialism and discourses such as tourism; disassociations such as this must be refuted because they stage colonialism as a localised practice which, only by accident, transgresses cultural bodies, as if beyond the reach of colonialism.

In Tony Bennett's examination of the 'birth' of the museum he introduces his text with a discussion of the museum's connection with fairs and circuses: "in spite of the efforts to keep them clearly separated ... the activities of fairs, museums, and exhibitions interacted with one another."¹² In this argument Bennett's concern is that the museum, an institution concerned with archiving colonial knowledge, articulates statements and implies an authorisation in order to disassociate itself from the fairground display of colonial conquest, sensationalist representations, or representations of the monstrous or mysterious. In an alternative reading, I propose that academic discourses on the Pacific circulating in Australian culture have similar interactions with adventure writing, tourism, and the popular stereotyped representations of Pacific Islanders, and that these connections underscore the authority of colonialism. While Bennett's study concentrates on the disassociation of

¹² Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995), 11.

the institution of knowledge from popular culture, I wish to argue that through discussing the genealogy of Australian colonialism, academic work remains incorporated with its populist, colonial, and often melodramatic representations of the Pacific.

By focussing on these three areas there is the potential to forget or ignore other sites through which colonialism functions. However, I do not seek for this thesis to be an encyclopaedic reading of Australian colonial discourse. The three topics are not an arbitrary selection, but are examined because they are central to popular and contemporary articulations of colonialism. The Pacific is most commonly represented in contemporary Australia in a romanticised adventure narrative, as tourist destination, or a subject of knowledge. Representations of Pacific Island cultures have been widely disseminated through tourist brochures and university-based studies; the growth of anthropology and ethnography, and the incorporation of this practice into a tourist activity, correlates almost directly with colonial intervention in the Pacific. One of the first anthropological field trips was in 1898, fourteen years after the first Pacific cruise, and was organised by Cambridge University to visit the Torres Strait islands. As I detail in chapter five on cannibalism, this field trip was to validate stereotypes of Pacific Islanders already in circulation, and then rationalise the representations as a form of academic knowledge. The popularity of anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski, with their study of sexuality, saw in the 1930s an anthropologised Pacific Islander culture brought once again to western audiences as examples of sexually liberated societies. More recently, and particularly in Australia, the university's intervention into the Pacific is broached in the discipline of Pacific history, in which the Pacific Islander's knowledge is subordinated to western

academic knowledge. The study of Pacific history in Australia, and the institutional context supporting it, details a transformation of colonial practice from political administration to pedagogical commodification. To detail this discursive practice demands an interdisciplinary approach for colonial discourse works across a variety of disciplines and informs many academic discourses. Hence this thesis employs different disciplinary theories and critical practices in order to broach the heterogeneity of disciplines and practices under examination. Colonial discourse is not confined by disciplinary boundaries and it is necessary to engage with the numerous disciplinary transgressions when Australian colonial discourse operates from literary, anthropological, tourist or historical texts.

The adventure novel is perhaps one of the more obvious and vocal proponents of colonial ideology. Regardless of the seeming disparity between the jingoistic adventure novel and the academic research project, I wish to suggest connections between the university and the narratives of adventure. Adrian Vickers asserts a direct connection between popular literature and Australia's knowledge of non-western countries, commenting the "knowledge that was available was chiefly formed and reflected in literature."¹³ Knowledge available in adventure and travel narratives is commodified and appropriated by university institutions. University practice is a nexus of popular and academic knowledge, of adventure and tourist representations alongside ethnographic studies. Adventure writers were keen for their work to be seen as factual, and university discourse has frequently relied upon adventure narratives to validate their research. Within the belligerent and nationalistic fervour of

¹³ Adrian Vickers, "Kipling Goes South: Australian Novels and South-East Asia 1895-1945," *Australian Cultural History* 9 (1990), 66.

the adventure narrative is an obedience to scientific categorisations of representing culture.

In tourist narratives, particularly at the turn of the century, the academic practice of ethnography and the sensationalism of adventure narratives are again brought together. Tourist practices such as sightseeing, souveniring, and photography merge the rhetoric of adventure with the justifications of western commerce and morality. The crucial role of tourism, and thus its importance to this thesis, is that it provides a regime for the practice of colonialism. Tourists who participated in the Pacific cruises were to engage in relationships of power managed by colonial discourse; they were to subscribe to regimes of representing Pacific Islanders as commodities, and they were to learn the commerce of colonialism, a financial knowledge which the tourist also funded. The university, adventure narrative, and tourist industry, importantly, are located in Australian institutions and categorise Pacific terrain as Australia's colonial possession. Through these areas the stereotypes of the Pacific are formulated and distributed in Australia as a knowledge of the Pacific.¹⁴

This is a central issue to my investigation of Australian colonialism: the use of knowledge, particularly as a pedagogic practice, in the discourse of colonialism. Specifically, I wish to disarticulate the privileging of knowledge as it operates in academic institutions in Australia's colonial history. I consider how the concept of

¹⁴ A related institutional site which I do not examine independently is the Christian mission. Missionary forces play a significant role in the reorganisation of Pacific culture and I examine in a variety of ways the role of missionary work in Australian colonialism. Missionary ethnography crucially influenced Australian academic work; Australian shipping and tourism businesses relied on the commerce of missionary stations. Each major western religion, the Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and Church of England churches, had regional headquarters in Sydney that widely advertised missionary projects to Australian audiences. Christian rhetoric, dominant in colonial narratives, is frequently employed in Australian colonial discourse to justify colonial intervention by introducing 'morality.'

knowledge has been motivated as an apolitical, humanist strategy that validates study, and authorises a person's intervention into Pacific cultures. Indeed, the term 'knowledge' is highly charged: most typically seen as emerging from the Enlightenment, the pursuit, quest, or desire for knowledge is the motor for much contemporary research. Also, in the context of 'the Pacific,' knowledge has taken on a decidedly Romantic agenda. The European intervention and representation of Pacific Island cultures at the height of imperialism was often articulated through Romantic ideology - ideas of freedom and imagination, or of the value of 'untouched' cultures - demonstrable in contemporary scholarship and Cochrane's review. Thomas Richards argues that

Romanticism persists ... as the basic animating project of the imperial archive, namely the organisation of all knowledges in a coherent imperial whole.... The legacy of Romanticism was the residual conviction most Victorians shared that all knowledge, despite its modular character, should and would be united.¹⁵

By historically contextualising Romanticism with the European intervention in the Pacific I examine how concepts articulated by thinkers such as Coleridge rationalised colonial intervention and appropriate Pacific Island cultures in a project to 'unite' knowledge. In particular, imagination has remained a predominant method of validating European description of the Pacific, a method that rationalises the European discursive production of the Pacific.

Obviously this thesis, as a demonstration of a 'contribution to knowledge,' necessarily details a complicity with precisely the colonialism of knowledge I criticise. This possibly untenable position calls for a strict positioning of myself and this study; I

¹⁵ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), 7.

must necessarily signal my position as complicit in a system valorising knowledge and making the possession of such knowledge a marketable resource - for any male, non-Pacific Islander speaking from the relative privilege of the Australian academy can occlude the history of others, and can mobilise indigenous histories as commodities within a white academic economy. Yet, to turn away from these issues, to subscribe to a complicity of silence around colonisation in the Pacific, is to ignore the force of racist representations, the inequalities in education and welfare facing many Pacific Islanders, and the histories that need to be spoken.¹⁶ Also, to infer I speak from an oppositional viewpoint and hence occupy a marginalised position does not acknowledge the privileges which have allowed me to produce this work (such as mobility, resources and institutional recognition). The thesis is already marked by this privilege. As Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese write in their brief essay "Subject Positions," from which I have taken many of the above points,

subject positions - despite the facile gestures made by some, which celebrate absolute disassociations of body and text, of author(s) and corpus - leave their traces in all texts. These traces remain precisely because a text is always a situated language event structured by a complex field of discursive and extra-discursive forces.¹⁷

A crucial point articulated here, which is relevant to my position and this thesis, is the erasure of corporeality from academic work in an effort to suggest a transcendent, unbiased, universal viewpoint and knowledge of the subject of study. In chapter three on Pacific historiography I detail the contradictions involved in this claim, particularly

¹⁶ Further, if Australian universities are to support an academic infrastructure for Pacific Islanders wanting tertiary education, which is part of the foreign aid commitment, it is crucial for these institutions to address their history of colonialism.

¹⁷ Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese, "Subject Positions," *Arena Magazine* 12 (1994), 38.

where a transhistorical 'experience' or 'imagination' is coupled with the practice of field trips.

A recent statement by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in a paper on pedagogy succinctly details some crucial political imperatives on academic positionality: "To claim agency in the emerging dominant is to recognise agency in others, not simply to comprehend otherness."¹⁸ While my position is distinct from Third-World academics, who are the focus of Spivak's article, her point on addressing agency, not knowledge, is significant. The task of my thesis is not the specious quest to 'know' how Pacific Islanders felt or thought under colonialism, but to describe both the function of colonial discourse in Australia and the points of its contestation. And my description, constructed by the generic concerns of the academic thesis, and determined by academic knowledges and discourses, is limited, specific and partial. The quest for knowledge, such a general Humanist claim of most academic work, does not justify the circulation and speaking on representations of Pacific Islanders. To criticise the representations of Pacific Island stereotypes necessitates locating my specific commercial, corporeal, and academic position in response to the cultural and colonial context, and the agency of Pacific Islanders whose lives are marked by these stereotypes. Colonial discourse in Australia is thus not exclusive from the series of knowledges I participate in and must ceaselessly be considered relational to the thesis itself.

¹⁸ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Teaching for the Times," *The Decolonization of Imagination: Culture Knowledge and Power*, eds. Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh (London: Zed Books, 1995), 182.

In order to consider these problems I draw upon the work of Rey Chow who examines these issues in her text *Writing Diaspora*.¹⁹ Chow questions the scholarly tradition of studying East Asia with particular reference to the discursive politics situating women in Chinese studies, and maps the inequalities between the Chinese intellectual in China and the Chinese intellectual in America:

As we continue to use Chinese women's writings and lives as the 'raw material' for our research in the West, then the relationship between us as intellectuals overseas and them 'at home' will increasingly take on a the coloration of a kind of 'master discourse/native informant' relationship. (109)

Of particular interest is the danger Chow signals in the constructed division of 'us' and 'them' to form two disassociated groups, a group of 'intellectuals,' and the other group of 'Chinese women,' or not intellectual, caught in a relationship of power within an academic context. What marks this distinction is the formation of 'raw material' by which texts and 'lives' are commodified in an economy of academic knowledge. Chow is aware of this tension and answers it by an ethical call to "use this privilege as truthfully and tactically as they can" (114).²⁰ Chow does emphasise the economy of this relationship in her introduction:

What academic intellectuals must confront is thus *not* their "victimization" by society at large (or their victimization-in-solidarity-with-the-oppressed), but the power, wealth and privilege that ironically accumulate from their "oppositional" viewpoint, and the widening gap between the professed contents of their words and the upward mobility they gain from such words. (17)

The formation of non-western cultures as 'raw material' for study opens up an economy of knowledge articulated through the university, an economy which simultaneously produces a space of 'otherness' in which the bodies, texts, and

¹⁹ Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993).

²⁰ With her use of 'they,' Chow does not position herself in the category of "the Chinese intellectual living in the liberal west" (115).

knowledges of non-westerners are categorised; crucially, an economy made possible by the non-western other. There are two central concerns. First, a study which commodifies non-western cultures is a 'profit' to western institutions: the lives and practices of non-western others, such as Pacific Islanders in relation to my position, not only produce jobs in universities, but the wealth of museums and libraries. Second, the practice of studying itself can suppose a hierarchy of knowledge. The performance of studying or research is legitimated in colonial discourse because it contributes to this field of knowledge and hence is thus inherently decolonising, or the person studying in some way will access the 'real' or 'true' history which non-westerners never knew and thus may liberate the non-western other from their misconceptions. The Humanist and Romantic concepts of knowledge are largely uncriticised because undercutting this power assaults the very core of the university's privilege.

The politics of my position must also be described in terms of an ethics of the study; why should other cultures become the 'objects' of a study from a western institution? What are the politics of applying a study to another culture? Do academics have the right to describe or represent other cultures? How can an ethical response to colonialism be articulated? These questions urge an ethical response to the use of Pacific Islanders as objects of knowledge, an ethics recognising agency and alterity outside the First-World academy. The production of Pacific Islanders as the 'raw material' of western research suggests knowledge is confined to an academic economy; however, I wish to emphasise that practices of study must fail to apprehend at some point, the objects they commodify and the economies they produce. A failure to apprehend - apprehend meaning both to arrest and to perceive - results from Pacific

Islander resistance to colonial appropriation, and the contestation between Pacific Islander knowledges and western academic knowledges. What colonial knowledge cannot apprehend confronts colonial rule as a juridical failure to police, or for the law to codify, Pacific Islander knowledge. Also, constantly concessions are made by the colonisers that they fail to perceive all of the colonised culture: the anthropologist is always seeking to witness so-called secret ceremonies never before observed by the west, or the tourist searches for 'authentic' Pacific Islander culture. That Pacific Islander cultures cannot be apprehended and that knowledges circulate independent of western reason provides an ethical recognition of Pacific Islander alterity.

There are numerous terms and concepts I use which need specific definition in relation to the parameters of this study. Here I address these definitions before briefly outlining the theoretical context of the thesis by discussing Foucault's concept of genealogical history, particularly in relationship to studies of colonial discourse theory and post-colonialism.

I necessarily must contextualise what I consider the parameters of 'the Pacific' for this is a term defining both spatial and cultural categories determined by colonialism. A key problematic in many studies of colonial intervention is the complicity of the subject of study to colonial categories. Geographical areas and cultural classifications such as 'the Pacific' and 'Pacific Islanders' are emergent from colonial demarcations, and hence inscribe colonial signification in homogenising disparate cultures as a singular concept and region. My definition of 'the Pacific' will necessarily produce an arbitrary area defined by the colonial invasion of the west. What I term the Pacific Islands in this thesis are the Micronesian, Polynesian and Melanesian island groups,

including Papua New Guinea, but excluding Aotearoa/New Zealand.²¹ I predominantly discuss the islands which have colonial relations with Australia. Hence the area of interest is determined more by my particular concern with the sphere of Australian colonialism as a produced and demarcated space in Australian legal, military, and economic discourses.

Nomenclature is not innocent of colonial history but marked by the economic and ideological desires of colonising nations. The Pacific in this thesis is both a colonial generalisation, and a strategic collective signalling political independence from Australian and other western, colonising nations. The name 'Pacific' is used in numerous western texts from European explorers in the eighteenth century to colonial officials in the twentieth century. In his study of nomenclature O.H.K. Spate details the use of the term Pacific; supposedly first used by Magellan in 1518, the 'Pacific' was replaced by the term 'South Sea'²² (or Mar del Sur, Mer du Sud, Zuid Zee in the respective languages of Spanish, French, and Dutch) during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Spate does not locate exactly the area signified by the Pacific, but argues that the predominantly Spanish patterns of trade and the southern entry points lead to the preferred use of 'South Sea.' However, the so-called "geographical discovery" of the northern Pacific by Cook (210) and the trade focus on American Whalers and Chinese goods were to limit the use of 'South Sea' in preference to 'the

²¹ I exclude Aotearoa/New Zealand for two reasons: firstly, Australia's attempts at colonising Aotearoa/New Zealand were over by 1850, and this is before the time period which I am most interested in; secondly, Aotearoa/New Zealand has its own history of colonialism in the Pacific which should not be conflated with Australia's. For a detailed study of Aotearoa/New Zealand colonialism see Angus Ross, *New Zealand Aspirations in the Pacific in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1964).

²² O.H.K. Spate, "'South Sea' to 'Pacific Ocean': A Note on Nomenclature," *Journal of Pacific History* 12 (1978), 205-11. The 'South Sea,' it is imperative to note, is distinct from the later, romanticised name of 'the South Seas' common in tourism advertising.

Pacific;' the term regaining popularity mainly among Europeans and Americans.

Indeed, the ocean was supposedly named 'Pacific' because of its smooth and peaceful nature - an impossible forecast for Magellan who gave this name to the world's largest ocean before even entering it. Further, being pacific, or to pacify, are terms of the imperial lexicon signifying the weakness of the non-western other, suggesting the inevitability of colonial intervention.

I call the indigenous peoples of these islands 'Pacific Islanders.' Again, this term is fraught, for within 'Pacific Islanders' are numerous culturally distinct groups who respond to and contest colonialism differently, such as Papua New Guineans, Solomon Islanders, and Fijians. Vilsoni Hereniko notes the fluidity of Pacific Islanders' identity: "Outside one's island of birth, identity becomes variable and more susceptible to manipulation" and is "situationally variable."²³ A concession must be noted that peoples of the Pacific Islands, as Hereniko states, do not often call themselves 'Pacific Islanders,' and only do so in relation to whites. Where it is necessary, I specify the national or cultural identity of Pacific Islanders, but I also use the generalised term, when strategic, to signify the peoples who are represented in or administered by Australian colonialism. Additionally I wish to avoid the homogenisation of Pacific Islanders into a category of 'other,' or simply indigenes, which silently collapses all non-western others into a single, and thus easily articulated, group. Because colonial histories attempt to represent Pacific Islanders as static and passive, it is important to emphasise the mobility of various Pacific Island

²³ Vilsoni Hereniko, "Representations of Cultural Identities," *Tides of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Kerry Howe, Robert C. Kiste, and Brij Lal (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1994), 419. Hereniko takes the term 'situationally variable' from Alan Howard, "Cultural Paradigms, History, and the Search for Identity in Oceania," *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, eds. Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1990).

groups around the Pacific. Trade routes, Pacific Islander explorers who predate European voyages by centuries, forced migrations, various mobile vocations for sailors, labourers, and missionaries, and Pacific Islander's desire to travel has produced dynamic Pacific cultures. While the association of indigeneity with 'home' or 'native' terrain can be misleading in context to this movement, it necessarily enforces the strategic positioning of Pacific Islanders as the rightful owners of their terrain, a concept frequently queried by colonial discourse's naming of Pacific Islanders as immigrants on their own land.²⁴ Finally, I discuss the representation of Pacific Islander in Australian colonial discourse in terms of 'race.' As Henry Louis Gates jnr. describes the term, "Race is the ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application.... Yet we carelessly use language in such a way as to *will* this sense of *natural* difference into our formulations."²⁵ Race is problematic precisely because it makes racism conceptually possible, but as colonial discourse fundamentally operates around this term its interrogation is crucial. I avoid using Melanesian, Polynesian, and Micronesain, to describe Pacific Islanders, but rather use these terms geographically to locate specific island groups. As I point out in chapter five, these terms are organised by theories of race.

When I write of 'Australia,' in reference to an 'Australian colonial discourse,' I speak predominantly of white Australia, the society from which the colonial practices and representations are issued. The colonisation of the Pacific has a correlating function of proposing a unified Australian nation pursuing imperial agendas. The

²⁴ The ownership can work to contest colonial appropriation; yet also, in Fiji, indigenous Fijians can disallow Indo-Fijians from land ownership.

²⁵ Henry Louis Gates jnr, "Writing 'Race' and the Difference it Makes," *"Race," Writing and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates jnr. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985), 5.

unification is ordered in terms of an hegemony - for which I mean, to quote Raymond William's reading of Gramsci, "a whole body of practices and expectations, ... our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world"²⁶ that relate to and issue directly from the dominant white class in Australia. The representation of such a unified nation functions to organise discourses and produce authorities that manage the heterogenous Pacific which borders Australia. Hence I am denoting the concept 'Australia' only to the extent that it operates in a master narrative, articulated by an hegemony, and used to privilege particular histories, social groups, and cultural practices. Australia, as I will outline, is determined through racial and gendered categories, and is a term which needs to be under constant interrogation.

While much of the colonial practice I detail here is similar to the invasion of Aboriginal territories in Australia and the warfare against Aboriginal groups, I want to signal a few differences so as to emphasis that my research does not consider Aboriginal history as irrelevant to colonialism in the Pacific nor does it conflate the two colonialisms. The histories of Aborigines and Pacific Islanders cannot simply be homogenised into a rubric of 'colonised peoples' and must be recognised for their distinct agency in contesting colonialism. The stereotypes of cannibalism, sexually promiscuous women, and servility operate under different discursive contexts for Aborigines and Pacific Islanders. However, the practices and discourses operated by the colonial powers against Aboriginal populations quite obviously are colonial, in that the appropriation of land, control of the culture, and representational elision of resistance were strategies of the Australian colonial discourse. The invasion and

²⁶ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977), 110.

subsequent brutal treatment of Aborigines is a colonisation which must underscore Australian history. The justification of colonialism in the Pacific has similarities to the colonialism of Aboriginal peoples - the use of racism, concepts such as the 'natural right' to intervene, and the supposed superiority of British culture similarly functions in both areas. Though operating under many similarities, there are distinctions marked by the role of national boundaries and foreign relations between Australian and Pacific colonialism. The Australian nation is constructed in Pacific colonialism by an international context where concerns of the proximity of other nations and cultures (both western and Pacific), and Australia's 'natural right' to colonise neighbouring countries, were to inform issues of hegemonic identities, political rhetoric, and cultural representations. The agitation for control of various Pacific Islands involved relationships with European countries competing for control in the area and the justification of Australian administration on the grounds of 'defence.' Australian colonial discourse in the context of the Pacific is a related formation that is distinct from the colonisation of Aboriginal nations.

Because this thesis explores the discipline of history, and is a criticism of some aspects of contemporary Pacific historiography, I need to define both my interpretation of 'Pacific History,' and my theoretical context to these histories. There are many interrogative, critical studies of historiography in the Pacific, and a number of well publicised debates on the validity and the economics of institutional research, which suggests Pacific History has not been left in the clutches of traditional and colonialist academic study. I aim to discuss how certain practices of Pacific History, which are often named 'truths' or 'common sense,' have reproduced relationships which can

best be described as colonial. What I signal as 'Pacific History' (which I capitalise to signify the propriety it has gained), I term the institutionally validated, pedagogically reproduced system of narratives, texts, events, and dates. In a sense it is the history taught and discussed in Australian pedagogy. Undoubtedly this discourse has been contested, and it is not a monolithic, orderly system. However, across this field runs a number of statements and beliefs on the function of history, and on the purpose and directive of the study, which give it a coherence as a systematised field of knowledge. So, in this sense, I employ the term Pacific History to classify that area of study which, operating from western academic institutions and archives, is concerned with classifying, writing, and speaking for the past of Pacific cultures through positioning Pacific Island cultures as dependent upon, and dominated by European knowledges. Importantly, Pacific History is not the unique historical discourse of the Pacific, but one of many. Hence, I do not wish to negate indigenous agency in Pacific History, nor negate alternative Pacific histories, but rather imply an unequal access to institutions and archives and a discriminatory evaluation of discourses, realities, and languages which favour history written by western nations.

As a significant portion of this thesis is a response and critique of Pacific History, Australian History, and theories of colonialism through addressing discursive production, I employ numerous concepts and insights from Michel Foucault's work on power, history, and knowledge. I follow a rather orthodox Foucauldian definition of the discursive formation:

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts, or

thematic choices, one can define a regularity ... we will say ... that we are dealing with a discursive formation.²⁷

Foucault's concept of discursive formation is useful because it proposes a system whereby the rhetoric, categorisations, institutions, theories of colonialism and Pacific History may be conceived as a related set of rules actively reproducing and dispersing particular ways of writing, thinking about and representing the past in the Pacific. The Pacific as an object of knowledge is thus discursively produced from this matrix. By positing a discursive formation which produces the Pacific, I am suggesting that within colonialism there are regularities of representation and systems of dispersal which ensure the Pacific is discussed, written, and conceived in a mode which rationalises colonial intervention.

Some criticisms and limitations of this methodology of discursive formation, particularly as it is situated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, need to be signalled. Rabinow and Dreyfus have located in their analysis of structuralism's relationship to Foucault's early work the problematic objectivity of the rules of discourse; presuming a "phenomological detachment" of the observer neglects the effects of social practices on the study itself.²⁸ The systematic process of discursive analysis cannot be taken as a general theory, for the analysis cannot be bracketed as a simple description of events without an underlying explanation or theoretical prescription. The discursive formation I map cannot be unproblematically situated into other fields of the human sciences or regional histories, as if it is a foolproof model. Similarly, the discursive

²⁷ Foucault, *Archaeology* 38

²⁸ Dreyfus and Rabinow 100. For this viewpoint see particularly "The Methodological Failure of Archaeology," 79-103. Also see Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), particularly chapter 7, "Reason and Philosophy," in which Gutting elaborates on Dreyfus and Rabinow's argument.

formation I outline is specific to the context of Pacific History in which I write, and the conventions of the academic thesis to which I comply.

The history I undertake may be considered a genealogy, for it critically and theoretically reconsiders the construction of the Pacific as an object of knowledge in historical, cultural, political, and colonial discourses. In a lecture Foucault defined genealogy thus:

Let us give the term *genealogy* to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of the struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today.²⁹

Foucault qualified erudite knowledges as those ideas which were buried and ignored - "present but disguised" in knowledge, and local memories as "disqualified ... popular knowledges" (82), the research of which leads to an opposition of the centralised, powerful knowledges: "genealogy [wages its struggle] against the effects of the power of a discourse that is considered to be scientific" (84). The 'union' recognises that traditional histories are formed by these disqualified popular knowledges, which tactically disempowers traditional history's claimed positions of objectivity or elite academic discourse. The concept of genealogy is most explicitly outlined in the essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,"³⁰ in which Foucault elaborates on Friedrich Nietzsche's writings on genealogy to construct a practice which ruptures and questions the patently metaphysical suppositions of traditional history without rejecting the concept of history itself: "genealogy does not oppose itself to history ... on the contrary, it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and

²⁹ Foucault, "Two Lectures," *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-77*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon *et al* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 83.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," *Language, Counter-Memory Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, eds. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (New York: Cornell UP, 1977).

indefinite teleologies. It is opposed to the search for origins" (140). The relationship between genealogy and traditional history, as Foucault states, is crucial. Genealogy is not simply the reverse or opposite of linear, teleological histories, but neither is genealogy mutually exclusive from traditional history for its very process is one of criticism and deconstruction of these historical processes. Foucault's essay criticises some fundamental tenets of traditional history which he outlines as three Platonic modalities of history: that history is continuous, that it describes reality, and that it is a knowledge of the truth (160). The concept of the origin as a central organising point in history "makes possible," according to Foucault, "a field of knowledge whose function is to recover it" (143). The metaphysical dependence on a systematic and linear tradition organised by an origin is problematised in genealogy through introducing the agency of accidents and the "proliferation of errors" (143). History is marked, then, by discontinuities that contradict history as linear. The 'great' historical characters and events, or what Nietzsche has termed monumental history, is contextualised within the specificity of the historian and the historical discourse: "Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy" (156). With history connected to the agency of historians, to historical corporeality, the very foundations of truth and reality must at once be read as subjective.

Owing much to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*,³¹ Foucault has deployed genealogy to reconceptualise the histories, for instance, of sexuality and punishment.³²

³¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1989).

³² Foucault has also discussed other historical genealogies, but his texts *Discipline and Punishment* and the volumes of *The History of Sexuality* are probably the widest known and most detailed of his studies.

Nietzsche's text is concerned with debunking the natural superiority of the concept 'good.' He states that "the source of the concept 'good' has been sought and established in the wrong place: the judgement of good did not originate with those to whom 'goodness' was shown" (25), and develops this argument to demonstrate that 'good' is linked more particularly to the domination of slaves, or the classification by a society's nobility of foreigners as barbarians and "dark, black-haired aboriginal inhabitants" (30). 'Good', then, is no longer the transcendent, 'value-in-itself' as defined by Schopenhauer (19), but an historical construct "engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years" (52); a struggle, it is pertinent to add, defined since its inception by 'race.' A crucial point which Foucault elaborates from Nietzsche's work is the refutation of history as manipulated by individuals; as if history is a conscious and personal choice. Rather, the "[r]ules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalised; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose."³³ Hence, my critical engagement with Pacific History is not a focus on certain authors supposedly inventing and forcing this truth intentionally and self-consciously, but rather an examination of texts operating from the nexus of particular discourses and in agreement with certain truths, hierarchies, and stereotypes. What is considered 'good' or 'proper' history of the Pacific is a dynamic and contingent value.

Obviously much of this criticism is common currency in post-structuralist theory, particularly in reference to contemporary historiography. Still, there are numerous concerns of genealogy which are crucial specifically to this thesis. There is no single manifestation of Australian colonial history for which a particular discourse has a

³³ Foucault, "Nietzsche" 151.

monopoly. The traditional history of Australia in the Pacific, from Cook's 'discovery' to the administration of Papua New Guinea, can be criticised much like Nietzsche's criticism of 'good': history need not reside with those who have 'historical knowledge' for the hegemonic construction of history can also be described in terms of accidents, errors, and failures, of discontinuous and competing forces.

There is much contemporary work on colonial discourse, particularly as it relates to cultural practices. Nicholas Dirks considers the connection to be blatant: "many of us now believe that colonialism is what culture is all about."³⁴ There are some investigations of colonialism in the Pacific using Foucault's concept of discourse;³⁵ however, Roger Keesing's claim of discourse theory as reading the history of invasion in "jargons of postmodernism" makes the climate for conceptualising colonialism in these terms open to much criticism.³⁶ A recent text by Nicholas Thomas examines colonialism in the Pacific with a similar theoretical methodology to my own and has a number of similar subjects of study and critical concerns.³⁷ Thomas's text is most useful in its examination of "how former colonial discourses and the present might be related" (21), a study which examines the politics of representation in tourist photographs, missionary propaganda, and the 'new-age' appropriation of indigenous

³⁴ Nicholas B. Dirks, "Introduction: Colonialism and Culture," *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992), 11. Dirks defines culture here in an anthropological sense: a classification of a society's practices which is simultaneously a project of colonialism (5-6).

³⁵ Two examples are Michael Davis, "Colonial Discourses, Representation and the Construction of Otherness: Case Studies from Papua," *Pacific History*, Proceeding from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference (Guam: University of Guam, 1992), 49-59; Lamont Lindstrom, *Power and Knowledge in a South Pacific Society* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1990).

³⁶ Roger Keesing, "Colonial Discourse and Codes of Discrimination in the Pacific," qtd. in Davis, "Colonial Discourses" 49. Keesing did, however, investigate colonialism in Melanesia in precisely these terms: Roger M. Keesing, "Colonial and Counter-Colonial Discourse in Melanesia," *Critique of Anthropology* 14.1 (1994), 41-58.

³⁷ Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Melbourne: Melbourne UP, 1994).

knowledges. Yet, I also want to signal where our work is dissimilar, and elaborate these crucial distinctions. Thomas argues in *Colonialism's Culture* that much contemporary colonial discourse theory "take[s] 'colonial discourse' as a singular and definable entity" (49) and thus reads colonialism in "unitary and essentialist terms [as a] ... a global and transhistorical logic of denigration" (3). Thomas's reading, which tends to conflate the work of Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Aijaz Ahmed in a singular entity of 'colonial discourse theorists,' suggests certain procedures for interrogating agency in Pacific anthropology which is apparently unavailable in colonial discourse theory.³⁸ However, colonial discourse theory, and particularly the work of Spivak, does not propose a 'unitary and essentialist' project. While some aspects of Thomas's argument I am in agreement with - particularly the need to specify colonialism in cultural and historical contexts - I see that colonialism must at some levels be conceived in a matrix of international strategies. Colonial projects of Europe, America and Australia work in response to each other, and there are intersections of rhetoric, race, and economics between them which are important when mapping colonial power. Colonial discourse operates in regularity, mediated by knowledge, and this knowledge is pervasive in western societies. I do not mean that colonialism is a monolithic and unified scheme; however neither is it, as Thomas conceives, "a fractured [project], riddled with contradictions and exhausted as much by its own internal debates as by the resistance of the colonized" (51). To describe colonialism in these terms is to deny the unequal distribution of power in colonial

³⁸ For support of Thomas's text see Patrick Wolfe, rev. of *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government*, by Nicholas Thomas, *Australian Historical Studies* 105 (1995), 677-8. For a critique of Thomas's concept of agency see Lynnette Turner, "Consuming Colonialism," rev. of *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government*, by Nicholas Thomas, *Critique of Anthropology* 15.2 (1995), 203-12.

intervention, and to imply it was a weak and insipid force. The callous and unremitting subjugation of Aboriginal peoples over two centuries does not imply a 'fractured' and 'exhausted' project; colonialism is among the most powerful discursive strategies operating in western culture and its contradictions are not weaknesses in terms of its ability to effect colonised people - and here is a crucial distinction, the contradictions in colonial discourse rather are the failures of colonialism's philosophy to rationalise and justify its practice.

In chapter one I initiate this thesis by locating some of the principle organising concepts which enable Australian academic, literary, and tourist discourses to codify, classify, and finally to apprehend cultures and identities in the Pacific. I argue that the concept 'imagination,' particularly as it is used to describe and sexualise Pacific Island cultures, is mobilised in studies of the Pacific to validate the western observer's representation of history. Imagination can perform the homogenisation of Pacific Island cultures and the appropriation of their knowledges which has the strategy of preparing the identities and knowledges for consumption by Australian audiences. In chapter two I proceed to demonstrate the strategic use of the concept of imagination in justifying colonialism by looking in detail at a famous subject of Pacific History, William Henry 'Bully' Hayes. The stories of Hayes play out many of the conceptual tensions between fact and fiction, yarn and document, historical text and adventure narrative. By historically contextualising the Hayes narratives I demonstrate their importance in circulating a politics of colonialism, race, and gender. In chapter three I examine the dispersal of colonial knowledges in the discourse of Pacific History. The focus of this chapter is the Research School of Pacific History (RSPaCH), based at the Australian National University, and its historiographic practice of 'island-orientated'

history which gestures toward a decolonisation of historical practice but reinscribes western academic knowledge as 'true' history in a number of ways. 'Island-orientated' history offers imagination as a supplement to the historical narrative in a procedure to complete the archival reading. Further, the valorisation of knowledge is located on an institutional level, where western research and colonial practices are validated by a complex nexus of academic discourses, the military, the university, the archive, and popular narratives.

Chapter four addresses the role of adventure narratives in representing the Pacific, particularly in the period 1880-1920, in which I discuss the relationships between adventure narratives, literature, and history, by close attention to the writing of one of the most popular Pacific adventure writers, Louis Becke. The marked impact of adventure narratives on colonialism through their ability circulate colonial rhetoric as knowledge is frequently ignored by theorists of adventure writing; rather, a reading which suggests a more figurate relationship is often preferred. I argue adventure narratives are crucial to the practices of Australian colonialism, and I stage a criticism of the depoliticisation of adventure narratives by the adventure theorist, Martin Green. The relationships between popular and academic discourses are examined in chapters five and six, which argue that the stereotypes of Pacific Islanders as cannibals or sexualised women are the product of both popular horror narratives or eroticism and academic study. The stereotype of cannibalism displays the contradictions in colonialism's morality which represents the Pacific Islander as a 'savage' consumer of flesh while not acknowledging that colonialism's own practices of representation - especially representations of Pacific Islander women - are based on the very consumption of this sexualised flesh. By commodifying Pacific Islanders, these

stereotypes attempt to erase the alterity of Pacific Islanders and incorporate them as objects consumable by western audiences. Finally in chapter seven, by investigating the industry of tourism, I examine one of the ways in which colonial discourse is transformed into a practice that disseminates to the white Australian public knowledges and concepts of colonialism. The advent of the South Sea cruise in the 1880s enabled the tourist to practice colonial intervention by participating in performances of observation, disciplinary practice, and commercial management. This industry pursues an agenda of Pacific colonisation that was often unsuccessful through political measures. In this chapter the tourist rhetoric justifying a western mercantile economy and valorising western representational practices is examined.