

Chapter 1

Telling Pacific Lives: From Archetype to Icon

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If historians aim at presenting what can only be an approximation of the past, biographers, for their part, attempt an approximation of a life. Usually a good biographer goes beyond the life, and attempts to illustrate the age in which his or her subject lived. Authors may think their own autobiographies achieve a more exact approximation of their lives but the historian is not always convinced. Autobiography is a doubtful primary source for writing biography, usually being less reliable than letters, diaries, vital statistics and archival files. Apart from the tricks of undocumented memory, the writer of autobiography is often subject to self-delusion, polemic and, in the pejorative sense, romance. We shall later consider this in the Pacific context.

Because writing biography and autobiography is a fairly recent development in the history of the Pacific Islands we might first look at the way Islanders themselves, and no doubt the preliterate ancestors of humankind in general, first commemorated the individual life.

When I first knew the anthropologist Derek Freeman he was in the habit of explaining everything in terms of kinship.¹ At every history seminar he attended, he was never satisfied until the whole hour's historical analysis had been reduced to a formula using kinship terms. One scholar was even reduced to tears because she had not introduced kinship into her otherwise immaculate presentation. Certainly kinship provides the basic framework for identifying the individual life. In some societies, there never seems to have been a real sense of history. The basic kinship structure was so set in the ethnographic present that it simply repeated itself as the generations passed away. There were a limited number of personal names that could be used in particular preordained relationships and these names were re-used, or rather, embodied in a child born into an identical relationship.² To an outside observer such a society could appear static. The sense of self was identified with a particular role. Something of this survives in the way Pacific title-holders readily identify with their 'past incarnations', that is, the previous title-holders, and can speak in the first person of having been present at certain events in distant historical time.³ This can be

very confusing when a narrator uses the personal name of a title-holder instead of the title in what we would regard as an anachronistic context.

Closely related to the concept of the perpetuation of the ethnographic present was the circular view of time based largely on the recurring seasons, and on other cycles in nature, particularly the rising and setting of the Pleiades. The physicists Isham and Savvidou recently voiced the obvious: 'If time is represented mathematically by a circle then it is clear that no real concept of history can be developed. For if an event lies in the future of a present one, then it also lies in its past'.⁴

In those societies where the shaman regulated social and artistic ritual the whole drama of human existence was transformed into an epic cycle. Every event in the cycle such as a flood, a hurricane, a war or a famine drew on all floods, hurricanes, wars and famines, every new experience adding to the detail of the repertoire when the cycle was either performed or recited. There was no room for individuals and in so far as there were characters they were archetypes—trickster, shaman or king and warrior. In the Pacific, song cycles were as developed as in India, Greece and Finland, all regions with circular views of time, some of the longest and best known song cycles being in Polynesia.⁵

We might ask to what extent the archetypes represent real lives. What do the cycles of the great culture hero Maui tell us about real people? I have argued elsewhere that the historical Maui is more likely to have been a shaman than an actual voyager, though the composite character undoubtedly draws on stories of the ancestral voyagers.⁶ I have also suggested that Maui represents the more common shaman, the trickster noted for shape-changing and cunning as opposed to Tafaki, the high initiate who manipulates knowledge. But everywhere that one finds Maui, he has been localised. He has numerous birthplaces, different partners, even different mothers. He has been merged with other tricksters and soul travellers such as Rupe, Kura and Kisikisi and it is not always easy to know how recently Maui has supplanted an earlier culture figure.⁷

The distribution of the Maui myths seems to emanate from Tonga and the Western Polynesian triangle, one main route leading direct to Hawaii and the other main route leading direct to New Zealand, particularly the South Island. These routes are supported by tradition if not by current theories of migration to the Islands. We owe much to Katharine Luomala for her delightful study of Maui, but it is doubtful if the Maui myths were as widespread as she suggests.⁸ In the 1950s I was told that her search for Maui in the Gilbert Islands was rewarded by indigenous story-tellers only too happy to recast their own tricksters as the Polynesian demigod in exchange for American cigarettes.

While I shall settle for Maui as archetype there may well have been a Tongan figure for whom we could resurrect a life. Just to outdo Gavin Menzies⁹ and

send a shiver down the spines of my prehistory colleagues, I offer Crown Prince Maui, a genuine historical figure and last of the Silla dynasty of Korea, exiled in 936, not that long before the Tu'i Tonga dynasty was allegedly established on Tongatapu.¹⁰ I might add that the Silla royal burial mounds closely resemble the royal burial *langi* of Tonga, and there were interesting shamanic parallels in the royal lineages including the veneration of snakes and eels. But when all is said and done the historian has no life story to tell. I am reminded of Peter Sellers as Sir Eric Goodness being interviewed on the life of a 13th century mystic Fazab El Barashadam Hashid, known as Smith, and his 'endeavour to bring to the common man the portrait of a man [who was culturally significant but] about whom we know practically nothing'.¹¹

We are on safer ground in telling Pacific lives when we have a large corpus of traditional stories supported by archaeology. Even then some historical figures can be as elusive as Smith. Chris Ballard, in his current research in Vanuatu, may be able to date the remains of Roimata/Loimata and his minions to the 16th century but will he be able to embody and authenticate the historical life of the legendary figure? Fortunately, in some Pacific countries, particularly in Hawaii and Tonga, the existence of parallel inter-island and inter-family traditions enable the biographer to check and countercheck the genealogical and chronological sources. Using such sources scholars such as Augustin Krämer and Penny Schoeffel-Meleisea have attempted to piece together the life of Salamāsina, the first Samoan *Tafaiā* (holder of all four paramount titles) and, as I would argue, the first Tongan *Tamahā* (the most sacred female chief).¹² I shall briefly look at another important female figure in Tongan history, the high chiefess Ta'emoemimi, whose name, if translated for a children's story, would be rendered Princess Pooh and Piddle. A respected senior Tongan colleague thought the name was so disgusting that he assumed the missionaries who recorded it had been the victims of irreverent leg pulling. But the traditional sources taken together with the evidence of archaeology, ethnology and the methods of historical revisionism reveal that Ta'emoemimi was a person of great consequence.¹³

The sanitised records of the 19th century and the rewritten or censored records of the Tupou dynasty have reduced Ta'emoemimi and her full brother to children who died in infancy, but these are flawed sources.¹⁴ More convincing is the vast *langi* of Ta'emoemimi in Vava'u and the fact that genealogies kept in Vava'u and related traditions name Ta'emoemimi as a Tu'i Tonga Fefine, the most influential female figure in the Tongan Islands who bore the title Sinaitakala. We also learn from fragments of song that her full brother, like several dynastic heirs before and after, was installed as co-regent during his father's lifetime.¹⁵ This may have been done to allow the son to marry his *mohefo* or Great Royal Wife. The junior Tu'i Tonga died before his father presumably without issue

and his *mohefo*, known as Tupou Mohefo, then married one of her husband's younger half brothers, the warrior Pau, who was, at various times, a contender for the *hauship* (or position of political king) of Tonga.

Pau and Tupou Mohefo were to produce a family of four daughters, the male heir probably being the son of a secondary wife of the *mohefo*'s lineage. When the first daughter was born it was probably the Tu'i Tonga Fefine's privilege to name the child.

One can only guess, but I think with cultural insight, how Ta'emoemimi acquired her mucky moniker. The name is a title for the *matāpule* (or chief's attendant) whose responsibility it was to attend to the royal toilet needs and wrap and bury the royal stool. A baby was likely to mess or wet a chief or chiefess who held it and it was not unknown for a chiefly person to kill rather than cuddle such a messy child. One supposes that the Tu'i Tonga Fefine was so delighted with her baby niece that she looked after her toilet needs and took the *matāpule* name for herself in exchange for her own title, Sinaitakala'i Fekitetele, which became the child's name and was no longer a title, a puzzle for those who correctly believed Pau's eldest daughter never succeeded as Tu'i Tonga Fefine.

Ta'emoemimi was an important figure and no doubt when her father died she selected Pau as his successor particularly as he was already married to the *mohefo*. When Ta'emoemimi died she was succeeded as Tu'i Tonga Fefine by Pau's older half sister Nanasipau'u who lived into the 1790s. Elizabeth Bott believed there was no way of finding out why the succession of Pau was 'irregular' but by telling or reconstructing the life of Ta'emoemimi we are able to show that it was not altogether irregular.¹⁶

With the advent of Europeans in the Pacific the amount of primary material for writing lives should have made the biographer's task easier but most of us know that reconciling voyage narratives with recorded traditions and orally transmitted accounts is one of the most difficult exercises for the historian. In the case of Tonga, just when scholars were beginning to agree about the identity of high ranking Tongans who met the British and French explorers, the appearance of new translations of Malaspina's visit to Vava'u has raised many questions.¹⁷ Certain characters remain particularly elusive such as Cook's Fīnau. The biographer, particularly the brief biographer, could get the identification horribly wrong.

With the advent of Europeans we also find the writings of beachcombers and missionaries. In 1964 Harry Maude listed all the then known writings of beachcombers.¹⁸ Since then other accounts have been found, one of the most recent being that of Joseph Barsden, known in Tahiti as 'Joe the beachcomber', who played a major role in the transition from paganism to Christianity.¹⁹ That

Barsden has surfaced after nearly two centuries highlights the constant need for revision and research and also the element of chance in telling Pacific lives.

For missionaries, chance was replaced by a providential view of history, an elaboration of the linear concept of history, supposedly rooted in Judaeo-Christian theology. Time was defined as the linear ordering of events between the creation of the world and its 'final apocalyptic consummation'. Although much missionary literature was objective and even scientific, it was also pious and didactic. The natural mode of missionary biography was hagiography. Missionaries sometimes complained that they were the instruments of 'pious fraud' and nowhere was this more blatant than in telling the lives of Pacific missionaries. Many a missionary confessed in his diary that the published life of a colleague was very different from the reality. The apotheosis of the renowned Protestant missionary John Williams was a case in point and his colleagues were only too glad to point out he had feet of clay.²⁰ While Williams was undoubtedly a great pioneer figure, Congregational historians in particular have turned him into a sanctified blacksmith-carpenter who built ships single-handedly apparently with little help from the faceless and virtual slave labour put at his disposal by compliant chiefs. One of his first biographers, the minister of his own church, the Reverend Dr John Campbell, was quick to point out Williams' personal limitations but until the 20th century the sanctified image remained largely unchallenged.²¹

Hagiography lends itself to visual images. Williams' life was mirrored in the oil prints by George Baxter, and several of Baxter's missionary prints are highly idealised such as the death and martyrdom of Williams, where he is attacked by brutish looking New Hebrideans, and the Reverend John Waterhouse superintending the landing of Wesleyan missionaries at Taranaki in 1844.²² With these in mind we leap forward to a modern idealistic painting by the New Zealand artist Piera McArthur showing Bishop Pompallier after disputing with Henry Williams, in which the great Catholic missionary bishop is shown levitating, a fine example of the hagiographic image.²³

Until well into the 20th century missionaries remained in charge of the telling and representation of their own lives. With the development of Freudian analysis and advances in forensic science the telling of missionary lives became more the function of social and largely secular historians. Father Damien de Veuster, now beatified by his Church as the Blessed Damien of Molokai, has been the subject of numerous biographies. Although traduced by Protestant critics, particularly the Presbyterian Dr Hyde, Father Damien was ably defended by Robert Louis Stevenson,²⁴ yet it is clear that, like John Williams, he was not the plaster saint of the pious monographs. Two biographical studies of modern times have done much to reveal the essential character of the leper saint as an inspirational if flawed human being. Gavan Daws, in 1973, provided a sympathetic portrait in *Holy Man*, drawing on the new techniques of psychohistory and analysing his

subject in terms of sibling rivalry. Richard Stewart, a professor of medicine in Wisconsin, has produced the most recent biography in which much new information is used in conjunction with a medical analysis of the disease and of Damien himself.²⁵ These studies reveal, in the words of one commentator, that 'even his detractors could not deny that he was almost single-handedly responsible for tremendous improvements to Kalaupapa [leprosy settlement] in the face of overwhelming odds having taught himself the practice of medicine and the skill of a master builder of chapels, churches and houses'.²⁶

In telling Pacific lives through psychohistory Gavan Daws was able to help us understand historical processes that might otherwise have eluded us. Just as forensic science convinces us who it is that committed a crime, so the clinical study of the biographical subject enables the historian to understand the workings of the subject's mind and prompts him or her to ask particular questions and look for particular signs. The historian becomes a profiler. The method was particularly useful for understanding missionaries usually partly concealed in pious propaganda. Apart from Father Damien, Daws treated at least three other missionaries, John Williams, Father Laval of the Gambiers and Walter Murray Gibson of Hawaii.²⁷ I recall that Barrie Macdonald once commented that he could learn as much from my essay on John Williams and his ship as from the Daws analysis, but he was forgetting that the Daws analysis, because it was clinically sound, had a scientific finality about it. My own reservations about the Daws psychohistory methodology are that the clinical analysis is converted into literary prose when I would prefer it to be presented in clinical terms like a forensic analysis. Of Gavan Daws' missionary portraits, the one I found most enthralling was that of Father Laval when it was presented as a clinical case rather than as a finished portrait. That even the portrait was never published suggests that sometimes the dark places of the mind can be unnerving, something we are aware of in his portrait of Melville.

In his fascinating notes on writing biography in the Pacific, Daws touches on another controversial missionary, Shirley Waldemar Baker, sometime premier of Tonga. Noel Rutherford in his excellent study of Baker and the King of Tonga had some doubts about Baker's antecedents, contrasting the missionary's apparent lack of education and polish with the relationships he claimed. Daws took the contrast further, arguing that 'Baker's shame about obscure origins was counter-balanced by strong drives to aristocratic status, prestige and power, and he mediated all this through family romance'.²⁸

But is this the correct analysis? Were Baker's origins as obscure as the scant records suggest? Geoff Cummins, himself the author of a very insightful life of Baker's rival, the Reverend J.E. Moulton,²⁹ discovered that Baker's father was who he claimed him to be, the Reverend George Baker, an Anglican priest who died on 28 December 1869. As Noel Rutherford attests, Baker's maternal Wesleyan

connections with the Woolmers and the Parkers were highly respectable. But there are hints that it was not obscure origins that Baker was escaping from. Baker's clergyman father died in the Marylebone Workhouse of chronic cerebral disease and paralysis, a common euphemism for death from alcoholism and syphilis. Shirley Waldemar Baker was probably escaping from his heredity and also possible neglect, causing him to run away from home at an early age. Madness was almost certainly inherited in Baker's family and his first given name, the surname Shirley, points to a great Methodist dynasty which produced the Countess of Huntingdon and several Evangelical divines. This was a family who were literally 'mad as hatters' as they suffered from transmissible mercury poisoning and inherited syphilis. When the head of the Shirley family, Lord Ferrers, was tried and hanged for murdering his steward, the Reverend Walter Shirley and his brothers testified to the madness in their family. Any reassessment of Baker is likely to find that a fresh clinical analysis is called for and this may explain Baker's fierce spirit of independence in breaking with the parent Methodist body and also his eventual return to the church of his father.

There are, of course, many ways to write biography. I sometimes think that the well-tryed 'life and letters' method is a good way to capture the essential nature of the life subject. This method has been well utilised in the Pacific in religious, literary and anthropological circles; to a lesser extent in the other sciences. Another valuable approach is the group biography. Many of us have drawn on the lives of particular groups of men and women in the Pacific to illustrate missionary, commercial and general historical themes. Diane Langmore was a pioneer in setting out to write a group biography of missionaries in Papua New Guinea.³⁰ The group biography has the advantage of showing complexity and variety, an excellent corrective both to hagiography and the literary or popular stereotype. What Langmore has done for Papua New Guinea could also be done for other areas and other social groups. Caroline Ralston and Ian Campbell have both worked on beachcombers and transculturists but most of their findings are based on general primary sources rather than on collecting and analysing individual lives.³¹ By tagging and asking questions of the individuals we are likely to produce a group biography which will give us a fresh perspective on transculturists. Islander missionaries and teachers are another group who would benefit from the techniques of the group biographer.

This brings us to another related topic, the suitability of the biographer. Is an Islander the best person to write the lives of other Islanders? I would like to think that this whole issue has been put to bed. As Oskar Spate believed in 1978, Island-born and trained historians from Fiji or Tonga, for instance 'should [be able to] tackle John Wesley as well as the Lotu Weseli na Viti; be able and willing to consider Sir Basil Thomson as a political figure in England, not only as the supplanter of Shirley Baker'.³² It must be admitted, however, that some Pacific Islanders are going to be more suitable than most non-Islanders to tackle

indigenous biography. Growing up in a community is the best qualification for understanding others brought up the same way and knowing the language and culture is half the battle. But one can make wrong assumptions based on environmental influences. Anyone who knew that at the age of seven I recited a piece of verse from the Victorian School Paper—

Little Jika Jika, all the darkies like her
In her dainty dress and pinny

—and was not aware of the influence of home and church, might conclude I was already an incipient redneck racist.

The late Jim Davidson had strong views about the suitability of prospective historians, and especially biographers. Preferably they should have a similar background to the subject, or at least have a common thought-world and he believed it desirable if they had abandoned or at least questioned these common values. I remember that he was apprehensive that Norman Douglas was proposing to study the Mormons in the Pacific as their religion was foreign to him and Douglas was an amused outsider.³³ Certainly the best work on Mormons has been done by ex-Mormons such as Fawn Brodie. Historians who tackle unknown or unfamiliar psychological territory can come to grief. Perry Miller was a great historian of Puritanism but the dark conflicts of the Puritan mind eroded his own mental stability.³⁴

The biographer from outside is often tempted to ignore or dismiss facets of a subject's life that appear alien or irrelevant to him or her. I recall attending a seminar on the Victorian Premier Alfred Deakin by the late John La Nauze when he almost boasted that Deakin had possessed an extensive library of theosophical literature but he, La Nauze, could see no point in reading it. I was therefore not surprised when a Sydney historian produced a book which gave significance to Deakin's interest and which complemented La Nauze's excellent political biography.³⁵ Pacific historians would be similarly unwise to neglect the input of both traditional and introduced religious values when writing the biographies of Pacific Islanders.

Biography is usually not a main preoccupation of historians but something which emerges from a period study or thematic analysis. Most historians have had the experience of immersing themselves in the sources they are using for a wider project and realising that excellent material exists for the biography of an important representative individual. At one stage, I started to work on a biography of the maverick London Missionary Society missionary John Muggridge Orsmond as the archival material was so rich. I even had my title, Chaplain to Venus. The only thing that stopped me from continuing was the knowledge that the greater part of Orsmond's writing has not surfaced. Many volumes of history, letters, journals and lexicons in his handwriting were known

to exist in the early 20th century and may well do so in France, Sweden, California and even in the Society Islands. Perhaps one should not be put off by this. After all there are many lives of buccaneer William Dampier and they all ignore the missing years which I am told on good authority are fully documented in the Dutch Archives. On the other hand, ANU historian Barry Smith was savaged by one reviewer because he did not know of a huge cache of Florence Nightingale papers she was editing.³⁶

There are, of course, biographers who tackle major subjects. In the area of 'big biography' it is almost inevitable that there will be competition. There appears to be no end to lives of James Cook. Each new life is forced to proclaim something new to justify the exercise. Multiple biographies exist for voyagers such as Bougainville and La Pérouse. Next are probably the lives of artists and literary figures such as Gauguin, Melville and Stevenson. Missionary lives abound for John Williams, Father Damien, and James Chalmers. There are also multiple lives for the Society Islands celebrity Mai (called Omai), and Will Mariner of Tonga. Islands royalty much written about include Kamehameha of Hawaii and Queen Sālote of Tonga.

In the field of 'big biography' the academic lives tend to be definitive, towering above their subject competition such as Di Langmore's life of Chalmers and Elizabeth Wood-Ellem's biography of Queen Sālote.³⁷ I myself am a big-biographer manqué. Sir Keith Hancock suggested in the 1950s that I should write a life of Chalmers. 'He was eaten, wasn't he', said Hancock. As we had been discussing the education of missionaries, I assured him that Chalmers did not go to a public school. For most Pacific figures there has been scope for only one serious biographer though some of the political figures, such as Rabuka, have several books written about them. Some of these figures belong in the category of 'big biography' such as Deryck Scarr's lives of Thurston and Ratu Sukuna.³⁸ Many of those with single biographies may not be known so well outside the Pacific.

Jim Davidson's life of Peter Dillon is a representative biography which was seen by its author as a spin-off project which provided relief from more demanding projects. Dillon was a romantic alter-ego and Jim found great pleasure in piecing together small snippets of Dillon material culled from obscure places. He intended to name the volume Pita, the name by which Dillon was known in the Islands. When Jim died the chapters were in various stages of completion. Oskar Spate, who took on editing the manuscript, found one set of chapters and set about completing the text. I remember discussing Dillon's charges against the missionary John Thomas with Oskar and did not realise he was using an old draft. When the book was published³⁹ I checked it to find the dates for Dillon's visit to Vava'u, and was dismayed to find there was no mention of the visit, especially as I had discussed the visit with Jim. Some time later when we were

moving some of Jim's papers to the archives I was amazed to find Jim's more complete versions of several chapters.

I might now return to autobiography as a way of telling Pacific lives. I have already suggested that autobiography is a doubtful source for writing biography and that the writer of autobiography is often subject to self-delusion, polemic and, in the pejorative sense, romance. Certainly we can be badly deceived by some alleged life histories. The Swiss adventurer Henri Louis Grin, known more familiarly as Louis de Rougemont, invented fanciful adventures searching for pearls and gold in New Guinea and living with a tribe of Aborigines in Australia.⁴⁰ These were serialised in *Wide World Magazine* from August 1898 and, on examination, deceived members of the Royal Geographical Society and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. But if de Rougemont was perhaps the most blatant Pacific fictional adventurer he was not alone. From the 18th century to the present there have been adventurers who have been happy to hoodwink the public with fictional lives. One or two writers simply cannibalised the writings of others and it is difficult to establish whether or not they actually visited real islands. More convincing are the writings of authors such as Louis Becke and Frank Bullen who actually sailed in the Pacific and wrote from experience. Bullen wrote with knowledge about whaling and life at sea though sometimes his islands were changed about, a device also used by Arthur Grimble in his popular books.

More genuine autobiographies should be treated like any other source used in biography. An aging person's memory is notoriously unreliable. As an early diary keeper, I am frequently surprised to find that events that I imagined happened over three years actually all happened in one year as confirmed by my diary. Many of the story-tellers' techniques used in the dim past of cyclic history still apply. The story-teller starts with a complex historical situation which is meaningful to those involved. Next time the story is told the audience may not be able to appreciate the fine detail so the setting is simplified or changed slightly. Still later the story-teller relates the story back to the original scene but incorrectly surmises where it took place so we have a new variant. By the time a remembered event is recorded in memoirs it often differs considerably from an account which may have been recorded in a contemporary diary or letter.

Another problem with autobiography in the Pacific is that it is sometimes ghost-written so that one is never sure whether the original information or text has been tailored to fit the outlook and prejudices of the ghost-writer. Missionaries automatically edited the published writings of their indigenous colleagues though texts such as the Cook Islander missionary Taunga's narrative constitute an autobiography relatively free of interference.⁴¹

The autobiography is often seen as a key to the essential nature of the writer, but this is not always the case. Peter Hempenstall, himself an experienced

biographer, stated in his review of Robert Langdon's autobiography, *Every Goose a Swan*, that it did not tell the reader much about the inner man. But with Bob what you saw was what you got. His stoical approach to life was far removed from the self-discovery that frequently accompanies puberty and sometimes leads to religious experience. Bob admitted that he never had such feelings. Not for him the Great Yea and the Great Nay of Carlyle's questioning.⁴² We learn from this that we cannot impose our own experience on another's. In telling Pacific lives we need autobiography but we can only use it properly if we understand 'where it is coming from' and its limitations.

Finally, we might consider the biographical collections, one of the oldest historical forms in the linear tradition, exemplified in classical times by the Romans Plutarch and Suetonius and in early Christian times in the Lives of the Saints. The British Lives of the Saints tell us more about individual Celtic lives than any other source from that time. Byzantine historiography was largely centred on the lives of court officials. The Western world has a long tradition of biographical dictionaries and collected lives. In the Pacific, the earliest attempts at collecting lives were the necrologies of Island teachers and missionaries sometimes published in the missionary magazines. William Gill published lives of teachers in *Gems from the Coral Islands* and A.W. Murray assembled more lives in his *Martyrs of Polynesia*.⁴³ Most serious work on collections dates from the mid-20th century, notably the regional biographical dictionaries and bio-bibliographies of Father Patrick O'Reilly for Tahiti, New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. These excellent compilations contain indigenous entries but most relate to persons of European origin. *Pacific Islands Portraits* edited by Jim Davidson and Deryck Scarr initiated short studies of important or representative Pacific personalities.⁴⁴ Potted Pacific lives can be found in earlier editions of the *Pacific Islands Yearbook*. Various Hawaiian biographical series appeared in the course of the 20th century. John Dunmore's *Who's Who in Pacific Navigation*⁴⁵ covers the voyagers while the Marists have published a necrology for their missionaries. Multiple Pacific lives appear in collections such as the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and other general collections. There have also been more recent attempts to compile regional or modern biographical dictionaries of the Pacific.

Dictionary projects are highly desirable not only in providing essential vital data for those working in general areas of history but also to commemorate the lives of important or representative individuals. There are dangers, of course, in arbitrary selection as sometimes undue importance is given to those included at the expense of those excluded. Any good dictionary system should have a revision policy. I have been impressed by the new material in the new *English Dictionary of National Biography*, especially many new entries that did not appear in *The Dictionary of National Biography Missing Persons* volume. I was also

disappointed that some of these entries were written by people who had no background knowledge, obviously members of the dictionary staff. Also, there are still important omissions.

The telling of Pacific lives has moved from the mythical archetypes of early settlement in the Islands through the ruling families of traditional Island cultures to the representatives and icons of modern times. Our increased knowledge and new professional techniques help us to better understand the lives of those who lived many centuries ago as well as the lives of contemporary men and women. We may soon be able to reconstruct the life of a man such as Roimata who presently, apart from a few myths, is in the words of Peter Sellers' Sir Eric Goodness, 'a man about whom we know practically nothing'.

Acknowledgements

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ENDNOTES

¹ As most of the references to past colleagues are drawn from my own reminiscences, observations and personal communications, annotation has been restricted to documenting printed sources and elucidatory comments.

² This was common in many traditional Australian Aboriginal societies.

³ For a Samoan example see Robert J. Maxwell, 'Anthropological perspectives', in Henri Yuker, Humphry Osmond and Frances Cheek (eds), *The Future of Time* (London 1972), 55-6.

⁴ Christopher J. Isham and Konstantina Savvidou, 'Time and modern physics', in Katinka Ridderbos (ed.), *Time: the Darwin College Lectures* [no. 14] (Cambridge 2002), 8.

⁵ See Niel Gunson, 'Shamanistic story and song cycles in Polynesia', in Tae-gon Kim and Mihály Hoppál (eds), *Shamanism in Performing Arts* [*Bibliotheca Shamanistica*, vol. 1], (Budapest 1995), 213-24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 214-15; see also Niel Gunson, 'Understanding Polynesian traditional history', *Journal of Pacific History*, 28: 2 (1993), 147, 151; and 'Great families of Polynesia: inter-island links and marriage patterns', *Journal of Pacific History*, 32: 2 (1997), 142.

⁷ The merging of characters in association with the circular view of history was present in medieval romance as both Merlin and King Arthur were composite characters. Despite assumptions that the Judaeo-Christian view of history was linear it was not always so. Graham Phillips, *The Moses Legacy: in search of the origins of God* (London 2002), has made a good case for the scriptural Moses being based on two persons of the name and even the historical Jesus was recast in a composite mould.

⁸ Katharine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-Thousand Tricks: his Oceanic and European biographers* [Bulletin 198] (Honolulu 1949). See also Luomala, *Voices on the Wind: Polynesian myths and chants* (Honolulu 1955/rev. ed. 1986). For a Jungian view of Maui see Rita Knipe, *The Water of Life: a Jungian journey through Hawaiian myth* (Honolulu 1989), 59-76.

⁹ Gavin Menzies in his provocative *1421: the year China discovered the world* (London 2002) clutches at every unusual piece of information to support his thesis. His chapter on the Pacific is particularly weak and the story of the emerald ring which he accepts as evidence for a Chinese presence has already been shown by Robert Langdon to be based on a faulty translation.

¹⁰ For Prince Ma-ui see Edward B. Adams, *Korea's Kyongju: cultural spirit of Silla in Korea* (Seoul 1979/86), [354] and appended genealogical table of Silla Kings.

¹¹ "'Smith"—an interview with Sir Eric Goodness', recorded by Peter Sellers on high fidelity stereo recording, *Peter and Sophia*, produced by George Martin in London and Rome.

- ¹² Augustin Krämer, *Salamasina: Bilder aus altsamoanischer Kultur und Geschichte: Lebens- und Kulturbilder aus ehemaligen deutschen Kolonie Samoa* (Stuttgart 1925). Translated by Brother Hermann as *Salamasina: scenes from ancient Samoan culture and history* (Pago Pago 1949/1959). Penelope Schoeffel, 'Rank, gender and politics in ancient Samoa: the genealogy of Salamāsina O Le Tafaifā', *Journal of Pacific History*, 22:4 (October 1987), 174-93. For a popular biography see Glen Wright, *Salamasina, Queen of Love: romantic mystery of the Samoan Islands* (Hawaii 1982).
- ¹³ A genealogy that I collected in Vava'u lists her correctly as a Tu'i Tonga Fefine. For her *langi* see Pesi and Mary Fonua, *A Walking Tour of Neiafu, Vava'u* (Tonga 1981), 13.
- ¹⁴ See, for instance, the genealogy of the Tu'i Tonga collected by E.W. Gifford in the Bernice P. Bishop Museum Library, Honolulu, and other genealogies approved by Queen Sālote.
- ¹⁵ 'On the death of the Tui Tonga' in E.E.V. Collocott, *Tales and Poems of Tonga* [Bulletin 46] (Honolulu 1928), 79, 139.
- ¹⁶ Elizabeth Bott with the assistance of Tavi, *Tongan Society at the Time of Captain Cook's Visits: discussions with Her Majesty Queen Sālote Tupou* [Memoir no. 44], (Wellington 1982), 100.
- ¹⁷ After Queen Sālote had edited Tongan traditions to accommodate what she read in the Mitchell Library, Robert Langdon publicised the visit of Malaspina to Vava'u in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. Although Karl R. Wernhart drew on Malaspina's account in *Fatafēe Paulaho, der 36. Tui Tonga (1740-1784) ...* (Horn-Wien 1977). Malaspina has only recently become available in English translation (3 vols, Hakluyt Society).
- ¹⁸ See the list appended to H.E. Maude, 'Beachcombers and Castaways', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 73: 3 (1964), 254-93.
- ¹⁹ See Grant Rodwell and John Ramsland, 'The maritime adventures of Joseph Barsden, according to his own account, 1799-1816', *The Great Circle*, 21:1 (1999), 16-45. Barsden's journal has since been deposited in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.
- ²⁰ See Niel Gunson, 'John Williams and his ship: the bourgeois aspirations of a missionary family', in D. P. Crook (ed.), *Questioning the Past: a selection of papers in history and government* (St Lucia, Qld 1972), 73-95.
- ²¹ John Campbell, *The Martyr of Eromanga: or the philosophy of missions, illustrated from the labours, death and character of the late Rev. John Williams* (3rd edn, London 1843), 194 ff provides a 'warts and all' portrait. 'On nearly all subjects, except that of Missions, his views were narrow and superficial', 197.
- ²² For Baxter's prints see C.T. Courtney Lewis, *George Baxter, Colour Printer, His Life and Work: a manual for collectors* (London 1972) and Max E. Mitzvah, *George Baxter and the Baxter Prints* (Newton Abbot 1978). For commentary see Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (2nd edn, Melbourne 1989), 320-21.
- ²³ Piera McArthur, ['Pompallier levitating'], untitled, in series 'The Holy Ghost among the Fantails', 2005. Exhibition Auckland, Studio of Contemporary Art, November 2005. Painting in private collection.
- ²⁴ Hyde's letter and Stevenson's response have been reproduced in various lives of Damien; see, for instance, Omer Englebert (trans. by Benjamin T. Crawford), *The Hero of Molokai: Father Damien, Apostle of the Lepers* (Homebush, NSW 1954), 263-82 (The testimony of Robert Louis Stevenson).
- ²⁵ Gavan Daws, *Holy Man: Father Damien of Molokai* (New York 1973) (numerous printings and translations); Richard Stewart, *Leper Priest of Molokai: the Father Damien story* (Honolulu 2000).
- ²⁶ Synopsis of *Leper Priest of Molokai* (www.booklineshawaii.com/book/bhh/823222.html).
- ²⁷ Gavan Daws, *A Dream of Islands: voyages of self-discovery in the South Seas: John Williams; Herman Melville; Walter Murray Gibson; Robert Louis Stevenson; Paul Gauguin* (New York/Milton, Qld 1980). The clinical analysis of Laval was presented in a seminar.
- ²⁸ Gavan Daws, "'All the horrors of the half known life": some notes on the writing of biography in the Pacific' in Niel Gunson (ed.), *The Changing Pacific: essays in honour of H.E. Maude* (Melbourne 1978), 305. For Baker see Noel Rutherford, *Shirley Baker and the King of Tonga* (Melbourne 1971).
- ²⁹ H.G. Cummins, 'Missionary Chieftain: James Egan Moulton and Tongan Society 1865-1909', PhD thesis, Australian National University (Canberra 1980).
- ³⁰ Diane Langmore, *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874-1914* (Honolulu 1989).
- ³¹ Caroline Ralston, *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific beach communities of the nineteenth century* (Canberra 1977); Ian Christopher Campbell, 'European transculturists in Polynesia 1789-ca. 1840', PhD thesis, University of Adelaide (Adelaide 1977).

³² O.H.K. Spate, 'The Pacific as an artefact' in Gunson, *The Changing Pacific*, 44.

³³ Douglas produced an excellent thesis but as a complete outsider he had a number of difficulties, and publication was made almost impossible. Similarly, another outsider, the Irish biographer Rex Taylor, faced legal opposition in his attempts to publish his biography of John Williams. On the other hand Fawn M. Brodie successfully launched *No Man Knows My History: the life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet* (New York and London 1963), and became a prominent psycho-biographer.

³⁴ Professor Perry G. Miller of Harvard, who died in 1963, was regarded as America's greatest interpreter of the Puritan mind and 'the master of American intellectual history'. He wrote lives of Roger Williams and Jonathan Edwards. There was an inevitable tension between his acknowledged atheism and his sensitivity to the complex religious issues of Puritanism.

³⁵ J.A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: a biography*, 2 vols (Carlton 1965, 2nd edn 1979); Alfred J. Gabay, *The Mystic Life of Alfred Deakin* (Cambridge 1992).

³⁶ Lynn McDonald, 'An unscrupulous liar? Florence Nightingale revealed in her own writings', *The Times Literary Supplement* (8 Dec. 2000).

³⁷ Diane Langmore, *Tamate—a King: James Chalmers in New Guinea, 1877-1901* (Melbourne 1974); Elizabeth Wood-Ellem, *Queen Sālote of Tonga: the story of an era 1900-1965* (Auckland 1999).

³⁸ Deryck Scarr, *The Majesty of Colour: a Life of Sir John Bates Thurston*, vol. 1, *The Very Bayonet* (Canberra 1973), vol. 2, *Viceroy of the Pacific* (Canberra 1980); *Ratu Sukuna: soldier, statesman, man of two worlds* (London 1980).

³⁹ J.W. Davidson, *Peter Dillon of Vanikoro: chevalier of the South Seas*, ed. O.H.K. Spate (Melbourne 1975).

⁴⁰ For a recent biography see Rod Howard, *The Fabulist: the incredible story of Louis De Rougemont* (Milsons Point, NSW 2006).

⁴¹ R.G. and Marjorie Crocombe (eds), *The Works of Ta'unga: records of a Polynesian traveller in the South Seas, 1833-1896* (Canberra 1968).

⁴² *ANU Reporter* (Canberra 1996). Thomas Carlyle's great spiritual autobiography *Sartor Resartus* (1833/34) is a useful reminder to the biographer of self-awareness and the subjective nature of intellectual scepticism.

⁴³ William Gill, *Gems from the Coral Islands; or, Incidents of Contrast between Savage and Christian Life of the South Sea Islanders*, 2 vols (London 1856); Archibald Wright Murray, *The Martyrs of Polynesia: memorials of missionaries, native evangelists, and native converts, who have died by the hand of violence, from 1799 to 1871* (London 1885).

⁴⁴ See J.W. Davidson and Deryck Scarr (eds), *Pacific Islands Portraits* (Canberra 1970); Deryck Scarr (ed.), *More Pacific Islands Portraits* (Canberra 1979).

⁴⁵ John Dunmore's *Who's Who in Pacific Navigation* (Melbourne 1992).