

PACIFIC HISTORIOGRAPHY: AN INDIGENOUS VIEW

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THIS paper will have two sections. First I will argue that European preconceptions, intellectual fashions, philosophical, literary and scientific preoccupations, and more recently concern about colonialism and development have influenced the perception of many of those who have written about the Pacific Islands and whose writings compose the sources of Pacific history. In this context, I will comment upon J.W. Davidson's remark that the history of the Pacific has largely been written as an aspect of European colonial history¹, focussing mainly on Europeans. This is understandable considering that indigenous inhabitants of the Pacific had no written records of themselves before the arrival of Europeans. Even after they had acquired this skill, as Gavan Daws noted of the Hawaiians², they did not save the pieces of paper recording their own reactions and views of events going on about them.

If the record of the past is to be balanced, first by looking into the pre-European past of the Pacific, and secondly by adopting an indigenous perspective for the recent period, some thought must be given to methods. This will form the second part of the paper.

The history of the Pacific, as it has been written so far, concerns the interaction of the Pacific Islanders with the successive influxes of Europeans: explorers, beachcombers, whalers, missionaries, planters and merchants, and colonial officials. There is a smaller literature concerning Asians brought into the Pacific by Europeans, Chinese, Indo-Chinese, Indians, and the movement and transportation of islanders within the region - mainly in the context of the labour trade.

Most Europeans speak for themselves in the historical record - in diaries, journals, official documents, letters and memoirs. For the native peoples, however, the historian must rely on what Europeans have said about them, for they do not speak for themselves. Moreover, travellers' tales and memoirs present the

Pacific Islander, more often than not, as a human curio. Accounts of pre-Christian Pacific societies invariably dwelt upon the exotic and the unfamiliar. Generally one-sided, they portrayed islanders as shadowy stereotypes - as children or as savages, noble or ignoble. Daws observed that Europeans judged non-Europeans in terms relative to themselves - 'different from', 'similar to', 'better than', 'worse than', and so on.³ The approach depended on the morality and philosophy of the writer. One could write of 'nature's gentlemen', another of 'depraved scoundrels'. The character of a people was often determined by actions during a first and brief encounter. Thus, of the Samoan people, La Perouse wrote that they were ferocious, boisterous and audacious,⁴ while Kotzebue described them as courteous and well-disciplined.⁵ Neither considered the possibility that they might have been guilty of gross over-generalization. Greater familiarity resulting from longer residence in the islands frequently did not modify such stereotypes.

This problem of perception has been well described by Bernard Smith,⁶ who, in his study of eighteenth and nineteenth century painting and drawing by European artists, scientists and other visitors to the Pacific, noticed how rarely human inhabitants and the environment were perceived as they actually were. The people were either Classical Greek figures in an idealized garden, or else figures of fun in some pantomime setting.

It is helpful at this point to turn to a theme in Western philosophy which assumed that change was natural, inevitable and directional.⁷ This notion originated with the Greeks and reached its most extreme expression in the ideas of the late nineteenth century evolutionists. Along with this idea, and closely related to it, were speculations about the 'natural' condition of man. Hesiod thought that in the beginning, man did not need the complex techniques and institutions typical of his own era (about 300 B.C.) as his simple needs were fulfilled by the 'bounteous earth (which) bears fruit for them of her own will in plenty without stint'.⁸ The theme of Eve and the apple in the garden of Eden was echoed in Hesiod's story of Pandora illustrating the relationship between knowledge and corruption, or conversely, between ignorance and innocence. Plato

was also interested in the 'natural' state of man, and like Hesiod equated simplicity with innocence and virtue.⁹ A more pessimistic view was offered by Thomas Hobbes in the sixteenth century. He suggested that in a state of nature every man's hand was against his neighbour.¹⁰ Interestingly, Hobbes defined man in a state of nature as being in a society without political institutions based on authority.

In the history of the Pacific, Europeans were usually only able to discern the existence of political institutions when these bore some overt resemblance to their own. This led to two kinds of colonial administration: indirect rule through existing political structures, and direct rule in which traditional structures were ignored.¹¹

In the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued in the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality that man in a state of 'nature' could only be 'good'. Like Hesiod and Plato he held that there was a connection between ignorance and innocence. He differed from Hobbes by defining the state of nature as the absence of private property. Between these two conceptions of the state of nature, two versions of the idea of change can be discerned. While it was accepted that change was natural and inevitable, there was a difference of opinion as to whether change degraded man or bettered him. Both views exist to the present day, and have a bearing on the way in which islanders were perceived by Europeans. Since the former were seen as representative of man in a state of nature, it depended upon the philosophy of the beholder whether they were regarded as 'noble savages' or 'nasty brutes'.

Aside from this basically philosophical preoccupation, there was another issue which began as a matter for philosophers and theologians but became in the nineteenth century a scientific question. This was the matter of race. When technology and navigational skill brought Europeans into contact with the peoples of Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Pacific in the sixteenth century, fundamental problems of thinking were raised. St. Augustine had taught that it was impossible for man to live in the Antipodes. The Old Testament had been quite definite that the

sons of Noah had peopled the whole world. It was also precise as to where their various descendents had located themselves.¹² Thus a debate arose as to whether the races of Africa and beyond were created by God at the same time that He had created Adam and Eve. In other words, were all men equal in the eyes of God?

No agreement was reached on the subject in the eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, in the face of the enslavement of millions of Africans for the plantations of the New World, the destruction of the civilizations of Meso-America, and the extermination of the Caribbean Indians and the Tasmanian Aborigines, the debate had gained great moral force. If the black, the brown, and the yellow races were separate creations of God, and if the white race alone was descended from Adam and Eve, then it could be argued that only the latter was created in the likeness of God, and thus were 'the lords of human kind'¹³

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God created he him,
man and women created he them.
And God blessed them, and God said
unto them, Be fruitful and multiply,
and replenish the earth, and subdue
it; and have dominion over the fish
of the sea, and over the fowl of
the air, and over every living thing
that moveth upon the earth.¹⁴

If white men alone were the descendents of Adam and Eve, there was no more immorality in conquest and slavery of other races than in the domestication of animals. If, on the other hand, all men derived from the Biblical creation, then slavery and genocide were moral crimes.

The polygenesists and monogenesists differed over whether the races of man were interfertile. The former insisted that they were not, or at least that any hybrid progeny, like mules, must be infertile. Faced with the evidence of their error in the American colonies, they devised the doctrine of the degeneracy of 'half breeds'. De Gobineau, a nineteenth century polygenesist, wrote a treatise on 'The inequality of human races'. He developed this

theory and concluded that hybrids were either 'beautiful without strength, strong without intelligence, or if intelligent, both weak and ugly'.¹⁵

By the late eighteenth century, a new 'science' had emerged. Craniology or phrenology sought to classify the races according to skull measurements and shapes. The pioneers, Blumenbach and Pritchard, did not agree on whether the original men were black or white, but they took the monogenesist position that all races were sub-species of an ancestral stock.¹⁶ Their colleagues in America, Morton and Nott, wishing to defend the institution of slavery, held out against the notion prevailing in Europe of the biological unity of mankind. Their ideas were expressed by Adam Ferguson, who declared in 1783 that the superiority of civilized nations was not innate, but an achievement acquired over a long period of history. Such a viewpoint has commanded its adherents in social science to the present day. It is based on the following assumptions: culture rather than biology is responsible for the difference between races; cultural evolution and technological innovation are linked, and thus 'progress' is some kind of natural process. There has been a recent reintroduction of biological determinism, notably in the currently fashionable viewpoint of sociobiology in certain American universities, and in the views of psychologists Eysenck and Hensen regarding racial differences in intelligence.

The European exploration of most of the remote corners of the world had been accomplished by the late nineteenth century, and scholars of this period had a bewildering collection of facts concerning the human condition with which to deal. Following natural science tradition, they attempted to classify the various peoples according to different criteria. Which criteria were used depended on the interest of the scholar concerned. The craniological approach had developed into a discipline called anthropology (now physical anthropology), classifying human beings by skull shape, brain size, hair formation, height, skeleton shape, and skin colour. Spencer tried to rank mankind according to technology and political institutions, while Morgan, Tyler and Frazer used religion, leadership, and kinship.¹⁷ In all cases the 'natural' superiority of Europeans was a fundamental assumption.

The influence of Darwin on late nineteenth century thought cannot be ignored, for while he recognised the existence of what seemed to be distinct human races, he noticed overlaps of physiological types and concluded that some kind of adaptive process in nature was responsible for the differentiation.¹⁸ Malthus's views on population, and Spencer's on evolution helped Darwin formulate the theory that natural selection operated in humans as well as in animals.¹⁹

By the turn of the century, the evolutionary ideas of Darwin and Spencer had become established in the popular mind in a distorted form. The belief that native populations were dying out (and many were) was accepted as evidence of the law of the survival of the fittest.²⁰ Furthermore, as the diversity of cultures outside Europe had been conceived of in simplified form so as to fit stereotyped categories which ranked all men in a hierarchy with Europeans at the top and the most technologically simple cultures at the bottom. European religion, morality, philosophy and aesthetic values were also assumed to be superior. As Peter Worsley said, 'the relationship of the rest of the world to Europe had become one of inferiority and backwardness'.²¹

The Tahitians whom Bougainville met in 1768 were among the first Pacific Islanders encountered by Europeans who lived to give an account to posterity. Cook and Banks added their reports in 1769, and all Europe was excited. As Beaglehole put it:

...and now rose up indeed within natural history, something new, something incomparably exciting, man in a state of nature; the noble savage entered the study and the drawing room of Europe in naked majesty to shake the preconceptions of morals and of politics.²²

Preconceptions built up over centuries were being projected on to the Tahitians. Daws (quoting Baudet)²³ discussed the idea of a 'golden age' - a brief period of enchantment which Europeans imagined they had found still intact in Polynesia. Such

notions were shortlived, although they are still to be found in tourist brochures, travellers' tales, and certain anthropological works.

Reports of royal incest, however, together with such practices as infanticide, cannibalism, human sacrifice, warfare, polygamy, head-hunting, idolatry and so on soon changed the prevailing attitude in Europe. Sensationalised and removed from the cultural context into which they required to be fitted before they could be properly understood, such reports soon caused romanticism to be replaced by reformist and colonial ambitions. Missionary ships set forth carrying men convinced that Pacific Islanders, lost descendents of Noah though they must be, were nonetheless a degenerate people in need of salvation.

The ancient past of the Pacific fascinated many nineteenth century missionaries. They were particularly curious as to how the obviously homogeneous Polynesians could have reached their widely separated island homes without the aid of modern instruments of navigation.²⁴ Wyatt Gill in Rarotonga, for example, and J.B. Stair and J. Fraser in Samoa,²⁵ hoped that the examination of myth, legend, and genealogies would provide the answer. George Turner carefully recorded Samoan customs in order to compare them with those mentioned in the Bible of the ancient Israelites. He hoped to demonstrate that the customs of the latter had survived among the Samoans, and that the two cultures were thus linked.²⁶ Fornander worked on Hawaiian origins by using the method of interpreting literally the main chiefly genealogies,²⁷ as did Smith with the Maoris of New Zealand. The result was a spate of 'histories' which naively gave exact dates for migrations, the islands from which the migrants had set out, and the names of the pioneer voyagers. The weakness of this approach will be dealt with below.

The question of Polynesian origins has dominated scholarly activity until recent times, and many theories have been advanced. Strikingly, most regarded Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians as separate races with separate origins.²⁸ Prehistorians such as Golson, Green, Groube, and Janet Davidson are now producing evidence to show

that all Pacific peoples belong to a number of very ancient ancestral stocks which have intermixed over long periods of time. Linguistic evidence supports the theory that original differences have been exaggerated.²⁹

II

TURNING from the scholarly interests of the nineteenth century 'Polynesianists' to the present, two things stand out. First, the major concern has been with what can be documented, and thus has depended largely on Europeans. In the preceding pages I have attempted to show the preconceptions which affected the perception of those providing the source material for the history of the islanders, and also how such preconceptions affected the features of life they selected to record. Secondly, the fragmentation of the social sciences into various exclusive disciplines has inhibited efficient investigation of the past in the Pacific. Even history is divided into sub-classifications such as 'oral history' and 'ethnohistory'. Denning described the latter as follows:

...ethnohistory's prime concern is not with myth, legend or genealogy, or with the historical reconstruction of illiterate societies, or with the origins of these societies. The ethnohistorian's prime concern is with the description of illiterate societies by literate observers at the time when contact between the two had not changed or destroyed the illiterate society.³⁰

The prefix 'ethno-' implies that history is not really history if it is about 'illiterate societies'. A further implication is that material concerned with Europeans and other foreigners is the stuff of history, while that which examines Pacific Islanders in the past or the present should be the concern of the 'prehistorian', the 'ethnohistorian' or the anthropologist.

This has led to serious problems. Denning, describing himself as an ethnohistorian, virtually dismisses the possibility of further progress through the examination of myth, legend, or genealogy - the material of oral tradition. Historians are stuck with the written record, and anthropologists cling to something they

call the 'ethnographic present', dismissing everything but their own empirical observations and the testimony of their informants. In such a situation we must be grateful to the few, rare anthropologists - like Douglas Oliver and Derek Freeman, who are conscious of history and historical problems, who understand the necessity to see present social institutions in the light of an historical perspective.³¹

The vacuum between anthropology and history has had unfortunate effects on the documenting of social change in the Pacific Islands. The anthropological approach is typified in the work of Raymond Firth on Tikopia³² and Ben Finney on Tahiti³³. This involves an initial study followed by a later re-study in which changes that have occurred in the interim are analysed. The approach has its obvious merits, but it is too dependent on the 'micro-level'. Economists and geographers approach the problem of social change from a different angle, being concerned to promote or criticise certain kinds of change. Their writing often has the tone of reforming zeal of the early missionaries, and like them they are divided into various sects of opinion and theory. Epeli Hau'ofa made the following comment at a 1975 conference of anthropologists:

Essentially, what the Pacific peoples expect of us is to be more of the novelist and the social historian and less of the scientist who speaks in jargon. We do not see ourselves as novelists, and rightly so; but we could benefit from the approach of the social historian, and from writing in plain, elegant English.³⁴

Social histories are needed to balance the record in the Pacific. To me, one of the saddest things is the way in which Pacific Islanders have tended to accept the sort of European definition of themselves discussed above. Like the Augustinian division of the past into 'before Christ' and 'in the year of Our Lord', Pacific Islanders tend to perceive a discontinuity between the pre-European and the post-contact eras. In my country - Samoa, the people speak of 'fa'anuupo', the 'time of darkness', and 'aso malamalama', the 'time of enlightenment' when referring to the pre- and post-Christian periods. This reveals acceptance of foreign stereotyped

descriptions of traditional cultures. The effect of such thinking is often encountered in Samoa, where incidents in the distant, pre-Christian past are constantly cited in oratory and genealogy to validate aspects of society, yet direct questions about the past will often receive a negative response such as, 'that was the time of darkness', or, 'we were ruled by the devil then'.

Mixed feelings of pride and shame about the past have another level of complication. Both Crocombe and Denoon have referred to the famous observation of Ivan Illich that knowledge is a form of capital.³⁵ In all Pacific societies, esoteric knowledge was hoarded by certain categories of people, because possession gave them status and power. The result of this, for the aspiring indigenous historian, is frequently that he is at a disadvantage in relation to the outsider. The foreign researcher may lack the ability to speak the language fluently, or have the inside knowledge of cultural matters of the local, but it sometimes happens that he is actually more likely to be given "secret" information than the latter. I know of a number of foreign scholars in Samoa, for example, who have been given valuable historical and genealogical information which would be denied me on the grounds of my status as an untitled man, and because it would be suspected that I might use it to further any political ambitions that I might have.

This does not only apply to oral information. One Samoan post-graduate student of history was denied access to material in the Wellington archives relating to New Zealand's administration of Samoa in the 1920s and 1930s in spite of its having been freely available to Professor J.W. Davidson researching his book Samoa mo Samoa. The situation came about because permission to see it required the authorisation of the then Prime Minister of Western Samoa. It was felt that Davidson could be trusted not to make public anything which might prove embarrassing to Samoans connected with the events of the period, or to their relatives. It was also felt that a Samoan could not be trusted to exercise the same discretion. Another Samoan abandoned a plan to work on a history of political developments since independence because he realised that whatever he might write would offend somebody influential and thus jeopardise his own future career in his own country.

My experience has been in the same pattern. I went to Samoa in late 1973 with the intention of conducting research on the subject of land alienation during the German period, and on the question of how Samoans themselves viewed the process and its effects. It quickly became apparent that the subject was politically more controversial than I had originally imagined. Accordingly, I abandoned the project, doubting that even with a long period of research I would ever have been able to get the older men to speak freely.

Turning my attention to Melanesian labour recruits, a few of whom were still resident in Samoa, I found that certain things worked in my favour. My informants and I spoke a language in common. They trusted me because I was not a palagi (European) whom they held to have been responsible for their plight. Even so, I elucidated information which proved that Samoans had behaved towards Melanesians in a manner not to our credit.

This leads to a further point. It is a fact that the Polynesian past has been accorded a better press than the Melanesian. If Rousseau prevailed in the minds of those who wrote about Polynesia, Hobbes dominated with reference to Melanesia. This attitude was not confined to the European. Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, and Cook Island missionaries working in Papua New Guinea and the Solomons were frequently as culturally arrogant as the British and French missionaries in Polynesia. The literature recording Polynesian missionary impressions of the 'heathen' they sought to convert is not as substantial as that of their European brethren, but impressions were reported back to relatives, friends and parishioners to be developed into widely circulated myths. The resulting Polynesian conviction of the inferiority and backwardness of Melanesians may be compared to European myths about the Pacific peoples in general.

All this must be considered a challenge by the more idealistic exponents of the 'Pacific Way', suggesting as it does that the concept may be no more than a modern kind of myth-making about the Pacific, its people, and its history. Crocombe, in his summary of what he conceives to be the ideological message of

the 'Pacific Way', writes:

Real life is not always the way we'd like it and the facts keep getting in the way of the ideologies. But one of the functions of any ideology is to hide reality or at least to mask it or shape it the way we wish and myths can be built to fill in the gaps. If the myths satisfy needs, most of us, most of the time, are neither intelligent enough, diligent enough, honest enough or courageous enough to probe reality very deeply or to insist on exposing painful truths. This is so in every part of the world.³⁶

There is a special temptation for those whose pride has suffered in the very recent past through conquest and domination by outsiders to create myths about that past, especially about the idyllic qualities of the pre-colonial period. It would be nice to invent what Denoon calls a 'great, glorious, complex and inspiring history' to compensate for the history of our region since European contact having been treated as a minor aspect of European history. The balanced view, however, would be that while each island has its small place in the history of Europe, and a number of European nations have a small part in the history of the Pacific, that is the size of it. No European historian would refer to a 'European Way', and Pacific historians should be equally sceptical about such slogans. Myths are better left to the poets. Rozak writes:

Myth is...both the archetype and the antithesis of history. As archetype, it deals with tales out of true, facts of the spirit, to which history may bear witness, but only provided we can see through the foreground of events. Myth becomes antithetical to history as form is antithetical to chaos... that as not, however, the antithesis which the conventional intellect will see; it will instead see myth as fiction and history as 'fact'. And from this conventionally enlightened viewpoint, the depreciation of myth will be regarded as a victory for the truth and reason, a welcome enhancement of our ability to see things as they really are.³⁷

There is no doubt that we need a 'Pacific Way' and that there ought to be a Pacific Way, but to suggest that there was or there is a 'Pacific Way' is to ignore the very facts which we have to confront before such an ideal can be achieved.

Economically and politically, the island nations of the Pacific have everything to gain and very little to lose from a closer union with each other. Psychologically too, a 'Pacific Way' is a desirable goal. However, Pacific islanders have been divided for thousands of years, not only by large expanses of water but also by different customs, values, and interests. It is difficult to argue that the colonial period in our history has made a substantial contribution to our psychic or any other kind of unity. On the contrary, there is unpleasant evidence that additional barriers of language, religion, and political and economic systems have been piled on top of the many pre-existing divisive factors. With the end of colonialism, political authority has merely been transferred from metropolitan governments to indigenous or locally-resident elites. Imperialism, in various guises, still shapes the political and economic destinies of the several nations of the region, as well as of the region as a whole.

Documentary sources for the future Pacific historian will be the written records of literate Pacific islanders - journalists, poets, scholars, and bureaucrats. In addition, and probably in greater volume, will be the continuing record of the foreign administrator, now dispensing aid, assistance, investment, expertise, and the results of his researches.

Crocombe notes in his essay on the 'Pacific Way' that the concept is of most value to the mobile elite, and meaningless to the rural population of the islands. I would even question the ultimate value of the concept to our regional elites. During my period of employment as a 'mobile elite' in Western Samoa, I observed that at the one regional conference I attended, the term 'Pacific Way' was hastily introduced by various regional delegates every time we came close to confronting a real issue on which we had conflicting interests.

To avoid the pitfalls of distorted, romanticised and dishonest historical writing, special attention should be devoted to the development of what Denoon has called 'people's history' - more generally known as oral history. I firmly believe that this is the one approach which will restore a balance without going overboard with slogans and myth-making.

There are two basic methods of approach for the oral historian in the Pacific. The first is to follow a number of earlier scholars and missionaries, and attempt the reconstruction of history from oral tradition. The pioneering work of Vansina and Ogot in Africa, and of Lacey, Oram, Kolia, and Waiko in Papua New Guinea has inspired many students - including myself - to specialise in this work. The approach assumes that oral traditions are not just myths providing a charter for social institutions, the expression of epistemological anxieties, or mere art forms, but that they also contain information about the past. The adherents of this belief argue that proper training and the use of critical methodology will permit the writing of history from oral traditions.

A second approach to oral history has grown out of the rigorous methodology of the historical analysis of oral tradition. Documentary sources are supplemented with oral testimony when the events to be evaluated are within living memory. Examples may be found in the work of Peter Corris,³⁸ and also in my own investigation of labour recruiting from the point of view of the recruited.³⁹ Using documentary sources whenever possible, we both concentrated on making a contribution to a well-documented aspect of Pacific history from a much neglected point of view. We found evidence to modify the popular conception of Pacific island indentured labourers as passive victims of white exploitation.

I have referred above to the difficulties associated with recording oral traditions. This does not mean that the task is by any means impossible. It is one, however, which requires urgent attention. Just as we all mourn the destruction of early works of art by over-zealous missionaries, and of the very art forms themselves as they are rendered redundant by introduced goods and technology, we should remember that oral traditions are facing destruction too, as they are confronted by influences from modern education and the mass media.

Samoans, for example, are often characterised as an inartistic people by writers on Oceanic art. Judging us from our plastic arts, and in comparison with many other island cultures, the opinion may seem to possess some validity. Our highest art, however, was oratory, narration, and the composition of songs and poetry which confirmed the record of our past going back as many as thirty generations (or 750 years calculating 25 years to a generation) - to the time of the gods and our culture heroes.

Such traditions have not survived in entirety, but they have survived remarkably well considering the rigours of the last one hundred and fifty years. Now they are no longer transmitted as formerly; new songs and stories are gradually taking their place with the result that the next generations will be the poorer unless something is done to record the old stories while they are still extant. Who can tell when the pendulum of fashion will swing, and Samoans will once again derive pride from a knowledge of ancient traditions?

The Education Department in Western Samoa is conscious of this, but their method of dealing with the volume, and the many variants of traditions, has been to employ elderly orators to standardize them. This is an excellent approach for making myths and literature, but the historical content of the traditions is being lost. For the historian, every version must be sought and recorded, and I hope that the planned cultural centre in Samoa will do this. For the good of the region as a whole, I hope that the methodology of oral history will soon be taught in the University of the South Pacific as a course in itself rather than merely as part of various courses as is the case at the moment. I hope that cultural centres will be developed in each nation of the Pacific to play an active role in recording the oral sources for understanding our past.

John Kasaipwalova has pointed out that only what is dead may be preserved. I do not wish to imply that by seeking to record and preserve oral traditions I consider them to be dying out. They are not, but they have changed, and they will continue to do so. By recording them, we can consider those changes and thus learn something of the consciousness of the

tellers over time. If there were to be no change, there would be no history. In many parts of Polynesia, nineteenth century missionaries and scholars took the trouble to record traditions in the local languages. The texts are still available to be translated by contemporary Pacific historians. It is the kind of recording done by the nineteenth century scholars which should still be done, for then future historians will have texts as well as comment from the nineteenth, the twentieth, and hopefully the twenty-first centuries. We must avoid the mistake of thinking about oral traditions exclusively in terms of the ancient past: they are a continuing source of people's history.

To refer again to Samoa, I have found over the past two years that there is a rich store of archival material remaining untranslated and unanalysed. This includes part of the German colonial records, recently discovered mouldering away in a cell in Vaimea jail, and also the records of the Lands and Titles Court. Both are vulnerable to theft by Samoans who for political reasons do not wish records of their family to be seen by others. At present, few Samoans are interested in writing history, or in the need to preserve records. There are plans to construct an archival repository, but it will still be necessary to overcome the widespread suspicion concerning the motives for preservation, and to calm fears about how the records will be used. Teaching in schools, and in the university, may make a great contribution to the solution of these problems.

I began this paper by discussing the prejudices of outsiders in their recording of the history of the Pacific. The present challenge is for us to be conscious of our own prejudices - past and present - as Pacific islanders. The social scientist, interested in objectivity, assumed that oral traditions were exposed to social and political pressures from within, and so reflect changing attitudes as well as the events themselves. The historian thus needs to develop a critical awareness to apply to indigenous and foreign sources alike. Finally, and this for me is one of the virtues of this university, we must retain a multi-disciplinary approach towards Pacific history. Historical consciousness is necessary for all social scientists; equally, it is necessary that historians should avoid becoming imprisoned in the past by writing only about the dead. They must retain an interest in living history.

FOOTNOTES

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