



Introduction

On Authoring and Authenticity

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Perhaps the most important contribution of this volume is a fresh perspective on how histories of ideas actually happen in social practice—how the transformations they entail are endlessly promiscuous. They spin out of and refract back onto relations of inequality, informed by relations of power and authority, yet everyone tries to appropriate what seems useful to them. Authenticity and authoring are projected objects (or subjects) of reference while also being “traveling concepts.” They are ideas transformed and rewritten in every culture that uses them, and they cross-fertilize in new contexts along the geographic and historical routes they traverse. This is not just a textual or intertextual or academic process of sedimentation. It is rather a dynamic of active social appropriation and recontextualization. Hence, we engage the morphing expression of authenticity and authoring among both Westerners and Pacific Islanders. This clues us in to their recursive and metamorphic histories.

Indeed, it is hardly a new notion that ideas and concepts as well as material renderings mutate and resolidify, crisscrossing and reconstituting over time. In different permutations, such awareness has been central to a range of highly theorized and sometimes highly abstract Western intellectual stratagems. These relate to: hermeneutics and phenomenology; semiotics and deconstruction; speech genres and heteroglossia; epistemic subjectivity; sociologies of knowledge; interdisciplinary conceptualization; and the attribution of artistic or academic categories.¹ In the present volume, we do not concretely engage these perspectives, and we do not attempt to amalgamate much less synthesize them. Our interest is more practical and applied: how is it, we ask, that influential or powerful notions—in this case, authenticity and authoring—get creatively used, changed, and reinvented in practice? This entails the power or privilege of assertion or promulgation, and also the counterforce of response, resistance, or appropriation—or seeming refusal or farce or parody (see Scott 1987, 1992; Knauff 1996: chs. 6–8; Mageo 1996, 2008, 2010; Clifford 1988; Ortner 1995; Abu-Lughod 1990). Beyond such an antipodal or polarizing mode of phrasing, however, our deeper goal is to see how these ideational asymme-

tries and interchanges themselves render inadequate simplistic dichotomies of opposition between the powerful and the relatively powerless, especially as change ensues over time (cf. Hallam and Ingold 2007; Knauft 2019; Ortner 2016; Mageo 1998, 2002; Robbins 2013). In the insular Pacific, authoring and authenticity have a particular valence and historical character. Yet, we suggest, this valence and character throw into relief patterns that are common but may not be as obviously evident in other areas and regions.

Authenticity and Authorship in Anthropology

Why “authenticity” and “authorship”? These have special histories and implications in the insular Pacific, and we consider further how these traveling ideas have been deeply informed by their prior Western provenience and projection. But the attentive reader may have already noticed that while the main title of this volume refers to *Authenticity and Authorship*, this introductory chapter is titled, “On Authoring and Authenticity.” Though these titular terms can be reversed and tweaked to convey basically the same meaning, this small shift reveals underlying issues and nuances. Especially in a Pacific context, a historical-cum-contemporary view of “*Authoring* and Authenticity” tends to evoke or resonate with an originating primacy of Western authorship in anthropology. From a classic anthropological perspective and from a sociological of knowledge point of view, it was the Western anthropologist himself (in the nineteenth century at least it was usually a he) who authored the authenticity of the Pacific Islanders he studied. Without this authorship, perhaps through the mid-twentieth century, the “authentic” nature of Pacific Island peoples was considered largely “unknown”—to Western sensibilities, that is. In this sense both authorship and authenticity evoke Western prerogatives and imputations: the imputation of Indigenous cultural authenticity by means of Western authorship. This volume undermines and deconstructs this dichotomy between Western authorship and Indigenous authenticity. All the while that, from a Western perspective, anthropologists were “authoring” in the sense of writing about Pacific cultures, Pacific Islanders and Westerners alike were reauthoring their own cultures enriched by historical waves of ideas, feelings, and images that washed in from other places. While anthropologists were opining about Pacific authenticity, islanders—and Westerners too—were imitating and appropriating what they perceived as Pacific authenticity to define what it meant to be authentic in their *own* cultures (see Mageo, Chapter 2). In accounting for intellectual and societal transformations, one can emphasize the propriety of origination or one can emphasize the subsequent creativity of ongoing reconfiguration—which throws into question the notion of ideational “ownership” by anyone.

If one reverses these terms, Authoring and *Authenticity*, an alternative meaning presents itself. Starting with authenticity—let’s say, the presumptive authenticity of Pacific islanders themselves—makes Western authorship appear more derivative. And *Indigenous* authorship assumes a greater superiority over Western “authorization.”² These alternative perspectives, one highlighting Western agency and the other Indigenous agency, have strong political stakes (e.g., Keesing 1989; contrast Trask 1991). But each of these, we think, has pitfalls as well as promise. Asserting Pacific Islander authenticity champions the ability and the agency of Pacific Islanders to speak for themselves, to define their own authenticity in their own terms (see Jolly, Afterword). But this collapses the diversity within Pacific Islander communities themselves—who among them is actually speaking for whom. Ironically, it also elides the power of capitalist imposition, of scholarly literacy, and standards of art and status, which, for better or worse, have provided the conditions through which Indigenous authorship and assertions of authenticity have been formulated and have come to exist. Unless explicitly acknowledged, extending authorship to include art production risks imposing Western suppositions of individual authorship onto collective forms of agency along with their productive affiliations and identities. For instance, “authorship” can incite and reflect “individuality” in artistic authorship rather highlighting the pervasive “dividuality” of artistic production (e.g., Strathern 1988; cf., Marriott 1976; see Aime, Chapter 4). In Pacific performance art, dance and comedy in particular are salient if not dominant art forms and are typically collective creations (see for example Hereniko 1994, 1995; Mageo 1992, 1996, 2008, 2010; Sinavaiana 1992a, 1992b).

Assumed Western authorship that presumes its own production of cultural authenticity has been roundly critiqued in many guises in anthropology during the past half century (for an early example, see Asad 1973, cf., Asad 1987). What is thereby rejected is an assumedly authentic Western objectivity that effectively asserts the dominance if not the exclusive province of the Western or at least the thoroughly Westernized author (cf., Chua and Mathur 2018). Until recent decades, this presumed the authenticity of objectivist method—of empirically investigating, documenting, and configuring modern dependable knowledge—not just indexed but vouchsafed the authenticity of non-Western Others. *Anthropology in this sense has through much of its longer history assumed its own authoring and authenticating of Others’ authenticity.* At the same time, the systematic documentary nature of resulting assertions—their ethnographies, articles, theories, and analyses—have not been without value as well as influence and even functionality, including, as we shall see, for Pacific Islanders themselves. As such, anthropology’s colonial and postcolonial history cannot be simply “thrown out” in practical terms, as if one could get around or behind it to some ostensibly purer, much less completely alternative form of authorship and authenticity that is genuine.

Again, our present volume is designed not just to critique but to refuse the above antinomy. We expose and acknowledge it, but we do not reduce the wild play of ideas *in situ* or their development over time to a polarized view of political constraints vis-à-vis cultural “realities.” At the same time, of course, the assertion and imputation of both authorship and cultural authenticity *are*, indeed, real and influential in the world, including in academic politics. They function, as Durkheim (1966) might put it, as social facts with objective social and societal entailments.

In its own history, the critique of anthropology’s imputed authenticity and authoring has been highly influential at least since the mid-1980s (e.g., Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986; Clifford 1988). But while critical accounts have provoked literary experimentation and elaborately abstract theoretical or (post-theoretical) positioning, the pragmatic spread and morphing of Western notions of objectivity—including into new presumptions of authenticity and authoring—has been much less considered or attended to, including with respect to nonacademic authored works, artifacts, and social practices. The practical import and usage of authorship and authenticity do not stop just because they have been intellectually critiqued.

Stepping back, we can note that anthropology asserted itself as an authentic scholarly pursuit since the later nineteenth century and as an authentic science by the early 1900s (e.g., Tylor 2018; Boas 1982: ch. 8). Along with academic authenticity, anthropology brought a distinct sense of authorship, authorship that in a sense disappeared into the ostensible neutrality of its depictions, the proverbial realist tale (e.g., van Mannen 2011: ch. 3). And yet, anthropology was at the same time deeply informed in lived practice by a different authenticity—that of the anthropologist who was a scientist and yet also a romantic explorer, a heroic figure of sorts who traipsed to the most remote and otherwise unknown of human places. Here it is worth recalling Malinowski’s famous statement on anthropological method, published in 1922 based on his earlier fieldwork among the Trobriand Islanders of New Guinea (Malinowski 1922):

Imagine yourself suddenly set down surrounded by all your gear, alone on a tropical beach close to a native village. (204)

[T]he Ethnographer has not only to spread his nets in the right place, and wait for what will fall into them. He must be an active huntsman, and drive his quarry into them and follow it up to its most inaccessible lairs. And that leads us to the more active methods of pursuing ethnographic evidence. (206)

In Ethnography, the distance is often enormous between the brute material of information—as it is presented to the student in his own observations, in native statement, in the kaleidoscope of tribal life—

and the final authoritative presentation of the results. The Ethnographer has to traverse this distance in the laborious years between the moment when he sets foot upon a native beach, and makes his first attempts to get into touch with the natives, and the time when he writes down the final version of his results. (202)

The *scientific* treatment differs from that of good common sense, first in that a student will extend the completeness and minuteness of survey much further and in a pedantically systematic and methodical manner; and secondly, in that the scientifically trained mind will push the inquiry along really relevant lines, and towards aims possessing real importance. (209, emphasis in original)

Well into the mid-twentieth century these dimensions of authenticity and authorship flourished uncritically in anthropology, even as they neglected Indigenous authorship and minimized the contributions of women such as Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead, and non-Whites such as Zora Neale Hurston. These women appeared to conceive their experience with local peoples not so much as a heroic discovery of uncivilized alterity but as a dialogue with honored friends and guests (see for example the photo of Mead and the Samoan Fa'amotu in Mageo, Chapter 2). Many academics saw these women's authorship and authorings as less objective, less authentically anthropological, and as failing to merit a tenured academic position (see Behar and Gordon 1996).

Our contribution here doesn't pretend to parse the history of anthropology's assertions of authenticity in authorship, including in relation to colonialism and Western projections of primordial authenticity. But we can note the relevance in all cases, not merely those mentioned above but also those authored here, of the importance and awareness of subject position, including as viewers, objects, and subjects of authenticity and authorship. In any enterprise that aspires to scholarship, some assertion of authorship in relation to authenticity—just by virtue of publishing—is part of the mix. We begin by offering some working definitions of these concepts and then turn to an intellectual history of the concepts of authenticity and authorship in the West more generally. This Occidental portrayal is in a sense an initial a down payment toward complementary perspectives about and by Pacific Islanders that occupy the latter part of our introduction and, indeed, the remaining chapters of this book.

Terms of Supposition

Authenticity in our usage has a sense of attributed and presumed primordialism, of constructed originality. From a Western viewpoint, this primordialism

entails a sense that time has passed without significantly effacing or confounding an essential sense of original or originating meaning. This stands in contrast to situations in which the work of time is admitted or acknowledged to have disjoined or transformed the content of the present, often irretrievably, in relation to the past. Before postmodernism (which impacted Anglo-American anthropology particularly during the 1980s and 1990s—see Knauff 1996), Westerners often viewed the taken-as-authentic to be original, albeit in historically variable relation to its own past. This optic allowed anthropologists to impute a sense of timeless importance to their ethnographic works while linking these to their recent observations and contemporary rendering.

Analogously, authorship in our definition is the presumed or constructed original agent of an object or product—an artifact, art event, writing, invention, or discovery—without which the resulting phenomenon would be deemed nonexistent or even impossible to exist. This may carry implications of Westernized individualism but, by extension of reference, need not be limited to it. No Shakespeare, no Hamlet, but also, no Samoans, no Samoan Way. Not that there is no other agency or constraint or contingency involved. For instance, in art, the constraints of the pigments and the canvas, the number of hours that the artist invests, or the socioeconomic and political or religious experiences available to the producer, and so on, are all important. The emphasis in hindsight of attributing “authorship,” however, winnows and narrows such factors to the distinctive will and effort and consciousness or intent of the instigating person or group. In this sense, authorship is almost intrinsically anthropomorphizing; we could potentially say that God authored the mountain, but not that the weather or the geology authored it. So, too, in story the great chief Tagaloa authored *faʻaSamoa*, the Samoan Way; the oceanic tropical environment in which Samoans live did not author it. Anything “authored” is always an individual and a collective product. Take poetry: a poem may be individually authored but if it is any good it is likely to be in Kristeva’s words, “a mosaic of quotations” (1980), bringing a tradition into new manifestations, just as collective creations, such as the present book, bring together the work of individuals.

In our perspective, the modern connection between authenticity and authorship is one of mutually constructed origination. Authenticity tends to be first produced by a group (in myth often personified by a god or spirit) or an individual, whose work is considered original either in historical time or in the present. Authorship taken in its broader “beyond-Western” sense is the human agency by which people presume to produce subsequent authenticity, especially primary or originary meaning or identity. As in the authorship of an authentic painting or an artifact of a given period in a recognizable style, people conceive and perceive such authorship to result from individual or collective social action. Of the two terms, however, authenticity is broader: it

may include impersonal things like culture or nationality or custom that have identifiable attribution only in origin myths and yet which still have presumed historical origination and persistence.

One question this volume asks is what linkage there is between Western conceptions of authorship and explicitly developed or conscious senses of authenticity within or across cultural identities. Dalton (Chapter 5), for example, finds customs as “authentic,” and argues that Rawa themselves also do so. This is not an assertion of authenticity conjoined to a modern sense of unidirectional time and agency, but a significantly different assertion of agency and authorship that evokes restoration of an endangered social covenant. One finds a roughly analogous contrast in Western intellectual history in the difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* (Homer 1998) begins with a broken social covenant and this degeneration is its subject throughout. By contrast, the *Odyssey* (Homer 2012) arguably reflects a new sense of authenticity by virtue of Odysseus’s standing apart from the onslaught of events, or, one might say, from the onslaught of temporality. His story is the self-consciously perceived result of his own self-willed intention. Odysseus prevails by virtue of his strength of will to return home despite endless trials—his heroic attempts to get back to his origin point, to Penelope and his son, which appears in retrospect as a personal golden age but one equally lost in time. His intention has resonance with a modern Western authorial self (cf., Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* [2005]). Of course, many nonmodern peoples, aboriginal Australians for example, have found the present to be a “degraded” time relative to a mythically larger, more powerful, and often better past. But the idea that an individual has willfully made this change through “authorship,” and that individual human agency is the cause of this change in some ways presumes or pretends a departure from a view that divine or other forces made a world that humans are often not up to the task of maintaining. So, the goal in these cases is to return to that golden past by mimicking and re-enacting it, a yearning for primordialism that eschews individual will and authorship in favor of what Victor Turner (1969) called *communitas*, which weaves such authorship into collective ritual returns and celebrations.

Traveling Concepts: Western Roots and Routes

Using the perspective developed above, we can trace the Western intellectual emergence, configuration, and projection of authenticity and authorship, first, vis-à-vis Western selves, and then, in the remainder of this volume, vis-à-vis Pacific islanders. At key issue here is the relationship *between* assertions of authorship and authenticity—in either direction. In our view, one of these terms can hardly hold without the other being evoked or implied. We think this

has been true historically in Western discursive and conceptual history—and that this legacy still has important if unrecognized implications. Further, the way that authorship and authenticity are evoked in relation to each other has strong practical relevance, including for how power, agency, and representation operate in and through the anthropology of the insular Pacific to the present. This is also true, in different permutations, of the anthropology of other world areas. We also outline the dangers inherent in such analysis, including the reinscription of Western intellectual orientalism in new guises. Multiple volumes could easily be devoted to this history. Of necessity, our version is highly abridged and telegraphic. We highlight those aspects most relevant to this volume, and, like the essays to follow, ricochet back and forth between perspectives and locales.

In Western conceptualization, authorship and authenticity are linked, echoing the etymologies of the words themselves. “Authorship” in common reference signals the individuality, autonomy, and genuineness of the producer; it connotes the coherence of a Western-style self as authentic agent and producer of the work in question. “Authentic” and “authenticity,” for their part, connote being real or genuine, not a copy, true to a deeper origin, reliable, trustworthy, and consistent and in agreement with known facts. In their earliest Western usages, authorship and being authentic or having authenticity are closely linked. Across Latin, French, and Anglo-Norman regions, the legacy of *authenticus* pertained particularly to titles, deeds, or other documents that were authentic because they were verifiably authorized by the true, valid, and individual authorship of the sovereign, authorized by his (or her) valid agent to convey the dictum by document. The sovereign had ultimate authority and hence as well the ultimate ability to author and to transmit authenticity. This seeded the train of subsequent authentications, which spread the power of the ruler, the primary author, across time and space. This depended on the writ being authentic and not needing to be reauthored or reauthorized. To stretch an analogy to a modern anthropological context, it’s like having your original fieldnotes as the ultimate guarantor that your fieldwork is genuine.

In the Western era of nobles and unabashed hierarchy until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it was especially the monarch whose very being was authentic and who could authorize or otherwise author writs, dicta, and exercise power of life and death. Others’ authenticity lay in acting their proper role in the order of status and deference. Thus, according to Trilling, the idea of non-monarchical authenticity is prefigured by the concept of sincerity, which in feudal times meant being true to one’s social role: that is, not acting “above oneself” (Trilling 1997: 16). One still finds this meaning in the seventeenth century. Thus, Shakespeare’s Cordelia in *King Lear* acts only according to her “bond,” that is, in accord with her given role. Audiences since

Shakespeare's time have recognized Cordelia as a sincere person, in contrast to her ambition-driven sisters who are false and feigning.

With the rise of evangelical religion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, sincerity shifts its meaning, coming to refer to the truth of one's experience as an individual and to the intensity of one's resulting convictions (Trilling 1997: 23). In Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* ([1787] 1983), written in the late eighteenth century, the protagonist is supposed to be the model of the "honest soul"—a constant "one true self" (Trilling 1997: 52). Werther testifies to the unchanging nature of his sentiments for a married woman through suicide. This novella, wildly popular in the early nineteenth century, precipitated a rash of suicides among young men, a phenomenon that came to be known as "the Goethe effect" (Swales 1987: 94–98; Phillips 1986; Philips, Lesyna, and Paight 1992). These suicides testify to the widespread historical shift that Trilling describes.

With Rousseau, the idea of sincerity shifts again, becoming a "sentiment of existence" (Gauthier 2006), or in Trilling words (1997: 92), a "sentiment of being." This "sentiment" referred to a life energy by virtue of which "the center shall hold . . . [and] the circumference of the self shall keep unbroken, that the person be an integer, impenetrable, perdurable, and autonomous in being" (Trilling 1997: 99). Embedded in Rousseau's version of sincerity, we suggest, is the model of the self that Geertz (1984: 126) later associates with the West, the unitary bounded individual. It is this sentiment, Trilling believes, that becomes the source of authenticity in the work of existentialist intellectuals such as, in different permutations, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, and Camus, who see authenticity as an idea about an irreducible quality of the individual resisting the influence of the group (see Golomb 2012). In Kipling's words:

The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself. (Quoted in Gordon 1935)

Embedded in this idea of the self is a bourgeois idea of property, indeed the self as one's own property. This was accompanied by the nineteenth-century Euro-American idea that our true natures are free from the corrupting influence of society, as celebrated in the work of the Romantic poets and Rousseau. Who we really are is supposed to pre-exist the present social order, to resist and often defy it. Inscribed in Rousseau's "sentiments of being," then, is an ontology of the self as "one of a kind," an individual who exists apart from Thomas Hardy's "maddening crowd." So results a modern self/society dichotomy—the idea that human nature precedes modern social life and is eroded by

it. Against this, non-Western societies were easily viewed as primordial windows into deeper or truer and more collective human nature.

As Trilling explains, Rousseau's "sentiments of being" also refers to a "primitive strength that . . . man brought with him from the state of savagery" (1997: 99)—an idea that evokes the figure of the "noble savage" in European and American literature and that in turn evokes Western social Darwinism. If Rousseau sought the natural individual in those cultures that nineteenth and twentieth century social Darwinism deemed "primitive," however, such cultures tend in fact to be highly social (Markus and Kitayama 1991; Shweder and Bourne 1984; Strathern 1988).

Giddens (1991) analyzed the psychosocial nature of the historical transition that Trilling traces. Its root, for Giddens, is the sequestration of experience—the fencing off of elements of existence that interfere with a sense of normalcy such as madness, poverty, sickness, and death. Foucault's (1988) account of the extrusion of the mad from normalized Western society since the fourteenth century, for example, traces the sequestration of madness. Defining and then exiling de-normalizing elements, however, simultaneously tends to exile major existential questions and hence to deprive people of fertile sources of meaning. Think of the Buddha growing up amidst wealth and luxury, sequestered in his father's palace, but then traveling beyond its borders to encounter a beggar and by doing so also encountering the existential questions at the core of so many religious traditions.

During the Industrial Revolution in the transition from village farm economies to industrial capitalist ones, individuals became more isolated from prior community groups, if not from their own extended and sometimes immediate families. In the process, many social sources of meaning also evaporated. Authentic humanity, at least as it had been understood in Shakespeare's time, was lamented as increasingly bleached out. As Tönnies ([1887] 2001) described it, the face-to-face interaction in communities (*Gemeinschaft*) gave way to the impersonality and facelessness of mass society (*Gesellschaft*). With the rise of impersonal cities, the anomie and alienation that accompanied them underscored and fueled the stakes of individuals' quest for self-actualization (Giddens 1991). While the actualized self is supposed to be the authentic self, its meaning easily became narcissistic, referring only to "my genuine wants," "my genuine desires." As the associated chasm of meaning opens over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we find the complementary rise of the idea of the modern author or artist and with that the idea of authorship as the communication of individualized uniqueness and irreducible authenticity.

In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century anthropology, the personal quest of the ethnographer was often if not typically that of *bildungsroman*—the formative quest for knowledge and understanding—by means of the radically non-Western Other. This romanticist quest for authenticity (e.g., Berlin 1988)

also informed anthropology's emergent notion of culture, which derived from the Germanic notion of "folk-culture" or *volk-kultur*, enshrined in the folkways, folktales, dances, costumes, and customs of the ethnic and national past that garnered so much interest and attention as a waning European "authentic" against the march of modern society (see Wolf 1964; Zammito 2002). Crudely put, "culture" elsewhere became the authentic Other, the collectivized meanings of otherness that many saw as increasingly shattered and obliterated by the march of modernity in the West itself. The modern author as anthropologist, then, had the heroic task of recuperating, bringing to light, and objectivizing the lineaments of collective otherness otherwise lacking in the heart of the modern.

In the romanticism of the Western modern—and the modernity of the Western romantic—the novel emerges as a new form in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. From the first, novels were often about women, for example Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, and by women such as Jane Austen in England and George Sand in France, among many others. Virginia Woolf (1929) describes this transition as making it possible for women to "live by their wits," as was also the case for other new kinds of new authorship, such as that of Jack London, discussed by Mageo in Chapter 2 of this volume. Similarly, male artists in particular could aspire to live by their art—rather than supporting themselves as acolytes, sculptors, or painters of aristocratic patrons (see Berger 1973, Bourdieu 1996.). Painter J. M. W. Turner, for example, was of modest origins and had a Cockney accent but became successful and famous through his distinctive seascapes and landscapes (Shane 2008; Bailey 1998). This status of the author as well-paid celebrity and personification of a primordial authenticity evinced by originality is so widespread in the twentieth century that it became both the aspiration and the signature of modern artistic production.

Parallel to the stress on individual authenticity best realized by authorship was the threat, risk, or suspicion of degraded sociality. In the twentieth century, the French Marxist theorist and filmmaker Guy Debord (1983), for example, writes that Westerners had come to live in a "spectacular society." Mesmerized by the social spectacle, people had ceased to author their lives, instead passively consuming what society placed before them. "All that once was directly lived has become mere representation," Debord writes (1983: 1). Ours is *The Society of the Spectacle*, the title of Debord's most famous work, in which passive consumption of the social supplants genuine activity and drains away authenticity. Like Rousseau, then, Debord projects individual authenticity elsewhere—in Debord's case into a premodern Western past of genuinely lived experience.

Against such degradation, anthropology was positioned to recuperate—and to author—just such collective authenticity among non-Western others,

and in marginal boundaries and borders of so-called civilized society. In some ways, then, the putative authenticity of the anthropological author emerged in complementary relationship to the “discovery” of sincere sociality in Otherness, on the one hand, and the de facto effacement of individuality—and of individuating authorship—as might be asserted or developed by Indigenous non-Westerners. Against this, the Western scholar, following figures such as the “armchair anthropologist,” presumed to author the structures, functions, and cultural patterns of collective non-Western lifeways—and to authenticate them for a Western audience.

Authenticity, Contestation, and Modernity in Regional Perspective

Our usage of traveling concepts, and of authenticity and authorship more generally, can be productively put alongside notions developed by Fillitz and Saris in their volume *Debating Authenticity: Concepts of Modernity in Anthropological Perspective* (2012). As reflected in the book’s title, Fillitz and Saris are especially concerned with the contested and reinforcing or escalating complementarity between the assertion or attribution of authenticity, on the one hand, and what is by contrast considered inauthentic and *not* genuine, on the other. They link this dynamic intriguingly and insightfully to the challenges of modernity and Western capitalism in particular, including in relationship to consumerism and commodification, and in terms of art and aesthetics, to Walter Benjamin’s ([1935] 1968) famous essay on the work of art in an age of mechanical reproduction.

In complementary fashion, drawing on the roots of Western romanticism (e.g., Berlin 1988), authenticity pertains especially to the search for and assertion of genuine experience and genuineness more broadly as a counter to the depersonalization and anonymity, atomization, and/or alienation of modern life. This theme—of searching for the authentic in a world that itself appears less and less so—has strong roots in Western thought, including the work of Rousseau, as discussed above, and Herder (see Zammito 2002). Fillitz and Saris link this to the critical analysis of social life in large-scale impersonal “society” as opposed to smaller face-to-face “community” as considered by Tönnies ([1887] 2001).

The depredations of modernity vis-à-vis its precursors and alters informed much of Western social science from the start, including Durkheim (1964) per anomie, Marx (1964) per alienation, and Weber (1958) per the iron cage of capitalist rationality. The same was true, as if in mirror image, in the “authentication” of anthropology as a scientific field that concerned itself with the putatively authentic, nonmodern, and non-Western primitive (e.g., Kuper

1988; cf., Knauff 2018). As Trouillot (2002) has noted, the Western modern has often if not always configured itself at least implicitly against an Other and an Elsewhere.

Our own approach to authenticity compares with and to some degree contrasts interestingly with Fillitz and Saris' perspective. On the one hand, we also view the assertion or quest for authenticity in dynamic relation to alternatives that may compromise or confound it. However, we see this less as a generic process of threats to authenticity shared widely across Western modernity than as a refractory prism of a Western quest for authenticity that engages—and to at least some extent presently also facilitates—*non*-Western and *non*modern perspectives that, from a local perspective, recast and reformulate Western notions of authenticity (or inauthenticity) themselves (cf., DeBlock 2018). We emphasize the playful ricocheting nature of authenticating and authoring subjectivity in the assertion and inversion of anthropological subjects and objects, including in the decolonialized attribution or self-attribution of Indigenous identity, autochthony, or primordialism.

While this dynamic is evident to some extent in all world areas, including some of those considered in Fillitz and Saris' collection, it is particularly developed and thrown into relief in world areas such as the insular South Pacific that have been—along with Sub-Saharan Africa and Amazonia—taken as maximally contrastive or antipodal (a.k.a., “primitive”) vis-à-vis Western modern practices, customs, and lifestyles (e.g., Knauff 1999: ch. 1). In this regional context, as mentioned above, anthropology has been prominent if not primary as the scholarly and disciplinary lens through which the insular South Pacific has been understood. From a sociology of knowledge perspective, it thus makes “sense” that the Indigenous/Western interface of projections of authenticity and their Indigenous recasting has been particularly pronounced in this volume's world area of concentration.

Our volume's emphasis is hence on the “nestedness” of local and presumptively Indigenous appropriations and transformations of what it is to be authentic within larger Western tensions and dynamics that Fillitz and Saris effectively foreground. This process has often been poignant and intriguing in postcolonial conditions under which modern nation-states, regions, and cultural assertions self-contextualize themselves to be at once “modern” and Indigenously “authentic.” Further, this process in the South Pacific is often informed by a sense of playfulness, humor, and metaframing creativity that undercuts the Western reification of “authenticity” itself (e.g., Alexeyeff and Kihara 2018; Hereniko 1994, 1995; Mageo 1992, 1996, 2008, 2010; Knauff 1998; Hammond, Chapter 1). Though contestations as to what is Indigenously authentic are sometimes politically polarized and sharp, there is also often a spirited and lively embrace of ambiguity and less *Sturm und Dram*—“storm and stress”—than one finds in identity assertions of authenticity in modern

Western contests, especially in the current twenty-first century political era. However, one wades into dangerously contested waters of subject positioning in making such a claim too strongly. In this respect, our assertions partake in the suggestive and playful ambiguity that we often find in assertions of authenticity in the contemporary South Pacific itself, especially in rural and/or hinterland areas.

It is important here not just to note but also to emphasize the relationship of authorship and authenticity as concepts in the worlds of Indigenous Pacific Islanders. In intercultural reference, one can of course stretch our terms—authoring and authenticity—as we ourselves have done self-consciously above. But it is not a conceit so much as a Western auto-critique to acknowledge that the force of these notions—along with modern Pacific notions of national identity and tradition and custom or *kastom* or “The Melanesian Way” or “The Samoan Way”—are presently shot through with the refractions, appropriations, and transformations of what were in some senses Western notions and ideals of self-authored identity and authenticity to begin with. Contemporary Pacific Islander reconceptualizations of these terms are—if sometimes sadly or regrettably and often critically, playfully, and brilliantly—influenced by and respond to dynamics of colonial-cum-capitalist intrusion, domination, and representation. Without proper contextualization, it would be a sleight of hand, for instance, to say that “dividuality”—or some native term from one or another Pacific society—is a form of Indigenous agency that “authors” its own “authenticity.” Expressed in Pacific cultural vernacular, these terms could be woefully under-nuanced and misleading.

Again, in our own analysis, the process of projecting and claiming authenticity and authorship—at turns both Western and Pacific—is thrown into relief by their relationship to each other. In terms of the anthropology of the Pacific Islands, this sets our approach somewhat apart from, though resonant with, a range of developed literatures concerning subjectivity, agency, and materiality in Pacific Islands societies. These include developed scholarly accounts and analyses that pertain to:

- notions and embodiments of selfhood and agency in Pacific Island societies (e.g., Mageo 1995, 1998, 2002; Strathern 1988; Mosko 2010; Sykes 2007; Bonnemère 2018),
- material and intellectual property and the assertion of property rights in the Pacific (e.g., Strathern 1999; Hirsch and Strathern 2004; Strang and Busse 2011; cf., Leach and Wilson 2014; Anderson and Geismer 2017),
- the production and/or curation of artistic, artifactual, or photographic works and their circulation in the Pacific, including in reflexive relation to alternative subject positions and statuses (e.g., Mel 2020; Kabutau-

laka 1997; Myers 2004; Negreiros and Howells 2012; Gell 1998; cf., Stanley 2008; Silverman 2015; Basu and Modest 2015; Bennett 2017; Mageo 2010, 2017b).

All of these are important issues that are beyond our purview to address or review on their own terms, though they resonate in various ways with our concerns.

Colonialism, Christianity, Literacy

In the Pacific as in most of the classic anthropological world, the civilizing mission of colonialism—and its literate authorship—was closely twined with economic exploitation, on the one hand, and the seeding of moralized modern individualism through Christian conversion on the other (e.g., Barker 1990; Mageo 1998: 141–239; cf. Robbins 2004). The impact of white missionaries was particularly prominent and pervasive in Polynesia and eastern insular Melanesia. Missionaries were the first to develop dictionaries of local languages and to publish material in local languages (Bibles, catechisms, and so on). Soldiering on amidst rival throngs of traders, planters, administrators, and the occasional anthropologist, Christianity became deeply intertwined with colonial experience in the Pacific. Inevitably over time, however, the control of literacy, of authorship, and of claims to authenticity began to shift, if gradually and with embedded dual consciousness, to local elites and to eventual national voicing if not control of authorizing discourse for and about Pacific Islanders themselves (e.g., Schram 2019; cf., concerning dual-consciousness, DuBois 1903). This process is one that still plays itself out in assertions of authenticity and authorship in the Pacific.

In the anthropology of the Pacific, many of these tensions are encapsulated in the critical contestation between Haunani-Kay Trask (1991) and Roger Keesing (1989). By the late 1980s and 1990s, anthropologists such as Keesing saw idealizations of custom by Pacific Islanders as emerging from Westernized local elites. Keesing believed that ideas such as “The Melanesian Way” or “The Pacific Way” were political rhetoric that enshrined the administrative and economic fictions of the postcolonial state while incorporating traditionalized missionary discourse, hyper-valorizations of the past, and fetishizations of what appeared to be newly invented culture. Against this, Trask, an active scholar in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, argued that Keesing’s analysis was academic colonialism. She saw Keesing as a latter-day missionary aspiring to enlighten bedeviled natives while ignoring native sources and authors.

Many joined the debate. Margaret Jolly (1992) parsed alternative moderns of Pacific authenticity: *la coutume* in New Caledonia, *Kastom* in Vanuatu, Samoans’ *fa’aSamoa* (the Samoan way), and *peu ma’ohi* in Tahiti. She questioned

Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) distinction between tradition and custom and the equation of unselfconsciousness with authenticity. Thomas (1992) argued that the distinction between tradition and invention exemplified processes of diacritical self-fashioning that were themselves intrinsic to cultural identity. From different directions and in different ways, these works attempted to deal with the moral and political issues that arose around the topics of authenticity and authoring, particularly concerning the appropriation of voice.

At the time, anthropology was arguably unprepared if not unable to adequately address these issues, and the stridency of debate concerning them gradually subsided. Yet attributions of authenticity and critiques of authorship have continued to reverberate and transform in anthropology and among Pacific Islanders (see for example Kabutaulaka 2015; Reisinger and Steiner 2006; Belthassen and Caton 2006; Theodossopoulos 2013a, 2013b; Wang 1999; West and Carrier 2004; Arthur 2011; Hammond et al. 2014; Field 2009; Myers 2004; Hoerig 2003; Taylor 2001; Martin 2010). These transformations are particularly striking in writings about and in the practices of Indigenous Pacific arts and Western tourism, two domains that chapters of this volume explore (e.g., Mel 2020). Some of these insights will be summarized further below. The larger point is to draw attention to the invariably complex reciprocal, ricocheting, and ramifying rebounds, recursions, and resistances between national and/or "Indigenous" assertions and constructions of authenticity and right to authorship vis-à-vis those of Westerners.

As Western senior anthropologist editors of this volume, our present authorship does not attempt to either re-assert or abnegate our own author function but rather to open issues of authority and influence over discourse in relation to larger politico-economic and historical contexts. These are invariably part of *all* present accounts and assertions of authorship and ethnographic or artifactual authenticity, whatever their provenience—not only of prominent cases that find their way to the Western press, such as the desire of Papua New Guinean Members of Parliament to dismantle as immoral or unethical suggestive neo-traditional totemic carvings in its national legislative chamber (e.g., Fox 2013). Issues of discursive construction and contestation of authenticity and legitimate or authorized authorship inform practically all contexts of published representation in the contemporary Pacific, including across national, provincial, local, and village registers as well as those of professional scholarship, academics, and publishing.

In and Beyond the Museum

Benedict Anderson (1991) regards the idea of the national state as developing out of romantic constructions of primordialism—i.e., the nation as the

original, natural, and authentic social unit. Significantly, he takes the museum to be a primary locale for the practice of nationalism. This was the case for Western hegemony whose aspirations for nations-become-empires projected themselves as global curators of others' cultural and artifactual diversity. Today the intersection of museums and nations is complex. Some museums are regional in scope—and Indigenous experts have leading roles in their management—for example the Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, New Zealand. Pacific nation-states may vaunt Pacific collections, for example the Auckland Museum and the Mitchell Library in Australia. And there are museums of local artifacts and historical photos dotted all over the Pacific, along with “ethnic” museums in Western locales with large Pacific Island communities, such as the Pacific Island Ethnic Art Museum in Long Beach, California. These types of museums are often devoted to notions of authenticity and indeed may identify as icons and actualizations of Pacific authenticity both of an artifactual and artistic variety.

Speaking generally, in the history of Western social theory, theorists tended to project authenticity onto three primordial locales: (1) inaccessibly deep within the individual Western-styled self, (2) among “primitive” societies, and (3) in the deep past of Western history. This conceptual splintering exposes various kinds of authenticity: authenticity found in Western authors, past or present, or in their objects of artistic production, and authenticity purportedly endemic in “primitive” societies and in their “traditional” objects. This splintering of authenticity became, we suggest, a schismatic structuring principle for museums, including early choices about dividing and segmenting different locales in different sections of priority within the museum as well as in the generation of wholly different kinds of museums—for instance, fine art museums in which individual artistic authorship is foregrounded, and ethnographic or natural history museums where authorship of all but the most recent objects may be unclear or absent altogether.

While nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Westerners believed that change and upheaval characterized their own societies, they tended to believe that non-Western societies were characterized by unchanging tradition, replete with perduring customs in the general absence of social transformation (Latour 1993). As we saw in the Trask-Keesing debate, Westerners often saw transformation in non-Western societies as an unfortunate fall away from the authenticity that such societies purportedly embodied. Anderson's (1991) analysis of the Taj Mahal offers another example. Western colonists sought to purify the Taj in order to extricate and enshrine the traditions it represented by removing persons and objects that might denote that it was or would otherwise have been part of a living, changing culture. This purification made it, temporarily, postcard-pretty and a key tourist destination, a must-see stopover on the grand tour that aristocrats and upper-middle-class Europeans

saw as integral to their education. Here “tradition” became, in Debord’s terms, spectacle.

To contemporary anthropologists, a model of authenticity as unchanging tradition seems quaint at best and, like museums themselves (Goetz 1954: 15), may be an invention of the colonial period. But the quaint can also be the contemporary. Mel (2020: 48), a PNG highlander who is currently manager of the Pacific and International collections at the Australian Museum in Sydney, attests that still today Pacific museum collections tend to be “steeped in Western ideologies.”³ In a recent project on Samoan historical artifacts and photographs for which she visited twenty-three museums in Europe, New Zealand, and the United States, Mageo found that such ideologies or rather their historical legacy still characterized many ethnographic collections. By investigating museum acquisition lists and then investigating the biographies of donors, she could often roughly date objects. In all but a very few cases, however, there had been little attempt to discover when objects were actually collected, to document Indigenous artistic or social transformation, and certainly not to discover who made them—their author. Of course, this was usually not the fault of contemporary museum staff.

In museums today in the Pacific and elsewhere, museum staff generally and the Pacific islanders who frequently number among them are intensely concerned with documenting artifacts and their histories. But there is often a widening gap between what people know should be done and what can be done. Resources to investigate provenience are limited and museum storages are replete with objects lacking substantive documentation. Museums cannot have experts in all cultural areas let alone all cultures, and artifacts come from a much wider range of locales than museum staff know about.

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travelers collected many museums items considered “traditional” and hence unchanging. In line with the biases of their time, they imagined that artisans simply repeated long-existing patterns rather than creating new originals like Western artists putatively did. This was the very signature of ethnographic artifacts’ authenticity. Authenticity meant an object was collectively authored and timeless. Ironically, “timelessness” was often legitimated by an object’s age, older items being more “timeless.” Often, too, during the period in which many objects were donated—the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—attitudes were similar at the museum. With photos, the situation was somewhat better—but only because tourists or official photographers might date their photos: in the first case as travel mementos; in the second because they depicted what photographers regarded as historical events in which dates were consequential. Contrast the imputed atemporality of early artifacts owned by museums with the detailed provenance that Aime’s Papua New Guinea Kayan people remember for their *garamut* drums (Chapter 4). Although Kayan see these drums as the

very essence of their traditions, its spirit(s), these drums are far from authorless or without history.

Today, along with accession dates, museums frequently have a record of who gave an item but not necessarily of the actual collector. This collector can sometimes be inferred from other records. For example, one might recognize the name of the donor as being the son of a famous traveler or expedition leader or itinerant ethnographer who was in the Pacific thirty years earlier but who died around the date a set of objects was given to the museum. Even this gives no definitive hint as to when an object was made. While early travelers often sought old objects, locals often realized that age-cum-authenticity attracted travelers' interest and so could "antique" objects to make them more saleable—practices that continue today (see for example DeBlock 2018 and Knauff, Chapter 3).

Bifurcated notions of authenticity still often structure museum collections: on the one hand, the authenticity associated with nature and perceived naturalness in people (what Mageo in Chapter 2 calls "natural authenticity"); on the other, the authenticity imputed to the recognized Western artist, which we might call "artistic authenticity." Frequently if not typically, there are distinct sections or even separate museums for ethnographic objects and for fine art. Today, recognized artists' works, like individual subjects, are putatively unique, coming from the deepest core of an individual subject—as distinct from the ever-proliferating objects of commercial and commodified production. If they are famous, the objects that Western artists produce also have an elaborately published history. And yet, ironically, significant Western artists have found inspiration for their "original" works in so-called "primitive" cultures. From 1906 to 1909, Picasso famously took inspiration from sculpture and masks brought back to Paris from the French colonial expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa; such pieces were a formative influence in his Cubism (Negreiros and Howells 2012; Rubin 1984; Stepan 2006). The intermediary, of course, was the museum, in this case, the Palais du Trocadero, among others. Even Baudelaire's famous original elucidation and formulation of Western "modernity" in the 1860s, was deeply intertwined with and informed by his travels and intimacies with radically non-Western others. In material culture, artifacts and "art," the locus of presentation is the museum, along with the art gallery, as Sarina Pearson and Shuchi Kothari (Chapter 6) suggest.

Authenticity and Christianity in the Pacific

To an important extent, ideas travel as if they have a life of their own, whatever our personal reservations. They circulate, passing from mind to mind, recontextualized by user upon user in different social and cultural locales.

Colonials of many stripes brought the Rousseauian idea of primitive naturalness even to the fringes of empire, including a Western cultural model of the self embedded in this idea. But Christian missionaries had particular impact on ideation in the colonial interface given their often long-term residence, practical influence, and explicit project of introducing Christian texts and ideas in and through local languages (Mageo 1998: 141–239). These projections have selectively influenced Pacific Islanders themselves, including in their own assertions of authenticity and authorship (e.g. Barker 1990; Robbins 2004).

A revealing case in point is the idea of sincerity brought and propagated among Polynesians by nineteenth-century evangelical missionaries (cf. Tomlinson 2020). In Samoa, for example, knowledge of the catechism was for the London Missionary Society a necessary but insufficient criterion for the privilege of baptism and for church office, to which many Samoans aspired. Missionaries looked for converts who displayed “knowledge of their own hearts” (Harbutt 1841); this alone indicated sincere adherence to the faith. As a result, converting Samoans, who modeled the self as a role player and who emphasized the importance of decorous performance (in Samoan terms *teu le va*, “decorate the relationship”), often came to feel like hypocrites. In an 1839 letter from Tutuila, the missionary Murray quotes a recent convert proclaiming, “Formerly . . . we uttered love . . . with our mouth while our hearts were full of hatred and murder but now, we know true compassion” (1839). Christianity purveyed Western ideas of authenticity and authorship in many locales although these ideas hybridized with local needs and feelings and with local models in highly specific ways (see Barker 1990, 2012; Mageo 1998, 2002; Robbins 2004; Tomlinson and McDougall 2012; Schram 2019).

Pacific colonial officials of many varieties also brought contradictory Western ideas of authenticity to the Pacific, on the one hand grounded in individuality, originality, and authoring; on the other, based on notions of the primitive as pure nature and of tradition as unchanging culture. What was “authored” was putatively original, the very opposite of traditional—and, indeed, voided any legal claim to what we might call historical authenticity and legitimacy.

While Christian missionaries brought the idea of sincerity as an honest accord between inner sentiments and outward expression to the Pacific, and while colonial officials brought the idea that “tradition” was a form of legal authentication, a multitude of people—museum-goers, tourists, anthropologists and others—recontextualized these ideas in playful and practical ways. One result is that in the contemporary Pacific, the “A word,” Authenticity, has increasingly become an emic category. Indeed, authenticity is now part of a “*pa-tois of culture*” among islanders, tourists, and collectors as well as a key value in the practices of all three groups. As such, authenticity and the entailed idea of authorship deserve renewed consideration and evaluation. This volume will

consider anew what cultural work these ideas have done and continue to do in Pacific settings today.

In different locales and from various viewpoints, our chapters shift the focus of this “authenticity” conversation to the active entwining of local and foreign cultural forms, to use Hammond’s (2017) phrase. We also investigate explicit and implicit commingling of ideas about authenticity and authorship in Pacific cultures by foreigners and locals, a commingling that has persisted since first contact. In most instances, the aims of these attempts were hybrid and the renderings themselves, multi-vocal. Often, such renderings have been and continue to be coauthored by foreigners and Indigenous in more or less manifest or latent ways that are generative for foreigners and Indigenous cultures alike. Troubled by concerns about voice, its origins, who is speaking, with what right and with what legitimacy, these renderings and their reception nonetheless represent creative hybrids of cultural orientations themselves. Their effects were and are to different degrees at once eroding and generative. Themes of tribute, gift, appropriation, and trade lace through such productions and their after-effects.

Thematic Contours

This volume develops four themes touched upon by all the chapters, with varying degrees of respective emphasis. First, obviously, is the thematic connection between Authenticity and Authoring itself. While some chapters emphasize one or the other of these notions more prominently, all pay some attention to both and to their interrelationship. From various places and perspectives, each chapter asks to what extent have these ideas implied and relied upon one another both in Western colonial incursions and in Pacific lives.

Second, all the chapters consider how change is invariably a two-way street. How do ideas of authenticity and authoring and their usage in the Pacific toggle back and forth between metropolitan Western European locales (the academy, the museum, the gallery, the fashion show runway, etc.) and Pacific locales, both rural and urban? How, through the concepts of authenticity and authoring, do Pacific islanders talk and talk back to Western theorizations and ethnographic descriptions? How has cultural interactivity developed around these concepts?

Third, the chapters touch upon authenticity and authoring as implicating a history of ideas, specially the history/transformation of these ideas in the West and in the Pacific. In some of this book’s chapters, the focus is more on Western production and assertion or dissemination of ideas, and in others on Pacific Islanders own sides of the coin. But in all cases the relationship is ultimately one of rebounding influence and combination.

Fourth, like this introduction, the chapters suggest the place of concepts of authenticity and authoring in the ongoing development of anthropological theory and practice. Discourses that are alternatively transnational, national, local—and academic or not—rebound in complex ways that authors address in importantly different permutations and registers. In all cases, these have significant implications for the further development of authorship, authority, and authentication in anthropology as a field and as a discipline.

The Chapters

The following chapters of this book are vitally complementary both with respect to each other and with respect to this introduction. Some contributions tend ultimately to champion Indigenous authenticity across the ricochet of ideas and impositions (Dalton, Aime, and Jolly); others stress the hybridities and playfulness of Pacific Islander performance of authenticity (Hammond), the whiplash of competing notions of Pacific authenticity in the Western curation of Pacific art (Pearson and Kothari), the complicities and complications of Westerners visual self-renderings in the Pacific (Mageo), and the imputations and contradictions of Western ethnographic authorship (Knauff). Because each of these contributions is, we think, very strong on its own terms, we take it as a strength that their respective facets and nuances of understanding are not fully reducible or collapsible to the conceptual framework that our introduction itself sets forth—at the same time that they all fully engage and deeply resonate with its general perspective. Our introductory ideas themselves ricochet through the chapters in ways that are at turns intriguing, surprising, and beyond regimentation. We see the larger contribution of this work not as promulgating a coherent new dictum but as a reflexive scholarly illustration of the kinds of interchange and prismatic refraction that our introduction expresses in larger conceptual terms.

Joyce Hammond's chapter, "*Tenues Végétales* in Beauty Contests of French Polynesia: Authenticity on Islanders' Own Terms," is perhaps the best example of the toggling back and forth of concepts of authenticity and authoring between European and Pacific Islanders. From the beginning of the Miss Tahiti competition, contestants wore a variety of fashionable Western-style garments such as evening gowns, a practice associated with beauty contests globally. In the late 1900s, a Tahitian dance sequence was added to the program that featured costumes crafted from natural materials. That sequence was abandoned shortly after 2000 when the owner of the contest decided to add a segment parallel to the elegant gown section. Ever since, the *tenues végétales* segment has featured stylish garments of local design, all made from natural materials of the island environment.

To create these *tenues végétales*, islanders often draw from their historical past as well as style magazines, fashion on the internet and in films and TV shows. Hammond suggests that this particular “fashion show” element of the Miss Tahiti competition was recast in local terms to give island artists the opportunity to author fashionable, cosmopolitan reconceptualizations of cultural identity. The practice, ongoing since 2000 and pervasive in a majority of beauty contests throughout French Polynesia, creates a venue for islanders to express authenticity as a creative engagement with global influence, with tradition, and with “nature” locally conceived. Hammond’s chapter shows how “authenticity” is a focus around which many other ethnographic oppositions collapse—such as that between the past and the present, between nature and artifice, and between “the West and the Rest.”

Tradition, Hammond argues, is mutable, changing, and the focus of Tahitian designers’ creativity. In Western thought there had long been an analogy between the depths of the self and the historical past. In “Civilization and Its Discontents,” for example, Freud (1961) likens the depth of the self to Roman ruins on top of which many new structures are built. In the Pacific, islanders often sought an authenticity that was not deep within the individual but by reimagining and reconceptualizing traditional forms. Art plays a special part here—art as a source of authenticity. The Western artist purportedly plumbed “his” personal interior depths to create authentic art. The authenticity of Tahitian designers, Hammond argues, comes not from their ability to mine the inner resources of the self but to create cultural identity anew. This link between art, authenticity, and cultural identity is clearly pan-Pacific. Thus since 1972, island nations have hosted the Pacific Arts Festival. This traveling festival is a cultural exchange aimed at supporting and expanding Islanders’ sense of cultural identity.

Next we turn to Jeannette Mageo’s, “American Colonial Mimicry: Cultural Identity Fantasies and Being ‘Authentic’ in Samoa.” Mageo’s chapter collapses the apparent opposition between imitation and authoring. In the traditional Western view, that which is authentically authored is original, but Mageo argues that people author their cultural identities in part by mimicking foreign others (see also Mageo 2017a, 2017b). In photographs from the first half of the twentieth century of Americans in Samoa, she examines American’s mimicry of Samoans. What she finds is that an artist and an anthropologist, along with women and children more generally, engage in playful mimicry of what they perceive as Samoan authenticity. They combine this mimicry with facial and bodily gestures that signal American authenticity understood as inclusiveness and openness to others. Official American colonials engage in a much more limited mimicry that preserves colonial authority while also signaling inclusiveness, which Mageo interprets as a platform offered in exchange for the right to rule. In contrast, she examines the New Zealand regime in the

westerly Samoa's post-World War I, which was more politically fraught than the American regime. In photos from the first several decades of the twentieth century, New Zealanders appear to imitate British imperial style: for them this is the authorizing source of social authority and legitimacy. Later New Zealanders, under scrutiny by the United Nations for their mismanagement, assume the task of shepherding Samoa to an independent state and then do mimic Samoans.

In "Critical Reflections across Four Decades of Work with Gebusi: Authorship, Authenticity, Anthropology," Bruce Knauff begins with Foucault's genealogy of authorship as not just an individual but an individually recognized Western phenomenon of representational construction. How and under what conditions, Knauff asks, do nominations or imputations of authenticity in our own authorship change over the course of an anthropological career—and how have they changed over recent decades of anthropological history? Authenticity and Authorship thus seem to have, Knauff argues, a collaborative or collusional relationship by Western genealogical fiat: Authorship and Author-ity, Authenticity, Authentication, and Author-ization. The politics of authorship and authenticity are very much at stake in the shifting forms of representation that ethnographers have pursued or at least reflected over time. In its own way, and perhaps inevitably, professional anthropological scholarship presumes attributions that are at once real, true, and genuine, on the one hand, and, on the other, brought to light and delineated through presumptively original authorship.

Though debates concerning the political assertion of authenticity and authorship ebb and flow over time, the pragmatic tasks of writing and publishing, curating, representing, and encouraging self-representation by and of other peoples and cultures continue. This chapter engages these issues in Knauff's forty-year representational relationship of and with the Gebusi people of Papua New Guinea, starting in 1980. During this period, both the Gebusi's and Knauff's depictions or projections of them have continued across long cycles of effervescent "traditionality," the effacement of traditions by local development, and the more recent resurgence of customs in the face of economic collapse. Knauff reflects on his own style of writing and representation as the themes and times of ethnography have altered and as his professional goals, and those Gebusi themselves, have morphed. He considers varied constructions of authorship and authenticity in relation to the intended or implied audience or addressee, self-critically tracing the twisted genealogy of his own authorship and assertions of Gebusi authenticity over four decades—and how they themselves have or have not reacted to this. In conclusion, Knauff adduces eight take-away points, relevant for junior or seasoned scholars, for considering authorship and authenticity in contemporary cultural anthropology. He suggests these allow and encourage anthropologists to be more self-aware and mindful of their own subject position vis-à-vis their subjects and collab-

orators in research, and the status of our work in relation to diverse local, national, and international constituencies.

In “Recovering Authenticity: *Garamut* (Slit-Drums) among Kayan People, Madang Province, Papua New Guinea,” Alphonse Aime explores resonances between Alfred Gell’s (1998) idea that objects mediate social agency and act as secondary agents that extend the agency of persons as spirit-charged objects. He suggests that conceptualizing objects as possessing agency and personhood is critical to understanding the production and use of *garamut* (slit-drums) among the Kayan people of Bogia District in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea. He uses this analysis to examine the potentials and complications of promulgating a neo-traditional return to an earlier Kayan village culture. Respect for authority and for elders is reinscribed by stimulating the production of *garamut*.

Young men who Aime interviewed were highly aware and to some extent taken with this return, which they saw as helping them move from a disorderly kind of freedom by resurrecting the voice of the spirits of old. *Garamut* could only be initiated by Big-Men, and only owned by men, not by women, and were apparently paired. *Garamut* production today is seen to underscore the value of tradition in ways that help address problems of lawlessness and social unrest among younger men that are evident throughout much of contemporary Melanesia. Potentially, Aime argues, *garamut* can author a resurgence of tradition that is both productive and cross-generational. These talking “drums” exemplify the spiritual force and efficacy of traditional spirit-charged objects that was lost or explicitly extracted from them (or not encoded to begin with) by siphoning them off for touristic or other non-traditional display. This turn to commercialism risks interrupting these objects’ sacred voice, spiritual value, and ritual internalization. Here the appropriation of voice, so often discussed in the anthropological literature on tradition and invention, takes on new meaning—capitalism appropriating but then Indigenes taking back voices that express themselves in a new key. Aime’s chapter lets *garamut* speak as if for themselves to a new audience.

In “The Flying Fox and the Sentiment of Being: On the Authenticity of a Papua New Guinea Rawa Tradition,” Doug Dalton suggests that Pacific Islanders are a genuine source of authenticity: they manifest what Rousseau calls “a sentiment of being.” The *yambo miro* or “song of the flying fox” of Papua New Guinea Rawa-speaking people harbors this sentiment. It is “anonymous” in the folklorist sense of having no original author. Involving a mythical origin and a magical bush spirit whose invocation in song elicits compassion and generosity and reminds men of their mortality, the song is at the heart of the marriage exchange system but is also employed in many modern contexts including a touristic encounter in the Rawa hinterland Dalton observed and the opening of a Lutheran church conference that his village sponsored.

Dalton argues that this analytic move, asserting Rawa authenticity, is a way to recoup Rawa otherness—that is, what is valuable and different about them and what they have to offer us as a model of being human. Along these lines, Dalton also asks how Rawa’s sentiment of being is the same as or different than that sentiment as Rousseau envisioned it. He finds that for both Rawa and Rousseau this sentiment counters problems of deception and self-deception through a return to sentient experience and to the empathy inspired by others’ pain, grief, and death. This Rawa experience of authenticity, however, does not seem to travel easily across cultures or through time. Thus, Dalton also suggests that the song of the flying fox fails to create a sentiment of being among Western Europeans and, increasingly, even among Rawa themselves. Dalton suggests this failure is evident in an increase in postcolonial violence that reminds him of the revolutionary politics that Rousseau foresaw and attempted to avert.

Sarina Pearson’s and Shuchi Kothari’s “Digital Storytelling in the Pacific and ‘Ethnographic Orientalism’” offers a powerful commentary on the ways authenticity is established in the Pacific today. One of the volumes’ features is to follow authenticity and authoring into diverse locales and through diverse histories. Pearson and Kothari’s chapter introduces a locale where authenticity and authoring have surprising contemporary resonances—the art gallery, which turns out, unsurprisingly, to be even more trammled by capitalism than tourism and museums, all under auspices of being supercool and anti-Orientalist. Pearson and Kothari were recording Pacific Islander life-history stories in Suva at the University of the South Pacific and at a USP extension in Tonga when the directors of a nursing program at the University of Auckland asked their team to pilot digital storytelling as part of the Māori palliative care research. They saw the project as offering a way to produce more authentic information than the program might get elsewhere. Here we find yet another version of “authenticity,” a scientific notion of genuine “truthful” data. Pearson and Kothari explore the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity embedded in the various response they got from their participants, from their colleagues before and after the project, and from the gallery, documenting each group’s changing ideas about authenticity. Given that the videos were made by and about Pacific islanders, the chapter has fertile implications for our understanding of authoring and how various audiences evaluate it.

Margaret Jolly’s Afterword begins by contrasting two evocative vignettes. The first is of remarkable pieces of art in a museum of “Old and New Art” in a subterranean quarry in Tasmania—where, for example, Winged Tang dynasty tomb guardians jostle against Egyptian falcons, plaster sculpted heads used for phrenology in early twentieth-century England, nineteenth-century Fijian clubs fashioned from tree roots, Picasso’s *The Weeping Woman*, and elaborate Pacific tapa cloths. The second vignette portrays Jolly’s poignant encounter with an embittered Vanuatu man dying of prostate cancer who claims authen-

tic ownership of cultural property in a homicidal dispute over local land dive (*gol*) performances that have attracted the attention and visits of many tourists to Vanuatu.

Having bookended a broad spectrum of issues concerning authorship and authenticity, Jolly then comments on the contested nature of authenticity and its relationship to authorship, particularly in Eurocentric readings of historical assertion or imposition. She engages the challenges to Western readings, histories, and interpretations posed by Oceanic ideas of authenticity, including in relation to Indigenous personhood as elaborated in the Maussian tradition of Leenhardt and by Pacific Islander authors themselves. Reflecting on the highly publicized argument between Roger Keesing (1989) Haunani-Kay Trask (1991), discussed earlier in this introduction, Jolly resituates this debate against centuries of colonial contact and change among most of the societies that this volume considers. After providing an analytic summary and review of each the book's chapters, her final assessment is that adjudications of authenticity should be up to Indigenous agents themselves rather than outsiders, even as Islanders may disagree concerning the terms and contours of authenticity. She finishes poignantly by considering the current role of social media such as Instagram in mediating assertions of authenticity by Pacific Islanders amid consumerism and the marketing of commodities, brands, and experiences on the internet.

Well-Traveled Reflections

Pacific Islanders take Western genealogies, projections, and impositions of “authenticity” and “authorship” on board, recasting these traveling concepts for their own purposes—that is their power for good and ill. The Western proveniences for these concepts and their entailments are not “by right” only Western. And yet, this genealogy of imposition has had lasting effects, and ones not reducible to some imagined Pacific alternative ontology that has its own hagiographic and projective biases. That Pacific Islanders incorporate, subvert, recast, and re-tool Western notions of authenticity and authorship in their own ways does not reduce their responses to “Westernisms,” but neither does it signal some continuity-without-change in received Pacific islander notions. Under conditions of asymmetric power/dominance, the ricochet of traveling ideas is not evenly equal or reciprocal—being always to a degree inflected by postcolonial conditions or by local elites in at least some spheres and contexts. As such, cultural ideas are in continual process of reassertion and translation, colored by changing relations of power and influence both within the insular Pacific as well as outside of it (cf., Clifford 1997). In the process, the endlessly variant translations of these Western ideas have become vehicles

of Pacific agency—like foreign words incorporated into an Indigenous language but used to convey (most authentically) transforming local meanings and values. In Papua New Guinea, what was once an English-based pidgin of indigenized Western terms has developed over time to become the full spoken and written national language of Tok Pisin (a.k.a., “Talk Pidgin”). If, as is often said, a language is a dialect with an army and a navy, new and even subaltern languages can also assume and assert their own authenticity and authorship over time.

So, too, Christianity in the insular Pacific encodes and reflects such conceptual travel (Barker 1990, 2012; Mageo 1998: 141–239; Robbins 2004; Schram 2019; Tomlinson and McDougall 2012). In many senses Christianity is now fully “Pacific Islander” and not an alien intrusion; its Western origin does not subvert its local “authenticity” or its originary provenience, definitions, assumptions, or impositions. The “Western” origin of the traveling concepts we trace is not one of ultimate determination—that is indeed our point—nor does it reflect a failure to appreciate Pacific Islander ontologies and received cultural constructions. Rather we hope to illuminate both the genealogical ancestry and the locally authentic construction of intrusions that, like Christianity, are now often “authenticated” and “authored” in new ways by Pacific Islanders themselves.

Another larger question these studies raise for anthropology is how issues tend to get debated in the abstract only to be then neglected for years while their practical impact actually deepens and rebounds more fully among the subjects as well as authors of anthropological work. As the “light of scholarly interest” moves on to other topics (see Robbins 2013), it easily leaves an historical and ethnographic myopia concerning the continuing entailments of these same issues in the lives of the people studied. A number of critical concepts in anthropology demonstrate this progression. For instance, structural-functional notions of “clanship” went out of fashion in anthropology at the same time that Indigenous peoples increasingly started latching on to these same notions to assert their land rights and property claims. Another more general example is how anthropologists critiqued notions of “modernity” and “development” in the 1990s and then moved on largely as if this critique had done its job. At the same time, however, development schemes of modern progress were increasingly internalized and aspired to by local people across many parts of the world—and have been concretely adopted as national political strategies in many if not most countries to the present day. One could also make this argument about the notion of “culture”: as holistic notions of culture were critiqued and rejected as overly reified, local peoples and national (and nationalistic) groups began employing such notions more and more in representational self-assertion. As Sahlins (1999: 403) suggests, quoting Brumann, “If anthropologists like it or not, it appears that people—

and not only those with power—*want* culture, and they often want it precisely in the bounded, reified, essentialized, and timeless fashion that most of us now reject.” This resonates with the crooked course we follow in this volume for authoring and authenticity, along with their travels and the travails they have spawned.

In combining different Pacific instances and locales where concepts of authoring and authenticity have played and still play major roles, *Authenticity and Authorship in Pacific Island Encounters* represents a new contribution to our disciplinary understanding of histories of ideas and their “routes” both within and across cultures (cf., Clifford 1997). This includes how concepts rebound and recast other existing concepts. In particular, this volume pries apart and refines our understanding of authoring in relation to the implicit or explicit assertions or renewed discoveries or reinventions of authenticity—be it through the defense, or the reconstruction or deconstruction, of primordialism. Perforce, this entails new relations and considerations of authorship, and of assertive agency and discursivity. The chapters show how thick cultural interactivity has grown crystal-like around these concepts—and how Westerners have uncritically lugged about this conceptual baggage from their first entrée into the Pacific, while islanders have adopted, sported with, and changed these ideas as they might any other novel import. Pacific Islanders combine externalizing and internalizing dimensions of authenticity and authoring, informing these with long-held concepts of their own that provide both new twists and old turns. As such, we hope this book will have strong relevance not only for scholarly work in the Pacific but for other audiences and for broader considerations of culture and history in anthropology.

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Since 1980, **Jeannette Mageo** has researched Samoan culture, history, and psychology. She has authored eleven books and edited collections as well as thirty-four peer-reviewed major articles and numerous book chapters on Pacific anthropology and psychological anthropology. After earning her doctorate in 1979 from the University of California at Santa Cruz, Professor Mageo spent

nine years in the field, returning to a postdoctoral position at the University of California at San Diego in 1989, which she held until 1993 when she assumed her current post at Washington State University. In recent years she has turned to examine the collision of Samoan and European cultures and psychologies in the colonial encounter through performance art, historical photos, and colonial artifacts.

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Notes

1. These approaches include hermeneutics in the tradition of Dilthey (1976), Husserl (2017), and contemporary phenomenology (e.g., Ram and Houston 2015; Jackson 1996); deconstruction as *différance* in textual tracings à la Derrida (2016, 2017) or in semiotic usage à la Barthes (1996); dynamic multivocality of intersecting speech genres and chronotopes per Bakhtin (1986); the morphing of ideas as seen through an historical sociology of knowledge per Mannheim (2015); traveling concepts in interdisciplinarity (Bal 2002); genealogies of nuanced subjective change à la latter Foucault (1985, 1986); and the traveling of concepts or theories in a world of artistic or academic attribution à la Said (1983, 2014), or, in different register, Bourdieu (1996).
2. Academic works by Pacific Islanders have provided highly important contributions to ethnographic and larger critical understanding in and in relation to anthropological scholarship. Even outside Hawai'i, New Zealand, and New Caledonia, contributions include works by Melanesians and Polynesians such as Narokobi 1983; Hau'ofa 1994; Hereniko 1994, 1995; Mara 1997; Ketan 2004; Guo 2006; Stella 2007; Smith 2011; Tamaira 2010; Osorio 2011; Nanau 2011; Diaz 2012; Teaiwa 2014a, 2014b; Kabutaulaka 1997, 2015; Alexeyeff and Kihara 2018; and Mel 2020, among many others. In the Pacific as elsewhere, opportunities or lack of opportunity for higher education have a strong impact on the potentials for insider authorship. Given the relative marginality of many, or most, smaller Pacific islands in the global political economy, it is not surprising that the facilitation of Indigenous academic authorship faces special challenges and constraints across many parts of the region.
3. Similarly, Appadurai and Breckenridge (1992: 36) see Indian museums as “a product of the conscious agenda of India's British rulers.”

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Figure 1.1. In the 2017 Miss Puna'auia contest, Mareva Domby wears a dress created by Myrna Taae, composed of the petals of pink 'ōpuhi flowers. Photograph by NDZ Max; courtesy of the Miss Puna'auia Organization.