

**Cultural Invasion, Negative Knowledge,
Self-Expression and the Prose Narratives
of Papua New Guinea**

**A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts in English
in the
University of Canterbury**

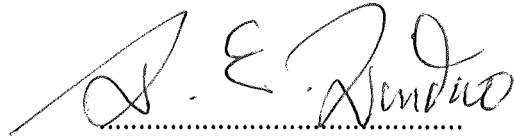
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1991

STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and believe, original except where acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in parts, for a degree at this or any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. E. Winduo', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Steven Edmund Winduo
20 November, 1991

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the imperialistic literary imaginings in New Guinea and the indigenous literature that has emerged in the last two and a half decades. The experiences of colonialism and the invasive role colonialism played in the cultural, social and religious life of the people of Papua New Guinea are the centre of discussion in this thesis. Cultural invasion made possible the setting up of colonial institutions which could maintain their power, control and dominance by forcibly conditioning the indigenous mind with a negative knowledge, and demanded the indigenous people to accept without protest, dissent, or resistance the colonial control, power and knowledge. In the imperialistic colonial discourse there was nothing human about the New Guinean, except that the New Guinean was part of the literary landscape the colonial writers explored for their own self and cultural identity. It is against this literature that the emergence of indigenous self-expression is founded. The emergence of the indigenous Papua New Guinean author is entwined with the social, political, cultural, and economical transition from being a colonial territory to an independent nation. The Papua New Guinean authors studied are aware of these experiences; this forces them to draw from their own personal experiences as much as possible. It is this feature of drawing from personal experiences that characterizes the Papua New Guinea narrative tradition as autobiographical. However the emphasis of this thesis is to determine, qualify and expose the literature of Papua New Guinea as a post-colonial literature. Theories of post-colonial literature are used frequently in this thesis, but not with the intent to obstruct one of the aims of this thesis: to analyse from within the literature of Papua New Guinea, which when closely analysed reveals it has its own influences from the oral traditions as well as from the indigenous social, cultural and linguistic contexts.

INTRODUCTION

This research concerns the prose narratives, mainly novels, novellas, and autobiographies written by people who were born in Papua New Guinea. The literary works approached usually have a Papua New Guinean setting and contain fictional characters (except for Albert Maori Kiki's autobiography Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (1968)) and situations whose social correlates, cultural milieu and linguistic continuum are immediately recognisable as Papua New Guinean. The books have all been written in the last twenty three years; their authors have been products of oral traditions, colonial condition and the post-colonial situation. This thesis will show that the prose narratives by Papua New Guineans can be distinguished from other works written in English on Papua New Guinea.

The early foreign writers' liberal and hilariously exotic or racist writings exist independently. The earliest known works were written by Johann David Wyss (1818), E. W. Cole (1873), Marcus Clarke (1874), Hume Nisbet (1888), Louis Becke (1897) and H.C. W. Watson (1835). The existence of foreign literature in Papua New Guinea has its own development and forcefulness. These authors have portrayed New Guinea according to their imaginations and fantasies. The writers who followed them portrayed New Guinea as a romantically exotic landscape where the test of nation-aggrandizing myths, white superiority myths, and colonial exploitation is considered as their prerogative. Writers formed around two important circles, those who wrote for the New South Wales Bookstall Company and those who wrote for The Bulletin. The themes and views of their writings varies. The post-war years produced a relatively small group of writers who were critical of the images produced in the works of the earlier writers. The Second World War, however, changed the kind of images which appeared earlier. More care and consideration was taken in describing the place, people and culture. The reminiscence of the war and the guilt realised after the war helped shape the new colonial image as a helping friend, sympathetic, pathetic and paternalistic. This remained the trend into the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The writers of this period, regarded as the de-mythologisers, went further to depict the

hopelessness and contradictions of the white man vis-a-vis the colonial administrator, patrol officer, teacher or priest.

Yet the emphasis of this thesis is on the Papua New Guinean novel written by Papua New Guineans in the last twenty-three years following Kiki's autobiography, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (1968), Vincent Eri's The Crocodile (1971) and Paulias Matane's My Childhood in New Guinea (1972). There was much optimism about a tremendous output of similar works by other Papua New Guineans. Unfortunately, only short stories, plays, and poetry dominated the next four years. These were compiled in Ulli Beier's anthology Black Writing of New Guinea (1973). In the same year M. Greicus and Elton Brash edited another collection of short stories Niugini Stories (1973). The next Papua New Guinean book came out in 1974, Paulias Matane's Aimbe the Challenger, followed by Michael Somare's autobiography, Sana, in 1975. In 1976 several works appeared. An ambitious collection of three Papua New Guinean novellas by Benjamin Umba, August Kituai and Jim Baital was published as Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea. Matane published Aimbe, the Dropout (1976), another of his Aimbe series. This was followed by Russell Soaba's novel Wanpis (1977), Voices of Independence; New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea (1978) (an up-dated anthology of Papua New Guinean literature, selected and edited by Ulli Beier), Albert Wendt's Lali: A Pacific Anthology (1978) (with a section devoted to Papua New Guinean literature), and Matane's Aimbe, the Magician (1978). Matane concluded his Aimbe series with Aimbe, the Pastor (1979).

However initial interest in the literary activity had shifted away from the university to other institutions, especially to the new Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies in Port Moresby; a central factor was that the patron of creative literature in Papua New Guinea, Ulli Beier, had moved to become the institute's first director. Such movement was crucial, as the literary energy of the early seventies began to decline. Literary journals such as Kovave (1968-75) PNG Writing Journal (originally New Guinea Writing) (1970-7), and the Papua Pocket Poets series ceased publication. In place, new journals such as Gigibori, Bikmaus (1980),

Ondobondo (1982), The PNG Writer (1984-6) and Sope (1988) emerged. The three later journals played an active role in the continuity of literary activities in the 1980s, although The PNG Writer had ceased prematurely in 1986. By now it seemed that at most one novel by a Papua New Guinean could appear each year. Ignatius Kilage managed to publish his novel, My Mother Calls Me Yaltep (1982) and Michael Yake Mel published his novella, Kumdi Bagre, together with Toby Waim Kagl's Kallan under one title: The Two Highland Novels from Papua New Guinea (1984). Russell Soaba published his second book, Maiba (1985), nine years after his first novel. A random collection of the entire literature of Papua New Guinea since its emergence in 1968 was compiled by Ganga Powell in an anthology of Papua New Guinean literature, Through Melanesian Eyes (1987). Other works by Papua New Guinean authors such as Mark Auhova's Bride Price of Hura, A Sequel to The Bride Price, Ambrosyus Waiyim's Crossing the Flooded Sipi, and Michael Tsim by William Tagis were published in issues of the Bikmaus magazine in the 1980s.¹

Papua New Guinean literature is young, perhaps premature to some extent, but has been one in which most of the writers are still alive but have works which are incomplete or have abandoned writing for other activities. Attempts at chronological analysis are basically only on a surface of the Papua New Guinean prose narrative in English. Unpredicted, independent development of writers, their sudden emergence into the literary scene and quick disappearance makes the study more difficult for identifying consistency in language pattern and literary maturity. Instead it is anticipated that the general underlying themes, issues, styles and patterns of narrative discourses are worth analysing.

The issues and themes Papua New Guinean writers treat are more complicated. The styles and patterns are distinct and very much experimental but evolutionary even though the writers themselves express uncertainty about the future of their writing. Russell Soaba writes:

Even now, while planning this novel, while treating it as a spare-time hobby, I am afraid. Afraid because I am too young

to attempt an effort as ambitious as this; and since I am too young and underdeveloped I feel I am fooling over two and a half million people. Above all, I am afraid because I and I alone, and not one or two of the so-called creative writers in this country, ask this question.²

The Papua New Guinean writer or the novelist was young when he/she wrote, or wrote as a student in one of the higher institutions. Because of their upbringing in their oral culture and traditions, making their way into the colonial world, taking up important status in the post-colonial world, the Papua New Guinean writers apply themselves with unusual urgency and immediacy to analyse and interpret their society's experiences, initially directing their energy to the negation of colonial forces, culture and control, preoccupied with issues of nationalism and independence.³ The literature of this era was able to investigate and comment on "society's ills including the social and economic deprivation of the majority", the perversity and contradiction of the elitist bourgeois in power after independence, the decreasing interest of young people in old traditions and oral histories, and the absence of any traditional values.⁴ The social consciousness of writers from Papua New Guinea draws attention to itself as a peculiarly interesting matter as it reflects the sudden outburst of nationalism that recognises the multicultural, polylingual and diverse inheritance of Papua New Guinea. The Papua New Guinean author is also the admirer of his/her land's cruel beauty and often attempts painting a vivid picture with words. This is one point at which the Papua New Guinean writer naturally departs from the nineteenth century colonial author who writes about Papua New Guinea.

The thesis has two parts. Part One, "We the Unwritten", looks at the various contexts in order to establish a path of critical analysis for Part Two "We the Written". Part One describes issues of cultural invasion through processes of colonialism, negative representation of Papua New Guineans, and the negative knowledge this has created in the minds of Papua New Guineans under missionary influence, imperial control, and the alienating educational system. This part also attempts to present an overview of the colonial literature on Papua New Guinea. Closely related to this discussion is the choice of language in the education system,

the development of the English syllabus and the inclusion of literature as a subject in this syllabus. Relatively different approaches in education by the missions and the government controlled schools alienated further the Papua New Guineans. The merging of mission and government schools raised a question of priorities, but with forceful administration policies in the 1950s and 1960s an entirely new education system emerged with English as the language of instruction. But English had its own problems. With the development of an English curriculum in the 1960s literature was wedged into the curriculum. The so-called secular education policy of the administration was so irrelevant that material foreign to the local environment was hardly absorbed, nor were materials printed to suit the domestic scene useful, as they were ingrained with irrelevant moral gems and written in complicated English. Creative or imaginative literature was absent and it took a long time to emerge because it was not encouraged early.⁵

The attitude to literature by the early missionaries, teachers, and colonial officials was one of neglect. Literature was in no way influential or relevant to indigenous activities; on the contrary it played an important role in the advancement of colonialism, national pride and self-assessment of the colonials. At the turn of the century the land of New Guinea became a minefield for planters, administrators, gold miners and adventurers in search of new grounds, as frontiers for masculine testing, exotic romance and the proving of the white superior myth. In many ways the New Guinea landscape, people and culture became a substitute for what they had lost in their own country, or as an extension of the Australian outback. As the colonial settlement was firmly established in the 1930s more writers, both male and female, were out in search of new materials. Literature coming out of this period contained exotically imagined stories, nation-aggrandizing myths, and the re-emphasis of racist and sexist ideas of their own countries. In many ways these stories glorified the colonial pioneers and the administration's progress in the territory. New Guinea became a cultural reflection of themselves, reflecting their failures and successes.

Towards the late 1960s indigenous literature also emerged, and immediately challenged some of the images promoted in the expatriate literature and attempted correcting them by giving the Papua New Guinean character the first priority. Chapter IV of Part One discusses the efforts in self-expression and creative writing in Papua New Guinea. It also tries to establish the fact that this was really the evolution of the Papua New Guinea literary tradition. The Papua New Guinean writers have without any suggested model of literature created a literature which is motivated by inner necessity and consciousness, often autobiographical, drawing models and patterns of discourses from their own oral traditions, combining them with those of the written culture. This textual practice describes the condition of their post-coloniality.

Part Two, "We the Written", deals with particular novels, concentrating on themes and styles. Although it uses a thematic approach, it basically focuses on it as an authenticating aspect of Papua New Guinean literature. "We The Written" takes a point of view from within the unwritten culture to see how it has written itself. The literary culture created by Papua New Guineans is one which can justifiably be assessed against the other world literature; thus it is also necessary to justify its literary merit by drawing from relevant literary theory or criticism from outside, especially as it cannot be denied that Papua New Guinean literature is a post-colonial literature.

The autobiographical experience forms a significant aspect of Papua New Guinean work. This is appropriately represented by the first Papua New Guinean book Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime. Kiki's book although written as a statement of truth and account of his important public stature influenced the literary minds as well as aspiring national leaders of Papua New Guinea. The book is praised not only for its autobiographical quality but for its honest presentation of the oral traditions and culture of his people. This is very much at the core of the Papua New Guinean author's mind: the question of preservation and keeping cultural purity in the face of new forces of change.

Naturally it is incorrect to isolate the oral traditions of the writers, which are an important aspect of a Papua New Guinean author's whole life. Vincent Eri's novel is more than a story about the quest of Hoiri and the great void of emptiness. Hoiri the protagonist is a quester whose fate is to become disillusioned. His personal journeys are clearly the symbol of a vicious cycle that leads astray personal freedom. Hoiri is judged as a betrayed hero, in the confrontation between western discourse and the traditions. Eri's fiction brings into reality the pre-war colonial attitudes and contradictions inherent in the pioneer settlers, administrators and adventurers. It is also the author's concern to teach the world about the Moveave culture, rituals and traditions which he sees fragmenting as a result of the colonial process. Like Kiki's autobiography, Eri as the first novelist, rewrites the history of his people. Appearing in 1971 Eri's book was symbolically the expression of the indigenous mind and intellect, which in other areas such as politics was already vocal and powerfully assertive. The significance of the novel is that it has set a precedent for other works.

If, however, it is insisted that we find references to the individual who finds no place in the society, we would do better to look at Russell Soaba's Wanpis (1977). The characters are "Lusmans" who eventually turn "Wanpis", by allowing themselves to be part of the society which at times is unable to contain them. This transition from being individual to being part of a whole system depends on individual discovery and self-recognition. This is either done through the processes of art or imitation of that process and the one who recognises both worlds is more like a writer. The writer as an existential self is at once able to lose and recover both worlds, that of the individual and society, because as an artist the author views the society through the artist's and the individual's point of view perceptively.

On the other level we see the author's concern for the character's consciousness as an important part of society. We find this in Matane's Aimbe, the Pastor (1979), whose appearance was predetermined by the social, political and historical circumstances of society. Aimbe is torn between two worlds and he inherits a double conscience. He grows up inheriting the traditional leadership, and using that privilege to establish duality in his

character, when he becomes a pastor. Although Matane has gone as far as showing rapid changes and the corroding cultural traits from the plantation influence and missionary work in the war of 1945, he is unable to reduce Aimbe the Tolai completely into the hands of the missionaries or the plantation overseers. In his work Matane shows that his characters are not subjects of white dominion, but subjects of their own decision to accept unquestioningly the introduced knowledge and culture; thus, at the expense of their innocence, more is done in destruction to their livelihood, culture and system of organisation. Matane's work is the most popular of the Papua New Guinean novels; he has created a fable out of the colonial condition spanning the entire colonial history.

The novels of the 1980s were marked by Kilage's My Mother Calls Me Yaltep (1980). The book received tremendous attention from the Papua New Guinean reading audience. After its first publication by the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, the demand for the book made Oxford University Press reprint several thousand copies. Kilage's work could be best described as combining Matane's story-telling literary style and Eri's epic of colonial contact, outward journeys, acquisition of new material goods, and disillusionment with the modern ways. Like other Highlands writers Kilage based his story in the Highlands village of Womatne in the Simbu province. The protagonist grows up in the village society and makes his journey into the outside world three times, but returns home acquiring new knowledges of the land beyond the village boundary. Kilage expands the period into years of self-government and independence. On the other hand Kilage follows closely the historical period and compresses the time span of his character to a neat history, evolving within several important moments of history.

Soon after Vincent Eri and Paulias Matane published their novels, three other short novels were published jointly in 1976. Benjamin Umba's The Fires of Dawn, August Kituai's The Flight of a Villager and Benjamin Baital's Tali were published together as Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea (1976). In Umba's story we are presented with a society in contact with the new-comers, the confrontation between the new forces and the moments of difficult transitions. The Fires of Dawn portrays the friction and tension of the contact

society. In the second story, The Flight of the Villager, we are taken further into the time when colonialism has established itself firmly in Papua New Guinea. With new forces of change challenging the old ones, young people become disillusioned and confused. August Kituai's The Flight of a Villager describes the movement of the villager into the modern world in search of work, material possession, good life and freedom from damnation resulting from village conflicts. However, the reality of the world outside is more rotten with obnoxious things ranging from unemployment, prostitution and crime. Although the protagonist in Kituai's story ends up working as a "house boy", the gist of the story is that of the uncomfortable absorption of the new ways. But it is not always the safest thing to do, as we learn in Baital's story, Tali. The last story works around situations of alienation and responsibility, a prediction of independence and the alienated system the country could inherit. Alienated from his culture and regarded as an outcast, Tali symbolically represents the generation who bear the burden of the past and the hasty decisions of the future.

The characters of The Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea appear to be tangled up with society. In the same vein are Michael Mel's Kumdi Bagre and Toby Kagi's Kallan, published as The Two Highland Novels (1984). They explore the Highlands societies with vividness and honesty. Excellent attention is given to the traditional rituals and ceremonies of initiation, courting, marriage and the Moka trade. Their text is an intricate result of combining the great oratory tradition in the Highlands and the enactment of historical accounts through fiction. The temptation to regard them as works of ethnography, history, or anthropology would inhibit understanding the experimental fiction of the 1980s in the literary history of Papua New Guinea.

One of the aims of this thesis is to offer an undistracted discussion of Papua New Guinean literature while another is to perform the critical activity itself. Part One provides a generally critical overview of the effect of colonialism, its social, educational, historical and political activities, and establishes the fact that indigenous discourse is possible given the determination of invaded people to recover what they have lost. The emphasis is different

in Part Two which drives towards the authenticating of the text and the way various national authors have approached the text, either by employing autobiographical devices, fictional imagination, intertextual practices or by combining the traditional oratory features of story-telling with fiction, autobiography, actual historical incidents and events.

PART ONE

We The Unwritten

Niugini, the clay,
Innocent, soft, gentle earth.
There sleeping,
There turning to wake.
Unshaped and unformed.
Oh how I dread the hands that will shape you!

Kumalau Tawali
'Potters'¹

CHAPTER ONE

Imagining New Guinea

Imagining New Guinea as a landmass dominated the discourse of the late eighteenth, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Portuguese explorers first sighted the island in 1512, and the first landing was by Jorge de Meneses, on the Vogelkop Peninsula, "the Dragon's head", at the north-west corner of the island in 1526. Jorge de Meneses named it "*Ilhas do Papuas*" or the "Island of the Fuzzy Hairs", from the Malay word *papuwah*. Jorge de Meneses's *Ilhas do Papuas* was later changed by Dutch explorer Inigi Ortiz de Retez to *Nueve Guinea* in 1545 and was first used in the Mercator's world map of 1569.¹ New Guinea reminded Ortiz de Retez of Guinea in Africa. In the following centuries various Europeans sailed past the main island and the smaller associated islands.² During the mad scramble for colonies bizarre, distorted and hilariously romantic imaginings were invented, created and textualised. Although New Guinea was marked as a black spot on the map, early explorations and navigation around its coast had taken place, following some of the suppositions which speculated that New Guinea had some of the highest mountains, with the interior inhabited by giants with tails, and complete with an animal kingdom. These speculations were so highly textualised that New Guinea as an idea was removed from reality, but provided the basis for much of the scientific, anthropological and geographical investigation of the century.

The promotion of their imagination coincided with some significant moments of history. Literary imagination about New Guinea grew with Captain John Moresby's geographical exploration in 1873, the beginning of mission schools in New Guinea and the first printing sheet in 1875 by the pioneer L.M.S missionary, Rev. W.G Lawes. One of the first known writers who imagined New Guinea was the Australian E (Edward) W (William) Cole (1832-

1918). Cole published a satirical pamphlet about New Guinea called Account of a Race of Human Beings with Tails; Discovered by Mr. Jones, the Traveller, In the Interior of New Guinea.³ This bizarre story of human beings with tails reflected considerable imagination as there was little knowledge of New Guinea at that time. It is held that Cole's satirical pamphlets were meant for commercial consumption rather than to deal with the truth. Although Cole's book may be one of the first of its kind in English, a German, Johann David Wyss, had published a children's story, The Swiss Family Robinson in 1813, translated into English by Mrs. H.B. Paull in 1909.⁴ Both these works of imagination had displayed a considerable amount of guesswork and reflected the most ludicrous imaginings of New Guinea. Wyss's island of New Guinea with bears, ostriches and horses (which are not indigenous to New Guinea) was in many ways similar to Cole's imaginings of New Guinea. Another contemporary of Cole wrote on New Guinea and serialized his work in the Melbourne Herald in 1874: Marcus Clarke's (1846-87) "Gipsies of the Sea, or The Island of Gold" reflected the materialistic goals and recklessness of young adventurers in the island of New Guinea.⁵ He foresaw colonial conquest and cultural invasion on the indigenous people of New Guinea, and the rape of the land by white Australian adventurers and explorers. Clarke's views were more genial than Coles. His concern was with the myth making capacity of the Australian white male, either as a reckless adventurer or corrupter from Western civilization.⁶ Another contemporary of Clarke was the Tasmanian, H (Henry) C (Crocker) M (Mariot) Watson (b.1835). His book, Wanderings in the Interior of New Guinea (1875), published in London under the pen name "Captain J. A. Lawson", caused an enormous sensation both in London's scientific circles and around the world.⁷ Watson tried to lay claim to the discovery of certain wild flora and fauna and animals in the interior of New Guinea. At least one scientific expedition by the Italian naturalist, D'Albertis, was reported to have followed the claims by Watson. However the book was outrageous and unscientific, one full of fanciful imagination as

Cole's was previously. By now the imaginings of the interior of New Guinea had already become a common topic of discussion in certain scientific, geographical and anthropological circles. Imagining New Guinea as a setting of the *voyages imaginaires* literature had formed the basis for much scientific, geographical, and anthropological suppositions of that century.

The imagined New Guinea provided a symbolic landscape reflecting the beastly hall-ways of hell and romantic paradise unspoilt by civilization. Most of the imaginings were fanciful, bizarre distortions of the unexplored New Guinea. These imaginings attracted young explorers, adventurers, scientists, gold prospectors and writers to the shores of New Guinea. Amongst the writers who arrived were Hume Nisbet (1849-1921) and Louis Becke (1885-1913). Nisbet visited New Guinea in 1886 and published three romance books based on his New Guinea experience. His The Land of the Hibiscus Blossom: A Yarn of the Papuan Gulf (1888) is a classic romanticized novel based on the outback or out in the colonial frontier.⁸ Nisbet saw New Guinea as a vulnerable paradise, but one which would eventually be destroyed by the outrageous attitudes of the white presence. Nisbet wanted New Guinea to remain an idyllic romantic situation, untainted by European colonisation.

The other colonial writers to visit New Guinea saw it as a hell. In his book York The Adventurer (1901), Becke saw New Guinea not as a paradise or Eden, but the most infectious and hazardous place on earth.⁹ The hazards of the New Guinea climate, diseases, environment, and the headhunting expeditions of the villagers, were dominant enough for him to detest New Guinea.¹⁰ He saw New Guinea as a murderous hell infected with malaria, cannibals, and savages. In twenty short stories and four novellas published between 1894-1909, Becke portrayed New Guinea as a hellish, fatal land which lacked beauty, elegance, purity and civilizing harmony. In contrast to Nisbet, who saw "civilized" peoples corrupting New Guinea's primitive innocence, Becke considered the great danger in New Guinea was the barbarous land's corruptive power over "civilised" peoples' normally "superior" morality.¹¹

Becke's imperialistic and racist view supported all forms of white exploitation in the Pacific, and appealed to a large audience in Britain, America and Australia.

By the turn of the century, New Guinea became two separate colonies. In 1884 both Germany and Great Britain annexed the eastern half of the island (New Guinea), what is today known as Papua New Guinea. Germany claimed the north, including the Bismark Archipelago and the Admiralty Island, and Britain took the southern zone including the Lousiade Archipelago. At Australia's request British New Guinea became the responsibility of the newly formed Australian government in 1906.¹² The colony was opened to colonial settlers during the period 1900s to 1930s. This attracted a wide spectrum of colonial settlers. Colonial empire had achieved its goal to secure new land for raw materials, new knowledge and international prestige. Imagining New Guinea was associated with power and knowledge.

One could say Cole and Wyss were the first authors to imagine New Guinea, but in reality they explored the idea only after the Portuguese, Spanish, British and French had invented a geography to contain New Guinea, and provided cultural traits that would be easily definable. The authors who followed Cole or Nisbet's imagination only had to expand the idea of New Guinea either as an ideal romantic situation or as a fatal one. To do this properly requires some form of framework that covers the history of colonisation. In the same manner, the idea of the orient was created by the west to distinguish "the other" which is not the west and works as "an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the west".¹³ Said pointed out that such a practice of the colonial empire involves a creation of an idea with other "corresponding realities" like the "configuration of power", "force", and a "structure of lies, deceit, and myths" that pervaded the western mind.¹⁴ Likewise New Guinea as an idea was an image created by the west and used to distinguish between what is European and what is

not European, between what is written and what is not written, between what is civilized and what is not civilized, and between what is modern and what is primitive. This idea has allowed the perpetuation of the white European males' macho and superior myth "in comparison with all non-European peoples and cultures", reiterating their superiority over what they consider as backwardness.¹⁵ In the nineteenth century a myth of white superiority heightened in New Guinea to a point where the white man was treated as a god. The early part of the succeeding century provided the opportunity to reassess that image, to challenge and offer alternative images, however consistent (or inconsistent) with the historical, political and social conditions of the colonial environment. A whole set of relationships with the indigenous was created, formed and defined, either as reflection of their own image or from what is assumed in the literary landscape.

The imagined New Guinea had become the symbolic landscape of colonial intrusion and imposing cultural imagery. Writers of the early 1900s attempted to portray the white man as a coloniser: the fulfilment of his own dreams and pleasures, the tests of his manly strength depended on his ability to exercise his white superiority and secure the submission of natives. This was successfully done by the use of "divisive tactics and manipulation" that destabilised and penetrated cultural contexts and complex structures of the unwritten, invaded cultures.¹⁶ One could describe this practice as a cultural invasion since it involves ignorance of well-established cultural systems of the invaded culture, the imposition of the colonisers' culture, and complete negation of the inherited values and world view of the unwritten culture.

The imagining of New Guinea allowed the colonial authors the liberty to explore their own imagination to an extent that it inflates and distorts as in Nisbet and Becke's work. What matters as in Nisbet's writing is that New Guinea maintains its ideal romantic paradise without being corrupted. This allows Nisbet's own imagination to bring into reality something

about himself, his ideas, his expectations and participation in the creation of New Guinea. The liberty to imagine New Guinea disempowers those who are colonised. The coloniser can ignore reality for imaginations which are easy to control and manipulate. Becke, for instance, made use of both physical and literary imagination to exploit the people of New Guinea; he contributed to colonial exploitation of the Melanesian race, first as slave trader and then as the promoter of that experience in his writing, and was known to support all forms of white ascendancy and exploitation in the South Seas. New Guinea of the imagination then has developed into one of "imperious imagination", one greatly influenced by imperialism and eurocentrism. New Guinea as an idea became the subject of colonial discourse and as a landmass became the battleground for colonial supremacy.¹⁷

CHAPTER TWO

Colonial Conquest and Cultural Invasion (1884-1914)

By the close of the nineteenth century, the colonial empire was firmly established, especially between 1884-1942, when more settlers, planters, gold miners and explorers arrived with high expectations of building the colony, in the name of the empire. British expansion had become a race with other colonial powers. With the French Britain exploited the regions of the Orient; "from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to Indochina and Malaya, their colonial possessions and imperial spheres of influence were adjacent, frequently overlapped, often were fought over."¹ With Germany the contest was over the island of New Guinea. The philosophy used was to "renounce", "monopolize" or "share" what they found in these colonies.² In most cases they shared what they found but with little regard for those they exploited. In New Guinea, Britain and Germany hardly shared their exploitation, rather they were always at variance with each other. On either side of the island they set out sets of ideas and knowledge to describe the behaviour of the people, they supplied the structure of mentality that the New Guinean should use, they constructed educational institutions based on their own models, syllabus, and language, and offered a genealogy and an atmosphere that would reflect their own social upbringing and cultural traits.

The invaders brought with them the ideas of social science, science, technology, theology, and literature. The strength of the invaders lay in their passionate desire to dominate the colonised mind and spirit. By pretending to be a helping friend or establishing a desire to know how those they invaded apprehended reality the coloniser dominated the colonised effectively.³ The colonials "mould those that they invade" to think in their concepts and accept their inferiority, and this "leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to interact to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders".⁴ Beyond this the island of New Guinea had become for the colonials the testing ground for the

macho image, coupled with racial and class prejudice as they moved in as pioneer settlers, adventurers, traders, gold prospectors, administrative officials and planters.

By 1919 when new incentives were provided by publishing outlets for colonial writers in Australia and out in the colonial frontier literature about New Guinea took a huge leap. The New South Wales Bookstall company and The Bulletin served this purpose. The New South Wales Bookstall Company in an effort to encourage Australian writers turned its attention to Papua as the setting for marketable romances. The company's increasingly successful promotion of Australian awareness of New Guinea produced pulp fiction that was however, generally chauvinistic, racist and sexist. The main concern was for marketable New Guinea romance books to satisfy the romance inspired readers in Australia. One of the writers associated with the company was James Morgan Walsh (b.1897), who published his famous book, Overdue: A Romance of Unknown New Guinea in 1925.⁵ Walsh wanted to justify Australian presence in Papua in the 1920s and to continue the glory and heroic deeds which Australian males had claimed on the battlefields of the First World War, with the new enemy being the hostile Papuans.⁶ The territory of Papua and New Guinea was seen as wild and backward, more as an extension of the Australian bush, the new outback where Australians could escape the expanding metropolitan pressures back home and test their survival skills against raw nature once again. The most prolific of the New South Wales Bookstall writers was Jack McLaren (1887-1954) who published, My Odyssey (1923).⁷ However McLaren, unlike Walsh, portrayed a sympathetic view of the Papuan village life in the 1920s. He shared the same views as Alys Brown (d.1956) (who also wrote in the same period) but was also troubled by the personal dislocation he had experienced on his arrival in Europe seeking work as a writer, after his twenty isolated years in the tropics.⁸ Other writers were Frank Pryke (1872-1937), D. Egerton Jones, (b.1897), G. Munro Turnbull (1890-1938), Ion Idriess (1890-1979), Beatrice Grimshaw (1871-1953), Ernest Osborne and Vance Palmer (1885-1959). Their narratives were often based on their diverse background and involvement in New Guinea between 1919 and 1941. Doris Egerton Jones (one of the first women writers to write about New Guinea) along with Beatrice Grimshaw, and Alys Brown wrote as

pioneer women settlers in the colony. Egerton Jones's work was more concerned with the Australian women's plight for recognition in the male dominated world, whether with the rugged conditions in the frontier of New Guinea or "with her own passions, the contemporary moral strictures, and the difficulties of establishing her own independence."⁹ Unlike D. Egerton Jones, Beatrice Grimshaw wrote romanticised fiction about the experiences of the white women in Papua. Grimshaw, the much worshipped goddess of romantic fiction about the South Seas, arrived in New Guinea from Dublin, bringing with her the inherent conventionalism of Victorianism and ideas of European ascendancy in Papua. It is said that, during the time she lived in Papua from 1907-1934, she had established herself as the most successful and popular resident writer.¹⁰ However her passion for romantic setting had been basically superficial and she had never succeeded in establishing an intimate relationship with the land or its people.

The romantic image of Papua promoted by Grimshaw was distorted to such a proportion that the settler who arrived in the colony was disillusioned and often moved on to establish the white superior posture among the natives. Grimshaw's failure to come to terms with the reality of New Guinea was later achieved by Alys Brown. Brown wrote most of her fiction and prose between 1928 and 1937, after taking permanent residence in Sydney in 1925. Her eighteen Papuan stories published in The Bulletin and four novels (three of which were serialized in Australian newspapers) placed her comfortably on the literary level as a more compassionate, warm-hearted, perceptive, honest and sympathetic writer. Brown investigated village relationships, traditions and ambitions, and criticized the results of white trespass on village mores. Generally Brown continued Hume Nisbet's concern for the Papuans and grassroots Papua village life, with an added element of detailed village knowledge which Nisbet lacked. Brown investigated perceptively the village outlook with warm heartedness and honesty.¹¹

The Bulletin (1880-) played a major role alongside the New South Wales Bookstall company to promote nation aggrandizing myths of the white Australian male, nationhood, and their

exploits in the territory of Papua and New Guinea. Writers who formed around The Bulletin promoted the belief of Australia as the salvation of working classes and of the value of mateship. Significantly, The Bulletin writers often were urban, intellectual and bohemian, while the myth they proclaimed was based upon the pioneer frontier life of previous generations in Australia and the plantation or goldmines in New Guinea.¹² One of The Bulletin's regular correspondents in New Guinea was Gilbert Munro Turnbull (1890-1938), writing as "Tauwarra" while government architect in Papua from 1914 to 1934. Turnbull wrote dozens of Papua stories and published four novels with Papuan settings revealing the racial hypocrisy and inappropriateness of the white superiority myth. In his fiction Turnbull attempted de-mythologizing the white man myth in Papua. His last published novel, Portrait of a Savage (1943), reveals a startling confession of colonial corruption, and attacks the people who perpetuated the Australian white male myths in Papua.¹³ New Guinea in the 1920s as Turnbull saw it could not provide the Australian's dream to create myths and promote their white Australian images.

The Bulletin widened the scope of its interest as an educating forum for the conscience of intolerant expatriates in New Guinea and their sympathisers back in Australia. Ion Idries (1890-1979), another writer of The Bulletin circle, attempted representations of Papua and New Guinean villagers' outlook as a means of understanding the alien New Guinea cultures.¹⁴ His Sepik village narratives were subtle and intelligent but again using The Bulletin's motive of educating the intolerant Australians about the colonial territory of New Guinea. In Brown or Idries' fiction, New Guinea villages were used as the setting for testing the various cultural norms and values inherited and debated in Australia.

The literature of this period was crucial to the assessment of the Australian colonial image. Fears were expressed about the losing of the great colonisers' cultural values and superior image. Vance Palmer (1885-1959), writing under the pseudonym "Rann Daly", published The Outpost (later as Hurricane) in 1924, where he debated issues of the colonial government's

aggression in the territory.¹⁵ Palmer thought the exportation of the colonial white Australia mentality was inappropriate and could not work in Papua. Palmer's view was similar to that of Turnbull, especially in its demonstration of the ridiculousness and inappropriateness of the racist white Australian superman image often celebrated in the adventurer romances published by the New South Wales Bookstall company. Palmer went further than Turnbull in suggesting that Papua provided two kinds of graveyard for Australia: one for physical casualties, the other for defeated national myths. He predicted the physical death of many Australians in Papua as colonial officers working in remote areas as magistrates, patrol officers, gold prospectors or plantation owners, and the casualties of the Second World War. He saw the great Australian mythical hero of the civilized society would fall short if he tried importing it to New Guinea.¹⁶ The group that wrote and published with The Bulletin were very much demythologisers of the great white Australian superman image imported and promoted in New Guinea. Their concern was that such a racist and inappropriate mentality imported to New Guinea would greatly affect other ordinary, intelligent and committed colonials; instead they opted for a more critical assessment of those values already transfixed in colonial New Guinea.

The conscientious writers of the 1920s and 1930s critically analysed the Australian colonial administration's progress, revealed the weaknesses of the Australian white male in the territory, and attempted to move away from the highly romanticised novels of previous decades. However the attitude of the average Australian writer towards Papua New Guinea too would change in the ensuing years, especially in the World War II and post war years.

Second World War and the Unimagined New Guinea (1939-1959)

The Second World War of 1939-45 suddenly challenged the strength of the empire as well as individual courage. The war also tested for the first time the white superman image introduced and promoted in early years of colonial presence. New Guinea proved brutal and

destructive especially with its hazardous jungles and terrain. The inhabitants, once downgraded and imagined as strange human beings with tails, savages, and cannibals were lifted to the level of human beings with the same feeling and pain. The literature of this period focused on this new relationship between the colonisers and the indigenous people. The war reaffirmed the mateship tradition of Australians on one level and at another a human relationship with the Papuans and New Guineans (whom they relied on for their survival in the hazardous New Guinea jungle war). The Second World War was a crucial moment for both Australians, Papuans and New Guineans. The fiction and verse written by soldiers and airmen in 1942 and 1943 described the venture as a personal battle for survival. It was obvious by then that Australians could no longer afford to maintain their superman image of the conqueror in the uncompromising environment of the New Guinea jungle. Writers who explored such themes were David Denholm (The Last Blue Sea, 1959), John Cleary (The Climate of Courage, 1954), T.A. G Hungerford (The Ridge and the River, 1952), Morris L West (Kundu, 1957) and George Johnston (My Brother Jack, 1964).¹⁷ The war was the most significant myth breaker in New Guinea's colonial history, and "the legacy of the war in literature was the development of themes concerning the general humbling of the Australian, and his greater acknowledgement of equality with the Papuans and New Guineans."¹⁸ David Denholm's The Last Blue Sea (1959), for example, portrays the war as an unavoidable calamity, the temporal removal of class and race barriers.¹⁹ The soldiers fighting in the New Guinean jungle without any experiences of war, discovered on the battlefields that survival means group strategy, irrespective of past discrepancies, class and racial prejudices. The social status enjoyed in Australia was no longer the survival strategy. Rather it was collaboration with themselves and with the New Guineans. The disenchantment of New Guinea is further explored and shows that the racial and superiority myths, if imported and sustained, can often be costly. These new images of the white man gave Papuans and New Guineans a new realization of their potentialities, capabilities, and intelligence. Their collaboration with the Japanese also provided them with opportunities to see things from a different perspective. Ironically, incredible loyalty and commitment shown by Papuans and New Guineans was later described as forced. Vincent Eri's The Crocodile (1970) and Paulias Matane's Aimbe the Pastor (1979)

claimed Papuans lived through it because they were expected to show high respect and self effacement to the white man.

The entire corpus of expatriate literature so far has been directed very much to the readers in the home country. The rule of writing in the colonies was that it must be of relevance to the readers at home. Post-war literature is no exception to this rule, although it has changed in style and moved away from the stereotyped romantic stories of the 1920s and 1930s. Characteristic of post-war literature is its sympathetic patriotism, apologetic and radical. Olaf Ruhen, for instance, wrote a collection of stories, Land of Dahori (1957), from a perspective that was taken earlier by Lewis Lett in 1946.²⁰ He focused on the post-war experiences of the expatriate in the territory of Papua and New Guinea. Ruhen brought in again the The Bulletin's notion of seeing Papua and New Guinean society as reflection of a colonial frontier. In many ways, Ruhen was more ushering of the writers of the post-war period; he challenged "the white opinions of their (New Guineans) 'primitivity' by emphasising their rarely recognised richness, and appropriateness of their actions and logic."²¹ Positions such as Ruhen's made it necessary that the Australian presence in Papua and New Guinea be immediately reviewed.

Reluctant Colonial Writer (1960-1975)

Although the literature of the earlier period suffered from the criticism of promoting the racist and male chauvinistic feelings of the past, there were also the more forceful writings of those who critically analysed and assessed the colonial presence, its achievements and its weaknesses and contradictions. Such literature exposed the vulnerable position of the coloniser in promoting white superiority myths. As time moved on into the 1970s, colonial writers were more reluctant to write with enthusiasm about the people they had colonised.

The indigenous writers' emergence challenged the colonial writer's right to construct them, by more strongly laying their claim to the written word, so that they could write about themselves and correct some of the distorted images in the colonial literature.

Yet within this context the colonial writer was able to reflect on his/her own consciousness, as well as attitudes, experiences and morals in the twentieth century. The 1960s was for the colonial writer the era of critical self-assessment and acknowledgement of the fact that the Papuans and New Guineans were part of the landscape which he/she invaded and colonised. The turning of events, the discovery of an embryonic indigenous national consciousness and the emergence of an intellectual tradition in the country, forced the colonial writer to write reluctantly about the territory. The most important novels of this period were G.C.O'Donnell's Time Expired (1967), Maslyn Williams' The Far Side of the Sky (1967), Keith Pickard's Bilong Boi (1969) and Ian Downs' The Stolen Land (1970). These novels showed Australian expatriates experiencing self-doubt, disorientation and desperation because they had come to rely on the New Guinean frontier for aspects of their own identities. The frontier was becoming more alienating as black rule drew nearer. Colonial achievement was no longer a thing to take pride in. It had become a reminder of their worst evils as colonisers. Fear of indigenous uprisings and bloody revolution was apparent. Old colonial scores and errors were matters of conscience rather than a natural colonial achievement.²² Ian Downs published his novel, The Stolen Land (1970) to portray this moment of colonial history.²³ Downs, a former District Commissioner and member of the House of Assembly during the 1960s, drew from this experience to portray satirically a young ambitious and radical Papua New Guinean politician, possibly a member of Pangu Pati, the first national party to enter the 1968 House of Assembly. The novel reflects the politically sensitive moments in the last hours of colonial rule in Papua and New Guinea but with an added patriotism that Downs felt Australia should maintain.

The acceptance of the new development in politics and literature meant that a critical scrutiny of the expatriate literature was necessary. A conscious writer such as Randolph Stow knew that the task of the expatriate writers in the 1970s would be commitment to the idea that Papua New Guinea's colonial and post colonial histories formed an undeniable part of Australia's evaluation of themselves as a nation. Randolph Stow (b.1935), the Sydney born writer John Kolia (Collier) (b.1931) and Trevor Shearston (b.1946), were determined to end "the myth of white superiority, which had allowed Australia to persist with its too often blind and reckless colonial career."²⁴ Their works departed radically from the earlier literary direction. The worst and the weakest aspects of the Australian character, and the exaggeration Papua New Guinea had allowed the Australian character were exposed. Whether the writing is about the patrol officer (kiap) as in Stow's Visitants (1979) or the missionary as in Kolia's My Reluctant Missionary (1980), there is always treatment of vulnerability and the awkwardness of the way characters conduct their activities. In the Visitants for example, Stow looked at the patrol officers' (kiaps) vulnerability to the expectations of both black and white societies.²⁵ The investigation of the *kiap's* conflicting expectations is undertaken through interweaving streams of expatriate and indigenous consciousness.²⁶ John Kolia went further than Stow or Shearston by replying to the large body of colonial fiction through inverted perspectives and parodies to debate issues of race, society and politics. As a colonial iconoclast, Kolia tried to end the superiority myths celebrated by such writers as Grimshaw and Walsh. In most of his work he tries to show how perfunctorily those myths were fabricated and how easily they broke apart once overturned and viewed from the colonised perspective.²⁷ Trevor Shearston also analysed the overstated authority and credibility of the Australian colonial officials. He attempted to come to terms with the guilt associated with being a coloniser who realises there is nothing in the blood that makes one race rule another or gives it the power of dominion. His first collection of stories, Something in The Blood (1979), confessed Australian weaknesses and failures and attempted to exorcise the guilt which arose out of Australian crimes and misconduct during the colonial period.²⁸ In his first novel about Papua New Guinea, Sticks That Kill (1986), Shearston

reconstructed the historical account of the murder of Rev. James Chalmers (called Lochart) of the London Missionary society by the Goaribaries at the turn of the century in British New Guinea.²⁹ In this novel Shearston attempts to establish the violence of colonialism and the ridiculousness of colonial conquest and confrontation especially with its strange weapons that kill: racism, national myths, spears, cross and flagpoles. His second novel, White Lies (1986), pursued further the themes of cross-cultural understanding, although again highlighting the confrontation and importation of values alien to the local environment.³⁰ This work projects the serious cultural conflict, the violence and terror of colonizing culture as it faces the stern opposition from the indigenous culture. Shearston, Kolia and Stow use their fiction as strategic tools of demythologising the colonial myths and exposing the crimes of colonialism, its institutionalised hypocrisy, and the seriously misshapen history it has created of New Guinea.

There are two important effects of cultural invasion and colonial literature. First, the west has created us, the unwritten, in the way they see us. Colonial writers invented, shaped and moulded New Guinea characters according to their own judgement. Second, this creation provides the structure for Europeans viewing themselves in their relationship to the colonised. In this situation the indigenous mind is either forced to swallow the myth of white superiority and accept inferiority, or revolt against the colonial dominion and reject completely the white man's view. If he accepts the colonial view, it is because the false myth of white dominion has become internalised in the psychology of the indigenous mind. This is best described as a negative knowledge born out of that colonial experience.

This profound effect is recognisable. Colonialism with its social and political structures had greatly influenced the perceptive framework and psyche of the colonised. The colonised either internalise these colonial values and cultures or resist them. Even the arts, philosophies, and literature of the colonials continue this trend, as the colonial expatriate writers address and discuss these issues, ideas and experiences according to the rules and structures of the colonial discourse. From imaginative writing to *imperious* literature the

successes and failures of colonialism were addressed through the various relationships and images established in the process of colonialism. Gayatri Spivak describes this in one of her interviews as an "imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialised was in fact previously uninscribed."³¹ But since the "imperialist project" assumes a territory of control, to textualise a world it must be absolute and final. This assumption is superficial and does not allow for negotiable space for the indigenous expression, the voice of the invaded and marginalised, to be located. Strategically, the imperialist project is the pervasive control of the world through power and knowledge. The coloniser through such projects discovers and recognises his or her own position as a coloniser, an oppressor, rather than a subject. This discovering of him/herself as an "oppressor may cause considerable anguish, but it does not necessarily lead to solidarity with the oppressed" as it reveals another set of relationships, one that is paternalistic and deceiving.³² This suggests that the oppressed are marginalised and seen as dependent on the former coloniser. The reluctant colonial writers of the 1960s and thereafter could no longer view the colonial past subjectively, but had to take a radically bold stand on issues of colonial exploitation (racial, class and social) of the Papua New Guineans.

On the other hand, the emergence of indigenous literature could no longer be seen as trivial, exotic and mere child play. In fact it had to be seen first of all as apolitical and secondly as a post-colonial textual practice. As apolitical literature it served as a "pedagogy of the oppressed" in Freirean terms where it serves as a "humanistic and libertarian pedagogy". In these two stages,

the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all men in the process of permanent liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of domination is culturally confronted. In the first stage this confrontation occurs through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the

second stage, through the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old order, which like spectres haunt the new structure emerging from the revolutionary transformation.³³

As textual practice the indigenous discourse necessarily becomes a counter discourse to the imperial literature. The literature of *imperious* imagination has to be de-scribed so as to reveal the voice of the oppressed. In its first appearance in the 1960s indigenous expression challenged the colonial power, its presence and the colonial literature. This moment of self-expression questioned the negative knowledge and false myth of white superiority. In response to the colonial literature and the archetyped or stereotyped images portrayed of the Papua New Guinean, the indigenous writer offered a perspective which critically challenged these imperious images. The indigenous texts had the flavour of colonial conflict between whites and blacks, missionaries and villagers, government officials and villagers. The immediacy of poetry and the intensity of its force was used effectively by young poets like Kumalau Tawali and John Kasaipwalova.³⁴ The need to recognise the differences colonialism created in the life of the people and society was taken up immediately by the indigenous authors. The local culture, tradition and values were reconstructed and given authenticity.

CHAPTER THREE

Negative Knowledge

The education of the indigenous people was another colonial institution set up to enforce and affirm the belief in the written word. Education during the colonial period was pervasive and imposing. It was an unavoidable tool of colonialism. An acknowledged factor of colonial education was to turn out functional citizens who could maintain and assist in the colonial administration or expand the work of the mission, ironically not as intellectual or creative beings, but as mechanical entities, shaped to function without a mind. Such a system was enforced by an imposed curriculum, and rules were created to enforce the effectiveness of it. The products of such a system naturally are subjugated to the level of inferiority, modelled and labelled, and unconsciously accept the negative knowledge. The administration controlled, regulated and categorised people according to language, geography, economic and political jurisdictions. The missionaries set up church structures, denigrated traditional values and introduced the Bible by setting up educational institutions and printing materials translated in the vernaculars and local dialects. Between 1873 and 1946 the missionaries pursued this goal with the aim of "preaching the gospel and conversion of a primitive people from pagan beliefs to the christian faith...in general to provide moral and christian training, and in particular to train catechists, evangelists, pastors and teachers...".¹ The administration, on the other hand, insisted on education that allowed them easy participation in the colonial enterprise in New Guinea. The administration advocated a secular kind of education based on the British and Australian models. The language of instruction, unlike that used in the mission schools, was English. The administration went further to introduce trade skills such as carpentry, agriculture and clerical work, skills necessary for administrative work.² Such was the administration's policy on the education of the indigenous people. Often the education was not appropriate to local needs. The

students in mission schools would learn about theology and religion in their vernacular, while their counterparts in the administration schools would be instructed in English about subjects and materials foreign to them. One study of colonial education in Australian New Guinea reveals that there were two types of formal education in existence since 1922, but based entirely on the idea that education of New Guineans was functional rather than intellectual:

The nature of educational provision in any political society tends to reflect the requirements of those who provide it rather than those who receive it. The knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs which are deemed suitable for transmission, the organisation and the methods by which they are transmitted and finally the extent to which they are made available, all tend to reflect the views of those who provide the formal education. The type of education they provide is shaped by their view of the nature of society and determined by their political and economic interests. This argument holds for the role of education in all societies but its application is particularly evident in a colonial polity such as Australian New Guinea where those who held political and economic power were so clearly differentiated by race, colour and culture from those they ruled.³

Colonial education functioned in this manner. The powerful colonial order built its strength by establishing institutions and rules that forced the colonised to abandon their language, culture and tradition for those of the colonisers. The missionaries used education to spread their Bible and the administration used it for the maintenance of the structures of colonial administration. The colonial education system was so elaborate that the traditional ordering of lives seemed fragmented and illogical. Colonial education as an instrument of cultural invasion works towards domination of the colonised that "in addition to being deliberate and planned, is in another sense simply a product of oppressive reality".⁴ In schools, incomprehensible, often foreign ideas were forced on to students, often concerning the coloniser's own country or the Christian religion. This relates to Freire's argument on the institutions of child-rearing and education which is highly structured and hierarchical that

a rigid and oppressive social structure necessarily influences the institutions of child rearing and education within that structure. These institutions pattern their action after the style of the structure, and transmit the myths of the latter. Homes and schools (from nurseries to universities) exist not in the abstract, but in time and space. Within these structures of domination they function largely as agencies which prepare the invaders of the future.⁵

The education of the Papua New Guinean child was practically influenced by such an approach. The Encyclopaedia of Papua New Guinea stated that, around the time of Australian early administration of New Guinea, students who attended the administration schools were taught the New South Wales and Queensland curriculum. Unnecessary time was spent learning the names of the different Australian States with their principal cities. Students were told to transcribe into copy books moral gems such as "withstand every Indictment to Iniquity".⁶ The students were forced to learn, and at times were expected to perform with utmost sincerity often against their will. This education was at the cost of the time that could have been spent with the men and elders of the villages learning about customs and traditional values. Physical removal from the local cultural environment meant complete alienation from it. Consequently the indigenous students were not made to discover their intellectual capacity but to become functional subjects, responding mechanically and submissively to the colonial orders and rules. Those who went to administration schools often abandoned their languages for English. Materials that were supposedly relevant to the local environment, such as Rev. W.J. Saville's first Papua School Reader in 1927, were written in English and proved too advanced and alien for pupils.⁷ It was also argued by the colonials that being forced into learning English and introduced knowledge in schools enabled the Papuans to read The Papua Villager (1927-1941), produced by the Government anthropologist F. E. Williams. It was claimed that The Papua Villager became the only justification for learning English and the school graduates were the most enthusiastic readers of this newspaper.⁸ It is still doubtful whether Papua New Guinean readers found The Papua Villager comforting to read as it primarily served the colonial government officers rather than Papuans and New Guineans.

Attempts to introduce relevant materials in Papua New Guinean schools were of questionable status. In 1932 a series of Papua Junior Readers was issued, written by visiting Queensland Inspectors of Education and local teachers. This remained the basis of instruction up to 1945. At the instigation of the Administration for "proper education policy and curriculum" in New Guinea W. C. Groves became the first Director of Education on 17 June 1946.⁹ Acknowledging

the great discrepancies in the dual education system and the alienating nature of education, he decided to change the language policy and encouraged teachers to choose and adopt their own subject and language in relation to the local situation. However, Groves's policy was undermined by the paradox of colonial education itself. There was still the average European teacher who maintained their patriotic feeling as reflected in his/her negative attitude to teach Papuans and New Guineans to speak English. In one study of the colonial education it was observed that an ambivalence of the colonial education was inevitable:

These can be detected in certain attitudes and feelings, explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious, among the colonisers. The mechanism of such underlying attitudes and feelings may well be described as ambivalent. Conflicting attitudes and feelings towards the colonised permeated and influenced the official education policy of the time.¹⁰

The undermining of Groves' policy for relevant education of the New Guineans can be easily understood. The official education policy since Murray's administration was determined and influenced by special interest groups. Even Murray had a negative view about the education of Papuans and New Guineans; his view was that there was no equality in intellectual capacity of Papuans and New Guineans. Generally the administrative officers showed low opinions of mission schools. The missionaries suspected the government officials and settlers of influencing the development of a negative education pattern; this caused much rift in the colonial education system.¹¹ This remained the trend right up to the period of the Second World War when such attitudes and opinions deflated. In the years under Groves much discussion took place and many experiments were done on language use in schools. By 1955 it was approved by Hasluck, the Administrator of the Trust Territory of Papua and New Guinea, that all instruction in education be in English.¹² The question of an appropriate syllabus that would reflect the local environment still was not settled. Between 1963 and 1965 it was realised that a Papua and New Guinean syllabus in English had evolved.¹³ What was considered the Papua New Guinea syllabus in English was ambitious but lacked a creative, consistent core to it. The syllabus included a list of common errors in language and a few literature texts set for detailed study. Literature was still a trivial aspect of the Papua

New Guinea English syllabus. Students were made to read books such as A Pattern of Islands, Cry the Beloved Country, Modern Adventure, Under the Northern Lights, Australian short stories, A Tale of Two Cities, We of the Never Never, Julius Caesar and A Midsummer Night's Dream as it was hoped that this would help their assumed lack of creativity.¹⁴ Teachers were admonished to ensure that there were some areas of common cultural contact with the students' background and experience. Even by 1967 when a full syllabus in literature was formulated it never succeeded. The literature syllabus proved unsuitable in terms of the specific content of various courses developed in schools; this was also affected by the paucity of background library materials, the choice of inappropriate teaching methods and the lack of understanding of literature by some of the teachers.¹⁵ Hence, the Papua New Guinea English syllabus did not encourage indigenous cultural expression but reinforced colonial values, instilled negative attitudes into the minds of the Papua New Guinean students and oriented towards filling the infrastructure of the colonial government. The indigenous minds and beliefs had to be totally manipulated into the colonisers' own, either by making them speak the language or relate to them by, as a result of the way they had educated them. The attitude was to impose, rather than encourage local enthusiasm and imagination. However, the literary climate and political consciousness developing in the later part of the 1960s in higher institutions were on the contrary radically opposed to this despotism of the colonial education system.

A kind of negative knowledge developed out of this system: the importation and imposition of materials irrelevant or inappropriate to the local environment. This influenced the indigenous mind to accept the inferiority myth of its culture, and the trivial nature of its own language. The whole colonial education system created thought patterns and artificial scripts so that the indigene's own echoes, aspirations, and voice were silenced within that negative knowledge. The indigenous people were forced to sit through the classes, speak the coloniser's language and read The Papua Villager upon their graduation. The indigene was swayed into

believing that the coloniser's language was powerful and had some authority which he/she could not see. For example, reading the Bible or The Papuan Villager would lead them to "truth and knowledge". The fact that promising students in this system went on to become pastors, teachers, interpreters or aid post orderlies and clerks fulfilled this function. The acceptance of the superiority of the white culture implied that the indigenes were unwilling to express, liberate themselves from this system. The coloniser enjoyed this privileged position and capitalised on the ignorance of the indigene and maintained their power and authority.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evolution of the Papua New Guinean Novel

The challenge of the literary tradition taken on by the Papua New Guinean writer has been one of personal achievement and necessity. The entry into the literary tradition marks the investigation into the self, society and history. The pattern that seems to develop out of this tradition is one of considerable personal motivation and the necessary impulse to write. From the beginning Papua New Guinean writers wrote out of a deep inner necessity, drawing models and structures of discourse from their own traditional cultures and from the newly acquired written tradition, practising what may be understood as an "intertextuality" where "the subject of the text is composed of discourses" to form "a signifying system."¹ This is a dynamic process which put into context and structure a unitary system. For the Papua New Guinean author literature in the general sense is a serious business from which s/he is "trying to discover his/her recent history, its turning point, its future" and therefore is driven by an uninhibiting desire, an almost natural will to create, invent and reconstruct a new written culture out of the colonised experience.²

The entry into the literary world is significant in that the indigenous author faces a challenging task of mediating between the oral culture and the literary culture. Although the Papua New Guinean writers may be aware of nineteenth century English literature, the fiction written about New Guinea, and perhaps conscious of the characters' manipulation of the environment in relation to the manners and morals of the colonials of the period, they are perhaps unaware of its patterns and forms of discourse. The decision to enter the literate culture constitutes:

a critical self-awareness of the writer's own problematic relationship both to the mechanics of writing and the specificity of an indigenous language, with all the constitutive intellectual and emotional forces concentrated in it...can act to

mediate between the opposing forces, generate a space for new and more appropriate regions of personal and domestic development, provide a vantage point for satiric examination of foibles and vices in all the contextual systems of knowledge."³

The writers realise the responsibility of this task and commit themselves to its development. This may be seen in the self-agonising points of view of the writers or from nationalistic sentiments expressed in their work. Even the fact that these writers work from within the unwritten culture with the medium of the written culture is problematic and challenging. In such a situation it is not surprising to see:

only halting evidence of such critical awareness, showing that he/she accepts without much thought the superficial words and genres of the book knowledge assumed as normal, natural, or privileged, and thus produces texts which are occasionally competent, and subversive of native natural identity, or merely naive -- embarrassing but highly instructive exposures of the fragmented."⁴

Generally speaking Papua New Guinean authors are driven by the desire to express their problematic position as writers in a changing environment and the way in which they see themselves in the complex historical, linguistic, cultural and political context. Often it is from these contexts that they draw their "structures, imagery and rhetoric."⁵ Although it could be easy to suggest that the desire to write is motivated by the colonial discourse about them, it is on the contrary an entirely new unaffected response, perhaps virginal and free of the expectations of the literary conventions.

The Papua New Guinea novel in English is sometimes criticised for being inadequate and experimental in nature and the real essence of the writing is sometimes overlooked. There is the ambiguous belief that there are no Papua New Guinean novels or literary culture active enough for serious scholarly research. Contrary to this belief the Papua New Guinean novel is part of a literary culture that has developed over the years and has to be recognised as a significant aspect of present-day Papua New Guinean culture. The novel encompasses the polycultural, multilingual and diverse experiences of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-

colonial experiences of Papua New Guinea. Up to now what has come to be regarded as the Papua New Guinean writer is one who is engaged either temporarily or permanently in the creation of the literary culture. The Papua New Guinean author writes autobiography, semi-autobiography, novels, novellas, short stories, plays and poetry. In many cases the style is a combination of actual historical accounts, personal anecdotes and experiences and vicarious stories that seem worth writing about. The Papua New Guinean novel cannot be regarded as an embarrassing mixture of styles and tradition, but is a source of strength and vitality, not the cause of weakness and diminution of insight. What may now turn out to be in focus for discussion is not whether the Papua New Guinean novel is insignificant for a contextual analysis, but what kind of direction the Papua New Guinean novel has been taking since the publication of Albert Maori Kiki's autobiographical work, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (1968) and Russell Soaba's Maiba (1985), to take the two important forms of approach for creativity.⁶

The Papua New Guinean writers' realization of their new-found talent and the acquiring of knowledge of the written culture offered an important challenge. The writers celebrated their new-found talent and blessing, and easily transferred their cultural, social and political beliefs into an art which proved incredibly powerful. It was a radical reorientation of the indigenous mind, from passive acceptance to indignation which led to a critical reassessment of national identity and self-consciousness in the process of writing. Often this consists of a reflection or a sense of nostalgia for traditions, cultures and values lost during the time of cultural invasion by colonialism. Rural traditional village situations are idealized and celebrated as time-immemorial customs; the languages and beliefs of their people are given much preference in their work. As the literary tradition evolves further, writers critically analyse the new identity brought about by the social, political and cultural changes. Their subjects deal with "growing up in a country controlled by unsympathetic foreigners, the experiences of competing cultures, victimisation through racial prejudice, the sense of alienation, the struggle for independence, the establishment of an independent nation, and the movement to the political and social revolution".⁷ Such a popular and common use of

subject among writers, based on the desire to convey to fellow nationals and to readers from colonial powers the feelings of the colonised makes it a more rewarding study. In almost all the Papua New Guinean novels a "good deal of care is often expended in the early chapters explaining the local tribal or village scene to those unfamiliar with it."⁸ Much of the Papua New Guinean novel constructed in such a manner utilizes the rare opportunity to include and define certain words, phrases, images, metaphors and linguistic elements. This is done through processes such as those identified by post-colonial literary theorists. These include features of appropriation such as glossing (paranthalical translation of individual words), untranslated words (selective lexical fidelity which leaves some words untranslated in the text is a more widely used device for conveying the sense of cultural distinctiveness), interlanguage (fusion of two languages' linguistic structures as interface signs to foreground cultural distinctions), syntactic fusion (intermarrying of local language syntax to that of the lexical forms of English), and code switching and vernacular translation (the technique of switching between two or more codes to make dialect more accessible).⁹ All are strategies which must be recognised as having been born out of the cultural system of writing, one that combines the oral storytelling mode and the written culture, as in Vincent Eri's The Crocodile (1971), Umba's The Fires of Dawn (1978), Kituai's The Flight of a Villager, Kilage's My Mother Calls Me Yaltep(1980), and Mel's Kumdi Bagre (1984).

Russell Soaba identified three stages of the Papua New Guinean literary culture. The first stage in the literary evolution of the Papua New Guinean novel was basically anti-colonial writing. Secondly the writing done after independence was personal or self-conscious, and thirdly writing became a kind of lighter entertainment rather than a committed activity.¹⁰ The last stage is one which Soaba criticises more forcefully today. These stages are somewhat based on Soaba's concern for the ultimate direction of Papua New Guinean literature but they also seem to dismiss serious creative efforts by his contemporaries. Soaba's comments may be regarded as dismissive and seriously injurious to the literary style and scope of written discourse within the Papua New Guinean context. Soaba fears the silent

withdrawal by serious writers into a vacuum of inactivity and a lack of inspiration offered for future writers. However, it can be argued that Soaba's concern for standard and style reflects a parochial notion of the activity of writing, as the principle of forms through time transcends those initially committed to open creativity. In this sense

the real problem is not that of being restricted by rules--or the absence of such a restriction--but the necessity of inventing forms of expression, or merely finding them not ideal forms, or forms derived from a principle which transcends the enterprise itself but forms which can be used immediately as the means of expression for a determinate content; . . . the question of value of these forms cannot reach beyond the immediate issue.¹¹

The forms of expression were already there in the culture, and the Papua New Guinean author had only to discover the necessity of them. Although to invent a form would not subvert the rules or norms of any other form, the very nature of being part of the unwritten oral culture and the written colonial culture has created a form, that of living within a literary landscape and the space of silence. It is within this conceptuality that the writer comes to recognise the multiplicity and diversity of inheritance which has to be nurtured. Françoise Lionnet writing about *Autobiographical Voice, Race, Gender, and Self Portraiture*, says:

Within the conceptual apparatuses that have governed our labeling of ourselves and others, a space is thus opened where multiplicity and diversity are affirmed. This space is not a territory staked out by exclusionary practices. Rather, it functions as a sheltering site, one that can nurture our differences without encouraging us to withdraw into new dead ends, without enclosing us within facile oppositional practices or sterile denunciations and disavowals. For it is only by imagining nonhierarchical modes of relation among cultures that we can address the crucial issues of indeterminacy and solidarity.¹²

Françoise further illuminates the nonhierarchical connection as one which "encourages lateral relations: instead of living within the bounds created by the linear view of history and society" and one which liberates the colonised man to achieve full freedom "to interact on an equal footing with all the traditions that determine our present predicament."¹³ The

conceptuality which best describes and accommodates the colonised or that of people of any similar historical experience is one of autobiographical literature. Although there are disputes as to what autobiography really is, and to what extent it is to be recognised as art, it is nevertheless agreed that there may be differentiated forms of autobiography.¹⁴ Roy Pascal in confronting this question goes further to distinguish autobiography proper from other literary forms and branches of the autobiographical genre such as letters, memoirs, diaries and confessions. In relation to the autobiographical genre which has developed in Papua New Guinea over the last two and a half decades it has become clear that the autobiographical form has been extensively used. In the context of this thesis, most prose narratives by Papua New Guineans could be interpreted as conventional autobiographical writing and as autobiographical novels which form the autobiographical literary tradition of the Papua New Guinean writer.

The Papua New Guinean Autobiographical Narrative Tradition (1968-1985)

The intimate relation which the Papua New Guinean author has with the autobiographical literary tradition warrants an investigation. This is not an attempt at investigating the historical and psychological origins of the genre and how it has come to be established.¹⁵ Instead it is an attempt to discover through the autobiographical tradition the considerable textual practice of Papua New Guinean authors. The Papua New Guinean writers have used the autobiographical form to redefine and place a fragmented cultural and polydiaglossic linguistic context into one unifying and democratic system, that of the written culture. The autobiographical form as a textual system of thought gives, in the Bakhtinian sense, "voices" or "dialogism" which take shape from an immediate "event or situation of experience... situations and events take on almost physical particularity, so that the 'life' with which logic must be connected appears to be composed of unique experiential moment."¹⁶ In this sense, the authentic and logical voice of the writer is autobiographical to "represent the self in and through its relationships with the outer world" and this

involves the recollection of the movement of a life, or part of a life, in actual circumstances in which it was lived. It imposes a pattern on life, constructs out of it a coherent story. It establishes certain stages in an individual life, makes links between them, and defines, implicitly or explicitly, a certain consistency of relationship between the self and the outside world...This coherence implies that the writer takes a particular standpoint, the standpoint of the moment at which he reviews his life, and interprets his life from it. The standpoint may be the actual social position of the writer, his acknowledged achievement in any field, his present philosophy and in every case it is the present position which enables him to see his life as something of a unity, something that may be reduced to order.¹⁷

As the negotiator of the past and present, the autobiography uncovers significant aspects of a person's history and life. Indeed, the Papua New Guinean author is at the very core of this activity if Pascal's notion of an autobiographical tradition as a genre is allowed to be used as an analysis of the Papua New Guinean narrative discourse. However, a more illuminating discussion of the autobiographical tradition is offered by Heidi I Stull in The Evolution of Autobiography from 1770-1885.¹⁸ She itemises three distinctive branches of autobiography: a) the classical or conventional autobiography (as in the case of Grillparzer), in which the author's sole concern is to present the story of his life as factually and "objectively" as possible; b) "Poetry and Truth"-Goethe and Wordsworth-in which the factual autobiographical experience is sacrificed or at least subjected to the artistic intent; and (c) the autobiographical novel (often referred to as *kunstlerroman*)-Goethe's Werther, Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise-in which an occasional glimpse of the author's personal experience is discernible, but which, because of its primarily fictional character, must be relegated to the genre of the novel.¹⁹ Stull's theoretical perspective is relevant to this thesis. To take such an approach means that a form of classification of the Papua New Guinean prose narratives is necessary.

In the conventional or classical autobiographical tradition Albert Maori Kiki's Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (1968) will be discussed. The next category, "Poetry and Truth", will focus on Russell Soaba's Wanpis (1977) Paulias Matane's Aimbe, the Pastor (1979) and Ignatius

Kilage's My Mother Calls Me Yaltep (1984). These works have demonstrated that occasionally the author's own personal experiences become part of the text. Soaba's Wanpis, more than the other two novels in this category, achieves this fascinating result by his controlled nameless character whose existential position is more ambiguous than the famed national poet only perceived as a shadow hero of the novel, from whom all characters take their inspiration. There is a considerable amount of information on Soaba's own life experiences in the first two sections of Wanpis where he also attempts "to produce an intimate sense of the determination and despair of Papua New Guineans educated into a system which cuts them adrift from their pasts but establishes no ideals for future."²⁰ Paulias Matane and Ignatius Kilage's novels operate like Soaba's Wanpis; their significance lies in their reflection of their own experiences as children growing up in their traditional societies and going out of that society. This exposure to the outside world is represented by the characters recruited as labourers to work on plantations, becoming Christians, attending elementary schools and taking up ministry work. Both authors' own experiences show them as victims of the twin imperatives created by cultural invasion (as in Matane) and by the contact dilemmas (as in Kilage). In the last category, "the autobiographical novel" we will look at Umba's The Fires of Dawn (1978), Jim Baital's Tali (1979), Kituai's The Flight of a Villager (1979), Michael Mel's Kumdi Bagre and Toby Waim Kagl's Kallan (1984). These novels, though overlapping into the second category, can still be seen as creative fiction, but ones that wholly utilise the autobiographical experiences more than the creative impulses which gave them the incentive to write the novel. On the other hand, the first novel proper, Vincent Eri's The Crocodile (1970), will be discussed separately to show the relationship his novel has with the other work that succeeded his publication, but not as a means to prove (or disprove) Eri's direct influence on other writers. Such a task would be difficult. This attempt is to see the Papua New Guinean authors' participation in the art of writing, their different methods of presentation of the past, and the distinctive quality of recalling that part of their experience that is different from any others.

The autobiographical literary tradition is an overall expression of a national literature which cannot be denied, or suppressed by discriminatory critical analysis. Kalyan Chatterjee notes this autobiographical structure in his essay on Papua New Guinea literature. He observes "the typical PNG author writes a single inspired autobiographical story or novel and then moves over to other spheres of life".²¹ This autobiographical structure is a distinctive textual practice of the Papua New Guinean writer. Through the autobiographical style the novelists have reflected more unpretentiously the Papua New Guinea reality not only as authentic images, statements of truth, but as poetry and fiction of a reality.

The success of the Papua New Guinean writer has depended on other factors as well: the continued liberal attitude of the University and higher education in fostering self-consciousness, creativity and publishing, the development of an active literature syllabus in schools, the willingness of publishing houses to publish local materials, and the newspapers' co-operation in promoting national literature. Political motivation and critical consciousness of the historical inheritance came from the political activities of the period. Students at the University of Papua New Guinea, the Administrative College and the Goroka Teachers College in the 1960s, aware of the political development of their country recognised the need to write and expressed their discontent. The students of the Administrative College regarded themselves as the "bulls", forming the famous "Bully Beef Club", and the pioneer creative writing students of the University of Papua New Guinea known as the "prophets", were to be heralds of the initiators of national consciousness. The "bulls' activities focussed on political issues of the country, and were practical and inspiring to the rise of national consciousness. The "prophets" on the other hand were actively engaged in literary activities across the University of Papua New Guinea campus; their concerns were shaped by the echoes of the "bulls" and by the impetus offered by the creative writing classes of Ulli Beier. Eventually the "bulls" moved into active politics in 1968, forming the first indigenous political party: the Pangu Pati in the House of Assembly in the 1968 sitting. The prophets, on the other hand, continued writing, making use of forums such as literary journals founded by Ulli Beier and theatres catering for their writing. As years reeled on other literary journals, organisations

and institutions were created to accommodate the literary and artistic sensibilities of the prophets. Writers' conferences and literature seminars were organised. International conferences, especially those organised within Papua New Guinea, offered writers opportunities to interact and discuss their work with internationally recognised writers.²²

PART TWO

We The Written

-If, then we think of literature as the condition for the flowering of intellectual and perceptive thought it is hard to see any great divide between those societies which happen to use writing for literary expression and those which do not.

Ruth Finnegan
Literacy and Orality.¹

CHAPTER FIVE

Political Consciousness and Self-Expression Albert Maori Kiki's Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime

Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (1968), Albert Maori Kiki's autobiography and the first book by a Papua New Guinean, marks the beginning of very important events in the political and literary history of Papua New Guinea.¹ This may be seen as the dawning of nationalism and the birth of a national literature. The book published during the last moments of colonialism has its own literary excitements and celebration. Its publication meant that for the first time an indigenous voice was heard, an authentic representation that immediately challenged the distorted, exaggerated, crude sketches and literary straitjackets invented by the expatriate fiction writers on Papua New Guineans. Authentic representation meant serious reconsideration of the expatriate literature on Papua New Guinea. The work achieved recognition immediately and was reprinted and translated into several different languages, the first one being German. This indicated that there was a readership for authentic Papua New Guinean literature, both in the country and outside it.

Political consciousness for Papua New Guineans took its bearing in educational institutions and from the encouragement of sympathetic Australians. Papua New Guinean intellectuals who attended the newly established higher institutions such as the University of Papua New Guinea, Administrative College and the Goroka Teachers College in the 1960s were encouraged and urged to think seriously about the future of their country. Public views and opinions were expressed about the administration's rigid colonial policy, and a greater awareness of the colonial position Australia was placing on the territory. Australian presence was seriously questioned by non-administrative officers, the public back in Australia, and the writers and nationals of Papua New Guinea. Albert Maori Kiki, one of the pioneer students in one of the institutions, records the events and political development of this period in his

autobiography, one of political expression coupled with his personal life story and the culture of his people.

In Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime Kiki talks about the intensity of political consciousness during the 1960s and up to early part of 1970. The nationalist ferment that was intensified by the formation of the first indigenous political party took a critical dimension. In this profound statement Kiki recounts how he became part of that early nationalistic group:

The idea of a political party came to me very slowly and to most of my colleagues. In a sense the actual formation of the party took place rather suddenly in June 1967, but to me the real beginnings go right back to early 1964, when we started the Bully Beef Club at Administrative College....But soon the club also became a platform for serious political discussion. Many of the subjects brought up in the political science class were heatedly discussed by us in the evenings...It is in this club that our political consciousness developed. Most of us had felt unhappy about many things we saw in Papua New Guinea, but it was only at Administrative College that we began to see the practical means of doing something about it. Most of all, the Bully Beef Club developed a kind of group feeling amongst us. We came from all parts of the country but felt we had a common cause.²

The cohesiveness of the group proved that they were able to challenge the ruling regime's policy on the future of Papua New Guinea. In a submission to the Select Committee on the future of Papua New Guinea, the members of the Bully Beef Club (by then it was not yet a political party) "pointed out that the present system of administration was 'out of date, autocratic, unrealistic and inflexible,' that it was merely perpetuating the domination of the Federal Government in the affairs of Papua-New Guinea to the exclusion of their own leaders and the domination and exclusion was already resulting in disillusionment, friction and steadily deteriorating race relations" which could impede future transition to self government.³ They said that they could not "visualize a change over to self government at any time in the future except under greatly worsened conditions and with a strong possibility of a complete break-down of amity and goodwill."⁴ The submission was high powered. They described the colonial situation as a 'master-servant' relationship, encouraged by the

Australian administration, and said that the regime should step down from power and let the nationals run their own country. Ironically, the pressure was not for immediate independence; it was envisaged that the Australian government work closely with Papua New Guinean leaders, but not as a basis for continued colonial control or domination. This enraged the conservative members of the house who were mostly Australian entrepreneurs and were patriotic about continued Australian control of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The general public reacted with mixed feelings about the effect of the new ideas radically introduced by the young Papua New Guinean parliamentarians. Comments and criticisms appeared in the South Pacific Post (Post Courier) and Australian newspapers (The Australian, The Age) (p.155-6). But this was to change. In the second House of Assembly sitting Pangu Pati had fourteen elected representatives in the House of Assembly. Despite his loss in the election, Kiki remained as Pangu Pati's Secretary. The political victory encouraged the elected members to unite to press for issues of home rule and political independence. In his participation as a founding member of the Pangu Pati, Kiki was proud to see that the Pangu Pati was a symbol of unity of the Papuans and New Guineans, highlanders and coastlanders working together to get their independence. Of this Kiki writes:

At this moment in our history I can see my country's future mapped out. We know where we want to go and I think we know how to get there.⁵

Kiki's energy and inspiration, although motivated by his experience in Fiji as a medical student and work experiences under the administration in Papua New Guinea, went back to his Orokolo people's way of doing things, in particular his mother's people: "I have come a very long way. And yet the long way I have travelled has not separated me from my people. The support and understanding I get from these allegedly 'primitive' and 'backward' people gives me much strength."⁶ To understand Kiki's public stature, and his extraordinary personality, requires a reflection of his early childhood years and the Orokolo society in which he was brought up. The first chapters of the book concentrate on this aspect of his life.

Incidents in Kiki's life with his parents and in the village are recollected. With every incident there is an explanation and some recollection of related chants, laments and myths. The focus is that of a child growing up in the society where a wide knowledge of the lore, myth, genealogy and the history of a particular thing or events was considered absolutely important. Kiki goes further, for example, in the chapter, "Orokolo" and gives a comparative view of the two different traditional societies he belongs to and finds that their social, cultural, political and economical arrangements vary slightly but both have a common link with the spiritual, natural and physical world around them. Moving from his mother's Peravavo people's environment to his father's Orokolo society he observed that there were many differences between the two cultures, especially in the occupational roles of men and women. Gardening, for instance, was the men's job, while sago pounding and weaving of fishing nets was the women's job. In the last chapter of his village life Kiki talks about his initiation and acceptance into the Orokolo society. He also explains how he came to be part of the Maori Kiki clan, his father's adopted clan. This chapter is an interesting one in that in viewing his society Kiki presents the categories of people and the way in which the Orokolo people organise themselves into different groups, by a distinction of houses which is strictly observed:

In Orokolo we distinguish three types of house: the *uvi*, or women's house; the *maupa eravo*, or young men's house and the *hehe eravo*, which is the real men's house. The young uninitiated boys like myself slept in the *uvi*, with their mothers and sisters. The men slept in the *hehe eravo* and paid only occasional visits to the *uvi*, because it was considered effeminate and immoral for a man to spend too much time with his wife. After their initiation, the young men moved into the *maupa eravo*, which literally means the house for decorating oneself. By contrast, the *hehe eravo* was the house for decision making.⁷

Kiki's Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime is not only about political development and his traditional society. It is also about the impact of change and its negative influences. He brings into light some of the dark secrets of his Orokolo society, his growing up in it and his movement out, into the modern world. We see glimpses of both lives in the basic influences on

the personality and character of Kiki. He lived both experiences through sheer courage and incredible personal commitment. He also describes the education he received from his mother's people and the knowledge he gained from his growing up in Orokolo and coming into contact with the white man and the white world outside of his own. His fascination, astonishment and enchantment with the white world was influenced by his people who believed that their dead relatives had come back from the island of the dead:

We further believed that whenever one of our people died he would walk under the ground until he got to the house of the white man. There his body would be washed, and the bad black skin would be taken off. Once he was white, he would be put on the next ship sailing to the island of the dead."⁸

Many of the notions of the white man and the world outside the Orokolo society came to a shattering reality when Kiki moved out of his traditional society. This brought him into contact with other people, tribes, cultures and ideas. Through the school system, Christian religion and his early work with the administration Kiki was able to understand and demystify some of the old beliefs of his people about the white man and the outside world.

Though it is interesting to trace the political development and traditional heritage of Kiki, it is the development of the literature ignited by the publication of Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime that is of interest to this thesis. Kiki's autobiography played an important role in the evolution of the literary culture in Papua New Guinea. Just as autobiographical writings have played an important role in the literary traditions of the Western civilization, Kiki's autobiography has provided a model for literary creation in Papua New Guinea. The book proclaims itself as a narrative text in the literary sense of the word, and opens up new possibilities, gives voice to the unspoken, unwritten text and through the eyes of the narrator both the oral and the written culture are transformed into a meaningful discourse. The narrative text according to Lionnet Françoise epitomizes the fact/fiction polarities, wrestling to establish and constitute absolute categories of feeling and perceiving reality, but usually ends up "splitting the subject of the discourse into a narrating self and an experiencing self,

which can never coincide exactly."⁹ So according to this logic, we have Albert Kiki, the author as the creator of a narrative discourse the Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime. On the other hand we have Albert Maori Kiki the subject of the book, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime which splits and becomes a narrating self and an experiencing self. The narrating self is the one whose voice is heard right across the book and the experiencing self is the one we picture in the voice of the narrative self. Thus what we have is that Kiki has placed himself in the centre of his narrative discourse and attempts to find a resolution to the tensions of the split. For instance, on several occasions, he reprints letters, official documents, election pamphlets and newspaper articles which have relevance or are about him and he defends or offers explanations, reasons and justifications of his participation. In this case we have Kiki's narrative self taking dominance over the experiencing self, which participated in the event implied in the letter or article. As a writer Kiki is engaged in a process of revision and reflection of the past. He provokes a radical insight into the present condition affecting him and his people. He handles his subject with great honesty, in the same manner as he approached his people; he writes with a deep-felt compassion, personal honesty and cogent interpretations of his people's myths and legends that remain an integral part of his character and mode of feelings. This is similar to Jean Jacques Rousseau's The Confessions. According to Heidi Stull, an autobiography like Rousseau's "present[s] the reader with a totally new concept of man, modern man, conscious of his uniqueness and therefore, of this alienation from society. And this man is not afraid to show his shortcomings as well as his virtues 'in all sincerity.'"¹⁰ Sincerity and truthfulness to the story of man is, according to Rousseau, "the singly most important aspect" of autobiography, where the narrator tries "to show *everything*, without dissimulation, without falsification, and above all, without omissions".¹¹ Thus in Kiki's work too we see the author takes ordinary village experiences and his modern experience as the focus but allows the reader to perceive in it any familiarity to or difference from the reader's own. This does not mean that Kiki in writing his autobiography was writing as an outsider, to make the discrimination of his society obvious; he wrote as an insider, one who was able to bridge the two worlds; the ancient mysteries revealed to him by his mother existing in fruitful conjunction with the modern pathologist,

welfare officer, politician and leader of his people. In fact Kiki's book was the first important written statement of deep self-expression kept within the space created by colonialism, but delivered at the right moment.

Although of questionable status as a literary text Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime has remained the most inspiring text for Papua New Guinean writers, as literature, autobiography and a social, political statement produced by a Papua New Guinean. It is a story (in the loose sense of the word) about a passionate man, with great personality, concerned with the problems of his country, "ruthlessly outspoken and perhaps too honest for a politician", a story also of the Orokolo culture, described as "stone age culture," but with daily practice of art and its symbolic interpretations of customs, rituals, and initiation practices.¹² Kiki is both the teller of his own story and reteller of the stories of his people heard and learned in his childhood and upbringing. As the first important book written by a Papua New Guinean "it tells the story of a man, who in his own life time spanned thousands of years of human development".¹³

Kiki's book set the precedent for the Papua New Guinea author especially in view of what the author has done in politics. The Papua New Guinea author had a story to tell and share and the opportunity opened through literary channels (literary magazines, journals, newspapers, etc), workshops, conferences and performances, gave a new necessity, an inner will to express their experiences more profoundly. The publication of Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime challenged the dominating images long entertained, denounced the sterile gestures and boundaries of western discourse of New Guinea, and destroyed negative knowledges of power and political boundaries between whites and black, New Guineans and Papuans, highlanders and coastlanders, administration and villagers, Christianity and paganism. Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime symbolically announces the unification of Papua and New Guinea into one country and destroys some of the worst fears and cynicisms of the colonial legacy:

Those who wish to deny us independence keep telling us about a number of problems we shall not be able to deal with as an independent nation. They say there is tension between Papua and New Guinea, tension between highlands and coastal people, and that we shall never be able to unite. They say we shall abandon democratic procedure, which is being taught to us so carefully now, and we shall introduce one party government. Some think we shall become communists. Some say the army will stage a coup and introduce military dictatorship. Some say we have trouble with our Chinese minority or mixed-race people. Others fear we will kick out the Australian planters. Most of them feel the country will collapse economically because Australian aid will dry up after independence.¹⁴

This first book brought together a force which is suddenly transformed by its powerful images and symbolism, its determined character and personality, and the truth and honesty of a man who is not ashamed of the humble traditions of his people nor of the changes that have taken place. To recall Julia Kristeva's note on intertextuality, the book is in the fore of simplifying the power of the dominant force (administration, church) and allowing it to be contested on the same level as that common to the subordinate cultures (village, customs, rituals). In other words, Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, chooses to cross time and space to wrestle with the truth. As an autobiographical work, it has to maintain a truthful interpretation of the author's life and the many mysteries, practices and experiences of his people. It is in Roy Pascal's description of autobiography directed towards the specific truth of the self "which transforms the conception of the psyche, particularly in the realization of the complexity" and it develops, "along with the awareness of the impact of historical change", the realization of the individual's development as part of the general social process, which focuses on the individual as the historical force to give the the sum of a whole social trend, political development of a generation.¹⁵ The inner experience, the burden of a weighty experience, "can not be borne until it is composed in autobiography".¹⁶

Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime may be read as classical or conventional autobiography. According to a working definition of a classical or conventional autobiography, "the author's

sole purpose is to present the story of his life as factually and 'objectively' as possible."¹⁷ What we have in Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime is the fusion of factual experience of the author, the mythical heritage (from which the author finds inspiration) and the prophetic vision of early nationalistic leaders. It is a book divided between the village and the modern world, in which the author has bridged "the gaps in a single life time and survived the experience as a whole man, not nervously divided between two ways of life, two moral or cultural loyalties."¹⁸ Perhaps this might explain the feature of the Papua New Guinean novels that succeeded this publication. Writers in any new nation are said to be the proto-elites whose initial preoccupation with political independence is as a divided person, with concerns for the age-old traditions and the inherited values of their western colonial education, with political nationalism and individualism competing with each other. Sadly, this dilemma is subjected to forces of internal pressure and consciousness in Paulias Matane's Aimbe the the Pastor (1979) and Jim Baital's Tali (1976) or results in a personal choice to remain outside of it as in Russell Soaba's Wanpis (1977). This discussion will be taken up more fully in later chapters.

Kiki's story is comparable with Michael Somare's autobiography published in the year of the country's first independence celebration.¹⁹ The stories of Kiki and Somare are similar in many ways, and both autobiographies reveal the extraordinary experiences of the first nationalistic leaders: their early childhood, initiation, struggle through the colonial education, their frustrations with the job they were given as junior officers in the administrative hierarchy, their concern for a fair representation of people's wishes and political achievements. Interestingly, the publication of the two autobiographies represents two important phases of political development in the country. Kiki's autobiography represents the phase leading up to 1968 (the time of the second house of assembly) and self-government in 1973. Michael Somare's autobiography, Sana (1975), covers the political development leading from self government to independence, from 1968 to 1975.

It is through techniques of recollection and explanation that Kiki is able to evoke the past with such ease and comfort. He describes the various social classes and village practices, while revising the old chants and fables entwined symbolically in the mythology and artistic rituals and traditions of the people. Much of the oral tradition that Kiki grew up in is written in his autobiography. There is much not written which could have been written, but the task is to present the society as it has accommodated the author.

Perhaps this technique of giving so much detail and description or explanation of life in the village, innocent childhood and initiation, is an important feature of someone who writes to be read by others outside of the writer's own society. Novels written by Papua New Guineans after this first book have all spent much time providing incredible geographical, historical and cultural background before they actually move on into their storyline. This autobiography takes us on a journey which is evoked by the accurate observation and sensitivity by the author towards his society. To spend a great deal of explanation of his society meant he could provide an important, indestructible and influential background to his later achievements and public stature. According to Roy Pascal, autobiographies based on childhood experiences uncover "experiences and capacities" that form the later life of the author.²⁰ The author's later achievement, public image and professional career is the consequence of a unique childhood and adolescence, without which the works written become irrelevant and perhaps "reflect a sentimental indulgence in his private memories; if he speaks only of what in his early childhood presages his later development, the truth may easily be distorted by his polemical bias".²¹ Indeed Kiki in entering into a literary space has not only provided autobiography of his childhood and personal development, but also offers a honest and truthful account of the massive cultural, social and political changes that have occurred during the course of his lifetime and his parents'. Thus Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime enters into a complex system of literature, just as the author entered the complex social, political and historical phase of his country.

CHAPTER SIX

The Crocodile and Cultural Fragmentation

Albert Maori Kiki wrote the first book, an autobiography, but Vincent Eri wrote the first novel, The Crocodile (1971) which strengthened the efforts of literary activities of the time.¹ The Crocodile was the success story of the Ulli Beier literary era, and the most concrete result of the "prophets" at the University of Papua New Guinea's creative writing class. It was an expression of indigenous authorship, which soared in the late 1960s and 1970s. Most people in educational institutions in the 1970s have read The Crocodile more than any other Papua New Guinean book. This is true outside of Papua New Guinea as it is within. The Crocodile is the most significant work to have come out of the colonial Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific islands, establishing itself as a classic post-colonial novel. The novel was a success in every sense of the word. Its first publication sold out immediately. It quickly soared into the critical attention of the literary scholars and critics. Part of Eri's success as a post-colonial novelist is the simple and lucid prose of his work, which fulfils two functions. First it informs the non-Moveave, non Papua New Guinean viewer of the rich heritage of the oral traditions. Second, Eri writes about what he knows of his people, his experiences as a child of his people and a teacher with the intent to teach the world about his people. He does so successfully by allowing the indigenous perspective to take dominance in his novel, emphasising its structural form and re-describing images which were once crudely sketched by expatriate writers.

The fact that it was the first novel by a local author meant that it faced the cynical criticisms of scholars. At times, the worst exaggerations of western thought have been the basis of bias and prejudiced judgements. On the other hand, confusion and reluctance to accept the Papua New Guinean author could be regarded as a healthy reaction to the emerging indigenous author. However, in reading The Crocodile, there is some sense in accepting some

of the critical analysis made by his critics. Nigel Krauth in his study of the literature of Papua New Guinea, commented:

Not only because it has evoked so much critical comment but also because it is the most significant literary art yet published here. It is a representative example in that the critical attitudes it has evoked are as those evoked by other genres, especially drama. Admittedly Eri's subject matter (as with that of other Papua New Guinean writers) correlates with the areas of sociological, historical and political study, but the main point is that Eri's book is a novel, not an autobiography, not a history, thesis, not a sociological treatise, not a piece of journalism. It is a work of fiction, and as such demands its own freedom of perspective just as it defines its own terms of criticism. It is in its own terms that the novel must be judged.²

Precisely, and Eri's novel is to be judged from perspectives suggested or implied by the book. It is a work of fiction, but with serious implications of historical, political, psychological and cultural knowledge textualised in the structural emphasis of the novel. Even if it seems that structural emphasis overruns other notions of textuality, it still becomes obvious that certain questions need answers. Questions such as: Has Eri achieved what he has set out to do, or has he undermined his didactical approach by allowing Hoiri, the protagonist, to be disillusioned, becoming the unfulfilled quester and defeated hero at the end of the novel? Is Hoiri a symbolic betrayer of his cultural upbringing or is his tragic defeat fated by a kind of prenatal destiny? Certainly such crucial features of Eri's novel need explication, because a book like The Crocodile is not easily relegated into categories of metafiction, metaethnology or autobiography. What we have here is a problem of interpretation. Do we read the novel from an outside perspective (i.e anthropological or literary) or from within the structure and cultural context of the novel?

Eri assumes the role of the artist as a teacher; he is an artist with a teacher's background, and has spoken about his task as basically pedagogical.³ Eri is able to portray the disturbed psychological condition of the Moveave people and the acceptance of the negative influences

of the coloniser. Eri's Moveave society like most colonial societies undergoes external invasion and conquest, cultural confrontation and conflict during the early years of colonisation. This is revealed in this passage:

No one was more troubled than Sevese. He wished Hoiri had never come into this world. He cursed the government and blamed Tamate [Toaripi name for the Reverend James Chalmers, the London Missionary Society pioneer who was murdered at Goaribari Island in 1901] for carrying the Word of God to the village, opening up the way for the patrol officers to be ordering his people around. If only the Government officers were like Tamate and other missionaries, who understood people and cared for their feelings, it would not be so bad. Maybe, when people die and change their skins, their feelings and ideas also change.⁴

In this passage Eri gives the impression that not only did the colonial forces prove invasive, but created a new psychology and gave the invaded a new image, one that is regarded by the colonised as inferior and submissive. Sevese's curses on the missionaries and the colonial government for invading the cohesive and harmonious Moveave society illustrate the pervasiveness of their control and manipulation, and reveal the colonised man's exposure to the worst realities of the colonial environment. In the passage that follows Sevese accepts this colonial domination:

"Hoiri, my son, the truth of what I had always told you about keeping on with schooling is beginning to show itself now. If you were a teacher or a clerk you wouldn't be recruited for a carrier. This is only the beginning. By the time you are as old as I am, there will be a slot in your shoulders where the round end of a long stick will rest comfortably. Your hip joints will be loose from swinging in time with the movements of the patrol box."⁵

Sevese's statement of truth to his son Hoiri reflects the negative knowledge and the false imaginations excited by the colonial education. The implantation of the pervasive, negative knowledge on the invaded people's consciousness is internalised and critically severs the indigenous perspective. In another passage Eri reveals the stubborn, hypocritical and intolerant attitudes of the white colonial man. Of Mr. Smith, the young patrol officer, Eri writes:

Mr. Smith had been long in the district. He would have been no older than Hoiri, but tall and fair. A healthy ripe pawpaw was the nearest shape and colour to his face; the cheeks were slightly red, either from the heat of the sun or the quantities of the rum he consumed. The flies seemed to have a particular liking for the white skin. He was stationed at Kerema, the district headquarters, where he had carried out a few minor patrols accompanied by a more experienced patrol officer, at least one in which he was on his own. Once on board, he removed his boots and relaxed in a deck chair and began reading a newspaper. The sergeant and the cook shared the shade of the canvas. At intervals Mr. Smith swiped at the flies and said, "The blasted flies - they won't leave me alone! Why don't you buzz around the smelly kanakas on board?"⁶

In this scathing description Eri paints Mr Smith as a caricature of the young, inexperienced patrol officers, often controlled by their white superior superman image and general arrogance towards the native conditions or the Papua New Guinean environment. Eri's portraiture of the young Mr. Smith is satiric in many ways, but also speculative. It is speculative in the sense that in most colonised societies the mysteries and phenomena inherent in the physical features, the general attitude and the material possessions of the white man are a common experience. In another passage Eri brings home this point:

Hera was not alone in his wish to learn the secret of easy access to lots and lots of money. It was common knowledge among his people that all white men who came to work in their country knew the secret of where all the money came from, but they dared not reveal it to the black men. The last thing the whiteman wanted was the black men become their equals. But if the white men had any sense of shame at all, they would admit openly that the wealth they proudly enjoyed didn't really belong to them. It was all confusing, to say the least. If they had easy access to all that stolen wealth, why did they come up to this country -- which some of them regarded as a bastard of a place to work in?⁷

Eri focuses on the indigenous characters more than the European characters. The protagonist alone, for instance, is well described and his characterization is shaped by the forces around him. Nigel Krauth shows that Hoiri's character is shaped largely by the social and cultural context of the novel, "from social unity in the novel's first half to social fragmentation in the later half."⁸ Eri has characterised the village people with deep and detailed compassion.

He allows the village people around Hoiri to show their emotions and relationships to one another. Growing up in a society characterised by people's relationships to one another and their understanding of one another makes Hoiri's childhood life profoundly innocent. The childhood society of Hoiri is a closely-knit society, bound by its close kinships and harmony, but the one that he experiences as an adult is a frustrating, alienating experience, where "people are essentially isolated...from the other and the society is a mass of fragments rather than a close-knit co-operative whole."⁹

Through Hoiri, the two societies and eras are seen as inseparable. This is the reality of the present condition of the colonised man. There is no escape, but the realisation of the entrapment and self-denial which may be necessary in the crucial moments of history. The entrapment and personal sacrifice may be presented as the surface reality of a more complex position that the author has attempted to demonstrate. Frances Devlin Glass found Hoiri trapped between tradition and modern cultures. Hoiri changes "his cultural framework and the fluidity of his conscious movements from a European frame of reference to a Papua New Guinea one as frequently as he could."¹⁰ It is an ambiguous position which Hoiri must live with, one that cannot be substituted for a purely Papua New Guinea experience or a modern one, but both must be adjusted to the cultural framework of thinking. Hoiri's reference to "the place above the rapids", for instance, could mean both in the Christian sense of the reference to heaven or in the traditional sense of the phrase referring to the people who live above the rapids, the unexplored territory of the fearsome warriors.¹¹ Such ambiguity can however place Hoiri intellectually above "the thinking of his own culture and that of the whites: the implication is that he has applied the evaluation that missionaries have used to denigrate his own culture's mythology (i.e., that it is mere superstition) to Christian mythology."¹² The novel is closely tied up with the rituals, ceremonies and customs and traditions of the Moveave people; their traditional relationships (personal, family) and trade relationships (trade partners and politics) and the mythical world. One could agree with Glass's interpretation as the very problem of the colonised is to break the barrier of cultural

conformity. Only by transcending the subverted level could the colonised be recognised as important. This requires characters of the novel to move between the two contesting worlds and beyond. At times this movement is mimetic as in the post-colonial phase, and at other times by a complex process of assimilation.

The novel is written with a dual structure based on (i) Hoiri's childhood innocence and (ii) his grown-up adult experience. The childhood experience is centred around the early years of Hoiri in the village, his childhood dreams, fantasies and innocence. Within this age of innocence Hoiri's natural transition to manhood, his contact with the mysterious world of the white man, and the idyllic village traditions combine to initiate him to take on the second stage of his life.¹³ The second stage is one of experience, from which he realises the vulnerability and worst consequences that result from serious confrontations of both worlds. Hoiri is more a victim than a hero, the disillusioned man who has only to be drawn into the abyss of nothingness. Of this second stage Krauth explains Hoiri's disillusionment:

He experiences the material ideal gone bad in the bombs and gun fire of warfare, and he suffers from the misfortune of being involved in a sorcery pay back, the outcome of the personal relationships ideal gone bad. With the loss of his wife, Hoiri's attempt at achieving fulfilment in the traditional way is turned sour. The second half of the novel traces Hoiri's period of tragic experiences. He is forced towards disillusionment with both ways of life.¹⁴

The two parts are unified by recurring themes, situations and images. The recurring devices weld the novel together by signalling the progressive stages in Hoiri's development and acting as reference points between these stages.¹⁵ It is a kind of rhythm and tempo of literary aesthetics. The first four chapters are all based on Hoiri's childhood, the rest about contact with the outside world, and the last chapter the end result of such an experience. Here in the Bakhtinian sense we could see that the structure is cyclical, in that "there is no broad or deep realistic emblematic; meaning does not exceed the sociohistorical limitations inherent in the

images", that it "makes itself felt with particular force, therefore the beginnings of growth and the perpetual renewal of life are weakened, separated from the progressive forces of history and even opposed to them; thus growth, in this context, makes life a senseless running-in-place at one historical point, at one level of historical development."¹⁶ Hoiri explores this world with questions at each new introduction or experience. The general experience is pivotal, moving between the traditional and modern cultures either mentally or physically. Mentally Hoiri resorts to easy speculation about the white culture, the material possession of white goods, and the white world he remembers from his journey to Port Moresby. Hoiri's predicament is more a psychological abyss than an empty void. By presenting such a condition of viciousness Eri brings his novel to an ending without an end. It is as we discover an abyss of disillusionment. Hoiri is disillusioned, with both the physical and the cultural environment he was born in and introduced to in his adult years. All through the novel we are aware of the geographical and mental circles which Hoiri dwells in. The cultural boundaries of his own traditional world are marked by notions of exclusion and categorised into a sequential development. In other words, the Moveave culture in which Hoiri grows up is fixed in its structures as well as its ability to contain its people, but becomes so fragmented that notions of exclusion become a necessary strategy of survival.

The world of The Crocodile is circular in nature. This generates entrapment and destruction more than freedom. In a way the circular journey and the shifting of Hoiri's mental ideas is a metaphysical aspect of the novel, and the protagonist is straddled between the world of the real as well as that of rituals and magics. It is an intrinsic aspect of many post-colonial novels. It is intrinsic because Eri's novel is written with the author's own psychological, historical and cultural background, which has a deep root in the metaphysical cosmos of his people. In many respects Eri's preoccupation is to demonstrate his ability to contain both worlds, by appropriating the written word to contain the artistic, magical, mythical and spiritual world of his unwritten culture. But more importantly, the written word is one which is also immersed in the ritualistic, magical, superstitious, mystical and verbal world as well as in the highly technical world. Eri's role as a writer and teacher is crucially important; it

is a privileged position which he recognises as vitally essential to the textualising of his people's culture and society. Being a product of the oral society the author is aware of its immenseness and tries to give scope to it in the written form. But there are problems with such a practice, as the author conditioned by the structures, morphology and style of the written discourse could easily restrict the entirety of a specific subject. This may be true, where the written word claims only to represent both worlds in the novel, and where its structure and conventional nature is inadequate to represent the unconscious, unconventional and complicated nature of the unwritten world. Frances Devlin Glass' interpretation of The Crocodile points out that there are problems which we can confront in Eri's work. For example, Hoiri's description of Mitoro's buttocks as 'two round pots' is something semantically sound to the western frame of thought, suggesting pleasing physical contours, but ambiguous, so that Eri's precise connotations for the pots within the Papua New Guinean context as items of high value, used in the age old Hiri trade cycle between the Gulf people and their Motuan partners are easily misinterpreted.¹⁷ Such can be the overall ambiguity of the novel when we read from outside without allowing for the cultural and structural context of the novel. Thus we are confronted with whether we should read The Crocodile with a western precision of structure, narrative technique or style. Even if we do, there is no one absolute direction because by nature Hoiri's own experience is destined to be one of confusion and disillusionment, as the world Eri has tried to portray is one of cultural fragmentation and chaos. The ideal village condition and the physical make-up of the traditional man crumples into fragments of ridiculous proportions through the loss of traditions and the cultural betrayal by acts of submission. Just as Hoiri's admiration of Mitoro's beauty and qualities as characteristics of the ideal village woman is denied to him when her life is taken by a crocodile, Eri presents the ideal village situations and qualities destroyed by forces of change. These forces of change are symbolically presented in the destructive power of the crocodile. The crocodile operates on other levels as well. On one hand it is the powers of evil and the spirituality of sorcery, and, on another level, it is the destructive powers of the colonial force. Associated with these are conscription into the patrol teams as carriers and Hoiri's marriage to Mitoro in the church, even though

they were already traditionally married. Although the establishment of white culture "on the Moveave district and the fact that power is valued in Papua New Guinean culture for its own sake makes possible the acceptance of the superior white technology,"¹⁸ it is arguable that power has to be institutionalized and maintained through force.

In many respects the novel is a profound statement of cultural fragmentation and the alienating psychological trauma of colonialism as well as the disillusionment emanating from it. The Crocodile presents the "cultural fragmentation caused by the influx of Australians during the Second World War and the profound historical changes this meant for the people of Papua New Guinea."¹⁹ Even before the war, the contact societies were experiencing cultural fragmentation. The war is only one of the drastic forces of destruction which caused cultural fragmentation. Eri explores the idea of fragmentation further, to the whole set of values that characterizes Hoiri's upbringing as a villager and the test of these values as they come in confrontation with the ones outside of his childhood society. The quest for an ideal self and an ideal society is not often possible, as cultures which operate in a contact society are vulnerable, and this results in fragmentation as they attempt to accommodate or reject those aspects absent from the original state. It is therefore through the novel that Eri acknowledges this fact of cultural fragmentation most forcefully effected by processes of colonialism. His attempt is not too distant from the autobiographer who sees this gap of cultural fragmentation and psychological disillusionment as the very aspect of a colonised man.

Eri has created a method which does not distance itself, but provides a passage into time. His style is straight-forward and can be compared to styles of other colonised writers. Writing from within a colonial situation enables the author to appropriate the written text, once denied to the indigenous author or excluding indigenous access. The first works of fiction from colonised people often wedge their way through a very revolutionary process. The

seizure of the written text often "involves an entirely different and intrusive (invasive) orientation to knowledge and interpretation" of the colonial people, but it is one which is essentially mimetic.²⁰ This feature is described by post-colonial literary theorists as the seizing of the word or the written text, to effectively:

retain the seed of self regeneration and the power to create and recreate the world. By inscribing meaning, writing releases it to a dense proliferation of possibilities.²¹

This means that the reimagining of New Guinea, the re-describing of the unwritten was necessary, but within the colonised author's own contextual framework. Eri's artistic work presents the "primitive" society we confront in Kiki's Ten Thousand Years in Lifetime, and one making a transition into a new historical phase. The seizing of the means of communication and the liberation of the post-colonial writing by appropriation of the written word become a crucial factor of the process of self-assertion and of reconstruction of the world as an unfolding historical process.²²

Eri's method is to provide us with a journey inwards, into the space of events and experience, not time. Time in the western sense would be inappropriate because things were not measured chronologically but allowed to be recalled through events and happenings. Once in the sphere of Eri's world, our own cultural and ideological background is unable to make sense of the ritualistic world, but we are compelled by intuition to discover it for ourselves. There is nothing to facilitate our critical knowledge of the world of the novel, but we are faced with the ultimate decision to share Eri's protagonist's tragic world. But to share Hoiri's gradual progress into the world outside of his own would be to further confront the vicious nature of such an experience. The novel is closely-knit with the fabric of the colonial and traditional societies. The structure moves from personal to family, village to towns, villager to the employed servant, or from the love of the black race to the hate of white race. Just as Hoiri was accepted as the village man brought up in his traditional society and making an entry

into the colonial world, the book has penetrated another world. The Crocodile has achieved what may be described as the oral word making its entry into the written word.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Soaba's Wanpis: "Lusman" and "Wanpis" as Outsiders in the Papua New Guinean Society

One of the most common generalisation underlying the misreading of Soaba's Wanpis (1977) is that it is a Marxist and racist text.¹ This prejudice is based on a certain degree of ignorance and lack of critical appreciation of two philosophical concepts in the book. In Wanpis (1977) Soaba rewrites the western existential ideas of individual self in his own terms. The terms "lusman" and "wanpis" stem directly from the Tok Pisin language. Conventionally "lusman" means a person who is not attached, an individual without roots or place, and "wanpis" means a person who is alone, perhaps loosely attached or temporarily detached from others. Soaba's concepts of "lusman" and "wanpis" go beyond the conventional meaning of these words. This may seem to suggest that Soaba in appropriating the philosophical knowledge of the west for his own use signals two points of departure in his textual practice: the departure from the literary imaginations (the Ulli Beier influence) and the decision to be an artist, an existential writer committed to his work. While the readers of Papua New Guinean writing praised and exalted the work of Soaba's contemporaries, he challenged the reader's critical and preconceived notions of a Papua New Guinean novel by the publication of this philosophically complicated novel.

Wanpis is indeed a very difficult work. Part of the difficulty has to do with the heavy adoption of existential ideas in Soaba's work which readers of the pastoral-village literature, concerned with the nostalgic dreams of the past found difficult to understand. Soaba's Wanpis explores broad ideas from Existentialism to Marxism, but within his own cultural context to a degree that takes him beyond familiar cultural grounds and traditional village writings. He is concerned with the "modes of survival, conformity and rebellion, contrasting the confused sensibilities of its characters' inner worlds with the brutally absurd

fates dictated for them by history and social pressures."² Soaba focuses on the highly conscious Papua New Guinean intellectuals and members of the elite class, artists and bureaucrats, school drop-outs and workers who form the post-colonial structure of Papua New Guinea. These are projected under three categories: "lusman", "split-egg nostalgia" and "wanpis".

Soaba initially talked about the notion of "lusman" as the experience that depicts the intellectual drop-out from any tertiary institutions, beyond which he could be a hero with good qualities that could be absorbed into the work force or back to the village to make ends meet, while a few continue into higher education.³ Soaba also implies in this section that even the few bright ones that continue are poorly educated, worshipping old mistakes and establishments of colonial institutions and this alienates them from their own social or cultural institutions. Basically the "lusman" is someone who is unattached to society by birth or through social institutions. To say that the "lusman" is an alienated person is to say that he has no sense of belonging. The irony of this is that suddenly a new aspiration for self-consciousness develops out of that placelessness and takes shape. Since the "lusman" cannot sustain or defend himself from society's ignorance of his existence, he must become a "wanpis", maybe as a last deathbed wish.

In "Split-egg nostalgia" Soaba talks about the dream of the great return to the village, the idealisation of the old pasts and the sudden upsurge of national pride and solidarity. Ironically the characters in this section do not return to the village, they only recognise that feeling of being attached to some common place of identity, a sense of belonging to their past and society, which becomes an idealized conception. This section forms the basis of Soaba's investigation of the student's cultural and political activities at the University in the 1970s. It also focuses on the solidarity of Papua New Guineans as they waded through the difficult transitional period to independence.⁴ On the surface it may seem Soaba is only presenting the nationalistic sentiments of the country, and not the contribution by the colonial government to the country. But one may easily argue that here is a novel, at the birth of national

consciousness, which must argue for and present the reality and the aspiration for independence and nationhood, which must rely on principles of group solidarity and nationalistic goals.

There may be a deception in such ambitions. The fact is that to achieve nationhood, there has to be a binding force. This binding force surfaces as a struggle rather than a smooth transition. Soaba prefers the truth unveiled rather than being withheld by deception. He foresees that the truth of this struggle, this experience of being liberated from the colonised, is at the cost of self-expression and individual sacrifices.

Although one is unable precisely to pinpoint who in the novel represents the "lusman", and who represents the "wanpis", all the characters could be represented in the "split-egg nostalgia" category. The "split-egg nostalgia" category is the overlapping point. In this category Soaba attempted to portray the whole Papua New Guinean society split between its traditional pasts and present post-colonial condition, between the village and towns, between traditional cultures and modern cultures. It may seem that the nostalgic return to the original order, the idyllic cultural order, is possible. It seems that, within this liminality, the individual characters have to realise the dichotomy of their existence and declare their allegiances, their sense of belonging, cohesion and unity in a new social, cultural and religious order.

The critical process of the novel and the concept of "lusman" and "wanpis" were made clear by Soaba much later. In an article he published about Albert Wendt as the Pacific's existentialist writer, Soaba attempted a definition of the concept of "lusman" and "wanpis" but with reference to his own work.⁵ The "lusman" according to Soaba is born free with unlimited freedom and is responsible for the nature of his own self. This kind of individual is someone who acknowledges the self as the entirety of his existence, but refuses to acknowledge the rules, cultural boundaries, ethical or moral rules of the society. He lacks conformity and refuses to acknowledge the existence of a society. This is demonstrated more

profoundly in the poet figure James St Nativeson, the real lusman, who is damned and trapped. The "lusman" figure is the most complicated of the characters in the novel. This character is the real outsider and is motivated

by habitual orientation towards hatred and self-hatred born of his incapacity to meet life and society in self-respecting terms...the unreconstructed individualist, the man or person that no ameliorate, let alone utopian, society can tolerate or assimilate, because his very existence undermines its rationale for or claims to excellence. He exemplifies human nature inaccessible to national social planning. He will always suffer or cause suffering regardless of any societal or theoretical assumption that suffering and perversity can be legislated out of existence. His very spitefulness is, ultimately, part of the essence of his (and our) humanity, if humanity is regarded as what is left in the viscera of rebellious subjectivity against any totalitarian polity of repressive control.⁶

Soaba's existential ideas were already developed in his earlier works which investigated the ideas of self and society.⁷ He was aware of the external conflict but also of something missing, the internal conflict of the self and its relation or the society's relation to the self which needed explication. Soaba's purpose in Wanpis was to express the inner strength and weaknesses of the individual characters. In so doing it was hoped that the "essential self" of the characters would be identified and asserted before they become swayed into believing in the individual's indifference to society as a consequence of social and cultural conflict.⁸ On the other hand, Soaba realises that self-acceptance, self-definition and discovery were essential qualities of consciousness which could prove powerful justification for being part of a split society, which was wrestling with the difficulties of maintaining a nationhood, as a result of the diversity of culture, language and history. Thus Wanpis opens up with different characters with different views and ideas, influences and backgrounds, who eventually work towards building a new society "each attempting to weave the fabric of a better future from the shreds of a tattered past."⁹

The "lusman" idea, explored extensively in the first two parts of the novel, is based on Abel Willborough's narration and reminiscence. But this takes on new emphasis on James St. Nativeson towards the end of the book. This is strategically important for the exposition of

the "wanpis" aspect of the book. The narrator, Abel Willborough, for instance, realises this shift of identity, from his own "lusman" identity to that of a "wanpis" as a necessary condition of survival:

I was born at dusk. True. I spent the first moments of my life in the darkness, waiting for the next dawn. True again. Symbolically, that is. I never did, and perhaps I never will, know what that next dawn was. Still, I arrived to find it one day, somewhere.¹⁰

Soaba's idea of the "lusman" is similar to Dostoevsky's narrator in Notes from Underground, where "the narrator [is] irrevocably self-divided, and acutely aware of his division; he is continually doing things that he does and does not want to do. Indeed, any one so deeply motivated as he is by spite and perversity (key words in the story), and who has his intelligence, is bound to possess a strong sense of his own dividedness."¹¹ The basic condition of such perversity or existential self has to do with alienation and loneliness. We see Abel Willborough as a lonely and alienated child as a result of his mixed-race blood, the death of his mother while he was away in school, the shadowy character of his school days, the indifference of his half sister upon his graduation from high school, and the intellectual hiding behind the facades of indifference. But Abel Willborough, unlike James St Nativeson, is willing to conform to the society, where the society becomes his shelter for his own weaknesses; he becomes the "wanpis" according to Soaba's definition. Only in the last chapter does this alienated, self-denying character suddenly shift identity, from being a "lusman" to being a "wanpis" by assuming the role of a husband, would-be-father and responsible citizen:

I have no choice. Can't flee the city; can't abandon myself...Ha! What frail pre-emptions! Nope. Can't abandon myself. Having a wife and family is no excuse, I know; but one day in the life of a man there is this... this business of belonging, a moment of decision, a desire to battle it all out, until he discovers that he is not totally alone. No, not even just be the fatherless native.¹²

On the contrary the "lusman" is free to abandon himself, even happy to take his own life when and wherever he wishes. The "lusman" is more at home with his own intellectual and artistic creations. In Wanpis the poet is isolated and alienated, in that the society is unable to sustain him. The emphasis is to show that the "lusman" is a poet and artist, who is more an intellectual outsider than most, seeking solitude as inspiration to live through the dreadful human conditions, and content with writing poetry and random notes for a novel. The "lusman" is essentially a truth seeker who lives by principles which are based on the conduct of the self. James St Nativeson as a true artist refuses to die in bureaucracy, an institution of self-deception and political mimicry. On the other hand he is prepared to undergo martyrdom for believing in the self and the virtues of self. The "lusman's" death is the most forceful expression of this martyrdom:

He lay flat on his stomach, legs spread, arms outstretched, teeth clenched, chin tightly pressed onto the concrete pavement, ready to bloat in [Port] Moresby's thick humidity. A pair of dead eyes stared ahead of him, each socket displaying suffering, discontent, but more of a dead hero whose photographer had striven in vain to make the corpse smile again. The body was butchered by broken bottles on this hot, drunken Saturday, a gash in his bloody mess of hair, several cuts on each forearm, and a slit lower lip forming a second mouth. Constant exudations of red soaked his clothes: a dead frog in a pool of human blood.¹³

Soaba's vivid description of James St Nativeson's death is disturbing, but presents a powerful expression of violence and death during the crucial moment of transition in a newly independent country. Such expressions can explain the uncertainties, the betrayal fever of a new bourgeoisie, and the cultural death of the previous generation. The overall aim is to infuse these two ideas into a coherent unity. James St Nativeson not only is an inspiring and binding force but the symbolic figure of a human sacrifice. This binding factor is represented by James St Nativeson's death.

Soaba may be suggesting here that while "lusman" may be forced to live on his own, it is horrifying to imagine the dreadful condition of such living without human contact. James St

Nativeson is the most alienated individual. His existence in the novel is on the edge of the normal society's experience. He suffers from what the society calls a rebellious, unconventional human experience, yet he insists on being left alone, to write in the solitary confinement of his flat, however absurd it may be:

....No one else but James St Nativeson, that All Saints' graduate, who could never afford a University degree nor any similar academic qualification but to shape and mould his own talents and creativity whilst shut in a room among piles of Western Existentialist novels and essays; whilst he'd spent all his youth wasting away in the narrow confinement of bureaucratic clerkship; and whilst dreaming only but never becoming the country's poet and hero, its historical figure, its forerunner of free thought and honesty in the self, would choose to die like this; a battered face, squandered youth; artistic insight squashed under the weight of human underdevelopment, deaf national harmony and political dreams of pot-bellied independence.¹⁴

As for the "wanpis", it is the contrary. According to Soaba the "wanpis" takes Sartre's idea of an existentialist based on broad ideas of humanism. In this case the "wanpis" is someone who is "condemned to be free" but is part of humanity, and must continue to live responsibly, as he is no longer free like the "lusman". The "wanpis" in this sense is attached to the society either temporarily or permanently. He questions his sense of freedom a lot but realises too that "the society is part of him" and the "society constitutes him."¹⁵ The "wanpis" character is the perfect opposite of the "lusman" figure, someone who is prepared to change his identity, assume a new responsibility and welcome all ideas of assimilation. In many ways the "wanpis" character recognises the hopeless condition of his entrapment and tries to improve it. He is trapped in by his birth and nature of being part of a larger constitutive whole, and he must be prepared to live through it. At birth he is a "lusman", but in later adult years he develops into a "wanpis" figure:

I discovered, after moving among the crowd...Fears of complete insecurity and self-betrayal began to stalk my conscience... yet I felt at the same time that I needed some kind of release. As such I moved at ease amid the din of the gathering, with some difficulty at first but tactically afterwards, no longer afraid of

the dangers of self-exposure, thinking I had no choice but to pretend to live with the crowd...¹⁶

Wanpis is an autobiographical work based on Soaba's association with people who have gone through school with him and have moved to occupy important places in society. Soaba indicates in his interview with Chris Tiffin that the last part of the novel, especially James St Nativeson's poetry and notes, was his favourite.¹⁷ This supports the notes made by James St Nativeson in his "Random Notes of a Novel":

The characters in this novel are not just literary inventions; they are based on the friends I currently treasure, and without whose personal sacrifice in terms of intellectual contribution to the content of this book, I would never attempt an effort as ambitious as this. Where necessary the reader should not fear the liberty of assuming that any of these characters can be an autobiographical representation.¹⁸

What is clear in Wanpis is that a great deal of loss both physical and psychological by characters is experienced. The idea of loss is not only experienced by Abel Willborough, but by Just Call Me Joe, Nathaniel, Vera Nondasiri, Sheila Jivi La and Mr. Goldsworth. The loss is on both a personal as well as the societal level. The characters' loss of their family, culture and original beliefs is weighed against society's loss, at the expense of independence. This loss is very much a positive thing, in that in experiencing loss, personal freedom and liberty to go beyond the doors of the past are conceived. This is well illustrated in the symbolic death of James St Nativeson and the comical celebration of the other Anuki companions during the time James St Nativeson lies dying in the hospital bed.

This idea relates to Richard Priebe's study of the West African novel, in which he observes the post-colonial societies achieving much more sense of national unity after experiencing a certain degree of loss. Priebe observes that:

We then effected a philosophical reversal in which we saw the loss of traditional values in positive terms, for the loss gave man the absolute freedom in the ordering of his existence.

Alienation was seen as a necessary step in the realization of the freedom.¹⁹

This is strikingly similar to what Soaba is doing in Wanpis. However Soaba envisioned a society that was multicultural, multilingual, multiracial, and ordinary, so that it could encompass every human experience. But the cost of such a society is dearer than envisioned and the loss is tremendous; only by virtue of an individual's commitment, as in the case of the writer martyr whose sacrificial death unifies the society in one cohesive unit. Soaba is not pretending he is right in prophesying, but at least he is honest in uncovering the reality of the post-independent Papua New Guinean society.

But alienation is seen as a necessary step in the realisation of freedom. Soaba's characters are people who have enough sense of their alienated past, the dark blind background of their early innocent years, but recognise themselves as living in the present and recognising too that to live is to conform and to make the best of everything, even out of the most abhorrently chaotic or violent experiences. At least that is what Soaba thinks:

I think there is no denying that we are all lusman. To a certain extent I would agree with the western Existentialist. Do I feel out of place in this country? Yes, well I'm a poet in one way or another so most of my characters are those who can't conform easily to the society they constitute. Some of the lusman and wanpis images are brave enough to declare that it is not I who must constitute the society. The society must constitute me...²⁰

Soaba uses personal experiences and philosophical ideas in his fiction in a conscious way. The use of philosophical ideas is basic to works of literature, as noted in Wordsworth's autobiographical works where poetry and truth precedes textuality to contribute to the greater understanding of man and society. Thus Existentialism was relevant to Soaba to pursue values of individuals, man and society in the Melanesian context. However Soaba has pursued this objective, but only in as much as is possible in the character of James St Nativeson who seems to be the only thinking person in the whole book. But one could pity James St Nativeson as a tragic creation only if Soaba could have given a greater status to his work.

Soaba's characters are created with great beauty and force, so that each one of them is a self-contained archetype, an individual spread across the entire society. What Soaba is working towards is really the alienated individual in modern society. The individual is not someone who is disillusioned and confused as in Eri's The Crocodile (1971) but one who is certain about himself, his inner strengths and weaknesses.

The significance of Soaba's ideas of "lusman" and "wanpis" is that they form the basis of Soaba's textual practice, not only in Wanpis but in his other work. Soaba probes into the intellectual, cultural and psychological life of a colonised people. He uses the character of the poet figure and artist. James St Nativeson's ideas, philosophies, writing and life seem to have formed the core of the Anuki folks' life outside of their village. Soaba's adoption of a biblical theme, and the naming of Jimi Damebo as James St Nativeson, after James Baldwin, works as hybridisation of powerful forms of textuality. In fact this is a significant aspect of Soaba's work, one which is interestingly adopted as a political weapon, in attempting to dismiss commonly held opinions about the art of writing as belonging to the western world and to reverse possible textual description of the invaded world. This world Gayatri Spivak argued was supposedly "inscribed" and "textualised" from the "uninscribed" or the "unworlded" world by the imperial empire.²¹ In other words, Soaba is seen here as simply attempting a "reworlding" of the falsely alleged world textualised in the western imperialists' discourse. Wanpis is a book about writing from the colonised, the subverted, the non-western writers. This is forcefully emphasised in this passage in the novel:

Flowers! These white people must be mad. Flowers indeed! Nathaniel Tabonaboni was attempting to understand 'what is it that makes these white people pick flowers, hold them up to their noses, then smile possessively for a long time?' Drunk with rapture! What is rapture! Ecstasy? These white people must be mad. Mad: probably because he couldn't understand their anguish and pleasures. His only understanding of smelling flowers was that everybody else around him did. Except Nathaniel. Everyone has been smelling flowers since the days of Chaucer. Except Nathaniel. Even Queen Emma of the Pacific did; even Queen Elizabeth Did; even the Blessed Virgin, Joseph of Nazareth and even the Prime Minister of Australia, did. Except Nathaniel. It was the same as his attempt to understand those who wrote thick volumes of books, who spoke endlessly even though there was no one to listen to

them. He was curious.One day he'd decided to read the dictionary out of some curiosity which he had forgotten immediately after he had picked up the volume. He chucked it into the fire. Simply because the dictionary was like everyone else. Obsolete. And this in turn had caused him to explore further his own condition, especially in the public service. Anything he rejected he was more than curious to know; best still he would like to know in order to become 'objective' about them, or what he had often termed as 'having the privilege to offer constructive criticism on whatever you learn'. If he accepted things as they were, he told himself, he would be what James St Nativeson called 'a lusman without principles'.²²

Simply the act of refusal of the common, conventional or popular requires the act of formulating one's own principles and rules of textuality. Soaba is advocating the reconstruction of thought, rejection of a western sense of pleasure and power, and the search for an inner soul's meaning. In so doing, Soaba has provided an entirely fresh and unique perspective of the indigene's psyche and self-consciousness in the literature of Papua New Guinea.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Double Conscience of Aimbe the Pastor

The critical focus on literature and writers has often concentrated on writers associated with the University of Papua New Guinea, the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and the literary forums operated by these institutions. The paradox of this emphasis is that anything produced outside of its influence was regarded as trivial and unworthy of literary analysis. Some writers who went out of their way to publish their books were never given much critical attention or evaluation. One of these was Paulias Matane, a prolific writer whose work ranges from autobiography to non fiction and fiction. His most notable literary achievement is the Aimbe series of books. Unfortunately many critics overlooked the literary value of this important author, whether out of lack of insight or from the influence of literary conventions. One of the reasons for this practice could be that Matane's fiction is meant for popular readership rather than for an academic audience. Matane's Aimbe, the Pastor (1979) is a work of literature, with a popular outlook, a touch of realism, and the story-telling features of the Papua New Guinean society.¹ This is combined with the recollection of historical events and the fascinating accounts of people who lived through this history. The formal structure of Aimbe, the Pastor is interesting. In strictly formal terms the book has the full characteristics of story-telling in Papua New Guinean oral societies and fully explored in the written form. Matane's narrative pattern is not too distant from the narrative tradition that has developed with Kiki, Eri, Umba, Kituai, Baital, and Soaba. Matane is as good as they are. His books are a brilliant series of narratives based on Aimbe, the fictional hero. The world of the Aimbe series is a world of the colonial society. The theme of contact, the world wars, the influence of the missions and the conflict of traditions and individual decisions are explored extensively.

Matane's writing not only demonstrates the need for a literature that is both popular and readable, but one which entices both the art of good story telling and a yarn with social, political and cultural significance. Indeed Matane's primary aim was to provide something that could reach non-sophisticated readers such as school children. In fact most of his other books had this quality and they proved popular in schools during the 1970s and 1980s. The need for popular novels was a step away from Albert Maori Kiki's autobiography, Vincent Eri's serious fiction and Soaba's philosophically sophisticated novel. Matane's writing had a wide readership within the country because of its simplicity and realistic quality, which the education department and churches found useful for their purpose. His work has played an important role in the developing literature of Papua New Guinea.

The whole condition of the people Matane writes about is that the dominant takes control of power and forms of knowledge, subverting the invaded people into a level of inferiority. Matane may not want to do this in his work, or to be conscious of it; the contrary is likely, as Matane aims at bringing both extremes together in a kind of force which recognises the difference. In Aimbe, the Pastor, this becomes the unifying course. Beyond this the author, as an offspring of this experience, paints clearly a narrative that comes close to his own experience as a village boy moving into the modern world and taking up positions of authority in the country. However Aimbe, the Pastor is not an autobiography in the conventional sense of the word. The text is a fictional creation based on actual events occurring in the author's time or in the colonial history of Papua New Guinea.²

Aimbe, the protagonist of Aimbe, the Pastor, occupies two different conflicting roles; he is a village leader and a pastor of the Christian religion. The villager and the pastor roles played by Aimbe do not often agree with each other, thus resulting in rejection of one and consolidation of the other. This leads into a very problematic area of consciousness and representation. Even if the book is intended as a cultural, historical or political representation of the colonised Papua New Guinea, it still becomes ambiguous. The protagonist of the novel is hardly a representative of his Papua New Guinean culture, values

and ideas. He feigns representation in most cases to match the two different values and traditions. Does Aimbe represent his people or the colonial world whom he works for but resists at times? Could Aimbe's early resistance to the planters be a fake resistance? Could Aimbe's fake resistance be motivated by self-esteem or status? We cannot be sure. It seems that although he speaks for his people, as a villager he undoubtedly maintains a dominant role as an agent of the colonial power. Such a dubious role of the protagonist does seriously affect the over-all impact of the novel.

Aimbe, the Pastor is about that experience in the history of colonisation in New Guinea where planters and missions were instrumental in cultural fusion and economic exploitation. The book is on the whole about colonial control and the negative influence of that control and order. In this passage, for example, Aimbe's early oratory is suggestive of his part in the expansion of foreign ideas. Although it may seem that Aimbe resists the colonial planters he makes allowance for the new ideas :

"Mr. Meyer, we have decided to return to our villages, as we have been away from our loved ones for a very long time. I would like to say just a few things. Though your attitude towards us were harsh, we learned a great deal from you and your friends in the nearby plantations. The things we learned are both good and bad. Let me say some of the good points. We appreciate the fact that you were always ready to listen to me, despite the fact that you did not always agree with me. We learned how to look after the plantation...the bad points...First, your arrogant attitudes to us are not welcome. Second your belief that we are not intelligent is absolutely without foundation. Third, when your coconuts are ready, you will sell their meat (copra) to other countries. The money...will be sent to your country. In other words, we are working hard for you and your relatives, who sit on their rocking chairs in your country doing nothing. Fourth, there is a degree of dependence on you. This destroys our independence and our pride. As independent proud people, we survive, but the other groups here and at the neighboring plantations fall into this disgrading trap. No wonder most of them do not want to go back to their villages. They have lost their self-esteem, their dignity, and, above all, their worth. They are nothing if and when they return to their villages. . ."3

This passage demonstrates Matane's authorial intrusion in the text is obvious (declaring his personal views) instead of drawing on the simple and often submissive attitudes of New

Guineans during the colonial period. It appears Aimbe could speak in as clear language as the plantation owners. It is not clear whether Matane has completely distorted this to make a point, but it is obvious that reaction to the colonial planters was strong in those days, as well as mobilization of people from different areas, languages and cultures, forming into social, political and cultural units to react against one powerful figure. Such overt reactions and protest during the colonial period were rare; if there was reaction and disagreement the New Guineans normally showed it passively, not violently. Most often during the period when New Guinea was under the responsibility of Germany as a protectorate, the plantation economy was booming and New Guineans could not challenge the Germans but justified their presence with far less resistance. Yet there was a degree of intelligence and self-consciousness exercised during the period of plantation experience and developed out of alienating conditions.

New Guineans were regarded by the colonials and missionaries as "mendacious, rude and wilful children; full of arrogance and darkness, who only want what to them was beloved and cannot bring themselves under any order or authority," according to one missionary in his report.⁴ However the missionaries and the planters played an important role in colonising New Guinea. One study of colonialism and missionary influence in New Guinean shows that:

They helped to introduce the capitalist order in patriarchal and religious forms, creating new economic relationships, political structures and systems of cultural symbols. As the secular state developed they fused these with more secular forms of development by participating in pacification and drawing on New Guinean labour to work in Church-oriented businesses. In some instances, such as in the Huon Peninsula, the infrastructure created by the mission society developed into an alternative state in which New Guineans owed primary allegiance to church-centred social and political structures.⁵

Matane has chosen the work of the ministry to emphasise the reaction and conflicts that were pertinent in such roles. He is more concerned with the examination of these reactions and conflicts in the contact Tolai society. While Aimbe chooses to achieve power and authority by using the introduced medium, he undermines the traditional power he has inherited. He

loses the traditional power. Instead he unconsciously exploits his own people. He strengthens and consolidates this exploitative role by what he preaches, although within him he knows the truth, that he has become an exploiter. His guilt in seducing Kanai means that he keeps it to himself so that it is unable to surface. He suppresses his fear with guilt-consciousness, until he retires from the ministry and is released from the bondage. This is not unnatural for someone whose heart belongs to the land, the culture and tradition he was born into. Aimbe's position is one of cultural betrayal as well as unconscious submission to the new forces of power. He cannot sustain it, and he has to submit and let the mission influence take over.

The importance of Matane's work is that it is set against the colonial situation of cultural invasion, rejection, and forceful submission. This condition of cultural invasion and subversion works as a disintegrative force, whereby colonialism establishes institutions which maintain its power and destabilises existing structures of the invaded people. It is a fact of colonialism that forces the invaded to see themselves as having inferiority complexes.⁶ But this does lead to the invaded having to resist by asserting their cultural values and traditions of their society as valuable to them for survival. The subverted people are also conscious of the rate at which their cultures and traditions are disappearing, as colonisation takes further strength and power from their submission. The colonials celebrate their role in so-called pacification rites and civilization. Matane sets Aimbe, the Pastor in this period of cultural imperialism and invasion of the local customs and lives, while massive denigration by missions and the infliction of European tradition on the minds of the local people follow.

The book is like the alphabet of colonisation in New Guinea. First there is the traditional non-contact society, which is contacted by missionaries, gold prospectors or the plantation labour recruiters. The first missionaries establish their presence by spreading the word of God, introduce the Bible and later reaffirm new forms of order and ideas based on the Christian religion. Once this is established colonial officers move into to utilise the labour reserves and acquire land for the plantation economy of the empire. More land acquisition for

the colonial plantation economy follows. More labourers are recruited. World War I comes to New Guinea. Schools and churches are opened and elementary classes are given by pastors. There is further interaction between villagers and missionaries, other villagers and the outside world. Then the Second World War is fought in New Guinea. This is followed by the post-war activities of rehabilitation and strengthening of colonial work in New Guinea. This follows up to the time of self-government.

Through this period of colonisation the Papua New Guinean character's mental conscience is invaded, Christianised, colonised and transformed in the image of the colonials. We see this development in Aimbe's own life. He grows up in the village, takes up a traditional leadership, faces a new threat to his leadership from the first white man, an outsider, and is further threatened with new ideas brought by the missionaries. He is taken away from his people to work on the plantation, which helps weaken the basis of a strong cultural attachment to his people. He is further influenced by the missionaries and the colonial officers. Consequently this affects Aimbe's traditional leadership. The missions Christianise him and call him Aimbe, instead of Luaina as his people call him. He is sent to Nagunan elementary school, Wailik high school and the missionary training school at Vunavartovo. As a brilliant and outspoken student of the Christian ministry school he becomes the leader of the students. After graduating from that school he becomes a pastor in another village. Aimbe works as a devout pastor to bring Christianity among his people. However this process of removing Aimbe from his village completely transforms Aimbe's way of looking at things as a village leader. The mission education makes him speak and behave the way they want him to.

The creation of a character like Aimbe could be very problematic. The consciousness of the colonised is suppressed further if the collective power of individuals in the society is disintegrated and won over to the side of the coloniser. Aimbe in the mental frame of the missionary pastor is seriously at conflict with his personality as a village person, traditional leader and spokesman for his people against intrusive forces of colonialism. Practical

problems and serious challenges take a new significance in Aimbe's life, he is often split between the two roles or denies one for the other. Often his traditional side is denied for the missionary work. Perhaps Matane wanted to show a political reason for such split characteristics of Aimbe. By giving him the role of a pastor, Matane gives him new power and authority that goes beyond the traditional power and authority. Aimbe's position is one which could also be seen as going beyond the colonised position to one which asserts power politically based on economic and political realities. The plantation life, for instance, changes Aimbe's ways of looking at things. He acquires new knowledge of planting coconuts, cash economy and self-reliance. The new knowledge proves useful. On his return to his own village, Aimbe starts a similar plantation.

We become aware from the start of the book that the oppositional influence in the character of the New Guinean is imminent. This dilemma is one which creates a lot of problems which even the author cannot control. One thing this book says is that the perils of survival and necessary leadership were an important element in the cohesion of the society in times of invasion and destruction. Aimbe is undoubtedly the chosen leader but he does not fulfil that expectation of the traditional society. He inherits the title from his father Luluiai, who preceded him as the traditional leader. In a vision from the spirits' world, his father counsels him to be courageous and compassionate, to be a spokesman for his people. In another vision the spirit of his wily uncle offers an alternative role to be more powerful and brave. Luaina Aimbe in the end takes his father's counsel, and is taken to work on a coconut plantation. There he uses his role as village leader to speak for the condition of labourers and the general treatment of labourers by planters. He forcefully challenges the plantation authorities and defies some of their rules.

Attempting to meld these two cultures and systems is difficult. We see Aimbe trying this during his year at Ralokor. He says publicly that the traditional dances, craft work, and practising magic are part of their lives. This may seem contradictory but an important position is taken up here by Aimbe, who tells the people that he still believes in some of the

traditional practices and goes out of his way to participate in one of the dances. On the other hand, he does not encourage immoral things such as payback killings, adultery, stealing, and bearing false witness against another. But again and again we see Aimbe, the man with a double conscience, becoming a victim of these contradictory and opposing forces. In one of his preachings he says:

If I am to be effective in my work, I must move closer to you than ever before. It seems to me that there is a big gap between you and me. The gap is our main problem. Its no wonder that you do not tell me what you plan to do in the villages and the men's houses, because you feel that you would be doing things against the teachings of the church. We must try to remove the problems and narrow the gap. I call on you to assist me as much as you can. If you do, there is no longer misunderstanding between us. We will work together for the betterment of our village.⁷

This is accepted by the villagers and works out well for Aimbe's work. In reality, the gap between the church view and the villagers is hard to bridge. But Aimbe, as the villager, himself recognises this gap and attempts to bridge it. This could also be seen as Matane's offering to bridge the gap created by the forces of colonialism. This is an important aspect of post-colonial texts, where the bridger of the gap is often someone split between the two extremes.

Aimbe as an individual recognises the need to answer for the alienated voice and to lead them. As the chosen leader of his people Aimbe recognises the masks of difference and attempts to bridge this difference of cultures and ideas. It is through his status as village leader that he challenges the new order, while by his mission travels he acquires new knowledge and unites different tribes and people. But through the process he encounters many difficulties for such decisions. In his role as the pastor of the church, he has to dismiss his traditions and customs, and allow the work of the mission to progress. In most cases this works against him. Aimbe is not able to progress, but with the wisdom of his traditional training he is able to pursue further knowledge of his people, who seem to distrust him because he is an

agent of destruction. Aimbe recognises this and accommodates the traditional aspects of his people with the rules of the church.

Matane's fiction is intertextual as well as operating as a popular realist novel. He has taken every care with description of village rituals (pp.30-1, 33-6) chants, (pp.25-6, 17, 21, 23, 24-5) the inclusion of minutes of meetings (pp.272-3), plans (pp.118, 262), timetables, programmes (pp.100, 130, 133, 134, 146) list of items (pp.241, 242, 244, 245, 246) and many other notes. This practice is one which had been already used extensively in modern literature. Matane's work has given Papua New Guinean literature something that no other Papua New Guinean author has tried to do. The intertextual practice is one that Matane uses unconsciously. That intertextuality goes beyond the surface of the reading text to include those things implied by the author as well as those not covered in the text but readily available to the reader's mind, such as church belief and implications, traditional myths and legends and their implications to men, bible teachings and classroom conversation and rules. What we see here is an interplay of text, both of the written and the unwritten. This is characterized by Aimbe's constant reminder that he is a product both of the oral culture and the written culture, that he is a villager as well as a pastor. One could also see that Matane is attempting to be as realistic as possible. He uses religious belief to an artistic end. In the life story of Aimbe, the pastor, he brings in emotions and psychological drama, the different personalities as the effective circumstances of conflict and resolution. Matane attempts to present the self-delusion faced by Aimbe, and the vulnerability of his religious pilgrimage as a pastor embarked on a false track, is recognisable. Matane mixes rich emotional conflicts as a source of irony but this conflict is one that is characteristic of an author at odds with his own artistic intentions.⁸

Matane's work is not only a play of imaginative fiction but draws much material from tangible, real and autobiographical experiences. It is a serious statement about his people in the time of colonialism with political overtones. Matane has provided an important insight into time and space, so that history could be read between them. This is a kind of revision,

taking on those things of the past and recreating them into a memorable sequence, with an elevated significance.

In the process of revision the author explores and describes his people's condition of survival during the critical moments of colonialism. It is not fictional reality alone, it is history re-examined and rewritten. By doing so, Matane as an author (with the capacity to dream or imagine) reconstructs the fragmented world affected by colonial conquest and exploitation. His very act of writing a story drawn from the past experience gives him the status of a historian. The visions and series of questions at the end of the book ask for a critical answer. We are shocked to find Aimbe, the old man, turning away from the church and the life he has been living all his years. Aimbe forecasts the future of the country and especially the attitude of the younger generation to the church:

Although the church was still strong, it appeared that it was for the older people only. One could observe that those in attendance at the church services were mostly old men and women. There were normally fewer men than women. The number of young people was even smaller. As the years went by, there were fewer young people in the church than before.

People did not appear to be critical about going to church anymore. Many men, in particular, looked forward to Sundays so that they could rest from their busy lives. But, of course, they did not rest at home with their wives and children. Apart from taking active parts in sports, they used Sundays either in town or on the beaches-with cartons of beer. When Mondays came, they would still have hangovers, so that Mondays were considered unproductive days.

Aimbe forecast that, within the next two to three generations, there would be fewer people following any church teachings, so that the natural death of the most important teachings was expected. This would be unfortunate, but it was going to come. There was no question about that...⁹

This explains that the type of knowledge forced on to the colonised people is negative and that often it ends up in disillusionment, confusion and total negation of their own culture. The above passages sum up the attitude of the younger generation, and its confused mentality. The passage also implies that with self-government most of the colonial institutions were no

longer seen as vital, but necessarily useful for the development of new institutions in the country.

Matane's overall emphasis is on Aimbe's progress into the ministry, his work with the church, and his reactions to white prejudices and ignorance. Aimbe is more reactionary as a village leader under the colonial administration, but is passive as a participant in the very mechanism which denigrates his people and culture. However one weakness of the book is that Matane has not given much thought and respect to Aimbe's wife who remains nameless throughout the book. The wife seems to occupy a trivial, less significant aspect in Aimbe's life. The development of the wife's character could have given a balance of human values, parental responsibilities, men and women, love and marriage conflicts in such societies. The deep resentment by the people against colonial rule is covered in the work of Aimbe so that other issues become further neglected. We are forced to see through the eyes of Aimbe as the pastor. This is an ambivalent position of analysis because Aimbe is a villager at heart and on the surface a pastor.

On the whole Matane's handling of character development is artificial. We do not feel that there is a sense of character development in Aimbe's life, but rather we see him naturally progresses and develops in an environment in which he only has to adjust. One of the reasons for this shortfall is that Matane's construction of the narrative pays more attention to events, activities and Aimbe's work as a pastor. This could be viewed as compressed narrative development, but it is one which must fall into the intertextual play. But Matane should not be dismissed. One aspect of the intertextual play is that authorial intrusion in terms of his own ideas and reactions to things in his fictional creation is of vital importance in the development of the characters. Thus lack of character development is replaced by the author's own views and reactions to social, political, economical, cultural and religious forces. Aimbe, the Pastor is perhaps Matane's most ambitious work, which separates the traditional, colonial and the Christian experience.

Aimbe is someone who is trapped by his allegiance to his people, tradition and society. He is also someone who has been the product of the colonial education and the mission system. Aimbe in a way is trapped by his own inability to maintain his traditions and is fully ordained as a pastor to work for the church. Aimbe works as a missionary but in his heart he is a Tolai villager. He is presented with the choice either to completely reject one side of himself for another or maintain both aspects of his life. If he rejects the mission work, he feels guilty and fears retribution. When he rejects the work of his people he feels guilty of neglecting and exploiting them. This creates a double conscience for Aimbe.

CHAPTER NINE

Ignatius Kilage's My Mother Calls Me Yaltep: Fictionalizing the Highlands Experience

The inaccessibility and rugged terrain of the Highlands was considered a difficult target for colonisation. Many early explorers, patrol officers, missionaries and gold prospectors trekked the mountains but made little progress. Although in many cases heavy resistance was met, some of the societies received the first missionaries and gold prospectors with confusion motivated by superstitious beliefs about their dead relatives and ancestors whom they believed were returning to them. It seems that in such societies the missionaries or the outsiders took great advantage and introduced their establishment. Two important groups of outsiders penetrated the Highlands in the 1930s, the gold prospectors and the missionaries. Among these groups were coastal carriers. On first contact the white missionaries and gold prospectors were regarded as those people from the realm above, while the black carriers as those from the world beneath the earth's surface. One study on the influence of religion in the Highlands, for instance, shows that

The Whites, it was rampantly concluded, were certainly from the realm above. As for the carriers, because it was believed that, when lightning fell to the earth, damage to trees and objects was consequently affected by forces from under the ground, these foreigners were connected with blackness (*Koko*) of the earth and were considered as the 'ground moving' men who caused earthquakes...tradition had it that powerful people lived in the clouds (*Konekupa*), and although these sky beings were nowhere near as prominent in Middle Wahgi traditions as they were in Mal Enga and other highland mythology, at least the appearance of the whites could be placed in the time honoured beliefs, whereas notions about the underground origins of the carriers was generated by the simple white/black division in that first band of patrolers, as well as by the manner in which the carriers laughed off intimacies and women's emotional asseverations that they were departed ones returned.¹

The contact with the Highlands opened up a new chapter in the history of Papua New Guinea. Missionaries and government officers moved in and firmly established their place in

the Highlands. The contact also provided opportunities for curious young Highlanders to move out to see the world outside their enclosed one. The world outside may be going down to the coast, the sea, the plantation, the inside of a plane or just to the urban centres. This allowed them for the first time to venture beyond their tribal boundaries into unknown territories, communicate with the outsiders with the language introduced to them and return to their villages with new modern items to aid them in their day to day living.

Ignatius Kilage's My Mother Calls Me Yaltep (1980) is exactly about this experience.² Kilage, following the footsteps of earlier Highlands writers like Benjamin Umba, August Kituai and Peter Kama Kerpi, is able to fictionalize this important contact experience. Although his predecessors basically portrayed the Highlands experience in short fictions and plays, Kilage is the first to use the novel. Kilage attempts to portray a contact society moving rapidly from the enclosed world into a more progressive and rapidly changing one. New ideas, new people and even some of the illusory beliefs of their ancestors were put to the test by their eagerness to change and understand the outside world. My Mother Calls Me Yaltep comes closer to explaining some of the claims concerning land alienation, cultural disorientation and rural urban migration.³

The book is about the Kuman speakers of the Simbu Province, occupying the gorges of the Upper Simbu country. The story is about a man called Yaltep who was born in Womatne and raised as a Kuman. He was baptised by the first missionary who went into the area and was called Joseph, though he used Joseph less than expected. The book opens up with Yaltep introducing himself as a Simbu man from the Kuman speaking group of people:

I was born a bit too early to see and try to understand and keep up with the tremendous changes that are taking place in my beloved Simbu, and all over our country.

You may not be able to understand the confused state of my mind as you may have been spared the painful experience of trying to understand two diametrically opposed cultures at once. Since I had the privilege of a peculiar and unique

experience I wish to tell the story of my life in my own way. I can only hope that you will get a glimpse of, and experience my bewilderment at such stupendous progress in a lifetime.⁴

The introduction indicates that the book is about characters forced into living diametrically divided selves. The book is also about a society that is diametrically divided. Though it may sound like a thinly sketched autobiography of Ignatius Kilage, it is simply a narration in first person by Joseph Yaltep. The first person narration has forceful, direct, and vivid observational qualities, which bring to the present moment the peculiar experiences of a Kuman man.

Kilage uses Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" to describe this whole experience of his people. Towards the end of the book Yaltep comes to remember the poem read to him by his teacher friend:

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield⁵

Although this may seem out of place in the book, Kilage's use of the poem suggests another form of knowledge acquired from the outside world's art and culture. The use of "Ulysses" may be regarded as a form of authorial intrusion. This implies also that the author was perhaps conscious of his own fictional creation, as an Odyssean journey of quest. But it is more likely that Kilage intended Tennyson's poem as a summarizing aspect of his fiction, drawing parallels between the traditional knowledge and the new knowledge introduced into the Highlands, between the oral and the written word, and between the fictional and real world.

Though it may work for the author, one wonders if it did work for the book. Written poetry was absent in the Highlands society, and the mere introduction of such aspects of the outside

culture does not register easily, nor does it allow complete expression of experiences, as traditional poetry would have done. The use of Tennyson's poetry is not the only authorial intrusion. Another passage in the book about the use of Tok Pisin is more elaborate. The conflict between the coastal teacher's use of Tok Pisin, the introduced language and Yaltep's imitation of it to convince Kauna's mother that Yaltep understands what he speaks is ambiguous. On the one hand it raises Yaltep's status to the level of the coastal teacher and on the other it demerits the power of the Kuman language to bargain for wealth and social status. Nevertheless these are Kilage's attempts to bring out the mimetic aspects of the contact experience.

Yaltep's descriptions of the stupendous Highlands landscape are remarkable. The Highlands is pictured with a striking beauty and colour. This is an unique aspect of the novel. The landscape is not only an aesthetic symbol in fiction, but has already been part of the traditional myths and legends of the people. The quality of myth and the way the cosmos is interconnected to a whole is explained in many ways through the land. Yaltep grows up to understand and feel deeply attached to his land. This is well explored by Kilage in his contrasts between the Upper Simbu with the Lower Simbu, their different climatic aspects and their different cultural practices. Yaltep is a product of both societies, and grows up in both of them.

Kilage also goes further to contrast the Highlands landscape with the coastal. The Highlands landscape is more real, concrete and ever present, but the coastal scenery is a landscape of the mind, the imagined world existing outside of the Highlands society. This is an important distinction, as the whole book operates on the level of consciousness activated by real experience and the imagined. Yaltep has experience in both worlds and this appears to be an important position to find a meaning within the landscape, its cosmology and the cultural contexts. For example, Yaltep makes this observation of the Lower Simbu; "In marked contrast to the Gowe valley, the Lower Simbu was warmer... and at times the sun becoming very hot or has heavy rainfall" (p.16). Yaltep describes the rainfall vividly:

A few days later came a continuous downpour, the like of which had never been seen in the history of the Simbu valley. Great torrents of muddy water cascaded down the hillside with a thunderous roar and uprooted trees, gardens and living creatures and swept them into the shimmering Simbu river. The people living near the slopes were forced to leave their houses and take shelter wherever they could find a flatter terrain, for landslides were occurring all over the place. Masses of earth and water went screaming down the slopes into the turbulent Simbu, and the Simbu in turn, with its new strength, moved huge boulders and ancient mossy trees standing in its banks. So great was the force of the elements, that the trees went crashing down like reeds.⁶

The description reflects the author's love of the land and its cruel beauty, a fearsome enough phenomenon to require explanation both in the traditional sense and in the modern. This also signals Kilage's own preoccupation with the humble beauty of his land, and the pride he has for it. It is also a phenomenon which arouses the imagination. Kilage plays with the landscape of the mind for contrast. For example, Yaltep begs the coastal friend to tell him about the coastal society:

The man was a true patriot who painted life on the coast with vivid and striking colours. All in all, after he had finished, I had an idea that the coast was a paradise, where you just have to look around to pick the fruit that was plentiful and live a carefree life. His vivid pictures of a huge body of water which he called *sol wara* which was much bigger than the Piunde Aunde Lake at the foot of Mt. Wilhelm stirred my imagination with all sorts of fantastic ideas which were, as I found out later on, out of all proportions. This imagination filled me with an anxious desire to see the coast, at all costs.⁷

Unlike pictorial representation of landscape, the landscape of the imagination is seen here as fantastic, exotic and unreal, presented in a dream form, mixed with fantasy and mythical explanation. Yaltep's life in the Simbu valley is the only real world which he could relate to easily and give explanation on the spot to any unusual formation or shape of the land, without resorting to a dream-like mental search. He could relate his surroundings even more meaningfully with the mythical inheritance of his people.

So what we have in My Mother Calls Me Yaltep is that place is constructed with full imagination, by Kilage, whose privileged position as a writer is one that allows both passionate and archetypal ethnographical descriptions to dominate his discourse. This creates a nationalistic feeling as well as a feeling of a cultural and physical attachment to the land.

In such a situation we have the author as the first interpreter who has meaningfully tried to give accurate description of his own surroundings and culture, instead of being an observer without any intimate spiritual, cultural and meaningful attachment to the land. And this is exactly the point that distinguishes the difference between the expatriate writer on Papua New Guinea and the indigenous author. Kilage like his contemporaries is engaged in a space of poetically evoked landscape, the reality of his imagination and the imaginative mental construction of a subject which has its bases both in the oral language and in the written. By allowing the submersion of these two different ideas, he is engaged in what V. S. Naipaul had done to his landscape in A Bend in the River. Like Naipaul, Kilage is "concerned with man's ancient harmony with the land and man's new efforts to placate to subdue the land. An important aspect of this new struggle is the relationship between place and reality, ultimately leading back to questions of personal perceptions of the world."⁸ Kilage's perception is a personal as well as a nationalistic one in that the world of Yaltep is closer to him as well as to other Kuman people.

Yaltep's people associate anything that does not belong to the ground as "something that belonged to the above" or that which is part of the mythical universe or to the world below the earth's surface, very much the kind of explanation given to the first Europeans who arrived in their valley. The introduced goods and animals that were brought were strange to the Highlanders. This reflects the dual manifestation of their beliefs and cosmogony, making sense of the things that they heard about and saw introduced by outsiders. The first aeroplane introduced in the Highlands, for example, was awe-inspiring. The curious

Highlanders invented new stories about these strange objects and so it is not surprising that Kilage introduced the story of the aeroplane in his book. Long before Yaltep was born, the people spoke about this mysterious object which they saw as an "extraordinary white bird making thunderous and booming sounds" (p.4). This account was related to Yaltep:

After a little while they heard the noise again. They stood on the hillside watching it disappear in the eastern horizon whence it came. That strange bird was the first aeroplane that flew over the Highlands. Tradition also has it, that for months after that strange bird came and went, there were rumours that the Gende people of Bundi were about to perform one of their famous magic spells (known as *Kimagl*) on the Mitnandi people. The fearsome Gerigl or Gende people over the other side of Mondi were notorious for their *Kimagl*. The rumours were spreading everywhere. The people did not venture far from their home, for it was also said that the predicted catastrophe would fall on them in the form of floods or slides.⁹

This is an unique aspect of the Papua New Guinean novel, where the author, after introducing the incident in history, goes on further to explain how this event was related by the people who were present during the event, and how this has affected them in the normal way of life. In *My Mother Calls Me Yaltep*, Kilage does exactly this. Soon after the sighting of the aeroplane and the rumours about the *nigl kande* or *gigl yomba* (the peculiar ghost) seen in the lower Simbu, the people took every precaution to defend themselves. The peculiar ghost was in fact the arrival of the first European in the Highlands. To avoid this peculiar spirit's spell and power, the people prepared themselves by "casting counterspells, putting up strong posts in front of their houses to ensure that those strange beings would not follow the river up to its source."¹⁰

Despite this preparation, called the "*Endi Yombuglo* and the *Binga* ceremony (literally, post ferns) " cast as "signs of powerful spells... at the main gates of men's houses, to ward off evil influences and protect those who were within the fence" (p.4), the first European man arrived. The arrival proceeded from Kangrie, and across the Mondi Pass to Gowe Kualke

river junction. The arrival of the European was well prepared for by these Simbu people. They took every measure of safety to defend against any physical challenge or the evil spell that might be brought by the ghost. The arrival was to their dismay, surprising and one of great misunderstanding. They explained that these were "the spirits of their ancestors", returning to them (p.5). Two types of white men arrived in the Highlands: the *batres* (fathers or priest) and *Kiaps* (patrol officers). Each of them was representative of different forces of change. The missionaries, patrol officers and the coastlanders accompanying them had tremendous influence with their power over the people of the Highlands.

The narrative of Yaltep concerns itself with his acquaintance of both Europeans and the coastlanders showing his good natured spirit and his willingness to get to know the people outside of his tribal units. He is often confronted with questions that do not have a simple answer, but become a motivating force to his quest for the truth. The problem of unanswered questions remains the most enigmatic aspect of the book because they are immersed in the world of magic, dream, fantasy, imagination and supernatural. This world counterexists with the world of reality, facts, and with concrete objects such as mountains, landforms, landscapes, floods, and rain. Within these two worlds is man. In these worlds, man seeks both protection and inspiration. He understand his environment and makes it possible to perceive the supernatural forces within it. In other words, to make sense of a place where one lives, there has to be an experience which requires both spiritual and physical attachment to it.

As part of the business of making sense, Yaltep is baptised as Joseph by the priest in the Catholic church. A ritualistic ceremony is performed. These names were taken as highly spiritual even though there was a sense of fantasy about them. For the Simbu people the acceptance of the Christian ritual of baptism was very much attached to a supernatural belief that having a Christianised name and a rosary around the neck would ward off evil spirits. Yaltep's mother took the initiative to baptise Yaltep because she " was convinced that the *batres* were the good spirits " (p.6). Yaltep felt this was a sign of goodwill and

protection. This is ironic in many ways. The baptism and rosary were not really seen as icons of the new religious power, but as an extension of an old belief, of warding off evil spirits.

Yaltep's confusion can only be resolved through two voyages. He can voyage either through the mythical world of his people or through a mental absorption of these happenings through the passage of education and physical removal from the environment associated with the mythical inheritance of his people. In the former circumstance we see Yaltep's confusion is more profound as there are limits to his quest for an answer. He is more confused and puts up resistance against the new things. He is unable to understand fully the new forces at work, partly because his own culture has drawn cultural boundaries and fixed certain attitudes to the way he looks at things. We see this clearly when Yaltep courts Kauna, his childhood friend, into marriage. He tries all he can, but finds that another force more powerful and influential hampers his success in winning Kauna's heart. The other force, represented by the school teacher (*shule yagl*) from the coast, who shows interest in Kauna, bribing her and her mother with new items from outside. This pleases the girl and her parents. Yaltep is unable to offer the equivalent and there is fear that he could lose Kauna to the school teacher.

Though this is the normal custom of courting among the Kumans, allowing suitable men to court a young woman so long as she is still living in her mother's home, this makes Yaltep lose hope. He contemplates violence. He would burn the school teacher's house. However this does not eventuate. Yaltep is advised by his grandfather to take Kauna to the upper Simbu before the patrol officer arrives for the first census; this allows him to secure Kauna as his future wife. However Kauna and Yaltep are not counted in the census, but after the census Yaltep becomes more furious about the affair between Kauna and the school teacher, pressured by one group of villagers in favour of the school teacher (*shule yagl*) while the other favours Yaltep. Yaltep decides to break the Kuman custom of courtship. He beats up the teacher one night in Kauna's mother's house, and this is protested against by the mother because the school teacher "was just following the conventions; as it is not forbidden to visit

girls when they are still at their own houses." ¹¹ After Yaltep attacks the school teacher, he attempts a brilliant imitation of the coastlander's language:

You harim tok bilong mi, yu save Kauna i meri bilong mi. Tasol givim em planti samting, na yu laik kisim em. Em i no stret, nau yu finis long dispela haus, sapos mi lukim yu kam hia gen bai mi yu kilim...yu save?¹²

This ends the school teacher's visit to Kauna's house. Although the teacher observes the conventions of the Kuman society, he brings a force of corruption and bribery that does not match the Kuman men's way of courting. Yaltep too follows the customs, but his measure of pride for his customs is overshadowed by the new force. To Yaltep, this means resistance and violence, challenging the forces of power with new aggression and force. His eloquence in the school teacher's language was taught to him by a friend, but in itself appears as a symbol of deception and negativity. Yaltep has only to speak the school teacher's language to put him on the same level as the teacher without his overt violence and aggression. Even within the Kuman society, violence and aggression alone cannot be enough. Yaltep's bride could be anybody's where the same aggression competes. We see this clearly before Kauna is fully married to Yaltep. She is allowed to court other men or vice versa. So is Yaltep. But this ends up with Kauna being held by the Kombri tribe to be married to one of their men. But according to the Kuman courting custom word is sent to the tribe to send Kauna back to their tribe. This custom is called *ambu kugl angua*. This courting custom of the Highlands can be confusing to the western reader, but what we have here is a strong presentation of one of the most important customs of the people, which faces serious misunderstanding in the face of forces of change. Kilage attempts to show here that the courting customs have their own significance and importance to the Highlands society.

On the other hand Yaltep's quest is illuminated through the passage of education and learning of the introduced culture. Although he refuses to go to school in the first place, he realises that it was a silly mistake. As time goes by he depends more on it and this is clearly

displayed in the use of Tok Pisin, the language of education and the outside world, to impress Kauna's mother and the fact that he later learns to speak and write Tok Pisin to survive the plantation life.

Yaltep is unconsciously preparing to move out of the cultural boundaries. He journeys to Goroka and Madang as a plantation labourer:

Our hearts were left behind in the cool mountains and Womatne. With mixed feelings and bitter anguish at leaving the dearest place on earth and with the excitement of seeing the wonderland, we accompanied the kiap and his train to Kundiawa. There we were given documents to take overland to Goroka. In those days, there were no roads and we had to go overland. Sometimes through hostile regions whose people spoke different languages and had different ways of dressing.¹³

The journey described here is one which seems to be out of the wilderness into the world of wonder. This is a new and exciting experience. The mere fact of flying out is spell-binding and it shatters the images of the supernatural long held by the Kuman people. Yaltep experiences what he would not have been able to experience if he was confined to his own cultural boundaries and limited geographical experience marked by tribal lands. He is not only participating in a self-seeking knowledge but one that elevates him from the world of his grandfather and parents. He travels into the world of the spirits, and this travel promises him new-found knowledge and a sense of self-pride.

The experience of colonialism has shown that a journey outwards from the village into the modern world is a significant one. Similar connections could be made by the spread of outside items brought by missionaries, carriers, and teachers. With the Highlands Labour Scheme firmly established by 1951, more and more Highlanders were able to move out into plantations. Consequently those returning from plantation work brought with them new metal items and shell money. By the 1960s mission education took an important place in the Highlands and aided by modern currency circulation saw popular beliefs about the

supernatural origins of white wealth and cargo undermined and weakened. The logical conclusion to this change of attitude was that "the strangers could not have had wealth except through the kinds of reciprocal relationship which religious activity made possible."¹⁴ Consequently around the 1940s and 1950s, more Highlanders seem to have been recruited on the labour recruitment list. The opportunity to acquire new knowledge and material possessions by the Highlanders had by then become competitive. To the Highlanders, the journeying out was more important than remaining in the cultural enclosures.

This is characterised by subsequent journeys made by Yaltep to other centres. As he moves further away from the Highlands society he learns new knowledge and gains new experience, though at times confusing and frustrating. In these journeys Yaltep is familiar with the outside world and can easily adjust to the new unfamiliar surroundings. We can say My Mother Calls Me Yaltep is about Yaltep's quest outside in search of this new knowledge. He learns to read and write. He goes away to work on a plantation in Rabaul. There his ability to speak Tok Pisin gets him a comfortable job in the mistress's kitchen. One day he misunderstands the white mistress's instruction and overbakes the bread with the clock shut in the oven. He runs away, ashamed of his stupidity, hangs out with a policeman from his own area, and later moves to work on a plantation at Wakunai in the North Solomons Province. Yaltep returns to the Simbu province after being informed that his mother had died, a cunning trick by one of his clansmen who was jealous of his achievement. In Simbu he learns more about reading and writing from a sympathetic school teacher, who later buys him a ticket to go to Port Moresby, where he visits the national parliament in session. But he dislikes Port Moresby and pleads with his friend to send him back to Simbu, where he belongs. He is sent home.

Ignatius Kilage's novel is a literary enactment of the colonial activity and the political events happening in the Highlands since the time of their first contact in the 1930s. The last

chapters of the novel concentrate on the political events around the 1960s and '70s. It is obvious that Kilage has combined ethnographical details, actual historical accounts, events and incidents to fictionalize the Highlands experience:

Fictionalizing is the enactment of humankind's creativity and as there is no limit to what can be staged, the creative process itself bears the inscription of fictionality: the structure of double meaning. In this respect it offers the paradoxical and (perhaps for that very reason) describes change to be both in the midst of life and at the same time outside of it. This simultaneous involvement in and detachment from life through a fiction which stages the involvement and thereby brings about the detachment, offers a kind of intramundane totality that is otherwise impossible in everyday life. Thus fictionalizing enacts our being in the middle of things by turning the very involvement into a mirror for itself. But what do we hope to gain from this detached involvement through which fictionality gives us the impression that we know what it is to be in the midst of life.¹⁵

Yaltep's character is fictionalized into a kind of duality. Kilage gives this duality and double consciousness such as we have already noted in Eri and Matane's work. By fictionalizing actual incidents, often autobiographical or real events, Kilage brings his people's experience into the world of fiction and written culture. The writing world then mediates between this duality and forms into a system of thought interpretation of those things which were once oral, like the myths, the beliefs of the people, social, cultural and ethical values, as well as their history. This is the artistic beauty of Kilage's fiction. By bringing his protagonist into the outside world, he brings the experiences of the Highlanders into the wider world, but with reciprocal results, where the outside world operates as a mirror image of their own societies. In this way, Kilage brings the experience into a totality that was made possible through fiction.

CHAPTER TEN

The Short Novels, the Textual Practice and the Unfolding Historical Process

Most attempts at Papua New Guinean novels fall short of the novel's traditional requirements. A high number of entries in the annual Papua New Guinea National literature competition over the years were novels but nearly all of them failed to get into print. This is a result of factors such as judges' recommendation on whether a novel should be published, based entirely on set criteria of the competition, willingness by local publishing houses and relevance of subject matter. Most of the entries did not fulfil these criteria. The novels written were either too short to be published as novels or were seriously affected by faulty basic structure and poor development of the subject. Only a few were eventually published. Of these, there were twenty three most popular themes used by most of the writers, drawn from village life, town life, oral history, folklore, westernization, return to the village, rebellion, white men, politics, Patrol Officers (kiaps), childhood, youth, love, sex, courting, marriage, identity, prestige, white women, dreams, war, mother figure and outcasts. Treatment of these themes varied with individual writers and authors.¹

To address the complex rifts between individuals and society, traditional villages and modern urban towns, old customs, beliefs, traditions, introduced laws, rules and religion, Papua New Guinean writers attempt solutions in their writings. Three authors, Benjamin Umba, August Kituai and Jim Baital collectively published an anthology of their short novels in 1976.² Umba's Fires of Dawn, Kituai's The Flight of a Villager and Baital's Tali were published together as Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea (1976).³ No other similar collection appeared until Michael Yake Mel and Toby Waim Kagl collectively

published Two Highland Novels (1984).⁴ Mel's Kumdi Bagre, a story based in the Western Highlands, and Kagl's Kallan, based on a Simbu man, are interesting attempts at renewing the literary spirits of the 1970s.⁵ Although the Two Highland Novels did not appear different from the Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea in the presentation of their subject, their textual practice is different.

The Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea have a tighter control than the Two Highland Novels. Each of these novellas has many short chapters, which are often surprisingly small and often portray a single event or scene. The first story in The Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea, Umba's The Fires of Dawn starts with the first contact and the period of serious confrontation. This moves into a society fragmented and disturbed by contact in Kituai's The Flight of a Villager, where the village youth attracted by the seductive city life escapes from the rigid rules of the village. There is a good contrast between the village society and the urban town of Goroka in The Flight of a Villager, a typical story about the first experiences of contact societies and the illusions that form around the exposure to the outside world.

The subtle differences in Umba and Kituai's depiction of the village is that Umba sees the villagers reacting violently against the church and missions, simultaneously condemning other villagers who assist the newcomers. However in Kituai's story we see the very negative attitude of the villagers force out the young people into towns in search of fortune and glory. Moving out into towns is not the wisest thing for them because town life is far more damaging to self-pride, moral conduct and social harmony. In such a case, a kind of nostalgia for the village is implied. The next story, Tali, is about the great return to the village, the story of villagers alienated as a result of long years of service in the colonial work force. The great return however does not prove an easy transition, but is the most difficult thing for someone who has been alienated from the village. The village becomes more negative and

shows disapproval of new ideas and values. Baital goes further to show how damaging this could be for future generations of Papua New Guineans, if individuals are to become bearers of the residual guilts of their colonial past. Although Baital embraces possibilities of national concern here, he does not focus on these but highlights some of this individual guilt and shame as part of a changing cultural system.

On the other hand, the writers occupy themselves with conflict of cultures, escape from these conflicts, and confrontation with more complicated problems in towns. The village conflict may have something to do with breaking of rules, disobeying elders' commands, forced marriages, or sexually related conflicts. Internal conflicts and tensions of one particular society are augmented by external forces. Individuals caught up in the tensions and conflicts have only to accept that condition and live with it, but in most of the short novels the external influence is so enforced by its new laws, politics, religion, administration, and education that this creates the basis of a new social order and power. These stories emphasise the moments of transition, and the idyllic past deracinated largely by pressures of European colonisation.

The authors of the late 1960s and early 1970s had significant influence on each other in ideas of politics and nationalism. Much of the writing of this period is categorized as protest literature full of antagonism and protest against colonialism. The central focus is the ridiculousness of the colonial situation, how this has affected the Papua New Guineans and made them appear contradictory, or at times, vulnerable to forces of destruction within both the traditional society and the modern one. In Umba's narrative, there is more violent reaction, while in Kituai's narrative we have a situation where the coloniser's own ignorance is exploited by the colonised for his own benefit, showing some of the contradictions and ridiculousness of the modern world. Although the futurist work of Baital shows a future of responsible and conscientious Papua New Guineans, he ironically twists the tone of the narrative to imply abuse and misuse of the inherited colonial values, which must be rubbed off somehow. He sees a society willing to accept the condition of its coloniality, but at the

same time resisting that aspect, by hoping for the return to the old traditions and values of the people. But this is only an implied aspect of Umba's work as the over-all emphasis is on the disillusionment of serious cultural confrontation.

The main characters of the Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea are single characters, with a line of experience perhaps parallel with the author's own. The individual characters are often rebellious youths who are forced to leave the village in search of other possibilities in towns. The qualities of the characters are first judged against the society's view of what are considered good qualities against bad qualities. Good qualities involve respect of customs, elders, observation of village rules, hard work, proper marriage and courting, courage and strength to fight for the society in times of invasion. These qualities are absent, not observed and misunderstood by the characters in all Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea. The protagonists are accused of being either rebels, betrayers, or outcasts. Although Baital's protagonist attempts to restore self-confidence, he too loses the respect of his people. Hence all protagonists in these novellas in many ways accept their condition as village outcasts and rebels. For instance, Anglum's son Tanawa, in The Fires of Dawn, is murdered for betraying the village and tribe. He is portrayed as an element of betrayal, so that it is his own society that must eliminate him. The Fires of Dawn highlights the contact with the first missionary at Denglagu, the traditional land of the Kukane, which was resented by the Kukane tribe. As we discover later in the story, Tanawa, Aglum's son, accepts the mission's word and works on the mission station. This is taken by the other Kukane tribesmen as a betrayal of trust. Aglum is forced to go to the mission station to persuade his son to return home. But Tanawa refuses his father's pleading to return to the village. The villagers burn and kill Aglum, his wife Murangigl and their son Koima in their own house. Tanawa is killed on the mission station and burned outside the house, perhaps achieving martyrdom in the Christian sense of being tortured and killed by his own people for betrayal.

Kituai's Iso, in The Flight of the Villager, runs away from his village with a friend to Goroka. But Goroka with its hordes of problems, crimes, and seductiveness does not please Iso.

He lives a vagrant's life with someone from his own village. They live on leftovers brought by his friend. He eventually gets a job as a house servant (*house boy*) with a young Australian officer in Goroka. With Umba, Kituai and Baital, the difficult often irresistible modern life always allures the rebellious youth into voluntary isolation, alienation and separation from the village. Iso achieves personal freedom as well as personal liberation. He escapes from the village punishment and the tax law of the council. This escape makes it possible for Iso to reflect consciously on the two different worlds.

In contrast, the characters in the Two Highland Novels live within the confines of the cultural perimeter and rules. Both Bagre and Kallan are regarded not as rebellious, but as brave defenders of their society. The Two Highland Novels suggests the tradition of the Papua New Guineans' novels, in that, although written in the post-independence period, the setting is still the pre-independence, colonial era of Papua New Guinea. On the other hand, the Two Highland Novels do not have the same thematic strength as in the Three Short Novels of Papua New Guinea. The controlling strength lies in their honest description of contemporary Highland societies. Artistically, both novels vary, but both are directly influenced by their own oral traditions, their personal experiences and actual historical events. The Two Highland Novels focuses on the traditional ways of life in the Highlands, warfare between tribes, historical incidents involving missionaries, relations between sexes, court cases, stealing, healing of ailments, schools, prisons, police raids, plantation work, returning from plantations, marriage and parent-child relations. Mel's Kumdi Bagre is set around the late 1960s and early 1970s, while Kagl's could well be set around the 1940s and 1950s.

Although Mel's book is based on young Bagre's growing up in the village and his education, it is also about some of the incidents that happened during the Baiyer River road construction. Roads are presented as a symbolic connection to the outside world. Roads bring new forces of power and authority which change the old ways of the village. The roads make it possible for modernity to undermine the traditions of the people. In Kumdi Bagre this seems to be the

point. When a tribal war is about to start the villagers are discussing among themselves what the new forces mean to them:

These police are here to maintain law and order and not to promote trouble. Why did the kiap come? Before I used to chop such idiots like these policemen and feed the birds. Comrades today these blue uniforms are making them too smart and powerful for us.⁶

The new forces of control and order are overpowering and indestructible. The police as upholders of that new power and authority maintain the rules and laws of the government, but not the laws and rules of the tribe. Furthermore the laws and rules of the tribe are forced to cease by those of the government. Mel may be attempting here the portrayal of the post-independence social, political, social and economical order.

Narrative style and subject matter are similar but their influences and the narrative techniques are very different. Generally Mel and Kagl's technique is the straightforward narratology, generally preoccupied with bringing the Highlands' spirit and consciousness to the fore. Although they utilise the story-telling aspect of their traditional societies they also bring into play the act of intertextuality that involves combining oral traditions with actual historical incidents and events. The very act of blending actual histories with fictional recreation of life during the colonial times of Papua New Guinea is an interesting feature of the short novels. Kagl, for instance, rewrites a segment of the Hagen saga involving the killing of the American Catholic missionary Brother Frank (Eugene is the actual name of the missionary). Kagl's narrative takes the perspective of the Barengigl tribesmen.⁷ Kagl's fictionalizing this actual historical account could have been influenced more directly from the Mennin's account or from an expansion of an oral history involving this incident. Since it is recent, the possibility of remembering actual details is greater and closer to the author. Mel and Kagl's narratives are similar to Kilage's, but their work is different in certain aspects from that of their predecessors.

Mel's oral narrative style could easily be compared to Umba's style or Kilage's. The narrative style used here is basically concerned with telling of a good story in the traditional oratory style. A good story is told with more power and intensity if it is told in the manner an oral narrative is delivered. This passage from The Fires of Dawn is an oral narrative style:

Though the world around them had reached the electronic age, locked away behind the Bismark Ranges were a group of people known as the Kukane. This is the name they called themselves and were called by the neighbouring tribes. They belong to the Old Stone Age. Their everyday life was governed by superstition and sorcery. They were unaware of any world beyond the towering mountains that looked like pillars of ruined temples when silhouetted against the early dark night.⁸

The passage also reveals the author's external influence, and the obvious inclusion of images outside of the society he is writing about. For example, his use of the image "looked like pillars of ruined temples" is odd, but one which the author in writing an oral narrative has the privilege to use. He then follows on to introduce the main character of his story, giving a picture of his type of character and what place he has in the society. His main protagonist is Aglum, "an old one-eyed and crippled man." Although he is disabled, he still commands respect and honour from others in the society.

Oratory and power within the Papua New Guinean societies are interconnected. Kagl, in Benjamin Umba's story, the great leader and warrior of the village, exercises his power to instigate the murder of Aglum's family. This is demonstrated in this piece of oratory:

Now, what our fathers want us to do is this--and listen carefully. They want us, and strongly ask us, that we kill the whiteman, and if his followers are too proud to leave him and return to the village, they too must be killed, and I mean *killed*. But first the hawk must be chased away and later the hens may be warned about their fate. This may seem rather a harsh thing for our fathers to say. But this is what we are told to do, that is if we want to live. So it means to kill or to be killed.⁹

The impact of such oratory is the persuasive skill employed in the delivery, with much allusion to their dead ancestors and spirits. This could even be contradictory to the western

readers' ideas about reason and logic. What we have here is the force of influence great orators have on their people, and how easily this could become powerful ideas that influence the conscience. Yet the moment of contact was really a point of challenge for the stability of these great leaders, whose own success or status depended on the allegiance and loyalty the people have to them. Uмба's The Fires of Dawn reflects this impact of contact on the tribal people of the Highlands, whose survival and existence depended on ritualistic worship, ancestral adoration, and tribal consensus based largely on superstition and magic. We see this more clearly in the conversation Aglum had with his son before their murder:

Our people have been dying off at an unusually high rate. Bokun's uncle died, Kagl's mother died, Kimagl's sister died, Mir's husband died, and many children have been dying at childbirth. Hitherto, these deaths were believed to have been caused by sorcery--until Kagl consulted the gilmogl ambu about the death of his mother. From her the rest of the villagers have found out that they were not the result of sorcery. They are to be taken as... punishment from our ancestors. You may ask punishment for what, and what has it got to do with us. The answer is--*punishment for your joining the whiteman....*¹⁰

But such superstition and ritualistic veneration are easily invalidated by the new arrivals. The missionaries' power is mightier than the power of the villagers' ancestors. The missionaries and generally the whitemen who first visited the Highlands were often seen as tricksters with powers that are magically superior. The items they brought with them were also considered magically powerful:

This white man can trick us so that the ones who come after him will kill us all or treat us as his boys. They will take our land and make us plough it for them so that they may grow their food. This white man says he comes in peace. True, he doesn't have this strange looking wood with him. However his mundi [salt] his nitnuman [mirror] and his maima [axe] weaken us and make us turn against our own people. Not only do they weaken us but they destroy us completely because many others like himself will come after him, and when they appear you can know that it will be the end of us. However it is not yet too late.¹¹

The introduced items are as powerful as the white man himself. Salt, axe and mirror, some of the items introduced were not taken without suspicion. Although this is against any logic, it reflects the minds of the villagers in conflict with accepting new foreign items. Umba like the other authors is very much engaged in writing about the confused state of mind of the villagers who came in contact with the outside world. With further contact more problems and confusion develop, problems to do with tax, labour recruitment and uneasiness with the new laws of the society. In Kituai's society for example, Iso thinks of running away from the village to Goroka to escape paying tax:

The Patrol Officer was touring the villages to collect money. The Councillor had already informed him that he was old enough to pay tax on the forthcoming tax day--but he had no money. How could the Councillor say that when he had very faithfully obeyed his orders?¹²

The pattern of the short novels is twofold in its construction. First there is the journey outward, the escape from the tribe, the village. Second it is about adoption of the colonial situation and the great return to the village. It is one which is commonly used, but one which ends up leaving the character almost disillusioned and confused. The journeys outward are emphasised by external sequences of events that are very much part of the articulate influence of the written culture. Voyaging is considered necessary for wider knowledge and self-consciousness. This means that exposure to the outside world opens up new experiences and makes possible a wider knowledge that enriches the mind.¹³

To a certain extent this is a positive aspect of the short narratives of Papua New Guinean fiction. The journey outward into towns and urban centres is one of discovery and uncovering of secrets of the outside world, but only if the journeys are more self-assuring than failure. The careers these voyagers end up doing do not often count as less significant, however menial the jobs may be. In fact the jobs that range from a house servant (house boy), to being a plantation labourer are considered the most important jobs in those days. Kituai's narrative for instance

talks about Iso being accepted for his first job as a *house boy* by a sympathetic Australian, who did not care whose letter of reference Iso showed him:

The prospect of a bright future revived in him and he thumped his stomach with satisfaction. Now that he was offered a job all that remained was for him to prove how good and reliable he was. He promised himself that he would show he was capable of handling the job of a *house boy* with efficiency. If he didn't and was sacked he had no one to blame but himself.¹⁴

The *house boy* job is one which has fascinated most of the early writers. Baital like Kituai brings this *house boy* job back into his fiction. But this time, Kanek, Tali's father, ends his career as a *house boy* and returns home after many years away from his village. He is unable to locate his village, but with the help of his patrons and the coincidental meeting with his brother in a movie theatre he re-establishes his contact with the villagers.

What we have in such fiction is that the introduction of villagers to the outside world is not complete until a return is made. This is sometimes described as the great return to the village, the ideal, often the original point of movement. Tali and his father Kanek return to the village. Although we have age and time differentiation in the form of Tali's age (the generation of the seventies) and his father Kanek (the colonial generation), it is Tali's life which takes significant focus in the novel. Tali becomes the future of the new Papua New Guinea, but one still affected by the past of his father, the effects of colonialism and the obscure position of being alienated from the village.

Baital's narrative is more melodramatic in portraying this experience. There are quick sketches of the characters that at times seem more imaginary than real-life. For example, a sentimental, dream-like romance takes place between Tali Kanek and the white girl Caroline Parker. The introduction of guitar music is associated with romance. The conversation in Baital's narrative takes place on a melodramatic level, but one wonders whether romance

between the colonial white girl and black son of a *house boy* was possible. This is a false picture, one which Baital may have been only fantasising; it is unreal in the context.

Another difference between the Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea and the Two Highland Novels is the editorial quality of their expression. The Three Short Novels from Papua New Guinea have a tightly edited quality and thematic structure, which controls the flow of narrative to give a complete impression of the colonial period. But this is not found in the Two Highland Novels. The quality of their literary expression does not seem to be appropriate at times. In both Mel and Kagl the uncontrolled, sometimes staggering construction of their text is obvious. This could easily lead to possibilities of distortion. But that does not mean their work is of no literary value. In fact they are engaged in a significant moment of the author's position; like other post-colonial novelists, their text is seen as the medium of expression, which includes language, the cultural contexts of the text and the very act of writing their own colonised experiences. This is where the authors are faced with the challenge to wrestle the given rules of the text in English with the imagination of their mind and the presentation of experiences. This very practice was clearly featured by another Papua New Guinean novelist, Russell Soaba, in Maiba,¹⁵ where he portrays the character of Doboro Thomas as the village orator, who seizes power and influences the entire village with his use of language in an extraordinary way, often in language foreign to the Anuki, and his introducing of new words to achieve an ominous role, perhaps as an attempt to demonstrate the privileges of being educated; power acquisition play where power is manifested in being socially and culturally different. The influential role the village orator plays is used not only by Soaba, but had already appeared in Uмба's Fires of Dawn, where Aglum, his family and Tanawa are massacred as a consequence of persuasive oratory.

But is it possible to draw the same parallel analysis of writings done in the 1980s? Writers such as Kilage, Mel, Kagl and others have written their works during the post-independence period and yet bring into their fiction the same old story about colonial contact, conflict, movement in and out of the village and presentation of idealised village situations. Kagl for

instance uses notions of power status based on languages in his own work. A good example is the social status and privilege plantation labourers acquire by learning Pidgin on the plantations. This scheme recognises labourers with reasonable knowledge of the Pidgin language. They are differentiated from others:

If one of the labourers already knew a bit of Pidgin-English or had picked up meagre amounts from hearing others speak, he was destined for the highly coveted position of overseer or the more prestigious position as the missus's cook in the kitchen as soon as the "masta" was aware of the difference... Those who were signalled out enjoyed certain privileges and benefits as they had an advantage with their newly acquired language tool over their counterparts."¹⁶

This reflects that the language in the colonial plantation economy was a vital part of survival and individual achievement. It also shows the types of jobs that are done with the type of language one speaks. There is a hierarchical order created with language as the basis of differentiation among the plantation labourers. More importantly the recognition of the power the new language plays in the creation of new social order and power games is also an important aspect of the text, one that also characterises the author's own participation as a writer. Just as the plantation labourers attempt to master Pidgin-English, writers like Kagi and Mel attempt to master the art of writing novels. It is not so much the problem with the selection of language for the text but the very act of writing that really matters. This has already been reflected in Kituai's The Flight of a Villager, where Iso shows the letter of reference to the young Australian to get a job as a *house boy*. This is a classic representation of writing as more important than anything else, where the signature of the referee and the written aspect of the reference are more important than the person who uses the reference. In such a case it is the process of writing which takes significance:

The presence or absence of writing is possibly the most important element in the colonial situation. Writing does not merely introduce a communicative instrument, but also involves an entirely different and intrusive (invasive) orientation to knowledge and interpretation. In many post-colonial societies it was not the English language which had the greatest effect, but writing itself. In this respect, although oral culture is by no means the universal model of post-colonial societies, the invasion of the ordered, cyclic,

and 'paradigmatic' oral world by the unpredictable and 'syntagmatic' world of the written word stands as a useful model for the beginnings of post-colonial discourse. The seizing of the means of communication and the liberation of post-colonial writing by the appropriation of the written word become crucial features of the process of self-assertion and of the ability to reconstruct the world as an unfolding historical process.¹⁷

In many ways this is exactly what Kagl and Mel are doing. It is not the language of the text that mattered, but the actual process of writing which is seen as the process in which power and authority could be seized, especially in a competitive post-colonial society like Papua New Guinea. This has been represented in almost all the major works beginning with Ten Thousand Years In a Lifetime (1968) to Maiba (1985). It is one which writers explore extensively. In Mel's Kumdi Bagre, we see Bagre wishing to be like his teacher Mr. Kila and his father dreams about his son's future:

Dad thought for a while, "Bagre, be a good boy in school and one day you will pay back the hardships I faced against the police, warders, and kiaps." He let my hand go slowly. I turned my back to them and walked towards the main road leading to Rugli. Having walked for ten metres, I turned around, then paused for some time. "Dad!... one day I will do what you want me to do. It's only a matter of time." Dad shook his head and smiled at me. I turned around and began my journey back to school, having a lot of thoughts in my mind.¹⁸

Education is seen as a positive way to achieve goals, dreams and aspiration. Education opens up opportunities into the written world, represented by the teacher, the police, patrol officers and magistrates, and prison warders. Bagre's father, a victim of the powerful force associated with the written world, changes his mind about the education of his son. He sees in Bagre the hope of revenge and power over those that victimised him.

More importantly by the very act of writing these authors have engaged themselves in the bridging of two completely divergent cultures; oral culture on one hand and the written on the other. In Kumdi Bagre, we see that Bagre is a son of two different tribes, and further divided as someone with access to literacy but having to maintain his traditions. Bagre is seen "like a bridge that links two sides of the river", where the two sides of the river could stand for two

different tribes, clans and villages; or between the traditional and introduced modern culture.¹⁹ Kagl also shows this more profoundly with Kallan on the other side of the river bank, watching the missionary being attacked by the enemy tribe. This may be interpreted as an oral society confronting the written society, questioning the attempt to find a cohesive unit. Instead of being alienated completely Kallan relinquishes the old traditions of his people's values and history. Although Kallan is removed from his traditional society like Yaltep and Tali, he returns with new knowledge, skills and implements to improve the life of his people. Kallan learns Pidgin-English while away on the plantation in the Milne Bay province, but also matures into a self-confident young man.

In all these short novels, the writers are very much contemporizing history. The 1970 stories emphasise the contact, conflict, resistance and hesitancy of accepting the introduced modern way and colonial culture. The act of writing itself is seen by writers as an acquired form of social status and prestige. It is not a privilege, but a form in which sudden transformation of ideas takes shape, and immediately represents a source of power and authority. The 1980 writers on the other hand, writing within a post-independence period, are still writing about the colonial period, perhaps because the experiences of the authors also form that part of history.

CONCLUSION

Papua New Guinean literature acquired a physiognomy and identity of its own. This study of it reveals two parts. One part of the Papua New Guinean literature is written by expatriate foreign writers dating back to the 1870s; the other part is the literature by Papua New Guineans beginning in the late 1960s. It is the latter which has been the focus of this thesis, even though the former is introduced in the first part of the thesis to acknowledge and provide a contextual, and perhaps historical analysis of a literature that contributes to the understanding of the Papua New Guineans, their history, culture, traditions and conditions of survival.

Most Papua New Guinean novelists were writing about their own village societies. It is the villager, the village elder or leader, heir to traditional chiefly dynasty, the warrior or the mischievous village youth who becomes the centre of the Papua New Guinean novel. This may be coupled with the writer who in the first place is a member of the oral (village) society and in the second place as a writer after his first book produced a new Papua New Guinean literate society. One could say the unwritten has written itself and framed itself. This study has demonstrated that the Papua New Guinean novel has developed its own literary tradition as a *rite-de-passage* literature, crossing cultural boundaries, moving out of the village enclosures into the outside world, represented in the books as a journey to the mission station, the colonial plantation or to different villages or towns. The movement is always made possible through education, patrol recruitment or forced labour.

For the first time the Papua New Guinean villager was seen through the novelist's eye as a living reality, a man with human spirits living in a web of cultures, traditions and values. The outside experiences of the villager as a school pupil, a pastor, a plantation labourer, a cargo carrier or policeman were given first rate treatment by Papua New Guinean authors who restored the Papua New Guinean villagers their true and original status as human beings. For the first time Papua New Guinean characters are not restricted to being

peripheral, as background figures and caricatures, but as the centre of fiction, of reality and of a world that consists of them, their experiences, their views, and opinions.

Yet the Papua New Guinean authors are affected by colonialism as a by-product or sibling of that system. It is possible to see the reason for this assertion. Colonialism has to be forceful enough to disorient the Papua New Guinean characters, alienating them by forming fragmented societies, and forcing them to live outside of their societies most of the time. The Papua New Guinean writers studied in this thesis confront this reality and attempt constructing themselves, their societies and history. If colonialism has deprived Papua New Guineans of the sustaining power of traditional culture, the writers have turned "this deprivation to an advantage, for, liberated from tradition yet subtly influenced by it, they are free to express their native insights in forms which might be very exciting."¹ Indeed this opportunity has been one of profound significance.

There was a challenge to bring to the surface the innermost feelings and complete characteristics of the indigenous person. This means first of all authenticating the experience, and creating a text which is Papua New Guinean. To authenticate the experience is to make it as real as possible. However imaginative their work may be, there is always the essence of being in Papua New Guinea. The writers concentrated on the village level, idealising the village scene and contrasting it with the urban societies. Others (notably Russell Soaba) search for open consciousness by concentrating on the personal level of consciousness, to investigate the contemporary experiences, from youthful weaknesses, childhood innocence, initiation rites to the cynicism about society's inability to contain the individual who wishes to be different. A kind of self-consciousness spills into far more complicated issues, such as of national identity and cultural authenticity. It is the individual who seeks to qualify for that identity through a personal commitment.

Although Papua New Guinean novelists began writing without a model suggestive of the classical text or the eighteenth and nineteenth century English novel, the analysis of the evolution of their texts reveals that the writer takes up an existential and autobiographical position by writing out of a deep-felt commitment, that the pattern of the discourse becomes unconnected to the conventions of the written text or the canonical tradition. It is in such a situation of creativity that the author brings out the most interesting, exciting and intriguing experiences, which involve both the author's personal experience and that of his fictional creation. In general the novelist is more interested in society and the way the characters perpetuate it. The emphasis is on society, since it is impossible to isolate the individual character who exists within it. The individual character's personal qualities, maturity, and acceptance as a person is determined by the society, with its strict rules and conventions.

There can be little doubt about the richness of the Papua New Guinean literary output. In fact it has managed to build a large body of literature over the last twenty-three years, so that a study such as this one may present only an aspect of that literary culture. One thing common to all these authors is their treatment of the human spirit and the value they place in their books on traditional cultures, values and ceremonies. They are undeniable aspects of the Papua New Guinean novel. Yet one cannot deny the difficulties and problems associated with fiction creation in a society with a large number of the illiterate population making it difficult for an assured reading audience. The critical task cannot be properly performed without taking a larger contextual view of Papua New Guinean writing.

Cultural invasion and negative knowledge have been viewed differently by different people. In this thesis they have been viewed as the perverse implantation of western thought, culture and value, which have been institutionalised and imposed on the minds of the colonised. In the case of Papua New Guinea, it moved from being an imagined land mass to one of colonial subjects that hardly exist as humans. The foreign writers promoted, critically assessed and challenged some of the images they created and framed, but for their own self, cultural, psychological and political identity.

Though it may seem that this is the preoccupation of the first part of the thesis, there is a positivity in such a situation: there is a deterministic urge in the national authors to correct these images, speak for their own people and create their own image which comes out of it. The cultural invasion and negative knowledge moved the feelings of the indigenous authors to stand up and speak, becoming what Subramani in his study of South Pacific literature has termed the "prime mover" of indigenous expression. Subramani's concluding remark on South Pacific literature is one which could bring this thesis to conclusion as well:

Literature evolves according to certain principles in dialectical interaction with history and society, and through its own inner dynamism and logic. The study outlines a critical dialectical model in which the literature is shown developing from a stage of reaction and confrontation (polemic against colonialism), towards adjustment and synthesis, through groping for an adequate vision of the changed reality brought about by historical processes such as colonialism, democratisation of traditional societies, literacy and Western education. A further stage in its evolution, no doubt, would lead to a modification of the existing paradigm and renewal of the process of accommodation and fusion.²

This is politically sound as resistance to that force of cultural invasion, resistance which made possible self-expression and national identity. In the process of writing and textualising, a world is created and allowed to exist, not artificially but consciously. The patterns of discourse, the themes of construction and methods or styles of presentation evolve with time and history, accommodating and fusing elements of both the colonial and post-colonial worlds, written and unwritten worlds, so that literature becomes the negotiating panel, the magisterial tool of justice, reason and liberty.

END NOTES

Introduction.

1. A chronological overview of Papua New Guinean literature during the last twenty three years is possible but requires an overview of the entire literature of Papua New Guinea which includes other genres as well. Although there are cases where promising writers are denied proper publication of their materials such as those published in special issues of the Bikmaus magazine, it is obvious more rigid bureaucracy and lack of financial support from the government does force publishing houses like the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (now the Culture Division of the National Research Institute) to be unfair to Papua New Guinean writers. See Steven Edmund Winduo, "Papua New Guinea Writing: the Growth of a Literary Culture, Manoa, 2., no.1 (1990), pp.37-44.
2. Russell Soaba, Wanpis, (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1977), p.118.
3. Ulli Beier, "Papua New Guinea: Voices of Independence", Voices of Independence: Black Writing from Papua New Guinea, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1980), pp.xi-xvi. See also Apisai Enos, "Niugini Literature" in Teaching Literature in Papua New Guinea, (eds.), E. Brash and M. Greicus, (Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972), pp.43-8, John Waiko, "The Place of Literature in Papua New Guinea Education", in Teaching Literature in Papua New Guinea, (eds.) E. Brash and M. Greicus, (Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972), pp.4-6, and Elton Brash, "Creative Writing, Literature and Self-Expression in Papua New Guinea" in Teaching Literature in Papua New Guinea, (eds.) E. Brash and M. Greicus, (Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972), pp.35-42.
4. Interesting similarities of the Papua New Guinean literature can be made to the development and flourishing of the West Indian literature. See Kenneth Ramchand's study of The West Indian Novel and Its Background (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), p.4.
5. Although this may be the case, it is understood that there were few odd creative pieces attempted by Papua New Guineans during the early colonial period. Peter Mühlhäusler writing about the reduction of Pacific languages in writing quotes U. Mosel's study on "The Influence of the Church missions on the development of Tolai" in R. Carle, et al. (eds) Gava (Festschrift Kahler), Berlin: Remir, pp.155-72; that:

Natives also wrote articles for church papers *Nilai Ra Dovot* (Methodist) and *Talaigu* (Catholic) but one can hardly speak of indigenous creative writing in these cases, as the articles followed the pattern of European Christian literature. The only book that has been written by a native in Tolai seems to be the autobiography by Hosea Linge, which was translated into English and published in Australia in 1932. It does not seem to have been printed in Tolai, since Threlfall (1975: 134) certainly would have mentioned it. Thus the only literature offered to the people was Christian literature.

See Peter Mühlhäusler, "Reducing Pacific Languages to Writing", in Ideologies of Language, (eds.) John E. Joseph and Talbot J. Taylor (London, New York: Routledge, 1990), p.196.

Part One.

1. Kumalau Tawali, "Potters" in Tribesman's Heartbeats, (Madang: Kristen Pres, 1978), p.34.

Chapter One.

1. Fraiser McConnell, "Introduction" Papua New Guinea, World Bibliographical Series, vol. 90, (Oxford, Santa Barbara, Denver: Clio Press, 1988), p.xvii.
2. The bibliographical history of Papua New Guinea compiled by Fraizer McConnell reveals that the earliest document dates back to the voyage of Louis Vaez de Torres in 1606, as recorded by Captain Don de Prado Y Tova in New Light on the Discovery of Australia. The Dutch, represented by William Schouten and Jacob Le Maire, visited the northern coast and the island region in 1616. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the English and French rose to maritime power and were responsible for charting much of the New Guinea coast. William Dampier in 1700, Philip Carteret in 1767, Francis Blackwood in 1824-45, Owen Stanley in 1849-50, and John Moresby in 1873 were the principal English navigators who contributed in the world's geographical knowledge of the New Guinea region. Their French counterparts include Louis Antoine de Bougainville in 1868, Antoine de Bruny D'Entrecasteaux in 1791-93 and Dumont D'Urville in 1826 (qtd: McConnell, p.xvii.)
3. E.W. Cole, Account of a Race of Human Beings With Tails; Discovered by Mr.Jones, the Traveller In the Interior of New Guinea, (Sydney: Fitzroy:pr. A.T. Mason, 1873), also in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed) Nigel Krauth, St.Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), p.1.
4. Johann David Wyss, The Swiss Family Robinson, tran. Mrs. H. B. Paull, (London: F. Warne, 1909).
5. Marcus Clarke , "Gipsies of the South Sea or The Island of Gold", The Melbourne Herald (24, 26, 28, 30, 31 December 1874), reprinted as "A Modern Eldorado" in The Austral Edition of the Selected Works of Marcus Clarke, ed. Hamilton Mackinnon (Melbourne: Fergusson and Mitchell, 1890), pp.343-61, also in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature (ed.) Nigel Krauth, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.13-34.
6. Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed.) Nigel Krauth, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), p.12.
7. "Crocker, Rev. Henry", pseud. (Henry Crocker Marriot Watson), Adventurers in New Guinea; the Narrative of Louis Tre'gance, Orangwok. A Tribe in the Interior of New Guinea, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1876), pp.116-27, also in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature (ed.) Nigel Krauth, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.37-41.
8. Hume Nisbet, The Land of the Hibiscus Blossom: A Yarn of the Papuan Gulf, (London: C. Ward and Downey, 1888), excerpt as "In the Gardens of Hula" in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed.) Nigel Krauth, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.45-55.
9. Louis Becke, York The Adventurer, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901).
10. Krauth, p.56.
11. Ibid.
12. McConnell, p.7.
13. Edward Said, Orientalism, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p.41.
14. Ibid, p.42.
15. Ibid.
16. Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p.56.
17. Said, p.41.

Chapter Two.

1. Said, Orientalism., p. 42.
2. Ibid.
3. Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed., p.121.
4. Ibid., p.122.
5. James Morgan Walsh, Overdue: A Romance of New Guinea, exerpt as "The last Voyage of the "Dorovi" in New Guinea Images, (ed.) Nigel Krauth, p.87-92.
6. Krauth, p.85.
7. Jack McLaren, Isle of Escape (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1926), Songs of a Fuzzy-Top; being, mainly, the Love Story of a South Sea Islander, told in his own peculiar English,

London: Cecil Palmer, 1926, published together with My Odyssey (1929) which also appeared by the same title in Krauth's anthology. His other work is Spear Eye published in Sydney by Sates in 1975.

8. Krauth, p.93

9. Nigel Krauth notes in New Guinea Images in Australian Literature (1982) that D. Egerton Jones had fought and won a feminist battle for the right of women to practice law in South Australia, but the contest broke her health and she never completed her law degree.

10. Krauth comments on Beatrice Grimshaw as one of the most original and inspiring writers of her time. See New Guinea Images, p. 120. Also see Beatrice Grimshaw's other works, The Coral Queen, (Sydney: New South Wales Bookstall Company, 1919) and The White Savage Simon, (Sydney: New South Wales Bookstall Company, 1919).

11. Krauth comments on Alyson Brown's "The Totem" and other stories that they prefigured the kind of fiction written by Papua New Guineans themselves in the nineteen seventies. "The Totem" was first published in The Bulletin (Sydney), 13 June 1928, pp.47 & 49, reprinted in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed.) Nigel Krauth (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.107-20.

12. Bruce King, The New English Literature-Cultural Nationalism in a Changing World, (London: MacMillan Press, 1980), p.9.

13. Gilbert Munro Turnbull, Portrait of a Savage, (Sydney: Currawong, 1943), and Paradise and Plumes, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934).

14. Ion Idries, The Yellow Ioss, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1945), first printed in The Bulletin (Sydney), 7 December 1929, p.44., excerpt as "And God Gave Man Dominion", in New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed.) Nigel Krauth, pp.116-20.

15. Vance Palmer, Hurricane, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1935, excerpt as "The Outpost" in Nigel Krauth New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (ed.) Nigel Krauth (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.145-51.

16. Krauth, p.144.

17. Ibid., p.xiv.

18. Ibid., p.152.

19. David Denholm *pseud.* "Forest, David", The Last Blue Sea (London: Heinemann, 1959).

20. Olaf Ruhen, Land of Dohori, (London: Macdonald, 1957), "The Husbandmen" in Nigel Krauth, New Guinea Images in Australian Literature, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1982), pp.200-7.

21. Krauth, p.199.

22. Ibid.

23. Ian Downs, The Stolen Land (Milton, Queensland: Jacaranda Press, 1970).

24. Krauth, p.254.

25. Randolph Stow Visitants, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1979). Other writers who published in the 1970s and 1980s are Christopher Wood, Kago (London: Collins, 1985), North to Rabaul, (New York: Arbor House, 1979), Hammond Innes, Solomon's Seal, (London: Collins, 1980) and John Brown, Zaibatsu, (Sydney: Walrus Books, 1983).

26. Krauth., p.267.

27. A writer like John Kolia is hard to categorize as an Australian author because since his change of citizenship to Papua New Guinean he has attacked fiercely Australian paternalism over Papua New Guinea. John Kolia published several important works which include such titles as Close to the Village, (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1979), A Compulsive Exhibition, (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1978), Up the River to Victory Junction, (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies), and My Reluctant Missionary (Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1980). See Krauth, p.26 for more detail.

28. Trevor Shearston, Something in the Blood, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1979).

29. Shearston, Sticks That Kill, (St Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1983).

30. Shearston, White Lies, (St. Lucia: Queensland University Press, 1986).

31. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Post-Colonial Literary Critic", in The Post-Colonial Critic, Interviews, Strategies and Dialogues, (ed.) Sarah Harasym, (New York, London: Routledge, 1990), p.72.

32. Freire, p.26.

33. Ibid., p.31.

34. Kumalau Tawali's poem "The Bush Kanaka Speaks" (1969) and John Kasaipwalova's "The Reluctant Flame" (1969) are the most popular and forceful of the poems which appeared in this period. The poems are significantly powerful in their evocation of resistance and

antagonism. These poems were published later in the Papua Pocket Poet books. See Kumalau Tawali, Signs in the Sky, (Port Moresby: Papua Pocket Poets, 1970) and John Kasaipwalova, Reluctant Flame, (Port Moresby: Papua Pocket Poets, 1971).

Chapter Three.

1. Geoffrey Smith, "Education, History and Development" in Encyclopaedia of Papua New Guinea, Vol.1. A-K, (Melbourne: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972.), p.315.
2. Ibid.
3. Peter Smith, "Education Policy in Australian New Guinea: a Classic Case" in Papua New Guinea: a Century of Colonial Impact 1884-1984, (ed.) Sione Latukefu, (Port Moresby: The National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea, 1989), p.293, also see M. Carnoy's study of cultural imperialism and the negative influence forced on to colonised people through the education system, in Education and Cultural Imperialism, (New York, 1974).
4. Freire, Pedagogy, p123.
5. Ibid.
6. Smith, G., p.316.
7. Ibid., p.318.
8. Ibid., p.325
9. Ibid.
10. John Kadiba, "Murray and Education: Some Observations on the Ambivalence of Colonial Education Policy in Papua Before World War II" in Papua New Guinea: a Century of Colonial Impact 1884-1984, (ed.) Sione Latukefu, (Port Moresby: The National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea, 1989), p.279.
11. See Peter Smith, "Education Policy in Australian New Guinea: a Classic Case" in Papua New Guinea: A Century of Colonial Impact 1884-1984, (ed.) Sione Latukefu, (Port Moresby: The National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea, 1989), p.314 and also F. E. Williams, "The Blending of the Cultures: an Essay on Aims of Native Education", Anthropology Report No. 16, 1935, Port Moresby, p.1 and Papua Annual Report, 1936-37, pp.20-21. One of the most influential reports on the development of education in New Guinea was based on W.C. Groves' field work paper on New Guinea, published as Education and Culture Contact: A Scientific Approach, (qtd in Smith, P., p.311.)
12. Smith, G, p.325.
13. John Stolz, "The State of Literature Teaching in P.N.G High Schools", Teaching Literature in Papua New Guinea, (eds.) Elton Brash and M. Greicus, (Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972), p.7.
14. John Stolz cites from T.P.N.G. Secondary Schools Syllabus; English, Department of Education 1967, p.74.
15. Stolz, pp.7-8.

Chapter Four.

1. Though the term intertextuality covers a broader range of theories and applications, it is used here with variations to Kristeva's original notion as expounded in her work, "Word, dialogue and novel" or "Problèmes de la structuration du texte". See Judith Still and Michael Worton, "Introduction", Intertextuality: Theory and Practices, (eds.) Michael Worton and Judith Still, (Manchester: New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), p.16.
2. Kalyan Chatterjee, "Papua New Guinean Literature: Innocence and Self Knowledge", Pacific Writers, A South Pacific Communication Journal, 14, no.1., (1985), p.6.
3. Norman Simms, "Towards an Assessment of Maori and Pacific Writing in New Zealand", Pacific Writing and Publishing A South Pacific Communication Journal, 14. No.1., (1985), p.86.
4. Ibid.

5. Subramani, South Pacific Literature; from Myth to Fabulation, (Suva: University of South Pacific, Institute of Pacific Studies, 1985), p.2.
6. Russell Soaba's Maiba has been the subject of my previous work, "The South Pacific Novel: A Dialectical Interaction Between Traditional Cultures and History in the Fiction of Albert Wendt, Russell Soaba and Epeli Hau'ofa," an Extended Essay ENG 680 submitted in the Department of English, University of Canterbury, 1990. In this essay I had focused more on the dialectical relationship of history and culture. I will not be discussing Maiba in this thesis for reasons of repetition.
7. Ken Goodwin, "Invective and Obliqueness in Political Poetry: Kasaipwalova, Brathwaite and Soyinka", Awakened Conscience, Studies in Commonwealth Literature, (ed.) C.D. Narasimharah, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1978), p.251.
8. Ibid.
9. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature, (New York: Routledge, New Accents 1989), pp.59-77.
10. Soaba's article, found in the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies archives. Date written and where published are unknown. It could have been written when Soaba was working with the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies around 1976.
11. Pierre Machery, A Theory of Literary Production (London, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), p.9.
12. Francoise Lionnet, Autobiographical Voices, Race, Gender, Self Portraiture, (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p.5.
13. Ibid., p.7.
14. See also Heidi I Stull, The Evolution of the Autobiography from 1770-1850, A Comparative Study and Analysis, (New York, Berne, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Laing, 1985), Elizabeth W. Bruss, Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1976), James Olney, Metaphor of Self: the Meaning of Autobiography (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), and Francoise Lionnet, Autobiographical Voices, Race, Gender, Self Portraiture, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989).
15. For such investigation works by Roy Pascal (1960), George Mish (1969) and Heidi I Stull (1989) are useful as they deal specifically with the origin and development of the autobiographical tradition.
16. Ken Hirschkop, Bakhtin and Cultural Theory, (ed.) Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd, (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), p.7.
17. Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp.9-10.
18. Heidi I Stull, The Evolution of Autobiography from 1770-1885; A Comparative Study and Analysis, (New York, Berne, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985).
19. Ibid., p.12.
20. Nigel Krauth, "Russell Soaba's Latest Work: An Investigation Into Accidents Along the Road to Papua New Guinea's Independence", ACLALS Bulletin (January, 1979), p.40.
21. The first independent Papua New Guinean writers' conference took place in 1976 in an attempt to re-establish the creative energy of Papua New Guinean literature during the period 1968 and 1975. It seems that after self government literature was in a decline. Perhaps this effort was most notably marked by Ulli Beier's Black Writing from Papua New Guinea (1973), later reworked as Voices of Independence; New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea (1980). It is understood that the first Papua New Guinea writers' conference assessed the literary situation in the country and lamented the lost creative momentum of the period 1968-1975. Feelings of uncertainty of the future of Papua New Guinean literature were expressed at the conference. The conference is noteworthy as international writers such as Albert Wendt (Western Samoa), Wole Soyinka, Kole Otomose, Taban lo Liyong (Africa) and Kath Walker (Australia), attended, sharing with Papua New Guinean authors their own experiences. As part of the South Pacific Festival of Arts programme in Port Moresby in 1980, writers such as Albert Wendt, Patricia Grace, Hone Tuwhare, Jan Kemp, Gary McCormack, Mrs. Faith Bandler, Katerina Mataira, Ngoi Pewhairangi, Alexander Anderson, Makuiti Tongia, and Sam Hunt participated along with several of the Papua New Guinean authors. Again the 1988 Waigani Seminar Conference based on "The State of the Arts in the South Pacific" saw Albert Wendt, Vilisoni Hereniko (Fijian playwright), S. Ngwele (Vanuatu) and Sam Alasia (Solomon Islands author) come together with Papua New Guinean writers to read and discuss their work.
22. Chatterjee, "Papua New Guinean Literature.", p.7.

Part Two.

1. Ruth Finnegan, Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication, (Oxford, New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p.67.

Chapter Five.

1. Albert Maori, Kiki Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968).
2. Ibid., pp.148-9.
3. Ibid., p.68.
4. Ibid., p.154.
5. Ibid., p.186.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p.35.
8. Ibid., pp.55-6.
9. Lionnett Francoise, Autobiographical Voices, Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), p.92.
10. Heidi I. Stull The Evolution of Autobiography from 1770-1885: A Comparative Study and Analysis, (New York, Berne, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985), p.42.
11. Ibid.
12. Ulli Beier, "Preface" in Albert Maori Kiki Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne, Cheshire, 1968).
13. As noted on the back cover of Kiki's book.
14. Kiki., p.183.
15. Roy Pascal, Design and Truth in Autobiography, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp.53-67.
16. Ibid., p.59.
17. Stull, The Evolution of Autobiography, p.12.
18. Ulli Beier "Preface" in Albert Maori Kiki Ten Thousand Years in a Lifetime, (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968), p.3.
19. Michael Somare, Sana, an Autobiography (Port Moresby: Niugini Press, 1975).
20. Pascal, Design and Truth, p.95.
21. Ibid.

Chapter Six.

1. Vincent Eri, The Crocodile (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1971).
2. Nigel Krauth, "Towards a Balanced Approach in the Study of Papua New Guinean Literature," Teaching Literature in Papua New Guinea, (eds.) E. Brash and M. Greicus, (Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1972), p.49.
3. Eri in a public lecture given at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1990 maintained that he is primarily a teacher of his people; his novel is basically about the rituals and customs of his people. It is not a strange thing for Eri to see himself as a teacher as other writers of the colonised societies have done so effectively. Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian author, for example, successfully taught the world about the ethos, values, and dynamic aspects of his society, one which scholars of Achebe have claimed as progressing "in a linear manner and set in an historical framework that reveals the persistence of cultural continuity despite internal and external threats to the society," in Richard K. Priebe, Myth, Realism and the West African Writer, (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1988), p.47.
4. Eri, p.72.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p.75.
7. Ibid., p.94.
8. Krauth, "Towards a Balanced Approach.", p.51.
9. Ibid., pp.51-2.

10. Frances Delvin Glass, "Between Two Cultures: Interpreting V. Eri's *The Crocodile*" Language and Literature in Multicultural Contexts; ACLALS Fifth Triennial Conference Proceedings, (ed.) Satendra Nandan, (Suva: University of South Pacific, 1983), p.135.
11. Ibid.,
12. Krauth "Towards a Balanced Approach.", p.52.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. M. M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Encounter; Four Essays (ed.) Michale Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michale Holquist, (Austin, London: University of Texas Press, 1981), p.230.
17. Glass, "Between Two Cultures", p.132.
18. Krauth, "Towards a Balanced Approach", p.53.
19. Ashcroft. et al., p.82.
20. Ibid., p.63.
21. Ibid., p.87.
22. Ibid., p.82.

Chapter Seven.

1. Russell Soaba, Wanpis (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1977).
2. Nigel Krauth, "Russell Soaba's Latest Work: An Investigation Into Accidents Along the Road to Papua New Guinea's Independence", ACLALS Bulletin (January, 1979), p.40.
3. Russell Soaba "An Interview with Russell Soaba" Interview by Chris Tiffin, SPAN no.8. (April, 1979), pp.15-30.
4. Krauth, "Russell Soaba's Latest Work", p.40.
5. Russell Soaba, "Albert Wendt: Pacific's Existential Writer", Ondobondo, 3 (1983), pp.37-41. See also Zak Tiamon "Russell Soaba's Wanpis" Ondobondo, 2 (Mid-1983), p.29.
6. Donald Gutierrez The Dark and Light Gods: Essays on the Self in Modern Literature (Troy, New York: The Whitston Publishing Company, 1987), p.5.
7. Soaba, "Scattered by the Wind," in Kovave, 4., no.1. (November, 1972), pp.30-42, and "A Portrait of the Odd Man Out" in Lali: A Pacific Anthology, (ed.) Albert Wendt, (Auckland: Longman Paul, 1980), pp.168-176.
8. Krauth, " 'Unfolding Like Petals' " : The Developing Definition of the Writer's Role in Modern Papua New Guinean Literature", ACLALS Bulletin 5, No.1. (July, 1978), p.2.
9. Nigel Krauth, "Russell Soaba's Latest Work: An Investigation Into Accidents Along the Road to Papua New Guineas's Independence", ACLALS Bulletin (January, 1979), p.40.
10. Soaba, Wanpis, p.7.
11. Gutierrez, The Dark and Light., p.23.
12. Soaba, Wanpis., p.170.
13. Ibid., p.104.
14. Ibid., p.105.
15. Soaba, "Albert Wendt", p.29.
16. Soaba, Wanpis, pp.56-7.
17. Soaba, "An Interview with Russell Soaba", p.22.
18. Soaba, Wanpis., p.119.
19. Richard Priebe , Myth, Realism and the West African Novel (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1988), p.37.
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