Dedicated to the late Roger Keesing
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The essays in this volume deal with material and conceptual aspects of the radical transformations that have occurred in South Pacific societies in the colonial and post-colonial eras. Topics that are discussed include the sometimes disastrous impact of development projects, the effects of increasing political and economic incorporation, the adaptability and viability of indigenous cultures, and the biases in Western representations of Pacific history and change. The five contributions depict historical trajectories in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Polynesian islands. In an introductory chapter I highlight and elaborate on the central themes of the following essays.

The authors share a critical perspective on Western material and intellectual involvement in the Pacific and they emphasize the need for reflection, dialogue and political engagement. Four of the authors are leading Western anthropologists with long-term involvement in the region; the fifth author is a distinguished Pacific Islander who assesses the colonial impact from a Pacific point of view.

The five contributors were invited to deliver keynote addresses during the First European Colloquium on Pacific Studies organized by the Centre for Pacific Studies in Nijmegen on 17–19 December 1992. The general theme of the conference was
'Transformation and tradition in the South Pacific' and more than 120 scholars had gathered to listen to and discuss fifty papers.

The Centre for Pacific Studies maintains close institutional ties with the Department of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific Studies of The Australian National University. As a graduate of the latter institution I am pleased that this volume is published as a joint venture, thus facilitating distribution in the Pacific.

I am grateful to Michael Young for advice and assistance in the editing process, Paula Harris for her careful copy-editing, Margaret Tyrie for her skilful wordprocessing, Natalie Spratt for artfully designing the cover and Judith Wilson for overseeing the last stages of publication. In Nijmegen I wish to thank Ricky Breedveld and Marlies Berbers for typing two of the contributions and Bart Hoogveld for taking the photographs during the conference.

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On 7 May 1993, less than five months after presenting his keynote address in Nijmegen, Roger Keesing died tragically and prematurely from a heart attack. To commemorate his great achievements as an anthropologist and his deep concern about developments in the Pacific this volume is dedicated to him.

Ton Otto
EMPTY TINS FOR LOST TRADITIONS?
THE WEST'S MATERIAL AND INTELLECTUAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE PACIFIC

Ton Otto

INTRODUCTION
Political decolonization began late in the South Pacific. Most island countries attained political independence only in the 1960s and 1970s. A few nations are still in bonds of colonial dependency whereas some other populations have become indigenous minorities encapsulated in state structures dominated by immigrant majorities. In spite of their late political evolution as modern states most Pacific peoples have had a long history of contact with the West. The impact of this contact has been pervasive and has irreversibly changed the face of the Pacific. Histories of migration, technological innovation, and conquest predate Western presence in the South Seas and we should be careful to avoid a Eurocentric perspective on the Pacific's past which, in its most crude form, identifies the beginning of history proper with the start of European exploration and documentation. However, the transformations during the past few centuries, the extent of which cannot be easily exaggerated, have incorporated the populations of the Pacific into one evolving world system of political and economic interdependence: local history has become part of world history.
In their contact with the West, Pacific Islanders have mostly been 'at the receiving end', as Pokawin phrases it in the final essay of this volume. They saw explorers land on their beaches and march into their valleys; they met with traders who wanted bêche-de-mer or coconuts in exchange for beads and nails; they watched planters occupy their lands; they were defenceless against the soldiers who came to protect the planters and traders; they listened to the stories of missionaries; and, finally, they encountered anthropologists who came to record *their* stories. It would be mistaken, however, to depict the Islanders only as passive victims of developments beyond their control. They confronted the new events according to their own cultural convictions and they manipulated the new circumstances to suit their own interests, sometimes by successfully playing colonial agents off against each other. The issue of indigenous agency is an important one and I will return to it below. It is evident, nevertheless, that the initiative and the impetus to the colonial transformations derived from Western expansionism.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to analyse the dynamics of the Western expansion and it suffices to note that the process was propelled by multifarious and varying interests and motives. Knowledge about the existence of South Sea islands and the great South Land (Terra Australis) was provided by explorers from the sixteenth century onwards. However, serious colonial settlement commenced late, for most regions only in the nineteenth century. Apparently the islands had been considered too far away and economic profits too marginal. Only when the established empires were scrambling to occupy the left-over regions, presumably more for strategic than for economic reasons, was the Pacific finally divided up into colonial territories (see Russier 1905). Strategic occupation and economic exploitation were
accompanied by another kind of expansion: that of Christianity, the predominant Western religion. This expansion was often accomplished at the cost of great personal endurance and even sacrifice by both Western and indigenous missionaries. However respectable their motives and however great their concern for local populations, this should not blind us to the fact that the missions provided an especially powerful ideological justification of colonialism.

With the way prepared by pacification and regular transport facilities, the Pacific also saw other kinds of visitors, who were not primarily interested in economic gain or ideological conversion. Rather, these travellers were drawn by the exotic lifestyles of Pacific Islanders and by the intricate artefacts they produced. Whether they came as collectors, artists, tourists or anthropologists, these travellers had one thing in common. Their interest concerned the indigenous cultures in their 'pristine' state, untouched by colonial influences. The irony of the situation was that while other agents of colonialism were engaged in irreversibly changing the Pacific societies, these latecomers on the scene wanted to preserve an ahistorical, tradition-bound, 'primitive' society that had in fact never existed. Following the requirements of their own intellectual projects, they converted living realities into ossified images which were then reproduced in books or exhibitions. They thus added the insult of intellectual appropriation to the injury of colonial exploitation.

Of course, this image is black and white and leaves out many shades of grey. The development of anthropology in the Pacific, for example, has not been as independent of material colonial interests as the above sketch suggests. Not only was the colonial situation a precondition for the conduct of field research, but an important part of anthropological research has actually been
carried out in the service of colonial administrative interests. Applied anthropologists, as they are often called, were interested in the practical issues of cultural change and their expertise was called upon to facilitate the process of modernization under colonial control. The majority of anthropologists, however, enjoyed a greater intellectual independence since they were based in universities and museums. They freely engaged in the intellectual debates of their time, such as those concerning the evolution of human society and the development of culture. These anthropologists provided the images of exotic 'others' which the dialectics of Western intellectual development required. As a result, contemporary Pacific peoples were sometimes depicted as (clues to) stages on an evolutionary ladder leading to Western civilization. The same images, however, were also used to analyse the negative effects of modernization and to criticize Western impact on Pacific Island peoples. Intellectual development is never linear and it is important to realize that the same images which in certain contexts serve oppressive goals may also give openings to critical self-awareness.

In the post-colonial era, which in some parts of the Pacific has not yet begun, the interests of the West have remained basically the same. Large Western states are concerned about their strategic positions and use economic pressure to achieve continuing access to tiny Pacific countries. They also misuse the Pacific area to test their deadly weapons. Western and Asian companies have an avid interest in the natural resources of the Pacific region. They are mining the minerals, harvesting the tropical rainforests, and overfishing the seas at an unprecedented and possibly catastrophic scale. Are they leaving the next generation only 'empty tins', as Keesing suggests in his essay? Anthropologists and other romantic travellers are still interested in resources of another kind: the
traditions of Pacific Islanders. These traditions seem to be disappearing as fast as the natural resources. At the same time an indigenous interest in, and even celebration of, the 'age-old' traditions has emerged. Subsumed under the heading of 'the politics of tradition' this indigenous process of cultural objectification and appropriation of Western images has constituted a new field of interest for anthropological research.

The Pacific is changing and is doing so fast. Pacific Islanders have achieved knowledge of Western ways and are applying this knowledge skilfully. They point to continuing economic exploitation and intellectual appropriation and they demand respect and recompense. The following essays provide the personal views of five people who have been closely involved in developments in the South Pacific. Four of them are Western anthropologists, each with decades of research commitment to one or more Pacific countries. The fifth author is a Pacific Islander who has been intellectually and practically immersed in the transformations, both as a scholar and a politician. In diverging ways the authors take stock of various aspects of the material and intellectual interaction between the West and the Pacific.

CENTRAL THEMES

By way of introduction to the concerns of the following essays I have selected several themes which in my reading constitute the central issues from which the arguments of the various authors evolve. I have organized these issues under three headings: 'Dependency, exploitation and agency', 'Tradition and innovation' and '(Self-)criticism and dialogue'. 
Dependency, Exploitation and Agency

Although political independence is now a fact for most South Pacific countries, economic and cultural dependency is greater than ever before. As a result of the increasing reliance on Western industrial and even agricultural products, the Pacific Islands have become part of the world economic system, forced to sell whatever resources they have in order to obtain the goods they need. In most cases their economic base is small and this makes them dependent on the continuation of foreign aid and on remittances from migrant citizens. This economic dependency clearly undermines their political autonomy, which runs the risk of being corrupted. Modern means of communication have established an appetite for Western cultural products. Video tapes, frequently of dubious quality, are being viewed in many Pacific villages with the help of generator-powered video sets. Missionization and modern education continue to propagate Western models of thought in more formal ways. The processes of economic and cultural encapsulation irreversibly determine the options available to Pacific Islanders to shape their futures.

Increasing dependency is linked to exploitation by Western business. As some of the authors justifiably remark, 'development' is often little more than the adaptation of local institutions and economies to better suit Western interests; it is a post-colonial euphemism for economic exploitation. However, exploitation does not only occur between the Pacific and the West, it has increasingly become a phenomenon internal to Pacific economies. Local élites with access to state and business power are consolidating and expanding their positions thereby enlarging social inequality and contributing to the formation of national and even supra-national economic classes.
Increasing dependency is also accompanied by the loss of control that Pacific Islanders have to shape their own lives. International market forces cannot be influenced by tiny nation states with limited resources, nor have local communities much impact on international flows of information and cultural styles. The process of colonization, initiated by Western agents, has seen the gradual transformation of autonomous and autarkical tribal groups into dependent citizens and consumers. The loss of control has undoubtedly engendered psychological problems such as alienation and concomitant social problems of anomie and rascalism. However, it is a mistake to deny Pacific Islanders agency in the changes their societies have undergone. As Keesing and Godelier show in their essays, there have been choices in the past, however limited, and Pacific leaders have therefore been partly complicit in the developments described.

Lest this story of dependency, exploitation and alienation becomes one-sided in its gloomy perspective, it is important to note some signs of opposite trends. In spite of increasing dependency some Pacific economies are doing well according to Western standards. With a real growth rate of around 9 per cent in 1992, Papua New Guinea's formal economy is experiencing rapid expansion. Economic exploitation, although widespread and possibly even increasing, is also successfully controlled by government measures and conscientious officers. Manus Provincial Government, for example, has recently reduced the logging harvest volume to about one-third of previous allocations in order to maintain sustainable yields. The premier reported that a Malaysian logging company had made an attempt to bribe him and his forestry minister. Western cultural models and knowledge not only contribute to the alienation of local groups from their own traditions, they are also appropriated and used in combination with
local wisdom to contain alienation and to create alternative cultural and social forms. Manus Province may again serve as an example since its government has embarked on an ambitious plan of 'integral human development' denying the primacy of economic objectives.

Tradition and Innovation

The concept of tradition has recently attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. It is not the place here to attempt to summarize the current debate. I will selectively discuss those aspects that are relevant to the following essays. The word tradition is basically used in two different ways. First, closely following the meaning of the Latin root, it refers to the customs of a society which have been handed down from one generation to the next. Tradition in this sense does not necessarily presuppose a conscious awareness on the part of those adhering to the tradition. It is a 'lived in' reality which assumes an aspect of naturalness to the participants. Therefore, in this usage, tradition is almost synonymous with the concept of culture. Second, tradition has also come to denote a conscious objectification of culture. Selected parts of a culture are constructed as 'traditional' in order to imbue them with greater authoritative force or to use them as marks of distinction. I will discuss some implications of both meanings, beginning with the first.

When contrasted with the concept of modernity, the noun tradition invokes the adjectives 'static' and 'conservative'. Traditions are often seen as hampering rational development. The opposition thus constructed has been used to distinguish between two different kinds of societies: Western, modern, developing or 'hot' societies as opposed to primitive, 'traditional', static or 'cold' societies. In this view, the latter have to be awakened from their traditional 'Sleeping
Beauty' slumber by the touch of Western civilization, which will push them into an irreversible process of 'acculturation'. Although this conceptual image is persistent, it has been sufficiently disproved by modern scholarship. The image of a primitive society dominated by its static traditions is utterly misleading. Whereas the actual speed of cultural change may vary, it has become evident that cultures or traditions are always in flux. They adapt to new circumstances, import new elements from outside, or change by the internal process of cultural invention, fuelled by competition and contradictions of meaning and interest. Tradition in the first sense, then, as 'lived in' culture, refers to a 'living' reality which may perhaps serve to stabilize social relations by rendering them conventional but does not ossify them.

An important part of the 'tradition' of Pacific societies, referred to in the following essays, consists of their various forms of subsistence agriculture. These are 'traditional' because they are based on the accumulated experience and wisdom of generations of practitioners. However, these traditions have always been open to incorporate new crops, tools and techniques. As Keesing and Pokawin argue, it is important that Pacific Islanders build on this base of 'subsistence affluence', not abandon it. Undoubtedly, the majority of the population will have to rely on subsistence forms of agriculture for some time to come. Where people have given up this base — for example, by using all their land for cash crops — they have voluntarily enslaved themselves to the uncontrollable forces of the world market and industrial politics.

Another crucial aspect of tradition, which may be classified as economic in Western terms, is the way in which products are redistributed. Numerous obligations to support kin and affines and to partake in reciprocal exchange relationships not only cement a network of social relations but also ensure that everyone has access
to goods. In the context of modernization these 'traditional' exchange mechanisms may lead to a massive redistribution of urban wealth, collected by migrants, into rural areas (Carrier and Carrier 1989). Migrant workers feel strong pressure of obligation to support their village kin in exchange activities lest they themselves lose status and access to village resources. As Keesing notes in his paper, this complex of reciprocal dependency organized through kin and village ties constitutes the richness of Melanesian sociality.

Traditions, as is implied in the name, depend on transmission in order to survive. In so-called oral cultures there is, therefore, a greater risk that whole sections of traditional knowledge vanish; for example, when a generation loses interest or consciously rejects some part of their culture. Ethnographic description is a way to preserve as much as possible of the variety of cultural traditions, and thus of human experimentation, in a way that allows for future consultation. As some of the essays suggest, cultural traditions, whether living or recorded, can be seen as repositories of values and models of sociality. Pacific Islanders may rely on the rich resources of their still-living traditions to find alternative and innovative solutions to today's problems. As Keesing speculates, these solutions may prove essential not only for their own survival but also for that of the West.

In its second meaning tradition refers to an objectified image of practices which are constructed as typical of the culture of a particular society. The scholarly discussion about tradition received new impetus by the observation that these objectified 'traditions' do not need to be continuous with the past (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983). They may in fact be relatively new practices so that their traditionalness is 'invented'. The use of the term 'invention' in this context has caused a great deal of confusion as
well as political debate. For instance, the word may carry the connotation of inauthenticity: invented or spurious traditions are juxuxtaposed to 'genuine' ones. The political loading of this connotation is obvious. It is based on the contradiction inherent in the concept of invented traditions: if traditions are not really of the past then they lose their purported authority. However, in much scholarly debate, invention is used in a different sense, that is, as cognate to construction. This usage may be traced back to Wagner's powerful book, *The invention of culture* (1981), in which he argues that 'culture' and also 'a particular cultural description' are inventions of the ethnographer. This kind of invention is in fact a universal process of cultural construction which does not create cultural meanings *de novo* but is grounded in conventional and negotiated values. In this sense traditions are always invented, whether they are 'lived in' or objectified, and, consequently, the discussion about authenticity assumes the character of a red herring (cf. Jolly 1992; Linnekin 1992).

It remains important, though, to investigate the circumstances under which processes of objectification occur as it is mistaken to relate these exclusively to the context of colonization. The objectification of certain cultural traits to mark a separate identity from neighbouring groups is a well-documented practice among Melanesian peoples (Schwartz 1975). However, under the conditions of colonization, with extreme inequalities of power and wealth, the objectification of culture assumed new forms. The opposition between colonizer and those colonized led to an awareness of commonalities between indigenous traditions and thus to a generalization of 'our ways' as opposed to 'their ways'. It also resulted in the valuation of tradition, seen as whole, either as positive, in opposition to Western influence (Keesing 1992), or as negative, in contrast to the coveted goal of modernization (Otto
1992; Thomas 1992). In the latter case indigenous reform movements sometimes emerged aiming at the abolition or 'inversion' of tradition.

A common aspect of the different varieties of cultural objectification under colonialism was that they were a means for those who were colonized to come to terms with and contest their subordinate position. Tradition was either used as an emblem of positive identification and political motivation or it was radically rejected in an attempt to become equal to the colonizers on their own terms. In the period of political decolonization tradition became a symbol of urbanized élites to assert the common identity of the nations they were trying build. Tradition then functioned both as a reason for demanding political liberation from outside domination and as a means of creating political unity within. In the same way, Fourth World nations, like the Australian Aborigines and the New Zealand Maori, have been trying to assert their political and economic rights within the context of a larger state. They invoke tradition to reclaim land and to demand a certain autonomy. Although tradition is thus used to forge a unity where there was none, it may be equally mobilized to emphasize local differences when political secession is on the agenda. The events in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, are a recent example of this. At the village level traditions continue to be deployed to demarcate the identities of local groups or competing political parties. In the study of objectification, therefore, it is of primary importance to distinguish between these various levels and contexts (see Tonkinson 1993).

Objectified tradition may not only be a vehicle of psychological and political liberation for oppressed groups; it can also be appropriated by local élites to assert and 'naturalize' their privileged positions. If the objectification of tradition is used to maintain
inequality and to suppress moves for political reform, it may be characterized as an ideology of traditionalism comparable to similar conservative ideologies which have prevailed in European history (see Lawson n.d.). In relation to outsiders the concept of tradition may also be used in an oppressive and morally objectionable way. I refer in particular to the denial of some political rights to certain categories of citizens on the basis of race or ethnicity. In some contexts traditionalism can shift rapidly from being anti-colonial to being anti-migrant. With respect to expatriate research the concept of traditional culture is sometimes invoked by local élités to claim an exclusive right to the representation (and even an exclusive capacity for the understanding) of their own culture. By grounding rights and knowledge in ethnicity and even 'blood-ties', the ideology of traditionalism assumes dangerous aspects of cultural mystification and racism.

In addition to the various political uses of objectified tradition, the concept also functions in an economic context. In particular, it is used where it can provide an added value to commodities, notably artefacts and tourist travel. Products of indigenous handicraft are more attractive to buyers if they are assumed to be traditional. And tourists are foremost interested to see and experience 'stone-age culture', 'age-old customs', and 'authentic lifestyles'. In the tourism and artefact business expatriate entrepreneurs and local agents share a complicit interest in sustaining dreams of primitivism and exoticism. These spurious images are economic commodities which can be sold at high prices. Unfortunately, most of the profits still end up in Western pockets.
(Self-)criticism and Dialogue

All the authors in this volume share a critical attitude in their work as scholars. Their criticisms concern various aspects of the relationship between the Pacific and the West. Evidently the enormous and often exploitative impact of the West on Pacific Island societies is a primary focus of such scrutiny, exemplified by all of the essays that follow. This criticism is often extended, however, to include not only the West's impact on other cultures but also the nature of Western society itself. Again, all of the authors have assumed a critical distance towards Western culture, which allows them to see both positive and negative aspects. A special case of the West's influence is the work of researchers themselves. Guiart critically reflects on the concepts that have been used, showing how Western models and research traditions have biased anthropological research. Keesing is concerned that anthropologists should use their knowledge of local situations to speak up against destructive developments and exploitation, while Howard ponders about ways to decolonize Pacific historiography. Finally, academic criticism may be directed against developments in the Pacific which cannot be reduced to Western agency, in particular the exploitation of Pacific Islanders by Pacific Islanders. Howard takes a stand against moral relativism and Keesing has on several occasions addressed the ways in which tradition may be used as an ideology of repression (Keesing 1982, 1989).

As part of a self-critical anthropology it is important to reflect on the grounds for continuing to do research in the Pacific. From the point of view of a developing discipline interested in the scope of human cultural variation, the Pacific will remain an important area for research in spite of the current process of globalization of Western culture. As is evidenced by contemporary research, participation in the universal flows of cultural information does not
mean that Pacific Islanders will forfeit their specific identities. As always they will 'invent culture' by adopting, incorporating, adapting and recreating foreign elements, thereby producing unique constellations of meaning and practice. This process of cultural change is at the very heart of present academic interests.

The anthropological study of cultural models, cultural change and culture production is, like any other form of knowledge, not 'value free' as the old positivist ideal would have it. In his essay Pokawin emphasizes that this knowledge can be used both to oppress and to assist Pacific Islanders in developments they opt for themselves. Although he is critical of much of the research that has been done, he has no doubt that anthropological knowledge is a valuable resource which can be used by Pacific Islanders to their own advantage, provided that the information is presented in an ethically and politically acceptable way.5 With this advice in mind, anthropologists should see it as their task to do their research work as well as they can, while avoiding bias stemming from foreign or local interests. This is not the same as 'value-free' research: research workers always operate in a political field and it is their prime responsibility to be aware of this. In the questions they ask, in the methods they apply and in the ways they present their results, researchers have to consider the implications of their investigations and to be prepared to confront ethical choices. The results of anthropological research may not always please local leaders, but, as Howard affirms, it is better to risk the denial of research entry than to compromise academic and ethical standards.

An important raison d'être for anthropological research has always been that it allows us to take a more distanced perspective on our own culture. Knowledge of other cultures implies this reflexivity since it is impossible to describe a foreign culture without (implicit or explicit) comparison with our own categories.
The confrontation between Western and indigenous concepts and practices lies at the heart of the anthropological project. This means that if anthropology is done well, it will provide a strong base for cultural critique. If it is not, it will only reaffirm existing models and images. In practice it may be difficult to distinguish between good and bad anthropology as we depend on the forms of ethnographic rhetoric in which it is expressed. However, a sustained dialogue with the bearers of a culture may provide an additional mechanism of control. Self-criticism and dialogue are the two keywords for a relevant anthropology which is acceptable to and useful for the populations studied. Only in this way can the process of intellectual assimilation and appropriation be arrested and reversed.

Reciprocity is often described as one of the principal organizing mechanisms in Pacific societies. It should also apply to the intellectual engagement of scholars with their field of study. However, I do not support the presentation of material tokens as a return for co-operation in a research project. I am not referring here to the accepted practice of anthropologists to share their material belongings in locally accepted patterns of exchange with the people among whom they live. I mean the exaggerated demands for compensation that are sometimes reported, be it in the form of high research fees or in the form of development projects. It is laudable if anthropologists are concerned to find and supply money for local projects (as Roger Keesing has done). However, the value of their research (not least for the local population) should not be measured against the success they have in building community centres and the like. Their projects should be conducted in such a way that the people studied perceive it as beneficial to their own lives and that of their children.
CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributors to this volume all have histories of genuine concern for local populations and of a critical attitude towards the discipline of anthropology. Their articles represent research undertaken in the Papua New Guinea Highlands and Lowlands, in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Polynesian islands. Before characterizing and summarizing the five contributions I will briefly introduce the authors, thereby privileging Stephen Pokawin as the only Pacific Islander and non-anthropologist.

Mr. Pokawin is a Papua New Guinean, born in Manus, who received part of his university training abroad (he holds a Master of Arts degree in Political Science from McGill University, Montreal). Having worked as a university lecturer and a politician, he has developed a critical but balanced view of Western involvement in the Pacific. As a young radical scholar he wrote that the best thing Australia could do for Papua New Guinea was to reduce its financial aid to the country. And one of the first policy acts he undertook when elected as Premier of Manus Province in 1985 was to institute a Provincial Research Committee whose task it was to formulate research priorities and critically assess the value of research projects for the province. The committee rejected some foreign research applications. However, the Manus Government led by Pokawin does not object to expatriate research involvement per se. As Pokawin has stressed on several occasions, there are clear benefits for Manus and Papua New Guinea from anthropological and other social research, be it in the field of education or in the field of social and economic development. A first requirement, however, is that researchers are sensitive to ethical and political issues.
Moving from the university to politics, Pokawin exposed himself to the radical test of trying to put into practice the ideas he developed as a scholar in political science. He has gained national recognition as a political innovator for his initiatives in the fields of education and government organization, focusing on integral human development and a fair representation of village communities. Nor does he eschew political opposition and conflict. In the field of forestry he successfully resisted national government policy measures which his provincial government considered detrimental to the sustenance of the province's natural resources. More recently, he has opposed strong moves to abolish the provincial government system, fearing that this would give disproportionate power to national politicians. His landslide victory in the recent provincial elections not only testified to his unequalled popularity as Premier but may perhaps also be interpreted as a vote of popular support for his position in the provincial government debate.

The other four authors do not need much introduction to an anthropological readership. Each one of them is an accomplished anthropologist who has made a major contribution to Pacific studies. The late Roger Keesing was professor and head of the Department of Anthropology in the Research School of Pacific Studies at The Australian National University for more than fifteen years until he accepted a chair of anthropology at McGill University in Montreal in 1990, which he held until his recent death. He began his fieldwork among the Kwaio of Malaita in the Solomon Islands in 1962 and returned many times in the following three decades. Maurice Godelier is professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He has gained international reputation through his work in the fields of neo-Marxist and political anthropology. His fieldwork among the
Baruya of Papua New Guinea started in 1967. Jean Guiart is another well-known French anthropologist from Paris, testifying to the importance of Paris as a centre for Oceanic studies. He was director of the Musée de l'Homme for many years and president and vice-president of the Société des Océanistes. His research involvement in New Caledonia covers more than four decades. Married to a New Caledonian woman from the Island of Lifou, he also has a strong personal involvement. Alan Howard is professor of anthropology at another important centre for Pacific research, the University of Hawaii in Honolulu. He has gained repute especially through his work on Polynesia. Like the other authors he has a long-term perspective on this region having started his fieldwork on Rotuma in 1959.

In concluding this introductory chapter I shall outline the five essays in the order of their appearance in this volume. Firstly, Roger Keesing's paper forcefully criticizes conventional Western-style 'development' as an instrument of economic exploitation. Once fashionable, such critique has largely faded away, although, as Keesing argues, pauperization and dependency caused by 'rational' development are more in evidence than ever before in the Pacific. In some places the situation is truly desperate because natural resources are being stripped away at a catastrophic speed, undermining the viability of the economy to sustain future generations. Anthropologists are in a unique position to witness the local consequences of global processes, standing as they do with one foot in the village and the other in the outside world. Unfortunately their voices are rarely heard and their advice rarely heeded by those in positions of authority. Keesing illustrates his argument by painting a dismal picture of the Solomon Islands. Development experts have foolishly attacked subsistence agriculture and customary land tenure, which constituted a secure
base for Solomon Islanders' survival. Large-scale logging is fast removing the option for people to leave the overcrowded coastal villages and resettle the interior.

The present situation is caused both by global forces beyond local control and by wrong-headed policies and misguided planning. In Keesing's opinion local leaders, therefore, share part of the responsibility: 'desperately striving to keep [their] books balanced and achieve a measure of Western-style prosperity, and taking counsel from the prophets of development, [they] will leave to [their] children a tin with the meat taken out'. Keesing believes that in many respects it is too late to follow the alternative routes that were available in the past, but he still places hope in the resilience of traditional values 'that may prove to be more adaptive in the twenty-first century — to all humans — than those of the post-industrial West'.

In view of the apparent success of Western expansion, Maurice Godelier poses the general question whether the West is the model for humankind. To answer this one has first to reflect on what the West is. In Godelier's view it may be characterized by an amalgam of three central components or sets of institutions, each with its own logic, symbols and values: capitalism, parliamentary democracy and Christianity. These components have different origins and different histories and their part in the process of Westernization also differs. Japan and the 'four little dragons', for example, though profoundly Westernized, have retained their adherence to Buddhism.

To illustrate how Westernization of pre-industrial societies takes place, Godelier describes in some detail the recent history of a tribal group in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, the Baruya. Discovered by an Australian patrol officer as late as 1951, their colonial and post-colonial history spans little more than four
decades. However, in this short period they have experienced all the instruments of colonial domination and Western intrusion. Pacification meant the end of political sovereignty; missionization contributed to the loss of cultural autonomy; and contract labour and coffee production radically altered the economic system which was partly self-sufficient but also an integral part of a regional network of exchanges. The Baruya were not just passive victims of these changes; they made choices to co-operate, for example, by sending some of their children to school. Godelier documents that later they objectified and revalued their tradition in a process of psychological emancipation: 'We must find strength in our customs; we must base ourselves on what the whites call culture'.

Godelier discusses the re-emergence of tribal warfare and the weakness of the post-independence state. He concludes that, in spite of obvious continuities, the culture of the Baruya has been irreversibly changed. These changes affect the core of their society, such as relations of authority between young and old, male and female. The society of the Baruya has not collapsed and it has even grown in numbers. But its development is largely controlled by external forces to which the Baruya are compelled to adapt.

Alan Howard reflects on history in Polynesia, but his thoughts are pertinent also to other parts of the South Pacific. He begins by reconstructing the history of historical interest among anthropologists. Initially this interest was inspired and coloured by theories of diffusionism, evolutionism and acculturation. When the dominant paradigm shifted to functional, cognitive and symbolic approaches, it resulted in a relative disregard of historical process. Only in the 1980s did a historical perspective come back in vogue, initiated by the work of Marshall Sahlins and Greg Dening. Howard points to the Western colonial bias of most written sources and suggests that biography is a useful means for Western
anthropologists to compensate for the absence of Polynesian voices in colonial history.

Interestingly, Howard finds that biography as a historical form is absent in Polynesian representations of the past. Polynesian histories are embedded in family lines and not linked to the larger polity. When investigating indigenous historical forms Howard discovers — in addition to the well-known but often misinterpreted ones, such as legends and genealogies — a whole range of tropes: family jokes, sayings, place names and chiefly titles. These tropes differ sharply from more familiar forms of history because the historical knowledge represented by them is largely implicit: in order to understand the tropes the listener needs prior knowledge.

Howard has some pertinent things to say about the necessary dialogue between Western and indigenous representations. While rejecting claims by some educated Polynesians to an exclusive right of representation based on racial arguments ('Polynesian blood'), he finds that the scope of academic discourse should be broadened to include the tropes used by Polynesian authors. As a result of changing practices of fieldwork, emphasizing the importance of return visits, anthropologists have become witnesses and participants in a Pacific 'history in the making'. This gives them a responsibility to speak up not only against colonial injustice and Western intrusion, but also against contemporary forms of exploitation by Pacific Islanders themselves. In an era of rampant post-modern relativities it takes courage to take such a clear stance against moral relativism.

Capitalizing on his long research involvement in the South Pacific, especially in New Caledonia and Vanuatu, Jean Guiart takes it upon himself to critically review some of the concepts and approaches that have assumed the force of anthropological traditions. He shows how certain Western concepts and
expectations have resulted in misrepresentations of Pacific realities. The lack of communication between different academic traditions based on language or region has also led to unnecessary distortions and has hampered useful comparison.

The biological cause of the low fertility of indigenous populations after the dramatic decline in population numbers following colonization has often been misconceived. Guiart refers to the spread of gonorrhoea linked with the presence of Western sailors and soldiers. Indigenous populations had to radically adapt their 'traditions' to the new demographic realities which made many positions in the social structure vacant. Anthropologists lacking sufficient historical awareness often failed to see the effects of reduced populations, identifying cultural 'rules' which were in fact only applied in a minority of cases. In the study of land tenure the Western concept of 'ownership' put researchers on the wrong foot, whereas implicit gender conceptions coloured the perception of Melanesian women, who were more independent — politically, economically and sexually — than commonly described.

Discussing the problems resulting from a regional division of types of hierarchy (chief versus big-man) Guiart makes a plea for a radical comparative anthropology: 'The South Pacific thus should be treated as a working whole for comparison purposes as well as theoretical analysis. There are no hard set frontiers anywhere in the island space, except geographical (distance being the principal operating factor)'. The Polynesia–Melanesia opposition is meaningless in this context and has to be understood as a colonial artefact (the Western invasion proceeded from east to west and made use of the 'more civilized' Polynesians to control the 'dangerous' Melanesians). As a complement to the discussion about hierarchy which has dominated Pacific political anthropology, Guiart points to the pervasive importance of 'horizontal structures'
or 'networks' based on trade, marriage and migration. Finally, he
gives compelling evidence that Aboriginal Australia, which has its
own regional tradition of anthropological scholarship, should be
included into the larger framework of comparative study of the
Pacific.

Stephen Pokawin concludes the volume with a critical appraisal
of Western impact on the Pacific. From the point of view of a
Pacific Islander, he discusses the negative and positive aspects of
Western penetration, using the situation of Papua New Guinea, his
home country, as his primary example. In a gentle but determined
way he points to past and present exploitation and to continuing
intellectual colonialism.

As it is today, the Pacific is to a large extent a creation of
European political and conceptual divisions. In the process of
colonization the hundreds of autonomous tribal societies became
classified as Melanesians, Polynesians and Micronesians and
organized into colonial states. Missions prepared the people for the
acceptance of a foreign authority. After political independence
foreign influence and control continued to prosper. In fact,
Pokawin notes that 'European influence on Papua New Guinea is
much greater today than it has ever been in the past'. The means of
this influence are foreign aid, with considerable benefits for the
donor; expanding commercial activities; and 'scholastic
endeavour'. Research in the Pacific provides knowledge which may
be used for development or control, while training opportunities
for Pacific Islanders in Western universities lead to the expansion
of Western models of thought.

Pacific Islanders are eager to share in the benefits of modern
knowledge and technology without, however, sacrificing their own
identity. 'Traditional' models of sociality maintain their hold over
people but do so at the cost of being transformed. Pokawin
summarizes the ambivalent relationship of Pacific countries to the West under the heading of four 'syndromes' which stress feelings of dependency and exploitation. In his conclusion he converges with Keesing's view on sustainable development, although he appears to be more optimistic about the possibilities of its realisation:

The hope of the Pacific Islanders is to become more innovative and industrious in fully appreciating the positive value of what the Pacific offers them and to follow the path of development that fits their situation ...

Thus, in a remote resource-scarce atoll, development is not Amsterdam, London and New York, but it is improvement and sustenance of a dynamic island life.

NOTES

I wish to thank Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and especially Michael Young for helpful comments on this introductory chapter. It was written when I was a visiting fellow in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, The Australian National University. I am grateful to this institution as well as to WOTRO (Nederlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research), the University of Nijmegen and the Australian Research Council for making my stay in Canberra possible.

1 See Fabian 1983, who calls this displacement in time the denial of coevalness; see also Thomas 1989.
3 From *Northeast Wantok System Newsletter*, no. 20. See also the *Islands Business Pacific*, July 1993, pp.35-38 concerning the enormous pressure that was exerted on the Papua New Guinea forestry minister, Tim Neville, by the logging industry as well as by landowners affected by 'a gold rush mentality'.
He reiterated this point in the discussion following his keynote address, stressing that a certain sensitivity is required from the researcher concerning ethical issues and local political circumstances. 

Pokawin (1982:59-60): 'The best gesture Australia can give to PNG to facilitate effective independence is to mind her own business, reduce all aid and permit the country to face the hard truth of nation building'.

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A TIN WITH THE MEAT TAKEN OUT: A BLEAK ANTHROPOLOGICAL VIEW OF UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PACIFIC

Roger M. Keesing

We can well wonder — as my longtime Solomons research colleague, now a parliamentarian [the late Jonathan Fifi'i], does — whether what is passed on to the next generation will be 'like a tin with the meat taken out' (Keesing 1981:40).

INTRODUCTION

In the heady days when New Left critiques were a strong voice in academia, conventional 'development' was challenged as an instrument of the imperialist world system. Development Western style, it was argued, maintained pauperization and dependency on the capitalist periphery and sustained and perpetuated a radically unequal international division of labour in which formerly colonized tropical countries provided cheap labour and cheap raw materials and markets for the industrialized world. Although the pauperization and dependency are more acute than ever, with debt bondage and political and economic chaos trapping much of the 'Third World' in ever-narrowing vicious circles from which escape seems impossible, the critiques have largely faded away. Global capitalist rationality has seemingly triumphed with the collapse of
state socialism almost everywhere; the alternative futures the New Left envisioned have vaporized into myth.

The Pacific countries where we work are increasingly trapped in the cycle of pauperization and dependency. They are being stripped of remaining resources — timber, minerals, marine life — at a frightening rate, and with no possibility of renewal or sustainability. Furthermore, the old economic mainstays of the tropics — copra and palm oil and other plantation crops — are vanishing from the industrialized world's shopping list. The anthropologist, with one foot in the village and the other in the world outside, is in a unique position to see local costs and consequences of global processes, to see the trees as well as the forest. Yet most of us write and speak about other things, whether it be exchange or concepts of personhood or such modern phenomenon as the rhetoric of *kastom*.

Here, I will reflect anthropologically on the course of 'development' in the Pacific, with special attention to the part of it I know best, the Solomon Islands. In doing so, I come back to issues I addressed around the time of Solomons independence, fifteen years ago (Keesing 1973, 1978a, 1978b, 1981). I return to them in the disenchanted mood of our times, less caught up in romantic populism and a socialist master narrative (in Lyotard's [1979] sense) than I was then. (In any case, the socialist success story we kept looking for in those days — which kept being relocated, from Cuba to Vietnam to Mozambique to Nicaragua, always *somewhere* just beyond the horizon — was always mythic). I have no magical solutions or alternatives to offer. But the situation in many parts of the Pacific is desperate, and worsening. If anthropology has something to say about the Human Condition, it should have something interesting — perhaps even something hopeful — to
say about what is happening to the futures of the Pacific Islanders whose lives we have been privileged to share.

THE SOLOMONS IN 1992: A DISMAL SKETCH

I will begin with a quite general sketch of the present economic position of the Solomon Islands to illustrate the declining situation widespread in the Pacific and the strategies being used in seeking to make ends meet. I will then come back to examine the historic processes that have led to this state of affairs, looking particularly at the advice and pressures of development planners during and since the colonial period. My purpose is partly to ask whether the present deteriorating situation is at least partly a predictable outcome of wrong-headed policies and misguided planning, as well as of global forces beyond local control.

We can take as a symbolic encapsulation of the present situation two recent vignettes. The first is the recent sale to an Asian consortium of a prime piece of Honiara real estate, a coastal strip which included not only the Coronation Gardens but Government House — the Governor-General's official residence, inherited from the British. The consortium paid several million (Solomons) dollars, committing itself to building a five-star hotel on the site (which then entailed construction of a new official residence for the Governor-General) — an arrangement a dollar-hungry Solomons Government accepted even though there was no evidence that the consortium, seemingly mainly representing timber interests, had any record of hotel investment. Once the transaction was finalized, the Asian consortium turned around and sold their interests to another Asian development group for well over twice the original price. It is an open question whether any hotel will be constructed on the site, but meanwhile the Solomons
Government has had to build another residence for the Governor-General with borrowed funds.

A second vignette, just reported to me from my informant on the spot, Christine Jourdan, is that it is now impossible to communicate by telephone between the capital, Honiara, and the island capital of Western Solomons Province, Gizo. The provincial government is unable to pay its telephone bill.

With world prices for copra and palm oil low and deteriorating, through both a glut in supply and a dwindling of demand for dietary-disastrous tropical oils, the plantation agricultural economy that was once the mainstay of the Solomons is in a poor and declining state. A deteriorating balance of trade continues to erode a battered Solomons dollar, which is worth roughly a third of what it was at the time of independence fifteen years ago. A proudly launched expansion of Solomon Airlines into international travel has foundered, with losses last year of $SI 8.5 million; and the government is tendering a 70 per cent share in the airline to overseas investors. While this has been a bad time for airlines everywhere, losses of this kind are harder to sustain in such a fragile economy. Tourism, much heralded as a revenue source, remains at a modest level, reduced because of world-wide recession. Honiara's two substantial hotels often house more members of the international development industry and overseas investors than tourists. Mining exploration (mainly gold) has been pursued in a number of areas, but has yet to yield any significant return. The economy now rests heavily on the export of fish, mainly through a Japanese-Solomons joint venture, and on timber exports.

An enormous public service, relative to the country's population and means, is the major employer. The rising cost of living, as reliance on imported foods continues to increase, generates
continuing pressure for wage increases that the national budget cannot afford. Recently, government doctors went on strike and, before that, it was the teachers. With a very young population and an alarming rate of population growth (around 3.5 per cent, one of the highest in the world), the education system continues to pour young people into an employment market that offers few places for them and little prospect of expansion.

Overseas aid, much of it geared to specific educational or medical purposes, continues to pour into the country, but at reducing levels. Although this aid bolsters otherwise crumbling infrastructures of social service, it cannot be relied upon to balance a deteriorating overall fiscal situation. A politically astute prime minister has so far fended off the World Bank–IMF potentates who impose radical models of fiscal governmental reorganization — at a virtual cost of sovereignty — on Third World countries whose economic disintegration pushes them into the basket-case category. But total economic collapse is never far from view; Solomons politicians are now easy prey for the international loansharks who hunt on the margins of the Third World offering get-rich-quick schemes, mainly fraudulent, at low interest rates.

In terms of health, borderline malnutrition among urban children and diet-induced diseases, such as diabetes, pose serious threats. Further, devastating new strains of malaria are lethally dangerous and are overturning both ancient balances between plasmodia and genetically adapted human hosts and the gains in malaria control achieved in the last twenty years through (dangerous) DDT-based spraying.

Finally, the level of political morality is deteriorating rapidly, with public servants and politicians at the highest levels — hard-pressed to meet rising living costs and facing uncertain futures —
succumbing to the lure of overseas money proffered 'under the table' and to the diversion of aid funds.2

Leaving aside for the moment the situation with regard to logging — which, as I will show, is devastating the country's rainforest interiors in a one-time-only sell off — the Solomon Islands is in a dismal economic situation. I leave it in these general terms because the statistics, in so far as they are available, would require extensive explication; but more particularly, because I want to paint the picture with such broad brushstrokes that the Solomons can serve to represent 'the post-independence South Pacific political economy'. I will fill in some of the statistics in what follows.

Some aspects of this deterioration — a decline in world commodity prices, world-wide recession — obviously come from forces beyond the control of the Solomon Islands or any individual country, even one much larger than the tiny island states of the Pacific. But some, I will suggest, represent the 'coming home to roost' of misguided development strategies perpetrated by Western 'experts' who misunderstood and undervalued Island ways of living and failed to anticipate — or worse yet, concealed — predictable global economic consequences of plans and strategies being promulgated all over the 'developing' tropical world. I turn, then, to the historical roots of the present crisis.

SOLOMONS DEVELOPMENT: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

It is just thirty years since I first arrived in what was then the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. In those days, the economic mainstay of the Solomons was the export of copra, produced on plantations most of which were owned by overseas interests, notably Lever's Pacific Plantations Limited. In a sleepy and remote tropical colony where a racist caste system and rituals of empire
still went unchallenged, the only substantial commitments to
development were in agriculture. Although this mainly entailed
cocoanut agronomy, the agricultural officers were trying to
persuade local landowners to invest resources in planting cocoa,
which had brought miraculous prosperity to Ghana. And at an
agricultural experiment station on Malaita they were also
attempting to dazzle local farmers with fertilizer-enriched
production of food crops (and thus persuade them of the folly of
shifting cultivation).

These can be taken as tropes of 1960s development 'wisdom'
applied to tropical colonies now independent or moving in that
direction. The case of cocoa shows how a commercial agricultural
success story anywhere in this emerging 'Third World' was taken to
be the secret of a similar miracle in a score of other places: with
scant thought given to the consequences for world market prices of
a flooding of the market from all directions once production
began in earnest. In the second case, the antagonism and scorn
towards traditional indigenous food crops and production regimes,
and the effort to displace them with fixed-field monocrop
agriculture, was not only culturally arrogant, but ecologically naïve
and often environmentally disastrous.

The effort to intensify agricultural production and cash crops
along the coastal strips of the larger islands in the Solomons group
was only the latest in a series of pressures and inducements towards
resettlement on the coasts and the abandonment of old settlement
sites and agricultural zones in the rainforested interiors. Missions
had long encouraged the establishment of large coastal villages,
free from pagan religious associations and more accessible to
Europeans. The machinery of colonial government — tax
collection, court houses, local schools — imposed further pressures
and inducements towards concentration on coastal strips; so did
prospects of access to coastal copra land, and markets and trade goods. By the early 1960s, only four or five significant pockets of interior settlement remained in the entire archipelago.\(^3\)

Although token effort was expended in advising co-operatives, the prevailing assumption of the Solomons administration was that traditional structures of kinship and institutions of collective land title and communal obligation were obstacles to development and modernization; the hope lay, always, in the ambitious individual willing to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities against the grain of tradition.\(^4\)

In the fifteen years of my fieldwork, government investment in rural education and medical services — which, where they existed at all, had lain in the hands of the missions — expanded considerably.\(^5\) World Health Organization malaria eradication programmes and treatment of infectious diseases cut death rates, especially childhood mortality, in rural areas, setting off a demographic time bomb that has been ticking down ever since.

Although the much-heralded cocoa project had predictably collapsed, efforts to foster cash crops in rural areas continued; in the mid-1970s heavy funding from Australia and New Zealand was poured into the establishment of rural cattle projects, further diverting already overcultivated garden land from subsistence productivity. In this period, agribusiness expanded considerably with the establishment of a large oil-palm industry on the Guadalcanal plains and heavily subsidized efforts to establish commercial rice production.

The 1970s also saw the first phases of a very rapid growth of Honiara as a major urban centre, with the substantial indigenous population being swollen annually by temporary and permanent migrants from rural villages. In these respects, the Solomons were following a trajectory of development paralleled in what became
Vanuatu and, on a very different scale, Papua New Guinea. The scenario was not so different from those being played out in the same period in the Gilberts and the Polynesian colonies and countries to the east.

The general political–economic pattern of Pacific colonies on the verge of nationhood followed those already laid down in Africa. In a 1973 paper I pointed out that radical critiques of what had happened in post-colonial Africa — allowing for differences and island geography — aptly characterized what was then happening in the Solomons and other parts of the Pacific (Keesing 1973:23): the emergence of indigenous bourgeois classes serving neo-colonial interests; the development of primary-export economies largely in European hands; growing urban centres tied to overseas metropoles; and rural stagnation. As Hopkins points out:

> The reason an economy of this sort came into existence is [that it] was never supposed to constitute the economy of a separate society at all. Its modern sector was to form an integral part of the metropolitan country's economy ... Labour or its produce was ... to flow from the subsistence to the modern sector, and some imports, social services, and administration were permitted to flow in the opposite direction (1964:157).

If the processes of indigenous class formation and economic domination and dependency in the Pacific followed depressing scenarios already familiar from Africa, then developments since the independence of Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands (in particular) continue to follow the same channels. These are manifested by the marked class stratification in post-colonial urban centres; continuing drift of population into mini-cities that now have periurban squatter settlements and all that goes with them; the rise of violence and predation; and, in the hinterlands, further stagnation and pauperization of village
economies and the breakdown of medical and educational infrastructures built up and initially funded by the colonial rulers and other foreign aid. The tragedies of regional secessionist movements and tribal–ethnic conflict inscribed in modern African history — Biafra, Uganda, Katanga — now have their counterpart in Bougainville.

THE ATTACK ON SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE AND CUSTOMARY LAND TENURE

What is most striking about the development strategies promulgated by the British in the last phase of the development period, and the pressures exerted by development experts in the post-colonial period, has been a consistent denigration of subsistence agricultural production, and a concomitant stress on the commitment of labour and land to cash-crop production and the dismantling of customary land tenure. The capacity of Solomon Islanders (or other Pacific Islanders) to feed themselves — the backbone of village life but also a focus of cultural value and of sharing, reciprocity, feasting and exchange — has been consistently denigrated, misunderstood, and systematically eroded and subverted by Western development planners.

The orientation on the part of British development planners in the pre-independence Solomons is strikingly expressed in a passage from the 1975 Annual Report on the National Development Plan:

The overall concept ... is to continue the move away from dispersive and often destructive subsistence farming towards a more disciplined commercial approach, this being the only form of agriculture which can be acceptable to, viable for, and provide job opportunities for, future generations.

The weight of pressure from Western 'experts' became evident to me when I took part in a 1977 conference in Honiara, organized
by Fred Fisk, exploring ways in which traditional agricultural production could be adapted to feed growing urban populations in the Third World (Fisk 1978). The Solomons Minister of Agriculture and senior public servants listened politely to early conference presentations. However, when we asked whether this might have some influence on governmental policy decisions the Minister told us that for every Western 'expert' giving advice in the direction we were advocating, there were twenty urging precisely the opposite course.

When Western experts do involve themselves in subsistence agriculture, they still characteristically show an arrogance that is amazing in the light of contemporary knowledge of the intricacy of swidden agricultural systems. In 1988 I met one of the many British tropical agronomists circulating around the former colonial world. He had come equipped with aerial photographs and surveys of several riverine drainage systems in the Solomons marked on development plans for intensification of production; and he was off to New Georgia to teach local villagers how to cultivate their ancestral land efficiently. He was completely incredulous when I suggested that more than the allotted week might be needed, and that the villagers might possibly know more about cultivating this terrain than he, their ancestors having lived there for some three thousand years.

A recent World Bank report notes that 'the strong subsistence base and extended family system have helped to provide the basic needs of food and shelter for most of the population' (1991:203). However, it goes on to observe that

[The customary] system of land tenure has tended to reduce incentives for smallholder development and limit the supply of land for plantation, timber and tourism development (1991:205).

Land disputes can be expected to intensify as population pressures increase and the cash economy grows in importance. The only lasting
solution is to demarcate, survey and record customary land ... It will take some time to gain the trust of customary landowners, as past efforts at recording have been associated with the alienation of land by the Government, often for lease to foreign companies ... First priority should be given to areas where smallholder resettlement or plantation development are planned (1991:213).

In addition to agricultural development, both by overseas investment in large-scale plantations and smallholder cash-crop production, a number of cash-generating spheres of development have been promoted by the colonial government and post-colonial development industry. I will focus on logging, because of its scale and environmental and social consequences. Before I turn to logging, I will briefly sketch other areas: livestock production, mining, fishing and tourism.

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

In the years immediately preceding independence, a strong push was made for development of a cattle industry in the Solomons. Much of the pushing came from the Australian and New Zealand government development aid organizations, with cattle experts flocking to give technical advice (that would establish markets for their countries' products and expertise) and aid. I and some others with experience at village level in the Solomons protested in vain about the obvious problems in developing a cattle industry. Cattle simply come in the wrong sizes. First, for village people they represent a very large capital investment per animal; and, second, the investment is threatened by the animals' vulnerability to disease in a tropical climate. Further, getting them to urban markets poses serious problems; and killing them for village subsistence is feasible only for very large feasts. Every prior attempt to maintain processing and transportation and disease treatment—prevention infrastructures (mainly in agriculture,
notably cocoa) in the Solomons had fallen apart, because of factors of small scale, dispersion, difficulties of marine transport and village-level scepticism. Success seemed no more likely in cattle production, which offered no possibility of integration in village economies comparable to the old local traditions of pig and poultry raising. Most serious of all, the very land needed for cattle raising — highly destructive environmentally in a fragile tropical ecosystem — was the land most needed for subsistence food (and cash-crop) production along the already overcrowded coastal strips. In terms of productivity per hectare of desperately needed agricultural land, cattle seemed an absurd choice in contrast to pigs and chickens, which require little diversion of arable land and modest intensification of existing subsistence production.

Yet when I had my interview with the new prime minister to present my university's independence gift of books, I met him in the plush new Cattle Development House. Predictably, within a decade the cattle horns on the logo had been replaced and the rapidly deteriorating building had become the centre of the Livestock Development Authority that had been reduced to encouraging the raising of pigs and chickens. The Solomon Islands is producing so little beef that it must be imported from Vanuatu. This thoroughly predictable fiasco has not been without long-term cost. The 1990 Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI) Annual Report observes that:

The story of Solomon Islands' long, costly and unsuccessful attempt to establish a cattle industry should be written now, in time for participants to contribute their experiences; and in time for lessons to be learned by project planners, government finance officials and extension workers engaged on any other schemes designed to change the face of Solomon Islands agriculture. The Asian Development Bank and the Australian government would presumably also like to see a competent and impartial account of the project, to which they
contributed many millions of dollars of concessionary loans (which have eventually to be repaid) and grants (1990:11).

MINING

Despite promises of wealth, a mining industry has never succeeded in getting off — or under — the ground in the Solomons. Although there clearly is some gold, both at Gold Ridge and at other sites, notably in New Georgia, the richness of the deposits is not such as to encourage investments in the Solomons, unlike Papua New Guinea. Substantial deposits of bauxite are too costly and low-grade to encourage development in the present world market climate.

A major factor in the reluctance of mining companies to pursue large investments in the Solomons is the ambivalent political climate, both centrally and locally. Local landowners, alerted by Bougainville secessionists to the environmental destruction and community disruption mining can generate, have been reluctant to negotiate mining agreements. There are other ideological forces: gold has become a kind of symbol of Europeans' exploitative extraction of wealth.

Given the urgent need for export earnings, in a country whose long-time plantation crops have an unpromising future, a modest mining industry may become urgent economically. Yet Howard's conclusions seem apt:

Known ore deposits are small and the problems of getting a mining operation underway ... are considerable. It looks now that if the Isles of Solomon are to produce any fabulous wealth it will have to be from some other source than mining — and for this, perhaps, the country should consider itself blessed (1991:128).
FISHING

Commercial fishing in the Solomons, particularly through a Japanese-Solomons joint venture, is a major source of employment (1700 workers in 1986) and a substantial source of revenue. Although catches have fluctuated in response to water temperatures and other systematic factors, construction of an 18,000 ton cannery at Noro in the Western Solomons opens the way to further expansion. Again, although there are considerable costs to the Solomons in terms of the inroads that commercial baitfishing makes in coastal fishing zones and the threat to local fish populations, it is hard to see how the country could survive without considerable dependence on fish exports; some cheap and commercially undesirable low-grade canned tuna contributes a good deal to the local diet as well. The largely Okinawan crews and Japanese management further contribute needed cash, although again with social costs, including prostitution.

TOURISM

Like other 'tropical paradises', the Solomon Islands covets tourist dollars. Optimistic planners and entrepreneurs portray tourism as preserving and valorizing 'traditional culture'; and in the Solomons as elsewhere, this commoditization of culture exacts deep and often hidden costs. In this realm, the Solomon Islands is relatively off the beaten track for tourists, and hence spared the impact tourists have in Vanuatu or Fiji. However, most of the tourist dollars are spent in up-market hotels, resorts, and dive services, and go to overseas investors; what local people get are the crumbs — and it is they who bear the costs, in terms of alienation, economic servitude, prostitution (and its risk of AIDS), and disruption. Moreover, such income as tourism brings is always
contingent on economic prosperity or recession in the industrialized countries.

LOGGING

Logging, which has generated between SI$20 to SI$50 million in export income through the 1980s, is widely seen as the major resource on which the country's solvency depends. In 1990, for example, the Solomons Government collected nearly SI$13 million on export duties and reforestation levies.

Yet when we look at the costs, even as set out in the Government's own reports, which are based mainly on data provided by the logging companies, the destruction of rainforest is going on at a terrifying and uncontrolled rate. The Central Bank of Solomon Islands Annual Report for 1991 is revealing:

Management of the nation's forest resources ... continued to cause concern at many levels of the community. The government's demand for tax revenues was used to justify the granting of more logging licences, with no apparently [sic] assessment of the long-term economic and social costs of rapid deforestation. Improvements to the authorities' ability to police logging methods to minimise environmental damage have been painfully slow. And bitter divisions at village level continue between the advocates of selling the standing rainforest to logging companies, and those who want slower, higher-value-added methods of using the forest, based on small local sawmills (CSBI 1991:14).

A previous report had commented that:

[T]he 400,000 cubic metre level ... of output will be removing the mature trees from 8,000-10,000 hectares of natural forest annually, with substantial cumulative effects on the environment and the micro-economy of the surrounding areas (CBSI 1989:13).

The CBSI Annual Report of 1991 makes clear that the situation is worse than that, and accelerating.
Licences in force now are reported to allow about 1.2 million cubic metres a year of log exports, several times bigger than any estimates made so far of the maximum sustainable yield of the natural forest (1991:14).

It now seems clear that the worst-case scenario is the one that is coming true. The World Bank report of 1991, while commenting that 'it is estimated that Solomon Islands' forest resources will be exhausted in 10 to 25 years', carries a footnote that CSIRO, the Australian scientific research organization, notes that at 1986 logging rates the rainforest will be eradicated by 1996. This seems distressingly close to the mark. Anthropologist Ian Frazer, who has just completed a reforestation study for the New Zealand Government, doubts that any rainforest will survive in the Solomons beyond the late 1990s.

But the implications of the island interiors that were once densely forested being reduced to scrubby and eroded wasteland have scarcely been talked or thought about. Where are the rapidly expanding village populations that are already packed along the coastal strips going to go to expand living areas and subsistence agriculture?

RURAL DEVELOPMENT, ROADS AND RAINFOREST

One of the positive signs I have observed in a generally depressing scenario of change during the years of my research in the Solomons has been the way roads catalyse rural revitalization — social and economic. In some areas, the roads have been along the coast. But where roads have actually opened up rainforest interior — a rare occurrence in the Solomons — a dramatic intensification of rural production and village development has taken place. Most striking has been the Tuni Road across the central mountains of northern Malaita; and, to a lesser degree, road
construction in West Kwaio on the other side of the island. New villages have sprung up, populations have moved inland again, with access to rich agricultural land but having a connection to urban markets. In that, I have felt, lay the key to a twenty-first century Solomon Islands where rural villagers could feed themselves and urban populations with modest cash earnings but rich lives (which, given modern technology, could be enriched materially with small local hydro schemes or solar power). In the mountains lay a place for the thousands of young children in the now-crowded coastal villages. In the mountains lay the retreats to which public servants, tired of the cost and confusion of town life, could retire, able to farm for cash and for food. In the mountains were the hardwood trees that provide endless supplies of building materials and firewood, and the forest fibers and giant bamboos that met a thousand needs.

But what mountains? They are being turned into wastelands by the day, with local landowners unable to defend themselves against bribes and temptations of greedy kin putting themselves forward as landowners. The fish in the lagoons, on the reefs and in the coastal lagoons have been drastically thinned by baitfishing. But it is the scars of the devastated eroding mountains — and with them, the poisoned and polluted streams, the vanished birds and small animals — that give me a bleak view of the future. The present generation of leaders, desperately striving to keep its books balanced and achieve a measure of Western-style prosperity, and taking counsel from the prophets of development, will leave to its children a tin with the meat taken out.

WERE THERE ALTERNATIVES?

But were there ever any alternatives? I believe there were. It is not that Solomon Islanders could now be wealthy, in Western
material terms, if their country had followed a different course. But they could, given the inevitable material austerity, be much richer than they are in human terms, and much less dependent on forces they cannot control. The 'development' espoused by the British and by subsequent 'experts' has taken virtually no cognizance of the richness of a subsistence-based life that was already there, and has systematically attempted to dismantle it so as to replace it with a Western-style commodity economy and nuclear family-based social structure.

Here we have a classic debating ground in which the admittedly romantic traditionalism championed by the anthropologist and the monochrome modernities envisioned by the development planner are counterposed. The development planner always feels he11 has the winning argument in this debate: that what the 'natives' aspire to are Western-style houses and cars and videos (so who are we to tell them to settle for thatch?).

There is no doubting the seductive attractions of material modernity. However, even those relatively few Solomon Islanders who have acquired cars, permanent houses and videos seem to dream less of more material wealth than of being able to retire to quiet thatch houses on their home islands, with enough income to afford some luxuries; but with traditional modes of Melanesianess — the pleasures of kin, community, exchange, home-grown foods and village life — as the most important luxuries, which had to be sacrificed in the alienation of urban life and work. Perhaps that is their romantic dream; but there is much substance in it.

What could have been built up, had the planners understood and valued these traditional modes of Melanesianess, were, first of all, more efficient internal networks or channels for the distribution of traditional foods, particularly root crops and fish. What would have been crucial were ways to get village-produced agricultural
surpluses and fish into the provincial centres and Honiara. So poor are the present modes of distribution that, as Christine Jourdan has remarked, pineapples and sweet potatoes cost more in the Honiara market than they do in Montreal in the depths of winter. No attention has been given in economic planning to the distribution within the country of agricultural produce that Solomon Islanders themselves strongly value, notably areca ('betel') nuts, canarium almonds, and coconuts (for consumption, not copra export).

Had the hardwood timber, once abundant in the Solomons, been viewed from the outset and valued as a means of enriching local life instead of foreign logging companies, and had the virtues of combining traditional and Western modes of housing been understood, Honiara and the provincial capitals could have developed a radically different aspect that was much better adapted to local conditions and the economy. With increased cultivation and distribution of the sago thatching that Solomon Islanders rightly value so much, vastly better and vastly cheaper houses could have been possible in urban and periurban settings, combining thatch roofs and walls with hardwood floors in creative ways. An interesting irony is that the most elegant building in Honiara is a French restaurant with a thatched roof; and when a Chinese millionaire entrepreneur built his dream house on plantation land west of Honiara, he used thatch and local hardwood.

Had the importance of household gardens been recognized in planning Honiara, urban families would not only be partly able to feed themselves, but the alienation, social disintegration and anomie of urban life would have been considerably reduced; the costs, especially to women, would have been far less.

Had local timber mills been fostered, and skills in joinery and cabinetmaking promoted, Solomon Islanders could be using their
rich forest resources both to meet local needs for furniture as well as housing and as high-yield rather than low-yield sources of export revenue. Other forest products, such as rattan, are potential sources of export revenue as well as means of meeting local needs, but they have already been largely destroyed by mindless and uncontrolled logging.

Had the planners had any appreciation of the riches of village life and subsistence self-sufficiency augmented by selective cash crops, the development of feeder roads into the mountains could have paved the way for resettlement of the island interiors, opening new areas for production (including cultivation of higher-altitude cash crops such as coffee, passionfruit and spices) and living space for rapidly increasing populations. There are hundreds and hundreds of miles of such feeder roads in interior New Guinea, through much more difficult terrain and maintained by volunteer labour from local villages serving their own interests.

Had the planners understood the rich complexities of customary land tenure, they could have built on its strengths and encouraged the compilation and local legitimation and recognition of genealogically documented corporate land titles, long before the present outbreak of land disputes, with concomitant litigation and frequent violence. Instead, for years, the British Government held on to the hollow dream of the surveying, registration and individuation of land title. As the World Bank report shows (1991), customary land tenure is still perceived as an obstacle to economic development. So are networks of kin and obligations of clan and community, even while the report concedes that it is through this system that some 80 per cent of Solomon Islanders lead sustaining social and economic lives.

Had the planners valued the extraordinary artistic skills of Solomon Islanders both in traditional crafts and new genres, such
as woodcarving, the export of art objects for international markets could be far more systematic and large-scale than it is, and less dependent on entrepreneurial middlemen, particularly expatriates, who rake off much of the profit. While ostensibly promoting the production of art objects for tourists, development planners and agencies have done vitally nothing to encourage craft cooperatives, develop marketing and exporting systems, or preserve and resuscitate traditional production of exquisite objects that could be a substantial source of revenue for the country. In this realm as well, the magnificent hardwoods of the Solomons could have been selectively used to bring jobs and money to local people, not mowed down to feed the gaping jaws of Japanese timber mills while destroying the environment.

It is not that Solomon Islanders have been bereft of imagination and enterprise in the pursuit of economic opportunity. Yet some of the areas of possibility have been so culturally alien to the European planners of the Solomons economy that they have been viewed with a kind of smug amusement, if they have been noticed at all. A case in point is the export of 'shell money' from Langalanga, Malaita to Bougainville and other parts of Papua New Guinea. The 'shell money' business has been entirely locally created and expanded, and is scarcely viewed as part of the country's economy at all. The point is that the demand for shell valuables in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere revolves around the symbolic value of traditional custom in a context of modernization, and the continuing valorization of bridewealth and feasting exchange; hence this exemplifies exactly the traditionalism that is seen by expatriate planners as an obstacle to modernity and the antithesis of economic rationality (as if buying Gucci haute couture or French perfumes or drinking champagne were rational). Urban Solomon Islanders, too, continue to celebrate
and enact the traditional values of exchange, in bridewealth payments and feasting, but all this goes on entirely outside the social and economic agendas of a government committed to bookkeeping Western style. Custom is one thing, the economy is another.

If there had to be a promotion of tourism, it could have built on the unusual resources of the country (only the World War II relics and history have been seen as such), and could have pursued emerging markets of eco- and adventure-tourism and village-level cultural centres and the attractions of the traditional, rather than emphasizing yet more 'tropical paradise' resorts (like Anuha) that reward foreign capital and fulfill Western fantasies. The latter may seem to bring more tourist dollars, but, in the end, most of them leave the country, leaving little behind other than widening class differences and alienation.

IS IT TOO LATE?

In many respects, it may be too late for a Solomons government bent on development Western style to change its course. The rainforests are already largely gone, and with them the possibility of re-establishing and redeveloping village life and economies in the island interiors. The character of Honiara, Auki and Gizo is largely set, in terms of housing and spatial allocation. A country that cannot afford to maintain the infrastructures of education, health services and transportation, already built up in the period of decolonization and a post-independence foreign aid boom, will have no resources to build new roads. And where would they lead? Into the post-logging wastelands?

In some respects, Solomon Islanders have always been going against the grain of development policy: in producing root crops, fish and areca nuts for the urban markets as best they can; in
building thatch housing in periurban areas; in producing craft goods for the few tourists who reach the Solomons; in developing their own local attractions in hopes of drawing tourists into village areas. This resilience and resistance and local enterprise may be small in scale, but it gives some hope that as the country slides further and further into a banana republic, its people will continue to find ways to survive and even to prosper, using traditional skills and values.

Despite the progressive deterioration of the economy and the disintegration of the infrastructure precariously built up in the early days of abundant aid money and a temporary export boom, there is still considerable resilience at village level. There still is, for most Solomon Islanders, a fall-back position. If there is fuel for the outboard motor, you use it; if there is none, you paddle. If you can buy rice and tinned tuna and bread, you buy it; if you cannot, you eat your sweet potatoes and bush cabbage and coconut (and stay healthier). But here are limits to this resilience, given growing populations and the devastation of the island interiors through logging.

There probably was never any hope that anthropological fieldworkers, who have lived in the villages for long periods and know the strengths and values of Melanesian sociality and subsistence affluence, would be listened to by those making the decisions. They are condemned to be woolly-headed anthropological romantics, both in the eyes of the high-powered development experts in their tailored tropical suits and in the eyes of the Western-educated élites who now run their own countries. As the Pacific slides into greater pauperization and dependency within a world system that no longer needs most of its primary products and is rapidly wiping out those that it still wants, it is scant consolation that some of us saw it coming long ago and did and
said what we could, to no avail. I return to these topics once again because I feel it is still urgent that we do and say what we can.

I am not optimistic about the future of Pacific Islanders — or, indeed, of my own children in California. But such optimism as I can muster for Solomon Islanders and their Pacific neighbours comes from the continuing commitment of most of them to values that may prove to be more adaptive in the twenty-first century — to all humans — than those of the post-industrial West.

NOTES
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1 Recent critiques by Arturo Escobar constitute an important exception.
2 In the most recent scandal, a cabinet minister has been implicated in the smuggling of tropical birds from Malaita into northern Australia.
3 I visited the ones in northern Malaita, central Makirta (San Cristobal) and Ysabel in the course of anthropological reconnaissance in 1964. At the time I was doing research in east-central Malaita, the largest remaining pocket of interior settlement.
4 This was a much less coherent ideology on the margins of the residual peripheries of the British empire than in areas more directly open to American influence and capital expansion, where ideologies of economic growth and modernization elaborated by Rostow, Lerner and others played a more central role in political policy and investment.
5 However, by the standards of Australia’s massive investment in what was to become Papua New Guinea, the British investments were minuscule.
6 In a country that had moved to substantial self-government and was on the brink of independence.
7 The same agriculture officer, an old Kenya hand, told of his long patrols by Land Rover in the African bush, and of how he had had his Askaris fetch a tank of water for his evening hot bath even if this meant driving fifty miles. 'I'm sure they respected me more for it,' he recalled cheerfully.
8 In 1989 the number of cattle slaughtered at official abattoirs was down to 921, half the 1986 total: CBSI Annual Report 1990, p.10. The cattle supply has apparently collapsed almost completely since 1989, although no data are available.

9 Howard gives a survey of the up-and-down — mostly down — fortunes of the mining industry in the Solomons (1991:Ch.4).

10 SI$53 million in 1986. In 1983 fishing provided 7.6 per cent of gross domestic product; in 1988 this had declined to 6.6 per cent.

11 I use the gendered pronoun advisedly in this context.

12 See Fifi'i 1989 for an account of the violence that followed the award to a single individual of title to the corporately owned land on which Atoifi Adventist Hospital was to be built, and for a distinguished leader's reflections on land policy.

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World Bank
IS THE WEST THE MODEL FOR HUMANKIND?  
THE BARUYA OF NEW GUINEA BETWEEN CHANGE AND DECAY

Maurice Godelier

As an anthropologist specializing in the study of societies that are literally on the other side of the world from the West, in Oceania, I have had the opportunity since 1967 of observing the changing lifestyle and thinking of a tribe in New Guinea, one of those societies sometimes referred to as 'primitive': the Baruya, who were 'discovered' in 1951 and subjected to Australian colonial rule in 1960. In 1975 Papua New Guinea became independent, and the Baruya were transformed into citizens of a new state that was a member of the United Nations, furnishing further proof of the West's advance in that part of the world.

But since 9 November 1989, the date when the Berlin Wall came down, it would surely be true to say that the process of Westernization has resumed inside Europe itself. The West, which was for several decades divided between the two Europes, is being reunified and in the future will exert an even stronger influence on the world's destiny, shaping it in its own image and in accordance with its own interests. Nevertheless, we should note that Westernization is no longer an accomplishment of the Western peoples alone. It has also become a product of the East: of Japan and of the four or five little dragons. But, in these cases,
Westernization is no longer just the expansion of the West since it has been achieved in societies that have retained their political sovereignty and preserved their cultural identity, of which one major component is certainly Buddhism. Westernization is spreading, but not every aspect of the West — or at least not with the same degree of success as previously.

What is the West today? What are its essential components? Components that occur in association in the West may be dissociated and appear in combination with different social and cultural components in other parts of the world. In my view, the West is a blend of the real and the imaginary, of achievements and standards, of modes of behaviour and ways of thinking, which today make up a sort of ball of energy that either attracts or repels and revolves around three axes, three sets of institutions each with its own logic, symbols and values: capitalism, parliamentary democracy and Christianity.

Capitalism is the most developed form of market economy that has ever existed. Parliamentary democracy is a system of government that, no matter whether it takes the form of a republic or a constitutional monarchy, entrusts power to representatives elected by universal suffrage and recognizes that all citizens have, in principle, equal rights and equal duties in the eyes of the law. And Christianity is a religion that emphasizes the sins and salvation of the individual and also preaches that one should love one's neighbour as oneself and render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's.

In short, the West today derives its strength from a combination of three components that emerged at different points in its history and have only lately come together and fused. Christianity has exerted its influence for 2,000 years and predates the appearance of capitalism by many centuries. Capitalism first developed before the sixteenth century within the feudal and monarchical societies.
Originally, therefore, it had nothing in common with democracy; indeed, as late as 1906 Max Weber wondered whether there was any necessary link between capitalism and democracy. Taiwan and South Africa currently prompt the same question. But South Africa is Christian, whereas Taiwan is not.

These unfavourable examples remind us that there is also a darker side to the West: the conquering, colonial, despotic West drawing its wealth from the resources of the rest of the world, closing its eyes whenever convenient to the lack of freedom and rights accorded by the regimes that serve it or are associated with it, encouraging not only individualism but also egoism. Such denunciations do not come only from the Third World: in the West equal rights coexist, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, with what are at times enormous disparities in standards of living, and there are still those who believe that the accumulation of capital depends in part on the legal exploitation of labour.

In short, the West is not a flawless or stainless model, but it is still today a source of attraction rather than repulsion. At the same time, like any historical phenomenon, it runs the risk of being demolished sooner or later by history as a result of its contradictions and ambiguities. But since the events in Berlin and Bucharest that day would seem to have been postponed for several decades or even several centuries.

THE BARUYA — A TRIBAL SOCIETY

Having defined the West in these terms I shall now proceed to consider the Westernization of pre-industrial societies; however, I shall confine my remarks to tribal societies, which are still major components of many nations in Africa, Asia, America and Oceania.
But, first of all, what is a tribe? A tribe is a local society composed of a set of kinship groups, united by the same principles of social organization and ways of thinking, interconnected by repeated marriages and co-operating in the defence of a common territory and the exploitation of its resources. Several tribes may share the same language and the same principles of social organization. What distinguishes them, then, and sets them apart is the control of a part of nature, a territory.

Thus tribal identity is a composite reality consisting of a cultural and social framework and identification with a territory that has been conquered or inherited from tribal ancestors and must be passed on to future generations. Tribal societies have always been highly diverse. In general, however, they have been classified on the basis of two criteria: whether they were sovereign in their own territory or already integrated in a pre-colonial state governed, in most cases, by the members of a dominant tribe; and whether power within the tribe was shared more or less equally between all groups or was concentrated in the hands of a few at the top of a hierarchy, hereditary or otherwise. In 1951 an example of a tribal society with its own sovereign territory in which ritual and political power was held largely by a number of families descended from conquering groups was provided by the Baruya of New Guinea. I shall analyse the forms taken by the processes of Westernization in that tribal society and the stages those processes passed through. I shall proceed, not by making comparisons, but by drawing general conclusions from the processes that operated among the Baruya — processes that, as will readily be seen, have also occurred and recurred elsewhere.

Who are the Baruya? A society living in two high valleys (at an altitude of 2,000 metres) in a chain of mountains in the interior of New Guinea. They were discovered in 1951 by an Australian officer who had heard of the Batiya (now Baruya), renowned as
salt producers, and organized a military expedition to locate them. In 1951 the island of New Guinea was divided into three colonial regions: Dutch New Guinea, now Irian Jaya, controlled by The Netherlands; New Guinea, a former German colony which had been placed under Australian trusteeship after World War I by the League of Nations; and Papua, a former British colony 'given' by Great Britain to Australia in 1906.

In 1951 the Baruya population amounted to some 1,800 people living in roughly a dozen small villages. The society was made up of fifteen clans, eight of which had been formed by invaders who had conquered local groups. The economy was based primarily on a form of extensive slash-and-burn agriculture, but the Baruya also practised more intensive techniques, growing irrigated crops on terraces. Pig breeding was mainly women's work, and hunting, which was an exclusive preserve of the men, had a chiefly ritual significance and contributed to the assertion of male superiority. At the beginning of the twentieth century their tools were still made of stone, bone or wood, but the Baruya had no good stone on their territory to manufacture the tools. They obtained it by trading in salt, which they produced from the ashes of a plant.

The organization of society was based on the interplay of kinship relations and the general subordination of one sex to the other, of women to men. Lineage was patrilinear and women were prohibited from owning land, bearing arms and possessing the magic and ritual objects that, according to the Baruya, ensured children's growth. Marriage involved a direct exchange of women among the men. Every three years great male initiation ceremonies were held, and the entire tribe, with all the villages and lineages taking part, built a large ceremonial house which the Baruya described as a gigantic 'body'. Each vertical post represented one of the tribe's young men who was to be initiated.
Summing up, what we have here is an example of a small local society, politically independent, with a partly autarkical economy, able to maintain itself but dependent on the salt trade for the acquisition of tools, weapons, ritual objects and other items; that is, its means of production, destruction and other objects essential for its reproduction. It was a classless society but not an egalitarian one. There were various kinds of inequality: a general inequality between men and women and another kind that set 'big-men' apart from others. These 'big-men' were great by virtue of either their function or their merit. They were either masters of rituals who had inherited from their ancestors the sacred objects necessary for children's growth or the struggle against evil spirits, or else they were great warriors who had killed many enemies or were hunters of cassowaries. For the Baruya, the cassowary was not only a type of game: it was also a wild woman who wandered the forests of New Guinea. As for the universe, the Baruya had no concept of the creation of the world. They believed that after a period when sky and earth were one, and when animals and human beings lived together and spoke the same language, the present order of the world was born: the sun and moon broke away from the earth and rose above it, pushing the sky before them. For the Baruya, the sun and the moon are powers of remote deities whose actions are beneficial. For example, the sun acts in women's wombs together with male sperm to produce children. What concerns and scares the Baruya are the evil spirits of the forest and the caves, especially the spirits of the dead.

I should note that in Baruya society there is no direct link between economics and kinship, between the production of wealth and the reproduction of life: a woman can be exchanged only for another woman. In many other societies in New Guinea and in Africa a woman is exchanged for wealth (bridewealth), and contact with the West has rapidly led to an enormous inflation in dowries.
This highlights the great variety of characteristics in the many societies on which the West has impacted.

THE COLONIAL IMPACT

The Westernization of the Baruya took place in four stages under the influence of various forces that acted either separately, one after the other, or jointly.

The meeting of two worlds took place in 1951, but by that time the West had already transformed the lives of the Baruya, even though no European had appeared in the region. During the twenty years preceding this contact the Baruya, through their salt trading, had obtained steel axes and machetes made in Sheffield and Solingen in an industrial Europe of whose very existence they were unaware. Seeing the effectiveness of these new tools they threw their traditional stone tools away in the forest. With their more effective steel tools they saved time, which they spent either in fighting or in doing nothing. But they were obliged to produce more salt in order to acquire them. The women, who were excluded by tradition from the work of tree-felling, continued to make use of their wooden tools, and, inasmuch as the Baruya started to clear larger gardens and raise more pigs, the introduction of the white men's tools meant that the women had more work to do. Thus the Baruya, by abandoning their old stone tools, had already placed themselves, without realizing it, in a position of material and economic dependence on the West.

But other surprising events occurred during the years that led up to the arrival of the whites. One day the Baruya saw in the sky two large birds chasing each other and spitting fire. They were terrified. This was an episode in the World War II, an air battle between Japanese and Australians that probably took place in 1943. Sometime later a Baruya named Dawatnie, who had gone to
trade in salt among the Watchakes, a tribe living far to the north of Baruya, was led by his hosts to the top of a mountain, from where he was shown in the valley below several of these large birds: beings of human form were entering the stomachs of these birds. On returning home he related what he had seen and thus, even although they had never seen any Europeans, the Baruya discovered the existence of supernatural beings of human form and with light skin who lived in large firebirds.

In 1951 the first white man, Jim Sinclair, arrived at the head of a column of soldiers and carriers. The Baruya were then at war with their neighbours whose fortified villages were positioned on top of the mountains on the other side of the same valley. The white man set up a camp, and in the centre he erected a pole on which he hoisted the Australian flag. He drew up his men and ordered them to present arms to the flag. The Baruya were dazzled by the flashing bayonets, and when the flag was raised the following morning a warrior named Bwarinmax fell into a trance. He believed he had been possessed by the white man's power, which had revealed itself in the flashing bayonets. At that point the Baruya decided to kill the white man and massacre his troops. But Jim Sinclair, who was completely unaware of their intentions, asked for a dozen very thick shields to be brought and invited some powerful warriors to fire arrows at them. He then drew up a platoon of soldiers and told them to open fire: the shields shattered. This demonstration of force impressed the Baruya, who abandoned their plans for a massacre. Thus, in 1951, another dimension was added to the Baruya's material dependence on Western tools: their military subordination.

Thirty years later, after independence, things would no longer be the same when the Baruya and neighbouring tribes resumed their warfare. The government sent an officer and a few soldiers to arrest the 'ringleaders', and the officer made as if to order his men
to open fire on the crowd. The Baruya explained to him that they were not afraid: he would not be able to kill all of them as they were too numerous and, in any case, he and his soldiers would rapidly be overwhelmed.

But let us return to 1951. The first sight of a white man in flesh and blood produced a great change in the Baruya. They soon discovered that he was a man like themselves and not a supernatural being, a man who was superior but certainly not a spirit or a god.

Several years went by during which no other whites appeared. Then suddenly, in 1960, an impressive column of soldiers and carriers emerged into the Wonenara Valley on the border between the Baruya and their enemies. This was a flat area where the tribes traditionally gave battle, and because it was flat the white men decided to build a landing strip there. A patrol post was set up at the end of the strip, and some of the soldiers went off to identify the tribes and inform them that they no longer had the right to fight each other. The officer in charge of establishing the administration later summoned representatives of the various tribes to explain the new order of things and sent them home after appointing them 'chiefs' of their villages on behalf of Her Majesty, the Queen of England. Unfortunately, one of these men was attacked on the way home by some warriors of the Yunduye tribe with which his own tribe had been at war when the whites had arrived. He was killed and his body was fed to the dogs.

On hearing this news the officer organized a punitive expedition and three people were subsequently killed, including a woman; a column of prisoners was brought back to the post. One of the prisoners, a great shaman, believed that he could escape from the white men by flying away since the spirit of the shaman is a bird, and he therefore threw himself — in handcuffs — from the top of a cliff. He crashed to the ground but did not die and has been
terribly disabled even since. Another incident, this time among the Baruya, gave the local tribes a fresh opportunity to gauge the white men's strength and determination. Following the suicide of a woman, a battle had broken out between the inhabitants of her village and those of her husband's village. When the officer was informed, he burnt the village of the people he believed to have been responsible for the battle — the dead woman's village. Unfortunately for the Baruya two sacred objects disappeared in this fire: the dried fingers of a great warrior who had led their ancestors in the conquest of the territory and, much more seriously, the flints used to rekindle the sacred flame during initiation ceremonies, which disintegrated in the heat of the fire. The officer never knew anything of these losses.

Thus, very quickly, within the first months of being colonized, the local tribes lost a major attribute of their existence: the right to lead their own lives, the right to apply their laws on their own territory. In short, they simultaneously lost what we would call political sovereignty and cultural autonomy.

As a state can exercise its authority only over a registered population, a comprehensive census of the population was begun at that time. Peace was imposed and the villages were relocated to the valley floor for census purpose and ease of control. The people were obliged to co-operate in the census and to submit to the law. They were prohibited from taking the law into their own hands. The Baruya had just come into contact with an institution that has played a great role in the development of humankind and is an indicator of civilization: the state. Of course, the state that had discovered them was colonial and authoritarian, but it was seen by the Europeans as representing a necessary stage in progress towards the democratic parliamentary state that would replace it after independence.
In 1966 another component of the West, Christianity, entered the field in force. Lutheran missionaries came to settle near the patrol post and built both a mission and a school. They brought with them evangelists from the coastal tribes, which had been converted to Christianity long before, and placed one in each village to preach the word of the Lord. They preached in pidgin English, the language taught in the school together with the rudiments of arithmetic and writing. The Baruya and the neighbouring tribes welcomed this move, and soon more than 100 children were attending the school. Two years later the best pupils were sent to a mission secondary school in a town of the interior. One of the boys in this first class later became a forestry engineer, another a mathematics teacher and a third a policeman; one even became a minister.

Throughout their stay at college the missionaries forbade them to return to their tribe to take part in initiation ceremonies. They were told that their ancestors had worshipped false gods and that they and their parents had previously been living in sin without knowing it. A split developed between most of the boys, who were to remain 'bush-Kanaka' like their parents, and the minority, the 'schoolboys', who had begun to 'evolve'. Some of the latter declared at that time that the customs of their ancestors should be abandoned and that they 'spat on the loin cloths' of their fathers. Fifteen years later, however, nearly all of them returned of their own accord to take part in the great initiation ceremonies.

I should note here that Kanaka is the Hawaiian word for 'man', adapted by the French as 'canaque' to refer to the tribes of New Caledonia. This term had been taken over by the Australian Administration to refer to the scarcely pacified bush tribes. The Baruya had therefore become 'bush-Kanaka', primitive people living in the forests. But it was these same 'bush-Kanaka' who had so quickly decided to send some of their children to school. That
decision demonstrated a determination to integrate to some extent in the new world that had been imposed on them or offered to them; a world that, as they quickly realized, they could no longer escape. The soldiers, evangelists and carriers, black like themselves and coming from unknown tribes, were proof of that. They therefore sent their boys to school without initiating them or limited their initiation to several hours and a few rites, whereas tradition demanded that boys be separated from their mothers and the world of women by the age of nine and that they should live in the house of men up to the age of twenty, when they would marry.

This did not prevent the Baruya's leading shaman from sending his son to the school. Twenty years later the son returned to his tribe, now a minister, and became deputy to the German missionary in charge of the Lutheran mission. At the time two Baruya clans had decided, with government encouragement, to establish a sort of sales and purchasing co-operative, and they entrusted its management to him. He was expelled from the mission, however, for making his wife's mother pregnant. He later gave up his other position on suspicion of having misappropriated the shop's funds. Today, having taken a second wife, he lives in his village and still enjoys undoubted authority.

In 1965 the Administration began to recruit up to 30 per cent of the men in certain villages for work in the coastal plantations. Many Baruya who wanted to travel volunteered for this work and went off for a period of two years. At the time the Administration did not allow natives to renew their contracts, as it was afraid they would begin to form organizations if they remained for too long at the same plantation. The men were housed in barracks, fed and paid a few dollars a week. At the end of their contract they were given roughly 200 Australian dollars each, which they could spend as they wished. Most of them spent part of this sum on tools, blankets and umbrellas, which they distributed when they got back
to the village. The Baruya thus became wage-earners who had freely sold their labour.

In actual fact, the money they earned and the food rations they received were not the equivalent of real wages. They had experienced the discipline of continuous piece-work under the supervision of foremen, an experience that was completely foreign to their traditional labours. They had encountered the sea (of whose existence they had not dreamed) and ships and aircraft. But on their return in 1967 many declared that they would not leave again even if asked.

In 1967, following the soldiers, the missionaries and the civil servants, an academic anthropologist arrived: that was me, bringing the Western presence up to full strength. Following Western forms of authority, there was now a Western form of knowledge. After a few months I was asked by the officer in charge of the post to tell him who the real fight-leaders were, since it was obvious that the Baruya had put forward men without importance as their village chiefs. The missionaries, for their part, would have liked to know what went on during the shamanist ceremonies and who the 'sorcerers' were. Like any doctor, I then invoked professional ethics to justify my silence.

In 1968 the Administration, in its concern for development, organized huge campaigns to encourage the tribes to plant coffee and distributed thousands of coffee plants free of charge. Agronomists came to explain what types of soil and what exposure were suitable for the crop. At the time coffee fetched a good price, as Brazil was going through a production crisis, something of which the Baruya were completely unaware. As producers of salt they knew what it meant to produce for exchange or sale. But their salt was simultaneously both a commodity and their currency. Coffee was a commodity that they produced but did not consume
themselves, and the currency they received for it was made and controlled by others.

The Baruya set to planting coffee trees, in the belief that they would be able to make money without leaving their valleys and without subjecting themselves to the discipline of plantation work. But a problem soon arose: certain families had good ground for coffee, and others did not. Initially the old rule of reciprocity between families allied by marriage applied, and those who had a large area of good land allowed their brothers-in-law to plant coffee trees on that land. But a coffee tree has a life of some twenty years. Allowing someone to use one's land to plant coffee was therefore entirely different from allowing him to plant sweet potatoes or vegetables, which are harvested at the end of a single season. Economic differentiation began to develop between families and between individuals, a phenomenon that had not applied to subsistence agriculture although it had already existed for salt-producing land. In short, the Baruya began to wokim bisnis; that is, to do business in the way the Administration did, which was widely emulated in those regions that had been colonized for a long time. But wokim bisnis meant selling to the whites, not — yet — to one's brother, to a member of one's own tribe, to a Baruya.

That threshold was crossed on the day the Baruya decided to sell the meat of a pig they had killed. Among the Baruya, pigs had always been exchanged as gifts between relatives, allies, initiates, and so on. The selling of pig meat meant changing a gift into a commodity and accepting the idea that anyone with money could use it to purchase that commodity even though he had no personal link with the pig's owner. Impersonal commodities and an abstract homo economicus had just made their appearance in a society that had traditionally functioned on the basis of personal relationships.
At the end of 1968 Australia decided to organize elections throughout the country in order to establish an assembly of representatives from the various regions; the first step towards the parliamentary democracy that was designed to replace the colonial administration after independence. Parties already existed in the country, including the PANGU Party, which was demanding independence and whose secretary, Michael Somare of the Sepik, was to become Prime Minister of the first government of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. But in 1968 the Baruya were entirely unaware of these parties and of the significance of the elections. By chance I was present when the elections took place.

The various tribes of the region were assembled in the mountains at several points that were easy to reach. A white officer arrived with his interpreters and set up a polling station in a tent. He explained that all the registered adults should vote and that by so doing they would send to the capital people who would speak up for them to the government. Then, as almost everyone could not read and therefore could not choose between names on the ballot papers, the crowd was shown posters with the pictures of nine candidates, black and white, who were unknown to the tribes. The officer provided some information about the candidates and their programmes. Each man and woman was then called by name and asked to point to one of the photos. Even the men were shy — and the women were terrified. For example, one of the women who placed her finger between two photos was shouted at; she then pointed to one photo at random. She had 'voted'. Such were the first steps in learning about parliamentary government. Since then the Baruya have come to be perfectly well aware of the importance of having their own representative in the National Parliament. But they have encountered two problems which they have not yet solved. It is essential for their families to agree on a single
candidate and that other tribes be prepared to back that candidate. But each tribe wants to be represented by one of its own members, and each family would prefer to choose the representative from within its own ranks.

INDEPENDENCE AND LATER DEVELOPMENTS

In 1975 the Baruya became, without asking or wanting to be, citizens of an independent nation that immediately became a member of the United Nations. This was the period of decolonization, and independence had been granted to them by Australia, which was then governed by the Labor Party. For the Baruya, the colonial period had been extremely short, just fifteen years. A further fifteen years have now passed since independence. What has happened to them in the interval?

Several months before the proclamation of independence Richard Lloyd, a missionary from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, who, since the end of 1951, had been the first European to live nearly continuously among the Baruya and learn their language, returned with the first book printed in that language, a remarkable translation of the Book of Genesis. At the time only two of the small number of Baruya who knew how to read and write had become Christian, since in order to be baptized it was necessary for polygamous men to repudiate all but one wife. But repudiating a woman meant breaking an alliance with people to whom a man had given his own sister; it also changed drastically the status of the children of the woman concerned. The Baruya found this too difficult; they also did not really understand why the white missionaries from the various Protestant sects — the Seventh Day Adventists, the Lutherans and the New Tribes Mission — fought among themselves to recruit them.
At that time the Lutheran mission, led by a German who had escaped from the German Democratic Republic, opened a trading post beside the mission. Two hundred dollars was invested to purchase the usual range of goods: knives, rice, umbrellas, etc. When this first batch was sold the money was reinvested to buy a second batch, and so on. At the end of the year the missionary had A$14,000 worth of cash and stock. He was criticized for running this flourishing business by the American missionary from the New Tribes Mission, who boasted of living in poverty. The rate of profit was quite appreciable but nothing compared with that of the large Australian commercial companies in the towns, Burns Philp, and Steamships.

Fresh elections were held to elect the first parliament of independent Papua New Guinea. The Baruya voted successfully for a brilliant young man, 'Peter', a medical assistant who was a member of a traditionally hostile tribe, the Andje. At the same time they also provided him with a wife. Unfortunately Peter was killed three years later in an air crash, and his successor came from a tribe with which the Baruya had little contact.

After independence increasing numbers of children were sent to school, including girls, who, for the first time in the history of the Baruya, competed directly with the boys in learning to read, write, count and even run. Many young men went off to work in the plantations or looked for employment in the towns. The older men remained in the village and continued to plant coffee. But much was now changing in the country. Many of the coastal plantations had been sold by their European owners, who were wary of the consequences of independence and left the country en masse. The plantations had been bought up by the big-men of the local tribes. The number of Europeans actually living in the country was dwindling. In the towns insecurity and delinquency increased. Alcohol, which had formerly been reserved for the consumption of
whites or for the few natives allowed to enter their pubs, was now freely on sale. The initiation ceremonies — which had never been discontinued among the Baruya during the colonial period but had merely been held far from the gaze of the missionaries and the soldiers — increased in scale albeit still without the rituals associated with war, which was now forbidden, and with homosexual relations between the initiates, which were on the decline. At that time some Baruya who had studied and become policemen, nurses and teachers returned to take part in the initiation ceremonies. These were the same people who twenty years previously had scorned the customs of their ancestors. And it was one of them who in 1979 publicly explained to all the men of the tribe and the young initiates that the initiations had to be continued because strength was needed to resist the life of the towns and the lack of work or money; people had to depend on themselves. In my presence he shouted: 'We must find strength in our customs; we must base ourselves on what the whites call culture'.

Things continued to develop in this contradictory fashion, with the Baruya drawing on certain elements of their culture and abandoning others. They began to combine what they retained with ideas and practices from the West. Thus, in 1980, the Baruya decided to initiate new shamans and organize grand ceremonies, which are usually held every eight or ten years. There were few volunteers, since a person who becomes a shaman among the Baruya must remain in the tribe to protect it against the attacks of evil spirits and to conduct a struggle every night against the witch-doctors of neighbouring tribes, who seek to lead the spirits of the Baruya astray or to devour their livers. The young men preferred to travel or else had less confidence than their elders in the powers of their shamans. They, in turn, admitted that their powers had not been the same since the whites had come. And yet a compromise
was reached with the medicine of the Europeans. People attended
the small medical post for the treatment of fractures, wounds and
infections; the shaman was consulted for internal pains, which were
signs of poisoning by means of sorcery.

That was the situation in 1986 when a problem unresolved
during the colonial period suddenly re-emerged, a problem
concerning good coffee-growing land lying along a river. The
Yuwarrunatche, neighbours and enemies of the Baruya, who had
just lost a war and the land in question at the time that Jim Sinclair
arrived, decided to recover it by force of arms once they realized
that the new state lacked the strength of the colonial
administration. War broke out again. The enemy tribe burnt the
Baruya village nearest to their border and fired arrows into a
Baruya warrior, telling him to return to the land of his ancestors
who had taken the land away from them. All the schools closed
down and the villages were re-established on the mountain tops
and protected by impenetrable stockades. The hospital and the
airstrip could no longer be reached by the Baruya because of the
proximity of their enemies, who maintained a permanent presence
in the area. No aircraft would agree to land to load the Baruya's
coffee. The road that the colonial administration had built with the
labour of the Baruya and their neighbours was cut by the latter and
the bridges destroyed. The road became unusable after the first
rainy season. A kind of retrogression then set in and continued up
until 1988.

Six or seven of the Baruya were killed in various battles, and
four of their enemies were killed — including their great fight-
leader. But it was not the same kind of war as in the old days.
Women and children were no longer killed, because that usually
led to police intervention. Indeed the police came on two occasions
by helicopter to arrest the 'ringleaders', but each time the villages
were empty and the police merely burnt down a few houses.
At length, in 1988, a long truce was established, but without a genuine peace. The airstrip became accessible again, but the Baruya had drawn a lesson from the war and had started to build their own landing strip in 1987 in the neighbourhood of the village furthest away from their enemies, on a high mountain terrace. The strip was operational in 1990. In short, life began again, and the changes briefly interrupted by the war resumed with a new momentum.

The Baruya planted increasing amounts of coffee, which is men's work. But the bulk of the subsequent work — harvesting, drying and hulling the coffee berries — is done by the women and young girls. Some men also perform this work: those for whom coffee production and moneymaking have become a sort of passion. Several of them have already managed to save the equivalent of A$500 to A$1,000. They have learnt to sell at the right time and use transistor radios to keep in touch with the coffee prices in Goroka, a town that is half an hour away by air. Up until now they have done practically nothing with their money. In order to prevent it from being stolen, the Government has advised them to place it in savings banks, for which it supplies bank books. The money is then taken to the town.

The Baruya continue to open small shops, usually with several individuals banding together in order to do so, in which they resell at extremely high prices the usual range of goods — rice, soap, kerosene and matches — which they have flown in on the mission aircraft. But these businesses often go bankrupt, as the people working in the shops help themselves or give presents for which they do not pay. Increasingly the Baruya kill pigs in order to sell the meat at extremely high prices. The rule is to make as much money as possible, wokim bisnis. The women have also entered the market economy. Almost every day a hundred or so of them come to sit near the medical centre, laying out in front of them several
kilos of sweet potatoes and bananas and exchanging recent gossip while waiting for customers. Towards midday they return to their villages, most having sold nothing. They then eat what they had come to sell — which had not, in any case, been produced for sale. Economically these exchanges are marginal, but at the social and psychological level they demonstrate a desire to imitate the Western world and even to become a part of it, if only in symbolic rather than real terms.

It is this same desire to integrate that, I believe, explains a new phenomenon of major importance. It will be remembered that in 1975 no more than two Baruya had been baptized. Since 1988, however, although there are no more European missionaries in the region, churches made of wood and thatch, *haus lotu*, have been built in nearly all the villages. Many young people and some old women gather in these churches on Sundays. Someone who can read pidgin English 'recites' the Bible, and people sing in pidgin English or in Baruya, thanking God for having brought light and life and asking him to forgive the sins of his creatures. In 1988 I was shown long lists of the names of Baruya who were preparing to be baptized. Most of them wished to join the Lutheran Church, but some wanted to belong to an American sect, The Church of Christ, which had recently arrived in the country. Among these recruits were many polygamous men. When I expressed astonishment, I was told that polygamists could now be baptized. I do not believe that this is so, but the Baruya themselves think so and it seems to make their conversion to Christianity somewhat easier. What is the explanation of this increasing desire for baptism? I am not very sure. The Baruya do not seem to understand the concept of sin, and their new Christian feelings do not prevent them from applauding when their enemies are killed, their villages burnt or their pigs stolen. I see in this another aspect of their wish to become a part of the Western world, the world of their time. It is
perhaps significant that the Baruya put on Western dress when they go to pray and that the women cover up their breasts. Those preparing for baptism give much thought to the Christian name they are to receive: John, Samuel, Mary, and so on.

What has certainly changed most among the Baruya are relations between men and women and between generations. Although the boys who remain in the village are still initiated and live in the men's house, which they should only leave to go into the forest, avoiding all contact with women, they can now be seen crossing the village and talking to the girls. Remarkably, the girls in one village have even set up a basketball team like the boys and are practising on the same playing ground at the edge of the village. Jokes and glances are freely exchanged, something that would have been impossible five years ago.

That is the situation in which the Baruya find themselves forty years after the day when a white man at the head of a column of soldiers and carriers appeared on one of their mountain tops and planted his flag in the middle of their valley. Their society has not collapsed: it is still there, and the Baruya have even increased in number. But their lifestyle and ways of thinking have been transformed, turned upside down — and the process is irreversible. The Baruaya have not accepted these changes passively but have been partly responsible for them. This applies equally to the great shaman who sent his son to school and to the orphan who became a mathematics teacher at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby after being sent by the Australians to study in Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland. But although they know how to adapt and thus to 'create' a society, the Baruya no longer control the development of their own society. It is now subject to enormous external forces that have penetrated their society and direct it, forces that have all come from the West and have already made the small society a part of the West's ever-expanding process.
of development. In the Pacific the West is not identical with Europe: half the goods sold in New Guinea come from Japan.

THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

Let us briefly recapitulate the various aspects of these now irreversible processes: submission to the West and integration with it. The Baruya no longer produce their own tools and would no longer be able to make the old stone tools and use them. They need a currency that is not their own; they must become unskilled and poorly paid wage-earners in order to earn it or else become small producers of coffee, which they do not consume and which others export onto the world market.

The Baruya have become citizens of a state whose principles and models are of Western origin. Indeed, it was the West that introduced them before granting independence to this artificial nation. And since independence Australia has continued to provide a third of the budget of the new state, which does not mean that the latter simply takes orders from its former colonial master. But all this is still way over the heads of the Baruya. We should note in passing that it is probably the existence of over 750 tribes of different sizes and speaking different languages (in a country of mountains and jungles where travel has always been extremely difficult), none of which had ever been able to establish its hegemony even over several others, that has made it possible to establish and maintain a form of parliamentary democracy. Elsewhere, in Africa and Asia, in places where one ethnic group wielded power over others before or after the period of European colonization, many one-party states and puppet parliaments were established after independence.

But the very factors that facilitated the introduction of parliamentary democracy in New Guinea have reduced its
effectiveness. The post-colonial state does not have the material and human resources necessary to maintain a universal presence and to enforce its laws. The tribes quickly realized this and have returned to the use of violence in settling their problems with their neighbours, as in the good old days. The war between the Baruya and the Yuwarrunatche is an example of this general trend. The state is seen both as an abstract and far-off power that is best avoided and as a mysterious near-inexhaustible source of money and various forms of assistance that should be exploited as much as possible. Each tribe invokes its right to obtain as much as the others, and each attempts to obtain more than the others. The Baruya have also learnt the rules of this game.

They are culturally subject to the West as well as being subordinate to it in economic and political terms. They have learned to read and write in pidgin English, a colonial language similar to the French and English Creoles spoken today by the black populations of the West Indies. Those who receive secondary or higher education must learn English, the only language that enables them — as it does us — to communicate with the rest of the world. But the most important change is the general erosion and dismantling of the Baruya's innermost culture and the irremediable destruction of some of its components. And this has happened in spite of the fact that many Baruya are proud of their customs and have not reacted passively or with indifference to their disappearance. But of all the forces acting on their society, two make direct attacks on their culture: the state, which prohibits war and assumes the right to dispense justice; and Christianity, which asserts that the sun and the moon are false gods, that the true religion is the religion of Christ and that people live in sin, especially if they are unaware that Christ died on the Cross to redeem the sins of people of all races and all colours. Like Islam and Buddhism, Christianity is a religion that seeks converts, and the
Baruya will probably all be Christian in a few generations, espousing a form of Third World Christianity that may differ considerably from European Christianity but still draws its inspiration from the latter's great visions and symbols.

Some of these changes are welcomed by the Baruya themselves. They do not wish to see the reappearance of constant, endemic warfare between themselves and their neighbours. But if war is no longer seen as a normal necessity for men, for which they must be prepared when they are very young, and as an opportunity to become a 'big-man', this means the collapse of some traditional values and of the traditional social hierarchy.

In addition, the Baruya men no longer like to spend their entire lives in the two valleys where their ancestors lived and in the four or five others they visited at the risk of their lives. They like to travel by air, to stay away for several years, to play cards, to drive trucks. One of them even joined a Japanese factory ship. Two or three have married women from the coast, announcing that they would not be returning to the village and that the women who had been promised to them could be married off to other men.

But, most importantly, there has been a major change in the deepest structure of Baruya society, the relations between men and women: a movement away from the traditional denial of women and affirmation of male dominance. Not that these changes have been accepted without violence. Seven or eight women were beaten to death or executed by husbands who could not tolerate the fact that they were no longer shown the obedience and submission to which tradition entitled them. But the men today are less afraid of women's uncleanness and, in turn, the women are less afraid of the symbols of male superiority. Young fathers can now be seen playing with their babies even when those babies are girls. Previously, the very idea would have made them spit in disgust and shame. One thing has not changed however: marriage is still based
on the direct exchange of sisters between two men and two families. But the girls increasingly have a say, and they are not forced to marry against their will.

That is my view of the forms and mechanisms involved in the Westernization of a tribal society. For the Baruya, a white person is no longer a supernatural being but does remain a superior being, albeit, since decolonization, one from whom they will no longer accept orders or kicks. But in one sense it is the whites themselves who, by granting independence, have denied themselves such liberties. And, on a higher level, it is the whites' religion that asserts that all men are equal before God.

Will these processes continue? Yes. Are they irreversible? Yes. Will they spread throughout the entire world? Probably, but here we must return to the idea that Westernization will continue to spread, but that its present three components will not spread with the same degree of success. Japan is today the most dynamic capitalist country, but it has become so without losing either its political independence or the basis of its cultural identity. Indeed, Japan was never a colony, and Christianity has not long been allowed to vie with Buddhism there. But the tiny society of the Baruya is as nothing alongside Japan, and there are hundreds of such societies.

The West's first triumph will be in Europe, where it will finally conquer Eastern Europe, a task begun in the sixteenth century well before the advent of the communist regimes. It will also spread in the Orient, even if the West is not synonymous there with Europe. Must we join in the applause or tiptoe off the stage? Leaving aside the people of the Third World, why should silence be required of those in the West who continue to believe that Christianity is not the only true religion and that there is indeed no true and no false religion; or of those who see that political democracy does exist and welcome it, but know that there is much to be done to extend
social democracy and that nearly everything remains to be done to ensure that the wealth produced by capitalism or appropriated by it is shared out more fairly in the West itself and elsewhere? Why should we refuse to see these bad aspects, which are there and do affect our lives? What reason could there be for putting up with them? Could it really be because the end of history has arrived and we are at last living in the best of all possible worlds?

NOTE

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REFLECTIONS ON HISTORY IN POLYNESIA

Alan Howard

I would like, in this paper, to reflect on some key issues of history in Polynesian studies. Historical approaches in anthropology have come into vogue again after a hiatus during which functional, structural and cognitive studies predominated. The new historiographies have brought with them new problems and dilemmas which I will try to identify and comment upon. I would particularly like to draw attention to issues of discourse, that is, the language — including underlying assumptions — in which historical approaches have been embedded.

Anthropological history began in Polynesia with attempts to reconstruct the great migrations that resulted in the settlement of the island archipelagos. Diffusionism focused on the artefacts and customs that were the presumed residues of an inferred history. In this context 'history' was synonymous with sailing from one island base to another. Humans were largely omitted, except as conveyors of material culture, language and customs.

The main competitor to diffusionism was evolutionism. Humans were also generally omitted from evolutionary accounts, which attempted to explain the varying levels of political and economic development evident in Polynesian cultures at the time of European intrusion. For evolutionists, 'history' was equivalent to 'processes of development' that were stimulated or constrained by ecological conditions. The forces that drove development were essentially
impersonal, although human actors were sometimes given a role in promoting movement from stage to stage. For example, in Irving Goldman's account (1970), specific Polynesian chiefs are credited with conquests and political activity that brought about changes of scale. But they are portrayed by Goldman as players in a cultural game motivated by status rivalry rather than as flesh-and-blood human beings absorbed in historical events. To be fair to Goldman — fairer than Nicholas Thomas was in his critical essay *Out of time: history and evolution in anthropological discourse* (1989) — he was not claiming to write history, and contributed much to our current understanding of political development in Polynesian societies. Evolutionism is, of course, alive and well in Polynesia, informing much of the archaeological work currently being done. Kirch summarizes the accomplishments of this approach in his book *The evolution of Polynesian chiefdoms* (1984).

In the 1930s anthropologists such as Felix Keesing and Ernest Beaglehole initiated studies of 'culture change' in Polynesia. These were premised on a reconstructed base-line culture that had been altered by European intrusion. History began with the European explorers who, along with missionaries, traders, beachcombers and colonists, set off a chain of causation that led to the transformation, and sometimes 'breakdown', of so-called 'traditional' cultures. A key concept in culture change accounts was 'acculturation', which originally was defined as a two-way process of exchange between interacting cultures, but in practice almost always referred to ways in which dominant Western cultures changed subordinated non-Western cultures. The documentation that supported such studies was generally compiled from European-centred accounts — from the records of missionaries, colonial administrators and the like.

While culture change studies continued into the post-World War II era, they took a back seat to accounts inspired by functional, cognitive
and symbolic anthropology. Raymond Firth’s functional studies of Tikopia were an inspiration to Polynesianists, and set an exceptionally high standard for fieldwork. Kinship, political systems, land tenure and economic organization became focal points for investigation. In these accounts history was sometimes ignored, sometimes included as background to a particular institution. But it was marginalized at best and, when included, played a similar role to the role of history in culture change studies. That is, it performed the task of providing a logical transition from reconstructed 'traditional' forms to the forms being described by contemporary ethnographers.

An implicit goal of many functional–cognitive–symbolic accounts was to dispel some of the stereotypic misconceptions in the earlier literature and in Euro-American public culture. Polynesians had been excessively romanticized on the one hand and disparaged on the other. Images of natural humanity and noble savagery were mixed with notions of irresponsibility and laziness to compose a cartoon of Polynesian personhood. Ethnographic accounts by anthropologists from the 1960s onwards have done much to refute these stereotypes, but I sometimes wonder if we have not generated new stereotypes in place of the ones we have dispelled. I have the feeling that we have created a new standardized image of Polynesian personhood: more sophisticated and superficially more benign, but every bit as stereotyped. These new caricatures will only begin to unravel, I believe, when we approach Polynesian societies as historically-dynamic systems, with real actors doing important things in real time. Only then will appreciation of the complexity of persons-in-situations replace the facile generalizations that embed these new stereotypes.

In 1959 Raymond Firth introduced a new approach to history in Polynesia. Visiting Tikopia after an absence of twenty-three years, he documented the changes that had occurred, interviewed previous informants and reconstructed events that had transformed Tikopia in
the interim (Firth 1959). This was a new kind of history in several respects: it was relatively short term; change was calculated from a well-documented account of the earlier culture; the people who participated in historical events were clearly identifiable and large as life; and, of considerable significance, most of the data were provided by the Tikopia themselves. European accounts were used but were clearly secondary.

At the time, Firth’s restudy of Tikopia was seen by anthropologists more as a unique opportunity than as a revival of anthropological interest in history. Not until the early 1980s, when Marshall Sahlins (1981) and Greg Dening (1980) published their studies, on Hawaii and the Marquesas respectively, did history again come into vogue in Polynesian anthropology. Informed by structural and symbolic frameworks, Sahlins and Dening focused on early encounters between Europeans and Polynesians. Unlike most previous accounts — those in the culture change genre, for example — they paid almost as much attention to the culture of the European intruders as to the culture of the Polynesians affected. In this respect Sahlins’s and Dening’s work marked a major step forward, but their studies were limited in scope. In some ways, by confining themselves to the period of 'conjunction' (in Sahlins’s phrasing), their projects had more in common with reconstructions of pre-European Polynesian societies than with post-contact historical accounts familiar to historians.

By drawing attention to the cultural background of European intruders, Sahlins and Dening have raised a number of issues of focal concern for historical scholars in Polynesia. The language used in historical documents, for example, now becomes a matter of problematic concern. As Borofsky and I have noted in our chapter 'The early contact period' in Developments in Polynesian ethnology (1989), the characterization as 'theft' by European explorers of attempts by Polynesians to appropriate shipboard goods is heavily
loaded with cultural assumptions. Documents, therefore, need to be read with a wary eye for both European and Polynesian cultural agendas.

Parallel to a growing interest in early contact history has been a revitalization of reconstructionist projects. Douglas Oliver's *Ancient Tahitian society* (1974) and Valerio Valeri's work on Hawaii (1985) are two outstanding, though drastically different, examples. Perhaps even more important is the work being done by a new breed of archaeologists who are integrating historical accounts with studies of environmental transformation, historical legends, and changes in material culture and language. Their work promises to provide a sense of Polynesian real-time history prior to European intrusion, replacing notions of relatively fixed 'traditional' cultures or sequential evolutionary stages. As the collaboration of Kirch and Sahlins (1992) on the Anahulu Valley project in Hawaii clearly demonstrates, the early post-contact period provides some unique opportunities for archaeologists and cultural anthropologists to work together.

The period following early contact, and particularly the colonial era in the Pacific, has also caught the attention of contemporary anthropologists. Many of us are now competing directly with Pacific historians in a quest to understand the political economies that resulted from colonization. Documentation for this period is extremely rich, thanks to the colonial powers' compulsiveness for keeping written records. But the documentation is strongly biased in favour of European administrators' values and concerns. It inevitably reveals far more about the culture of colonialism than it does about subjected peoples. If we are to write credible histories of Polynesian societies during the colonial period, however, we have to do more than take European biases into account. We have to do something to compensate for the silencing of Polynesian voices. In my opinion, one
of the best ways to do this is through biography, and by assisting and encouraging Polynesian elders to record their own autobiographies.

I have recently completed a biography of a remarkable Rotuman man by the name of Wilson Inia. He was trained as a school teacher and became a leader who served as a bridge into the modern era. He started the Rotuma High School and was responsible for training a whole generation of individuals who went on to become teachers, ministers, doctors and government officials. Without compensation, he nurtured the Rotuman Co-operative Association into the most successful co-operative venture in Fiji. In his later years he was elected Rotuma's first senator to the Fiji Legislature and served with distinction from 1970 until his death in 1983.

What I found when researching Inia's biography was that although his record of accomplishments was known to most Rotumans he was not seen by them as a figure of historical significance. Nor was he a historical figure to the British colonialists. He had often proved an irritation to them by defying their authority, and they were content to bury him in their voluminous files.

What I came to realize through this research was that in some very important respects Rotumans, along with many other peoples who were colonial subjects, have been deprived of their history. The colonial powers, Great Britain among them, had little interest in glorifying indigenous individuals, especially any who defied their authority. 'History' in colonial schools was mainly European history, and only a few indigenous individuals — usually rulers or warriors — were ever identified, mostly for the roles they played in abetting or thwarting the dominant society's agenda. Rarely are they represented as flesh-and-blood human beings; their biographies, if known at all, are more often than not superficial and shallow. Virtually without representation are those individuals, like Wilson Inia, who —
unobtrusively from the viewpoint of their colonial masters — led their people into new social, economic and political territory.

It is no wonder, then, that the only histories available to ex-colonial peoples are so often short on biography. But history without biography is cold and impersonal; it fails to provide the substance for empathetic identification. It lacks the immediacy needed to make a people’s history their own, to make history personally meaningful. Heroes — historical models who exemplify the virtues of particular cultural traditions — are a vital part of every group’s sense of themselves. I have written Wilson Inia’s biography in order to identify such a hero for the Rotuman people, in the hope that it will help to awaken their concern for their history.

IN SEARCH OF POLYNESIANS' HISTORY

All of the approaches to history I have discussed so far have been from a Western perspective, embedded in forms of discourse that emphasize chronological sequencing, cause and effect, developmental stages, and the like. Events and processes with pronounced political or economic effects are routinely privileged. But what of the ways Polynesians 'do history'? What forms do their discourses take? Were their traditional approaches to the past 'historical' in our sense? Are their current perspectives different from ours?

Some forms of traditional Polynesian knowledge, especially legends, were widely presumed by European scholars to be historical discourse as we know it. Many early commentators treated legends as essentially accurate oral accounts of 'real events', slightly embellished with metaphors and colourful exaggerations. Their assumption was that Polynesian story-tellers were repositories of time-chronicled events that were important to each group — that they were 'doing history' in our sense. Some current scholars take a similar view and attempt to date accurately legendary events. But more recently there
has been a good deal of debate in the anthropological literature about the historical veracity of Polynesian legends. Personally I am somewhat sceptical. As I have stated elsewhere when discussing Rotuman legends (Howard 1985), Polynesian story-telling appears to be couched in strong semiotic codes in which sequencing plays an important part. The structuring of legends thus seems to be less oriented to chronicling history than to documenting recurrent cultural truisms. In other words, Polynesian myths and legends seem to be forms of discourse designed to explicate cultural logic. I have no doubt that real historical events are often incorporated into legendary accounts, but I do not believe the assumptions underlying Polynesian legendary discourse are of the same order as those underlying Western histories, written or oral.

Genealogies probably come closer to historical discourse as we know it. They are ordered chronologically and often significant events are attached to various personages. They may be mythicized to a greater or lesser degree as they recede in time and, to the extent that they provide legitimacy to authority, are politically manipulated; but these are processes familiar to Western historiography as well.

In an effort to learn more about historical discourse in Polynesia I recently embarked on a project to discover how contemporary Rotumans 'did history'. I purposely chose a sample of educated individuals initially, thinking they would be sensitive to contrasts between Western and Rotuman approaches. I was shocked to discover that although they were all familiar with history as a subject taught in school (which included British history, the history of Australia and New Zealand and, in some instances, the history of Fiji), none had thought about Rotuma's past within a historical framework. When I asked which events in the past they regarded as especially important, I drew blanks. If I suggested events I knew to be important, they would usually agree, but it was apparent they had not thought about
them in historical terms. When I asked about people whom they admired, or who had done the most for Rotuma, they invariably named a close relative or near ancestor, never an unrelated individual who, from an outsider's point of view, had been a historical figure.

These interviews gave me the clue that I needed. For Rotumans, history is embedded in family lines, not in the polity as a whole. My informants' responses reflected the fact that personal identity is still much more strongly attached to kin groups and locality than it is to Rotuma as a whole, or to the expanded Rotuman community. This helps to explain why genealogies remain the closest approximation to Western historical discourse in many Polynesian communities. Genealogies are, in essence, family histories, which coincidentally at times are also political histories.

Once this realization took hold, it was much easier to identify forms of discourse that encoded information about past events. Most of the forms require some previous knowledge of persons and events; familiarity is assumed and so much of the potential narrative is not made explicit. The cryptic nature of these oral accounts is one reason it is so easy for an outsider to miss their historical essence. Some examples of the tropes that encode history are:

1. Family jokes (*te samuga*)
These comprise jokes about families that usually refer to a humorous event involving an ancestor. They are usually condensed to a single word (for example, biscuit, button) or a short phrase, and are known by nearly everyone. For example, the descendants of one man are known as 'shake hands with the mirror', in reference to his reaction when he was first shown a mirror by European visitors.

2. Sayings
Some sayings encode prototypical events that serve as commentary on current affairs; for example, *fak se Michael* refers to a story about
a district officer who, in a fit of rage, threw hot water on a man who had been a faithful servant. The saying is used as a commentary on someone who turns on loyal supporters.

3. Place names
Place names carry with them stories and associations that are well known to people in a specific locality. Who owns a particular piece of land, who claims rights to it, disputes associated with it, social dramas played out on it are all embedded in the name of the land.

4. Chiefly titles
As with place names, titles are cultural shorthand for encoding ancestral persona, wars and conflicts, triumphs and tragedies. Titles are located within particular districts and families and as such are circumscribed rather than general to the Rotuman community at large.

So, in contrast to Western historical formats, which are oriented towards providing readers or listeners with information they are presumed not to know, these Rotuman tropes assume a listener’s prior knowledge. They aim at recall — at directing a listener’s attention to the relevance of their knowledge to a contemporary context. If a listener is uninformed he must ask knowledgeable kin or a friend in private of the associations involved. Only rarely will the historical knowledge embedded in these codes be made explicit in public arenas.

Still another trope for encoding history is songs which are composed to honour specific events such as weddings, funerals, the Methodist Conference, when important guests visit, and so on. These songs are often sung in conjunction with tau maka (group dances), but they are also composed by individual singers in modern formats. They are composed as commentary on current events rather than as records for future reference. Most songs are therefore ephemeral,
relating to the current context and later forgotten, although some survive in people's memories and thus have historical significance.

I am well aware that in other contexts educated Polynesians have joined academic discourse concerning their history. Some have taken radical stands disparaging all Western scholarship. They argue that only persons with 'Polynesian blood' are entitled to produce representations of Polynesian culture or narrate Polynesian history. Usually this is stated in more parochial terms; for example, only people with Hawaiian blood or Maori blood are entitled to write about Hawaiian or Maori culture and history. They argue that we have demeaned them in our characterizations and have undermined their political power in the face of Euro-American domination and oppression.

While such arguments deserve a hearing, and are based on serious grievances, I find them unacceptable. For one thing, I have a strong aversion to the racial premises underlying such pronouncements. Any attempt to legitimize or de-legitimize scholarship on the basis of race or ethnicity should not be tolerated. It is through a multiplicity of views that we are most likely to gain a satisfactory appreciation for the human experience in general. Likewise, it is through a multiplicity of views that we are most likely to do justice to the full richness of any single group's humanity.

What would be a step forward for anthropology, however, would be to broaden the scope of our discourse so that it is more accessible to, and appropriate for, the people we study. I am, therefore, extremely sympathetic to the efforts of Polynesian scholars like Albert Wendt from Samoa, Epeli Hau'ofa from Tonga, and Vilsoni Hereniko from Rotuma. They have incorporated Polynesian tropes into their writings — humour, mythical imagery, redundancy — lending to their work an insider's subjectivity that enriches everyone's understanding of the Polynesian experience. To treat such
writings as somehow less scholarly, because they may not conform to
current academic standards of discourse, would be a grave injustice.
In other words, I am arguing for inclusiveness rather than
exclusiveness. For too long academic anthropologists have
overvalued esoteric discourse designed to prove their intellectual
superiority. We have correspondingly undervalued communication
that is clear, straightforward and accessible to a public that includes
the subjects we study.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Finally, I wish to address a form of history that is being thrust
upon us by changes in the way we do fieldwork. In the past,
anthropologists would usually go into the field, spend a year or so
there, then return to their home society, and that was it. Return trips
were rare, and 'the ethnographic present' was represented in writing as
an experience frozen in time. Today, however, many anthropologists
stay on location for much longer periods, or return to their field sites
over and over again, year after year. They come to see history in the
making and gain a very different perspective from their predecessors,
whose ethnographies were based on single visits. The more time we
spend in the communities that we study, the more blurred the
distinction between 'us' and 'them' becomes. The notion of 'the other'
as the subject of anthropological investigation and discourse comes to
make less and less sense. Ultimately we come to realize there is no
other, only us.

I did my first fieldwork with Rotumans from 1959–1961 and did
not return for twenty-six years. During the interim my field notes
constituted for me an ethnographic present devoid of history. But in
the period between 1987 and 1991 I returned every year to Rotuma
for field sessions lasting from a few weeks to six months. So I not
only have a thirty-year perspective on recent Rotuman history, I have
been seeing history unfold before my eyes. Each time I go back I gain
deep insights into ongoing disputes, shifting alliances, and political
and economic maneuvering by individuals I have seen in many
guises.

Modern technology also has contributed to a constant flow of news
and gossip being accessible to the anthropologist. In addition to
letters, I now get periodic faxes from my Rotuman friends in Fiji. I
talk regularly, in person and on the telephone, with Rotumans —
including some who live in Europe — who relate the latest news from
home. Other important sources of ethnographic data are the Fiji
newspapers. One can find articles about Rotuma ranging from results
of cricket matches to political upheavals. So there is no ethnographic
present any more, only perpetual change and ongoing process; only
history in the making. And the anthropologist often becomes an
integral part of that history.

Being witness to, and a participant in, history creates new ethical
problems for anthropologists. When analysing the colonial period, or
erlier forms of European intrusion such as missionization, we have
felt perfectly justified in mercilessly criticizing Europeans who had
abused power in pursuit of their own self-interests. In the struggles
between Europeans and Pacific Islanders our sympathies have been
unabashedly with the latter. Europeans had the power; Pacific
Islanders were powerless. We were the oppressors; they were the
victims.

I believe we have pushed that particular imagery too far,
sometimes portraying Polynesians as though they had no agendas of
their own, as if they were only passive reactors to European initiators.
But the point I want to make here is that in the post-colonial period
power abuses continue. We are now confronted with instances in
which Pacific Islanders in positions of authority abuse power in
pursuit of political or economic gain. How do we deal with such
occurrences? Should we report them with the same ruthless candour we have used to expose power abuses by Europeans? Or are we to fall back to a position of moral relativism that justifies tyrannical behaviour on the grounds that it is acceptable within Pacific cultures? Just what kind of 'history' should we be doing?

I wish to stick my neck out here and make my own bias clear. In my opinion we have more to lose, both as anthropologists and human beings, by accepting extreme forms of moral relativism than by adopting a universalistic approach, albeit a culturally sensitive one, to power and its abuse. I think the time has come for anthropologists to muster the courage to confront tyranny in no uncertain terms, at every level, and regardless of the ethnicity of its perpetrators. Such an approach will no doubt involve risks. It may mean being denied access to field sites. It may mean getting politically involved despite attempts to avoid it. But it will result in more credible accounts and, hopefully, more social justice, than ignoring such goings on.

To conclude, I believe that anthropologists can no longer avoid paying attention to historical processes, whether analysing earlier cultures in the Pacific or recent ones. The only question is what kind of history we should be doing. We can be timid, falling back on comfortable stereotypes and glossing over rough edges. Or we can confront the worst as well as the best head on, in the manner of good investigative reporting. I suggest that in the long run we will provide a greater service to anthropology, to the Pacific peoples and to humanity if we have the courage to opt for the latter.

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A usually unheralded aspect of the history of anthropology is that the lessons learnt by each successive generation have not always been heeded by the next. From this standpoint, Malinowski’s influence was certainly better sustained than that of one of the pioneers of British Social Anthropology, W.H.R. Rivers. Rivers had understood two things: that field trips should be of long duration¹ (wise counsel forgotten for some time afterwards); and that the changes in population numbers had an impact on the field situation.

In his pioneer study *Essays on the depopulation of Melanesia* (1922) Rivers outlined a psycho-social explanation for the very high male sex ratio then found in the Melanesian islands, and at the time expressed general anxiety that Melanesian people would simply fade out of the picture, as had almost happened with the Marquesans and the Tahitians. The collective lack of a will to live on, the despair shown by so many people then — Maurice Leenhardt has given us vivid instances of this (1929:27) — was thought by Rivers to explain the continuous population decline long after the spread of introduced diseases. This combination of a numerical factor and a feeling of doom disappeared with the population rise in the 1960s.
DEPOPULATION

Dwindling numbers have been often explained by historians, firstly, in terms of internal strife, stemming from prestige competition, leading to internecine wars using firearms (see Derrick 1946; Layard 1942), which were soon much more deadly; and secondly, by the introduction of foreign diseases in epidemic proportions: smallpox, influenza, whooping cough, tuberculosis, leprosy, and so on.

Precarious unions, or lifelong marriages, with Europeans have been a fixture of everyday life in even the smallest islands in the South Pacific, each of which has had a whaling sailor jumping ship, marrying and settling locally for some years or for the rest of his life. These sexual relations, the offspring of which married anew inside the local population, have brought in antibodies to the introduced diseases. After a few generations these antibodies were carried into the blood of every single islander and explain their physical survival. Nevertheless, the demographic decline lasted much longer than might be expected if this factor alone was taken into account. Rivers’s published genealogies, checked in the field, show, at the onset of the present century, generation levels with very few children, or with none at all (Rivers 1914).

Missionaries and other authors have often implicated the introduction of syphilis (see Deacon 1934). That was a mistake. Syphilis does not prevent children from being born in numbers. Pacific Islanders did not catch syphilis easily, for the reason that they nearly all had survived attacks of yaws in their youth or were still carriers of yaws, a disease which is characterized by a cross immunization with syphilis, the agent, a treponaema, being the same. Local histories of the sickness in the Pacific Islands and America have been quite different: yaws have no sexual connotations whatever, they are caught by walking barefoot on the
ground, and are transferred from the deeply scarred soles of the feet to the face, eating up parts of the nose and the ears, and because of this have often been confused at first glance with leprosy.

The real agent of the continuous depopulation process has been gonorrhoea, brought in by the sailors of the different navies, English, French, American, German, and the different corps of marines used to enforce the white man’s peace over the islands. Gonorrhoea, being a very old pre-Columbian European disease, was introduced early: by the Spanish in the Marianas; by the Portuguese and the Dutch in the Eastern Indonesian spice islands; maybe even by La Pérouse’s sailors, which explains the very early cases of depopulation in Guam, among the Marind-Anim in the south-eastern corner of West New Guinea and maybe on Vanikoro. Gonorrhoea provokes metritis in women, who then find themselves unable to conceive children, their fallopian tubes being closed. The continuous attraction of port towns, keeping numbers constant locally, served to hide the powerful depopulation factor linked to this physical presence of sailors and soldiers.

The very specific origin of the disease made for an irregular pattern of its diffusion in the islands, going from one lineage to another according to the marriages taking place and the amount of physical contact of individuals with the port towns. The system of forced labour introduced in New Caledonia was a factor accelerating its diffusion, as was the labour recruiting for the sugar-cane plantations in Queensland and Fiji. The sexual abuses of native female servants by European employers, or their sons, and the recourse on the plantations to a small number of women recruited to satisfy the sexual needs of a majority of men have been other accelerating factors. The small island of Aneitium, at the southern tip of Vanuatu, has seen ships coming over and over again, seeking the pretty clear-skinned girls and reinfecting them,
which explains why the population, which had fallen from more than 3000 to 300 in a matter of ten years under the eyes of the pioneer Presbyterian missionary John Geddie (Miller 1975), remained more or less around 250 for a century.

CONTRASTING NUMBERS

This constant and irregular depopulation factor, coming on top of all the others, is responsible for checkered consequences. Smallpox was introduced by a parcel of disease-carriers' clothes kindly left on one of the beaches of Espiritu Santo by a recruiter from Queensland, who thus practised an early form of bacterial warfare. It killed four-fifths of the population on the island in the second half of last century.3

Classical introduced diseases killed in a sort of egalitarian manner. All lineages were smitten in the same way. Gonorrhoea would hit those families with first contact with the European disease-carriers — the crews of men-of-war or later port-town garrisons — and would slowly expand without any capacity for quick diffusion throughout. Irregular or controlled contact — for instance, for all those islands which, for so long, only saw the Melanesian Mission ship Southern Cross twice a year and were so efficiently protected by the Anglican Church that they very rarely had European settlers on their coasts — or the simple fact that numerous expatriate workers, in Queensland or New Caledonia, tended to stay there and never come back — such being the case with many Tannese, the northern ni-Vanuatu workers being repatriated in greater numbers after 1899 — made for this singularity of diffusion. Islands like Lifu, in the Loyalties, and Tanna, in southern Vanuatu, have kept their population levels steadier than Epi and Malekula.4 The persistent refusal by the people of Aoba to go and work on plantations had the same effect.
Their clear-skinned women were much sought after by the planters, who tended to keep them as common-law wives and not send them back to their villages once they had fathered children by them.\(^5\)

Thus, over more than three generations a situation was maintained by which the population content of each lineage could differ widely, much more than would be normal, the general trend being an unequal disappearance of the faculty of producing children. The reason was medical. The consequences were cutting deeply into the social fabric. Prescribed spouses were nowhere to be found and marriages had to be rearranged according to the real situations. Nobody was alive to take over thousands of lapsing social statuses. The culture was surviving through dwindling numbers of living adults. Villages too small and too far apart had to be combined with larger coastal communities under missionary protection and supervision. A man could have conferred upon himself more than one traditional name, more than one social status, and thus multiple land tenure rights. The fact that the traditional society had largely become unworkable because of the lack of numbers — the island of Epi in central Vanuatu being one of the clearest examples of this state of affairs — explains the general trend to take refuge in Christianity and hide the necessary adaptations through the outward use of Christian names.

One of the consequences of the heavy but irregular depopulation process was that prescribed wives disappeared. For more than a century Islanders married the spouses they could find, not unborn theoretical brides and bridegrooms. Sir Basil Thomson, in his too often forgotten book *The Fijians: a study in the decay of custom* (1908), tells of a marriage census he made of the Tailevu Province through which he learned that the men would marry any girl there was to be found, and only then reorganize her genealogy so as to be able to call their wife by the kinship term applied to a
female cross-cousin. Was this *tradition* or the result of an *adaptative process* to the realities of demography at the time? Nobody asked the question, and nobody yet has offered a credible answer. It should be remembered that Viti Levu was not then the worst case of depopulation.

One might be reminded that, in Rivers's time, the capacity of the Islanders to read their genealogies in more than one way, and thus to place a given individual, preferably female if Ego was male, in the kin category that was more opportune, was an accepted fact which has since faded away from anthropology textbooks. The problem of what is really an incestuous relation remains to be specified. The Lakilia people, on Tongariki, had long found an easy way out. On a side of the public square a special stone serves as a way of deciding there is no incest, the couple having only to put their right feet simultaneously on the stone to escape this anthropological dishonour.

The hoped-for reverse trend in population decline came between the two world wars, at a time when the steady downturn of colonial economies obliged the Islanders to go back to their subsistence agriculture and use what small access they kept to the world market of cash crops as a simple adjunct to their time-honoured way of life. Such a situation is reappearing with a vengeance.

After World War I, the Rockefeller Foundation chose the Pacific Islands as the best area for an attempt to eradicate certain diseases that were chosen for their relative simplicity of treatment (Lambert 1941). They worked, with some success, on hookworm, which was a parasitical debilitating disease; then they started to try to eradicate yaws, treating tens of thousands of Islanders over the years with a mercury salts compound given by injection, the *Salvarsan* of the German firm Bayer. This was strong medicine. But its results showed in the population figures, which started to
level off, giving the first rays of hope in a century to the Pacific Island peoples living under direct colonial control.

After World War II, the World Health Organization took over and decided to eradicate yaws this time; hookworm, still in existence, was considered a lesser evil. At the end of the 1950s, the whole population of the Pacific Islands was treated with a single injection of penicillin in oil, repeated after two years. Yaws disappeared entirely, but gonorrhoea too, the name of which had never been even mentioned in official reports. Doctors knew of it, evidently, but, gonorrhoea not being an exotic disease, nobody would have been interested in organizing such a campaign. Results were immediate. Villages started filling up with children. Fathers gleefully put on each of their children’s heads the names they had had to keep for themselves, thus reconstructing, as well as they could, their old society. At the same time, with the increase in population helping, the pressure for the return of lands taken over by white settlement started in earnest throughout the region. Independence of the Pacific Island states is one of the far-reaching consequences of this sudden upward population trend, not yet abated, with some smaller islands being already overpopulated, for instance in the Tongan group. These results changed the anthropological scene overnight, starting with medical decisions taken far away from the region and which had apparently never envisaged such far-reaching consequences.

The return to the past noted by observers of the Pacific Islands is in part a mechanical consequence of the return of a healthy population growth. With increased population allowing for a normal functioning of the island society, the necessity to hang onto the new structures introduced by the missions was due to wear off. At the same time the missionaries were leaving the area in favour of independent Churches that have a much more subtle and more liberal view of their former culture and society. Pacific Island
nations exist not as collective political entities but as a complex series of actors inside specific cultures and social institutions which are at the same time as close as possible to their traditional models and yet different from them through the erosion of time and the play of adaptative processes of change. In all places where established Churches have existed a good hundred years, the concept of heathenism as something to be destroyed has sunk to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. There is no need any more to hide from the white men who had been autocratically governing the Church for a good century the reality of what was happening in the villages, and how Islanders had kept underground so many fundamental ritual and mythical links with the invisible world and the realm of the dead. Prophetic movements have in a way won the day and, being recognized for what they were — an attempt to gain independence of thought and of action for each island nation — are fading away too. They will come back if and when they are needed anew.

The problem with anthropology in the Pacific is that its first good material dates from the end of last century and relates to coastal areas which were all more or less severely affected by the depopulation process. No one has been able to describe a real traditional society, which does not exist anymore, if it ever existed. All those societies about which data was being published were in the throes of a hardening adaptive process that they would not explain spontaneously, even to inquisitive white men.

Little attempt has been made to document what happened from the end of the eighteenth century in Polynesia or, for that matter, from the sixteenth century on the north-western coast of New Guinea. Anthropologists write learnedly of traditional societies that they have in effect never seen, and study surviving cultures in a constant process of change, not only as a response to culture contact factors (Christianization, loss of land, loss of any form of
independence for a century or more, police and military repression of any form of collective resistance). Fortunately the dates of each field study are known and thus it is possible to incorporate something of the relativity the author often did not imagine. The first culprit was Malinowski, offering us a masterly introduction to so many other incomplete descriptions and having wilfully rejected any concept of time.¹¹

Due to his earlier exposure to Maori society and culture, and his capacity of working in the vernacular language, Raymond Firth gave us an early and much better balanced description (see, for example, Firth 1936). He saw the importance of noting down each of the social statuses lacking a living titular holder, and what solution the people gave, day after day, to such problems. In Canala and Hienghêne, I found that only two chieftainships practised cross-cousin marriage, once every generation, and that this was enough to justify the existing kinship system based on this type of marriage; all other lineages marrying according to what suited their strategy at the time. But how can I know if this was already the case before James Cook’s vessels skirted the shores of the New Caledonia?

The structuralist school, born with Radcliffe-Brown, furnished theoretical reasons for not publishing genealogies, and we thus lost the precious and detailed type of information found in Rivers’s *The history of Melanesian society* (1914). Field workers, who should have undertaken a complete genealogical coverage of the area studied, went on being satisfied with working from one or two short genealogies — never published — and found themselves caught unawares in writing an a-historical description, in a sometimes worse fashion even than functionalists. Their hesitant treatment of so-called 'irregular' marriages, or other cases not following the proclaimed rules, shows how much the theory was full of holes and anthropologists powerless to fit them in the real
social processes. These were adaptive at all points in time and space, and still are. The better authors, however, did show this factor in action.

LAND

The subject matter least worked on by social anthropologists is land. None of the pioneers offered any easy way of dealing with it. Asking what is the prescribed rule is a short cut of a naïve kind. Nothing proves that the rule is in fact followed in any way. Its expression being couched inevitably in the white man's words, because they were already used in the formulation of the question, European observers were persuaded from the start that they were confronted with forms of 'ownership', be they individual or collective. The nineteenth-century utopian socialists, followed in this by Friedrich Engels, were so eager to find in the Pacific forms of collective ownership, under the name of primitive communism, that they found what they wanted to find within the limited information available to them.

A governor of New Caledonia who was a follower of the French social theorist Saint-Simon, published a decree recognizing the collective ownership of land by the tribe. He had no other definition of the 'tribe' than a collection of individuals living in a given area, at the expense of which he wanted to redress imaginary wrongs suffered by European settlers through confiscating native land. This 'Order in Council' was in fact a nasty colonial trick. Collective ownership meant it was easier to confiscate global stretches of land than to proceed plot by plot, individual by individual. One had only to define the existence of a tribe on strictly geographical criteria, without any fieldwork, and accuse it globally of some wrongdoing in order to take over the lot in one stroke.
Land needs detailed survey work, which most anthropologists have not been trained to do, and a study — plot by plot, place name by place name — of the history of the system, with information being obtained on the spot and never in a far-away location.¹⁵ A recently-built Christian village is the worst place to gather data,¹⁶ the existence of the village itself being at the origin of new factors in land quarrels. Detailed land survey is not so easy because of the implications people will put on it; for instance, the fear that the knowledge could be used for the introduction of a land tax system — the one in existence in New Zealand has been a reason for the loss of land by lineages who could pay neither the tax nor the subsequent arrears.

Pacific Island societies do not produce any commodity allowing for the establishment of an accumulation process. No agricultural produce can be kept for more than a few weeks (taro, sweet potato) or months (yams). When reared,¹⁷ pigs do allow some accumulation because they are fed with vegetable refuse and special crops not always relished by man. They always end up being killed and eaten in pig-giving feasts where any pretence at accumulation disappears in favour of the obvious and spectacular search for greater prestige through giving away generously, albeit in a strictly controlled fashion.

Manipulation of land rights is an age-old process in all peasant societies.¹⁸ Prestige competition is, in all sorts of ways, the rule in the Pacific Islands. This institution allows Islanders to strive to attain greater heights rather than only being content with boasting the best worked gardens, which already are a constant factor in acquiring prestige. Bernard Vienne’s work on Mota Lava in the Banks Islands (1984) has shown that what some authors had imagined to be a complex system based on oblique marriages between succeeding generations was in truth the result of an equally complex strategy allowing for the transfer of land tenure
holdings from land of lesser value for yam cultivation to the acquisition of garden locations on the best type of soils.

Acquiring land through a sophisticated marriage strategy which has been pursued over many generations can create the basis for entering a successful prestige competition, because it means the potential capacity to feed, when needed, a greater mass of people for the number of days deemed necessary in each case (often enough this involves hundreds of visitors for five days). Only a complete genealogical coverage and an exhaustive land survey can document such a process. But how many are there in the published literature?

Personal experience in dealing with land tenure over the last forty years has shown that the concepts of 'ownership' could not be applied to the problem; they only tend to hide the reality. From the Isle of Pines to Epi and further north or east, land goes with names. The name given at birth — after consultations, negotiations, and lengthy meetings of all concerned — defines the social status and the land tenure of the future adult. This name is in effect that of a man, or a woman, who has lived or might still be alive and party to the transaction; the transfer of social status and land tenure rights is smoother because no new action is needed. One inherits what has already been held in the public eye for generations by all successive persons who have borne the same name. If the name is taken from another lineage, this is a form of adoption. The child will be reared by his parents, but the other party — the lineage which has given the name — will do what is necessary to teach him his future rights and obligations. This can be quite a convenient arrangement in helping a junior son to escape somewhat his elder brother's future authority.

The territorial aspect of a lineage's claim to land is none other than the addition of those land tenure claims that go with the series of names which belong to it. This could explain why Deacon in
Seniang, South West Bay, Malekula, as well as myself in Lifu, have found that ownership — for the individual or for the lineage — is not about territorial claims as such, but first and foremost about the well-worn paths going through the land.

WOMEN

Missionaries and other white men came to the Pacific Islands with the preconceived idea that local women were not free agents but chattels of the men’s sexual urges, interests and strategies. They usually asked their own wives to train the girls and bring about a form of women’s liberation through conversion to Christianity or to some of the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment.

Like quite a number of other set ideas, this was partly a misconception. Strongly patrilinear, but in a way Utopian, societies, where the maternal uncle plays a central role, have been described by anthropologists unknowingly repeating the missionaries' ideas about the unequal status of men and women, even though some of the reality was already known to be different. One of the consequences was the usual assertion that if a woman of high rank inherited a title imbued with power, her husband or her brother would in fact wield this power, leaving her only a kind of prestige-carrying honorary position.

Between Efate and Nguna in south-central Vanuatu the system of titles governing land tenure and social status is matrilinear. This was considered evil by Presbyterian missionaries, who insisted that the people became patrilinear, and checked that they did, but only for the principal titles, forgetting about the mass of other titles that went on being transmitted from maternal uncle to sister’s son. Since the independence of the Church and the departure of the last missionary, these principal titles have gone back to being
matrilinear. Because of this missionary insistence, the local society had been classified as being patrilinear for a century.

Reality can be otherwise. Everybody knows of Salamasina, the heroine who engineered the removal of the Tongan yoke from Samoa four centuries ago. But other high-born women have been gifted with the capacity of wielding power themselves, such as Ka’ahumanu, the widow of Kamehameha I, who assumed the power of lifting the tapu system. This capacity of taking power unto themselves is more obvious when they are first-born, which means their rank outstrips any living male in their lineage. William Mariner had already noticed this in Tonga in the first years of the last century (1827). A survey of the life stories of any number of first-born women, known and talked about around the Pacific Islands, would be an interesting project. In New Zealand, Maori successive female ali ki nui and other women’s most interesting case stories have already been published and it can be shown that certain Maori ha’apu (sub-tribes) such as the Ngati Porou allowed the women to speak at the marae (ceremonial centre) and exercise direct political leadership (see King 1977; Mahuika 1975). Also, independent Western Samoa recognized the eldest sister of the present chief of state, the titular head of the house of Malietoa, as the highest-ranked person in the nation.

Life stories written by men, prominent people in the first stages of independence in Papua New Guinea, are revealing. They all talk in glowing terms of their mothers, showing them as having been in many ways free agents, neither submissive nor letting their husbands solely take decisions that concerned the well-being of the family. The Australian film First contact shows how Papuan women, having given birth to half-caste children by the first white men who came to the valleys of the Anga people (formerly called Kukukuku) — because their over-anxious brothers or even their husbands had sent them as tentative go-betweens once the
humanity of the powerful newcomers had been recognized — refused to let their male kin kill their babies at birth and reared them into adulthood against the general hostility of their own society.

It can be understood how nineteenth-century academics, transferring their own view of gender differences in Europe, determined ideas about unequal social status in the Pacific. It is less understandable how archaeologists in recent years have continued to ignore the fundamental fact that potters were women. They always were at first contact. Even if the men often claimed that their ancestors stole from their women the techniques of making masks and the myths dealing with the initiation of boys coming of age — the mythical being who devours and then regurgitates the initiates is often female — they have never claimed that the women acquired their knowledge of pottery techniques from the men.

The change over from Lapita pots to other cooking traditions in the last thousand years, which has been noted by archaeologists (for instance, on Tikopia; Kirch and Yen 1982) and which, in the 1950s, was already acknowledged by oral tradition in north Malekula in Vanuatu, could not have been done without women taking an important part in the decision. Lapita pots were made to cook sauces from a coconut-milk base incorporating animal, fish or shell meat that was not put aside for ritual or ceremonial purposes. Making parcels out of banana leaves allowed greater quantities of more sophisticated food (baked and mashed taro, grated yam, smaller parcels inside larger ones incorporating fowls or other birds stuffed with a red hot stone inside, and so on) to be cooked.

High oval pots in New Caledonia (one metre in height instead of the 30-40 centimetres in diameter and height for the Lapita pots) allowed a woman to cook a family meal for her husband and children. With these cooking arrangements there were single
houses for each wife and collective lineage houses which were more or less the men's privilege. \(^{22}\) Malinowski has shown us, following authors such as the Hungarian Baron Ludwig Biro (1889–91), how women potters would make high conical vessels in which coconut oil, produced in the same vessels, was brought to boiling point in order to make taro fritters. Men only intervened at a later stage, proposing the use of large softwood vessels in the Solomons, or canoe hulls in Polynesia, which contained tubers with red-hot stones being put in the middle and parcels of banana or purao leaves covering everything until the food was cooked.

Anthropology was formerly characterized by a form of rigidity; that is, it was thought that traditional societies had not changed for thousands of years. This negative factor tends to stand untouched where the role of women and the technologies created by them are concerned. Like men, women have gone from the original techniques they brought with them from Asia to technical innovations fitting a new environment and enriched by new social experience — going from the longhouse (kept in east and central inland Espiritu Santo) to nuclear family dwellings (Vanuatu, New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands and later in Polynesia).

The first generation of female anthropologists tended to choose men as informants, because they were thought to be the only ones to know the tradition. A number of distinguished women colleagues, from Annette Weiner (1976) to Barbara Gloscewski (1991), have since brought us new knowledge about the capacity of women, not only to have dreams about the invisible world and show a capacity to prophesize — they have been active in both such ways in post-war millenarian movements — but to introduce new innovative ritual activities over those which were theirs in the past. A few older, but at times forgotten, field anthropologists had described in the 1920s female grade-taking social rituals in central Vanuatu without the importance of this fact being recognized. The
general view of Pacific Island societies is fortunately now in the process of becoming more balanced.

Maurice Leenhardt was told how the wooden spade in New Caledonia was used to make yam mounds. The kneeling wife held the back of the hardwood spade with her two hands, and the standing husband gave a hefty push with the bamboo handle he was holding. Thus, the functional unit was the couple. The same author published vernacular texts of myths showing that young women seeking legitimate marriage, and not men, were the active partner in provoking the very first sexual relations (Leenhart 1932).

In 1924 Arthur Bernard Deacon was told of the value of love magic to the men. The maker of the magic had recourse to sand or dust wetted by the woman’s urine, mixed with ground taken from an ant’s nest. A bit of this dust was then silently blown in the direction of the woman at a time when she would be looking, because the essential part of the magic was to let her notice the action. Any first move on the part of the man was considered dangerous if the girl, or the married woman, was not agreeable, as she would then report the advances, resulting in a difficult situation for the man. There was the risk of being fined at the very least or, at the most, of being obliged to run for his life. I got the same explanation from young men interested in sleeping with one of the wives of a polygamous Big Nambas chief in north Malekula, and from elderly women describing how they were working as intermediaries between their younger female kin and the anxious would-be lovers.

If the women are the decision makers in sexual affairs, this can also occur in many other walks of life, as long as they let the men reap the prestige of expressing themselves through formal speeches made in public. The women who laugh between themselves, while they are telling each other stories about the men
around them, are using an extraordinarily strong instrument of social pressure. Ridicule in front of the women can explain why a man may eventually feel he must go into self-imposed exile.

RANK

Progress in the analysis of ranked societies in the South Pacific has been stifled by two factors, more or less unconsciously nurtured over the years: the century-old belief that Polynesia differed widely from Melanesia; and the fact that anthropologists dealing with New Guinea have so often never read what has been published over two centuries about the Eastern Pacific. They tend at times to rediscover what has been already noted somewhere else to the east since the first European ship dropped anchor among the Pacific Islands.

Margaret Mead would advise her students at Columbia University not to read what had been published on their future field site so as to arrive with a fresh mind. She never imagined that set ideas and *a priori* judgements coming from one’s own culture do not create an open mind, but more often exactly the contrary. A critical reading of the existing literature by the teacher is a much better introduction than this falsely objective and passive stance.

Back from the field, researchers should read everything once again for the very simple reason that they will only then be able to see the exact value of other people’s data and to fit their own into a more general picture, using what remains valid of the knowledge acquired in the past, adding their own information and not pretending to have found what never exists anywhere today: a virgin field full of potential new discoveries.

Since the days of Captain James Cook’s precise information and sound judgements — he has been the only one, for a long time, to disprove the popular notion of the Pacific Islands as a
sexual paradise — a world of knowledge has been accumulated about conditions at first contact, with date and location. The greater part of the known reactions seem to have been extraordinarily repetitive. This can be explained partly by the fundamental unity of all these cultures. Who made decisions at the time of first contact is one of the points little studied by anthropologists. In one way or another it appears that decisions were made by men of rank. But how did they get others to agree to act in a coherent fashion, if such was the case? The often more detailed data obtained at the time of the first mass conversions to Christianity can be equally helpful in answering this question. Although at times difficult to read, missionary literature is crammed with information waiting to be interpreted.

What we call rank is what elevates one man over others. Rank can be inherited, acquired through a mixture of complex strategies and sheer physical exertions or through a quasi-elective process. A century-old simplification says that inherited rank is Polynesian; acquired rank, in a sort of ingrained trend towards democracy, is Melanesian. This is nonsense.

The Samoan matai system is made up of two groups: firstly, the more or less hereditary regional ali'i who play a political role but are pitted against each other in a continuous prestige competition, with 'talking chiefs', tulafale, manipulating the scene; and, secondly, the elected matai, who are entrusted with the pule, that is, the power to control land tenure inside the local community's territorial limits, showing an elective process wherein hereditary rights are never really forgotten. The Shepherd Islands, in south central Vanuatu, boast a complex and interesting elective system of titles governing access to land, roads for exchanging gifts and counter-gifts, and the availability of positions in the power structure. Informants will not give genealogies but present a
succession of titles, some of which have even been reproduced in writing on a few, for us unusual, contemporary tombstones.

Hereditary rank, so-called for convenience, apparently devoid of any electoral process, applies not only to Eastern Polynesia but to Tonga, Fiji, the Loyalty Islands, southern Vanuatu up to Efate and north Malekula, parts of the Solomon Islands, and evidently to the Trobriands and any number of other locations. But elder brothers, if unsuitable, can be replaced by junior ones. The lineage of the shelved hereditary titular head goes into self-imposed exile and is often obliged to change names. The chief can gain mana — a Melanesian, as well as Polynesian, concept first described by Codrington for the Banks Islands in north Vanuatu — through war, well-calculated and negotiated marriages, or astute political manoeuvering comprising gifts of food and traditional riches. He will lose prestige by not repaying ceremonial debts, by losing battles, or by being divorced by his high-born first and legitimate wife. Often enough, before handing over a title to the dead chief’s eldest son, this function will be taken over successively by each male sibling of the deceased (New Caledonia, New Zealand Maori). If a chief acts too much according to the European concept of chieftainship and its imaginary absolute power and heaps up abuses (trying to take over land or sleep with too many married women) he can be exiled or murdered (the public murder of Jean-Marie Tjibaou on Ouvea in 1989, with nobody raising a hand to prevent it and tens of people knowing in advance of the risk or of the projected murder, can only be understood as one such instance).

These 'chiefs' are surrounded by a 'court', both in Western Polynesia, Fiji, the Loyalty Islands and south-central Vanuatu. This concept of court can be physically translated into a courtyard, that is, a fenced area — hag in Ouvea and Lifu — surrounded by monumental posts of the hardest wood, one post to a tree. Inside
this area the privileged members of the court, each representing his lineage, have certain duties: orator or 'talking chief' (the Samoan tulafale, the Fijian and Tongan matapule, the Wallissian mutu de aliki, the Melanesian Ouvean hnyimen than); warrior; executioner; priest, seer or diviner; carpenter; holder of the traditional treasures; messenger to any place occupied by allied or enemy lineages (each possessing marriageable maidens) and so on. A careful assessment of these positions over a long period shows that instead of being subservient to the holder of the paramount title they tend to strive to be as independent from it as possible: they can act on their own, without consulting the titular head of the apparent hierarchy, and they can send the representative of a junior line to act in their stead, thus giving a theoretical homage, but remaining free agents as much as possible. Observation over more than three decades of the precise behaviour, and the strategies involved, of each of these dignitaries in a number of circumstances, and the interpretation on the same basis of former historically recorded events favours the same conclusion (see chapters on Lifu and Ouvea in Guiart 1992).

The concept of the 'big-man' has been taken from the language of nineteenth-century recruiters working for Queensland plantations. It is a pidgin word, and as such lacks precision. It implied then the existence of a person benefiting from a rank acquired in unknown conditions. Contemporary anthropological usage applies the word to persons who usually live within a dual competition, each organizing for the benefit of the other the presentation of extensive quantities of food, involving tens or at times hundreds of pigs being killed. All this is conceived of as a kind of aggression which must be repulsed through mobilizing and handing over more pigs, food and riches in the same way to the very man and group responsible for the first gift. Any such presentation must be reciprocated, each former recipient giving
slightly more than he received initially: too much over the amount that has been received would eventually be bad manners; even slightly under would mean losing the competition and the prestige acquired or maintained over the years. Douglas Oliver was the first to give us a convincing description of the strategies of such men, known as *muumi* among the Siuai of Bougainville Island. This example is, for the present, more convenient to use for comparison purposes with the rest of the Pacific, being geographically closer to the physical centre of things.

My view is that if this description fits a model — models do exist, at levels sometimes more complex than has been thought — this one would show at least two variants: one which tends to operate inside a fixed hierarchy of formal grades and one which does not. The first option would be the grade-taking hierarchy of central and northern Vanuatu, called *namanggi, mange, ninmangki* in the centre, and *suk(p)we* in the north of the group, where grades go from two to thirty according to place and time, each grade responsible for erecting a stone or wooden carved monument (see Codrington 1891; Deacon 1934; Layard 1942; Tattevin 1926–27, 1928; Vienne 1984). In this case the sons of the principal pig owners, who do not need to rent pigs from others at a high price but have them readily available, are at a considerable advantage (Guiart 1951). People in north Ambrym explain that these individuals are, for this very reason, asked to pay twice the going rate for each of the successive stages of acquiring a given rank.

The other option is the one found in Bougainville and the Highlands of New Guinea, but equally in inland Malekula, Vanuatu, where a man must build a dancing square, then a men’s house and later a battery of wooden gongs, before starting to send invitations for a food and pig feast to be reciprocated later. One must infer that sons of the richer pig owners are at an
advantage here too; 'commoners' lack resources and are obliged to borrow pigs or shell money at high cost. In the Highlands of New Guinea at least some of the newly elected representatives after independence have been sons of former big-men, following in their fathers footsteps but making use of new means of displaying and distributing riches (for instance, the so-called and now suppressed 'slush fund').

The inhabitants of the Big Nambas Plateau of north Malekula have used their great and early concentration of acquired firearms to prevent any European settlement in their area, and to maintain and elaborate the different facets of their grade-taking tradition. They boast hereditary chiefs working against one another, in war and in peace. These two chiefs, who always claim the same mythical origin, exchange human victims to mark the end of a war, as well as ceremonial presentations of pigs and food. They are the only ones to take higher grades in the process (Guiart 1952), as if they considered they had to demonstrate that every logical trend in the 'game' had been invented in Melanesia.

Thus all the logical trends emerging from apparently contradictory principles will be represented somewhere, even to the point of appearing intermingled. All the logical intermediate steps should be found, in such a way that cultural differences are made of nothing else but the variants which in any case should exist somewhere. The South Pacific thus should be treated as a working whole for comparison purposes as well as theoretical analysis. There are no hard set frontiers anywhere in the Island space, except geographical ones (distance being the principal operating factor). Pacific Islanders are masters of logic and do not share the fear of contradiction evolved by the European intellectual world since Hegel was so widely misunderstood. They know, better than us, how to manage a dialectical process, and can easily proceed to
the utmost consequences of a logical position and yet keep alive the contradictions they seem to thrive upon.

Islanders have never perpetually repeated the same social behaviour, which is evidenced by their adaptation when and where they have been obliged to abandon their former environment (the Malaita island builders are a case in point and the adaptations where the white man took over extensive areas of land are another). They have constantly sifted the information available to them at a given time so as to set their behaviour inside the form of vernacular expression they themselves had decided upon.

POLYNESIA VERSUS MELANESIA

The variations in the way social control is exercised over the islands has thus little to do with the oft-repeated idea, born in our colonial world, that hereditary chieftainship in Melanesia could only be the fruit of Polynesian influence.

In the same way, the hypothetical influence of Polynesian outliers on nearby Melanesian societies should be reconsidered: firstly, because, as Firth has shown for Tikopia, these outliers are as much Micronesian as they are Polynesian, and the more so as one goes west; and, secondly, because the outliers may have been Melanesian speaking until some centuries ago, as in the case of the former Leuangiua (Ontong Java) people. They were obliged to abandon the island because of a tidal wave, becoming the 'island builders' of north-west and south-east Malaita (Ivens 1930) and have since been known as non-Polynesian speakers. Later they were entirely replaced on their former atoll residence by a brand new Polynesian-speaking people (Hogbin 1934). Also, Melanesians left Tikopia for Utupoa or Ndeni in the Santa Cruz group to make way for the more recent paramountcy of the Te
Ariki Kafika lineage hailing from Funafuti (Firth 1961; Kirch and Yen 1982).

In some other cases the outliers established themselves on an island peopled by a majority of Melanesian speakers, such as Emae in the Shepherds Islands (only the village of Makata being Polynesian speaking) and Ouvea in the Loyalties (Unec [Teuta], Takeji, Heo, Muli, Fayava, and Lekiny being peopled by Polynesian speakers).\(^35\) In these instances the social structure of the Polynesian-speaking group is but a translation of the one reigning in the Melanesian-language-speaking majority, without any visible fundamental originality (Guiart 1962, 1973, 1992).\(^36\) On Emae, those who still make offerings to Mauitikitiki are from a Melanesian-speaking village, in the same way as further south those who revere the same god are from Port Resolution in the south-east of Melanesian Tanna — Mauitikitiki being said to live on the top of nearby Mount Mëlën. They are not, today, from Aniwa or Futuna, the Polynesian-speaking islands in the nearby environment. This could illustrate the point that this institution — revering Mauitikitiki — cannot be thought of as very recent.

The number of such factors, or institutions, which appear ambiguous and difficult to place, if one accepts as a basic principle the opposition between Polynesia and Melanesia, is quite important. This is even more so considering the number of Polynesians — on specifically planned voyages or in drifting canoes — who have found their way into Melanesia, and have forgotten not only their knowledge of the return journey, but their language and their specific culture too, remembering only their place of origin. One finds Tongans,\(^37\) Samoans\(^38\) and Rarotongans\(^39\) all over the place, Wallisians\(^40\) and Futunians in a group of specific locations, and occasionally Fijians.\(^41\) Thus, this means that a good number of those who came were alone, or in a very small group of men, without wives of their own. Or they
started exchanging their classificatory sisters, having eventually come with them, against spouses chosen from the local people. Their bilingual children drifted slowly towards an acceptance of the local Melanesian social structure, which was never very far from their own. The Wallissian migration to Ouvea Lalo and northern New Caledonia (Balade) is peculiar inasmuch as it appears to be more of a maritime two-way relationship over an extended period than the sole result of a single voyage.

This presence in small numbers of all sorts of other Polynesians is also found all over Western Polynesia and Fiji, and is explained by the fact that in islands tending to be over-populated before contact adventurous young men would easily get a place on a return voyage — in exchange for those members of the crew who stayed behind because local girls decided to marry them — and then find themselves too far away to renew contact with their place of origin.

In the post-war years I was one of the very first authors to propose the idea that Western Polynesian and Eastern Melanesian societies showed variants of the very same social models and should be analysed comparatively and not be artificially separated. This meant, in my view, that Polynesian social models came from Eastern Melanesia. Today this hypothesis is confirmed by archaeological results. Even so, some archaeologists are replacing Te Rangi Hiroa’s version of a northern route for Polynesians, who should not be confused with lower-rank black Melanesians, with the idea that the Lapita potters were a roving trading people skirting the coasts of the larger Melanesian islands before they settled — this time happily alone and almost untainted — in Fiji and Western Polynesia (Bellwood 1978).

The expansion of the Lapita pots does not need any migrational hypotheses. In the whole area, potters came from small specialized groups, some on the coast, some inland, according to where the
best clay was found. The potters themselves being women, a small proportion of their numbers always married afar, thereby transmitting their technical knowledge to their daughters and their sons' wives. This mobility of women could easily have dispersed the knowledge of pottery over a wide area in a matter of very few generations. When we have the benefit of more inland archaeological digs — there are next to none at present, except in New Guinea — the picture will hopefully become clearer to all.

The relatively more coherent physical appearance of Polynesians has long been recognized. It is easily explained in biological terms. The small groups settling in Fiji, then in Western Polynesia before going further east, brought with them only a fraction of the original set of genes one can find in Melanesia, where physical appearances are very much more varied. If one adds the consequences of the 'founder effect' and of 'genetic drift' in small communities more or less cut off from their place of origin, there is no problem in understanding the relatively recent (2,000–3,000 years) and specific aspects of Polynesian people, societies and cultures.

The number of canoes going to or from inter-island marriages (between east Fiji, Tonga and Samoa) and drifting to Vanuatu, the Loyalty Islands or New Caledonia, was important in the first half of the last century, before the commanding officers of men-of-war of the different nations interfered and, at the demand of missionaries, prohibited these long-distance inter-island voyages. European ship owners in fact could then reorganize the sea routes around the South Pacific, Islanders being left with only the option of choosing between San Francisco, Sydney or Auckland. There had been an earlier period where Pacific ports of call were the Bay of Islands in New Zealand, Pape’ete in Tahiti, Lahaina in Hawaii and Valparaiso in Chile and because such destinations appealed to the adventurous young men, they switched from roving canoes to whaling ships.
During this whole period, European observers, and in particular the London Missionary Society expatriate European staff, considered that Vanuatu, New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands were part of Western Polynesia. The concept of Melanesia as opposed to Polynesia had not crossed their minds, and visual impressions at direct first contact — appearances, hair styles, clothing, body adornment, gesturing — supported the idea of a general unity of the Eastern Pacific. Differences were later underscored because they fitted better the colonial policies aimed at dismembering the region.

Stressing the opposition between two imaginary worlds — Polynesia and Melanesia — is not establishing a concept with any operational value, but continuing to play the colonial trick of contrasting clear-skinned and semi-civilized Polynesians with dark-skinned, cruel and savage Melanesians. The reason is that the explorers and colonizers came from the east. They did not come from the west because of the opposition of the Dutch — entrenched in Indonesia — to any exploration proceeding from west to east; they would hang officers of ships considered to be poaching on their trading rights. Subsequently Western powers began using Polynesians to help them conquer and control Melanesian islands, as sailors, soldiers, petty administrative or commercial clerks, and mission teachers. These Polynesians had to be given some recognition for their labours, having been entrusted with the task of bringing 'civilization' and the *lotu* to the natives of the Melanesian islands, where the job might have been physically too dangerous for lone Europeans. They had also been used as the complement for ships' crews, whalers or sandalwooders, even men-of-war, in unknown waters where unkind savages were thought to lurk behind every coastal bush.

With no local interests to protect, the whalers were at an advantage: they recruited sailors from everywhere and did not
worry if they were Polynesians or Melanesians. But they tended to dump them at any location and let them find their own way back home. Melanesian as well as Polynesian sailors experienced extraordinary adventures at the time. Some were of chiefly rank, but many were not and had gone on the ships for this very reason. Similarly, of those who were LMS (London Missionary Society) teachers, quite a number were commoners or people of rank in a difficult situation for traditional reasons, who strove to acquire renewed or brand new mana through working for the powerful white man. This might still be true of a sizable part of those Islanders who choose to become clerics in Melanesia.

The Greek words used for differentiating Melanesia and Polynesia are usually misunderstood, if only in an unconscious way. Melanesia means 'black islands' — black because of the massive aspect of their vegetation, not black because of their inhabitants. Most Melanesians are light coloured; the east coastal Papuans were clearer skinned than any Polynesian at first contact, the only dark-skinned people being the inhabitants of Bougainville and Buka.

The Polynesians enthusiastically mixed with the Europeans in order to obtain children with lighter skins. However, this also applied to the Loyalty Islanders — except specific priestly families who had inherited a tapu (kep) on light-coloured skin — as well as to any number of more or less ranked lineages in New Caledonia and Vanuatu. The later colonization of Melanesia, and the reputation ascribed to Melanesians of being dangerous to handle — although Maori have killed more white men in New Zealand than were murdered in the whole of Melanesia — reduced such intermingling. Except for the killing of Bishop Patteson, the Anglican Melanesian Mission never had any trouble in the tens of islands where it managed to prevent any European settler from taking over land. This means that there was less sexual
intermingling with Europeans on such islands. However, it was enough to introduce to the bloodstream antibodies against introduced diseases, but not enough to change fundamentally the physical appearance, such as happened in the Society Islands and the Marquesas. Melanesia was taken over more or less at the same time as the concepts of the 'white man's burden' and the 'loss of caste' through a common-law local marriage evolved. Polynesia managed to become somewhat 'civilized' before that.

Opposition between the two worlds is the result of a colonial strategy which, over two centuries, has thus created, on the surface of things, some appearance of a justification. It has been, and still is, a methodological trap. Islanders are slowly bridging the gap as they see that the whole thing was a manipulation which did not act in their favour.

The correlative idea that Melanesian hereditary chieftainships were of a lower order and a smaller scale, covering seventy to three hundred people at most, is just bad information. The largest chieftainship in Lifu reigns over nearly 8,000 people, and each of the two quasi-military confederations which share the paaci language area in central-north New Caledonia represents over 15,000 people, which is much more than the 3,000 given as being the mean number for the best organized Polynesian chieftainships. The misconception about these aspects of Melanesian hereditary chieftainships can be attributed to the survey published by Ian Hogbin and Camilla Wedgwood (1952–53) of the literature for Eastern Melanesia, which only covered the anthropological publications in English and not those in French. Moreover, one could be confused by information emanating from the French colonial authorities presenting their administrative dissection of Kanak social structures into the smallest possible politically manageable units — the so-called 'tribes' or 'districts' — as being the result of local tradition.
HORIZONTAL STRUCTURES

Marxists have never managed to fit the Pacific Islands into their universe for the very simple reason that the trend to build something looking like a state is a Western import, through the system of socio-religious concepts introduced by the different shades of Christianity. Prestige competition was a difficult institution to classify in the partly imaginary time of the pre-contact situation. It belonged to the world of the superstructure, but affected all types of structural factors, and particularly the circulation of goods. Materialistic explanations have tried to replace the economic ones which did not work, although they can be easily seen to be preposterous. A recent attempt, in an otherwise excellent work, to transform women into a subordinate category (Godelier 1982) lacks convincing strength.

Theoreticians forgot an essential point in that no culture can strive towards an aim that its technological level cannot sustain. Pacific Islanders, lacking the wheel, could not transport heavy amounts of produce over land. They could only do it by sea, and then only in the most locally-efficient way. This is the fundamental reason for political systems being more complex — in terms of rank hierarchies, of the subtleties of lineage statuses, and of relations between them — when there is a length of navigable coast involved or opposite coasts covered by the same trade systems. There is no need to imagine a sea-based people migrating as carriers of more sophisticated and hierarchical social structures.

The only commodity which can be transported in any quantity along inland paths is pigs. They can walk slowly and along part of the road, and they present their owners with the advantage of living long years and with a capacity to reproduce themselves in great numbers. But they are heavy when carried on the shoulders of two men or more; they may be unable to walk along some paths when
they are too fat and most valuable. They must be fed, which is partly the work of women, mostly at the time of their last fattening, and cannot be killed without the agreement of the wives who have done the work. Wealth in pigs goes with polygamy, which, as an institution, cannot be generally practised in small-scale societies as there is an obvious limitation to the total number of wives, and it becomes unmanageable in times of high depopulation and a high male sex ratio. This is one explanation for the success of the Christian message.

Traditional riches are an able part-substitute for pigs, carrying more symbolic and social value for a much smaller weight, being worked in units which can be easily counted, and incorporating the prestige of their successive proud possessors, rather like works of art that have belonged to famed collectors. They can be exchanged over wide areas, feeding an extensive inter-island trade which is controlled by ever-changing marriage alliances and ever-higher-prestige-seeking strategies and rivalries. The persistent trend of Pacific Islanders towards formalized speeches, actions and relations, has incorporated each individual or collective behaviour in what can be called a horizontal structure — a complementary structure to the, so often more apparent than real, vertical hierarchies.

Some years ago I demonstrated the existence of two marriage moieties named Bay and Dwi (Guiart 1992:ch 2) among the eastern paaici language speakers of north-central New Caledonia, the most numerous group on the island. Later I found that a number of lineages on the west coast, belonging to the same language group, display what was effectively a third marriage class (only recognized there as such) called Gorotê. Consequently it was apparent that the same people who married inside the two, or three, factor system, married equally outside — a fact forgotten by theoreticians — and that no analysis could exclude these marriages
without becoming artificial. In reality this was a three (in the east) or four (in the west) factor marriage system; it allowed great freedom in choosing a spouse, who could come from one-third, or one-fourth, of the male or female population in the whole area. This system was a way of introducing greater coherence throughout a strong and assertive linguistic area, expanding consistently to the north-west. The very light-weight New Caledonian shell money circulated throughout the innumerable possible routes while the disk-shaped stone clubs, carefully hafted with a mounting of braided flying-fox hair (hache-ostensoir: gi o kono), were exchanged solely at marriages between chiefly lineages’ first-borns.

For the Houaïlou Valley, in central New Caledonia, I have recently shown that both the rituals which are linked to the beginning of the yam crop and the first fruit ceremony, and the beliefs related to the control of the fertility in land and women, as well as semi-political alliances and systems of solidarity, were based upon the existence of two unnamed, non-marriage quasi-moieties covering two-thirds of the inhabitants of three parallel valleys. The rest of the population is out of the system, although they may internarry with its member lineages (Guiart 1992:ch 1).

I have checked the existence in the whole of northern New Caledonia of two non-marriage moieties noted by Maurice Leenhardt (1930; see also Guiart 1987), called Hwaap and Ohot, which played a role in all historical events since contact. Again, I found the existence of a third group, known by the name of Gwalap. The members of this group explained that they all fundamentally belonged to the same allied lineages, constituting a string of villages, made up of fishermen and occasional makers of shell money, who settled all along the west coast. These people played a central role in the 1878 insurrection by carrying messages from one insurgent inland area to the other, striving to
spread the movement. They paid a high cost for this involvement and consequently their descendants were difficult to track down because they had to hide to escape military repression and mass murder at the time.

A parallel system existed on the island of Tanna between two warring groups called Numrukwen and Koyometa. The usual scenario was that the group which lost went into exile on the other side of the mountain range and negotiated its return in the next generation. The go-betweens were the members of a third minority group called Kowut Kasua (Guiart 1956) that was dispersed all over the island and whose members never participated in the fighting, and a dignitary called yani nengoo, that is 'master of the canoe'. His function covered both the intrigues which brought the two sides to war, and leading his exiled group in the negotiations to allow them to come back home. Blocks of land, from one mountain range to another or ascending a mountain range, were alternatively Numrukwen and Koyometa. Exchange routes went from one to the other according to circumstance. But both the Numrukwen and Koyometa came together for the large pig-killing ceremonies, nekowiar. Here were two ritually complementary sides, in the same way as the Ohot and Hwaap in New Caledonia, entering the dancing square alternately clockwise or counterclockwise.

In New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands these structures (let us call them horizontal for convenience) do not justify all the journeys recorded over the past half century. Another essential factor is the number of lineages that explain how they are the offshoot of another lineage through reference to apparently mythical migration routes criss-crossing wide areas of land and easily going over to the next island. My first reaction was to draw the semi-genealogical figures which linked together a number of residential locations, marked by raised mounds (tertres) supporting
round houses, and translate this principle on the ground. I discovered that none of these tree-shaped figures ever stopped anywhere. 'Roots' and 'branches' alike went on endlessly, all these arborescences linking with other ones over land and sea. In biology (for instance, in the physiology of the brain), as well as in the computer world, these are called 'networks'. It has taken me a lifetime to map the networks covering New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, which were linked in pre-contact times to south and central Vanuatu in the same way as the Banks Islands were linked with Tikopia and the Santa Cruz Islands, closing the only geographical gap of some importance in the structured relations over land and sea which cover the Melanesian chain of islands.

The problem is how many networks there are. There are obviously more than one, as the prestige competition between networks immediately becomes evident. The idea of having two networks covering the area has the advantage of being intellectually satisfying, but appears to be non-operational. The way relations work and gifts flow through the traditional routes indicates that there are at least three, and possibly more, networks criss-crossing each other as much as working in parallel. Their existence can only be made clearer, and mapped, by noting all individuals going forwards, backwards and sideways over more than a single generation. Only a fraction of this data can be obtained by direct observation, the rest must be acquired from countless interviews. The problem can be put in the reverse formulation: Who receives whom? Who gives shelter, food, clothes, money, eventually a wife and land, to whom? Who feels an obligation of solidarity with whom? This translates into the constant journeying of Pacific Islanders, who bring their children and their wives to every spot where they have such an obligation or can benefit from such a privilege. They give the available information in solemn tones and insist on the exact location and
names of the people involved. These names are not modern Christian names, but those that so often before could not be publicly uttered — not strictly secret, as every adult knew them — except in very exceptional circumstances.

The forms that networks take can fluctuate. On Tanna the solidarity links that derive from sharing the same nekaiïa (kava) yimwayim (drinking place) and, at a further level, sharing the same dancing place between a number of yimwayim, are found through the sharing of specific routes drawn outside of the residential areas — there are essentially three, kwotèxen, nahmyèrèp and mwatakayû, which follow the greatest length of the island in a more or less parallel way. These were the very same routes used to carry the messages that spread the John Frum prophetic cult and led to the move away from the Christian Churches in May 1941.

In south-central Vanuatu there are no marriage or non-marriage moieties, but a complex horizontal system of ties, criss-crossing or circuiting the larger islands, such as Efate and Tongoa, linking in a general south to north direction all those who claim descent from the crew of a given canoe. This is in addition to a matrilineal marriage and solidarity system which is coded by the names of different vegetable and animal foods and is claimed to have been instituted by the mythical chief Roy Mata. This hero — no living person has dared since to claim his title — became a historical figure when his tomb was excavated by José Garanger and dated at AD 600 (Garanger 1972). All those claiming descent from a scattered lineage (naflak, nakainanga), owning a given food symbol (namatarao), are linked by well-balanced gifts and counter-gifts of food as well as sister exchange marriages that are always outside the recognized kin structure: one cannot marry a girl who belongs to one's kin group (Guiart 1973).

The Christianization of a good half of New Caledonia proper at the end of last century by evangelists from the Loyalty Islands is
very interesting. Left on their own and no longer controlled by any resident European missionary, who were then English and in deep trouble with the French colonial authorities, these men from Mare, Lifu and Ouvea went spontaneously to the traditional routes open to them. They knew who were the authentic chiefs — not the ones nominated by the colonial authorities — and called them by their real names — not the ones known to the white men. They thus got immediate results by working through the networks which they had inherited membership, translated by the very name given to them at birth (Leenhardt 1953).

Prior to contact, similar systems extended from the Loyalty Islands to southern Vanuatu with exchange relations going from the Loyalty Islands up to Epi, which was called tas (short for the local vernacular word tasiriki 'on the coast') by the Lifu people. They still go from the Loyalty Islands to New Caledonia. Each person who is part of any one system in the islands of Mare, Tiga, Lifu, Ouvea and Heo knows well the exact locations where each of its lineages can find its traditional corresponding local group. In each case the identification goes through the set of names owned by each lineage and this furnishes the capacity to claim status and land, if former residence is changed. Myths justifying these situations may be given one day in a very symbolic script, and on another day as a kind of chronicle boasting historic authenticity. It is just a question of patience and who is present at the time. As far as possible, I have made an exhaustive survey of these relations over the last forty years.

One will easily remember how Malinowski, in his well-known *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), showed that each Trobriand Islander received from his father the knowledge of the partners he inherited in all the different locations participating in the 'kula ring'. Later each Islander might want to go and visit them, in order to trade valuables, food items or special materials found
here and there. The institution of such partners is found in many places and is the basis for all sorts of exchanges of valuable goods, from polished stone blades to mother-of-pearl or New Guinea Highlands vegetable salt.\textsuperscript{56} Thus one can propose a generalization which could be valid in the rest of the Pacific. A man has always the benefit of trading partners in more than one place. These partners represent lineages and names indefinitely carried on through each generation, with which his forbears were already trading.

What will change from place to place are, firstly, the justifications expressed for such formal relations criss-crossing every island and, secondly, the types of valuables carried from one cultural area to another. Polished serpentine disk-shaped heads of ceremonial clubs in New Caledonia become small pierced serpentine stone disks worn as neck pendants by women in Tanna. Wooden dishes from Huon Gulf and Tami Island finish up along the north-east coast of New Guinea and south-west New Britain, but then take other shapes and benefit from other decorative designs depending on their final location. Carried on the breast, the back, the forehead or the sides of the head, \textit{kapkap} (delicately carved circular decorations made of shell and turtle) carry the same general shape in all islands, from the Santa Cruz group to the Admiralties. Each of the routes followed by such mobile valuables can be mapped.\textsuperscript{57} The distances they travel are well documented, from the coastal areas up to the Highlands of New Guinea, in the same way as conch shells from Sri Lanka can be found in Tibetan monasteries. The first European to pursue this notion of exchange — sailing canoes along the coast, to and from the island of women potters of Bilibil — was the Russian scientist Mikloucho-Maclay, one of the most talented observers of any time. Even today the steady flow of goods in Bougainville from the Solomon Shortland
Islands testifies to the permanence of these exchange and solidarity networks.

WHAT NEXT?

Radcliffe-Brown often stated that when two unacquainted Australian Aborigines met they sat down and swapped genealogical information. This might happen, but the first information exchanged would in fact be more immediate, much shorter and more to the point. It would be the very information Radcliffe-Brown introduced us to, that is, the name of the marriage section or subsection of each. This information determined where the newcomer would sleep, away from women who were forbidden to him and close to those who might be available, if they wished, to tell him who would be his local classificatory kin; the section names, in particular, were the same and known over wide expanses of land and in many language areas. This way of understanding the concept of 'horizontal structures' would thus appear equally valid all over the Australian continent.

The social anthropology of the Australian Aboriginal population has been functioning separately from the rest of the South Pacific, evolving concepts which were solely associated with its own field of study. The more experience I gain, the more there appear to be vivid parallels and the less I believe in keeping apart two equally valid sets of conceptual analysis.

Early Australian anthropology dwelt on the concept of 'the dreaming', the 'dreamtime', and so on, the different aspects of which have been extensively documented and systematically organized by the late Professor Elkin (1933). We now know that this dreaming does not refer only to a dreamtime at the origin of all things, but is coextensive to the world and time of present human people. The space and time where humans dwell is parallel
to the space and time where gods and the dead ancestors have their abode. This is the very way the rest of the Pacific sees the invisible world and talks to it.

For those who have had the privilege to work on the hundreds of millenarian movements (cargo-cults) which covered New Guinea and Melanesia before the war and during most of the 1950s, after so many parallel instances which started immediately after Christianization in Polynesia and Fiji, the crucial function of dreamers, male and female, is clearly apparent. One must dream first before being able to present a viewpoint in public and be listened to. The dreamers came to the fore in the political disturbances in New Caledonia in 1984–85. No Kanak group would act before being in agreement with the dreams of the established or newly appeared seers. Melanesians dream all the time or have day visions about the dead, to whom they will talk as if they can feel their presence at their side. Even my own Melanesian wife has dreams or visions about the immediate future.

Polynesia is full of similar cases all the time, even in Tahiti today. But we have rarely tried to conceptualize them and link them with the well-known ideas about the abode of the dead and how they can visit us or, contrariwise, how some seers have had the opportunity of short, or long, journeys and stays in the subterranean land of the dead.

Anthropology in the Pacific has built its own series of concepts, never looking back over its shoulder, linking with Australia only as regards marriage control systems — although who will talk of section marriage where one is meant to take as a wife the mother’s brother’s daughter, and of subsection marriage where, as among the Nenema people of north-west New Caledonia, marriage is with the mother’s brother’s daughter’s daughter? There is a need for theoretical discussions to make use of the whole available range of cultural variations, including Australia, now that we know that
man's antiquity has comparable early dates in Australia and New Guinea. Australian anthropology should look at the rest of the Pacific, in the same way as colleagues specializing in New Guinea should learn that part of what they discover has already been described somewhere in the chains of islands covering the Western and Eastern Pacific, albeit at a smaller statistical level.

NOTES

This paper is dedicated to the memory of Professor Jan van Baal, late of Utrecht University.

1 He brought John Layard to Atchin and Vao for more than a year in 1913. Much later Reo Fortune's famed monograph on Dobu was based on only a six months' stay, his further field trips being more reasonably longer.
2 Personal observations in 1949 and 1952 and interviews with local merchant and government marine officers.
5 Personal fieldwork on the links between colonial Espiritu Santo and Aoba between 1949 and 1973. Manuscript notes and lists established by Raghragh Charley of Matanvat of common-law marriages between European plantation owners and ni-Vanuatu women.
6 Personal involvement in this campaign in the Shepherds Islands, south-central Vanuatu and checking on its results elsewhere.
8 In New Caledonia, from the Houaïlou Valley to the north of the island, the offerings to the mythical lizard or other beings protecting the lineages have never ceased among a population Christianized since the 1890s. See René Guiart 1988:33-46 for modern instances of traditional religious concepts maintained.
The term 'traditional' has no satisfying meaning except in a very vague way. It is nevertheless convenient, as opposed to terms such as primitive, tribal (who knows what tribal means?) and so on, the connotations of which are still more rigid and even more ethnocentric. The words 'custom', or its pidgin equivalent 'kastom', or French translation 'la coutume', have evolved in the colonial system, and certainly not for the good of the people subjected to this system. Their legalistic connotations are methodologically dangerous, inasmuch as they imagine a set of fixed rules understood to be as exotic as they are thought to be irrational. The modern translation is the widely publicized idea that tradition is antagonistic to economic development. This judgement is still more ethnocentric than the preceding colonial view, and tends to serve as the justification of new sophisticated techniques aimed at destroying the Pacific Islanders' cultures in the name of their material progress. This is pure hypocrisy; those who support this view having been quite unable, over the last decades, to better in any way the native people's situation, and in particular their purchasing power. The reality is that the Islanders have always collected or planted the crops which brought them a sufficient revenue (sandalwood, bêche-de-mer, coconut, coffee, cocoa, cotton), and abandoned what had become a non-paying proposition.

Pacific Islanders bear some responsibility here, with their constant indifference to our notions about time.

The idea that the exceptions confirm the rule is, in fact, the more than 2000 years old conception of the Greek grammarians of Alexandria, who could not manage to fit a number of real linguistic occurrences in their proposed laws. This argument should be considered today as false. A proposed rule can only be judged scientifically sound if no exceptions are found to it. If there are some, the validity of the rule must be reconsidered.

See papers by Elkin and Stanner in early issues of *Oceania* showing how marriage systems were traded over the whole of Australia, and Berndt's later assessment of how the cult of Kunapipi swarmed over the Northern Territory.

For examples of this process see Governor Guillain, *Arrêté du 22 Janvier 1868*; Garnier 1871; and Saussol 1979.
15 See Guiart 1992, especially the chapters on Lifu and Ouvea. This is a completely revised and rewritten re-issue of the first half of the former study published in 1963.

16 This idea that anthropology can be done sitting down quietly in a Christian colonial village site with a few privileged informants is incredibly naïve. Anthropologists need to deal with hundreds, if not thousands, of informants — men and women of all ages — to be sure of what is being recorded. Even children hold precious knowledge. See Guiart 1992:ch. 2 for a detailed methodological discussion of this point.

17 Pig rearing was unknown in New Caledonia.


19 On names linked to social status and land tenure see the path-breaking paper by Lamont Lindstrom (1985). Lindstrom could have made use of the rather complete survey of names and social statuses I published for the whole of Tanna in 1956. Lindstrom says that man Tanna is not exactly Everyman, the heroic deeds and the less heroic but well-remembered intrigues which illustrated or caused wars of the past being part of a vivid tradition. The opposition between this part of Melanesia lacking genealogical depth (staying around three generations before Ego) and the (manipulated) Polynesian genealogies, is that the New Caledonians and ni-Vanuatu, at least, replace depth in time (genealogies) by physical extension in space. The reading of the past is followed from place to place, along a string of linked house foundations remembered by names. This is rather more like Aboriginal Australian use of the concept of time and space.

20 See Williams and James 1859 for the ancient Fijian fear of one's title being claimed by the sister's son when of higher birth than his uncle, and the correlative precaution of introducing an abortion specialist in the retinue of a first-born girl of high rank marrying abroad.

21 Ritual uses seem to prefer old pots, or broken ones, or even special and rather coarse ones produced by the appointed man himself. For a description of the excavation of a Kanak ritual location on the island of Konien, off the west coast of New Caledonia, see Guiart 1992:128.

22 Women and men share them in New Caledonia, the Loyalties, and in south-central Vanuatu, from Efate to south Epi, on ceremonial occasions. Women cannot enter them in north-central Vanuatu and the Banks Islands.
23 Personnal communication, 1948; later checked in the field.
24 The attempt to analyse the Tannese situation through the wielding of the magic word 'big-man' is unwarranted (see Bonnemaison 1987). The justification given is the pig-killing rituals called nekowiar. These are not geared towards prestige acquisition by the same two persons, the groups banding together on each side, and their spokesmen, being different in each case. This is in addition to a number of inherited exalted social statuses which ensure differentiated prestige levels to an important part of the male population, the kweria holders and their spouses.

25 In a meeting behind closed doors in Noumea, he had given the order for an attack on the armed constabulary post on Ouvea on the weekend before his murder. He later refused to let the young people in northern New Caledonia organize diversionary actions or even to accept a phone call by the desperate young people who had followed him, not calculating the risks and having no answer ready for what was happening: an extraordinarily violent repression by French army crack troops, authorized in effect by the signature of the then socialist president of the Republic (personal fieldwork on Ouvea and interviews with political leaders and my wife's kin on the island; Plenel and Rollat 1988).

26 See Oliver 1949, 1955. For New Guinea proper see Strathern 1971, who shows that sons of big-men are favoured in the moka.
27 As a means of scientific analysis, comparisons should only be attempted once the whole chain of variants has been uncovered between the locations chosen to be compared. As a result of this methodological precaution, they can only be of value as a teaching tool, or to suggest, illustrate or clarify an idea.

28 See Guiart et al. 1973, where one of the very first computer analyses of data recorded over tens of islands and hundreds of informants shows that each piece of information fits in the whole picture without any discrepancy or logical contradiction being brought to the fore by the analysis, as if each person speaking knew exactly what the others would say.

29 The absence of a cultural trait existing next door has the same theoretical importance as its presence.

30 Personal fieldwork, inland from South West Bay, Port Sandwich and Tisman Bay, in 1951. The first inland villages have since moved over to the nimangki and nalawan rites bought by them from the Tomman Island people, having decided to become Presbyterians. The people inland from Port
Sandwich had already acquired a complex set of namanggi grade-taking rituals.  

These 'victims' come from specific lineages, and are meant to be killed and eaten. The specific dances of glee in front of dead corpses are enacted. In fact, these men change status: they are incorporated within the victorious chiefly lineage, given a new wife and are forbidden to keep up any relations with their former people. Who knows if this is an adaptation to a failing demography?  

This was the theme of an unpublished lecture given by Douglas Oliver at the Société des Océanistes in Paris some years ago. His view then was that if one substracts from each local situation the spectacular aspects of the reigning culture — those in fact which do not stand up to change and Christianization after contact — the remaining village structure is fundamentally the same all over the South Pacific.  

See Guiart 1992:ch. 1, the case of the Boreare chieftainship, and ch. 2, describing the Bayes chieftainship, in which they reorder their society so as to prevent further land grabbing by maintaining a constant mass of people locally at a time of depopulation through an organized influx of lineages thrown out of their lands by European settlement or military repression (1878).  

See Thomas 1989. This slightly inconclusive academic exercise, the paper plus the discussion, is helpful because it illustrates the nascent idea of the opposition among the first navigators. But it misses the point of the way Cook’s and later explorations started from east to west, thus concentrating on Polynesian islands at the expense of Melanesian ones, which got a more superficial appraisal, and fails to recognize the political and ideological colonial use of the division. The discussion published shows a lack of clarity, the valid geographical division not being separated from the wrongly assumed cultural one.  

They are, in fact, all at the least bilingual through general intermarriage.  

The only difference between Polynesian and Melanesian chieftainships in Ouvea is that the Melanesian-speaking chief, than, can be beaten up by his councillors, hingat, if he misbehaves, whereas the Polynesian aliki cannot.  

In Takeji on the north of Ouvea.  

In the Isle of Pines; in the north of the Wetr district on Lifu (Hanawa); on Teuta in northern Ouvea; Houailou and Bourail, respectively on the east and west central coasts of New Caledonia; in Fila ( Ivira) and Erakor on the south coast of Efate; in Makura, Tongariki and Tongoa in the Shepherds Islands.
39 In Mare (Roh), Lifu (Ahmelewedr) and Ouvea (Muli) in the Loyalties; in Mele on the southern coast of Efate.
40 In the villages of Qiqatrul and Hmèlek in the Lòsi district of Lifu; in Takeji, Heo and Muli at the north and south tips of Ouvea; in Hienghène, Kourmac and Balade, on either side of northern New Caledonia; on Owa Riki at the south of the Solomon Islands.
41 In Arama at the north-eastern tip of New Caledonia and Merela in the Banks Islands.
42 All inhabitants of Ouvea are bilingual, if not trilingual (with the addition of the Lifu language), adding to their father’s and mother’s language the knowledge of a language from the areas of New Caledonia proper with which they have traditional relations: Canala, Kouaoua, Houailou, Hienghène, Pouébo, Balade.
43 There are any number of instances where the girl is the person making the decision about such a marriage, in itself an adventure and a factor of prestige. White men have profited for two centuries from such strong-headed young women acting as free agents, often first-born children claiming their birthright and bringing land to their husband.
44 First in a meeting called by Margaret Mead at the Bishop Museum to listen to my proposed hypothesis. Later I was surprised to find the same idea advocated by Kenneth Emory, who was present at that meeting, without giving the source. Fortunately I had published it earlier in a résumé form; see Guiart 1963.
45 In New Guinea and in the Melanesian arc of islands, the next people are never further away than one or two days by foot or canoe. Between Eastern Melanesia and Fiji there would be more than a fortnight’s journey by boat, with a lot of tacking, which means first waiting for the change of direction from the reigning trade winds, then, once arrived, redoing all sails and rigging with new coir rope before starting on the return journey. It is the difference between continuous contact and limited exposure, with return journeys happening only once every generation or only very occasionally, and even not at all, as the Pacific Islands navigators went island hopping towards the east. Such mechanical factors can be of foremost importance in shaping the evolution of social, economic and religious institutions. New Guinea and Melanesia benefited from constant relations between all their parts and had not even cut the link to Asia through Indonesia. This meant, amongst other factors, a greater capacity for technical change. The New Caledonian and Fijian double-hulled canoes were more sophisticated than the
Tahitian ones, and the techniques of multi-hulled canoe building of the East Papuans, who participated in the high-seas *hiri* voyages to the west coast of the Papuan Gulf, were technically more advanced. Faced with double canoes easily disintegrating in the violent waters of the Tasman Sea, the Maori had to invent a way of building much wider single-hulled canoes and from then on kept to coastal voyages. They still used double canoes at the time of Tasman’s voyage.

46 Archives of the New Hebrides Joint Naval Commission papers.
47 See Murray 1874 where he describes Mare, Lifu, Ouvea, Aneityum, Tanna, Eromanga, Efate.
48 See also Sahlins 1963. Going through missionary literature and in particular the earlier material can be useful as it contains quite a lot of practical information about political units and their numbers, for instance, in Fiji. In one case Mrs Hadfield, wife of the last British missionary in the Loyalty Islands, gave indications about the statistical level of chieftainships in Lifu.
49 For instance, the idea that ranked societies are linked to residence on high volcanic islands is ridiculous (see Sahlins 1958), as any raised coral plateau in Melanesia can be home to ranked societies boasting hereditary chieftainships; that is, the Loyalty Islands and the Isle of Pines, Efate and the Big Nambas area of northern Malekula and, in Polynesia, Tongatapu and Makatea. The current notion that volcanic soil must be more fertile than others is erroneous. Recent volcanic soils, such as those found on the slopes overhanging the coastal plains in Polynesia, can be nearly devoid of fertile elements, whereas the soils on the raised coral plateaux will present the best physical and chemical characteristics in the region. Only the very low coral atolls of Kiribati and the Tuamotu have presented difficult problems of survival, although they too house a highly ranked and differentiated society, claiming to be of Samoan origin in south and central Kiribati.
50 The ethnographic data given in this study could be used to demonstrate that the women, far from being subordinate to the men, are their equals in that the men can neither work nor programme their strategies without the acquiescence of women, who are accused of using an inordinate number of ways of despatching men with whom they do not agree. Godelier recognizes that the women know much more than they say about the men’s secrets.
51 I call the 'system of solidarity' in New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands and elsewhere in Melanesia, a system of place names spread out in space as well as local lineages linked together in such a way that any member, going from
one location to another inside the system, can claim food, shelter, a wife and access to land, in every place named in his genealogy or in the quasi-genealogical lists of his ancestors' successive residences.

52 This precise point has taken me some years to check.

53 In July 1980 the Kowut Kasua intervened in the fighting between the pro-independence and the pro-French camps. They were in favour of letting the independence ceremonies and transfer of responsibilities proceed, but later went over to the side which claimed a limited autonomy for Tanna, thus allowing the Vanua aku pati to lose the elections for the Island Council. To justify their stand of 1980, they called me in to drink kava and showed me the Numrukwen and Koyometa stones that they had only just dug out from the volcanic soil of the White Sands area after having learnt through a dream of the precise location of the lost stones.

54 One reason for the inadequacy of the big-man concept in Tanna is that the leaders of the successive nekowiar are never the same. The location shifts from year to year around the island and the unstable confederation of lineages on either side is never the same.

55 Tikopian canoes take three days sailing or paddling south-south-west to get to the rock of Vatganay, twenty-two miles north of Ureparapara, where they can pull their canoes ashore to sleep and find coconut, breadfruit trees and bananas in season. Then they veer south-south-east for two days and find themselves in the middle of the Banks Islands, eventually landing on the coast of Espiritu Santo.

56 The use of such vegetable salt is a daily occurrence in the mountains of Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu.

57 See the beautiful map of coastal exchange relations in Tiesler 1969-1970.

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SHAPING AND RESHAPING OF THE PACIFIC: 
THE PERPETUAL EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

Stephen Polonhou Pokawin

On the occasion of the First European Colloquium on Pacific Studies, it is very appropriate to address the role of Europe in the Pacific. The Colloquium focuses on the theme 'Transformation and tradition in the South Pacific'. The theme tells us in a very simple way that the Pacific or the South Pacific is no longer the same as it used to be. The new and the old ways have merged and given way to new Pacific communities. Yet these new communities are not replicas of the metropolitan powers which brought about or accelerated the process of transformation. Tradition prevails in the midst of transformation resulting in characteristically Pacific communities distinct from other communities throughout the world.

THE PACIFIC

The Pacific conjures up numerous images: the vast body of ocean between Asia and the Americas; the dynamics of regions of the world bordering the Pacific in Asia and America commonly known as the Pacific Basin or the Pacific Rim; the tiny atolls and the idyllic existence of the inhabitants as portrayed by popular European literature; the testing of military arsenals by the United States of America and France; the challenges of the emerging
Pacific Island states. In this paper the Pacific is understood as comprising the islands in Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, their inhabitants and their environment.

In colonial history an image of the Pacific has emerged as being inhabited by Polynesians, Micronesians and Melanesians — conceptual categorizations based on peculiarities of the inhabitants and their environment as perceived by Europeans. European linguistic scholarship further introduced Austronesian and non-Austronesian or Papuan categories to distinguish Pacific languages. These categories straddle social, cultural and political distinctions. We also have the South Pacific, South-West Pacific, Western Pacific and Oceania as popular geographical descriptions introduced by Europeans.

European influence has impacted upon the Pacific in many ways. As the Pacific Island states find their own places in the international community amidst ongoing changes in the economic and political arrangements of the world and ever-increasing technological achievements, international forces continue to effect changes in all areas of life throughout the Pacific.

Much has changed since Europe ventured into the Pacific some 200 to 300 years ago. The isolation that characterized the Pacific has been overcome by technology. Relations amongst the Pacific Islanders themselves have changed. Relations between the Islanders and the Europeans continue but have taken a new twist. New actors other than Europeans have entered the scene. Yet amidst all these developments, Pacific traditions continue to hold the Islanders different and distinct from one another, from Europeans and from others. The Pacific is being reshaped and Europe, which had an earlier impact, continues to influence the process.

As isolation disappears in the Pacific, opportunities increase, and changing values at the international level make the peculiar
characteristics of the Pacific attractive to international consumers of all forms. They find expression in varied means through which Europe lends a hand in reshaping the Pacific. The Pacific today attracts investors, governments, aid agencies, environmentalists, scholars, holiday-makers, missionaries, illicit agents and shady characters.

The papers presented during the Colloquium cover a wide range of subjects in many societies in the Pacific. A careful analysis of the topics alone may open a window into the minds of the Europeans. How do they understand the Pacific? What areas of knowledge predominate research interests among the European scholars? How would this affect wider European understanding of the Pacific? What do the Pacific Islanders say about what the Europeans are doing and saying? What are the scholars promoting? What are they perpetuating? Are they agents of positive transformation or are they perpetuators of outdated and oppressive notions?

Eurocentricism has been a major argument used by Third World scholars against the apparent lopsided use of concepts and theories to understand the non-European societies. It is argued that Europeans use scholarship towards maintaining their dominance. What they say, write and think about the Pacific is what and how they want the Pacific to be. Basically, as is popularly understood, this Pacific is a figment of European imagination intent on control and domination.

The Pacific societies have been a rich field for anthropological research. This area of interest predominated scholarship in the Pacific for many decades. The way people live attracted interest among scholars and continues to do so. The studies built up the world's knowledge of what the Pacific was and is. This Colloquium brings together a collection of such scholars. The Pacific peoples
and governments are also responding to such research. Some areas of research are encouraged whilst others are being discouraged. As the people of the Pacific come to realize the power of information in the transformation process, they now know that documentation of tradition is not necessarily free from manipulation. In this climate, the attitude, quality and professionalism of European scholars and researchers can determine their future relations with the people of the Pacific.

The Pacific as we know it today was shaped by the Europeans. Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, The Netherlands, France, Germany, at the height of their glory, collectively shaped the Pacific. The United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, with predominantly European credentials, followed. Canada is a recent player in the region. And the European Community (formerly the European Economic Community) is entering the scene in a new way.

The Europeans entered the Pacific as adventurers and explorers, empire builders, traders, missionaries, scholars and colonizers. They came to own land and control the inhabitants. They introduced their brand of commerce, order, government, education, belief and life. They created new political groupings out of numerous, previously disparate groups.

The Pacific changed hands throughout history. The changing history of Europe determined the fate of the Pacific Islands. Today, the Pacific Islands are either independent, self-governing or remain the territory of a colonial power, in one form or another. Except for the French territories of French Polynesia and New Caledonia, all major Pacific Island communities are either independent or have achieved a certain degree of self-government. West Irian has been incorporated into Indonesia. This political fact has a very interesting history that attests to European influence.
Indonesia is a country consisting of an Asian majority and a Melanesian minority. The country is shaped today as it was shaped by Europe in the past. The politics of self-determination for Melanesians in Indonesia spearheaded by the Free Papua Movement has effectively been ignored by international protocol and sensibilities. What was previously the Dutch East Indies became Indonesia. The only factor which has influenced the redrawing of political boundaries set by Europe has been great distances separating inhabited islands. Thus, the Gilbert and Ellis Islands became the separate island states of Kiribati and Tuvalu while Micronesia became the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Belau, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Otherwise, as a rule, the Pacific as it was divided by the metropolitan powers, which were predominantly European, has been maintained.

To provide an in-depth look into European influences in shaping and reshaping the Pacific, I shall use the experience of Papua New Guinea, with which I am familiar. I note with interest that a substantial number of presentations in the Colloquium are based on studies undertaken or being undertaken in Papua New Guinea.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea is popularly known as the land of a thousand tribes. The island of New Guinea singly reflects the entire European experience in the Pacific. It was the most challenging and could be regarded as an example of the 'success story' of colonialism. The harshness of the geography and the inhospitable environment accounted for many human lives. Yet the process of bringing the island under European control did not waver.

The Dutch, Germans and British divided the island into three
parts to become known as Dutch New Guinea, British New Guinea and German New Guinea. The changing fortunes of Europe saw the former British colony of Australia taking over British New Guinea, which was then renamed Papua, and the Germans relinquishing New Guinea to the Australians through the League of Nations. And many years later, Dutch New Guinea was taken over by Indonesia to become West Irian. The decision by the European giants at that time to divide the island among themselves laid the foundation for the future of the island and its inhabitants. The colonial administrative process moulded the thousand tribes into three units. Over time the three units have become two political entities: the independent state of Papua New Guinea; and Irian Jaya, a province of the Republic of Indonesia.

Numerous anthropological, sociological and linguistic studies done over the past sixty-odd years have testified to the diverse nature of the societies in Papua New Guinea. Archaeological discoveries are uncovering amazing evidence of long-term human habitation. The hundreds of tribes were nations for all practical purposes. They had their own territories, languages, systems of 'government' and had either friendly or adverse relations with surrounding tribes. They saw themselves as different from others. They had their own identities. European colonial enterprise was able to mould these small 'nations' into the largest nation state in the South Pacific. Introduction of English, Tok Pisin and Motu languages has progressively broken down the communication problem and brought about a sense of greater common identity. Advances in education, the road system, administration, technology and increased participation in the modern economy have strengthened the process of promoting the cause for a single Papua New Guinea. There have existed rumblings of separation but so far 'Project Papua New Guinea' has prevailed. With about four million
people and abundant natural resources, Papua New Guinea has emerged as the single most dynamic island state in the Pacific. An amazing transformation of one thousand tribes into one nation.

Today in many parts of the country there are still people who were present when the Europeans first made contact with their tribes. There are also people whose encounter with the impact of government has only intensified since the country became independent seventeen years ago. Today there are still many villages which have no schools or basic health services. Illiteracy among all age-groups remains a major challenge for the government, and malaria and pneumonia are among major causes of death.

About 80 per cent of the population live in villages. This will remain so even though urban drift is increasing. Of the four million people one would have thought that a major relocation of the people by the government into a few development centres would have eradicated most of the basic problems that plague the country today. But village people have attachments to the land and the environment which they will continue to hold for a long time in the future. This is a clear illustration of the past and the present coexisting. People in villages maintain the age-old form of subsistence livelihood and live in grass huts and mourn their dead for days. At the same time their children go to universities, fly in jets, use telephones, listen to radio, watch television, learn about the recent advances in the sciences, hear of international efforts to bring food to the starving Somalis as it happens. Within a lifetime, advances in technology, education and commerce have penetrated and are influencing the perception of the people of Papua New Guinea from all walks of life.

The European missionaries were among the first foreigners to settle and work among the people. They remain with them. They
now have Papua New Guineans working and living side by side with them. The Christian religion has spread right across the country. There are as many brands of Christian churches in Papua New Guinea as there are in Europe, if not more. Conflicts, disagreements about interpretations and historical feuds between European churches find their way into Papua New Guinea's Christianity also. The inner man is being shaped and reshaped by the influences of Europe. Technological advancement is making that influence more effective. Today you do not have to be there on location to be in control of affairs.

Apart from earlier sightings of parts of Papua New Guinea by the Spanish and Portuguese, three countries of European origin particularly have influenced Papua New Guinea's development from colonized territories into an island state. These were Germany, Great Britain and Australia. Great Britain and Germany put in place the basic administrative structures that set British New Guinea and German New Guinea into motion. By the end of World War I, both territories had become the responsibility of Australia. Papua was administered as a protected territory of Australia whilst former German New Guinea was administered by Australia on behalf of the newly established League of Nations.

Australia has had a greater impact on the transformation of Papua New Guinea than any other country. European influence remained particularly strong through the work of the churches. European missionaries established and promoted the Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and Anglican churches. Smaller groups like the London Missionary Society, South Seas Evangelical Missions and Swiss Missions also prospered. They were actively involved in propagating the Christian faith, teaching in schools, working in hospitals, running businesses and passing on numerous skills to the people.
Where a missionary was, the people of the area associated themselves with the missionary and his country of origin. The missionaries ventured into very remote parts of the country. They lived in the villages. Many spoke the languages and learned about the cultures, which they either appreciated or detested. The missionary's own way of life left lasting impressions in the minds and lives of the people among whom the missionary lived and worked. In most cases, the villages where the missionaries lived, or those near the mission station, absorbed the values of the mission earlier than places further away. Some of the villagers became involved in advancing the work of the missions to other villages. Some travelled beyond the boundaries of their traditional territories to receive further instructions and acquire wider experiences. In the process, they contributed to bringing other parts of the country under the control of the administration. The impact of the missions and missionaries was not only institutional but also personal; it was not only confined to the advancement of Christianity but it also transformed the many tribes into one people subjected to an authority alien to their own, the authority of the government.

On 16 September 1975, Australia's flag was lowered and the new Papua New Guinea flag slowly rose to its heights on Independence Hill in Port Moresby to symbolize the country's emergence from its colonial status into an independent state. In the minds of the leaders and the people, foreign control then ceased and the country was expected to be run by the people of Papua New Guinea. A large portion of the population was somewhat apprehensive. They were concerned that there were not enough trained personnel to carry on what the foreign nationals had been doing. In fact, many foreign workers had returned to their respective countries, either in good faith or in anticipation of
bloodshed when the country became independent. Many of these people returned soon after to work with the government or private companies, or they became consultants, often attached to international aid agencies, or they came to promote the products of the companies with which they were associated. It is now very obvious that, with independence, nationals increased their role in the affairs of the country, but foreign influence and control instead of decreasing, prospered. The desire by the national leadership to strengthen the economic base of the country, to improve the quantity and quality of services to the people, to attract international assistance in performing its role nationally and asserting its role in the international scene, to train the workforce and to benefit from the latest technological advances, only increased the intensity of international influence on the affairs of the country.

Where does Europe enter here? I suggest that the demise of The Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany from the Pacific and Papua New Guinea never ended the role of these countries in influencing what happened there. Their strategies changed and their continuing presence received less prominence and acquired greater political acceptance. They became providers of needed basic services that were considered essential to the livelihood of the country. They ceased to be colonizers. As Papua New Guinea goes through even greater transformations, these levels of involvement in the country's affairs will come under the spotlight of critical scrutiny and judgement. It is obvious, however, that Europe had not really left the shores of Papua New Guinea and for that matter, the Pacific.

When Europe was in Papua New Guinea up to the 1920s, they were dealing with tribal people whose entire world view was centred around their age-old traditions. Prevailing knowledge and
experience available at that time enabled Europe to achieve the aims of bringing the people under the control of the administration; making them live harmoniously with each other; extracting raw materials needed by the European booming industries; establishing commerce; and making Christians out of the pagans.

After independence, the tribal people became the citizens of a new state. Their world view had broadened to include the world beyond their wildest imagination. They were increasingly mastering the art of creating, developing and managing a modern social, economic, legal and political system. A system that was integrated into the wider world. Now, the Europeans must deal with people who have absorbed the values of government, business and social order inherited from Europe but specifically shaped by the new environment and traditions peculiar to Papua New Guinea. Europeans thus need different approaches to achieve the same aims that brought them into Papua New Guinea in the first place. In fact, European influence on Papua New Guinea is much greater today than it has ever been in the past. This is being accelerated by Papua New Guinea's absorption into, and greater involvement with, the international system.

ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

From the vantage point of Papua New Guinea's experience I shall briefly discuss five areas in which the perpetuating influence of Europe continues to shape and reshape the Pacific. These are aid given to Papua New Guinea by individual European countries; expansion of commercial activities; the two-headed scholastic endeavour involving Papua New Guineans receiving training in Europe and European scholars researching and teaching in Papua New Guinea; joint assistance to Papua New Guinea by the
Europeans through the European Community; and the influence of the changes currently taking place in Europe.

The generation of Papua New Guineans that took the country to independence are now the seniors in the government. Many of them have left the public service and are now in the private sector. They are either being replaced or joined by generations whose preoccupation is not political independence but how Papua New Guinea can make use of its natural resources and the opportunities available in the international system to increase its capacity to function as an effective member of the international community.

Aid by Individual European Countries

Many European countries have bilateral relations with Papua New Guinea. Great Britain, Germany and France lead the way. Aid ranges from providing volunteers to serve in Papua New Guinea, to purchasing primary produce and supplying scholarships to educate and train Papua New Guineans. This is being done to promote better relations between the countries involved and at the same time help build up the capacity of Papua New Guinea at both the national and international levels.

The establishment of foreign embassies and high commissions in Papua New Guinea has helped to increase the presence of those European countries concerned. These offices assist communications to and from the metropolitan countries. Beyond the large-scale aid projects, smaller projects often receive funding from these foreign offices. Aid has been given in the form of needed school materials, educational visits by key officials and money for construction projects.

During most of the years after independence a large proportion of Papua New Guinea’s annual budget was financed by Australian
aid. This has changed to a policy tying foreign aid to specific projects. Countries other than Australia have also contributed to funding projects through the government system. At the same time, non-government agencies have contributed significantly to facilitating major programmes. The Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany and the British Volunteer Service Overseas are two such examples.

Who benefits from such aid? This is a question that has attracted much interest in the past. There are basically two responses. Firstly, that the recipient benefits from the aid by the positive outcome of the aid. And secondly, that the real beneficiary of aid is the donor country. The return that the donor receives is argued to outweigh the benefits to the recipient. Both arguments are applicable in the case of Papua New Guinea. Germany is a major importer of Papua New Guinea's raw materials, including copper. An announcement by the Papua New Guinea Government in 1990 to purchase military vessels from South Korea led to representations by German officials to the Papua New Guinea Government. For this and other reasons the project was shelved and to date the plans to strengthen the capabilities of the maritime element of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force to provide effective surveillance of the country's waters remain unrealized.

Expansion of Commercial Activities

In spite of great distances between Europe and Papua New Guinea, European countries have active commercial interests in the country. European companies, including Shell, San Miquel Brewery and Commonwealth Development Corporation, have established long and successful operations here. They employ national staff and train them to run the affairs of the companies. European countries also buy Papua New Guinea's copper, copra,
coffee and other raw materials. They also export manufactured goods to Papua New Guinea.

Improved technology increases the capacity of European companies to maintain an active interest in the country without being physically present. Papua New Guinea's desire to break her dependence on Australia promotes closer relations with other countries. Major efforts have been made recently, including a spectacular participation at World Expo 1992 in Seville and various trade fairs in London and Brussels. As Papua New Guinea vigorously focuses on mining and petroleum, Europe will inevitably respond in order to benefit from the opportunities.

Scholastic Endeavour

Europe's long history of scholarship constitutes the powerhouse of human progress. The ability of the human race to learn more about itself and its environment gives those with advanced knowledge the edge over those who lack such knowledge. The European expansion into other parts of the world was accompanied and driven by knowledge that prevailed at that time. New experiences and findings refined existing knowledge and propelled the search for new knowledge.

Much has been written by scholars, scientists and administrators about Papua New Guinea. Travellers have also documented their impressions and experiences. Many who have not travelled have read these works and have formed opinions, acquired understanding and made decisions that affect the country. Information about Papua New Guinea, including academic analysis, is still being predominantly produced by non-Papua New Guinean writers. And European academic and research institutions contribute a great deal to Europe's success in this area. Those present at this Colloquium are testimony to this. The fact that this
Colloquium is organized to bring scholars together to share information about a part of the world which may have no immediate concern to the general European public is evidence of the importance of research.

Since scholarly work influences peoples' opinions and views, its role is very important. The driving force behind research, particularly in the social sciences, is becoming more and more subject to scrutiny. Basically, the information can be used to effect positive transformation as well as to deny those affected the benefits of decisions made by those who matter.

Information made available by academic researchers is used by others in schools and universities to expound theories and learn about Papua New Guinea. Even Papua New Guineans themselves are learning about themselves through the eyes of others, including the Europeans. Today, abundant information about Papua New Guinea is stored outside of the country.

An important form of international aid is the granting of scholarships by European countries for Papua New Guineans to study in educational institutions in Europe. Those selected have been few but their numbers are increasing and on completion they play significant roles in decision making and policy development. Special programmes have been designed in universities and colleges to address particular needs identified in countries like Papua New Guinea. And courses ranging from a few weeks to several years attract Papua New Guineans supported by scholarships. These scholarship holders have also become the catalysts for refining the programmes and the concepts behind the programmes. Two things result from this: Europe continues to influence Papua New Guineans by training them in the tools that they will use on their return; and, secondly, these nationals become
ambassadors of the school of thought and work to transform the country from within.

The European Community

Europe today is heavily involved in transforming Papua New Guinea through the European Community and its agencies. Experts on the economy, finance, and project development are actually located in key positions in Papua New Guinea in order to implement programmes and to facilitate changes in the institutional system to meet the requirements of the development programmes. The European Community, through its agencies, is involved in funding development through the national budget. In addition, it directly funds major national projects through the Office of International Development Agency, and also village-based projects that substantially affect the lives of the people.

The European Community is also directly, as well as indirectly, involved in facilitating the restructuring of the way Papua New Guinea organizes itself to bring about development. As a result of the conditions attached to the kinds of assistance they provide, Papua New Guinea must make changes or the programmes will not be available. Through the ACP–EEC\(^1\) agreements a lot of changes have taken place and will continue to take place in the basic institutions of Papua New Guinea. Through the World Bank, Europe also indirectly contributes to controlling and influencing the affairs of Papua New Guinea from New York, London and Brussels.

Much consultancy work is also carried out by European experts in Papua New Guinea under the European Community programme. These experts decide on the fate of development in Papua New Guinea after spending a few weeks to a few months
assessing the environment for the planned programme and making reports to both the government of Papua New Guinea and the agency responsible.

The European Community supports the economy of Papua New Guinea through trade agreements which guarantee purchases of raw materials, through funding to subsidize ailing industries and through the provision of markets for Papua New Guinea's produce. The Community also collectively provides scholarships for study in Europe. The programme guarantees Europe's perpetual influence in transforming Papua New Guinea. It ensures physical changes to the communities as well as institutional and structural changes in the country, and it trains the people to absorb the accompanying values for long-term effect.

Changes in Europe

With improved technology Papua New Guineans are watching the changes that are going on in Europe now. The dismantling of Communism in Eastern Europe; the disintegration of countries like Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union; and the efforts by the European Community to come together in order to become stronger, are sending important messages worldwide. Television, radio and newsprint are transmitting the changes as they happen. Knowledge of history shows that Europe may be repeating the past when there existed a greater Europe in a different context.

The ideological war that separated Western Europe from Eastern Europe has disappeared. The two Germanies have once again united, the Soviet Union has given rise to new countries, Yugoslavia has disintegrated and democracy and the free market economy are spreading across Europe; borders separating the countries are being relaxed. At the same time the influx of foreign nationals into
Europe is causing a resurgence of racial disharmony that at one stage ignited massive destruction of human lives in Europe.

Due to the central influence that Europe has on Papua New Guinea and the Pacific in general, what happens in Europe will inevitably affect the affairs of the country and the region.

TRANSFORMATION AND TRADITION

Europe has had a major part to play in bringing about wholesale changes in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific. The changes have not only been material but also spiritual and structural. Peoples' ways of life are changing. The rate of change is dependent on the degree of exposure to agents of change. Those with higher levels of education, in positions of authority and decision making, in better paid jobs and living in urban areas experience greater changes than those who live in very remote villages with no easy access to the outside world. Many fall in between and are grappling with how to make ends meet in the rapidly changing society.

The massive transformation, however, has not successfully diminished the role of traditions in the lives of Papua New Guineans. In spite of how modernized a person or a community has become, the basic traditional pattern of behaviour prevails. A successful businessman versed in the principles of the modern economy must still adhere to meeting his responsibilities to the family and the community. The prime minister of the modern government must attend to traditional obligations in matters of the family and the community.

Old traditions have also given way to new ones. Bride-price, for example, is developing new characteristics. As marriages occur between different tribes whose practices are different, elements of both are combined whilst other elements are set aside. Attitudes
towards land and sea are changing as the resources become more and more commercialized. This is striking at the heart of Papua New Guinea's society. Money has transformed communal assets into a struggle for the benefits. Thus communal land falls prey to disputes about ownership, and forestry and mining divide the families and turn them into adversaries.

What are these changes doing to Papua New Guinea? To answer this question is to bring up the old issue of development. Who benefits from all these changes? Are these changes instruments of development that benefit all people or are they instruments of oppression and exploitation of the majority by a few on the basis of foreign principles? I shall conclude this paper by offering some thoughts on the question of whether or not Europe's perpetual influence in the shaping and reshaping of the Pacific has been beneficial to the Pacific Islanders. How are the Pacific people responding to the process of development amidst these changes?

Donor Versus Recipient Syndrome

Due to the smallness of most of the Pacific Island states, their livelihood depends largely on assistance from other countries. Their own ability to sustain themselves is weak due to their small resource bases. To follow the strategy of development propounded by the metropolitan powers, they must forever rely on the donor countries. The history of the Pacific's exposure to the international market place has been one of it being a recipient of the metropolitan powers' ideas, knowledge, funds and manpower. Major Pacific Island countries like Papua New Guinea and Fiji and resource-rich islands like Nauru are trying to change the equation. However, the donor–recipient syndrome is not only limited to whether the island state is economically strong. The total spectrum
of development is involved. The full impact of European influence is such that it is difficult to break away from being at the receiving end all the time.

Workers Versus Owner Syndrome

The incorporation of the Pacific into the international system has turned the Islanders into workers. This involvement in the modern sector requires them to work for the government, private sector or the churches. They work as unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. Different categories of skills correspond to different levels of renumeration.

All large businesses in the Pacific are owned and controlled by foreign companies. Whether it be in cash-crop plantations or fisheries or mining or forestry, the principle investor is not an original Pacific Islander. In an attempt to change this situation, governments have ventured into commercial investments. Statutory organizations have been set up to regulate investments and even invest in successful businesses with the aim of promoting national ownership.

With the changing patterns of investment, the ownership of business has also changed. Plantations which were originally owned by foreigners have now virtually been taken over by nationals and national companies. At the same time, the commercial tree crops are experiencing a serious downturn in prices. Foreign investment, on the other hand, is moving into mining which requires high levels of initial capital outlay while providing a potentially high return. In Papua New Guinea the traditional significance of land constitutes a complicating factor in ownership issues and the distribution of benefits from minerals, petroleum and forestry.
As a norm the Pacific Islanders are workers for businesses which are owned and controlled by foreigners or foreign companies.

Dependent, Independent and Interdependent Syndrome

The international system is founded on the principle of interdependence. The smaller systems or members influence and are influenced by each other resulting in an international system in which the smaller systems do not necessarily have any control. The transformation process in the Pacific has turned most of the island states into dependent communities. They are too insignificant to make any impact on the international system. Their extremely dependent situation reduces their effectiveness and thus practically excludes them from meaningful interdependent relationships with other countries.

The notion of political independence only means that the island states have an elected government that oversees their affairs. For all practical purposes, apart from the larger Melanesian island states, the Pacific environment has created a new category of nation states out of the Pacific Islands. International law and practice demands that they become self-governing or independent. They are absorbed into the international economic system in which they cannot effectively participate due to limited capabilities. They must develop a new relationship with the metropolitan powers and the international system to sustain a livelihood.

Owner-Worker-New Owner Syndrome

Generally, land in the Pacific is owned communally by the original Pacific Islanders. This was so until land alienation was effected with the expansion of European rule in the Pacific. Land was alienated to build towns, establish plantations and build
mission stations. Other services followed. The owners of the land became workers. They were owners before European rule, workers during European rule and are struggling to become owners again after European rule.

The extent of land alienation depends in part on the size of the island. In the majority of small atolls, land alienation was extensive when the colonial powers decided that they would settle there or engage in business activities there. Where the island was sizeable, land alienation was less extensive even though, when it did take place, the original land owners lost either all their land or a substantial portion of their land.

After independence, when political power returned to the people and they came to be more involved in the money economy, alienated land became a subject of contention. This has worsened as people from other parts of the country acquire land from the state and engage in gainful enterprises whilst the original landowners are virtually left on the side as onlookers. This has given rise to demands for compensation. In some cases, land has been returned to the landowners.

This experience has resulted in a new move by the landowners to benefit more from the development of resources on their land. In Papua New Guinea, development in the mining, petroleum and forestry sectors raises the need for a new approach that must effectively take account of the interests of landowners. This approach has to critically review the introduced law that says what exists under the ground and in the sea belongs to the state. Where land needs to be developed in a post-independence period, the landowners do not only want to be beneficiaries of the development but also owners of the means of development.
CONCLUSION

The nature of the Pacific Islands offers a challenge to innovation and creativity. The people have been absorbed into the competitive and advanced world system. They have not and will not move away from their traditions and acquire new ways of life that are devoid of their kastam. The new Pacific is of cosmopolitan character, combining the Pacific Islanders' own traditions and the influence of the world at large.

It is easy for the Pacific to accept the changes being imposed from outside and follow the well-trodden path of development. Such an approach would only deepen their alienation from themselves and from the rest of the world. The hope of the Pacific Islanders is to become more innovative and industrious in fully appreciating the positive value of what the Pacific offers them and to follow the path of development that fits their situation.

With a very limited economic base, the strategy for development that requires exploitation of natural resources to generate capital, which would in turn drive the wheels of change, is unsuitable. Pacific Islanders need to make use of what is available within their means to develop themselves. Development must be refocused away from capital and profit into human development compatible with the environment. Thus, in a remote resource-scarce atoll, development is not Amsterdam, London and New York, but it is improvement and sustenance of a dynamic island life.

NOTE

1 The ACP–EEC Convention of Lome was set up to foster co-operation between countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) and the European (Economic) Community.
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