Seating the Place:
Magic and Embodiment on the Lelet Plateau,
New Ireland (Papua New Guinea)

Richard Eves

A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

June 1994
Except where otherwise acknowledged, this thesis describes my own research and analysis

Richard Eves

Department of Anthropology
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
Plate 1: *Lavavang* on top of the pigs at mortuary feast
The author holds the copyright of this work which may not be reproduced, circulated and cited in any form without the express written permission of the author.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abstract</th>
<th>ix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction: Alterity, identity and the body</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Encounters with others: Boundary crossings and borrowings</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: From birth to death: Body, gender and power</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Embodying kinship: Shame, sex and shell valuables</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Imagining other bodies and the world of non-human beings</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: The origins of taro and the culture of famine</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: The magical world of the garden and the seating of taro</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7: Feasting and fame: Finishing the dead and lifting up the names of the living</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures

1. Female ego terms of address 104
2. Male ego terms of address 104
3. Cross cousin marriage and transmission of valuables from father to son 112
4. *Lepot amlong* - marrying back between Laragat and Katanuat clans 112
5. Movement 'path' of a lineage heirloom 120
6. *Lavatpas or lavas*, taro plant and parts 182
7. Genealogical connections for putting *kalibi* 219

Maps

1. Papua New Guinea xv
2. New Ireland xv
3. Lelet villages and hamlets xvi
4. *Larada* abodes in relation to hamlet and village sites 131
5. Clan land boundaries 132
6. *Larada* abodes in relation to clan land boundaries 132
7. Limbin environs and *larada* abodes 136

Plates

1. *Lavavang* on top of the pigs at mortuary feast iii
2. Men's *Tubuan* dance performance 74
3. Men's *Tubuan* dance performance 74
4. Women's dance performance 75
Plates (cont.)

5. Women's dance performance 75
6. Men's line dance performance 76
7. Men's Tubuan dance performance 77
8. Men's Tubuan dance performance 77
9. Women's dance performance 78
10. Women's dance performance 78
11. Shell heirloom valuable 115
12. Salut holding her clan heirloom 121
13. Planting a taro garden 183
14. Flying stone in a taro garden 183
15. Women peeling taro tubers 218
16. Woman peeling taro 218
17. Smearing on kalibi 219
18. Moving the taro bundle onto heated stones 220
19. Men's house yard during feast preparations 220
20. Laxabis display 223
21. Dividing up taro from laxabis display 224
22. Kuruse - shell valuable distribution 224
23. Climactic ivavang performance 229
24. Counting the pigs 230

Tables

1. Moiety designation of clans 101
2. *Larada* forms and abodes 130
3. Named stages in garden cycle 179
4. Gardening processes from clearing to harvesting 180
5. Stages in taro growth 181
6. Stages in taro tuber growth 181
7. Magical intervention and garden processes 185
8. Summary of mortuary feasts 214
9. Summary of *lokpanga* mortuary feast 217
Abstract

This thesis explores and describes the lived world of the people inhabiting the Lelet Plateau in central New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. Its particular focus is embodiment and the forms of corporeal imagery in magical belief, interpreted from a perspective that draws on Bakhtin's dialogism and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Bakhtin argues that dialogic relations extend far beyond dialogic speech in the narrow sense and are imbued in the entire realm of living thought. For him there is no unitary or self-constituting subject who exists in and by him or herself. I argue similarly for a relational or dialogical theory of personhood which sees the person as constituted in the social world, in relations with others. Among the Lelet sociality is crucial in defining humanness. I follow Merleau-Ponty in seeing the subject as embodied, and suggest that the consciousness of the Lelet person is not radically separated from bodily being, as it is in modern western thought, but is integrally bound up with it. The Lelet person is very much a body-subject whose consciousness of self as acting subject is integrally connected to the corporeal component of his or her being. I draw on the insights of Merleau-Ponty to elaborate a theory of the body which points to the significance of movement and action as the basis of intentionality. I argue that the movement of the body in action is central to the Lelet imagination because it is integral to the constitution of the person. The immobile state of the sitting body is opposed to the more mobile state of movement in numerous contexts. Throughout, I explore the polyvalent meanings of such bodily images and the ways in which they are reconfigured in different contexts. The body, thus, is the medium through which the Lelet construct personhood and identity. Because of this, power relations are often concerned with the body. The renown of a person is dependent on the processes of value creation in which bodily power or bodily movement are transformed into products which are then circulated and exchanged with others. Because the body is central to the constitution of the person and the creation of value it is the target for those who seek to attack or control others.
Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to many people and a number of institutions who have assisted practically during the several years of this project. The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and the New Ireland Provincial Government are thanked for granting permission for this research to proceed. This project initially began at the University of Adelaide prior to fieldwork and was completed at the Australian National University following fieldwork.

I owe an enormous intellectual debt to two of my teachers at the University of Adelaide. Many thanks are due to Susan Barham and Tom Ernst who through their courses greatly inspired me and gave me a passion for anthropology. My understanding of both anthropology and phenomenology owes much to their insight and their intellectual vigour. During courses on Melanesian anthropology, during honours and in the first year of this project I benefited greatly from Tom's understanding of Melanesian anthropology.

During my time at the University of Adelaide I benefited greatly from the support, encouragement and practical advice of a number of students and colleagues whom I wish to thank. Among them are Isao Hayashi, Christine Lovell, Sandra Pannell, Mary Thoday and Kerry Zubrinick. Deane Fergie first suggested New Ireland to me as a fieldwork site and her practical advice and encouragement was greatly appreciated.

Numerous thanks must go to Roger Dixon and his wife Emelia of Kavieng for their hospitality and friendship while in the field. Not only did Roger give considerable practical assistance and advice but he was a great friend and support during some difficult times. I also thank Bob Lee, a linguist with the Summer Institute of Linguistics who worked in the Mandak language area and generously supplied me with some published and unpublished work on the Mandak language.

Many thanks are due to the people of the Lelet who generously shared their time, knowledge and hospitality with me. Firstly my greatest thanks are due to the residents of Loso where I lived for most of my time in the field. Above all I wish to thank Lenius, who not only took me into his home and looked after me but was exceedingly generous with his time. Many thanks go to the rest of his family for their help and company: Kumkum, Sopka, Lima, Bin, Peter, Marangas and Ninimun all in one way or another helped me greatly while in the field. I also want to thank the children of Loso - Yamo, Lingling, Laxala, and Saring, who kept me company at various times and gave me much joy. Many thanks are due to the residents of Lenba - Etuat, Oripa and Loren who assisted me in many ways.

I extend my thanks and gratitude to Pastor Esrom and Margaret as well as their children - Joe, Jetla, Judith, Brown and Matulai - for their warmth and hospitality when I first arrived in the field and before I became established.
In addition I wish to thank the following people of Limbin for their generosity both in hospitality and information; Sition and Rose, Liman and Sadum, Solu, Eskeil, Ruben, Mande and Tudan, Lesok and Dokas, Gerson and Jubili, Maub and Tile, Robin and Turus, Steven and Evodia, Epen and Nale, Manina and Kisina, Tunde and Esta, Solomon and Ugen, Munorong and Riut, Paul Kamalap and Sablingkon, James and Tedang, Rebeka, Megi, Saravit, Rodi, Mamat, Longerep, Simion, and Peter Patiste. I also wish to thank the following people from other villages; Maratin and Helena, Kamai and Sana, Leven and Meles, Tamao and Dinah, Eruel and Salibo, Dioni and Seni, John Songlixa and Tomi, Momopolom and Betty, Thomas, Emos, Lekot, Tebengatu, Juli, Kunak, Lakuna, Lendoma, Monase, Eliuda, Samuel, Anis, Lenbung, Misiel, Riki, Muntadi and John Kabien.

Thanks are due to my cross cousins and aunties for teaching me about joking relationships. In particular Pinu, Dampas, Eliut, Tomine, Mande and Tunde are all warmly remembered. Special thanks are due to my cross cousin Gawo for much fun and companionship. Josephat and Moses are especially thanked not only for their friendship but also the great help they gave in transcribing, translating and collecting material. Epen, Togelom and Onolom often greatly assisted me in my work.

During the subsequent writing up of this thesis at the Australian National University a number of colleagues and graduate students in thesis writing seminars and at other times have offered beneficial comments on my work. In particular I have in mind the feedback, support and encouragement I received from Nils Bubant, Margaret Burns, Barbara Grimes, Arlette Ottino, Ingrid Slotte, Aileen Toohey and Borut Telban. A number of people in the Anthropology department gave invaluable advice about computers. In particular I wish to thank Margaret Tyrie for teaching me how to do drawings on the computer, Ria van de Zandt for helping me clear up some nasty bugs in my page formatting and for help with style sheets and Nils Bubant for teaching me how to do tables and drawings in Windows.

Many thanks are due to Judy and Andrew Lattas for hospitality when either passing through Sydney or doing archival work at the Mitchell Library. Since 1988 Andrew has given considerable feedback, support and encouragement on my work and this is greatly appreciated. Andrew generously invited me to visit him in the field for three weeks prior to my going to New Ireland and I benefited greatly from this experience.

Many thanks are due to my supervisor Margaret Jolly. Margaret generously took me on as student half way through the writing up of this thesis. Without Margaret's feedback, guidance and support this project would not have been completed and this is greatly appreciated.

Last my greatest debt and most thanks go to Roe Sybylla who for the duration of this study has given enormous support, encouragement and practical assistance.
Preface

This thesis is based on ethnographic research among the Mandak-speaking people of the Lelet Plateau in New Ireland Province, the northernmost province of Papua New Guinea (see map 1). As well as the main island there are several smaller islands within the province: New Hanover (Lavongai), the Saint Matthias group (Mussau and Emira), Tabar, Lihir, Tanga, Djual, Feni and Anir. The main island is a narrow, northwesterly-tending island 350 kilometres long and at most 48 kilometres wide (see map 2). In the central region where the Lelet Plateau is located, the island is approximately 21 kilometres wide. The Lelet are the only remaining residents of the mountainous backbone of New Ireland, having resisted colonial pressure to relocate on the coastal fringe, as other inland populations have done. The majority of the population of about five hundred people live in dispersed hamlets of varying size and distance from the four main villages of Lengkamen, Lavatkana, Kaluan and Limbin which form the nucleus of social and political life (see map 3). As in the rest of the Mandak area, the Lelet are organised into two exogamous moieties, which are named Lamalom and Laragam. Within each moiety there are several matri-clans which are further subdivided into matri-lineages.

Swidden agriculture is the main subsistence activity practised on the Lelet, the main crops being sweet potato and taro. Taro is the most culturally important foodstuff. Other cultivated foods in the diet include cassava and banana. Tinned fish and meat are the major sources of protein consumed on a daily basis, with these being supplemented occasionally with wild pig and possum hunted in nearby forest. Domesticated pigs and chickens are killed and consumed occasionally in the contexts of mortuary and other feasts. Rice is an increasingly important staple in the diet.

Due to the temperate climate the Lelet successfully grow and market a variety of European and Asian vegetables (such as cabbages, tomatoes, capsicums, potatoes, bok choi and beans). This is the main cash income for the area which is outside the altitudinal range of coconuts, the main source of cash for the coastal peoples. The Lelet are very successful market gardeners and regularly supply the provincial capital of New Ireland, Kavieng, with produce. Gardening for subsistence and for cash consumes much of people's time. The rhythm of gardening is interrupted only by regular attendance at church and, particularly in the dry season, by mortuary feasts.

This thesis is based on a total of fifteen months fieldwork in two periods, twelve months from April 1990 to April 1991 and three months from August to October 1991. During this time I was based at Loso hamlet in Limbin village. For six months of my time in the field I was accompanied by my partner, Roe Sybylla, who carried out research among women. Except in the one instance stated I have drawn only on my own research.
Like many scholars who have gone off to do fieldwork with one project in mind but who end up writing on a completely different topic, my project has undergone a metamorphosis. My original intention, born out of an honours thesis on cargo cults, was to study issues such as continuity and persistence in beliefs and practices in the face of what appears to be radical cultural and economic change. While in some ways these concerns are to be found in this thesis, they are addressed more at the level of metaphor and image than at the more practical level of, say, the economic effects of cash cropping on a rural economy. In large part this change of emphasis was determined by the Lelet themselves who were very concerned to tell me about such things. As Christians they viewed the past with a mixture of nostalgia and disdain and were continually grappling with this tension and negotiating their identity in the context of change.

The material on which this thesis is based was obtained by a mixture of participant observation and informal discussions with people, often over cups of tea at my house. On a number of occasions I travelled to other villages to interview knowledgeable men. This involved staying overnight and storying long into the night in smoke filled men's houses. It was on occasions such as this that people familiar with various forms of magic and Lelet culture imparted their knowledge to me. While I collected a considerable number of spells, it is nonetheless difficult to gauge the extent of their use due to the general disapproval of magic by the Church. Most spells in the past were secret and their revelation, except in cases of valid transmission, meant efficacy was lost. Even those who no longer use their magic nonetheless guard it carefully, and passed it on to me while we were alone. In keeping with people's caution in this area I have been careful to speak only generally about this subject, and have avoided including vernacular spells or overly detailed accounts of the practical steps of the magic I collected. For these reasons and to protect people's privacy, I have used pseudonyms throughout, rather than real names.

While the ownership of spells and knowledge to do with magic is not necessarily gendered, the practice of it invariably is. The use of the most important and powerful forms of magic, such as weather magic and garden magic is the prerogative of men, even though women may have considerable knowledge of them and in the past men have transmitted magic to their daughters. There are, however, certain garden spells which are the prerogative of women and which form parts in a sequence of acts which are mainly performed by men. Women's magic relates to the division of labour in gardening. Because women are responsible for harvesting taro, any spells relating to this are their sole prerogative. While men perform most stages of garden magic, women have more knowledge of gardening in general and taro in particular. Women's knowledge of taro varieties far surpasses that of men's. Some women have considerable knowledge of indigenous curing magic, although new imported forms of curing as well as western medicine is displacing these. The new forms of curing magic are the sole prerogative of men.

While I collected some material relating to women's gardening magic and curing, most of my material from women was mediated through third parties, who
Arriving at the Lelet via the road from the coast, one is likely to be greeted by seas of taro growing profusely and exuberantly in gardens located close to hamlets or in valleys nearby. The people of the Lelet are good gardeners and it is no understatement to describe the Lelet Plateau as the bread basket of New Ireland. It is the chief source of fresh vegetable produce for the market at the provincial capital, Kavieng. The people from the coastal villages of Pinikindu and Lamasong, and from further afield, also visit the Plateau to purchase taro for their mortuary feasts, a practice that is frowned upon disdainfully by the Lelet. This visible fecundity belies what the people of the Lelet believe to be the reality of the situation: the taro of today is not comparable to the taro of yester-year. Some would even go so far as to say that there is a state of famine, a paradoxical perception given the patent productivity of the Plateau.

I was surprised when some people told me that they are currently living in a state of famine, a state without taro. This famine, it is believed, has been caused by the people of the coast, who have thrown into the sea the regenerative stalks of taro purchased from the Lelet for mortuary feasts. Because of this careless action taro is consigned by the metaphoric imagination to move ceaselessly, as does the sea. As the sea moves, in the motion of tides and waves, so will the taro - it will not remain 'seated' in its place. It will move, bringing famine to the place.

The arrival story that I have recounted here draws together a number of the themes which I will explore in this thesis and which I ground theoretically in this introduction. In particular, it points to the significance and centrality of taro as the archetypal food in Lelet conceptions of identity. Issues central to people's existence can be highlighted and expressed through discourses and narratives about food and famine. The absence of taro can, thus, signify wider dilemmas, including such existential predicaments as death, disaster and conflicts which threaten communal viability. It also illustrates the contradictions emerging in encounters with others. Thus, while the sale of taro can bring returns of cash it can also threaten the community by taking away something that is vital to its self-definition and survival. The perceived dearth of taro and the present state of famine are commentaries on the ambivalence which the Lelet feel towards their incorporation into the capitalist economy and the wider world. This is part of a deeper malaise in the community, brought on by the abandonment of the past practices of 'seating the place', a term
which refers to the agricultural rites and magical rituals which were carried out in the past to ensure that food was plentiful and there was general well-being and harmony (see chapters one and six).

Moreover, my arrival narrative suggests the significance of metaphors and images drawn from the sea in Lelet discourse and imagination. The coast and the sea are seen simultaneously, as a source of power and a source of danger (see chapter one). Like all metaphors and images they assume different meanings and values according to the contexts in which they are employed. While at certain stages in the growth cycle taro gardens are referred to as 'the sea', at other stages marine metaphors are avoided because their properties are considered detrimental to that growth. The reference to 'seating' also points to an important source of images and metaphors - the body and its comportment. Through an examination of corporeal imagery and metaphor I will argue that the body is significant, not only as a source of imagery, but in constituting the Lelet world and those who people it. I endeavour throughout this thesis to map the fluidity, ambiguity and contextual flux in the use of such images.

It is the purpose of this thesis to suggest a more general approach to the study of the body and its role in meaningful human action, through a particularly detailed exploration of one ethnographic case. In this introduction it is my intention to set out the conceptual framework with which I interpret meaningful human action in the Lelet world. My approach is inspired by the work of Munn who has explored similar questions among the Gawan islanders of the Massim area. Like Munn, I rely heavily on the phenomenological tradition for the conceptual apparatus which frames my analysis.

Spacetime and value creation: The view from the Massim

Munn is concerned with the modes of transformative action through which a community creates the value necessary for its viability (1986:3). She suggests that there are positive and negative value potentials that are mutually imbricated in an ongoing dialectical tension. Through this value creation, 'members of the society are engaged in an effort to construct and control themselves and their own social world' (1986:3). In the most extreme cases, negative potentials, such as witchcraft, threaten to undermine and subvert the basis of communal viability. Influenced by authors such as Bourdieu, Geertz and Ricoeur, Munn follows a practice or action approach to argue that actors construct the meaningful order of their social world in the process of being constructed in its terms (1986:6). The practices through which actors construct their social world and simultaneously constitute themselves are considered to be both symbolically constituted and symbolic processes in themselves (1986:7). Thus, as actors engage with the world, they both produce the social world and are produced by it. Acts have outcomes, she suggests, although the actual outcomes may not necessarily be those desired. The results are dependent on the act's ability to
produce another kind of effect, that of influencing the minds of others (1986:8). Acts are the means by which value is created.

Employing the concept of ‘spacetime’, Munn writes that value may be characterised:

in terms of differential levels of spatiotemporal transformation - more specifically, in terms of an act’s relative capacity to extend or expand... intersubjective spacetime - a spacetime of self-other relationships formed in and through acts and practices. The general value of an act or practice is specified in terms of its level of potency, that is,... the relative expansive capacities of the spacetime formed (1986:9, her emphasis).

The spacetime produced by an act of hospitality between a Gawan who gives food to an overseas visitor initiates the possibility of entering into and engaging in reciprocal transactions with the visitor (1986:9). The giving and travelling that these sorts of practices entail constitute a mode of spacetime that connects persons and places. Thus acts, such as the overseas travelling of a kula partner, involve the unification of otherwise disparate or separate actors into one particular moment, both spatially and temporally. It is through such acts that actors create or constitute their own spacetime (1986:11). Not only are relationships of this sort considered to be characterised by spacetime but the entities involved in any given set of practices (such as food, gardens, fame) are themselves viewed as condensed spacetime because their properties are significant to the wider intersubjective spacetime in which they are situated (1986:10).

Modes of intersubjective spacetime, such as the example of hospitality above, have a particular potency or potential value. By this, Munn means that these acts have the potential to produce value through what she refers to as the extension of spacetime. Extension means 'the capacity to develop spatiotemporal relations that go beyond the self, or that expand dimensions of the spatiotemporal control of an actor' (Munn 1986:11). Just as certain actions have the capacity to extend spacetime in a positive way, other actions can have the opposite effect, contracting it. Witchcraft, for example, is a practice that can counter acts with positive value potency by reversing or undermining them (1986:13). Within this schema certain acts are seen as fundamental 'symbolic operators' of positive value and its negation. For example, the separation of food from an actor's self is a very important aspect of the process of value creation. The transmission of food to others to consume, as in the case of hospitality, involves the creation of positive value for the actor. Should the actor opt instead to consume that food this is considered to create negative value (1986:13).

An important constituent in Munn's analytic of value transformation is the body and objects symbolising bodies, such as kula shells and canoes which can take on anthropomorphic form. She argues that value can be signified through properties exhibited by the body and the objects which symbolise it. Thus, the body and the qualities it exhibits display iconically 'the transformative value of acts and modes of spacetime' (Munn 1986:16). Following Peirce, the qualities of things like the body are referred to as 'qualisigns'. Qualities which signify value are such things as motion
(speed vs. slowness or stasis); weight (lightweightness vs. heaviness); and light (light vs. darkness). These qualisigns can also have associations with directionality (e.g. upward vs. downward movement) and certain geographical locales (e.g. the land is considered heavy and the sea buoyant (1986:17). Because the body takes on those qualities that express the value of the intersubjective spacetime produced, this bodily spacetime serves as a condensed sign of the wider spacetime of which it is a part' (1986:17, her emphasis).

Further to the process of value creation and transformation Munn suggests that such an approach cannot ignore the interplay of hierarchy and equality that occurs in society (1986:18). The acts that produce value involve a hierarchising process, which is itself 'encompassed' by cultural premises. Such cultural premises create:

the underlying moral-political problem of contemporary Gawan polity: namely, that to generate and maintain positive potency within their community, Gawans must mediate between these overriding assumptions about the relative autonomy and equivalence of all persons and the hierarchising that appears to violate these premises (Munn 1986:18).

From dialectics to dialogue

The importance of Munn's work is the extent to which it integrates, within an overall framework, a theory of value and a practice approach, both grounded in a phenomenological analysis of self-other relations. To some extent this thesis adopts a similar framework, although my theoretical orientation differs in that I draw on the work of Bakhtin to examine the question of selfhood in a dialogical, rather than in a dialectical or structuralist way. I explore the fluidity and ambiguity in the social milieu, and I pay particular attention to the contextual character of meaning. Finally, my approach is informed by the phenomenological writings of Merleau-Ponty on the body and the significance of intentionality to subjectivity, and by the work of Ricoeur on language, narrative and identity.

Increasingly the work of Bakhtin has been utilised by anthropologists in the study of language and culture, enabling the examination of what one anthropologist describes as the 'messy crevices and the structural contradictions of society' (Gottlieb 1992:14). Bakhtin's notions of dialogue, polyphony and heteroglossia have been drawn on to undermine tendencies in anthropology which homogenise complex world views, and portray them in monologic and singular terms, free from ambiguous, contradictory and subaltern voices. One proponent of the sort of dialogue envisioned by Bakhtin has been Clifford, who has used it to criticise dominant modes of ethnographic representation and their exclusion or silencing of other voices (cf. 1988:41-7, 22-3 and 1986:14-15). Referring to Bakhtin's work on the novel, he writes that 'there are no integrated cultural worlds or languages' (1988:46). Furthermore, he goes on to suggest that a 'culture is, concretely, an open-ended, creative dialogue of subcultures, of insiders and outsiders, of diverse factions' (1988:46).
In a similar vein to Clifford, Gottlieb applies Bakhtin to the Beng, although this is less an interrogation of the ethnographic text and the control of voice within it by the ethnographer, and more of an application of Bakhtin towards an understanding of dynamics internal to that society. In this study, Gottlieb focuses on Beng ideas of identity and difference which are viewed as the premises of 'traditional' thought. This pair of principles are seen as opposed but in some ways complementary, and form the dominant principles around which Beng society is organised (1992:14).

Although Gottlieb cites the later writings of Bakhtin, the questions she raises are in many ways more thoroughly dealt with in his early work, where he examines existence in terms of dialogue. In this work Bakhtin sees existence in terms of a dialogue between self and other, and this aligns him closely with the phenomenological and existentialist tradition, which has historically been concerned with this problem. To rely solely on his later studies, in which the focus is predominantly on the dialogue between speaking subjects in discursive exchange, is to miss the profound importance of Bakhtin's dialogical approach for wider and non-conversational contexts. 'Dialogic relations are thus much broader than dialogic speech in the narrow sense of the word' (Bakhtin 1986a:125). 'Dialogic boundaries intersect the entire field of living human thought' (Bakhtin 1986a:120). For Bakhtin, human relations are already rooted in language prior to any dialogue in a literal or linguistic sense, and these relations lie beyond the domain of linguistics, although they are manifested in linguistics (Schwab 1984:453 and cf. Clark and Holquist 1984:9). 'Where there is no word and no language', Bakhtin writes, 'there can be no dialogic relations ... Dialogic relations presuppose a language, but they do not reside within the system of a language' (1986a:117). What Bakhtin is proposing is a theory of existence that is essentially and thoroughly intersubjective in nature and which manifests itself in the intersubjective and cultural world of language and its use. In contradistinction to certain approaches, such as the structuralist, which collapses the individual and the social, Bakhtin assumes that the individual is constituted by the social, that consciousness is a question of dialogue and juxtaposition with a social other (cf. Steward 1986:43 and Jung 1990:86). As I will explain, the opposition between the individual and society is not conceptualised as a dialectical either/or relation, but rather as Holquist argues as 'different degrees each possesses of the other's otherness' (1990b:51, his emphasis).

In Bakhtin's theory of subjectivity, there is no unitary and self-constituting subject who exists solely in and for her or his self. It is a thoroughly social and thus relational theory in which there is no one (self) without other selves. Meaning in dialogism is relative in that it results from the relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different spaces. Consciousness of the other is conceived of in terms of the positionality of the self's body and the perspective that it gives on another's body. In reality, being is always experienced, not just perceived and, furthermore, this experiencing is from a particular position which is seen in kinetic terms as a situation - the event of being a self (Holquist 1990b:20-1).
In the relationship of the self and the other, the latter occupies a position, Bakhtin argues, outside that of the former. This positionality of outside occurs with respect to every constituent feature of self, such as space, time, value and meaning (Bakhtin 1990:14). Using the example of the author and the hero, Bakhtin suggests that the being-outside of the latter (hero-other) enables the former (author-self) to collect and concentrate the other within the self and to constitute the self to the point where a whole is formed. This process of self constitution through the other is something which does not occur only in the literary text, although this is the example which Bakhtin uses, but more generally. In life, he says, 'we evaluate ourselves from the standpoint of others, and through others we try to understand and take into account what is transgredient to our own consciousness' (Bakhtin 1990:15).

Space and time are key concepts in Bakhtin's dialogical theory and articulate what is called the 'law of placement' which says that everything is perceived from a unique position in existence (Holquist 1990b:21). The subject's place is different not only in that its body occupies a different position in space but also because subjects see the world and each other from different positions or centres (Holquist 1990b:21). The horizons of the two different subjects do not coincide because, despite position and proximity, each will always see and know something of the other that the other cannot see (Bakhtin 1990:22-3). Understanding presupposes occupying the position of outsideness. As Bakhtin writes:

it is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his or her creative understanding - in time, space, in culture. For one cannot even really see one's own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside us in space and because they are others (Bakhtin 1986a:7, his emphasis).

Bakhtin refers to this as an excess of seeing, and suggests that any 'knowing, and possessing in relation to any other human being is founded in the uniqueness and irreplaceability of [his/her] place in the world' (1990:23). It is only through the other and others that a subject can see its self as others might see it. It is through this external positioning through others that a self constitutes itself in the social world and authors itself (Holquist 1990b:28). Additionally, outside positioning is important in the production of meanings: 'A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning' (Bakhtin 1986a:7). Meanings in this way engage in a dialogue, which surmounts any closure and one-sidedness.

The self and other are further imbricated in space and time through deixis and it is partly through this that a subject becomes immersed in the intersubjective and social world which language creates. Central to deixis are personal pronouns, particularly the 'I', which, unlike other nouns, does not signify any particular object and is in this sense an empty word, because the reference it names can never be visualised in its consummated wholeness like the object of another noun. If the 'I' is to perform its task as a pronoun, it cannot refer to specific objects as other nouns do and must be able to refer to all who use it (Holquist 1990b:23). But the 'I' is invisible only at the level of the system; at the level of performance, in the event of an
utterance the meaning of 'I' can always be seen (Holquist 1990b:28). In this way the 'I' constantly shifts between users, and those who appropriate it as a marker of their own subjectivity fill the 'I' with meaning.8

Any use of the 'I' presupposes a 'you' and thus 'every instance of discourse is immediately linked to a specific, shared situation' (Clifford 1988:41). It is through the subject appropriating the 'I' that it positions itself with regard to a 'you' or other. Not only does the use of 'I' presuppose an other, it also presupposes an other who occupies a different spatio-temporal position. Thus, when a particular person appropriates the 'I', he or she not only fills it with meaning but also provides the central point 'needed to calibrate all further time and space discriminations' (Holquist 1990b:23).

Moreover the 'I', marks the point of intersection between the 'now' and the 'then', as well as the 'here' and the 'there' (Holquist 1990b:23).9 The difference between these markers 'is manifested by the relation each of them bears either to the proximity of the speaker's horizon (here and now), or to the distance of the other's environment (there and then)' (Holquist 1990b:23). As Bakhtin says, 'only I - the one-and-only I - occupy in a given set of circumstances this particular place at this particular time; all other human beings are situated outside me' (1990:23).

What makes Bakhtin's work so important, I argue, is his refusal to eliminate paradox, ambiguity, and conflict in social situations, often a marked tendency in anthropology. In an attempt to impose a conceptual unity, the fluidity, dynamism and plurality in societies are reduced to mechanistic functioning wholes or the manifestation of binary opposites. While Bakhtin does propose a unifying conceptual scheme for the analysis of social situations, this is not done at the expense of heterogeneity. Thus, in contradistinction to structuralist thought with its closed either/or dialectic of structure and history, nature and culture, Bakhtin's approach emphasises performance, history, process, becoming and the openness of dialogue.

The body acting on the world

The body is a central component of Bakhtin's dialogical theory; he presupposes that the subject of these relations is embodied. It is, thus, an embodied being who gives a perspective on the other who is also a body. The work of Bakhtin can be combined usefully with Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on the body. Like Bakhtin's, Merleau-Ponty's subject is inseparable from a body, with an identity that is mutually constituted by and dependent on the body. Thus, like Bakhtin, Merleau-Ponty develops a theory of subjectivity which is grounded in the body and its interactions with the world and others. The usefulness of Merleau-Ponty for me is his stress on intentionality, his idea that the body is also an agent.

It is only recently that the body has begun to receive serious scholarly attention in the social sciences and the humanities.10 In anthropology in the past it was either ignored or discussed through cultural conceptions such as classification beliefs, procreation beliefs, initiation rituals and pollution beliefs. The body is often still seen...
either as an object or taken for granted and ignored, and there is little recognition of its role in the constitution of subjectivity. Thus, Jackson has suggested that in many anthropological studies the body is considered to be inert, passive, and static (1989:124). We have a dominant picture of the inscribed canvas, not the acting flesh. Anthropology has not been concerned to study the 'lived body' but rather the body as a thing. This kind of approach is typified by authors such as Radcliffe-Brown who writes that:

Every human being living in society is two things: he is an individual and also a person. As an individual, he is a biological organism ... Human beings as individuals are objects of study for physiologists and psychologists. The human being as a person is a complex of social relationships (1971:193-4).

It is the person, Radcliffe-Brown emphatically states, which is studied by the social anthropologist (1971:194). I argue that this division between the individual, by which is meant the body, and the person, by which is meant consciousness, is not useful and ignores the extent to which the body is the means through which the world is experienced and inhabited. In short, such an approach ignores the pivotal place of the body in subjectivity and the means by which cultural practices become internalised and habituated in the body. As I hope to show in this thesis, among the Lelet the body is inseparable from personhood, selfhood or subjectivity, as against Radcliffe-Brown's discriminations. The body is both threshold and mediator between the intimacy of the self and the externality of the world (Ricoeur 1992:322).

Radcliffe-Brown's statement is in many ways merely a recapitulation of the Cartesianism which has dominated social science since the seventeenth century and in which the body has 'been primarily identified with its scientific description, i.e., regarded as a material object whose anatomical and functional properties can be characterised according to general scientific law' (Leder 1990:5). Accordingly, the body is seen as essentially no different from any other physical object and studied accordingly (Leder 1990:5). Following that trend of social thought, Radcliffe-Brown holds that the study of the body is the province of the empirical sciences, where the body is not that which is experienced in everyday life but is one that belongs to the quantifiable world of physical science.

A more useful approach is taken by Merleau-Ponty who argues that by considering the body in movement, a better understanding can be gained as to how it inhabits the world. This is because movement is not limited to submitting passively to space and time, it actively assumes them, it takes them up in their basic significance which is obscured in the commonplaceness of established situations' (1962:102 and cf. Straus 1966:45). For him, movement as a basis of intentionality (or his technical term, 'motility'), becomes not a matter of 'I think' but of 'I can' (1962:137). Intentional consciousness should not be viewed as existing independently of the body and guiding the body's practical engagement with the world but should instead be seen as integrally bound up with the body and inseparable from it. Intentionality belongs to the body and endows it with its basic connection to the world.
Consciousness is thus inseparable from the body, the reason why Merleau-Ponty refers to the human person as a body-subject. What purely objectivist approaches to the body fail to recognise is the active, purposive nature of the body and its practical orientation towards various tasks and goals, or, in short, its attitude to the world (Hammond, Howarth and Keat 1991:165). For Merleau-Ponty, the body is 'the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is ... to identify oneself with certain projects and be continually committed to them' (1962:82).

The body is 'primed' to experience the world in a certain way and there is a 'sedimented' stock of knowledge through which this is achieved (Hammond, Howarth and Keat 1991:189). Any body-subject experiencing the world has a prior history of experiencing things in the world. How a body-subject experiences that world is not un-mediated through language, and the world in this sense is a cultural one. People do not first experience or understand some reality and then find words to name that understanding; they understand in and through the languages and other cultural symbolisations at their disposal. All symbol systems, as Ricoeur has remarked, in one way or another contribute to the shaping of reality (1991:6, 16). It is through language, to paraphrase Heidegger, that the world is disclosed, a disclosure that is integrally bound up with the process of habitually acquiring certain dispositions in relationship to the world.

As other phenomenologists have remarked, the human person or body-subject, is born into a life-world that is already peopled by others who communicate through the medium of language. One finds oneself born into a language community that is shared by others. Those who live in a life-world 'encounter it as already constituted. [They] are, so to speak, born into it' (Schutz 1967:465). It is from the outset an 'intersubjective world of culture' (Schutz 1967:465-6 and cf. Schutz and Luckmann 1989:142-3, 148-55). Similarly, as Merleau-Ponty writes, 'I am given, that is, I find myself already situated and involved in a physical and social world' (1962:360 emphasis deleted and cf. Bakhtin 1990:95). Language is the primary means 'for the social construction of every human reality; but it is also the chief medium for transmitting a particular, historically and socially already-constructed reality' (Schutz and Luckmann 1989:154, their emphasis). Through the historically situated acquisition of language and the practical knowledge of the world through the body the person becomes immersed in and surrounded by the world into which they were born.

Language creates what Taylor refers to as public space, 'or a common vantage point from which we survey the world together' (1985:273 and cf. Tracy 1987:49). He suggests that it 'creates the peculiarly human kind of rapport, of being together, that we are in conversation together' (1985:273). The public space of language or what I prefer to call intersubjectivity allows the possibility of Being-with-others. Language, through narratives and discourses, creates a community - it creates the 'we' out of the 'I's'. But just as language creates the possibility of Being-with, it also allows for the possibility of not-Being-with. Thus, language can allow for the creation of community (and other social groupings within that community) on the
basis of exclusion as much as inclusion. Language creates the means for intersubjective dialogue and is integral to the development of identity both of a subject and a community. I thus consider in a preliminary way how the Lelet language constructs the body, the person in her/his relation to others.

**Embodiment, incorporation and the overcoming of alterity**

The Lelet divide the live human being into two constituent parts that together define the person (cf. Biersack 1990:65). These consist of a body and a life force. As in other parts of Melanesia, there is no generic term for the body as such, and when people speak of the body they speak of the skin (*labantuxu*) (cf. Bercovitch 1989a:387 and M. Strathern 1979:249). The nature of the life force (*loroang*) cannot be considered entirely non-material, because it is seen after death, and embodies properties such as weight which indicates a degree of physicality. During life, however, this life force is invisible.

While usually contained within the spaces of the living body, the *loroang* is not irrevocably joined to it, but can leave it and travel separately, though only for short periods. This occurs in sleep, fainting, or trance states. If prolonged, death results. If the life force leaves the body in a waking state, through fright or by contact with a non-human being, then the person loses his or her perceptual faculties and becomes dumbfounded. In this state the person’s body wanders around aimlessly, as a mere shell, until the *loroang* returns or the body dies because of its lack.

The life force gives the body its capacity to experience, to perceive and to communicate. That is, together they make the person. Thus, the Lelet conceive of the person in a way that goes beyond the Cartesian mind/body dualism which privileges the inner self, or consciousness, which is what 'really' experiences, perceives, and communicates, while the body is a mere (though necessary) container. The interdependence of body and life force is further illustrated by sorcery beliefs and practices which can destroy humans either by utilising personal leavings from the body or by attacking the life force, for to destroy one is to destroy both.

Upon death the body decomposes and the *loroang* separates permanently from the person. It now exists outside of the realm of the everyday world of people, but can be drawn closer to it and participate in it indirectly through magical invocation. However, its relationship to humans is only occasional and does not entail the constant dialogical interactions of social and linguistic kind which characterise and indeed define humanness (see chapter two).

The interconnectedness of the body and the life force indicates the particularity of Lelet notions of the person and the embodied nature of that personhood. The human person does not exist unless those two components are united in one body. The person is very much a body-subject whose consciousness of self as acting subject in the world is integrally connected to the corporeal component of his or her being. However, without the *loroang* the Lelet person cannot exist as an agent in the
world and cannot articulate the subject pronouns which enable it to engage in intersubjective communication and dialogue with others.

It is the person as a body-subject who occupies the deitic 'I' which sets it apart from the 'you' or other, and this is dependent on the body having a requisite life force animating it. Like many other cultures, the Lelet have subject pronouns which indicate an individuated or egocentric personhood. The first person pronoun, translated as the English 'I', is *nenia* or *nia*, while the second person pronoun, translated as 'you', is *nenu* or *nu*. While the pronouns 'I' and 'you' are common to other languages, what is important in an ethnographic context is their specific conceptualisation and, more pertinently for an analysis of embodiment, how the body relates to the entities marked by these pronouns. Studies of personhood in a different culture may show the great significance of pronouns and other such indicators of subjectivity, but this should not be considered in ahistorical and acultural terms as pre-existing givens, as Mauss points out in his pioneering essay on the person (1985). Because the separation of the mind from the body is so pronounced in western cultures, it is exceedingly important to map out indigenous philosophies of the body and its inter-relation to concepts of the person.

The pronoun forms take on 'psychological and symbolic importance as markers of the boundary between the self and others' (Lutz 1988:88). In addition, as has been noted by Lutz for the Ifaluk, 'the point at which the self stops and the other begins is neither fixed nor conceptualised as an impermeable wall' (Lutz 1988:88 and cf. 1985:43). In certain instances, among the Lelet, where the identity of two persons is closely bound, such as in marriage, those two separate persons are said to become consubstantial with one another. The two separate bodies become merged into one body and one personhood. This occurs through their 'skins' or bodies becoming joined (cf. Nash 1987:157). Consubstantiality is important in certain avoidance relationships, in which a person is envisaged to be the same sex as their partner and must avoid the selfsame kin. Thus, a husband must avoid spatial proximity and familiarity to his wife's brother in much the same way as she must (see chapter three). Slightly different ideas of consubstantiality can also occur in certain magical contexts for example when invoking powerful figures such as deceased ancestors or culture heroes. These powerful figures are invoked through incantation to occupy the same spacetime position, or the here and now, of the magician. What these ideas illustrate is that the 'I' is not necessarily one body and can be filled by a plurality of beings.

While the Lelet notions of personhood delineate a human person as constituted by a body and a life force, they also stress that the person is a plural and relational composite of others, in contradistinction to western ideas of the indivisible individual. For them, while the person who fills the 'I' is individuated in terms of the name borne and the body occupied, he or she is conceived of as the product of social relationships. 'As a microcosm of social relationships', M. Strathern has argued, 'a Melanesian person is a composite, multiple entity, constituted by the acts of others, internally differentiated in the various origins of his or her being' (1992a:178-9). This
is true also for the Lelet, where it is continually stressed that people are the products of the nurturing and feeding relationships of others. The person is seen in composite terms as the sum total of the contributions of those others who have contributed things such as food, labour or knowledge to his or her upbringing and as a result indebted to them. In the process of labouring and producing food used to nurture and feed others, people are detaching and giving up parts of themselves for the sake of others (cf. M. Strathern 1984a, 1985a:198-200, 1987a, 1987b and 1988:15). It is in this context that the corporeal nature of personhood and selfhood become most apparent and that ideas concerning embodiment and the self come to the fore.

Because the body is the ground on which the dialogue of self and other occurs, it becomes exceedingly important to other relations of otherness occurring in the cultural world. The body becomes the medium through which people construct their personhood and identities in the world and the means by which people discern that which is otherness in others. Also the body is important in the creation of identity and difference in discourse and narrative. Additionally, the meditative role of the body in a person's encounter with and immersion in the world is the reason why the body and the body's comportments, dispositions and gestures are widely employed in imagery and symbolism. The representational deployment of metaphors and images drawn from the body and bodily positionalities gives weight to and reinforces the corporeal nature of the human encounter with the world and those who people it.

I want now to explore the processes of embodiment, grounding some of the theoretical points I have just outlined more thoroughly in ethnography. By embodiment I mean the processes by which the alterity of that which is other is either assimilated, subsumed or overcome in acts of internalisation. Embodiment is the process of internalising that which is external and alterior, making it consubstantial with the person. Here I want to examine two processes of embodiment which occur by incorporation, the first being incorporation through the consumption and ingestion of things external to the body. This includes not just comestibles such as food but also knowledge and objects. The second type of incorporation involves the acquisition of habits, particularly those that relate to the movement of the body in space and the body's comportments, gestures, and dispositions.

Both forms of embodiment point to the significance of the body in Lelet notions of power, gender and subjectivity. In short, these examples point to the significance of the body in a politics of identity. By necessity, people are continually internalising things exterior to their corporeal selves, whether the products of humans or not. It is when the products of persons or their embodiments, which can include parts of themselves or products of their labour, or items that are anthropomorphised, are given value that the dynamism of the self-other dialogue reveals itself most fully.

Eating, food and the crossing of bodily boundaries

Since Malinowski wrote of a 'cult of food' among the Trobrianders, the importance of food on the symbolic, cultural and political plane has been widely discussed in the
literature on Melanesia (1961:170). However, what I want to draw out is the centrality of food to concepts of sociality. Typically, food is seen as an idiom of sociality, and its sharing is given the highest social value (cf. Kahn 1980:102 and Schwimmer 1979:300). Food is widely used to create, maintain and manipulate social relationships or, as Fajans suggests, 'Food embodies social relationships' (1988:161). A similar point is made by Schieffelin when he says, paraphrasing Levi-Strauss, that food is not only good to eat but also good to think (1977:72). Food 'doesn't only mediate social relationships', he writes, 'it comes to stand for them as well' (1977:72).

Such statements also apply to the Lelet, where people are judged on their willingness to engage in sociality, and the moral status of a person depends on this. But there are different levels of sociality and these range from the everyday informal sharing of food (and other comestibles such as areca nut) to the more formal and large-scale public exchanges that accompany mortuary feasts. As I argue, following Munn, both are forms of sociality in which comestibles, circulate beyond the limited spatiotemporal confines of one person's body. Acts of sociality are, in short, 'outward, self-extending acts' (Munn 1986:13). Through acts of hospitality, people escape 'the immorality and self-closure of nurturing only one's self' (Lattas 1990:87). Through such expansive acts, products that must be consumed before they perish, such as cooked food, are transformed and given value that extends them beyond the temporal limits normally imposed by that perishability.

The good person is one who engages in these forms of sociality and there is a strong public ethos to that effect, although out of the view of others private practice does not necessarily mirror public moral discourse. I explore these issues more fully in chapter three, and here it suffices to say that the morality of sharing is bound up with whether others have knowledge of the items or not. If someone has let it be known they have some food and they do not share it, with say a visitor, he or she will probably be subject to scornful gossip. Despite this disjunctive between the seen and the unseen, there is, nonetheless, a strong ethos of sharing. It was constantly stressed to me, that a good person is one who calls out to the passer-by and invites them into their house to eat (cf. Fajans 1985:379).

The archetypal greedy person is labelled a lantupe, a man or woman who lives alone in the bush. The greedy person is like the bush dweller who partakes of food solitarily without recourse to the acts of sociality that constitute the (moral) person. This image has allusions to the non-human bush being, the tambaran or lagas, a powerful, monstrous being, anthropomorphic but antithetical to humans. In many stories the lagas is an archetypal negative other, a cannibal being who devours unsuspecting inhabitants and whose insatiable appetite threatens communal viability. While predation by these beings appears not to constitute the grave threat it did in the past, people can still be made ill or be kidnapped by lagas should they wander in the forest unprepared (see chapter four). These beings are beyond the realms of sociality that are integral to the definition of the human person. The imagery of the lantupe is particularly important to ideas of personal identity and of communal identity, as I
show in the next chapter. Such imagery is not only central to Lelet notions of the
good person, but indeed to what it is to be human.22

The lagas and the anti-social human subvert the intersubjective world of humans
by withholding food. Instead of engaging in the 'outward, self-extending acts' of the
generous person, the selfish being, as Munn suggests, is the paradigm of the
incorporating individual who holds back food for their own consumption (1986:49). I
am also reminded here of A. Strathern's discussion of Melpa women who wanted to
consume the pork that men preferred to give away (1982:115). In this interpretation,
women become the consumers of the pork that men wish to use to transact with
others; while men want to create society through acts of sociality and exchange,
circulating food beyond the spatiotemporal confines of the person, women wish to
negate this by doing the opposite. Incorporation is ultimately an extreme act of
withholding in which 'food that is caught inside the body, in turn, epitomises what is
not only consumed, but also cannot be released' (Munn 1986:49). In the act of eating
or of greedily incorporating food into their own body, in opposition to acts of giving
and exchanging that can be used to initiate and sustain social relationships, selfish
ungenerous persons feed their own body excluding others.

Such issues bring to notice the relationship between sociality and the creation
and circulation of value. Indeed, as Bakhtin has stressed, the dialogical relations of
self/other are axiological in that they are the basis of a system of values.23 In the
ongoing process of constituting the self, of overcoming alterity through the other,
sociality is engaged in, and is in fact created by it. It is through the sociality of
sharing and exchanging that the self establishes social relationships with others and
in that process constitutes itself. Thus, in the Lelet imagination, to engage
intersubjectively in the sociality of sharing and exchanging of food with others is to
create one's humanity. To resile from those acts is to forsake one's humanness.

The self/other relationship also creates the means by which indebtedness is
created. Herein lies a paradox, which A. Weiner has termed the paradox of keeping
while giving (1992). In the dialogical relation of sociality, one gives to the other and
is constantly indebted to the other for likewise giving. Because fame is achieved by a
mixture of giving in everyday contexts and distributions of accumulated wealth in
exchanges at mortuary feasts, one must regulate the extent to which one gives and
withholds (see chapter seven). A person must control the scope of shifting between
states of giving and withholding. People must give or risk being labelled a lantupe,
but they cannot give too much because they will be unable to repay debts or
accumulate wealth to distribute in climactic fashion at mortuary exchanges.

The analysis of the food beliefs and processes of embodiment brings out the
significance of the inside of the body and what is external to it. In the body's
encounter with the world there is thus a distinction between what is inside the body
and what is outside it, in the world. Kilgour, whose argument is germane to my own,
argues that the act of incorporation or the taking inside the body is predicated on this
distinction between inside and outside (1990:4). The model of this antithesis, she
argues, is based on bodily experience (1990:4); but such a distinction should not be seen as a structuralist binarism that is inflexible and immutably fixed. As they live, people continually constitute their identity via their engagements with others and the world and in those engagements they constantly mediate and renegotiate the distinction. Thus, contrary to being an immutable metaphysical boundary, it is constantly being crossed.

One such act that involves boundary crossing is that of eating when a person brings things that were previously external to her or his body within its corporeal confines. In crossing the boundaries of the body, food becomes a mediator of the distinction between the inside and the outside, and the incorporative act dissolves the opposition of external to internal.24

It is at the margins or boundaries of the body, particularly at those sites in the skin that open up into the interior spaces of the body, such as the mouth, that the body engages, assimilates and incorporates the world.25 I argue that the reason that the simple act of partaking of food forms a pervasive and powerful image generally in Melanesia is because it is part of the process by which the self assimilates that which is external and other to itself. It is the process by which the outside is made inside and the uncanny made canny. As an act of incorporation via the mouth, eating is one aspect of the body's encounter with the world, or as Bakhtin in his study of Rabelais' banquet imagery has remarked:

In the act of eating, ..., the confines between the body and the world are overstepped by the body; it triumphs over the world, over its enemy, celebrates its victory, grows at the world's expense (1984b:282-3).

While Bakhtin is correct in his focus on the act of eating as a way by which the bodily boundaries are transgressed and through which a person interacts with the world, I would argue that the process he alludes to is not necessarily one of unequivocal triumph. The body at its boundaries is also the site at which the world can enter the body to the body's detriment. The boundaries of the body, the skin, the orifices, not only reflect the autonomy of the body and its encounter with the world, they can also illustrate the violable and vulnerable nature of the body to that exterior world. The act of incorporation is an ambivalent and ambiguous act and this is where many studies which examine food and its role in the creation of social relationships fail. It is commonly argued that food, as I suggested above, is used to initiate and sustain social relationships and that the sharing of food is an indication of sociality. While I agree with those positions which stress the more benign and nurturing aspects of food sharing, I argue that on their own they involve an overly romantic notion of sociality and ignore the ambiguous and plural ways in which food is conceived and deployed.

Food and eating act as ambiguous mediators; they undermine, subvert and even destroy social relationships as well as creating them, and it is important to examine the contexts in which they are deployed and how they are given different valuation. As I show in chapter two, the body is seen as vulnerable at the boundaries,
particularly at orifices where external objects, benign and beneficial or powerful and dangerous, enter or transgress the boundary between the person's body and the world. Thus the giving and exchanging of food also involves a great deal of trust, particularly on the part of the receiver, who is in a vulnerable state because food can be adulterated and used as the means by which a person comes under the control of another, loses control of her or his body, or is destroyed. This is made particularly clear in the examples of love magic I discuss in chapter two, where food or other comestibles such as areca nut can be the medium through which a woman or man comes to incorporate exuviae from a person who desires her or him. Through this incorporation the object of desire is 'moved' to think of the desiring one and to return that desire.

The vulnerability of the body at the boundaries, particularly at the orifices, is further illustrated in Lelet ideas of fasting and body closure. These ideas emerge particularly in practices which involve the transgression of the temporal and spatial limitations of the everyday world, in order to achieve magical power, or to have contact with powerful non-human invisible beings. The closure of the body through an ascetic regime is important for magicians wishing to employ some of the most powerful forms of sorcery. The most powerful of these involves the sorcerer sending his animating life force into the body of some type of non-human being, such as an eagle, pig or shark. This being is then sent to kill the victim, whose visceral organs are cannibalised by the disembodied life force of the sorcerer. Similarly, if a person wishes to have contact with some of the powerful non-human beings that inhabit the Lelet world, such as the lagas mentioned previously, he or she must undergo a regime of fasting and abstinence which not only makes the body invulnerable to the deleterious effects of these beings but also facilitates their being seen, because under normal conditions they are invisible to the human eye. I elaborate on these issues in chapters two and four. For now, it is enough to say that these issues bring Lelet ideas of the body to the fore. They show how, in contexts of extreme power and danger, the body can be reconfigured and re-created, facilitating extension into worlds not normally accessible. To gain access to these powerful worlds one must sever contact with the everyday and transform the body into a lightweight, invulnerable, and thus powerful, form.

Embodiment, value creation and gender

Incorporation is only one form of embodiment. As I mentioned above there is another which does not entail the taking inside of the body through eating, but involves the incorporation of that which is other by alternate mean. For example particular styles and comportments of other bodies can be appropriated and internalised through the process of mimesis. More specifically, I examine the acquisition of styles of bodily movement and dispositions in relation to Lelet ideas of gender.
Bodies become defined and valued by their capacity to achieve projects, by their ability to act intentionally towards the world. As Merleau-Ponty has argued, intentional action and the movements they entail are centrally important in breaking down the radical separation of consciousness and body. The self overcomes the alterity of that which is other by actively engaging in the world through projects. Following Merleau-Ponty, I argue that the movement of the body entailed in action is central to the Lelet imagination because it is so integrally bound up with the constitution of the person.

But a general reluctance of Melanesians to speculate on the intentions, motivations and thinking of others has been noted by a number of scholars. This has led one anthropologist to suggest that 'one does not know another's mind is a Melanesian axiom' (M. Young 1987:249). This reluctance is integrally connected to another aspect of Melanesian epistemology - the stress on knowledge being most reliable if it is experienced by seeing or hearing. For example, Rubinstein shows that people on Malo (Vanuatu) lexically divide knowing into two concepts based on two sensory processes of seeing and feeling/hearing (1981:138, 150-2; cf. Lindstrom 1990a:44 and M. Strathern 1985b). Among the Lelet, the former aspect of knowing, that of seeing, is considered the most reliable because people, in making their intentions known, may either disguise them in some form of veiled speech or not speak the truth at all. In a discussion of these issues, on the question of whether a person would be envious if another person possessed some valuable item, it was expressed to me that mere hearsay would not be sufficient to cause envy, for the person would have to see the valuable to be convinced. Thus, 'to see is to know and be certain' (Biersack 1983:93). Moreover, even with knowledge obtained through hearing there are strong elements which stress the visual aspects of confirmation. As M. Strathern has noted 'validation of what people say must come through reference to the person who 'saw' it. Disembodied information must be discounted' (M. Strathern 1985b:67). Among the Lelet, the words for announcement (tong axasep) clearly illustrate the relationship between knowledge and seeing. In this case an announcement literally means to bring the speech out into the light (laxasep) and thus has strong connotations of acquiring knowledge through acts of disclosure or revelation.

These idioms suggest the profound visualism of Melanesian epistemology and situate intentionality through its effects in action. They also evoke the connection between ideas of power and bodily acts. Visualism here renders acts to be the external registers of internal intentions: action is a sign of intentionality which is collectively acknowledged. Confirmation of the intention is born out by the acts themselves and not by delving into unfathomable reaches of the mind of the perpetrator, which, as Young and others have suggested, people are reluctant to do. While people may be persuaded to say they have done something, such as causing a storm or practising sorcery, the reasons for such actions will only ever really be known to the perpetrator, unless he clearly articulates them. People do not speculate nor do they pry into the minds of others such as the rainmaker who has washed out a feast or the feast host who has given an overly large portion of pork to someone who
does not have the means to reciprocate it and thus is shamed by it. Such concerns for mental intentions are somewhat peripheral to Lelet ideas of what is most culturally significant; they rather reflect the western concern with the individual as the origin of meaning. The paramount concern for the Lelet is not the reasons why something has been done but the results of what has been done. The acts in and by themselves are read as indications of intentionality. Markers of efficacy, such as a storm or a distribution of pork, in this sense extend 'the boundaries of personal space, exposing one's thoughts about someone else' (A. Weiner 1984:174). Intentions are, thus, revealed by actions and consequences (M. Strathern 1987a:23 and 1988:119).

The confirmation of knowledge in effects seen or witnessed is also crucial to Lelet ideas of power, because actions register power, whether corporeal or magical. Created or produced items, 'things' of value embodied in the form of taro bundles, pigs or shell valuables are detachments of the person in one form or another. Items of value are produced or gained through the person's labour, and this can be facilitated or extended by magical practices, as magic which enhances taro fertility or pig growth illustrates.

Among the Lelet, just as persons are valued for their willingness to engage in acts of sociality, they are valued for their capacity to work hard. The Baining of East New Britain are similar in valuing people highly for their capacity to work. Both sharing and industriousness signal a person's moral worth. Thus, according to Fajans, an industrious person is considered good while a lazy person is considered bad (1985:368-9; 1988:158 and cf. Chowning 1987:133). For the Lelet, laziness is heavily depreciated, and people who do not work hard are chided for it. Thus the body is essential to the way that value is created (cf. Modjeska 1982). It is through acts of labour that a person transforms bodily power into such things as garden produce or pork meat, which in turn can be circulated through sharing and exchange, creating or increasing the renown or fame of the person. Through labour, value is transferred from one domain to another (cf. Fajans 1988:145). Among the Baining, Fajans argues, it is 'this socially necessary labor time that gives food its social value' (1988:158). The Lelet do not quantify value in terms of the time of the labor involved, but rather see value as residing in the body's power, the power contained in the body and released from the body. In this sense, things such as food are detached embodiments of a person's strength. While there is a western tendency to see such things solely in metonymic terms, this is not the case for the Lelet. The products of a person's labour are conceived as being actual embodiments, or to borrow M. Strathern's term, partibles, rather than mere symbols of the body. Thus parts of the person are detached from that person and come to stand for that person as they are exchanged and circulated beyond them (cf. M. Strathern 1984a, 1985a:198-200, 1987a, 1987b and 1988). In Munn's terms these detachments of the person embodied in such things as pigs, taro or wealth objects, involve the spatiotemporal extension of that person beyond the narrow confines of his or her body as an 'individual' entity.

Whether items of value are directly produced by the exertion of the body, or whether they are detached from someone else through magical incantation, both
constitute visible or external signs of a person's power. In this sense all wealth in Lelet cosmology is conceived of as the result of action which involves the externalisation of something that was previously internal. The creation and production of value is thus akin to a process of revelation, where things previously concealed become disclosed. Social life 'consists in making the internal capacities of persons visible' (M. Strathern 1992b:199). Like those of incorporation, these ideas of revelation are grounded in a conceptualisation of the body as having an inside and an outside that is constantly transgressed, refigured and re-negotiated.

Body power or strength is termed lolos by the Lelet (strong), although lolos has a wider application than this (cf. Wagner 1986 and George 1988). Another term which is an appropriate gloss on the English term power is lumumuat, which also means heavy. This term is widely used to signify abundance, and has connotations of fertility. (Its significance and uses will be explored further in chapters five, six and seven). Lolos has connotations of activity whilst lumumuat has connotations of passivity, but they both also have connotations of movement, the former evoking fast upward buoyant movement and mobility generally, the latter slow downward movement and immobility. Present here are some of the qualitative properties (or what Munn refers to as qualisigns) that are given certain values, either positive or negative, and that, as Munn remarks, are not gender free (1986:17). While abstractly both terms are gender neutral, in practice their use is gendered. I explore the ethnographic contexts of the use of these concepts in chapter two, but here I examine them in terms of embodiment.

Movement and the control of bodily movement are exceedingly important on a practical level. The control of bodily movement is significant to constructions of gender and the means through which women come under the power of men in this society. One such means is through kinship and affinal etiquette which requires that women cannot position their bodies above men's. In addition to the relative vertical positioning of bodies, the horizontal spatio-temporal extension of women's bodies in movement is minimised. Women cannot engage in the sorts of pursuits which involve fast and buoyant body movement such as hunting. In the masculine economy of knowledge which characterises the Lelet world, it is deemed that women lack the strength and are incapable of the speed necessary to hunt. While I discuss this in more detail in chapter two, the point I make here is that through the spatial and temporal control of bodies, the body acquires certain movements as habitual.

Bodily movements are in a broad sense to be considered action. In a discussion on intersubjectivity Ricoeur follows Weber in suggesting that human action is not simply behaviour and 'can be interpreted in a comprehensible manner by its agents, hence in terms of intended significations, whether or not these are alleged' (1991:241, his emphasis, and cf. Weber 1978a:4). The notion that the individual is the bearer of meaning is qualified by locating such action in the sphere of the social, in that action is not only meaningful for the individual but orientated toward others (Ricoeur 1991:241). Actions which take others into account are thus considered social actions. When the conduct or action of a person takes account of other persons
she or he enters into what Ricoeur refers to as a 'modality of plural action' (1991:241). Such modalities of actions are mediated through language. It is only through language or some other form of symbolic activity, that people become aware of others in the sense that 'standards' which govern their behaviour can be recognised and action modified accordingly (Taylor 1985:271-2).

It is through recognition of others in the intersubjective world, which is in turn mediated through language, that actions become habituated. Thus, by controlling and directing movement through such things as the strictures of kin and affinal etiquette or discourses about corporeal power, bodies internalise those attributes of movement most consistent and desirable within culturally informed and linguistically articulated gender constructions. Certain movements thus become internalised or habituated. This occurs, as Ricoeur writes, through a process like: 'habit formation, namely through the internalisation which annuls the initial effect of otherness, or at least transfers it from the outside to the inside' (1992:122).

In my 'arrival scene', I suggested the significance of taro for the Lelet and the image of taro being moved by the sea preventing it from being seated properly. I now want to return to explore the importance of this type of imagery to Lelet ideas of identity. Seating is one of the most widely used body images employed on the Lelet, used in reference to place and to social states. In its most potent usage, it is applied to the community or place in prosperous and harmonious times when it is free from famine. Seating also evokes ideals of social well-being or a community without conflicts and fragmentation.

For people to be seated steadfastly in their place is a highly desirable state. However, it is never fully achievable given the exigencies of life. Moreover, in certain strategic contexts, mobility is also highly desirable. Seating is thus only one ideal of bodily comportment and people must occupy other positions that upset the image of seating. Seating may apparently suggest motionlessness and stability; but it also implies the potential or intention to move or travel. Thus being seated portrays a transitory position assumed before or after other states, such as sleep, running, walking or standing. A body, for example, is seldom permanently seated, except in the case of infirmity, but sits prior to some form of movement.

I have argued for a theory of subjectivity that integrates subject constitution with action, the 'I can' as opposed to the 'I think'; that is, bodily movement and the action that it presupposes are central to personhood for the Lelet. The image of a highly desirable social state in which the community or place are 'seated' contradicts the socially necessary requirement for movement, and herein lies a central paradox for Lelet society.

In effect, what we have is a tension between society's ideals of stasis, poetically and metaphorically evoked through the image of seating, and personhood, constructed around ideas that are contrary to that stasis. In many contexts mobility is valued and indeed necessary. Bodily movement, such as using one's body in
gardening is valued highly. Failure to manifest strength through gardening work is extremely disdained, because it is through such directed bodily movement that people create identity, personhood and worth.

In effect the value of mobility contends with the value of immobility. Humans must move in carrying out projects which involve the creation and transference of value and society. On the other hand, there is a requirement that movement not be undertaken, that the place be 'seated'. Such values are not fixed; there is a degree of fluidity and ambiguity and they must be examined in practical contexts. Like many of the images and metaphors employed by the Lelet, the conception of seating is not only plural and heteroglossic, its meaning varying according to context, but it can also be ambiguous. Images of immobility, like movement, are not always positively valued. The younger generation (mainly young men) are both decried for their alleged 'passivity' or 'laziness' because they do not harness their bodily movement to appropriate ends and they are also seen to be in constant movement, the forms of which are not purposefully directed, are unproductive, and hence, devalued. In their travels between hamlets for socialising, young men are seen to dissipate their strength pointlessly, movement which would be better spent, according to their elders, in productive gardening work. Such uncontrolled movement and travel is referred to as isasa, a term also used to designate the uncontrolled movement of children as they wander and play, and people who move from hamlet to hamlet around mealtimes in search of food are called lansasa (cf. Modjeska 1991:253). This term is also applied to people who move from residence to residence, never becoming settled permanently in one place. In a similar way, the image of seating is employed ambiguously. On the one hand, it is associated with abundance and plenitude, when, through human intervention, taro is firmly seated and famine avoided. On the other hand, seating can be associated with characteristics antithetical to this, such as the immobility occasioned by severe illness and old age.

In this thesis depicting the world of the Lelet, I want to highlight the crucial role of the body in the constitution of the Lelet person and the Lelet world. In describing that world, I discuss in detail the multitude of images related to the body that are deployed there, particularly in relation to magical belief. I do this in order to expose and explore, firstly, what the body is and how it is related to the other components and aspects of the world. The body, through metaphor and image, can be seen as a basis of the constitution of the social world, and the construction of collective identity. Secondly, my aim is to lay bare the role of the body in personhood. In both these regards, the body plays an important role in the constitution of relations of power, both in gender relations and in the relations between men that dominate the Lelet social world. In detailing aspects of this world and its life, again, I aim to show that their rich endowment of bodily metaphor and image means that the body is a very important element underlying the constitution of subjectivity and power.
Notes

1. This arrival scene is a fictional account in which I am attempting to play with (and subvert) the conventional and often utopian arrival scene of Pacific ethnography, by combining it with Lelet imagery (for example, see R. Firth 1936:1-2). In an illuminating discussion Pratt examines the deployment of personal narrative in ethnographic writing, focusing on the arrival of the ethnographer in the field, and the antecedents and continuities of this style in travel writing. She notes that arrival stories are responsible for setting up the initial positioning of the subjects of the ethnographic text (1986:32). What I want to bring out is the ambiguity and contradoriness of Lelet images, and the way that they can undermine the uncritical tendency to believe what one sees from one's own particular perspective. As I demonstrate later, however, seeing is important to knowing.


3. For a critical questioning of Clifford's use of dialogue, see Rabinow (1986:245-7). Rabinow argues Clifford uses dialogue in its literal sense as a text that presents two subjects in discursive exchange (1986:245), although, as can be seen from the citations I use, this critique does not acknowledge Clifford's view of dialogue in a wider sense. However, I agree with the thrust of Rabinow's critique and his attention to questions of power.

4. Some of the points about the dialogic nature of existence are mentioned in passing in his later works. See (1984a; 1986a and 1986b), but the more comprehensive account is found in 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity'. This work dates from the period of 1919-24, was first published in 1979 and has only recently been published in English (1990). According to Holquist, early writings such as the above preserved the fundamental principles of dialogism that guided Bakhtin's work throughout his long career (1990a:xvii). For a comprehensive overview of the development of Bakhtin's thought, from the dialogue of existence to the dialogue of language, see Holquist (1990a, 1990b and 1986) and Todorov (1984).

5. Holquist draws attention to the similarities and differences between Bakhtin and Heidegger and Sartre (1990a:xxxv-xxxix and on the latter see Morson 1986:17 and Jefferson 1989). There are also similarities between Bakhtin, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Bakhtin mirrors some of Husserl's work on the role of the body in the self-other problematic and pre-empt Merleau-Ponty's approach in this area as well.

6. This stress also brings Bakhtin close to the phenomenological tradition of authors such as Schutz, Luckmann and Merleau-Ponty and others who emphasise the intersubjective nature of language and culture. See Schutz (1962), Schutz and Luckmann (1989), and Merleau-Ponty (1962).

7. This brings Bakhtin very close to the theory of spatiality proposed by Merleau-Ponty (1962) in which the body in movement is seen as important for perception.

8. On the importance of deixis to subjectivity see also Benveniste (1971:217-30); Hanks (1990); Madison (1990:161-4, 166) and Mauss (1985:2-3). Benveniste goes as far as to suggest that a language without the expression of a person cannot be imagined (1971:225).

9. See also Lauer (1967:175-6); Schutz (1967:458) and Husserl (1960:116-19).

10. There is now a plethora of publications in this area. See the following collections: Curtin and Heldke (1992); Crary and Kwinter (1992); Featherstone, Hepworth and Turner (1991) and Feher (1989a and 1989b). Also the following: Bordo (1989); Bynum (1991); Curtin (1992); Frank (1991);


12. In addition, I argue that Radcliffe-Brown's use of the term 'individual' is not particularly useful given that in its western sense it is associated with an autonomous, indivisible and self-sufficient subject, something which is incompatible with Melanesian notions of subjectivity.

13. Descartes assumed the physical body of Galilean science, where there was a duality of subjective experience and objective nature. The empirical sciences have a privileged position in identifying and understanding the latter which then is used to explain the former (Hammond, Howarth and Keat 1991:157-8) and see Husserl (1970:21-84).

14. Merleau-Ponty likewise offers a useful anti-Cartesian perspective of the question of space, in which the body is again seen as exceedingly important, particularly as it is seen as a mediator between people and the world, and space is considered lived space (1962) and see Jackson (1989:122) and Langer (1989:80). Lived space is seen as more appropriate than viewing space in the purely objective terms of Euclidean geometry in which it has typically been examined. See note 17 for Husserl's concept of life-world, which Merleau-Ponty uses. For anthropological studies on space see Hugh-Jones (1979); Noyes (1992); Parkin (1991) and Thornton (1980). For approaches integrating the body into a theory of spatiality, see Pandya (1990); Pandolfo (1989); Munn (1970 and 1986); Stoller (1980) and J. Weiner (1991). I have examined some of these issues in a paper titled 'Seating the place: Tropes of body, movement and space for the people of the Lelet Plateau, New Ireland (Papua New Guinea)' forthcoming J. Fox (ed.) The poetic power of place. Canberra: Dept. Anthropology, Australian National University.

15. See also Ricoeur (1992:321 and 1991:215) and Mohanty (1972:136-7). Bakhtin says similar things when he writes 'From within my own consciousness - as a consciousness participating in being - the world is the object of my acts: acts of thinking, acts of feeling, acts of speaking, acts of doing. The center of gravity in this world is located in the future' (1990:98). Like Merleau-Ponty he also relates the acting subject to the futuricity of projects. See also Schutz in this regard (1980:57).

16. While I do not employ that term in this thesis it should be born in mind that whenever I use subject, body or person I envisage them as a body-subject or body-self, as Merleau-Ponty does. See also Mimica, who argues that among the Iqwaye the self is the body (1991:81).

17. Life-world is a term used by Husserl (1970:121-47, 379-83 and 1960:133-6) and adapted by Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Schutz (1967:465-466). The life-world constitutes the taken for granted and pre-given world in which people live (1970:123, 142-3). For Husserl, 'The world is pregiven to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon' (1970:142). It is separated from and bracketed from what Husserl calls the 'scientificaly true' world (1970:131). There are two crucial features of the life-world, these being its historical character and orientedness. Life-worlds are cultural worlds shared by others and thus acquired in time from particular points of view.
18. This life force, I would argue, differs from the concept of the soul and I avoid using this term because it is synonymous with the western and Christian idea of an interiorised moral conscience which regulates a person's ethical orientation and actions in the world.

19. The following are Mandak subject pronouns (Lee 1989:106):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>singular</th>
<th>dual</th>
<th>plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>(ne)nia</td>
<td>neda</td>
<td>nedik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>nema</td>
<td>nema</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>(ne)ni</td>
<td>nedu</td>
<td>nedi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. See, for example, Fajans (1988); Jolly (1991); Jones (1980); Kahn (1980, 1986 and 1988); Kahn and Sexton (1988); Macintyre (1987a); Mosko (1992); M. Young (1971 and 1983). The centrality of exchange has often been noted in Melanesia and there are innumerable and thorough studies focusing on exchange relationships and the objects of exchange, particularly for the Highlands region of Papua New Guinea. See, for example, Feil (1984); Lederman (1986); Sillitoe (1979) and A. Strathern (1971).


22. See also Biersack (1990:69), where the solitary person is considered less than human. See Modjeska (1982:90-1); Montague (1989:27); Roheim (1950:228) and Thune (1980:197) for discussion of the stingy and selfish person. The significance of food and sociality to the constitution of society is illustrated wonderfully in the mythology of the Avatip (Harrison 1988). Before their emergence into the world, the totemic ancestors of different Avatip descent groups killed and ate each other. They also kept knowledge of the existence of their totemic foods to themselves and consumed them in their villages. It was only when the social groups renounced their independence and made their respective totemic foods and other resources available to each other that the totemic ancestors emerged and society came into being (Harrison 1988:322).

23. As Bakhtin writes:

The I and the other are the fundamental value-categories that for the first time make possible any actual valuation, and the moment of valuation, or, rather, that of the valuational attitude of consciousness, is present not only in an act proper, but also in every lived experience and even in the simplest sensation: to live means to take an axiological stand in every moment of one's life or to position oneself with respect to values (Bakhtin 1990:187-8, his emphasis).

Holquist draws parallels between Marx and Bakhtin with regard to their concern with value and exchange (1990a:xli). Dialogue is a recognition of the constant need for exchange, which in turn is fuelled and expressed by differences in value (Holquist 1990a:xli).
24. Although, I do not deal with it here, it should be noted that sexual intercourse also involves similar crossings of bodily boundaries. The metaphorical and symbolic connections between eating and sexual intercourse have often been noted in Melanesia. See for example, Fajans (1988:160); Gell (1977:32 and 1979); Kelly (1976:50); Meigs (1992:113-15); Modjeska (1982:105) and A. Strathern (1982:129). More broadly see Kilgour (1990). Among the Lelet, eating is sometimes used as a metaphor or euphemism for sexual intercourse. Unlike the Umeda discussed by Gell where the same term is used for both, this is not the case at the Lelet (1979:139).

25. I have explored some of these issues in a manuscript titled 'Cannibalism, shamanism and sorcery: Images of incorporation in the magical cult of Buai'.


27. On the significance of seeing to Melanesian ideas of knowing, see Biersack (1990:77-8); Foster (1990a:64); Mayer (1982:246); Otto (1992a:436-7); A. Strathern (1989a:301-2) and M. Strathern (1988:108-9). Of course this sort of epistemology is not only the province of Melanesia. It has been argued by Martin that vision has been a primary route to scientific knowledge historically in the west (1990:69). She suggests that when we speak of "knowledge as illumination, knowing as seeing, truth as light" this is an expression of western thought that associates the illumination of vision with the 'highest faculty of mental reasoning' (Martin 1990:69) and see also Blumenberg (1993). Later, I take up some of the resonances between Lelet ideas and those of the west, particularly the Christian and Enlightenment rhetoric of darkness and light (see chapter one).

28. M. Strathern makes some cautionary remarks in this regard when she says:

at some point analysis should touch on the way such attributes are held to be attached to the person .... The very intervention of our own metaphors, however, may block what should be investigated, and that is indigenous metaphors of attachment: in what terms are persons encompassed by or identified with this or that exchange of attribute (1985b:63, her emphasis).

29. The stress on hard work and on the labour embodied in products such as garden produce or pigs is noted in a number of studies. See Lattas (1990:87); Feachem (1973:282-3); Modjeska (1982:105) and M. Strathern (1984a:168).

30. Lolos applies to a large number of things. It does not apply only to physical acts. For example it can apply to acts of self assertion, as in the case of somebody having something of yours and you determinedly seeking to have it returned. It also applies to thinking and to such things as performing magic for a garden. Furthermore it applies to things in the natural world (i.e. if the wind is blowing strongly, lamanman lolos). It applies to humans regardless of gender, although men seem to have more of it than women.
Chapter 1

Encounters with others: Boundary crossings and borrowings

Through nearly a hundred years of contact with colonial governments and then the nation-state, a complex and fluid lived world has been created in which the Lelet negotiate and constitute their identity. Along with colonisation and conversion to Christianity there has been a marked increase in the spatial and ideational horizons of the Lelet. The spatial horizon in which the people of the Lelet can move has been extended beyond known and imagined worlds into previously unknown other worlds. The spatial boundaries and periphery have been reconfigured and displaced to encompass not only the whole of New Ireland but other parts of Papua New Guinea, and even overseas as well. Probably more importantly, expansion has occurred in the domain of ideas to which people are exposed. These include the obvious intrusion of 'western' ideas and practices such as capitalism and Christianity, and also new forms of knowledge from within Papua New Guinea itself.¹ Like many other cultures of Papua New Guinea, the Lelet is very much part of the world system in its cultural aspects and not just its political and economic dimensions. This has resulted in profound changes and repercussions, some of which I will attempt to chart in this chapter.

The transformations effected by encompassment, first by colonial states and later by the nation-state, are far more complex than a simple one-way process of 'westernisation'. Rather novel configurations have emerged as this agriculturally-based culture engages with, and is engaged, by other more powerful, forces - colonial, postcolonial, capitalist and Christian.² These encounters have resulted in numerous changes, reconfigurations and reworkings in existing beliefs and practices. Old practices and beliefs have been dispensed with and new ones taken up. Some old practices and beliefs have persisted, albeit in a new context, while others have been reconfigured. Some new practices and beliefs have been reconstituted to appear like old.

The fluidity of the boundaries of the Lelet world is not surprising, given that prior to the extension of movement facilitated by colonialism there was considerable importation of exogenous beliefs, rituals and practices from the coast, which constituted the periphery of the known world to the Lelet as the centre. The notion of a bounded spatial and cultural area such as the Lelet is a colonial and anthropological fiction. I wish to stress that 'pre-contact' a zone of cultural contacts between various
indigenous peoples existed but was based on different criteria of identity and not that of a spatial unit. For this reason I use terms such as 'traditional' and 'indigenous' cautiously because they tend to reify and essentialise a particular bounded 'culture' or 'village' which comes to be the object of the anthropological gaze.

First contact and displays of power

Unlike some other parts of New Ireland, the Lelet's acceptance of the imposition of colonial government by the German Administration of New Guinea was not accompanied by the death and bloodshed that occurred elsewhere, although it was accompanied by the threat of violence from the colonists. Despite the missionaries' claims to have been the principal cause of the cessation of cannibalism and warfare, these were actually stopped by the colonial government. Although the exact date for the Lelet's first contact with Europeans cannot be ascertained, it seems likely that central New Ireland, of which the Lelet is a part, came under administrative control around 1905 or 1906.

The Lelet had undoubtedly heard of the presence of whites prior to the direct contact made when a patrol ascended the mountains. One of my informants, Lataba, heard this account from his grandparents:

At this time the people here did not wear loin cloths (laplap). They used to wear the beaten bark of a breadfruit tree. Women wore this and men wore cordyline leaves, just like we see people from the mainland wearing today. They used to cover their genitals and their backsides with leaves. Although they had heard about the government and white people, when they came, the people thought - what kind of people are these? Some were very fearful thinking the whites might be aggressive and kill them. Before, people from other places would not visit. They would stay at their own hamlets. A person from here would not go to Lengkamen and a person from Lengkamen would not come here. If a person came from Lengkamen they would come for one day and they would not return, they would be made into soup. That is why people were afraid when the government first came up. It was a time of great darkness. I think God saw this and thought it was not right. The government then came and people here heard them coming. They sent some men on top [of the mountains] who were not afraid of being killed, but if you or I had come the people here would have killed us. Some people came with salt. The people here were very fearful. The women were afraid. People were too fearful to fight when the government came. People thought: What kind of things are they? What kind of man? The whites carried guns and weapons for war. People were afraid and wanted to run away. When the whites first arrived in a hamlet they would all go and stand in one spot and then fire into the forest at a tree. They would fire their guns to scare the people. There was a loud shriek when they did this. The people here were unable to counter these powerful things the government brought with them. They were very fearful. People did not know the language of the whites and the whites communicated with their hands, indicating to people that they should not run away. They visited people and made them stand while they gave them salt to taste. They first tried the salt themselves and demonstrated how good it tasted by hitting their chests in pleasure. Following this they put some salt on the tongue of a man here. The man was very pleased because it tasted 'sweet'. After this they placed more salt in this man's hand and sent him to do the same with other people. All the men and women tasted this salt and it was 'sweet'. There was no anger. That is how they did it. After the first hamlet they would move on to another hamlet and repeat the process.
Following the initial displays of force and the distribution of salt, Lataba said that government patrols returned twice to complete the process of implementing administrative control. In the second patrol, they brought with them tinned fish, which was distributed in the same fashion as the salt. They also cut a man's hair and shaved him, before giving him some scissors to repeat the process with others. On the third visit, he said, the officials distributed rice and showed people how to wear strips of loin cloth, which they then distributed. Some people at this time were taught some rudimentary skills in **lingua franca**, and when the patrol left some people were taken away to work for the government on ships and plantations in other places where the government had established its control.

Lataba's narrative has been refracted through mission discourses which construct the pre-contact past as one of darkness, a moral space replete with warfare, cannibalism and nakedness. Noteworthy is the dual way in which government brings people under its ambit, through displays of military power - the guns, a feature of colonisation in other parts of Papua New Guinea (cf. Connolly and Anderson 1988:62-4) - and through the distribution of goods.

The role of consumption in facilitating the acceptance of the new colonial order without violent resistance is also to be noted. As I show throughout this thesis, consumption or incorporation is an extremely important image in the process of boundary crossing, whether this concerns the individual body or the wider political body. Incorporation is constructed as the assimilation of things from outside to the inside not only in the consumption of food but also of knowledge. It is one of the pervasive images that are deployed in various contexts of the Lelet world.

**Who are the Lelet?**

If we as anthropologists want to break away from some of the reifying, essentialising and ahistorical tendencies of our discipline, problematising the object of the anthropological gaze should be of primary importance. I therefore pose the question: Who are the Lelet?

According to my informants, the people of the Lelet did not identify themselves as such prior to contact, the name having been conferred on them by the German colonial government. The process of constituting identity on the basis of fixed geographical location has been the result of colonialism. As Ranger has noted, 'one has to accept that colonialism not only *imagined* localised religions and communities but also *created* them (1993:72, his emphasis). Demographic shifts, movements and boundary crossings were part of the lived world prior to contact. Rather than being solely based on one geographical locale, identity was founded more on the narratives of origins and dispersals, shared kinship and how particular collectivities such as clans and lineages came to occupy certain places. Tutelary beings were (and still are) particularly important to notions of shared identity and attachment to particular places, but again these were never completely fixed because these beings could move (see chapter four). Even the clans and lineages which formed the local basis of
identity were subject to reorganisation as groupings took flight and dispersed during times of warfare. But in the colonial period movement and stasis assumed different forms. These have partly refashioned the existing notions of space, reshaping people's relations with others.

While, in the past, various Lelet villages were drawn into alliances for the purposes of warfare against other villages, such unification was never permanent or stable. Lelet villages were just as likely to fight among each other as to fight coastal or other mountain dwelling peoples. The precolonial period was characterised by much fluidity and economic, social and political interaction between different villages and hamlets. Since there are no records of the Lelet prior to the ceding of military power to the German colonial government, and since some ninety years have now elapsed, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which hostilities occurred. I did collect several stories of wars between Lelet and coastal villages, and among Lelet villages. Further evidence of warfare is that hamlets in the past were often perched on ridges to ensure good strategic positioning in case of attack. It would, nonetheless, be an overstatement to say that the peoples of this part of New Ireland lived in a state of permanent warfare (cf. Danks 1914:513). There was considerable movement of people and trade between various villages and hamlets, some facilitated by the immunity given by a feather of the New Ireland drongo (luxurusmixin) in the hair. Should this mark of respect not be heeded, the reprisals meted out were great. Occasional and sporadic warfare has often been overdrawn, in order to represent the past before contact in a particular way. It is represented as one of unceasing violence, while postcontact is represented as a time of peace. In this view, the considerable death and violence that was consequent to colonisation is elided. Such a creation of memory in this re-presentation of the past coalesces with the rhetoric of the early colonists and missionaries.

Demographic movement, and associated spatial reorganisation, have meant the Lelet Plateau has become more geographically defined now than it was prior to colonial government. During the German and Australian colonial governments, nearly all the villages of the range (Schleinitz Range) that stretches down the middle of New Ireland were relocated to the coast. The exception to this was the Lelet, who resisted pressures to move. Such spatial relocation facilitated greater and more effective control by the administration, and the development of a plantation economy along the coast. The hinterland and mountain dwellers were now more accessible and thus more easily governed, with surveillance being effectively carried out and discipline meted out when needed.

Whether the demographic relocation was a clear administrative policy is unclear from the available written sources. Some commentators on the period say that forced relocation occurred (cf. Rowley 1958:38), but others, suggest that people shifted voluntarily in search of new wealth opportunities. The German New Guinea Annual Reports cite examples of people relocating of their own accord in order to work on plantations, and make no mention of coercion (Annual Report 1907-08:278). Oral
narrative from the Lelet, however, suggests that people were pressured to relocate by the colonial administration, at least in the Australian period of government.

The Lelet say that they were told by the patrol officers they should move to the coast (cf. Neumann 1992a:295). They refused to do so because they feared they would no longer be able to grow good taro. I was told that people gathered some large taro tubers and took them to the administration's office at Kavieng. The taro was shown to the administrative officers, who were told: 'You see this taro? If we leave this taro behind and go to the coast what will we live on? This taro is our life'. This is indicative not just of the material importance of the staple taro to the Lelet, but its salience in the formation of identity.

Whether there was a clear administrative policy to relocate mountain dwelling peoples to the coast is to some extent irrelevant. What is pertinent is that colonial practices in both the German and the Australian colonial governments facilitated these spatial reorganisations. There were two main incentives, namely the forced labour requirements of road building and the head tax, both of which ultimately aided capitalist expansion in New Ireland by the development of a plantation economy. I will first discuss the use of forced road building, the consequences of which go far beyond that of spatial reorganisation, and will return to the head tax in the next section.

Hahl, the German Governor of New Guinea, believed that road building was a 'civilizing agency' (Overell 1923:85). In line with this 'civilizing' project, early in the German colonial period the people of New Ireland undertook work, often enforced, on a road along the north coast from Kavieng to Namatanai (cf. Rowley 1958:168-9).10 Started by District Officer Boluminski in 1900 (Annual Report 1900-01:215), and now named after him (although originally named after Kaiser Wilhelm), this road was developed as part of a vision of a plantation economy in New Ireland. As it progressively stretched further south, numerous trading stations and plantations were established in its wake (Hahl 1980:91). By 1902/03, the road had reached Fissoa, 134 kilometres south of Kavieng (Annual Report 1902-03:238). In the next year rough foundations had reached Panakondu (Pinikindu) in central New Ireland, about 200 kilometres from Kavieng (Annual Report 1903-04:247).

The development of the road was significant in a number of ways. It encouraged spatial and demographic reorganisation because large numbers of people settled on the coast to fulfil the requirements for labour on the road. It also allowed people to move freely and to engage in labour on the numerous plantations which arose along the coast. Because the road meant that people were more effectively controlled by the colonial government, they were to some extent protected from the feuding that accompanied the imposition of colonial rule.11

Colonial governance: The head tax and census taking

After the appropriation of military power by the German colonial government, probably the most important and far reaching administrative act of those early years
was the imposition of a taxation regime. The head tax, as it was known, was introduced into German New Guinea on the Gazelle Peninsula by Hahl in 1904 (Hahl 1980:112). It was hoped that it would aid the administration of areas (in this case the Baining) which had not been subject to 'systematic control' (Annual Report 1908-09:289). The early colonists also regarded the head tax as important to the development of capitalism. Along with the collection of the head tax, there was instituted a whole regime of power relations in which colonial subjects were counted, classified, recorded and observed. Taxation collection was thoroughly bound up with the processes of enumerating people through census taking, which as Appadurai has remarked, played a crucial role in the exercise of colonial power (1993:315). Thus taxation not only was important to the promotion of a plantation economy it was also a central component of the colonial government's administrative and disciplinary regime.

The head tax was introduced to New Ireland in 1906 (S. Firth 1986:105). Its imposition was significant because, without an available source of cash, people were forced either to undergo indentured labour, where there was an exemption from the tax, or to engage in cash cropping or other enterprises to secure the necessary money. This made more necessary the demographic relocation of mountain peoples to the coast, because the coastal fringe was the site where money could be earned. In addition, the altitude at which some of the mountainous peoples resided meant they were unable to grow coconuts successfully for use as a cash cropping resource. This is the case at the Lelet where coconuts do not fruit adequately. It should be noted that while New Ireland was an important source for labour recruiters prior to Hahl's imposition of the head tax, this greatly facilitated it. The purpose in imposing the head tax, according to Rowley, was that the villager should become a day labourer and/or cash cropper, not a long-term indentured labourer (1958:106), but the fact that those engaged in indentured labour were not subjected to the tax would have meant rather that indentured labour was favoured, intended or not. In any case, the effects of the tax were to force people into new forms of labour. Those who defaulted had to pay off their debts by labouring in public works, usually road building. This led Rowley to remark that eagerness to pay was due to people not wishing to work in lieu of the tax (1958:176).

There was a recognition among officials in the German government that the revenue raised from the head tax could be increased if there were more means by which the local populations could earn money. This was integrally connected to the development of the plantation economy. The Annual Report for 1909-1910 noted: 'The amount collected in tax would rise considerably if the natives were offered more opportunities to earn money, e.g. by opening up new plantations' (307).

When the Australians took over the administration of New Guinea in 1914, the head tax was still imposed but, unlike the Germans who thought it crucial to the imposition of colonial government, the Australians saw it merely as a revenue raiser (Rowley 1958:174). The Germans varied rates according to a community's ability to raise funds. The Australian government made no such distinction and charged
everybody the same amount, regardless (S. Firth 1986:107). However both administrations seem to have agreed that the head tax facilitated the development of indigenous plantations close to villages.

A number of other policies were significant in the development of a capitalist economy in both New Ireland and New Britain. Although the effects on the Lelet were not so great, they are important because of their role in developing capitalism in New Ireland generally. In 1900 the German colonial government passed an ordinance which prohibited the use of 'any kind of shell money in commercial transactions' (Annual Report 1900-01:220). At a later date this was extended to cover all transactions between Europeans and locals, encompassing such things as remuneration for carriers and labourers. After 1902 it was not possible to purchase European goods with shell money. This compelled local peoples, 'in order to obtain such goods, to devote their labours to the production of really useful goods, suitable for export, such as copra etc' (Annual Report 1900-1901:220). These measures were aimed at promoting commerce as a whole within the administered areas with a stable currency. For similar reasons, an ordinance of 1900 prohibited the purchase of whole coconuts from locals for the purpose of preparing copra. Like the head tax and ban on the use of shell money in certain exchanges with Europeans, this meant that locals had to engage in the labour of copra cutting themselves or in other forms of labour to obtain money (Annual Report 1900-01:220 and 217; cf. S. Firth 1986:73 and Rowley 1958:184).

Because of the altitude of the plateau, the Lelet have been largely peripheral to the development of the capitalist economy which has occurred on the coast. Prior to the second world war the participation of the Lelet in the capitalist economy mainly took the form of wage labour, on plantations run either by Europeans or developed by locals. Another course available was for people from the Lelet to purchase land on the coast for the development of their own plantations. For example, Limbin village members purchased some land at Kantebu on which they planted coconuts, areca palms and breadfruit trees (none of which produce well on the plateau). People today no longer produce copra from this plantation, but they still use the fruits of the palms and trees. This plantation was also established as a place where Limbin members could camp temporarily, when they were required to be at the coast for government patrols.

Until the second world war, there were few administrative patrols to the Lelet. Control and surveillance was achieved by requiring the Lelet population to travel to the coast for 'line' (lain) meetings where government censuses, collection of the head tax and other administrative tasks were carried out. Given short notice, the population was required to travel, often overnight, in time for the morning parade before the patrol officer. During this time before battery operated torches became available, people would light their way using torches made from brush. Possibly it was envisaged that the Lelet would tire of these journeys and set up permanent camp on the coast, thus facilitating their greater incorporation into the capitalist economy.
Despite its colonial origins, the constitution and identification of the people residing on the Lelet as a social and cultural group has become an important feature of the indigenous conceptual and political landscape today. While there was some dichotomisation between the coast and 'the bush' in the past, what is important is the extent to which these oppositions have been refashioned and have thus taken on novel meanings through the colonial period. This opposition is reinforced through colonialist discourse positing the coast as the space of modernity, as the place of progress, development and the light of the Christian mission, while the bush interior is seen as lacking in those attributes of modernity, as backward, undeveloped and unenlightened. But the coast has always been seen by the Lelet as a place of power and/or of danger. Particularly it has been the source of powerful forms of garden magic, in which the names of some coastal villages are evoked, as centres of power (see chapter six). It has also been seen as a risky place to venture, where one could be killed. The coast is still seen in these terms today. It is a place to acquire such things as areca nut and coconuts, but it is still fraught with risk. The coastal people are seen by the Lelet in terms of an archetypal negative other, constructed around images of consumption and greed (cf. Parkin 1991). The Lelet deny that sorcery exists among themselves, while the coastal peoples are constructed as rampant sorcerers who ensorcel, among others, the Lelet (cf. Poyer 1988:480 and Lattas 1990:87). Through the construction of the coastal peoples as other, the Lelet depend on the coast for self-definition.

The coastal people are characterised by an absence of things which are crucial markers of identity for the Lelet, such as taro growing and sociality. They are considered to be greedy and to not engage in the sharing which is iconic of sociality on the Lelet and in New Ireland more generally, constituting a key marker of kastam (cf. Thomas 1992a). At work here is the deployment of ideas about what constitutes correct kastam in constructing an image of otherness (cf. Lindstrom 1982:328). Instead of sharing food to initiate and sustain social relationships, the coastal people greedily devour it, denying the imperative to share. I was told, if a man travels to the coast and has to sleep in another's men's house, he is not assured of being fed, as is the custom of the Lelet, but will almost invariably sleep on an empty stomach.

In part, this lack of willingness to share is said to be a result of the coastal people's lack of gardens. In effect, they are considered to be lazy and unaccustomed to the hard work necessary for gardening. As a consequence of not having gardens, they do not have taro. The coastal peoples, in the Lelet view, subsist on a diet of rice and tinned fish, purchased from stores. The money to purchase these items is obtained either by cutting copra or working on some of the coconut and cocoa plantations strung along the coast. Like the Hawaiians discussed by Handler and Linnekin (1984), the food staple, taro, is one of the main means by which Lelet identity, and relation to the land, is constituted. A dependence on the cash economy for subsistence effectively means that the coastal people, in the Lelet view, are severed from connection with their place, created through the work of cultivation and the consumption of taro. Despite an increasing tendency of the Lelet themselves to engage in the capitalist economy through cash cropping, they nonetheless construct
the coast as a place where sociality is absent. This amounts to a critique of capitalist development.19

Just as the colonial discourses and practices have led to the peripheralisation of the Lelet and their construction of the coastal peoples as archetypal others, these negative constructions have been reciprocated. The Lelet have become others to the coastal peoples. The coastal peoples, I was told, refer to those residing at the Lelet as 'people of the bush' (ol man bilong bus). This also conveys connotations of being wild and undomesticated, living beyond the commensal human world. Increasingly deploying Christian and colonial rhetoric, this designation has connotations of being uncivilised. The imagery employed in such designations alludes to the lagas or tambaran, a being that is antithetical to humans and can cause illness and death if people go close to it without undergoing certain protective measures (see chapter four). While lagas embody a form close to humans, they are, nonetheless, monstrous derivations of it. Unlike humans, they are external to the realms of sociality which define persons. As I mentioned in the introduction, the image of the bush dweller also alludes to the negative practices of the lantupe, who does not give and share but rather takes his or her food into the forest to consume alone, thus negating the social relationships which constitute humanness. It is somewhat ironic that the coastal people's depiction of the Lelet deploys the image of the non-sharing consumer, as does the Lelet image of them. This underwrites the significance of giving and commensality in definitions of personhood and sociality and their deployment in drawing political boundaries.

As well as constructing coastal people as greedy, lazy and asocial, the necessity to engage in wage labour on coastal plantations led Lelet people to remark to me that they had been 'slaves' to the people of the coast for a considerable time. This relationship had only changed, I was told, with the building of a road from the coast to the Lelet (see below). The more recent development of cash cropping on the Lelet is now of increasing significance to their definition of themselves in opposition to the coastal peoples.

Cash cropping on the Lelet has a history which stretches back to the period of Australian colonial government that followed the first world war. As early as 1923-24, patrol officers were promoting the growing of cash crops of European varieties of vegetables (TNG 1923-24).20 In the following year English potatoes were grown and marketed in Kavieng by the Lelet (TNG 1924-25). This continued until the second world war, although for a period vegetables were grown for the Japanese occupying forces stationed at Kimidan on the coast. Following the war, cash cropping of vegetables was again promoted but transportation to markets was extremely limited. Some vegetables were sold to the plantations run by Europeans at Lasigi and Lemerika and some were marketed by a cooperative society which transported them to Kavieng.21 The post-war period was one of considerable experimentation in cash cropping for the Lelet. During this time with limited financial returns they have for varying periods, both at the behest of government agricultural officers and on their
own initiative, planted coffee, cacao and cardamom, the latter being the most recent
crop tried and dispensed with.

The failure to develop cash cropping during the colonial period led one patrol
officer to remark that the 'people of the Lelet Plateau are probably the least
progressed in the sub-district' (Patrol Report Kavieng 5, 1957/58). The success of
cash-cropping on the Lelet, as on the coast, was dependent upon the development of
roads. This led the local councillor for Lelet to remark that: 'roads are the backbone
of development'. An initial rough track suitable for four wheel drive vehicles was
built from the coast half way to the Lelet with council funds in 1973/74. This track
was called a 'false road' (giaman rot) by the Lelet because they still had to bodily
carry their produce long distances to get them to market. Finally, a road was built by
the Papua New Guinea Defence Forces in 1979 after the Lelet threatened a taxation
strike and held a protest march on the offices of the New Ireland Provincial
government in Kavieng.

The completion of the road inaugurated a new era for the Lelet. Prior to the road
people represented their life as having been extremely hard. It was a time in which
'much suffering' was experienced, a time when people had to carry heavy things
which caused sores to 'eat into the shoulder'. The time following the road is seen as
'easy', people are freed from the pain of carrying and new sources of cash income
have opened up. Now, with the development of a road, people have been able to
successfully market cash crops of European (and now Asian) vegetables, promoted
for so long but difficult to transport.22 Whereas previously the Lelet saw the people
of the coast as being 'on top of' them, the Lelet are now seen to be 'on top of' the
coast, an inversion which has been achieved through cash-cropping, and of which the
marker is the number of trucks possessed.23 The imagery here draws on existing
notions of the positioning of bodies in space appropriate to avoidance and gender
relationships (see chapter three): this is redeployed as a measure of success of
capitalist development.

The completion of the road has led to demographic changes, paralleling those
following engagement with the successive colonial governments. Like the coastal
villages, the Lelet villages have undergone spatial reorganisation. This has primarily
affected the villages that were located on the outermost edges, close to the mountain
range that rings the plateau on three sides. Almost all of these outer and most distant
villages have been abandoned. As people have become increasingly involved in cash
cropping, the need to carry vegetables from distant gardens has meant people have
opted to live closer to the road and thus access to the market.

But the benefits of the road and the cash economy are not seen as unambiguous.
Contrary discourses also exist, often side by side with some of the utopian images of
the road 'freeing' people from hardship. The development of the road and more
general development, that has accompanied colonialism and the postcolonial nation­
state, is associated by some with the emergence of rascality. One man, Lavarise,
remarked to me that 'before development came there was no rascals in New Ireland'.

35
While rascals are not a problem on the plateau itself, they are on the coast road and at the main urban centres of Kavieng and Namatanai. Thus the lure of riches at market, like the lure of power more generally, is associated with risks and danger just as much as with gain. Some people employ magic for protection from these risks. One woman, Teptep, said that when her son went off to market she chanted a form of magic to ensure his safe return. Another example involved hanging a charm inside the car, to protect the occupants. Such instances are not isolated, and are examples of the creative redeployment of magic in new contexts brought about by the colonial and postcolonial situation. They point to the pervasiveness of magical belief in the Lelet lived world, that has not been displaced by contact with the ideas and practices associated with colonialism or Christianity.

In some people's view, the greater movement facilitated by transport in vehicles is responsible for a sort of atrophy with which the Lelet have in the past characterised the people of the coast. Before the road came, I was told, people did not think about travelling, they just thought about garden work. Now with numbers of vehicles travelling to the coast, to Kavieng, or other places, people have many options for avoiding the rigour of work. This increasing tendency to avoid work and to travel 'round' is seen by many to afflict the younger generation, and especially males, who are quick to climb on board a passing vehicle. Apart from the critique of development inherent in such narratives, they draw to a significant extent on local notions of useful deployment of body power. Movement is integral to the constitution of Lelet persons more generally and is specifically tied to notions of how bodily power is transformed into fame (see chapter seven). Not all bodily movement is useful in this regard, as I suggested in the previous chapter, and those who roam around avoiding work are thought to be dissipating their bodily power and not transforming it into garden produce which can ultimately, by exchange at feasts, be converted into fame. The purposeful and meaningful movement that is utilised in garden work is valued, while movement that does not attempt to transform body power into fame is depreciated.

**Christianity, conversion and conceptual mapping**

In its prosaic sense, conversion means the transformation or change of something, such as an opinion or belief, for another. More pertinent for this thesis is the religious sense: the act of changing or being changed from one form of religion to another. Conversion, in the Christian view, entails more than merely a change of religion but a spiritual change from a state of sinfulness without God to a state of grace with God. Despite the claims and aspirations of missionaries, such transformation is never total or absolute but always partial. This is especially so when two different religions such as a Melanesian religion and Christianity encounter and engage with each other. Conversion is less a complete change than a dialogue, which entails the mutual refashioning and reconfiguring, undermining claims for complete and unproblematic conversion.
As Schieffelin has commented, there is considerable emphasis in the literature on missionisation on the social structural, political, and economic factors motivating the acceptance of Christianity (1981:150).25 While such factors played an important part in the Christianisation of the Kaluli, he argues that they fail to account for the rapidity of the transformation there. He argues that an important factor motivating the Kaluli convert was 'something in the drama and rhetoric of the evangelical process of itself' (1981:150). Particularly pertinent in the process was a readjustment of Kaluli norms of reciprocity, both moral and social, from one of relationships between people to relationships between a person and God (1981:155). The force of the message derived not from its content and 'more from the fact that it was set out in terms of the structure and implications of a traditional form: the reciprocity scenario' (Schieffelin 1981:156). While doubtless such realignment went on among the Lelet, this is not the line of Schieffelin's argument I want to follow. More pertinent for my purposes is his more general contention that the rhetoric employed in the evangelists' message is presented in compelling forms that capture the imaginations of the people and motivate them to change (1981:156). While the messages of the evangelists can map onto or overlay indigenous ideas such as reciprocity, these are, nonetheless, reconstituted to serve a different purpose.

In a similar fashion, in a critique of analyses which only focus on one side of the missionisation process, Rafael has argued that these often assume an evolutionary progression as the local society is subsumed by Christianity (1993:6). Such approaches, he suggests, focus only on the global and reductive category of Christianisation and are unable to account for the 'penchant for hooking onto discrete words' in sermons (Rafael 1993:7). The submission entailed in such hooking is purchased, Rafael argues, at the 'expense of marginalising the meaning and intent behind the discourse of authority' (1993:7).

In this section I want to examine in particular the mappings, crossings and borrowings that accompanied, and continue to accompany, the process of Christianisation and conversion. I am interested in how certain Christian ideas, symbolisations and metaphors map onto or overlay 'indigenous' ones, and the extent to which they are refigured and refashioned as a result of that mapping. I focus on the images and metaphors at work in the conversion process in order to examine Lelet ideas of the body and how they take on novel meanings in the colonial context. To argue that certain exogenous metaphors map onto indigenous ones is not to argue that the meaning of those indigenous metaphors remains unchanged. An increasing number of analyses of different colonial situations are showing that meanings can take on different forms in that encounter (cf. Dirks 1992b:177). When the context of use of images and metaphors changes, they change meaning and take on new connotations. Sometimes images and metaphors can assume greater figurative power than existed previously. One example of this lies in the evangelical rhetoric which the locals doubtless found compelling, namely the imagery of darkness and light. This imagery is particularly powerful because it reverberates with local metaphors, ideas and practices about bodies, knowledge and revelation, but it also gained new power by its association with Christian conversion.26
"We are in darkness and many are dying. When is the light coming?"

The above title is part of an appeal in 1914 by a leader from a central New Ireland village for a mission teacher from the Methodist Overseas Mission be sent to his village.²⁷ This appeal illustrates the enthusiasm that greeted the mission in its early years in this part of New Ireland:

Talatala, this is the third meeting I have attended and asked for a teacher. Has he come yet? We have built a 'House Lotu' and house for the teacher.²⁸ We are waiting for him - when can we expect him? My people have heard of the 'Lotu' but are crying out for an experience of it. We are in darkness and many are dying. When is the light coming? (PCR 1914).²⁹

There are a number of suggestive themes in this appeal. Like numerous villages in central New Ireland at this time, the villages of the Lelet had heard of the church and also made appeals for it to commence work there.³⁰ According to oral accounts, people from the Lelet at first thought the mission was a new form of malangan or ceremony and attempted to obtain access to it through the exchange of shell valuables, as they did for other ceremonial and ritual complexes they wished to import (cf. Threlfall 1975:39 and Kahn 1983:105). Possibly this was also the case for other villages in the region, although missionary records make no mention of it. What is pertinent is the obvious enthusiasm that people in this part of New Ireland held for the coming of the church. Although the missionary report does not make the connection between the desire for conversion and the dysentery epidemic that was sweeping New Ireland during 1914, the allusion to dying possibly indicates that this was on the village elder's mind (cf. Laracy 1976:67 and 83).³¹

The village elder's view that his people were in 'darkness' and dying as a result is extremely significant. The redemptive or recuperative potential is powerfully represented in Christian discourse. Darkness is equated with death and light with life. The non-Christian colonial subject is not positioned in an absolutely negative way but allowed the possibility and the means to repudiate that negativity. This is achieved in the act of conversion. At work in the appeal is an association between 'indigenous' ways and illness culminating in death. This is counterposed to the importation and acceptance of new non-indigenous ways as being the way out of that predicament, into life, even life after death. By converting, the population is assured of life, and thus Christianity is posed as an alternative to death. Conversion is thus more than just the process of changing one religion for another. Conversion is seen by the local people as not only giving redemption following death, but of redemption prior to death, particularly from the spectre of dying in the present.

Missionary reports abound with this imagery which forms part of a powerful condemnatory moral discourse. In this evangelical rhetoric the local populations and their customs are seen as evil, sinful and generally repugnant. 'Native customs and superstitions gripped the people and held them in darkness' (PCR 1926). The role of the early missionaries was seen as that of wresting the people from the 'power of darkness' (PCR 1914). Practices were seen as 'vile', 'barbarous and degrading' and the only way that the local peoples of New Ireland could escape this was the acceptance
of the 'purifying and helpful' influence of the church and the 'pure light of the gospel'. The process of conversion was seen not merely as the changing of one's religion but as the step of turning one's 'heart from the evils of heathenism as far as they understand them and ... searching for the light!' (PCR 1918). It was an ethical conversion which involved the renunciation of an immoral state, a way of life. One missionary, after the mission had been evangelising for about twenty years, used a very apt metaphor drawn from the clouded sky, noting that the 'spiritual life of the people is dark and cloudy though one does find an occasional rift in the clouds' (PCR 1939). As the appeal to the missionaries cited above indicated, the local population was quick to use this image as well, partly because it was known from the indigenous repertoire of metaphors. Such images were much used by the New Irelanders who became catechists, preachers and ministers. One such person, for example, was Hosea Linge, a Barok man, who preached at varying times at the Lelet during the second world war:

One more generation followed these men and grew up in the deepest darkness, always fighting, and eating human flesh, until the morning star began to shine, and it rose and began to give them light. Then the full sunrise came, and they took a good look at the practice of cannibalism, and they discarded it completely (1978:16).32

Like many missionaries Linge contrasts the darkness of the past, in which cannibalism figured, to the coming of the church which brings a light and leads to the cessation of the reign of cannibalism.

These images of darkness and light were fundamental to the appeal I cited above and a pervasive feature of the missionary discourse (not only in New Ireland but elsewhere).33 Such imagery, JanMohamed argues, is a product of an imperialist duplicity which operates through the economy of its central trope, the 'manichean allegory', which is based on a transformation of racial difference into moral and even metaphysical difference (1985:61). The manichean allegory constructs 'a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white and black, good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject and object' (1985:63 and cf. 1992:106 and T. Mitchell 1992:289). To this list I would add dark and light, child and adult, fallen and uplifted, which are also dominant images of mission discourse and, to a lesser extent, of colonial discourse more broadly.

These contrastive metaphors have formed points around which Lelet people have reconstituted their identity of themselves and their past in the colonial and postcolonial context. Moreover, Europeans have come to be seen in a particular way by the local population, as a source of power, knowledge and wealth. In this process of refiguring identity, the local population has constituted itself as a negativity, as inferior against the lightness which Europeans embody. The importance of all these oppositions is that they are ambiguous, they denigrate the black as evil, inferior, savage but often, as in Christian discourse, allow the opposite possibility - of becoming light (if not white), good or civilised.
Images of darkness are images of negation, creating spaces which can be filled by the moral discourses of the missionary. Rhetorically, this strategy of negation designates the other as an absence, lack, or emptiness so that space is cleared for Christian (and colonist) expansion (cf. Spurr 1993:135). In their appropriation of this metaphor, locals draw on the 'figurative power of language' as a site of ambiguity, reconstituting and recontextualising its meaning within the 'indigenous' horizons (cf. de Man 1978:13). The polysemic and polyvalent meaning of such figurative discourse is refracted through the lens of the local cultural and metaphoric repertoire in such a way that it reflects local needs, desires and horizons.

But how do the missionary metaphors of darkness and light conceptually map onto and reverberate with, Lelet metaphors? These evangelical metaphors become potent symbolisations of the Christian and colonial encounter, in part, because they find resonances with indigenous idioms. Missionary images 'hook' onto indigenous symbols and ideas of secrecy and revelation, images of inside/outside, grounded in the body and broader notions of power, knowledge, wealth, spatiality and sociality.

One indigenous metaphor which connects with the evangelical image of darkness and light is that of the rising sun found in many different forms of magic. It is employed in magic used to ensure that people do not return home from a feast without pork, where the distribution of pork is called upon to mimic the rising of the sun (see chapter seven). As it rises in the morning the sun gradually illuminates things that were previously hidden in darkness. The sun, I was told, sees everywhere: there is not a hole or place that its rays do not strike. Thus, there is an association with the illumination of the sun, revelation and abundance. This image is also employed in a form of knowledge-acquisition magic, although whether this has entered the magical repertoire following contact with Europeans I am unsure. The rising sun and the illumination it casts are here associated with acquisition of knowledge (see chapter two), knowledge which is said to be comparable with that possessed by whites.

Conversions, revivals and contestations

Reading the missionary reports, one perceives that the process of conversion for the local population was not a smooth and relentless march of Christianisation. There was not the continual and exponential increase over time, from 'primitive' to 'civilised' (cf. Rafael 1993:6). While the evangelical rhetoric of darkness and light was powerful, it could not secure permanent conversion, as constant revivals of discarded practices attest. Nonetheless, this rhetoric was important to the local population's construction of themselves as positioned between the dual powers of loklok at lemenemen or kastam and colonialism/Christianity. Such imagery persists in how the past and the present are imagined. For example, while I was in the field people often talked of the past before Christianity as the 'time of darkness' (taim tudak) when warfare and cannibalism were rampant. The coming of the church was seen as inaugurating a new era free from such things. Given that people found some
particular aspects of the evangelical rhetoric appealing and easily adopted and others not, it is not surprising that conversion in such circumstances would be partial. The idea of complete conversion was no doubt the utopian dream of the missionaries, always desired but never in reality achieved.

The process of becoming Christian rather appears as one of continual contestation and restitution of previously discarded practices, when Christianity did not satisfy the needs and aspirations of the locals, or brought negative impacts, such as disease. For example, in 1931 in the Pinikindu circuit, the missionary noted that the influenza epidemic of July and August of that year was responsible for the revival of many of the 'old superstitions and fears of heathen days' (PCR 1931). The missionary, who had been absent, was greeted on his return by many people wanting some explanation for the epidemic which had claimed a considerable number of lives. People's interpretation of Christianity had led them to believe that they would be immune from the ravages of illness and death (cf. Laracy 1976:83).

Millennial cults emerged in New Ireland as people became disillusioned with Christianity (although it is unclear from the records whether any of these extended to the Lelet or to the Pinikindu circuit). Involvement by people from the Lelet in such movements was highly probable given that they have participated in cult-like activities such as the Mataungan movement, T.K.A and T.I.A., and that many subscribe to beliefs that are consistent with cult movements. As noted in much of the literature on conversion in Melanesia, many saw their acceptance of Christianity as bringing some material advantage, whether in the present or in the afterworld. This was also the case among people in central New Ireland. The mission at this time was seen as 'a parent', in the words of one missionary, who 'should supply ... some material advantage' (PCR 1933). Others thought their acceptance of Christianity ensured 'peace and rest after death', this being contingent on their regular attendance at church, a belief still widely held.

Utopian conceptions of life after death are current in the present-day Lelet conception of the land of the dead, a sort of luminescent underground city where people sit around and spend their time reading books as whites do (see chapter two). Some also believe that people become white skinned following death (cf. Kulick and Stroud 1990:293; Lattas 1993:68 and M. Young 1987:249). Christian ideas of the afterworld have been relocated to accommodate 'indigenous' notions of the land of the dead, and so this world is underground. Others believe that Christian heaven, in this instance spatially above, is a luminescent place where singing takes place continually.

The culture hero Moroa who became God

It has been remarked by Fields, in a discussion of the process of Christianisation in Africa, that evangelisation there did not require argument as to whether extraordinary power existed (1985:157). She writes that if Africans 'were amenable to new ideas about a transforming Power, it was because they were already subject to
extraordinary powers in everyday life' (1985:157 and cf. Bond 1987). As among the Africans, the early missionaries and teachers who visited the Lelet would not have needed to explain the nature of spiritual or extraordinary power because the Lelet world is inhabited by powerful non-human 'spirit' beings of both a beneficent and a malevolent kind (see chapter four). In addition there are narratives of culture heroes and heroines who brought important crops and other things to the people. Just as locals readily assimilated or 'hooked' onto Christian ideas, the missionaries also readily appropriated local ideas as a means to speed conversion. Culture heroes were appropriated to represent the Christian God. Such appropriations of items from the cultural repertoires of the missionised in the interests of successful evangelisation has been common practice throughout the history of missionisation (J. Shapiro 1987:126).

Unlike some of the missionaries to Melanesia who baulked at using local terms for God, preferring the English word, the Methodists, in New Ireland, did not. They often used vernacular terms or terms drawn from indigenous languages they attempted to promote as a lingua franca in the areas they were evangelising. Initially, the first missionaries in New Britain and New Ireland used vernacular terms designating spirit to solve the problem of how to translate God (Threlfall 1975:55). This was, however, eventually deemed inadequate because there were many types of spirit in local belief. To solve the problem the missionaries opted to use a Fijian term Kalou to designate God. Later, after the second world war, when the local Mandak language became the medium of preaching by local catechists and preachers, the name of the culture hero Moroa came to be used as God. As a creator figure of sorts, Moroa was an obvious choice, although as there have been changes to the church's attitude to aspects of the local culture, this has given rise to contradictions, something which I will examine later. Here is the narrative of Moroa, as told to me by Larass:

Moroa and Sixiridium were cross cousins who lived a long time ago. At a time in the past, Sixiridium asked Moroa to visit him, and Moroa replying agreed. Sixiridium prepared some food and accompaniments for the day. He gathered together such things as the catkin of the wild betel pepper vine and wild betelnut. These things were not really meant for consumption. Sixiridium also gathered for food what he called pigs but which in reality were merely rats. To accompany the 'pigs', he gathered from the forest wild taro, although it was not really edible. He also collected a vine which he said was a shell valuable. Sixiridium prepared all these things and wanted to show them to Moroa. One afternoon Moroa went to visit Sixiridium. After exchanging greetings the two of them sat down ready to consume what had been prepared. Initially they started by chewing the betel-nut which did not taste good and had an astringent bitter taste. After the betel-nut Sixiridium said he would get the food and then show Moroa the other things he had prepared. He said he would call out for his pigs to come. Moroa asked Sixiridium to wait while they finished chewing the betel-nut. As they continued to chew betel-nut Moroa thought to himself - what kind of betel-nut is this? When they finished the betel-nut Sixiridium called out to his 'pigs' which came running to their owner. All of Sixiridium's little rats came running. As they arrived Moroa nearly laughed at the small things that Sixiridium was calling pigs. But he merely sat there and watched, saying to Sixiridium they were all huge pigs. Sixiridium, not wanting to boast, referred to them as little things. After showing Moroa his 'pigs' Sixiridium got out his shell valuable which was really only a long thin vine, again saying
how small and insignificant it was. Moroa meanwhile made no comment. After this Moroa said to Sixiridium that he should come and visit him one day and that he would reciprocate and they again could chew betel-nut together. They made arrangements for a day to meet again and Moroa went home.

Close to the time Sixiridium was due to visit, Moroa prepared everything. He cooked real pig and real taro in readiness. He obtained a hand of betel-nut and some pepper leaves. Like the previous time they exchanged greetings and sat down to chew betel-nut. As Sixiridium chewed betel-nut he spat out the residue which was a bright red colour and he thought to himself that all of Moroa's things were good. Sixiridium wondered what they were. Moroa went off and got the food and placed it in front of his cross cousin. Sixiridium tried some taro and tried some pig, wondering to himself what they could be. After they had finished eating, Moroa called out for his pigs which he wanted to show to his cross cousin. The pigs dutifully obeyed their master's call and came running. Sixiridium was startled by the size of Moroa's pigs and became afraid, calling out - what are these things? Moroa, as Sixiridium had done before, referred to his pigs as small and proceeded to call out for some others to come. These pigs were even bigger than the last and some had huge curved teeth. Sixiridium was even more frightened than before and again asked his cross cousin what they were. Moroa merely insisted that they were only small things. Sixiridium, who was afraid, attempted to climb a tree to get away from the fearful looking pigs but Moroa insisted he sit down. After showing Sixiridium his pigs Moroa got his shell valuables. Unlike Sixiridium's these were real shell valuables and not just vines from the bush. Sixiridium was truly amazed, remarking to Moroa that all his things were real. Moroa deflected this saying that this was not really the case and that his things were really small and rubbish-like, and that Sixiridium's things were really genuine. When Sixiridium was about to depart, Moroa said to him that he should get rid of all those things that he showed him the time he had visited. Those things, Moroa told Sixiridium, were false things which were inedible. Sixiridium on hearing these words and thinking of his own inferior things felt ashamed that he had given them to his cousin. Moroa said to Sixiridium that if he got rid of those things he too could have the sorts of things Moroa had. Sixiridium felt ashamed of his inferior food and got rid of them. As a result, today people only eat true taro, true pig, true betel-nut, true pepper and possess only true shell valuables, all of the things that Moroa had.

This narrative is similar to many in sea-board Papua New Guinea, which have two male culture heroes who give rise to significant material and cultural things. The creative power of the mythic figures led one man to make the connection between the myth of Moroa and Sixiridium and the story of Genesis (cf. Lawrence 1987:20). Unlike other myths with two brothers, the Lelet version contains two cross cousins and some Lelet directly relate this to the moiety system. The narrator of this version, Larass, went on to say that Sixiridium belonged to the Bik Pisin moiety Lamalom while Moroa belonged to the Liklik Pisin moiety Laragam. As in similar myths, the Lelet narrative has a clever hero and a not so clever hero, the former triumphing over the latter in their competitive feasting. The clever one is responsible for things that are useful, while the other is responsible for things that are not.

While there is a clear differentiation between the cross cousins in terms of their power, this has not meant the eclipsing of Sixiridium as a figure of importance as one would expect, since the things he had were the inferior, inedible ones. Both Sixiridium and Moroa are extremely important in a number of forms of magic. There
are numerous spells from garden magic which invoke first Moroa and then Sixiridium. On the Lelet Plateau, at least, they are seen as complementary.

Through the appropriation of the powerful creator figure Moroa as the Christian God the church has, in a sense, confirmed many aspects of the 'traditional' culture. Such an appropriation is not unproblematic and has given rise to many ambiguities and contradictions. These contradictions have been exacerbated in recent years as the church has taken on a more Pentecostal orientation, in which church members are meant to devote themselves completely to God and to renounce 'traditional' practices such as magic. People who still adhere to the practices that the most vehement Christians have disavowed and renounced would, nonetheless, still profess to be Christians. Indeed people still carrying out practices such as garden or rain magic recognise no contradiction in doing so, given that all things in the world were created by God or Moroa. This points to a fundamental contradiction with which many of the Lelet are grappling, this being that if everything in the world is the product of God, as Christianity has led them to believe, then why must they forsake the ways of their ancestors because they too must be a product of God. In the church's appropriation of the culture hero Moroa as God there has been no challenge to the notion of 'extraordinary power', as Fields refers to it, but merely a displacement in which Moroa takes on even greater powers than he was credited with previously.

From 'heathen darkness' to 'holy spirit movement'\(^4\)

Since the 1970s the United Church has assumed a more Pentecostal orientation.\(^4\) This aims to consolidate people's commitment to Christianity by a more rigorous attention to the ethics of Christianity as portrayed in the New Testament. As part of this orientation there has been an increasing focus on the 'holy spirit' as the means through which a person becomes a true Christian free from sin and temptation.

The focus on forms of Pentecostal evangelism have their origins with Ralph Bell, an evangelist associated with Billy Graham, who conducted a 'Crusade' in Rabaul in 1972, at which large numbers of people 'rededicated' or made a 'personal commitment' to Christ (Threlfall 1975:226). Although, I am unsure how many people from this part of New Ireland attended, this crusade has, nonetheless, been influential in the formation of Christianity as it is now practised. In addition to this influence, two ministers from the United Church attended an international conference on evangelism and brought back a 'new vision' (Threlfall 1975:226). One of these ministers, the Rev. Ben Lenturut, a Lelet man responsible for the Kimadan circuit of the United Church, has been instrumental in promoting this approach in New Ireland.\(^4\) This evangelistic and Pentecostal approach has become known to people from Lelet and others in Central New Ireland as the 'revival'.\(^4\) It is at such things as rallies, conventions and youth camps that people have what Threlfall refers to as 'Pentecostal' or 'charismatic' experiences, in which they rededicate themselves to Christ (1975:226). Some of the literature on Pentecostalism refers to this process in which people become empowered by the Holy Spirit as 'infilling' or 'indwelling',

\(^4\)
and it is sometimes also referred to as undergoing a 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' (Barr 1983a:109-11, 118).

Several things are significant to the evangelism associated with the 'revival'. As Barr has noted, the conservative evangelical churches and fundamentalist sects tend to contest the 'validity and authenticity of Melanesian religions' by stressing 'distinct breaks with the past' which are based on dramatic conversion experiences (1983a:109-10). As it has been articulated by one leader in the movement: 'A clearer line seems to have been drawn between what is acceptable Christian practice and what is not, e.g., social nights, magic, drinking' (Lenturut 1983:206). And as Weber noted in a discussion of the puritan ideas of the Methodists, it is only 'by a fundamental change in the whole meaning of life at every moment and in every action could the effects of grace transforming a man from the status naturae to the status gratiae be proved' (1978b:118, his italics).

While the severance from things of the past is advocated in the Pentecostal approach, much the same as the early missionary practice, the rhetoric employed is not the same. Like early missionaries, the evangelical orientation draws heavily on images of renunciation and spiritual rebirth, illustrated, for example, in the types of names applied to this phenomenon (i.e. revival and renewal). The deployment of the imagery of rebirth, like that of darkness and light of early missionary discourse, are grounded in corporeal notions of inside and outside. However, the break with the past is in many respects partial, because many aspects of 'tradition' which find echoes in the Bible or Pentecostal beliefs and practices are accepted. In particular, while magical practices such as garden magic are condemned, the 'traditional' customary emphasis on sexual morality is not. Like early Methodism, Pentecostalism is in full accord with the 'traditional' stress on modesty, propriety and shame.

The main way in which a radical break with the past is encouraged in the Pentecostal approach is through people undergoing a public testimony in which they renounce their past life and commit themselves to a new one (cf. Tonkinson 1981:243 and Robin 1982). However, those who 'change their lives', as some euphemistically put it, or 'speak out' do not go so far as to reveal 'traditional' knowledge such as magical secrets, as has occurred in parts of the Highlands when revival movements have become dominant (cf. Robin 1982). People merely renounce their practices more generally and commit themselves to their cessation. Some, however, go so far as to destroy any written versions of spells they may have.

At the same time, people make a personal commitment to become Christian in the sense expounded in the New Testament, where there is heavy emphasis on living free from sin as a mark of one's faith. In addition to a public testimony, people also undergo a spiritual experience in which they are baptised by the 'Holy Spirit'. Such a baptism goes hand in hand with a form of exorcism called deliverance, in which 'evil spirits' (spirit no gut) are expelled or cast out from the body in the name of Jesus. Once a person's body is free of 'evil spirits' and that person lives a moral life (stretpela pasin), the 'Holy Spirit' is said to have come 'down' on them. Deliverance is often practised at larger church gatherings such as rallies, conventions, camps or
special services which bring people from the four Lelet villages together at one church. At one such service I attended this was carried out following a sermon which concentrated on the Day of Judgement and the Second Coming of Christ. After telling people that they must be ever ready for this time, because the date is known only to God, people were asked to come forward if they were experiencing the workings of 'evil spirits'. On this occasion several people came to the front to undergo deliverance, which was carried out by the minister and other pastors and preachers attending the service. Those performing the exorcism went from person to person placing their hands on the head and stomach of those who came forward, while the minister or others called out for the 'evil spirits' to leave their bodies. While this was occurring, others not undergoing deliverance prayed for those that were.47 The numerous manifestations that 'evil spirits' can take are those things that the church opposes. Thus, such things as drinking, anger, swearing, promiscuity, theft, adultery and even answering back are wrongdoings which are the work of the Devil who is considered to be the father of 'evil spirits'.

Precedents for the phenomenon of possession can be found in the indigenous cultural repertoire. This is why some people believe that local non-human bush beings, laga and larada (see chapter four) are the 'evil spirits' responsible for the wrongdoings described above (cf. Parkin 1991:189). Often the experience of possession is associated with these beings (most notably larada) who colonise the bodies of those in certain kin categories who transgress their domains. Illness is strongly linked to possession by these malign forces. Similarly, both local and introduced forms of sorcery rely on the idea of possession, albeit temporary, in which the life force of the sorcerer enters the corporeal spaces of victims and cannibalises their internal organs causing death.

It is only through such things as public testimony, deliverance and following a life free from sin that a person will enjoy the benefits of heaven. In his analysis of the concept and symbolism of evil in Christian theology, Ricoeur makes the distinction between the symbolism of defilement and that of sin. The symbolism of defilement is dominated by a 'symbolism of externality, but which expresses seizure, possession, enslavement, rather than contagion and contamination' (1969:48). He goes on to argue that it is the personal relationship which one has with God that determines the 'spiritual space' where sin is distinguished from defilement. With sin the 'penitent experiences the assault of demons as the counterpart of the absence of the god' (Ricoeur 1969:48). 'Evil spirits' take up the spaces of the body in the absence of the spirit of God, represented by the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the act of expulsion, of freeing ones corporeal spaces of 'evil spirits', those spaces become available for the Holy Spirit. The symbolism of sin is, thus, complemented with the symbolism of redemption, of 'return' (Ricoeur 1969:71). The dualism employed here is akin to that used in the images of darkness and light which, while constructing a moral discourse of degradation and being 'fallen', also allow the possibility of freedom from that state. In the Pentecostal approach, people can exonerate their wrongdoings, by undergoing a public testimony and through baptism by the Holy Spirit. These are steps toward salvation in the future.
I argue, following Foucault, that the public testimony required by Pentecostalism is an attempt to reveal and to know the inside of people's minds, as the means to bring them under the power of the church. Whether this is successful or not is another question. The public testimony is similar in some ways to the confession, the centrality of which, Rafael argues, is its requirement that the convert reformulate his or her past in a narrative of sin and repentance (1993:97 and cf. 1992). Talking more generally of the pastoral power of the church, Foucault has suggested that this form of power cannot be exercised 'without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets' (Foucault 1986b:214 and cf. 1987). It is by mapping and knowing the inside of people's minds that the confession produces 'intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it: it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation' (Foucault 1987:62).

The public Pentecostalist testimony, however, differs markedly from the confession practised by Catholics, which Rafael and Foucault are discussing. For example, the testimony is not mediated by a priest but presumes a direct relationship between the wrong-doer and God. Because there is no intervention by the priest, it is unlikely that the most intimate acts and desires of the confessant become known. Unlike the detailed questions of the confessional manuals utilised by the Catholics in the Philippines (cf. Rafael 1992 and 1993), the public testimony depends solely on the individual to reveal all. In addition, I would question whether the western notion of sin is applicable here at all. Read, for example, argues that the closest New Guinea approximation to sin in the Christian sense of the word, is the notion of shame (1955:271). The Lelet clearly have a notion of shame (see chapter three), but following Read I contend that they do not have a notion of sin in the western Christian sense.48

In everyday life people do not reveal their wrongdoings, nor do they feel shame for acts that remain hidden. If, however, a person's wrongdoings become publicly known they experience shame. Shame is only experienced by someone who has committed adultery, for example, when the deed becomes known. What is at work here is an ethical position in which actions, which Christians say are sins, are acceptable as long as they remain hidden. It is only through the revelation, or the bringing of them out into the public sphere, that an individual will acknowledge their wrongdoing. In the act of revealing wrongdoings people make external what was previously internal and hidden.

It is against the background of such notions of shame and the concealment of wrongs that the revelatory approach of deliverance must be seen. Some Lelet are highly sceptical of such acts of deliverance and public testimony, suggesting that people do not reveal serious failings but only mention minor things. Similarly, the renunciation of past ways is viewed by some with equal scepticism. Several instances were related to me of people renouncing certain practices but within weeks returning to them. One man, for example, was reputed to have renounced the practice of a particular form of magic three times thus far.49
Christianity recuperated and magical practices redeemed

The censure of practices associated with the non-Christian past is a characteristic of both the early missionary experience and of the Pentecostal revival which is currently under way among the Lelet. One thing which has been greatly condemned is garden magic. If cultural practices such as dancing were iconic of the 'heathen', so too was garden magic (cf. Robin 1980). However this suppression has not always been thorough-going, and the church's position on this seems to have undergone considerable change over the years. Changing church discourses on garden magic are significant to an understanding of the present form of Christianity among the Lelet. Further, by situating the transformations of mission and church discourses in an historical context, I challenge the common view that Christianity has been constant over the colonial, and into the 'postcolonial' period.

The first missionaries were unrelenting in their condemnation of nearly all beliefs and practices of the local population, considering them, as I have described above, as variously 'heathen', 'ugly with sin', 'vile' and 'evil'.\(^50\) Adherence to practices belonging to the period prior to the arrival of the church was seen to be holding the people in 'darkness' and thus needed to be dispensed with. However this kind of condemnatory rhetoric has not always characterised missionary discourse and in the 1940s, for example, there appears to be less of it and, in some areas at least, a partial acceptance of customary ways and practices. Thus, in 1940, a resolution was passed at the annual Synod meeting which stated that members of the church who practise magic shall be expelled 'except where it can be shown that there is no antisocial intent' (my emphasis). Such practices were still frowned on, but absolute condemnation was replaced by a more pragmatic and creative approach by the missionaries. Just as the Lelet themselves, and the New Irelanders more generally, appropriated aspects of Christianity which served their needs, so also did the missionaries.

The mission report for the Kavieng circuit is instructive in this respect, referring to a revival of 'so-called heathen' practices. The missionary wrote that:

we have to confess that there is often nothing in these practices which could harm the spiritual life of the church. In fact, on the contrary: there is much in them which would bring colour and interest into their otherwise drab village life (KCR 1941).

Some of the missionaries, possibly seeing that the inroads they were making in conversion were only slight, opted for approaches which appear to be informed by some knowledge of anthropology.\(^51\) There was also a recognition that the local population's understanding of the Gospel was reflected through indigenous subject positions and ideas. One report, in its discussion of the 'spiritual life' of the converts, makes note of the fact that many of those who profess to be Christian have interpreted it from the standpoint of their existing beliefs:
In this interesting stage of the people's development it is only to be expected that the gospel will have to fit into their own thought forms and categories, and that they will approach Christ from the standpoint of their own peculiar need (PCR 1932).

Christianity was seen by the New Irelanders as an 'added superstition', as one mission report noted, with greater power than the bush spirits but only because whites pray to him (PCR 1939). This led to conscious strategies by some missionaries to combine Christian ideas within indigenous cosmology. Sometimes the mission reinforced the creative reinterpretation of Christianity from the viewpoint of the local cosmology by translating and transforming Christian concepts in local terms.

They occasionally stressed the pragmatic utility of Christianity in subsistence and other daily activities where magical intervention would previously have been the norm. One missionary in the Namatanai circuit in 1940's, with a familiarity with some of the anthropological writing of the time, notes that the local population is still at the 'prelogical' stage and that only 'myth and ritual touch the unconscious depths of their minds and thus motivate and activate their lives' (NCR 1940). With these ideas in mind, and framed against the background of a discarded practice called kikikipto, in which initiates consume the decomposing fluids of a corpse, the Superintendent of the circuit decided to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper throughout the circuit, constructing its symbolism and ritual on the roots of local custom. Prior to the taking of the sacrament, the 'significance but insufficiency of native practices was sympathetically explained', the missionary citing Deuteronomy: 'Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead ... I am the bread of life' (NCR 1940). This explicit comparison of indigenous ideas of incorporating substance from the dead with the incorporation of Christ's body as embodied in the sacrament is particularly potent because this act of incorporation was extremely important to indigenous ideas about the embodiment of power and knowledge. The missionary notes how the indigenous teacher translates these ideas locally, with an emphasis on the pragmatic utility of this ritualised act:

The preacher did not hesitate to say that the re-orientation of their faith and the resultant integration of personality made for efficiency in fishing and all the humble tasks of life besides giving survival value to the soul. During the series of services several happy incidents occurred which confirmed the belief that in the Sacraments we have an illustration of the soundness of the principle of positive substitution (NCR 1940).

In addition to ideas cited above, Deuteronomy calls on people to obey the commandments of God, follow his ways and fear him. This part of the Old Testament describes images of wealth and abundance in a world where there is not a lack in anything. Images of abundance are contrasted with a state where there is no belief in God and where all are subject to drought and famine. Again such images would have had strong reverberations for the Central New Irelanders where drought, disaster and famine were common experiences in the past, and continue to inform their interpretation of the present (see chapter five). This section of Deuteronomy finishes with the stricture that if God is forgotten and false gods worshipped those
that do so will perish. This again echoes indigenous belief in those with ancestral efficacy flourishing while those without withering. Thus we witness a dialogue of meanings and dramatic reconfiguration of beliefs and practices, not just persistence or abandonment of past beliefs and practices.

**Magic and the baptism of the 'Holy Spirit'**

Although the Pentecostal revival has in many ways returned to the moralist approaches of the early missionaries, condemning such things as garden magic as 'satanic' (samting bilong satan), there is still fluidity. What is abandoned or creatively reconstituted often tends to vary according to the specifics of the local context and to the particular proselytism the inhabitants have been subjected to. Individuals also vary in their willingness to abandon previous ways. To illustrate this I will briefly cite a form of garden magic examined more fully later (see chapter six). This form of garden magic is combined with a form of feast magic and together they aim to ensure plentiful taro for a mortuary feast. The magician, Lakana, who described this version of the magic to me abandoned the garden component of it in 1985 as part of the process of 'changing his life'. Despite this 'change of life', Lakana still utilises the feast component of the magic and did so at one of the mortuary feasts I attended.

Such selectivity is partly a response to the deprecation of garden magic by missionaries and church workers. I was told by Lataba that the church condemned garden magic because in some forms of it, prior to the soil being broken up with a digging stick, the soil was likened to the brains of Moroa or God: the magician incants a spell that proclaims that Moroa's brains are about to be broken up, like the soil.53 The case study of Deden, a man who ceased using garden magic in 1978 after baptism by the Holy Spirit illustrates the relationship between more 'traditional' practices and the Pentecostal tendencies:

Deden had been working for several years in another part of the country where he did not attend church. When he returned to the village, although he attended church, Deden said he was not a committed Christian. He did not 'sit down good'. Even though married Deden drank alcohol and pursued other women. At a church convention in 1978, on hearing God's talk he realised the error in his ways and how bad a man he was. The preacher gave a sermon in which he talked about the way of life of a married man and what sort of relationship he should have with his wife. Deden recognised that on this 'path' he had fallen. The preacher also preached about believing in other kinds of God and here too the man recognised that the garden magic he performed was like this. When Deden returned to his village, he told his father that he had renounced garden magic at the convention and would no longer practise it. His father was extremely angry with him and persuaded him to continue using the garden magic. Deden continued to utilise it and, because he had given his life to Jesus, in effect he was subject to two different influences. The two influences pulling on him meant that the garden Deden planted using magic became diseased and rotted away.

This case study illuminates an idea that has become increasingly prevalent since the influence of Pentecostalism. Whereas in the past, at least for a time, there has been a recognition of the compatibility of the 'traditional' magic and Christian belief,
particularly as they both call on the same God, Moroa, this is being replaced by the idea that the two belief systems are incompatible (cf. Dalton 1988:20). The recognition of this antithesis does not, however, mean there is disbelief in the magical practices. On the contrary, Deden is among those who have discontinued magical practices, but who still believe the magic they practised was efficacious. The irreconcilability derives from the fact that one cannot renounce the power of magic for God and then return to it. If one chooses the path of Christianity that is the only path. If Deden had not made a commitment to Christianity entailing his renunciation of past ways, then the efficacy of the magical practices would remain.

Such views are by no means orthodox, since there is much variation in belief about the compatibility of ancestral and Christian religion. Some say Satan is a god, and just as God is called Moroa, Satan is as well. Because Satan is bad and associated with the earth, those forms of magic, such as garden magic, directed at the earth are also considered bad or 'satanic'. Some people do mix both Christian and 'traditional' magical practices and do not see them as irreconcilable. Others, who attend church and say they are Christian, rely solely on magical practices for their gardens, believing that prayer is insufficient to guarantee healthy and good-sized taro. With some, the abandonment of garden magic has meant that the Lelet no longer harvest the large taro of the past, and they look back on such aspects of the past in a nostalgic way. The following account from Lataba illustrates this:

Before, people used to see a lot of large taro, they used to work magic and they ate a lot of large taro. Today we do not use *lubu* [a form of taro magic], the church stopped us, they said that we cannot call the name of God. Some forms of magic use the name of God, they ruin him with words - they break open his head with digging sticks. They used to perform some spells directed at God which were not good, and when the church saw this they said we must stop it, telling us that God will make food abundant with his blessing. Today we do not use *lubu* or use ginger [a form of taro magic] in the garden any more. Some people still follow these ways, they do not listen and say 'you cannot stop us, we *bubu* and eat large taro'. We plant taro without magic. All the taro is small, there are not any large taro, now just the small taro that you and I eat, that is all. But it is sufficient, it is God's blessing. Did you see all the big taro at the feast at Kaluan? It belonged to some people who used magic and as a result the taro was big. But at Limbin we plant our gardens without it now, occasionally with God's blessing we find some medium sized taro. Before, sorry! Every man would *lubu* in their own gardens.

While most people of the Lelet today profess to be Christians of one denomination or another, their conversion should not be seen as an absolute or total imposition of a 'world' religion onto a 'local' Melanesian religion. Despite the overall acceptance of Christianity, a degree of scepticism remains. Moreover there is much variation not only in people's understanding of Christianity but also in the extent to which they heed the church (as indeed there is among western Christians). To homogenise or to assume a unidimensional view of the world is to provide a misleading and superficial view (cf. J. Carrier 1992:16 and Barker 1992).

My effort in the latter part of this chapter has been to illustrate the creative and complex interaction between the Lelet cultural imaginary and that of the exogenous
Christian religion. I have described some of the reverberations and reconfigurations that have occurred. Like the colonial, capitalist governmental project discussed early in this chapter such an engagement is replete with contradictions, contestations and creative reworkings.
Notes

1. Particularly important has been the importation of aspects of the magical cult known as Buai (areca nut) by people who have worked in other parts of New Ireland and New Britain. I will refer to this briefly in chapter two and chapter four.

2. I use the term postcolonial with a degree of caution, and need to qualify my usage. Breckenridge and van der Veer, for example, argue that they see the term as a framing device to characterise the second half of the twentieth century, and use it as a replacement for postwar (second), which was central to the decolonisation process (1993:1). Such global framing devices, however, fail to acknowledge that not all colonies have been decolonised, let alone allow for those peoples subject to internal colonialism by nation-states (e.g. the Australian Aborigines). Miyoshi argues that such terms can conceal the actuality of global politics in which 'colonialism is even more active now in the form of transnational corporatism' (1993:728 and cf. Dirks 1992a:5). By postcolonial, I mean the period following Papua New Guinea's independence, although I would argue that, despite the establishment of a nation-state following the cessation of colonial government by the Australian administration, Papua New Guinea is not free from colonial power relations. There is much that persists from the colonial to the postcolonial, particularly on the economic level, and the administrative structures of colonialism have, in the main, been taken over by the Papua New Guinean government. What is needed is detailed analysis of the colonial and postcolonial periods of government to ascertain the extent to which, and how, the various colonial power relations have persisted, become sedimented and transformed, as well as the ruptures that have occurred.

3. The German New Guinea Annual Report (hereafter Annual Report) of 1900-01 noted that in the Bismarck Archipelago practically every 'individual tribe has to be made to feel the power of the Administration before it can be induced to desist from robbery, murder and cannibalism' (211).

4. The Annual Report for 1905-06 notes that all the coastal 'tribes' as well as those in the mountains of the central section of New Ireland were organised into administrative units (266).

5. Ranger contributes to the literature addressing the 'invention of tradition' or the 'politics of tradition' by examining the complex relationships created by colonialism, particularly the way in which culture is reworked in colonial situations. See, for example, Dirks (1992a) and Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983). For the Pacific, see the collections by Keesing and Tonkinson (1982) and Jolly and Thomas (1992) and other works by Carrier and Carrier (1989 and 1987); Keesing (1989); Otto (1992b); Poyer (1988) and Thomas (1992a and 1992b).


7. One popular narrative recounts a war between several Lelet villages and the west coast village of Mesi following a breach of the sign of respect. In this account the Lelet villagers killed nearly all the men of Mesi.

8. I am influenced here by the sort of relations of power, knowledge and discipline that Foucault examines in his work. In these works spatial positioning and geography are important to how the gaze, and thus relations of power (and knowledge), are maintained over certain populations, be they in a hospital, prison, or other place (1982; 1986a; 1988[1980]a and 1988[1980]b).
9. Mission records talk of forced relocation but are not specific about which colonial administration they are referring to (Namatanai Circuit Report 1925). For a discussion of settlement pattern following relocation, see B.R. Clay (1969).

10. The north coast is a more correct designation in terms of compass bearings but it is called east by a considerable number of people in New Ireland. According to Wolfers, after 1903 the government empowered its officials to require labour without payment for up to four weeks a year for the improvement of such things as roads and government plantations (1975:70). Also, the German New Guinea Annual Report for 1903-04 notes that previously, in lieu of taxes, the local populations had been required to perform labour for the administration, particularly road building (245).

11. This is not to suggest that differing levels of feuding did not exist prior to colonialism. The point I wish to make is that with colonialism some of the, albeit tenuous, states of peace between differing peoples were possibly disrupted by the influx of new and powerful weaponry. New weapons could have given some parties strategic advantages not previously possessed. A similar point is made by Tonkinson (1981a:243).

12. There appears to be some discrepancy in the literature about when the head tax was first introduced. Hahl, in his autobiography first published in 1937, says it was 1904, while a number of commentators on the period say 1907 (Rowley 1958:172; Wolfers 1975:67; Moses 1969:56-7 and German New Guinea Annual Report 1908-09:289). S. Firth suggests it was introduced in 1905 and a head tax ordinance in 1907 (S. Firth 1986:105). For an account of the collection of the head tax see Lyng (1919:237-8).

13. New Ireland, particularly the north, was a much sought after location for labourers prior to the establishment of the government station at Kavieng in 1900 and the labour trade was prevalent in this region even prior to the establishment of the German Protectorate as it was initially known. See S. Firth (1986:14-15; 28-9 and 50-2) and Hempenstall (1978:151-2). For early contact history of New Ireland see Rubel and Rosman (1991); Lomas (1981) and Lincoln (1987).

14. Further measures were also adopted to facilitate the development of a plantation economy. For example, villagers were 'compelled' to plant and maintain a certain number of trees (Biskup 1969:87). Possibly this was at the behest of the Methodist Mission which passed a resolution calling on every villager ('able bodied native') to be 'obliged' to plant coconuts at least eight metres apart at the rate of five per annum until they own one hundred (Minutes of the New Britain District Synod, 1908). Such a policy, I would argue, went hand-in-hand with the administration, because the same Synod also called for the appointment of officers to act as Inspectors of native industries and to instruct and encourage villagers in the raising of profitable products.

15. It was illegal not to present oneself for a census. Different villages were required to go to different places. Thus the villages Limbin and Lavatkana went to the east coast and the villages Lengkamen and Kaluan went to the west coast. To some extent this was a reflection of past links of the population with these areas.

16. When the patrol officers did occasionally come to the Lelet, people tell of how they were carried by coastal people halfway to the Lelet, and then by Lelet people the rest of the way. If anyone stumbled and the patrol officer fell to the ground, those responsible were thrashed.

17. For constructions of otherness around staples, see Handler and Linnekin (1984:285); Linnekin (1983:243-4) and in another non-Pacific context, Bloch (1985:635).

18. Such constructions are exceedingly fluid and are deployed both rhetorically and politically. Despite the Lelet constructing the coast as other in the present, during the colonial period large numbers of Lelet resided at the coast for long periods of time. The 1972 census figures put the
population of the Lelet at 578, of which only 200 were residing there (Konos Patrol Report no. 1 1972/73). This is the case even now, with a considerable number of Lelet both visiting the coast for short periods or living there on a more permanent basis.

19. This form of criticism is also levelled at others in Papua New Guinea who are seen as successful in the capitalist economy. For example, I heard a man who had attended a Tolai feast state, say with much disgust that they charged people money for small pieces of pork. According to Lattas, the Tolai are accused by Kalai villagers of killing their children and selling their flesh in the markets as pork (among other abhorrent acts, such as incest) (1993:59 and 61).

20. TNG - Territory of New Guinea reports to the League of Nations.

21. Cooperative societies were a big development initiative by the Australian administration following the second world war. There was one in the Mandak area of which some Lelet were members. During the 1970s and 1980s a number of business groups were initiated.

22. An agricultural research station was established with economic assistance from the New Zealand government in 1982. This greatly facilitated the development of cash cropping on the Lelet through the marketing of seeds, expertise and, prior to people obtaining vehicles, the purchasing of vegetables for resale.

23. During the dry season when vegetables grow well, and depending on the type of produce, a person can earn up to one hundred and fifty kina or even higher on one market trip. The costs of hiring vehicles range from seventy or eighty kina for smaller vehicles to one hundred and forty for larger trucks. To keep down costs, people share the expense of hiring which can mean as little as a twenty kina expenditure. If people hire a small car and their produce is not very good, after paying for transport the result can be very little profit. One person I knew came back from market with only five kina profit. Increasingly, as more people become involved in cash cropping, the market is becoming saturated and in some cases people have had to dump their vegetables because they have not sold. When I was in the field there were number of vehicles, mostly trucks and utilities, associated with different villages. It is unlikely that cash cropping is the main source of income used to purchase vehicles. Remittances from children who are working in other parts of New Ireland or Papua New Guinea play a big part. In addition some trucks have been purchased with grants from government and development agencies.

24. This definition draws on the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary and has benefited greatly from the illuminating discussion in Rafael (1993:xvii).

25. While not wishing to deny that people's acceptance of Christianity is in some circumstances governed by economic, political or pragmatic factors, I would argue that when looking at conversion there is too much reduction of Melanesians to pragmatic accountants who weigh up the economic benefits before converting to Christianity. There is not sufficient attention paid to the important questions of belief, epistemology, metaphor and, as Schieffelin suggests, rhetoric, in facilitating (or hindering) conversion.

26. The idea of reverberation is derived from Bachelard's work on the poetic image (1969). He argues that through reverberation 'we are able to experience resonances, sentimental repercussions, reminders of our past' (1969:xix). The idea of reverberation, for me, captures some of the ways metaphors and images arouse emotion in people. This concept also captures the ideas of bodily movement or 'moving' which a considerable number of Lelet magical beliefs evocatively exhibit, and which I examine throughout this thesis.

27. The mission board of the Methodist Overseas Mission decided to expand their arena of endeavours to New Britain and New Ireland at the behest of the Rev. George Brown, a missionary in
Samoa. The first missionaries, including Brown and a number of Fijians and Samoans, arrived at Port Hunter in the Duke of York Islands in August 1875. From there they expanded their missionisation, firstly to New Britain and then to New Ireland, establishing their first church building on New Ireland in 1876 at Kalil. The expansion of the area of evangelisation to central New Ireland followed the 1906 Synod decision to establish a head station there. Originally, it was planned that the head station would be established at Mesi on the west coast but following a reconnaissance trip to the east coast it was decided the latter was more appropriate because of the larger population base there. A block of land was purchased at Kimadan on the east coast, but as the mission boat was unable to land building materials there, these were put ashore further north. As a result the head station was established at Pinikidu (Pinikindu). See the following for accounts of the establishment and history of the Methodist church: G. Brown (1908:69-102); Burton (1912:190-211); Danks (1914 and 1933); Threlfall (1975) and R. Williams (1972).

28. **Talatala** is a Fijian word used widely by the Methodists. Initially it meant missionary but later came to mean Minister (Threlfall 1975:63). **Lotu** is a Tok Pisin term derived from Fijian and designates church.

29. PCR is Piniqidu (Pinikindu) circuit report, NCR is Namatanai circuit report and KCR is Kavieng circuit report in the Methodist Overseas Mission (M.O.M.) records in the Mitchell Library. For brevity I will cite only the place and date of reports. I am mostly drawing on unpublished reports, such as circuit reports to the synod, synod minutes, journal resolutions and various minutes relating to the development of the church in New Britain and New Ireland. There are a number of problems with a reliance on mission records. It gives a one-sided view of the process of Christianisation by not usually presenting the local response, although an anthropological approach partially remedies this; see Laracy (1976:x). A further problem is the lack of specific detail about the incidents mentioned in the texts, partly due to the fact that the reports cover wide areas, and summarise a year's events. Another problem is that the reports are written by the white missionaries whose discourse and orientation may differ from the evangelists (predominantly South Sea Islanders from Fiji) who were in most contact with the villagers. It should be recognised that many of the missionary reports are specifically directed towards soliciting donations from the laity in the mission's country of origin (in this case Australia). Such reports are very much rhetorical documents requiring considerable interpretation of their subtexts. Clifford, among others, has made similar points about the pressure for missionaries to recount stories that illustrate the success of the Gospel: 'Sentimental stories brought in donations' (1980:6) and see Wetherall (1977:135). Leenhardt, for example, was implored to write as a fundraiser like other missionaries of his time. This led him to remark: 'I gave myself dispassionately to this work. Why can't Christians learn to give - dispassionately?' (cited in Clifford 1980:6).

30. According to the archival records, the Lelet asked for the church to come in 1915 (PCR 1915).

31. One must also see the rapid conversions in central New Ireland as occurring in a power vacuum created when the local peoples ceded their capacity for warfare to the colonial state. Rapid conversion was thus dependent on the imposition of a new order by a colonial state which had an overwhelming military power which was quickly recognised. As White, notes this power was often associated with the mission and gave people an impression of the efficacy of the Christian message (1988:15).

32. This is from Linge's autobiography, *An offering fit for a King* (1978), originally published in 1932 as *The erstwhile savage*. This was possibly the first autobiography by a Papua New Guinean. The 1978 version has considerably expanded on the 1932 version.

33. See, for example, Bercovitch (1989a:11); Berde (1974:33); Clifford (1980:9); Comaroff (1985a:136 and 1991:9); Gewertz and Errington (1993:281); Kaplan (1990:133); Lindstrom (1990a:45); Poyer (1988:482); A. Strathern (1989a:310); Wetherall (1977:4-5, 19, 135, 174) and White (1991:138-9). Such ideas of darkness were not only the preoccupation of the missions. Foucault, for example, has noted that the fear of darkened places haunted the latter half of the
eighteenth century (1988b:153). The Enlightenment is, of course, framed around such metaphors. See also Introduction n. 27.

34. Fernandez has argued that culture is a repository or inventory of images and ideas available to those who create religious movements (1982:252). In his early work on religious movements he argues that certain images acted as models or organising metaphors (1972:14). I do not argue that such images of dark and light are organising metaphors but that they are part of a repertoire of images. What is important is to chart the contextual use of metaphors and the refigurings, refashionings and redeployments undergone in that process.

35. For example, according to G.J. Platten in the Namatanai circuit report of 1932, a millenial cult occurred in the most distant section of the circuit, although he does not say specifically where. In this cult, in anticipation of the second coming of Christ, people revealed their past 'crimes' and 'settled old debts'. It was believed that Christ would put one foot on the east coast and one on the west coast of New Ireland and rock it until it capsised. At this time some of the population killed all their pigs, while others, anxiously awaiting the imminent return of Christ, feared they would miss the event if they slept so they stayed awake for days and nights on end, beating their children to keep them awake. During this time some people claimed they were angels. The cult was crushed when some of the leaders were imprisoned, with hard labour.


37. See also Guiart (1962:125-6); Kahn (1983:105); Laracy (1976:81) and Lawrence (1956:75 and 87). Schieffelin, notes that among the Kaluli, while there was a recognition that Christianity was the road to wealth and influence, there was no direct connection between conversion and access to goods (1981:153).

38. Of course the point should be made that these beings do not necessarily exist in a separate world, as concepts such as 'supernatural' presuppose. Beings we label as 'spirit' often have an immanence and corporeality to them, and merely remain invisible to humans under normal conditions. Many studies on Christianisation in Melanesia point to the significance and persistence of indigenous conceptions of the 'supernatural' or what Fields calls extraordinary power. Indigenous notions of ancestors, ghosts, bush spirits and culture heroes (and the legion of other terms anthropologists use) have been incorporated, to varying degrees, within or parallel to the Christian framework. See, for example, Barker (1993:209); Hogbin (1958:180); Kahn (1983:97); Laracy (1976:163); Smith (1988:36) and White (1988:23-4). See also the discussion in Barker, who argues that Melanesians move between different levels of ghosts, bush spirits, power and Christianity and 'reshape each discourse according to the concepts and pressures they experience in the others' (1992:165).

39. For example the English Melanesian Mission preferred the English word God (cf. Clifford 1980:9). Leenhardt put a great deal of thought into choosing an appropriate vernacular term for God, because he thought using the French term might have meant that the Christian God would be simply added to the head of a list of other deities (Clifford 1980:9 and 16-20).

40. Examples of these myths occur in Damon (1983:321-2); Hannemann (1934:11-29); Lawrence (1964:22-4 and 1988:17); McSwain (1977:3-4, 24, 28); Nash (1987:155) and Panoff (1969:24). As Lawrence has shown, these myths not only become incorporated into Christianity but also have been utilised in cargo cults and cargo beliefs, to illustrate the material inequality between blacks and whites (1964:69-72, 98-105, 136, 163-4, 189, 196-7). Some of these figures have been appropriated to
represent the Christian God, often with cargo cult connotations. See, for example, Burt (1982); Chowning (1990); Macintyre (1990:84-5) and Trompf (1983:55-6 and 1990:65).

41. 'Holy Spirit movement' is derived from Barr (1983a:109) and is a term which is being applied by both local participants and missionary observers to forms of collective 'ecstatic experiences' in Christian contexts. The increasing focus on the 'holy spirit' or Pentecostalism, however, is common not only to New Ireland but also to other parts of Papua New Guinea. See, for example, Barr (1983a, 1983b, 1983c and 1984); Barr and Trompf (1983) Flannery (1980); Namuna (1983); Robin (1982); Tamanabae (1981); and Trompf (1983). The majority of this literature derives from theologians and religious scholars, and there is little specifically anthropological attention to this area, despite the fact that Pentecostalism is gaining currency in Papua New Guinea. For exceptions, see Eyre (1988) and Gewertz and Errington (1993). In other non-Melanesian contexts, see Harding (1987) and Willems (1967).

42. The United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands was formed in 1968 from an amalgamation of the Methodist Church of Melanesia, the United Church in Port Moresby and Papua Ekalesia. Papua Ekalesia was formed from the London Missionary Society of Papua in 1962. See Threlfall (1975:213-14). The Kwato Extension Association had its origins also in the London Missionary Society and joined Papua Ekalesia in 1964.

43. The Kimadan circuit was formerly the Pinikindu circuit.

44. Lenturut also refers to it as Charismatic Renewal, or simply renewal (1983:205).

45. The stress on the recognition that a sinless life is a mark of faith in Christ has its antecedents in the life of John Wesley, who while reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, in which Luther describes how God works in the heart through faith in Christ, had a similar conversion experience in which he had trust in Christ and saw this as the means of salvation (Wright and Clancy 1993:xi).

46. Some of the precedents for deliverance are found in the New Testament, particularly the Gospels of Mathew (10:1, 8) and Mark (1:27, 32), where evil spirits are referred to as 'unclean spirits' or 'devils'.

47. The extent to which people get involved in acts such as these varies. I heard a report of a youth rally at which, after being called on to come forward for deliverance, several youths from the Lelet ran away. One of them, I was told, thought that he would be made sick if he underwent the process.

48. In this regard I disagree with J. Turner (1991) who tends to conflate 'supernatural' sanctions for wrongdoings with the punishment of sin. Sin is inseparable from western Christian notions of the individual, interiority and self as authors such as Ricoeur (1967) and Foucault (1986b; 1987 and 1986c) have shown. See Chakrabarty (1992:9-11) for an similar analysis in relation to Indian material and also Fernandez (1972:23). My critique of the applicability of sin to Melanesia does not deny that the development of a concept of sin among Papua New Guineans is part of a Christianisation project, although from my experience in the field, I posit that this is yet to be successful. Comaroff touches on similar things when she suggests that scholars 'seem to have missed the point of Foucault's connection of Christian confession with the modern psyche' (1991:4). A similar line is followed by Yengoyan in an analysis of the failure of Christianity among the Pitjantjatjara. He argues that while Christianity posits a strong sense of the individual 'the social structures and relationships of Aboriginal Australia make problematic any such free-floating individuality, and thus the process of Christian conversion itself' (1993:236). How Yengoyan reconciles this thesis with the fact that massive conversion has occurred elsewhere in Aboriginal Australia I am unsure.

49. One man said that it is instances such as these incomplete and partial renunciations which set the United Church apart from the Pentecostal group called the Christian Life Centre (CLC), of which
there are a few members at the Lelet. See Barr (1983a:112-13). CLC members criticise United Church members for returning to their past ways, and not totally renouncing them. In addition, CLC members do not chew areca nut. This is increasingly denounced also by the leaders in the United Church, but has made little headway.

50. The exceptions, at least in the early period, appear to be local marriage practices and notions of avoidance and respect, although not all marriage practices were condoned. Such things as polygamy, infant betrothal and the marriage of older men to young girls were vigorously condemned.

51. Threlfall mentions that in 1928 the Mission Board established a college for all outgoing missionaries where they studied, among other subjects, linguistics and anthropology (1975:120).

52. Possibly this is a reference to Levy-Bruhl's ideas in Primitive mythology: The mythic world of the Australian and Papua Natives, which was published in 1935 in France, although I am unsure of the date of the first English translation. Some of the missionary imagery has resonances with the rhetoric of the colonisation project. One such example is the notion of 'elevation', a spatial concept widely used in the missionary reports. Spatial positioning in Christian thought is associated with the putative positioning of God above, whereas in evolutionary thought it relates to a racial hierarchy conceptualised in terms of an evolutionary ladder up which races climb. Elevation thus can convey both the meaning of being fallen associated with a life of sin, and also the idea of being at the bottom of an evolutionary ladder. On evolutionary thought and rhetoric see Stocking (1968) and Thomas (1992b:367).

53. This form of incantation occurs in only one of the several versions known of that form of magic. Ironically, although this form of magic was the target of condemnation, it is still today probably the most widely used (see chapter six).
Chapter 2

From birth to death: Body, gender and power

In the previous chapter I discussed some of the sorts of boundary crossing and borrowing that has accompanied Lelet encounters with Christian and colonial others. I now want to discuss the 'indigenous' relations of alteriority and boundary crossing central to the process of embodiment: I prefigured this in the introduction when I suggested that the radical alterity of the other is assimilated through acts of incorporation. In the Lelet conceptualisation of the body, the skin is significant because it marks the boundary between what is inside and consubstantial with the body, and what is outside or external to it. This chapter follows this conceptualisation and the process of embodiment as it is applied in various contexts, such as procreation, socialisation and forms of love magic.

Intentional consciousness, as I have argued following Merleau-Ponty, is not independent of the body but is bound up with it, guiding its practical engagement with the world. The movement of the body as the basis of intentionality connects the person to the world. Movement is crucial to ideas about the gendered body, in which men are constructed as being more active while women are more passive, and it is also a central concept to various forms of magic. I examine a form of women's power, laram, which undermines certain contexts of male power such as magic, hunting and dance, pointing to the significance of control over bodily boundaries. The ability to control the body is an important factor in Lelet ideas of gender, personhood and power and I discuss the regimes of fasting and abstinence which aim to produce a particular form of invulnerable, idealised and masculine body. Following discussion of the ideal body, I discuss the vulnerability of the body and forms of magic which aim to bring it under the control of another, such as love magic and sorcery. This is followed by a discussion of the separation of body and life force that occurs with death and the different entities that then arise, depending on the type of death undergone.

Mapping the body

Among the Lelet, as elsewhere, the body is conceived through social discourses and knowledges that construct it in a particular way. For the Lelet there is no term for the body as such and if someone speaks of it they refer to it as the skin, labantuxu (cf.
Bercovitch 1989a:387 and M. Strathern 1979:249). This is not to say that there is no conceptualisation of the body but merely that the skin comes to stand for the body as a whole. The Lelet divide the anatomical body into its constituent parts, of skin, flesh, bones and so on, but more pertinent for this thesis, they stress a distinction between the inside and the outside (cf. Biersack 1983:93; Devisch 1985b:592; Mosko 1985, 1991:138-40 and Iteanu 1990:41). The mediation of inside/outside is important in incorporation. Below I discuss this and related aspects of embodiment.

The inside of the body - the flesh, muscles, fat and bones - are referred to collectively as *luut*, a term which specifically refers to the flesh or meat of the body but which also refers generically to the interior parts of the body. As in other parts of Melanesia, it is the interior spaces of the body, particularly the internal visceral organs, which are seen as the site of the emotions and which become the target of the most powerful forms of sorcery.\(^1\)

The skin, the outer surface in mediating the distinction between the inside and outside of the body, forms the interface between the body and the world. In local etymology, the skin, *labantuxu*, means the covering of the life force, and derives from *laban*, a prefix applied to things that are flat or wide and that enclose or cover up other things.\(^2\) The second component of the word, *tuxu*, applies to the invisible aspect of a person, more commonly called *loroang*, the life force. As I stated before, this is usually contained within the spaces of the body, but is not irrevocably joined with the body and can under some circumstances leave the body for short periods of time. The *loroang* is integral to Lelet notions of embodied personhood and agency in the world. The person does not exist as such unless those two components are united in one body. Upon death the *loroang* becomes permanently separated from the body, taking various forms that will be described below.

The skin manifests and mirrors interior states of a person's being and represents these to the world, in a process of revelation whereby what is on the inside is made visible on the outside (cf. O'Hanlon 1983:319). The skin is not only the point where the body interacts with the physical and social world, but the point where the interior of the body interacts with the world. Thus for the Lelet, as in much of Melanesia, shame is said to lie on the skin (*labantuxu i mamang*) as an embodiment of actions which are socially unacceptable (cf. A. Strathern 1975).\(^3\) Alternatively, if someone is weighed down by worries, the skin is said to be 'heavy'.

Not only does the skin come to manifest interior emotional states, it also mirrors a person's physical state. Thus, someone with a healthy skin, free from blemish, is deemed to have good health and well-being. A healthy skin, and particularly a shiny skin, is highly desirable, not only because it is an indication of well-being but also because it is aesthetically pleasing and makes the owner an object of others' desire. It is important to stress, however, that visible signs on the skin connote far more than a person's state of health or desirability. People with sores and bodily deformities are considered not only to be unhealthy but also to embody moral fallibility. In the imagery of the body employed by the Lelet, physical health and well being are not
merely aesthetic states but are inextricably intertwined with indigenous notions of value and morality (cf. Fortune 1963:136 and Frankel 1986:58). In short, moral status is an embodied condition which is exhibited in the skin.

Conceiving growth and conception

Conception is considered to be the result of the mixing and joining together of the seminal fluid of the man and the vaginal secretions of the woman in the uterus. The first part of the body to form when the fluids of the parents have mixed and joined are the eyes, followed by the face, and then downwards through the rest of the body. Unlike some parts of Melanesia where men and women are seen to contribute different substances which give rise to qualitatively different parts of the body, like the skin for women or bones for men, no such procreative theory exists among the Lelet. Parents can contribute a mixture of body parts of varying proportions and a child may bear a resemblance to either its mother or father.

As reported for other parts of New Ireland and Melanesia, one act of intercourse is not deemed sufficient to impregnate and form a fetus, this requiring serial intercourse to be carried out over roughly a two week period (cf. B. Clay 1977:31; Wagner 1983:78 and 1991:338). If the woman has had a number of partners in this time, they are all considered to be a progenitor of the child and may be forced to contribute to the child's upkeep. In such cases, the child can have different parts of its body contributed by different men. If, however, a child bears a resemblance to a particular man, it is considered he has slept with the woman the most and correspondingly contributed the most seminal fluid to the child, and as a result he must contribute a greater share to its upkeep. If a woman becomes pregnant before marriage and the resulting child bears a facial resemblance to a certain man, he can be forced to marry her.

In the process of conception the man is considered to contribute a far greater amount of fluid than the woman, but her contribution is equalised by her contributions to the child's growth in the womb. When the fetus is in the process of forming in the womb and amniotic sac, it gains its sustenance from the mother's blood, through the umbilical cord. When a woman gives birth to a child, it is referred to as latkin i visik. Thus, it is not so much the fact of birth, but the public display of a child which is glossed as revelation. In the past, a feast was held to celebrate the first time the child was taken outside of the parent's house after birth. This feast, named lanan asu mandak, uses the common verb to convey revelation, asu, where something that is previously enclosed and not seen is taken outside where it becomes visible.

Once the fetus has formed, the man should cease having sexual intercourse with his wife and sleep in the men's house. Ideally this should be done until the child is walking, talking and has enough awareness of its parents to say their names. Should a man continue to have intercourse with his wife while she is pregnant, his act is literally said to 'shoot and break into pieces' the child, whose growth is affected.
Although this suggests the child's bones are broken, it is actually the general well-being and development that is affected, its growth being inhibited, resulting in its being thin and emaciated, with a dull skin that reflects ill health.  

In the past, certain foods were avoided by the mother during gestation, although these strictures are probably not always followed today (cf. D.A. and D.R. Counts 1983:53; Meigs 1984:82-6 and Nash 1987:165). The examples I heard often involved the avoidance of certain species of fish (cf. Ivens 1927:275-6 and Powdermaker 1932:246). One species was avoided because it caused a type of illness in which sores developed on the child's tongue and another because it caused the child to cry. Another illness, in which the child cried constantly, was caused by pregnant women eating fruit that has been partially eaten by flying foxes or birds. At night these creatures congregate on one tree and make a great amount noise.

There are two types of growth processes, which are envisaged and conveyed by the verbs *i sisilok* and *i susu*. The former is more usual and refers to the process of the child getting bigger, while the latter verb applies to the growth of things such as trees (*luna i susu*) involving some form of revelation. It means the type of growth where something such as a shoot or growing tip gradually expands and unfolds, revealing itself after having been hidden from sight. Within the overall types of growth there are two types: *dan or goros*. The first form occurs in people who grow very fast and whose bodies are said to contain a considerable amount of water. This contrasts with the second form of growth which applies to people who grow slowly, and lack the abundant flesh and water of the other type (cf. Meigs 1990:103). Such people have thin bodies, skin that is dry, and exceptional strength. People who grow fast and whose bodies contain a lot of water are weak and more susceptible to illnesses and sores. This results in their dying much earlier than people who have the slower growth pattern. In the past, the parents of a child which was fat and characterised by rapid growth, would wash the child's skin with various plants to counter the rapid growth and to protect it from sores and illnesses.

**Socialisation, internalising knowledge and embodiment**

A discussion of child socialisation serves to illustrate Lelet methods of construction of the (gendered) person through processes of embodiment. Socialisation is seen as a process of incorporation in which that which is external to a person is acquired as habituated practice. One ideal socialisation process involves the production of a wilful or arrogant child. It is desirable that the male child embody this character, and, although not exclusively a male behaviour, it is disparaged in females. While the socialisation process is deemed important in the development of such a character, this sort of person can also be created by magical intervention.

There are two contrasting methods of child socialisation. On the one hand, parents can adopt an 'easy' approach, which involves looking after the child in a gentle and reasoned manner. In this approach, particularly in the early stages until walking and talking, striking the child is avoided. Prior to the mastery of speech and
body movement, a child is thought to be lacking in knowledge or understanding and careful schooling is required to produce a child with knowledge. If this approach is followed, the child will not be an arrogant person (sosolom) but will respond receptively to others. The second approach involves doing the opposite to this. The parents strike the child from an early age, before it is deemed to have any understanding. Parents following this method swear, shout and generally adopt an aggressive or coercive approach, which means the child will grow to be this kind of person.

In the remote past, during times of war, it was desirable for male children to be brought up to be assertive, aggressive and violent so that they could defend themselves, and men used a form of magic to ensure this. Although this form of magic is still in use today, the reasons for its use differ from the past. Today, the rationale is not warfare but aggressive assertions of personhood, ensuring a man will 'stand up' for himself and not be pushed around or belittled by others. This form of magic involves the bespelling of a child while the magician tugs on his testicles. The testicles are thought to be the site where anger, aggression and wilfulness originate, before these states move up the body to the stomach and then to the head. Children who have this magic performed on them are said to eat their own excreta and drink their own urine, indications of the efficacy of the magic. As the boy grows, he fights and bullies other children, not allowing himself to be beaten by its playmates. By the time the bespelled child reaches adulthood, his strength and wilfulness is irresistible.

The spell described to me draws on the metaphoric associations of a thorn-studded vine and a python. The vine is used because it is exceedingly strong and cannot be broken with the hands. Moreover, if a person touches the vine, the thorns rip into the skin, leaving bloody cuts. The python is used because if provoked it can respond very aggressively, seizing its victims and crushing them. One of the verbs employed invokes the child to 'stand', a bodily comportment which is commonly used to evoke self-assertive and powerful personhood, contrasting with the passive, but still powerful, connotations of sitting. Other verbs invoke the child not only to be strong but also to have brooding anger and 'fight' in the stomach, to be ready to respond quickly to provocation. Parts of this spell evoke violence; the child is called on to be like the python that can also bite into its victim, drawing blood with teeth which stay locked shut.¹⁰

Most people say that as wilfulness and arrogance are not properties which are thought appropriate for women, this form of magic is not performed on them. Others say that there is a similar form of magic for female children but nobody could name any women who had been bespelled. In fact, if the magic is performed on a female child, it is not her genitals but her fingers that are bespelled, because they are a source of strength for a girl and woman. It is the woman's fingers and hands, I was told, that are important in planting, weeding and tending gardens.

Another form of socialisation is based on incorporation of visual knowledge. In this form of socialisation people imitate the life style and character of the people who have parented them and thus embody their characteristics. For example, a man who
was greedy was said to have learnt this from a grandparent who looked after him as a child. The method of acquisition of the ways of people who are close is through sight. Seeing, as I have suggested, is associated with knowing and is considered the most reliable means to obtain knowledge. Idiomatically, socialisation through sight can be expressed by saying that a person has the umbilical cord belonging to their father or mother. This does not entail the idea of inherited character but merely the use of a bodily idiom to express schooling by parents. While the influence of the people who have raised and taught a child is exceedingly significant, when that child reaches adulthood it can become independent and disregard any values it has learnt from those who raised it.

Knowledge can also be acquired and embodied by ingestion and there are powerful forms of magic with their origins in the Buai cult. One example gives the consumer increased capacity to think and retain knowledge. This magic involves the consumption of animal products or botanical matter with suitable metaphoric properties. Some forms use only botanical matter while others combine these with brains from snakes and cats, creatures believed to be extremely intelligent. Such innovations are partially consistent with indigenous belief about pythons, which in the past were eaten to obtain the considerable strength they embodied (prior to the church forbidding people to eat snakes because of their association with evil in the Bible). Pythons are often anthropomorphised and credited with amazing powers of regeneration and immortality.

These forms of magic are said to give 'knowledge like that possessed by whites', and it is reputed that a very bright pupil at the local school was given this form of magic by his parents, facilitating his outstanding intelligence. In one version of this magic, the magician travels deep into the forest, far from any settlement, so that it is unlikely the python used will later be inadvertently killed by someone else. Should this occur the person who has used this magic would also die. Once the python has been captured the magician cuts its head with sharks' teeth and collects the blood, which will be consumed by the person wishing increased intelligence.

Another form of this magic, obtained from the Duke of York Islands, involves the consumption of the brains of a python and a black cat. The black cat is killed after its brain has been extracted, but after the python's brain is removed it must be released alive, an act which requires the magician to employ the 'skills of a surgeon', as my informant put it. The spell for this magic employs the common metaphor of the sun, which is also used in a form of magic to ensure the pork is distributed far and wide at mortuary feasts (see chapter seven), and which, as I have suggested, has strong reverberations with the Christian imagery of lightness and darkness. The sun as it rises sends its rays reaching far and wide, dispersing light and illuminating spaces and things which have previously been hidden in darkness. This deploys the imagery of revelation, where things that have previously been hidden, concealed and inaccessible are made accessible and visible through disclosure. Knowledge in this metaphoric view is brought out into the open and made available. Similar metaphoric images are employed for the plant material which accompanies
the brains. Thus, the new shoots of a thorn-studded vine are utilised because of its capacity for prolific growth, spreading out and encompassing other things in the process. As it grows, this prolific climber catches on to things, covering them up and not relinquishing its hold.

Knowledge, in this imagery, is brought within reach, caught, subsumed and not relinquished by the person who has employed it. Knowledge as a form of power is brought close to the body and then incorporated into it, becoming consubstantial with it. It is within the body that knowledge is most powerful and this reflects the more general focus on the inner reaches of body and darkened places as sources of power. In the inaccessible and dark interior spaces of the body, knowledge is safely kept out of the reach of others. Secrets, like valuables and other things people desire, are best kept hidden in the dark away from the knowing and desiring eyes of others. Just as a person's emotions and intentions remain hidden from others, so too does knowledge; secrets remain secrets.

**Contrasting images of power, movement and the dance**

Gender is inseparable from Lelet conceptualisations of the body. Gendered dichotomy is pervasive and widespread: there is no part of the social world which is not reflected through gender constructions and discourses. Discourses about the body structure the divergent actions of men and women in the world and the way in which different bodies are situated in relation to space, time and power.

In the introduction I suggested that the control of bodily movement was important to gender constructions. The opposition between male and female, as Bourdieu has remarked, is 'realized in posture, in the gestures and movements of the body' (1992:70). Like the Nagovisi discussed by Nash, Lelet distinguish male and female on the basis of physical strength (1987:156-7). Males are associated with the more active form of body power or strength, *lolos*, while females are associated with the more passive, *lumumuat*. The latter have the qualitative properties of heaviness, immobility and fertility while the former have the qualities of lightweightedness, upward motion and speed. This is illustrated by the case of hunting. Lelet men suggest that only the bodies of men have the power and strength to venture to the forest to pursue and hunt wild pig, and to a lesser extent, possum. Women, men say, do not have the requisite strength and speed to be able to sustain long and hard pursuit of pigs.

In hunting, the rugged terrain of the forest is thus exclusively male, a space in which only men can move. Men's spatial mobility is thus greater than women's (cf. Modjeska 1982:72 and Damon 1983:314 and 1990:172). This, however, does not accord with a nature/culture dichotomy. Nor does it suggest that men are associated with the bush and women with the hamlet. The conceptualisation of space, and for that matter gender, is more complex than these simple dichotomies allow.
Men's movement is much less socially regulated than women's, whose movement in space is hedged with more kinship and affinal rules (see chapter three). However, the positioning of bodies, particularly in vertical space goes beyond the imposition of kinship and affinal rules and is a much broader manifestation of the ideal that women's bodies cannot be positioned above men's (cf. Lattas 1990). Women should not climb trees to retrieve fruit, because in such acts they are positioning their bodies, and more particularly their genitals, above men. Again, there is a strong equation between seeing and desire: should a man see a woman above him in a tree he will disregard all social conventions and be unable to control his desire for her.

Women who are loud, boisterous, and assertive are liable to be labelled sosolom, a term which, although a virtue for men, is derogatory when applied to women. It is also applied to women who move their body in a way that is uncontrolled and undisciplined. Thus, the term goes beyond the Tok Pisin gloss bikhet for the stubborn and wilful person and encompasses, importantly, movement of the body. An example which illustrates this well occurred on the night prior to my and my partner's departure from the Lelet, when we were given a send off by the people of Limbin. I was in the men's meeting house near the church and Roe Sybylla was in the women's meeting house. In the men's house I and the other men were sitting around chatting while in the women's house the women were having a party. The women were dancing to loud music in an uncharacteristically flamboyant and uninhibited manner, young and old alike. Some were humorously manipulating plastic crates and rocks as they danced. Although they were enjoying themselves hugely, after an hour or so the women called an abrupt finish to their party because they feared the men would become angered at their free dancing and would violently break up the party, as had occurred previously.

Men are much more able to move without restriction when they socialise, whereas women must move in pairs to avoid the threat of assault. Because of such restrictions and perceptions, women tend to remain located in the spaces of the hamlet and garden. Women's names, too, reflect the immobile state they are perceived to embody. For example, the verb to seat, ti kisi, is often used, as in the feminine name Kiskot, which means to make one's home in a place which is not a traditional hamlet site. Men's names tend to be derived from more active states, or things that have connotations of power, wealth or movement, such as pigs, fish or valuables.

Sexuality is associated with an antithetical form of power called laram, which is sometimes known as female 'fight'. It would be erroneous to label this as a form of pollution, as such forms of power are often glossed. Such a gloss, I argue, may be appropriate in some contexts, but in the case of the Lelet it tends to obscure the complex form this power takes and its more general relationship to bodies and bodily states. A similar argument is put by Faithorn who suggests that substances (such as menstrual blood, the placenta or semen) 'are not inherently polluting, rather they are
extremely powerful substances that may be dangerous if not carefully controlled' (1975:139 and cf. Keesing 1985 and 1989b).

*Laram* is best characterised as a form of sexual or reproductive potency associated with women of sexually reproductive age which can be transmitted from women to men who in turn can transmit it to other men. It is not synonymous with dirt and disorder as the concept of pollution presupposes. After her first menstruation a girl's body has *laram* inhering in it, and this decreases gradually until menopause is reached. *Laram* remains associated with pregnant women until they give birth, when it ceases (cf. Bowden 1983:121). When the woman becomes sexually active again, *laram* returns. It is said to be greatest in newlyweds who are considered to be very sexually active. *Laram* is transferred in sexual intercourse or through close contact with people who are sexually active. It is unclear whether it inheres in any one site of a woman's body or in the totality. Some say it is present all over the body, while others say it originates in the interior spaces of the body, particularly the stomach, from whence it travels to the genitals to be released to the outside. Whatever its origins, *laram* is seen to give women great power. There are, moreover, several forms of it.17

While it can cause several forms of illness, it is only considered dangerous in the context of the vulnerability of young bodies which are not fully grown. The forms of illness show how *laram* is associated with a qualitative state, that of heaviness, which weighs on the affected person, countering his or her normal bodily strength. These illnesses are brought about by being in close proximity to or by touching some one with *laram* inhering in their body. Men and women affected by *laram*, for example, must not touch a small baby to about 6-7 months of age because they will transfer it to the vulnerable baby. If this occurs, the child's urine will be hot and its skin will shown signs of illness. The child will 'feel the heaviness' and be restless in its sleep, crying a lot.

The effects of *laram* can be more severe in the case of a young man coming into contact with an older woman through sexual intercourse. If, for example, a young boy (say 13 years old) has sexual intercourse with a woman who is considerably older (say 25 years old), he is liable to develop an illness called *sulik*. The boy experiences weight loss, cracked lips, dry mouth and general lethargy. *Sulik* means that when the youth has sexual intercourse, his semen becomes trapped inside the woman, who, when she sits down, restricts his ability to breathe. The woman weighs down on the semen as an embodiment of the youth, affecting his growth and well-being. Older men are said not to be affected by this kind of sickness because they have developed a tolerance to it and their bodies are sufficiently strong to ward off the debilitating effects. While there is magic to remove *laram* from men, this is not the case for women. One such method involves the use of the derris vine, which effectively 'kills' the efficacy of the *laram* if is rubbed on the skin.

Menstruation (*lagaling i sep i* - the moon is fighting her) is also associated with a form of *laram*, but has important metaphorical and corporeal associations that are
different from other forms of *laram*. With menstruation what is significant is the image of substances flowing from the interior spaces of the body to the outside world. Thus, if a weather magician performing sun magic sits on a bench that a menstruating woman has sat on, his magic will lose its efficacy and it will rain. This is because, as menstrual fluids have flowed from a woman's body, rain will do the same, flowing from the sky. (This is a somewhat unlikely because weather magicians usually seclude themselves in a men's house prior to performing magic. It is also rare, because stringent avoidance rules mean women do not sit on benches used by men for seating, see chapter three). Menstrual fluids have other effects too relating to the creation of desire through incorporation. Women in the past avoided preparing men's food while menstruating, not so much because the men's magic would be destroyed but because should menstrual blood contaminate the food, the man would desire the woman whose blood it is. It is for this reason that it is used by women as a form of love magic.

Most significant, however, are the effects of these forms of female power on male power. This is why I prefer not to refer to it as pollution. For instance, *laram* can affect the efficacy of various forms of magic such as sun magic. In addition to the metaphoric image of substances flowing from a menstruating woman, a woman who is pregnant or 'heavy' with the child cannot go close to a sun magician, nor can he receive food from her. Failure to abide by this injunction means the sky will become 'heavy' with water and rain will fall. The form of *laram* inhering in pregnant women, *laram patmuat* is derived from the word *lumumuat* meaning heavy. As I have said, this term refers to a passive form of power signifying fertility and abundance (see chapters five, six and seven). 'Heaviness' is not inherently a negative power but one which varies according to context. In some contexts heaviness is desirable while in others it is not.

A magician can even lose all efficacy for magic, when his skin is said to 'die'. To be efficacious, a magician's skin must be devoid of *laram*. The skin as the body's boundary, is thus a point of vulnerability for magicians. To retrieve this lost efficacy, the skin must undergo magical washing. One form of this, imported from the island of Lihir, is used if a man's efforts at performing love magic fail to excite the appropriate desires in the woman. The man collects the leaves of a vine and goes to the sea, where he washes his body with the leaves whilst standing in the water and looking out to sea (cf. Ivens 1927:338-9; Munn 1983:285, 1986:99-100 and Roheim 1948:281). When he has finished, he must throw the residual matter between his legs, being careful not to look in that direction whilst doing it. Should the man inadvertently look while disposing of his magical leaves, the magic will fail. These forms of magic often employ plants with astringent and irritant properties which raise or 'get up' the skin, restoring its receptivity to magic. Similarly, waves are used for their properties of buoyancy and upward motion, which are thus reinstilled in the body, again enabling it to exploit the power of magic.

The forms of female power transmitted to men can also affect and diminish the forms of magical power used to enhance and protect the dances performed at mortuary feasts, so that the dancers are made heavy. Heaviness is a quality dancers
do not want, and much effort is made to make their bodies lightweight. Through contact with women, men become slow and lethargic and are unable to move in the vigorous, vibrant and buoyant way which is a criteria of judgement of these performances. This is unlike the Hagen dancers discussed by M. Strathern, where movement is often minimal, consisting of bobbing up and down, the main import being to show off the dancer's decorations (1979:244). Among the Lelet, while the decorated body is important, movement is also salient, and Lelet male dancers should display considerable vigour. Vigour is not only an aesthetic preference but displays power. The buoyant energetic movement of the body has connotations of self-assertive personhood which is a highly valued male attribute. This valuation of bodily vigour, and upward movement, has affinity with ideas of fame, which employ the imagery of movement in vertical space (see chapter seven).

The state of heaviness that women are seen to embody was one of the reasons given to me for why only men now dance in the Tubuan masked figure (see plates two, three, seven and eight). According to myth this form of masked figure and dance originated with a woman of Lamawan clan at coastal village of Katanden, to whom they were revealed in a dream. The woman made the mask and showed it to her husband, although when she danced her movement was slow and lacked vigour. In short, because the dance was not energetic, displaying the qualities of buoyancy and upward motion like male dancing, it was taken from her. Women were forbidden to dance or see the figure prior to its display because it was said their laram affected it. Later, the figure was thrown into the sea where it drifted until it came ashore at the Duke of York Islands.

The Tubuan figure and dance has been reintroduced to the Lelet both by being obtained from other parts of the Bismarck Archipelago (one for example was obtained at Siar in Southern New Ireland) and through the medium of revelatory dreams. The latter has occurred through the Buai magical cult as well as autonomously through contact with non-human beings, larada (see chapter four). Lelet men have learnt the secret of the masks' construction but this process lacks the long and arduous initiation accompanying it on the Duke of York Islands (Errington 1970 and 1974). The Tubuan is the most powerful manifestation of the magical contests and displays occurring at Lelet mortuary feasts when dances are performed (cf. Nachman 1981 and Apisai 1977). There is much magic, both of local origin and imported, associated with all the dances performed, although there is much more for male dances, because of the greater male power to be displayed. There is also much sorcery associated with men's dances in general, and the Tubuan dance specifically, and the seclusion and fasting regimes undergone are to ensure the dancers are protected against sorcery attack as well as against the heaviness of laram. In preparation for a dance women would fast for only two or three days whilst men would fast for two or three weeks or more.

The different dancing styles of men and women are important because they show how gender conceptualisations become embodied (see plates 2-10). In women's dances, the movement is much more constrained and circumspect, as
indeed is their movement in everyday life. Women's dances generally consist of line formations which move slowly with minimal leg uplift. Women dancers may hold some flowers or croton leaves which are moved about in front of the body, but overall the scope of movement is not as great as with men's dances. Men's dances, except for the Tubuan, also consist in line dances with similar movements, but they are performed quickly and vigorously. There is much more leg uplift, this being evoked prior to the dance when the knees are rubbed with bespelled leaves to give them more flexibility and bounce. Moreover, women do not use some of the dance paraphernalia, such as langaron, that men hold. This is thought to cause violent shaking in the holder and involves contact with lagas or the life forces of the dead who have undergone a premature or violent death (see below).

When line dances are performed, people can crowd closely around the dancers and the dances can be disrupted by people in joking relationships. This may involve taking off some of the dancers' decorations or throwing ash over them. Such actions do not, however, occur when a Tubuan dances, when the dancer or dancers are given considerable space in which to perform, because of the strong associations with sorcery. Powerful limepowders are used in the construction of the mask. One recipe involves cutting a piece from a particular tuber and adding this to limepowder. As the tuber becomes rotten, the hole gradually increases in size, the effect desired for the sores which will develop on the unprotected who come in contact with the power. Such forms of limepowder are placed in the decoration on top of the mask and, as the dancer bends over and shakes, these spill out. These limepowders are also used to paint the eyes on the mask. During a Tubuan performance a man collects any other debris which falls from the masked figure as it moves. Should this not be done and some unsuspecting man or woman steps over some debris, they will be struck ill. The effects are greatest on women. A man would merely develop a sore on his body, but a woman would give birth to a snake or a tortoise. Similarly, it is said, if a woman were to step over the pinnacle of the Tubuan she would give birth to either a snake or a lizard.

The idealised body: Closed, lightweight and powerful

The two conceptions of growth, dan and goros, and the ideas of the gendered body in dance illustrate the ideal form a body should take. This is not simply an aesthetic ideal but reflects Lelet ideas of power, and how it is most successfully embodied. Thin and lightweight bodies have considerable strength and power, conforming to a masculine ideal. In a number of magical contexts, regimes of fasting and sexual abstinence which close the body are pursued to produce this form of idealised body.

Ideas about the regulation of bodily boundaries by the imposition of fasting and sex avoidance are also commonplace in Melanesia, although the reasoning concerning different substances varies.22 As on the Lelet, these sorts of regimes often aim to produce bodies that are lightweight, thin and thus powerful, enabling contact with potent magical substances (such as sorcery paraphernalia), non-human beings and ancestors or preparedness for warfare. This is well illustrated by examples of
Mekeo sorcery discussed by Hau'ofa (1981), Mosko (1983 and 1985) and Stephen (1979a, 1982 and 1987a). For the Mekeo sorcerer or shaman to withstand the powers of the ancestors and other beings invoked in magic he must keep himself in a state of ritual preparedness. Most importantly he must never wash in cold water, consume cold foods or fluids and eat sparingly. The effect of this regime is to make him 'dry, light, pure. Heavy, moist flesh has been reduced till his frame is little more than dry skin on empty bones' (Stephen 1987a:57). Although he still exists on the human plane, this state makes him more 'spirit' than man, Stephen suggests (1987a:57).

Similarly for the Lelet the closed lightweight body is important in certain contexts of power, where a normal human body is vulnerable. However, heat is not important in this context for the Lelet, being primarily associated with passion and desire in sexuality (cf. Bell 1957:143 and below n. 28). There are several magical contexts which require that consumption of food be limited and the integrity of the body's boundaries be controlled. All of the most powerful forms of magic, and some minor forms, require the magician to undergo a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence (welwen). In these regimes the body is closed off to potentially antithetical forms of power or the debilitating effects of things external and is thus made more powerful. As I have suggested, women or things and persons they have touched such as food or even men are avoided because they embody the antithetical properties of women and make the magician's body heavy and slow. A different reason was given to me by a man familiar with Buai. He suggested that a man wishing to become a ritual expert of Buai should avoid sexual relations for several years after his initiation. If this was not observed it would lead to his death. The man used the metaphor of the grave, telling me that when one is to acquire Buai a woman's vagina is analogous to a grave and that to have sexual relations is like stepping into the grave.

An ascetic body is also necessary for people's encounters with lagas, not only to facilitate the revelatory seeing of these previously invisible beings but also to make the body invulnerable to their deleterious effects (see chapter four). These regimes differ in length or types of avoidance depending often on the metaphoric properties of the items that would be incorporated. Thus, for example, while water is avoided by a weather magician seeking to produce good weather, there is obviously no point in avoiding it if rain is the desired product. What I want to point to is the general way in which many of the regimes practised by Lelet magicians work both to facilitate the efficacy of magic and to produce a particular type of controlled body, a body that, like the Mekeo shaman, is thin, lightweight and buoyant, and ultimately powerful and invulnerable.

The form of power associated with females illustrates clearly that attributes of the Lelet gendered body should not be seen as fixed or determined. These beliefs show the fluid nature of the imagined body, and how characteristics of gendered bodies can vary in time and context. Thus, a man or a woman at varying stages of life can take on qualitative properties such as feminine heaviness or masculine lightness. These qualitative properties can vary not only with the life cycle of the person but also with the types of activities and interactions experienced. As women
get older the reproductive potency or *laram* diminishes and they become progressively masculinised (cf. Meigs 1984:62 and 1990:110). Men on the other hand particularly, when they are most sexually active, could be considered more feminine than say a mature male elder. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that not all gender constructions are as fluid as these examples suggest. As she gets older a woman can never achieve the idealised body that men can aspire to and that is why I suggest it is a masculine ideal.

Other factors can also come into play. Women, unlike men, are said to be incapable of exercising the self-control required to regulate the boundaries of the body by practising fasting, to produce the required body. In this sense women's bodies are conceived as being more open. This was a further reason I was given why women cannot be initiated into the cult of *Buai*. For a man to become a ritual specialist of *Buai*, a *Tena Buai*, he must forsake pork for four or five years, something men believe women incapable of. Women, I was told by a man, do not fast well while men do. Women would eat foods that were forbidden to them and thus die. This has obvious parallels with the image of the female witch as archetypal consumer, whose appetite for flesh is unlimited but, in fact, the Lelet do not have witches. This is also reminiscent of the Melpa (cited above) where women were not only constructed as witches, but were also seen as being unable to control their appetites, wanting to consume the pork men wanted to exchange (A. Strathern 1982:115). In these cases, women are being constructed as more corruptible than men who in turn construct themselves as more disciplined.

Furthermore, it is said that if a woman did acquire the powers of *Buai* it would affect her ability to reproduce. If she gave birth, she would produce an anatomically deformed monstrous being such as a head (without a body) or a torso (without a head) or possibly, as in the case of stepping over something from the *Tubuan*, a snake. I would argue that the forms of power men pursue are thus sharply contrasted with the reproductive and life-giving powers of women.

This ideal of body closure is at odds with the human as a social being who is constantly engaging in acts of sociality with the others. People can be too open in the sense of allowing things or embodiments of themselves, such as taro, pork and valuables, to flow too freely and not in the most appropriate contexts. Overwhelming and uncontrolled generosity can do the reverse of what is desired, it can undermine the basis of the act. It can shame or belittle others and ostentatious display can motivate envy and lead to sorcery. A similar thing can happen to people who close themselves off. They can be too closed off and as a result cut off from others. This can be problematic because in being too closed off they cannot engage in the acts of sociality which constitute moral personhood. Should this occur they risk becoming the anti-social *lantupe*. People must thus regulate different aspects of their lives, so that they are neither too open nor too closed to others.
Plate 2: Men's Tubuan dance performance

Plate 3: Men's Tubuan dance performance
Plate 4: Women's dance performance

Plate 5: Women's dance performance
Plate 6: Men's line dance performance (note: langaron in hand)
Plate 7: Men's Tubuan dance performance

Plate 8: Men's Tubuan dance performance
Plate 9: Women's dance performance

Plate 10: Women's dance performance
There is something of double bind, as Barth has also noted in relation to the
distribution of knowledge, when he says:

Rank should be something you obtain from holding and hoarding secrets, not from giving
them downwards by teaching. Yet you are trapped in a double bind, since the alternative of
not transacting produces no relations (1990:649).

While the case I am discussing concerns the regulation of the body in relation to
a different form of power from that of Barth, his point is salient. The flow of
knowledge can be considered to be about control over bodily boundaries, particularly
because knowledge is embodied through the processes of hearing, sight and even
ingestion. Barth does not, however, connect his discussion of knowledge control and
distribution to issues of embodiment and control over the body and its boundaries as
I do.

**Boundaries of the body, embodiment and vulnerability**

From the above discussion it can be seen that the body is a site of contestation, and
the regulation of its boundaries is important to contexts of power, such as the use of
various forms of magic. I now want to explore in detail some of the magical
practices centred on embodiment, particularly those which focus on the body and its
boundaries as the means by which a person is brought under the control of others. I
will look at those forms which target the skin directly and those forms which target
the interior spaces through ingestion. The skin obviously marks the boundary of the
body, defining the outside from the inside. To have effect, external things must
transgress this boundary and be incorporated into the interior spaces. Both the skin
and the orifices through which substances enter a body are sites of vulnerability and
illustrate the ambivalent nature of incorporation. Incorporation can be a source of
power but can also be a source of danger.

Certain forms of love magic focus on the skin as the interface through which the
interior of the body is moved and altered (cf. A. Weiner 1984:185).25 One widely
known form uses a plant with a strong and pleasing smell, and invokes the *loroang*
of twelve men of the past renowned for their love magic. This magic also uses plants
with irritant properties to affect the woman’s body, causing her to think of the man
performing the magic. During the night the magician places plant material on the fire
near his bed, the ‘fight’ of the plants causing the fire die to down and smoke to
emanate from it. Now, the man sings a song reciting the names of the twelve men.
The woman’s skin begins to itch, it ‘gets up’ and then her interior thoughts ‘get up’,
and she dreams of the man who is performing the magic (cf. Malinowskii 1953:93).
Once her thinking has been aroused, she strongly desires the man and thinks of
nothing else but him, finally searching him out to reveal her love.

This example illustrates the importance of movement within the body in
generating both mental states and actions (cf. Bell 1957:143). Efficacy is either
instilled or thought generated by things that have the qualitative properties of
movement. Such movement is not always of an upward nature, although in this case it is conceptualised that way. Through the medium of things with these qualitative properties, passive or inactive states are transformed into active states by being made to move as the skin moves in this example. As in the examples of the gendered body I discussed above, upward motion is associated with active bodily states while downward movement is associated with passive states.

Just as a person's mind can be moved through the skin, this can also be achieved through incorporation. Not only can ingestion be the means through which the body assimilates the world, it can also be the means through which the body loses control to the world. Many forms of love magic employ the imagery or the act of incorporation, particularly the ingestion of bodily substances and exuviae, as the means of initiating desire. Lelet men believe that the most powerful form of love magic available is possessed by women - that is their menstrual blood. Although it is more usual for men to use love magic to excite desire in women, it is commonly believed that some women have used their menstrual blood to capture the hearts of men. Menstrual blood is also reputedly used by a woman wishing her husband's desire not to wane and that he remain faithful.

One simple and commonly known form of love magic employed by young men involves collecting a number of substances or partibles from the body (cf. Burridge 1969:186 and Stephen 1987a:72). In this form the man takes scrapings from his finger and toe-nails, hair from his head and blood from his chest. All these things are heated until reduced to ash and then secretly given to the woman to consume. In this form of magic the blood must be taken after a period of exertion so that the heart is beating furiously. In one of the versions that I heard, the man must run to the top of a hill while holding his breath. When he arrives at the top he must cut his chest in a place directly over the heart and collect some of the blood which spurts out. Particularly important here is the imagery of the heart in constant movement; the woman's heart will also violently pulsate, causing her to think constantly of the man. Another man told me that the heart was used because while a person is alive it never ceases beating. Similarly, the woman's thoughts and desires will never wane for the man whose body partibles she has incorporated within the spaces of her body. In other variations, the man can catch a fly that has been persistently trying to land on a sore of his, and also collect some saliva from the mouth of his dog. Like the fly which follows after the sore, the dog is renowned for following its master wherever he goes. As these things follow the man continuously the woman should also be continuously in pursuit of the man (cf. Deacon 1934:671).

A second form of love magic which illustrates the centrality of incorporation in Lelet belief is lentuntun, which means 'to worry all the time'. This magic uses the dew left on leaves and grasses overnight and which is said to be the saliva of the female cicada. The man must rise in the early morning, before the sun has arisen and must ensure that his body's boundaries are not violated by not going to the toilet or consuming any substances. He must then go and collect some dew from the cicada. First, however, he must 'get up' or startle the cicada (symbolising the woman) by
saying loudly 'I am your husband'. After this he will incant a spell which invokes first the cicada and then the woman to 'worry' about him. The spell is repeated as different parts of the body are successively substituted for the woman's name. After the bespelling is complete, the man will combine the dew droplets with some food, which is given to the woman to consume. Once the woman has ingested the bespelled products into the interior spaces of her body, she will think and 'worry' continuously about the man until her desires are satisfied.

What these love magic examples illustrate are the sites of vulnerability of the body and how these become the target of magic when one person seeks to bring another under his or her control. Similar ideas are at work when the effects desired are more maleficent, as in sorcery.

**Sorcery, illness and the monstrous body**

When I asked people about sorcery, nearly everyone said it was very common on the Lelet in the past and caused many deaths, although it is no longer practised today. A typical answer to such a question is 'We don't have it here but it is very common on the coast'. This view of the coastal peoples as sorcerers means that some prefer not to marry women from the coast for fear that by alienating their affines they would be subject to sorcery.

One expects denials of sorcery, given that it is illegal and has been heavily frowned upon by both church and state for many years. Nevertheless, it is still commonly adduced as a cause of death. People sometimes recognise cases of illness as signs indicating sorcery, such as a dramatic and sudden loss of weight, or when a person seeking medical attention is told by the doctor or aidpost orderly they are not sick. Alternatively, they may be given medicine, recover from illness, and then fall ill again. It is believed that western medicine is unable to cure sorcery (cf. Stephen 1987a:43) and other illnesses arising from contact with *lagas* and *larada* (see chapter four), and these must be treated by village curers (cf. Jones 1980:88).

Sorcerers, people say, are not simply capricious, killing for no apparent reason. They are generally thought to be motivated by envy and jealousy, something that appears to be a common motivation for sorcery in other parts of Melanesia (cf. Zelenietz 1981a:11 and Lederman 1981:15-20). In the past, if a person organised successful feasts or had many visible and material manifestations of wealth, such as pigs, shell valuables or big gardens, they were said to be susceptible to sorcery. Now it is said that people often become jealous of a person owning a car or a trade store. Sorcerers can also be hired to avenge suspected sorcery deaths or to avenge other wrongdoings, such as adultery. If the target of sorcery is a clan, this is often said to be an attempt to gain control of gardens, land or heirloom shell valuables.

What is significant in the motivations for sorcery, I would argue, are the issues of concealment, revelation and display. These issues are very similar to the ideas of closure and openness of the body and the management of the boundaries of the body.
in contexts of power, as discussed above. Again, sorcery points to the contradiction or double bind between the social necessity to be open and the dangers this can bring. Ostentatious living is a risky and dangerous business, and displays of wealth are generally avoided except in appropriate contexts such as feasts and even here they must be controlled. People are careful to keep their wealth such as shell valuables hidden away in the dark recesses of their houses, away from the prying and envious eyes of others (see chapter three). The contradiction is exacerbated with increasing capitalist development. On the one hand, wealth should be concealed because its display leaves one open to sorcery attack. On the other hand, some of the methods of acquiring wealth now are, of necessity, highly visible. Increasingly people purchase cars, trucks and other markers of wealth, and concealment becomes less possible. This led one man to remark to me that on the coast if a person was successful enough to own two or three cars they would almost inevitably be killed by sorcery attack.

Sorcery or *lasak* can be practised by either men or women. As is common elsewhere in the Mandak area (B. Clay 1986:42-3) and in Papua New Guinea generally, personal leavings sorcery is one method used. This form employs similar principles to those employed in love magic. Personal leavings sorcery involves the sorcerer manipulating the victim's personal exuviae, (excreta, hair, fingernails etc), or items which the victim has used or touched (such as a half eaten piece of food or a discarded areca nut shell or the soil from a footprint) (cf. Fortune 1963:137). After incantation over these leavings wrapped in a parcel, the sorcerer burns them if she or he wants the victim to undergo a quick death, or places it elsewhere to decompose if he or she wants the victim to suffer a slow death. In the latter case, as the exuviae breaks down the victim experiences a progressive deterioration in health, culminating in death (cf. Lindenbaum 1979:65-6 and Bowden 1987:187). If, for example, a sorcerer uses excreta in sorcery, when the excreta finally decomposes the victim dies, or if hair is used, when the hair finally breaks so does the victim. Some say the kind of leavings used by the sorcerer determines the kind of illness the victim undergoes. For example, if a sorcerer uses hair, the illness affects the head and the victim goes mad prior to death. If the sorcerer utilises a discarded skin of the areca nut, this may be wrapped tightly in a leaf package and buried. In this case the victim experiences difficulty in breathing, which will cease if the parcel is retrieved.

Like some forms of love magic which work by having the person incorporate substances within their body, sorcery can also work in this way. One form uses lime powder to which is added some botanical matter considered to have 'fight', the bones of a *lagas*, which also has 'fight', and human bone, which are mixed with the lime powder until indistinguishable and given to the victim to chew. Because the 'fight' of the ingredients begin to consume the mouth and neck of the victim, sores will erupt and the victim eventually dies.

In my discussion of sorcery I include those forms of magic meant to cause severe injury to those who steal or trespass where they should not. Often, this type of sorcery involves the placement of a sign to indicate the property is protected and the
visible signs of this form of sorcery are widespread, particularly in groves of areca
nut or coconut where the stem of a plant is tied around the trunk of the palms to ward
off thieves (cf. Meggitt 1965:129-30). Sometimes these sorts of signs may be used to
keep someone from wandering down a garden path, the owner placing, at the start of
the path, a stick with a piece of grass wrapped around it. It is not possible to
determine whether such signs are really bespelled or not. They are widely believed to
be effective and are widely respected because people are not prepared to take the risk
of testing them.

Protective sorcery often works in such a way that the victim embodies the
transgression. The transgression which normally would have remained a secret is
made visible on the body for others to see, again a process of revelation, whereby the
invisible interior is made external and visible. In these forms of sorcery, the skin and
the body are the target of the sorcerer, who causes monstrous deformity in the victim
which restricts movement. This is significant because bodily movement, I am
suggesting, is a dominant basis of power and the grounds for the creation and
circulation of value. It is through the movement in labour that products such as those
of the garden or pigs are created and then transformed into items of exchange. When
these items are transacted beyond the spatiotemporal confines of the producer’s body
to others, this extends the producer in time and space. Sorcery which attacks the
body’s potential to move strikes at the core of value creation in society.

People who transgress the warning signs and steal betelnut or other prized
property, are liable to incur such illnesses as elephantiasis (cf. Fortune 1969:65-7).
This sorcery uses a piece of the brain coral, which is hidden near the valuable
needing protection. If, for example, someone steals the fruiting hand of an areca
palm, the aggrieved party can place the coral in a hole on a dry reef, and cover it
with a stone. With high tide, the waves move the hidden piece of coral about in the
hole, causing the victim pain in the testicles, which gradually become enlarged.
Elephantiasis of the testicles can also be caused by burying the fruit of a particular
tree, with an accompanying spell. If a theft is noticed, the owner of the stolen
property takes this fruit and hides it underneath a stone on a reef or despatches it
permanently by throwing it out to sea. It is said that as the waves swell up so do the
testicles of the victim. If the fruit is thrown out to sea the illness is untreatable
because the object is irretrievable.

Protective sorcery can also affect the joints of the victim so that bodily
movement is constrained. One form affects the knees so that the victim is unable to
walk. The spell uses the metaphor of a bloated corpse, invoking the victim’s knees to
bloat like the corpse. Another type affects the joints of the hands, causing painful
swelling. The spell here employs the metaphor of the crab digging its hole and
heaping the sand (cf. Fortune 1963:169). It invokes the crab to go down as it digs its
hole and, just as the sand is heaped by the crab, this heaping should occur in the
fingers causing them to swell.

In this context, monstrous deformation of the skin, particularly of the legs or
genitals, is a clear and highly visible sign of the thief’s flawed character. Not only is

83
the transgression revealed by the thief literally wearing it on his or her skin, but it is
displayed in the very comportment of the body. People afflicted in this way cannot
sit or walk without their body being a visual confirmation of their moral state. This is
poignantly illustrated in the narrative of Luanga, the giant cannibal pig who
terrorises the population of New Ireland, forcing them to take flight to off-shore
islands. In this story, a woman with elephantiasis of the leg is left abandoned on the
beach by people as they flee: she embodies moral transgression. Tragically, her
desolation is even enforced by her close kin who make excuses to her, saying the
canoes are full and there is insufficient room for her, while leaving her stranded.35

Lenaulom sorcery and the cannibalisation of internal organs

The most powerful form of indigenous sorcery, lenaulom, differs from the forms
discussed above because it employs loroang of the dead to attack the victim. It
differs significantly, also, in the fact that it aims not merely to maim the victim but to
destroy them by cannibalising their internal organs. This form of sorcery has many
similarities to the imported forms associated with the cult of Buai which rely on
loroang of both the living and the dead to cannibalise the internal organs of the
victim.36

This local form of sorcery is associated with men's houses, particularly those to
which a person's loroang travels prior to death (see below). In the past, hamlets
where this form of power was located were referred to as a place of lenaulom
(menemen naulom). The power was contained in a package placed high in the rafters
of the men's house and people were very fearful of venturing there lest they be
affected. Nowadays people do not know what substances were contained in the
tightly bound package over which sorcerers would incant their spells, which called
on the various disembodied loroang and lau to eat the insides of the victim, thus
causing their unnatural death.37 This sorcery power was not common, being located
only at the men's houses at the hamlets of Lenuat (Limbin), Katalok (Lengkamen)
and Tumbu (Kaluan). The custodians of these men's houses could be hired, for the
fee of one shell valuable, to despatch the person who had invoked the anger of the
purchaser.

This form of sorcery employs the loroang of those practitioners of it who have
since died. One of these loroang belonged to a man from Lenuat, Mandaut, a
cannibalistic sorcerer seasoned in this form of killing. When Mandaut was alive, he
kept the sorcery power in a small house at the back of the main men's house of
Lenuat, close to a thicket of bamboo. Mandaut slept in this small house, where no
one else dared venture. Upon his death, Mandaut's head was placed on a stone in the
vicinity of this small house where it was allowed to decompose. The skull was then
used in the very sorcery in which he was so adept. It is said this form of sorcery calls
for the loroang employed to eat the tongue and liver of the victim, who will vomit
blood, and it is also said the victim has nightmares when he or she sleeps. In these
nightmares, the victim's loroang goes to places which are bad and eats food that is
spoiled or raw. In addition the victim can dream he or she is flying or eating excreta.  

It is clear that sorcery beliefs are still quite common despite being condemned by both church and state. Of the eight deaths that occurred while I was there, three were attributed to sorcery. All three were men of middle age, while the other five were elderly people, who it was said, died of 'natural causes' (cf. Lawrence 1987:25). One of the three deaths believed due to sorcery was the subject of a village court case, and as a result, was re-evaluated, at least by some people, as due to malaria. I believe this had more to do with people's fear of prosecution by the village court if they dared say otherwise, than with what they really believed. I will use this example as a case study to illustrate Lelet sorcery beliefs and some of the contesting ideas at work, going on to discuss death and what happens to the loroang upon death:

A piglet belonging to Livila had broken its leash and left its owners' hamlet, following the path until it came to the garden of Terepin and his wife Lowotep who killed and ate it. Livila went in search of the piglet that afternoon, asking a number of people including Terepin and Lowotep whether they had seen it. Both replied that they had not. Sometime afterwards both Terepin and Lowotep started to experience illness and for a couple of weeks they were very sick and did not eat. They believed it was a sorcery attack by the piglet's owner. Terepin and Lowotep travelled to the coast to visit a relative who they thought could cure their illness. I had travelled to the coast in the same vehicle and knew of Terepin's illness, although unaware of the gravity of it. After spending a few days at a coastal village in search of a cure for his illness Terepin went to the local hospital further along the coast. Unfortunately he had left it too late and died soon after.

A few days after the death and burial of Terepin, Lowotep's illness became more severe and she became delirious, asking where her husband was buried and where the coast was. In her delirium she revealed to another woman that she had a dream in which she saw Livila standing behind the pig and holding two packages and a ginger plant. This dream confirmed to Lowotep that she and her husband had indeed been ensorcelled by the piglet's owner. Also believing that she had been subject to sorcery, some relatives took her to the coast to a magical curer. But he refused to enact a cure and she returned to the Lelet. Later, a relative Loxon went in search of barks and leaves to attempt a cure, believing that she would also die from the sorcery. He was chastised by his son who said she should be taken to the hospital and so finally she was taken to hospital where she recovered.

Terepin's death had been a great shock to all of the people of the village and several people recounted having experienced omens or other indications that a death was imminent. One man said he had seen a bird which portends death on the day previous to Terepin's death. Another said he did not sleep well during the previous night. One man said he had been asleep in the men's house and when someone came inside, he awoke to see some wet white fingers on the top of the door. A woman said she dreamt that Terepin had died. In the weeks following the burial several occurrences suggested that the loroang of the dead man was roaming around. A man said that it came and sat on his bed. At first he thought it was his father but changed his mind when he failed to blow on the fire to make it burn properly as his father usually did when he came into the house late.
In addition there was considerable speculation at the time of death about the cause, with people's opinions changing as the death was re-evaluated, largely due to a village court case in which Livila sued Lowotep for spreading the rumour that he was a sorcerer. Before Lowotep dreamt of the pig, suggesting sorcery was the cause, several other reasons for Terepin's death were put forward. One person thought that it was probably retribution, due to his failure to attend church or community meetings. Another man suggested that it was the 'fire' about to consume everyone, as this was the second death in the village in a month. One educated man, who was aware to some extent of western aetiology of disease, remarked that among 'whites', deaths are caused by heart attacks, cancer and TB but here it was sorcery or 'blak pawa' (black power). This view became dominant when the dream offered confirmation.

Sorcery was eventually ruled out at the court case and compensation of thirty kina was paid to the pig owner, Livila, not so much because the pig was stolen but because of the rumours circulating, implying he was a sorcerer. When it became apparent at the court that the allegation of sorcery against the owner could not be sustained, a number of people suggested that Terepin and Lowotep had been made ill in divine retribution for the theft. Several people intimated that had the two spoken out about the theft while they were sick, the man would not have died.

Death and travels to other worlds

In life it is recognised that the corporeal life force, *loroang*, is not irrevocably joined with the body but, as is common in Melanesia, can leave the body and travel away from it for short periods of time. This form of travel is particularly common during sleep, and people's dreams indicate where their *loroang* has been. The travel of the *loroang* from its body is also common to the forms of shamanism associated with the Buai cult. Control over the boundaries of the body allows shamans to send forth their *loroang* on divination or sorcery journeys. To be able to control one's body in such a way is an extremely powerful act in that the normal spatiotemporal world is transcended. To enable these flights requires that the shaman practise the regimes mentioned above, which produce the ideal masculine body, one that is thin, lightweight and powerful.

The *loroang* can also temporarily leave the body when a person faints or is startled, when it leaves through the fontanelle, a process likened by one man to the stone which was used to entomb Jesus being removed and allowing him to rise up again (cf. Barth 1990:641; Glasse 1965:30 and A. Strathern 1982:120). Should a person be unfortunate enough to fall from a tree and be knocked unconscious, then people will quickly hold this area to prevent the *loroang* from leaving. At death, it leaves the body permanently via the fontanelle and proof of this is that the body is cold. Coldness is a sign of unequivocal death.

have died what is considered a 'good' death, which effectively means dying of old age, are considered to take the form of loroang. Those who have died a 'bad' death, usually through sorcery, take the form of the lau, a restless and capricious being (cf. Battaglia 1985:436 and Bloch and Parry 1982:17-18).

Loroang are utilised in various forms of magic, from love magic to weather magic, and are summoned when spells are uttered or sung over the bones or other parts of the person. Some lороang are helpful to humans even without being summoned in magic. For example, they can take the form of fireflies and visit hunters camped in the bush, settling down close by, causing the hunters to think about this visitation and to dream about where to go in search of game. Not all life forces are helpful in such a way but only those that had expertise in that field of knowledge when alive. Thus, the loroang of a man who excelled at hunting wild pigs could be called on for help by hunters, to bring wild pigs close or to make the pigs short of breath so that they are unable to escape pursuit. When hunters enter the forest looking for possum, they sometimes call out to particular lороang to make the possum come out into the open where they can be easily seen and killed.

While the lороang of the dead are not generally seen as capricious, they have the ability to make children ill or to disturb their sleep. Children are passed over and under the coffin of a dead person with whom they have had a close relationship, in order to sever the relationship. If this is not done, the lороang will continue to visit the child and play with it as it did when it was alive, causing restlessness in sleep, as well as other minor illness. Similarly, if a mother has died leaving a young child, the large rounded flower of a banana plant is placed in the arms of the corpse to give her the impression her child is with her (cf. Blackwood 1935:130). Thus fooled, the lороang does not seek out the child as it would otherwise do when it leaves the coffin. It is said that if the banana flower were not placed, the mother would come and take the lороang of her child with her, causing its death.

The life forces of those that have died what is considered a bad death, are called lau, generally referred to as birua in Tok Pisin. People are said to take this form when death is unnatural or premature, the result of such things as homicide, accident, attack by other beings (larada and lagas), or sorcery attack. The lau are rather capricious roaming entities who smell of blood and who are best avoided because they are considered dangerous. They can make a car stop suddenly and unexpectedly by 'killing' the engine and not allowing it to start again for a considerable amount of time. They often roam around ceaselessly when it is raining and at night. If, for example, you are walking around with hot food or whilst it is raining, a lau will call out to you, 'Don't you want to give me any food?' or 'Where are you going?' Those unfortunate enough to meet a lau in such circumstance can be made ill if it assaul ts or holds them and can have shaking fits, vomiting and painful headaches. One woman came to my house seeking treatment for a badly inflamed breast which she said was caused when a lau came and held her breast as she was carrying some food to another hamlet.
There are many variations on what embodied forms the lau take and where they reside. One person said lau have the ability to fly and he suggested that they can be found hanging from a type of tree that grows on large mountains. Others say that lau can take the form of a flying fox, a creature known for its restless wanderings. The circular winds which form waterspouts are the work of lau, and it is believed they follow these waterspouts down to the sea to catch fish and to capsize any boats they find. They eat the fish raw whilst sitting in a type of coastal tree, the wood of which is sometimes used in skin washing to restore receptivity to magic. Lightning is also caused by lau, as is the thunder that occurs while the weather is good. The power of these beings is invoked in various kinds of magic. The circular winds, for example, are invoked in a form of taro magic, which I examine in detail in chapter seven. They are widely invoked in weather magic, where skulls from people who have died an unnatural or premature death are utilised. The lau can also be the source of significant magical innovation through the medium of revelatory dreams, and many of the songs and dances performed at large mortuary feasts have originated with them.

In the distant past, it is said, people were immortal and did not die as people do today but merely rejuvenated themselves by removing their old wrinkled skin to reveal a new skin underneath. Lakana told me the following story concerning this:

At a place called Lasala a grandmother was looking after her granddaughter. The grandmother was not experiencing a good life because her skin was lethargic and she was not feeling well as a result. The grandmother, who was very old, told her granddaughter to wait for a while, while she went to do something. The grandmother went to a stream, Dankasoxorop, where she shook off her old loose skin revealing a new skin, underneath. She had changed her old skin for a new skin and was now a young woman with firm breasts again. The grandmother threw her old wrinkled skin into the stream and it was carried along until it caught on a branch. When the grandmother went back to her granddaughter, the girl did not recognise her, became afraid and started to cry. The child continued to cry and the grandmother was unable to reassess her. The grandmother felt pity for her granddaughter and did not wish to make her unhappy, so she returned to the stream to retrieve her skin. She searched along the stream until she found it caught on the branch. Removing it from the branch, she put it back on, becoming old again. If she had not put her old skin back on again, people would still be able to replace their skin when it became old. A number of creatures, like the snake and lobster ate some of the skin and as a result today they can change their skin.

This narrative, variants of which are widespread in Melanesia, suggests that people are consigned to mortality because of the girl's failure to recognise her grandmother in the originary time. But it also intimates that a youthful, smooth and unblemished skin is an aesthetic embodiment of vitality and life, whereas a wrinkled skin is a sign of ill health, lethargy and the approach of death.

Today, it is thought that, prior to a person's death, his or her loroang travels to a number of men's houses, which in the past were associated with the powerful sorcery lenaulom. The loroang visits these places in order to 'smell' or partake of the power that remains from the packages once kept there. Regardless of where the person nearing death lives or what is the cause of death, her or his loroang travels firstly to
Lenuat, then to Katalok and finally to Tumbu. People who sleep in the men's house at Lenuat report that they often hear these beings as they climb the stone fence surrounding the men's house and this is what occurred when the man saw the dead man's hand on the door. Whether the dying person is male or female can be judged by the sounds they make when carrying their bedding on their journey. A male carries a complete bed which knocks on the stones in the fence as he climbs into the men's house yard. The female is more silent as she carries only a pandanus mat which hardly makes any noise. If such noises are heard early in the evening people know that the person to die is from the vicinity, whereas if noises are heard later in the night people say the life force is from a distant place.

When a person dies, the *loroang* leaves the corpse or the coffin on the third day, a notion borrowed from Christianity and also incorporated in some cargo cult ideas. After a death, people sometimes hide in the cemetery to wait for the *loroang* to separate permanently from its material body so that they can obtain the bag containing money it carries. This occurs at midnight three days after the burial because this is time that Jesus arose from his tomb. The person must be well hidden, preferably behind the head of the grave, so that when the *loroang* departs they are behind it and are not seen. A number of people have tried this, but the only known success came to a European man who was a resident agricultural officer at the research station at Lengkamen. As stories have it, he lay in hiding at the appropriate time and when the *loroang* left the grave he crept up behind it and took a flour bag full of money from its hand. Buli, the person who related the story to me, saw the flour bag but not the money, which was said to have amounted to five thousand kina.

As might be expected in a people who have been influenced by Christianity for some time, beliefs about the dead have undergone much transformation, and many discourses contend about what occurs to the life force after death. Some people, adopting a Christian interpretation, believe it stays in the bounded area of the men's house until the 'day of judgement', when it is decided on the basis of people's lives who goes to heaven and who to hell. However, as life forces are called to assist in various forms of magic they are obviously not bound temporally and spatially in one place as are people in the everyday world. Some say they only stay in the cemetery during daylight hours and at night they roam about. Given that there were several sightings in the weeks following the death of a Terepin, cited above, it seems to be widely held that, for a time at least, a deceased person's life force remains in the vicinity of the place of burial (cf. Powdermaker 1931-32:28).

Before Christianity became dominant, people believed that the life force went to a place called Katan Moroa and this is still widely believed. Others say the place where the life force goes is not Katan Moroa and is called simply the place of *loroang* (*lemenemen na roang*), although people were uncertain where this was located. Katan Moroa is believed to be the place of the 'culture hero' Moroa, and is central to the symbolic world of the Lelet. This is also where the powerful magical stones used in taro magic are found (see chapter seven).
Katan Moroa is located on the west coast of New Ireland close to the Mandak village of Mesi. In some descriptions I obtained, the *loroang* of the dead go to a large fresh-water hole, separated from the sea by a narrow land bridge. In the past, the people of Mesi would go to the beach near this water and dig the sand to obtain water seeping from the waterhole to rub on to their heads, to relieve headache. In this water hole, people say, there is a large clam shell (some accounts say two clam shells) and it is forbidden to walk along the land bridge in the afternoon, when the sun is shining over it into the hole. Should anybody do this and their shadow be cast into the clamshell and it closes, they will die. One man likened the form of this hole to female genitals, saying that if the land bridge separating the hole from the sea were to be broken by the crashing waves, women's ability to reproduce would cease. Although another man (from Mesi) denied this metaphoric association, he did reinforce the view that if the land bridge breaks, catastrophe will result and the world will end. Even during batterings from severe storms, it is said, this land bridge remains firmly in place. This man also said that Katan Moroa was an abode in which the anthropomorphic beings, *larada*, live in the form of eels, and that another name for it was Sopka or Sepka.

Some describe the life that follows death in the narrative of Seledik. This story, told to me by Lakana, also provides an instance of the assimilation of Christian beliefs by indigenous cosmology:

When a person dies people must kill a pig quickly. If it is a man who has died they must kill a male pig. If a woman has died they must kill a female pig. When a person dies their *loroang* will go on the road to heaven. In the middle of the road to heaven there is a man named Seledik who stands waiting there with a stick. The *loroang* of the dead person must send the pig's life force ahead. When the pig goes near Seledik, he thinks it is human and hits it with his club. Fooled by this, Seledik allows the human *loroang* to go past on its way to heaven. If the human *loroang* does not have a pig it will be clubbed and not go to heaven.

A second version of this story more clearly counterposes the indigenous cosmological conceptions of the land of the dead with Christian belief by linking them not only to heaven but also to hell. In this version, the narrator, Melemu, refers to the land of the dead as Sopka, and to the land of those who die an unnatural or bad death as Baria:

Baria is a place that is located near to Mesi and accompanies Sopka. It is a place people do not go near. Baria is located out to sea and Sopka is in the forest. If a person has been good in life he will go to Sopka. If a person has done plenty of bad things in life he will go to Baria. Baria means it is the place where all the life forces of those who have died an unnatural death hang up [as flying foxes], whereas Sopka is the place where people receive life. These things are from our ancestors, and the church arrived after they were known. Today they call him Jesus but before he was called Seledik. He stands up at the door with a large club. If a person dies, no matter where, he or she goes to where Seledik is waiting. If the person has a lot of debts and a lot of wrongs Seledik will pretend to hit them with the club. This causes them to shake and lose balance, falling into the hole that leads to Baria. It is a hole in the sea. Ships know about this hole and avoid it. When a ship goes past they will throw a bag of rice into the water. When people go past in canoes they must travel on the seaward side in the morning and then in the afternoon on the shore side lest the sun cast
their shadow into the hole. If this occurs it results in their death. If the person has been good, Seledik will direct them to take another road which leads to Sopka. This story existed before the church arrived and people were cautioned about stealing, being told that if they did that Seledik would send them to Baria. If they were good they would go to Sopka.48

Melemu said there were two polished stones acting as doors to Sopka and Baria and told a story of a man who, looking for a lost pregnant pig, went close to Sopka. He walked on top of the door, which made a sound as if he was walking on galvanised iron. The inquisitive man wondered what made this noise and proceeded to open the door. Inside he saw people sitting down in chairs and reading books in a place like a village. This place was very light and the people were dressed very well. There were no black people there, only white people. After observing the land of the dead, the man closed the door and returned home to tell people about this place. Following this, he died.

It is widely believed that those who have died an unnatural death, the _lau_, do not travel to Katan Moroa or Sopka like those who have undergone a natural death but go to Baria, as the second story of Seledik suggested. Where Baria is located is again subject to many conflicting and varying accounts. Thus, the story of Seledik says Baria is a hole out to sea. Another man thought Baria was the large mountain on the main island of Tabar, on whose summit was located a large tree from which the _lau_ in the form of flying foxes hung. This was confirmed by another man, who said that it was between two places, one called Kurubo and the other Dataro, on the 'head' of the mountain on Tabar. Another man said that Baria was an uninhabited stony island between the east coast and Tabar Island where there was a large tree from which flying foxes were hanging.

As well as these diversities in belief, I want to emphasise that the entities associated with the different kinds of death go to different places. The story of Sopka and Baria clearly illustrates how indigenous beliefs about kinds of deaths were mapped onto and assimilated with Christian beliefs about heaven and hell.

This chapter has been devoted to an exposition of Lelet bodily beliefs and embodiment, exploring the body's conceptualisation, its powers and its sites of vulnerability. The skin stands for the body as a whole and, in a pervasive process of revelation, exposes interior states of a person's being to the world. Qualitative states of the body, such as heaviness and lightness, are also crucial, informing ideas of gender as embodied by men and women in the way they move. Moreover, control of the body, and in particular its boundaries, figures centrally in Lelet ideas of power, gender and magic. When men, and to a lesser extent women, take rigorous measures to control their bodies' boundaries they gain extra powers which enable them to perform extraordinarily, for example warding off dangers or dancing with unusual vigour. In this way male magicians can produce an idealised masculine body which enables them to overcome its normal spatial and temporal limitations. The converse of this is that the body's boundaries, and particularly the orifices therein, are sites of vulnerability. Many forms of magic exist which target these boundaries to bring a person under the control of another. Many more examples of such magic will be
presented in later chapters (see especially chapter seven on mortuary feasting). Because I argue that the Lelet do not dualistically conceive of the body as radically separated from a 'spirit' or 'consciousness', but rather see the person as embodied, I have concluded this chapter with a discussion of the 'life force' and what happens to it after death.
Notes

1. This is represented widely in Tok Pisin by such notions as bel i hat, bel i hevi, bel nogut. Although these glosses do not necessarily represent an accurate portrayal of the site from which the emotions are generated, they point to the importance of the internal organs and interior spaces of the body. For the role of the interior spaces of the body in emotions see Leenhardt (1979:6-7, 22); Mayer (1982:246); Stephen (1989:164). For the interior spaces of the body as a target of sorcerers, witches or other non-human beings (such as spirits, ghosts etc.) see Battaglia (1991:87); Glick (1963:116); Hocart (1925:231); Kelly (1976:39); Malinowski (1961:76); McIntosh (1983:230); Roheim (1948:307); Scaletta (1985:232); Sillitoe (1979:32, 1983:163 and 1987:145); A. Strathern (1981:211 and 1982:113) and Tambiah (1983:179).

2. For example, labankabu means cloud, and a mat made from coconut leaves is called labanpotep.

3. See also Mayer (1982:243) and M. Strathern (1979:250). The importance of the body and the skin to ideas of health, beauty, desire and morality are common themes in Melanesian cosmologies, see Buchbinder and Rappaport (1976:21-2); Feachem (1973:274); Frankel (1986:107); Glick (1963:104); Goodale (1980:127 and 1985:231); Kyakas and Wiessner (1992:14, 77); Malinowski (1961:335); Mayer (1982:242); Nelson (1971:421); Roheim (1950:193, 280); M. Strathern (1979:243-6) and A. Weiner (1984:174). Similar ideas are prevalent among other people of New Ireland, where the Tanga, for example, describe specific attributes of the body in their notion of beauty, preferring a 'clean dark brown skin' (Bell 1957:139, 1938:410-11); see also Powdermaker (1933:229-31).

4. Conception is called i lok kaxat and means to originate. Both seminal fluid and vaginal secretions are called lavuk. The sometimes the former is called ladankirok and the latter ladanpuk. People usually refer to these fluids euphemistically as 'toktok no gut' or swear words and avoided. See also Wagner (1983:79) and Jorgensen (1983a:58).

5. The Lelet Mandak appear to differ from the coastal Mandak of Pinikindu studied by B. Clay, who believe the male contributes the blood, skin and internal organs to the formation of the fetus (1977:31 and 39-40). For an overview of various theories of procreation see Jorgensen (1983b). For societies making a distinction between female and male contributions to the fetus, see Bateson (1958:42); Biersack (1983:93, 96); Meggitt (1965:110) and Poole (1981:63).


7. Similar ideas are reported among the Kaliai of West New Britain (D.A. and D.R. Counts 1983:50). There, parents should avoid intercourse until the child is two to four years old, is able to tell its parents about its dreams, to spear fish in the shallows and is more interested in playing than its mother's breasts. See Chowning (1987a: 143) and Nash (1987:166) where the spacing of children is mentioned.

8. This is called i sokpirivit lamandak, derived from i sok (to shoot) and pirivit (break into pieces) the child (lamandak).

9. There is another form of illness that occurs if a man sleeps with his wife following the birth of a child. It is said that he breaks the lentau. Although I am unclear what part of the anatomy this refers to, the lentau is said normally to break when the child is walking. The woman then starts menstruating again, but if she has intercourse prior to the child walking this is said to initiate the menstrual cycle
earlier than should be the case. This premature menstruation will result in the child's ill health. It will be afflicted with such things as distended stomach, dry nose, enlarged legs and glands, emaciation, small head and large body (or vice versa).

10. Parts of various trees can also be given to the child to make it even more aggressive. This was suggested to me as the reason for the extreme aggressiveness of one man from which not even his father was spared. There are also other forms of magic men use for fighting.

11. It is referred to as *i venara* (derived from *i ven* - to see). If I learn my way of life from a grandparent, it would be *nenia avenara atne tubuk*, or if a man learns from his father it would be *i venara atne temen*.

12. The python's power of regeneration is only circumvented if it is cut into pieces and burnt (cf. George 1988:65-6).

13. The magician also related a story about a young man from the Duke of York islands who used this form of magic and the consequences. The young man had attended theological college and, after completing his studies, went to study in America. He became so intensely pre-occupied with his pursuit of knowledge it was said he went mad. After deeply pursuing the question of how God originated, he finally exclaimed he knew the answer. He then fell to the ground and died.

14. For example, see the following discussions of the nature/culture dichotomy: Forge (1972); Gillison (1980); Goodale (1980); MacCormack (1980); Ortner (1974) and M. Strathern (1980).

15. Literally it means to sit down in the middle. Other examples are: Kisalawa, which means to live only a short amount of time; Kigomat, to live in the place, Lavatgomat; Kismiding, to sit on shell valuables; Kisbin, to sit down in a place without people; Kismai, to remain seated; Kismuat, to sit down steadfastly like a stone; Kisina, to sit down on a debt; Kismarua, to sit down in the light; Kiskarun, to sit down without parents. Some examples of men's names are: Marasungaon, a large pig worth ten shell valuables; Lumamau, something that has 'fight' like chilli; Lavatboorong, good pig; Septupe, to kill something and take it to the forest with you; Bungunen, a school of fish; Ligok, a type of fish; Lavasibo, a bone of a pig; Sorong, to try and spear something; Lentos, to blow on a fire to light it; Lorong, an important or 'good' man.


17. The form of *laram* inhering in pregnant women is called *laram patmuat*. *Laram soraun* is the form associated with menstruation and with the stage of pregnancy before a foetus has formed. *Laram anka* is associated with sexual intercourse, and to coming into close contact with the sexually active. *Laram sonka* is a further form which is transferred if you are given food by someone who is sexually active.

18. Not only does *laram* undermine and destroy the efficacy of men utilising magic it can also have effects on other beings, such as dogs who have been bespelled for hunting wild pig. There are forms of magic performed on dogs to make them speedy, aggressive and strong, thus giving them the drive and ability to pursue wild pigs through the forest. The power of these forms of magic can be diminished if hunting dogs come into contact with *laram* which can be acquired if a dog sleeps under the bed of a married couple or by being in close contact with them. Alternatively, dogs, like humans, can acquire it by stepping over places where sexually active males or females have urinated. When this occurs, dogs become lethargic, passive and generally lazy about chasing wild pigs. Again as in the case of male dancers the dog too, embodies the qualitative state of heaviness which is antithetical
to most desirable bodily states for hunting, that of speediness and lightweightness. To remedy this, there is magic to remove the laram from the dog.

19. Etymologically, the verb to dance (i tlos) is similar to the noun for power (lolos) in its more active sense. Similar ideas about gender and upward movement are reported by Nash who says fish that jump over weirs are believed to be male whereas those that cannot, a big-mouthed variety, are said to be female (1987:156).

20. Valentine reports that among the Lakalai, women originally possessed the Tubuan but men stole it from them because women carried it clumsily, did not 'march' well and their breasts slapped unpleasantly against their stomachs as they ran (1961:40-1). A similar reason is cited in Danks (1933:280). The mythical theft of important ritual and magical paraphernalia from women by men is widely reported. See Barth (1975:278-9); Codrington (1972:76); Ernst (1979:49); Gillison (1980:154-6 and 1983:44-6); and Godelier (1986:63).

21. Myths from New Britain also suggest that the Tubuan originated in New Ireland. For example Sheret reports that the Tolai say that the Tubuan (and another masked figure the Dukduk) floated to the Gazelle Peninsula on coconut shells (1976:33-4).


24. I collected an example of war magic that was performed by a middle aged woman on male warriors while they were secluded prior to battle.

25. Love magic is one of the most widely owned and used forms of magic among the Lelet and probably every adult male knows and possesses knowledge of at least one type. Love magic or lupupulu is called malira in Tok Pisin. Other less common terms are lenpusok and lenbobonom. The latter term designates any form of device used for trickery, such as a rat trap. Within the category of lupupulu there are numerous named types, such as lowosigin, lumparang, lesepaxanom, loxonnau me Limbin, loxonta at taruri, lentuntun, laxalan me Livinu, lesepaurung, lesepaurut, lavas kangangkadek, lesepasungu and loxontaing. Also in use are others imported from other parts of the Bismarck Archipelago.

26. In later chapters I discuss other aspects of incorporation employed in processes of embodiment of desired characteristics. In chapter four, I discuss the images of incorporation employed in the initiation of people into the magical cult of Buai. In chapter five, I discuss the images of incorporation involved in the consumption of taro which enables the body to take on the characteristics of heaviness that taro embodies, and which in turn facilitates productive work.

27. Women believe the opposite - that men possess the most powerful love magic (cf. Macintyre 1987b:213). Due to the potency of menstrual blood, only a small amount is used, and should a man be given a large amount it would be detrimental to his health.

28. To maintain passion in a marriage, a man will conceal the remaining bespelled ingredients in the langkut, a place in the roof directly above the hearth, where it is heated. If a man wishes to cease attracting the woman, he takes the ingredients and either throws them into a stream or allows the rain
to wash it, and thus to cool the substance and with it the desires of the woman. See Blackwood (1935:121).

29. In defining sorcery, I am to some extent following Chowning, who in turn is influenced by Seligman, when she defines sorcery, not merely as 'harmful magic' but restricts it to those 'magical practices directed towards the production of disease and death' (Chowning 1987b:150). I define sorcery more broadly, to be those magical practices that seek to cause ruination, injury or death to the victims. Forms of magic such as garden magic or weather magic are problematic to definitions of sorcery, for while under certain circumstances these can be malevolent and meant to cause ruination, this is not the only possible outcome. Love magic is similar, in that it can sometimes be used as a form of sorcery to harm people, but this is not normally the case. For example a practitioner can heat a magical package to promote desire in his beloved or he can burn this package completely, causing the woman, so consumed by passion, to kill herself. As I have discussed love magic more fully above and will discuss catastrophic weather magic in chapter six I will confine myself to discussing sorcery in a more restricted sense - that malevolent magic seeking to cause injury or death. In my discussion of sorcery, unlike some commentators (Chowning 1987b:150 and Patterson 1974-75:141), I include those forms of magic used to protect property from theft (lungkunubeng or tambul). Chowning and Patterson exclude this form of magic on the grounds that the 'specific motive of the practitioner is the desire to protect property' (Patterson 1974-75:141). But one could also argue that the motive of these forms of magic is to cause injury to those that steal, just as much as it is to protect property. Whatever the motives, these sorts of definitional problems require very specific data directed at answering such questions. Definitional questions aside, I am following my Lelet informants who, whilst they have a separate magic to protect property, nonetheless invariably include it when discussing sorcery.

30. This has also been reported in the literature for other areas. See, for example, Bercovitch (1989a:452); Bowden (1987:191); P. Brown (1977:26); Chowning (1987b:156); Glick (1967:40); Hogbin (1935:20); Nachman (1981:45); Patterson (1974-75:141); Poole (1981:59); Westermark (1981:92); Iteanu (1990:42) and J. Turner (1991:430-1).

31. These illnesses are referred to as an indigenous illnesses or illnesses of the place (lanmeres at lemenemen). As in other parts of Melanesia, the grafting of a western aetiology onto indigenous conceptualisations of illness has resulted in what some refer to as a dual system of illness and curing. See Connell (1980:5); Hamnett and Connell (1981:491) and Stanhope (1968). I refer to it as a multiple or plural system because depending on the circumstances cures may include those drawn from local sources as well as imported cures from other parts of Papua New Guinea, Christian methods (i.e. prayers, use of the Bible) and more mainstream western medicine. See Barker (1989); A. Carrier (1989); Frankel and Lewis (1989); Herdt (1989b) and A. Strathern (1989b).

32. To ensorcel someone is i sepsak i or, if someone has been poisoned, i sepsak pam i. Not long after I had arrived in the field, I heard about a person who, having been heard walking in a hamlet on consecutive nights when people were asleep, was met by two local men wielding axes. The person was supposedly hit in the side but no body was found and it was presumed that he staggered back to the coast to die. I was told by one person that sorcerers will not fight on meeting another person when prowling, because they know their actions are wrong. In the past, it is said that sorcerers would carry shell valuables and money to bribe anybody who met them on their errands. Some sorcerers, however, sleep prior to their departure, sending their loroang ahead to check that nobody is hiding in wait (cf. McIntosh 1983:229). Then, when the sorcerer is walking along the road, he/she sends his/her loroang ahead in the form of a firefly, to watch if people are waiting in hiding for the sorcerer. Those in hiding must kill the firefly so that it cannot go back and warn sorcerer. This divining method can also be used to divine or detect sorcerers. The diviner dreams whether he will meet the sorcerer, or he can send his loroang to observe whether the sorcerer has likewise sent his/her's ahead. If the diviner meets the sorcerer's loroang in the form of a firefly he will only know a sorcerer is coming but not his or her
identity (cf. Glasse 1965:42). The firefly is a common vehicle or mark of the life force in other parts of Melanesia. See Bell (1937:339) and Chowning (1987b:179).


34. People can hire the services of the Tena Bua, the ritual expert schooled in the arts of Bua, who using shamanistic powers, goes into a trance and sends his loroang to go and retrieve the parcel. Although I never posed the question, presumably in the past before the introduction of Bua, the sorcerer, if known, could be encouraged to retrieve the package with the inducement of shell valuables.

35. Paradoxically, although abandoned, the woman turned out to be responsible for the birth of twins who eventually killed the monstrous pig, allowing people to return to New Ireland. In its various guises, but not necessarily following the plot of the Lelet version, this myth is widely reported not only in New Ireland but in other parts of Melanesia. For an overview of this genre of myth in Papua New Guinea, see Chakravarti (1974). See also Battaglia (1985:436 and 1991:93-4); Beier (1972:14-15, 22-4); Blackwood (1935:37-9); Bonnemaison (1985:36); Burrudge (1969:312-15); Fortune (1963:270-1); Hanneman (1934:42-4); Hesse (1982:143-4); Ker (1910:121-7); Kohnke (1974:91-5); Malinowski (1953:111-14); Powermaker (1933:34-5); Roheim (1950:225-6); Seligman (1910:414-15); Thune (1980:400-11); Wagner (1986:25) and M. Young (1991:386-8).

36. These are called injet, komkom and jusuwo.

37. The power in the package was referred to as lulu. In my opinion it probably contains fragments of bone. This term also applies to a form of sculpture used in malangan ceremonies, previously performed but long abandoned. See Gifford (1974). Lulu also refers to the ubiquitously used magical ingredient - ginger.

38. The person who gave me the details of the effects of this form of sorcery said another form utilises the powerful sort of heirloom shell valuable called lavatlaku (head of the lau, see chapter three). As the shell valuable is bent open revealing the strings inside, the spells recited send forth the contained life forces of people who have died an unnatural death to kill the victim.

39. In a number of studies, old age is the only 'natural cause' recognised. See, for example, Powermaker (1931-32:27); Malinowski (1961:78) and Hogbin (1937:78).

40. In Christian discourse the loroang is associated with the spirit or soul of a person. A more accurate designation is life force because it has corporeal components, and this means it is difficult to categorise ontologically. Etymologically, the stem for loroang is life (lor). The reflection of a person is referred to as loroang while the shadow is called lamau. Some other terms, although not widely used, are lentiemes (sg.), larapentemes or labaremes (pl.) all of which apply to the life force if some relic from the body is kept.

To further complicate matters, humans also have doubles called livipisen (sg.) and lubungpivipisen (pl.) which look exactly like their human counterparts and die when they do. See Bercovitch (1989b:128); Lawrence (1987:23) and Powermaker (1931-32:27). Although they are visible to humans they do not have houses like people but live at the bases of trees or stones. Many of such beings live in the vicinity of the abandoned hamlets of Lenkoxo, Boxa and Lavata. The doubles are
occasionally seen walking around with baskets or other bundles and sometimes approach villages ahead of their human counterpart. Prior to their human double arriving, or if someone talks to them, these beings will disappear. Unlike other beings such as lagas it is not necessary that a person undergo a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence to see them.


42. When in this form, lau carry a fruit in their mouths, which alters their cry. However, some people say that it is a particular bird not a flying fox. While this bird is not seen, its cry can be heard at night, and is a portent of death. This bird/bat, the lengkobe steals the loroang of people when they are asleep. When this cry is heard a person can call out an oath, upon someone with whom they are in an avoidance relationship, such as their sister or brother, and ask that the bird/bat communicate to them in a dream the identity of the person who is to die. If the person does dream who is to die, he or she can go and warn this person the lengkobe is trying to steal their life force. If the person does not dream of the identity, it is considered too late, and the person's loroang has been taken already. On birds as omens for death see Ivens (1927:409) and Stephen (1987a:56).

43. See Codrington (1881:274 and 1972:265) and Dixon (1964:118) for the Banks' Island (Vanuatu) version, identical to the version in the text. For similar and other variations see also Bell (1935:261-2); Codrington (1972:283-4 and 287); Dixon (1964:118-19 and 122); Fortune (1963:186); Foster (1990b:434); Fox (1924:81-2); Fox and Drew (1915:138); Hogbin (1937:88); Janssen, Mennis and Skinner (1973:90); Levy-Bruhl (1983:150-1); Mosko (1993:706); Sheret (1976:47 Append.); Thune (1989:156).

44. Any material manifestations of this power have long since disappeared, but this does not stop the life force of people travelling there to 'smell' what could be described as its essence. When my informant was explaining this to me, he originally said they came to 'eat' some of the luli but then, as he realised that it no longer existed in its original form, he referred to it in terms of being smelt.

45. The men's house at Lenuat was referred to as a 'bad place', due to the residual power located there, and some degree of caution is exercised when digging holes. For example, when burying a corpse the head of the lineage on whose ground this men's house is located must be the first to break the soil, with an accompanying spell. This spell is identical to some spells used in gardening magic and calls on Moroa to break the ground as the person does (see chapter six).

46. Beds consist of a wooden frame with flattened bamboo laid over it. Today foam mattresses and pillows are common.

47. The agricultural officer in question was no longer stationed there and I could not confirm the story. A similar belief is cited by B. Clay (1986:114). A parallel belief is reported by Gnegchi-Ruscone (1991:95) where people wait near a grave for the 'spirit' to rise as a form of divination to reveal the cause of death.

48. The story of Seledik appears to be widespread and narratives from Vanuatu bear many similarities, particularly the requirement that a pig must be killed to enter the land of the dead. See Layard (1942:226-7, 234).
Chapter 3

Embodying kinship: Shame, sex and shell valuables

In chapter two I described how movement of the body saturates constructs of gender, magic and power. I now examine the connections between power and bodily disposition in kin collectivities, kinship etiquette and valuables. First I examine how collectivities are imagined and the bodily inscriptions that pervade them. Ideally kin collectivities should remain immobile but narratives frequently describe fragmentations and dispersal. Movement, of this kind, is antithetical to the desired state of 'seatedness' and to the willed, purposeful and controlled movement that characterises men.

Controlling movement of the body is central to kinship etiquette. There are elaborate proscriptions concerning bodily placement which mesh with Lelet ideas of gender: they focus particularly on the control of women's bodily comportments and dispositions. I have already shown that women's bodies should ideally be less mobile and active than men's. Now I show that there are strict rules governing the placement of a woman's body relative to a man's. These rules are based on the intimate link between seeing and desire.

Similar images pervade dealings with valuables. Valuables are also seen through the images of immobility and mobility that saturate clan and lineage origin narratives. The most highly valued are clan and lineage heirlooms which should be secreted away in dark and cold places. The most prized valuables should be immobile and unseen, so that they cannot be seduced from their rightful owners. Thus it is crucial that clans and lineages secrete such valuables, so that they remain sitting firmly and securely.

Moieties, clans and lineages

As in other parts of New Ireland and New Britain, the largest and most fundamental kinship category of the Lelet is the moiety. The Lelet are divided into two exogamous moieties called Lamalom and Laragam, each named after the bird which constitutes its emblem: Lamalom moiety is marked by the eagle lamalom and Laragam moiety by the eagle laragam. At birth, people are assigned to their mother's moiety, and they belong to this for life. Moiety identity goes beyond mere group membership; it is embodied in ways which differentiate each moiety from the
other, as natural marks inscribed on the body. Collective identity is integrally bound up with corporeality - it is embodied and inscribed on the skin. Members of the Lamalom moiety are said to have four creases on the palms of their hands whilst members of Laragam have three.² When starting to walk from a stationary position, a member of Lamalom moiety will lead with the left foot while a member of Laragam moiety will place their right foot first (cf. B. Clay 1977:36). Blinking also distinguishes the moieties: Lamalom have left eyes which unintentionally blink a lot whereas Laragam moiety members have right eyes which blink a lot.³

The full import of the moiety system is realised in the context of marriage. Like their Barok neighbours to the south east, the moieties of the Lelet are a central constituent of loklok at lemenemen (the ways of the place) or kastam, in the choice of a marriage partner, as Luxurus a Masa or village leader explains:

Before, during the times of my ancestors and grandparents, people had respect for these birds and good ways existed. Before, they said, there was respect among Lamalom and Laragam and so if a man was a Laragam he would not 'wrong' [have sexual intercourse] with a woman from Laragam. The same was the case for Lamalom; a man in Lamalom would not 'wrong' with a woman from Lamalom. People had respect for the two birds and marriage followed this. ... If a man of Lamalom wronged with a Lamalom woman they would kill them - they would ask 'have you no shame?'. They would give them a rope to hang themselves with or they would merely kill them. They would kill them because they broke this 'law'. During the time of our ancestors and grandparents the punishment for this was great and as a result people had a lot of respect. People would die because of their lack of shame.

Other aspects of Luxurus' speech are telling. Throughout, he bemoans the fact that today people do not follow the ways of the ancestors by abiding by the 'law' of moiety exogamy. Drawing on the common body image, of 'seating', he contrasts the earlier times, when the place was seated well, with today, when the place is not seated well (see introduction). Today, he claims, people follow new forms of knowledge and have discarded the old. The past is nostalgically re-presented as a time of harmony, when kinship and affinal etiquette were obeyed, while the present is seen as lacking such stability. There is an implicit critique of modernity here; new forms of knowledge are seen as the distraction from the more disciplined customary ways. Later, he suggests that rules of avoidance and respect between cross-sex siblings and cross-sex cross cousins are not heeded, another sign of social disruption and conflict. A man who touches his sister or female cross cousin causes 'problems' - a euphemism for incest. Luxurus stressed that the marriage rules of the moiety system must be heeded, thus highlighting respect and shame as values central to the realisation both of the moiety system and loklok at lemenemen. This echoes Wagner's claim for the Barok where he sees the core of kastam, the 'conceptual as well as behavioural elicitation of ethos', as the two moieties which mutually and dialectically oppose each other and in this process initiate important relationships between each other (1986:49). In some ways the relations between the moieties constitutes the types of dialogic relation I discussed in the introduction. Like the self/other relationship, moieties have separate identities but are also reciprocally dependent on each other in constituting themselves. One cannot exist without the other.
The moieties are not corporate groups; they are not the means whereby people gain access or rights to land, valuables or property. Neither do the moieties constitute descent groups. Rather they are the means through which marriage is ordered and structured. Within each of the moieties are clans and lineages. Clans belong to either Lamalom moiety or Laragam moiety (see table 1).

The corporate group, which I gloss as clan, the Lelet call lubungmixin or libibinat. The first term means a group of people and derives from the plural prefix lubung and mixin, meaning people. People say the second word derives from the term for womb, loxontinenat, and will often stress that clan members have their origins through their mother, carried by her mother back through the generations to one mother. Collective identity is proclaimed through corporeal idioms. Parts of the female body, the womb and the breasts, provide images for the collective identity, of clan and lineage, their common origins and shared substance, derived from one mother.4

Table 1: Moiety designation of clans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lamalom moiety</th>
<th>Laragam moiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solong</td>
<td>Laragat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puraren</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanismalom</td>
<td>Murass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanisde</td>
<td>Lamawan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulom</td>
<td>Luben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kantaon</td>
<td>Lanbaba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunau</td>
<td>Angkalanga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anmalom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanispowo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanismimiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbuk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katalok</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladolik</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is through the clan that rights of access to certain forms of property such as land, valuables, and certain forms of knowledge are gained and transmitted. A clan's land has resident on it at least one lubungtada, an abode of the larada which acts as a tutelary guardian. This relationship is configured through similar corporeal idioms and images. I examine this in the next chapter - for now suffice to say larada are akin to the mother's brother of clan members. Clans are collective land holding units and, although this land may be further divided into parcels for its constituent lineages, these rarely have a separate larada. Each clan has a leader who is ideally the most senior living male of that clan, although this varies with strength and personality. If a man is not a skilled orator he may consent to a younger man who is a good speaker becoming leader. If there are no suitable adult males, then the most
senior woman can do so. However, unlike the situation reported by Nash, for the Nagovisi of Bougainville, women do not play an active role in the politics of a clan (or lineage), as most discussions of clan affairs take place in the men's house, from which women are excluded (cf. Nash 1987:161).

Because women tend to reside on their husband's or husband's father's clan land after marriage, a clan's members are dispersed, because, while women are idealised as embodying immobility, in practice it is usually they who move in marriage. (This is a movement fraught with dangers, as I show in the next chapter). The main occasions when clan members, local and dispersed, gather are funerals of members and their mortuary feasts. In recognition of their shared nurture and identity, clan members should 'stand up' together there. If a member does not, others will be angered and may try to evict the culprit from the clan land. This has never happened, but the risk was still emphasised.

Lineages are smaller entities called *lavatparus*, a term which derives from breast- *lentus*. People say that lineage members have obtained 'milk from their mother and she got milk from her mother'. Whereas clan members have their origins in one womb, lineage members share nurturance from the same breasts. Many of the qualities of clans apply also to lineages, which are corporate groups with rights to certain parcels of land and other property (such as heirlooms). A lineage, like the clan, has a leader who acts as a spokesperson. Because lineages are smaller and more localised, they are more likely to act as a corporate group on occasions beyond funerals and feasts. While people may not be able to trace their lines of descent within the clan to a particular ancestor, this may be possible within the lineage.

Lineages claim their origins in the fission of the main clan into a number of segments which then dispersed to different tracts of land within the clan's territory or further afield. Several lineage narratives document their coming into being from one clan, recounting conflict, fragmentation, dispersal and ultimately the formation of a new corporate group. The same plot recurs: a conflict at a feast because of an inadequate earth oven. There are minor variations about place, in details of preparation or what was being cooked. Here is one such account, by a member of Katanuat clan, Laba, of the segmentation of this clan into several smaller lineages:

This clan Katanuat comprises several lineages. Before, it consisted of only one big clan covered by the name Katanuat. In the past the clan Katanuat all resided together at a place called Ladan, meaning they made an earth oven with water (*la* - earth oven; *dan* - water). They made this large earth oven like those made today at feasts. They collected the leaves of taro, making them into a parcel which they filled with water. When they placed this parcel on the hot stones and then started to put stones on top of it, it burst. Once it burst the water spilled, causing the heated stones to cool. As a result the members of the clan became angry with each other, and to resolve the conflict they decided to separate into different lineages and each moved to different places.

Such narratives highlight the tenuousness of collective social life which can be ruptured by conflicts. This contrasts sharply with the image of the feast as maintaining cohesion propounded by Powdermaker. She suggests the communal
eating of food is to 'maintain the cohesion of the society and of groups within it' (1932:236). Feasts are both more complex and more conflictual than Powdermaker presupposes (see chapter seven). The ambiguous nature of feasts amplifies an ambiguity which characterises eating in general (see chapter two). As the feast brings people together through the sharing and eating of food, it can also undermine the very the basis of the community, as the above narrative illustrates.

The evocation of shame and respect

In his speech on the ways of the place, Luxurus drew attention to respect and shame as dominant ethics of kinship and affinal relations. The Lelet word closest to the English word, respect, is *lokngao* and is used, for example, when children are playing noisily in a house while adults are trying to discuss something important. The children are said to have no *lokngao* or respect for the adults they are disturbing. The term is also used for obeying the moiety exogamy rule, or following kinship etiquette by avoiding close proximity to cross sex siblings. People who do not follow moiety exogamy in marriage or kin protocols are said to lack *lokngao.*

Shame, or *lamamang,* is in many ways cognate with *lokngao* and could easily be substituted in a number of the examples given above, but it also has broader meanings and manifestations. Like respect, shame governs the behaviour of people (cf. Nash 1987:162). For example, *lamamang* also embraces what English speakers call embarrassment and shyness. Those who go close to forbidden people are said to be unashamed, or to feel no embarrassment. People who do not observe such protocols are sometimes said to be not following the 'path' of shame. Shame is experienced particularly in relationships of avoidance but not exclusively. Thus, if a person is discovered to have stolen something, they invariably experience great shame. Shame is said to cover up or inhere in the skin. It is also made manifest in bodily dispositions and comportments (cf. A. Strathern 1975). Kinship and affinal relations are realised through corporeal dispositions, particularly through movement of the body, both in horizontal and vertical space. Moreover, bodily movement is construed as an aspect of visualism, which I have suggested is an important facet in Melanesian of epistemology. Both seeing and bodily proximity evoke desire and sexuality.

Avoidance relationships and bodies in space

Relationships of shame and respect are constituted by and manifested in avoidance. Some avoidance relationships are affinal, others consanguineal, but for simplicity, I will discuss them as cross sex or same sex relationships. The cross sex relationships I group together are those of; *koko* (male ego: MBD, MBS, ZSD, ZSS and female ego: FZD, FZS, BDS, BDD), *minmin* (male ego: Z, FBD, MZD, ZDD and female ego: B, MZS, FBS and BSS), *nasong* (male ego: MBW and ZSW and female ego: HZS and HMB) and *utulum* (male ego: WM and BWM and female ego: DH and DHB). All
these relationships are pervaded by respect and shame, of differing intensities (see figures 1 and 2 detailing terms of address from female and male ego perspectives).\textsuperscript{7}

Figure 1: Female ego terms of address

Figure 2: Male ego terms of address

(reciprocal term in italics)
The respect required in relationships is maintained by avoiding the other person, showing no signs of familiarity and not using the other's name. In earlier times, it is said, people in avoidance relationships would not have talked to each other, but today these more rigid protocols are not observed, though veiled and indirect speech is still the norm when communicating with the more forbidden persons. When people in an avoidance relationship must communicate, they should address each other by the term for that relationship - that is, koko, nasong, utulum and minmin. Other forms of veiled speech such as plurals are also used to reinforce distance. For example, if one wanted to ask one's minmin where she or he was going, one would ask: u wanimi luwutminmin or where are you (plural) going. As an indication of the spatial distance between them the prefix luwut may be added. Luwut can mean boundary or border, and suggests there is a barrier between the people in that relationship which cannot be crossed.

Spatial distance between two people in an avoidance relationship must be maintained at all times. The proximity of two such people suggests familiarity. However in some of these relationships spatial distance is not as rigidly enforced as in others and moreover, this changes over time according to the lifecycle of the persons involved. Thus while the koko and nasong relationship are the strictest and distance must be maintained no matter what the age, this is not the case with the minmin relationship which is not enforced rigidly until both parties have reached puberty. Thus a boy can carry his baby sister or vice versa, something which is not possible for those in the koko and nasong relationship. Avoidance of spatial proximity also applies to the sleeping quarters of the person in the relationship. People in an avoidance relationship cannot see the beds and sleeping quarters of the person they should avoid. This implies the risk of sexual liaison as does the proscription of all knowledge pertaining to the avoidance partner's sexuality.

Often in such avoidance relationships the onus of responsibility falls on the women. Thus, previously, if people in the nasong, minmin, koko, and utulum relationship were to meet walking towards each other on the road, the woman was expected to turn away and look off into the bush or even start walking in that direction, while the man continued along the road unhindered. Similarly, while a man can sit down on benches on which his minmin has been seated, the female minmin cannot sit on benches on which her minmin has been seated. If she were to do so, she would be required to slaughter a pig which would go to him. The above examples illustrate the intersection of ideas of gender, bodies and space (cf. Lattas 1990). Sitting on the bench previously occupied by her minmin is part of the wider stricture that women cannot position their bodies above men or items they consume. When discussing these issues people say the same rules apply irrespective of gender in avoidance relationships, but in practice these strictures are more compelling for women.

While there is no prohibition on stepping over the hearth by women in general, there is against stepping over the food of people in avoidance relationships. For example a man's nasong cannot step over his food and if this happens he will refuse
to eat it. The embodied spatiality of kinship relations is also enacted in various other similar ways, e.g. if a man has carried flooring timbers on his shoulder, his minmin or sister cannot walk on those timbers. To do so is seen as equivalent to her standing on his shoulder. The same situation arises if a man has carried timbers which are used to make beds or seats. Women in avoidance relationships cannot use these because they are symbolically positioning themselves above the man. Finally, a man should avoid walking underneath the drying clothes of his nasong or minmin or she should remove them, for if he does inadvertently walk under them as they hang, she can no longer wear them.

If a woman's body or her clothes are above a man, this means figuratively that her genitals are above his eyes and within his gaze. He will thus desire her and be unable to control himself (cf. Modjeska 1982:67 and Glasse 1965:34). While such rules are clearly aimed at proscribing sexual desire, they act as rationales for controlling women's movement, both in horizontal and vertical space. Women internalise them and thus their movement becomes habitually constrained.

The marriage of a person's minmin initiates a new avoidance relationship, grounded in similar notions of bodies in space. The relationship of laramasik is an affinal same sex relationship typified by respect, shame and avoidance. The protocols and etiquette between two minmin are transferred to the minmin's husband or wife. A person cannot say the name of, or be familiar with, his or her laramasik. While two laramasik can talk to each other, they should maintain a spatial distance. Neither should they look steadily at each other. A man can enter the house of his laramasik but cannot like the minmin sit on the beds or seats because the laramasik has carried the timber on his shoulder. Both suggest the positioning of the (female) body above the (male) other, and thus portend desire and sexuality. The male laramasik is, in effect, sitting on the shoulder of his avoidance partner because, although the relationship between two laramasik is in reality a same sex relationship, it is reconfigured as a cross sex relationship. This transformation of the gender of one of the persons in the laramasik relationship was explained to me as arising from the marriage, which in effect creates one person. This was expressed to me, by a male informant, as 'the skin of myself and my wife is one, it is joined' and 'our skins are joined' (cf. Nash 1987:157). To have married and slept together, means that the body of the spouses has become consubstantial, and their personhood merged. Thus, as I suggested in the introduction, the body which fills the pronominal 't' can be reconfigured, as more than one person. Through this consubstantial body, a cross sex relation is symbolically transformed into a same sex relation, and the affine comes to occupy the position of his/her wife or husband (cf. M. Strathern 1988). Thus, a man who treats his minmin with a great deal of respect and circumspection must treat her husband in the same way, because he is, in this sense, she.

Shame, secrecy and the sexual revelations

Lelet people initially appeared to me prudish even repressed, because of the strong emphasis on the kin and affinal etiquette, manifested in the various forms of
avoidance. This may be an accurate representation of the public ideology of sexual restraint undoubtedly reinforced by both Methodist and United Church rhetoric, but behind public discourses and the strong emphasis on shame, there is a hidden realm of sexuality. For the Lelet, shame lies not in the commission of forbidden acts but in their disclosure or revelation. 'To disclose', asu, signifies the movement from the inside which is hidden, to the outside which is not (cf. White 1990:53-4). People who commit adultery, for instance, feel no sense of embarrassment or shame so long as it remains hidden. But should an adulterer's or a thief's deeds be revealed, he or she will experience great shame, embodying the prototypical dispositions of bowed head and avoidance of other people.

Within the confines of the men's house (lantin) mature men assume a pedagogic role towards younger men, often reciting to them traditional narratives and various anecdotes about how to behave in the world. Advice about sexual adventures is usually about the necessity of keeping them secret: young men are advised that they should be like a cat: one never sees a cat having sexual intercourse. The following simile is also used as advice: 'only the lizard should know about you'. This refers to the ubiquitous small skink that resides in all dwellings and observes all. Men should not boast of or expose their sexual adventures which should remain a secret between them and the skinks. A further cautionary adage is: 'even if a fly or a lagas sees you they will talk, so hide your affairs well'. This advice is particularly appropriate to extra-marital affairs. Young men are warned that if they gossip, they will in all likelihood find themselves the victims of sorcery or murder.

Yet, among younger men, discussions of sexual adventure are a dominant form of banter when they are alone in the men's house. Such discussions are, however, guarded and cautious. Men hide not the details of their adventures, but the kinship relationships of the women. A man must not mention sexual relations with the sister of any man present or a woman he must avoid and who belongs to the same clan as any man present. Such an indiscretion would result in his appearance before the village committee, or else the village court, which will order him to present a pig to the wronged man and his clan. Men can become so enraged on hearing such mention of their sisters or other women with whom they are in avoidance relationships that they are likely to violently attack the man foolish enough to brag, an attack which cannot be reciprocated by the guilty party. Others present do not try to restrain an enraged man in these circumstances because he is considered to be entirely justified in his actions.

Sexuality is thus closely associated with lamamang or shame, and is hidden for that reason. For some, the shame of sex means they would avoid having sex during daylight hours. One man said he could not have sex during the day, because he was ashamed to look at his partner. Shame thus pervades intimate relations as well as public discourses about sex. Euphemisms are used in discussing conception and people refer to seminal and vaginal fluids as blood. Indeed people are often ignorant of the vernacular for genitalia and for sexual fluids. Sexual intercourse is called in Tok Pisin pasin nogut but paradoxically, the vernacular for sexual intercourse is
commonly used in swearing or exclamation. Many expletives, particularly those referring to male or female genitals, cannot be used in the presence of women. To do so would entail 'buying the shame' by killing and giving a pig. The injunction against using swear words is even stronger in the presence of people in an avoidance relationship.

Illicit sexuality and punishment for its revelation

As in most other Melanesian societies, human reproduction is initiated and sustained ideally within marriage. Any incestuous unions, or for that matter any sexual liaisons external to the marriage, are strongly discouraged (cf. Mosko 1985:73 and Bowden 1987:206). In the pre-pacification era, knowledge of these affairs would have brought great shame to the clans involved, particularly to the woman's clan. Prior to pacification, breaches of moiety exogamy would be met with death for the couple, both either being killed or given ropes to hang themselves (cf. Bell 1937:318 and Hogbin 1937:77). (This retribution was not symmetrical for each sex. This is explained in greater detail below). Today, people are still ashamed and fearful of marrying incestuously because they will be subject to the scorn and gossip of others, who will refer to them in their absence as incestuous.

Breaches of moiety exogamy are uncommon and I recorded no instances of it on the Lelet within living memory of my informants. There was one attempt by a man to marry a woman of the same moiety from the coast, but the woman's father observed custom and declined to support the marriage. Such marriages are possible, but require that the man and the woman each on their own account, in addition to the normal bridewealth (lunun), accumulate a payment for removing shame. This must take the form of a large pig and ten shell valuables which the man gives to the woman's clan and the woman gives to the man's clan. Such endogamous marriages, people say, are very common among the coastal peoples, who are seen by the Lelet as morally degenerate because traditional customs are no longer followed.

Breaches of exogamy, loboso, involving sexual relations, whether within the same moiety, clan or lineage, connote animality, particularly dog's sexually promiscuous behaviour. In the world of dogs, no distinctions are made as to sexual partners and, lacking the sense of discrimination of humans, dogs have intercourse with close kin. Dogs, unlike humans, do not have a consciousness of shame. Thus people who breach the rules of exogamy like dogs are considered to lack a sense of shame (cf. Goodale 1980:125 and Mimica 1992:49). Like other illicit liaisons in pre-pacification times, if people were discovered to have engaged in incest, the couple were either killed or given ropes with which to hang themselves (see below; cf. Goodale 1980:133 and 1985:231).

A similar situation arises in relation to women's sexual relations which at all times must be concealed from their clansmen, particularly their minmin and laksigiliklowolom. Sexuality must also be hidden from some male affines, such as nasong. If women's premarital and extramarital relations become publicly known,
shame is brought to the clan. Women have attempted suicide because people in avoidance relationships have learnt of their sexual relations.

In the past, the divulgence of a female clan member's sexual relations brought great shame to the clan, shame which could only be removed by her death. When her illicit sexual activity was discovered, a male clan member, a minmin or laksigilik, would take from her carrying basket the rope used to hang the basket from her head, or he would collect the same sort of vine, which would be hung from a tree in the men's house yard. The man would then go and tell the woman to hang herself. Following her death, the man who gave her the rope would go to the central area of the hamlet and beat a slit gong to mark the death. After the death the members of the clan of the woman would seek the death of the man involved, in reciprocation. If this happened to be an important man such as a magician or a man who had hosted many feasts, he could be fortunate and escape death by substituting a man with less power for himself. There was not, however, the possibility of replacing the woman because, as one man put it, 'women have not got much power'. However, the two deaths occurred for different reasons, the woman's to remove the shame she has brought to her clan, the man's to reciprocate to the woman's clan for her death. The possibility of substitution for the man is not therefore surprising, since such substitution is common practice in compensation between clans. Following the death of the man, or his unfortunate substitute, to avoid further conflict between the two clans and to re-establish good relations, each clan was required to exchange with the other a large shell valuable. Additionally, each clan would give the other a large taro parcel and a pig's head. While knowledge by her clan of a woman's extramarital or premarital sexual relations would once have required her death, today it requires the death of a pig. Such breaches of kin etiquette requires the 'buying' or removal of the shame with shell valuables and/or the killing of a pig.

Paths of marriage, elopement and the buying of shame

Nowadays, it is said that people make their own choices in marriage, albeit within the rules of exogamy. But parents still play a considerable role in arranging and negotiating the marriages of their children, and they and other close kin have been known not to grant approval for marriages they did not find suitable. Usually marriage negotiations are carried out between close relatives of both the man and the woman - usually the father, or an uncle. If a man wants to marry a woman her clan and parents must be informed. Should a man surreptitiously marry a woman he will be required to 'buy the shame' with up to three valuables. Similarly, if a man elopes with a woman or 'pulls her into the bush' he will also be required to 'buy' or 'remove' the shame. A man and a woman can cohabit prior to marriage, but only if the man has 'bought' the shame with shell valuables or cash, which are divided among her male clan relatives (brothers, maternal uncles).

The amount of bridewealth (lunun) exchanged is determined by the woman's father, maternal uncles and brothers, and will be divided amongst them. However, negotiation is necessary. The bridewealth must include one large valuable referred to
as the 'eye of the bridewealth' (*lemeren lunun*). Usually the bridewealth comprises a large valuable, several smaller ones and some money. If a woman is without a father the bridewealth will be decided on by her mother's brother who would receive the 'eye of the bridewealth'. If she is without any mother's brother the bridewealth will be decided by her first born brother. On the man's side it will be those relatives, particularly the father (including classificatory ones such as the father's brother) and maternal uncles who contribute to the bridewealth. Should a man want to marry but be without a father, his mother's brother will take on responsibility for gathering the necessary bridewealth and negotiating the marriage.

Ideally a newly married couple do not attempt to conceive a child quickly, as is the case with the Bush Mekeo (Mosko 1985:73-4). Previously, the Lelet distinguished between two alternate 'paths' a couple could follow once married - *kaxabibilu* and *kaxamesames* (unrelated to the two types of growth discussed in chapter two). The preferable path was *kaxabibilu* and meant the newlyweds avoided a quick pregnancy and instead reared a female pig which was seen as the means of accumulating shell valuables. As the pig reproduced, the couple sold the piglets for pieces of valuables of varying size depending on the size of the piglet. If they followed the custom of *kaxabibilu*, it was said that newlyweds would have sufficient wealth and there would not be any needs they could not satisfy. This is similar to the custom described by Wagner for the Barok, where the bride's people give a small live pig to the groom who raises it until large enough to sell and make a 'profit'. This is used to repay the leader who contributed his bridewealth and to repay his affines for the contribution of the pig (Wagner 1986:58). The alternate path, which it is said all newly weds of today follow, is that of *kaxamesames*. If a couple follow this 'path' they do not think of acquiring a pig as in the case above but think merely about having children. In such circumstances all a couple's productive energy goes to meeting this goal, and no other. Once a woman has given birth, all of the couple's productive energy is further spent on feeding the child, and methods of wealth acquisition are overlooked. Couples who follow this custom are said never to 'get ahead', but spend their lives merely existing.

**Marriage, the matrilineal puzzle and nurturant paternity**

In her pioneering article 'Some types of family structure amongst the central Bantu', Richards drew attention to the 'matrilineal puzzle' - how to resolve the tensions created when descent is reckoned matrilineally and there is a rule of exogamy (1950). Further to this, it is argued by Schneider that the bonds which may develop between a child and his father are in direct competition with the authority of the child's matrilineal descent group (1961:21). Like other Melanesian societies with matrilineal reckoning, the Lelet refigure the 'puzzle' in terms of nurturant paternity or paternal nurture and the attendant debts created through that process (cf. M. Strathern 1984b:53; B. Clay 1977 and Battaglia 1985). In this context I discuss the importance of cross cousin marriage as the means by which conflicting loyalties over the transmission of valuables are avoided.
Much the same as the Sabarl described by Battaglia (1985:428), the Lelet make no terminological distinction on the basis of gender of cross cousins, who are alike called koko. Unlike the Sabarl who prohibit cross cousin marriage, the Lelet do not. While the cross sex koko relationship is governed by the ethics of shame, respect and general avoidance, marriage among people in this relationship is common. In fact, in many pragmatic ways, a cross sex koko is the most preferred and desirable marriage partner. People say that previously it was an extremely common form of marriage and even today, when marriage choice is considered to be governed by the desires of the couple, it is still very common. People give a number of reasons why this form of marriage is preferred. People say that it occurs because people marry 'following' land, gardens, shell valuables and even men's houses.

The Lelet have a preference for virilocal residence, with the woman moving to her husband's and father in-law's hamlet. In this situation the man lives on the land of his father or on a hamlet site to which his father has rights. If a man does not marry a cross cousin but a woman from a clan other than his father's, problems of access to land can occur when the father dies. The son's children will not have rights of residence on the death of their father and will face eviction. To solve this, a man ideally marries his father's sister's daughter, or koko, who belongs to the same clan as the man's father. Any children of this marriage will belong to the clan of their mother, having residential and access rights to the land of their mother which is also their land.

A similar situation occurs with the heirloom shell valuables belonging to a particular clan. Because a man forms strong bonds with his son he usually wants his son to inherit any heirlooms in his possession. If this son has not married a koko or other female member of his father's clan and is given the clan heirlooms, the clan to which they rightfully belong will become angry and demand their return. Numerous conflicts have occurred in the past and continue to occur because the correct lines of transmission have not been followed. In their attempts to retrieve clan heirlooms, the rightful owners can take these matters before the village court for resolution or may utilise other strategies. One such alternative strategy can involve the aggrieved party impeding a mortuary feast by sitting on top of the peeled taro prior to its being cooked. While this does not necessarily see the heirloom returned, the feast host and his clan members and affines must contribute money and shell valuables to remove the person blocking the proceedings. Such problems do not, however, arise when a man marries his cross sex koko, and a father can give clan heirlooms to his son without fearing the rage of clan members (see figure 3). There is a recognition by the rightful clan owners in circumstances such as these that the heirlooms will eventually return to the clan because a man in this situation will transmit them to his son, a member of their clan and a legitimate owner. This kind of marriage should, however, still follow the process of negotiation that characterises other marriages.

Historically, some clans from opposite moieties have formed close relationships over time, through a process of repeated cross cousin marriage. For example, members of the Lamalom moiety clan of Katanuat have married repeatedly back to the Laragam moiety clan of Laragat (see figure 4). Clans have coupled in the
following ways: Solong to Bungaring; Kaniside to Lamawan; Katanuat to Bungaring; Tunau to Murass and Lulom to Kanumulu. Such a strategy elides the potential for conflict that arises if a father transmits valuables to his son as opposed to his sister's son. Through repeated cross cousin marriage two clans can form a closed and self reproducing system between themselves where each nurtures and feeds the other. When this occurs there is no dispersal or loss.

Figure 3: Cross cousin marriage and transmission of valuables from father to son

Figure 4: *Lepot amlong* - marrying back between Laragat and Katanuat clans
Valuables, desire and movement

I will now draw out some of the ways in which valuables are considered to be governed by the same sorts of relations which govern human life and bodies. Just as immobility and mobility are important values for people and their collectivities, they are salient also for wealth items, such as shell valuables. Relations of shame and secrecy governing sexuality and kinship etiquette are transposed from people to valuables. Shell valuables are anthropomorphised: like women's genitals which should not be positioned within sight of men, shell valuables should be secreted away to impede others' desire. Thus, the same imputed link between seeing and desire constrains the movement of women's bodies and of valuables in space.

Clan and lineage identity are manifest in shell valuables, their heritable property. But what sort of property or wealth is this? Recent discussions of wealth exchange suggest differences between classes of wealth items, such as circulating/non-circulating and inalienable/alienable, as in A. Weiner's recent work (1985 and 1992). Weiner examines Mauss's *The Gift* where he refers to a particular class of object as 'immeuble', and points out that in English this has often been glossed as 'indestructible'. Such a mistranslation misses the point Mauss was making, that the object 'could not be detached from their origins' (Weiner 1985:210). Weiner argues that this revised translation is important since it forces us to consider how value is created in objects which are kept out of circulation. Inalienable possessions, according to Weiner, are 'imbued with affective qualities that are expressions of the value an object has when kept by its owners' (1985:210). The primary value of these inalienable objects is that they define who one is in an 'historical sense':

The object acts as a vehicle for bringing past time into the present, so that histories of ancestors, titles, or mythological events become an intimate part of a person's present identity. To lose this claim to the past is to lose part of who one is in the present (A. Weiner 1985:210).

The notion of inalienability has difficulties on the Lelet. Categories of wealth objects which Weiner would label as inalienable under some circumstances become alienable, moving from their rightful clan or lineage owners to another clan or lineage. What is needed, I argue, is an examination of the process of categorising an object, its value, what can cause this to change, and the various contexts where valuables do change hands. More useful, for the Lelet at least, would be to view wealth objects on a continuum from 'immobile' or 'mobile', according to contexts. These distinctions reflect indigenous notions and categories of wealth objects more than do 'inalienable' and 'alienable', in their use of body tropes to convey collective identity and attachment of persons and objects to place. Moreover, focusing on the movability of wealth objects captures the contestations over valuable things. Often such contestation is magical: people employ magic to seduce these objects from their owners, using images of human bodily movement in spells designed to detach them.

Shell valuables, or 'shell money' as they are sometimes called, are collectively referred to as *levenepene* or *mis*. These consist of small red or white coloured shell disks threaded on a string(s) to which some form of ornamentation is attached at one
end. This can be simply a u-shaped seed pod with some shells attached or larger more elaborate woven and beaded ornament (see plate 11). A distinction is made between the types of valuable used in everyday exchanges or, as one man put it, 'to buy women and pigs', and those that belong to a clan or lineage and are not ordinarily transacted (cf. Nash 1987:153).

I will first discuss the former, more moveable, category of valuable. There are several different types of valuable, of varying colour, disk size and length in use everyday exchanges. There are levenedasilok (long, red disks), levenedalixlik (shorter, with red disks), levenelolot (a mixture of red and white disks), levenebungbung (white disks), leveneagun (very small white disks). The latter two are rare and not often seen, mainly because the Lelet do not make levenepene and traditional sources have been replaced. Today, valuables are produced by migrants from the West New Britain town of Kimbe resident in Kavieng and are purchased for cash. The amount paid for a levenedalixlik is about twenty five kina while the amount paid for a levenedasilok (slightly longer with more decorations) is about thirty to thirty five kina. Because these valuables are made by women from Kimbe they are sometimes pejoratively referred to, by men, as 'something women place between their legs', a denigratory allusion. I have also heard these types of valuables bought with money referred to as 'rubbish' and not having 'power'. They are seen to lack power because only store bought string and fishing line is used in them - not indigenous string or vine. The latter are seen as essential to the life of the Lelet people, being used for numerous purposes, from tying taro parcels to fence posts. Because string and vine are so widely used, it is said that they are the 'backbone of the place'. The significance of the string on which the disks are threaded will emerge when I discuss the more valued heirloom valuables below.

People say that the more valued levenepene strung on local vines have their origins in a cave found in the heavily forested fringing range near the village of Lawasama. This cave has a pool which people liken to the sea because it ebbs and flows. This pool is referred to as loxontass (patch of sea-water), and in the past it was used in collective rain magic ceremonies. Caves like this, with 'sea-water' pools, are found in a number of other places but only this one is connected with the origins of shell valuables. Tradition has it that people collected stalactites (lurus sumbuang - breast of the cave) in bamboo tubes which were then left to 'rot', allowing any excess water to drain off and the stalactites to solidify. They were then removed from the bamboo tube and cut into disks which were threaded on strings. Such stories evoke not only the connection of breasts, sea and valuables but the importance of caves as places of great power where wealth is often found.

The term leveneavolo applies to all those valuables to which a person has rights of ownership, such as shell valuables, knowledge (in the form of magic or narratives), and gardens. In short, this term is applied broadly to all categories of heritable wealth, which are passed down the generations, whether they follow the maternal or the paternal line.
Plate 11: Shell heirloom valuable
The most highly valued, desirable and important *leveneavolo* are those belonging to a clan or lineage, such as the heirloom valuables which originated in the cave cited above. These heirlooms often have individual names and life stories. Such heirlooms are often in the possession of the head of the clan or lineage, and are transmitted by him to his sister's first born son. They may be transmitted to his own son if that son has married into his own clan, as in cross cousin marriage. If a clan's or lineage's heirlooms are in the possession of a female member, they may be transmitted to her son or even her daughter. Clan or lineage leaders apportion their valuables at feasts either before or after death. Some prefer to disperse their valuables when alive so the heirlooms do not go astray or to the wrong people. The first valuable dispersed will be the main heirloom, which goes to the man's sister's son or if a woman has control of it to her son. Following this, heirlooms and ordinary valuables are distributed in order of value. This can involve the distribution of large numbers of valuables both of heirloom and non-heirloom type. Each person who receives a valuable at these feasts is obliged to slaughter a pig at the final mortuary feast for that leader (see chapter seven).

**Secrecy, seeing and desire**

A man or a woman usually keep their valuables wrapped in cloth, made from the bark of a breadfruit tree or some store bought cloth, forming a bundle called a *laplus*. This bundle is secreted away in a dark place of a house, strictly out of the sight of prying and desiring eyes. The most important valuable(s) the heirloom(s) are kept at the bottom of the bundle with lesser valuables being piled on top. Sometimes at the bottom of the bundle is a valuable made of small, fine white disks, which has many shells and particularly dogs teeth attached. This and other relics are placed there to magically 'pull' other shell valuables to the bundle. Some people place pieces from stalactites with an accompanying spell, so that, like the water dripping continuously from the stalactite, valuables will continuously come to the bundle. People wishing to protect their valuables from theft may even place sorcery parcels to invoke the life forces, *lau*, to attack the thief. The bundles I saw often had small bone fragments or teeth at the bottom for similar purposes.

Insects such as the *latkin palus*, known for their stillness and their desire for cold places, are sometimes placed inside. The name of this insect is derived from woman (*latkin*), because women are said to stay in places without fire. It thus evokes the immobile state women are thought to ideally embody. Generically, *palus* can apply to all insects because they tend to stay in cold and dark places, not moving when touched. One man even suggested that heirloom valuables 'smell the cold places', i.e. they search them out. A bundle of valuables should remain silently hidden in its cold place, not moving from that place, like an insect. The insect, which ensures the necklaces remain and do not move, might be accompanied by ginger or other shredded leaves to entice other valuables.
I am reminded of Foster's illuminating discussion of Tangan *am fat* - lineage heirlooms made from the giant clam shells, secreted away in their depositories (1990a:63 and 1990b:440-1). Significantly, the semantic domain encompassed by the Tangan term *fat* is much greater than merely this class of valuable but applies to stones, rocks and properties such as hardness, fastness, and durability, characteristics that convey the idea that wealth items should remain immobile and not move. Given that people on the Lelet try to seduce valuables from the rightful owner by making his or her body move, the importance of these bundles remaining in one place is obvious.

A. Weiner overstates her case that inalienable wealth objects are general examples of the paradox of keeping while giving. Keeping things as opposed to giving them away is, for her, 'essential if one is to retain some measure of one's social identity in the face of potential loss and the constant need to give away what is most valued' (1985:211). Although the Lelet are, in some circumstances, caught in 'the paradox of keeping while giving', they are under no compulsion or 'constant need to give away' the most highly valued wealth items. While there are strong cultural imperatives to give, to be seen to have an open hand from which many people have eaten, this is not always the case. As I have suggested, people carefully weigh up the extent to which they share and give. Should a food item or other comestible be in short supply or highly valued, people will be less likely to share it around, they may even hide it. This is not to suggest that they are greedy, although they themselves judge others on the basis of their willingness to give. What is at issue here is a value system based on seeing. People feel no compunction or guilt at consuming a pawpaw that is ripe and not sharing it, so long as this act occurs out of sight of others who do not know of it. But shell valuables and especially heirlooms are rather different. They are hidden from view because if seen they will be desired and coveted. Seeing is crucial to believing (see introduction) and to desiring. People are reluctant to display their valuables lest those that have seen them, and thus 'know' them, should try to seduce them away.

In a discussion of the nature of mediated exchange, M. Strathern argues that 'one gives what is *extracted* from one' and the donor has been 'persuaded, cajoled, and suffered the sorcery of another in being compelled to yield the gift' (1988:198, her emphasis). While there is undoubtedly an element of force that extraction presupposes, I further suggest that the detachment of valuables also entails elements of seduction, which, like men's seduction of women, is effected through the human body.

This is illustrated in the magic of *lavaxat* which aims to 'pull' or seduce valuables from their owners (cf. Feachem 1973:277). The ideal immobile state of secreted valuables, so essential for their retention, is reversed. The valuables move as the owner's body is moved. The skin of the body and the mind of the owner is moved, and thus valuables are detached. The spells and images are very similar to some forms of love magic (see chapter two). In both love magic and *lavaxat* magic, the skin is viewed as a site of vulnerability.
Some forms of lavaxat utilise the effects of the lagas, known for its power to cause disorientation in people who go close to it. In one form of this magic, the lagas causes the person to shake and thus cede control of his or her valuables. In another lavaxat using lagas, the spell 'turns' organs in the interior of the body to enact the release of the valuables. These forms of magic commonly employ the verb i nagong, meaning the liver is moved or 'turned', a term that connotes desire not just for women or valuables but also food.34

Having somewhere to sit down: Clan and lineage identity

Heirloom valuables are integral to the collective identity of a clan or lineage - to how its members see their shared historical past and themselves as a collectivity in the present. Like the clan or lineage itself, these valuables should ideally remain seated and immobile. Should they be lost, the clan and lineage are considered to be without a place to sit. While some heirloom valuables have their origins in the cave I mentioned, some clan and lineage narratives give accounts of their manufacture. The lineage Uatnanganang of Lulom clan is said to have derived its heirloom valuable from two women who manufactured them in a cave many years ago. The narrative, told to me by Likit is as follows:

It was the time of darkness when there was a lot of fighting. I think there was a homicide of a person in a clan here at the Lelet. The people who killed this person wanted to compensate for this killing so they sent a small girl to the Lelet, where she was to be eaten to replace the dead person. When she arrived at the Lelet, a man of Tunau clan placed a lavatpila (circular breast ornament) together with a shell valuable around her neck. He placed a black feather from the bird luxurusmixin (New Ireland drongo) in her hair. These are signs of a leader - a Masa. It meant he forbade her being killed and eaten. This girl stayed with his clan now and they gave a large shell valuable as a substitute for the girl. The clan of Tunau, through their actions, gave life to this girl. After this reprieve the girl resided at a place called Penarada. When she was adult, she and another woman of Tunau clan wondered where they could get some valuables from. In search of shell valuables the two women went to a cave in the forest called Labaxalik. While sitting in this cave they saw some spider's web and the two women took some of this and together with vine from the banyan tree made it into strings. They also made disks using a type of shell which they strung on the strings they had made. They continued to make shell valuables until they had two baskets full. The two women made a round basket each and then divided the valuables into two large valuables - one with twenty lengths for Lulom clan and another with twenty lengths for Tunau. Lulom got the valuable which they named Lenpitpisnu, which means the shell of a coconut. Tunau got the valuable which they named Lenabenbo, which means to hold someone together with a pig, meaning that the person who possesses it will have a lot of pigs and be wealthy as a result. The two women then returned to Penarada. The woman from Lulom went to a place called Kantaru and the woman from Tunau went from Penarada to Lavatkana.

Not only is this narrative an account of the origin of the heirlooms of the two respective clans Tunau and Lulom (Uatnanganang lineage), it is also an account of the movement of people from those clans and how they came to inhabit places on the Lelet. The lineage of Uatnanganang has its origins at the Dabinot and Panatgin on the east coast, and this narrative records the movement of a member of that lineage.
to the Lelet. Other narratives accompanying heirlooms tell less about the manufacture of the shell valuable and more about the movements and lines of descent it has followed. These narratives often constitute biographies of the heirloom and are used to define who the rightful owners are. One such narrative I want to recount is that of the heirloom named Losogong of the clan Katanuat and told to me by Lebeve:

There were two women of Suawas, daughters of one woman. One of these two women left Lenuat and married to the place Lanbulen. This was in the time before whites, during the times when people killed each other. The other married and went to the place near Lawasama called Lavata. This woman gave birth to a man named Lavaxanang who lived at a place called Kubixis and not Lenuat because he had been involved in a conflict. He cleared an area of virgin bush and made a new hamlet for himself. He planted all his gardens there and the place had been full of food. Some of this food he sold to others for small pieces of shell valuables, of the white kind and the small red type. These two types of disk he strung together, in a section of white and then a section of red, until he had an arm's length. He named this Losogong, which means lost or astray. He called it this because he did not go straight to the place of his grandparents but went to another place.

The term losogong applies not only to a person not residing in the place where they have traditional attachments, but also to heirlooms which have gone astray through appropriation by others. In such cases, these heirlooms are referred to as levenesogong which suggests that the valuable is lost. Both losogong and levenesogong are evocative of uncontrolled movement, which is not willed and purposeful, and, in the case of the man not residing at his ancestral hamlet, undesirable. It is not that movement of these valuables should not occur but more that it should be directed and controlled. People speak of them as having 'walked straight' when the correct lines of transmission have been followed (cf. A. Weiner 1976). These terms employ images of bodily movement and movement away from the body (in this case the rightful owner). Both derive from the stem gong, which is applied to movement of the body, particularly to those internal organs which are thought to be the seat of passions and which must be moved for people to relinquish their valuables (see above).

When a person who is keeping the heirlooms, dies he or she no longer has control over where the heirlooms will go. The people distributing them may not be aware who the rightful recipient is. Sometimes people may plunder the valuables prior to distribution, taking the most valued for themselves. This has occurred to two of the heirlooms of a lineage of Katanuat (see figure 5). One was taken from the laplus of Sinarong after his death by a member of another lineage. The second was given to the wrong person at a feast. The following is an account of its movements also by Lebeve:

Originally this shell heirloom walked straight and stayed with us in lineage A. Originally Kali had it and when she died it went to Sinarong. When he died it was exchanged in a kuruse to Lasa of another lineage. They were wrong about this, they gave it to him for no reason, he's in lineage B. Lasa experienced 'pain' over this heirloom by slaughtering a pig at the mortuary feast of Sinarong. This heirloom then stayed with Lasa until Ladankis took
it, fearing that he would lose it, and now she has it. When she dies it should be returned to Kanteren of lineage A when we will slaughter a pig for Ladankis.

As Lebeve indicates, the heirloom was transmitted to the wrong person, who was given it during the shell valuable distribution stage (kuruse) of a feast. A person given a shell valuable at this time, as noted above, is obliged to slaughter a pig at the final mortuary feast of the person in whose possession the valuables were. The slaughtering of a pig is referred to as experiencing pain (i songot). Because this pig was slaughtered it is necessary that lineage A reciprocate this exchange by likewise slaughtering a pig at the mortuary feast of the person who has been keeping the heirloom. Once the slaughtered pig is reciprocated the heirloom can return to its rightful owners.

Figure 5: Movement 'path' of a lineage heirloom

Because collective identity is inextricably linked with these objects, their going astray or loss generates heightened passions. Clans angry because their heirlooms have gone astray have been known to destroy or 'finish' other clans through sorcery. These sorcery attacks target women, as a clan or lineage's links with the past and future, by making them barren. One such example concerns Salut, a woman of Puraren clan, the sole surviving member (now deceased), who, refusing to relinquish an heirloom she had in her possession, was made barren by a clan who claimed the heirloom was their own (see plate 12).
These heirlooms are said by some to be the 'bone of the clan'. Bones, it is said, perdure and this is why they are widely used in magic. Clans or lineages which do not have these 'bones' are referred to as being like a 'nothing leaf'. Although the full import of this image was never explained to me, it suggests lightweightedness and transitoriness, being easily blown around and not heavy and enduring as are bones. Given the importance of seatedness or immobility to a clan and the fear of dispersion, as illustrated in the narratives of lineage formation, this is a powerful image. People refer to clans or lineages who do not have heirloom valuables as not having a place to 'sit down' on or 'sitting down with nothing'.

When clans or lineages are involved in conflicts over such things as gardens, enraged members will ask those with whom they are in conflict how many heirloom valuables they have. This is expressed idiomatically as - 'how many dark places do you have'. The figurative allusion to 'dark places' refers to the internal part of the valuable where the strings are threaded, also sometimes called its stomach. That this is the most important part of an heirloom valuable underlines the centrality of darkened interior spaces in ideas of power and wealth. Should a clan or lineage not have any heirlooms they will be unable to answer the challenge and will be humiliated as a result. If they do have heirloom valuables to answer the challenge, it will be necessary for each of the angry parties to bring them out for examination. The significance of the 'dark places' thus becomes apparent, the heirlooms are exposed and examined to see how many strings the disks have been threaded on. Shell valuables can have ten strings or less: a valuable with ten strings is valued far more highly. One ten-string valuable would, I was told, have more value than ten or twenty ordinary valuables.

These prized heirloom objects are sometimes said to have a great deal of destructive power. In such cases people, particularly children, are kept away from bundles of valuables so that they do not sicken or die. Such negative power can derive both from sorcery spells and parcels protecting the bundle but also from the life forces of those who have died an unnatural death (lau) which are said to be closely associated with them. This is preeminently true of those valuables given as compensation for a murder or unnatural death. These ten stringed valuables called lavatlaku (head of the lau), were sometimes used in the performance of lenaulom sorcery (see chapter two), being bent open to reveal the interior and the strings, while spells were incanted over them.

Heirlooms of a clan or lineage also have a great deal of positive power because of the narratives which accompany them. They are the medium through which narratives of origin or important events are transposed from the past into the present (cf. A. Weiner 1985:210). But the power of these objects and stories in constituting identity should not only be seen in terms of past and present but in terms of the future (cf. Munn 1992). In a similar way, Ricoeur has argued that in narratives the process of:
'repeating'... the past is inseparable from the existential projection of ourselves towards our possibilities. To 'repeat' our story, to retell our history, is to re-collect our horizons of possibilities in a resolute and responsible manner (1984:21-2).

Heirloom valuables are thus powerful in that, through their accompanying narratives, they project their owners' identity into the future by being that 'horizon of possibilities' towards which they move. They constitute the base or foundations on which a clan or lineage must be soundly grounded to project itself through time (and space). For a clan or lineage to lose its heirlooms is to lose its identity and become as a 'nothing leaf' - a leaf drifting without fixation, with nowhere to 'sit'.

In this chapter I have discussed the centrality of body and spatiality in Lelet kinship and social structure. I focused on those aspects of *loklok at lemenemen* central to the constitution of human relations. In particular, I have described the centrality of bodily manifestations of shame and respect, integral to the rules of exogamy which structure the choice of marriage partner. The values of shame and respect are more broadly significant in the realm of kin and affinal relationships, structuring the movement of bodies and especially women's bodies in space. Following a discussion of sexuality and shame I discussed the problem of the 'matrilineal puzzle' and the Lelet solution to it. Cross cousin marriage and notions of nurturant paternity are the means by which the Lelet reconcile the various conflicting loyalties and strains thrown up in a matrilineal society where strong affective bonds are created between father and son. This form of marriage is particularly important in overcoming the problems which arise when valuables are transferred. The origins, meanings and value of clan and lineage heirlooms are also conceived through corporeal images of a clan's identity, as having somewhere to 'sit down'. These forms of valuable not only 'seat' a clan or lineage in the past and present but constitute a projection into the future and an horizon towards which clan or lineage moves in time. Without such valuables a clan or lineage is seen not to have a future. These items must remain hidden from the view of others, so that others do not seek to seduce them magically from their rightful owners. Thus notions of seeing and desire for valuables echo the links between seeing and desire in the protocols of avoidance between persons.
Notes

1. People often use the Tok Pisin terms for the moieties and the birds used to mark them. Lamalom moiety is referred to as Bik Pisin and associated with the bird manigulai and Laragam moiety is Liklik Pisin and associated with the bird taragau. There is no indigenous exegesis on why these birds in particular are used, but I would suggest that it is because they are the most powerful birds in the area. Particularly important, I suggest, are the ideas of purposeful movement both in horizontal and in vertical space which characterises the idealised masculine body of humans. It is difficult to identify definitively these birds because they are rarely seen in this part of New Ireland. People say that lamalom are common in the Barok area near Kanam where many are said to reside in a large lima or banyan tree that is magically evoked in some gardening rituals. B. Clay identifies the birds as follows: Bik Pisin as *Haliaetus leucogaster* and Liklik Pisin as *Pandion leucocephalus* (1977:36). Wagner identifies Bik Pisin as the white bellied sea eagle (*Haliaetus leucogaster*) and Liklik Pisin as the white-headed sea hawk or possibly the brahmany kite (*Haliastur indus*) (1986:50). Powdermaker identifies the moiety birds as the eagle (*Haliaetus leucogaster*) and the fish hawk (*Pandion leucocephalus*) (1933:33). My identifications using the book *Birds of New Guinea* by Beehler, Pratt and Zimmerman (1986) tend to follow B. Clay's, although I remain uncertain whether these are correct. The brahmany kite identified by Wagner is known to the Lelet as the bird mesan which commonly feeds on snakes.

2. Similar embodiments for clan but not moiety membership are reported by Blackwood (1935:42) for the Solomons. See also A. Weiner who notes that members of the four exogamous groups (kurula) on the Trobriands also distinguish group identity through the marks on their hands (1976:51-2). See also Battaglia (1990:76).

3. When blinking is pronounced and protracted it is seen as a portent of the death of another member of that moiety.

4. There is considerable difficulty and risk in trying to break down words such as *libibinat* into its respective parts and my informants offered little exegesis on it. The main constituent of *libibinat* is *nat* which has a number of meanings. It can mean small - for example, a small pig is referred to as *natbo*. It also has connotations of being the first, as in *lenat meren*, a term which applies to the first born child. The term *lenat meren* also applies to a clan's leader because he is the first born. Quite literally the term *lenat meren* means small eye. A person who has their origins in a particular place (aspires) is referred to as *lenat avolo*, with *avolo* having connotations of continuity and transmission over time. As a verb *i nat* means to bite.

5. *Lentus* - one breast; *lurus* - two breasts.

6. The clan Kanumulu is also said to have dispersed and fragmented into several lineages after a conflict over the making of an earth oven on the west coast where this clan originally resided. In this story conflict arose because everybody was too slow in collecting the materials for the earth oven and when it was finally unearthed the food was undercooked. The clan Bungaring at Limbin also fragmented into lineages over the making of an earth oven.

7. In practice some of these rules are policed with more vigour or obeyed more carefully than others, and to some extent I am presenting how people abstractly talk about them. Thus, while some people avoid their mothers-in-law (*utulum*), others disregard the spatial proximity rules because they say that they will go close to this person when they bury them, so why should not they go close to them in life.
8. It should be reiterated that my insights and observations are overwhelmingly drawn from discussions with men and thus present a masculine viewpoint. This applies even more to sexual matters.

9. There is an imported form of magic which makes its practitioner invisible, employing the remains of a black cat, and this is possibly what is referred to here. In addition, there is magic that facilitates illicit sexual encounters that even the woman does not know about. Some men claim to possess magic that can send all the occupants of houses into a deep sleep which enables them to enter and have intercourse with the women. I was told of one man who used similar magic to avoid being beaten by the patrol officer during the Australian colonial period when he was late for the compulsory meetings (lain).

10. To breach the rule of moiety exogamy and marry within the moiety is referred to as *i epot berebet* or *i epot lili*, which simply means to marry within the moiety. Modjeska reports that among the Duna sexual morality was severe and women who breached it were either killed or maimed. This did not apply to men who elicited sympathy by saying they had an erection and what could they do (1982:67).

11. The sexual secretions and fluids of dogs can be used to ensorcell women if they refuse men's advances. Women who have been ensorcelled in this way become promiscuous and, like dogs, do not discriminate among their partners. This form of sorcery is not unique to the Lelet, as I collected an example from a Lelet man who obtained it from the Duke of York islands.

12. Women are often seen by men as the origin of conflict in society. All fights, I was told by men, have their origins in one thing - women. One man saw women as 'poison' because of their supposed corrupting influence on men, arousing men's desires. Some men also say women distract men from purposeful and presumably important actions.

13. The pig is referred to as *lobokawuk* or *lobomamang*. *Lobo* means pig and *kawuk* derives from one of the types of tree often used to make the rope for women's basket - the *laxawuk*.

14. In the past child betrothal (*aura lono*) was common. It involved the parents of a boy approaching the parents of girl in the opposite moiety to arrange their marriage when he was older. Neither children were aware of these arrangements and it is said that boys were often surprised to find they were going to marry a particular girl. To set aside a girl for betrothal the parents of the boy were required to give some shell valuables to 'mark' the fact.

15. The wife's parents will make a return payment of a pig and some taro to the husband's kin to enable her to visit her parents and help with work there. This is called *lesep amet puvorong*, meaning to 'kill' the bridewealth and occurs at mortuary feasts hosted by the husband's kin.

16. The 'path' or road is a common metaphor employed in a number of contexts, often it signifies the means by which wealth is obtained. For various uses of this metaphor in Melanesia, see Damon (1983:307-8); Feil (1984); Jolly (1991:52); Munn (1977:40 and 1983:278-9) and M. Strathern (1984a: 165).

17. This seems to be the case only today. Previously, but only rarely today, a distinction seems to have been made on the basis of gender, male cross cousins using the term of *koupe* or *luwopno*, while female cross cousins would use *koko*. Cross sex cross cousins would also use *koko*. The male cross sex cross cousin can also use (like the situation with *nasong*, *utulum* etc) the prefix *luwut* to distinguish the barrier between himself and the woman.

18. This form of marriage is referred to as *koko i epot* or *lepot tuntuna*. Sometimes it is also referred to as *lepot tonu*, meaning the person has married endogamously within the village or hamlet.
19. Two examples of this strategy occurred at a feast at Murass in 1991. One example was over a heirloom which was in the hands of the feast host but which should have been in the possession of the woman who delayed the proceedings. The second example involved a man who held up proceedings because the feast host's clan had in its possession some magic belonging to the clan of the man. Once they had received their recompense the two were grabbed, taken some yards away and unceremoniously dumped on the ground.

20. This process of continually 'marrying back' is referred to as lepot amlong.

21. In this regard, I agree with Thomas when he criticises Weiner's earlier paper, arguing that the focus is on 'broader similarities rather than the differences between particular kinds of valuables and the distinctive purposes which some may have' (1991:23).

22. The latter is not a vernacular term but appears to be widely used in New Ireland to designate shell valuables.

23. Some of the heirlooms I saw are identical to the valuables collected in northern New Ireland and currently in the Field Museum (Chicago) collection. See for example the photographs (plates xx; xxi and xxii) in A.B. Lewis (1929). See also the photograph of tsera in Powelrmaker (opposite page 209) which is identical to some I saw on the Lelet (1933).

24. Darkened interior spaces of caves and holes as the source of wealth are significant to the Lelet as well as elsewhere, occurring in cargo cult narratives. For example, M. Young reports that there is a myth on Misima of a giant snake who guards a cave full of gold (1987:238). I heard a similar story, except in this case the snake was guarding a diamond. This occurred near Namatanai and concerned two brothers who entered a cave in which lived a huge python (a masalai, see chapter four). The brothers approached the python and stroked its head, saying they wanted the diamond it was resting its head upon. The snake raised its head and they took the diamond, which was sent to Port Moresby, but there was not enough money there to purchase it so it was sent overseas.

25. Stalactites are used to enhance the efficacy of hunting spears. The imagery employed here is that when water drops from a stalactite it falls in only one place and the spear should similarly fall in one place and not miss its mark. For similar reasons they were also rubbed on sharpened bamboos placed on the other side of garden fences to entrap pigs as they jumped the fence to plunder the garden.

26. The verb from which leveneavolo is derived, i volo, invariably has connotations of continuity in time. Thus the power of the larada, the clan tutelary beings, is referred to as i lolos i volo, meaning their power is continuous.

27. The clan heirlooms are generically called leveneavolo at libibinat. The lineage heirlooms are called leveneavolo at lavatparus.

28. This is referred to as loklok anarong and occurs at the stage called kuruse held either at the feast laxaxabis or luxuxuruse, if the leader is dead, or at laxaxibisto or luxuxurusero, if the leader is still alive.

29. This occurs in a process referred to as 'the eye has been carried' (ga xip meren).

30. These parcels are called luxuxunaulom or luxuxusitsit and are associated with the sorcery lenaulom (see chapter two). The owners might have to protect themselves with medicinal herbs, should they wish to open the bundle.
31. In a similar way kula valuables are gendered in relation to movement. Armshells are identified as male, while necklaces are identified with females, the former are more mobile, the latter more sedentary (M. Young 1987:239).

32. The insect *latkin palus* is also placed in people's trade stores so that money there does not move but remains fixed in its place. There is an insect called *lenagumiding*, which if it calls out in your house means that shell valuables will come there. *Miding* is a metaphor for shell valuables, and means the stomach of a flying fox, which is long and thin. Magic used by people to entice valuables from their owners often employs this term. Flying foxes are renowned for their constant movement in search of food - discussed later (see chapter five).

33. The mechanics of seduction and detachment of valuables is also common to the Massim, where the ritualist beautifies himself so that he can move his kula partner to release shell valuables (Munn 1983:285).

34. Thus, if someone speaks of a taro tasting good or 'sweet', they would use *loxongkun i nagong*. As a noun form, *lenagong* is another word for *lavaxat*. Gong is also used as a woman's name.

35. This is termed *pram*, the vernacular being *legesasongo* although this is not widely used. These terms apply to a valuable fully stretched out between the two hands across the chest.

36. If someone is lost in the forest the verb *i sogong* is used.

37. Not having anything to 'sit down' on, is also more widely applied to the lack of other forms of heritable wealth, such as land or knowledge.

38. Munn argues that the past-present-future relation 'is intrinsic to all temporalisations irrespective of focus, inasmuch as people operate in a present that is always infused, and which they are further infusing, with pasts and futures' (1992:115).
Chapter 4

Imagining other bodies and the world of non-human beings

The non-human corporeal beings, the larada and the lagas, are the subject of this chapter. Both larada and lagas are powerful beings who occupy monstrous bodies or, in the case of larada, other natural forms. These beings live side by side with humans in terrains and imagined worlds that overlap and sometimes coincide. I focus upon the conceptualisation of these beings, their form, their powers, and their relation to humans, seeking especially to draw out the significance of notions of movement and space for these non-human beings.

Larada are the vehicles through which kinship collectivities are connected to tracts of land. The relationship between humans and larada is one of kinship and, like clans, larada have the ability to move. Narratives of the movements of larada imaginatively transforms space from landscape into lived place. Just as larada can move towards people and attach them to land and place, they can also move away, unsettling the tenuous connection of people with place. The relation between lagas and humans is very different; it is always an ambivalent and tense relation, often characterised by illness, violence and death.

In this chapter I explore the ambiguous relationship between these two kinds of powerful beings and humans in both their negative and positive effects. These effects further illustrate the vulnerability of the human body at its boundaries (see chapter two) and further reinforce the body as the threshold of people's encounter with the world and others within it. People can communicate with these beings and they are widely invoked in magic, but their power and dangerousness necessitates that particular measures to empower the human body must be taken before such communication is safe.

The multiple bodily forms of Larada

Larada are powerful, knowledgeable and, in some circumstances, vengeful beings which can assume many animate and inanimate forms. Such variety of incarnations means that larada are difficult to categorise in English terms. The usual gloss of 'spirit' is inadequate, failing to recognise the embodied nature of these beings. Their transformative power enables them to become invisible lacking corporeal substance, or to manifest themselves as corporeal beings or inanimate objects (cf. Fox 1924:78;
Hughes 1988:67 and Valentine 1965:179-80). As corporeal, live beings they can take the form of snakes, possums, dogs, pigs, eels, sharks, octopus, trees, plants - even white people. Sometimes, when incarnate in animate form, larada remain invisible to people but they manifest themselves more often in different inanimate forms which remain visible to humans, such as stones, water-holes and caves. Often the form taken is abnormal or monstrous, setting them apart from normal animate and inanimate things (cf. van Baal 1966:178-90). For example, they can take the form of an unusual shaped stone, a deformed plant or a two headed possum (see table 2).

Larada also have amazing powers of regeneration. If, for example, a person cuts a snake from a larada abode in many pieces, it will not die but will reconstitute itself. The complete destruction of a larada can only be achieved by burning it on a fire, thus completely extinguishing its regenerative ability. The larada can also generate and some are said to have given rise to particular clans. The lineage Luxulep of the clan Tunau is reputed to have originated from a short yellow snake larada called Lumu, which gave birth to a girl. Logolos told me this origin story:

A man went to a larada abode where he pulled at a vine hanging in the trees. At the end of this vine there was a child who was asleep. When the man tugged on the vine the child awoke and cried out. Hearing this he wondered what it could be. Again he pulled on the end of the vine and again the child cried out. Out of curiosity the man drew the vine towards him only to discover a child at the end of it. The man took the child to his home. When he arrived home he was asked by his wife where he found the child. He replied that he found it at the end of a vine at a larada abode. That night they firmly locked up their house suspecting the larada might come in search of its child. As they had suspected, during the night a short snake left the abode, in search of its child. Finding the couple's house and knowing the child was inside, the snake began to shake the house. The wife went to the door to see what was shaking the house to find the snake, which demanded they return the child. The snake told the couple that it was its own child. The woman went back into the house, returning with some shell valuables which she hung on the door to placate the larada snake. On seeing this, the snake returned to its abode leaving the child with the couple. The child grew up and married a man, later giving birth to two children, a boy and a girl.

This originary role is one illustration of the close relationship between people and larada, another is land tenure. Larada are integral to a clan's possession of particular tracts of land and, as I describe below, people have a kinship relation with their clan larada. Ownership of a clan's parcel of land is justified by larada residing on it. Clan members are aware of their respective larada, and of origin stories or narratives concerning them, and can use these in disputes over land ownership. There may be a single larada abode or several on a clan's land.

The name for these abodes, lubungtada, technically means a group of larada. In practice, however, they are mostly referred to in the singular form of larada. This ambiguous designation reflects the ambiguous ontological status they embody. All things, whether animate or not, that live in close proximity to one of these sites are said to be larada, including the site itself. If, for example, a snake is found near a larada water-pool then this snake is considered to be a larada.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Larada name</th>
<th>place</th>
<th>clan</th>
<th>larada form</th>
<th>detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Limbin</td>
<td>Limbin</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>water hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Laxalatada</td>
<td>Lenuat</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>oyster shell in hole beneath large banyan tree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Latbeve</td>
<td>Latbeve</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>two stones shaped like sharks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Meraxake</td>
<td>Latbeve</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>water hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Puroro</td>
<td>Puro Lenuat</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>tree lined spur where larada snake Simut lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Meraxawus</td>
<td>Puro Lenuat</td>
<td>Katanuat</td>
<td>cave with white-skinned being</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pidik</td>
<td>Pidik</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
<td>hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lantoang</td>
<td>Lantoang</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
<td>hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bungaring</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
<td>hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kantada</td>
<td>Kantada</td>
<td>Bungaring</td>
<td>two water holes one male and one female with python/vine called lubusorada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Onolom</td>
<td>Balute</td>
<td>Lulom</td>
<td>water hole with snakes and coloured plants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Metlaki</td>
<td>Metlaki</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
<td>cave and waterhole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Kanemeroborada</td>
<td>Metlaki</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
<td>pig - loborada</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Latbungtada</td>
<td>Lavaon</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
<td>water hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Metsangasang</td>
<td>Lavaon</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
<td>two holes in close proximity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Liit</td>
<td>Liit</td>
<td>Kanumulu</td>
<td>stream running from cave in which a snake lives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Lavaartoontada</td>
<td>Danagum</td>
<td>Lamawan</td>
<td>tree with crabs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Lavaartoongumtada</td>
<td>Danagum</td>
<td>Lamawan</td>
<td>paragum plant lining a valley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Ladotada</td>
<td>Lawasama</td>
<td>Luxun</td>
<td>possum with two heads and two tails</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Meraxawus</td>
<td>Murass</td>
<td>Murass</td>
<td>hole with white skinned anthropomorphic beings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Waro</td>
<td>Lempatnas/Kolube</td>
<td>Kantaon/Solong</td>
<td>small hill with sand, coastal trees and crabs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Pentangarang</td>
<td>Lempatnas/Kolube</td>
<td>Solong/Kantaon</td>
<td>two rocks one marking each clan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Katalu</td>
<td>Ladan</td>
<td>Angkalanga</td>
<td>large tree with python/vine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Luruglas</td>
<td>Luruglas</td>
<td>Luben</td>
<td>oyster shell in hole and coastal vegetation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Luruglas</td>
<td>Luruglas</td>
<td>Luben</td>
<td>cave with oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Lubentada</td>
<td>Lubentada</td>
<td>Luben</td>
<td>cave with net and oyster shell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Lavatnnon</td>
<td>Lavatkana</td>
<td>Lamangan</td>
<td>clump of trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Metanop</td>
<td>Lavatkana</td>
<td>Lamangan</td>
<td>clump of trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Tunau</td>
<td>Lavatporo</td>
<td>Tunau</td>
<td>python/vine in clump of trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Lavatkaba</td>
<td>Lavatkaba</td>
<td>Tunau</td>
<td>black two headed snake called Lubungomo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Dasu</td>
<td>Lavatkana</td>
<td>Tunau</td>
<td>water hole with cave and python</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In cases where a clan has land dispersed over a large terrain, each of these separate parcels of land has a *lubungtada*. Water-holes, caves and clumps of trees are often the abodes. If there are several *larada* abodes on a clan's land, one is said to be dominant and controls or 'bosses' the other abodes (see maps 4, 5 and 6). It is from these dominant abodes, *laxatitada* (the eye of the *larada*), that the *larada* are said to travel. The *laxatitada* sometimes bear distinguishing marks or features that signify lineages within the clan. The *laxatitada* of the clan Katanuat is a water-hole, named Limbin, located a few kilometres from the village bearing the same name (see map 7). When this water-hole is cleared of debris and mud, the water effuses from several holes in its depths. Each of these holes or 'eyes' is said to mark a lineage of the main clan.

At the site of another *larada*, Lirin, there are three separate marks, designating two lineages of one clan and one of a completely different clan. At this site, which lies on the border of the land of the clans of Kanumulu and Lamawan, are three holes in a limestone rock face, each of which exudes water. The hole on the northern side designates the clan Lamawan, whilst the two holes on the southern side designate the two lineages of the clan Kanumulu - Sunass and Kantuba. The relative direction and location of these holes also delineates the layout of each of these clans' lands. Other manifestations of the *larada* are a shark called Lapemut, belonging to the Lamawan, and a white skinned person, belonging to the lineage Sunass.

Map 4: *Larada* abodes in relation to hamlet and village sites
Map 5: Clan land boundaries

Map 6: Larada abodes in relation to clan land boundaries
In some instances two clans can share the same larada, though this seems rare. Two clans, Solong and Kantaon, of Lamalom moiety are in this position, sharing the same snake, Pagamlamat, a python which lives in a bay at Kolube on the west coast of New Ireland. People say this python has a line of lime-powder drawn down the middle of its face, dividing it into two halves. One half of the face marks the Solong and the other marks the Kantaon. These two clans also have a larada called Pentangarang whose abode is on the border of their respective clan lands, where there are two stones, one for each clan. It is said that the close proximity of their respective larada has meant that these two clans have formed a strong relationship. In the past this meant that they supported each other in times of war and at feasts. Nowadays, with the cessation of warfare, this alliance is maintained by reciprocal support and sharing, both at feasts and in everyday practical ways.

Refiguring the human form in lagas

For the Lelet, lagas are real and powerful beings, rarely seen but often experienced. Generally, they are feared and avoided because of their ability to cause illness to people who come close to them. Lagas primarily inhabit the heavily forested remote areas, generically referred to as 'big bush'. Occasionally, they might reside closer to a hamlet, in a cave, a large tree, or a clump of bamboo or trees, where they are sometimes seen or intuited by the human inhabitants. The spatial terrain in which lagas moved, lived and interacted with humans was considerably greater in the past than it is today. The power of the Christian church is believed to have caused their retreat from close proximity to humans (cf. Valentine 1965:179, 183). This has not occurred with larada, I argue, because, unlike the lagas, the human-larada relationship is one of kinship. Given the larada's connection with land tenure, to undermine that relationship is to unsettle human connection with the land. However, despite the inroads of Christianity, lagas remain an important part of the Lelet people's imagination and cosmology and, as with larada, they have been incorporated into the Christian belief system.

Lagas are not characterised by such a diversity of forms as larada and they do not bear individual names or have relationships of kinship with humans. In the main, lagas are monstrous derivations from a basic anthropomorphic body, but vary in appearance, size, and effects on humans. As with larada, lagas are difficult to categorise in terms of ontological status and it is a mistake to assume they are simply incorporeal bush spirits. They have a physical or corporeal form - particularly important in magic where parts of their bodies - their bones - are widely used.

Although less capable of transformation than larada, lagas can occasionally change form - for example, from being like humans they can change into a flying fox, a cat or other animal. This transformative power and their invisibility means that there is no clear or uniform corpus of knowledge, exegesis or description of them (cf. Valentine 1965:170). Indeed concepts of lagas are fraught with internal contradictions and ambiguities. This is partly because the world which these beings
are imagined to inhabit is not easily accessible; in order to see *lagas*, for the invisible to be rendered visible, people must undergo a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence or have revelatory dreams.

Despite variations in the form and qualities of *larada* and *lagas*, there are some similarities, and the difference between them can be unclear. For example, when describing types of beings found near *larada* abodes, people say a *lagas* which lives in close proximity to a *larada* abode is not only controlled by that *larada* but is another embodied form of it. This is not so in tracts of land away from *larada* abodes, where the *lagas* are thought to be unique beings in themselves and not manifestations of *larada*. The abodes of *lagas* are in no way connected to the land tenure system, as is the case with *larada*. They predominantly reside in trees, stones or caves, the most common being deep caves with small restricted entrances opening into a larger cavity. In these places they live in ways similar to humans.

One man, Lisiva, ventured into a cave to gather some fragments of bone for magical purposes. Inside, he saw a *lagas* with very long hair reaching to its shins. It looked, he said, like an ordinary person except that it had exceedingly long teeth and finger-nails and toe-nails like those of a cat or possum. Within the cave there were stone walls dividing it into separate rooms, and Lisiva saw a stone table which was smooth and attractive. Not only can *lagas* have residences similar to human beings, they can be married and have children. However, people do not speculate very much on what they eat or whether they garden. Some say if *lagas* had gardens these would be visible and that they merely subsist by eating insects, such as butterflies and ants. Many descriptions of *lagas* derive from oral history and mythology, although people occasionally encounter them when returning to their hamlets after dark. In such encounters, the *lagas* is not seen but its presence felt. Later, when asleep, the person will have dreams in which the *lagas* is seen.

Some people believe that *lagas* are considerably richer materially than humans (despite their diet of insects). In the eyes of some, these beings are as wealthy as white people. One young man said that the *lagas* had a subterranean world underground where they had the same material goods as white people, such as cars and even cities. This perhaps explains why I was often asked curiously about some caving expeditions in the mid-1970s, and especially as to what the white people were searching for. People perhaps suspected that the search was for wealth rather than for scientific knowledge, which I suggested was the purpose. Given the pervasive connection between darkened places and wealth that mentioned in chapter three, this is highly likely.

The delineation and constitution of space: *Larada*, seating and movement

Not only do *larada* and *lagas* differ in their forms and effects, they also differ in their relation to space. A primary association between the Lelet and the land they inhabit is through *larada*. These tutelary guardians, which root particular clans in certain bounded locales, like humans, have the ability to move around. They thus
evince the tension between being attached to place and movement away from that place, as do human individuals and collectivities. Again, images drawn from the body are used to conceptualise their world and social relationships within that world. Larada can either be 'seated' or mobile. The movement of larada maps space for people of the clans who inhabit it. As Tuan notes 'Space is transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning' (1977:136). Larada are pre-eminent in this process. Clan land boundaries are said to result from the movement of larada prior to their settling in fixed locales.

Larada are territorially located on a clan's land but are by no means permanently seated there and have the capacity to travel from their abodes to other spaces in a controlled and purposeful way, along paths. This is one of the primary means by which space is mapped and recognised as 'place' for people. Larada, I was told, 'get up and sit down in other places'. In the process of larada becoming seated in unclaimed tracts of land, space is possessed, named and converted into inhabited place for the larada's human kin. In this context, seating is used as an image for marking the stabilisation of identity and its union with space. Like the Dreaming stories of the Australian Aborigines, a mythic topography of place is formed as these powerful beings traverse the landscape, structuring undomesticated space into place (cf. Myers 1986:48).

The ability of larada to move and migrate means a clan's land can be scattered over a large geographical area. Dispersed clan lands are therefore an indication of the past migrations of the larada. The travels of larada and the sites at which they settle are important in naming land; the plateau is dotted with the numerous named larada abodes (see maps 4 and 6). The movement of larada from their lubungtada can be temporary or permanent. Temporary travel from their dominant abode to other abodes dispersed around a clan's land is not usually random, but is to other sites either proximate or several kilometres away. For example, the larada snake of the clan Katanuat, Simut, is said to move from its main abode to other abodes close by. This snake resides near a large tree located close to the hamlet Lenuat and sometimes moves from there and changes places with another snake larada living at a tree lined spur, Puroro. At other times Simut is said to travel to the other lubungtada, such as Latbeve and, formerly, to a water pool called Merakeke that has since dried up (see map 7: numbers 2, 5, 3 and 4).

The larada of the clan Bungaring was also said to have moved in the past but now is still. The larada in this case consists of three hills, each representing a lineage of the main clan (see map 7: numbers 7, 8 and 9). These hills, people say, would in the past change places with each other. The larada of the clan Lamawan, a white shark named Lapemut which lacks a tail, normally inhabits a water hole at Lirin but is said to travel to the east coast near the village of Lavatbura, where there is another lubungtada of this clan.
When larada move permanently, and thus claim new clan lands, they travel along valleys that do not belong to any clan. These valleys become the 'paths' along which larada are said to have travelled to open up and colonise new and vacant spaces. Land that has already been delineated by larada of other clans, and thus claimed, cannot be reclaimed. If a migrating larada attempts to traverse land already claimed by another larada, the latter will be angered and the two will fight. The following origin narrative told to me by a member of the clan Luben, Lakana, illustrates the claiming of land through larada movement. The clan of Luben had its origins in the sea at Kinaba on the west coast of New Ireland, in an oyster (laxalas), the shell of which is used by women to peel taro.

In this originary time, some men were on a reef, fishing with a net (uben). Nearby there was a larada abode, a lubungtada, a hole in the ocean called Kanemara. This larada was avoided by people in canoes, for if a person's shadow were cast into the hole, that person would die. The oyster larada would not leave its abode during the day, but only at night. One night when the oyster larada was moving about on the reef, it was caught by the fishermen in their net. When they had caught enough fish, the fishermen went ashore to divide their haul and then to cook some of it. They decided to cook and eat the captured oyster larada. It was placed on the fire to cook and thus to open, but to no avail. They tried to open it with a knife but this also failed. One man then tried to smash the oyster open with a rock but this did not succeed either, the oyster remaining intact. Finally, admitting defeat, the men threw the oyster away. During the night when the fishermen were all asleep the larada communicated through a dream with the man who had tried to smash it open.
The oyster told the man that he would from now on bear the name of Luben [derived from uben] and the larada would be his guardian.

Lakana went on to say that the discarded oyster, together with the fishermen's net (uben) which also became a larada, journeyed from this site to a water pool at a place named Sarum. This water pool then became a larada of the clan Luben. The oyster larada, however, did not remain 'seated' there for very long because a person in an avoidance relationship with it visited the pool. This lack of respect caused the oyster larada to flee once again. From this coastal area, it moved into the mountains of the Lelet, journeying via the hamlet Tumalom at Kaluan, where it found that all of the land was already occupied by other larada, and thus by other clans. It then moved to the other side of the plateau where it found an unoccupied area of land. Here the oyster larada and its companion went to a place where the oyster made a hole for the net to reside in. This larada abode was named Lubentada after the primary larada residing there - the Luben. Afterwards, the oyster larada journeyed to another place and made a hole there, naming this place after itself - Lurugalasirok (big oyster). It then moved and made a further hole, also naming it after itself - Lurugalaslik (small oyster). Finally, when the oyster larada made its abode, the net larada, Luben, moved to demarcate the boundaries of the Luben clan land, in a way similar to the enclosing and trapping of fish. As Luben journeyed along valleys and over mountains, mapping the space of its land, it occasionally came to the boundaries of other clans' lands, so that it was forced to change its route. For example, in the south its path was restricted by the land of the clan Kantaon, in the north east by the land of the Bungaring, and in the west by the land of the Solong. Lakana, who told me this legend of the origins of his clan and its larada admitted that he had never seen the oyster larada, but he authenticated his story by pointing out that coastal vegetation grows at the places where the larada now resides.

The wandering movements are part of the process by which space is named and transformed into meaningful lived place when the larada, and following them, people finally take up residence. These movements become the inscription or signature which verify and authenticate ownership of that land. Narratives like this serve not only as the means by which emotional and aesthetic roots are attached to place, but they are also important in giving people genealogical connection to that land, and thus rights of ownership and control. Once the larada have ceased their travels, their human clan members can legitimately occupy the newly colonised land, becoming seated in place. This seating of larada, as well as of their clan members, while giving the illusion of permanence is not necessarily presupposed by it. These beings, like humans, have the ability to move from their place, enacting the tension between being immobile and 'seated', and mobility and 'getting up'.

The movement of lagas to peripheral spaces

While lagas also move across the landscape, this does not occur in the same way or for the same reasons as for larada. The movement of lagas is not part of the process by which land is colonised or demarcated. The association of lagas and space is
nonetheless important, since these beings and their abodes are seen as dangerous, and are therefore avoided.

Prior to the coming of the Christian church, the landscape inhabited by *lagas* encompassed the area of human settlement. In those times, *lagas* were considerably more threatening to humans, as shown in narratives which tell of them entering unlocked houses and abducting the inhabitants. At night people were reluctant to venture outside their secured houses. The range of these powerful beings has been curtailed by the church, whose power is seen to be antithetical to theirs. People say the church chased away those *lagas* who inhabited spaces close to villages and hamlets, showing that *lagas* are fearful of the church (cf. Sheret 1976:81; Valentine 1965:183 and White 1988:24).

The antithetical power of the church became apparent when I was planning to visit an abode with a noted weather magician in search of *lagas* bones. Initially, it was suggested that I carry a Bible to foil the negative powers of the *lagas*. It was concluded, however, that I should not do so because I would not then be able to gain access to the cave. The *lagas*, fearful of the Bible but masterful at trickery, would fail to open the appropriate entry, or even send me and my guide into a cave from which we could not extricate ourselves.

Although fear of *lagas* has declined, people are reluctant at night to venture deep into the thick rainforest of the mountainous areas fringing the plateau where they are believed to be abundant. *Lagas* can do bodily harm to people, causing them to lose their faculties and become disorientated and lost (see below). The *lagas* act as guardians of the forest, controlling human access to game. They are said in particular to 'control' (boss) possum, a prized game meat. In the southern periphery of the plateau, near the hamlet of Lawasama, when men are hunting in the forest there is an etiquette which must be observed. Hunters should not remove their shirts and should refrain from speaking Tok Pisin or even the vernacular. The hunters must communicate in a special 'bush language' to make the *lagas* believe the hunters are also *lagas*. Should a man use his own language, even to say 'lagas', in the forest while hunting, he will not kill any game. For the same reasons, men even avoid thinking about *lagas* while hunting, lest the supply of game is curtailed. Should someone, on seeing a hunter leaving for the forest, wish to sabotage his hunting trip, he or she merely says to him/herself that the hunter is going to kill a *lagas* and that hunter will return empty handed.

When I was to go for the first time to an area of forest near Lawasama, I was told that I would probably become slightly ill because the *lagas* would not recognise me. People often cautioned me not to wander alone in the forest because the *lagas*, not recognising me, would be likely to attack. The resulting illness would be slight, possibly a shaking fit, or I might dream a *lagas* was grabbing me, and be startled. It is in this forest terrain that *lagas* have transformative powers akin to those of *larada*. Here, the *lagas* can change their corporeal form to that of a possum, and, if inadvertently hunted, can change into another form to escape. Ladansen told me the
story of when he was hunting possum with some other men one night. Seeing a possum at the top of a tall tree, they decided to sleep at the base of the tree until morning when they would climb up and kill it. When they awoke the following morning the possum was gone, the hunters realised it had been a *lagas* in the form of a possum which changed form and escaped.

Like humans, *lagas* have desires which can be directed towards humans they have seen. Should a *lagas* inhabiting peripheral areas see people having sexual intercourse, it is likely to follow one of them (depending on its sex) and to have intercourse, causing illness or death to the human. Similarly, should *lagas* see unfamiliar persons washing naked, they will follow them and 'sleep' with them, making them ill or even causing their death (cf. Lane 1965:264). I was told of two cases of this, where a person, washing in isolated areas free from the usual constraints of modesty, preferred to bathe naked. Observing this, the *lagas* became desirous, followed the person and had intercourse during the night. Both people became sick, one dying and the other recovering through curing magic. This was the explanation given for some footsteps I heard outside my house late one night. If it had been a human, I was told, dogs would have barked and, as there was no such noise, it was suggested it may have been a *lagas* who had observed me washing naked and become desirous of me.

**Illness, death and vulnerable bodies**

Some of the powers of *larada* and *lagas* powers can be appropriated by humans, while others are always dangerous and harmful, causing illness and even death. I now first discuss the negative effects they can have on those in close contact and then their more positive powers, which can be harnessed for the production of knowledge and magical power.

The forms of power possessed by *larada* and *lagas* are glossed in similar ways to human powers, but are perceived as much greater, easily surpassing those of humans. The powers of the *larada* include some that *lagas* and humans do not possess. Thus, while the general term for the power of *larada* is glossed as *lolos* other more benign forms of this power are referred to by different terms. The more negative forms of power are referred to as *i axalat* and *loklok ase*.

*Larada* are capable of transgressing spatiotemporal limits, enabling them to see into the future. Once the future is seen, *larada* can translate it into the present through some form of sign which can be interpreted by people. The power of omen or seeing into the future is called *loklok ase* and is something *lagas* do not possess. More specifically, *loklok ase* is the ability to alert people to the impending death of a fellow clan member. Commonly this is realised through the *larada* taking on some unusual corporeal form or doing some extraordinary act.

Often these omens seem rather mundane, such as the howl of a dog or the coloration of a water-hole. The water hole *larada* of Katanuat clan, Limbin, mentioned above, is said to change colour to yellow, black or red in forewarning the
death of a clan member. (Red indicates death for several *larada* water-holes). More complex omens involve the appearance of *larada*, such as dogs or pigs coming out of their caves to be seen or heard by their human kin. One such example is the *larada* of the clan Bungaring who have a *hubungtada* named Lemerauk or Meradu (cave with dogs) at a place called Sakisixis. People say should a person in Bungaring clan be about to die, the dogs will leave the cave and run to the edge of the hamlet Bungaring and then back to their home, howling as they go. The death omen of a *larada* of Kanumulu involves a python which lives inside a cave that feeds the stream Liit. Should a member of this clan be about to die, the python blocks the flow of water, reducing it to a mere trickle. Sometimes as a portent, the water of this stream turns red in colour.12

As I have mentioned, *larada* can change form at will. Sometimes these forms are visible, such as a snake, or invisible, such as a woman who cannot be seen except in sleep or with one's eyes shut. Changing form both tricks and invokes fear in people. This transformative power also confounds human intent, a person who consciously searches for a *larada* abode will be unable to find it, whereas a person not consciously searching might stumble across one unexpectedly. This transformative power, *i axalat*, is possessed only by *larada*. It is the power not only to change form but to trick or challenge, tease and frighten. It thus can cause harm, particularly to those who ignore the warnings of the *larada* to be circumspect.

One story illustrating the power of *i axalat* was told to me by a member of the clan Katanuat, on whose land the incident occurred. A woman who is married to a member of the clan Katanuat, and who is in the relation of *nasong* to her husband's *larada*, was planting a regenerative taro stalk in a communal garden. The *larada* performed an act of trickery by transforming the taro she had planted into another plant, a form which *larada* are often said to take.13 By this act of transformative trickery, the *larada* was warning the woman she must observe the correct etiquette of respectful avoidance when in proximity to her husband's *larada*.

Normally, among the Lelet, clan members do not fear, nor can they be harmed by, their own *larada*. These beings are not considered to be innately evil. As Lataba said: 'Larada are not evil, they are good 'people'. If you respect them, they will respect you'. Thus, a person can go close to their own *larada* and, if it takes the form of a tree or a clump of bamboo, can even cut it down without fear of retribution. People can even, in some circumstance, kill their own *larada*. This is not the case among the Barok studied by Wagner, where, although the *masalai* or *tadak* maintains a tutelary interest in the clan and its members, it can nonetheless be wrathful towards, and even harm, them (Wagner 1986:101). This is particularly the case if a person who has recently had sexual intercourse or is menstruating washes in a *tadak* stream or water-hole. No matter what their clan status, the *tadak* will attack them in some form of reprisal.14 A similar situation is reported by B. Clay who states that, among the Mandak speaking people of Pinikindu, *larada* are feared by clan members and non-members alike, causing illness and even death (1977:37).
For the Lelet, *larada* are nonetheless, in some circumstances, powerful, capricious and harmful beings. In such contexts they are generically called *lasepnasong*. The *nasong*, as explained in chapter three, is a type of affinal relationship circumscribed with the most severe rules of avoidance and respect, for example the relationship between a mother's brother and a sister's son, who each call each other's wife *nasong* and are called *nasong* by the respective wives (male sp: MBW and ZSW; female sp: HZS and HMB). Irrespective of the sex of the person, the *larada* takes on the relation *nasong* to the spouse who, like any *nasong*, must maintain respectful avoidance of the *larada*, which will also under normal circumstances maintain respectful avoidance. Just as the *nasong* relationship among humans associates seeing, sexuality and shame in governing the movement of bodies spatially, so these are invoked in human relation to a non-human *nasong*.

People must show respect or feel shame towards their *larada nasong*, and they are strictly forbidden to go close to any *larada* abode of their spouse (cf. George 1988:66). Numerous stories document the consequences of such lack of respect. Men or women, who do not show such respect are liable to suffer ill effects from the *larada*, which will colonise his or her body. Given that it is predominantly women who move to live on their husband's land, it is they who are most at risk from enraged *larada*. In addition to kin and gender proscriptions on movement, women must be wary not to offend their husband's *larada* and must control their movement accordingly. The following story illustrates this well:

A woman named Katen had a garden in the bottom of a valley close to a *larada* at Latbeve (see map 7: number 3). One time she walked down to her garden and began working there. She was pulling taro out of the ground and removing the skin, which she failed to throw away but merely left, discarded on the ground. After Katen had finished work she returned home to her hamlet. During the night the *larada* came to the garden in the form of a snake and smelt the discarded skins of the taro that she left behind. The snake continued to smell the discarded taro skin and to eat it. The snake then went to the place where the woman had been seated and smelt the place where her body had imprinted a mark in the soil. While it was sniffing at this spot the snake was saying to itself, 'Oh, this woman does not feel shame towards me. I shall marry her, she does not feel shame towards her *nasong*'. The *larada* then went regularly to where the women lived and, when she and her husband were asleep on their bed, the *larada* would sleep underneath it. It did this every night. When the husband and wife slept in other places, the *larada* snake would follow them and sleep under their bed. Eventually, the woman started to be affected by the snake's presence and her skin showed signs of illness. The sickness gradually got worse and still the *larada* followed her. Katen lost a considerable amount of weight and her body became progressively covered with sores until she finally died.

This narrative shows how those that are disrespectful, whether by ignorance or malice, are liable to retribution in the form of sickness and even death. A common idiom in such stories is that of the *larada* 'marrying' those who breach the rules of respectful avoidance and shame. This means, in effect, that the *larada* and the disrespectful person become one, as do other ordinary couples who become one consubstantial body on marriage (see chapter three). The *larada* enters the person's body, often through the act of sexual intercourse, causing illness, and does not separate from them permanently until the person's death or until a cure is effected.
Larada can embody human or animal form when this occurs (cf. Codrington 1881:277 and 1972:172 and Malinowski 1961:76-7). The snake is a particularly common vehicle of larada attack upon women, while it commonly takes a female human form with men. Death from the effects of larada is one of the commonest forms of unnatural death. The larada Lubungumo, of Tunau clan, a black python with two heads (one head coloured with red ochre and the other with white lime-powder), is reputed to have killed several men and women who disregarded affinal etiquette. In one case, the python invaded a woman's body as retribution after seeing her have sexual intercourse at its abode. Seeing the woman's genitals meant the snake desired her, as men do, and was led inevitably to breach the rules of respect and avoidance that normally govern the relationship. As the woman was disrespectful the larada too was disrespectful. The python reproduced inside the woman's body and during the daylight hours the woman's stomach became distended from all the larada snakes inside. The larada migrated at night, so that the woman's swollen stomach slackened. After exiting via her anus, the larada snakes, which screeched like a posse of rats, would return via the same orifice to recolonise her body at dawn. This continued until the woman's death, after which the snakes left her corpse to return to their abode.17

The forms of illness caused by the retributive power of larada differ from those of lagas, which I discuss below. The skin and the body are the primary targets of larada attack. The boundaries of the body are transgressed and the larada comes to inhabit the victim's body, resulting in various sores and internal illnesses. Sometimes, there are pus-filled oozing sores that will start in one part of the body and then spread, covering the whole body, until the person dies. With other forms of illness, the colonised person feels as if there is something moving about underneath the skin while asleep. This is the larada moving about within the body. In another form of illness, which is said to result from stepping over the path of a larada, the person's legs become swollen with fluid. Larada residing in the legs can cause the experience in the late afternoon and evening of the legs going numb and having 'pins and needles', which is said to be the larada rising. If people in an avoidance relationship with a larada eat food from a garden which is located close to its abode they can experience various forms of illness such as stomach pains, vomiting, swelling in the legs and boils covering their body. Similarly, a person who washes at a larada water-hole, can experience itchy skin, profuse sweating and erupting sores. A leech found near a larada abode is said to be an incarnate form of the larada, and should it gain sustenance from the leg of a nasong, the leg swells up.

These illnesses illustrate the extent to which people's transgressions come to be embodied by them. The bodies of those who fail to respect the larada carry tangible signs of their transgression just as when people steal or ignore prohibitory signs (see chapter two). These illnesses transform something known internally to the transgressor to something externally visible to other people.

The relationship of respect between a person and their spouse's larada becomes one of fear when the person is on their spouse's clan's land. Movement of people in
avoidance relationships can be exceedingly circumscribed, due to fear of *larada* attack. This fear may cause many forms of avoidance - of not going to certain places at night lest one meet a *larada* moving around, as they are prone to do at this time, of not washing in a water-hole and also not eating certain foods. For example, some people avoid eating chickens, which in scavenging for food might have eaten a *larada* in the form of a snake. People resident on the clan land of their husband or wife avoid throwing refuse close to a water-hole, lest the *larada* consumes this rubbish, causing the person whose rubbish it was to become ill. People stay clear of places and paths where *larada* are thought to move, lest they step over the tracks of *larada* and become ill.

The location of a *larada* abode will often influence choice of residence. One man told me that he did not live near his traditional men's house because it was located too close to a *larada* abode of his clan and he feared for the safety of his wife. Previously, she had come close to death through illness brought on by a *larada* which she had inadvertently cut whilst slashing grass close to its abode. The husband, too, had been affected by an illness in his leg after he stepped over a shell *larada* on a path on his wife's land. As a result of such afflictions, the couple was forced to relocate several times, in attempts to rid their bodies of the *larada*. They finally settled back on the man's land, but this time they started a new hamlet site a considerable distance from his traditional hamlet and the *larada* abode located near it.

**Cannibals, sorcerers and tricksters**

*Lagas* are considered to embody more negative powers than the *larada* whose negative powers are clearly tied to transgression of affinal protocols. The *lagas* are more capricious; they do not follow or reinscribe affinal rules and their negative powers pertain beyond forbidden places. In some cases *lagas* are benign and playful, and can be befriended, but mostly they are antagonistic. Many narratives of past encounters describe *lagas* as cannibals, sorcerers and tricksters renowned and reviled for their attacks upon humans. These fears are still prevalent, particularly for those who venture into the forest, even though the overall risk is thought to be less. Since they are more negative, and because they are not connected to the land tenure system, *lagas* have readily been incorporated into Christian cosmology as 'evil spirits' or 'demons', despite their equivocal nature.

The power of the *lagas* is manifest in a kind of 'fight' that inheres in their skin and is not dispersed throughout their body. The skins of *lagas* are not only considered to be inherently dangerous, they are also smelly and encrusted with dirt. Their skins are also cold, and they can occasionally be seen atop large trees, warming themselves on sunny days. Such bodily characteristics reinforce my argument that *lagas* should not be seen as ethereal spirits but as having a corporeal presence, although having a body which is in many ways the antithesis of the human.
The 'fight' of lagas can make people unconscious and is sufficiently powerful to kill but does not affect people such as magicians who have empowered their bodies by practising fasting and sexual abstinence (welwen). It is through such regimes that the boundaries of the body are regulated so that an ideally powerful body is produced. In particular it makes a person invulnerable and able to withstand the powerful and otherwise deleterious effects of lagas (see chapter two). Moreover, it is through the closing of the body in these regimes that the invisible lagas are made visible. Thus, performances such as the dances utilising paraphernalia containing bones from lagas are displays of extreme masculine potency.

While lagas have some transformative powers, such as the ability to change into a flying fox or a rat, they do not have the range of transformative powers of larada. Lagas do not have the power to make omens - to transcend the spatial and temporal present, which enables larada to see into the future and thus warn humans of impending deaths. Lagas also lack the powers of trickery of larada, although they can use mimicry to lure humans to their deaths. Occasionally, humans can escape death by tricking the lagas. Some stories tell of stupid lagas easily fooled by simple tricks enabling potential victims to escape.

Other stories tell of lagas lying in wait to overhear the plans of potential victims, such as a pair who intend going hunting or fishing the next day (cf. Valentine 1965:191). The lagas then mimics one of the hunters, waking the other early in the morning while the real hunter sleeps, a subterfuge facilitated by the dark. Thus tricked, the hunter accompanies the lagas to the forest where the lagas hopes to kill and eat the naive hunter before he realises his folly. The popular story of Lasi tells a similar tale of trickery by a lagas. In this case, the victim, having climbed a tree to find a possum, realises that his hunting companion is really a lagas and so remains at the top of the tree for safety. Unperturbed, the lagas waits at the base of the tree until the human tires. From the tree, the trapped man sings a song calling his hunting dog, Lasi, left behind in the hamlet. The dog, hearing his name being sung in the distance, comes to the rescue of his master, killing the lagas.

Some narratives tell of the attempts of lagas to kidnap residents of hamlets who venture from locked houses at night. One example is the following story set in Limbin village:

A group of men had just finished eating in the men's house at the hamlet Kanenbe, when they sent a man called Simatra out to get the water that had collected in bamboo containers leaning against a large tree nearby. Outside, he was seized by a lagas who put him on his shoulder (in another telling, Simatra was held by the tail of the lagas) and started running with him into the forest-covered mountains. The waiting men, finally impatient, called out, 'Simatra, Simatra, Simatra'. Receiving no answer, the men went in search of him, following his track to the nearby mango tree. They continued to call out but Simatra was unable to respond well because the lagas had inserted rolled leaves in his mouth, ears, and nostrils to silence him. Nonetheless, he managed a muffled answer which the men heard, finally realising that he had been taken by lagas. They collected some ginger for magical purposes, as well as branches and bamboos to use as torches. At first, the men ran together but then they divided into two groups, one following the path the lagas took, while the other followed a different path to cut off its escape. Two men who followed the second
trail sat down at an area called Penawut and hid, ready to ambush the *lagas* if it tried to escape that way. When the *lagas* with Simatra came along this path and was almost past the two hidden men, one of the men, Lenpo, grasped Simatra and shook him free from the hold of the *lagas*. Lenpo then ran, carrying the unconscious Simatra, while the other group in pursuit made a lot of noise, eventually scaring the *lagas* away. Lenpo carried Simatra to the men's house where he too collapsed because he had come in contact with the 'fight' of the *lagas*. Both unconscious men were treated by heating their bodies, which were cold from the 'fight' of the *lagas*, and by having chewed ginger sprayed over them, and they revived.

The effects of the 'fight' inhering in the skin of the *lagas* range from merely feeling the presence of the *lagas* to total disorientation and loss of faculties, and even to death. Those who unfortunately come into contact with *lagas* accidentally, without fasting, can have the deleterious effects dissipated by the application to the skin of the heated leaves of some plants. The heat is said to remove the 'fight', dissipating its power. One person who collided with a *lagas* when walking home one night said that he mainly experienced fear that manifested itself bodily, as his 'skin getting up'. His skin also became cold, covered with gooseflesh, and his body hairs stood on end. Later that night he dreamt he saw the *lagas*. Such bodily experiences are usual when humans encounter *lagas*. The fright may also cause that person's *loroang* to leave the body through the top of the skull, as is the case with fainting. When a lone person encounters a *lagas* and their *loroang* flies, their ears are said to become blocked and they become 'mad', losing all capacity to think and reason (cf. McArthur 1971:174). (This is why *lagas* are used in some wealth-enticing magic. See chapter three). If this occurs, the person's body or 'skin' wanders aimless and disoriented until the *loroang* returns when all the faculties are completely regained, but should it fail to return, death results.

If someone encounters a *lagas* in the forest and becomes dumbfounded and disoriented, the consequences can be disastrous. In such a state, a person can become lost in the forest, never to be found again. Those who become lost are either adopted by the *lagas* or perish there. The former happened to a teenage boy who disappeared in the forest, in about 1984. The day before he disappeared he had been cutting bamboo in the forest and had carried it back to the village. The next day the boy went off to search for something he had left behind and never returned. People searched fruitlessly for him, following his footsteps until no further trace could be found. Much later his parents hired a Tena Buai from Lihir Island, to utilise his skills as a specialist diviner to seek out their son. The man sent his *loroang* from his body on a shamanic flight in search of the boy and saw him living in a cave with a family of *lagas*. The boy was now a man, with long hair and a beard. The shaman tried to entice him back with him to the village but he was unresponsive and remained with the *lagas*.

Other deleterious effects and illnesses occur if *lagas* come into contact with babies, up to about the age of three. *Lagas* have the ability to steal the strength of sleeping babies left unattended in gardens (and occasionally even hamlets). This is not *loroang* theft, but is rather a substitution where the *lagas* replaces its bodily growth pattern for the child's. Such a substitution affects the growth and
development of the child. When this occurs the lagas denies the child normal growth, so that the child's 'skin' becomes affected - it loses weight and is generally lethargic. People recounted several instances of the unusual growth, bodily deformity and even insanity in children affected by lagas in this way. A child in a village at the coast is thought to have been so affected. This child has a disproportionately large head and a small body, is incapable of speech or movement and merely sits impassively in its house (cf. Mosko 1985:31).25 Should this child require anything, it simply points to it. Such tragedies can be avoided if the parents act quickly and take the child to a curer competent in this type of illness and the growth and development of the child will follow its normal course unaffected.

Despite their considerable powers, lagas are renowned for their sorcery, carried out for motives similar to those of humans. Just as humans are thought to be motivated to commit sorcery out of jealousy of another person's wealth, so are lagas. One such practitioner, who lived near the hamlet of Bungaring, was reputed to be a female lagas whose breasts thumped against her chest as she ran. Stories tell that this sorceress's breasts were so long that she kept them out of her way by hanging them over her shoulders. When she was not ensorcelling her victims, she would bash them to death with her breasts, and then feast on their flesh.

Revelatory, magical and innovative powers

As is common in other parts of Melanesia, non-human beings inhabiting the world are the source of much human creative and magical power.26 Larada, it should be noted, do not help or protect the members of their clans in the ordinary sense of guardianship. Although they occasionally communicate with humans (not necessarily a clan member), this is not initiated on the human's part. The influence or benefits are obtained from larada through powers transferred in revelatory dreams.27 The revelatory and innovative power of larada is not a new or recent phenomenon, and was common in the pre-contact past in the production of cultural items, such as malangan objects, or magical powers. The story of the origin of a circular type of malangan no longer manufactured by the Lelet best illustrates this.

This type of malangan is called Kambilin and was originally shown to a woman of the Luxulep lineage of the clan Tunau. She was returning to her hamlet at Laburubut in the late afternoon after collecting water, when she came upon a lagas who had just come out of a cave which was the home of a larada. The larada lived in the deep recesses of its abode, and the lagas left the cave at a place called Labagat, where there is a large Lavaraon tree standing above the cave opening. During the night while the woman slept, the larada, embodied as a lagas, communicated to her in her dreams. The lagas told the woman that something would be shown to her while she slept. It described to her the making of the circular malangan with cane, and the various leaves of trees used to decorate it. The process of revelation completed, the lagas asked the woman if she had remembered the design and how to construct it, and she replied that she had.28
The powers of larada have also been utilised in a wide range of magical practices. In the more 'indigenous' forms of magic, some of which are still in use, the power of larada is used in forms of garden magic, weather magic, pig growth and pig hunting magic. In one form of pig magic, the power is harnessed to ensure the rapid growth of domestic pigs. This magic uses a type of grass found close to the entrance of a cave inhabited by numerous larada pigs. The magician holds a blade of grass in each hand while calling the appropriate spell, after which the grass is fed to the pig. Larada are also invoked in weather magic, particularly sun magic. One form shown to me utilises a crystal stone that was collected from the larada abode, Latbeve. The crystal is used in sun magic because its luminescent properties have similarities to the shining sun (see below n.35).

The powers of lagas are also important in magic, both in the local kinds, such as weather magic, love magic, protective magic, 'theft' magic, and in the new introduced varieties, such as Buai. These forms of magic either invoke the presence and power of the lagas through songs and incantations, or they use bones from these beings to summon the lagas and their power. Bones are newly obtained by visiting the places where lagas reside, usually caves (lemeragas), or are inherited from others who obtained them in the past. The latter is the case with skulls which are difficult to obtain, being hidden in a secret part of the cave, in the furthermore recess where humans dare not venture. In the past, men obtained the skulls by ambushing and killing lagas. This was done only after a regimen of fasting and abstinence of three to four weeks, during which little food was consumed except an occasional banana. When the man has obtained an ascetic and powerful body, he observes the lagas as they leave their abode, counting them by folding the leaves of a fern frond. He then waits for them to return in the late afternoon, counting them off (by unfolding the fern leaf) as they pass and waiting for the final stragglers. He then kills the last lagas, who is invariably elderly or a child. The body is left to decompose so that the bones and skull can be collected.

To retrieve other bones, the magician ventures into the homes of lagas, an act that requires at least a week of strict fasting and abstinence (some people say that even longer is necessary). This regime not only enables the man to gain access to the inner recesses of the lagas' cave, but also to see the bones, which, like the lagas, are normally invisible. During this period, the magician must be secluded from women and must subsist on a diet of bananas, which he himself has collected and cooked, free from the antithetical power of women. If a strict regimen is maintained, the door and path into the cave will be open and he will be able to see lagas and their bones. If the regime has not been rigid enough, access to the cave will either be closed off or no bones will be seen (cf. Codrington 1972:152). This was the explanation offered when I accompanied a weather magician in search of some bones in a cave, near the hamlet Bungbung, without success, although he had collected some there five years earlier. Some people also suggested it was due to my white skin, which would have been unfamiliar to the lagas. Furthermore, should the ascetic regime be inadequate, the lagas can disorient the magician in the cave making him unable to find his way.
out again. When the magician reaches the inner recesses of the cave, he must snatch the bones as fast as possible and leave immediately.

Lisiva, who described to me a particularly abhorrent looking *lagas* with long hair and teeth, said that he obtained a thigh bone, a piece of jaw-bone, a bone from the back and two teeth when he visited a *lagas'* cave. Some of these bones formed part of the paraphernalia utilised in a song and dance performance taken by youths to the coastal village of Katang, in 1990. This man also uses the bones to magically enhance his sales of fresh vegetables at market, which he does by rubbing the bone on his hands while uttering a spell. Customers at the market will be attracted to purchase his leafy vegetables because he has held them with his magical hands. The power of the *lagas*, he said, also helps him to confuse customers so that he can short change them. As mentioned previously, *lagas* are invoked in a similar fashion in other forms of magical enticement which aims to draw or 'pull' things such as shell valuables or pigs from people who do not wish to part with them (see chapter three). The 'fight' of the *lagas* causes people to become disoriented and to lose their faculties, particularly the ability to think and reason clearly.

There is a form of wind magic, named *loxonpixa at lonu*, which also relies on the power of *lagas*. This name means wind or bird (*pixa*) belonging to the hamlet, but, more euphemistically, a weather magician said the name meant 'wind/bird of women'. The imagery involved is of women who at varying times throughout the day sweep not only the area on which the houses of the hamlet are located but also the inside of houses. Like women whose days are dominated by the action and motion of sweeping, the wind magician desires that he creates a wind which also has that motion. Like the movement of the women in clearing away the rubbish that litters the hamlet site, the weather magician hopes his magic will likewise clean the hamlet.

In this magic, *lagas* are used to give 'power' or 'strength' to the main paraphernalia used - pieces of tortoise shell generically called *pixa*. The tortoise is also referred to as a 'bird of the sea'. This is because the tortoise, like birds, are thought to travel constantly in search of food. Tortoise do not rest, but come and go, in restless movement similar to birds (see chapter six). Tortoises have wings that 'cut' through the water in a similar fashion to the bird's wings in the air. Moreover tortoises, like birds, lay eggs. Finally, in this type of wind magic, the shell pieces are taken from the backs of immature tortoise while some other forms of more destructive wind magic use much larger pieces, taken from the mature tortoise. Before the tortoise shell pieces can be used in wind magic, they must be taken to the abode of a *lagas* where they are smoked over a fire, to which has been added other things that have 'fight', so that the smoke permeating the shell gives it power. This 'fight' facilitates 'getting up' or initiation of the wind, just as the 'fight' makes people's 'skin get up' if they come near *lagas*. This parallels the washing discussed previously, where the unreceptive skin of magicians is made buoyant and vibrant, and thus responsive to magic (see chapter two). Scrapings from a *lagas* bone and from some trees are added to the fire. One tree, ubiquitously used in magic and renowned for its 'fight', is used, as is another tree with irritant properties that cause itching. Scrapings derived from two tree branches that have grown crossed and rub continually together.
in the wind are also ingredients. The fire to 'power' the tortoise shell is lit at the opening of a cave of the type of *lagas* that has wings and can fly. In the cosmology of the Lelet wind is thought to emanate from these sorts of *lagas* caves dispersed around the landscape.\textsuperscript{32}

In this magic there is no extensive spell or accompanying song, merely a short phrase directed at the tortoise shell bird as it is placed on the fire. Wind magic is an important accompaniment to sun magic, and the wind is used extensively to disperse clouds before they can coalesce into rain-bearing clouds (cf. Codrington 1972:201). The words uttered summon the various trees burnt on the fire to 'fight the clouds'. More specifically, the image invoked is that, just as the bird cuts through the sky, the magician's paraphernalia, the tortoise shell, will do likewise, cutting through clouds and dispersing them.

The power of the *lagas* is also used in the sun or good weather magic that accompanies this form of wind magic.\textsuperscript{33} In this, the skulls of *lagas* are used, together with the skull of a person who has died a natural death and one from a person who has died an unnatural death.\textsuperscript{34} These skulls, which have been painted in red ochre and lime powder so they 'shine', are lined up on a bench under which is a fire.\textsuperscript{35} In one form of sun magic which accompanies the wind magic described above, the skulls are painted with a white line down the centre, with red ochre on each side. In another form, the weather magician paints the whole skull, in this case a human skull, with red ochre.\textsuperscript{36}

The process of weather-making is explained in the following way. The various life forces associated with the skulls are summoned, and travel to their corporeal form. In the process of moving, they collide and, since they are antithetical to each other, thunder results. When such thunder occurs in the west, it is a sign that the sun will shine the following day. Should the thunder occur in the east, it is a sign that it will rain. In some forms of sun magic, the exploding sound is also mirrored by the crackling and exploding sounds made by certain leaves placed on a fire.

In other forms of magic, the *lagas* power of invisibility is invoked. One such form, used by young men in search of illicit sexual liaison, is called 'escape'. This spell calls for the man to have the property of invisibility, enabling 'escape', just as the *lagas* does. These incantations are often of simple formula and require no paraphernalia. Such spells are often used in combination with other forms of magic using *lagas*, which make women sleep, facilitating illicit sexual union.

**Initiation and revelation of powers in the Buai cult**

The more recently imported forms of magical knowledge of the Buai cult also harness the considerable powers of *larada* and *lagas*. This knowledge is generally communicated through revelatory dreams or visions. There are several ways in which a man can be initiated in order to harness the considerable power of these beings. Usually these methods involve the magician being able to 'see' things shown
to him by either the lagas or the larada. I will describe first how these powers are obtained from the larada, and then from the lagas.

One means is through the construction at the larada's abode of a table, on which various substances, such as coconut oil and botanic matter, are laid and then eaten. The powers are thus incorporated into the body of the initiate magician. This method is one that allows the recipient to 'see' or 'dream' the power of Buai to creatively produce the songs and dances performed at large scale mortuary feasts. However, the person must still observe the rules of avoidance and respect as they apply to larada. A man cannot, for example, call on the larada of his wife.

In another type of initiation, the initiate undergoes various ritual ordeals at a larada abode. One form recounted to me occurred on the Duke of York Islands, where the initiate slept at a larada abode. After consuming some ginger plant and the leaves of various other plants, the man slept in a shelter built close to the larada, Korroboiroy, while the Tena Buai initiating him slept in his Taraiu. During the night, the life force of the Tena Buai entered the corporeal form of a python, which in this case had the distinctive feature of a beard. The snake wrapped itself around the body of the initiate and vomited a substance into his mouth which he swallowed. The snake here belonged to the Tena Buai and was not a larada, but was merely utilising the power of the larada to facilitate the transferral of the Tena Buai's magical power.

The acquisition of the magical powers of Buai is also possible from lagas and I will now explain some of the methods involved. Generally, the sorts of magical powers transferred in this way are not as formidable or dangerous as those transferred from the larada. The powerful new forms of sorcery such as iniet, komkom and lusuwo are transmitted using the power of the larada, but I did not hear of this being done through lagas. Some minor sorcery and protective magic is transmitted from lagas, but mostly it appears to be magic associated with the performance of songs and dances at mortuary feasts.

One way of doing this entails the consumption of bespelled ginger. The incorporation of the ginger into the body facilitates the transfer of power. When the person sleeps, the power, the mysteries and the secrets of Buai will be revealed to him by lagas in visions. The power of the ginger, and the trance-like state it induces, render permeable the boundaries between the invisible world inhabited by lagas and the visible world inhabited by humans. Through these practices people can cross the borders of spaces not normally accessible, thus making extraordinary powers available to them.

While some powers can be obtained from lagas through friendship, these are limited and do not include sorcery, which must be acquired through rigorous seclusion. Only the type of lagas called lababalantono can be befriended, these beings usually residing at a boulder, a tree or clump of bamboo. The method involves spitting the masticated stalk of a plant on the lagas abode. The person wishing to befriend the lagas will not immediately see it, but at night the lagas will
visit in a dream and speak to the dreamer. 'Why did you evict me from my home?' it will ask. The remaining stem of the plant is hidden somewhere in the person's home and the lagas resides where this is placed.\textsuperscript{38} During the late afternoon and evenings in dreams it will reveal songs, knowledge of curing plants, or other magical powers.

These more harmless lagas have also been known to leave money under pillows or in wallets, to the surprise of their human patrons (cf. Codrington 1972:152-3). Should people let it be known to others that they have such a friend, the lagas will invariably abandon them.\textsuperscript{39} One man was said to have befriended a lagas who resided inside a guitar hanging in his house. In the late afternoon and early evening the lagas could be heard playing the guitar. When asked who was playing the guitar the owner would reply his 'watchman' or look-out. Frequently, this befriended being would leave money for his patron. However, when the patron revealed this to other people, it ran away into the forest, never to return.\textsuperscript{40} The magical power in this instance is like knowledge and valuables, all of which should be kept secret; should they be revealed the power can be lost.

In this chapter I have focused on the forms of corporeality taken by the two types of non-human being existing on the Lelet and the forms of power, danger and illness associated with them. Both larada and lagas are extremely powerful beings and because of this they are a great source of power for humans. I have shown some of the ways new forms of knowledge and cultural artifacts are created after encounters with larada and lagas. Access to these powers necessitates the magician closing his body through a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence producing the ideal bodly form discussed in chapter two. Again, these magical powers are often internalised through acts of ingestion.

While there are similarities in how these two types of beings are imagined, there are also considerable differences. One of the most important differences is their effect on the relation of humans to space. Both affect the conceptualisation of space and its habitation but in different ways. The relationship between humans and larada is configured as one of kinship, mapped onto space. This is not the case with lagas, who are more maleficent and thus generally avoided. Because of their danger, lagas circumscribe human movement more than secure it.

While larada are important to the processes of demarcation of land in which clans become seated, the relationship of larada to that place is, nonetheless, tenuous. The tension between immobility and mobility pervades larada identities as much as human identities. Larada have the potential to move from the land they occupy, in the process uprooting their human kin. The gendered relationship of kinship between larada and humans becomes most clearly realised in the relationship between people and their spouse's larada. For those who move to their spouse's land there are many attendant dangers and they must strictly observe affinal etiquette. Just as the movement of bodies in space within the nasong relationship is governed by shame and respect, so is that between human nasong and larada nasong. The equation
between seeing and desire that exists in the human-*nasong* relationship is also evinced in the relationship between human *nasong* and *larada nasong*.
Notes

1. Larada (sg.) and lubungtada (pl.) are glossed in Melanesian Pidgin as masalai, while lagas (sg.) and lubunggas (pl.) are glossed as tambaran. I will use the vernacular because the lingua franca terms are not necessarily constant. Thus, the meaning of the term masalai when used by the Lelet may be considerably different from its use by, say, a Sepik people. Beliefs in masalai or beings similar to the Lelet larada are widely reported for New Ireland. See Albert (1987:91-9); Clay (1977:37-8 and 1986:50-6); George (1988:50-104); Jessep (1980) and Wagner (1986:99-120).

2. In the past, at the hamlet of Murass there were several white-skinned larada, who resided in caves underneath the hamlet. These larada ventured from their abodes to steal chickens from the human inhabitants. The abodes of this type of larada are called Meraxawus (cave of white-skinned beings) and these exist on the land of several clans. At the hamlet of Lenuat there is a white-skinned larada which can occasionally be seen in the late afternoon walking around the hamlet. Besides white skin these beings also have similar facial features to white people, and are not merely albinos.

3. Commonly the suffix tada is joined with other words to form the names of types of larada. For example, the lavaraontada translates as tree larada. Lavaraon is the banyan tree often located near hamlets and useful for locating hamlets from a distance. Tada is linguistically close to the Barok term tadak. See Wagner (1986).

4. This also applies to the other form of being - the lagas. Thus all lagas that live close to or at a larada abode are considered to be manifestations of that larada, whereas lagas that live in the forest far from any larada abode are considered to be lagas.

5. A larada water-hole or water-pool is a latbungtada.

6. The clans of Kanumulu and Lamawan are closely related, as the proximity of their respective larada and land indicates. Both clans are also members of the same moiety, Laragam. Although the specific details seem to be forgotten, some people suggest that in former times Lamawan was a lineage of Kanumulu that has since taken on the status of an independent clan. Possibly this is the case, as Lamawan does not have any lineages within it.

7. In order to make as clear as possible the nature of this equivocal being, the lagas, I have composed a description, amalgamated from many things I heard while in the field: (1) Lagas (sg.) and lubunggas (pl.) are the generic terms for all tambaran but also for one form of lagas itself. This type is anthropomorphic in form, with the many variations of appearance that humans have. Some have exceptionally black skins. At night in torch light, their eyes radiate a red glow, as from a fire. They differ from humans in that they have exceedingly long hair which can reach the ground. There is one form of lagas that is a dwarf, that doesn't wear clothes and lives in large trees. One person said the dwarf lagas was about three feet tall and had four eyes, two at the front and two at the back of its head. Unlike other types of lagas, this type does not make people ill if they come into contact with it. (2) Lubuxuremes (sg.) and lubungbuxurumes (pl.) - a form of lagas which causes illness if it sees or comes close to a human in the forest. It does not cause death but a sickness similar to malaria, with shaking and severe headaches, cold skin and swollen face and body. It can also make children wake and scream at night. (3) Luttam (sg.) and lubungluttam (pl.) - a very short anthropomorphic type of lagas which is exceptionally strong and which can be male or female, be married and have children. Luttam is as fearful of people as they of it. They usually live in caves in the bush but have been known to reside in trees. They do not garden, and eat only fish. Luttam are renowned for their ability to catch fish, at night using a small net. The luttam that reside at the Lelet journey to the coast each night for their fishing. They have considerable bravado despite their dislike and fear of humans, often using sleeping humans' fires to cook their fish. They have also been known to joke with humans.
whilst they sleep - 'here's some fish for you' - as they consume their catch in a human's house. There is a *luttam* which lives among a clump of bamboo at the rear of Lenuat hamlet and which can occasionally be seen wandering around in the afternoon. Similarly, there is a tree near Sinton hamlet in which a *luttam* resides. (4) *Sogalum* (sg.) and *lubungsogalum* (pl.) - another form of *lagas* with large black teeth and a wallaby-like head which it uses to split trees. (5) *Lasebalung* (sg.) and *lubungspebalung* (pl.) - a type of *lagas* which, although human in appearance, flies with wings like those of flying foxes. This type is aggressive, fights often, and is armed with spears and stone sticks. People say that when you are in the thick forest you can hear them hitting trees with their stone sticks to frighten people away. They beat (*i sep*) the buttresses (*balung*) of large trees, and it is this action which gives them their name. It sounds like the beating of a slit gong. If humans come close to them in the bush, the *Lasebalung* will throw stones and trees at them and, at night, the humans' sleep will be greatly disturbed. (6) *Lababalantono* (sg.) and *lubunglababalantono* (pl.) - these *lagas* live close to villages, are greatly aware of the people around them and even understand human speech. They are often seen and are not afraid when this occurs. They are not considered to be aggressive and thus not a threat to humans. They are sometimes befriended by people. (7) *Laraptava* (sg.) and *lubunglaraptava* (pl.) - a type of *lagas* that has wings and flies. The wings are believed to generate wind, which blows from the holes in the ground in which they live. These holes are called *lemramanman* - 'hole of wind'. (8) *Lorotkeka* and *lubunglorotkeka* - this *lagas* has a tail, which they have been known to use in the past to hold and carry people they have captured. Beings similar to *lagas* are reported widely in Melanesia. See Codrington (1972:152-3, 354-5); Feachem (1973:266-7); Fox (1924:138-9); Lane (1965:264) and Valentine (1965:190).

8. Movement occurring on a temporary basis is referred to as *larada lalau* and is particularly common at night. See also Brouwer (1980:81). *Larada* that do not roam around at night are referred to as *larada kitkis*, meaning the *larada* are firmly seated.

9. Further authenticity is furnished by the existence of an omen that indicates the impending death of a member of the Luben clan. Should a person in Luben be about to die the oyster *larada* makes an exploding sound.

10. For similar reasons people do not refer to possum by their proper name of *lado* but refer to them generally as game lest the *lagas* curtail supply.

11. People normally refer to the power of the *larada* as *larada i lolos* or as *larada i mumuat*, and the power of *lagas* in similar terms, both of which, as noted above, are also associated with humans (see introduction). To illustrate that the power of the *larada* and *lagas* is great and to differentiate it from the human, people would use *i volo* - signifying the power is enduring or continuous. The term *i volo* also applies to such things as heirloom valuables that are passed continuously down a descent line and to extensions in time (see chapter three).

12. When the flow is reduced to a trickle, it can only flow fully again if a member of Kanumulu goes to the entrance of the cave and calls out to the python, 'There is a bone stuck in my throat and I want the water to flow properly so I can have a drink of water' or 'I'd like to fill up my water container'. The *larada*, being responsive to its kin, then moves, allowing the water to continue on its proper course from the cave. Codrington gives examples of snakes being omens for death (1972:221).

13. This edible taro-like plant is referred as a *paragum* (*Alocasia*). Some go as far to say that any form of this plant found on a clan's land is a *larada*.

14. I asked people clearly whether this was the case for the Lelet. Even if a woman is menstruating she can wash at her respective *larada* water-holes. Woman who have married into a clan and are resident on that clan's land cannot under any circumstances wash at the *larada* water-holes of that clan.
15. The term *lasepnasong* takes its meaning from the word *sep*, which means the *larada* attacks and injures or even kills its *nasong*.

16. Because of this the abodes are sometimes referred to as *lenkotnasong* (place of *nasong*) or *lenkoikala* (forbidden place).

17. Not all people who reside on their spouse's clan land necessarily fear their spouse's *larada*. One noted weather magician acquired a piece of crystal from a *larada* of his wife and uses it in sun magic. As he explained, it was necessary that his magic harness the power of the *larada* closest to where he was working and he therefore had to acquire this stone from his wife's *larada*. He said that as he is looking after members of the clan of the respective *larada*, it would be pleased with him and not make reprisal. Nonetheless, he said he had to announce his intentions clearly before going close to the *larada*. Other people were not so sure that the *larada* would not be angry, and thought he was foolish to do such things. Eventually, they said, he would be afflicted by forms of illness common to *larada* attack.

18. The *larada* snake received a cut which failed to heal, a state which the woman's body also took on, becoming covered with suppurating sores. Her recovery was only brought about after she visited a magician experienced in forms of curing, in this case, derived from the *Buai* cult, although there are some indigenous cures.

19. *Lesep* is the usual term for 'fight' but this is not applied to the *lagas* because it describes 'fight' entailing action. To kill something or someone is referred to as *i sepamet* (he/she strikes something dead). An alternative word *lamamau*, or *lamama*, is employed to describe the 'fight' that *lagas* have in their skin - thus the *lagas* are said to have *lamamau at lagas*. Sometimes people say it inheres in their bones as well. This is an embodied form of power, inherent in an object or being - for example some trees are said to have this kind of power.

20. Under these circumstances, as in some others, the *lagas* are visible, although I am unsure why. It seems that *lagas* can make themselves visible to humans if they wish but otherwise remain invisible. Should people wish to use *lagas* for some magical purpose or obtain their bones, a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence must be followed, otherwise they are invisible.

21. It is for this reason that they are invoked in fighting and protective magic. Some of this is still in use today. One of the magicians accompanying one of the dances I witnessed, told me afterwards the dance was protected by invoking *lagas*.

22. Another person said that it was actually the *larada* of Katanuat, Simut, a short snake which in this instance took on the form of a *lagas* with a tail and named Lakemut. The same person also said he had previously seen Simut, which he described as being 2-3 feet long and fat, with shiny skin that changed colours. The *larada* had a head like a snake but a tail not at all like a snake in that it stood up at right angles to the body.


24. This is referred to as *lagas sixun mandak*, and literally means the *lagas* has substituted itself for the child. If it was merely the life force that was taken it would be glossed as *yixun loroang*. Similar notions of 'spirit theft' and substitution affecting babies are common in other parts of Melanesia, although it is often unclear which types of beings comparable to the Lelet are responsible. See Bulmer (1965:153); Chowning (1987b:156); Feachem (1973:267); Hughes (1988:68) and Meggitt (1965:122).
25. It was also suggested that the child's deformity could have been a result of the child's mother having illicit intercourse at a larada abode forbidden to her. Both informants, young men, said they were afraid of the child.


28. In the morning the woman told her husband that she had a revelatory dream in which she was shown how to make a malangan. The husband then asked her to show him how to make it, which she did. The man then took possession of it from the woman and it is men who became custodians of the malangan objects (as also occurred with the Tubuan masked figure. See chapter two).

29. Lisiva said that from ordinary produce, such as the tips and leaves of the choko plant he can 'pull' about 150 to 180 kina at market. This a considerable sum for produce that is generally seen as a second-rate method of earning money. He also said that he knew of a woman (not from the Lelet) who rubbed her hands with oil to help her efforts at selling produce. As she handled her products the oil coated them and attracted the purchaser by its radiance. He requested that I send him some oil from Australia, which was thought to be greatly superior to indigenous or store bought varieties in Papua New Guinea.

30. Sometimes these pixa are called lapka, another word for wind and bird - for example lapkaso means wind or bird for making the sun, or good weather (loso).

31. Bird of the sea - lapka boro larass. Tortoise (lavaipalagun) can also be referred to as pig of the sea - lobo boro larass, because when on the land they move as pigs do. Accordingly, tortoise can be eaten at the mortuary feast occurring after burial of a corpse. If wild pig were to be served at this feast, the host would be subjected to considerable gossip and scorn from the guests. Such scorn would not be felt should tortoise be served.

32. One weather magician, who has since died, said that these caves were to be found at the four cardinal points of the compass. He added that, normally, the homes of lagas are called lemeragas, but more specifically if they are the source of wind they are called lemeramanman (lemera: hole; manman: wind). This was disputed by the weather magician referred to in the text, who said wind-generating lemeragas were randomly located throughout the landscape. To find and see wind coming from these holes it is necessary to undergo a regime of fasting and sexual abstinence.

33. Unlike the power of larada the power of lagas is not invoked in garden magic. The 'fight' of lagas is considered antithetical to taro plants.

34. When used in sun magic, skulls are called luatso (stone of sun magic), and are the main paraphernalia used in two of the several forms of sun magic known to Lelet magicians.

35. This form of weather magic also employs the power of larada - specifically, the stone crystal called luattada (luat - stone; tada - larada), utilised for its luminescent properties. Two of these are used, one being buried beneath the fire and the other placed on the bench with the skulls. The common name for this type of crystal, outside the context of magic and not derived from a larada abode, is luatmonokbo (stone of pig fat).

36. These particular ways of colouring the skulls will be seen in the subsequent sunrises and sunsets, demonstrating to the people who have commissioned the weather magician that it is he who has produced the sun as desired.
37. The Taraiu is the haven where the master of Buai - the Tena Buai practices his magical arts and stores his paraphernalia. It is a Duke of York Islands' term for men's house. See Errington (1974:62-3 and 252).

38. Valentine mentions that people spit ginger to entice the spirits of the dead to come and reside in an object in their house. Spirits befriended in this way can act as aids in hunting and love magic (1965:174-5).

39. This is something the loroang of the dead can also do. Should a person reveal to someone else that small amounts of money are being left for them then this ceases.

40. People are not always successful at befriending lagas. If the place where the lagas lives is too far from the village of the prospective friend, the person in question is likely to be chased away.
Chapter 5

The origins of taro and the culture of famine

In the introduction I discussed the importance of food in the constitution of personhood and as a fundamental idiom of social relationships. The giving and sharing of food with others is fundamental to the definition of what it is to be human for the Lelet who confer great social and symbolic value upon it, especially taro. The arrival story at the beginning of this thesis showed that people perceive a disastrous state of famine to exist in the absence of taro, despite the presence of other food. When I asked which was the most valued food people proclaimed taro as pre-eminent, easily eclipsing all other foods. Moreover, people often recreate or represent their historical past through narratives about taro, which is integral to their identity and connection with place. The Lelet did not relocate to the coastal fringe as did other mountain communities because they feared the loss of taro.

In this chapter, I return to and explore more fully this identification with taro, its significance and symbolic centrality. I examine beliefs concerning taro as an anthropomorphic being which has the capacity to travel and I explore the mythological origins of taro, through narratives referring to the time before it existed, a time when people restlessly searched the forest for food. Finally I examine some of the magic employed to protect people from the ravages of famine. As in my previous discussion of collective identity, I focus on the corporeal images of movement and stasis that are deployed both in discourses about famine and in magic which seeks to protect people from famine.

Food staples and travelling food

The very word staple evokes an image of a perduing food supply, a supply that is non-depletable and limitless. Permanence, timelessness in a food staple, suggests it is not subject to depletion over time. Such permanence also suggests immobility, being rooted in one location. Taro, though the food staple of the Lelet, cannot be unambiguously viewed as stable in time or place. Taro is ambiguous. It can evoke images of perdurance and immobility, as the archetypal 'heavy' food that sits in the stomach giving the body its strength and capacity for productive work. But it also can embody a quality antithetical to heaviness, that of mobility. Taro is a potentially mobile food, more so than any other foods, which are not seen to produce the 'heaviness' characteristic of taro. Despite people's efforts to keep it located or seated
at the Lelet, it can and does travel, thus potentially threatening famine. In the past, people attempted to keep the taro 'seated in the place' by enacting elaborate horticultural rites that were meant to make it heavy and thus immobile. Taro is 'seated' so that the place will be made 'heavy' with food (see chapter six). While taro can move from place, heralding famine, less catastrophically it can move from garden to garden, primarily through magical enticement.

In describing taro, the Lelet distinguish between the tuber and the plant, using two distinct names. Taro as a plant is lavatpas or lavas, whilst as a tuber it is loxongkun. These terms embrace meanings that go beyond denotation of an item of food, encompassing the notion of movement or travel. Pas, a name for taro, comes from the verb i tpas, which means to walk, while lavas is another name derived from another verb for walk, i vas. Walking, an intentional bodily movement, is one of the ways in which people actively engage with and assimilate the world. It is the primary means by which the people of Lelet come to know, experience and demarcate their environment and place. It is also the primary means through which sociality is inaugurated as people visit others in hamlets dispersed widely over the landscape of the plateau. In this case it is integral to the way in which a person extends him or herself beyond the spatiotemporal present into the future. Walking contrasts with sitting and signifies bodily movement which can be either directed and purposeful or undirected and haphazard. Thus, like the comportment of sitting, walking is an activity with polyvalent meaning.

The word for the taro tuber, loxongkun, like the words for the plant, connotes mobility, though evoking the more cyclic movement of replacement. Loxongkun comes from the verb to change - i ngkun. The verb i ngkun is glossed in Tok Pisin as senis, but its meaning exceeds the single act of changing something for something else. A more accurate and appropriate gloss is cyclical replacement or replenishment. These both invoke a concept of change continuing over time, as opposed to change as a single occurrence. For the Lelet, the notion of change entailed in the term i ngkun is a fluid and continuous concept that envisages movement over time.

This notion of cyclic replacement was explained to me by Laba in the following terms:

Taro finishes and then comes up again; finishes and then comes up again. Taro when it finishes comes up again,... It is replacing itself all the time. You look at it, when you came here, we started to eat taro, now there is still sufficient taro, it won't finish for us. Taro won't finish, it replaces itself continually... every day. Today, if we finish the taro, tomorrow we will collect it again. It is not possible that you and I eat and the food completely finishes. We would sleep and die, if we did not have any food. Taro is continually replaced. Sweet potato as well is continually replaced.

In this account, other foods such as sweet potato are also seen in terms of cyclic replacement. The human agency of cultivation is elided and taro is given the volition to replenish itself. It is not only taro which replaces itself. Also pertinent is the association of taro and human mortality. When taro no longer is replenished, humans
exist only in sleep until death. Sleep, as Munn comments in her analysis of Gawa, is a negative form of an actor's being-in-the-world; more specifically the motionless state for a Gawa person entails a contraction of his or her person's body's 'spacetime' (Munn 1986:17). Thus sleep unto death, as encapsulated in Laba's account, entails the absolute negation of the body's 'spacetime'. For life to continue, taro must cyclically replace itself. If taro dies human life too must end. Such notions of reproduction and replacement contend with the existential predicament of death. When taro ceases to replace itself, people confront their own mortality.

Stealing the anthropomorphic taro

Like important food crops elsewhere in Melanesia, such as yams, taro is anthropomorphised. 'Taro are like people, they have knowledge - they are human'. I became aware of this on my first feeble attempt to plant taro when I visited a garden at Lavaraon, on the far side of the plateau. After levering a hole in the ground with a wooden digging stick, I somewhat ineptly placed a taro stalk (lobolo) in the hole, only to be told that I had not planted it well enough. During the night, Laba said, the taro will ask each other if they have been planted firmly and securely in the ground. Those firmly planted will be so pleased that they will sing songs. Another time this was described to me in the following way, also by Laba:

When the women remove taro from the ground, they remove the tuber from the stalk. There is a little piece that is located on the 'eye' of the taro; you plant this in the soil. You then look after it and the taro will fill up the garden again. You then harvest the taro and later the taro is there again. That's the way it is, taro is knowledgeable; it has understanding. When you plant it, you must plant it well. If the taro does not 'sit' down well the taro will talk amongst themselves. They will ask each other if they are sitting down firmly. 'Are you seated alright?' 'Ahah, I am seated well.' This taro as well will ask the other taro 'And you, are you sitting down well?' 'Yes I am seated well.' They will be pleased and will produce taro tubers as a result. The taro has got knowledge.  

Taro, then, shares some human attributes, particularly those of understanding and the capacity to hear. It is this capacity to hear that enables it to respond to the magical spells cast to make it grow large and profusely. Failure to 'seat' the taro adequately means that it will move and not produce a tuber. Firmly and well seated taro that is immobile produces the best and largest tubers.

Taro, like humans, also has a life force or loroang which is located differently depending on whether the tuber is still attached to the regenerative stalk. When the tuber is separated from the regenerative stalk the loroang is said to reside in the small piece of tuber that is left on the stalk. This small piece of tuber, which facilitates asexual reproduction, contains the loroang and is sometimes referred to as the 'eye' of the regenerative stalk. Unlike the loroang of humans which can leave their bodily abode in dream or magical flight, the loroang of taro stays with the plants and does not leave them. In effect this means that when people use magical songs and spells to steal taro, they steal both the loroang and the material substance of the taro plant. It is the taro's life force that gives the taro plant the power to grow.
As suggested above, taro has the ability to hear. More specifically it is the *loroang* that has the capacity to hear requests to produce a large tuber or seductive songs to entice it from one garden to another (cf. Mayer 1982:247). People who see another person's garden full of taro plants when their own gardens are lacking can sing magical songs (*loxompixanbolo*) to entice the taro stalks to their own gardens. Before this, one small regenerative stalk of the variety that is desired is stolen from the garden. The regenerative stalk is then placed under the thief's pillow, and the song is sung several times at night prior to sleep. The thief then repeats this singing for several nights. After this the taro stalk is planted in the garden of the thief, its *loroang* drawing other taro of that variety from the garden where they are abundant to the thief's garden. A less poetic way of stealing taro involves entering a garden secretly to snatch a regenerative stalk, after which the thief urinates into the hole from which the stalk was uprooted. As the urine quickly dissipates into the porous soil, the taro of that garden, in metaphoric imagination, likewise disappears. The thief then plants the regenerative stalk in his or her own garden.

Taro plants generally, and the regenerative stalks specifically, can travel, through human agency, theft or neglect (cf. Panoff 1972b:382). Due to this mobile nature taro plants must not only be 'seated well' but also must be well looked after or they 'will go altogether'. It is said that if a person fails to care for their taro, particularly the regenerative stalks, it will follow the person whose name this variety bears. In cases where people have completely neglected their taro and as a result do not have sufficient stalks for replanting, other people are exceedingly reluctant to offer help. Those who find themselves in this unenviable predicament can expect gifts of taro stalks only from close kin. Those foolish enough to allow their own stalks to die are unlikely to receive pity from others who would demand payment in exchange for regenerative stalks.

**To fill the stomach and make it heavy**

Taro is valued highly over other types of food for its capacity to give 'strength' or power (*lolos*) to the consumer. One or two taro in the morning are deemed sufficient to sustain a person for a day's hard work in the garden. Taro is also highly regarded for its ability to fill the stomach completely. Other foods such as greens or pork when eaten on their own are not sufficient to fill the stomach and must be eaten with taro. Taro is said to make the stomach 'heavy' (*lumumuat*) and is highly regarded for this reason (cf. D. Mitchell 1976:25). *Lumumuat* is derived from the root word of stone (*uat*), and is also glossed as 'power' (see introduction). Some people do say that to make the stomach heavy taro too must ideally be accompanied by other foods, though such a belief is not widely held. To accompany or garnish taro, foods such as pork, wild game and greens are the most desirable (in that order).

The most highly prized taro for consumption are those that have a pleasant smell, as smell is an extremely important factor in making things (and people) desirable. Varieties of taro such as Mamat, Saliann, Laxatlimelubu, Laxakupso,
Lamanbe have a nice smell and are most preferred for roasting, which involves placing the tubers on top of the hot earth oven stones as they are being heated and then scraping off the blackened outer layer with a glass shard. Varieties such as Lasop and Loxorumorum smell good and are considered good for cooking inside the earth oven. Children are said to like the varieties of taro that are coloured (cf. Panoff 1972b:382).\(^\text{12}\) Preferred properties also derive from the cooking process. For example, people prefer soft rather than hard taro, moist rather than dry taro and hot rather than cold taro. Also, as taro has properties that irritate the mouth and throat if it is under-cooked, well-cooked taro is preferred.\(^\text{13}\)

A number of these characteristics are important in the process by which children in the past were introduced to the consumption of taro. This further elucidates the importance of taro in inducing particular bodily states in people. Previously, young babies were introduced to taro through a process of ritual feeding, outlawed by the medical staff of the colonial government during the Australian administration.\(^\text{14}\) In this ritual, taro is placed on top of a fire to cook when the expectant mother first experiences labour pains. Particular types of taro were chosen: those with the preferred attributes of good smell, few fibres, and white colour. Such taro varieties as Nimen, Tuktuk and Gong were considered the best for this purpose. The smell, it is said, teaches the child to be aware of taro. In future when taro is cooked and broken, the child will smell it and then cry for food. When the child is born it is given the breast to suckle and then washed. After this, the infant is given its first taste of taro, premasticated so that it is 'like breast milk'. This feeding of taro should be done several times a day until the infant teethes. This ritualised feeding does more than merely accustom the new child to taro but takes on much wider curative and strength-giving roles. A new born child fed only breast milk is said to cry continuously and not to sleep well. As adults must accompany taro with other food so must the child accompany its consumption of breast milk with taro. Taro fills the child's stomach, making it heavy so that it sleeps well. The process of ritualised feeding is said to give the child's stomach strength in much the same way as taro is seen to give adults strength and capacity for work.

**Nirut and the mythic origins of taro**

From the above discussion, it can be seen taro is extremely important for the Lelet. However, it has not always been a part of their diet. In the distant past, it is said, when taro did not exist the population subsisted solely by scavenging for food in the bush. This time is considered by some a pre-social time, when the social organisation and culture of today did not exist. With the advent of taro in this primordial and pre-social time, society as it exists today was also originated. The mythic narrative of a woman called Nirut recounts the arrival of taro, a story worth recounting because it indicates the importance of taro and its origins.\(^\text{15}\) Lataba told it to me as follows:

I will start to narrate this story. Previously at this place, the people living here did not have taro or other kinds of similar food. Our ancestors ate all kinds of vines from the bush. They found wild yams in the forest and ate these. They used to search the forest for food.
Sometimes they found nothing to eat. They used to collect greens (leaves and grasses) from the bush and eat these. They used to eat from the forest because there was no taro.

There was a woman, who had a forest standing on her back, this woman was the ground. On this woman's back was a piece of earth with taro standing there. Taro, yam, sugar and all other varieties of food were standing on her back.

During the day, all the children were in the village, while their parents were in the forest searching for wild bush foods. While the children were in the village this woman, Nirut, came to the children and asked them what they were doing. 'We are waiting for our parents who have gone to the forest to find wild bush foods for us to eat'. 'What have you to eat while you're waiting for your parents?' Nirut asked the children. 'Nothing, we are just waiting here without food,' the children answered. Nirut then said to the children, 'You children pull a taro from my back. Pull out only one and then remove the stem and place it back from where it came.' Following this, Nirut told the children to cook the taro on the fire. When it was cooked, Nirut then told the children to break the cooked tuber into small pieces sufficient for all the children. A small piece was enough for each child. When one of the children first put the piece of taro into his mouth, he said that it was 'sweet'; 'Oh, this is sweet, this is very nice food.' After they had all eaten their piece of taro, Nirut said to them, 'When your parents return from the bush, you must not tell them that I visited you. You have eaten enough now, so I will go away.' Following this warning, Nirut disappeared.

Later the parents of the children returned from the forest with the wild foods which they began to cook in an earth oven. The children did not tell their parents that they had been visited by a woman who had given them food to eat during the day.

Again, the next day when the parents were away searching the forest for wild foods, the children were visited by the woman with food on her back. This time Nirut told them to remove two taro from her back, remove the tubers and replant the stems on her back. Again they cooked and ate the taro, which was 'sweet' and very delicious. It was much more desirable than the other food that they were accustomed to, that did not smell good, did not go down easily and was bitter.

When they had apparently finished eating the taro, Nirut asked the children, 'Have you eaten all the taro?' The children had finished the taro, except for a young girl who hid a tiny piece under her armpit. Nirut, suspecting something, searched the children thoroughly, to see if any taro had been hidden. But she was unable to find anything because the girl had hidden the piece so well. Nirut told the children she would not be back tomorrow but would come the following day.

Later in the day the parents returned from foraging in the forest with plenty of wild foods. The girl who had kept a piece of taro hidden, went to her mother, and asked her, 'Mother would you like a little something, it is very nice. I have hidden it and will get it to show you.' The girl retrieved the taro and placed some in her mother's mouth and asked her to taste it. The mother chewed and chewed the piece of taro which she found delicious. 'What is this very nice food?' she asked of her daughter. 'Where did you get it? Who gave you this good food?' The children then spoke out about the food they had been given by Nirut. The parents questioned the children about when the woman with the food on her back would return. The children revealed to the parents when the woman was to come back again.

The parents then waited for Nirut to come back, concealing themselves in the bush surrounding the village. The children waited in the village for Nirut to return. Nirut arrived during the day and asked the children where their parents were, receiving the answer that
they had gone to the forest in search of food. Being satisfied that only the children were there, she told them to pull out some taro from her back and cook it. When they were pulling it out, the parents came out from their hiding places and rushed to hold Nirut. When they had firm hold of her, Nirut said to them, 'Alright, you people remove all the taro from my back then. I will tell you how to look after this taro - how to cultivate it. First you must clear the bush, and then allow it to dry. Then you must burn all the dry vegetation and clear the soil until there is nothing growing. After this, you plant the stem of the taro. When it is ready, you collect the taro and plant the stem, which will stay in the ground. When you go and return to the garden the taro will return again too. You must work at this now and not go to the forest in search of food any more.'

The parents ate the taro, which was very 'sweet' in their stomachs, making them very pleased. They then made a garden as Nirut had instructed them and planted the stems which grew and produced taro. Taro prospered in this place. They continued to plant taro over the years until our grandparents and parents time, and today there is a lot of taro here as result. Before, they did not have taro in this place. Our ancestors used to eat all sorts of greens from the forest. There was not any taro or other sorts of food. It started with this woman, they removed the taro from her and planted it until this day. Now we have taro.

As revealed by the myth of Nirut, there existed a time when the people subsisted by scavenging for wild bush foods: such things as leaves, grasses, fruits and tubers. These foods were considered to be barely edible or palatable, having astringent qualities and bad aromas. The primordial time prior to the arrival of Nirut was a time of scarcity evoking an image of famine, loroxo. Narrative accounts of previous famines, both experienced and known through oral recollection, abound with images of people who were forced from human settlements to search the forest ceaselessly for wild bush foods. The time before Nirut and the advent of taro is a time of hardship, a time when people did little but search for the next meal. Sometimes the search for food was unsuccessful and people slept without food in their stomachs. This was a time when children were left in the village without food during the day, something that would be unthinkable today. Those who failed to look after their children in such a way would be scorned today.

The coming of Nirut inaugurates the present agricultural cycle and gardening practices of the Lelet people. The birth of horticulture in this context also implies the coming into being of other aspects of social organisation, such as the clan and land tenure system. It is not clear, however, whether the marriage rules and the moiety system were in existence prior to the coming of Nirut. One informant, thought that the present social organisation and loklok at lemenemen originated with Nirut's appearance. Another man influenced by Christianity said that the marriage laws came into existence with Noah but other social practices such as feasting, magic and dance performances did not exist prior to the time of Nirut.16

An important association in this myth is that between the ground and gender. Nirut the mythic woman is said to be the ground - she rises up from the ground and disappears into it. Nirut, as both ground and woman at one and the same time, is an example of what people refer to as a lampowo, or tok piñsa. Nirut signifies the ground and in this way is metaphoric of women, who are equally crucial as food.
producers and reproducers in this matrilineal society. Nirut is female, I was told, because only women 'carry' (give birth); men do not. The myth of Nirut illustrates that just as food can be seen to move, so the ground can also be said to travel. Shifting ground presents problems in this matrilineal society where people's access to and use of gardens is partly through patrililial and not solely through matrilineal reckoning.

New varieties of taro are said to arise from the ground, in much the same way as taro originated from Nirut's back. New varieties are found after the cutting and burning of forests or hills. When a new variety of taro is discovered, people will remove it and replant it near their houses. Through domestication the flavour improves over a couple of years. People generally name the newly domesticated taro after themselves or possibly after a child.Only occasionally is new taro not given the human name of its discoverer or someone closely related. In these instances naming appears to relate to how or where it was discovered.

Famine and the flight of food

As my introductory arrival story shows, even despite today's abundance of varieties of food, Lelet people remain fearful of famines. The truth or falsity of past or present famines is not the issue here; the question is why famine is so thoroughly inscribed in the imagination of the Lelet. I will not reconstruct a chronological history of famines, but rather examine how narratives and recollections of famine relate to notions of movement and immobility. Doubtless people in times past experienced severe deprivation through natural disaster and famine and this threat remains very real today. I am particularly interested in how memories are reworked to give meaning to people's present predicaments. For the Lelet, narratives of famine, I would argue, illustrate more than anything else except death, that human existence is vulnerable to the exigencies of environment, place and time. Movement in time and space symbolises the movement of life from birth to death. Immobility, on the other hand, is associated with the continuation of life.

Famine, loroxo, contrasts with the state of prosperity, lenmila or limila. Beyond mere abundance of food and prosperity, lenmila means 'the place is sitting down well, there is nothing disrupting it' or 'the place is seated well and there is an absence of famine'. A key metaphor used in any discussion of the concepts of lenmila and loroxo, is that of 'seating' or 'sitting' (iktis).

Seating is evocative of both motionlessness and stability, and the potential of purposeful travel. A body, for example, is seldom permanently seated, except when infirm, but sits prior to some other form of movement. Sitting is a position of the body assumed after or before other states, such as sleep, running or walking. Being seated is thus evocative of a transitory position before or after some other more active or mobile state. I have explained how taro too can be seen to move and travel and is never permanently 'seated' despite people's efforts to make it so. The metaphor of seating imagined in lenmila extends beyond merely having the food 'seated',

165
having wider metaphoric meanings. Those who are familiar with English refer to it as 'peace'. *Lenmla* is said to exist following war and social disruption when the village or place is described as not sitting down well or not seated properly. Angry confrontations and arguments are also expressed through this metaphor. Conflicts between people over land or other transgressions, also mean that the place is not seated properly. During the sorcery allegation cited in chapter two, people referred to the place as sitting down in a dispersed way (*lixis epeseves*), reminiscent of the narratives of clan dispersal (see chapter three). People spoke of the loss of the *loklok at lemenemen* and the failure of youth to be under the control of the village leaders as being signs that the place was not seated properly. In such contexts seating becomes part of a moral discourse that nostalgically regrets the weakened power of the elders.

*Loroxo*, as contrasted with the state of well-being and prosperity, *lenmla*, is characterised by the absence of food and a state of hunger. Again this word for famine, when glossed simply as absence of food, loses other, more subtle meanings. For example, *loroxo* would still be used in contexts where there is an abundance of food but this food does not nourish or satisfy the consumers. One form of magic used to cause famine aims to make food lack the capacity to 'fill the stomach' despite being abundant. Because the food lacked its filling capacity during one recent famine, I was told, people had to cook in earth ovens three times a day to come close to satisfying themselves.

If *lenmla* characterises harmonious social relationships, *loroxo* characterises the antithesis of this, in the breakdown of social relationships. If the exchange and sharing of food with others is vital to the constitution of personhood, as I have suggested, then famine quintessentially signifies the negation of that sociality and the self that is constructed through it. During famines, social fragmentation and isolation is reinforced by people separating themselves from others by the closure of houses, villages and even their bodies. Other authors have drawn similar conclusions, notably Fajans, who says that the hunger entailed in the state of famine is a sentiment. She argues that hunger is both a physical state and an emotion or sentiment, which westerners usually do not understand (1983:175 and cf. Schieffelin 1977:71). People left alone, she suggests, feel their loneliness as hunger (1983:176 and cf. 1985:379). As Fajans suggests hunger and famine are ways of talking about emotions and the state of social relations. Unstable times such as the present, when new forms of knowledge are eroding the bases of village authority and capitalist development is undermining village sociality, are refracted through discourses of famine, as my arrival story poignantly illustrates.

*Loroxo* is only one type of catastrophe, but is commonly used also to designate other forms of catastrophe, particularly as these often, although not always, cause an absence of food. Famine or the absence of nourishing food can be brought about by forms of sorcery that affect the ability of the garden to produce sustaining food. One common form involves the disturbance of the power-stones that are used by garden magicians to make the garden 'heavy' with food. Tilting, scattering or inverting these stones (see chapter six) means that the power is no longer localised in the garden or place. Sorcery to make a garden unproductive can involve manipulation of the
elements by weather magicians. These forms of catastrophe, referred to as *langon*, can also inaugurate famine. One such disaster is to conjure a continuous, scorching sun that burns the food crops and causes drought and subsequent famine. Wind magic can also be used to create catastrophe by uprooting dwellings and food crops. One such destructive cyclonic wind, the power of which was possessed by the clan Lulom, was named *sexa lemenemen*. Literally this means to 'sweep the place', the wind being so strong that it cleans everything in its path, and even drags sleeping pythons from their caves. Disaster can also be wrought by continuous torrential rain.

Those with power over the elements and food supply, such as the weather and garden magicians, do not generally, it is believed, work catastrophes without good reason. Such catastrophes are not created for mere wanton malice or jealousy, as people often believe to be the case with other forms of sorcery. People say that in the past these disasters were wrought during a state of profound grief (*lasaxanu*) brought on by bereavement, over the death of close kin. This grief differs from, and is more profound than, the ordinary grief (*lanbulu*) felt if someone leaves for another country. The grief for close kin is greatest if these are young children, who have not experienced life. Grief diminishes with age, and the mourning for elderly people is not nearly as dramatic or intense as for a young or middle-aged person.

Catastrophes are worked to 'finish the grief of loss' and people in the past considered it thus acceptable; they would not have been cross, I was told. On the other hand, a person who worked famine without good reason would certainly have been severely beaten. In practice though, it seems that people did not only work famine over grief, and I was given instances of people causing famine over some form of conflict over land for example, or in one case for failure to 'pay' for garden magic.

**Birds and the flight of food: Restlessness and movement in search of food**

Famines, are often heralded by omens from birds, figures iconic of movement - such as cries from the bird *lapkasesep* (meyers goshawk - *Accipiter meyerianus*), a bird that preys on other birds (cf. M. Young 1986:119). This bird, I was told, is used by sorcerers in their magical spells aimed at producing famine. The sorcerer, hearing this bird, knows that his spell has been efficacious and that the famine is imminent. Numerous other birds, such as *lavatkoxo* (black cuckoo-shrike - *Coracina melaena*) or *lavatkalanga* (eclectus parrot - *Eclectus roratus*), are also called on by the sorcerers of famine and are thus seen to be omens of impending catastrophe. Gardens are plundered by these marauding birds, who fly into the garden and consume the food before it has ripened. Birds are also often believed to be omens signalling an impending death in the community (see chapter two). These highly mobile creatures epitomise travel, particularly travel in search of food. Birds traverse the landscape constantly in search of food, never becoming sedentary as humans do. In this context, birds are a metaphor of food-as-travelling and travelling-for-food.

As the omen of imminent famine, the bird embodies ceaseless and continuous movement in search of food, a fate for which humans are also destined.
Recollections and narratives of famine stress the movement of people from their villages to the forest, perpetually in quest of food.

*Loroxo* is a time when everyone is hungry; there is no food. People eat from the forest; people collect greens from the forest, they eat these without garnish. People find wild yams in the forest. There are no other foods available. People won't see taro.

*Loroxo* is an absence of food and especially an absence of taro, a time when people have to rely on the forest. A common expression is that people are forced to eat 'bush nating'. This term evokes notions of the undomesticated and uncultivated spaces of the forest, and its food as ungarnished and unfilling.

Narrative recollections of famine, through their stress on constant movement in search of food, reconstruct times similar to the epoch prior to Nirut, when people were forced to scavenge in the forest for food, while children were left at home with empty stomachs. Such discourses reiterate the lack of seatedness during such times of crisis. One informant, when discussing a famine experienced by people before world war two, referred to people as being 'longlong', which means to be demented, confused, or lacking knowledge, and connotes the notion of losing control of oneself.

People during the famine:

were really crazy (*longlong tmu*). They arrived at the coast, they carried coconuts. They carried coconuts on top [of the mountains] for food. They'd finish only a small amount of coconut then they'd return to carry more.

This evokes the constant movement during famine. People have to return to the coast to collect more coconuts after having just eaten; such food had obviously not nourished the body and must be replenished almost immediately. The movement in search of food during these times is purposeful, unlike the frivolity that characterises young men's wanderings from hamlet to hamlet. It does have the goal of obtaining food, but this is undermined by the constant, unrelenting and ultimately uncontrollable nature of that movement. The purposeful and productive movement entailed in gardening during normal times when surplus produce can be transformed into value for the gardener does not occur during famine, and bodily movement is thus dissipated. The absence of food, and in some contexts the failure of food to nourish, can be said to create transience. People do not 'sit down' or remain 'seated' and are forced to move continuously and restlessly, in a way that squanders the body's power.

This external restlessness is paralleled by a restlessness within the body. Food has lost the capacity to satiate the stomach which no longer 'sleeps' well. Lapkasao described this as follows:

If someone works a famine, it does not matter that you are filled up. You can eat rice, you can eat taro, whatever you eat you will not feel as if you are filled up. This occurs because they have worked a spell on you, so that your stomach is restless, restless with hunger and as a result you eat a lot of food. They do it that way, so that you eat a lot.26
Through the act of magical incantation, food loses the capacity to make the stomach 'heavy'. In effect, through the absence of food the stomach becomes 'light'. Food that is 'light' means the body is also not weighted and made immobile. While in some circumstances, such as magical contexts, it is desirable that the body be lightweight, this is not the mundane ideal. In the everyday, the masculine ideal of a lightweight body is not seen as a virtue because the heaviness of taro is necessary to sustain the body for work. Moreover, the intentional control of one's body is lost in famine. During famine the necessary and controlled action, on particular paths, for example, is replaced by uncontrolled and haphazard movement.

Similar ideas of lightness and heaviness are incorporated in Lelet calendars. The year is periodised in terms of the weight of food. This is particularly so in the monsoon period when food is short. The months from October to January are referred to as moons of hunger, when the moon is said to be 'light'. The moon symbolises the absence or abundance of food. Food weighs down the crescent in particular directions, signifying that there is abundance in those places. If, for example, the point of the crescent is weighed down over the coast it is said that the coast is 'heavy' with an abundance of food. If the point of the crescent is upwards over the Lelet, it is thought to be 'light' and there is a shortage of food. On the other hand, if the crescent of the moon lies with the point down over the Lelet and up at the coast, this indicates plenitude at the Lelet and lack at the coast. If the moon lies in an even manner, both the coast and the Lelet enjoy plenitude.27

During times of famine people engage in forms of magical practice to avoid its effects. Most pertinent is hunger-suppression magic. But a second form aims to protect the village or community from the famine as it moves from other places by sending it back from whence it came or to another unprotected place. I will discuss each in that order.

Closing mouths and stomachs: The magic of hunger suppression

In addition to birds signalling an approaching famine by plundering food crops, garden magicians may also experience increased appetite, verging on gluttony. To protect dwindling food supplies there is hunger suppression magic (lotonga belo moxon) which regulates and closes the body to quell appetite. This form of magic aims to suppress the feeling of hunger.28 This works in several possible ways - for example, by making the stomach feel closed and tight so that it does not feel hunger, or by making the stomach feel satiated after the consumption of little food. Another involves making the stomach cease desiring food. Such spells were often sung and chanted in the early hours of the evening throughout the duration of the famine after insufficient meals of bush foods. Like the fasting regimes employed to produce a particular form of body for magic or for encounters with non-human beings, some of the hunger suppressing magic also entails the intentional closure of the body, a closure which makes it invulnerable to the deleterious effects of famine.
The following song was sung while the hungry person lay down after a frugal meal. It was said to affect not only the person singing but also to make the stomachs of other people and animals in the community 'sleep easy', so that they were sustained by a small quantity of food.

Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still.
Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still. Stomachs of all people be still.
Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still. Stomachs of all rats be still.
Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still. Stomachs of all dogs be still.
Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still. Stomachs of all pigs be still.
Rotten trees be still. Stomach be still. Stomachs of all cats be still.

The primary metaphor used and repeated in each section of this song, is a noun designating trees that have fallen to the ground and are in the process of decomposing. Rotting trees do not move in the wind or move with growth but are consigned to a motionless state until they have completely rotted away. Such a metaphor evokes an image of absolute immobility and stillness, a state desired of the stomach and of the food supply more generally. Such a metaphor counters the restless wandering in search of food that epitomises the unproductive bodily movement that characterises times of famine.

The above song can also be sung in another form, in which types of birds that subsist on the fruits of trees are substituted for animals, whose stomachs are urged to be still. In this version, the desired state is one where all the birds named will be still and as a result refrain from eating the fruit which would then be available for human consumption. As noted above, birds whose cries signal impending famine are highly mobile creatures symbolising movement in the quest for food. Not only does the song command that birds refrain from eating the food, but it also reinscribes the relationship between stillness and abundance.

The desired state of stillness is often epitomised by the rootedness of stones and other heavy objects. Some men's houses, for example, have heavy objects such as clam shells placed in them to make the 'place sit down well' by preventing the onset of famine. One of the men's houses has a clamshell, 'seated' there many years before with accompanying magical incantation. This clamshell is placed upside down with the concave section face down, a few metres from a number of stones that are said to accompany it and which serve a similar function of making the 'place heavy'. Even now, despite most forms of garden magic fading from use, this clamshell is still thought to have 'power' and if it is turned over famine would result. The spell used for placing the clamshell was directed at closing mouths of birds, and even now it acts to 'silence the birds from calling out and announcing famine'. This clamshell also aims to close the mouths of animals and birds so that they will not eat food otherwise available for humans. It also acts in similar way to the spell recounted above, in that one of its roles is to 'close up' people's stomachs so that they require
only a small amount of food to sustain the body. 'You eat a little and you are satisfied,' remarked Lamasere when discussing the clamshell. By repressing the desire for food, the food supply is not depleted quickly and therefore lasts longer. This closing of the stomach is paralleled by similar magical practices and rituals on the village level, and it is these I now discuss.

**Closing the village: The magic of hunger repulsion**

A general strategy embarked on by people in the past when they were aware that the plateau was being swept by hunger was to close their hamlet or village through magical incantation, *lavaskabot*, meaning to walk and close or fasten the place. This form of magic is sometimes referred to as *lavaskabotangon*, particularly when directed at closing the village to avoid the catastrophic sorcery mentioned above. As noted, *lava* means both 'to walk' and 'taro', and possibly *lavaskabot* implies keeping the taro from moving and escaping. People more specifically use *lava* to mean walking, in particular, the method of the magician, who walked the fringes of the village or hamlet incanting the magic. *Kabot*, on a more general level, means to close or fasten but, most importantly for this context, has connotations of impenetrability. *Kabot* can also apply to the placing of spells on property to prevent its theft. Normally when people place a prohibitory sign, the spell is accompanied with a visible sign that warns potential thieves that they are liable to be injured if they breach it. When this is done without a warning sign it is referred to as *i kabot i* (he/she places a spell on it). *Kabot* has other meanings too; in the past it was used to describe a type of house, *langkutkabot*, also sometimes called *langkuthbonot*. This latter term derives from *bonot*, which means to be closed with no holes. In this sense *bonot* and *kabot* refer to a house which was almost totally enclosed, with only a small entrance hole and one at the pinnacle of the roof through which smoke escaped. Such houses were built so that they were extremely difficult to break into from the outside, ensuring protection from intruders. These houses were not built around a system of posts as they are today but had very closely placed saplings and were lined in the interior with bark.30 *Kabot* thus implies the creation of an impenetrable enclosed space from which things cannot leave and things can only enter with difficulty. This image of closure connotes the negation of sociality, where food is consumed within the darkened spaces of the house, out of sight of others. Indeed, people say that the kinds of sharing that characterise social life during times of abundance is absent during famine.

*Lavaskabot* was performed at night at sites marked by a stone on the outer boundary of the village and its territory on roads leading to other villages (cf. Malinowski 1935 vol.1:237). The magician placed his leg on the stone, iconic of heaviness, while calling the incantation that would repel the famine thought to travel along the roads from other villages. As the magician sang the spell, he faced his own village and put his back to the village where he wanted the famine to stay. Other forms of this magic were performed at the hamlet level if a local magician knew the appropriate spells. Like those performed for the village, these were also performed...
on roads and the magician placed his foot likewise on a stone (in this case an ordinary stone, not a boundary marker stone) whilst he chanted the incantation.

One elderly man, Labkaso, related to me a spell he used to protect his hamlet from a famine prior to the second world war. In this instance the spell has two parts, the first part using the metaphor of sea-water which, in the context of this spell, represents the state of famine. Sea-water, I was told, embodies the notion of being repelled or being turned back, as the magician urges the famine to do.

Sea-water break and return here. Famine of Laxanes break here,

Sea-water return from here. Famine return from here.

As the sea breaks onto the beach, it travels only a certain way before retreating back again. The beach forms a barrier to the sea, forcing back the tides and waves that threaten to engulf it. So does the spell send the famine back, thus protecting the village from being engulfed by famine. The second part of the spell invokes a creature that lives in the sea, in this case a shark. The shark, Lapkaso said, when under threat from shark-callers is liable to dive deep down and hide in holes on the sea floor. Once in a hole, the shark will not budge and will not be seen again. The famine, like the shark, will go into a hole and not be seen. By metaphoric association the shark hiding in the hole evokes the image of the desirable state of immobility in which the food stays located in the place and does not travel. These two spells are accompanied by a song sung at night when people are going to sleep. This evokes the time, lenmila, when the place is seated well and there is general prosperity and abundance. According to the song, this state must continue for eternity without end.

Other forms of this hunger repulsion magic related to me use similar images of movement and warding off. One spell, for example, invokes the culture hero Moroa, (in Christian discourse synonymous with God), to walk with the famine and send it back.

Moroa walk taking this famine with you.

I walk sending this famine back.

Moroa walk taking this undesirable thing with you.

As in the spell using the metaphor of the shark, this spell uses the verb that designates to return, to send back or to reciprocate. It lacks explicit metaphor, however, being a type of spell that merely describes the required action. Other forms of this magic are said to utilise a broom made from labunmila, a tree that is also used in taro magic. This broom, as the name indicates, derives from lenmila and is said to be used because it makes the 'place sit down well' or 'sleep well', evoking the states of immobility and restfulness desired of both the body and place. The magician uses the broom to sweep the cleared areas adjacent to houses in a hamlet, which he must do four times with the accompanying spell.
This chapter illustrates the fluid and polyvalent nature of metaphors employed for food. I have discussed the pervasive metaphor of 'seating the place' in connection with taro, the most culturally important foodstuff, which is anthropomorphic, with a life force, knowledge and the capacity to move. The most desirable characteristic of taro is its ability to make the stomach full and heavy. When not seated properly, it loses those desirable characteristics and becomes light and thus vulnerable to movement. It is through this movement and loss of taro that famine is inaugurated. I have argued that narratives about famine implicitly refer back to that mythic time before Nirut when people were in constant movement in search of food. In famine, people take on the characteristics of lightness and mobility that the taro is said to embody at that time. Finally, I have examined techniques employed against the effects of famine. By invoking such things as weighty stones and fallen trees, appetite reducing magic evokes images of stasis that counteract the restlessness and movement that famine brings. Although it sometimes employs images of immobility, hunger repulsion magic can also evoke images of movement. The retreating tides of the sea are invoked to depict, by analogy, the retreat of the famine.
Notes

1. It is unheard of, for example, to distribute sweet potato as a substitute for taro at mortuary feasts. Even to purchase taro from somewhere else for a mortuary feast, as was the case at Boram hamlet in 1990, is viewed with disgust and disdain in *tok stil*, the hidden gossip that circulates following a feast. See B. Clay (1986:138-9).

2. This has been reported elsewhere in Melanesia. See Jones (1980:125); Kahn (1980:126, 1986:92 and 1988:44); Lattas (1990:87) and Oliver (1971:57).

3. Plural *levenpas*. I prefer to use the term *tuber* in this thesis because it is more widely known and used than the term *corm* preferred in the more technical literature on taro, although I recognise that strictly speaking what is termed a tuber is a thickened stem or corm. See Petterson (1977:31). There are a number of other taro-like plants of the Araceae family also consumed, although not subject to the kinds of cultivation of 'true' taro (*Colocasia*). For example, what is referred to as *singapore* (*Xanthosoma*) in Tok Pisin is also consumed and cultivated, albeit usually on marginal ground such as the corners of gardens or in valleys. *Laxari* or *paragum* (*Alocasia*) which grows on the edges of villages is also occasionally consumed. *Laxari* is often considered to be an embodiment of a *larada*.

4. For the anthropomorphisation of yams, see Fortune (1963:107-9); Roscoe (1989:225); Tuzin (1972:234-7) and M. Young (1983:89). For anthropomorphisation of taro, see Kahn (1980:120-6, 1986:101-4 and 1988:44); Jones (1980:96-7); Lattas (1990:80-1); Panoff (1969:28-9, 1970a:248 and 1972a:381-3); Schwimmer (1973:114); Valentine (1965:187); F. Williams (1928:24-5). In New Ireland the anthropomorphisation of important food items has been noted among the Barok, for yams by Wagner (1986:36-7) and among the Mandak, for taro, by B. Clay (1986:26). Myths, sometimes, explain the origin of culturally important foods such as yams and taro, regenerating or metamorphosing from part of the human body, or by humans giving birth to it. See Jolly (1981:273-4); Jones (1980:127); Kahn (1980:126-8, 1986:66-7, 90-1, 112).

5. This was expressed as *lavas i kleklen* and is reminiscent of the awareness humans have when they reach about three and have the capacity to communicate to others (see chapter two).

6. If the tuber is still attached to the regenerative stalk the life force is called *loroang kongkun*, when the tuber is separated from the stalk, it is called *loroang lobolo*.

7. In some contexts, when the regenerative stalk is separated from the tuber, it is 'killed' or cut in such a way that it can no longer reproduce. The practice of 'killing' the taro is carried out after the first and last harvest and in a number of mortuary feasting contexts.

8. A number of authors have mentioned the mobile nature of foods like yams and taro. See Fortune (1963:108, 118, 124, 128); Kahn (1980:122); Tuzin (1972:234-5); Wagner (1986:36-7). Both Fortune (1963:83, 101, 134) and Kahn (1986:99) discuss the magical theft of these foods.

9. People who discover new varieties may name it after themselves or their children (see below n.17).

10. In making choices in pork meat, people said they preferred pork that is evenly layered with fat. Pork fat by itself is liked by some people who see it as giving strength, while other people did not like it, saying that it causes diarrhoea and makes one ill and lazy. Ideally pork fat was seen as facilitating the consumption of taro if there was no meat available for that role. In the past, when there were shortages of suitable garnishes, people resorted to dipping their taro in salt water before eating it.
11. The significance of smell in the aesthetic systems of people of Papua New Guinea is often overlooked. On the Lelet, smell is important in making things desirable. This is most common in forms of love magic and the apparel for dances, which often use strong and ‘sweet’ smelling botanical matter. Young men’s baskets, too, often have in the bottom-most recesses fragrant smelling dried leaves and roots.

12. These coloured varieties are referred to generally as lasak. Taro comes in a number of varieties, ranging from white through to red, browns and purples. These colours, particularly those of the tuber, the stem and the ‘eye’, are considered to be important in identifying the named varieties. The people of the Lelet recognise numerous named varieties, of which without great effort I collected about fifty names.

13. According to the literature on taro, this ability to produce itching is a result of calcium oxalate which is present in varying degrees in taro and other edible aroid species to which taro belongs. The calcium oxalate occurs in needle-shaped capsules, which are ‘ejected with considerable force when water passes through the capsule walls’ or from mastication and maceration (Petterson 1977:33). Because these capsules rupture explosively, the crystals can pierce mucous membrane and cause acute discomfort in the digestive tract. Thorough cooking breaks down the capsules, thereby releasing the raphides (Petterson 1977:33). The calcium oxalate is also prevalent in the leaves and petioles of the taro plant and these also require thorough cooking. This characteristic of taro to cause severe discomfort is utilised in forms of ritualised play at certain mortuary feasts when people in particular relationships to the deceased have poured over them taro skins that have been mixed with water or the skin (sometimes rotting) smeared over their faces. At these times, the victims neutralise the effects of the calcium oxalate by covering the affected area with wood ashes. A variation on this form of play involves the cooking of a taro on a fire so that it is thoroughly blackened and only partially cooked. This is then given to people in certain relationships to the dead person with the expectation that they consume all of it, a feat that is by no means an easy one.

14. This ritual was called i mom lamandak, the name deriving from the verb - i mom, and refers to the process of premasticating food by the mother. Similar ritualised premastication of taro by mothers has been reported for the Maenge (Panoff 1972a:382) and for the Sa speakers of South Pentecost (Vanuatu) (Jolly 1991:55). Among the Mandak people of Pinikindu B. Clay reports that a baby would sicken and die if it was not fed pre-masticated taro (1975:35). For the Lelet people this ritualised feeding is part of much larger ritual called kolaxon which involves a large number of women harvesting four taro each from their gardens. The four taro, still with their leaves attached are tied together into a bundle (gi ngkoloxoh). It is the process of leaving the leaves attached to the taro that lends its name to this ritual. Normally taro when it is harvested has either the leaves or also sometimes the regenerative stalk cut off. The women carry these koloxon to the house of the woman about to give birth. The taro are then separated from the regenerative stalk and one of them is cut into four pieces and one piece placed on the fire. It is this piece that is given to the child after it has been washed.

15. Some people say that Nirut came from across the sea and arrived at Loxun close to Kanemeradan (near Mesi) on the west coast of New Ireland. Others say she came from a place called Merudan also on the west coast. Oliver (1955:41-2) recorded a myth that has similarities to the myth of Nirut. In this case, the culture hero, who is a man, finds children alone while the parents are searching for wild food in the forest. The myth of the ‘Maker’, differs from Nirut in that the hero does not have food on his back. The ‘Maker’ asks the children to place a cooking pot on the fire, into which he climbs and defecates taro and other foods, after which unbeknown to the children he climbs out.

16. There are a number of themes in the mythic narrative of Nirut that I do not wish to pursue here except briefly. For example, a common theme in a number of Melanesian myths is the theft from women of certain important ritual items and magical powers and the Nirut story could be seen as belonging to that genre. Another aspect, which I also do not wish to pursue, is the reinterpretation of
this myth in terms of cargoist ideology. For example, in one account of this myth I collected Nirut was a white woman who had access to cargo.

17. The following are varieties of taro named after people who discovered them and resident in Limbin village whilst I was in the field: Sanura, Loren, Gong, Munorong, Mamat, Rabeka, Kamalap, Lebudan, Kotmani, Maneta, Moses. This list is by no means exhaustive. Sweet potato is also in some contexts named after people who have introduced it to the Lelet. For example there is a variety called Sevenaday after the Seventh Day Adventists who introduced it. Other names bear testimony to the places they have come from, such as Kimadan, Lihir, Taskul, Popondetta, Nonga or Arawe.

18. Loroxo derives from the verb - i roxo, the verb I would use if I was hungry (a roxo, I am hungry).

19. Commonly, when a man has worked the magic for a famine people gloss it as - laradi i lok loroxo (man is working a famine). If there is uncertainty as to who is responsible, people will be vague about attribution and say - gi lok lavunga miloroxo (they have worked a famine affecting a lot of people'). Another idiomatic expression used to discuss the creation of famine is gi ganan kenbuk lemenemen, which literally means that the place has been 'dug up' and there is no food as a result. Possibly, this expression refers to the removal of the various 'power stones' used in garden magic that make the place 'heavy' with food.

20. These disasters are referred langonkangkin (scorching sun), langonpixan or langonmanman (gale force winds), and langonbet (torrential rain).

21. The most severe forms of catastrophe when people die are called lasala.

22. This attitude causes some people to be exceedingly flippant and uncaring, particularly to our western sensibilities about death. I was somewhat shocked when a close informant commented, with much humour, in the week following the death, how a fictive grandparent of his would be well and truly rotted in the grave by now.

23. Panoff gives the example of a spell utilising a bat ('The bat flies off, taro flies') to initiate famine (1969:28). Among the Maenge a taro eating parrot (Electus sp.) is said to be responsible for its dispersal (Panoff 1970b:241).

24. Some species of birds are noted for having, at certain seasonal times, particular paths (langas) which they regularly follow. Hunters can set up traps in the tree tops on these paths, using a net (uben) suspended between two poles. Once the birds have become ensnared in the net the poles are used to close the net so the birds cannot escape.

25. Some birds are not eaten because of their property of flightiness. A couple of species of laxangkabilington or swallow (uniform swiftlet - Collocalia vanikorensis and glossy swiftlet Collocalia esculenta) are avoided because they 'do not have a home'. These species sleep in one place one night and in another the next. If they are eaten the consumer takes on the quality of restlessness and similarly moves around, sleeping in different places.

26. The Tok Pisin word used by Lapkaso in this text is kirap, which according to Mihalic means to 'to get up, to arise, to awake, to start, to begin' (1971:110-11). From Mihalic's definition kirap implies the state of moving from a stationary state to one of motion. I have glossed this as restlessness, which I think catches accurately my informant's intent. Restlessness, I think, also more aptly catches the lack of control implicit in the bodily state due to famine. Other glosses by Mihalic, apart from possibly 'to awake' imply a consciousness and an element of control that I believe is absent.
27. Similar ideas are reported among the Barok. In addition the directional dip of the crescent of the new moon among the Barok, according to Wagner, is likened to a mouth (1986:43).

28. Similar hunger minimising, suppressing or spoiling magic have been reported for the Massim. See Malinowski (1961:169); Munn (1986:85-6); Roheim (1950:223) and M. Young (1971:159-61 and 1986:123).

29. This is reminiscent of the immobility desired of valuables both in the Lelet case and also the Tangan example I cited above (see chapter three). Tangan valuables are made from clam shells.

30. Another word, lungkabot, sheds light on the meanings of kabot. It is the name of a feast that used to be held at the end of the mortuary feasting sequence. This feast is closed, in that all the food that entered the feasting area of the men's house yard had to be consumed there. Any food not eaten by the men had to stay inside the men's house yard and be left to rot.

31. Moving sea-water and other aquatic metaphors are common in gardening spells (see chapter six). I collected an almost identical garden spell which also uses the metaphor of waves breaking on the beach.

32. Damon reports a similar idea, except that it is a fish and the spell is used in yam magic for the storehouse (1990:161).

33. Munn describes a curing and fertility rite, Bibira, meant, on the one hand, to banish illness from the hamlet and, on the other hand, to make food stay there. This rite significantly involves the garden ritual specialist sweeping the hamlet (Munn 1986:89-94).
Chapter 6

The magical world of the garden and the seating of taro

In discussing the origins of taro and famine, in the last chapter, I focused on the metaphors and images of immobility and mobility that characterise discourse about food generally and taro in particular. Lelet garden ritual and magic also abounds in contrasting images of seating and movement. Here, I examine more fully the agricultural rites and practices aimed at seating taro in place, focusing on these images and tying their use to the stages in the taro gardening cycle. I will outline the more practical aspects of the gardening cycle before discussing garden magic and how it is transmitted from person to person. I will outline the various types of magic, before detailing the precise forms and images employed in them. Finally, I will describe the regimes of abstinence that garden magicians undergo, drawing out the apparently antithetical images used.

The taro gardening cycle

It is already clear that taro is important to the Lelet but, while I have alluded to its symbolic significance, I have not situated that discussion in the context of the agricultural cycle. Examining this cycle of production will allow me to map the types of metaphor used in the different stages, illustrating the fluid and contextual nature of some images I have discussed so far.

People take several matters into account when considering starting a garden (laramang). In the past, a garden was considered to have been fallow for a sufficient time when the trees, cut last time the garden was cultivated, have grown sufficiently to begin to fruit. Today, as a result of increased pressure for production, this fallow cycle has been shortened. Before, gardens could be left for up to twenty years but three or four years seems to have been usual. Now, people wait only until the fallen leaves of the trees are sufficiently dry and start to cover the ground. This vegetative litter suppresses weed growth. The site and the season, must also be considered.

All these factors are to some extent interdependent. For example, when considering a particular site and type of garden, the season is significant, although the interconnection between seasonality and gardening does not appear to be as elaborately developed as among the Barok (Wagner 1986:28-44). Due to the topography, the availability of flat land is extremely limited. When choosing a site
for a new taro garden, gardeners choose to cut it in the valleys or on the upward slopes of the valleys. This in turn must be correlated with the seasons. During the drier months taro gardens are cultivated in the valleys when the moisture content of soil is greater. During the wetter months they are usually cut on the slopes to avoid the unduly moist conditions of the valleys.³

Initially the site is examined to see if it is mature enough to be cut, followed by the cutting of the undergrowth (shrubs, grasses and small trees) which is carried out by both men and women (see tables 3 and 4). Then larger trees are lopped (some may be ring-barked and left), a prerogative of men only. After the initial cutting is complete the vegetation is left to dry, a process that may take several weeks. Then it is burnt, a task carried out by both men and women. It is then left for a couple of weeks to allow any weed seeds to germinate. Should this occur, it is thought that the firing was insufficient.

The next stage in the cultivation of the garden is hoeing of the soil and the removal of any weed growth and root matter. At this time any vegetative matter that has not been thoroughly burnt is gathered up into several small heaps and reburnt. Next, the garden is subdivided into sections for planting. The initial step in this process involves the cutting of saplings which are then placed around the contours of the land at approximately two metre intervals and fastened to the ground with stakes, to mark it out.

Table 3: Named stages in garden cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of stage in garden cycle:</th>
<th>Stage in garden cycle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  <em>livira</em> or <em>laramang i marang kuku</em></td>
<td>a fallowed garden ready for cutting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  <em>laxasilo</em></td>
<td>a newly planted garden but no new leaf growth as yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  <em>laxasinna</em> or <em>legesinna</em> or <em>lasna</em></td>
<td>a garden in which new leaf growth has emerged from planting stock; there has been an initial weeding and placement of soil; the leaf is too soft to be edible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  <em>laramang lomlomo</em></td>
<td>a garden in which a second weeding has occurred and a small amount of soil has been placed at the base of the taro plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  <em>laramang kimkitsinna</em></td>
<td>a garden from which edible leaves have been taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  <em>laxanongolong makun</em> or <em>lavaikanolong</em></td>
<td>a 'new garden'; a garden in which the leaf of the taro is no longer edible and the taro tuber is harvestable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  <em>laxantiam</em> or <em>liriam</em></td>
<td>an overgrown garden still with some harvestable tubers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  <em>laramang i raxap pam</em> or <em>laramang i raxap tino</em></td>
<td>a garden that has been completely harvested and is now lying fallow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planting comes next, another task performed by both men and women. This involves digging a hole approximately twenty centimetres deep by thrusting with a sharpened digging stick (los) into the ground a couple of times and then heaving the soil so that it becomes loosened. Then the regenerative stalk of the taro plant is inserted into the hole and the soil firmed around it to hold it in place. This process is repeated until all the stalks have been planted.

Table 4: Garden processes from clearing to harvesting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vernacular gloss on garden process:</th>
<th>Garden processes from clearing to harvesting:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. i ven kating laramang</td>
<td>checking the garden for clearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. i xorop os</td>
<td>cutting liana vines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. i kuwu laramang</td>
<td>lopping trees and clearing garden of undergrowth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. i ka i ramang</td>
<td>leaving the cut debris to dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. i tos laramang</td>
<td>firing dried debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. i repet ung</td>
<td>leaving fired garden for weeds to sprout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ngu</td>
<td>hoeing garden to clear weed growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. i ngum\ i rin</td>
<td>gathering unburnt debris for further firing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. i sep buan</td>
<td>dividing the garden into sections with saplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. i bu</td>
<td>breaking soil with digging stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. i ilo lobolo</td>
<td>planting the regenerative stalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. i rep</td>
<td>removing the dried or rotting stalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. i ge sinna</td>
<td>weeding the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. i loknap\ lako\ kloknap</td>
<td>filling any gaps in planting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. i mlomo</td>
<td>weeding and heaping soil at base of the taro plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. i xingtaba</td>
<td>heaping a lot of soil at base of taro plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. i mkit</td>
<td>collecting edible taro leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. i sep asu</td>
<td>cutting and removing the taro leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. i sep ligin</td>
<td>collecting first taro for harvesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. i kaxat</td>
<td>harvesting of taro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once planted there are a number of stages in the growth from regenerative stalk to a plant with an enlarged and edible tuber (see figure 6 and tables 5 and 6). Some of these stages are accompanied by human intervention, particularly tending by women. The growth begins with the unfurling of a new leaf. As the new leaf grows from the centre of the regenerative stalk the older part that was attached to the leaf dries up and when completely dried in two or three weeks it is removed by the gardener. Later the gardener removes all the weed growth around the plant and places some extra soil at its base. Both are considered vital if the plant is to grow profusely. After this, the garden is left for several months before the same process is repeated on a larger scale. Then the growth of the taro continues until the time when new leaves are harvested as greens. The taro plant then has its leaves lopped off so that the majority of its growth goes into the tuber. It is not long after this stage that some of the new taro will be harvested and eaten, to determine whether it is mature enough for harvesting. If the taro that is tasted is deemed ready, more widespread harvesting is carried out depending on the needs of the gardener. The last taro to be
harvested, which is by far the largest from the garden, comes from the sites where the woody matter was heaped and burnt.4

Table 5: Stages in taro growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vernacular gloss of taro growth:</th>
<th>Description of stage in taro growth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lobolo i sep exe</td>
<td>the roots of the taro have emerged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lobolo i xong\ lobolo i susu</td>
<td>the leaves have emerged from regenerative stalk (lobolo); the regenerative stalk grows (i susu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laxankanbolo i rapsoso pes</td>
<td>the hand of the taro stalk is rotting, drying and falling away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lobolo i ra susu lavas i ra turut</td>
<td>the taro stalk has subsided and the taro is going upwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lowopavaxanbolo i re palas</td>
<td>the taro leaf is opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavas i ra sepsixan</td>
<td>the taro tuber is swelling in the ground; the growth starts to go down into the tuber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavas i ra sopke</td>
<td>this is the stage in the growth cycle when it starts to put 'children' (levendepholo) this follows the removal of the rotting stems after severance of aerial growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavas i ra merixi</td>
<td>the leaf of the taro plant has yellowed and the tuber is large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lavas i ra merobos</td>
<td>the stem of the taro is small and the taro is large</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Stages in taro tuber growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages in tuber growth:</th>
<th>Description of tuber growth:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>loxongkun i sepsogen</td>
<td>the tuber is round but not yet out of the ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pas merixi</td>
<td>the tuber is round, has emerged from the ground and is edible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pas palom</td>
<td>the tuber has emerged more from the ground than pas merixi and still has large leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pas patmang</td>
<td>the tuber is larger than pas palom but when consumed it is dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pas soxobolen</td>
<td>the tuber is large and edible but there is considerable debris at the base of the leaf stem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pas sipsiwut or pas merobos</td>
<td>the tuber is very large and mature at this stage; the tuber is edible but it is considered old at this stage; some start to rot; there is only a few yellowed and shrunk leaves left on the plant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6: Lavatpas or lavas, taro plant and parts
Plate 13: Planting a taro garden

Plate 14: Flying stone in a taro garden
The magic of the garden: Lasangsanga at laramang

Magic is generally referred to as lasangsanga, but pre-eminence this applies to garden magic. The act of uttering a magical spell is ingsanga and the act of uttering a taro magic spell is ingsanga loxongkun. Other terms are used for different magical methods. Thus, if the magic involves singing, the verb kpixan will be used, a term which applies not only to magical song but to singing generally (for example in church). More elaborate forms of magic, such as lemeravas or those that require the recitation of lengthy lists of ancestral names, are referred to as lenga. The various practices involved in the cultivation of a garden, of both a ritual and practical nature, are referred to as lenkot maxantamang (all things of the garden). For example, it applies to the incantation of spells and also to the dividing of a garden into separate sections, or to digging holes for planting.

Garden magic (lasangsanga at laramang), in the main, like most other forms of powerful 'traditional' magic - such as weather magic, belongs to particular clans and is considered part of their cultural heritage. As with other material or cultural items, magic is ideally inherited matrilineally, being passed from a mother's brother to a sister's son. In reality, the paths along which magic travels are far more complicated. Among the Lelet there is not the rigid pattern of transmission that Kahn, for example, discusses for the Wamira, where magic is inherited patrilineally, being passed from father to son and mother to daughter, and where there is no transmission or borrowing between a husband and wife (1980:130). Among the Wamira, a husband and wife cannot exchange their inherited magic between themselves, but at the Lelet a marriage partner's magic may be transmitted and used, and some noted magicians have acquired magic by this means (cf. Keesing 1991:280). For example the Lundok, Gawo, of Limbin inherited his garden magic from his wife and then passed it on to his adopted son in Katanuat clan. For the Lelet, magic, like other forms of heritable wealth, is sometimes given to a son as opposed to a sister's son, and these forms of inheritance sometimes result in conflicts. In cases like this, people say the magic has 'followed blood' or patrilineal reckoning. For example, a form of magic described to me by Lavarise was inherited by him from his father of Murass clan. People have also been known to purchase magic with shell valuables or money. Lamagum, for example, purchased a love magic spell from another Lelet man for five kina.

As the scope of garden magic widens, from a single garden to all of the gardens of the community, the magic tends to become more complex, the elaboration and length of spells and rituals increases. The more elaborate forms, such as the community-wide garden rituals of lemeravas which aims to attract and seat taro in place, provide a 'potentialising umbrella' of power, beneath which individual gardeners perform their own less elaborate magic, in their own gardens. This is also the case with most garden magic, so that there is an encompassing hierarchy. I will outline each of the different forms of magic, concentrating on the last three forms for more detailed exploration because they illustrate best the metaphors used and the changing contexts of their use (see table 7).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garden process:</th>
<th>Vernacular gloss:</th>
<th>Magical intervention:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. checking the garden for clearing</td>
<td>i ven katling laramang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. cutting liana vines</td>
<td>i xorop os</td>
<td>lomondok - spells as cutting occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. lopping trees and clearing garden of undergrowth</td>
<td>i kuwu laramang</td>
<td>lomondok - spells as cutting occurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. leaving the cut debris to dry</td>
<td>i ka i ramang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. firing dried debris</td>
<td>i tos laramang</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. leaving fired garden for weeds to sprout</td>
<td>i repat ung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. hoeing garden to clear weed growth</td>
<td>i ngu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. gathering unburnt debris for further firing</td>
<td>i ngum\i rin</td>
<td>lomondok - burning botanical material in centre and placement of heavy log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. dividing the garden into sections with saplings</td>
<td>i sep buan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. breaking soil with digging stick</td>
<td>i bu</td>
<td>lubu - magical incantation of spells; lomondok - incitement songs prior to planting and rubbing botanical material on taro stalk 'eye'; lomondok - fixing heavy log in place with spells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. planting the regenerative stalk</td>
<td>i tlo lobolo</td>
<td>lubu - magical incantation of spells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. removing the dried or rotting stalk</td>
<td>i rep</td>
<td>lubu - songs sung as old stalk removed; lavasop - the planting of ginger; lomondok - spells incanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. weeding the garden</td>
<td>i ge sinna</td>
<td>lomondok - spells incanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. filling any gaps in planting</td>
<td>i loknap\lakloknap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. weeding and heaping soil at base of the taro plant</td>
<td>i mlomo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. heaping a lot of soil at base of taro plant</td>
<td>i xingtaba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. collecting edible taro leaves</td>
<td>i mkit</td>
<td>lomondok - spells incanted when collected and prior to being eaten; lubu magic songs and spells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. cutting and removing the taro leaves</td>
<td>i sep asu</td>
<td>lubu - placement of stones in centre of garden as part of lemeravas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. collecting first taro for harvesting</td>
<td>i sep ligin</td>
<td>lomondok - spells incanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. harvesting of taro</td>
<td>i kaxat</td>
<td>lomondok - spells incanted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Magical songs and the seduction of taro stalks

The least complex form of garden magic is the magical song, *loxonpixanbolo*, used to entice the taro regenerative stalks to the garden and thus to multiply the planting resources available.⁷ This form of magic predominantly comprises the singing of songs at night to entice taro to the magician's garden, but can also involve the uttering of spells for this purpose. These same songs or spells are often also used in famine sorcery, but *loxonpixanbolo* are used more widely in garden magic. When used as famine-producing sorcery, these songs rely on the actual theft of a taro stalk in addition to the singing of songs, but when used as a beneficent garden magic they do not require this. In both its malign and beneficent uses, this form of song is directed at the *loroang* of the taro plant. These songs are performed to ensure that the taro planted in the garden grows abundantly.

Swelling ginger and swelling taro

The type of garden magic referred to as *lavasop* uses the ginger plant (*losop*), planted in the middle of the four taro already planted in the centre of the garden.⁸ This is one of the sites where debris left over from the firing process has been gathered and burnt, forming heaps of ashes (*lavatpingka*).⁹ These sites are important for the performance of other magic such as *lubu*. If the ginger is planted as part of magic *lubu*, it will be planted in numerous sites, but if it is being planted as part of *lavasop* it will only be planted in the main firing place in the centre of the garden. The ginger is planted when the original taro stalk has dried and withered and has been replaced by new growth of two or three shoots or 'hands'. The dried or rotting stalk is removed as are any weeds close by.

In one example described to me, after incanting the spells, the magician takes a ginger planting stem and rhizome and circles it around his head while calling the name of a important man (*lemesilok*, literally big man) whose head he figuratively wants to plant with the ginger. According to this spell, the grown taro will be as large as the head of the man whose name was called (cf. A. and M. Strathern 1968:184). Initially, in this version, there is a sequence of five different spells. All the spells invoke the growth of the taro plant to mirror or mimic the growth of the ginger plant by growing large and fat, and it is for this reason that *losop* is often referred to as the base or foundation of taro.

The use of ginger is not arbitrary but relates to the similar growth cycles of the two plants (which are also both regenerated by asexual reproduction). The growth of these two plants begins with the profuse and verdant development of new shoots and leaves, followed by a second phase where the base of the plant swells in size while the leaves yellow and diminish. The end product is a plant with a canopy of smallish stems and yellowed leaves with a huge base, protruding partially from the ground. Especially important for the efficacy of this magic is the use of a type of ginger that does not die, but remains firmly placed in the garden long after the final harvest. The
aim is to make the taro acquire the same perduring and long lasting qualities as the ginger plant.

A variant of the ginger magic is performed as with the previous planting but with only one taro stalk in the garden centre. Again, the ginger is planted when the withered taro stalk is removed. One form of this magic has incantations addressed to taro, ginger and stones. All are called on to be as large and powerful as the circular winds, generated by the movement of the lau, the powerful and restless life forces of people who have undergone unnatural deaths (see chapter two). These winds are called on not only because of their obvious power, but because of their circularity, a property that is a highly regarded and desired attribute of taro. Another important element in the metaphoric associations is the powerful upward motion of these winds, especially pertinent at this stage because, after the planting of the stalk, the leaves are required to propel themselves upward. A final spell invokes the power of the wind to place the stick taro inside the hole that has been dug for it. While the meaning of this was never clearly explained to me, this probably enjoins the powerful swirling of the wind to entrench or root the regenerative taro stalks firmly in the ground, so they cannot be enticed away.

Breaking the ground and Moroa's head

The third type of garden magic is lubu, which is performed when the soil is broken with the dibble stick prior to the planting of the taro stalks. The process of breaking the soil, or i bu, gives this magic its name. There are numerous individually named variations of this magic. I collected several versions and believe it was one of the most widely used forms of garden magic. This form of magic was heavily frowned upon by the church because some of the spells invoke the breaking of Moroa's or God's head (see chapter one). Despite the church's disapprobation it is still the most common, mainly because of its simplicity. In its most basic form this magic consists only of incantations uttered when the soil is broken and the taro stalks planted, or it can be part of a sequence of magic that begins when the forest is cut and finishes when the garden matures. When lubu was practised in the past, it could be carried out by either a single magician in his garden or by numerous magicians in their own gardens subsequent to the communal performance of lemeravas, thus utilising the potentialising force of this most powerful magic. Lubu was also included in the next level of magic, lomondok, which aims specifically at producing abundant taro for large mortuary feasts.

Now I will describe more fully one example of the lubu variety of magic, shown to me by Lebeve, who ceased using it in 1975 when he 'changed his life' by becoming a fully committed Christian and renounced all those practices considered satanic ('samting bilong Satan'). For brevity, I will omit the preliminary steps and concentrate on the later steps which have accompanying spells, i.e. from when the garden is ready for planting.
This form of magic can be performed on large collective gardens, in which the magician has his own section of garden, or it can be performed on a single smaller garden. The magician focuses on the centre (kantabu) of each section in the garden, bespelling the areas where excess garden debris was burnt forming small ash heaps. He begins by flattening the central ash heap into a uniform circle while uttering spells invoking the earth to have sufficient fertility to make the taro grow. The spell invokes taro to 'get up' at this site, an allusion to the required upward growth. Then he takes some of the ashes and walks around the ash heap, uttering another formula before throwing the ashes back onto the heap (cf. Malinowski 1935 vol.1:299). This spell refers to the upward motion of the sea as it rises into waves before it surges and breaks. This second spell exhorts this to occur in the garden as well as at Kanam, a place with considerable symbolic importance, on the east coast of New Ireland (see below). The use of aquatic metaphors, especially the rising or upward motion of the sea, is common in many spells focused on the early stages of the taro growth cycle. Such spells invoke the taro shoots and leaves to propel themselves upwards.

The next step is the breaking of the soil, for which new digging sticks are cut from the forest. New taro is said to require new sticks, old sticks would produce old taro. Meanwhile the magician's wife, helped by other women, sorts the varieties of taro into separate piles for planting. The garden magician also cuts his own digging stick, carefully choosing wood free from blemishes. Should the magician's stick be blemished or marked the taro will be likewise.

When the magician starts digging he calls a spell saying he is breaking the earth, firstly with taro, secondly with Moroa and thirdly with Sixiridium, the culture heroes whose myth I recounted in chapter one. After breaking the holes the magician removes the soil and as he does so calls on the culture heroes, as well as himself, to remove taro from here. The spell is a projection into the future when the taro is being harvested. The magician then takes four taro stalks and bespells them. The spell refers to the magician as being the noise of taro as it moves. The verb employed applies to things that make a noise when they touch the ground, - the noise of footsteps as they tread on stones and twigs. Recall that the name for the taro plant, lavas, is derived from walking; the image here is taro noisily 'walking' from other places to the garden. The magician then plants the stalk while invoking the taro to come out. Then he proceeds to other ash heaps in the rest of the garden, and concludes by returning to the first site, where he gathers some earth, and proceeds to circle the site moving his hand up and down as he goes. As he does this he invokes the sea to rise upwards.

Then the magician's wife roasts a large taro tuber on the stones of the earth oven, producing a crusty skinned tuber. The roasted taro is placed on a taro leaf in the middle of the four taro stalks planted in the central ash heap, signifying that the taro of the garden should be large and appetising, like the tuber placed there. This process is repeated at all the sites in the garden where the magic has been performed. These will remain until the completion of the planting and will then be collected by the magician's wife who gives them to the children of any of the adults helping plant the
garden, in recompense for the parents undergoing a regime of abstinence (see below).

Once planting is complete, the garden is left until the taro has grown two or three new shoots or 'hands' and the original piece of stalk has dried or rotted. At this stage the magician plants a ginger plant (losop) at the places previously bespelled, in a process similar to that described above for lavasop. Again the spells used with the planting of ginger entreat the taro to mirror the growth of the ginger rhizome. After this the garden is sealed off by the magician who barricades the garden gate with some branches. (Sometime there is the incantation of spells, but in this magic there is not). The closure is intended to exclude women whose laram is especially potent and can cause the magic to dissipate. This prohibition continues for only two days, after which women are free to enter and plant other secondary crops, such as sugar-cane, corn, greens and tobacco. They will also fill any gaps left by taro stalks that have died.

When the taro plants have grown and the planting material has been replaced by new shoots, the magician returns and removes the withered stalks from the taro planted in the centre. The removal of this debris allows the new shoots to grow unrestricted. Also any weeds that have since grown in the various ash heaps where the magic was performed are removed. As he removes the debris the magician sings songs like this:

Mother, my mother, mother, my mother, they are removing the dried stem, they are taking the dried taro stem from here.

Mother, my mother, mother, my mother, they are removing the dried stem. They are taking the dried taro stem from here. They are taking the dried taro stem from here. You will collect this taro for the two of us from Kanam and bring it here.

Mother, my mother, mother, my mother, they are removing the dried stem, they are taking the dried taro stem from here. They are taking the dried taro stem from here. You will collect this taro by calling out for it to come here.

In this song, only partly cited here, the magician poetically invokes his dead mother's loroang to collect taro from powerfully charged places like Kanam and bring it to the garden. Another man, who had a slightly different version of this song, said the mother was used because of her nurturing role as a supplier of food: a mother does not forget about her children but always, in her maternal attachment, prepares their food.

This song lyrically depicts the action the magician performs, such as the removal of the taro stalk debris. However, as with other songs for enticing taro, it also portrays taro travelling from distant places. Taro, the song goes, should be brought from Kanam and from Lagulom. Kanam, a place on the east coast in the Barok language area, ranks second to Katan Moroa in importance. It is invoked in garden magic and pig rearing magic. And in the more elaborate garden rites, lemeravas, the
movement of taro from Kanam to the Lelet is often invoked. The reasons suggested for its importance differ. I was told by one man that there is an enormous *lima* or banyan tree there, whose base is magically clear and free of the litter of leaves, like cement, smooth and flat. This large tree is also home to numerous *lamalom*, the moiety eagle, which is not abundant in other areas on the coast. Other men mentioned a stream, on whose bottom are found smooth rounded stones covered with a green mossy growth, used in gardening magic, or a giant *larada* eel who occasionally surfaces from the water of this stream to spit saliva onto the ground, (carefully collected for magical use). Lagulom is a place mentioned in other taro songs but not in other forms of magic. People I asked were not clear about the true significance of Lagulom beyond it being a place evoked in taro magic. The name, means 'something big', and the taro should be big. The song's owner said taro does not come from Lagulom but its power does. Thus by singing of this place the magician draws the power of taro from there to his taro.

Once the magician has removed the taro debris, he walks in the garden singing the above song, finally by throwing the debris onto the emerging taro plants. After doing this at all the magical sites, he leaves the garden, erecting a prohibitory sign forbidding entry. The garden is closed for a week before women enter and remove the rest of the withered or rotting taro stalks. After this the growth of the plants is said to 'get up'.

The garden is left until the plants have large leaves, when a few of the new, soft and edible leaves are collected while the majority of the leaf growth is cut back. The magician bends and breaks the taro stems and leaves downwards whilst he sings, recounting the acts he is doing and, again calling on the power of taro to travel from Lagulom and Kanam to the garden. The song evocatively images plentiful water, an allusion to the taro stems and leaves broken off being soft, moist and, by implication, edible.

The magician now closes access to the garden again for a week, using branches, and in this case, spells. When the garden is opened and closed he invokes Moroa and afterwards himself to carry out these actions. When free access is permitted, the magician's wife collects new taro leaves which are cooked as greens to accompany some new taro cooked in the earth oven. Before eating his portion, the magician places a taro on top of the greens and incants a spell, invoking the sea and then the taro garden to rise up. In other variants of *lubu* magic, the spells metaphorically liken the upward motion of the taro plant to the upward movement of *lamalom*, the moiety eagle in flight.

Women are now allowed free access to the garden to harvest greens. Most of the other non-edible leaves are also cut off, leaving only one or two on the plant. This forces the growth downwards into the tuber in the ground. The removal of all but a few leaves begins what Panoff refers to as the second phase of taro plant growth (1970a:241). It is at this stage that a stone can be placed in the garden as part of the process of potentialising and making the ground heavy, which is achieved through the encompassing magic of *lemeravas*. The placement of the stone not only
symbolises those properties sought in taro, smoothness, roundedness and lack of blemish, but the heaviness of the stones also counteracts the previously invoked upward motion by weighing down the taro.

After the severing of the aerial growth, the magician approaches a weather magician for a small amount of rainfall, after which the taro grows rapidly, the leaves rise up again, entangling with each other and forming a dense thicket of foliage. When the magician judges this to be sufficient, he approaches the weather magician again to ask for a period of hot weather. The sun matures the taro plant, the leaves become old, withered and yellow, while the tuber enlarges, swelling from the soil. The garden is now left without human intervention until the magician decides the taro has grown enough to be tasted. He ventures into the garden first to collect the new taro, after which his wife collects some large tubers. A small first fruits feast can be held to celebrate the garden, the taro being accompanied by pork (either domesticated or wild).

**Heavy logs and repugnant taro**

The fourth type of magic, called *lomondok*, utilises a heavy log placed in the centre of the garden. This type of garden magic is performed in preparation for a large mortuary feast and differs from the other forms discussed so far, in that it is not only a sequential form that starts with the first cutting of vines for a garden, but it continues after harvesting until the taro is cooked at the mortuary feast.

*Lomondok* magic also differs significantly from *lubu* magic in that it is not only the magician's and his immediate kin's gardens which are made productive but it is more widely aimed to ensure the productivity of all the community's gardens. Such generalised abundance is important because women from all the hamlets on the plateau should carry a basket of taro with them to contribute to the taro reserves of the host of a mortuary feast.

The first step of *lomondok* begins when the garden is cleared, and involves the recitation of spells when the magician cuts the grass, creepers, bushes and trees in a tract of forest. As he swings his knife he invokes Moroa to be present and carry out the same action. The magician's song, like other songs of taro theft or enticement exhorts the movement of taro from other places to his garden. This suggests the magician is so successful that he is chased to the garden by bundles of taro stalks. Once the clearing is completed, the garden is hoed and left until the debris is dry enough for firing.

The magician now collects plant materials selected for their exuberant growing and fruiting properties, such as bamboo and the banyan tree. For example, leaves and other dried debris from a banana are used because it carries abundant and sizable fruit. Leaves from the banyan tree are used because this tree grows tall, broad and unrestricted (cf. Hogbin 1970:177). Similarly, leaves from a taro-like plant are used because these plants grow large and profusely. Leaves from other trees are used to repel and protect the garden from sorcery attack, because they have considerable
'fight'. A type of bamboo is used for its protective properties particularly its sharpness. Should a sorcery attack be made the knife-like bamboo 'cuts' it, making it useless. A type of grass with sharp edges is also used as part of the protective umbrella against sorcery.

All of this botanical material used is burnt, forming a pile of ashes in the centre. The magician has cut a log about a metre and half long from a variety of tree that grows in valleys and this is thrown onto the ash pile with a spell exhorting Moroa, and then taro, to fall noisily to the ground. As in the spell described previously, the verb used designates not simply falling but hitting and falling with a thud (cf. Panoff 1972b:201). This image combines movement of taro at a great velocity from distant and peripheral places and movement which is downward, a pre-requisite for the development of large tubers.

The log remains while the garden is divided into sections and marked out by the placement of tree saplings, after which women prepare the regenerative stalks. On the night prior to planting, the magician does two things. Firstly, he and his immediate kin will collect various botanic materials, and secondly, he will sing songs to draw regenerative taro stalks to his garden. The botanic matter is rubbed on the 'eye' of the taro stalk, the piece of tuber attached to the stalk containing the taro life force from which the tuber will grow (cf. Blackwood 1935:307). Once again, the magician uses the plant and tree materials described above for the same reasons. Another plant is added because it has a large bulbous onion-like base which the taro tuber is to mimic. Finally he collects a type of grass with irritant properties which causes itching on the body because this will irritate the stalk and make it grow upwards or 'get up'.

While the magician is lying on his bed at night he sings songs to entice taro stalks to his garden (see above and also chapter six). These songs aim to 'carry' taro to his garden from all directions. He first sings of the large winged flying fox which when flying can smell food at a great distance, travelling to it and finding it easily. By invoking the flying fox the magician exploits its ability to smell food and particularly taro, bringing it to his garden no matter how far away it is. An abbreviated translation is as follows:

Flying fox, flying fox, flying fox, large flying fox, flying fox, flying fox, flying fox. You will noisily fall down here on this abundant taro from the east, here. Here. Now it has arrived.

As this song is repeated all the cardinal points are named. It evinces completed action, the song ends with the affirmative statement that taro has arrived. This song, thus confirms the efficacy of the magic, evoking the image of taro noisily falling to the ground. One element the translation lacks, requiring emphasis, is the abundance alluded to. The image of abundance evoked, according to Lakana, is a basket so full of taro that it is overflowing and noisily falling to the ground.
The second song of enticement again invokes the movement of taro from other places to the garden. The magician either names the varieties of taro he plants, or he directs the song to taro stalks at other places, drawing them to his garden. In one of the two versions that Lakana sang for me, he called on taro to come from Kanam as well as from other places. It also implies completed action, that the magic has been successful. Both songs are sung throughout the night until the morning of the day of the planting.

On the morning of the planting the initial work of the magician is to cut some small stakes, used to fasten the log that is already in the centre of the garden. When hammering the stakes the magician uses a large, round white stone, properties he wishes to impart in the taro tuber (cf. A. and M. Strathern 1968:184). Accompanying this action is a spell which invokes Moroa to firmly ‘seat’ the log, and afterwards, the taro. This completed, the magician burns some leaves and stalks from plants with large bases, a property to impart to the taro plants, and rubs the ashes onto the point of his digging stick. He then throws two stalks on the ground while reciting a spell calling on Moroa to forcefully fall down, and taro to do likewise. After this he takes a plant with a large bulbous base breaking it on the sharpened end of the digging stick. This is accompanied with a spell which again addresses Moroa. As Lakana put it, this spell calls on Moroa and then the magician to open the ‘path of taro’ (langas loxongkuri). In explaining this he used the metaphor of a locked house and the door being broken open to allow free passage. The path of taro must be opened to facilitate its unheeded movement. The verb is commonly used, among other things, for thrusting a stick into a hole to find something hidden there, where things previously hidden or concealed are disclosed by being brought out into the open, through the medium of magical spells. This relates to the way taro is conceived as growing. As the regenerative stalk grows it gradually reveals itself. This conceptualisation of growth uses the ubiquitous verb for revelation, i su (or asu), which means that something once hidden is now visible.

In the next step, the magician breaks holes for the taro stalks, again with spells, calling on the growth of the taro plant to 'go down', for the taro stalk to be firmly rooted in the hole. Then he calls on Moroa, and afterwards himself, to 'put' taro at this place. Finally, he invokes the sea, and then taro, to rise upwards. As I've said the use of aquatic metaphors is common at this stage when the growth must be upwards (see above and n.15).

After planting is completed, the garden is left while the stalk grows one or two new leaves. Then the magician enters the garden and goes to the two taro planted near the log. In much the same way as described above for lubu magic, he proceeds to remove the dried or rotting debris that has fallen away from the newly emerging taro shoots and leaves. Accompanying spells describe his action and, are again addressed to Moroa. As he cleans the bases of the taro he sings a song invoking the taro tubers to grow as large, unblemished and smooth as the eggs of the moiety eagle, lamalom.
In the next step the magician cleans the taro plant a second time, again accompanying it with a spell describing his actions and that of Moroa in cleaning the garden. The whole garden is then cleaned and soil placed around the base of the plants. As the magician cleans he complements his actions with a song which sings of the 'fight' (i.e. plants with irritant properties having made the taro 'stand up'). The magician then calls on those irritant properties to leave, because the growth of the tuber depends on the reversal of the upward motion into downward motion causing the tuber to swell.

The garden is left until it is ready for the collection of edible greens. The magician is the first to enter and he utters spells as he breaks two leaves off each plant he initially planted. The spell invokes Moroa and then himself to forcefully bring the taro out into the open. Like the unblocking of the 'path of taro' spell above, this uses the image of revelation (asu). The leaves collected are cooked in an earth oven together with taro tubers (which may or not come from this garden) and divided up among the people whose garden it is. Only a small serving of greens will be eaten by the magician who is the first to taste them. Before eating them, he places them on the tuber and incants a spell, an unusual one for a spell prior to the consumption of food. The spell likens taro to excreta:

Taro from a place that is no good. Excreta from a place that is no good. Taro is dirty.
Excreta is dirty. Taro is spoiled. Excreta is spoiled.

The spell initially refers to taro coming from a spoiled area, a reference to a type of garden adjacent to hamlets in the areas previously used as toilets (cf. Panoff 1970b:242-3). The spell then obviously likens taro to excreta as dirty, spoiled and repugnant. This is not purely an act of wanton destructiveness or metaphoric of sorcery, but must be seen in the context of the mortuary feast for which the garden is planted. By evoking taro as excreta the magician aims to make the food abhorrent so that it is wasted. Wastage is a highly desired outcome of large feasts when the host wishes there to be not only so much food that it cannot be consumed at the feast, but also that the food people take with them rots as well and the food they consume is wasted in diarrhoea, and is not properly converted into bodily power (see chapter seven).

These spells are analogous to spells for the suppression of hunger but, while those spells aim to make the stomach restful or 'sleep easy' so that it requires little food for satiation, these spells aim to repulse people by the thought of eating too much taro (see chapter five). Comparable ideas are found among the people of the Massim, where hunger-suppressing magic is used to limit consumption and promote abundance (see chapter five). Among the Gawa, Munn says many garden spells invoke the desire for small amounts of food (1986:85). Gawan spells make metaphoric allusions to food being dry or tight and thus being restricted in its movement into the body (1986:87). In her schema, dry food moves through the body slowly because the throat is tight, implying 'productive, tight planting' and conversely, 'tight planting implies controlled eating' (Munn 1986:87). Like the Lelet image of abundance, the parallel Gawan ideal is one of an overwhelming glut which
cannot possibly be consumed and consequently is left to waste. Malinowski also reported the use of magic aimed at minimising consumption (1935 vol.1:165, 227). The Trobriand magic appears closest to the Lelet, aiming to disgust the consumers so they cannot eat. According to Malinowksi, this is done to limit consumption and thus depletion of food reserves: "Their minds are nauseated ... they decline food, so that it remains in the storehouses", while fish and fruits from the bush are desired, the staple yam is not (1935 vol.1:239). Other spells I recorded also promote revulsion, whereby a person's body cannot bear to consume taro. Lakana told me they made the stomach desire only meat and feel repulsed at the thought of taro. This, he said, is similar to having diarrhoea in that the person cannot consume taro and when they try to do so after only a single bite they cease eating and leave the tuber to waste.34

To return to lomondok magic, the magician dips his greens into some sea-water (or salted water if none is available) and then eats the greens while incanting a spell. Like others described, the spell uses the imagery of the upward and buoyant motion of the sea. The sea is used, the magician told me, for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is invoked because people are unable to walk around in it and the garden growth required should similarly be so thick that people cannot walk around in it. Similar notions are found in the work of Bell, who mentions Tangan spells employing the metaphor of the sea for its denseness and darkness (1946-49:164 and see above n. 15). The sea is also invoked in lomondok for its ability to swell up and swamp people under its waves. The magic should promote the prolific growth of the taro leaves so that people entering the garden will be figuratively and literally submerged beneath the canopy (other spells for similar reasons invoke the thick and dense rain-forest).

The method of harvesting taro is pertinent here. It is important when women harvest taro that it be removed with care and thought, so that no visible signs remain of harvesting, girls are taught this at an early age. In the process of harvesting, the image of a dense and tightly planted sea of taro must be maintained. People erect prohibitory signs to stop scrutiny of gardens from close up, a method which enables people to be deceived by the illusion of abundance. A cardinal mistake for women to commit is to completely harvest a single row, leaving a marked and clearly visible space in the garden for all to see. In the past a man would beat his wife if she did this. Alternatively, he could perform magic to reform his wife's injudicious behaviour. He could ask another woman to prepare a package containing shredded leaves and barks from plants that are heavy or prolific growers. The husband places the package either among the earth oven stones when they are heated or on top of them, so that when the woman warms her hands over the fire the smoke from the package affects them.35 This process makes the hands of the woman 'heavy' so that she harvests with 'respect'. Here we have an association of lightweight body, fast movement and fast depletion of the garden and a heavy body with slow movement and slow depletion of the garden. The same qualitative properties are evoked in dance, except that the opposite ideal is desired (see chapter two). Dancers, particularly male dancers in that context are spoiled by heavy things which counteract the desired state of lightweightedness.
After the consumption of greens the garden is left until the testing of the taro tubers to determine the correct time for harvesting. Again the magician tries the taro first and repeats the spells used when eating the taro greens likening taro to excreta. After tasting the taro, he checks the garden to see whether the required growth pattern is occurring. If the upward growth of the leaves is continuing, the magician arrests it. This is done by heating some botanic material and placing it in the central area of the garden where he has performed the magic. One of the plants he uses is yellow, the colour the magician wants the taro leaves to adopt, showing that the upward growth has been halted and the tuber is now swelling in the ground. When the magician returns, in approximately a week, he finds large tubers which have burst from the ground, 'sitting' down ready for harvest. When this occurs his work is complete. The four taro in the centre which the magician planted in the first stage of the cycle will be left in the garden until all the others have been harvested. When the garden is completely harvested, he will remove these and hold a feast in his men's house accompanying these taro with pig and banana.

Magical power stones and seating the garden

_Lemeravas_ is the fifth type of garden magic and by far the most powerful. It makes use of the placement or seating of power stones in a collective ritual performance in the men's house yard. Some of these magical stones are shaped like taro, and are brought from Katan Moroa, the place of Moroa on the west coast of New Ireland. Located near the village of Mesi, it is also to the place where the _loroang_ of the dead are thought to go.

The name _lemeravas_ is derived from hole (_lemera_) and taro (_vas_) but more specifically refers to the site where the various magical stones are 'seated' in the custodian's men's house yard. This magic aims, as one man put it, to make 'the place well seated and to be full up with taro'. In the past _lemeravas_ was practised as a ritual means for overcoming the deprivations caused by famine, and one way of creating famine was to disrupt, invert or disperse the placement of the stones. Famine was only averted and fertility restored by the stones being righted. This potentialising magic aims to make the place productive, both of taro and of other foods growing from the soil, by making the ground 'heavy'. This process described to me, by Logolos, in this way:

They work magical spells on this stone, so the stone will be heavy, as will the place, the ground will be heavy. They use the stone to mark that the ground will be heavy and as a result everything will grow well. If the ground is heavy everything you plant in it will grow well. If the ground is not heavy there will no food.

This is similar to Gawa, where the '[g]ardens should be heavy; land or a garden which is lightweight is empty and unproductive' (Munn 1986:80). Previously, I have shown how the property of heaviness is conceived for the human body (see chapter five). Heavy taro tubers are an important constituent in making the gardener's body productive, although even this is regulated. If people overeat, their body will be too
heavy and instead of wanting to work they will want to sleep. In cyclic fashion, heavy taro makes the gardener heavy and productive, this bodily state is in turn transmitted to the garden where the gardener's productive energy is expended, and the garden is again made heavy and productive.

Pertinent to this is the concept lumumuat, which I have said means both heavy and power. One magician said this power was transferred via the magician's words into the objects of their spells.

This is because the power of my mouth or the breath which comes from my mouth with spells will cover the place completely. The whole place will sit down well and have good food and no famine. The insides of the gardens will be full of food.

When the performance of lemeravas magic is completed, other less powerful forms of magic are used by magicians in their own gardens. These capitalise on the potentialising power of lemeravas which makes the ground heavy and thus productive. If lemeravas had not been performed previously, the efficacy of the smaller forms of magic such as lavasop or lubu would be minimal. For example, I was told, if ginger is planted in the centre of the garden and lemeravas had not been performed, the four taro in the central site would grow large but taro in the rest of the garden would not.

Although the elaborate lemeravas rituals used to 'seat' the stones and thus taro, are no longer in use because of condemnation by the church, the power stones are still found in men's houses and should they be moved famine will result (cf. Panoff 1969:21). The magical effects of the power stones are still at work and there is a general reluctance to remove them from where they have been placed. Should a person who is not a custodian of the magic hold or touch these magical stones he or she will die a gruesome death, which involves the anus opening up as large as an 'orange' and the internal organs falling out. Thus the human body no longer retains things within it and the powerful internal organs of the body are lost. The body in this scenario is rendered lightweight, opposite to the effect the stones should have on the garden. The imagery involved here is similar to the Maenge protective magic, mentioned above, in which the garden thief is ensorcelled using lightweight wood and is unable to maintain corporeal integrity or control his/her bodily boundaries (Panoff 1972b:212). Lightweightedness in both cases entails a rapid flow from the body.

Magical flying stones

There are three different kinds of magical stone, lavadok, loxongkun and lentupegugu, associated with this form of magic, each with differing degrees of power. The largest, lavadok, kept permanently in the men's house yard, have considerable 'power' and 'fight'. It is this type that can kill people who touch it. Lavadok are an elongated oval-shaped grey stone about eight to ten inches long. The second type, loxongkun or taro, are also grey in colour and shaped, as the name suggests like a taro tuber. These stones have a round base and a stalk-shaped top,
looking like a pestle (cf. Bulmer 1965:147; Meggitt 1965:115 and A. and M. Strathern 1968:1931). *Loxongkun* are also very powerful and have considerable 'fight'. The third type, *lentupegugu*, is similar in appearance to the *lavadok*, but smaller, and has only a small amount of 'fight'. The name of this stone derives from *tupe*, meaning 'to go inside', and *gugu*, meaning work.40 This is a reference to its role in garden magic, as this type of stone is sometimes taken from the men's house yard and partially buried in the garden. It is placed in the garden after the removal of nearly all the aerial growth of the taro plants, when the remaining leaves and stems turn yellow and shrink. This process, *sep asu*, literally means to hit or forcefully bring out (the tuber) into the open. Again, there is a reversal in the growth of the taro plant from one of upward motion to that of downward motion. The swelling taro tuber will mirror the partly exposed placement of the stone, emerging from the soil to be half above and half below the ground.

All of these stones come from Katan Moroa and are said by some people to contain many human *loroang*. Like taro, which embodies the seemingly antithetical properties of motion and weightiness, these magical stones embody both the potentialising power of heaviness as well the reverse properties of lightness and mobility, exemplified most clearly in their ability to fly. This was became apparent to me when I visited a garden being planted. As I wandered about I noticed a single oval shaped stone near the edge of the garden (see plate 14). This stone, I was told, was not there the last time the garden was planted, but had 'jumped' there from the west coast. Unlike the 'walking' stones mentioned by Kahn among the Wamira, the Lelet ones are conceptualised as having the ability to fly, not walk (1990:51, 57; cf. Lindstrom 1990a:49 and Meggitt 1965:115).

The mobile and powerful nature of these stones is best illustrated by recounting a narrative of their discovery on the west coast near Katan Moroa.41 This was related to me by Logolos as follows:

> They do not use this ordinary black stone, the stone used is like taro. It comes from over the ocean, it flies over the sea. It is not possible to collect any stone from the beach or wherever and use it. This kind is marked for this purpose. People wait in hiding on the beach and hear it travelling over the sea. It flies making a prrrrrrr sound and lands on the beach. They are collected for use in magic. This type of stone is used so that the place will have food and taro will be abundant.

Some accounts suggest that prior to landing on the beach these stones skim beneath the surface of the water like a 'torpedo' before shooting ashore and becoming buried in the sand. These stones, thus, have not only the capacity for movement but also speed. Newly discovered stones are called *laknem* prior to being bespelled and used in *lemeravas*. Although the above narrative account does not mention it, as in other contexts of revelation it is necessary when finding and collecting these stones to practise a regime of ritual abstinence, which enables the body to withstand the powerful effects they can have.
Lemeravas and seating the place

As with the other forms of magic, there is considerable uniformity in the structure and form of the rituals associated with 'seating' of these stones, with only minor variations in the types of spells, songs, and paraphernalia used. For example, the lemeravas shown to me by Luburso used only four stones, whereas the form shown to me by Laxalon uses more. Other forms may differ as to the way the stones are painted, some for example are painted using several colours over each other, forming a grid pattern, while in others, red or white colouring is painted in single bands or simply on the top of the stone. Like the lomondok magic discussed above, lemeravas utilises botanical matter from vigorous growing trees or plants with bulbous bases, although that used also tends to vary. There is considerable uniformity in the form the spells and songs take, if not the specific content. As in other forms of taro magic, the verb to sit, *i tkis*, is also widely used. The songs, like those discussed above, invoke the power of taro to travel from powerfully charged places (Kanam, Katan Moroa, Lagulom) to the place where the lemeravas stones are located. Some more elaborate songs recite the names of the places through which the lemeravas magic has passed on its journey from the west coast.

The lengthy process of 'seating' the stones is collective and involves the congregation of men and women in the hamlet where the magic is performed. During this time people do not work and those present observe an etiquette of not being boisterous or noisy. The custodian of the magic, the chief magician, will maintain a regime of fasting and abstinence starting at this time and finishing when the taro has matured.

The initial step for this magic involves singing and washing of the stones, which are referred to anthropomorphically as babies. This is a time of heightened emotions, and people often cried when the washing takes place. Then the stones are painted. The next step involves preparing shredded barks and plant matter, placed on the ground or in a hole which is especially dug. Other things can be placed in this hole, - women can cut their clothes up and place them there as well. Then the stones are seated in the shredded botanical matter and clothes. In the form described to me, the larger stones made a border around the edge, while a taro shaped stone (*loxongkun*) was seated in the middle surrounded by smaller stones (not taro shaped) representing the 'children' of the taro. As the stones are placed the magician and his assistants (other male clan members) will talk in an ordinary way to the stones. When they have placed the stones in the botanic matter, the magician says to them, 'we are seating you, you will seat large taro for us'.

When the stones have been positioned and fastened firmly in place, the magician places his hands on the taro shaped stone and recites the spells to seat the taro, invoking the stones to sit here and taro to do likewise. Some call on Moroa to be seated. One spell from the lemeravas of Luburso, invokes the taro, and after that the lemeravas, to sit continuously. Just as the spells of lomondok magic elicits taro to be
repugnant this spell invokes taro to grow mould. Again taro should be too abundant to be consumed and thus wastes.

After the incantation of spells to 'seat' the stones, songs like the enticement songs described above will be sung. A final song finishes the sequence, comprising the recitation of the names of the deceased practitioners of this magic, whose power was invoked, prior to the advent of the church, through lining up their skulls. After the seating of the magical stones the people who witnessed the rituals will donate small pieces of shell valuables and the magician addresses the stones in lieu of this: 'You see all these shell valuables we have placed here, you shall seat big taro for us'. The pieces of shell valuable go to the custodian of the magic.

To finalise the efficacy of the lemeravas, some of the stones, lentupegugu, can be taken from the men's house yard at a later stage, and located in a maturing garden. The process of removing these stones occurs, as I mentioned above, when the leaf growth is high enough and downward motion is required to consolidate the growth of the tuber. Each man who has participated in the ritual will remove a stone from the lemeravas site, together with some of the rotting botanical matter and place it in the centre of his garden, where he has performed other magic such as lubu. When this occurs the potentialising power and weightiness of the stone reverses the growth so that the tubers swell and become heavy in the ground (cf. Blackwood 1935:302; Deacon 1934:669; Munn 1986:82).

Regimes of abstinence and bodily regulation

An important facet of garden magic yet to be described are the regimes of abstinence the magicians and others undergo when a garden is planted and maturing. Primarily, this consists in avoiding types of food with negative metaphoric properties, which if eaten will be reflected in the growth of the taro. Like the magical spells and songs already described, there are paradoxes and contradictions in these regimes. While the images evoked are similar, the meanings differ according to the context in which they are used. For example, a large number of foods avoided come from the sea, an important source of images for certain stages in the garden cycle, and the warding off of famine (see chapter five).

Paradoxically, in other contexts the sea and products from it are antithetical to the growth of taro and correspondingly are assiduously avoided (cf. Kahn 1980:157-8, 1986:116-20, 1990:61; Blackwood 1935:308 and Munn 1977:41). The gardeners do not eat edible seaweed, or fish nor do they drink sea-water or other salty things. The sea, in the imagery employed here, is considered a barren place: nothing grows on its surface, it is flat and free of the protuberances like trees and plants that cover the earth. Should the regime to regulate the body boundaries be broken and items from the sea be incorporated into the gardener's body, the garden will be like the surface of the sea and be correspondingly flat and desolate. Other foods from the sea are avoided but for differing reasons. Crabs, for example, are avoided because they dig holes in the sand for hiding in. Should a gardener consume crabs then the taro
will similarly disappear into its hole and not be seen. Tortoises are avoided because when they are caught it is necessary that they be turned on to their backs to stop them escaping, an image not beneficial to the growth of taro. Should the tortoise not be turned over, it will head straight back to the sea and not be seen again. Should that animal be eaten, taro is similarly imagined to depart like the tortoise. Furthermore, the tortoise, it will be remembered, is widely used in weather magic (see chapter four), being seen as a bird because it has wings and cuts through water as birds cut through the sky. At work again is the imagery of flying away from the place, an image embodied by birds, who as archetypal travellers are portents for famine.

But several foods not derived from the sea are also avoided. For example, the fruit of one tree is avoided by all those who plant the garden because when it has matured and ripened on the tree it falls too quickly to the ground. If people eat this fruit, the garden will similarly ripen and 'fall' too fast for good taro to develop. In addition, this fruit is avoided because it is sour, a property that undesirable in taro. The fruit of another tree is avoided, despite being large in size, because it is not perfectly round, but uneven with various marks and protuberances. The long and spindly leaves of the tree fern are not consumed as greens. Should the magician eat these, the taro plant will also grow long and spindly and the tuber will not develop.

In addition to the fasting regime, sexual abstinence is practised by those who have planted the garden. This abstinence is not grounded in the notions of laram discussed elsewhere (see chapter two). Although laram is thought to spoil the efficacy of magic, making it dissipate or turn to 'water', it does not affect the growth of taro itself. Sexual avoidance is practised because the taro tubers are likely to be attacked by the taro beetle. In the evocative imagery employed here, just as in the act of sexual intercourse, the woman's body is penetrated, the taro beetle penetrates the taro tuber boring holes in it and as a result spoiling it. In this reasoning, couples recently married and thought to be sexually active are restricted from the planting of the garden because it is deemed they are unlikely to abstain from sexual activity during this time. Confirmation that the regime has not been followed is obtained when the matured taro has abundant holes. The fasting and abstinence regime is most rigid for the garden magician, who continues until the taro plant has developed its tuber, a period of several months.

In this chapter I have explored the images and metaphors employed in various forms of garden magic and the seemingly obvious contradictions and paradoxes employed in the spells. On the one hand, garden spells employ the widely used image of seating; on the other hand, they employ images of mobility, and movement. Stones and logs are replete with images of heaviness and seatedness. Some spells employ metaphors drawn from the sea evoking mobility, upward movement and buoyancy, and others use images of birds rising spatially. But these contrasting images of immobility and mobility are contextually applied. The image evoked relates to a particular stage in the growth cycle of taro. Images of upward movement are employed when the aerial part or leaf canopy of the taro plant is growing,
whereas images of seating and immobility are employed at the start of the growing cycle, when the taro stalk is planted, and at the end, when the tuber is maturing.
Notes

1. The two most important subsistence crops are taro and sweet potato. The cycle of agriculture described refers to taro, culturally the most important crop. Sweet potato, introduced in the colonial period, is becoming increasingly popular and its cultivation and consumption has increased considerably over the years and is no longer thought of as 'pig food', as it was previously (cf. Connell 1978:445). Although I collected no data on the consumption of the two staples, I would say that the consumption of sweet potato is at least equivalent to the consumption of taro. There are a number of factors that have led to the increased consumption of sweet potato, largely social changes brought about by participation in cash cropping. The nature of sweet potato means that it is less labour intensive and matures much faster, and is thus superficially a more productive crop than taro. Normally during the dry season it takes approximately four months to mature and during the wet season five months. Taro on the other hand takes nine months to a year to mature and requires closer care.

2. It is believed that leaves when they are lost and start to rot give 'gris' to the soil. Such ideas of the nature of fallow are in many ways similar to western scientific notions of increase in soil nutrients being due to the decomposition of organic matter derived from the foliage.

3. The situation is different with sweet potato gardens, which are more sensitive to moist conditions, but, nonetheless, tolerant of sites considered inadequate for taro. Sweet potato gardens are never planted on the valley floors but primarily on the mountainous slopes of valleys and the tops of hills.

4. The agricultural cycle used when cropping sweet potato is in its initial stages similar to that of taro. For example, the preparation of the site varies only to the extent to which the ground is tilled - considerably more than for taro. Four or five pieces of the vine about fifteen centimetres long are inserted into the centre of the mound for about five centimetres. These mounds are about fifteen or twenty centimetres high. Weeding is carried out only once and this is sometimes very haphazard. Once planted sweet potato are generally left to grow by themselves without much intervention from the gardener. Probably the most important intervention is to mound more soil on the central mound when the tuber has developed. This is said to prevent damage from rats.

5. Within the different types of garden magic, there is variation between places and between magicians, but such variation does not appear to be great. Mostly, these appear to be at the level of the spells. While the associated rituals are often similar, there are minor differences in the verbs employed in the formula and spells, but considerable uniformity in the metaphors and images employed.

6. Lundok is a term applied to a magician who knows everything about garden magic and other magic to prevent famine. The people from Limbin with whom I discussed this said the only person to whom this label would have been applicable was Gawo (who was deceased).

7. This type of magic is also called loxonpican kaka limbolo.

8. The correct name for this magic is i sep lavasop, but it is commonly abbreviated to lavasop or such other names as losop, lasop, lesepsop and lesepin. This magic can also be practised on its own or incorporated into the other forms of magic such as lubu or lomondok. Losop, the generic name for ginger, applies to a number of varieties, such as luli, lavatkuma and others. Ginger is widely used in garden magic in other areas of Papua New Guinea. See Munn (1986:82); Panoff (1969:25 and 1972b:191). Among the Gawa, ginger is used as part of a crop magic called 'stone', in which a stone is buried in the garden either after clearing or at the time of planting. In this instance ginger is spat into the hole, so that it heats the soil, making it aggressive and thus facilitating the growth of the plants.
Ginger is also planted in gardens by the Maenge of New Britain. Ginger is masticated and spat onto the ground so the heat neutralises sorcery (Panoff 1972b:191). Particularly interesting is the Maenge spell which employs the metaphor of the sun, which is compared to the efficacy of ginger. It is utilised because as the sun rises it enters everywhere and sees everything, resulting in all sorcery being purged (1972b:191). I collected a spell which employs the metaphor of the sun for identical reasons, although employed at mortuary feasts to facilitate the supply of pork to the guests (see chapter seven).

The centre is called kantambu at laramang (the true centre of the garden) or simply kantambu or marantu. Among the Maenge, ginger is also planted in the centre of the garden in the main firing places. However, in addition to ginger the Maenge also plant cordyline, something unheard of on the Lelet where, although widely used in other forms of magic, cordyline is not used in garden magic because its thin base lacks a tuber. Because of these properties cordyline or latagat are used in famine-producing garden sorcery. It is forbidden to plant or burn a cordyline plant in a garden because the taro will fail to develop a tuber. Taro that is lank and does not have a tuber is sometimes referred to as lumuntagat, meaning it is like the tagat or cordyline plant.

These circular winds are called lentogorop. Malinowski in his study of garden rituals and magic mentions that such natural phenomena as violent winds, thunder, lightning and earthquakes, are portents for the efficacy of the magic (1935 vol.1:130). I am unaware of any such phenomena signalling efficacy of garden magic among the Lelet, although thunder can signal the efficacy of weather magic. P. Lewis, for the Notsi of New Ireland, mentions thunder being mimicked in a garden ritual that involves the placement of stones which sounds remarkably similar to lemeravas magic I describe later (1969:49-52). In this Notsi ritual, called tsur, when the stones are placed in the ground the magician imitates the noise of thunder and calls out to ancestral spirits to descend via lightning (P. Lewis 1969:52). Similarly, the return of taro to the Maenge is marked by lightning (Panoff 1969:29).

In many ways this spell appears to be unique, because garden spells do not usually invoke such antithetical beings as lau or lagas, but rely more on the benign life forces of the dead, particularly the loroang of great practitioners of garden magic from bygone eras (see also below n.17).

Some of these are: lubusilok (big lubu), loxonbubulom (large lubu), lubu at laxarun (lubu belonging to an orphan), lubulom me Limbin (large lubu from Limbin) and lubu me Kanabasa (lubu from Kanabasa). Those with suffixes silok (big) or lorn (large), such as lubulom me Limbin, are the complex sequential versions with numerous spells, whereas those without suffixes, such as lubu at laxarun, have only a small number of spells performed at the planting stage only.

These are called livinka although the one the magician starts with in this instance is called lavatpingka because of the central focus it has in the magical rites.

Munn mentions the use of spells which startle the entity at which the magic is directed; magic such as this is used to get young children to walk (1986:79). The process of startling (sibarutu), for the Gawa, has similar notions of upward motion to those in Lelet garden magic. For the Lelet the process of 'getting up' the taro plant, is sometimes facilitated by plant material with irritant properties. The type of grass used in this case is also rubbed on dogs to make them ferocious and excitable in hunting pigs. Similar notions of 'startling' and 'getting up' were discussed in relation to love magic and skin washing in chapter two.

Similar aquatic metaphors are used in the garden spells of the Maenge, where the early growth of taro is likened to the breaking of waves and the swelling of sea (Panoff 1972b:199). Bell also mentions metaphors drawn from the sea being used in garden magic on Tanga Island (1946-49:161). In the Tangan case it is not utilised for the metaphoric evocation of upward motion but waves are called on to break open the soil so that the yam can emerge (1946-49:161). In another example of Tangan spells, more akin to the Lelet examples, the deep sea is invoked for its density and darkness.
In this spell, the garden is called on to - "Grow up densely! Be as a high tide which covers the bare reef! ...Let it be dark, yes, let it be dark within the density of the vines! Even as the darkness and the density of the paupua tree!" (Bell 1946-49:164). In a discussion of the peoples of the south-east Solomons, Ivens notes that sea spirits are invoked in garden fertility (1927:358).

16. This is called lavasdukduk and is the type of roasted taro fed to young children (see chapter five). It is also often given to people passing by a hamlet in the afternoon as women are cooking the evening meal, as a mark of sociality.

17. Exhortations to ancestral life forces or deceased close kin to bring taro from other places further afield is common in garden magic, as elsewhere in Melanesia. See P. Lewis (1969:52); Blackwood (1935:307); Munn (1986:83) and Wagner (1986:35). For the Lelet, when ancestral power is invoked the loroang normally addressed are those people who have previously possessed the magic or were good magicians. In many instances other culture heroes or gods are addressed, such as Moroa for the Lelet or the 'masters of taro' for the Maenge (Panoff 1972:193-4).

18. In the other versions I recorded the magician invoked travel of taro from Katan Moroa.

19. The process of encouraging the upward growth of the aerial part of the plant is referred to as luarut sinna. Apart from the upward motion of the sea already mentioned, the image of upward motion appears to be widely used in garden magic from other parts of Melanesia. For example, Malinowski notes spells used to encourage taro to 'blaze up' and 'flare up' (1935 vol.1:114). Similarly, in another of the spells recorded by Malinowski, Tudava is called on to climb up as in the growth of the yam vine (1935 vol.1:129-30). See also Bell (1946-49:162).

20. Like the allusions to the sea in aquatic metaphors I cited previously, the upward motion of birds and other flying beings are also common metaphors for the Lelet, as they are in garden magic elsewhere. For example, Munn mentions a spell utilising the imagery of a bird whose spreading wings are likened to the unfurling of the taro leaf (1986:82). Likewise Malinowski records a spell where the growth of the yam vine is associated with the flight of the green parrot (1935 vol.1:146). Panoff cites the use of the imagery of the butterfly in a spell to initiate the growth of the taro plant (1972b:199).

21. This stone is called lentupegugu (see below).

22. When he does this he will take with him betelnut and mustard peppers enclosed in the leaf of a cordyline plant.

23. This magic is sometimes referred to as lomondok kongkun, lamadok, loxosep mondok, or losop madok. Within the general type of lomondok there are further differentiations based on whether it is performed during daylight hours - lomondok kangkin, or at night - lomondok menabung.

24. This magic was shown to me by Lakana who ceased practising it in 1985, although he still uses the feast component of it.

25. Another metaphoric possibility here, although the magician did not say so, is that this banana has a fruiting hand (standing upright) which remains concealed until nearly ripe. This is like the taro tuber that, until the severance of the aerial growth and its maturation, remains hidden in the ground.

26. The name of this plant means knife and is used in sorcery and counter-sorcery common to the Buai magical cult, such as those dance performances I discussed in chapter two.

27. The log is properly referred to as loxonkamek but it is sometimes called lavatmala after the type of tree used. I also recorded another word for the log, loxonmalavas, but this is a less common term. In this form of magic, the end of the logs can be painted with red ochre derived from the seed pod of the
lavatalomon tree. Although in a different context, the use of heavy woods in garden magic is also reported by Panoff (1972b). The Maenge magician sometimes buries a heavy wood (Intsia bijuga) at the entrance to the garden prior to harvesting, the purpose being to make the women's hands heavy so that they do not harvest the tubers quickly (1972b:211-12). This type of wood is used because of its enduring, immobile and heavy properties and is also used in association with stones in another form of magic to ensure prosperity (1972b:212-13). Panoff also reports that sorcery can be carried out by placing a light wood (Pipturus argenteus) at the garden entrance so that women harvest quickly and the garden is quickly depleted (1972b:212). Interestingly, this wood is also used as a counter measure against theft, causing diarrhoea in thieves.

28. In other forms of this magic, the log is not thrown to the ground but rolled to its place, an image evocative of taro being so heavy it cannot be carried but can only be rolled. The taro probably envisaged, although not specified, is that referred to as paskun. This word is commonly abbreviated in spells from paskongkun, a term designating that a taro tuber (kongkun) is so large and heavy that it cannot be pulled from the ground and women, instead of harvesting it, can only walk (pas) around it. See also Hogbin (1970:170).

29. This employs ideas similar to the irritant plants used in love magic to 'get up' the thoughts of a sleeping woman (see chapter two).

30. It can also be used to do the opposite. As portents of famine these creatures are invoked by sorcerers to eat unripe crops as a precursor to famine (see chapter five). A similar situation is reported among the Maenge. See Panoff (1969:28 and 1972b:190).

31. I was told, by another man, that considerable care should be taken when hammering in these stakes. Not only should they be placed directly upright, rather than angled as when the garden dividers are fastened, but should the stone break, disaster can befall the magician or someone close to him. I was told the story of two men who were 'sleeping' a log in a garden, when the stone broke. This was a portent that one of them or someone close to them would die. Evidently the disaster by-passed them but afflicted a clan member of one of the men instead. Taro from the garden was consumed at that person's mortuary feast.

32. To speak out or reveal something - tong asu - is also derived from this verb.

33. Metaphoric allusions to excreta have been noted by other authors. Malinowski writes of a garden magical rite referring to dog excrement, but unlike the Lelet spells this allusion is used to deter pigs from entering the garden (1935 vol.1:113 and vol.2:160, 165). Further examples are found in Panoff where she describes garden magical rites that use 'snake faeces' - pulverised bark inserted into a taro tuber buried in the garden (1970a:245). Furthermore in Melanesia myths linking foods such as taro or yams with faeces occur. See Damon (1983:321-2); Hogbin (1937:84); Oliver (1955:41-2) and Roheim (1950:231-2).

34. I collected numerous other examples of these spells, utilising images of repulsion, employed not only in garden magic but also in magic that promotes abundance for feasts (see chapter seven). In addition to comparing taro to excrement, taro is invoked to be: bulubulu - spoilt and undesirable; bixurun and milimngot - rotting and unsightly in appearance; bulus - having mushrooms growing on it; misin - mouldy.

35. I was told of a similar practice using different trees, used in the past by women to make their husband's hands heavy so they ceased beating them.
36. As he is tasting the new taro, the magician must be careful not to break or cut it, for it is believed that to do so would effectively divide his garden magic into two separate halves. See also Kahn (1986:98).

37. Kahn mentions a stone named Tauribariba used for prosperous and plentiful crops by the Wamira (1990:58 and 1983:101). This stone was cemented into a church wall by the early missionaries according to government records cited by Kahn, “turned upside down as a symbol that the magic had been emptied out of it” (1990:58). Lindstrom mentions that on Tanna (Vanuatu) the missionaries shattered power stones, threw them in the sea or cemented them in foundations. See (1990a:49, 1981:216) and also White (1988:25).

38. Ownership of the stones associated with lemeravas can still be subject to dispute, as occurred while I was in the field and it is worth noting this to illustrate that belief in the efficacy of this form of magic still exists. The dispute followed the seizure by Tipsep of the power stones associated with the lemeravas magic which had been seated at a now deserted hamlet of his ancestors. Tipsep was the custodian of the magical spells and songs used to ‘seat’ the stones. Luxurus on whose land the stones had been placed became enraged with Tipsep and took the issue before the village court. Nothing evenuated and the case, for the time being at least, seems to have been dropped.

39. Lavadok sometimes called padok or ladok can also be individually named. Loxongkun are sometimes called lavas or ladulavas, while lentupegugu are sometimes called lempa, levempe, or lapempe. All stones appear to be of volcanic origin and are grey in colour, although in Tok Pisin people refer to them as 'black' (blak ston). The use of various kinds of stones in various forms of garden and fertility magic has been widely noted in the literature. See Bulmer (1965:147-9); Codrington (1881:276, 278 and 1972:181); Feachem (1973:279); Glashe (1965:34); Hogbin (1937:84); Lawrence (1965:209); Lindstrom (1981:210-16); Meggitt (1965:115); Modjeska (1982:64); Newman (1965:73); Powdmer (1933:346) and Stephen (1987a:60). Munn mentions the use of stones for their heavy and durable properties (1986:80-2). Likewise Malinowski notes the use of stones of volcanic origin to anchor yam houses, because they are heavier and more durable than ordinary coral-derived stones (1935 vol.1:220-2). Stones are also used for village prosperity by the Maenge (Panoff 1970b:243). Kahn discusses the various uses of stones of varying sizes and shapes, all are grey and from her description are probably of volcanic origin (1990:51). Deacon has also referred to the use of stones in gardening, although in his case they are not round but cylindrical with ridges and a pointed end (1934:669). Blackwood also mentions stones being planted in the garden to encourage taro growth, obtained by breaking a piece off a larger stone (1935:302-5). For New Ireland, B. Clay has mentioned briefly the use of stones among the east coast Mandak speakers in magic called endok (1986:135). P. Lewis has an account of the tser rituals utilising stones among the Notsi of New Ireland (1969:49-52). Stones are also often associated with other powers for use in things such as divination, warfare, witchcraft and sorcery. See Lindstrom (1981:212 and 1990b:320); Malinowski (1961:235); Rubinste (1981:139-40) and Stephen (1987a:60).

40. The lentupegugu stone and the anti-social person, the lantupe, share the same stem (tupe). Both words connote the notion of withholding or keeping food within the defined spaces, of either garden or house.

41. One man schooled in Bua discovered some of these stones on an east coast beach where they landed. The man had dreams revealing the magic for 'seating' the stones and they are now located in his men's house yard. See also Bulmer (1965:149).

42. The names of the most recently deceased owner is added to the sequence and incanted last. See A. Weiner (1984:183, 191, 1976:71); Hogbin (1970:177); P. Lewis (1969:52); Stephen (1987a:59) and above n.17.
43. I am reminded here of the spell used by the magician for protection against famine utilising the image of the shark, a creature which, if threatened by a shark caller, retreats into a hole not to be seen again.

44. Sexuality and sexual secretions have been reported to be antithetical to gardens in a number of Melanesian societies. See Bell (1946-49:153); Damon (1983:312 and 1990:170); Kahn (1980:152, 156-7); Tuzin (1972:237).
Death for the Lelet inaugurates a long and complex sequence of mortuary rites and feasts, as in New Ireland generally. Simple explanations of the significance of these mortuary cycles are difficult to formulate because they have a plurality of meaning. Feasting is about far more than memorialising the dead. It is about the creation of fame for the host and his clan. Through a process which sees bodily power transformed into objects of value which are in turn exchanged and circulated the name of the feast host is lifted up. In this chapter I capture some of the complexity of corporeal imagery and manipulations of the body that occur in the process in which renown is produced and memories of successful events are circulated.

For the Lelet, mortuary rites and feasts are the most obvious manifestation of *lokok at lemenemen* or *kastam*. In recognition of the centrality of mortuary feasts to their way of life, people often refer to the feasts by the Tok Pisin term of *kastam*. Apart from this term, the most widely known and commonly used term for mortuary feast is *lokpanga*, which more accurately refers to the final day of the last and most elaborate feast, which is called *lokpanga*. This climactic feast, thus, comes to stand for and epitomise feasts generally. The word *lokpanga* suggests the complex milieu in which feasting takes place. The first part, *lok*, is derived from a verb which has connotations of action, the verb to do - *i lok*. The second component, *panga* means simply 'something'. Thus literally *lokpanga* means; 'to do something'. By referring to the feast, in all its complexity, as simply 'doing something' people are employing a form of depreciatory language. Because of sorcery fears it is important that people are not openly boastful of anticipated feasts. Referring to the feast in this way makes it seem mundane and ordinary, not the spectacle it really will be. Similar kinds of depreciatory language are employed during feasts (see below).

**Death, mourning and the feasting cycle**

The cycle of mortuary rites and feasts begins when a person dies and continues intermittently over several years until all rites are completed, when it is said that 'the head of the deceased is finished'. Should people not complete the mortuary cycle of
their deceased relatives, they would be subject to the scornful gossip of others who would say - 'you have not finished his/her head' (cf. Powdermaker 1932:237).

Following death, the corpse is normally taken to the hamlet site where the dead person has rights. This is the place where the person was born or the place of her or his parents and grand parents. Death is greeted with keening and wailing, the noise of which often carries to other hamlets making them aware a death has occurred. In the past, death was signalled by the beating of slit gongs, but these have now been replaced by the transmission of the news by word of mouth (via foot or car). When news of a death reaches other people, whether they are relatives or not, they travel to the site where burial will take place. While this is occurring, the body is prepared by close relatives, who wash and dress the corpse and construct a coffin.

The body is laid on a bed surrounded by women who sit crying and wailing. Other people approaching begin their wailing well before arrival at the hamlet (up to a kilometre away). As groups arrive, the intensity of wailing increases considerably. Men may also join the wailing over the corpse but usually only for a short time. Those not wailing will be sitting talking in hushed tones in other parts of the hamlet or the men's house. It is at this time that there is considerable speculation about the cause of death, unless the person has died of old age (see chapter two).

Due to government and church pressure a corpse is buried more hastily than previously. Today, burial occurs either on the day of death (if the death was in the morning) or the next day (if the death was at night). The latter is preferred as it allows people, in part at least, to 'sit' with the corpse throughout the night in a practice called lixisnau. Nowadays, women will sit around the corpse at night singing Christian hymns, whereas in the past indigenous laments were sung. While the women sing, the men generally sit around a fire in the men's house yard, talking. During this period people also express their grief. At one lixisnau I attended I saw one man cry for his sister who, I was told, 'had given food to him when she was alive and he was crying for her'. During the night the clan and affinal relatives prepare food for the guests. Today this consists mostly of rice and tinned fish but in the past an earth oven would have been prepared and taro cooked in it. People say pigs are not killed at this stage today because there is too little time to organise it.

A considerable amount of 'play' occurs at lixisnau, as in the later mortuary feasts. This 'play' as I have indicated, is directed at people who have benefited in some way from nurturance derived from the deceased or relatives of the deceased (see chapter three). A common form of 'play' is to roast a taro tuber over a fire until it is encrusted with charcoal. The blackened tuber is given to certain people to eat, in its entirety, which is no easy task because not only must the unpalatable charcoal be eaten but also the uncooked taro underneath. Undercooked taro, as I have remarked, causes severe irritation of the mouth and throat when consumed. People may also be given tea, to which large quantities of salt have been added. Taro skins mixed with water (kalibi) may also be thrown on people, causing considerable irritation. Less sophisticated 'play' involves the throwing of cold water over a sleeping person.
Prior to the colonial period and Christian conversion, corpses were either buried or cremated, although the reasons why one form was chosen over another is unknown today (cf. Powdermaker 1931-32:28). Possibly burial was the preferred option for ritual experts and magicians, while cremation was preferred for less important people. If burial was chosen, the corpse was interred beneath the men's house, not outside, as occurs today (cf. Hogbin 1970:161). Cremation took place outside in the yard that surrounds the men's house. Cremation ceased, I was told, because it was opposed by the missionaries who associated burning with hell. The retrieval of bones was also opposed, possibly because the church did not approve of people interfering with bodies, knowing also that the bones could be used in magic.

Today, the only form of disposal for corpses is horizontal burial in the men's house yard and it is this I now describe. When the corpse has been enclosed in a wooden casket it is taken outside, where children who were familiar with the deceased will be passed above and below the coffin (see chapter two). A local pastor will then perform a service at which Christian hymns are sung. In one of the services I witnessed, the pastor eulogised the dead person, emphasising how he had been a good church member and had done considerable work for the church. He claimed that God had 'marked' him for death, just as he pre-ordains everything that happens. Following the service, the body is taken to the cemetery, behind the men's house. Normally women are not permitted to enter the men's house or the yard surrounding it, but for funerals this rule is waived. The grave is dug by young men who are paid a small amount of money initially (ten to twenty toea) but at the deceased's first mortuary feast they will also be given a piece of pork. Following the lowering of the coffin in to the grave the pastor speaks again, he reads a prayer from the Christian song book, more hymns are sung and he is then the first to throw soil on to the coffin to commence the filling in of the grave. To mark the grave a cordyline is planted at each end. Later, after the main feasts for the dead have been held, a cement tombstone may be built.

After the funeral, relatives and important or senior men stay in the hamlet for one or two weeks. In the past this was done for three weeks or until the body began to decompose. This mortuary observance is called langkoxomok and is referred to as 'sleeping on top of the corpse'. It is not always observed today. Sleeping on the corpse is observed to help alleviate the grief and concern felt by the deceased's kin. During this time, as a sign of grief and in sympathy with the relatives, the mourners experience the discomfort of not sleeping and eating well. An earth oven in which taro is cooked will be made every afternoon to feed them. One man, for example, when telling me of the deprivation and discomfort he had experienced, put great stress on not having 'flesh' or 'pork' accompanying his taro. Following this period of mourning a more complex and lengthy series of feasts for the deceased is set in motion.

The structure of all the feasts is similar and follows a basic pattern which is supplemented by other activities, such as dance performances and exchanges. For simplicity's sake I will sketch the basic format here and later will elaborate on the
largest mortuary feasts, the *lokpanga*. The most basic elements of all mortuary feasts consist of the preparation and cooking of either one or two large taro parcels and pork to accompany it.

The day of a feast begins with the lighting of a fire to heat the stones for the earth oven. Meanwhile, the pig(s) will be butchered and enclosed in bark in preparation for cooking in either the main earth oven together with the taro or in a separate earth oven. When the stones are heated, the taro tubers are peeled by women and then enclosed in bark. When the stones are hot enough, they are placed on the taro parcels and the pig(s) and then the whole is covered with ferns, leaves and soil to retain the heat. At the more complex and larger feasts, various forms of exchanges occur around the time the earth oven is prepared. Late in the day, the oven will be uncovered, the food distributed and, if the feast is a large one, uncooked food (pork and taro) will also be distributed. As the mortuary cycle extends over time, the feasts become more elaborate and increase in size, with the preparation of food taking longer, up to three days for the largest (see table 8).

The first feast after a death is called *langkorop*, and completes the period of 'sleeping on the corpse'. The name of this feast means to rest from the tedious work of preparing the earth oven every day during the period of sleeping on the corpse. Possibly this feast is an innovation, given that the time of sleeping on the corpse has been shortened considerably from three weeks formerly to one or two weeks at present. In the past, the period of mourning and sleeping in the hamlet of the deceased was terminated by a feast called *lakmitoang*, which nowadays is generally carried out three weeks after burial. Sometimes this feast is held at the same time as the funeral, but usually there is a break of up to three weeks.

The next feast, the *laxabis* or *luxuruse*, may occur months or even years after the death and its main purpose is the opening, distribution and dispersal of the shell valuables of the person or persons whose deaths are being commemorated. Sometimes, to make sure the valuables go to the correct people, a man may opt to carry out the distribution while he is still alive. I was told that this sort of feast for the living is carried out when people were very old and incapacitated. Previously, when people reached this immobile stage of life euthanasia was sometimes carried out. Nowadays, because people have other competing commitments, the *laxabis* feast is occasionally amalgamated with the largest and most elaborate feast, the *lokpanga*. Then the *laxabis* feast will be executed on one day and the *lokpanga* on the next.

**To do something: Finishing the head of the deceased**

The next feast in the cycle after the *laxabis* is the *lokpanga*, the largest and most important feast for the dead which I will describe in more detail. The purpose of a *lokpanga* is to 'finish the head of the deceased'. In the past this meant revelation and display of a *malangan* carving or sculpture, but today it means slaughtering as many pigs as possible.
As is the case with all mortuary feasts, to get the preparations underway for the *lokpanga* the clan leader holds a meeting with consanguineal relatives, children and affines. The clan leader asks each of those present to obtain a small pig, which should reach only as high as the knee, a size referred to as *i maran saurut kaba* which means to throw on top of the *kaba*, a feast structure made from the upperstory of a tree which is inserted in the ground. This term or a cognate one, *laxaba*, is sometimes used to refer to the *lokpanga*. Not long after pigs of this size have been obtained and when they have reached a size called *i maran pit tamang* (meaning the size at which gardens are cut) the gardens will be cut. Everyone, whether or not they have acquired a pig, should clear and plant a garden in preparation for the feast. The feast host, or someone hired for the purpose, will perform the magic *lomondok* on the main garden, that of the host, and the power and efficacy of the magic is thought to spread to other gardens as well (see chapter six).

Before a *lokpanga* a number of preliminary feasts are held, to accompany certain preparations that are necessary for the main feast (see table 9). There is a feast, called *losora*, for the erection of a taro platform. Another feast, called *lixipkamut*, is held when firewood is cut and transported to the feast hamlet and a further feast, called *lixipuat*, is held for the carrying of stones for the earth oven. It is at this time that temporary dwellings, in which guests from other places will sleep during the feast, are erected.

At these small feasts a taro parcel is prepared and one or two pigs are slaughtered, all the food being cooked and eaten. The most important of the preliminary feast is *lixipkamut* at which areca nut is distributed to certain guests after the food has been eaten. This indicates who will bring a pig at the main feast, two to three weeks later and who will receive a shell valuable in return. Areca nut will be given to the clan and lineage relatives of the deceased as well as close affines. The colour of the areca nut given to people determines what kind of shell valuable they will receive at the shell valuable distribution for the *laxabis*.19

The *lokpanga* is normally held over three days, although if there are many dance performances a whole day may be set aside for these and the feast thus runs for four days. Neither of the two *lokpanga* I attended at the Lelet, was structured in this way because there were only a few dance performances. However, at a feast I attended on the coast a complete day was taken up with these performances.

The first day is a preliminary - the feast proper starts when outside guests arrive for the second day. On the first day, called *loxonanan*, a small earth oven is prepared in which a taro bundle is cooked to feed the people on the second day. Because the people attending this feast are only hamlet residents or close relatives of the feast host it is not an elaborate affair. It primarily involves the collection of materials for the earth oven (i.e. bark and vines used for enclosing the taro and pig; leaves or tree fern fronds for covering the earth oven). This earth oven will be opened the following morning. On this first day, people are fed plates of rice, accompanied by tinned fish.
### Table 8: Summary of mortuary feasts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feast name</th>
<th>time span</th>
<th>purpose</th>
<th>types of food</th>
<th>exchanges and performances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Langkorop:</strong></td>
<td>held 3 days after burial</td>
<td>a 1 day feast completing period of sleeping on</td>
<td>1-2 pigs and a taro bundle (lavala)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the corpse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lakmitoang:</strong></td>
<td>held 3 weeks after burial</td>
<td>a 1 day feast completing the period of mourning</td>
<td>1-5 pigs and 1 taro bundle for the hamlet and 1 for the men's house</td>
<td>kalibi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laxabis/Luxuruse:</strong></td>
<td>held either while person is alive or several years after their death; can be held on the second day of a lokpanga</td>
<td>either a 1 day feast or a 3 day feast to distribute the shell valuables of either a living or a deceased person</td>
<td>numerous pigs anywhere between 10 and 50; areca nut and pepper; taro pudding (lakde)</td>
<td>see table 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Losora:</strong></td>
<td>4 to 5 weeks before a lokpanga</td>
<td>a 1 day feast held on the day that the taro platform (lorapas) is erected for the lokpanga</td>
<td>1 or 2 pigs and a taro bundle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lixipkamut:</strong></td>
<td>2-3 weeks before a lokpanga</td>
<td>a 1 day feast held on the day the firewood for a lokpanga is cut and carried</td>
<td>1 or 2 pigs and a taro bundle</td>
<td>distribution of betelnut to indicate who will kill a pig at main feast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lixipuat:</strong></td>
<td>1-2 weeks before a lokpanga</td>
<td>a 1 day feast held on the day that the earth oven stones for a lokpanga are carried</td>
<td>1 or 2 pigs and a taro bundle; banana; areca nut and pepper; taro pudding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lokpanga:</strong></td>
<td>held several years after the death of either one deceased or several</td>
<td>a 3 day feast to 'finish the heads of the deceased'</td>
<td>numerous pigs, anywhere from 30 to over a hundred</td>
<td>see table 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Licimen:</strong></td>
<td>several years after death</td>
<td>a Christian innovation of a 3 day feast accompanying the erection of a tombstone</td>
<td>a number of pigs and taro bundles; banana; areca nut and pepper; taro pudding</td>
<td>similar to other feasts such as lokpanga and laxabis except there is no distribution of shell valuables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second day, called *lannual*, involves the preparation of a much larger earth oven for the third and final day. The activities of the second day are more elaborate, and a number of exchanges, are made including the distribution of the deceased person’s shell valuables, if a *laxabis* feast was not held. On this day, too, some pigs will be butchered and cooked to accompany the taro cooked the previous day. During the preparations, guests arrive from about nine or ten o’clock in the morning. Women will bring a bundle of taro which is given to the feast host when they arrive, being placed on the ground. Some women take two bundles of taro, one going into the taro parcels, and the second into a specially erected display called a *lese*, the contents of which are to be distributed to people attending the feast.

If a man or woman has been given a areca nut at the feast for the preparation of firewood, indicating they will bring a pig, they will also bring a bundle of taro with them (the woman carrying it). This taro will be placed on the taro platform, together with taro contributed by others who will also contribute a pig. Taro on the taro platform, the *lorapas*, will be distributed in a number of exchanges whilst that contributed by women who did not bring a pig is cooked in the earth oven prepared that day.

If the hamlet is located near the road, pigs for the feast are transported in trucks, but if not, the pigs are carried ceremoniously in a line. The largest pig is carried at the front of the line and the whole event is accompanied by the blowing of a conch shell and the singing of a pig chant which signals to those ahead how many pigs are being carried in the line. When the line of pigs arrives, a orator stands at the front and asks if the men carrying the pigs have been successful finding pigs. The man asking of course knows they were successful and employs a kind of rhetorical questioning. At one feast I attended the man asked, ‘I sent you to go find something at the coast. Did you find it or not?’ When the man at the head of the line says he found what he went looking for, the pigs are placed on the ground. Following this the pigs will be placed in the shade while other work for the feast continues.

Once the fire for the earth oven is well alight and the stones have been placed on it, a number of exchanges occur (although the timing of these exchanges can vary). First, the pigs which have been brought are transferred from their donors to the feast sponsor. This exchange involves an orator placing his foot on the pig and announcing that the exchange of the pig is ‘killing’ the valuable to be received from the dead person. This will be called out even if a valuable is not to be given in an exchange.

Following this, there is an exchange of taro. In this case, taro taken from the taro platform is given to each of the important men and his associated men’s house. This exchange is said to reciprocate for taro received at feasts held at the hamlets of these men. At another feast I attended, taro was sent to important men who were no longer living at the Lelet, but residing at the coast. Later, there is an exchange of pork fat which is said to accompany the taro.
Then the taro to be cooked is divided into two piles, one for each taro parcel to be made. Women will then sit down to peel the tubers (see plates 15 and 16). The peeled taro is enclosed within bark and then fastened with vines, to make two taro parcels, one to feed the women and one for the men. Meanwhile a smaller parcel of taro pudding is prepared.

When the taro is being peeled there is a considerable amount of ritualised 'play' - kalibi (cf. Mosko 1992). This involves the smearing of rotting taro tubers on faces and bodies or the dousing of people with taro skins which have been mixed with water (see plate 17 and figure 8). This is by no means random 'play': it has a clear rationale - to irritate all those who have benefited from nurturance from the clan of the deceased person(s) whose mortuary feast it is. If someone has taken food from a member of the dead person's clan or utilised their land or magic, the clan members can place kalibi on that person.24

Once the earth oven is covered there is an exchange: the purchasing of the pigs. Unlike the earlier exchange where control of the pigs passes from the donors to the host, this simply involves the exchange, with accompanying oration, of money and/or valuables from a purchaser to the pig raiser. In the past people would have raised their own pigs and only rarely purchased pigs. Pigs which have had food given to them or have been 'fed at the doorway of the house' are more highly valued than purchased pigs (cf. Modjeska 1982:95). Nevertheless, the majority of pigs presented at the mortuary feasts I attended had been purchased, often from the coast. Because there is considerable cash cropping on the Lelet people are afraid to rear pigs lest they damage someone's garden, when they would be liable for considerable compensation for the damage.

After the purchasing of the pigs, there is a competitive exchange in which people are challenged to accept a head of the largest and most highly valued pigs (cf. Wagner 1986:205). With a good deal of gusto, an orator hurls a taro or coconut at the feet of another man, calling on him to accept the taro or coconut and thus the head. Other people sitting near him will goad him to accept. Should a man wish to accept he keeps the taro or coconut but if he does not, he throws it back. Sometimes a man will refuse with a flourish of oratory. At one feast one man stressed that he is always working feasts and his head hurts and his body aches as a result. Another complained that in the past the pig's heads he had given out were not properly reciprocated and he was not going to accept any as a result. If the more important elder men are reluctant to accept the pig's heads then some of the younger men will be asked.

Those organising the feast are aware of any feasts planned and target people who are thus likely to slaughter a pig. If a head is accepted it must be reciprocated to the original donor at a later date and there must be equivalence of value (cf. Keesing 1991:279). Thus, if a purchaser spent two hundred kina on a pig, the person who accepts the head must also buy a pig for two hundred kina, looking carefully to obtain one the same size. If a pig has been reared by the owner then it must be reciprocated by one similarly reared by the person completing the exchange.25
Table 9: Summary of lokpanga mortuary feast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day name:</th>
<th>Preparations:</th>
<th>Types of food:</th>
<th>Exchanges and performances:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Loxonanan, day one</strong></td>
<td>preparation of small earth oven (<em>lalik</em>) with two taro bundles for day two</td>
<td>tinned fish and rice</td>
<td>ceremonial arrival of pigs in line (<em>longosbo</em>) and announcement (<em>i vang asu longosbo</em>); transfer of pigs to feast host and the killing of shell valuables (<em>lesep amet pene</em>); erection of <em>lese</em> taro display; <em>lava</em> <em>tungaxarang</em> taro exchange; exchange of valuables for pigs purchased; throwing of coconut/taro for pig’s head (<em>i sok pas/laxat</em>); <em>laxabis</em> display - pigs added to <em>lese</em> taro display; <em>luruse/kuruse</em> - purchasing food; <em>i vavang</em> performance on <em>lava</em> and pigs; distribution and consumption of cooked food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lannual, day two (can include laxabis)</strong></td>
<td>preparation of a large earth oven (<em>lanesilok</em>) with one taro bundle for day three; cooking of pigs to accompany taro bundle</td>
<td>a small number of pigs and taro; betelnut and pepper may be distributed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lokpanga, day three</strong></td>
<td>cooking of pigs to accompany taro bundle cooked on day two; slaughtering and butchering of pigs for final pork distribution</td>
<td>a number of pigs and taro; taro pudding (<em>lakde</em>); betelnut and pepper may be distributed; banana</td>
<td>erection of <em>lava</em> <em>maxat</em> and placement of pigs on it; dance performances, if sufficient can take a whole day; distribution of pork fat and entrails; <em>lava</em> <em>vavang</em> performance atop <em>lava</em> <em>maxat</em> and stacked pigs; counting of pigs; distribution of cooked food; butchering of pigs and final pork and taro distribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plate 15: Women peeling taro tubers (note: heating of stones in background)

Plate 16: Woman peeling taro (note: she has had kalibi placed on her face)
Figure 7: Genealogical connections for putting *kalibi*

Two people in photograph:
F is putting *kalibi* on E, there are a number of connections which allow her to do this:
1. E is married to D a daughter of C, who in turn is a brother of F's grandmother A;
2. E is married to D who is a sister of F's father a member of Laragat clan the same clan as B one of the deceased a grandparent of F;
3. E is resident on the clan land of F the land of one of the deceased.

Plate 17: Smearing on *kalibi*
Plate 18: Moving the taro bundle onto heated stones

Plate 19: Men's house yard during feast preparations
Following the purchasing of pigs and the throwing of taro, the earth oven containing the pigs to be consumed is uncovered. Some of the cooked pigs will be placed on the taro parcel that had been cooked overnight. At a lokpanga I attended in 1991 four cooked pigs were placed on a taro parcel and a further two pigs (one cooked and one raw) were placed on the lese display (see plates 20 and 21). This display consists of a large number of unpeeled and uncooked taro tubers, which still have their regenerative stalks attached, being stacked up about four or five tubers in height and about three metres in length. This wall of taro is about a metre high and has all the stalks on one side. Once the pigs are placed on top of it the whole structure is called a laxabis. But each pig has a different purpose. One pig placed on it is slaughtered to accompany the opening of the deceased's bundle of shell valuables. Other uncooked pigs will be cut up and distributed along with the raw taro from the lese which is distributed to the women. If there are sufficient pigs, one or two will be placed on the display for distribution to people who had taro skins and water thrown on them earlier in the day. This pork is to remove kalibi from their bodies.

While the lese is being constructed by both men and women, other men will be placing sticks in the ground at spaced intervals forming a line in the middle of the central area of the hamlet. The deceased's shell valuables will be hung on these sticks in a display prior to their being distributed. The distribution to the children and clan members of the deceased is called luruse or kuruse (see plate 22). All those who were given a betelnut at the firewood cutting feast and have slaughtered a pig will be given a valuable in recognition of that. Other clan members who were not designated to bring a pig to the feast but nonetheless did so will also receive a valuable, when clan and lineage heirlooms are transferred from the deceased person to those who are entitled to them.

Two lines of valuables are formed, one for those which will go to the children and one for those which will go to members of the clan. In the line for the clan members the valuables placed first are the most important and highly valued ones, the heirlooms. In the line for the children are other important, named valuables transmitted by patrilateral reckoning. Once all the valuables are displayed, a male child of the deceased, holding a cordyline plant and with lime powder or ochre on his face, walks along counting aloud how many valuables there are. Thus, for the distribution I saw in 1991, there was a line of forty-four valuables (twenty-two large and twenty-two small) for the children of the deceased and twenty five for the clan (seven large and eighteen small). After counting, the valuables are given to the new owners. An orator makes an announcement confirming the transfer. As each valuable changes hands he calls out it is 'killing' the pig that was brought by the recipient of the valuable.

Another important exchange then occurs, this one in two parts. The first is referred to as 'finishing the food' and involves people throwing onto the ground in a heap either money or shell valuables as a man calls out repeatedly that they are finishing the food. As people throw away money or shell valuables they have in mind that they received from the deceased person(s) food or other nurturance. The
money and shell valuables will go to the living relatives of the deceased (such as brothers, sisters, grandparents, wife, father's sister). The second part consists of a similar kind of exchange but is referred to as 'reciprocation of strength of the wife who prepared food on the fire'. The wealth in this case is given to the wife of the deceased and comes from people such as the brother of the deceased or others who have received food from the wife.

Following this distribution there is a speech or performance (lavavang or i vavang) where the host or renowned male orator will make announcements or sing a song. To do this, the orator stands on or near the taro parcel which has the pigs placed on it. Usually this performance takes places in the confines of the men's house yard. The orator brandishes a spear or a cordyline plant, while his face is covered with lime powder. The content of these performances varies. Some are merely an announcement of how many pigs there are and how the host and his clan are pleased that so many people are attending.

Others employ forms of depreciatory language alluded to above (cf. M. Strathern 1979:252). Thus, at one feast I attended at Bungaring hamlet (in this case a laxabis), the host while holding a cordyline plant in one hand, gave a speech that was extremely apologetic. He said he was very sorry that there was so little food and that it was prepared by 'small boys'. He went on to say that if people were not full up with food they should not joke about it but should merely forget it. Further he implored, while some people have feasts with sufficient food for all the important men, if this was not the case for his feast, could the patrons be forgiven. There were three pigs, he said, signifying that the feast was for three dead people and that he was working this feast for his brother. Such language of course should not be taken at face value but is a rhetorical ploy aimed at diffusing potential malice from the guests. As is usually the case, there was more than sufficient food for the guests. The modest language downplays this so feast sponsors are not subject to sorcery attack from jealous or belittled guests.

When the speech or song performance is completed, the food and other comestibles (ie. areca nut and pepper) are distributed to the guests. Food is not placed randomly and when it is distributed those doing it must be conscious of where important men are sitting and make sure that sufficient, high-quality food is placed before them. Ideally, for example, meat still on the bone must be given to important men. Prior to eating the food a brief Christian prayer is said, which thanks 'god the father' for all the food. Once the food is consumed people gather any leftovers very hastily and return home. There is little standing about talking; within minutes most people are on their way. As people leave, the sponsor will ask them to return for the final day. Again depreciatory language is employed and at one feast I attended the village leader asked the guests back tomorrow to finish the 'little mosquitoes over there' (meaning the remaining pigs).
Plate 20: *Laxabis* display
Plate 21: Dividing up taro from *laxabis* display

Plate 22: *Kuruse* - shell valuable distribution
On the morning of the third and final day, a number of pigs will be cooked to accompany the taro bundle prepared the previous day. This must be done quickly because a late start means the pork will not be cooked enough or the finishing time for the feast is delayed. As afternoon rains are common, any delay in the cooking of the pork means the feast might be washed out. Once the pigs are cooking, the earth oven from the previous day which contains the taro bundles is uncovered. All the remaining pigs are then slaughtered. The dead pigs then have their hair burnt off and they are gutted. The person who takes the pig to the feast is usually the one who guts and butchers it. Should a person be unable to do this, they may hire someone to do it for a small sum.

While this is occurring, a structure for the display of the pigs is erected. This is called a lavala maxat, meaning an uncooked taro parcel, although in reality it does not bear much resemblance to the taro parcels that are cooked. It basically consists of a number of supporting posts placed in the ground in a rectangular or square shape. The inside of this is sometimes lined with bark and then filled with unpeeled taro tubers. Other supporting posts are then laid both over the top of this enclosure and (if there is a lot of pigs) to one side of it. The slaughtered pigs are then stacked (stomach down) in a pyramid on this structure which is left like this until later on in the day.

After the lavala maxat is erected any dance performances scheduled are usually held, although there is some flexibility as to whether they are held before or after the distribution of pork fat and entrails. If a whole day is taken up with dances, the slaughtering of the pigs and main feast occur on the following day. These performances are either local or have their origins in the Buai cult. Often these new types of performance, epitomised by masked Tubuan figures, are enmeshed in a powerful and dangerous world of sorcery challenges and counter challenges (see chapter two and cf. Nachman 1981).

The next stage in the feast is a distribution of pork fat and entrails. The pork fat is given to each men's house and the leader associated with it, and is to accompany the uncooked taro tuber that was distributed early in the feast. The entrails are distributed by the women of the host clan to other women attending. Whatever entrails are given out are either in recognition for those parts having been received in the past or establishes that there must be a similar reciprocation in the future.

It is at this stage when the feast is nearing its climax that another i vavang or lavavang performance occurs (see plates 1 and 23). This one differs from that on the previous day. While the format of the two performances is quite similar, both entailing climbing on top of pigs laid over taro, the magnitude of the second is greater. The second occurs with the host standing, in a show of power, on numerous pigs, not just a small number. In the second performance the body of the host is thus positioned considerably higher than his body in the first. Moreover it takes place in the hamlet area in front of a much larger audience than the first which took place in the men's house yard with fewer people present.

225
A further important difference between the two performances is the type of song sung. In the first performance the singer is more circumspect and apologetic in his tone, employing modest rhetoric that does not boast about the achievements of the feast clan. In the second performance, the songs celebrate the clan and its efforts to stage a successful feast, singing of the difficulties encountered in staging a feast and how the clan did not think they had the strength to organise it, but managed nonetheless.

After the performance, the host dismounts and proceeds to count the pigs loudly, as he slaps each pig with an open hand. When he has finished doing this he calls out how many pigs remain and the total number of pigs that have been slaughtered since the feast began. Importantly, at this time, he makes an announcement: 'You see all these pigs, we have finished their head'. This signifies that the clan members (and children) of the deceased have fulfilled their obligations to the dead by 'finishing the head' (of the corpse) (see plate 24).

The cooked food is now distributed to the guests. On the second day the men eat in the men's house and the women in the hamlet, but on the final day all the guests eat in the hamlet. As people receive their food others butcher the remaining pigs for the final pork distribution which culminates the feast. The butchering begins when a magician has turned each pig from its stomach onto its back. As he does this the magician inserts a magically prepared knife into a particular place under the foreleg of the pig and into the heart. People recognise there are two possibilities when this occurs: either the knife has been ensorcelled to make people have diarrhoea or the knife has been bespelled to ensure plentiful pork (see below). Each pig is then butchered by the person who brought the pig to the feast. He cuts it into pieces, which are heaped ready for distribution.

While people are eating the cooked food, the uncooked pork meat is distributed to them, in a similar way to the earlier distribution of cooked food. Often at these times the hamlet has the appearance (at least to my eyes) of chaos as dozens of pigs are butchered while other people eat. Given afternoon rains (or successful sorcery) it often happens that feasts are washed out, and the first feast I attended ended in this way. This time, when the final pork distribution got underway there was about a centimetre of water on the ground (which was quickly turning to mud). In the deluge, the raw pork was being thrown (sometimes from several metres away) landing unceremoniously with a splash at the feet of those receiving it.

As on the previous day, once the pork and taro has been distributed and people have eaten some food they assemble their things quickly and leave. As they disperse, a member of the host's clan, brandishing a cordyline plant in his hand, runs from the men's house yard through the departing guests to the edge of the hamlet while calling out 'Ladanute, ladanute, ladanute'. This idiomatic expression, drawing on the poetic allusions of water and fertility, means that water is flowing and carrying the guests to their places. It evokes the image of water flowing down valleys and washing away
accumulated debris, an image also employed in magic to make food abundant at feasts (see below).

The feast ends for the host clan the following day after they have cleaned the hamlet of the debris and litter. To complete the clearing up, a small earth oven is prepared in which a small taro bundle is cooked together with a circular piece of pork (mostly fat) from the stomach of a pig. This piece is usually the first cut made when gutting a pig and ideally comes from the pig which the host began to rear when he and his clan members decided to stage the feast. This pig is often referred to as the base of the feast and is usually the largest pig to be slaughtered.

While in the past the lokpanga was the final mortuary feast, with Christianity and government control some changes have been made to the feasting cycle and a further feast has been added to the end of the cycle. This is held some years after the lokpanga and accompanies the construction of cement tombstones to mark the graves of the dead. This feast, licimen, its name derived from the English word cement (cimen - cement). Like other indigenous feasts (i.e. laxabis, lokpanga), this one can also be held to commemorate the deaths of more than one person although the numbers are not as great. One feast of this kind I attended, for example, was for a husband and wife. Although this kind of feast is an innovation, it follows the same structure and involves the same forms of exchange as the feasts described above. The main difference is that at some stage during the feast people enter the men's house yard to see the tombstones. At this time women will give a small amount of money so they can enter the men's house yard, which at other times is out of bounds. Following this schematic sketch of the different mortuary feasts I now discuss more fully the meanings of the imagery deployed in feasting.

Fame, movement of names and the creation of memory

While the Lelet have no word equivalent to the English word 'fame', they nonetheless conceptualise what is meant by it. Here, as in other parts of Papua New Guinea, fame is associated with naming and the spatio-temporal movement or circulation of names (cf. Goodale 1985:241; Munn 1986:105-9 and 1977:50). Conceptually, fame is associated with the upward movement of a name, something which is inextricably tied to indigenous conceptions of power, space and bodies as witnessed in the climactic i vavang performance atop the pigs.

A man organising a feast desires success, which is achieved through abundance. Firstly, he hopes there is an abundance of people. Secondly, he hopes there is an abundance of food and considerable efforts are made toward the realisation of this goal. It is only through such overall abundance that the feast patron's name is propelled upwards: 'i gip aurut lisen teren' (to carry his name upwards). The symbolism of power involved in attaining fame also entails movement on another plane. The extent to which a name moves or is 'carried upwards' is dependent on movement in another dimension, on the horizontal plane. As a name moves outwards from the locus of a man's body he expands his self. Conceptually the movement
away from the centre of the man's body to the periphery of the social world is paralleled by the movement upwards of his name. The wider the name moves the higher it moves. The movement of a man's name occurs through speech or 'talk'. It is only through the wide circulation and movement of 'talk' about a feast to people in other hamlets and places that fame is achieved. To some extent this is why magic to draw or 'pull' people to a feast is important, since the more people attend the more the name of the host moves. As the talk about a feast expands beyond the spatio-temporal horizon of the hamlet where it is held, so too does the name of the host of that feast.

The success of a feast is dependent on a number of things. There is a strong link between the creation of fame and the use of bodily strength or power (lolos). It is through the movement of the body, or the intentional engagement of body with the world, that the feast host transforms body strength or power into fame. The feast is the end point of a chain of value creation, which starts with a person labouring to produce and finishes when products, as embodiments of persons, are exchanged and circulate among others. Products of a person's bodily power are detached from and thus circulate beyond the confines of the host's body. It is through the detachment and circulation of these embodiments that renown or fame accrue for the feast host and his kin.

The success of a feast is dependent to a large extent upon the type of person the host is and the type of life he has led. In this sense the achievement of fame or 'carrying oneself up' is not the result of a single successful feast but depends on prior facts. Thus, fame is the intersection and accumulation of a number of essentials. Fame is predicated on the expansion of the body in space and time, by harnessing the potentiality or power of the body over a long period and a wide spatial ambit. Fame depends on Lelet notions of personhood and sociality that I discussed above (see introduction), where the measure of a person is dependent on the extent to which they give and share with others over time.

If a man is considered to epitomise the negative aspects of personhood, such as social isolation and the selfish consumption of items that should be shared, he will not be able to host a feast successfully. If a man manifests the characteristics of the archetypal negative other, the lantupe who sits hidden away in the bush and consumes things which are better shared and which could be used to create and sustain social relationships, then any feast he hosts is doomed to failure. In this context openness is associated with generosity and closure with stinginess. I am reminded of the corporeal image from the Massim, in which a person who eats with an open mouth is considered generous while someone who eats with a closed mouth is considered stingy (cf. Montague 1989:27). The image of the sociable person is one who has an 'open hand', from which people receive things and from which 'many have eaten'. Openness, whether of the hand or the house is associated with movement of things that were previously contained within, and this is one of the ways through which a person's name travels and he becomes widely known.
Plate 23: Climactic *i vavang* performance
Plate 24: Counting the pigs
A man who is sociable and embodies openness will be able to host a successful feast because people will bring pigs to his feast in recognition of his history of giving and sharing. As it was put to me by one man: 'If you close your hand and work a feast nobody will come with anything but if you open your hand pigs will come from all places'. A 'closed hand' does not generate a successful feast (cf. Munn 1986:49). It is through having an open hand and thus implicitly an open body, from which things move, that the self of the host expands out and his name moves to other places where he becomes known. Openness is associated with movement and expansion of the self, while closure is associated with the contraction and inwardness of the person, existing by and for itself, outside those normal social relationships which constitute humanness.

The success of a feast is also dependent on a second use of bodily strength or power which, like sociality, also requires detachments from the person/body. These detachments also entail notions of movement from the inside to the outside in a similar way to the open/closed aspects of personhood. In this case it is the exteriorisation from the host's body with the movement of speech, both of a magical and non-magical nature. Initially, I will examine aspects of non-magical speech before a fuller discussion of magical talk and the images it employs.

There is a recognition that a feast and its success is the result of the collective efforts, work and bodily strength of both the feast host and the members of his lineage and clan. This was made apparent to me when I attended the feast a man was holding for his wife who had died suddenly a week before. As I arrived the host remarked to me that without his clan and lineage members to help he would not have been able to organise the feast (a *lakmitoang*). Particularly important, he stressed, was the necessity of having sister's sons (*laksigilik*) and the assistance they gave. Without their support and help the feast would have been difficult to organise.

While there is an acknowledgement that the success of a feast is dependent on the establishment and maintenance of many complex social relationships that often go beyond kin relationships, there is nonetheless a recognition that the success of a feast depends crucially on the 'power' of the feast patron. As one man said - 'a feast marks that the host has got power not his clan'. This man had in mind the power of the host, most particularly the power of his speech. A successful feast, he said, is only achieved if the host's 'mouth is strong'. It is only through the manifest power of his mouth, embodied in the speech used to extract the necessary labour and support of his clan and lineage members, that it is possible to stage a feast.

The enactment of a large feast, such as a *lokpanga* or *luxuruse* is a concrete indication of the power of the host, and the power of his oratory in marshalling and extracting the bodily power of his clan and lineage members and in making their and his interests coincide (cf. Wagner 1992:162). In part this is why, when hosts give a performance on top of stacked pigs, they stress the difficulties involved in organising a feast and how it would be impossible without the support of the clan. The power or 'strength of the mouth' is realised in another manner as well, through the magical
spells and songs a host possesses and which he sometimes uses to ensure a successful feast, and it is to this that I now turn.37

Making the place heavy with food

One of the essential desires of those sponsoring a feast is that the 'place is heavy' \((\text{lemenemen i mumuat})\) with food. The success of a feast is predicated on this fact and this is why magic directed at producing large quantities of food is still very much a part of the preparations for feasting today, even though some other magic is discarded or rarely used. When a feast hamlet is 'heavy' or abundant with food the guests will have more than enough to consume and take home with them. In many ways the ideal mortuary feast is one where food is so abundant that it rots, and in relation to food there is an aesthetics of decomposition which counterposes the everyday aesthetic (of shiny, unblemished, and sweet smelling things).38 It is through this 'heaviness' that 'talk' is started and thus circulates, creating fame for the host. The symbolism involved here is similar to the imagery of the dipping and rising moon crescent as a sign of famine (see chapter five). If feasting is seen in a similar way, the heaviness of the food can be seen to lift up the feast host's name, thus giving him fame.

As noted in chapter six, one form of garden magic, \(\text{lomondok}\), is specifically directed at the production of large and abundant taro for mortuary feasts. This form of magic aims to make fertile the gardens of the feast host, his kin, supporting others and, importantly, all gardens so that people will have plentiful taro to bring to the feast. \(\text{Lomondok}\) is a sequential form of magic which starts when the garden is first cut and ends when the taro is cooked in taro parcels at the feast. That component of the \(\text{lomondok}\) magic which is specifically directed to the taro during the feast is referred to as \(\text{lotongkongkun}\).39 This magic is used either by the host, if he knows it, or a member of his clan or lineage, in the lead up to the feast.

The first time this feast magic is used is the stage in the feast preparations when the platform on which the taro is placed is constructed. This platform, which stands about a metre and a half off the ground, is made of vertical posts supporting horizontal flooring on which the taro is placed. Centrally located in the middle of it are three or four bamboo poles, the only bamboo posts in the structure.40 Before other erection, the joints of the bamboo poles are painted with red ochre, placed into the holes and bespelled. Like many other garden spells, these invoke Moroa and then taro to stand firmly here. When the horizontal flooring beams are placed they are bespelled and invoke Moroa and then taro to sleep here. The rest of the platform is completed and people go to their gardens to collect taro to place on the platform (with accompanying spells). The first taro is placed by the magician, who climbs on to the structure and is handed a bundle of taro. This first taro must be large and of good quality. As he places it he calls spells that invoke Moroa and taro to sleep well. The feast is then held and people disperse.
The next stage in this magic occurs only at the main feast, the *lokpanga* or *luxuruse*. Prior to the taro being peeled ready for cocking, the magician will climb on to the platform and collects a taro. As he removes the regenerative stalk from the tuber he bespells it, again invoking Moroa. However, the spell differs in that the magician substitutes himself for what formerly was taro. The spell calls on Moroa to be taro and the magician to be taro at this site. The magician then takes the taro from the platform and places it on the ground, again with a spell that invokes Moroa and the taro to sleep here. Other taro is then taken from the platform and placed with the de-stalked taro and divided into piles for peeling. As men do not peel taro, the magician delegates to his wife and another woman the peeling of the first four taro which must be accompanied by a magical incantation which he has taught them. The women call on Moroa and then themselves to bring out the taro tuber at this site with force.

After this incantation, the magician again assumes the initiative in the magical process as he places the taro into a pile, and utters a number of spells, (which are very similar to those used in *lomondok* magic - at the stage when edible leaves from the taro are consumed together with taro from the garden). These spells invoke taro to take on a repulsive and repugnant state and instead of coupling taro with Moroa as in the spells above, these spells couple taro with excreta (see chapter six). The evocative imagery employed is meant to make the taro so revolting that it is not eaten but wastes. In the aesthetics of decomposition employed here, wastage is a highly desired outcome of the feast. The host wishes not only that there be so much food that it cannot be consumed at the feast, but also that the food carried home is so abundant it wastes as well. Hosts desire that food be so plentiful that the hamlet in which the feast is held smells from the mounds of rotting food left behind, because the guests, already weighed down by food, are unable to carry more. As I have said, attractive smell is extremely important in the creation of desire, whether in relation to humans or food (see chapter five). Rotting smells do the opposite; they repulse. The magic, I was told, is to ensure that if plenty of people attend the feast that there is no shortage of food. In part the magic works to promote abundance and in part to minimise consumption. These spells make those who consume a small piece of the taro experience a tightening of the stomach so that they will not be able to consume more. When offered more, those so affected do not accept. By this suppression of appetite there is more food for distribution. Not only are these spells used at this time they are also repeated when the taro is enclosed in bark for cooking.

Other spells of this type of magic utilise similar images of abundance but not the imagery of excreta. In another form of feast magic the image of abundance evoked is that of rubbish, in this case the metaphor of the accumulated rubbish and flotsam that gathers in the littoral area on the beach or in stream beds. Water and moist environments are associated with fertility, and drought and dryness are associated with the absence or shortage of food. The imagery of flotsam evokes that time at the end of the feast when someone calls out that water is flowing and carrying everyone away.
Returning to the sequence of spells, the next intervention by the magician occurs when the taro parcel is opened. The magician must be the first person to break the vines which have been used to tie up the parcel, which he does while calling a spell which invokes Moroa and taro to sit down in the open. This spell evokes the image of sitting, which as noted previously, is a widely used image of bodily comportment employed to illustrate harmonious and prosperous times. It is also evokes revelation - the taro which was previously concealed is brought out into the open for everyone to see. Once the rope is broken there are no more spells and the food is distributed for consumption.

A further type of magic is employed after the erection of the taro platform, prior to the hosting of a large feast. This type is called lavasmenemen (to walk about the place) and is similar to the magic employed to ward off famine (see chapter five). Both types are performed at night, in this case while people in the hamlet are locked up in their cold, dark homes without fire and light.

The magician leaves his house carrying a smoking log and walks to the fringe of the hamlet, paying specific attention to all the intersections of paths into the hamlet. He positions his body so that he faces into the hamlet and his back is away from it. With his body so positioned, he incants spells which close off and protect the hamlet from any destructive magic sent by sorcerers wishing to ruin the feast. Particularly, he aims to repel any spells aiming to make the feast guests unsatiated by the food they consume. Curiously, in one of the spells told to me, the magician does not invoke the closure of the hamlet when he is at the fringe of the village but calls for the closure of his house. The reason for this metaphoric shift was not explained but I interpret it to mean that the magician's house stands for the hamlet as a whole and that he, as the one performing the prosperity magic, must be closed off from the destructive magic. If the feast host does not have the necessary magical techniques and is unable to commission the help of someone who does, then the feast is doomed, as people will not be filled by the food they consume.

After calling his spells, he listens carefully for the calls of some birds which do not normally call at night. Some birds have considerable powers to foresee the future and warn humans through their cries of some impending danger. Some bird species foretell famine and some impending death (cf. Ivens 1927:407 and chapter five). The bird cry forewarns the feast patrons of impending sorcery attack and disruption. If no such bird calls, it is a sign the feast will be free from sorcery.

Following the incantation of protective magic the magician proceeds to the cemetery area in the men's house yard where he places his foot on a grave or merely on the earth. The spells he incants at this time are said to make the place 'heavy' with food. The spells initially call for prosperity or good times (lenmila or limila) to come to the magician and then for taro to be 'good here'. Following this he invokes the taro to be repugnant excreta. The spells in this instance work like hunger suppression magic, by minimising the consumption of taro. Thus, I was told that the consumption

234
of a tiny morsel of taro will cause the consumers' stomachs to close and they will consume no more.

After the completion of these spells there is a pause in the magic and the hamlet is left unswept for four days, during which time a considerable amount of rubbish accumulates. This evokes the image of flotsam used in other spells. On the fifth day, the magician is the first to sweep the hamlet, which he does with a broom made from a type of tree whose name is derived from the word for prosperous times (lenmilal). The spell used calls on Moroa and the magician both to make prosperous times here and to tame the hamlet, after which it is swept by women.

The magician becomes aware of the efficacy of his magic by a number of signs, such as a firefly approaching him whilst he is performing it. A second sign is from humans. If he sees, for example, that a considerable number of people (both children and adults) have defecated at the back of the house, this is a sign that the taro will be so abundant that it rots. This symbolises to the magician, I was told, that the place will be 'so heavy with food that no matter how many people attend the feast they will not finish it'.

Revelation and the dispersal of pork

A further form of magic is employed by the host, focusing on the distribution of pork. Not only must those attending a feast have an abundance of taro, it must also be accompanied by plentiful pork. Nobody should return home 'empty handed'. If there is not enough pork to accompany the taro then those responsible for organising the feast will be subject to the scornful gossip of the guests. The magic for the pork distribution involves the magician standing on a piece of pork while the distribution is occurring. While he remains standing on this piece of pork other pieces continue to be distributed. When he removes his foot from the pork the remaining pork is depleted and finishes quickly. This form of magic is specifically directed at the knife used to butcher one of the uncooked pigs that are distributed following the climactic performance and consumption of cooked food. There is a recognition that there are two kinds of knife for this magic. One knife is considered to be 'good' and makes the consumers of the pork desire it. The second is considered to be the opposite of the first and makes the consumers experience diarrhoea after consuming it. While people refer to one form of knife as being 'good' and the other as 'bad' such glosses are steeped in Christian rhetoric and both, as far as I could gather are, referred to by the same name in the vernacular. Both forms of knife have the same function of producing abundance, it is just that one does it by targeting the anus.

With the 'good' type of magic, the magician initially inserts the knife into the anus of a pig prior to it being gutted. When this is done he invokes a spell which says his knife and then the sun are opening. The image of the rising sun is used, because, as was explained to me, when the sun rises it sees everywhere. There is not a hole or place that the rays of the sun do not strike. It is a very common metaphor and is used in a number of other types of magic. This imagery also resonates strongly with the
Christian imagery of darkness and light which I explored previously, and this is possibly why this method has been labelled 'good' (see chapter one). Once the magician has bespelled the pig in this way, all the other men will simultaneously disembowel the remaining pigs. After the removal of the stomach and entrails, the pigs are laid on their stomachs on the ground while the magician incants a further spell similar to the one when the knife was first inserted, but this time the magician invokes his knife and then the sun to see everywhere from above. This same spell will be called when the pigs are finally placed on top of the uncooked taro on the edifice mounted for the final climactic speech performance.

Once the performance on top of the pigs is completed the magician recommences his work. In some forms of this magic the knife is inserted into the heart from the side of the pig as it is turned over but in this form the magician inserts the knife into the anus a second time. As he is doing this he calls his original spell invoking his knife to be open. He inserts his knife in all of the pigs and then they are cut into pieces for distribution by others. While people are butchering the pigs the magician does not stand or sit still but walks about continuously while singing a song in hushed tones, as follows:

My cordyline moves the liver, it moves the liver of my sister's daughter. Her ginger moves the liver, it moves the liver, it moves the liver. A man [named] and his wife get up in the morning and the two of them see and take this.

While I received little exegesis on the meaning of this song, I interpret it to be about making the pork meat desirable for consumption because this song bears many similarities to the songs employed to magically draw valuables from people. In particular, it uses the verb (i nagong) which signifies both good (as in desirable) and to move the liver. Bodily movement, particularly the movement of the internal organs (such as the liver), is one of the main ways desire is created in people (see chapters three and four).

Once the butchering is finished the magician will stand near the mounds of pork awaiting distribution, placing his foot on a small piece of meat from the strip of flesh that runs from the eyes of the pig to the tail. He calls a spell invoking a dried banana leaf to close up, and the people attending the feast to do the same. This spell makes it seem that there are not many people attending the feast. Thus, it is the opposite of the spell initially used for the knife, which invoked the knife to be 'open'. Here, as with sociality, openness is associated with abundance while closure is associated with insufficiency. Once he has minimised the number of people, he invokes a spell to again 'open' his knife and the sun. Again he concludes with the spell which invokes the sun and himself to see all the people from above. When he has finished, the pig is distributed to the guests.

Magic is not only employed to ensure that food is abundant but also to ensure there are plenty of people as well (cf. Otto 1992a:440). These sorts of magic are similar to the wealth magic, mentioned above (chapters three and four). One type of magic for drawing people to a feast uses a ginger plant and a spell to 'pull' people to
the feast. Another aims to entice people to bring pigs with them and also utilises ginger: the efficacy of the magic is confirmed when all the leaves fall off the ginger plant. This indicates that the place where the feast is held will be full of people who have brought pigs with them.

**Tournaments of power, sorcery and fighting with food**

Fame, as discussed above, involves the upward movement of the feast host's name and creates memories in the minds of others. Such pretensions to power do not go uncontested, and the power gained by one person is power lost by others. Thus, people often speak of the actions of a feast host metaphorically as 'downing' people. Feasts are not only 'tournaments of value' if we are to follow Appadurai but also tournaments of power (cf. Appadurai 1986). The language of feasting is riddled with the images of rivalry and warfare and it could be said that today people fight with food rather than weapons (cf. Kaberry 1941:344 and M. Young 1971:189). The arena of feasting, like warfare in days gone by, is very much an arena of male power and thus one could refer to feasts as tournaments of male power. From my descriptions of the various feasts and their structure it is clear that men take all the initiatory and important roles, whether this be performing magic, organising exchanges or dancing atop stacked pigs. Men dominate but without women feasts would not happen. Though there is not equality, there is in a sense a mutual interdependence in which each requires the other.45 Men, for example, are dependent on women to take taro to feasts to accompany the pigs they take.46 While men may perform the magic that ensures a bountiful harvest, nonetheless without women tending the gardens they would not eat. Men often remark that the 'origin' or 'as' of food lies with women.

In addition to sorcery contests and the displays of power that characterise dance performances, there are wider references to the rhetoric of warfare in feasting, most graphically in the exchange of heads. During warfare in the past, human heads were reciprocated as pigs' heads are today.47 If someone killed a person during war and then gave his/her head to another person, that person was obliged to return a head later. In addition, the climactic performances atop the stacked pigs were paralleled in times of war when a person would *i vavang* atop the lined up corpses of slain enemies.

I have described some attempts to defeat or 'down' people in my descriptions of feasting (for example, the aggressive challenging to accept a pig's head). Other forms of challenge are sometimes made, such as a man being given a huge amount of food, all of which he must consume. There are forms of magic in which the consumer likens himself to a whale, because these creatures have huge appetites and as such he can eat all the food placed before him. Other forms of 'force feeding' occurred in the past at feasts where all the food had to be eaten and none could be taken home (cf. Foster 1990b; Mosko 1992:111; Wagner 1986:187-8 and 1991).

In the giving of food there is a fine line between sharing and shaming. As such the flow of value-producing items should be carefully regulated. In the introduction I
pointed to the paradox alluded to by A. Weiner of keeping while giving, and in chapter two I discussed the nature of the regulation of the body, pointing to the double bind of giving and retaining: that people must not be too open or too closed to others. The flow of things from a person and their clan and lineage reaches its highest point at climactic mortuary feasts such as the lokpanga. Indeed, at the end of a feast the host will call out that everything is finished and there is nothing left. Sometimes this may be idiomatically expressed using the metaphor, leselamamung, meaning the place is devoid of things. Literally this metaphor means the place is dry. This total dispensation of wealth is fraught with risks for the feasters, both prior to and after the feast.

If someone is slighted by the host's obvious embodiment of power, he may have recourse to sorcery as a countervailing strategy, now that warfare has long ceased. Although the Lelet deny that they practise sorcery, they still believe others do. As such, the threat of sorcery is ever present, from the initial preparations until the feast itself, and even after. Because of these threats people about to organise a large mortuary feast may refer to it not as a lokpanga but as merely loxonanan, to diminish the full significance of the event. Such a term is normally applied to small feasts, like a person's going away feast or a feast to celebrate the harvest. This form of veiled talk or euphemistic language is often used in the context of feasting.

One reason why people employ this form of speech is a general reluctance to speak about things before they have happened. Obviously, the success of an event cannot be predicted beforehand, but can only be known afterwards (cf. Rubinstein 1978:180). As I suggest in the introduction there is a profound visualism in Melanesian culture in that true knowledge of an event is confirmed only when the event is seen. While people desire that their events be successful, their hard work and magical intervention does not necessarily assure this. Mainly, however, such veiled language is used because of sorcery fears. Talking about an event prior to its completion may invite sorcery attacks. It is commonly said that sorcerers act out of jealousy and those who conspicuously and unashamedly display their wealth are likely targets. If a feast host says the feast he is organising is going to be huge and a large number of pigs will be slaughtered, this is seen as boasting. Such open boasting is not only premature, because he does not how many pigs are going to be slaughtered, but it is also foolish. Those who are boastful will leave themselves open to sorcery because someone felt 'downed' by their words. There are many accounts of people being struck dead by sorcery following the success of their feasts. As I noted earlier, one of the hosts, in an almost apologetic tone referred to the pigs lying on the ground nearby as 'mosquitoes'. It was raining at the time and his talk was aimed at diminishing the feast so that the rainmaker thought to be causing the rain would not continue to do so.

Sorcery that causes rain to fall and thus destroy a feast is widely believed to be practised by those with ill intent. The patrons can employ a weather magician to perform sun magic so there is good weather. In fact a feast host will often hedge his bets and employ several weather magicians in pursuit of good weather, not communicating to them whom he has hired.48 In the past it was said that people
practised various forms of sorcery and weather magic to ruin a feast in pursuit of their claims to clan heirlooms or in compensation for the deaths of their clan members. Today, however, people's motives have changed and sorcery is used in pursuit of claims over land and gardens which in the past would not have been dealt with in this way.49

It is said by some that people ruin other people's feasts by ensorcelling the pork if an heirloom valuable belonging to them is in the possession of the clan giving the feast. If a valuable is held by a clan for no good reason, the rightful owners will think in the following terms; 'the head of my clan member is being sat on top of by this man'. This expression alludes to the symbolic importance of the head, and refers to the fact that clan heirlooms are often given in compensation for a killing, and are then referred to as the head of the victim.50 The spatial positioning of bodies is an expression of power: the one with the valuable is positioned above the clan to whom it rightfully belongs.

If someone from the feast host's clan has killed someone in another clan and they have not yet atoned the death with a large shell valuable, it is possible the other clan may ruin the feast as a consequence. I was told by one man that some people hide their ill will over these matters while others do not and openly speak of them prior to the feast. In such cases the sorcerer causes some rain to fall prior to the feast, to give the feast host an indication of what may occur. To make it clear why the rain has fallen the sorcerer will go and find the host. After first engaging in some small talk, the aggrieved man, using partially veiled speech, will say to the feast host that he is going to look for his dead clan member. The feast host will then wonder why the man mentioned the name of his dead clan member, and when any unusual weather occurs it will confirm to him that the inference was directed at him. To ensure a successful feast the host and his clan must give the aggrieved party a suitably sized valuable.

Other methods of ruining a feast target the food consumed. One of the most common ways involves the use of the pig butchering magic I described above, only in this case instead of facilitating the wide distribution of what was seemingly a small amount of pork, the malevolent method makes the consumers experience diarrhoea. When this sorcery has been performed the food is not retained, satiating the body, but flows rapidly from it. While the feast patrons desire that the bodies of those attending a feast become heavy and satiated, those who wish to ruin a feast desire the opposite effect - that the bodies of those attending the feast become light and hungry. (This is reminiscent of the Maenge anti-theft sorcery that uses a lightweight wood to cause the thief to experience diarrhoea. See chapter six).

Sorcery of this type uses the metaphor of a decomposing corpse. The sorcerer incants his spell whilst placing his foot on a grave in the cemetery of the feast hamlet. This is the reason, I was told, when people leave the hamlet to collect food an elderly person is left behind with the specific purpose of observing the cemetery and the cemetery is also observed at night. The decomposing corpse is employed
because after a period of four days in the grave it ruptures. Like the corpse that loses its integrity, the sorcery is meant to ensure the feast patrons experience a similar loss of bodily integrity in a failure to control the boundaries of the body. Even though there is plenty of food at the feast, people will not be satiated by what they consume. When people cannot control their bodies or satiate themselves with the food they consume, they experience hunger, a highly undesirable occurrence in the feasting world!

Opening the body and remembering the feast

There is a countervailing view to the one I have just outlined that poses that the host actually performs magic which causes the guests to experience diarrhoea. Thus, one man, with whom I was discussing people's propensity to experience diarrhoea following a feast, said it was the aim of the host that this be the case. Indeed, I was told, that the feast patron would be pleased if it occurred and if he did not know the appropriate magic to do it himself he would hire someone to do it. He claimed that the host increases his fame if there is diarrhoea. The question, however, is: why would this be so, given that sorcerers also seek to do a similar thing? What this illustrates is that feasting is a milieu in which polysemic meanings and different views of power abound. The reason I was given for this apparent contradiction is that the host increases his stature by such actions because these occurrences create a memory of the particular event. Once a feast has finished and people return to their hamlets they will start to reflect on the feast, talking about it. Indeed people scrutinise various aspects of a feast; as to whether it followed the correct *loklok at lemenemen*; whether there was sufficient food; whether the food they received in reciprocation equalled what they had originally given. If people experience diarrhoea this too will be something for talk and this talk is part of the process by which this feast is known and remembered. In a sense it is like the media publicist who believes that any publicity is good publicity. It is said that even if they experience diarrhoea 'people will talk and carry the name of the feast host on top'.

This form of inflicted loss, I would argue, differs from that intended to ruin the feast in the way it manifests itself. While the results are the same, the way it is achieved is slightly different. The diarrhoea inflicted by the host aims to make people not desire the pork they see before them, turning their heads away in revulsion. This mirrors an action of the magician when he inserts the knife into the heart (or anus) of the pigs. As he does this, if he wishes people not to like the pork, he turns his head. Looking at something is associated with desire while looking away from something is associated with the opposite, repulsion. (This why the magician in the protective magic described above faces into the village when performing it). People at a feast carefully examine the movements of the magician at this time to see whether he turns his head. If he does, this is seen as sign that people, when confronted with a plate of pork, will do likewise.
The logic behind this will be made clearer by examining the detail of this magic. There are two methods. The first uses various botanical products and the knife is placed in these when it is bespelled. The second is simpler, involving the magician merely placing his knife into some excreta. This is the reason for the turning of the head: when people see excreta they are normally repulsed and turn their heads away. Thus, the magician turns his head away as a mark that the consumers will be similarly repulsed, as if the pork were inedible excreta.

The magic used by the host makes the consumers, after eating only a small amount, experience diarrhoea, a bloated stomach and a loss of desire to eat. The magic used by the person who wishes to disrupt the feast and deflate the fame of the feast host, aims not to give the consumer a bloated stomach and sense of fullness but the opposite, a stomach which experiences emptiness and lack of satiation. The magic performed by the host fits with the images of abundance garden magicians hope to produce when performing magic for the gardens intended for the feast, and aimed for in those forms of feast magic used in preliminary preparations. Spells in the lomondok magic practised for feast gardens often have sections which liken the taro to excreta, as well as invoking images of so much abundance that the food cannot be eaten and therefore wastes. The spells in the lavasmenemen magic which I described above also liken taro to excreta and other repulsive matter, the aim of which is to make it waste.

To conclude, I want to evoke Levi-Strauss' often cited passage where he refers to a world without exchange: a world in which the 'law of exchange could be evaded, that one could gain without losing, enjoy without sharing' (1969:496-7). While Levi-Strauss' utopian world without exchange very probably would not be desired by the Lelet, there is one point I wish to consider.

As I argued in the introduction, the constitution of identity is predicated on exchange: without it there is no social world. As Foster has commented, '[the] world [is] made permanent by means of ceaseless exchange' (1990b:433). But it is Levi-Strauss' suggestion of gaining without losing that bears further consideration. It points to some of the complexities of the double bind entailed in giving and withholding.

As I have shown in my discussions, of sorcery, of the ideal bodily form and especially of feasting, the extent to which people allow things to flow from themselves to others must be carefully regulated. In normal contexts people must be neither too open nor too closed. If people are too open and allow their wealth to dissipate they will not have the resources available to engage in feasting. If they are too closed in the sense of being stingy, they might have the wealth but will be unable to draw the necessary support from others to engage in feasting.

It is during mortuary feasts, particularly the last climactic lokpanga, that people must be absolutely open, exhausting all their accumulated wealth. Given this absolute openness and the stress on equivalence in exchanges: How does one gain
without losing? How does one resolve the paradox of keeping while giving? The answers I suggest lie in the form of diarrhoea-producing magic performed by the host. It is through playing with the bodily boundaries of the guests that the feast host turns what would otherwise be his corporeal loss - that of the gift and the loss of power that it presupposes - into a gain (cf. Lattas 1990:93). Loss is transformed into a gain. People are satiated by the food consumed and have so much food that it rots, they thus cannot begrudge the feast host. However, the satiation is only illusory and this is the important point. The food consumed cannot be transformed into bodily power and thus utilised in the process of value creation and exchange as is usually the case. Apart from illusory satisfaction, the guests do not gain in the equation of exchange. Through diarrhoea the exchange is rendered nothing. Not only has the host gained fame, but he will later receive further gains when the taro and pork distributed is returned. Thus feasting as a tournament of power and value is pre-eminently concerned with the manipulation of bodies and bodily power.
Notes

1. Mortuary observances and practices comprise a major and minor theme in a number of the ethnographies of New Ireland. See Albert (1987); Brouwer (1980); B. Clay (1986); Fergie (1985); Foster (1988); George (1988); P. Lewis (1969) and Wagner (1986). See also the papers by Bell (1946-49:68-74); B. Clay (1992); Foster (1990a and 1990b); Groves (1933); (Kuchler 1987 and 1988); Melion and Kuchler (1991); Powdermaker (1931-32 and 1932); Wagner (1991 and 1987) and the collection edited by Lincoln (1987).

2. There are a number of other terms for mortuary feasts. Sometimes the word designating food, *loxonanan*, can also be used or large mortuary feasts may be referred to as *lempatokluxa silok*.

3. The head is important, people say, because this is the place where knowledge resides and it is through utilising this knowledge that people eat. Oaths are sworn on the head and people avoid the heads of those they are in avoidance relationships with.

4. The sites of burial are often contested, numerous arguments and conflicts erupting. Assuming that the parents die first, it is the children who ultimately determine where the corpse is buried and they can disregard their parents' wishes. People are fearful of dying in foreign places and hamlets lest their relatives attempt to bury them there. One such situation occurred while I was in the field. A woman wanted her deceased husband buried in a hamlet on her land where they had lived for some time. This option was contested by a number of the senior men who took the deceased's body back to his hamlet and buried it there. Because of such disputes terminally ill people knowing death to be imminent may want to be taken back to their hamlet to die, so that they will be buried there. Elderly people have been known to reside in isolated hamlets, away from their children and grandchildren who have married to other hamlets, so that when they die they will be buried there, in their own place.

5. If a person has allegedly died from sorcery, people are quick to seal the body in the coffin. People close to the deceased will be responsible for washing, dressing and placing it in the coffin, all of which occurs at night. Other people are forbidden to touch the body.

6. Previously, particularly if a garden magician died, people used to pull taro and banana plants from the ground and then circle the hamlet while singing songs. These songs were said to draw the *loroang* of the dead magician back to the hamlet, so he did not take the taro and banana with him to the land of the dead. If this was not done other plants of those named varieties taken by the magician's *loroang* would follow and be lost to the living forever.

7. This is possibly because very few pigs are kept by the Lelet and to organise the slaughter of a pig requires a journey to the coast to purchase it.

8. People say that those on the coast carry such things to the extreme in ways that are considered bad form. Prior to attending a feast on the coast I was warned that people gather urine in drums for dousing people and tie empty fish tins around people's necks so that flies swarm to them.

9. I suggest this because it is known that a particular form of burial was practised in order to retrieve the skulls of garden and weather magicians for later use. The corpse was seated in a open round hole within the men's house and a bamboo frame was erected around the neck to hold the head in place. As the corpse decomposed the rest of the skeleton fell away and the decomposing fluids drained from the skull which was then easily collected. The remains were finally covered with earth.

10. Men's houses were much larger than they are nowadays.
11. Of course burial did not stop people from retrieving skulls, and in the past some skulls used in sun magic were obtained by robbing the grave.

12. If the burial is in a men's house which is associated with the powerful form of sorcery, lenaulom (see chapter two), women do not enter, observing the proceedings from outside instead.

13. At one of the funerals I attended, the deceased had left express wishes that this rite not be observed. It was said, that this man did not want the customary way followed because he believed that it would block the path of his loroang on its route to heaven. He wanted this to apply only to 'sleeping on top of the corpse' and not to later mortuary feasts. When his wishes became known after his burial there was heated argument about not following this aspect of loklok at lemenemen, although his wishes were, finally, followed. There is an interesting inversion here. In chapter two it was mentioned that in the past it was believed entry to the land of the dead required the slaughter of a pig. Now, in this man's thinking the slaughter of a pig prevents access to the Christian land of the dead.

14. At this time there is sometimes a stricture on the burning of gardens, imposed on all the villages of the Lelet, observed as a sign of respect for the deceased. If this is disregarded the person responsible will be suspected as the cause of death. The length of time the restriction is observed is determined by the close kin of the deceased. If a person has died of old age the relatives may not insist on it because they do not experience such profound grief as when a young person dies.

15. Women attending contribute taro and as well all the gardens of the deceased are harvested. The regenerative stalk is severed from the taro tuber in such a way that it cannot be reproduced.

16. Some support for this is found in B. Clay (1986:118) where the comparable feast called eruruma of the coastal Mandak of Pinikindu coincided with the burial in pre-colonial times and then after colonisation occurred two to three weeks after burial. The name of the Lelet feast, lakmitoang, is derived from the covering up of the corpse (i kmit loroang).

17. In this case the feast name has a suffix meaning alive (ro or to; from loro) added to it. Thus, this feast is called either laxabis or luxurusero. Feasts of this type come close to fulfilling the role of successorship that Wagner discusses (1986:176-213). Thus, the man atop the stacked pigs in plate one is the sister's son of the man whose 'mortuary' feast is being celebrated.

18. Seeing that their close kin had a pig or a garden maturing, a person in this state could make it known to them that their time had come and they wished to die. Then the invalid would attend their own laxabis feast and after observing the preparation of the earth oven, or sometimes after partaking of the cooked food, they would be killed. Such killings were not always voluntary. I heard stories of elderly people who after having freely set this process underway changed their minds. Sometimes such a person would try to escape, only to be trussed like a pig on a pole and brought back to be killed, by strangulation. This bears some similarities with the widow killing that occurred in West New Britain, but did not only occur to women. See Chowning (1980:8, 15) and Goodale (1980:126, 134-5 and 1985:238).

19. If they will receive a large valuable (levenadasilok) they are given a yellow areca nut, if they will receive a small valuable (levenadalixlik) they are given a green areca nut. The size of the pig they slaughter should also be commensurate with the size of the areca nut and valuable. Thus, if a person is given a large valuable they should slaughter a large pig. If one of the close relatives or lineage/clan members does not, however, receive an areca nut indicating a valuable is set aside for them they can still take a pig to the main feast (and expect to receive one later in return).

20. Men also chant when they are carrying pigs in trucks, and people in hamlets near the road get some idea of how many pigs have been brought up for the feast.
21. The process of announcing finding the pigs, done at the path into the hamlet, is called *i vang asu longosbo* and employs the verb *asu* indicating the process of revelation.

22. The orator calls out: 'ne nesan i asep amet mo lubung kuruse ne nesan' (so and so is killing this valuable of so and so). *Sep amet* means to forcefully kill something; the same words would be used to describe a homicide. See Lindstrom (1984:298) for a similar deployment of this metaphor in relation to exchange.

23. When the exchange is announced the name of the hamlet is usually called, however sometimes men's names are called.

24. Normal rules of avoidance still apply in such situations.

25. It is said that if someone charges more for a pig than it is thought to be worth the person throwing the taro or coconut will target him to accept the head from the pig he sold, thus obliging him to purchase a pig at the inflated price he originally charged.

26. The sticks are called *lavaxali* and in the past after they were used to display shell valuables they were collected up into a bundle and left in the men's house. Later the bundle of *lavaxali* was burnt and this was accompanied by the slaughtering and consumption of a pig. If there are not many valuables they may be held by the people due to receive them.

27. It is this act which gives its name to the feast *luruse* at which this distribution normally occurs.

28. There is usually a large shell valuable that is passed from father to son. This act of transmission is called *lokanarong* and also refers to another different type of exchange occurring at feasts. In this case it applies to the prestation of a piece of uncooked pork meat given to all the important men from other hamlets/men's houses.

29. In the vernacular this is *gi sep korop anan*. *Sep korop* has connotations of separating something into parts. Thus when a taro tuber is separated from its regenerative stalk, semantically it would be: *i sep korop lavas*.

30. A pig is killed by one, two or even three young men or teenagers who, after having trussed the pig, sit on it and then bind its snout with strips of rubber (from the inner tubes of tyres). After a few minutes the pig suffocates.

31. Like contributions of pig and taro for a feast, the song and dance performances brought to a feast from another place are either in reciprocation for previous performances by the host clan or will be reciprocated at a later date. As well as reciprocating with later performances the host gives the performance leader a small amount of money or a shell valuable for his or her trouble in organising the event. This is exchanged prior to the performance and consists of the money being tied onto a cordyline leaf and ceremoniously handed over.

32. The stacked pigs have lime-powder placed in a line down their snouts indicating that this is the finish of the feasting for the deceased. This lime-powder mark cannot be placed any earlier, for example, at the *laxabis* or *lakmitoang*, because the feasting is still incomplete.

33. Sometimes women will take a pig to a feast but men will nonetheless butcher it.

34. This tends to vary. Some people start the process of gutting by cutting out the anus.

35. Semantically the term for upwards (*aurut*) is compounded from the root for standing (*ru*: to stand - *i ru* or *i tu*), a vertical positioning of the body. This root also appears important in other Melanesian
concepts of fame. The Gawan concept of fame (*butu*), for example, incorporates concepts of upward motion or 'climbing' (Munn 1986:107). See also Roheim (1950:208) and Rubinstein (1978:178).


37. I use the qualifier to indicate that the feast patron does not always perform the magical spells but sometimes delegates to other magicians.

38. This is referred to as *lapsolom*, and is one of many idiomatic expressions used to explain this sort of phenomenon. Other expressions employed are: *levenpanga i psopso* - everything is rotting; *laluxa i psopso atlemenemen i psopso ga masa* - the food is rotting in the village for no reason; *laluxa i psopso at lokluxa* - the food is rotting at the feast. If there is so much food that it is wasting, people may say: *i sava lemenemen* - it is covering the place.

39. This term means 'to call taro' and is applied to all those forms of magic (for taro) which are employed in the lead up to a feast and while the feast is in progress.

40. They are referred to as *losora* and this is the name of the feast which accompanies the erection of the taro platform. Houses often have a bamboo pole located close to the hearth from which food baskets are hung and which is similarly bespelled to ensure abundance.

41. Hogbin mentions a form of magic used by the Wogeo which invokes similar images of good times, social stability and abundance. In the Wogeo magic, performed before the food distribution, the magician stands firmly in one place "like an immovable rock" and incants the village to be securely fastened and covered completely, in addition to there being much food to eat (Hogbin 1970:182). The magic invokes liana vines which envelop trees making them stable, the desired state for the feast.

42. This type of tree is used in the brooming magic employed to ward off famine (see chapter five).

43. It is also used in imported magic which has its origins in the Buaie cult as well as in indigenous forms. The metaphor of the sun seeing everywhere is also used in garden magic (Panoff 1972b:191) and divining magic (Ivens 1927:345).

44. This strip is also the target of some forms of pig growth magic, when the hand is rubbed along it as spells are incanted.

45. In the past it was men who were the sole consumers of the food but, under pressure from the church, distribution of food has been extended to women, although it is men, particularly the elder more important ones, who still receive the choicest food.

46. One woman who arrived at a feast with a bundle of taro became so ashamed, when her husband did not arrive with the pig he had gone to the coast to purchase, that she broke a sugar cane over his head when he arrived at his hamlet after spending the money on beer.

47. Iteanu reports a similar people/pigs equation among the Orokaiva (1990:37).

48. The weather magician tells the host to look for particular colouring in the sky as a mark of the efficacy of his magic.

49. Weather magicians are commonly believed to act out of self interest, wishing to extract larger payments from the patrons. They are widely believed to disregard affinal considerations, sometimes being accused of disrupting feasts of clans into which they have married. There is often lengthy
discussion both during the feast and after it has finished, if it has been ruined by rain. At one feast I attended a discussion occurred on the night prior to the final day in which the weather magicians were asked to swear on a Bible that they were not causing the rain that was bucketing down. One admitted the rain was his responsibility but said he was performing sun magic and the fire he was using had inadvertently gone out causing it to rain. If people are particularly angered they collect a small amount of the rain water, which can be used in the introduced sorcery injet to kill the culprit. See also White (1988:24) for a discussion of similar issues.

50. These valuables are called lavatlaku deriving from lavatlak - head and u - homicide victim.

51. Jones discussing the Faiwol mentions diarrhoea being a by-product of magic to make pork go a long way (1980:159).

52. In this example Levi-Strauss is specifically referring to the exchange of women. For a discussion of this, see Bloch and Parry (1982:31-2) and for a critique of their position, see M. Strathern (1987b:297).
Epilogue

Some forty years ago, Laxau, who lived at Katalok, weakened by age and leprosy and feeling shame that he was unable to host a mortuary feast for his dead sister, addressed this defiant song to two men who had taunted him for his failure:

I am standing (a tu) here, I am standing,
I am standing here, I am standing.
Only I remain here.
I do not have anything for feasting,
Illness has affected me.
Where shall I get good strength from?
It does not matter that this illness follows me.
You have belittled me,
I shall belittle you.
They buried the old woman close by.

Have you seen the two birds
Who sit and stare outside?

Only I, an orphan, remain here,
My parents are dead,
I have chased the two of them before me.
I am standing here, I am standing,
I am standing here. Only I remain.
I do not have anything for feasting,
Illness has affected me.
Where shall I get good taro and pigs from?
It does not matter that this illness follows me.
You have belittled me,
I shall belittle you.
They buried the old woman close by.

Have you seen the two birds
Who sit and stare outside?

I am standing, he says. His body is upright, controlled, assertive and, above all, active. Rhetorically, at least, he is not incapacitated - he is powerful. He repeatedly asserts this, it being the most important point of his song. Alluding to the politics of feasting, he stands above the two men (the birds who sit and stare outside). Placing himself in the position of the feast host, standing on the pigs, above all others, his fame is realized.

Laxau reminds the two men that it is only because of his illness that he cannot host the feast for his dead sister. 'Where shall I get the strength from?' he poignantly
asks. But he likens the two taunting men to parrots who can only sit in their hollow tree and stare blankly outside, cleverly reversing the common usage of this expression which actually refers to old people like himself, who remain hunched over in a sitting position, unable to move.

In reality it is he who has been rendered immobile, able only to sit and stare out from his house and unable to summon the strength or to call on support from others to silence his challengers through feasting. The essential isolation of his plight is emphasised by his constant reference to being an orphan. But the composer reverses the power relations and renews his fame by reminding his two taunters that when his parents died he hosted highly successful mortuary feasts. He achieves this through his allusion to having chased the two men, a euphemistic way of saying that he has humbled or 'downed' them by his feasting efforts.

The song powerfully illustrates the central role of the body and its dispositions in the politics of identity. The 'sitting birds' is important, for seating is generally associated with social harmony, abundance and plenitude, as when taro is firmly seated and famine avoided. Here, however, Laxau's song illustrates the ambiguity of this valued comportment, contrasting the immobility of the sitting birds with the strategic mobility of standing. The singer is comparing his own upright, active, achieving, state with the passivity of the sitting birds, the men who taunt him, who, sitting there, are doing, or achieving, nothing.

'I am standing', emphasises the singer. This is a metaphor for hosting a feast, an act which cannot be carried out by an isolated or lonely person unable to summon the support of others. Feasting is the pinnacle of the sharing and exchange relationships which not only inaugurate social relationships but are predicated on them. Without the dialogical relations of the self with others there is no society. Feasting is not the preserve of the socially isolated, of people unable to utilise their bodies in the creation of value, or of the selfish greedy lantupe figure who prefers not to share and exchange but to consume alone. Feasting is dependent not only on many social relationships, but on the continuation of those relationships over time. In his emphasis on standing, Laxau is claiming that he is one of those who can muster the support of others to produce a feast.

In alluding to feasting Laxau is also demonstrating his own power. Feasts constitute the visible or external signs of a person's potency. While his efficacy is in the past, this does not cheapen the fact that he has achieved fame through his actions, while the two men can only sit.

The allusions of the song point to the importance of bodily power in the creation of value. Through that bodily power a person creates things for exchange, which in turn bring fame. Bodily movement is the means through which people intentionally act upon and inhabit the world. As I have argued, following Merleau-Ponty, movement is not a passive submission to space and time but an active appropriation
of them. The body is the medium through which people construct their identity and personhood in the world.
Bibliography


Beier, U. 1972 *When the moon was big: And other legends from New Guinea*. Sydney: Collins.


253


Codrington, R.H. 1881 Religious beliefs and practices in Melanesia. *Journal of Anthropological Institute* 14:261-316.


Hogbin, H.I. 1958 *Social change: Josiah Mason lectures delivered at the University of Birmingham*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.


265


Lawrence, P. 1964 *Road belong cargo*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.


Lewis, A.B. 1929 *Melanesian shell money in Field museum collections*. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History.


Neumann, K. 1992b *Not the way it really was: Constructing the Tolai past* (Pacific Islands Monograph Series No. 10). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.


Strathern, A. 1972 One father, one blood: Descent and group structure among the Melpa people. Canberra: Australian National University Press.


Valentine, C.A. 1961 Masks and men in a Melanesian society: The valuku or tubuan of the Lakalai of New Britain. Lawrence: University of Kansas.


Wagner, R. 1991 New Ireland is shaped like a rifle and we are at the trigger: The power of digestion in cultural reproduction. In A. Biersack (ed.) Clio in Oceania: Towards a historical anthropology, pp.329-45. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.


Willems, E. 1967 *Followers of the new faith: Culture change and the rise of protestantism in Brazil and Chile*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.


