SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

Kwato Perspectives on Matriliny and Missionisation

Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

December, 2017

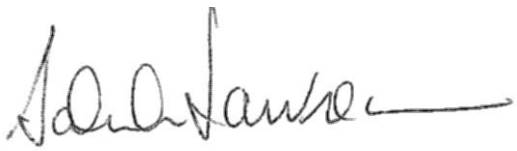
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of The Australian National University

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Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

To my matrilineage

the women past

my mother Dineheilo

my grandmother Vera

my great-grandmother Polini

the women present

my sisters Paruru and Vilia

my daughter Dineheilo Hedoa

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A Note on Orthography and Language

How the decision was made to adopt the Suau language on Kwato is unclear but likely related to the fact that many of the first generation of Papuans in the Kwato Mission came from the Suau region. Nonetheless, over time, with the entry of Tawala and speakers of other languages into the mission, Kwato Suau would undergo significant change as to be quite different to that spoken and written in the Suau region.

The first attempt to codify Suau orthography was done by missionaries who first translated the *Gospel of St. Mark* as *Mareko ena Evanelia*, an effort started by Fred Walker, then completed by Charles W. Abel and Dagoela Manuegu. The translation of the entire New Testament was done by Russell Abel and Benoma Dagoela, and titled *Riba Harihariuna*. The title, itself, marks one of the key differences between written Kwato Suau and spoken Kwato Suau, and indeed with related languages in the region. 'Riba' which means word, is pronounced 'liba' by native speakers, and 'harihariuna' which means new, is pronounced 'halihaliuna'. It is unclear the reason for the conflation of the sounds of the R and the L, as with the V and the W. Maiwara is a region west of Alotau, known to its inhabitants as Maiwala. Tawala, the region and the language, has been spelt variously as Tavara and Tawara by missionaries.

There is also inconsistency in the way the 'y' sound (as in yell) is symbolised in Kwato Suau orthography. For example: yama means fish, and is pronounced as it is written; ea and eau mean I and me, and are pronounced ya and yow (rhyming with cow). Likewise, the word for greeting, which is popularly spelt yauwedo, in Kwato spelling becomes eauwedo.

Popular spelling follows the rule of phonetic transcription so where Kwato spelling is tanuaga (master, owner, custodian), popular spelling writes it as tanuwaga. Similarly, the word for farewell is spelt aiyoni, but in Kwato spelling it is aioni.

In this thesis I have, for the most part, used popular spelling, although I have maintained the 'ea' for the 'y' sound, such as in 'eauwedo', or Eaubada,

which means God. For the words gana'aro and ganamuri, which have a particular meaning in Kwato Suau, I have retained the Kwato spelling. Where my interlocutors provided written information, I retain their spelling.

Throughout my text I also use Tawala words where used by my interlocutors. I designate the language by placing (S) or (T) after the word.

My use of 'Massim'

Massim is a designation used primarily by anthropologists since at least 1889 to refer to the region of eastern Papua New Guinea that is contained in the Milne Bay Province.[1] In 1862 Catholic missionary Carlo Salerio introduced the term Massim to the Europeans after hearing the Muyua locals use it to refer to people of the Louisiades and D'Entrecasteaux groups of islands. Ernest-Théodore Hamy also records that Massin (not Massim) was used by the locals in 1848 to designate an island.

Although we Milne Bay peoples do not use it to identify ourselves I have found it useful to re-purpose this term to embrace all the matrilineal peoples of the Milne Bay Province since not all the people of the Milne Bay Province are matrilineal. Given I need some way of grouping the people that went into the Kwato Mission from the regions of Suau, Tawala, Maiwara, Ealeba and Bwanabwana, and since there is no word in any of the languages from these regions that does this, I have had to decide on what is the most suitable introduced term. 'Massim', even if a mispronunciation seems more fitting than the very English 'Milne Bay', and it does not have the racial overtones that, for example, 'Melanesia' does. This re-purposing is in keeping with the theme of my thesis which is about Massim creativity and resilience, adoption and reinvention of introduced forms, and the relationality of life and our collective and co-constituted engagements with one another.

[1] Ernest-Théodore Hamy, 1889, 'Etude sur les papouas de la mer D'Entrecasteaux', *Revue d'Ethnographie* 7.

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It is a fallacy to think that a body of work as large as a thesis could be due to the efforts of just one person. Any errors are undoubtedly my mistakes, but the production of this thesis was made possible, and supported by, so many.

Egu ita helolo lautoina ilau pele Kwato tau'ulu'ulu, isibaguna eo isimulita alimiu eai. Ena taba omi nige'e, eau taba nige ina doha wauta. [First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my elders past and present, of the Kwato community and of my matriline, as well as both my parents, Dineheilo Dickson Lawrence and William Lawrence. I am here today because of all of you.]

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Abstract

Narrowly conceived, this is an historical ethnographic study of the indigenous people who participated in the Kwato Mission. More broadly, it is an examination of how people responded to the arrival of the culture of whiteness and the fundamental changes to practice and consciousness that took place through the processes of missionisation and colonisation. Changes were simultaneously subjective and objective, mental and material. In what ways did the Massim peoples engage with the new introductions? How did our own history shape those engagements with whiteness? And in what ways did they respond to attempts to coerce and dominate? At an even broader level, what can the Kwato Massim people's experience tell us about contemporary dialectics of culture and power, ideology and consciousness, such as through the process of 'developmentisation'. Attention to power leads me to also engage with the question of knowledge production and to ask how is it possible to know the Massim without fluency in Massim ways of knowing and languages.

My conceptual lens is decolonial feminist theory and critical race theory. From Luce Irigaray and Iris Marion Young I borrow the concept of wonder as a theoretical construct to shift the gaze on how Massim peoples have often been represented by whiteness. Since a balanced comprehension of the world we live in must necessarily include different perspectives, social justice must allow for epistemic difference. There is, thus, both an epistemic and ethical impulse to name whiteness and to disrupt its hegemony. Guided by this decolonial imperative I delve into the deep past of the Massim peoples demonstrating the biological indistinguishability of *Homo sapiens* and examining the wonder-full Austronesian migrations across millennia which more deeply inform contemporary Massim languages and culture than do missionisation and colonisation, or indeed, whiteness.

The empirical part of my decolonial methodology draws primarily on oral history supplemented by archival work. I examine the disruptions presented by external forces of colonisation and missionisation and demonstrate how the

Massim peoples responded to these. I delineate the Kwato-specific history into the genealogical periods of the tanuwaga, the isibaguna and the isimulita past and the isimulita present.

I conclude that Kwato, the mission, could not have existed without the support of the Massim peoples and that this shaped Kwato personhood indelibly. I propose, too, that the matrilineal descent system of the southern Massim produces a distinct form of gender relations and particular structures of governance that are grounded in relational autonomy. The space of Kwato was created from this matrilineal sociality fused with missionisation.

My thesis is neither an exhaustive history nor a comprehensive anthropology of the Massim in the Kwato Mission. It is certainly not the definitive work, if ever there could be such a thing. There remains great scope for other Massim people to write Kwato history from perspectives different from mine, which has been shaped by belonging to two genealogies that were influential in the politics of the Mission.

Prologue

Kabul, June 2010

Hermetically sealed in an armoured 4X4, the Tajik driver is transporting me to my residence at the Green Village. The almost four-tonnes of armour is an unmissable and unmistakeable barrier against would-be suicide bombers. This reassures me little. Instead, it makes me more anxious that I am now a differentiated and, therefore, visible target in this tank-like transport emblazoned with the UN logo.

It is also a reminder of privilege. Apparently, as a foreigner employed by the UN, my life is worth more than that of my Afghan driver who must return the armoured vehicle at the end of each day and make his way home, unprotected. The privilege makes me cringe each time he is body searched entering the compound to pick me up and drop me off. The conspicuous subtext is that Westerners must be protected from these Others and the savagery of their religion and customs. The threat of violence is the justification for the apartheid that separates Afghans and foreigners. It is also a reminder of the privilege that continues to separate whites from Papuan New Guineans in Port Moresby from where I have come for this mission.

An Afghan colleague is with me in the vehicle. She knows nothing about Papua New Guinea except for UN statistics on gender-based violence. What it is that causes Papua New Guinean men to be so aggressive, she wonders aloud to me. At least we can blame Islam, she adds. I am struck by her question. Six years later I am writing a doctoral thesis triggered by that conversation. My interest is in the international politics of social justice and gender equality none of which can be understood without also considering race. My frame is matriliny and my subjects are the Massim people of Kwato.

***

Kwato is a prominent part of the history of Christianity in Papua New Guinea, and was once the densely populated headquarters of the east Papua branch of the London Missionary Society (LMS). Kwato, an island in the China Straits of

this province, is so small it does not appear on most maps. Yet it was a spiritual and educational centre that produced a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Papua in the 1950s and 1960s as well as a female member of the Legislative Council.[1] The isibaguna (S) were the indigenous pioneers who built the Kwato Mission in the 1890s.[2] Isibaguna is comprised of two words from the Suau language meaning literally 'those who came first' – isi = they/those/the group, baguna = first. In this text I do not italicise the languages of my subjects since it is clearly not foreign to them, nor is it to me, given I too am a member of the Kwato community.

From inception, Massim women assumed public roles. Indeed, women from the Milne Bay Province have been recognised to continue to occupy greater public space relative to women from other parts of Papua New Guinea (PNG), as have women from other matrilineal provinces of Papua New Guinea, such as New Ireland and the now Autonomous Region of Bougainville. Anne Kaniku has proposed that the matrilineal organisation of Milne Bay is a contributing factor to women's relatively high value as have Ruth Saovana-Spriggs and Matthew Spriggs argued for Bouganville.[3] In the early history of Papua New Guinea Milne Bay women have 'scored a number of firsts'.[4] They have, for instance, been disproportionately represented in the country's

[1] Kwato influence in the public domain and the presence of Kwato women in the public domain is documented in: Anne Kaniku, 1981, 'Milne Bay women', in Donald Denoon and Ronald Lacey (eds), *Oral Tradition in Melanesia*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies; 1989, 'Those Massim women', in Sione Lātūkefu (ed.). *Papua New Guinea: A Century of Colonial Impact, 1884–1984*, Port Moresby: National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea in association with the PNG Centennial Committee.

[2] In this text I designate the Suau language with a bracketed (S) after the word, and I use (T) for Tawala words.

[3] Kaniku, 'Those Massim women', 369–76; Ruth Vatoa Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, 'Gender and peace: Bougainvillean women, matriliny, and the peace process', PhD thesis, The Australian National University; Matthew Spriggs, 1997, *The Island Melanesians*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 280.

For matrilineal influence in other parts of the Pacific see Elise Huffer, 2008, 'Introduction', in Elise Huffer (ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

[4] Kaniku, 'Those Massim women', 369.

Western education system. Kaniku has argued that the high status of women in relatively egalitarian Milne Bay, combined with early contact with Europeans, positioned the Massim to, amongst other things, produce the first woman Local Government Councillor in 1949, the first woman to enter the Territory of Papua and New Guinea Legislative Council in 1961, the first woman from PNG to be admitted to an Australian university in 1963, the first woman to be elected to the House of Assembly of Papua and New Guinea in 1972, and, in 1989, almost 50 per cent of Papua New Guinean women with Masters degrees.[5] The first Papua New Guinean woman to achieve a PhD came from matrilineal Bouganville.[6] These firsts are not surprising in the context of matrilineal social organisation.

Kwato and its people have figured prominently in my life. Much of myself is in this work, partly to be transparent about my subjectivity, but also because, as one of my relatives put it, 'Kwato DNA is very strong in you and your sisters'. Who I am and the life I have lived I attribute primarily to this Kwato DNA. My life is therefore also 'data' for this study.

My maternal grandmother's parents, Iosia and Polini, were amongst the first Papuans to join the mission and helped shape Kwato sociality and extend the influence of the mission in Milne Bay.[7] My maternal grandfather's parents, Diki and Daeuonei, were also courted by English missionary Charles W. Abel but both declined long-term mission life, preferring instead to return to and protect the land that would be their children's legacy, at Wagawaga, Ahioma. Their two elder sons, Merari Dickson and Osineru Dickson, would become prominent Papuans on Kwato. Selected by Charles W. Abel as one of three local leaders, Merari's Oxbridge English, common to the Kwato-educated at the time, as well

[5] From personal communications I know these women to be Mrs Elenise Sadisi in 1949, Ms Alice Wedega in 1961, Miss Dineheilo Dickson in 1963, and Ms Josephine Abaijah in 1972. Masters recipients were Mrs Anne Kaniku, Ms. Eleina Butuna from Bonarua, and Mrs Rona Nadile from Sariba.

[6] Matthew Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 280.

[7] Iosia is spelt variously in different publications as Josia/h. He is also referred to as Jo. Polini is the indigenised form of Pauline.

as other aspects of Kwato sociality, would position him to become one of the first three indigenous members of the Legislative Council of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea. Likewise, Osineru's command of the English language and his Kwato upbringing made him valuable to the colonial administration in Port Moresby. My mother, Dineheilo Dickson, would be the first Papuan woman to be accepted into an Australian university, but not the first to graduate, since, pregnant with me, and unmarried in the early 1960s, she would be forced to abandon her education.

My mother, a strong, independent woman, would never have called herself a feminist. Yet she raised three daughters, who like their matrilineal ancestors, some of whose stories are shared in this thesis, demonstrate an autonomy and mobility that feminists theorise are amongst the criteria for gender equality. My feminism, therefore, was not triggered by reading Simone de Beauvoir or Germaine Greer, but nurtured by my mother and grandparents and by my Milne Bay aunts and uncles. It was not called feminism, nor labelled women's rights or gender equality. It was simply a way of being that encompassed many of those things that women in the West have long battled for.

I must also provide further background on myself which is relevant for the elucidation of my subjectivity, especially vis-à-vis Kwato. After high school, at the International School in the Philippines and then at Port Moresby International High School, I worked for a while before further education. My first attempt at an undergraduate degree was a Bachelor of Business majoring in Accounting. I made the decision to drop out before I failed, such was my level of boredom. At the age of 23 I took myself to England for what was ostensibly a four-week vacation. I left a little more than 12 years later having acquired over the period, a Bachelor of Arts in Politics, Philosophy, and History, a Graduate Diploma in Management, and a City of London-based career which took me to New York, Sydney and Puerto Rico. A growing dissatisfaction prompted a re-orientation in my mid-thirties.

I swapped financial bottom-lines for the bottom-up of community development and found myself, briefly, working for the UN. Here, immersed in a discourse that portrayed women of the majority worlds as beasts of burden, oppressed by their menfolk, and invariably in need of saving by the enlightened West, I found I had entered a space that demanded that I position myself. Was I a member of that enlightened West? Would I too participate in that discourse of the superiority of whiteness? And in doing so, would I condemn my male relatives to the role of violent and tyrannical oppressor and my female relatives to the exploited and helpless mistreated? The prison-like confines of working for the UN in Afghanistan in 2010, in apartheid-like conditions imposed to protect the foreigner from all Afghans, facilitated for me a monastic reflexivity.

My chance conversation with my Afghan colleague who was puzzling over the differences between her religion and my culture and the links with gender formation, specifically male domination and violence, prompted me to wonder about these violent Papua New Guinean men who beat their wives up for sport—who were they? Of course they existed, but in my immediate and extended Kwato familial environs, I was hard-pressed to identify them. Perhaps, I thought, if I could identify actual oppressed women, I might be led to male oppressors. But again I faced the same question—in the specific Kwato and broader Milne Bay context who are these oppressed women who need saving? And if indeed they were to welcome being saved, from what would they need saving? Never having given much thought to Milne Bay and its ideology of matriliny, and having always taken for granted Kwato sociality, I became engaged in an endeavour to understand Milne Bay people, and specifically those influenced by Kwato, as a means to destabilise the discrimination that global institutions constructed on foundations of whiteness continue to perpetuate upon women and men whose ways of being do not conform to whiteness.

I start with the story of an intrepid and highly mobile woman whose descendants are now scattered across Milne Bay, across PNG, indeed, across

the globe, from Brisbane to Sydney, Kuala Lumpur to Kampala, and Chicago to London to Beijing, and collectively, have traversed every continent and much of the planet. Sipiniei's descendants also contributed to the story of Kwato and, as with the other Papuans, brought with them into the mission, the matrilineal sociality that would be so influential in the formation of the missionised, Christianised Kwato person. This is the story of Sipiniei's boga esega (S), the matriline of all those descended from one womb, that of Sipiniei.[8]

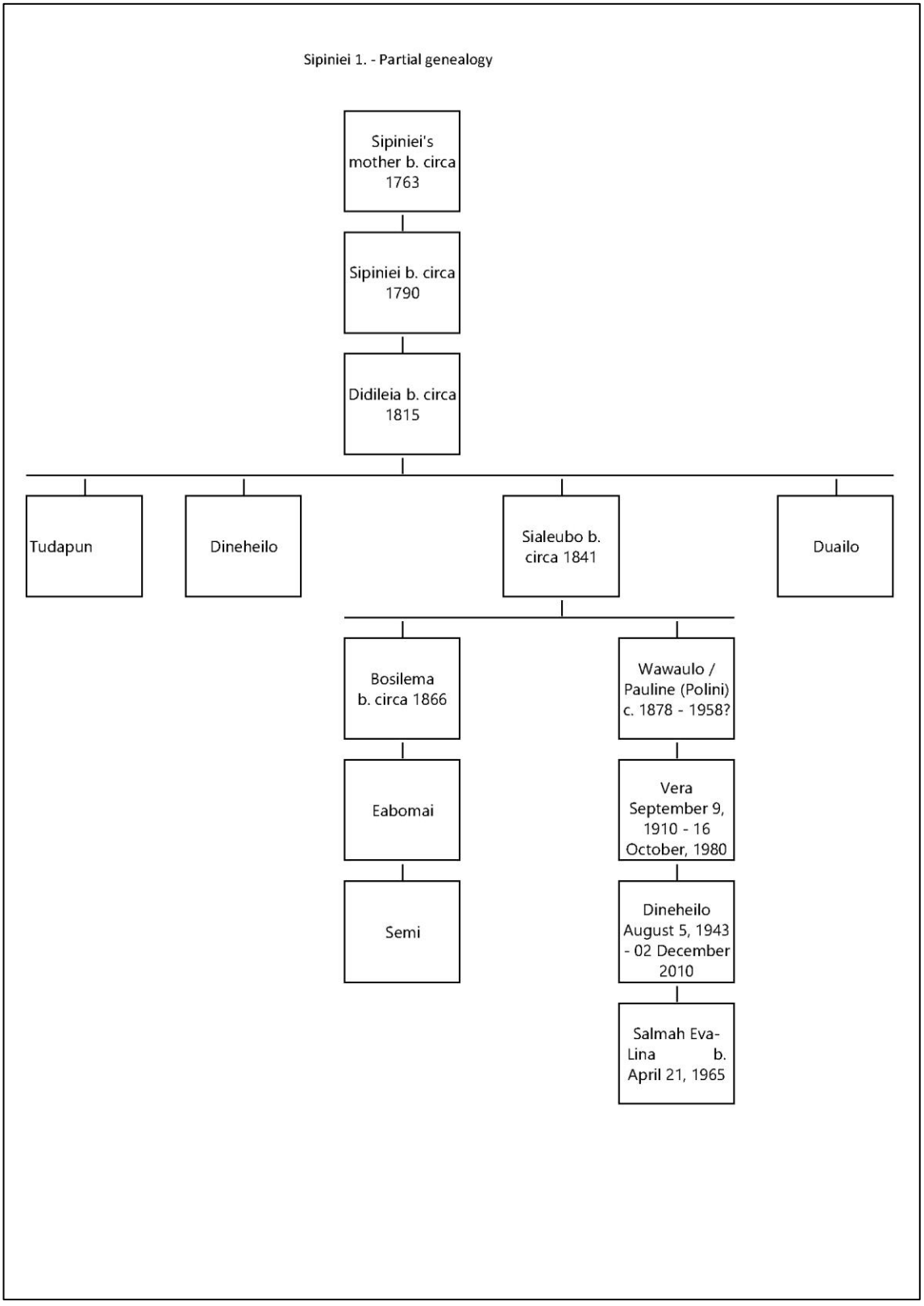
Our planet, 1770

Englishman Captain Cook has landed on the east coast of Australia triggering a chain of events that continue to have repercussions for the indigenous people of this continent. In India the British East India Company, by forcing Bengal people to grow opium instead of food crops, engineers a devastating famine that claims the lives of 10 million.[9] And sometime between 1760 and 1770, on the north coast of the easternmost peninsula of the island of New Guinea, a girl is born in a place called Garuahi. We don't know much about her life except that she would give birth to a daughter around 1790. The daughter is named Sipiniei.

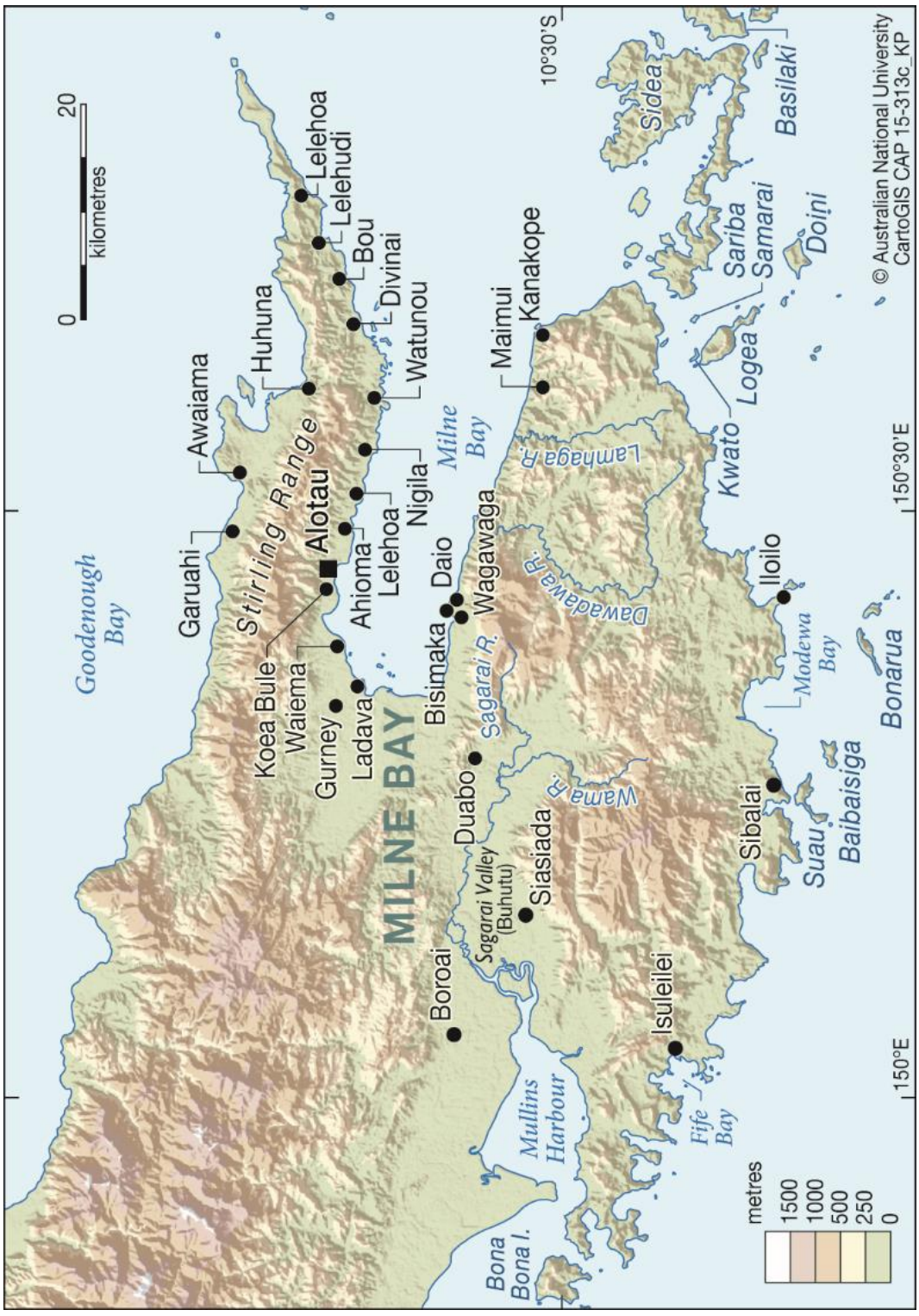
[8] Boga esega (S) means one womb, boga = stomach, esega = one

[9] Apart from forcing the cultivation of opium in lieu of food crops, the British increased taxes to 50 per cent of the harvest, an action which depleted any surplus the peasants would normally set aside to manage the inevitable weather-related disasters, leaving them unable to withstand severe drought conditions. See Nick Robins, 2012, *The Corporation That Changed the World: How the East India Company Shaped the Modern Multinational (2)*, London: Pluto Press; William Dalrymple, 2015, 'The East India Company: The original corporate raiders', *theguardian*, 4 March.

Sipiniei's boga esega



Genealogical Chart 1. Sipiniei 1. Partial genealogy A (some of the women of Sipinie's boga esega)
Source. Constructed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence



Map 1. Partial map of Milne Bay showing Garuahi, birthplace of Sipiniei
Source. © CartoGIS CAP 15-313c_KP. The Australian National University



Figure 1. Alotau, on the south side of the Stirling Range, June 2016
Source. Courtesy of Sioni Sioni.



Figure 2. Almost exactly opposite Alotau, but on the north side of the Stirling Range, is Garuahi, from where this image was taken
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015

In the same year of Sipiniei's birth, in the Americas, George Washington delivers the first State of the Union address and Africans enslaved in Haiti, revolt. In England the Treason Act of 1790 nullifies the burning alive of women as punishment for witchcraft, treason, heresy and other crimes. In Hawai'i King Kamehameha I unites the islands. And in Australia Indigenous warrior Pemulwuy

commences a war against the British who two years prior had established a colony, and the following year, would extend the expropriation of land that would dispossess the likes of Pemulwuy.[10]

When Sipiniei is about two years of age French navigator Antoine Raymond Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux in his ship the *Espérance*, passes the coastline near Sipiniei's home while on the search for his missing compatriot, the Comte de La Pérouse, Jean-François de Galaup.[11] Perhaps this was the same ship of which oral histories speak—sighted off the Suau coast in the south, news of its passing relayed by conch shell and drum communication from Suau up into the Buhutu Valley, over the Stirling Ranges, and down into the coastal regions such that by the time of its arrival two weeks later on the north coast, people were ready and primed for trade or war.[12]

In the early 1800s Sipiniei, now a young woman, leaves her hamlet at Modewa near Garuahi (see Map 1), taking with her two bagi, the traditional currency. A bagi (T) is a metres-long strand of money, sometimes worn looped one or more times over the shoulder to the opposite hip. It is used in payment for land, in marriage exchange and in mortuary ceremonies.[13] A samakupa (T) is the single-strand necklace commonly worn today as a choker. It is not clear why she leaves but it is likely that severe drought prompted the migration, initially of Sipiniei and a male and female sibling to Huhuna, about 20 kilometres down the coast towards the east. In December 2015 even over this short distance, the microclimate of these flatlands changes from grassland around Garuahi to forest near the coast at Huhuna. I had travelled to the area to retrace the footsteps of

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[10] J.L. Kohen, 'Pemulwuy (1750–1802)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

[11] Antoine Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, 2001, *Voyage to Australia and the Pacific, 1791–1793*, ed. and trans. Edward Duyker and Maryse Duyker, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

[12] My source here is Lediwa Dickson. This implies that settlements although distant remained in contact with each other prior to the arrival of colonisers and missionaries, if not through migration, or trade as with the Kula and the Suau/Mailu, then through drum telegraph.

[13] In my relaying of Sipiniei's story I use the words that my sources themselves used. The result is a mélange of Suau and Tawala words. The language is identified in brackets after the word as Suau (S), Tawala (T), same word in both Suau and Tawala (S,T).

Sipiniei. Milne Bay was in the grip of a drought. The river that flows past Modewa was almost dry and the land, parched and cracked, was so hot that food crops cooked in the earth that should instead have nourished them. In 2015 the community was able to travel into Alotau to buy rice and other food items. In the early nineteenth century Sipiniei and her siblings did not have that option.

Leaving her siblings at Huhuna, Sipiniei continues exploring on her own, scaling the eastern end of the spine of the island of New Guinea.[14] In 1849, several decades after Sipiniei's crossing, a Captain Owen Stanley, surveyed the south coast of Papua and would be immortalised in the naming of the Owen Stanley Range, of which the notoriously challenging Kokoda Trail is a part, and the tail end of which Sipiniei negotiated. Here, the eastern end of the peninsula of Papua, the range forks around the alotau (S), the 35-plus kilometre-long and 15-plus kilometre-wide harbour of Milne Bay that gives the province its name.[15] On the north side of the bay the cordillera has been named the Stirling Range. The heavily forested mountains bordering Alotau peak at around 1100 metres (see Figure 1), dropping steeply into the bay, the black sands of which suggest volcanic activity long past, as does the vertical drop-off into a watery abyss, not far off the shore. The peninsula is not wide; both coastlines are simultaneously visible on a clear day as one descends to land at Milne Bay's Gurney Airport. On a map a straight line drawn north from Alotau to the other shore is, according to Google Earth, a distance of only approximately 12 kilometres. Of course, this elevated aerial view does not account for the creases and folds of mountains and valleys of this easternmost limb of Papua New Guinea which make any crossing rather more perilous than suggested by a one-dimensional representation. On the north side of the Stirlings, approaching Garuahi, the mountains descend into foothills, and then into savannah (see Figure 2) that gives way to the Solomon Sea and looks out towards the D'Entrecasteaux Island

[14] In the Tawala language huhu means bay.

[15] In the Suau language alotau means bay.

of Normanby. The islands of this province, like this range, are now marked by complex cartographic sediments of indigenous and imperial names.

Sipiniei traverses the mountains and descends into Watunou. She is still exploring on her own when one day down by the river, her path crosses that of a couple. The man is from the Yawalata clan. Uncertain of Sipiniei's intentions he hides whilst his wife approaches the lone woman and engages her in conversation. Assured that she presents no threat the couple invite Sipiniei to their eanua (S). Like its various iterations in other Austronesian languages in PNG and Oceania, such as hanua in Motu, vanua in Fiji and whenua in Māori, the Suau eanua represents 'the land to which I belong, and which belongs to me', the conjunction of person and place. That reciprocity is an important component, for without that relationship, land is merely tano (S, soil). Suau would not have been Sipiniei's language—she would have spoken Gweda in Garuahi and Tawara in Watunou, also Austronesian languages. But the words I use in my telling are the words used by my interviewees.

Sipiniei is informed that there is much land available and that she is welcome to settle in the area. She determines to take up the offer but decides first to marry and again undertakes the passage over the range to Garuahi to find a husband. In December 2015 I too walked this trail from Huhuna to Watunou which starts on both sides of the range as a fairly innocuous stroll across flat land, then, on the Huhuna side, traverses a rocky riverbed, dry at the time of my trek. Then came a vertiginous almost 90-degree ascent of at least several hundred metres through dense rain forest without which I would have suffered vertigo. On the other side of the range, an equally steep descent, in places following a trickle that became a waterfall that fell into another river, snaking through banks of rock so steep and slippery that the only way through was to swim (see Figures 3 and 4). I needed a walking pole to maintain my balance, and was accompanied by two male cousins who alternately pushed and pulled and supported my ascent and descent. In addition, six young men came to carry my pack and to cut a path through the forest with their elepa (S,

machetes). Sipiniei is said to have travelled on her own with only an ilama (S), an axe with a stone blade.

She marries a man from Yauyau, a small village in the Garuahi area. The married couple return to Watunou where they have a child who is stillborn. They are advised to bury the child at a place called Lalawa also at Watunou. Here Sipiniei also builds a gahana (T), a shrine of sacred stones, which could still be viewed in 2015. Sipiniei has more children at Lalawa, all unknown except for Didileia.

On her first trip to Watunou, Sipiniei had carried wealth in the form of two bagi named Gadogalewana and Oyapopotalina. In the Tawara language gado means gap and galewa is rain; oyapopotalina means mountain. The names of the bagi likely reference the journey that Sipiniei made through the mountain range. The detailed naming of places and people and things are typical in oral history and important in assessing the veracity of genealogically based claims to land and resources. Names typically repeat across space and time. When Sipiniei dies the Gadogalewana is paid to the people at Lalawa as part of the mortuary ceremony. The other, Oyapopotalina, is inherited by her daughter Didileia.

Didileia left Watunou to settle at Bubuleta[16] bringing with her the Oyapopotalina. This she used to buy land from the Himala clan. After they are traded this oral history of the Modewa Clan of Bou loses track of the bagi except to tell that Oyapopotalina was lost when the woman to whom it was paid for land, out fishing one day, capsized her canoe. The bagi, which, like Sipiniei, the new owner wore on her person, fell into the ocean between Bubuleta and Mahabalina Island never to be recovered. The fate of the fisherwoman is unclear.

[16] Bubuleta is not shown on Map 1 but it is after Watunou and just before Divinai.



Figure 3. In the forest that Sipiniei negotiated, at the base of a tree that may have been a sapling when she passed this way
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015

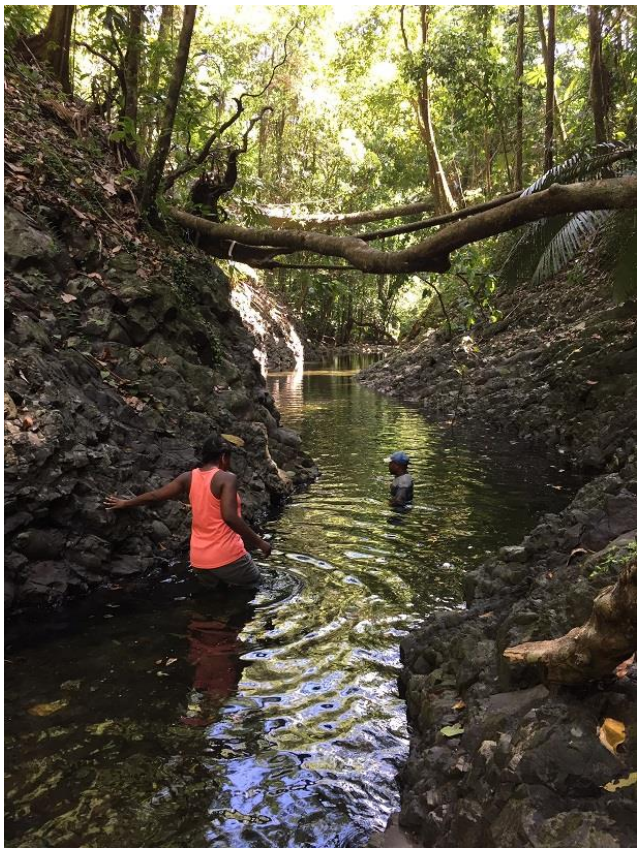


Figure 4. In the footsteps of Sipiniei, the author preparing to swim through a submerged and rocky passage
Source. Photographed by Sheldon Andrew, December 2015

At Bubuleta Didileia gave birth to Sialeubo, who, mobile like her mother and grandmother, also moved eastwards, and settled in Bou. Sialeubo was twice married. Of the two children from her first marriage, Bosilema, female and eldest, born in the mid-1860s, would be driven away from Bou, accused by her brothers of malevolence. Bosilema possessed sibasiba (S), knowledge and wisdom. People then understood that positive and negative powers derive from the same source but Christianity converted this unified and comingled relationship into an antagonistic binary, designating the negative as witchcraft and condemning the rest of indigenous knowledge as magic. Sibasiba can be positive and creative, such as in healing modalities. It can also be negative, threatening and destructive.

It is not clear what Bosilema's transgression entailed, but she first took refuge with her mother's sister, the childless Dineheilo. Later, exercising the spirit of adventure so evident in her female ancestors, Bosilema would paddle the 15-plus kilometres across the bay in search of a husband. She found him up the Dawadawa River where she established a new home at Badilauna. Two generations later, one of her granddaughters would marry the eldest son of missionary Charles Abel, an event said to contribute to the decline of the Kwato Mission, because it transgressed the mission code against miscegenation. Also intimately implicated in the history of the Kwato Mission would be Bosilema's youngest sister, Wawaulo, offspring from their mother's second marriage. As you can see from the partial genealogy at Diagram 1, Wawaulo, who was later christened Pauline indigenised to Polini, was my great-grandmother.

From the time of Bosilema and Wawaulo, the missionaries commenced their attack on Papuan culture. Determined to destroy the visible elements of non-Christian worship and material culture, they also targeted customs they deemed uncivilised such as mata'asi (S), the cycle of feasting, celebration and commemoration around which the calendar was constructed. Mata'asi were held to mark the changing seasons, as thanksgiving after harvests, and to farewell the dead. Mata'asi were loud, colourful and conspicuous. They were

easy targets. But invisible to the foreign eye was the intangible flow of values embodied in matrilineal organisation. The writings of these foreigners mention only in passing the women of Milne Bay. Since it lay so far beyond their own experience, and since it did not have the tangibility of material items, they failed utterly to comprehend the matrilineal sociality that shaped women's lived experiences of autonomy and mobility, their access to and custodianship of land, ownership of wealth, and their role in political, economic, and social life.

Milne Bay, 2016

As I prepare to complete my fieldwork and return to the ANU to write my thesis, I receive a visit from another interviewee of a branch of the Modewa Clan in Suau. We sit in his brother's family-run hotel in Alotau and he presents to me a document he has prepared over the course of the last year in response to years of disputes over land and other resources. My eye is drawn to the genealogical chart which I had first seen a few years prior. The women are highlighted (in blue) and in each of the eight generations shown, only the offspring of female siblings is included (Genealogical Chart 2). Males are peripheral in this representation. In contemporary Milne Bay matrilineality has survived Christianisation, colonisation and developmentisation, and it continues to profoundly influence gender relations.[17]

[17] I use 'developmentisation' to distinguish a process that is saturated with whiteness and neoliberal economics, from 'development' which is a process that many individuals and communities pursue over the course of a lifetime. My thinking in this area has been influenced, *inter alia*, by: Arturo Escobar, 2012, *Más allá del tercer mundo: Globalización y diferencia*, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historía, 11–18; 2008, 'Development, trans/modernities, and the politics of theory', *Focaal* 2008(Winter): 129; 1995, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; William Russell Easterly, 2006, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, New York: Penguin Press.

PART ONE

DANCING A RUEDA: THE SUBJECTIVITY AND METHODOLOGY OF A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST

Chapter One

My Concerns

My thesis engages with many theoretical and empirical issues. There is the issue of mis/representation of the Massim peoples and, specifically, Kwato peoples, produced through a lens of whiteness. This brings to the fore issues of epistemic and methodological justice and builds on work done by Linda Tuhiwai Smith as well as feminist scholars such as Linda Martín Alcoff. My thesis also engages with the work of feminist political scientists such as Cynthia Enloe and Anne Dickson-Waiko (née Kaniku) and provides empirical evidence for the functioning of relational autonomy that has been the subject of work by, for example, Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar.[1] Through an historical ethnography of the varied Massim peoples who constructed the Kwato Mission and Kwato personhood, I eventually arrive at the juncture that southern Massim matrilineal ideology embodies a form of relational autonomy.

My initial questions may, at first, seem only marginally related to the sum of these concerns. I ask, first, what is Kwato personhood? Kwato identity was constructed from 1891 from both missionisation and matriliny but little scholarly attention has been given the latter. Responding to this question has thus meant investigating Massim history before and after the entry of whiteness by way of colonisation and missionisation.

My second question is related to knowledge construction—what happens to representation when framed through an indigenous methodological and theoretical lens. Indeed what would be that indigenous theoretical and methodological lens?[2] I contrast my thesis with David Wetherell's corpus on Kwato, and with Charles Abels' and Russell Abels' writings in which it appears

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[1] Cynthia Enloe's bottom-up approach to international politics has been an influence on my work. See Enloe, 1990, *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics,* Berkeley: University of California Press.

[2] I do not capitalise 'indigenous' unless I refer to a group of people in settler societies who specifically identify as 'Indigenous', for example, Indigenous Australians.

the sole agent of change was a white man named Charles W. Abel.[3] My indigenous methodology relies to a large extent on oral history. I conducted well over 100 interviews with 88 interviewees for this thesis and my interview technique was structured to mirror the way knowledge is transmitted from one generation to the next: that is, I engaged in gigimasi (S) or conversation, rather than interrogation, and I positioned myself to the elders as wanting to learn. My theoretical lens draws also on indigenous concepts in the Suau and Tawala languages. Using my approach it becomes clear that whilst missionisation represented a rupture in the southern Massim way of life, it was the Massim people themselves who, through their own agency, made it possible for the missionaries to act as they did.

My two questions also allow me to explore how a lens of whiteness—in short, a set of attributes that proclaim white supremacy and insist on white privilege—creates distortions. This approach allows me to discern the misrepresentations that such a myopic view generates. These specific questions speak also to my broader interest in how difference is negotiated, in particular gender differences. This interest underpins the original contribution of my thesis which is the proposition that gender equality and gender justice are shaped differently when viewed through the lens of a matrilineal cultural perspective. Matriliny is not merely the system of descent that some anthropologists suggest it to be. It is, in fact, a system of values, a particular moral code and a system of governance, which shapes ways of being in the world.

Although studies in gender have examined male oppression of females, only a minority consider it to be a realistic proposition that not all women in

[3] David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930'. *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4): 17; 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press; Charles William Abel, 1900, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, London: C.E. Roberts and Co.; 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society; Russell W. Abel, 1934. *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell.

every part of the planet are oppressed by men.[4] This is the legacy of second-wave feminist theorising that was generated in Anglo-European spaces by women who were primarily middle class. As such, this study speaks to the intersectionality of women's identities and provides additional insight into arguments for the pluralism of gender justice and the multiplicity of women's experiences around the planet.[5]

But what excites me the most about this project is that this matrilineal society which forms the basis of my study, is my own collective in Papua New Guinea, the very same Papua New Guinea that is positioned as having very high levels of violence against women. It is true that levels of violence are very high but it also spurious to suggest that an aggregated figure is true in every part of Papua New Guinea. It is tremendously exciting to be able to contribute to

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[4] Michelle Z. Rosaldo, Louise Lamphere and Joan Bamberger (eds), 1974, *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. The essays in this edited volume do engage with the question of sex and difference in different cultural contexts. Peggy Sanday's work has also highlighted the extant matriarchy of the Minangkabau people in Indonesia. See Peggy Reeves Sanday, 2002, *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*, Cornell: Cornell University Press; Peggy Reeves Sanday and Ruth Gallagher Goodenough (eds), 1990, *Beyond the Second Sex: New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

However, more recent works by majority world scholars remain critical of white feminist theorising of sex and gender. For instance, Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí's thoughtful analysis strips the theorising of gender to lay bare its basis on biology. She argues that any form of differentiation that takes the body as its starting point necessarily positions biology as the arbiter of difference. Moreover, whilst this is true of European social thought and structures, it is not so for the Yorùbá of Nigeria, for whom factors other than biology determined an individual's position and rights in society. This situation has undergone changes with colonisation but, argues Oyěwùmí, such positions and rights are fluid for they exist only in relation to other peoples. Individuals—both women and men—can therefore occupy positions of dominance and subservience. Biology as arbiter of difference has led white feminists into the contradictory positions that, on the one hand women are universally oppressed, and on the other, that different cultures might conceive differently the categories of woman and man. Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, 1997, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1–30.

See also Nkiru Nzegwu, 2006, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1–21; 2005. 'Feminism and Africa: Impact and limits of the metaphysics of gender', in Kwasi Wiredu (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishing.

[5] 'Intersectionality' was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw to make visible the multiple influences on subjectivity and, thus, the multiple experiences of oppression. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1991, 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', *Stanford Law Review* 43(6).

feminist theory on issues that have relevance to global norms on difference and inclusion, on gender equality and gender justice, and that I can do this from a location in the Global South.

The struggle to do justice

I found the writing of this thesis far more difficult than I had anticipated. To do justice to a primarily oral culture I had interviewed 88 people across Milne Bay, Port Moresby, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and by Skype. Different temporalities were presented in the genealogies, as were changing ontologies across temporalities and enlarged spheres of mobility across temporalities. The fundamental transformations to ways of being and ways of engaging with the world within and across multiple generations of matrilineal people produced in me a sense of being overwhelmed.

My interlocutors might have had Kwato in common, but Kwato persons derived from multiple places across Milne Bay with different languages, practices and iterations of matriliny, and many of my interlocutors were also geographically dispersed around the planet. There was no sense of the bounded space that past anthropologists produced in a schematic field site neatly enclosed, physical borders clearly defined, a village here, a town there. Even narrowed down to southern Milne Bay, the geographical dispersal, and cultural and linguistic variation made for a highly complex field. I struggled with how to do ethnography in this environment.[6]

As much as I found the spatiality of my field complex, temporalities were just as taxing. I had committed to an historical ethnography. As, I suppose, historians must, I grappled with how I might analyse across temporalities when each of these generations implicated in the phenomenon of Kwato and Kwato personhood lived in such different circumstances to the last and each had

[6] In their critique, Akhil Gupta, and James Ferguson argue for a 'decentering' of the field and greater attention to the epistemological location of the ethnographer. See Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 1997, 'Discipline and practice: "The field" as site, method and location in anthropology', in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds), *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

distinct ways of world-making. Those epochs or events or geographical borders defined by imperial administrators, academic disciplines or social commentators as watershed moments—such as colonisation, missionisation, the Pacific War—are all externally defined. My subjects, the Massim people of Kwato Mission, did not think about or describe their past in terms of these externally defined epochs. The linearity of Kwato history as one finds in David Wetherell's *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975* is, for the Massim people, an artificial ordering of events; artificial since indigenous people of this locality do not compose or structure their own histories in this manner.[7] Boundaries introduce simplification and simplification is one of the sources of misrepresentation. And since an important aspect of my project was to endeavour to avoid the misrepresentations of Massim peoples made through the lens of the European epistemic process, a process which requires that one create boundaries, such as field sites or epochs, however artificial they might be, I struggled.

So how did my interlocutors tell their history if not as a linear progression of years? The Kwato peoples know themselves and know their past through their ancestors. Genealogies and oral histories were the means by which information was conveyed to me.[8] Massim history is both collective and deeply personal. It is also cyclical.[9] Like the spiral of a nautilus shell, generations fold back on themselves whilst continuing to also move forward. My fear of unwittingly engaging in misrepresentation blocked the creative process, until I

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[7] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea.*

[8] Genealogies and oral histories are common to Oceanic epistemology and methodology. On how genealogy makes a Hawaiian see Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, 1992, *Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La E Pono Ai? How Shall We Live in Harmony?* Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press; see also Damon Salesa, 2014, 'The Pacific in indigenous time', in David Armitage and Alison Bashford (eds), *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, Houndmills and New York: Palgrave.

[9] The circularity of time is a unifying feature across Oceanic cultures. See Vilsoni Hereniko, 1999, 'Representations of cultural identities', in Vilsoni Hereniko and Rob Wilson (eds), *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 140.

decided to write Kwato as many remember it—in terms of genealogy and oral history.

My personal struggle is a reflection of a much broader contest in the world we live in. That contest is between whiteness and its privileges, which have included the privilege of shaping global governance and its institutions, indeed of shaping the contemporary world order and its structure of nation states, as well as shaping academic disciplines, analytics and arguments. Race as an analytic is largely absent from the writings on Kwato, as it is largely absent from literature on Milne Bay, indeed on PNG.[10] Yet race, primarily through whiteness, permeates all the structures of modernity in what has become the State of Papua New Guinea. It structured colonial history, laws, policies and relations. And whiteness continues to colour the lens through which Papua New Guinea is viewed by the minority world, and even more alarmingly, by many Papua New Guineans themselves.

Some refer to the majority worlds as the developing world, the Third World, the Rest, other to the West. I use majority world to avoid the infantilisation implied in 'developing' and also to rupture ideas of Anglo-European hegemony, particularly of norms and values. Those who are not Anglo-European comprise by far the greater population of the planet, and share, for example, similar kinship norms in which the category 'family' is much broader than the nuclear family norm espoused by the minority Anglo-European world. Like Chandra Talpade Mohanty who speaks of 'one-third/two-thirds', I find minority world/majority world to articulate more clearly and emphatically the situation of economic and epistemic inequality in a world that is raced.[11] Granted, this sets up another binary but it is not a binary that is exclusive.

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[10] Scholars Amirah Inglis and Ted Wolfers are exceptions in making colonial racism visible. See Amirah Inglis, 1974, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press; Edward P. Wolfers, 1975, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Co.

[11] Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 2003, '"Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles', *Signs* 28(2): 505–506.

Participating in the majority world is to reject the structures and conditions that enable white supremacy and white privilege at the local and global levels.

Apropos the lens of whiteness directed on Papua New Guinea, one facet is the assumption that embracing the type of modernity that has been generated by whiteness has an equivalence to desiring to be white. Frantz Fanon wrote about this long ago. Fanon's text speaks to the differing experiences of colonialism experienced by Caribbean and Pacific populations, and also between the Anglophone and Francophone forms of oppression.[12] This view, that the brown and black person wants to be white, is also an unspoken but implicit presence in contemporary interventions in the name of development. For instance, during my studies for a Masters in International Development as well as a Masters in International Relations, the analytics of race and whiteness and how these shaped institutions were notable by their absence.

Whilst the nuances will vary tremendously across time and space in the modern era, the use of race as a technology of power is ever present in this age, and whiteness has honed this technology to its benefit. This thesis, whilst an history and an ethnography of the phenomenon that was Kwato and of the Papuan people who informed that era, interrogates as well, the operation of power through race and disrupts a conflation of the material and symbolic. For whilst Fanon's black man perhaps aspired to whiteness, the Kwato Massim people aspired only to the material benefits of white privilege.

I use decolonial theory as a tool to subvert the hegemony of Anglo-European epistemology and versions of a universal history in which Anglo-Europeans dominate. I hope that I apply a decolonial consciousness without being rigid about borders which are porous—that is to say that Europe, its settler societies and the ideology of whiteness they exported are as much constituted by the majority worlds they have sought to dominate, as much as

[12] Franz Fanon, 1952, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, Bibliothèque Paul-Émile-Boulet de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi.

the majority worlds of the twenty-first century are constituted by Europe and Europeans. We are co-implicated in the construction and production of the world that we live in, even when some of us are silenced or made to appear as being without agency.

This thesis is staunchly decolonial in tone. My work on Kwato is not to be read merely as an historical and ethnographical document written from a particular perspective. It is first and foremost a decolonial reading of historical events and ethnographic details. Decolonial consciousness is the space in which this project was germinated and nourished. To be decolonial is to give equal merit to the epistemologies of the majority world, hence my decision to tell the history of the Massim people the way they tell it, through genealogy and oral history.

The ethnographic is averred in the attention to the lived experiences of Kwato peoples. The historical is asserted through genealogies and oral history that reach back to the late eighteenth century, and extend into the present day. I do not, however, examine a continuity of events. I have chosen to examine particular events and selected genealogies and associated oral histories to do several things. First, I portray the world-making of particular indigenous pioneers of the Kwato Mission and their political choices and actions. Second, I try to understand the participation of the indigenous people in the politics surrounding the demise of the institution known as the Kwato Mission. Third, I explore the ruptures and continuities of the past into the present and of the tangle of matrilineal socio-economic systems with missionisation and developmentisation. Through this temporal and spatial voyaging I challenge some myths about Milne Bay peoples, about gender relations in Papua New Guinea, and about the human rights discourse as the only frame for addressing inequality and injustice.

Objectivity and history

Various objections have been made to the possibility of any type of history being an exercise in objectivity.[13] Claude Lévi-Strauss said:

> [H]istorical facts are no more *given* than any other. It is the historian, or the agent of history, who constitutes them by abstraction and as though under the threat of infinite regress … What is true of the constitution of historical facts is no less so of their selection. From this point of view, the historian and the agent of history choose, sever, and carve them up, for a truly total history would confront them with chaos [author's emphasis].[14]

With regard to Kwato, the scholarly historical canon owes a debt to David Wetherell. Nancy Lutton's unpublished thesis contributes, too, to the research on Kwato.[15] Personal memoirs by Charles W. Abel, his son Russell Abel, and other Kwato residents such as Halliday Beavis, Geoffrey Basket and Dame Alice Wedega also provide other sources of information on Kwato.[16] Notwithstanding the inclusion on this list of Alice Wedega, the memoirs and much of Wetherell's

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[13] See Chris Ballard, 2014, 'Oceanic historicities'. *The Contemporary Pacific* 26(1).

Klaus Neumann argues that Tolai histories depend on situatedness, that is, on one's perspective, shaped by the particular social structural influences that all human beings experience, and which give rise to subjectivity—there is no one telling of Tolai history, nor is there a single interpretation of a telling (1992). Of his work, and of this book, he says '*Constructing the Tolai Past* must eventually be a dialogue of knowing involving those who re-member their past'. See Neumann, 1992, *Not the Way it Really Was: Constructing the Tolai Past*, Pacific Islands Monographs Series, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 262.

Walter Mignolo critiques the use of European forms of recording and history in the majority world, arguing that these have become tools of oppression. Mignolo, 1995, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Noenoe Silva demonstrates Indigenous Hawaiian history to be significantly different to the versions produced from whiteness. Noenoe K. Silva, 2004, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, Durham NC: Duke University Press.

[14] Neumann, *Not the Way it Really Was*, 119–20.

[15] David Wetherell's publications include: *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*; 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930'; 1974, 'Christian Missions in Eastern New Guinea: A study of European, South Sea Island and Papuan influences 1877–1942', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.

[16] Abel, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*; *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*; Russell W. Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*; Geoffrey Baskett, 1991, *Islands and Mountains*, Castle Hill: G. Baskett; A. Halliday Beavis, 1994, *My Life in Papua, 1929–1967*, Templestowe: D.S. & R.J. Beavis; Alice Wedega, 1981, *Listen, My Country*, Sydney: Pacific Publications.

scholarship, are focused on the European—white people writing about white people. Although Wetherell does, in places, draw on oral history, it is not central to his work. Yet Massim history continues to be largely oral. As such, these authored documents reflect the values and assumptions of European settlers on Kwato Island.[17] This is hardly an objective history from the perspective of a Papuan.

My decolonial historical ethnography sets out a view of the past according to Papuans. It is not a chronology of the most momentous events, as Jan Vansina would have it.[18] Rather, it is an attempt to understand the influence of the phenomena and institution that was Kwato, on individual lives, and these effects over time as well as on space. It is an attempt to understand the contributions made by Papuans to the success of the mission, and in doing so, dispel the myth that an assortment of white people—*inter alia*, Fred Walker, Charles W. Abel, Beatrice Abel, and later Russell Abel, Arthur Swinbourne and Halliday Beavis, all responding to Abel's vision of 'How [to] save the Papuans?'[19]—assumed the agential capacity of the hundreds, if not thousands, of Papuans who passed through the mission.

The victim/agent binary

This intention to 'trouble' the colonised-victim/coloniser-agent binary informs the work of a growing number of scholars of Oceanian peoples and cultures in a diversity of disciplines. Kanaka Maoli political scientist, Noenoe Silva, refutes the image of the passive native accepting colonial aggressions.[20] Māori educator, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, challenges indigenous researchers to decolonise their own

[17] Likewise the inter-war Kwato publications, the *New Guinea Tidings*, and the *Kwato Mission Tidings*, as indeed the travel writings of Beatrice Grimshaw who resided a while in Milne Bay.

[18] According to Klaus Neumann, *Not the Way it Really Was*, 109.

[19] Charles W. Abel, 1925, 'How [to] save the Papuans?' *New Guinea Tidings*, April, 7.

[20] Silva, *Aloha Betrayed.*

minds and their research agendas.[21] Papua New Guinean-born Tongan anthropologist and educator, Epeli Hau'ofa, calls on us to reconceptualise the ocean as a waterway that connects Pacific Island peoples and which provides a counter-hegemonic discourse to that of small, insignificant island states.[22] And Hyaewol Choi and Margaret Jolly's edited volume presents us with the vernacularisation of Christianity to mark the agency of Oceanian peoples.[23]

This victim/agent binary is not merely an academic construct. During my exposure to the United Nations' (UN) system, working in Afghanistan, the effort to battle gendered inequality appeared often to reinforce other social structures of inequality such as race, casting majority world women overwhelmingly as victims, to be redeemed through interventions by the emancipated western woman.[24]

Agency is a continuum. Agential capacity transacts with social structures and is expressed in varying degrees attentive to the particular environment. There is no such thing as a generalised agency—agency is contextual and the exercise of agency will vary from situation to situation and from person to person.[25] One has, therefore, to identify specific situations and specific actors in order to be able to speak meaningfully about agency. It is thus not meaningful to speak of the colonised victim and the coloniser agent.

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[21] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books.

[22] Epeli Hau'ofa, 2008, *We are the Ocean Selected Works,* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

[23] Haeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), 2014, *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press.

[24] This is a key objection in the work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty. See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 1984, 'Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses'. *boundary 2,* 12–13; 2003, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity,* Durham and London: Duke University Press. See also Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002, 'Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others', *American Anthropologist Ethics Forum: September 11 and Ethnographic Responsibility* 104(3): 104; 2013, 'Do Muslim women (still) need saving?' in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press; Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 2000, *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Aboriginal Women and Feminism*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

[25] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1997, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 48.

Like all humans, the Papuans of Kwato are both agents and victims. Their capacity to act is demonstrated in a myriad of ways often commencing with their own decision to join the mission, and once in, their decisions to remain part of the missionising sphere, or in many cases, to depart the core. Of course, the choice to join, or not, was denied the many children whose kin sent them to Kwato to receive an education. Nonetheless, they too, as they matured, demonstrated their capacity to act, often against the social structure of the missionised environment.

Space and time

When viewed as a spectrum, it becomes clear that individuals and groups can, and do, inhabit both victim and agent positions, in different spaces and at different points in time. I examine the disconnects arising from different spatio-temporal scales, such as that of the centuries-old genealogical time around which clan kinship is structured.[26] Since whiteness works through the colonisation of time and space, there is also a decolonial imperative to highlight that white people and their culture are marginal to the history of Papuans, and indeed, to the history of humankind, when one takes a deeper and broader gaze than that restricted to the activities of Europeans in the modern era.[27]

Kwato was not the product of a sole white man named Charles W. Abel, or even a group of white people that included Fred Walker, Beatrice Abel, and Mary Abel in the early decades, and others in later decades. Nor was Kwato solely the product of missionisation. The Papuans who participated in the establishment and growth of the mission, brought into Kwato their own values. Missionisation mingled with matrilineal ideology, and Christian chauvinism had

[26] On the importance of genealogy to people from Oceania see Kame'eleihiwa, *Land and Foreign Desires*; Salesa, 'The Pacific in indigenous time'.

[27] Such as through Dipesh Chakrabarty's texts which interrogate Eurocentrism and deep history. See Chakrabarty, 2000, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; 2009, 'The climate of history: Four theses', *Critical Inquiry* 35(2); 2012, 'Postcolonial studies and the challenge of climate change', *New Literary History* 43(1); 2014, 'Climate and capital: On conjoined histories', *Critical Inquiry* 41(1).

to find a way to co-exist with customary women's rights. For the Papuans, it never resulted in the total rupture of the customary. Whiteness was not aspired to, merely access to new knowledges and technologies and the status privileges of whiteness.

Writing from the decolonial

What makes research decolonial? Feminist international relations' (IR) scholars have struggled with the parallel question of what it is that makes IR research feminist, and have concluded that is the research question and not the tool, method, or methodology.[28] In contrast, what makes research decolonial is the intent, and this, thus, shapes the process. Therefore, the research question, as well as the methodology, and the methods, matter—indeed, the entire epistemological framing is of importance in decolonial scholarship. Many scholars would prefer to believe that colonialism is a relic of the past hence they are not, and cannot be, party to perpetuating colonial practices. But knowledge creation—epistemology, methodology and methods—that disregards positionality and partiality is a colonial practice. This is convincingly argued in Linda T. Smith's critique of Anglo-European epistemology and the methodologies used as tools of domination; her volume also provides an exemplar of a decolonial methodology that draws its basis of knowledge creation from Māori values and which has taken shape as Kaupapa Māori Research.[29]

To address the question 'what is decolonial methodology' it might be more appropriate to start with 'what is a decolonial epistemology' since beliefs about how and what we can know shape the choice of tools and techniques that compose a given methodology. Indeed, since a central theme of decolonial scholarship is to challenge hegemonic structures of power and knowledge, one

[28] Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True, 2006, 'Feminist methodologies for International Relations', in Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True (eds), 2006, *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 5.

[29] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 185–97.

must necessarily engage epistemological and ontological debates. The questions posed by Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter in *Feminist Epistemologies* (1993) are also relevant to decolonial thinking and include the following: are the standards of justification of European theories of general knowledge legitimately universal? Are these justificatory standards socially constructed? Is there a way of knowing that is informed by gender? Decolonial scholars might also ask if there is a way of knowing that is informed by race and oppression, and how and why decolonial accounts of knowledge are undermined and delegitimated.

Feminism and decoloniality are both political movements. That is, both are concerned with actions to change the material conditions of oppression. Yet, investing effort in the abstractions of epistemology is necessary because Eurocentrism and androcentrism permeate the structures of knowledge production, indeed '[c]ognitive authority is usually associated with a cluster of markings that involve not only gender but also race, class, sexuality, culture, and age'.[30]

These clusters of markings constitute identity. That identity is socially constructed is no longer a novel idea; that it has material impact on people's lives as a result of epistemic and political judgements is now beginning to become well-established.[31] Hegemonic epistemology is concerned with the universal and the abstract whereas feminist analyses, regardless of discipline,

[30] Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, 1993, 'Introduction: When feminisms intersect epistemology', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge, 3.

[31] Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Martín Alcoff, 1993, 'Are "old wives' tales" justified?', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge; Paula M.L. Moya, 2000, 'Introduction: Reclaiming identity', in Paula M.L. Moya and Michael Roy Hames-García (eds), *Reclaiming Identity Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, Berkeley: University of California Press; Bat-Ami Bar On, 1993, 'Marginality and epistemic privilege', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge; Satya Mohanty, 2000, 'The epistemic status of cultural identity: On "Beloved" and the postcolonial condition', in Paula M.L. Moya and Michael Roy Hames-García (eds), *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

highlight the context and material conditions.[32] So too, does decolonial epistemology. Furthermore, the notion of omniscience contained in the idea of an objective knower free of social and cultural baggage, is an anathema.[33] It is, perhaps, the salience of identity and this rejection of an independent and universal knower that provides a common theme across writings concerned with feminist epistemology and the decolonial.

A cursory search will reveal a multiplicity of titles with decolonising and epistemology in the title but, to date, there is no volume mapping decolonial epistemologies in the manner of Alcoff and Potter's edited (1993) *Feminist Epistemologies*.[34] Such a publication would provide more evidence of commonalities across the majority world in the face of the epistemic hegemony of the global demographic minority that asserts whiteness. Still, in view of the plurality of decolonial epistemologies it would be counter-productive to confine decolonial methodology within rigid boundaries. However, some basic principles can be distilled from various seminal works—Oceanian and otherwise—including Epeli Hau'ofa's *We Are the Ocean* (2008), Linda Tuhiwai Smith's

[32] Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, 1993, 'Introduction: When feminisms intersect epistemology', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge, 1.

[33] Donna Haraway, 1988, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', *Feminist Studies* 14(3); Walter D. Mignolo, 1999, 'I am where I think: Epistemology and the colonial difference', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies: Travesia* 8(2). On the association between whiteness, masculinity and objectivity see Genevieve Lloyd, 1984, *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*, London: Methuen.

[34] There is, however, a growing corpus addressing Indigenous methodologies. For instance Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Bargele Chilisa, 2012, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications; Margaret Kovach, 2009, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press; Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (eds), 2008, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Shawn Wilson, 2008, *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Black Point: Fernwood.

The following text presents the journeys of various Indigenous researchers and the challenges they have faced: Bargele Chilisa, Fiona Cram and Donna Mertens (eds), 2013, *Indigenous Pathways into Social Research Voices of a New Generation*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Decolonizing Methodologies (2012), Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005 (1970)), and Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000).[35]

Decolonial research engages with local values. Epeli Hau'ofa, describing the birthing of the Oceanic Centre for Arts and Culture proclaimed, '[it] should reflect important principles of our societies—in particular reciprocity, cooperation, openness to communication, and transmission of knowledge and skills through observation and hands-on experience'.[36]

In line with Hau'ofa's vision, decolonial methodology, whether in the production of art, culture, theory or discourse, accords equal value to the knowledge held by indigenous experts in their communities as does, for example, the Kaupapa Māori.[37] It is, therefore, participatory and engages local ways of generating, disseminating and valuing knowledge. Ty Tengan, for instance, endeavoured to involve his subjects in the ethnographic process to the extent of getting feedback from them before circulating his work to outside parties.[38] Evident, as well, from Hau'ofa's statement is that ethics are not an add-on to decolonial methodology, nor are they predicated on filling in forms and collecting signatures. Ethics are central to decolonial research and, increasingly, research ethics bodies in places—such as Vanuatu—stress that research must be on matters relevant to locals and research output must be returned to communities in an appropriate form. Implicit also in Hau'ofa's words is the type of relationship between researcher and subject. Decolonial

[35] See also David Welchman Gegeo and Karen Ann Watson-Gegeo, 2001, '"How we know": Kwara'ae rural villagers doing indigenous epistemology', *The Contemporary Pacific* 13(1); 2002, 'Whose knowledge? Epistemological collisions in Solomon Islands community development', *The Contemporary Pacific* 14(2); David Welchman Gegeo, 2001, 'Cultural rupture and indigeneity: The challenge of (re)visioning "place" in the Pacific', *The Contemporary Pacific* 13(2); Teaiwa, 'Multi-sited methodologies'; Ty P. Kawika Tengan, 2005, 'Unsettling ethnography: Tales of an ʻŌiwi in the anthropological slot', *Anthropological Forum* 15(3); Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, 2006, 'Teacher education for new times: Reconceptualising pedagogy and learning in the Pacific', *Directions: Journal of Educational Studies* 28(1–2); Nēpia Mahuika, 2011, '"Closing the gaps": From postcolonialism to Kaupapa Māori and beyond', *New Zealand Journal of History* 45(1).

[36] Epeli Hau'ofa, 2008, *We are the Ocean: Selected Works*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i, 85.

[37] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 185–97.

[38] Tengan, 'Unsettling ethnography', 251.

researchers do not present themselves as detached objective reporters—to be open to communication and learning is to practise humility.

Decolonial research is perforce transdisciplinary. Chela Sandoval's (2000) *Methodology of the Oppressed* is a study focused on resistance and the process of change through the analysis of what she calls US third world feminism. Sandoval is explicit about dissolving disciplinary barriers, particularly between critical and cultural studies, that constitute an apartheid of academic knowledges that 'have been developed as divided and racialized, genderized, and sexualized theoretical domains'.[39] Within this apartheid of academic knowledges, in which these disciplines independently pursue a goal of some form of emancipation or of liberation, and through which is manifest some facet of oppositional consciousness, Sandoval argues that the contrived boundaries owe their robustness as much to disciplinary defensiveness as to dominant subjectivities.[40] Identity is again implicated, and again demonstrates material impacts on people's lives since

> [t]hese [disciplinary] divisions further demonstrate the articulation of knowledge with power inasmuch as what is being reenacted on a conceptual level are colonial geographic, sexual, gender, and economic power relations. Such divisions encourage what Cornel West describes as the appropriation of 'the cultural capital of intellectuals of color' and women, insofar as their contributions are folded into some 'appropriate' category and there go submerged and underutilized.[41]

Hegemonic feminist theory has, for instance, categorised theorising done by women of colour by reducing it, as did Hester Eisenstein,[42] to 'the special force of poetry' or to 'mere description' as did Allison Jaggar.[43] When these two categories are inadequate it is said that the theorising by women of colour

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[39] Chela Sandoval, 2000, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 69.

[40] Ibid., 69–70.

[41] Ibid., 70.

[42] Hester Eisenstein, 'Introduction', in Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine (eds), *The Scholar and the Feminist*, Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., xxi.

[43] Allison M. Jaggar, 1983, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 11.

contributes nothing new to feminist theory.[44] Yet whiteness does appropriate the culture and theories generated by the Other—this is a process of sanitising. Only when whiteness has appropriated, then claimed to be the source of a theory, does it become valid and acceptable as knowledge. One such instance is that Roland Barthe's semiotics first made an appearance in Frantz Fanon, whose *Black Skin, White Masks* is about how the oppressed read and interpret the signs issued by the coloniser.[45]

We can extrapolate from Sandoval and others that decolonial knowledge production does not reject on the basis of race, sex or gender; is respectful of different subjectivities, and does not confine itself to a disciplinary straight-jacket. Transdisciplinarity is, in fact, the default choice of many indigenous Pacific scholars who are challenged by the demand to find a disciplinary home but are unable to locate a space that responds to their multiple identities and interests.[46]

As I have stated, a decolonial intent precedes a decolonial research question. For decolonial scholars, and in the development of a decolonial consciousness, there comes a point when most, if not all, knowledge claims about the subjectivities of majority world peoples made from within Eurocentred discourse are, to varying degrees, suspect. This is necessarily so, since decolonial research is part of a liberatory project and liberatory projects must be led by the oppressed who cannot action liberation until they understand their own oppression.[47]

At this point I feel compelled to digress from methodology and to make some comments about projects of liberation. For those who despair that

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[44] Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 46.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Geoffrey M. White and Ty Kawika Tengan, 2001, 'Disappearing worlds: Anthropology and cultural studies in Hawai'i and the Pacific', *The Contemporary Pacific* 13(2); see also Teresia Teaiwa, 2011, 'Preparation for deep learning', *The Journal of Pacific History* 46(2).

[47] Paulo Freire, 2005 (1970), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York and London: The Continuum Publishing Group.

resistance to hegemony and pursuit of liberation are, in this postmodern era, futile, it is productive to read Sandoval. She is, in part, responding to Fredric Jameson's claim that 'postmodernism is a neocolonizing global force'[48] and that 'forms of resistance, oppositional consciousness, and social movement are no longer effective under the imperatives of the neocolonizing mode of globalization he calls postmodernism.'[49] But, Sandoval asserts, there are postmodern resistance movements and US third world feminism—her terminology—is one such. This is what she calls a '"differential" mode of oppositional consciousness and social movement'.[50] Jameson argues that a destabilising psychic disintegration accompanying a fractured social order is becoming the lived reality of 'the formerly centred and legitimated bourgeois citizen-subject of the first-world'.[51] There is an unfolding of a 'democratization of oppression that … crosses all class, race, sex, and culture boundaries'.[52]

In fact, the Eurocentric categories modern, post-modern, and globalisation mask the anti- and de-colonial efforts that have taken place since Columbus landed in the Americas.[53] So, to Jameson, Sandoval retorts, '[this is the] psychic terrain formerly inhabited by the historically decentred citizen-subject; the colonized, the outsider, the queer, the subaltern, the marginalized'.[54] And it is they who possess the most advanced tools—'the skills,

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[48] Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 16.

[49] Ibid., 2. See also Chapter 1 for Sandoval's critique of Jameson, 15–40.

[50] Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 3.

[51] Ibid., 27.

[52] Ibid., 36.

[53] For instance, between 1612 and 1615, Waman Puma de Ayala, an Incan nobleman, wrote *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, (translated as Letter to a King). A 1000-plus page text in Quechua, Aymara, Spanish and Latin, it described and condemned the ill-treatment of indigenous people at the hands of the Spanish. See Felipe Guamán Poma De Ayala, John V. Murra, Rolena Adorno & Jorge Urioste, 1980, *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*, Mexico, D.F: Siglo Veintiuno. In 1787, Ottobah Cugoano became the first published African critic of the trade in enslaved humans, in a work titled *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Human Species.* See Ottobah Cugoano, 1999 (1787), *Narrative of the Enslavement of Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa*, published by himself in the year 1787.

[54] Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 27.

perceptions, theories, and methods' to negotiate this terrain.[55] Some consider it an audacious proposal that the world at large could possibly learn anything from the oppressed, yet Sandoval, drawing on the legacy of US third world feminism, proposes that the cynics and those despairing of postmodernity can do just that by emulating the methodologies and technologies that women of colour have employed, not just to survive, but to bring about social change. These are, in fact, methodologies and technologies that majority world peoples utilise—transdisciplinarity, for example, is a method to locate the most appropriate knowledge for a specific context.

Apropos decolonial consciousness, when Eurocentred knowledge claims are identified as suspect, or as partial but are masquerading as universal, it leads to decolonial projects to write our own histories and analyse our own societies as an important part of the reclamation and restoration of our being.[56] It follows then, that a decolonial approach will be wary of claims made by the hegemonic culture about the subjectivities of peoples of the majority world. A process of triangulation takes place between decolonial scholarship, local experts and other sources. This process of triangulation presents a safeguard against the possibility of conferring outright epistemic privilege on particular groups, a position to be avoided since we end up in the same position we are in now, of hegemony and marginalisation, even if with different players.

To summarise, decolonial methodology is unambiguous about positionality and subjectivity. It is therefore transparent vis-à-vis subjectivity which makes judgements about accountability and integrity easier to ascertain. Decolonial scholarship is not undertaken merely for the academy; it often has an emancipatory aspect and is also explicit about its normative intention to influence social change. This chapter is part of my own effort to be explicit about my own positionality and subjectivity. Decolonial methodology is also

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[55] Ibid., 37.

[56] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 29, 31–36; Njoki Wane, 2013, '[Re]claiming my Indigenous knowledge: Challenges, resistance and opportunities', *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 2(1); Silva, *Aloha Betrayed.*

participatory, engaging both local epistemology and according participants a role in knowledge creation, not just as sources to be mined. This makes ethics integral to decolonial methodology. My own project has engaged local epistemology via my use of the indigenous categories of boga esega (S, matriline) and eanua (S, place, belonging). Like Tengan, I circulate and discuss my written work with informants prior to publication. My decolonial fieldwork engaged with local norms through interview processes that were structured to feel like gigimasi, the Suau word for chatting or conversing, in lieu of interrogation. Moreover, through participant observation I positioned myself as the learner to be taught by community experts. However, it is not just a decolonial consciousness that determines methodology. The discipline in which one is located influences to a large extent the methods and tools that one utilises, as it does how research questions are framed. In the next section I examine how my disciplinary location has impacted on this project.

Disciplinary dances

Katerina Teaiwa's article 'Multi-sited methodologies' speaks to my own insecurities locating myself in a space in which I had no training.[57] My education was in business and in political science—specifically comparative politics, international politics and international development with an MBA thrown in for good measure. This training reflected my professional life corresponding to a career in international business and then in international development. I was trained to think at the level of the global, the world of universal norms and standards. It was an approach which worked in multinational corporations, and at the regional and global levels of other international institutions but became untenable when I began working on gender-related projects in community development. Planning my PhD I determined to do research grounded in the local, an anomaly in mainstream political science, unless it is a quantitative

[57] Katerina Teaiwa, 2004, 'Multi-sited methodolgies: "Homework" in Australia, Fiji, and Kiribati', in Lynn Hume and Jane Mulcock (eds), *Anthropologists in the Field: Cases in Participant Observation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 216–33.

analysis of, for example, voter behaviour in a particular locality. I had already determined that my locus of research would be gender relations in my own matrilineal society in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. But how to examine the local from within international relations? I made the decision to sacrifice the abstractions of political science for the particularity of ethnographic work.

Although I was located in the department of Gender and Cultural Studies (from 2014 Gender, Culture and Media Studies) at The Australian National University, by virtue of choosing the ethnographic method, I suddenly found myself cast as a 'native' anthropologist and having to respond to questions about my subjectivity.[58] How strange, I thought, immersion in any other context equals expertise, yet here, it is presented as problematic, with the mantle 'expert' awarded to outsiders who were not even Papua New Guinean, much less Oceanian.[59]

I was curious what the guardians of disciplinary boundaries would make of the people from the blended families I knew when growing up in Port Moresby—families composed of Motuan, Anglo and mixed-race half and step siblings, all having grown up in close proximity to Hanuabada village and strongly influenced by Motuan values, and all fluent in the Motu language, regardless of ethnic origin. If the white Anglo sibling became an anthropologist studying the Motuans would he be considered to have an edge over other white Anglo and Euro anthropologists given his cultural and linguistic proficiency? Or would he have to defend himself, as his half and step brothers would, to accusations of lack of objectivity? Or perhaps he would be challenged about not

[58] Kirin Narayan, 1993, 'How native is a "native" anthropologist? *American Anthropologist* (n.s.) 95(3); Lila Abu-Lughod, 1991, 'Writing against culture', in Richard Gabriel Fox (ed.), *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe School of American Research Press; Tengan, 'Unsettling ethnography', 247–56; Teaiwa, 'Multi-sited methodolgies', 216–33.

[59] Epeli Hau'ofa was the exception; an Oceanian anthropologist specialising in Papua New Guinea where he had grown up in a missionary family. He nonetheless rejected the designation of 'expert' and of anthropologist. See Epeli Hauʻofa, 1975, 'Mekeo: A study of a Papua New Guinea society', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.

being native enough, not having been born in a Motuan village and not having a Motuan genealogy, just as some white scholars challenge Pacific Islanders over not having an 'authentic' Oceanian identity. Deriding this fatuity, Geoffrey White and Ty Tengan, when considering Allan Hanson's review of Vilsoni Hereniko's publication of his dissertation, write

> Hanson challenged Hereniko's status as an insider. When Hanson noted that Hereniko 'is himself Rotuman,' he added, 'albeit of the expatriate variety. He left the island at 16 for education in Fiji and Great Britain, and he currently teaches Pacific literature at the University of Hawai'i' … Apparently, if travel abroad for education doesn't disqualify you from cultural status, then teaching at the University of Hawai'i is surely fatal. The absurdity of this position was noted in a response by Alan Howard, who has devoted years to studying Rotumans in Rotuma and elsewhere, when he observed that when Hereniko left Rotuma at sixteen, he moved to Suva, Fiji, 'where there are more Rotumans than on the island of Rotuma itself'.[60]

Anthropologists, said Lila Abu-Lughod, 'seem reluctant to examine the implications of the actual situatedness of their knowledge'[61] despite an appearance otherwise. In the commitment to interpretivism, anthropology's attachment to an ideal of objectivity means native anthropologists are judged to be in a position of bias and thus prone to be more subjective. Like feminist anthropologists, native anthropologists are deemed to provide only a partial view, an irrational sentiment considering that all views are partial.

A further absurdity is that an outsider should adjudicate the authenticity of an indigenous Rotuman. David Gegeo, who examines what it means to be indigenous from the perspective of the Kwara'ae Solomon Islanders, finds eight criteria of Kwara'ae-ness related to place, and if these criteria are fulfilled, then regardless of the geographical space one finds oneself in, one is considered to be Kwara'ae by other Kwara'ae.[62] In other words, travel, diaspora, a western education and cosmopolitanism or multiculturalism do not negate what it

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[60] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 403.

[61] Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against culture', 468.

[62] Gegeo, 'Cultural rupture and indigeneity', 493–95.

means to be Kwara'ae. Gegeo wonders why it is that indigenous Pacific Islanders living mobile and/or diasporic lives are accused of inauthenticity vis-à-vis their indigeneity, yet children of Peace Corps volunteers born and raised somewhere other than the USA are not considered to be any less American. For the Kwara'ae 'identity and place are portable' and multiple subjectivities arising from changing lived experience are accepted as normal.[63]

In my own research, too, the questions of Kwato personhood revealed multiple subjectivities; one can for instance be from Sariba and be Kwato-influenced. Multiple subjectivities are also accepted as normal. Indeed, my own subjectivities have been influenced by living some of my adolescent years and most of my adult life in variously, Manila, London, New York, Puerto Rico, Buenos Aires, Kabul and Australia. Yet the question of my indigenous authenticity has never been posed by Milne Bay people, despite my having been born outside of Milne Bay, in Port Moresby, and despite my ethnic roots including Ghanaian and Indian ancestry. That my mother is from Milne Bay, and that I speak Suau and a sprinkling of Tawala, and that I engage with and embody my matrilineal cultural values (which I examine in following chapters), are sufficient qualifiers to be accepted. It is not my intention to privilege 'insider' accounts. It is, rather, my intention to highlight the irrationality of privileging 'outsider' status and knowledge, which as White and Tengan note, betrays a 'disciplinary panic concerned to preserve the sacred spaces of fieldwork and ethnography'.[64]

Part of that disciplinary panic—which manifests also as methodological panic—is a rejection of the personal voice for doing theory. But this is an approach used by many decolonial scholars. Indeed, oppressed peoples have long embodied and intellectualised theories of survival some of which, Sandoval convincingly argues have been claimed, indeed, colonised, by the academy.[65]

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[63] Ibid., 501.

[64] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 403.

[65] Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 7–8.

Sandoval argues that the critical theory of the twentieth century has its genesis in the struggles against colonial oppression which provided a new language for the likes of Roland Barthes, Hayden White, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. But these were not new concepts for decolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Eldridge Cleaver, Gloria Anzaldúa, Haunani-Kay Trask, Merle Woo and Audre Lorde, who lived and wrote what Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa have called 'theory in the flesh'.

> A theory in the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives – our skin colour, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. Here we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience.[66]

In the work of scholar and activist Gloria Anzaldúa we see the validation of knowledge through Anzaldúa's personal experience and social identity.[67] The volume *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, canonical in decolonial feminism, applies this approach, as does the equally canonical decolonial work of Frantz Fanon.[68] It is Fanon's own voice which makes *Black Skin, White Masks* so powerful. Vilsoni Hereniko exercised his own voice to the same effect but was further chastised by Hanson who 'was disturbed particularly by Hereniko's unorthodox mixing of fiction, personal conjecture, and ethnographic observation'.[69] Hanson, perhaps, had not come across Kamila Visweswaran who pointed out that new forms of writing culture

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[66] Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 2002 (1981), 'Entering the lives of others: Theory in the flesh', in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (eds), *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, 3rd ed., Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 21.

[67] Gloria E. Anzaldúa, 1987, *Borderlands: La Frontera The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books. Anzaldúa's work is often cited to celebrate and legitimise hybridity and living in border spaces, however Linda Alcoff reminds us that '*Borderlands / La Frontera* gives a detailed first-person phenomenology of how painful and difficult hybridity can be.' See Alcoff, 2006, 'The unassimilated theorist', *PMLA* 121(1): 257.

[68] Moraga and Anzaldúa (eds), *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*; Franz Fanon, 2008, *Black Skin, White Masks* (new ed.), London: Pluto Press.

[69] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 402.

included life stories, poetry and autobiographies, were often more compelling than traditional anthropological ethnography.[70]

Feminism has reminded us time and time again that the personal is political. Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (1990) is wonderfully illuminating of how that which is considered personal exercises a tangible influence on international politics. However, it is not just that the personal is political. It is also that the personal voice, so prevalent in native anthropology, can have both political importance and theoretical legitimacy.[71]

Learning the norms of anthropology

It was not just the native in 'native anthropologist' that I found unsettling. I was troubled, too, about anthropology itself, which had produced many of the biased and distorted views of Melanesians, starting with Bronisław Malinowski's offensively titled *Sexual Life of Savages*. It is no small wonder then, that many Papua New Guineans like myself, fail to recognise the images of us constructed by anthropologists.[72] However, it troubled me, too, that '[t]hroughout most of the twentieth century, western audiences took for granted the role of anthropology as the field through which indigenous societies were studied and represented in scholarly literature'.[73]

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[70] Kamala Visweswaran, 1994, 'Introduction: Fictions of feminist ethnography', *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 1994, 'Defining feminist ethnography', *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. See also Kirin Narayan, 2012, *Alive in the Writing: Crafting Ethnography in the Company of Chekhov*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[71] See also Alcoff, 'The unassimilated theorist'.

[72] There are, of course, exceptions. One example from Milne Bay is Katherine Lepani's portrayal of the Trobriand Islanders as rounded human beings. Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press. Other sensitive Milne Bay ethnographies include: Maria Alexandra Lepowsky, 1993, *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society*, New York: Columbia University Press; Susanne Kuehling, 2005, *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

[73] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 381.

This is overwhelmingly the case for Melanesia. Nonetheless, I busied myself with becoming familiar with the genealogy of anthropology and to counter the unease I felt at being in this space I would frequently preface my presentations with the qualification 'I am not an anthropologist …'. My discomfort stemmed not only from unfamiliarity with the canon and code; through the reflexivity demanded by feminism and the decolonial I became aware that, like many Oceanians I, too, harboured a deep suspicion and mistrust of anthropologists. Amongst the Pacific Islanders who have commented on the other-ing of indigenous peoples of Oceania are, famously Haunani-Kay Trask in her blunt response to Roger Keesing, and Epeli Hau'ofa in his now canonical 'Our Sea of Islands'.[74] Younger scholars also express their ambivalence such as Lynette Hi'ilani Cruz who said,

> I could not see myself being maha'oi [rude, impertinent] in someone else's land, asking them questions designed to take away their power and their identity for the examination of others.[75]

Or Kèhaunani Cachola-Abad, who questions the value of the knowledge and for whose benefit it is produced, and who 'pointed out that when Hawaiians want to learn about Hawaiian culture they go to Hawaiian sources'.[76] This sentiment was echoed by Glenn Petersen, not a Pacific Islander, but someone who also questioned the value and usefulness of anthropology stating that: '[s]ince Micronesians know about Micronesia, they have neither need for nor much interest in my ethnography: they already know about themselves'.[77]

If I were writing anthropology, for what, and to whom, would it be useful, I asked myself, finding no response that satisfied me. Whilst there is now

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[74] Haunani-Kay Trask, 1991, 'Natives and anthropologists: The colonial struggle', *The Contemporary Pacific* 3(1); Epeli Hau'ofa, 1994, 'Our sea of islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6(1).

[75] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 398.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Glenn Petersen, 2005, 'Important to whom? On ethnographic usefulness, competence and relevance', *Anthropological Forum* 15(3): 312.

greater acceptance that all anthropological data is at best a partial view, some have argued that there is less acknowledgment that ethnographic representations are also positioned truths—positioned because an anthropologist writes primarily to and for other anthropologists.[78] That one writes about, and not to, the other, speaks for the other, or acts for the other is to exercise power over the other.[79] A native anthropologist, on the other hand, is both the self and the other, therefore the issue of ethics in ethnography is always foregrounded, and this means too, that issues of power are foremost, such as language use and attentiveness to the possibility of barriers and hierarchies being constructed.

To this litany of perceived shortcomings, I add another issue that I grappled with: 'In the (post)colonial Pacific there are few indigenous scholars for whom disciplinary training, institutional location, research interests, and methods converge to produce an easy identification of disciplinary identity'.[80] Perhaps this is why I found myself in the multi-disciplinary department of Gender and Cultural Studies instead of the department specialising in Melanesia where amongst all the 'expert Melanesianists', not a single Melanesian could be found in any position of scholarly authority. Nonetheless, I was doing ethnography, a method pioneered in anthropology and refined by Malinowski in Milne Bay, no less. I still felt obliged to learn the norms associated with the discipline.

In the first year of my PhD, I was implicated in three discussions concerning the codes of ethnographic work, discussions which left an impression and also coloured my view of anthropology. In the first instance, I had to justify how I would engage with people who were at the same time my kin and my research subjects. I felt that it was not a case of me changing my

[78]Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against culture', 469. See also Gupta and Ferguson, 'Discipline and practice', 38; James Clifford, 1983, 'On ethnographic authority', *Representations* 1(2).

[79] Abu-Lughod, Writing against culture'; Linda Alcoff, 1991–1992, 'The problem of speaking for others', *Cultural Critique* 20(Winter).

[80] White and Tengan, 'Disappearing worlds', 401.

approach but of becoming more aware of my place and position, of becoming more reflexive. Ultimately, what I was being asked was whether I could produce knowledge for the sake of knowledge. The ethics of my matrilineal sociality include the norm of reciprocity—this alone would make it challenging to excavate the lives of my subjects without giving anything in return. Pairing this with the injustices of a global economic system that derives from, and perpetuates, racial and gender inequalities[81]—which led Linda T. Smith to state that indigenous people know 'there is unfinished business, that we are still being colonized (and know it), and that we are still searching for justice'[82]—means that producing knowledge for the sake of knowledge without any corresponding social justice outcome is untenable. It also speaks of a power relationship which I was dismayed to find is still unquestioned by some in anthropology.

Some time ago Lila Abu-Lughod cautioned anthropologists with these words:

> We need to ask questions about the historical processes by which it came to pass that people like ourselves could be engaged in anthropological studies of people like those, about the current world situation that enables us to engage in this sort of work in this particular place, and about who has preceded us and is even now there with us (tourists, travellers, missionaries, AID consultants, Peace Corps workers). We need to ask what this 'will to knowledge' about the other is connected to in the world.[83]

Twenty-three years after Abu-Lughod wrote this, the will to knowledge about the other appeared early in my first year as a doctoral candidate. Given my lack of training in anthropology I had opted to take two courses, one on

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[81] Sundhya Pahuja, 2011, *Decolonising International Law: Development, Economic Growth, and the Politics of Universality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Makere Stewart-Harawira, 2005, *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization*, London and New York: Zed Books; Aníbal Quijano, 2007, 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality', *Cultural Studies* 21(2–3); 2007, 'Questioning "Race"', *Socialism and Democracy* 21(1); Samir Amin, 2011, *Ending the Crisis of Capitalism or Ending Capitalism?*, trans. Victoria Bawtree, Bangalore: Books for Change.

[82] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 34.

[83] Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against culture', 473.

theory, the other on methods. In one of the seminars on methods, the professor chairing that session encouraged all the students to look upon their period of fieldwork as a time of 'capital accumulation'—capital that could be used later on in an academic career. He proffered himself as an example—he was, at that time, working on a paper using data he had collected in an Indigenous Australian community some 20 years prior. The seminar ended before I had gathered my thoughts to mount a challenge. Was it a longitudinal study I wanted to ask? In which case, presenting data collected 20 years prior made perfect sense. But no context was given, leaving the impression that it is an acceptable practice to use data collected 20 years prior without returning to the fieldwork site to assess the continuing accuracy, or not, of one's data.

As an indigenous Pacific Islander I was dismayed that such cavalier attitudes continue to exist and be taught in the second decade of the twenty-first century in a major university. The analogy of capital accumulation is itself distasteful—here were human beings and human lives reduced to commodities. It was an example of the power dynamics of race in anthropology—the white, male, professor exercising his expertise of/over the non-western other, presented as unchanged and unchanging, even after 20 years. So what might this will to knowledge about the other be connected to in the world? Career, tenure, academic prestige; it might even have been connected to policy formulation. What is undoubtable is that in 2013 it reflected and maintained the power dynamic of western self and non-western other, and 'as part of a professional discourse of "objectivity" and expertise, it is inevitably a language of power'.[84]

This language of power asserted itself in other seminars on anthropological methods. For instance, there was the lecturer who advised that an appropriate gift to leave with communities under study might be their genealogy, charted and documented. Why, I asked, would giving people knowledge they already possess be considered an appropriate gift? I issued a

[84] Ibid., 474.

second challenge—where I come from genealogical data is valuable as it establishes land rights and claims. It is rarely provided in its entirety to all clan members unless trust has been established, and trust can take years to build. Why did these white anthropologists imagine they could just waltz into a village, demand and be provided such valuable data? The representative of the Indigenous Australian community—there at the invitation of the white lecturer, perhaps to provide legitimacy to her claims—agreed with me. Genealogical data and oral history are not provided to just anybody.

Culture is the medium through which anthropologists construct difference, the self and the other, but 'cultural anthropology's assumption of a fundamental distinction between self and other is challenged', suggests Abu-Lughod, by 'feminists and halfies'.[85] I include in this the colonised (former and present) who by virtue of negotiating the hegemonic space of the coloniser as well as the marginality of indigenous space, must develop multiple subjectivities as a survival mechanism.[86] During that first year of my PhD I found in the classes I attended that despite attention to the ethics of doing ethnographic research, anthropology was reticent about power relationships that structure the self/other relationship—the self is still usually a western self, occupying a position of power and privilege relative to the other, usually non-western. Just as worrying was the idea that culture is the tool for creating difference which helps to maintain inequality.[87] As a decolonial scholar I had to examine why I would want to engage with this since, obviously, a project of decolonising power and knowledge should not be grounded in ideas that legitimated and continue to legitimate racism, sexism and inequality.

My encounter with anthropology was, therefore, fraught. Although the discipline has engaged in much self-critique, rejecting the racism and sexism on which it was founded, I was still uncomfortable in this space. Nearing the end of

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[85] Ibid., 466.

[86] See e.g. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera*.

[87] Abu-Lughod, 'Writing against culture'.

the first year of my PhD I worried constantly that I had made the wrong decision to locate myself if not in, then very close to, that discipline, and in an institution where of the myriad of 'Melanesianists', none were Melanesian.[88] However, I also knew that had I located myself in international relations I would most likely be similarly vexed albeit for different reasons, and probably would be seeking out anthropological guidance on ethnography.

Choosing to dance with transdisciplinarity

A year and a half into my PhD I won a scholarship to attend training at the Institute of Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University at which the faculty were primarily political scientists. It was transformative. For I encountered, for the first time, a method used by political scientists called political ethnography. Had I known this two years prior it is quite likely my PhD trajectory and choice of institution would have been quite different. The discovery that I could remain within the discipline with which I was familiar and use the method of ethnography gave me back the voice I had lost as I struggled to gain a foothold in anthropology. Freed of the burden to appear at least somewhat knowledgeable about that discipline, I chose to embrace the ethnographic method and discard the other norms and practices. And although I had always been explicit about my status as non-anthropologist, with limited interest in enhancing anthropological knowledge in dialogue with other anthropologists, I chose also to reposition my stance in more positive language. I am grateful to Katerina Teaiwa who, on pressing me to clarify my disciplinary home, helped me to understand that an academic trajectory that was inter-disciplinary (a BA in Politics, Philosophy and History), and that became multi-disciplinary (international business, international politics, international development), then brought me to a place influenced also by anthropology, could not be anything other than transdisciplinary. Rather than drawing from

[88] I wondered if a department specialising in feminism could be legitimate if none of the feminists were women.

different bounded disciplines, as do inter- and multi- disciplinary, my approach is integrative and seeks to transcend the traditional boundaries of Anglo-European knowledge production.[89] Moreover, disciplinary boundaries contribute to the partiality of knowledge which I discuss further below. Transdisciplinarity, on the other hand, responds to Paul Feyerabend's caution that 'the best protective device against being taken in by one particular language is to be brought up bilingually or trilingually'.[90]

I initially thought I was dancing a disciplinary tango, trying out different dance partners to find the best fit, that is, a strong lead if I was dancing the follower, yet one happy to follow were I to lead. I came to realise I was dancing a salsa *rueda*, not at all a tango. Compared to salsa, tango has more formal vocabulary. In tango the upper halves of the body move in unison whereas the lower halves are freer to execute different movements. The pair work as one unit and on a crowded dance floor the leader must employ 360-degree vision to avoid accidents with other couples.

Salsa on the other hand is much more fluid, even allowing for partners to break apart and 'shine', that is, perform some fancy footwork solo. Another aspect of salsa is the *Rueda de Casino*, a square dance, or, in this case, a round dance, *rueda* meaning circle or wheel in Spanish. Pairs of dancers form a circle and execute moves communicated by calling out or by signing. The circle revolves, each pair rotating within that revolution, and often swapping partners forwards and backwards according to the calls. Each person must employ 360-degree vision and acute embodied awareness in order to contribute to the smooth and uninterrupted execution and operation of the *rueda*. There are as many points on the wheel as there are couples, and within each couple one can be moving forward, backward, looking into or out from the centre. Each view is partial but the constant movement enables the construction of a more holistic

[89] See also Teaiwa, 'Preparation for deep learning'.

[90] Paul Feyerabend, 1979, 'Dialogue on method', in Gerard Radnitzky and Gunnar Andersson (eds), *The Structure and Development of Science*, Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 91.

view and the realisation that, though one may have passed through one position multiple times, there are still multiple ways of viewing in or from that locality.

Rueda de Casino is a whole made up of many dynamic parts. In a club this can often be strangers who have not danced together before, and must find a way to move in harmony with each other and in unison with the whole. *Rueda* cannot be danced by one person, or by two people. Four people can start a *rueda*, more enhance the flow and provide additional points on the wheel from which to view the whole. *Rueda* is a deep interaction, a stepping into another's space temporarily rather than a simple negotiation to avoid colliding with others. *Rueda* is about embracing the other. I chose the transdisciplinarity reflected in a *rueda*, which interestingly, being a form of salsa, is derived from both African and European influences.

I had at first thought to identify a metaphor to do with weaving or water. But my intention goes beyond these obvious Oceanian analogies. In the dance, *Rueda de Casino*, many people participate. A tapestry on the other hand, is generally constructed by one person whose hands guide the threads into new relationships. A *Rueda* is more organic, expanding and contracting as individuals and pairs move into and out of the circle. There is no universal hand, no omnipotent eye; just a process of cause and effect. But as lived experience can have the sense sometimes of an organic process, and at other times have the feel that agential capacity is severely limited, as it is for the threads in a tapestry, I take the liberty of mixing the metaphors of dancing and weaving throughout this text, and indeed, in my analysis of Kwato history and personhood.

Nonetheless, it may seem strange to some that I opt for a Spanish word from an Hispanic Latin American cultural practice to envision not just my subjectivity, but also the process of knowledge construction. But a practice that combines multiple cultures speaks to the constructed entity of the Kwato Mission and the sociality that was generated within. It speaks also to the

vernacularisation that Oceanian peoples engage in—that impulse to adopt the foreign and reinvent its use or purpose. *Rueda de Casino* is a metaphor for adoption and appropriation. And although the major movements undertaken by the Austronesian ancestors of Kwato people were by watercraft, the *rueda* speaks to such mobility and dynamism and creativity. Finally, the *rueda* expresses the movement between past and present, between rupture and continuity, between ancestors and descendants, all of which contribute to how Kwato people know themselves and how they reveal their personhood.

Chapter Two

Structure

The structure of this thesis speaks to my different readers. My Kwato community will be more vested in the history of Kwato than in debates around knowledge and in the theorising of matriliny. Sandwiched between a prologue and epilogue are three parts to this thesis. Every part engages with theory at some level but Parts One and Three are primarily theoretical with some ethnography whilst Part Two reverses that ratio, presenting more substantive historical ethnography than theory.

In Part Two, Untangling the Idea of Kwato, I examine the different dimensions of Kwato through place, people, practice, performance, through island, institution, and ideology, and through the threads of whiteness and matriliny. There are two sections. The first section is primarily conceptual and also attends to deep history. The second section limits the gaze to the modern era and the ruptures, continuities and reinventions experienced and engaged in by the Massim people.

Part Three, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy, theorises the southern Massim system of matrilineal descent as a giving rise to a form of radical-relational autonomy.

PART ONE. DANCING A RUEDA: THE SUBJECTIVITY AND METHODOLOGY OF A DECOLONIAL FEMINIST

This is a statement on my methodology and subjectivity but also explicates my understanding of a decolonial historical ethnography based primarily on oral sources, and why such an approach is necessary. It also elucidates the structures of this thesis.

PART TWO. CHOREOGRAPHING THE RUEDA: UNTANGLING THE IDEA OF KWATO

In the first section of Part Two, Conceptual Precision and Historical Clarity, in the first instance, I elaborate on my use of ‘wonder’ as an analytic. I then move on to do the same for the analytics of race and whiteness. Then, since I am

concerned to demonstrate that Massim history did not begin with the arrival of white people, I allocate space to the deep past.

In the second section, Ruptures, Continuities, and Reinventions, I examine the disruptions presented by external forces and how the Massim people responded to these. First, I explore the early encounters between Europeans and the Massim people from the fifteenth century. The Suau language word 'dimdim' means horizon as well as people who come from the horizon. All foreigners are designated dimdim. It is often used in contemporary times to refer to white people although I too have been called a dimdim when I have arrived in a place for the first time where my genealogy is unknown.

In the next chapter I provide an overview of London Missionary Society (LMS) activities in Papua in the late nineteenth century. Then, since much of the remaining sections draw heavily on Massim epistemologies of oral history, I reflect on the nature of fieldwork for the 'native' ethnographer, drawing on Katerina Teaiwa's experience of multi-sited homework. Following this I examine the Massim-specific response to colonisation and missionisation. Then I turn to Kwato-specific history. I delineate this history into genealogical periods of the tanuwaga (S), the isibaguna (S) and the isimulita past and the isimulita (S) present. The tanuwaga were the customary landowners of Kwato Island; the isibaguna were the pioneering Massim Papuans of Kwato; and the isimulita are the succeeding generations of Massim Papuans of Kwato.[1]

Conceptual precision and historical clarity

Wonder

The objectives of this chapter are threefold: to introduce Kwato the island and the people; to elaborate on the concept of wonder and the relationship between wonder, Kwato, and the Massim peoples. There are thus three key areas of interest which correlate with the way the chapter has been structured

[1] Isi = they/those, baguna=first, mulita=following, latter.

into: The wonder of Kwato; Wondering about wonder: An approach to difference?, and; The Massim, and wonder, generosity, reciprocity, and respect.

Following feminist philosophers Marguerite La Caze, Luce Irigaray and Iris Young, I argue that wonder is openness to difference that springs from generosity and that wonder occurs in the space before evaluation, judgement and emotion. Irigaray argues that wonder should be brought into encounters of difference. Irigaray's is a normative claim for the recognition of sexual difference in an Anglo–European philosophical tradition that values sameness and proposes equality derived from an abstract model of white men. I am arguing that the lived experience of the Kwato Massim people is a collection of practices and performances that value sexual difference.

Whose past? Whose present? Race, the Massim, and Kwato

Much has been written on the Massim people of the Milne Bay Province, the Trobriand Islanders immortalised by Malinowski in his unfortunately titled *The Sexual Life of Savages* and the Dobuans by Reo Fortune.[2] Rather less has been

[2] Bronisław Malinowski, 1948, *The Sexual Life Of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account Of Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea with a pref. by H. Ellis* (3rd ed.), London: Routledge & K. Paul; Reo Franklin Fortune, 1932, *Sorcerers of Dobu: The Social Anthropology of the Dobu Islanders of the Western Pacific*, London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

More recent ethnographies include: Linus Silipolakapulapola Digim'rina, 1995, 'Gardens of Basima: Land tenure and mortuary feasting in a matrilineal society', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; Miriam Kahn, 1986, *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender Relations in a Melanesian Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Susanne Kuehling, 2005, *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press; Maria Alexandra Lepowsky, 1993, *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society*, New York: Columbia University Press; Martha Macintyre, 1983, 'Changing paths: An historical ethnography of the traders of Tubetube', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; Shelley Mallett, 2003, *Conceiving Cultures: Reproducing People & Places on Nuakata, Papua New Guinea*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; Annette B. Weiner, 1977, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange*, St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Also journal articles such as: Melissa Demian, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2); 2007. 'Land doesn't come from your mother, she didn't make it with her hands: Challenging matriliny in Papua New Guinea', in Hilary Lim and Anne Bottomley (eds), *Feminist Perspectives on Land Law*, London: Routledge-Cavendish; Ryan

written about Kwato. Historian David Wetherell has done important work in this regard.[3] However, the body of work on the Kwato is almost entirely about missionary Charles Abel and does not fully consider, if at all, the agency of the Papuan people in the history of Kwato, and indeed in the history of the LMS in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

The recent past of Kwato is a racialised past. The phenomena called Kwato refers in the literature to the arrival of whiteness via the twin projects of colonisation and missionisation. But the mountains and islands of Milne Bay were inhabited for centuries, if not millennia, before the arrival of Europeans. The history of Kwato and the Massim people did not, therefore, start with the arrival of white people.

A balanced comprehension of the world we live in must necessarily include different perspectives and social justice must allow for epistemic difference.[4] There is, therefore, both an epistemic and ethical impulse to name whiteness and to disrupt its hegemony. This section introduces concepts from critical race theory and from decolonial theory and their relevance to this thesis. The concepts of whiteness, racialising, racism, and modernity/coloniality are deconstructed.

The deep past

Since, in the previous chapter, I argue that Massim history did not commence with the arrival of whiteness and white people, in this chapter I excavate the deep past of the Massim and their Austronesian ancestors. I review the literature on the Austronesians and the Lapita Cultural Complex, addressing as

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Schram, 2007, 'Sit, cook, eat, full stop: Religion and the rejection of ritual in Auhelawa (Papua New Guinea)', *Oceania* 77(2); 2015, 'A society divided: Death, personhood, and Christianity in Auhelawa, Papua New Guinea', *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5(1); Michael W. Young, 1983, 'The Massim: An introduction', *The Journal of Pacific History* 18(1).

[3] David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930', *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4); 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

[4] Boaventura De Sousa Santos, 2013, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide,* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, vii.

well the relationship of matriliny and the Massim to both. I note that the founder-focused ideology that venerates ancestors has been a strong theme in Austronesian scholarship.[5] Yet, despite Mathew Spriggs' observation that much of Island Melanesia is matrilineal, the application of the theory of a founder-focused ideology has been exclusively androcentric. For instance, Peter Bellwood has suggested that such an ideology influenced Austronesian migration by encouraging younger sons to emigrate and found their own genealogies.[6] In matrilineal Milne Bay the founder-focused ideology is, incontestably, gynocentric.

Ruptures, continuities and reinventions

The dimdim

Dimdim is a word in the Suau language meaning horizon, or from the horizon, and is used also to refer to foreigners. In this chapter I explore the initial encounters between Massim and white people, and I also present how working from within a dimdim epistemic framing can hinder the process of learning about Massim people.

As I showed in the previous chapter, the Europeans did not discover the island of New Guinea. They merely came across it in their travels—initially by accident, later by design—and opened up the possibility for voyages by other Europeans. I chart those journeys and those initial encounters between Massim people and Europeans. I then provide a brief overview of LMS activities in Papua in the late nineteenth century.

Next, I reflect on the nature of fieldwork for the 'native' ethnographer, drawing on Katerina Teaiwa's experience of multi-sited homework. Through a narrative of my field travels I make several arguments. I argue for the centrality

[5] Peter Bellwood, 1996, 'Hierarchy, founder ideology and Austronesian expansion', in James J. Fox & Clifford Sather (eds), *Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Exploration in Austronesian Ethnography*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

[6] Ibid.

of the ocean to the personhood of Milne Bay peoples. I indicate some issues about how status is conferred by the southern Massim people and the importance of the role of 'mother'. I describe the interactions between me, a stranger, and the people I encountered. I also illustrate the spiral of Massim time and how Massim people know and define themselves through the past as much as the present, and how genealogy is critical to this knowing. Then I elucidate how culturally different epistemic processes influence the questions asked and, therefore, the responses given.

Finally, I present oral historical data of the advent of missionisation and examine some of the assumptions made by whites about the Massim people. I argue for the centrality of Massim method—such as oral history—in any project that claims to be about the Massim. I examine the paradox of European descriptions of the Massim as gentle and friendly with the co-existing practice of warfare, and European accounts of 'pacification' with Massim resistance to missionaries and colonisers. I also challenge the assumption that missionisation and colonisation were the sole factors for the arrival of long-term peace in Milne Bay, arguing that peace had its own intrinsic value, irrespective of pacification. I reflect, as well, on how my subjectivity is critical in having a depth of exposure to my subjects and subject matter.

The tanuwaga

Why did the Massim people embrace missionisation and Christianisation so enthusiastically? This question requires that we examine the motives and actions of two groups of people in and around 1891, when Charles Abel arrived at Kwato. They are the tanuwaga and the isibaguna.

I propose that the tanuwaga embraced missionisation and Christianisation so enthusiastically because it served a number of purposes. In the first instance, the missionaries made strategic allies. Second, missionisation provided a path to access new knowledges and technologies. Third, they were also useful to the established tradition of using a third party to broker peace between hostile parties, a technique which continues to be employed in present

day disputes, inter- and intra-clan.[7] Fourth, as Melissa Demian has also argued, the Massim people saw in these peoples who had come from the horizon, not just a reflection of their own highly mobile selves and lives in which inter-island trade, and occasionally warfare, occupied much time. They also saw an opportunity to enhance their own mobility and to bring those places of dimdim into their immediate spheres thereby enhancing their prestige. And perhaps as well, they contemplated how they might extend their relational autonomy, since it was a marvel how these white people travelled free of kin encumbrances. Mobility and relational autonomy continue to be highly valued by the southern Massim peoples.

I start by examining key characters in the Massim history of the Kwato Mission and their motives for inviting missionaries to live with them. I then examine the quotidian lives of the people of this era, approximately the decades of the 1870s and 1880s. I also examine the cultural and linguistic misunderstandings that have repercussions in the present, such as relationships to land and alienation from land.

The isibaguna

I am also curious about the motives of the isibaguna, the indigenous pioneers, in joining the mission. Isibaguna is a missionised identity. The isibaguna adopted Christianity and lived and worked in the mission, initially on Kwato Island, and later in other mission stations.

I argue that the isibaguna, like the tanuwaga, were people who gazed on the world with wonder. I have employed wonder as a theoretical construct to shift the gaze on to how Massim people have often been represented by

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[7] Abel himself notes that peace can be brokered by third parties. See David Wetherell, 2003, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888, as told to Charles Abel', *Pacific Studies* 26: 51.

I describe an intra-clan attempt to manage hostilities in Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, 2015, 'Witchcraft, sorcery, violence: matrilineal and decolonial reflections', in Miranda Forsyth and Richard Eves (eds), *Talking it Through: Responses to Sorcery and Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia*, Canberra: ANU Press.

whiteness. The isibaguna, as well as others of their generation towards the end of the nineteenth century, recognised that significant societal restructuring was imminent and they chose to fully engage with the new era, leveraging their complex networks of kinship and trade to grow the mission.

I contrast ideas of power, authority and the cosmos with introduced ideas. I also analyse the violence of missionisation within the Kwato space.

I conclude that despite their adoption of a missionised identity the isibaguna did not want to become white, although, like the tanuwaga, they wanted the material benefits of white privilege and status for their children.

The isimulita past

There were two generations of Massim people party to the reinvention—that destruction of the old and the adoption of the new—the isibaguna and the isimulita of the first generation. The isimulita are those who followed the isibaguna. One hundred and twenty-five years from the arrival of the isibaguna on Kwato in 1891 we can count five generations of isimulita. I am of the fourth generation of isimulita. The isimulita past of the title of this chapter refer to the isimulita of the generation that immediately followed the isibaguna. They are the isimulita 2nd.

The isimulita, although continuing the project embarked on by the isibaguna, nonetheless embodied a changed relationship with the world around them. The isibaguna engaged wonder in their encounter with whiteness through missionisation and colonisation. Can we say the same of the isimulita 2nd? In this section I focus on the major shifts that people recall. They are: the death of Charles Abel, the adoption of the Oxford Group/Moral Re-Armament (MRA), the war in Milne Bay, and the expulsion of Cecil Abel from Kwato.

Rather than a detailed historical timeline I focus on the words of my interviewees.[8] I finish the chapter with an analysis of how the promise identified

[8] For a detailed historical timeline see David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

by the isibaguna went wrong and I propose three specific factors: white privilege and authoritarianism, the contradictions between matrilineal egalitarianism and racial exclusion, and between a sacred world and a secular world.[9]

The isimulita present

Missionisation was a process by which socialisation into the codes and structures of whiteness was undertaken. But to what extent did the isimulita want to become 'little brown dimdim', a pejorative phrase that some use to describe Kwato people. This section demonstrates the elements of Kwato personhood for the isimulita and in the process, addresses this question.

Isimulita personhood has many foundations. These include a biological and genealogical dimension through one's parents or other ancestors having been born there; a geographical parameter for one who was born, raised, schooled or employed there; and a sociological aspect—the norms, values and aesthetics which guide the conduct which Kwato people refer to as 'the Kwato Way'. All these contribute to isimulita subjectivity which differs from isibaguna personhood. The isibaguna were on the cusp of a new world but still strongly anchored in matrilineal sociality. The isimulita 2nd were also still strongly guided by key Massim matrilineal values such as relational autonomy and the importance of kinship. Can we say the same of the isimulita 3rd?

I examine what is known as the 'Kwato Way', then, in a nod to Anne Kaniku, I look at 'Those Massim Women' who were domestic goddesses, teachers, matrons and nurses.[10] I argue that the missionised identity that had been a novel ideology in the time of the isibaguna had become hegemonic by the time of the isimulita 3rd.

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[9] The unfulfilled promise of missionisation has been written about by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 1986, 'Christianity and colonialism in South Africa', *American Ethnologist* 13(1).

[10] Anne Kaniku, 1989, 'Those Massim women', in Sione Lātūkefu (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: A Century of Colonial Impact, 1884–1984*, Port Moresby: National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea in association with the PNG Centennial Committee.

Reorchestrating the *rueda*

Ten chapters ago I set out to untangle the idea of Kwato guided by the questions this thesis set out to address: 1) what is Kwato personhood and; 2) what happens to representation when framed through an indigenous methodological and theoretical lens, indeed what would be that indigenous theoretical and methodological lens?

In concluding, I draw together the elements of Kwato personhood arguing that, even for the isimulita of the third generation, much of that personhood is still derived from a matrilineal ethos.

PART THREE. EXPANDING THE RUEDA: MATRILINY AND RELATIONAL AUTONOMY

In this, the final substantive part of my thesis, I revisit the victim/agent binary that I discussed in Chapter 1, My Concerns. I address the questions: 1) what is relational autonomy; 2) what is matriliny and; 3) what is the relationship between southern Massim matriliny and relational autonomy?

Utilising indigenous concepts I demonstrate the relationality inherent in Massim ways of being. Drawing on the oral histories presented throughout this thesis I make a case for individuals who act with autonomy, but since they are embedded in relational sociality, they illustrate the empirical workings of relational autonomy. I finish the chapter by proposing a theory of Massim relational autonomy and articulating its relevance to the contemporary.

PART TWO

CHOREOGRAPHING THE *RUEDA*: UNTANGLING THE IDEA OF KWATO

PART 2A

Conceptual Precision and Historical Clarity

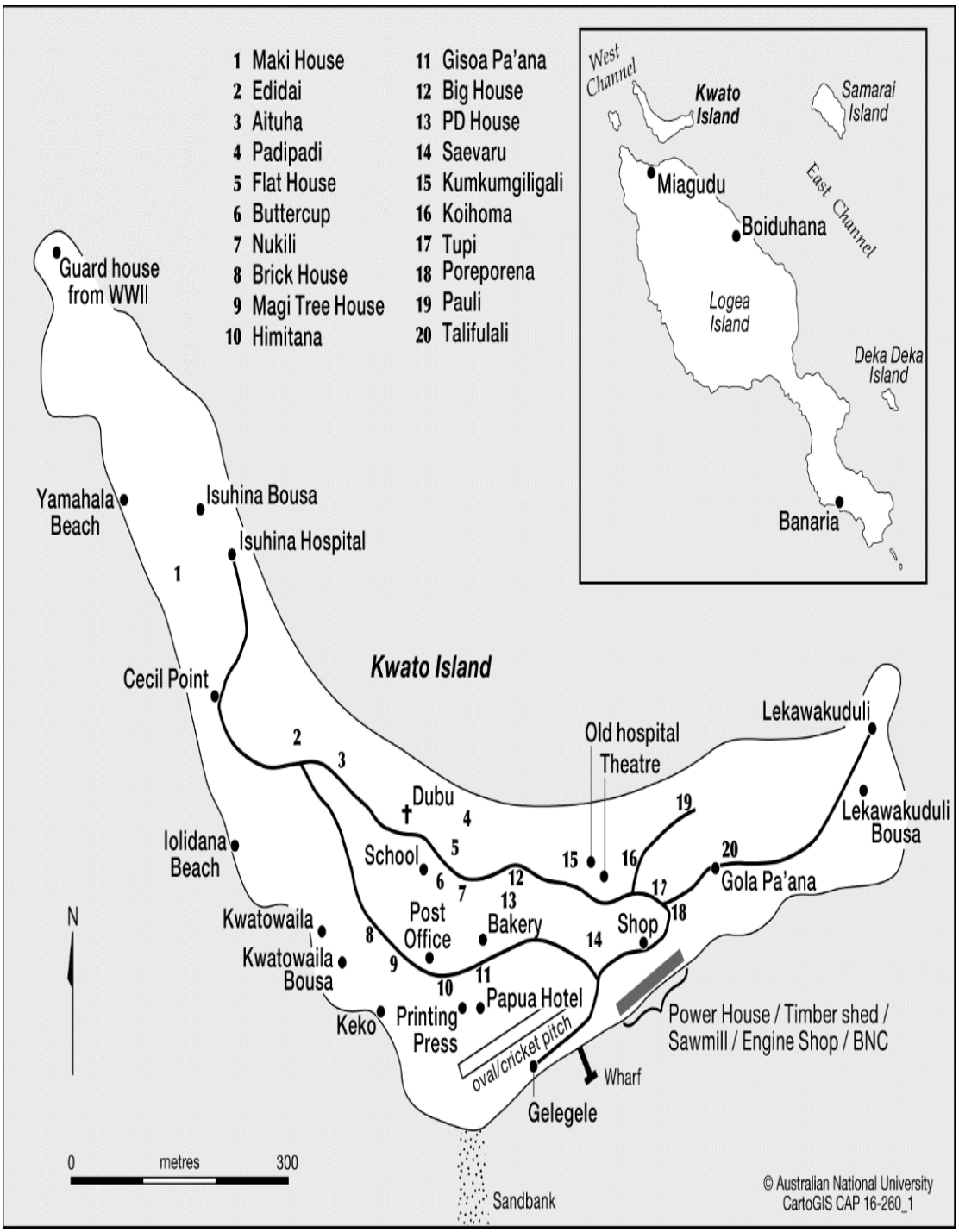
Chapter Three

Wonder



Figure 5. Kwato Island from a drone, January 2016
Source. Courtesy of Sioni Sioni.[1]

[1] See also Map 1. Partial map of Milne Bay



Map 2. A schematic map showing some of the infrastructure on Kwato Island at various times between the 1920s and 1960s

Source. © CartoGIS CAP 16_260_1. The Australian National University

The wonder of Kwato

K stands for knowledge.
W stands for winning.
A stands for attacking, advancing.
T stands for truth.
O stands for opposing evil.

Dirona Lebasi, March 2016[2]

Kwato doha eanua lolona eo hinage dodoga se lolo. Once upon a time when I was a kid meta Kwato i lauma doha i, doha ta libai, i lau alili. Dodoga lailai, lords, se laulauma Kwato, meta when I was a small boy. England eai se laulauma. Se lauma alinai Kwato eai se ne golo pa'ana, Union Jack flies, meta abinai ai ata meta doga esau lailaina i laulauma Kwato.
[Kwato was a beautiful place and the people were wonderful too. Once upon a time when I was a kid, Kwato was, how do we say, it went far, it reached such heights. Grand people, lords, they'd come to Kwato when I was a small boy. They came from England. They came and so on Kwato when they said on the flag pole, [the] Union Jack flies, then we knew that a grandee was coming to Kwato].

Harry Merari Dickson, March 2016[3]

My eyes drank in the pleasure of the landscape … The hills and the all-powerful, lovely jungle a dark green, the transparent water bright green, the sky frozen in perpetually good weather, the sea a deep azure blue. Over it the outlines of countless distant islands; closer to me, I distinguished bays, valleys, peaks. The mountains of the mainland—everything immense, complicated, and yet absolutely harmonious and beautiful (see Figures 5 and 18).[4]

[2] Dirona Lebasi, recorded interview, Koea Bule, 23 March 2016.

[3] Harry Merari Dickson, recorded interview, Mahimahi, 22 March 2016.

[4] Bronisław Malinowski, 1967, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, London: Routledge & K. Paul, 44–45.

Kwato egu eanua: (Hailoba'i Anthem, verses 1 and 3)[5]

Nawalai malana eai	In the light of the moon
Egu eanua ea nuatui	I think of my home
Daodaona eo, gelegelena ne	The black volcanic rock and the sandy beaches
Bagodu dagugudi, doha se eogaeogaigu	The waves roaring, as if calling me
Na paisoa debana eai, eanua ea laugabae	Alas work has taken me away, I have left my home
Nawalai wa abo ie dui	The moon is hiding
Eanua wa i masigili	The country grows dark
Ipola maladi mo, eanua wa se hemala	But starlight brightens my island home
Eni egu eanua Kwato	O my Kwato, my home
Inai abo ta lau aioni	I take my leave now
Huia lolo esau eai, abo ta hailoba'i	But one fine day, we shall meet again

Kwato

Kwato is the dense foliage that drapes the island an intense green.

It is the kokoilo, badila and aiyalu trees branches hanging over the ocean, roots reaching down and across, embracing the earth—protection from the eroding forces of sea and wind (see Figure 6).[6]

It is the golden sandbank that meanders into an azure deep.

It is the brush of the bauri breeze on the face and the slap of the ealasi on the side of the waga.[7]

It is the raucous waking of starlings at dawn and their animated chatter as they return at dusk.

It is the briny smell of nawa, the low tide, and the tinkling laughter of children jumping off the wharf into the sparkling sea.

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[5] Written and composed by Harry Merari Dickson, n.d., *Kwato egu eanua: (Hailoba'i Anthem)*, colloquial translation Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, verses 1 and 3.

Hailoba'i is an island community festival initiated by the Leditami Foundation and organised by Vilia Lawrence in which children and adults participate in canoe races and other activities. Hailoba'i (S) means to meet, to come together.

[6] Suau language: Kokoilo is a beach callophylum, badila is a type of almond, aiyalu is a horse-tail she-oak tree, waga is boat.

[7] Ealasi (S) is the more ferocious south westerly tradewind. Bauri (S) is a northerly wind.

It is the sometimes emerald sometimes turquoise sometimes sapphire of a capricious ocean.

It is where the moon hangs low and the stars light the night.

It is my church.

It is a way of life.

It is a community.

It is my home.



Figure 6. Kokoilo (S) tree branches extend over the ocean. Adapted to saline conditions, the roots of this and other trees protect the island from eroding into the ocean
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figure 7. Kwato Church in January 2016
Source. Courtesy Sioni Sioni

Images of Kwato people between 1891 and 1960 (Figures 8 to 11)

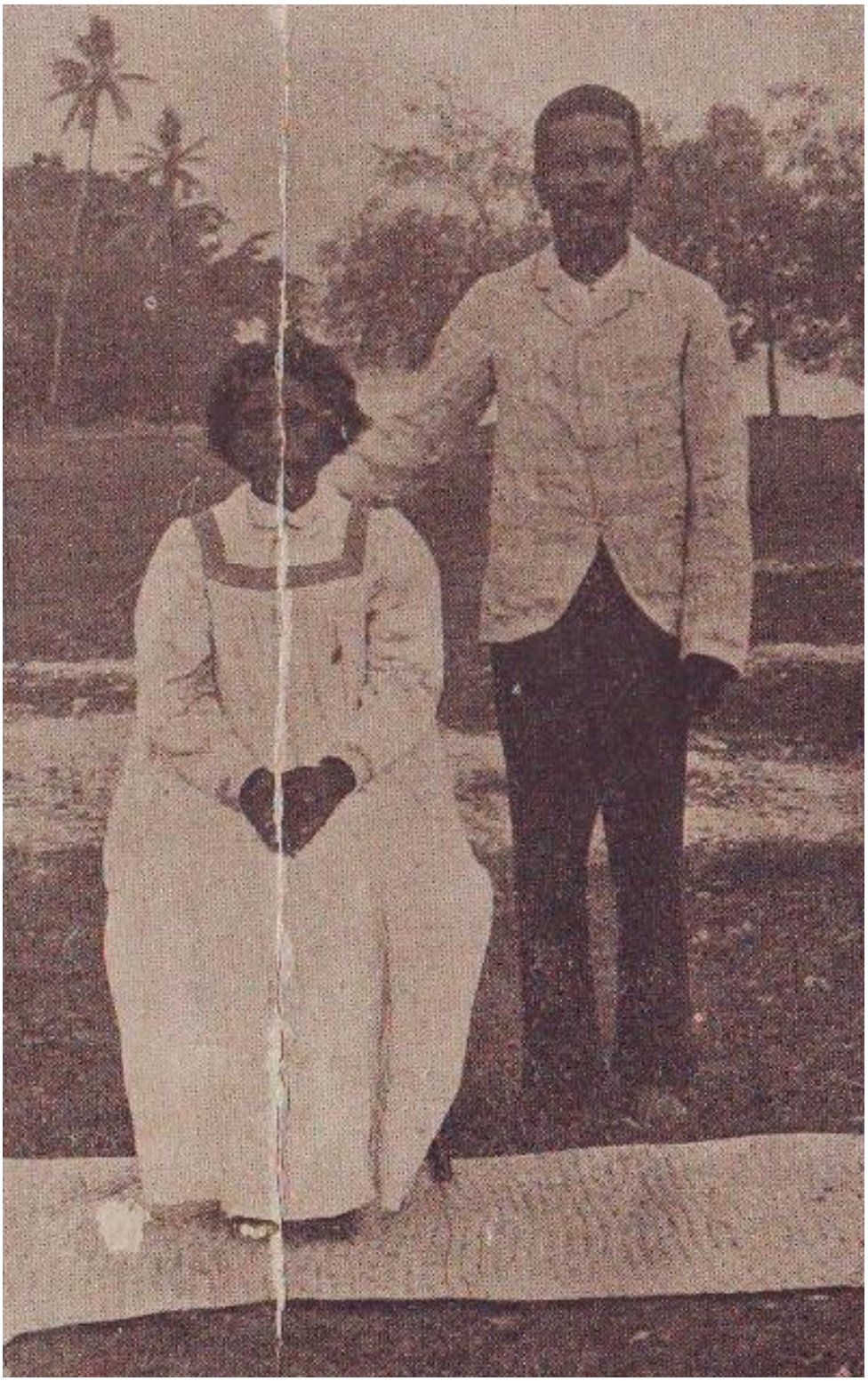


Figure 8. Biga Lebasi from Suau marries Ruta ca. 1890s
Source. Charles William Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 106



Figure 9. Kwato ladies take afternoon tea. L to R. Semi Dilome, Bessie Towolei, P.D. Abel, Pauline Lebasi, ca. late 1940s
Source. Liz Abel, 1991, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, Hervey Bay: Author, 11. Used with permission[8]

[8] Bessie was married to Alaidi Koinega.



Figure 10. Kwato people travel to India. L. to R. Merari Dickson, Vera Dickson née Lebasi, Geoffrey Basket, Alice Wedega, Penueli Anakapu, 1953
Source. Dickson family album. Merari and Vera Dickson were my grandparents. My mother kept their photo albums, now I have them.



Figure 11. Outside Kwato Church, Back L to R: Lukoi Koideba, Elsie Joseph, Setima Kaikaisima, Hilda Lebasi, Wedilo Bumeda. Front: Garoinedi Tariowai, Lydia Sisa holding baby Judy Bumeda, Nori Maniana, Rowena Bonarua, 1963
Source. Dickson family album

Practice, people, and place—these are all evoked in the previous pages, in the words and sentiments from, and images of, my interlocutors, all Massim people.

The Massim people are speakers of Austronesian languages, a family of languages spoken by the peoples of insular Southeast Asia, the Pacific Ocean, and the island of Madagascar. The linguistic characteristics of the Massim languages thus gives us some insight into the possible origins of the peoples of Milne Bay, as well as an appreciation of their cultures. Linguists, historians, and anthropologists have suggested that some common features of Austronesian languages include a focus on the relationships between humans and landscapes.[9] Bodies of water are also significant for these maritime peoples in the construction of an Austronesian sense of place.

Place and landscape are embedded in the consciousness of Kwato people as a form of social memory. James J. Fox uses 'topogeny' to designate these genealogies of place which he describes as 'an ordered succession of place names'[10]—they emplace social knowledge, create identities and form links between past and present. Map 2, a schematic map of Kwato, was created from the memories of my subjects—even buildings, including people's houses, have or had names. Kwato continues to be remembered by these names in speech and in song, even though the structures themselves are long gone. Topogeny is one way of knowing Kwato as indeed it is to know Milne Bay. Just as in the history of the boga esega (S, matriline) of Sipiniei to which we were introduced in the Prologue, origin stories, memories and histories combine genealogy and topogeny to shape people's identity and sense of belonging. So too on Kwato genealogies of people and place have epistemic value.

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[9] See the collection of papers in Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox & Darrell Tryon (eds), 1995, *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press

[10] James J. Fox, 1997, 'Genealogy and topogeny: Towards an ethnography of Rotinese ritual place names', in James J. Fox (ed.), *The Poetic Power of Place: Comparative Perspectives on Austronesian Ideas of Locality*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 89.

The place my interlocutors describe is wonder-full. There is a sense of wonder in their descriptions of place, and their nostalgia for that place. People too evoked wonder, for as Harry Dickson said,

> Kwato doha eanua lolona eo hinage dodoga se lolo.
> [Kwato was a beautiful place and the people were wonderful too]'.[11]

But besides an actual island, Kwato is also an institution, and an ideology. Race, class and kinship structure the different layers and nodes of community and identity, as do the threads of whiteness and matriliny both exert an influence.

Why an enchanted isle?

The island was known as Kwa Dou, place of crying, by the Logea people to whom it belonged for it was where some buried their dead. Logea Island itself was known as Hanayawe. In 2013, Kwato was home to around only 10 households which host a fluctuating population of between 30 and 40 people. This demography is unsurprising in this mostly sparsely populated province. The population of Milne Bay in the year 2011 was around 276,000 whereas PNG's population at the time was 7.3 million.[12] About ten thousand people live in the provincial capital, Alotau; the rest are dispersed over a land area of 14,669 square kilometres, including a scattering of 600-odd islands in some 259,681 square kilometres of ocean, making the province amongst the largest geographically, despite being amongst the smallest in PNG in population.[13]

Sentinel of the China Straits, Kwato is cradled in the shelter of the northeast corner of the much larger Logea Island to which it must have been joined at one time (Maps 1 and 2). So small a land mass is Kwato—only about 35 hectares in area and with a coastline of about three kilometres—its boomerang shape does not appear on most maps. Despite its origins as a graveyard, the

[11] Harry Dickson, recorded interview, 22 March 2016.

[12] PNG National Statistical Office, 2011, *2011 National Population and Housing Census of Papua New Guinea – Final Figures*, Port Moresby, National Statistical Office, 8–10, 16.

[13] These figures were estimated by CartoGIS, CAP, The Australian National University in November 2017. See Appendix 4 for the data sets that were used.

island has nonetheless enchanted travellers and migrants, Papuans and foreigners, over the last century and a quarter since the settlement by London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary Fred W. Walker in 1890.[14]

In the late nineteenth century Kwato Island became the site of an LMS mission in the evangelical, non-conformist tradition. The island was developed over the next few decades so that in early twentieth-century colonial Papua the physical infrastructure established on Kwato—the water tanks, the generators, the telephone and telegraph—probably rivalled that of Port Moresby during the same era (see Map 2). A couple of nautical miles to the east was Samarai Island, which, following the annexation of Papua by the British in 1888, had become the headquarters of the colonial administration for the district.[15] Like Kwato, Samarai Island had been largely a swamp. But, by the early 1900s, the island was a bustling town that, in addition to government buildings, had several pubs and stores, a church, a hospital, and private residences with views to rival those of Kwato. By 1919 some100 foreigners had settled on Samarai and from 1927 the district capital had electricity and street lighting.[16] Thus, from the last decade of the nineteenth century, Milne Bay peoples were discovering a foreign culture in their midst and technologies quite different to that which they had been accustomed.

[14] David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975,* Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 9–11.

[15] It was in 1886 that a British Protectorate station was established at Samarai. See David Wetherell, 2003, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888, as told to Charles Abel', *Pacific Studies* 26: 42.

[16] Margriet Roe, 1961, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 495–96.



Figure 12. Memorial to Christopher Robinson on Samarai Island, October 2016
Source. Courtesy of Sioni Sioni

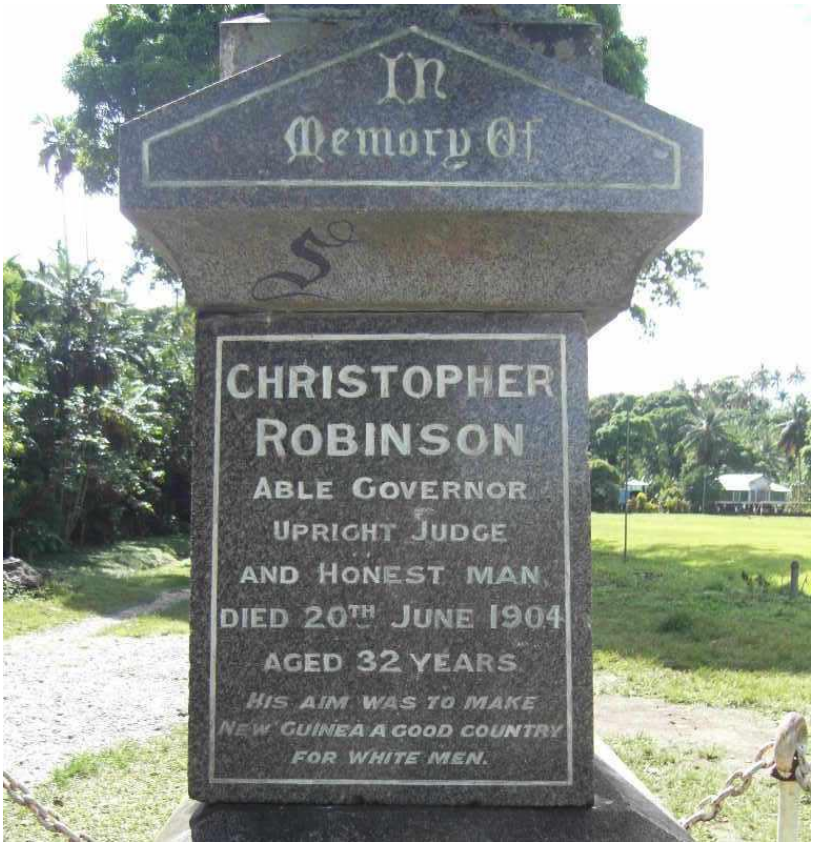


Figure 13. Closeup of text on memorial to Christopher Robinson on Samarai Island
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2012

Samarai, like Port Moresby, was a colonial space, a white town.[17] The commemorative plaque for one-time British New Guinea Governor Christopher Robinson installed on Samarai speaks to this whiteness (Figures 12 and 13):

CHRISTOPHER ROBINSON

ABLE GOVERNOR

UPRIGHT JUDGE

AND HONEST MAN

DIED 20TH JUNE 1904

AGED 32 YEARS

HIS AIM WAS TO MAKE NEW GUINEA A GOOD COUNTRY FOR WHITE MEN.

Robinson, however, resided in Port Moresby, not on Samarai. During his administration he presided over a massacre of Papuans at Goaribari in retaliation for the deaths of missionary James Chalmers and his party in 1901. This was one of many attacks on whites by Papuans who did not want to be colonised politically or religiously.[18] Notwithstanding Robinson's residential status, the wording on the plaque on Samarai Island is reflective of the attitudes of whites throughout the Territory, attitudes also articulated by journalist and

[17] Although various scholars of PNG attend to race, Amirah Inglis is one of few who name the culture of whiteness and its pernicious effects. She does this in the context of the law the *White Women's Protection Ordinance*, of which she writes:

> Sir Hubert Murray, a thoughtful and benign Administrator … brought in the [White Women's Protection Ordinance], as he brought in all those regulations passed since 1908 in Papua whose purpose was to keep Papuans in an inferior position and to keep them apart from whites in the town, partly because he shared many of the assumptions of the white residents about black sexuality and inferiority and about the importance of white prestige. Amirah Inglis, 1974, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 147.

See also, Edward P. Wolfers, 1975, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea*, Sydney: Australia and New Zealand Book Co.

[18] The few arrows shot by the Goaribari warriors were met with an excessive 250 rounds of shots fired by Robinson and his men. Robinson hanged himself before the Royal Commission into the mishandling of the affair. See Diane Langmore, 1989, *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874–1914*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

novelist Beatrice Grimshaw. Grimshaw, after she settled in Milne Bay, described to her readers that: 'One can get on without the world, without people, other than these shadowy brown folk who do not count as such'.[19] She added, 'Power? Authority? You can revel in both to your bent'.[20]

Fortunately, the topography, the climate, and the tropical diseases deterred widespread white settlement. However, the concentration of white settlers on Samarai and in the vicinity of Kwato meant that the Massim people were exposed much earlier than many other Papua New Guineans to the different technologies that whites brought with them.[21] And on Kwato itself they also found themselves in much closer proximity to white people than would have been the case in Port Moresby and on Samarai where racial segregation and white supremacy were explicit, periodically in law and continuously in action, up to the time of self-government for Papua New Guinea.[22] Laws that discriminated on the basis of race were repealed in 1958 but practices such as 'whites only' spaces were continued—Ela Beach in Port Moresby was one such space, and on Samarai apartheid was also enforced.[23] My informants recalled experiencing discrimination on Samarai; for instance, there was a European

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[19] Beatrice Grimshaw, 1930, *Isles of Adventure*, London: H. Jenkins, 215. Grimshaw's contempt alternates with a shocked incredulity—that in circa 1908 Rossel Islanders spoke 'reasonably good English of the "pidgin" variety' and that these cannibals were 'very fond of gardening, and plant pretty red, yellow, and pink flowers about their houses with considerable effect.' See Beatrice Grimshaw, 1911, *The New New Guinea*, London: Hutchinson & Co, 291, 293.

Some scholars have attributed flower gardens as a missionary introduction. This is not the case. Many Massim people have always used plants around their homes for decorative and practical purposes. It is the case, though, that missionaries, especially the South Sea Islanders, introduced different plants. See Martha Macintyre, 1989, 'Better Homes and gardens', in Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

[20] Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 212,

[21] Port Moresby, Rabaul and parts of the Sepik had comparable missionary activity but Port Moresby, Samarai and Rabaul had the largest settlements of foreigners.

[22] Inglis 'Not a White Woman Safe', 144; David Wetherell, 1973, 'Monument to a missionary: C. W. Abel and the Keveri of Papua', *The Journal of Pacific History* 8(1): 8.

[23] Oram describes the racial discrimination that continued after the repeal of discriminating laws in the 1950s. Nigel Oram, 1976, *Colonial Town to Melanesian City: Port Moresby 1884-1974*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 157–66.

Hospital on Samarai, clearly only for whites, and Grimshaw's 'shadowy brown folk who do not count as such' were also restricted from entering white residential areas. Marianna Ellingson, who grew up on post-war Kwato, recalled this apartheid on Samarai throughout the 1960s.[24]

Kwato, on the other hand, although racially stratified, over time became much less rigidly so than either Samarai or Port Moresby. The racial hierarchy is patently obvious in Russell Abel's hagiography of his father, Charles W. Abel,[25] and is written much in the same vein as the latter's *Savage Life in New Guinea*—on the one hand professing love for the indigenous people, on the other, displaying a profound paternalistic bigotry.[26] For instance, each of the latter book's photographs of the non-missionised indigenous people is accompanied by a caption containing 'primitive' or 'savage' and throughout the text the Massim people are described as 'grotesque' and 'ignorant'. Some will protest that Abel and his son are merely the products of the era in which they lived. But since we do not excuse paedophilia, for example, as an acceptable practice of a particular era, why should racism be absolved?

Even when Kwato became less racially stratified there does not appear to have been racial equality. One-time post-war resident Geoffrey Basket is honest enough to write that the 'Kwato family' was not so in reality, for the white people had 'different living conditions, always being treated as "honoured guests"'.[27] Race was fundamental to the way whites organised their lives in Milne Bay, on Samarai and on Kwato.

Nontheless, for the Massim people, Kwato offered a journey into the exotic Other, a means to explore the different world of white people and the culture of whiteness, including the religion of Christianity. That was one of the

[24] Interview with Marianna Ellingson, Boroko, 19 February 2011.

[25] Russell W. Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell.

[26] Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society.

[27] Geoffrey Baskett, 1991, *Islands and Mountains*, Castle Hill: G. Baskett, 54.

magnetic attractions for the many Papuans in Milne Bay who joined the mission. Kwato was, quite simply, an adventure.

A chequered history

The enchanted isle has a chequered history. It was a place of farming for the neighbouring Logea islanders in the late 1800s, a graveyard for others, and also a place where some of them occasionally committed suicide by hanging.[28] But, from 1890 swamp and rainforest began to be transformed into a little English village, eventually replete with dairy cows, a manor for the lord, and cottages for the workers. The manor later came to be known as the Big House and was perched on the highest point of the island affording sweeping views of both coasts. It even boasted a fireplace in the parlour.[29] At the peak of mission activity the island was home to several hundred people and the infrastructure to support them. The Post Office permitted telegraphs and telephone, the Power House generated electricity for lighting, and the mission ran plantations and boats across the province.[30] The printing press produced teaching and evangelising materials as well as newsletters and newspapers.[31] The post-Pacific War newspaper, the *Papuan Times*, was published by Kwato man, Penueli Anakapu, who announced proudly on random pages:

Published by a Papuan for Papuans

News of apartheid in South Africa, the war dividing Korea, and Persian politics were some of the global events brought into Kwato homes through this

[28] Inherent in its name—in the Logea language kwa do is place of crying. Hangings are also referred to in Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, 61.

[29] David Wetherell, 1986. 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group in Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986'. *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 5.

[30] David Wetherell provides a good analysis of the business of the mission in Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

[31] Such as the New Guinea Tidings, Kwato Mission Tidings, and Papuan Times.

newspaper. Schools, a bakery, a hospital and operating theatre rounded out the services, and residents also enjoyed cinema, concerts and cricket. Over time Kwato grew into a place which became the symbol for a type of Papuan personhood, a way of being in the world, characterised by a particular aesthetic and ethic.

But cycles of life play out too for places as much as they do for people. From swamp to bustling mission Kwato Island today is but a shadow of its former glory. In 1974 on a family holiday my parents, siblings and I stayed in the Big House. By the end of the century the house was gone. In 2012 the largely depopulated island was still home to a church and some 10 households. The swamp may have gone but the topography is otherwise unchanged from a century ago. The schematic view of Kwato Island in Map 2 does no justice to this terrain—undulating, surging at times suddenly and precipitously, to 100 metres or more above sea level. Away from the main road sinuous paths snake through the dense foliage that has reclaimed land where buildings and industrial units once stood—the disintegrating concrete bones of the Big House and the rusting iron innards of the industrial area a testament to that past (Figures 14, 15, 16 and 17).

From the elevated spine of the island, magnificent views are still to be seen taking in the China Strait and the islands to the east (Figures 18 and 19). But in 2016, 125 years after C.W. Abel came to Kwato, nature, whose hold was never relinquished, has reasserted her dominance over most of the island—tangled, fecund and verdant even in times of drought. Only the immediate areas around each residence, the church, and the cricket pitch show domestication in the mowed lawns (even on undulating surfaces!), the hedges of hibiscus and crotons, the splashes of periwinkles and frangipanis. Outside of these areas Mother Earth's efflorescing reclamation contrasts starkly with the decaying detritus of human hand.

Kwato is also an institution with its own particular culture and ideology. I use culture to refer to local practices and I use ideology to encompass those

ideas that legitimate those practices. The Kwato culture is a suite of practices that Kwato people call the 'Kwato way', and though influenced by whiteness through Christianisation and missionisation, the matrilineal practices and ideas are still an integral part of the 'Kwato way'. The institution of Kwato also lives on today as the Kwato Church of PNG or KCPNG. It is headquartered at Koea Bule (KB) near Alotau, and Kwato Island is but one of the 52 congregations in the four areas that the Church administers.[32]

The ideology of this institution has also morphed through the years. Always aligned with non-conformist Christianity there was a period of engagement with the Moral Re-Armament movement, later still, a merger with the United Church of PNG, and then a reclamation of independence. The ideology of the contemporary institution of KCPNG differs in many ways to that of the historical organisation, especially in attitudes towards women. What one can say with certainty then, is that, enchanted or otherwise, Kwato symbolises, and has been, many things to many people.

In the remainder of this section I will first elaborate on the concepts of 'wonder', then race and whiteness. Next I gaze into the deep past, from where I transition to the more recent past. Here I distinguish the white from the Massim history of Kwato, although clearly the temporal frames overlap. The Massim history is further delineated into periods associated with the isibaguna (S) and the isimulita (S)—the pioneering Papuans of Kwato and the succeeding generations.[33] This ordering of the Papuan history reflects the importance of genealogy to the Massim people.

[32] KCPNG, n.d, Constitution of the Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea and Governing By-Laws, Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea

[33] Isi = they/those, baguna=first, mulita=following, latter

Images of Kwato, December 2015



Figure 14. Carcass of rusting locomotive
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figure 15. More carcasses of long-dead locomotives
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figures 16. Once a printing press
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figures 17. Another view of the rusting printing press
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figure 18. View from the peak. Nicky junior emerging from Tupi House, Maniana family home, against the backdrop admired by Malinowski—China Straits and Tanosina on mainland Milne Bay
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Image 19. Agsa, the dog, poses as we look out over the rusting roof of Koihoma beyond the China Strait towards Milne Bay
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015

Wondering about wonder: An approach to difference?

'Wonder', as you may have now guessed, forms an important theme in this thesis and I will later argue for its place in the ideology of matriliny. Operating as both a noun and a verb, the Oxford dictionary defines wonder as: 'A feeling of amazement and admiration, caused by something beautiful, remarkable, or unfamiliar' and 'Desire to know something; feel curious'.[34]

My use of wonder here is not of some doe-eyed, limpid, uncritical gaze, although it can have that aspect. Wonder here is curiosity, admiration and desire. And as we shall see for the Massim peoples associated with Kwato, an abuse of the generosity that partners this type of wonder will elicit scorn and contempt, if not outright rejection. Such a situation will prompt he'asisi bolabola—a common phrase that Suau speakers use which translates literally as 'false respect'.[35] But first, since we are engaged in untangling, let's deconstruct 'wonder' before looking at the place of wonder and respect in Suau and Tawala epistemology and ethics.[36]

> Advancing toward the other … requires a different way of speaking than the one that we currently know … Such a path demands forgetting words previously defined, progressing beyond their frontiers and asking language itself how it can allow acceding to proximity.[37]
>
> Wonder is a kind of surprise felt in the face of the strange that lets it difference be without trying to assimilate it into something known, same, and familiar.[38]
>
> In generosity we recognize the worth of others, so that respect, veneration, and magnanimity follow wonder.[39]

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[34] English Oxford *Living* Dictionaries, s.v. wonder. Online: en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/wonder (accessed 28 November 2017).

[35] He'asisi = respect, bolabola = false, untrue, untruth.

[36] I am careful not to say Massim ethics since I am not familiar with all the different linguistic groups that make up the Massim nor do I have knowledge of their philosophies.

[37] Luce Irigaray, 2002, *The Way of Love*, London and New York: Continuum, quoted in Penelope Ingram, 2008, *Signifying Body*, Ithaca, NY: SUNY Press, 107.

[38] Shannon Sullivan, 2006, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege,* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 39.

Wonder is an openness to difference that springs from generosity.[40] Wonder occurs in the space before evaluation. The space of wonder is the space between possibilities that have equal merit, coming before the act of judgement that provokes emotions. The space of judgement is oppositional—it renders the situation or the object to have a negative or positive value. From judgement all other actions flow. Wonder provokes curiosity and curiosity can be a driver of knowledge seeking.

Luce Iragaray's reading of René Descartes takes us beyond the mind/matter dualism for which he has become synonymous. In his writings on the passions, Descartes suggests that wonder is the first passion which prompts Luce Irigaray to suggest that '[w]onder is the motivating force behind mobility in all its dimensions'.[41] Like Descarte's, Irigaray's 'wonder' brims with curiosity and attraction which she argues should be brought into encounters of difference, specifically male and female relations. Irigaray's is a normative claim for the recognition of sexual difference in an Anglo-European philosophical tradition that values sameness and proposes equality derived from an abstract model of white men. I am arguing that the lived experience of the Kwato Massim people is a collection of practices that value difference, including sexual difference.

Let's take for instance the wonderfully outspoken Boru, Papuan nanny to Charles W. Abel's children. Leaving Papua for the first time in 1905 to accompany the missionary and his young family on a trip to England, she apparently relished the cold climes and was giving public addresses in her own language with Abel as translator. On one of these occasions, whilst making a presentation at a school she was confronted by jeering children.
In broken English she paused to give her audience the good scolding that their teachers had been too timid to administer. The children in her country, she told

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[39] Marguerite La Caze, 2002, 'The encounter between wonder and generosity', *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 17(3): 12.

[40] La Caze, 'The encounter between wonder and generosity', 12; Luce Irigaray, 1993, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

[41] Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 73.

them, had better manners, and would not openly laugh at white strangers, however queer they might appear. Having restored order to some extent, she continued her address in Suau.[42]

A brown woman—whose parents would not have seen white people until well into their adult lives—stands in the heart of empire, and gives a public address in her own language to a roomful of white strangers. This is remarkable on its own merit given the era. That she then rebuked both the adults and the children for unacceptable behaviour is even more astonishing. What does it tell us? That her self-worth was not derived from whiteness but from some other ideology entirely, that being surrounded by white people in their territory did not intimidate her, and that people in her country were more respectful of difference. This latter, I propose, is the basis of the initial encounter between the LMS missionaries and the Massim people.

There are however, critiques of Irigaray's wonder that foresee that an excess of untempered wonder can propagate exoticism and, like fear, can lead ultimately to the desire to dominate that which is different, to the demonisation of difference, and to the creation of the Other. Iris Marion Young, therefore, argues that wonder must be accompanied by respect and that respect be mutual—it must be reciprocated.[43]

For Young, reciprocity is both a moral obligation to respect the other as well as an act of giving. In any encounter of persons each must be open to give of oneself or else a communication cannot take place—one gives friendship as a gift in the expectation of a return of the same but in that initial moment one cannot be certain it will be returned. Clearly, this also requires that there is an initial stock of trust that parties will invest in that initial encounter, but for

[42] Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*, 131.

[43] Iris Marion Young, 1997, 'Asymmetrical reciprocity: On moral respect, wonder, and enlarged thought', *Constellations* 3(3).

continuing free social interactions and cooperation that initial stock of respect and trust will have to be developed.[44]

Reciprocating the gift of friendship opens up the encounter to all kinds of possibilities that could not exist without the reciprocity. Indeed, for the mission to be established on Kwato required an offer of friendship on the part of the Massim people who had in fact extended an invitation to the LMS to come and live amongst them to do exactly this. And the decline of the mission post-World War II can be attributed in part to a deficit of trust and respect by the indigenous people in the whites.

A further note about reciprocity. Since we are intersectional beings, Young argues that reciprocity cannot be viewed as taking place between equals. We must acknowledge asymmetrical reciprocity, which is awareness of the fact that we each have different life histories and social positions, and this should structure social interactions and guide our encounters.[45] Young's asymmetrical reciprocity combines 'wonder … with self-respect and respect for all'[46] as the basis for healthy social interactions and cooperation.

But, contends La Caze, wonder is about acknowledging difference whereas respect can come only from a recognition of some shared quality[47]. This philosophical dilemma is resolved when we combine wonder with generosity to be the salient passions in the practice of an ethics of difference. To greet the novel with wonder is to accept it on its own terms as whole and complete without any projection of the subject self. To extend generosity in the initial encounter is to recognise similarities from which respect can be generated.[48] Where encounter is structured by wonder, generosity, and respect

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[44] Ibid., 351.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Marguerite La Caze, 2008, 'Seeing oneself through the eyes of the other: Asymmetrical reciprocity and self-respect', *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 23(3): 132.

[47] La Caze, 'The encounter between wonder and generosity', 17.

[48] Just as Irigaray has drawn on Descartes so too does La Caze extend Irigaray's argument by drawing from the same source to extend the concepts of wonder and asymmetrical reciprocity. She utilises Descartes idea of *générosité*, clarifying first that this 'generosity' is

there can be no space for control and domination since these two latter stem not from respect but from fear. In chapters that follow, drawing on historical and ethnographic details, I will demonstrate that the practices grounded in matriliny shaped the encounter between the Massim people and Others and I will demonstrate too that Massim matriliny is grounded in wonder, generosity, respect and self-respect.

These three philosophers I have drawn on—Irigaray, Young, La Caze—have different trajectories and research interests but are united in their commitment to a feminist philosophy. Their works that I have drawn on here are focused around what is apparently a novel claim in Anglo-European ethics, which is that '[t]he idea of an ethics of sexual difference is distinctive because traditional ethical theories have rarely acknowledged the existence of two sexes'.[49]

Irigaray is rejecting the sexual hierarchy implicit in Anglo–European ethics. So ingrained is the idea of maleness as the norm that even at the beginning of 2017 a Spanish judge, Antonio Salas, can claim about violence against women that 'si la mujer tuviera la misma física que el hombre … no pasaría esto [if women had the same physique as men … it would not happen]'.[50]

Irigaray rejects entirely this logic. In doing so she eschews an understanding of the two sexes as either opposites or complements of each other—(white) maleness is not a singular model of humanity—men and women are different. An entirely different ethics arises out of this position which recognises that women, too, are autonomous, not defined by men or their

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different to its everyday use in English. In this psychoanalytic reading generosity is essentially self-respect or the value one has for self. If one does not have appropriate self-esteem this lack of worth is projected out onto situations, objects and people. Conversely, where one practices *générosité/*generosity, one will be able to have respect for self and the other. See La Caze, 'The encounter between wonder and generosity', 12.

[49] La Caze, 'The encounter between wonder and generosity', 4.

[50] 'Violencia de genero: Un juez del Supremo achaca la violencia de género a "la maldad del ser humano" y la mayor fuerza del hombre', 2017, *El País*, 03 January.

relationship to men, and often have concerns that are quite different to male perspectives.[51] In my final chapter which analyses Massim matrilineal ethics I will demonstrate that the normative claim of autonomy for women is, in fact, the way that matrilineal ethics operates in Milne Bay.

The Massim and wonder, generosity, reciprocity and respect

I do not suggest that the Massim people are singular beings. A century and a half ago, in parallel with the exercise of the principles of matriliny, headhunting and cannibalism were widespread practices. How does one reconcile the apparently benign ideology of sexual difference and autonomy with such barbarism? One may ask the same question in contemporary times of other places and other peoples: why does Australia proclaim itself humanitarian yet treat refugees with such violence? Why are the lives of black men of so little value in the US? Why do Eastern European and African politicians appear before the ICC for national war crimes whilst Tony Blair and George Bush are excused for starting a global war on a pretext of weapons of mass destruction, and that many now see as the trigger to the global terrorist activity of the last decade and a half—an act that nurtured the likes of ISIS which can now claim hundreds of thousands of victims. The point is that none of us, nor the nation-states constructed to contain us, are singular. I can no more explain the co-existence of matriliny and ritual cannibalism—which is the complete dehumanisation and denigration of the other—than I can justify the ongoing slaughter of African-American men by US police or the inhumane conditions faced by refugees, or the growing acts of racism in the USA and Europe towards immigrants and others, by peoples who claim to be civilised, enlightened and supporters of human rights. That the Massim people engaged in ritual cannibalism does not preclude them from engaging in wonder, generosity and respect and vice

[51] Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 5–19.

versa.[52] Indeed, often those designated to be ritually cannibalised were spared and adopted into the clan, even becoming powerful leaders in time.[53]

At any rate, the intent of this thesis is to examine the influence of the ideology of matriliny and its encounter with whiteness in the form of colonisation and missionisation.

For those of us who live abroad—Bitali Tauwala in Maine, Mariana Ariansen in Utah, me alternating between Europe and Australia, and for many other people with Milne Bay roots—the wonder, generosity, reciprocity and respect of the Massim people was something we took for granted until we moved away and no longer had daily access to it. Whether we have moved away or continue to live in Milne Bay we are often shocked by what we perceive to be the lack of these qualities in whiteness. Up to this point I have used the term 'whiteness' fairly loosely. This will be the next disentangling.

[52] Banivanua Mar explores cannibalism as a 'tool of empire' in Tracey Banivanua-Mar, 2010, 'Cannibalism and colonialism: Charting colonies and frontiers in nineteenth-century Fiji', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(2): 255–81.

[53] The story of Manuegu from Suau, who appears later in this thesis, is one such example.

Chapter Four

Whose past? Whose present? Race, the Massim and Kwato

> The point of seeing the racing of whites is to dislodge them … from the position of power, with all the inequities, oppression, privileges and sufferings in its train, dislodging them … by undercutting the authority with which they … speak and act in and on the world.[1]
>
> [T]he understanding of the world by far exceeds the Western understanding of the world.[2]
>
> **Gari Kumaina**: They treated us like slaves.[3]

Naming whiteness

Much has been written on the Massim people of the Milne Bay Province, the Trobriand Islanders immortalised by Malinowski in his unfortunately titled *The Sexual Life of Savages* and the *Sorcerers of Dobu* by Reo Fortune.[4] Rather less

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[1] Richard Dyer, 2005, 'The matter of whiteness', in Paula S. Rothenberg (ed.), *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, New York: Worth, 9.

[2] Boaventura De Sousa Santos, 2013, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice Against Epistemicide*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, vii.

[3] Taped interview with Kwato born Gari Kumaina, December 2016. This exploitation by white missionaries over the Massim was also identified by other Kwato people. See Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion'. *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4): 266.

[4] Bronisław Malinowski, 1948, *The Sexual Life Of Savages in North-Western Melanesia: An Ethnographic Account Of Courtship, Marriage, and Family Life Among the Natives of the Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea with a pref. by H. Ellis* (3rd ed.), London: Routledge and K. Paul; Reo Franklin Fortune, 1932, *Sorcerers of Dobu: The Social Anthropology of the Dobu Islanders of the Western Pacific*, London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd.

More recent ethnographies include: Linus Silipolakapulapola Digim'rina, 1995, 'Gardens of Basima: Land tenure and mortuary feasting in a matrilineal society', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; Miriam Kahn, 1986, *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender Relations in a Melanesian Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Susanne Kuehling, 2005, *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press; Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press; Maria Alexandra Lepowsky, 1993, *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society*, New York: Columbia University Press; Martha Macintyre, 1983, 'Changing paths: An historical ethnography of the traders of Tubetube', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; Shelley Mallett, 2003, *Conceiving Cultures: Reproducing People & Places on Nuakata, Papua New Guinea*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; Annette B. Weiner,

has been written about Kwato. Historian David Wetherell has done important work in this regard and this is supplemented by texts from Charles Abel, Russell Abel and Nancy Lutton.[5] However, the body of work on the Kwato is almost entirely about missionary Charles Abel and does not fully consider, if at all, the agency of the Papuan people in the history of Kwato, and indeed in the history of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Framing his subject in the preface to his biography, Wetherell advances the idea of Abel's omnipotence, writing of 'his 40-year practice of removing young children from their parents and settling them on an island over which he had absolute control'.[6] However, Abel did not have absolute control over the island since he had to periodically negotiate use with the customary landowners and even today there are disputes over the Church's rights to use the land, some of which I touch on briefly in Chapter 7, The Tanuwaga. Moreover, whilst he was a strong advocate of removing children from village environments, this was only made possible by the Massim matrilineal ethos which is grounded in relational autonomy—even for children—as well as in wonder, reciprocity and respect. Furthermore, Massim ethics views parenting as a social, rather than exclusively biological, role. I will have more to say about Massim matrilineal

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1977, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange*, St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Also journal articles such as: Melissa Demian, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2); 2007, 'Land doesn't come from your mother, she didn't make it with her hands: Challenging matriliny in Papua New Guinea', in Hilary Lim and Anne Bottomley (eds), *Feminist Perspectives on Land Law*, London: Routledge-Cavendish; Ryan Schram, 2007, 'Sit, cook, eat, full stop: Religion and the rejection of ritual in Auhelawa (Papua New Guinea)', *Oceania* 77(2); 2015, 'A society divided: Death, personhood, and Christianity in Auhelawa, Papua New Guinea', *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5(1); Michael W. Young, 1983, 'The Massim: An introduction', *The Journal of Pacific History* 18(1).

[5] David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930', *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4); 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton, Melbourne University Press; Charles William Abel, 1900, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, London: C.E. Roberts & Co.; 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society; Russell W. Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell.

[6] David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, xiv–xv.

ethics and relational autonomy in the following chapters. For now, I wish only to make the point that it was possible for Abel to act as he did only because Massim social codes and practices permitted it. It was the Massim who made possible *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea*,[7] but a lens of whiteness obscures this. The publications about Kwato demonstrate this particular distortion of reality which depends on the erasure of an entire group of people.

The recent past of Kwato is a racialised past. The phenomenon called Kwato refers in the literature to the arrival of whiteness via the twin projects of colonisation and missionisation. But the mountains and islands of Milne Bay were inhabited for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. The history of Kwato and the Massim did not, therefore, start with the arrival of Europeans. Moreover, a balanced comprehension of the world we live in must necessarily include different perspectives and social justice must allow for epistemic difference.[8] There is, therefore, both an epistemic and ethical impulse to name whiteness and to disrupt its hegemony—as a species we cannot know or fully comprehend life if we blindfold ourselves to the manifestly multiple realities of human social life.

Whiteness is a set of material and ideological practices of privilege attributed to racial superiority.[9] It is a practice based on racialising people. That is, whole groups of people are judged solely on the basis of the colour of their skin or their physiognomy. Racialising the world through the construction of a

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*, vii.

[9] Shannon Sullivan, 2006, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; Linda Martín Alcoff, 2015, *The Future of Whiteness*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

For an exploration of how possession—of space and Others—is intrinsic to whiteness see Aileen Moreton-Robinson, 2015, *The White Possessive Property, Power, and Indigenous Sovereignty*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

mythical ladder of racial superiority enabled colonialism.[10] European expansion is, therefore, inseparable from racism. Obviously, to aggregate all white peoples under a single category erases all the differences within and between them. However, from the perspective of Papuans, from which this thesis is situated, this is how this group of foreigners self-identified and it was the basis on which this group established their political, economic and social structures—by asserting a superiority based on the colour of their skin. It continues to play out in the most insidious ways in present day PNG through a dual wage structure under which whites earn more than Papua New Guineans for no other reason than race.[11] Part of the objective of this section is to put into perspective how meaningless are assertions of racial superiority and, therefore, how unjust are racially based material conditions such as the dual wage structure, conceived under colonialism, and still present in contemporary PNG.

Another objective is to make visible epistemic injustice. There is no single social theory that captures the full diversity of human experience, experiences shaped by race, ethnicity, sex, gender, citizenship, class. Likewise, there is no definitive account of a history. There are, instead, multiple versions of any event dependent on the perspective of the subject. Knowledge is situated—it can only ever be partial since it is shaped by geopolitics and body-politics.[12] Situated

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[10] Walter Mignolo, 1995, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 2009, 'Dispensable and bare lives: Coloniality and the hidden political/economic agenda of modernity', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 7(2); Aníbal Quijano, 2007, 'Questioning "Race"', *Socialism and Democracy* 21(1); John M. Hobson, 2004, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

[11] Martyn Namorong has blogged about this injustice and the resentment it creates when Papua New Guineans find their skills and qualifications to be superior to those of foreigners who earn more. See Namorong, 2011, 'Decolonising Papua New Guinea's pay structure', *Keith Jackson & Friends: PNG Attitude*. As has David Nalu, 2011, 'Injustice – is the dual wage structure'.

[12] This has been elucidated in feminist theory, and by postcolonial and decolonial scholars such as: Donna Haraway, 1988, 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', *Feminist Studies* 14(3); María Lugones, 2008, 'The coloniality of gender', *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise* Spring; Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics', *University of Chicago Legal*

knowledge is a truth. If it were not, it could not have generated the vast literature of feminism and of post- and de-colonial scholarship.[13] There simply would be no requirement for it.

Forum 1989(1); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott and Barbara Smith, 1982, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press; Walter D. Mignolo, 2002, 'The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference', *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101(1); Suman Seth, 2009, 'Putting knowledge in its place: Science, colonialism, and the postcolonial', *Postcolonial Studies* 12(4); Dipesh Chakrabarty, 2000, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

[13] Critiquing and redressing the white gaze and perspective has long been undertaken from multiple majority world perspectives. The genealogy of decolonial thinking is not derived from the European Renaissance or Enlightenment thinkers although it emerged at the same time as did European colonial expansion in the sixteenth century. A genealogy of decolonial thinking might start with Waman Puma de Ayala's 1612–1615 *El primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (Letter to a King), Mexico, D.F: Siglo Veintiuno; and Ottobah Cugoano's 1999 (1787), *Narrative of the Enslavement of Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa*, published by Himself, in the Year 1787. See also Ottobah Cugoano, 2005(1787), *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Humbly Submitted to the Inhabitants of Great-Britain*, Ann Arbor.

From 1831 Maria Stewart, an enslaved African–American, challenged African–American women to reject the negative images of Black womanhood, pointing out that race, gender, and class oppression were the fundamental causes of Black women's poverty. In an 1833 speech she proclaimed,

> Like King Solomon, who put neither nail nor hammer to the temple, yet received the praise; so also have the white Americans gained themselves a name … while in reality we have been their principal foundation and support … We have pursued the shadow, they have obtained the substance; we have performed the labor, they have received the profits; we have planted the vines, they have eaten the fruits of them.

See Maria W. Stewart and Marilyn Richardson, 1987, *Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 59.

Likewise Sojourner Truth whose speech 'Ain't I a Woman' was delivered and published in 1851. A video of Alice Walker reading Sojourner Truth's speech can be found at Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove (eds), 'Alice Walker reads Sojourner Truth', 2006, *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, November 11, Berkeley, CA.

On Sojourner Truth's life see Nell Irvin Painter, 1996, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol*, New York: W.W. Norton; Olive Gilbert, Sojourner Truth & Nell Irvin Painter, 1998, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Bondswoman of Olden time, with a History of her Labors and Correspondence Drawn from her Book of Life; also, A Memorial Chapter*, New York, NY: Penguin Books; Sojourner Truth, 1850, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth. Dictated by Sojourner Truth (ca. 1797–1883*), Boston: the Author and University of Pennsylvania Digital Library.

From the late nineteenth century onwards decolonial voices include W.E.B DuBois, Mahatma Ghandi, José Carlos Mariátegui, Amílcar Cabral, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and more recently Rigoberta Menchú and Gloria Anzaldúa.

For Oceania specific voices see: Bernard Narakobi, 1983, *The Melanesian Way*, Boroko: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies; Noenoe. K. Silva, 2004, *Aloha Betrayed: Native*

The European canon has long been presented as the only valid form of both scholarly and popular knowledge that is universal.[14] This fits within a practice of whiteness since epistemic racism is a form of epistemic exclusion that promotes a hierarchy of knowledge based on the race of those generating the knowledge. Epistemic sexism is another form of epistemic discrimination through which the knowledge held and generated by women is devalued.[15] Depending on how it is measured, Western Europeans form between 3 per cent and 12 per cent of the present population of *Homo sapiens*.[16] Given the exclusion of European women from the European canon, it means that, using present figures, at most *only 6 per cent* of the planet's humans have determined what constitutes hegemonic knowledge.

If knowledge can only be partial then it follows that the process of knowledge production is similarly imperfect. Yet the limited perspective of the Massim peoples developed from the position of whiteness has been presented uncritically as the only valid interpretation of Massim history and peoples. Some scholars who have written about the Massim people situate themselves, naming their race, their class—explicit about their subjectivity.[17] The vast majority do not. Instead they present the knowledge they produce as objective, universal, free of the inflection of race and gender, free of geopolitics and body politics. The use of neutral terms such as modernity rather than western or European

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Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism, Durham NC: Duke University Press; Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 2012, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books; Haunani-Kay Trask, 1985, 'Islands of history. Marshall Sahlins', *American Ethnologist* 12; 1991, 'Natives and anthropologists: The colonial struggle', *The Contemporary Pacific* 3(1).

[14] Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*.

[15] Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff, 1993, 'Are "old wives' tales" justified?', in Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge.

[16] Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population, 2015, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, World Population 2015 Wallchart. ST/ESA/SER.A/378; World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables*, *ESA/P/WP.241*.

[17] E.g. Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*; Mallett, *Conceiving Cultures*.

modernity, normalises and naturalises structures, disciplines and categories as universal since they are not situated, nor specified.[18]

The past that the white people write about is analysed, interpreted and portrayed through a lens of whiteness. The problem can hardly be just whiteness. Rather, it is the assumption that whiteness is both singular and universal and hence is the model to which all humankind should aspire. Often, and probably despite the intentions of some of the authors, this limited perspective manifests and contributes to the white supremacist logic that majority world peoples are lacking until such time as Europeans arrive to transform their existence. In the case of the Massim people, it effaces a long history of peoples whose creativity and resilience enabled them to survive and thrive as evidenced by long-distance marine trading relationships, complex rituals surrounding death, and a systematised approach to social order, to belonging, and to difference, that is contained within the structures that emerge from a descent system based on matriliny.

Race, racialising, racism

> Racism consists in devaluing the humanity of certain people by dismissing it or playing it down (even when not intentional) at the same time as highlighting and playing up European philosophy, assuming it to be universal. It may be global, because it piggybacks on imperial expansion, but it certainly cannot be universal. Racism is a classification, and classification is an epistemic maneuver rather than an ontological entity that carries with it the essence of the classification. It is a system of classification enacted by actors, institutions and categories of thought that enjoy the privilege of

[18] Likewise, making implicit assumptions in which whiteness is the norm. For example, Chilla Bulbeck writes about white women's lives and roles in the Territories of Papua and New Guinea, stating 'Papua New Guinea was seen by men and women alike as a "mans' country"'. See Bulbeck, 1992, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages 1920–1960,* Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1. In this statement Bulbeck has effectively erased all Papua New Guineans from view. Clearly, the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea, men and women alike, did not and do not, see PNG as a 'mans' country'. It was seen that way only by white men and white women.

> being hegemonic or dominant, and which imposes itself as ontological truth reinforced by 'scientific' research.[19]
>
> What we mean by racism has little to do with the xenophobia that existed in various prior historical systems. Xenophobia was literally fear of the stranger … Racism was the mode by which various segments of the work-force within the same economic structure were constrained to relate to each other. Racism was the ideological justification for the hierarchization of the work-force and its highly unequal distributions of reward. What we mean by racism is that set of ideological statements combined with that set of continuing practices which have had the consequence of maintaining a high correlation of ethnicity and work-force allocation over time.[20]
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> [The dual wage structure] ensures expatriates are continued to be paid exorbitant amounts of money with all the perks and privilege, whilst the average Papua New Guineans slaves away for an annual salary that often does not even amount to the monthly accommodation rental bill for any individual expatriate officer.[21]

Since I use race as an analytic, and since there is no biological reason for the category, it begs the question from where does the idea of race come? Race might easily have been simply a marker of difference. How, then, did the idea of racial hierarchy evolve? What are the radical shifts in history leading to the construction of a racial hierarchy?[22] First, I nuance the different meanings of racialise and racism. To racialise is to draw attention to a racial marker. To impose a racial hierarchy is to practice racism. In this thesis, since I draw

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[19] Walter Mignolo, 2015, 'Foreword: Yes, we can', in Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* London: Zed Books, vi.

[20] Wallerstein cited in Mignolo, 'The geopolitics of knowledge and the colonial difference', 79.

[21] Nalu, 'Injustice – is the dual wage structure', 1.

[22] Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants discuss this question in their paper, 2006. 'The long-durée entanglement between Islamophobia and racism in the modern/colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system: An introduction', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5(1). Destabilising the idea of the singularity of European modernity is also explored in: Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*; Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*; Walter Mignolo, 2006, 'Islamophobia/Hispanophobia: The (re) configuration of the racial imperial/colonial matrix', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology Of Self-Knowledge* 5(1); Nancy Bisaha, 2004, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*, Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1–12.

attention to race, I am engaged in racialising. I do not, however, invoke racism since I do not subscribe to the ideology of a race hierarchy.

Regarding the development of race and racism, decolonial scholar Ramón Grosfoguel in a lecture at the 2014 'Decolonizing Knowledge and Power Summer School' in Barcelona proposed four shifts.[23] The first was a shift to politicise Christianity, transforming it from an anti-imperialist moment against the Roman Empire into an ideology of state by the Emperor Constantine. Centuries later, this ideology would influence the methods of ethnic and religious cleansing to drive non-Christians out of Iberia.[24] Later, these methods would then be exported to the Americas and then to rest of world along with the *Encomienda*.

Encomienda was a policy applied by the Spanish crown in the Americas to legitimate expropriation of indigenous territories and also enabled the virtual enslavement of indigenous peoples who were expected to pay tribute to the *encomenderos*. This approach was formulated during the era of Al-Andalus during the Christian battles against the Moors as a deliberate policy to bring Christians from the north to take over properties within the Moorish state. Grosfoguel suggests that it became the model for settler colonialism.[25]

The second shift was to denote people without souls to be not human.[26] Following the arrival of Columbus in the Americas who wrote in his diary about encountering a people without religion, the Catholic Church from 1492 to 1552

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[23] Ramón Grosfoguel, 2014, 'Opening lecture at the Decolonizing Knowledge and Power Summer School', Barcelona.

[24] For a history of Al-Andalus derived from Arabic sources see Hugh Kennedy, 1996, *Muslim Spain and Portugal: A Political History of Al-Andalus*, London and New York: Longman.

[25] An account of the ethnic cleansing undertaken by the Christians is set out in Matthew Carr, 2009, *Blood and Faith: The Purging of Muslim Spain*, New York: New Press.

Elizabeth Drayson examines how the centuries-long relatively peaceful multi-ethnic society of Muslim Iberia was destroyed by the European Christians in Drayson, 2017, *The Moor's Last Stand: How Seven Centuries of Muslim Rule in Spain Came to an End*, London: Profile Books.

[26] Grosfoguel and Mielants, 'The long-durée entanglement between Islamophobia and racism'.

would debate the condition and status of 'people without souls'.[27] The Spanish Empire deemed that people without souls could be enslaved thus condoning racially-based slavery. This was different to previous forms of slavery which had not been conducted on the basis of race. The Valladolid Controversy, organised by Charles V in 1550/1 was held specifically to debate the humanity of indigenous Americans and whether they could govern themselves. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda argued the right of Spain to colonise, and/or enslave, and forcibly convert indigenous Americans to Christianity. The debate about 'people without souls' was essentially a debate about the 'human-ness' of Others and this argument was used to justify the enslavement of Africans. The premise is incorporated in whiteness and has formed the basis of modern racial discrimination.

The condoning of colonial violence external to Europe was replicated within through the witch hunts which targeted primarily women over several centuries from the late 1500s.[28] The control and domination of European women was extended through the murders of approximately one hundred thousand of them over roughly the same period that Africans were being enslaved and indigenous peoples of the Americas were being slaughtered. White women, like Africans and Native Americans, were deemed mentally deficient, weak and deviant and as such more susceptible to the wiles of Satan, as Pacific Islanders would later be described.

This early period in European modernity thus coincides with a vicious grab for power which eventually became concentrated in the hands of white men. One such battle was over childbirth. Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff demonstrate how epistemic discrimination is a process which so narrows the

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[27] Lewis Hanke and Bartolomé de las Casas, 1974, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

[28] Anne L. Barstow, 1994, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*, San Francisco: CA: Pandora; Brian P. Levack, 2013, *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

definition of knowledge and methods of justification such that many types of knowledge are relegated to myth or unscientific hearsay. This is what happened to European midwives over the early to mid period of European modernity despite midwife knowledge having always been grounded in empirical methods.[29]

What emerges is a pattern of discriminating against anything that is not produced by a white male. European modernity, seen from a location that is not that of white male, is hardly benign. Control and domination were effected through genocide and epistemicide. There is little of an ethic of wonder and generosity.

The Europeans of this period did, however, very successfully and selectively appropriate knowledge.[30] This appropriation of knowledge combined with the wealth from the Americas enabled the regeneration of European civilisation and contributed to European men being able to position themselves as founders of science conveniently erasing the debt and theft of knowledge from non-Europeans. And so commenced the invention of a linear history with Western Europeans at the top of the hierarchy.

[29] Dalmiya and Alcoff, 'Are "old wives' tales" justified?' 223. Fundamental to European logic is propositional knowledge of the construct (s knows that p). However, as Dalmiya and Alcoff demonstrate, this approach is inadequate to account for practical knowledge, and in fact supports and sustains epistemic discrimination, such as the marginalisation of midwives and their knowledge, as well as majority world knowledges. Midwifery knowledge was discriminated against because midwives were illiterate, and even if they were literate, there were other institutional barriers to negotiate such as the gender-biased entry into formal educational centres from which they were systematically barred.

[30] The European Dark ages paralleled an Islamic Renaissance in Europe. The global connections of the Moors across Asia to Mindanao contributed to vast knowledge banks in Islamic libraries such as those in Cordoba and Granada which contained around 500,000 and 200,000 books respectively. See Dag Nikolaus Hasse, 2014, 'Influence of Arabic and Islamic philosophy on the Latin west', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, online; John L. Esposito (ed.), 1999, *The Oxford History of Islam*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*.

This portends a third shift in which valid knowledge comes to be attributed to a minority within a minority.[31] In the seventeenth century Réné Descartes conjures the non-situated I, investing it with all of the attributes of the Christian god. This eye is all seeing. It is objective, has no particularity, is neutral, and can see the world from all points. It is universal. Through a monologue, speaking only to himself, Descartes, and many after him, assume he has arrived at a universal truth, applicable to every human on this planet. That universal truth is of ontological dualism—Descartes' 'I think, therefore I am'—which separates mind from body, a reduction that is absurd to many ontologies in the majority world, yet which continues to influence many disciplines and professions in Western institutions in the present.[32]

Enrique Dussel rightly issues a challenge demanding 'who is this "I"? where is this "I" situated?'[33] As it happens, Descartes (1596–1650) passed most of his life in Amsterdam, then a new centre of wealth and power, following a war with Spain. Knowing Descartes spatial and temporal location makes it possible to think that his attribution of omnipresence and omnipotence, qualities previously attributed only to gods, might stem from the elation of a geographically insignificant entity conquering a much larger state. 'I conquer therefore I think therefore I am' is Dussel's reading of Descartes.[34]

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[31] Ramón Grosfoguel, 2013, 'The structure of knowledge in westernized universities epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 11(1).

[32] An easy introduction to René Descartes is provided by C.G. Prado whose chapter 4 outlines the Cogito argument. See Prado, 2009, *Starting with Descartes*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing. Descartes himself can be found in volumes 1 and 2 of René Descartes, John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, 1985, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[33] Enrique Dussel, 2014, 'Anti-Cartesian meditations: On the origin of the philosophical anti-discourse of modernity', *Journal for Culture and Religious Theory* 13(1).

[34] The *ego conquiro*, ibid., 21. See also Enrique D. Dussel, Javier Krauel and Virginia C. Tuma, 2000, 'Europe, modernity, and eurocentrism', *Nepantla: Views from South* 1(3): 471.

For an analysis of Dussel's reinterpretation of Descartes see Linda Martín Alcoff, 2013, 'Philosophy, the conquest, and the meaning of modernity', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 11(1).

But, for Grosfoguel, 'I conquer' does not lead directly to 'I think therefore I am' since it does not account fully for the racial and sexist structures nor for the genocide, femicide and epistemicide that informed the era in which Descartes lived. Grosfoguel suggests, rather, that the logic that leads to *cogito ergo sum*, properly situated, is 'I conquer therefore I exterminate therefore I think therefore I am'. Cartesian thinking has informed European modernity through science, technology, politics and economics and European modernity has had a profound impact on other modernities and continues to shape global distributions of power and wealth. The legacy of extermination that informs Cartesian logic has shifted from Christianise, or I kill you (Indigenous Americans in the sixteenth century); to civilise, or I kill you (nineteenth century); to develop, or I kill you (twentieth century); to democratise, or I kill you (early twenty-first century).[35]

The habits of whiteness, which come from a belief in racial superiority, are at the core of European modernity. It pays to repeat—European modernity is hardly benign when viewed from the margins. Moreover, contemporary attempts to address gender equality and human rights have delivered only middling change—women in the West may have the vote but they still earn less than men and far more women are victims of violence and assault than are men.[36] European modernity remains highly sexist and racist because its foundations have not been dissolved. In this section I have employed the category 'modernity' uncritically. I will now unpack my usage of this controversial concept.

[35] Decolonial scholar Ramón Grosfoguel argued this point in a lecture at the 2014 Decolonizing Knowledge and Power Summer School in Barcelona. See also Ramón Grosfoguel, 2009, 'Human rights and anti-semitism after Gaza', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 7(2).

[36] In economically developed regions women earn 23 per cent less than men. See UN Women, 2016, 'Progress of the world's women 2015–2016. Transforming economies, realizing rights: Fact sheet developed regions', UN Women, 1.

Modernity/coloniality and alternative modernities

> Modernity is an alterity-generating machine that, in the name of reason and humanism, excludes from its imaginary the hybridity, multiplicity, ambiguity, and contingency of different forms of life.[37]

> Colonialism was founded on a series of discontinuities and contradictions. Having arisen in dialectic relationship with industrial capitalism—itself the product, in part, of an earlier global expansion—its culture reinscribed world history in its own Eurocentric terms. Colonizers everywhere purported to export modernity, designating all others as 'premodern.' They espoused an enlightened legal system but invented and enforced 'customary law'; offered that their civilizing mission would convert 'natives' into sovereign citizens of empire, autonomous individuals one and all, but abetted their becoming ethnic subjects in a racially divided world; held out the prospect of prosperity but left a legacy of poverty; undertook to save colonized people from the prison-house of tradition but reified and concocted traditions in which to enclose them; spoke of removing difference but engraved it ever more deeply onto the social and physical landscape.[38]

> Europe is literally the creation of the Third World.[39]

Modernity is a highly contentious social science category. In western discourse modernity is presented as societal modernisation or as cultural modernity. Associated with the former is the European Enlightenment and the advent of a scientific consciousness, the separation of church and state, a teleology based on scientific rationality and capitalist economy managed in a nation-state. This is structured on the ideas of contract and rule of law such that citizens are

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[37] Santiago Castro-Gomez & Desiree A. Martin, 2002, 'The social sciences, epistemic violence, and the problem of the "invention of the other"', *Nepantla: Views from South* 3(2): 269.

[38] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1997, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 27.

[39] Franz Fanon, 2002 (1961), *Les damnés de la terre*, Bibliothèque Paul-Émile-Boulet de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, 102. In the original French the text is:

> Cette opulence européenne est littéralement scandaleuse car elle a été bâtie sur le dos des esclaves, elle s'est nourrie du sang des esclaves, elle vient en droite ligne du sol et du sous-sol de ce monde développé. Le bien-être et le progrès de l'Europe ont été bâtis avec la sueur et les cadavres des nègres, des Arabes, des Indiens et des Jaunes. See Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre*, 98–99.

provided with security, education and employment, especially when they can be congregated into urban spaces.[40] With roots in the Romantic movement, cultural modernity, on the other hand—according to Dilip Gaonkar—is a reaction to the preoccupation with rationality, an anti-bourgeois position, which for Charles Baudelaire is an attitude of critiquing the present, whatever epoch that present might be.[41]

Critiques of the (Enlightenment=modernity) proposition include Latin American decolonial scholars for whom modernity as a temporality commenced in 1492 with the arrival of Columbus in the Americas and the emergence of a system of economic expansion and capital development predicated on race.[42] Modernity is also theorised as a mode of spatiality and other critiques of Euromodernity propose that there are multiple or alternative modernities which become visible when Europe is provincialised.[43] Philosopher Charles Taylor suggests that theories of modernity are cultural—grounded in a specific location and social practices—or acultural in that they propose a single, teleological progression from tradition into a Euromodernity which is not named as such because it is seen as Modernity.[44]

Into the morass of competing ideas Arif Dirlik enters and questions the value of theorising alternative modernities.[45] His concern is the fetishisation of

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[40] Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, 1999, 'On alternative modernities', *Public Culture* 11(1): 2

[41] Ibid., 6.

[42] Dussel, 'Europe, modernity, and eurocentrism'; Enrique Dussel, 1993, 'Eurocentrism and modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt lectures)', *boundary 2* 20(3): 20; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*; Quijano, 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality'; Quijano, 'Questioning "Race"'.

[43] Such as in Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

[44] Charles Taylor, 1999, 'Two theories of modernities', *Public Culture* 11(1).

[45] An exploration of the relationship between modernisation, modernity, development and alternatives can be found in Arturo Escobar, 2008, 'Development, trans/modernities, and the politics of theory', *Focaal* 2008(Winter).

An overview of conceptualisations of alternative modernities can be found in Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 2010, 'New modernities: What's new?', in Sérgio Costa, Manuela Boatcă and Rodríguez Encarnación Gutiérrez (eds), *Decolonizing European Sociology: Transdisciplinary Approaches*, Farnham: Ashgate; Arif Dirlik, 2013, 'Thinking modernity historically: Is "alternative modernity" the answer?' *Asian Review of World Histories* 1(1).

difference without substantive change to power structures. In other words, global cultural politics has in some cases become divorced from global political economy and the impacts of the globalisation of capital. It is for this reason I favour the modernity/coloniality framing first developed by Aníbal Quijano. Intrinsic to colonisation is coloniality. Coloniality is a theory of power whereas colonisation is one type of enactment of that power. It is a type of power that is racially constructed—coloniality is the indispensable partner of Eurocentric modernity which has relied on the creation and imposition of an ideology of racial hierarchy to expropriate, control and dominate for the last 500 years.[46] Race, says Quijano 'is surely the most efficient instrument of social domination produced in the last 500 years'.[47] In this model of race, whiteness is the pinnacle. Given the relationship between modernity and coloniality, it should then come as no surprise (as it seems to Ira Bashkow) that in parts of PNG, 'it proved impossible to separate people's ideas of race from their ideas of modernity. Modernity, among Orokaiva, is so deeply "raced" that it is a racial concept itself'.[48]

Despite the post-World War II project of political decolonisation many of the forms of oppression experienced by colonised peoples continue. One such oppression is epistemic violence. It is the absence of plurality in a global political and economic order dominated by the ideology of whiteness under which knowledge production is valid only when sanctioned by the rules and standards

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See also Dipesh Chakrabarty, 2011, 'The muddle of modernity', *The American Historical Review* 116(3); Robbie Shilliam, 2010, 'Modernity and modernization', in Robert A. Denemark (ed.), *The International Studies Encyclopedia Vol. VIII*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

[46] Quijano, 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality'; 'Questioning "Race"'; Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance*.

[47] Quijano, 'Questioning "Race"', 45.

[48] Ira Bashkow, 2006, *The Meaning of Whitemen: Race and Modernity in the Orokaiva Cultural World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 9.

of whiteness.[49] This oppression has always faced a push-back, growing stronger as the last millennium ended and as this one unfolds.[50]

I first noticed a shift in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Around 2006/2007 I noticed that in conversations with majority world peoples, who may or may not have considered themselves westernised, topics that had previously been taboo began to make their way into discussion. Technology has no doubt had an impact on the way we share information and I hazard a guess that as citizens of the majority world began to discover their sentiments shared in other parts of the planet they derived a strength from that. Of course, western invasions of non-western countries on the flimsiest pretexts of global security and human rights, combined with the drama and impact of climactic events such as floods and tsunamis which link to a discourse of human-consumption-induced climate change where that consumption is clearly historically and geopolitically demarcated, contribute to the sense of failure of European modernity to live up to its self-proclaimed singular promises. And the contenders for global power now include China and India. People of the majority world probably sense they have greater ontologic and epistemic alternatives than ever before. I have struggled to make sense of these shifts that I have been observing but in mid-2016 they began to coalesce into what I now refer to as the 'Fuck You Žižek' moment,[51] encapsulated more elegantly by

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[49] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1–80; Hamid Dabashi, 2015, *Can Non-Europeans Think?* London: Zed Books, 30–43; Mignolo, 'Foreword: Yes, we can'; 2011, 'Epistemic disobedience and the decolonial option: A manifesto', *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2).

[50] Of the mid-twentieth century push back, the canon includes Franz Fanon, 1952, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*, Bibliothèque Paul-Émile-Boulet de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi; *Les damnes de la terre*; Aimé Césaire, 1972, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review Press.

[51] Hamid Dabashi, 2016, 'Fuck You Žižek!' *ZED*, online.

The text which inspired Dabashi can be found in Kishore Mahbubani, 2002, *Can Asians think?: Understanding the Divide Between East and West*, South Royalton, VT and Berkeley, CA: Steerforth Press.

Walter Mignolo, who wrote: 'We are no longer silent, nor asking for recognition'.[52]

The FU Ži moment and Mignolo's statement above are entwined for Mignolo writes this sentence in a foreword to Dabashi's *Can non-Europeans think?*, a book that had grown out of an earlier essay and with which Mignolo had entered into conversation. According to Dabashi, and disputed by Žižek, the latter's affronted response to the suggestion that there are more interesting philosophers in the majority world was 'Fuck you, Walter Mignolo'.[53] This elicited the equally inelegant response from Dabashi. Leaving aside the macho posturing what might this moment represent? Let me share a bit more of Dabashi's blog.

> I was in fact addressing no European philosopher at all. But whenever something happens anywhere around the world they think it has something to [do] with them. It does not. And that precisely is the point: people like me are no longer interested in whatever it is they fancy to be 'hegemonic' or 'counter-hegemonic' in Europe and for Europeans … Žižek and his fellow philosophers are oblivious to those geographies because they cannot read any other script, any other map, than the colonial script and the colonial map with which Europeans have read and navigated the world … There is a new condition beyond postcoloniality that these Europeans cannot read, hard as they try to assimilate it back into the condition of coloniality.[54]

Now let me apply the FU Ži moment to the intent and production of this thesis. Western thought, like all bodies of knowledge, has a history of borrowing. For example, Mauss' concept of the gift derived from Oceanic and Native American philosophies has had a profound impact on both scholarship and on the policies that gave birth to western welfare states.[55]

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[52] Mignolo, 'Foreword: Yes, we can', xxix.

[53] Dabashi, 'Fuck You Žižek!', 1.

[54] Ibid., 2.

[55] Nicholas Olivier, 2008, *Marcel Mauss, Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, Lectures: Presses universitaires de France:

> Selon Florence Weber, L'essai sur le don doit même être considéré comme un « chaînon essentiel dans l'invention d'une sécurité sociale à la française ». En effet,

That humans are learning beings could well be the raison d'être of our species. From the moment of birth we are learning how to adapt to and thrive in our environment. As we grow we often generate new knowledge. This new knowledge is created by taking what is, viewing it through new lenses, or by taking the introduced and refashioning it for a different context. Nobody views as bizarre that a Frenchman named Mauss would develop a theory that entered into French public policy from concepts he borrowed from the Massim peoples, *inter alia*. But when the adoption happens in reverse, when the Massim peoples adopt, for example, aspects of Christianity, it suddenly becomes of scholarly import to interpret why these brown people want to adopt whiteness. These same brown people have never asked why white people might have suddenly awakened to 'gift economies' to the extent that their national economic and social policies are transformed.

The Massim people do not ask of the European 'why does he want to become Massim?' but the European is fond of asking 'why does the Massim person want to become white?' And the Massim scholar has to justify why it is that the Massim people do not want to become white, but are merely engaging in what white people do, what all peoples do, which is to borrow, build, create, since life without imagination and experimentation would not be living. Moreover, the Massim would have to put all of this into the language of the

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Mauss affirme que la société n'est pas quitte envers les travailleurs qui lui ont donné leur vie : elle doit donc leur donner les moyens de vivre décemment en période de vieillesse et de chômage. Pour lui, le travail salarié doit être au centre de la solidarité sociale, « comme un don qui appelle une contrepartie au-delà du seul salaire ». *Cette logique a donné naissance au système de Sécurité sociale français*. Les analyses de Mauss ont donc une portée très contemporaine : elles sont en partie portées par l'exigence de trouver des réponses aux problèmes des sociétés occidentales. C'est ainsi que pour Florence Weber, il faut relire Mauss à l'heure où le modèle social français est remis en cause: le « détour ethnographique » permet de mettre en évidence l'universalité et la complexité du mécanisme de don - contre don. L'étude de sociétés traditionnelles de Polynésie, de Mélanésie implique un « décentrement de l'observateur » qui donne des outils pour penser la réalité contemporaine [my emphasis] (online).

whiteness. For as Fanon once said: '[N]ot only must the black man be black, he must be black in relation to the white man'.[56]

But there came a point, sometime in the first decade of the new millennium when a shift began to occur across majority world cultures. At first it wasn't clear what exactly the shift was. But by the middle of the next decade it had become clear. It came with Dabashi's 'Fuck you Žižek' moment which came shortly after Linda Martín Alcoff declared that: 'Whiteness is not cool, it is not on the right side of history, and it is associated with many troubling dispositions, most importantly racism'.[57]

It is no longer acceptable to define being coloured in relation to whiteness. White is but one of many colours. And this thesis does not set out to explain why the Massim people might have wanted to become white since such an interpretation is only visible from a superior vantage point on a racial hierarchy. Like other peoples, the Massim have strategies for cultural and social reproduction, and like other majority world peoples, the Massim wanted access to the privileges of whiteness to further these reproduction strategies.[58] This is not the same thing as wanting to be white and to misconstrue it is to continue a practice of epistemic violence.

Decolonial theory defines epistemic violence as the fundamentalist insistence that the only valid knowledge production is Eurocentric. This epistemic violence has been crucial in the maintenance of the hegemony of whiteness, such that majority world peoples are relegated to the role of passive observers, to be needy recipients of Eurocentric ideas and practices, and dependent on Eurocentric production of knowledge. Eurocentrism and

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[56] Franz Fanon, 2008 (1952), *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, 82–83.

[57] Linda Martín Alcoff, 2015, *The Future of Whiteness*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 7.

[58] Anthropologists have typically analysed the Massim peoples through gift exchange and reciprocity, a trend started by Malinowski. Annette Weiner challenged this with a theoretical innovation which proposed that exchange and reciprocity are part of a system of reproduction—'a reproductive system – in which the reproduction and regeneration of persons, objects, and relationships are integrated and encapsulated'. See Annette B. Weiner, 1980, 'Reproduction: A replacement for reciprocity', *American Ethnologist* 7(1): 71.

whiteness are grounded in the same ideology of a racial hierarchy that privileges the European race. Any distinctions in the scholarly application of these concepts seems to be discipline and/or geography bound—scholars of international politics will use 'Eurocentric' whereas scholars of critical race theory in settler societies will tend towards 'whiteness'. I use both interchangeably since my focus is transdisciplinary. The Eurocentric bias in the case of the descriptions and interpretations of the Massim and Kwato peoples is the epistemic racism and epistemic violence of a history told by, and interpreted from, the perspective of whiteness. Furthermore, let's situate temporally this Eurocentric bias. It is but a blip, if even that, in the course of the history of our species, *Homo sapiens*.

The space I devote to excavating the deep past may appear to be extreme in relation to my thesis questions. But it is in keeping with my indigenous ontologic and episteme within which the past is always present and at the same time is shaping the future. We hold our ancestors in high esteem, and we recognise that we would not be here were it not for them. Europeans, too, practice their own form of ancestor worship—their ontologic and epistemic structures of the present are in no small measure the genealogical offspring of long dead white males.

Chapter Five

The Deep Past

> It is slowly dawning on Europeans that the rest of the world has a mind of its own, philosophies of its own, and increasingly an economy of its own to boot – and it is a traumatic realisation. Unwilling to take this reality lying down, the US has been leading its 'allied' clients into a permanent of state of war with the planet and its inhabitants which has now been raging across various battlefields for at least 15 years, and continues to grow.[1]

Dan Glazebrook's observation is clearly about the very recent past. The very recent past can be understood by reference to the recent past, say the last one thousand years. This also happens to be the period over which Europeans have come to dominate the global space politically, economically and culturally. But this domination, which was never absolute, is waning. For the majority world the psychic shock of being dominated is retreating. In the twenty-first century, the hierarchy of white supremacy is threatened. And the assertion of different trajectories of human experience is being validated. But while our cultural paths may diverge our biology points to the same origin.

My decolonial interpretation of Kwato history and Massim peoples takes as its starting point not just the perspectives of the indigenous peoples, it also takes a view of history from the level of the species. This approach brings into sharp relief certain ideas about modernity/coloniality which only pertain to the last millennium.

Genus. Species. Race?

Anatomically and biologically, whites and majority world peoples are the same. We are all of the species *Homo sapiens* and as far as we can tell, our species, indeed the *Hominidae* to which the genus *Homo* belongs, are exclusively earthlings. That is to say, that *Hominidae* and *Homo* exist nowhere outside of

[1] Dan Glazebrook, 2015, 'With enemies like this, imperialism doesn't need friends', *Counterpunch Magazine*, 16 March.

this planet, which also points to the intimate relationship between the evolutionary paths of the planet and *Homo sapiens*.

Our knowledge of these twinned evolutionary paths is circumscribed by the available fossil data and by technology, as well as by the challenges of interpreting deep time, and there are many hypotheses for planetary history and for human evolution.[2] There are also many hypotheses about the influence of planetary shifts on the changes to *Hominidae* family and ultimately on the emergence of *Homo sapiens*. Needless to say, the planet sciences and human origins sciences are in constant flux with new discoveries constantly refining and reshaping these thought-scapes.[3] Human taxonomic terminology is as dynamic as the disciplines which use it.[4] Here, I use *hominim* for the members of the genus *Homo*, as well as the genera *Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus* and *Ardipithecus*. *Hominid*, on the other hand, includes the ancestors of *Homo*, the chimpanzee, as well as other bipeds such as gorillas, orang-utans, and their ancestors.

What it means, however, to be human is more stable. A human is a biped, has an opposable thumb, and possesses an enlarged brain relative to other *hominims*.[5] These have influenced the emergence and development of language, tools and culture.[6] Culture I take to mean local practices—all the ways

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[2] Committee on the Earth System Context for Hominin Evolution, Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, Division on Earth and Life Studies, 2010, *Understanding Climate's Influence on Human Evolution*, Washington: National Academies Press.

[3] For instance, new findings published in 2016 suggest that Remote Oceania was initially colonised by people of East Asian origin, and later population movements introduced Papuan DNA. Pontus Skoglund, Pontus, Cosimo Posth, Kendra Sirak, et al., 2016, 'Genomic insights into the peopling of the Southwest Pacific', *Nature* 538(7626).

[4] Alexander Harcourt, 2012, *Human Biogeography (1)*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 4.

[5] Committee on the Earth System Context for Hominin Evolution, Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, Division on Earth and Life Studies and National Research, *Understanding Climate's Influence on Human Evolution*.

[6] Humans are not the only animals that make and use tools. Gorillas, chimpanzees, orang-utans, elephants, and crows and octopuses are amongst other toolmakers. See J.D. Pruetz, P. Bertolani, K. Boyer Ontl, et al., 2015, 'New evidence on the tool-assisted hunting exhibited by chimpanzees (Pan troglodytes verus) in a savannah habitat at Fongoli, Sénégal', *Royal Society Open Science* 2(April).

of engaging with one's environment and with other humans, beyond the necessities for basic survival. Surprisingly, despite the regional variations in human populations, *Homo sapiens* is a species that is unusually genetically homogenous.[7] Unusual because the wide dispersal of humans over the planet would suggest otherwise and surprising because of the insistence by some groups of people on race as a marker of significant difference between humans. In fact,

> a large number of studies from a variety of labs and continents on a variety of bits of the genome all agree that more genetic variation exists within chimp subspecies, even a single population of chimpanzees, than within the whole global population of humans.[8]
>
> In sum, spatial gradation in traits and extraordinary genetic homogeneity make 'race' as the word is used in normal discourse a sociopolitical concept, not a biological concept.[9]

Race is, thus, a spurious biological category. Since, there is no biological basis for race, the fact of its existence suggests it has been socially constructed, and the most obvious outcome for engaging in such is to usurp. It has been, and continues to be, a tool of control and domination. Race remains elemental to the structure of power. Therefore, deconstruction of assertions of the singularity of whiteness and modernity requires that we look at history at the level of the species as well as deconstructing at the level of cultural epochs.

Whiteness suffers from myopia—ontologically blind to Others, it is also temporally short-sighted. Blindness as a form of ignorance is both consciously and unconsciously practised as a means of oppression.[10] But when we transcend

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See also Frans de Waal, 2016, *Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?* London: Granta; Jennifer Ackerman, 2016, *The Genius of Birds*, London: Corsair, 73–74, 84–85.

[7] Harcourt, *Human Biogeography (1)*, 6–7.

[8] Ibid., 6.

[9] Ibid., 7.

[10] Charles W. Mills, 2007, 'White ignorance', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, Albany: State University of New York Press; Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, 2007, 'Introduction', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds), *Race and*

this myopia we can wonder at the adventuring exploits, the creative genius, and the robust resilience of the true discoverers of Milne Bay. In terms of decolonial scholarship, deep history serves to remind us all that we come from common origins.

What is deep history?

Deep history is an approach that starts with the first *Homo sapiens*, not with the invention of writing.[11] It is concerned with a history that includes human beginnings, not just the very recent past.[12] Deep history reminds us that the basic physiology of our species *Homo sapiens* is the same, however, the manner in which many of our genes are expressed is not hardcoded.

Modernity and whiteness are so powerfully enmeshed in the historical narrative and in the collective un/conscious as to be taken to be synonymous. Deep history provides us the opportunity to construct an historical narrative

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Epistemologies of Ignorance, Albany: State University of New York Press; Alison Bailey, 2007, 'Strategic ignorance', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, Albany: State University of New York Press; Linda Martín Alcoff, 2007, 'Epistemologies of ignorance: Three types', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

An example of the practice of an epistemology of ignorance comes from Tracy Banivanua Mar who writes 'Australia did not forget its black history through absent-mindedness, but rather through an active process of repressing the full picture of the past.' See Tracey Banivanua-Mar, 2012, 'Settler-colonial landscapes and narratives of possession', *Arena Journal* 37/38: 178.

Of the many texts on the experience of the oppression resulting from ignorance, I have been influenced by, *inter alia*: bell hooks, 1982, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism,* Boston, MA: South End Press; Toni Morrison, 1987, *Beloved: A Novel*, New York: Knopf; Ralph Ellison, 1952, *Invisible Man*, New York: Vintage International, Vintage Books.

[11] Proponents of a deep history approach include: Daniel Lord Smail, 2008, *On Deep History and the Brain*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Writing deep history is Yuval N. Harari, 2014, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, London: Vintage Books.

Epeli Hau'ofa urges Oceanians to reclaim our autonomy by engaging with our own deep history and our adventuring Austronesian ancestors. The division of prehistory and history is a spurious binary that serves the cultural domination of whiteness. Epeli Hau'ofa, 1994, 'Our sea of islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6(1); 2000, 'The ocean in us', in Antony Hooper (ed.), *Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press.

[12] It then begs the question of how one might access a past that is not written? Archaeology is one means of access. In Oceania, oral history is another means, as is historical linguistics.

that is independent of whiteness and of the development of the nation-state on which is built the grand narratives of European modernity. Reaching into the deep past destabilises European knowledge of Others that places the European Enlightenment as the central origin from which all is measured.

Finally, there are many ways of knowing the world. Our species has occupied this planet for longer than we have had writing and science.[13] Yet privilege is given to knowledge generated through writing and through science and this privilege has been claimed by white men in the most violent, brutal and bloody confrontations with white women and with majority world peoples; encounters that have had the purpose of control and domination of bodies and of minds.[14] Whiteness in these interactions has been bereft of wonder and has deemed the Other unworthy of such. Let us reclaim a sense of wonder through engaging with the Austronesians across deep time.

Discovering PNG and settling Milne Bay

> Discover: 'be the first to find or observe (a place, substance, or scientific phenomenon)'.[15]

Strangely, since they acknowledge that these lands were inhabited before they arrived, Europeans claimed to have 'discovered' the island of New Guinea, and thus the region that is Milne Bay, imposing on the land and seascape foreign nomenclatures such as Melanesia, Papua, New Guinea, Milne Bay and many others.[16] Yet the very presence of inhabitants points to the fact that they, if not, settlers prior to them, are the ones who should properly lay claim to the act of

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[13] See Chris Ballard, 2014, 'Oceanic historicities', *The Contemporary Pacific* 26(1).

[14] I have elaborated this process of privilege-grabbing in Chapter 4.

[15] English Oxford *Living* Dictionaries, s.v. discover. Online: en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/discover (accessed 2 December 2017).

[16] Critiquing the 'discovery' trope in Oceania: Margaret Jolly, 2007, 'Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and foreign representations of a sea of islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 19(2).

Critiquing the idea of vacant spaces and denial of existing inhabitants in Oceania: Tracey Banivanua-Mar, 2009, 'Frontier space and the reification of the Rule of Law: Colonial negotiations in the Western Pacific, 1870–74', *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 30(1); 'Settler-colonial landscapes and narratives of possession'.

discovery. But the (il)logic of white supremacy is such that Massim peoples, who, described by various European explorers as copper coloured or olive skinned, cannot lay claim to the discovery of Milne Bay.[17] They are not white.

Indeed, fundamental to a racialising ideology was the doctrine of discovery and the notion of empty space which essentially dehumanises non-white people to justify their colonisation and European expropriation.[18] The notion of empty space was developed by Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda during his participation in the Valladolid Controversy in 1550 in which he argued the right of the Spanish crown to colonise and enslave Native Americans.[19] His ideas were developed some 500 years following the beginning of the Crusades in 1095. I draw attention to this to point out that the ascent of Western Europe that began with the Crusades and the conquering of the Mediterranean, then the Atlantic, and then elsewhere, has been predicated on religion/race and militarism. At the start of the crusades Europeans started to construct the Other in religious imagery. A religious hierarchy was constructed which morphed into a racial hierarchy some 500 years later. By the late nineteenth century Europeans had refined and imposed their racial hierarchy onto the peoples of the Pacific Ocean and the British crown had claimed the Territory of Papua.[20]

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[17] Ernest-Théodore Hamy, 1889, 'Etude Sur Les Papouas de La Mer D'Entrecasteaux', *Revue d'Ethnographie* 7.

[18] Peter Fitzpatrick, 2002, 'Doctrine of discovery', in David Theo Goldberg and John Solomos (eds), *A Companion to Racial and Ethnic Studies*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley; Robert J. Miller, 2010, *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2011, 'American Indians, the doctrine of discovery, and manifest destiny', *Wyoming Law Review* 11; Luna Nájera, 2011, 'Myth and prophecy in Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's Crusading "Exhortación"', *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* 35(1).

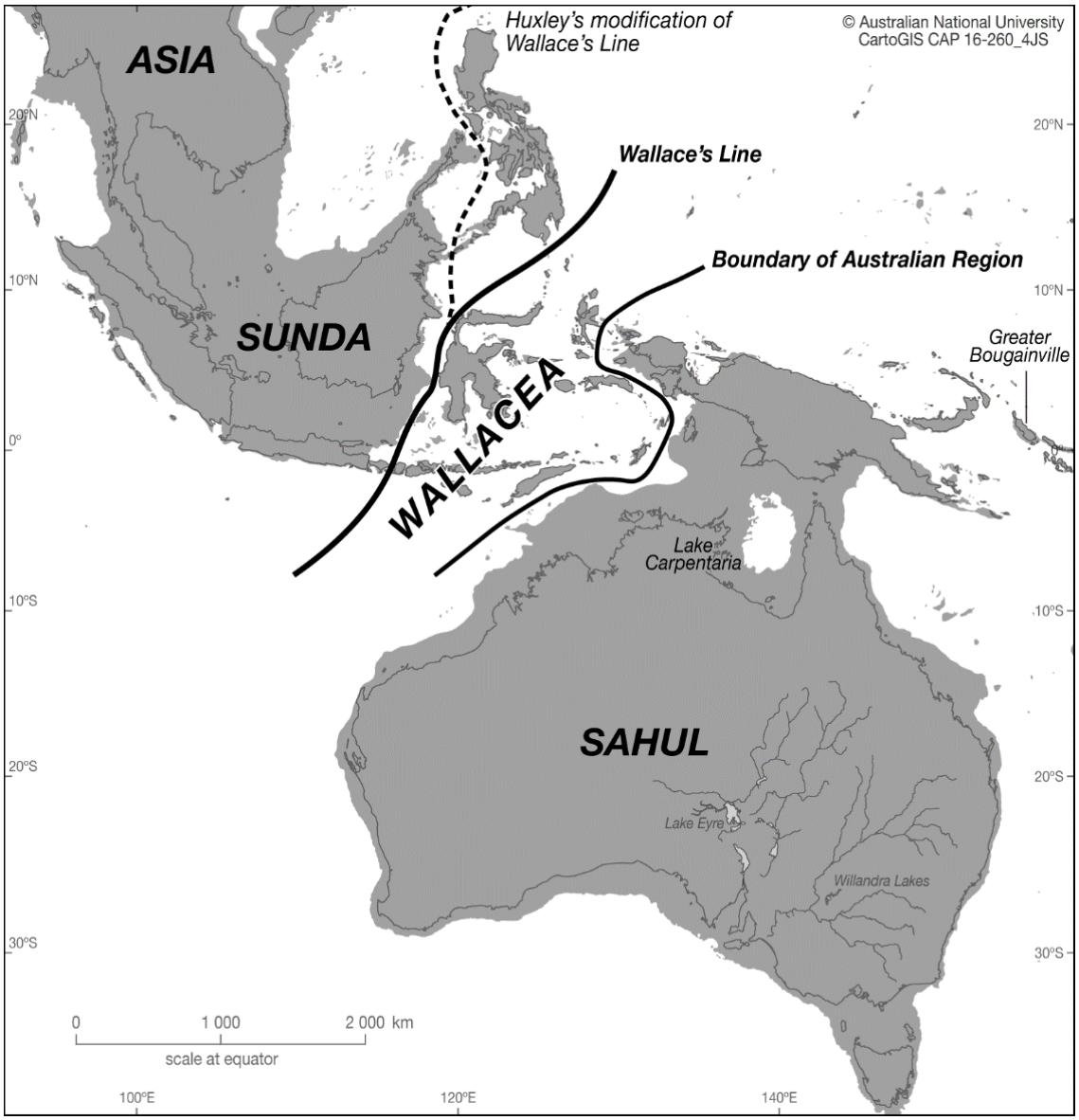
And continuing impact of: Lisa Strelein, 2015, 'The right to resources and the right to trade', in Sean Brennan, Megan Davis, Brendan Edgeworth and Leon Terrill (eds), *Native Title from Mabo to Akiba: A Vehicle for Change and Empowerment?* Annandale: Federation Press.

[19] Luna Nájera, 'Myth and prophecy in Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's Crusading "Exhortación"'.

Indigenous Americans were put into *encomiendas* where, although not enslaved, they were nonetheless captive. *Encomienda* was used by the Spanish crown in the Americas to legitimate expropriation of indigenous territories and also enabled the virtual enslavement of indigenous peoples who were expected to pay tribute to the *encomenderos*.

[20] The 'othering' that took place by Europeans in Oceania was both religious and 'scientific'. See Margaret Jolly and Serge Tcherkézoff, 2009, 'Oceanic encounters: A prelude', in Margaret

But Papua was already inhabited. Who were these inhabitants? More specifically, who were the inhabitants of the region that later came to be called Massim by European anthropologists, and where did they come from?



Map 3. Deep time. The ancient continents of Sunda and Sahul. It was only about 6,000 years ago that sea levels stabilised to create the separate land masses with which we are familiar.
Source. © CartoGIS CAP 16-260_4JS. The Australian National University

Our home, the planet Earth, is estimated to have been formed 4.6 billion years ago. But, our earliest human ancestor, *Homo erectus*, descended from the

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Jolly, Serge Tcherkézoff and Darrell Tryon (eds), *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

For the shifts in ideas of race in Oceania see also Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), 2008, *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

chimpanzee, only appears one to two million years ago. Modern humans, those extant, are known as *Homo sapiens*, forming part of the genus *Homo*, under which are other extinct human species such as *Neanderthals* who died out some 30,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens* are estimated to have been around for about 200,000 years, and started to become the dominant human species some 50,000 years ago. There are several theories explaining the development of *Homo sapiens* but all point to our common origins in Africa.[21]

Our ancestor, *Homo erectus*, moved into Java between 500,000 and one million years ago.[22] The reach of *Homo erectus* is wonder-inducing considering the technology available to her at the time—archaeological evidence places her in regions as diverse as South Africa, Kenya, Spain and China.[23] Material evidence is then in short supply until about 45,000 years ago. Moving over land and sea from the Sundaland expanse of Southeast Asia, *Homo sapiens*, descended from *Homo erectus*, settles Ancient Near Oceania.[24] Technology had developed to a point in which the sea passage through which runs the Wallace Line—that boundary line proposed by British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace in 1859 as the demarcation of the ecological regions of Asia and Australia, or Sunda and Sahul (Map 3)—could be overcome. The development of the raft was key to the mobility of these early modern humans.[25]

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[21] The Replacement Model of the development of modern humans proposes that all humans alive today descend from a common ancestor who lived in what is today Ethiopia, at the end of the last Ice Age. This is on the basis that the earliest skeletal remains dating some 200,000 years old have been found in the Rift Valley. The Regional Continuity Model, however, suggests that a contemporaneous development in different parts of the planet, of *Homo sapiens* after initial migrations from Africa some two million years ago. A third model has been developed in an attempt to account for the shortcomings of the above models. The Assimilation Model proposes that *Homo sapiens* migrating from Africa procreated with other species of the genus *Homo*, such as the Neanderthals in Europe. This interbreeding of different species has culminated today in modern humans also known as *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

[22] R.C. Green, 1991, 'Near and remote Oceania – disestablishing "Melanesia" in culture history', in Andrew Pawley (ed.), *Man and a Half : Essays in Pacific Anthropology and Ethnobiology in Honour of Ralph Bulmer (Memoire No. 48)*, Auckland: Polynesian Society, 496.

[23] There are scientific contentions around the classification of some of these as *Homo erectus* or as another species.

[24] Green, 'Near and remote Oceania – disestablishing "Melanesia" in culture history', 496–97.

[25] Ibid., 497–500.

In what is now Papua New Guinea there is archaeological evidence of settlements in New Ireland 33,000 years ago, Buka 29,000 years ago, and New Britain 11,400 years ago.[26] Settlers likely came from north eastern Sunda via northern Sahul. Despite sea levels being around 40–70 metres below levels of today, distances travelled would have been much the same as today. In fact, around 17,000 BP global temperatures were at the lowest and sea levels were 130 metres below present levels.[27] According to Matthew Spriggs:

> [P]leistocene occupation of Manus attests to the longest known open-ocean voyage in world history up to that time … Equivalent distances were probably not being crossed in the Mediterranean until the last 10,000 years.[28]

Then about 10,000 years ago geologists estimate the start of the shift from Pleistocene to Holocene when ice began to melt and global temperatures began to rise to arrive at their present ranges. By 6,000 years ago sea levels had stabilised and Australia and New Guinea became separate land masses.[29]

It is around this time that Austronesian speakers likely colonised first Taiwan, then around 5,000 BP the Philippines.[30] Further technological development in ocean-going craft would enable their movement out of Near Oceania to Remote Oceania.[31] In Near Oceania, the emergence of Lapita culture about 3,000 years ago, distinct in its use of agriculture and pottery, and

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[26] Matthew Spriggs, 1997, *The Island Melanesians*, Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 23.

[27] Ibid., 43. See also D.T. Tryon, 1984, 'The peopling of the Pacific: A linguistic appraisal', *The Journal of Pacific History* 19(3); A.G. Thorne and Robert Raymond, 1989, *Man on the Rim: The Peopling of the Pacific*, North Ryde: Angus & Robertson.

[28] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 23.

[29] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 20; Green, 'Near and remote Oceania – disestablishing "Melanesia" in culture history', 498.

[30] Bellwood, 'Austronesian prehistory in Southeast Asia: Homeland, expansion and transformation', 105–106; Pedro A. Soares, Jean A. Trejaut, Teresa Rito, Bruno Cavadas, et al., 2016, 'Resolving the ancestry of Austronesian-speaking populations', *Human Genetics* 135(3): 309–11, 322.

[31] Green, 'Near and remote Oceania – disestablishing "Melanesia" in culture history', 498.

Near Oceania denotes the initial settlement of western Oceania and Remote Oceania denotes the later settlement by Austronesians. The terms were introduced by Roger Green to disrupt usage of the racially inflected Melanesia and Polynesia.

domestication of pigs, dogs and chickens, extended from the Bismark Archipelago to Western Polynesia, and encompassed a trade network for obsidian stretching from Fiji to Borneo, some 7,000 kilometres.[32] Other wonder-full expressions of human creativity during these millennia include the Egyptian pyramids (from approximately 4,500 BP) and Mayan ceremonial architecture (from approximately 3,000 BP).

The early Austronesian speakers were characterised also by agriculture and sailing. Farming was first practised about 12,000 BP as the ice cover of the Pleistocene Age began to recede and the warmer temperatures of the Holocene Age began to dominate.[33] Agriculture is thought to have emerged spontaneously in different regions from southwest Asia to the Middle East to China to Mesoamerica—in the New Guinea Highlands there is evidence of cultivation some 10,000 years BP[34]—but it would take another several thousand years before it replaced foraging, gathering and hunting to become the dominant means of subsistence for *Homo sapiens*. So, at the time of the early Austronesians agriculture was still an unusual (and wonder-full!) technology and along with sailing technologies gave these people a competitive advantage over the contemporary hunter-gatherer societies.[35]

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[32] Lapita is named for the site in New Caledonia at which the pottery was first uncovered by archaeologists. See Green, 'Near and remote Oceania – disestablishing "Melanesia" in culture history', 498.

Mathew Spriggs argues that Lapita was a culture not just a form of pottery. Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 67–107.

[33] Graeme Barker, 2006, *The Agricultural Revolution in Prehistory: Why did Foragers become Farmers?* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1–41.

[34] T.P. Denham, S.G. Haberle, C. Lentfer, et al., 2003, 'Origins of agriculture at Kuk Swamp in the Highlands of New Guinea', *Science* 301(5630).

The people of the PNG Highlands are not Austronesian language speakers.

[35] Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox and Darrell Tryon, 1995, 'The Austronesians in history: Common origins and diverse transformations', in Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox and Darrell Tryon (eds), T*he Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 5–8.

Current evidence shows parts of the Milne Bay region to have had settlements from at least around 14,000 BP.[36] There is then a long gap in evidence of settlement until pottery evidence of 2800–2600 BP.[37] Along the south coast of Papua there is more pottery evidence, possibly Lapita-influenced, suggesting an Austronesian movement along the Milne Bay coast, followed by a colonisation of the islands and further westwards. The colonisation was characterised by sea expeditions into areas in which there appears to have been little competition for land and other resources.[38] The sites excavated show marked similarities—small villages and hamlets in which gardening, fishing and hunting were the main productive activities.[39] There is also evidence at these sites of obsidian sourced from Fergusson Island indicating trading relationships between the south coast and the northern islands.[40] Obsidian from Fergusson found in a Lapita site in the Reef Santa Cruz Islands suggests contact between the indigenous and the Lapita peoples.[41]

The Lapita Cultural Complex may not have been the first Austronesian settlement in the Pacific and whilst it is impossible to determine the motives for the mobility of these peoples this phase of colonisation was one of action rather than reaction—that is, the voyagers were well equipped, suggesting long-term planning. Moreover, the archaeological evidence does not show demographic pressures in the regions from whence they migrated and the colonisers were

[36] Geoffrey Irwin, 1991, 'Themes in the prehistory of coastal Papua and the Massim', In Andrew Pawley (ed.), *Man and a Half: Essays in Pacific Anthropology and Ethnobiology in Honour of Ralph Bulmer (Memoire No. 48)*, Auckland: Polynesian Society, 503.

[37] Ben Shaw, 2016. 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology', *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* 7(1): 116, 118.

[38] Irwin, 'Themes in the prehistory of coastal Papua and the Massim', 503.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Shaw, 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology', 116.

selective about where to settle despite the multiple options available in Near Oceania.[42] As Epeli Hau'ofa notes:

> Only blind landlubbers would say [Oceanic settlements] were made through accidental voyages by people who got blown off course—presumably while they were out fishing with their wives, children, pigs, dogs, and food-plant seedlings—during a hurricane.[43]

Settlement of Oceania was not a chance occurrence—the agential capacities as well as the technology and skills of the Austronesians were at play here, skills still evident in Milne Bay. For instance, Austronesian culture everywhere includes boats, constructed, as their houses are, without nails.[44] Maritime peoples, such as the Massim, the Motu and the Mailu (the latter two also live on the south coast of Papua), have always been able to interpret the physical environment in order to leverage winds, tides, clouds and stars for voyaging and navigation.[45] Indeed, this navigational knowledge in the person of Tupaia, and his advice and mapping of the ocean, eased Captain Cook's passage across the Pacific.[46]

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[42] Geoffrey Irwin, 1992, *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonisation of the Pacific*, Oakleigh and New York: Cambridge University Press, 212.

[43] Epeli Hau'ofa, 1994, 'Our Sea of Islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6(1): 154.

[44] Robert Blust, 2013, *The Austronesian Languages*, Canberra: Asia–Pacific Linguistics Open Access Monographs, 14.

[45] The Mailu peoples speak both Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages and there is a long history of exchange between the two language groups. See Tom Dutton, 1997, 'From pots to people: Fine-tuning the prehistory of Mailu Island and neighbouring coast, south-east Papua New Guinea', in Roger Blench and Matthew Spriggs (eds), *Archaeology and Language III: Artefacts, Languages and Texts*, London and New York: Routledge, 95, 97–98.

Undertaking one such voyage and mapping the skies, winds and tides permitted Irwin to grasp how it was possible for Austronesian colonisation of Oceania to occur. See Irwin, *The Prehistoric Exploration and Colonisation of the Pacific*, 7–13, 216–21.

This navigational knowledge is a common thread across Oceania and is celebrated by Hau'ofa as the basis of the common identity of Oceanians. Epeli Hau'ofa, 1994, 'Our sea of islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6(1); 2000, 'The ocean in us', in Antony Hooper (ed.), *Culture and Sustainable Development in the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press.

[46] See Jolly, 'Imagining Oceania: Indigenous and foreign representations of a sea of islands'.

Event	Time Period
Formation of Planet Earth	~4.6 billion
Appearance of Homo erectus	~1-2 million to 50,000
Emergence of Homo sapiens	~200,000
Domination of Homo sapiens	~50,000
Maritime voyages to settle New Ireland	~33,000[47]
Maritime voyages to settle in Buka	~29,000[48]
Homo sapiens settlements in southern Milne Bay	~14,000-10,000[49]
Maritime voyages to settle in New Britain	~11,400[50]
Pleistocene Age shifts to Holocene Age[51]	~10,000
Sea levels stabilise	~6,000
Austronesians colonise Near and Remote Oceania and Lapita Cultural Complex develops	~4,500-3,000[52]
Probable Lapita settlement of Milne Bay	~2,800-2,600[53]
Development of Milne Bay trading networks including Kula	~1000-200[54]
Start of racial domination via white supremacist ideology	~500
Europeans begin to settle in Milne Bay	~150

Table 1. Some milestones in years Before Present (BP)
Source. Constructed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

[47] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 23.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Shaw, 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology', 118.

[50] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 23.

[51] The Pleistocene and the Holocene are scientific categories. In this they differ from the evidence of changes in the natural and social worlds which I have presented in this table.

[52] Roger Green and Andrew Pawley, 1997, 'Early Oceanic architectural forms and settlement patterns: linguistic, archaeological and ethnological perspectives', in Roger Blench and Matthew Spriggs (eds), *Archaeology and Language III: Artefacts, Languages and Texts*, London and New York: Routledge, 35. See also Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 67–107; Peter Bellwood, 1995, 'Austronesian prehistory in Southeast Asia: Homeland, expansion and transformation', in Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox and Darrell Tryon (eds), *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 105–106.

[53] Shaw, 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology', 116, 118.

[54] Ibid., 118.

Prior to European contact and the introduction of writing, this knowledge would have to be memorised. What marvels then, those human bodies who employed all their senses to take in and store knowledge—from lying on the deck of the waga (S, boat) to feel the slap of the waves to determine in which direction and how far away was landfall, to smelling the onset of different weather patterns or the proximity of land on a dark night or foggy day, to memorising the constellations and working with the shifts in the trade winds and the tides—the wonder of which we who rely on computers instead of memory will never know.

The Trobriand Islanders sailed hundred of kilometres on their Kula voyages, as did the Motuans on their annual Hiri trading voyages, and the Mailu people continue to sail hundreds of kilometres down the south Papua coast to Milne Bay in their traditional double-hulled sailing vessels. Indeed, Mailu Island and its surrounds were first settled by those amazing ocean-going Austronesians around the same time that Milne Bay was settled by the same.[55] That Milne Bay remains linguistically primarily Austronesian whilst the Mailu region has become primarily non-Austronesian suggests that in Mailu, over time, non-Austronesian speakers, after mastering Austronesian technologies, came to dominate.[56] But what of the Austronesians and the Massim?

[55] On the Mailu settlement see Tom Dutton, 1997, 'From pots to people: Fine-tuning the prehistory of Mailu Island and neighbouring coast, south-east Papua New Guinea', in Roger Blench and Matthew Spriggs (eds), *Archaeology and Language III: Artefacts, Languages and Texts*, London and New York: Routledge, 104.

[56] Ibid.

The Austronesians and the Massim

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is part of Melanesia, a category devised in the racing of the world by white supremacists.[57] Invented on the basis of a racial classification of skin colour, even were it a category of substance, Melanesia would still be contentious applied to PNG where many peoples, such as the Motu and the Hula peoples of the Central Province, and the Wuvulu peoples in the Bismarck Archipelago, more closely resemble Southeast Asian, or Micronesian or Polynesian peoples.[58] Indeed, a Captain Thorngren transporting Loyalty Island teachers to the Torres Strait London Missionary Society (LMS) mission, mistakenly landed in eastern Papua where 'the tattooing and carving of canoes, as well as the people''s olive skins and the relatively high status of its women, reminded [him] of Polynesians'.[59]

Notwithstanding its emerging political salience as a badge of identity for people within PNG, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, in academic circles, especially in linguistics and archaeology, there has been a growing dismissal of the designation of Melanesia to bound a group of peoples, given their biological, cultural and linguistic diversity.[60] A view of the past deeper than that of European colonisation reveals the inadequacy of this early nineteenth- century

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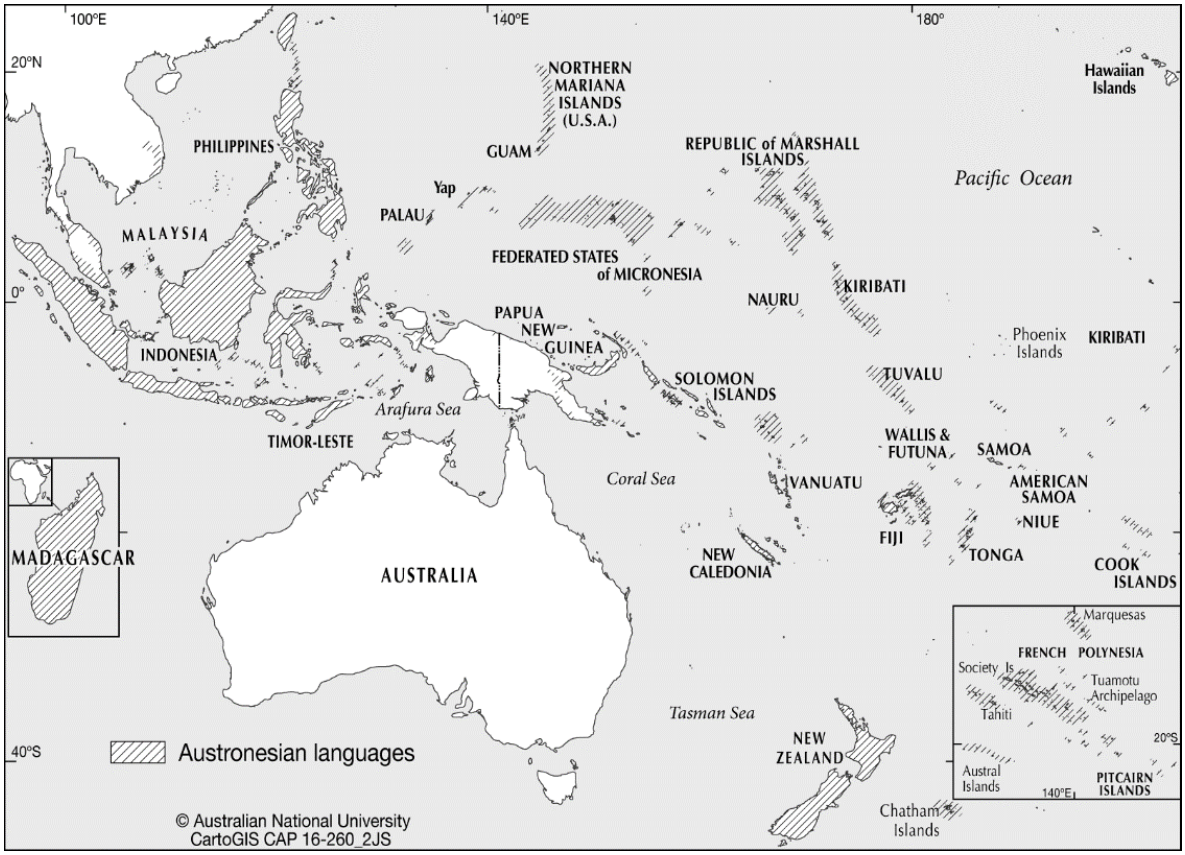
[57] Serge Tcherkézoff, 2003, 'A long and unfortunate voyage towards the "invention" of the Melanesia/Polynesia distinction 1595–1832', trans. from French by Isabel Ollivier, *The Journal of Pacific History* 38(2); 2008, *Polynésie / Mélanésie – L'Invention française des « races » et des régions de l'Océanie (XVIe–XXe siècles)*, Tahiti: Au Vent Des iles; Bronwen Douglas, 2008, 'Foreign bodies in Oceania', in Bronwen Douglas and Chris Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*, Canberra: ANU E Press; 2008, '"Novus Orbis Australis": Oceania in the science of race, 1750–1850', in B. Douglas and C. Ballard (eds), *Foreign Bodies: Oceania and the Science of Race 1750–1940*, Canberra: ANU E Press; Matthew Spriggs, 2009, 'Oceanic connections in deep time', *PacifiCurrents: eJournal of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies* 1(1).

[58] This observation made by Robert Blust is self-evident to Papua New Guineans. Blust, *The Austronesian Languages,* 36.

[59] David Wetherell and Charles W. Abel, 1998, 'First contact mission narratives from Eastern Papua New Guinea', *The Journal of Pacific History* 33(1): 111.

[60] Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, 2015, 'Re-presenting Melanesia: Ignoble savages and Melanesian alter-natives', *The Contemporary Pacific* 27; Bernard Narakobi, 1983, *The Melanesian Way*, Boroko: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.

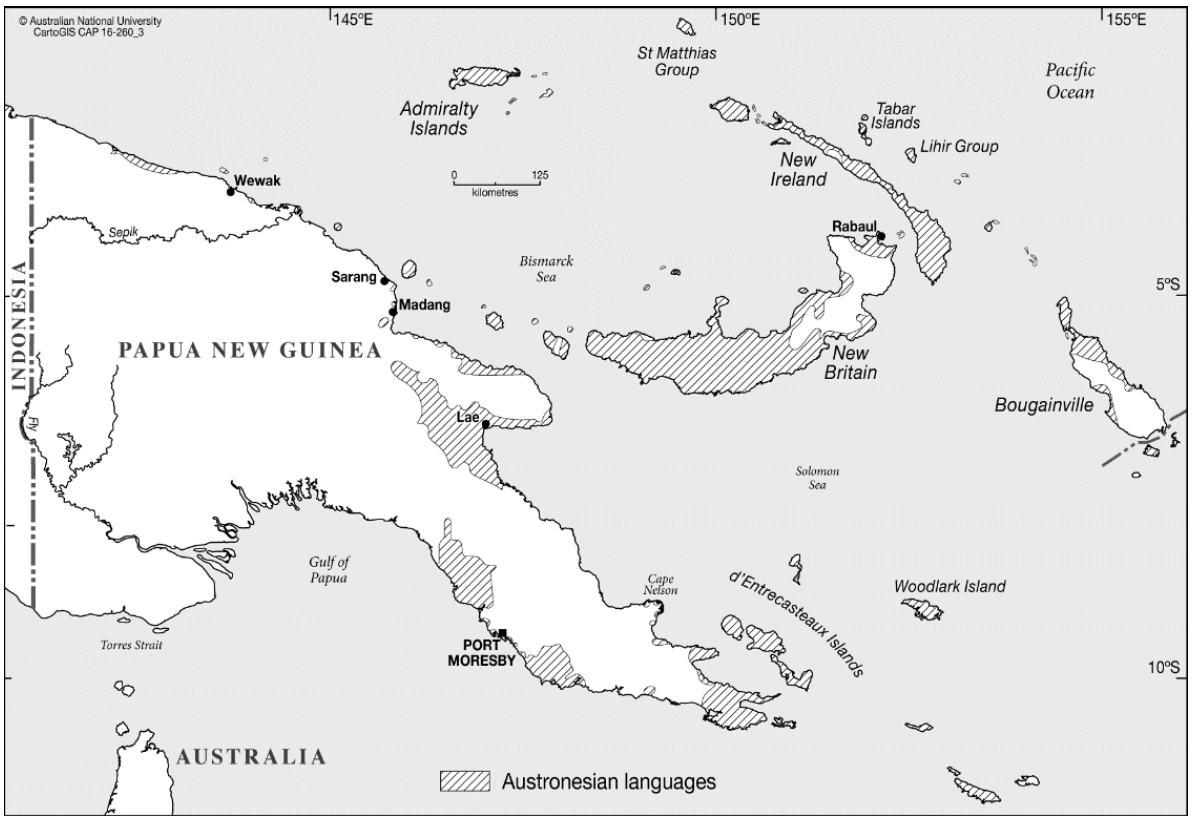
classification as a socio-cultural analytic across deep time.[61] The cultures of the region emerged, influenced firstly by geographic barriers which influenced the movement of plants and animals, including the genus *Homo*. Other influences on cultural emergence are linguistic and technological. We saw earlier that the Mailu region was populated by Austronesians and that over time, neighbouring non-Austronesian speakers adopted the Austronesian technology and then became linguistically dominant.[62] Let us examine further these linguistic and other factors in Milne Bay.



Map 4. Global dispersal of Austronesian languages
Source. © CartoGIS CAP 16-260_2JS. The Australian National University

[61] For an historical analysis of the category 'Melanesia' see Tcherkézoff, 'A long and unfortunate voyage towards the "invention" of the Melanesia/Polynesia distinction 1595–1832', 175–96; See also Spriggs, 'Oceanic connections in deep time'.

[62] Dutton, 'From pots to people: Fine-tuning the prehistory of Mailu Island and neighbouring coast, south-east Papua New Guinea'.



Map 5. PNG dispersal of Austronesian languages
Source. © CartoGIS CAP 16-260_3. The Australian National University

Language and an Austronesian discourse on origins

> The development and break-up of the POc [Proto Oceanic] language and speech community were stages in a truly remarkable chapter in human prehistory—the colonisation by Austronesian speakers of the Indo-Pacific region in the period after about 3000 BC. The outcome was the largest of the world's well-established language families and (until the expansion of Indo-European after Columbus) the most widespread.[63]

Linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests that Austronesian speakers first populated the Bismark Archipelago then moved to the south coast of Papua.[64] The deep past of the Massim can be accessed through this archaeological and linguistic evidence. Linguists have identified that of the 750 languages of the

[63] Malcolm Ross, Andrew Pawley and Meredith Osmond, 2007, *The Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic: The Culture and Environment of Ancestral Oceanic Society. 2 The Physical Environment*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 2.

[64] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 11.

island of New Guinea, approximately one-third are Austronesian languages.[65] The largest Austronesian languages in Papua New Guinea include Motu, Mekeo, Keapara and Sinaugoro in the Central Province and Tawara in the Milne Bay Province.[66] Milne Bay languages such as Gweda, Saliba, Suau, Tubetube, Wedau are Austronesian. Possibly the only non-Austronesian language in Milne Bay is Yélî Dnye spoken by the Rossel Islanders.[67] Milne Bay is, therefore, linguistically Austronesian. It is also culturally and genetically Austronesian and the Massim history thus includes participation in the largest expansion of human settlement patterns prior to the onset of European modernity.[68]

Austronesian languages are likely to have originated in Taiwan some 5,000 years ago.[69] Peter Bellwood speculates that Austronesian speakers first migrated out of subtropical Southern China.[70] Moving from the Bismarcks to south-eastern Papua it appears that the Austronesians were either settling an unoccupied land or were a significant demographic majority wherever they came ashore in what is now Milne Bay and this enabled them to anchor their

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[65]Blust, *The Austronesian Languages*, 2.

The rest of PNG's languages are referred to, confusingly, as Papuan languages, and less confusingly, as non-Austronesian language. Confusing since there are Papua New Guineans who identify as Papuans but who do not speak Papuan languages; likewise there are people who identify as something other than Papuan but who speak Papuan languages. However, Papuan languages do not form a single language family.

See also Alan Rumsey, (forthcoming), 'Melanesia as a zone of language diversity', in Eric Hirsch and Will Rollason (eds), *The Melanesian World*, Oxford: Routledge.

[66] Blust, *The Austronesian Languages*, 97–98.

[67] Ibid., 3.

[68] See e.g. Mannis Van Oven, Silke Brauer, Ying Choi, et al., 2014, 'Human genetics of the Kula Ring: Y-chromosome and mitochondrial DNA variation in the Massim of Papua New Guinea', *European Journal of Human Genetics ((EJHG)* 22; M.Stoneking, L.B. Jorde, K. Bhatia, et al., 1990, 'Geographic variation in human mitochondrial DNA from Papua New Guinea', *Genetics* 124(3). See also Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy, where I discuss the genetic studies.

[69] Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox and Darrell Tryon (eds), 1995, *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 5–8.

[70] Bellwood, 'Austronesian prehistory in Southeast Asia: Homeland, expansion and transformation', 104.

socio-cultural structures and their languages.[71] It is worthwhile to draw attention to the linguistic diversity in Milne Bay where some 58-odd Austronesian languages are spoken by a population of almost 270,000 in 2011.[72] Tom Dutton, for one, is surprised that more creole languages were not developed for communications between the speakers of hundreds of different languages in PNG. [73] He speculates that if contact was frequent then trading partners were at least bilingual and even today many people are multilingual in indigenous languages. My interlocutors for this thesis often spoke, or at least understood, Suau and Tawara, as well as English and other languages.[74]

An Austronesian discourse on origins

There is an Austronesian discourse on origins and it is 'based both on a semantics of recognizable cognate terms and on a variety of similar metaphoric idioms'.[75] In the reconstructed Proto-Austronesian (PAN), 'reflexes of **tu(m)buq*

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[71] Interestingly, the Mailu people, also of the south coast of PNG are culturally Austronesian yet linguistically non-Austronesian. Dutton has argued that this is the outcome of intense interaction between the two groups. See Dutton, 'From pots to people: Fine-tuning the prehistory of Mailu Island and neighbouring coast, south-east Papua New Guinea'.

[72] Gary F. Simons and Charles D. Fennig, 2017, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Dallas, TX: SIL International, 243–44; PNG National Statistical Office 2011, *2011 National Population and Housing Census of Papua New Guinea – Final Figures*, Port Moresby, National Statistical Office, 8.

[73] Tom Dutton, 1995, 'Language contact and change in Melanesia', in Peter Bellwood, James J. Fox and Darrell Tryon (eds), *The Austronesians: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press, 209. Duttons' paper explains the different effects of language contact and change and what this means for historical reconstruction.

[74] Although I have not explored it in this thesis, I am curious if in this matrilineal ideology in which biology is not a marker of difference—as it is in European social thought and practice—could it be that language becomes an explicitly cultivated marker of difference, just as the music and dance forms of US East Coast rap and West Coast hip hop were, for a while, expressions of difference for African American youth?

Other questions are raised by the fact of relatively frequent contact between Massim people. For instance, how could such trades have co-existed with practices of headhunting and cannibalism? Would not the latter have deterred the former? There is no doubt headhunting and cannibalism existed. The question becomes—over what period did this exist, what were the protocols that governed this, and what may have been the first social or environmental triggers for these particular acts of war? Sipiniei (see Prologue), for example, travelled freely.

[75] James J. Fox, 1996, 'Introduction', in James J. Fox and Clifford Sather (eds), *Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Exploration in Austronesian Ethnography*, Canberra: Dept. of Anthropology Australian National University; Thomas Anton Reuter, 2006, 'Land and territory in the

and *t*-u(m)pu* combine, in various forms, to create a semantics of origins',[76] for example *tipuna* and *tupuna* in Māori.[77] In the Suau language the equivalent is tubu/tubuna. Tubu means grandparent or, more broadly, ancestor, as does the Māori. Tubuna locates the ancestor within a particular lineage, 'na' being the suffix that denotes possession. Thus, tubuna means her/his ancestor. The reflexes of the Proto-Austronesian (PAN) **banua* and **tanah,* both denoting relationships to land, are also to be found across Oceania in the Fijian and Vanuatuan *vanua*, Māori *whenua*, Samoan *fenua*, and Motuan *hanua*. Both **banua* and **tanah* are also to be found in Suau 'eanua' and 'tano'.[78] For the Suau, the discourse of origins and belonging encompasses the tubu and the eanua.

A reciprocity between ancestors and the living and between land and the human body is part of the social philosophy of the Massim. Ancestral names are bestowed on the new additions to the boga esega (S, matriline) to sanction their identity, connection and belonging. At the other end of life, at death, the body is returned to the land that nurtured it, or rather, that has nurtured the boga esega. It matters little whether that particular body was born on or spent its life on this land. What is of import is the cycling of the matrilineal substance that gives life to the clan and to the eanua of the clan.[79] In the absence of this reciprocity in death, the relationship to eanua is weakened.

Austronesian world', in Thomas Anton Reuter (ed.)., *Sharing the Earth, Dividing the Land: Land and Territory in the Austronesian World*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

[76] Fox, 'Introduction', 6.

[77] I do not italicise words in languages used by my subjects. I italicise all foreign words.

[78] See Reuter, 'Land and territory in the Austronesian world', 22–24; James J. Fox, 2006 (1997), 'Genealogy and topogeny: Towards an ethnography of Rotinese ritual place names', in James J. Fox (ed.), *The Poetic Power of Place: Comparative Perspectives on Austronesian Ideas of Locality*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

[79] In the Trobriand Islands, the boga esega, the matriline, is known as the dal See Annette Weiner, 1978, 'The reproductive model in Trobriand society', *Mankind* 11; 1980, 'Reproduction: A replacement for reciprocity', *American Ethnologist* 7(1); Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press.

Take for instance my oldest interviewee. Susan Tiraka née Frank was born on Kwato Island in 1921. She passed away in October 2015 at her home, Pauri, on Kwato. She had lived most of her 94 years on the island. Susan's name was also Sinepauri, as is her daughter. Said Susan of the name Sinepauri

> Sinepauri meta Kalalaina ena haliesa to nige eau, nige egu family, ai nige esana ai ataiei paana sinamai ena haliesa.
> [Sinepauri was Kalalaina's (Susan's mother) name so I didn't, nor did my family, we don't speak that name because it is the name of our mother.]

Susan's mother's other name was Kalalaina and she also adopted the English name Rhoda when she moved to Kwato. She was from Nigila on the Tawara mainland. Sinepauri is a name that links Susan to Kalalaina/Rhoda and links both of them to their boga esega (S) and their eanua (S) at Nigila. That link is further strengthened since, in death, Susan's body was taken there for burial despite the fact she spent relatively little of her life there. Her mortuary rites included exchanges of pigs—rituals which her mission upbringing would have condemned. But, with Susan's blessing, through these rites her children re-established their identity, connection and belonging to eanua and boga esega.

See Mosko for a description of the reciprocal relation of land/human for another Papua New Guinean Austronesian society, the Mekeo. Mark Mosko, 2006, 'Self-scaling the earth: Relations of land, society and body among North Mekeo, Papua New Guinea', in Thomas Anton Reuter (ed.), *Sharing the Earth, Dividing the Land: Land and Territory in the Austronesian World*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

Austronesians, Lapita, Massim, and complex networking

The Austronesian migrations and the Lapita Cultural Complex are deeply enmeshed in scholarly debates.[80] Academic debates continue over whether Lapita was just a style of pottery or a culture, whether it was introduced by colonisers originating out of Taiwan, or whether it was a development indigenous to the peoples already in Island Melanesia.[81] Notwithstanding these arguments, the most prominent aspect of the Lapita Cultural Complex is its reach over vast maritime spaces and between different groups of people who formed complex networks. The Lapita may have gone, but in Milne Bay the trades and interactions over vast maritime spaces—such as the Kula of the Trobriand Islands, and the Kune of Tubetube Island—continued until the recent past and the arrival of Europeans.[82] And we shall see that the complex networking of the Massim would penetrate into missionised spaces. Indeed, the growth of the Kwato Mission depended on these complex networks.

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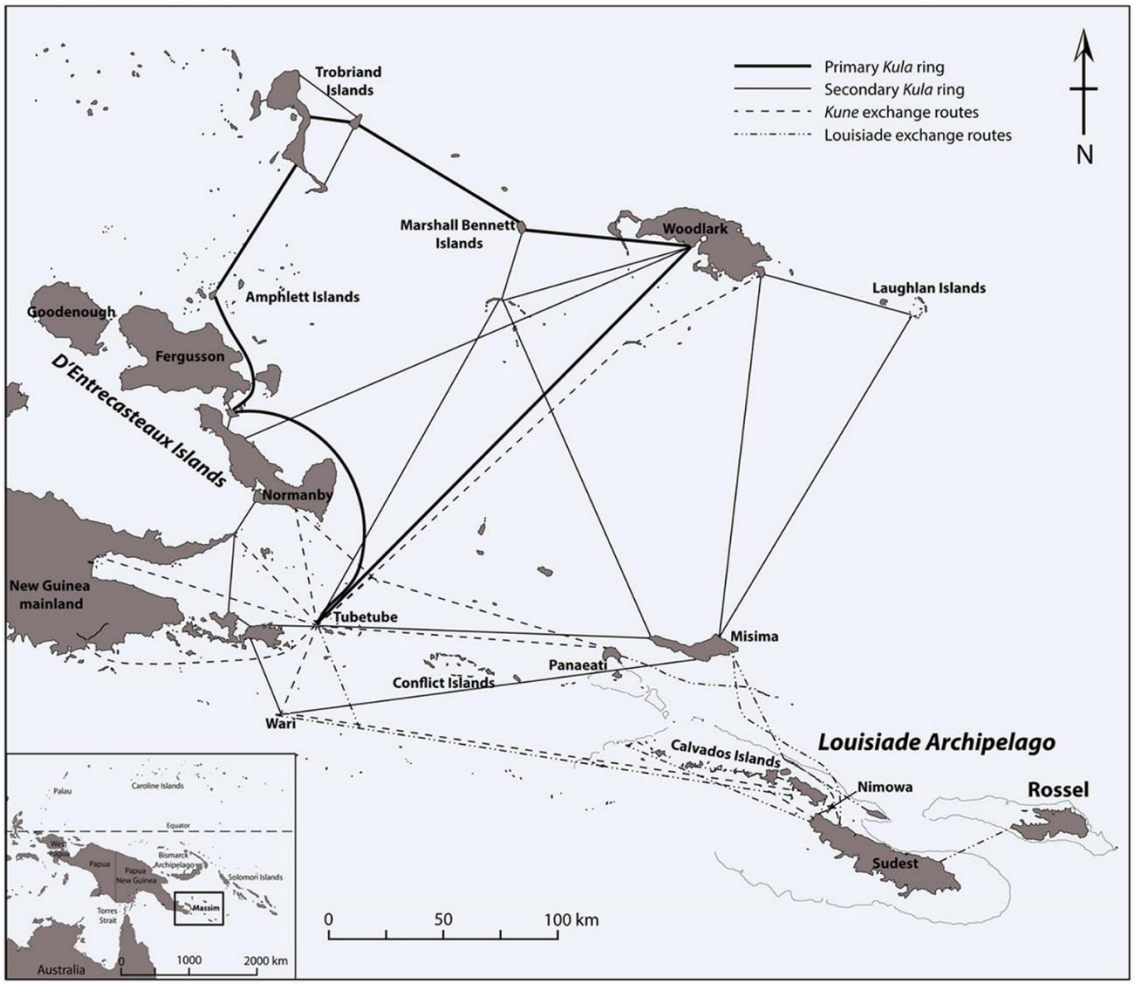
[80] For instance, Spriggs argues that Lapita is a culture, not just a style of pottery, that it originated in Southeast Asia, and that as the Austronesian speakers travelled east across the Pacific they took with them their languages and their culture. See Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 67–107.

Jim Specht and his colleagues, however, propose that the Lapita Cultural Complex was due to several hundred years of interactions between different groups. Furthermore, they assert that the linguistic colonisation by Austronesian language speakers should be delinked from the Lapita Cultural Complex arguing that the archaeological evidence does not demonstrate a watershed moment for the peoples of Oceania with the arrival of the Austronesians. See Jim Specht, Tim Denham, James Goff, et al., 2014, 'Deconstructing the Lapita cultural complex in the Bismarck Archipelago', *Journal of Archaeological Research* 22(2): 117–19.

[81] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 67–107, Specht, Denham, Goff, et al., 'Deconstructing the Lapita cultural complex in the Bismarck Archipelago', 92.

[82] The original ethnographic account of the Kula, first published in 1922, is by Bronisław Malinowski, 2014, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Florence: Taylor and Francis.

On the Kune see Martha Macintyre, 1983, 'Changing paths: An historical ethnography of the traders of Tubetube', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University; 1983, 'Warfare and the changing context of "kune" on Tubetube', *The Journal of Pacific History* 18(1).



Map 6. Trade routes across the Massim region
Source. Courtesy of Ben Shaw, 2016, 'The late prehistoric introduction of pottery to Rossel Island, Louisiade Archipelago, Papua New Guinea: Insights into local social organisation and regional exchange in the Massim', *Archaeology in Oceania* 51(S1): 63.

Where does matriliny sit?

> We propose that the predominance of maternally transmitted mtDNA of Asian origin and the significant presence of paternally transmitted Y chromosomes of Melanesian non-Austronesian origin in Polynesian ancestry can be accounted for as an effect of matrilineal institutions of residence and descent in Austronesian Proto-Oceanic society. The matrilineal hypothesis is supported by abundant linguistic, ethnographic, and cross-cultural evidence, and the genetic data are consistent with this evidence.[83]

[83] Per Hage and Jeff Marck, 2003, 'Matrilineality and the Melanesian origin of Polynesian Y chromosomes', *Current Anthropology* 44(S5): S125.

I will discuss matriliny in greater detail in Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy. Here, I wish to explore the links between matrilineal descent and the Austronesians.

Genetic testing has shown Polynesian populations to have mitochondrial DNA of Asian origin and Y chromosomes of both Near and Remote Oceanian origin.[84] Since mitochondrial DNA can only be transmitted through the mother, Per Hage and Jeff Marck hypothesise that these effects in Polynesian populations are the result of matrilocal residence and matrilineal descent in the Proto-Oceanic era of Austronesian speakers.[85] In other words, groups of non-Austronesian men married into Austronesian communities and settled matrilocally. This also suggests that the Austronesian voyaging across the Pacific Ocean was rather more of a 'slow-boat' than an 'express-train'—the 'slow boat' thesis positing prolonged contact between the Austronesians and the indigenous peoples of the region.[86] Their hypothesis, based on genetic testing and linguistic evidence, finds strong support in the evolutionary-biology-influenced cultural phylogenetic testing, which is the attempt to discern relationships and sequences of evolutionary paths of cultural characteristics.[87]

The distribution of matrilineal societies in PNG appears to mirror the distribution of the Austronesian Lapita Cultural Complex although there are non-Austronesian parts of Bougainville that are also matrilineal.[88] The majority of the matrilineal areas of PNG are populated by Austronesian speakers (see

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[84] Ibid., S121.

[85] Ibid., S121–S122.

[86] On 'slow-boat' and 'express-train' see: Simon J. Greenhill, and Russell D. Gray, 2005, 'Testing population dispersal hypotheses: Pacific settlement, phylogenetic trees, and Austronesian languages', in Clare J. Holden, Ruth Mace and Stephen Shennan (eds), *The Evolution of Cultural Diversity: A Phylogenetic Approach*, Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 32–37.

[87] '[W]e find strong evidence that matrilocality was predominant in earlier Austronesian societies ca 5000–4500 BP, at the root of the language family and its early branches.' Fiona M. Jordan, Russell D. Gray, Simon J. Greenhill, et al., 2009, 'Matrilocal residence is ancestral in Austronesian societies', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 276(1664): 1957.

[88] See Map 2 in Ruth Vatoa Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, 'Gender and peace: Bougainvillean women, matriliny, and the peace process', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, xvi.

Map 5). In fact, Spriggs has pointed out that much, though not all, of Island Melanesia is matrilineal, and that women in these societies tend to be better off than women in patrilineal societies.[89] For instance, prominent women in Vanuatu come from matrilineal areas and Bougainville women achieved a number of firsts in PNG such as the first female PhD. Bougainville women were also active in the opposition to the mine, as well as in the peace process following the civil war.[90] Indeed, as Matthew Spriggs has pointed out,

> One of the triggers of the [Bougainville] Crisis was the perceived lack of respect accorded Bougainville women by mainland New Guinea workers and squatters living in the province who had come from areas where women were more oppressed.[91]

Until recent genetic testing enabled Hage and Marck to generate their hypothesis of matrilineal in Proto-Oceanic societies,[92] it was not possible to link matriliny with the spread of Austronesian cultures, which at any rate, in their dispersal across the Pacific were often patrilineal.

However, there were other threads that linked Austronesian speakers. The theory of a founder-focused ideology that venerates ancestors has been a strong theme in Austronesian scholarship.[93] Yet, despite Spriggs' observation that much of Island Melanesia is matrilineal, the application of the theory of a founder-focused ideology has been exclusively androcentric, such as in Bellwood's suggestion that such an ideology influenced Austronesian migration

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[89] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 279–81. See also Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*; Elise Huffer (ed.), 2008, *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

[90] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 280.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Their hypothesis is: '[T]he predominance of maternally transmitted mtDNA of Asian origin and the significant presence of paternally transmitted Y chromosomes of Melanesian origin in Polynesian ancestry can be accounted for as an effect of matrilocal residence and matrilineal descent in Proto-Oceanic society.' Hage and Marck, 'Matrilineality and the Melanesian origin of Polynesian Y chromosomes', S121.

[93] Peter Bellwood, 1996, 'Hierarchy, founder ideology and Austronesian expansion', in James J. Fox and Clifford Sather (eds), *Origins, Ancestry and Alliance: Exploration in Austronesian Ethnography*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

by encouraging younger sons to emigrate and found their own genealogies.[94] Let me illustrate this point from my fieldwork.

Across Milne Bay and its southern islands, one finds repeating sulu and asa. An asa (S) is a clan name and a sulu (S) is the totem of that clan. For example, the Modewa is an asa with populations at Garuahi on the north coast, Bou inside the Bay, and Nebololo at Fife Bay on the south coast, and a generation ago there were also Modewa on the island of Ware. These different populations across Milne Bay are not necessarily familiar with each other in the present but each have the same sulu, that of the kulokulo.[95] They also each have oral histories that include some kind of migration story. So the Modewa of Bou claim their identity and belonging through the migrations of Sipiniei, my adventuring ancestor whom we met in the Prologue.

In December 2015 I visited Ware Island which, in a 23-foot dinghy with a 75-horsepower engine, still took two hours from Kwato Island. Battling the ealasi (S, south-easterly trade wind) as well as the nawa (S, the current which flows into the bay)[96] we also had to negotiate the narrow passage a few metres wide between Sariba and Sidea Islands—the Sawasawaga pass.[97] Through this narrow passage a vast ocean squeezes itself on its way into Milne Bay creating a challenging current to navigate.

Then turning away from the Sidea coast we headed south into what seemed to be emptiness. No island, no rocky outcrops to mark the journey, no

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[94] Ibid.

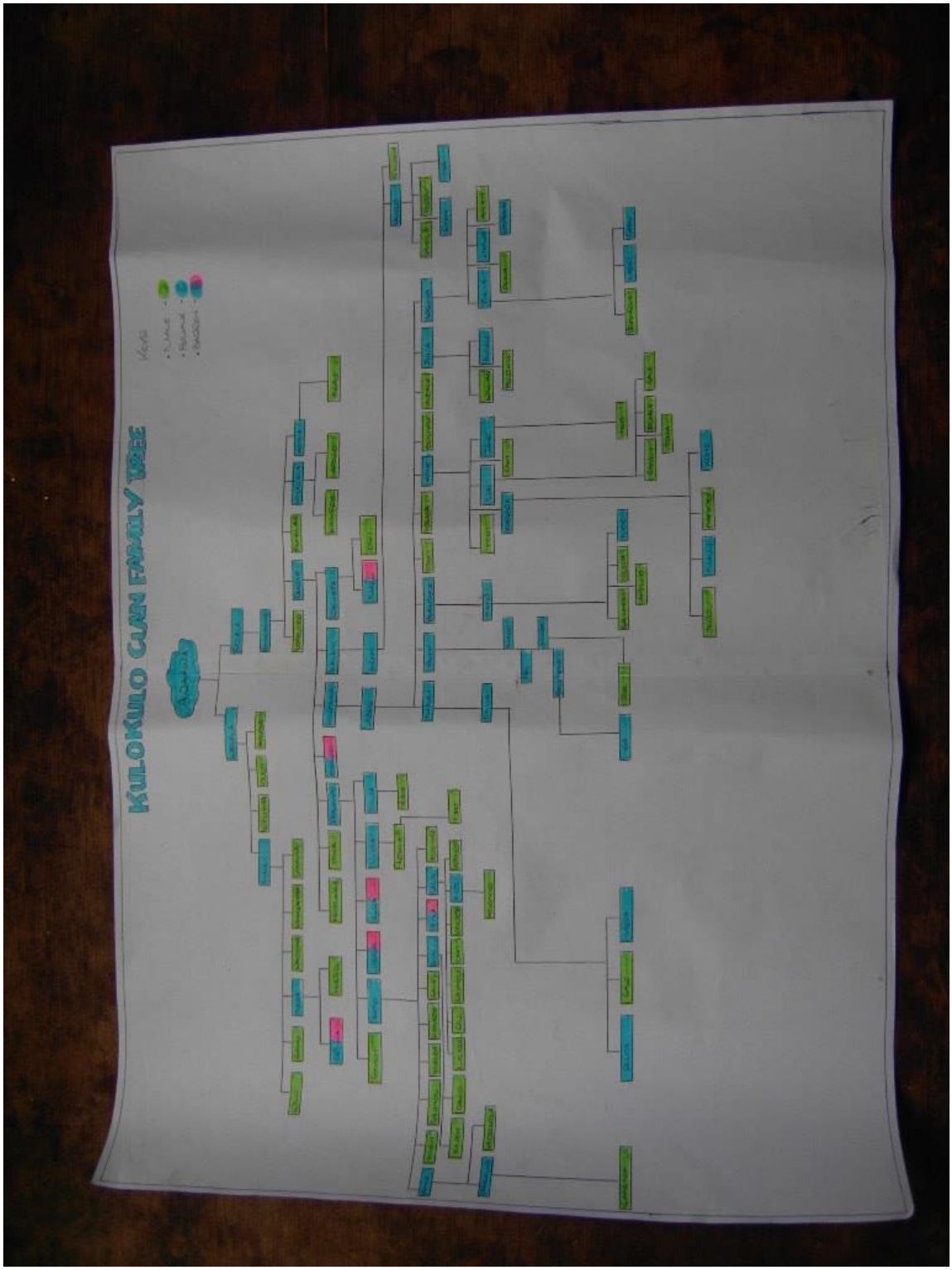
[95] The kulokulo is a common but elusive bird. I have never seen one. It was described to me as being black and white and somewhat like a magpie. I do not know the Latin designation of this bird.

[96] Damuni and nawa (S) are the currents that flow through the China Strait, into the bay and around the islands. A good sailor knows to ride nawa into the bay and to travel out of the bay to the islands with damuni. They also refer to high tide and low tide, respectively.

[97] So strong can the current be that even Luis Baéz de Torres who passed through this passage on 18 July 1606, spending three days in the area, found on his departure that a current of seven knots was running through Sawa Sawag To get through safely, the men had to be landed to pull the ships through the passage. Brett Hilder, 1980, *The Voyage of Torres: The Discovery of the Southern Coastline of New Guinea and Torres Strait by Captain Luis Baéz de Torres in 1606*, St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 29–30.

land. My three crew were all seasoned sailors, that is, they had grown up negotiating the seas of Milne Bay. They had no need of GPS, which without signal to my iPhone was pointless anyway. Nor did they need a compass. Anyway, the hard slap of the waves from starboard made it perilous to hold anything without losing it overboard. But, it turned out that my anxiety at perhaps finding ourselves adrift in the Solomon Sea was unfounded, for an hour or so after we lost sight of land, there appeared on the horizon literally out of nowhere, the island of Ware. Alas, my search for Modewa peoples was in vain for I found that the remaining Modewa, a man, had passed away a while back. And since there were no women to carry on the lineage, the asa/sulu ceased to exist on Ware Island. I had come to Ware because on a trip to the Suau region in the prior year I had encountered other Modewa whose origin stories took them back to Ware.

Nebololo is in the Fife Bay area of the Suau region. This, another journey by dinghy, was on the one hand less anxiety-inducing (for me, not for my crew) since we were in sight of land the whole six hours of travel. On the other hand, the swell was amplified to the extent that, caught on the slope of one wave, had the effect of cutting off any sight of land. Skipper Colin had to work hard at negotiating the vertigo-inducing amplitude, manoeuvring the dinghy so that we avoided hurtling down into the yawning valleys between each swell from where it would have been too easy to capsize, submerge and be captive to the current.



Genealogical Chart 2. Nebolo Modewa/Kulokulo
Source. Poniu Alan. Used with permission

I had visited Poniu Alan to discuss the London Missionary Society presence in Suau since his great-grandfather, Manuegu, was the chief who had given permission for James Chalmers and the London Missionary Society to settle on Suau Island, and Manuegu's wife Nibeta had saved Chalmers from

being attacked by Manuegu's warriors.[98] There I found out that Poniu was one of the elders of the Modewa at Fife Bay. Neither of us knew beforehand that we were both of the Modewa/Kulokulo albeit at different geographical points. The outcome of the revelation was that I was greeted and welcomed as a kinswoman. Genealogical Chart 2 is titled Kulokulo Clan Family Tree. The key in the upper right corner denotes green as male, blue as female, and blue/pink as childless females. What is absolutely striking about this image is how males are marginal. They have a presence only as the offspring of a woman.

In these Massim founder-focused oral histories of mobility and belonging it is the female who is favoured. Moreover, for the broad dispersal of the Modewa/Kulokulo to have occurred across Milne Bay, it had to be females who migrated since a male cannot pass on his asa/sulu to his children.

Notwithstanding Bellwood's androcentric gaze,[99] a matrilineal founder-focused ideology is prevalent throughout the Suau, Ealeba and Tawara regions of Milne Bay, and although ceremonial importance is not ascribed to it, elders and ancestors are generally revered and this is exemplified through naming, oral narratives and topogeny. Through this the ancestors and origins are inscribed into place and people. But it is quite unlike the founder-focused ideology of Polynesian societies which is significantly more hierarchical.[100] In the past, Suau and Tawara chiefs were selected based on their ability in war and other criteria—birth order was not always critical, nor was consanguinity. Or, rather, an outsider who was accepted as an insider, would be given the same rights as consanguineal kin. Poniu's great-grandfather, Manuegu, was captured as a child

[98] Manuegu is spelt such by his descendants (Poniu et al.) and also by Chalmers (1902) but Wetherell (1986) spells Manuweru. See James Chalmers and Richard Lovett, 1902, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, London: Religious Tract Society; David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2).

[99] Bellwood, 'Hierarchy, founder ideology and Austronesian expansion', 19–41.

[100] Ibid. In Milne Bay, outside of the Suau and Tawara regions, the Trobriand Islands do have a system of hierarchical chieftanship. See Mark S. Mosko, 2013, 'Omarakana revisited, or "do dual organizations exist?" in the Trobriands,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19(3).

in a war between the Suau islanders and the Normanby islanders. Adopted into his Suau family, Manuegu received a chieftanship from his adopted father, after proving his prowess as a warrior. Over on Logea Island, at around the same time, Bwagagaia, also adopted-in, became a renowned warrior and strategist, for which he was recognised as paramount chief on Logea. What they all had in common was birth into a matrilineal social order in a region where matrilineal descent and Austronesian languages are predominant.[101]

The wonder-full Massim history – trade, inter-Massim and other relations

> Trade is the major form of relationship between most AN-speaking communities.[102]

We have a wonder-full Massim past which started with the adventuring spirit of the early *Homo sapiens* who crossed from Sunda into Sahul then made their way down to what is now Milne Bay.[103] And millennia later we witness the arrival of the equally adventuring Austronesians who first populated the Bismarck Archipelago and then sailed to the south coast of Papua. They would position the Massim people as part of a linguistic group that had the largest global reach until European colonisation.[104]

The rise of sea levels and onset of the Holocene had created the islands of Milne Bay that these Austronesians settled but for the most part the islands were poor in resources and trade was necessary for survival.[105] But trade was developed not just for survival—it was also to fulfil the creative needs of *Homo sapiens*, the Kula being the prime example of this. There is evidence of trading

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[101] Not all of Milne Bay is matrilineal.

[102] Blust, *The Austronesian Languages*, 15. AN = Austronesian.

[103] Shaw suggests that Rossel Island was first settled in the Late Pleistocene. Shaw, 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology', 116–17, 119–20.

[104] Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 11; Ross, Pawley and Osmond, *The Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic*.

[105] Macintyre, 'Changing paths: An historical ethnography of the traders of Tubetube'; 'Warfare and the changing context of "kune" on Tubetube'; Shaw, 'The Massim region of Papua New Guinea – A review and proposed chronology'.

networks along the coasts and islands of Papua New Guinea dating back at least 2000 years.[106] Then some 600 years ago came another shift. Mass production and specialisation in pottery wares began to take place. In some parts of Milne Bay archaeological evidence also suggests a growth in population density and increased tensions as a result of these socio-economic changes.[107]

Like modern state-led economies do, the trading communities of the Massim and their partners such as the Mailu exercised comparative advantage with particular regions leveraging the assets inherent in their environments to build monopolies—stone for tools, for instance, came from the Suloga Peninsula of Woodlark Island,[108] obsidian from Fergusson Island,[109] and even today cooking pots from Ware Island are valued.

Never static, ever dynamic and outward looking, the creativity, resourcefulness and innovation of the Massim people is evident in their trades. As social circumstances changed existing forms of wealth were supplanted by other forms. For instance, Mwali (Conus) valuables had been used from around 1000 to 500 BP.[110] But, by 1855, in northern Milne Bay doga (circular boar's tusk pendants) and soulava (shell disc necklaces) had assumed greater importance.[111]

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[106] Shaw, 'The late prehistoric introduction of pottery to Rossel Island, Louisiade Archipelago, Papua New Guinea: Insights into local social organisation and regional exchange in the Massim'.

[107] Ibid., 62, 68–69.

Swadling and Bence write:

> The use of Suloga stone had begun by at least 1500 CE, but its use had ceased by 1870 … When Romilly was travelling around the Massim in 1881, he observed that stone was no longer in use for tools … However, ceremonial axes (beku) continued to be made from roughouts held on Kiriwin Malinowski … reports that craft specialists were polishing stone beku roughouts at three villages on Kiriwina, but it was clearly a declining industry, as Seligman … reports that five villages had been active a decade before Malinowski's visit.

See Pamela Swadling and Polly Bence, 2016, 'Changes in kula valuables and related supply linkages between the Massim and the South Papuan Coast between 1855 and 1915', *Archaeology in Oceania* 51(S1): 51, 56.

[109] Ibid., 59.

[110] Ibid., 52.

[111] In southern Milne Bay these are known as doga or dona. Ibid.

Yet later that century doga would cede importance to mwali.[112] Rather than a passive resignation of their rapidly devaluing wealth, the Massim shrewdly employed their trading prowess by engineering a strategic disposal of the doga assets by marketing them out of the region as far as the Motu settlements around Port Moresby.[113]

This dynamism, entrepreneurship and curiosity are reflected as well in the journeys of Sipiniei who some 200 years ago criss-crossed the Stirling Ranges as a wealthy and autonomous young woman. And we see the same wonder and spirit some 125 years ago in the figure of Boru whose curiosity about Christianity took her to London where she berated the white people she encountered for their rudeness, one could say, for their lack of wonder.[114] Indeed, the wonder-full past of the Massim and the wonder exercised by the Massim people did not end with the arrival of colonisation and its hench-man and woman, Christianisation. Not at all. This was just the start of another adventure.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Mwali are the *Conus* armshells. Doga are the circular boar's tusk pendants. Soulava are shell disc necklaces. Ibid., 50.

[114] See Boru's story in Chapter 3, Wonder.

PART 2B

Ruptures, Continuities and Reinventions

Chapter Six

The Dimdim

The 'discovery'

Dimdim, as I have earlier explained, is a word in the Suau language meaning horizon, or from the horizon, and is used also to refer to foreigners. In this chapter I explore the initial encounters between Massim and white people, and I also present how working from within a dimdim epistemic framing can hinder the process of learning about Massim people.

1606

As we have seen, the Europeans did not discover the island of New Guinea. They merely came across it in their travels—initially by accident, later by design—and opened up the possibility for voyages by other Europeans. Their first recorded sighting was by Luís Vaz de Torres (or Luis Báez de Torres) and Don Diego de Prado who, whilst searching for passage from Vanuatu to Manila, spent seven weeks at sea between Samarai and the Torres Strait in 1606.[1] Their ships sighted Rossel Island on 14 July 1606 but they did not land until four days later at Oba Bay on Sariba Island.[2] Here they encountered some locals who, preferring to avoid close contact with unknown strangers, hid before the Spaniards landed. Prado's text reveals many gardens and just one thatched house containing many fishing nets so this was most likely a farming and storage site for an inland village.[3] Climbing to the crest, the sailors reported a vista of more ocean, more peninsulas, and more islands on the other side. Two days after arriving a party was sent out by boat to further scout the area, specifically to look for a passage northward to Manila.

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[1] Brett Hilder, 1980, *The Voyage of Torres: The Discovery of the Southern Coastline of New Guinea and Torres Strait by Captain Luis Baéz de Torres in 1606*, St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, xxii.

[2] Hilder gives the local names of the landing places of Torres as Sukuri and Oba Bay. Ibid., 26.

[3] Hilder, 1980, *The Voyage of Torres*, 28. See also Don Diego de Prado, ca. 1614–1615*, Prado y Tobar – Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto. que enpeco pero fernandez de quiros ... y le acabo El capan don diego de prado...con asistencia del capan luis baes de torres ... 1607.*

The 'Indians', as Prado describes the Massim people, did not welcome these foreigners and 'came from the mouth of a harbour six canoes of twenty paddles a side with great cries and shouting and with many banners and streamers, set in battle array'.[4] Prado's men responded with gunshot, and as their dead fell around them the Massim 'gave them blows with their clubs to make them get up, thinking that they were not dead'.[5] One can imagine their consternation on discovering their compatriots were indeed dead. Prado notes that more than three hundred people then emerged from hiding to gather up the dead.

This bloody and brutal encounter between the locals protecting their land and possessions and the thieving Europeans who took canoes, livestock and garden produce was to play out over the course of their journey along the south coast of New Guinea.[6] In the bay of San Millan, so named by Prado and which is today Milne Bay, the party spent three days and Prado noted that wherever they sailed they saw 'many smoke signals on land, which is a sign that there were many villages therein'.[7] The smoke was also likely to communicate the arrival of armed and violent strangers, since this form of communication was a common practice. Elsewhere in this thesis is the story of Bwagagaia, renowned warrior of Logea Island who later adopted Christianity.[8] On one of Bwagagaia's raids, on finding that news of his arrival had been transmitted by smoke signal to forewarn the intended victims, he turned his fleet around to ransack the village from where the signal had been sent.

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[4] de Prado, *Prado y Tobar – Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto*, 12th.

[5] Ibid., 13th.

[6] Ibid., 12th–18th; Hilder, *The Voyage of Torres*, 28–71.

This violence played out in other parts of the Pacific. For instance, on the European arrival in Vanuatu see Margaret Jolly, 2009, 'The sediment of voyages: Re-membering Quirós, Bougainville and Cook in Vanuatu', in Margaret Jolly, Serge Tcherkézoff and Darrell Tryon (eds), *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence*, Canberra, ANU E Press.

[7] de Prado, *Prado y Tobar – Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto*, 13th.

[8] Bwagagaia appears in Chapter 7, The Tanuwaga.

Negotiating the current of the Sawasawaga Pass on their exit from Milne Bay, Prado was taken aback by the tidal change of 'such force that there is no river current that could be compared with it, for it raised waves more than three times a man's height'.[9] The same current operates today in the same manner, and local mariners know how to use the incoming and outgoing tides of damuni (S) and nawa (S) as an aid in their voyages. For Prado it meant landing his sailors in order to pull the ships through the passage. Their next stop was Doini Island where the locals, rather than engage, took to the hills. Hilder's analysis of Prado's maps show that the Spaniards' expeditions in the region took them to Watunou towards East Cape, and around or past the islands of Sidea, Sariba, Doini and Logea.[10]

On 30 July 1606 Prado records that a formal act of possession was undertaken in the name of Spanish Crown and on 2 August 1606, after 15 days in the Massim region, the Europeans set sail westward.[11] They passed by Baibaisiga Island, Suau Island, landed at Mullins Harbour, then made their way into the mouth of the Sagarai River. Kidnapping and ransoming locals they encountered or ransacking the gardens they came across, their only non-violent encounter seems to have been with people on islands in the vicinity of the Sagarai River[12], possibly Bona Bona islanders. Their most violent encounter was probably with the people of Mailu where men, women and children were slaughtered indiscriminately, after which 14 youth were kidnapped and taken on board, and homes and gardens ransacked. [13] News of their violence spread up and down the coast[14] and would have spread even further over time given

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[9] de Prado, *Prado y Tobar – Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto*, 13th.

[10] Captain Brett Hilder was a seaman and an historian and his life as a mariner afforded him the opportunity to travel in the wake of Torres along the south coast of Papua. Hilder, *The Voyage of Torres*, 35.

[11] Ibid., 33–34.

[12] Ibid., 44–45.

[13] Ibid., 48–51.

[14] Ibid., 51.

the trade networks between the Mailu, the Motu and the Massim.[15] It is unsurprising then, that later visits by Europeans would often be greeted with violence.

Interestingly, in the context of race theory, Prado describes the locals as Indians, occasionally as a 'white race' or 'somewhat white'.[16] The locals would have appeared in colour not that different to the olive skinned Mediterranean Europeans whose ideas of social hierarchy at the time were more religious than racial, although the two strands would later converge.[17]

In their journeys into the Pacific, they and other Spaniards, despite the violence of their passages, did not introduce a race hierarchy although they commented on gradations of skin colour. Rather, they distinguished between the human and the technological, between the social and the material. Although they did not condemn the indigene person as ugly and primitive, they did judge the latter's material cultures as lacking.[18] It was initially the Dutch, then later the British and French, who introduced, then refined the language of racial hierarchy such that the 'Man of Nature' living in harmony with his natural environment became the 'savage'.[19]

It is also important to note that the Massim people displayed no signs of feeling inferior to the whites during the early encounters. Their technology was a source of wonder, but a pale-skinned human was not. It was whites who assumed that the awe displayed for their technology extended also to their

[15] News spread along Mailu trade routes to Rossell and Trobriand Islands. These initial encounters with Europeans influenced later relationships with white men who were deemed to be cruel and savage. Margriet Roe, 1961, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 36–48.

[16] Hilder, *The Voyage of Torres*, 36, 38.

[17] Argued in Chapter 5, The Deep Past.

[18] Ákos Östör, 1981, *Europeans and Islanders in the Western Pacific 1520–1840 : An Essay in the History of Encounter and Ideology*, Wien: Institut Fur Volkerkunde, 117.

[19] Ibid., 117–19.

bodies, and whites who also presumed their own moral superiority.[20] It would be the paternalism and physical and psychological violence of colonisation and missionisation that would cultivate in some Papuans the belief in white superiority.

The reports of Torres and the charts prepared by Don Diego de Prado of their voyage from Vanuatu through the strait which now bears the former's name, were deemed to be of national security significance, since, in the wrong hands they could pose a serious threat to the wealth that the Spanish Crown was plundering from its colonies. Had the documents not been archived it may have meant an earlier intrusion by Europeans into Papua. It was not until the early 1760s that Alexander Dalrymple uncovered some related texts that he had translated from the Spanish and which were provided to Captain James Cook for his voyage of 1768.[21] Torres' original report to the king of Spain was later recovered and published in 1806, some two hundred years after his journey, and ten years after Cook had navigated the Torres Strait. Prado's narrative, the *Relacion*, was published in English only in 1930.[22]

1768–1793

The next major encounter between Massim peoples and Europeans would occur a century and a half after Prado's violent passage. This time it was the French who sailed in. In 1768 Count Louis-Antoine de Bougainville would shelter in Orangerie Bay. He named the Louisiades Archipelago during this journey.[23] The island of Kwato lies on the outer reaches of this Archipelago. Then 25 years

[20] Roe examines the diaries and journals of Moresby and others and concludes that, notwithstanding the superior arms of the Europeans, the Massim engaged with them as equals.

[21] Hilder, *The Voyage of Torres*, xxv.

[22] Ibid., xxvi. Hilder's book is based on de Prado's text. De Prado's charts had with them four watercolour drawings of the indigenous peoples encountered, including those from near Samarai and Mailu Island—it is not clear if they were done by de Prado. Ibid., xxvii. Hilder reproduces one sketch of a tattooed Mailu girl. Ibid., 49, plate 16.

[23] de Bougainville, Louis-Antoine and John Dunmore, 2002, *The Pacific Journal of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville 1767–1768*, London: Hakluyt Society.

hence Antoine Raymond Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux would sail off the north coast of the Milne Bay mainland and mark his passage by naming the D'Entrecasteaux and the Trobriand Islands. Some Massim oral histories reference ships of white men. One such tells of an encounter off the south coast, in the Suau region, news of which was transmitted by conch shell and drum telegraphy up into the Buhutu Valley and down into the regions of the north coast preparing the people for their arrival.[24] This was probably Bougainville's journey of 1768 since Orangerie Bay is part of the Suau region.

Of note as well, is that in 1793, Sipinei, our protagonist from the *Prologue*, is a toddler, who may well have grown up listening to stories of strange ships of white men who traded cloth and iron with her relatives for food and fresh water. However, despite the occurrence of trade with passing vessels, contact between Massim and Europeans was fairly limited up to the time of Captain John Moresby's contact.

1800s

When Sipiniei's granddaughter, Sialeubo, would have been about eight years of age, the British appeared. In June 1849 H.M.S *Rattlesnake,* commanded by Captain Owen Stanley, navigated the waters of south east Papua, He reported seeing plumes of smoke, but:

> [i]t was not smoke from a common fire, it seemed more like the rush of waste steam from a steamer's funnel … I am quite at a loss to account for these jets which were seen all along the coast from Rossel Island, the east End of the Louisiade, to Cape Posession on the coast of New Guinea.[25]

Smoke, as we have seen, was a means of communication.

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[24] My source is an interview with Lediwa Dickson, Dodobana, 7 February 2015.

This implies that settlements although distant remained in contact with each other prior to the arrival of colonisers and missionaries, if not through migration, or trade as with the Kula and the Suau/Mailu, then through drum telegraph.

[25] June L. Whittaker, 1975, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History: Pre-history to 1889*, Milton: Jacaranda, 267.

On disembarking in the Louisiades, Stanley and his men found the locals wary and distrustful, refusing to engage until the sailors had laid down their weapons.[26] They had clearly had earlier contact with whites and firearms perhaps directly, perhaps through oral history, perhaps through voyages they made to trade.

By 1873, Sialeubo is married with children. Living in Bou she would have witnessed Captain John Moresby's arrival into Milne Bay, which he re-named and which, coincidentally, sounded similar to Prado's Millan Bay.[27] Moresby's voyage to chart the waters of New Guinea over 1873 to 1874 seems to have been largely peaceful in the southeast. The inhabitants of Sidea Island, which he named Basilisk, apparently viewed him with 'intense interest', and in the China Straits, he traded with locals to acquire stone axes, some with blades of seven inches (18 cm). In Milne Bay he recalls that '[t]here was no unfriendliness; canoes of all sizes, and catamarans darted about us, bringing fine pigs and vegetables which were gladly exchanged for our hoop iron'.[28] So too did the locals of Normanby and Fergusson engage. In fact, it was the women of Fergusson who preceded their menfolk in making contact.

> The good feeling of these natives deserves mention. They had never seen the 'Basilisk', and new nothing of our possessing superior arms. We were but ten men amongst hundreds, and they knew that we carried iron hoop on our persons; but not only did they refrain from the least attempt to molest us, but they helped us over obstacles, showed us the best paths, and took care of our clothes whilst we bathed.[29]

Since the locals knew that Moresby and his men had hoop iron about their persons it points to prior contacts in which this came to be known. That they were greeted with wonder, kindness, and hospitality speaks to the local telegraph of drum and conch shell communications, as well as the smoke signals

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[26] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 295.

[27] de Prado, *Prado y Tobar – Relacion sumaria del del descubrimto*, 13th.

[28] Whittaker, 1975, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 302. Hoop iron is flattened bands of iron wrapped around barrels or casks.

[29] Ibid.

that had so puzzled Stanley some 25 years earlier. News of the Basilisk and its friendly white crew would have reached the D'Entrecasteaux Islands prior to their arrival. Moresby, too, seems to have had strong interpersonal skills, able to smooth over tensions such as at Killerton Island,[30] and to transform potential conflicts into amicable situations, helped no doubt by the wonder that the Massim people expressed when physical threats are removed.

Alas, aided by the charts made by Moresby, these encounters of wonder were, in the following decade, to transmute into another period of violence as a result of the enslavement and human trafficking, euphemistically named 'blackbirding'. The first labour ship came in 1886.[31] A later Royal Commission into recruitment in New Guinea waters found that the 'recruits' had been kidnapped and deceived. In one case at Fergusson Bay, the locals who came out to trade were shot at and pursued. Those who weren't killed were captured—one who attempted escape was recaptured to have his throat slit. A child—deemed useless to the marauders—was set adrift, and drowned shortly after in the surf.[32] The Royal Commission enabled the return of the trafficked persons to their homes. H.H Romilly, after returning the kidnapped Massim people to Milne Bay, later reported that 'these same returned islanders are now the most hostile natives to whites in New Guinea'.[33] As if he expected the opposite.

By 1888 European traders had set up shop on Samarai to join the London Missionary Society who had arrived in Milne Bay in 1877.[34]

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[30] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 304.

[31] Roe, 1961, 83-86.

[32] Brian Jinks, Peter Biskup and Hank Nelson, 1973, *Readings in New Guinea History*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 18.

[33] Ibid.

[34] British New Guinea Special Commissioner & John Douglas, 1888, *British New Guinea: Report for the Year 1887 by Her Majesty's Special Commissioner for the Protected Territory: With Appendices*, Melbourne: Robt. S. Brian, Government Printer, 8.

Colonising and missionising

Annexation took place in the decade after missionisation had commenced. Papua, in fact, became a British territory at the insistence of the Queensland colonial governments who viewed the land mass as a strategic buffer to other colonising forces.[35] Fortunately for the Papuans, Britain and its Australian colonies lacked the finance to exploit the country and its inhabitants as had been done in the Americas and Africa. Nonetheless, colonisation was clearly a major rupture.

The actual annexation to create British New Guinea as a British Possession occurred on 4 September 1888 although various flag-raising ceremonies occurred including the following: Henry Chester at Port Moresby on 4 April 1883; Captain John Moresby at Possession Bay, Sariba, on 24 April 1873; Hugh Hastings Romilly in Port Moresby on 23 October 1884; and Commodore James Elphinstone Erskine in Port Moresby on 6 November 1884.[36] Prior to the last ceremony, Commodore James Erskine would collect Chief Manuegu from Suau, and, along with 20 others, would take him to Port Moresby to witness the flag raising that marked the annexation that created British New Guinea.[37] Manuegu's descendants would become missionaries. Missionisation is, of course, the other major rupture of this period.

The Catholics were the first missionaries in southeast New Guinea with their mission at Murua (Woodlark Island) established in 1847. Lack of success at converting the Muruans who held that they were doing the missionaries a favour by hosting them, prompted the French to abandon it in 1855. The

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[35] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History: Pre-history to 1889*, 435–36.

[36] Ibid., 439, 445, 460–65. Reprinted here is a report from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of the proceedings of the day to which various chiefs from along the Papuan coast had been invited. Manuegu from Suau was one such, as was Boe Vagi of Hanuabada. See also Brian Jinks, Peter Biskup and Hank Nelson, 1973, *Readings in New Guinea History*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 32–42.

[37] Robert W. Kirk, 2012, *Paradise Past: The Transformation of the South Pacific, 1520–1920*, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 222. Manuegu's attendance is not specified by Kirk but is part of the oral history of the Benoma family at Fife Bay.

Marists moved in but lasted only three years.[38] It was to be the London Missionary Society (LMS) that initiated widespread missionisation and Christianisation in Papua. Established in 1795 in London as an interdenominational body the Society later became a Congregationalist organisation.[39]

The LMS undertook its first mission to Tahiti in 1797 but it wasn't until a century later that an extension of activities from the eastern Pacific to New Guinea and surrounds was considered.[40] Mirroring the organisation of colonial powers intent on carving up the planet for their exploitation, the LMS had its own Foreign Secretary.[41] In 1870 then Foreign Secretary, Dr Mullens, proposed a new venture into New Guinea but commencing in the islands of the Torres Strait.[42] The scouting expedition fell to the Reverend Samuel MacFarlane in 1871.[43]

Initial encounters between whites and Indigenous peoples in these western Pacific waters were fraught: at Darney Island in the Torres Strait, the natives were said to be so 'savage' a bay was named Treacherous after them. It transpired the whites bestowed this name after soiling the only source of drinking water on the island by doing their laundry in it, the consequence of which was the aggression of the islanders, and theft and pillaging of villages by passing ships added to the general distrust of white people.[44]

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[38] Roe, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', 56.

[39] Congregationalists were Protestant churches that cultivated an independence and autonomy with authority for church affairs vested in the congregation. Cannon, John & Robert Crowcroft, 2015, *A Dictionary of British History*, Congregationalists, Oxford University Press.

[40] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 345, 350; Donald C. Gordon, 1951, *The Australian Frontier in New Guinea, 1870–1885,* New York: Columbia University Press, 57.

[41] For an account of the early voyages and intentions of Europeans in Oceania see Ákos Östör, 1981, *Europeans and Islanders in the Western Pacific 1520–1840: An Essay in the History of Encounter and Ideology*, Wien: Institut Fur Volkerkunde.

[42] Gordon, *The Australian Frontier in New Guinea, 1870–1885*, 59.

[43] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 351–53.

[44] Gordon, *The Australian Frontier in New Guinea, 1870–1885*, 60–62.

On August 3 1871 Macfarlane landed at Redscar Bay, the first landing of the LMS in Papua, where he established the first mission in Papua, a decade and a half before annexation. But it was only after Captain Moresby bestowed his name on the harbour to the east of Redscar Bay, that the LMS sent in the Reverend A.W. Murray to establish missions at 'Anuapata' and 'Elevara'. Captain John Moresby had arrived in the harbour that would bear his name on 21 February 1873 and unlike the violence that marked other encounters this one was peaceful.[45] Without the threat of violence the locals freely expressed their wonder at the newcomers and their vessel and Moresby commented too on the kindness and generosity they exhibited. Later that year in November, a good anchorage having been identified, an LMS station was established in Port Moresby, the first on the mainland, another at Manumanu.[46] The mission was staffed by Native Teachers as South Sea Islanders were known—Rarotongans, Ruatoka and his wife, Tungane, at Elevala, and Anederio and his wife at Hanuabada.

The decision to welcome the missionaries was taken by way of a public meeting at which virtually the whole of Hanuabada and Elevala was present, asserting their desire for the Native Teachers to remain and reside with them.[47] European missionaries did not arrive until 1874 in the persons of the Reverend W.G. Lawes and his wife, Fanny, to be joined in October 1877 by James Chalmers.[48] Chalmers, however, soon continued eastward with two Rarotongan and six Loyalty Island teachers.

Influenced by Moresby's accounts of 'gentle, amiable, tribes' in the south-east, corroborated by their first visit in 1876 when they found the

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[45] John Moresby, 1876, *Discoveries & Surveys in New Guinea and the D'Entrecasteaux Islands: A Cruise in Polynesia and Visits to the Pearl-shelling Stations in Torres Straits of H.M.S.* Basilisk, London: J. Murray, 153–58.

[46] Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 357.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 358–60; Gordon, *The Australian Frontier in New Guinea, 1870–1885*, 60, 66–67. Lawes is notable for his translation of the New Testament into Motu (who were his aides) and for publishing the first grammar of the Motu language.

Papuans very eager to trade, the LMS presence in Milne Bay commenced in earnest in 1877.[49] Macfarlane and Chalmers' first port of call was Ware, known to them as Teste Island, and where two teachers were left.[50] The next port was Sidea Island which they knew as Basilisk, where they found that 'the people there were not inclined to be friendly'[51] and then into the Bay they ventured, leaving another two teachers at Killerton Island. The next stop was to establish a mission on Suau Island (also called Stacey Island or Brumer Island by Europeans). By the end of 1877 the LMS had two Lifou Islanders at Ware, two at Killerton, and one at East Cape and others elsewhere in Milne Bay to a total of 10 teachers.[52] In 1888 another 14 teachers and their families arrived.

At Suau, Chalmers found the people had an insatiable demand for European products to the extent of helping themselves to unattended items. Tensions led to a battle on 29 December 1877 and the captain and crew of *Mayri* departed soon after, leaving Chalmers and his mission party in Suau.[53] This battle of 29 December 1877 may well be that remembered in the oral history of the Benoma family resident at Nebololo in Fife Bay. Clan elder Poniu Alan recounted to me this oral history concerning his great-great-grandfather, Manuegu, and great-great-grandmother, Nibeta, some of which is corroborated by Chalmers' writings.[54] Manuegu was a chief on Suau Island in the mid to late

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[49] Roe, A history of south-east Papua to 1930', 64.

[50] James Chalmers and Richard Lovett, 1902, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, London: Religious Tract Society, 139.

It is not specified where in the South Sea Islands they came from although when the *Bertha* sailed from Torres Strait for east Papua there were two Rarotongans and six Loyalty (Lifou) Islanders on board. Whittaker, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History*, 361.

Also, in Collier's index to the Abel Papers, he notes the 1878 arrival of Rarotongan and Lifou teachers to the Milne Bay region. J.A. Collier, 1972, *The C.W. Abel Papers*, *New Guinea Collection, Library, University of Papua New Guinea*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea, 1.

[51] Chalmers and Lovett, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, 139.

[52] Roe, A history of south-east Papua to 1930', 67–68.

[53] Ibid., 66.

[54] Chalmers and Lovett, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*.

1800s and was a contemporary of James Chalmers, assisting the latter settle on Suau Island.[55] He was not born on Suau, though, coming originally from Bueli, on Basilaki Island some 83 kilometres to the east. Suau and Basilaki had been long-time enemies, and constantly at war. A Suau raid on Bueali during Manuegu's infancy, was apparently brutal and bloody, but two children were saved, a girl, and a boy, Manuegu. Adopted into the raiding chief's Suau family, Manuegu acquired the title on his adopted father's death and was already a chief when the missionaries arrived. Initially unwelcoming to the foreigners, Manuegu had summoned his warriors to repel them. However, the night prior to their coming on shore, Manuegu's wife, Nibeta, had a dream she took to be an omen relating to the newcomers. On the day when the battle was to take place she placed her body between the warriors and the missionary, thus saving Chalmers and his party. This was a common tactic of women—who also sometimes discarded their clothing—to avert conflict.

There is no acknowledgment in Chalmers' writings of Nibeta, and although her husband, Manuegu, is mentioned by name in places, he is not important enough to be listed in the index.[56] Chalmers does, however, acknowledge that older and elder women possessed significant authority and that he made it a point to seek them out with gifts on his arrival into a new place 'and to call them mother'.[57] He also writes, 'At one place, when the men

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Nibeta is also mentioned in: Melissa Demian, 2007, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter: the life history of a Melanesian relationship', *Paideuma* 53: 96–97; 2013, 'When we were in darkness: The hazards of knowing history on the Suau coast', in Lissant Bolton, Nicholas Thomas, Elizabeth Bonshek, Julie Adams & Ben Burt (eds), *Melanesia : Art and Encounter*, London: British Museum Press, 33.

[55] Manuegu is spelt such by his descendants (Poniu Alan et al.) and also by Chalmers but Wetherell uses the spelling Manuwera. See Chalmers and Lovett, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, 144; David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 9, 7.

[56] For example, Manuegu is referred to in Chalmers and Lovett, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, 144.

[57] Chalmers and Lovett, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*, 162.

were gathering around me with their spears and clubs, the old women collected near me, and ordered the men away, and they obeyed.'[58]

The Suau were pleased to have this white man live with them. He provided access to iron and cloth and knives and this increased the prestige of the Suau even with their enemies.[59] Twelve years hence, Charles William Abel would stop here on his way to Kwato, and the adolescent Iosia Lebasi would join the missionary and would become so crucial to the establishment of the Kwato mission that 'Abel used to declare that but for this lad [the] story of Kwato might never have been'.[60] Moreover, Manuegu and Nibeta's son Dagoela would be amongst the isibaguna of Kwato and with Charles Abel would undertake the first translation of parts of the Old Testament into Suau.[61] Manuegu's sons would continue to work in the mission as would, in time, Lebasi's children.

Un/learning: Doing my homework in Suau

Iosia Lebasi was an adolescent on Suau Island when Charles W. Abel passed by on his way to Kwato. Lebasi was also my mother's maternal grandfather. Journeying to Suau, the region of his birthplace, was a necessary part of the production of this thesis further blurring for me, as it did for Katerina Teaiwa, that distinction between homework and fieldwork.[62] My site was the Milne Bay Province but within the provincial borders I was to criss-cross the province travelling from Alotau to Bou and in between, to the Suau region and the Buhutu Valley, along the north coast between Garuahi and Huhuna, to Ware

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 156.

[60] Russell W. Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell, 52.

[61] Dagoela was educated at Poreporena, the facility established by Lawes in Port Moresby. He was an adult and married when he came to Kwato, unlike Lebasi. Dagoela's education at Poreporena, in Motu-speaking country, probably influenced the orthography of Kwato Suau which often utilises R in place of L.

[62] Katerina Teaiwa, 2004, 'Multi-sited methodologies: "Homework" in Australia, Fiji, and Kiribati', in Lynn Hume and Jane Mulcock (eds), *Anthropologists in the Field: Cases in Participant Observation*, New York: Columbia University Press.

Island, and of course to Kwato (see Map 1). In addition to being multi-sited, my engagement has been multi-lingual, reflective of conversations held in which thoughts were expressed in whichever language best expressed the ideas at hand. This seemed also to be in keeping with the diversity of the Massim since practices in one locality need not be the same in a neighbouring area.[63] It is a diversity which, though noted by some missionaries, was of no great interest since their objective was, rather, to homogenise.

Like Katerina Teaiwa's, my multi-sited engagement is at odds with the single-sited approach of much ethnography, and similarly, mine too reinforced the theme of 'connections between lands and peoples and the very specific, palpable oceanic spaces between them'.[64] The Milne Bay Province is mostly ocean—some 259,681 square kilometres from which emerge some six hundred islands which when combined with the mainland comprise just 14,669 square kilometres of land.[65] Ethnographers of Milne Bay have, for the most part located themselves on land and in one place. But since the Massim people, past and present, spend much time in, by, or on the sea, commuting, travelling, swimming, fishing, or simply sitting near water's edge to catch a breeze whilst scanning the horizon, the ocean itself is a site of greater understanding of the Massim. And in establishing the mission at Kwato and converting the peoples of Milne Bay the ocean was to connect and also to exclude.

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[63] Charles Gabriel Seligman's is the earliest scholarly record of the differences in practice in different parts of Milne Bay, although hints of this can be gleaned from the British New Guinea Annual Reports. See C.G. Seligmann, 1910, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea, with a Chapter by F.R. Barton and an Appendix by E.L. Giblin*, London: Cambridge University Press, 376–659. See also the Kwato newsletter, the *New Guinea Tidings*. For example Kwato Extension Association (KEA), 1923, *New Guinea Tidings*, October.

Note that Seligman changed the spelling of his name from Seligmann. Throughout my text I use Seligman, however, my references will be as the publication.

[64] Teaiwa, 'Multi-sited methodologies', 220. Over the last few decades there have been growing debates about multi-sited ethnography in anthropology.

[65] These figures were estimated by CartoGIS, CAP, ANU in November 2017. See Appendix 4 for the data sets that were used.

According to Charles Abel, Iosia Lebasi—my great-grandfather—had been abandoned by his mother as a young child and cared for by others.[66] He had joined Abel's party as cook in early adolescence in 1891. Iosi is a Suau name which happened to correspond to Josiah, indigenised to Iosia.[67] Iosia would be nicknamed Jo by Abel. During his youth, the lad had been knocked unconscious by a falling coconut which, on his regaining consciousness, appeared to have caused no harm. But it may have triggered the excruciating head pains and violent seizures in later life that would lead to his being taken off Kwato in shackles sometime between 1918 and 1920 and his death shortly thereafter.[68]

I wanted to establish the veracity of this story and to understand Lebasi's genealogy and oral history—who were his people, where had they come from, what did their oral histories say of the arrival of dimdim?[69] What shaped the young boy who became Abel's cook then his lieutenant, prompting Russell Abel to record:

> Jo, the foreman of the industrial department, was a man of unusual intelligence. White men in the country recognized his superiority and treated him with a regard unearned by other Papuans at that time… In spite of his many abilities he remained humble, and his earnest Christian witness made him a power among his people.[70]

My curiosity was not simply familial.

It was, in fact, a dissonance between my own lived experience and what had been written by whites about the Massim people in general and the Kwato people in particular, that also sparked the desire to undertake this research. Throughout my lifetime I have been surrounded by Massim peoples whose ancestors contributed in no small way to the establishment and maintenance of

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[66] Russell W. Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell, 51.

[67] Confirmed by Pauline Bona whose eldest brother was also named Iosi, namesake to Lebasi. Recorded interview, Kwato Island, 23 December 2015.

[68] Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, 52.

[69] Dimdim (S) - horizon, or from the horizon, foreigner, white person.

[70] Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, 110.

what is today known as the Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea (PNG). Notwithstanding the acknowledgment of Lebasi's influence in the latter sentence of the quote above, in the public telling of the story of Kwato these Papuans are absent. To read the story of Kwato is to be told that an Englishman by the name of Charles W. Abel arrived in 1891 and singlehandedly effected mass change. Whilst this myth clearly feeds into the popular white trope of the sole male hero battling against all odds to succeed, allowing good to triumph over evil, it is untrue in the case of the Massim and unjust to the legacy of those Papuan women and men whose efforts and kin connections were more powerful and influential than Abel the individual, as will become clear in the following chapters. Furthermore, given that Abel did not use physical force to convert the Papuans, there must have been a resonance between Christianity and native cosmology which permitted the Massim people to embrace Christianity, a factor that Michael Young has suggested might be pertinent for the Dobuans.[71] Quite simply, Kwato the place and Kwato the ideology could not have been built nor enjoyed the success it did without the labour and support of the Papuans.[72]

As I started my research into the history of the isibaguna, the Papuan pioneers of the Kwato mission, I was excited to come across a partial and very limited collection of the *Kwato Mission Tidings*, a newsletter which had started life as the *New Guinea Tidings* and was printed at Kwato from 1924 up to the war.[73] The newsletter appears to have been initiated as a means of reporting to the Mission's financial backers in the USA. In my first reading of this small collection my initial excitement turned quickly to dismay then to outrage. The

[71] Michael W. Young, 1989, 'Suffer the children: Wesleyans in the D'Entrecasteaux', in Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

[72] Anne Kaniku also documents the use of indigenous unpaid labour to build the mission. Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion', *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4).

[73] Collections of *The Kwato Mission Tidings* and *The New Guinea Tidings* are held at the National Library of Australia.

natives were all but unseen.[74] A small one but a rupture nevertheless to my sense of belonging to Kwato. It was at that moment that I understood at an experiential level, what I had hitherto comprehended only intellectually—the lived experience of invisibility of Ralph Ellison's protagonist in the *Invisible Man*, a black man living in New York in the 1930s, who was unseen and unheard because of his skin colour.[75] My project became to make Papuans visible and to render explicit their agency in the context of the Kwato mission.

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My journal records that on the day we set out for Suau from Mahimahi Beach at Ahioma just down from Alotau it was the type of weather we call daumori in the Suau language, calm waters, flat seas. I had been residing with my mother's brother on land that is mine and which I had come by through a rupture in my life. The block had belonged to my mother who passed away in 2010. She had been given the land in recognition of years of support to my grandfather's brother, Maleko.

In a dappled clearing in the forest, where grassy lawns are bordered by pebbled footpaths and landscaped flower beds host the red blooms of a zingiber, as well as white hibiscus, pink periwinkles, yellow strelitzias and red helicionias, was a small house of bilibili (S, tiles made from the trunk of the sago palm) and atohi (S, thatch roofing made from sago palm leaves). This, my uncle Harry Dickson's house, was in the hamlet of Mahimahi which numbered four households in total, all of us kin, albeit from different clans and sulu. In fact, and quite possibly unusually for most of Milne Bay, in this hamlet we are all related through male kin, since it is my grandfather and his brothers through whom we are related. According to our matrilineal law our grandfathers should have settled their children in the eanua of their wives' matrilines. That my generation is still here is a consequence of the ruptures caused by missionisation.

[74] This is not true of all issues of the *New Guinea Tidings* and the *Kwato Tidings*.

[75] Ralph Ellison, 1952, *Invisible Man*, New York: Vintage International, Vintage Books.

Between the houses and the beach the forest is still thick. That day of daumori (S, calm), the glassy ocean was forest green in mirror image of the jagged peaks that surround it on three sides. The Mahimahi population of about 15 people plus my sister waved us off from the black pebbly beach which a few metres out plunges suddenly into an abyss. Across the bay, just outside Kanakope we crossed the path of a school of dolphins ever so lazily finning—such was the tranquillity of the day. On so flat a surface we arrived at Logea Island in under 90 minutes in our 40 horsepower dinghy. We stopped to take on another crew member and some oars which I had enquired about in Alotau on the advice of my sister, Vilia. On being told no oars were aboard I had insisted we stop to collect some. Fortunately, Logea where the crew come from is on the way to the Suau, which is both a region along the south coast as well as the name of an island. The missing oars are indicative of how blasé people here are about ocean travel, having been closely bound to the waterway for millennia.

I used the stop as an opportunity to buy a lunch of sago moistened with shredded coconut wrapped in palm fronds and baked on the fire, siaiya—a local chestnut cooked in coconut cream—and some fish, freshly caught and smoked. For dessert there was a hand of bananas, green-skinned, but of a flavour and sweetness far beyond the standard yellow-skinned supermarket variety found in non-tropical countries. From that point on, the crew referred to me as ‘sinamai’ (S), ‘our mother’. It mattered not that I had no kinship relation with the crew, or that I was only marginally older than the captain. My designation was granted according to my role on that trip and it was a role of consequence. I was feeding the group.

Hardly had we exited the Iloilo/Dalina channel and the protection of the China Straits when were we exposed to the current of the Coral Sea and the broad and deep swell of open water. A 19-foot dinghy felt ridiculously exposed but the Suau islanders had regularly made war raids across these open waters to Basilaki some 83-kilometres away, and oral histories and the dispersal of clan names throughout the province attest to frequent voyages across these waters.

So too had the Mailu people sailed through here to trade at Samarai and other places.

We were first heading to Isudau in search of an interlocutor, after which we would make for Suau Island. Furthermore, my mother's brother Harry, with whom I was residing, had recently remarried but his wife, Angela, whom I had not yet met, had been away at her eanua since I had arrived to do fieldwork. Harry had requested I deliver a parcel to her. At Gaiogudu we found she had been expecting us and had prepared an enormous lunch of udo, maniota, sugelu, yama and kamkam (S, taro, cassava, pumpkin, fish and chicken). Hers appeared to be the only house on this side of Dubaguri Bay, muddied by the river flowing into the harbour.

An hour later the sudden wind had dropped and the squall had passed so we recommenced our journey. However, the swell out in the open water was even more pronounced. Since I was sitting inside the cabin I hadn't really noticed it until, all of a sudden, I was thrown from my perch. I recomposed and wondered again about the merits of wearing a life jacket. But it was hot, and especially so under the blue tarpaulin covering the cabin. I was already so sticky that just the thought of slipping on a moulded plastic upper body covering was enough to induce hyperthermia. Nonetheless, a dramatic scenario unfolded as we headed into Isudau. I noticed that our captain, Colin Didi, was hesitant, eyeing the water, with an even greater focus than he had as yet demonstrated. There was a small island in the entrance to the cove and it was difficult to ascertain which side was the safer approach. It turned out to be not the first one he chose—bommies and reefs abounded and he had to raise the motor quickly to avoid damage.[76] This was risky as we had less thrust with the motor raised. Deciding to try entering from the other side of the island, he swung the boat around at the same time that Joe, or perhaps Tony, yelled something I

[76] Bommie is a term used by surfers and scuba divers to designate an outcrop of coral reef. It comes from an Australian Aboriginal language word 'bombora' which describes waves breaking over submerged shoals and shelves.

found unintelligible. I looked up to see a wall of water racing towards us. I became aware of my heart pounding in panic since there was scant time to don the lifejacket before being buried. But Colin's skilful manoeuvring enabled us to climb the several metres of steep watery slope, crest, and slide gently down the other side.

At 4.30 p.m. we pulled into Isudau which appeared to be a cluster of thatched houses around a main path leading off from a white sandy beach. Villagers were milling around in the late afternoon sun, and a small boy of perhaps three years of age, kohakoha (S, nude), ran down to greet us, fascinated by the motor, insistent on joining the crew to haul the boat onto shore so I could disembark. Three adults wandered down to see who we were. Introductions were made, hands shaken. But Poniu Alan, who we had come in search of, was not there. He was in Fife Bay proper. Again we took our leave.

Another 30 minutes of boating and we were in Fife Bay. The shallow water was warm, the climb up the hill steep but shaded. A small boy brushed past me on the track calling out a greeting. A little further on were a five-year-old boy and a three-year-old girl. He looked up, surprised to see me, a stranger, and grabbed (probably) his sister's hand protectively. They giggled hello back to me.

My gluteus muscles were throbbing as Jonas and I reached the Benoma home, three buildings arranged around two lawns bordered by hibiscus and other flowering shrubs, at the top of the hill. Poniu, immaculate in long shorts and short-sleeved shirt, greeted us. Gaelene and her cousin Ashley, both children of Poniu's daughters, were presented for introductions by Naomi, Poniu's wife. 'Shake hands, say your name, look people in the eye when you are talking to them,' they were instructed by their grandmother.

It was only in later conversation that Poniu and I discovered that we were both of the sulu Kulokulo and of the clan Modewa. Westernisation and missionisation had prompted us to introduce ourselves with our paternally-derived surnames which are ineffective at placing people in a matrilineal

society. This was a mistake that I would carry into my later interactions at Suau Island but I would not become aware of it until several weeks later.



Figure 20. L to R. Gadi Jonathan, Poniu Alan, Jonas Anania
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, Fife Bay, March 2014.

Two days after arriving at Fife Bay we departed. Leaving at around 8 a.m. permitted us to avoid the ealasi, the south-westerly trade wind that stirs up the ocean from about midday when in season. I would be staying not on Suau itself, but with kin on Baibaisiga, the neighbouring island.

I had never met Dieselo in whose house I would stay, however, on first sight I recognised him since he was uncannily like my maternal grandmother's brother, Jo, so-named for his father Josia/Iosia Lebasi. Dieselo was 76 at the time we met, and although he walked with the aid of a stick, he was otherwise mobile moving daily between his house and his boat-building operation on the beach. He had trained as a boat builder on Kwato. His connection to Lebasi was that Dieselo's grandfather, Taubai, was brother to Lebasi. Dieselo never met Iosia since the latter died more than a decade before Dieselo was born, but he was unambiguous in his response about the man.

> Charles Abel ena ponoli meta nige doga esau i uiodi edi eanua eai. Eda tau paisoa i ayahalidi. Nuagu ena bae'ea … Kwato ena gilu. Iosia se gabai doha wenu pa'ana ena bousa nige abina se ata.
> [Charles Abel's wrongdoing was that he never returned anybody to their place. He stole our workers. It pains me … it's Kwato's fault. They threw Iosia away like garbage because they don't know where he is buried].[77]

Dieselo's pain was that Charles Abel had taken Suau people and never returned them to Suau. It was unforgiveable, he said, since if the Suau people had been informed of Lebasi's illness they would have come for him and he would have been buried with his family. Dieselo's grief and anger were palpable. He had been planning a reunion of the extended family to commemorate Iosia and he was adamant that Abel's grandson Chris, and great-grandson, Charles, both resident in Alotau should be invited. Why, I asked?

> Abo se hedudulai.[78]
> [To make matters right].

Dieselo passed away five months after I met him and before he realised this ambition.

What little he could share about Iosia follows. Lebasi was about 12 when Abel had observed that the lad had sailing skills and a lively spirit and decided to take him to Kwato. Iosia may have been an orphan but he had siblings, two brothers and a sister. One of his brothers, Biga Lebasi, was accompanying Abel to Kwato. Biga would shortly thereafter travel to Wagawaga, Ealeba, to establish a mission outpost there. It is highly likely that Iosia accompanied Abel because of his elder brother. On Kwato Iosia was not entirely cut off from his family since his sister's daughter, Niulele, later came to Kwato, apparently at his

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[77] Suau was also emptied of young men during the Pacific War when they went to work for the allied troops in Milne Bay.

[78] Demian examines the nature of hedudulai, which she spells hadudulai, in village court proceedings in the Western Suau region and its importance in restoring balance to fractured relationships. See Melissa Demian, 2004, 'Disputing damages versus disputing ownership in Suau', in Lawrence Kuna Kalinoe and James Leach (eds), *Rationales of Ownership : Transactions and Claims to Ownership in Contemporary Papua New Guinea*, Wantage: Sean Kingston, 30–32, 36–39.

request. In this matrilineal society the mother's brother is of more import than the father. (One of Niulele's grandsons is PNG Judge Sir Kina Bona.)

'Edi sulu meta maliboi' [their sulu is the Maliboi (flying fox)] was as much as Dieselo could tell me. Since Dieselo's relationship to Iosia Lebasi is through male ancestors, they are not of the same sulu. He therefore could not tell me anymore about Lebasi's matriline. Needing more information, I went to Suau Island.

At Suau I was taken to the place from where Lebasi had departed in 1891, never to return—now marked by a memorial plaque installed in 2016 by the Alotau and Port Moresby-based Lebasi extended family. But my trip to Iosia's eanua did not yield any further information about his genealogy and associated oral history. And it was only sometime later, perhaps a month more into my time in the field, that I realised I had been asking the wrong questions. I had been asking the people on Suau Island about Iosia, the individual. I should have been asking about his sulu, the Maliboi. Like Teaiwa I had to learn to unlearn.[79]

I have shared this story of my field travels for several reasons. First, to highlight the relationship of Milne Bay peoples to the ocean. The geographical area in which the Massim peoples live is vast since much of it is ocean. I made the point earlier that the ocean is central to the personhood of Milne Bay peoples. It wasn't until months after first having written that statement that I realised to what extent it is true. In March 2017 Ariel Ben Yishay, Pauline Grosjean and Joe Vecci published the results of a study in which they had set out to study the influence of marine ecology on social institutions of descent and inheritance. They used reef density as a proxy for the quality of the marine environment. Their test populations were drawn from small horticultural and fishing communities in the Solomon Islands and then, for comparison, from

[79] Teaiwa, 'Multi-sited methodologies'.

other parts of the world.[80] Their key finding is that: '[R]eef density consistently predicts the prevalence of female land inheritance'.[81]

My second reason for sharing this particular part of my field research is to point out how status is conferred and the importance of the role of 'mother'. Third, the story demonstrates the interactions between me, a stranger, and the people I encountered. Fourth, Dieselo's pain over the fate in death of his grandfather's brother, Iosia Lebasi, speaks to the spiral of time and how Massim people know and define themselves through the past as much as the present and how genealogy is critical to this knowing.[82] Finally, it underscores how culturally different epistemic processes influence the questions asked and, therefore, the responses given. Over this process of un/learning I came to see more clearly the continuities of Massim life following the externally introduced ruptures. And I saw also that reinvention is central. The rupture of missionisation and the continuity of matriliny bookend the reinvention from war-mongering people to the most peaceful province in PNG.

The (mis)advent(ure) of missionisation: Life on the cusp

> My word, the people here too much want him Word of God.[83]

It is not my intention to give a chronology of Kwato mission life from 1891. David Wetherell has done excellent work in this regard. Moreover, my interest is in the indigenous people, not in the whites. Accordingly, my primary sources are the Papuans themselves, from oral histories as well as the few documents

[80] Their methodological innovation included focusing within a single ethno-linguistic group in order to isolate ecological factors from cultural influences then, for comparison, repeating the test in other ethno-linguistic communities. Previous studies made comparisons of land characteristics across countries and regions. Ariel Ben Yishay, Pauline Grosjean and Joe Vecci, 2017, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny: Reef density and matrilineal inheritance', *Journal of Development Economics* 127(July): 127, 236.

[81] Ben Yishay, Grosjean and Vecci, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny', 235.

[82] The concept of the spiral of time is found elsewhere in Milne Bay. See Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press, 2.

[83] Marean missionary cited in David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930', *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4): 198.

written by them, including letters written by isibaguna women to Beatrice Abel. I also make extensive use of Kwato publication, *New Guinea Tidings*, later *Kwato Mission Tidings*. Although this newsletter was produced by Charles Abel and his management team to provide donors and supporters in the US news of the Kwato Extension Association, it does also provide information about some of the isimulita.[84]

Furthermore, the more interesting question from a Papuan perspective is: why did the Massim people embrace missionisation and Christianisation so enthusiastically? This question requires that we examine the motives and actions of two groups of people in and around 1891, when Charles Abel arrived at Kwato. They are the tanuwaga and the isibaguna.

In this section I present oral historical data of the advent of missionisation as well as examine some of the assumptions made by Whites about the Massim. Wetherell has written a detailed account of Charles Abel and although his biography of Abel references Papuans it is superficial since, as a white historian, Wetherell did not make central non-European methods of knowing. Oral history is one such method.[85] But beyond the culturally-inflected ways of doing research is one's broader subjectivity. And here my subjectivity is critical in having a depth of exposure to my subjects and subject matter. At the end of a career a fieldwork researcher will typically measure her time in the field to be a fraction of her entire research career. My immersion, on the other hand, is a lifetime. Work at a particular site becomes homework because 'the field' of Kwato is always with me, whether writing this paragraph on an unseasonably sunny spring day in London, or partaking in afternoon tea with my kin in Port Moresby, or making house calls on Kwato Island. My interest in Kwato is not to construct a series of sequenced events but to unravel how the southern Massim have interpreted and made sense of the establishment of the

[84] You will recall that the isibaguna (S) were the pioneering Massim Papuans of Kwato and the isimulita (S) are the succeeding generations of Massim Papuans of Kwato.

[85] Wetherell does access oral history but it is not central to his texts.

Kwato Mission. As a member of two prominent Kwato families, the Lebasi and the Dicksons, I have access to information that other researchers would not, simply because of my situatedness. This is not to claim that I have the gods-eye view: there is no such thing. It is entirely possible that, because of my location, some interlocutors may choose to withhold information from me because of the relationship they had with my ancestors. I do, however, offer a perspective that is less coloured by whiteness and as such I generate different questions and insights.

The peoples of Milne Bay have often been described by Europeans as gentle and friendly, since at least the passage of Captain John Moresby, hence prior to missionisation and colonisation. Yet these are the same peoples who engaged in revenge warfare and retributive cannibalism. War was often accompanied by ritual cannibalism, a practice through which the grossest disrespect could be expressed against another human being. Even pigs were slaughtered with more care than were human victims and prisoners of war were often subject to heinous and inhumane forms of torture.[86] But, paradoxically, these prisoners could also be embraced and designated as adopted kin with all the rights that entailed.[87]

In European epistemology, pervaded by the dichotomous, this situation makes for a nonsensical paradox since one cannot be savage and gentle, warlike and cannibalistic yet loving and inclusive of the enemy. But this is not a space of whiteness and knowledge relations, including social relations, find their justification in different sources. In the southern Massim matrilineal epistemology, knowledge relationships can be constructed as the exclusive either/or as well as the inclusive both/and. Underlying both is an ontology that is relational. How knowledge is constructed will depend on the situation and the

[86] David Wetherell presents two accounts of war and cannibalism recorded by Charles Abel in David Wetherell, 2003, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888, as told to Charles Abel', *Pacific Studies* 26: 46–47. See also Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 32, 136–45.

[87] As was Manuegu adopted by the Suau Island people. See Chapter 5, The Deep Past.

subjects. Therefore, neither construct is superior. Because of this, in Milne Bay loving one's enemy cannot be a paradox.

Pacification is oft used in the telling of recent Massim history. Pacification is the forcible suppression of hostilities, the outcome of which is peace. Since to pacify is to use force, it means that to pacify is to make one submit to another's will. Force was used to suppress inter-clan warfare to make the Massim people submit to the colonial administration who positioned themselves as the only body allowed to enact violence. But the act of pacification through colonisation is only one element in the onset of long-term peace in Milne Bay.

Missionisation, too, contributed to the submission of the Massim. But Milne Bay peoples enjoyed peace before the arrival of Europeans—trade routes and the dispersal of clan names through intermarriage point to a complex networking across the waters and mountains of the region. Oral histories and genealogies of generational depth show that mobility of clan names was occurring for centuries before missionisation. Trade networks extended the length of the south coast of Papua, into the bay, along the north coast and through the islands. Such prolonged interactions can only take place in situations of peace. The Mailu traders, for example, are unlikely to have journeyed down the coast through Suau to Samarai if their safety was in question. Likewise Sipiniei, whom we encountered in the Prologue as a young woman negotiating the Stirling Range and Madayoge mountain on her own, could not have been so highly mobile in the early 1800s if there were concerns about the safety of her person. And around the time of annexation, one of Sipiniei's granddaughters, Bosilema, paddled the 15-plus kilometres across the bay from Bubuleta in Tawala country to Dawadawa in Ealeba country, again unthinkable if people existed in a state of continuous warfare. That they did not was also evidenced by C.G. Seligman in his documentation of ceremonies to make peace.[88] Let us not forget that even Captain Moresby journaled his

[88] C.G. Seligmann, 1910, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea, with a Chapter by F.R. Barton and an Appendix by E.L. Giblin*, London: Cambridge University Press, 544–46.

encounters with peaceful natives. Peace, therefore, had its own intrinsic value, irrespective of pacification.

Martha Macintyre alludes to this when she proposes, contra Bronisław Malinowski, that it was pacification via colonisation that gave rise to one trade network, that of the kula, as a closed circuit of historical depth across generations.[89] She suggests that since the Tubetube islanders were engaged in frequent warfare this disrupted trade relationships. The prolonged peace from pacification gave rise to greater trade opportunities and the long-time maritime traders, the Massim, recognised this opportunity when it presented itself. That is, the Massim recognised the value of long-term peace, and since they already had a history of engaging third parties to broker peace, the colonial administration inadvertently fulfilled that role, articulated to an anthropologist as, 'And Muyuw are glad the government—MacGregor—came in and stopped warfare'.[90]

However, the cause of pacification, colonisation, was not welcomed nor was missionisation always welcomed, as is evident in the acts of violent and non-violent resistance that occurred. The *Annual Reports of British New Guinea* document resistance to colonisation and the people of Bou, for instance, were forthright about their disdain for the missionary.

> When they found we studied their needs before their wishes they became very offensive, and showed considerable opposition to our settling amongst them.[91]

The most prominent resistance was perhaps that of Tokeriu. In competition with the London Missionary Society (LMS), Tokeriu established his own movement in 1893 which promised peace, goodwill and material prosperity not

[89] Martha Macintyre, 1983, 'Warfare and the changing context of "kune" on Tubetube', *The Journal of Pacific History* 18(1).

[90] Frederick Damon, 1990, *From Muyuw to the Trobriands: Transformations Along the Northern Side of the Kula Ring*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 68.

[91] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 170.

much different in that respect from the missionising being undertaken.[92] Furthermore, abundance was to be free of whites and whiteness.[93]

> 'Go!' shouted Tokeriu, speaking for the spirit. 'Go from thy village on the coast, where thou art in sight and reach of the white man! Go inland, and make a new village where the tidal wave and the white man cannot come near thee'.[94]

The critical difference was the deliberate exclusion of the dimdim, the foreigner, specifically the whites. Tokeriu's actions are clearly anti-colonial and anti-white. Also of import is that peace was of value even in Tokeriu's vision of a world free of white men.

The periodic events or war and ritual cannibalism have garnered attention over the daily and the mundane for they make for good storytelling and offer unparalleled opportunity for whites to essentialise the darker-skinned as savage and to justify interventions by way of colonising and Christianising.[95] Reading the *Annual Reports of British New Guinea*, *Charles Abel's Savage Life in New Guinea* or popular literature of the time, such as that of Beatrice Grimshaw, or certain anthropological texts, is to read about the spectacular, the unusual, the exotic, the savage. For instance, Grimshaw's tale of Rossel Islanders cannibalising a shipwreck of Chinese led to the view of the Rossel peoples as fierce and terrifying. But a government patrol in 1890 had found the

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[92] Maria Lepowsky's analysis clearly positions Tokeriu's actions as anti-colonial resistance. See Maria Lepowsky, 2004, 'Indian revolts and cargo cults: ritual violence and revitalization in California and New Guinea', in Michael Eugene Harkin (ed.), *Reassessing Revitalization Movements: Perspectives from North America and the Pacific Islands*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 35–38.

Tokeriu's movement has been described as a 'cargo cult'. Melissa Demian, however, questions whether 'cargo cults were not about things, but about mobility?' See Melissa Demian, 2007, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter: the life history of a Melanesian relationship', *Paideuma* 53: 93. For instance, the highly mobile Massim people saw in the arrival of Europeans an opportunity for them to expand their own horizons and connections.

[93] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 108–109.

[94] Ibid., 108.

[95] Regis Tove Stella analyses such representations in Regis Stella, 2007, *Imagining the Other: The Representation of the Papua New Guinean Subject*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

natives to be 'harmless and inoffensive'[96] and the Chinese were said to have had built rafts and sailed away. It is also to read of a world populated primarily by men. Quarrels, violent outbursts, war, cannibalism fill these pages—the peaceful natives of Moresby's encounters are absent, as are women in general.[97]

War, too, is made out to be men's business even though Massim women often played a decisive role. James Mackay, who was appointed Chairman of the Royal Commission into the governing of British New Guinea observed that:

> Campbell[98] told us of certain tribes where the women wield considerable power even to deciding for war or peace. It seems that if at the feast, held prior to proposed foray, the women sang and danced, the men saw it through; but that if on the other hand the women sat silent and moody, the men still marched off to save their faces, but always on some pretence or other abandoned the expedition. In another tribe, if a woman took off her 'rami' and threw it over the shoulders of any man about to be killed, he became at once 'tabu' and no one dared to touch him.[99]

Similarly Sir William Macgregor said,

> He had known instances where attacks about to be made on white men had been restrained and turned aside by native women rushing forward and laying hold of spears already poised for throwing, while other women waved a mat as a sign of peace.[100]

But few scholars, if any, have thought to foreground Massim ideas of peace and peace-making, conflict-resolution and inclusiveness. Cannibalisation is far more

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[96] Roe, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', 122.

[97] Stella does an excellent job of revealing the pejorative discourses that whites employed against the indigenous peoples. Ibid.

[98] Malcolm Campbell was the Resident Magistrate and Warden, South-Eastern Division.

[99] James Alexander Kenneth Mackay, 1909, *Across Papua: Being an Account of a Voyage Round, and a March Across, the Territory of Papua, with the Royal Commission*, London: Witherby, 60. In the Motu language a rami is a skirt or sarong.

[100] William Edward Bromilow, 1977, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, New York: Ams Press, 211.

attention-arresting than the fact that the head hunters also practiced social inclusion of their enemies.[101]

So what do we know about the quotidian lives of the southern Massim who eventually joined the Kwato mission towards the end of the nineteenth century? We know that annexation had occurred and that people were wary that Whites were coming to steal their land.[102] They had heard about white land grabbing and the dispossession of the Aborigines from those returning after being trafficked to work Queensland plantations. So why did the southern Massim give land to missions and missionaries? And under what conditions did they provide land? Moreover, what was it that resonated so strongly that many were willing and able to start a completely new life in the mission on Kwato Island barely eight years after the British flag was raised in Port Moresby, on 6 November 1884, by Commodore James Erskine? Did the Christianity offered by the LMS and Charles Abel reinforce some ideologies inherent in the indigenous cultures? Was there a resonance between Christianity and indigenous norms and values which permitted them to embrace so wholeheartedly this new religion? And what of their relationship to European technologies and the novel ideas and structures of whiteness?

I examine these questions through the lives of some of the tanuwaga and isibaguna, two groups of people without whom the Kwato Mission could not have been established or become as successful as it was. The tanuwaga are the custodians of the land, the authority in a given locality or eanua. Tanuwaga is a word common in many Massim languages including those in the regions of Suau, Logea, Tawala and Ealeaba. As such, it suggests that despite great

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[101] This could be said of the Pacific in general although, as an exception, Debra McDougall does foreground indigenous ideas and practices of social inclusion in the Solomon Islands in her book, Debra L. McDougall, *Engaging with Strangers: Love and Violence in the Rural Solomon Islands*, New York: Berghahn Books.

[102] Regarding the Papuan fear that whites would take their land, their awareness of the dispossessed indigenous Australians, and their resistance to colonisation see also Marilyn Lake, 2015, 'The Australian dream of an island empire: Race, reputation and resistance', *Australian Historical Studies* 46(3).

diversity across the Massim cultures, there is a common pattern of land custodianship and resource governance and managment. The tanuwaga of Kwato island, who were the Logea islanders, are those who made it possible for the establishment of the Kwato Mission.

Isibaguna is from the Suau language and means 'those who came first'. In the Kwato context 'isibaguna' refers specifically to the first generation of Papuan pioneers who helped to establish the Kwato Mission and grew the missionised population by drawing recruits from their networks of kin.

Bubusia

The story of the indigenous peoples who influenced the development of the Kwato Mission cannot be told without reference to two women, strictly speaking not isibaguna, but without whom history may well have taken an entirely different course. We encountered Nibeta, wife of chief Manuegu of Suau who, by inserting her body between Manuegu's soldiers and the missionary Chalmers, saved the latter's life.[103]

Nibeta's actions were mirrored by Bubusia on Kwato some 15 years later. Sighting Charles W. Abel landing on Kwato, a party of warriors were despatched from Logea to protect their women and the food gardens which were on neighbouring Kwato Island. Logea was then, as it is today, populated by multiple clan groups. Although there was a principal chief, this does not translate to being able to coerce other groups and other chiefs to submit to one's will. Alliances existed in a constant state of negotiation. Moreover, a principal chief was generally a war chief, able to determine war and peace, but outside of these his authority was negligible.[104] So although the missionaries had been

[103] Demian, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter: the life history of a Melanesian relationship', 103. In acknowledging Nibeta's actions, Melissa Demian writes that 'Nibeta's innovation was to recognise Tamate [Chalmers] as kin-like in the absence of a totemic analogy'. Ibid.

[104] Lolomaniena was one such war chief on Logea Island. Wetherell, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888', 48.

invited to the area by the chief of one, or perhaps more, clans, they were not necessarily made welcome by other groups.

I learnt of Bubusia's story in 2011 from her great-grandson Anton Robinson, who passed away in 2015.[105] My sister, Vilia, and I had gone to Kwato for the weekend to visit our recently deceased mother's grave accompanied by Mum's brother Harry Dickson, and her cousin Dirona Lebasi. Anton had paddled over from Logea to visit with his choir buddy, Harry. Another of Mum's cousins, Salesi Maniana, had joined us to laubawa (S, to sit around and chat). Wherever Harry went there was bound to be music, and that day was no exception. Between songs each of the men had a story to share. Without any prompting on my part the conversation had drifted to the origins of the Kwato mission and the roles played by the parents and other ancestors of the men present. I wish now that I had made a digital recording of that day to supplement my written notes. For it was only after it was over that I realised the value of the information I had been given. These 'stories' were histories, oral histories, and because they were oral they had not made their way into any text. They were none the less real for that. Without consideration of indigenous oral histories, the story of Kwato is incomplete. This was Anton's 'story'.

Bubusia was an elderly woman from Logea Island. On the day of Abel's arrival she had paddled her canoe across the narrow strait separating the two islands to join other women working their gardens on Kwato. There were no pigs on Kwato—food crops were thus safe from destruction. Bubusia would have been wearing a nogi, a fibre skirt mistakenly translated as a 'grass skirt'. A nogi is usually made from the fibres of the very young, not yet unfurled, leaves of the coconut palm, not from grass.[106] Furthermore, a nogi is worn over an underskirt. The underskirt is never to be removed even when bathing prompting Seligman to conclude that the Massim he encountered were far more modest

[105] At the time of telling I did not think to ask what asa (S, clan) or sulu (S, totem) Bubusia belonged to. Anton, her grandson, belonged to Kabikwalaisa.

[106] Men wore sihi made from leiaha nu'ula, a bush pandanus (as opposed to leiaha, a cultivated pandanus).

about their person than white men and women[107]—total nudity was, and remains, anathema.

Looking down to the beach from their gardens, the women could see a dimdim waga (S, foreign boat) approaching the shore. At the same time they could see, across on Logea, the agitated activity of war canoes being pushed into the water. Some curious, some afraid, the women decided to descend from their gardens and return to Logea. This meant returning to where they had beached their canoes and to where the dimdim waga and the war canoes were converging. As Abel descended from the dimdim waga on to Kwato soil, Bubusia, for reasons unknown—perhaps she'd just had enough of bellicose men—discarded her underskirt and stood kohakoha between Abel and his attackers preventing his demise. Kohakoha (S) translates literally as naked and for the modest Massim, not wearing an undergarment is considered akin to nakedness. Seligman had observed in 1905 that the Massim 'were absolutely modest in their behaviour … carry[ing] their physical modesty further than do Europeans, for no one takes off his perineal bandage when bathing'[108] and total public nudity for both men and women was considered shameful. Massim modesty later married with missionary prudishness—they were not such strange bedfellows.

A woman's undergarment is considered taboo by the Massim. Martha Macintyre proposes that in a matrilineal ideology women's power is inherent in their bodies since they birth the continuation of the lineage.[109] Women not only give life, through their supernatural powers they also mediate death. Such powers a man has to learn whereas a woman need only cultivate the potential

[107] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 568.

[108] Ibid., 569.

[109] Martha Macintyre, 1987, 'Flying witches and leaping warriors: Supernatural origins of power and matrilineal authority in Tubetube society', in Marilyn Strathern (ed.), *Dealing with Inequality: Analysing Gender Relations in Melanesia and Beyond*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 209.

inherent in her body.[110] All women are, therefore, potent and potentially destructive when upset. Since an undergarment sits close to the woman's skin for long periods it is seen as an extension of her body. It would be a brave man who would oppose the taboo of touching said undergarment and this provided women an effective tool for moderating conflict by placing their underskirt near or over a body they wished to protect, or to mark a barrier to prevent the passage of the soldiers.[111] Massim women's bodies and their clothing have a protective power.

If not for these women, Nibeta and Bubusia, the path of the LMS in Papua, and the fortunes of the peoples of the colonial Territory of British New Guinea, might have been quite different. Neither of these two women appear in any of the narratives of the Europeans.

[110] Ibid., 211.

[111] Shortly after annexation this practice was noted in British New Guinea Special Commissioner and John Douglas, 1888, *British New Guinea: Report for the Year 1887 by Her Majesty's Special Commissioner for the Protected Territory: With Appendices*, Melbourne: Robt. S. Brian, Government Printer, Appendix H. See also Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 640.

Chapter Seven

The Tanuwaga

> Contrary to the way in which 'non-Western' societies have been described in the scholarly and popular literatures of the West, these societies were never 'closed,' 'traditional,' or unchanging. Nor were they founded simply on kinship, communalism, ascriptive status, patriarchy, or any other such 'principles.' They tended, rather, to be complex, fluid social worlds, caught up in their own intricate dynamics and internal dialectics, the workings of which had a direct effect on the terms of the colonial encounter.[1]

Dilome

Tanuwaga is a person in authority. He or she may have authority over land, people, and/or objects. It is possible for land to be held by an individual since it is possible to purchase land. Sipiniei, as we saw, purchased land, as did her daughters.[2] In the matter of land, tanuwaga—which is often translated into English as master—is the collective comprising the woman and her offspring who have authority over that land. Her sons will assist their sisters in the management of the land but it will be primarily her daughters who will benefit. They will all be known as tanuwaga in relation to their land. In all the European accounts of Kwato mission lands the transactions are effected between men, white and indigenous. The indigenous men, however, could not have acted with such independence in these matters. Just as it continues to be the case in the present, they would have had to have consulted with the female members of their matriline and they would have had to have acted in accordance with the wishes of the women. Dilome is one of these men who appears in Charles W.

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[1] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1997, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 27.

[2] Sipiniei first appears in the Prologue. Also, one of my interlocutors, Ilinome Tarua, described to me the land that his parent's purchased near Alotau, which then belonged to them exclusively, and has now been inherited by Ilinome and his siblings.

Abel's and other texts as a 'landowner'.[3] Amongst his descendants is Gari Kumaina née Pita.

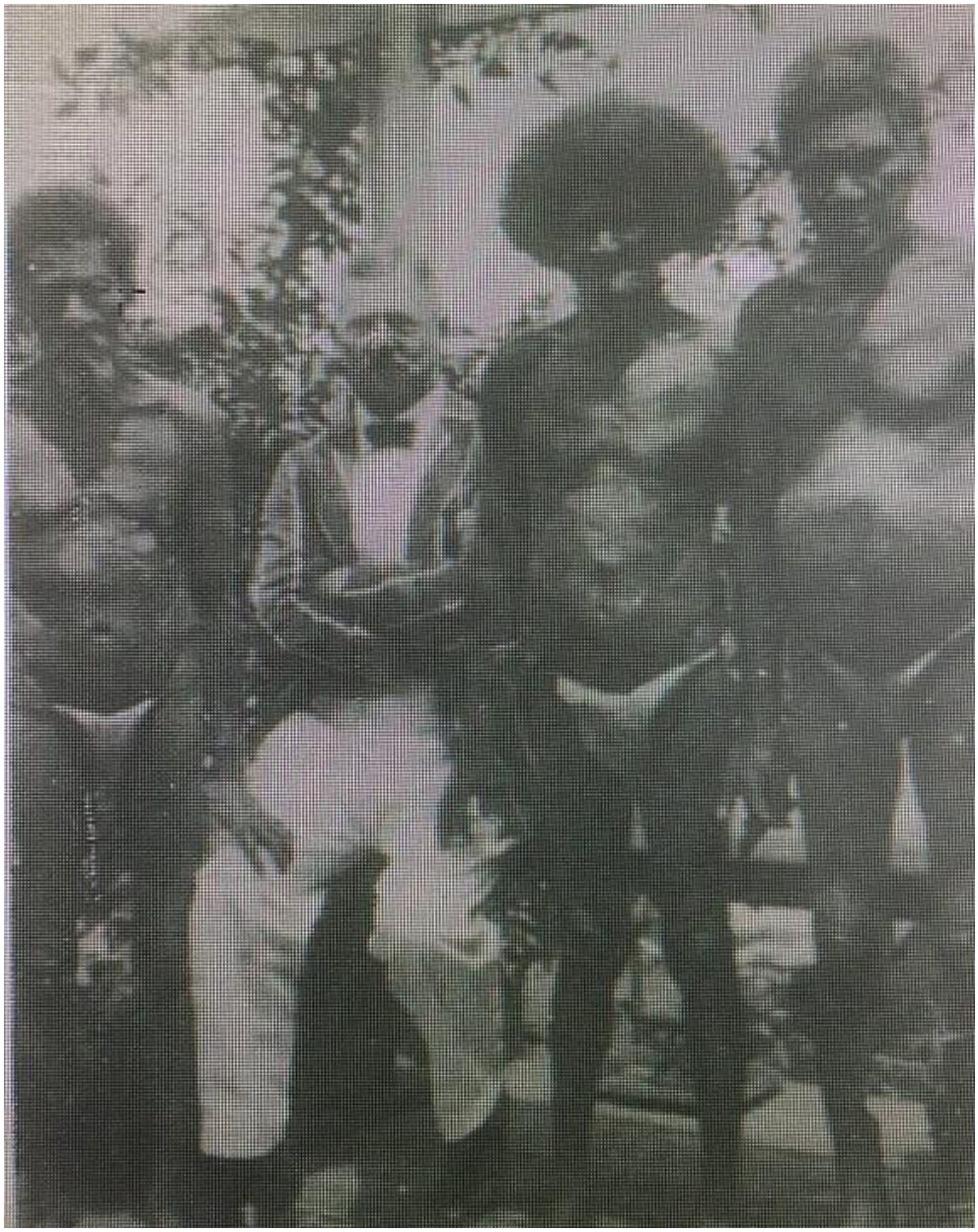
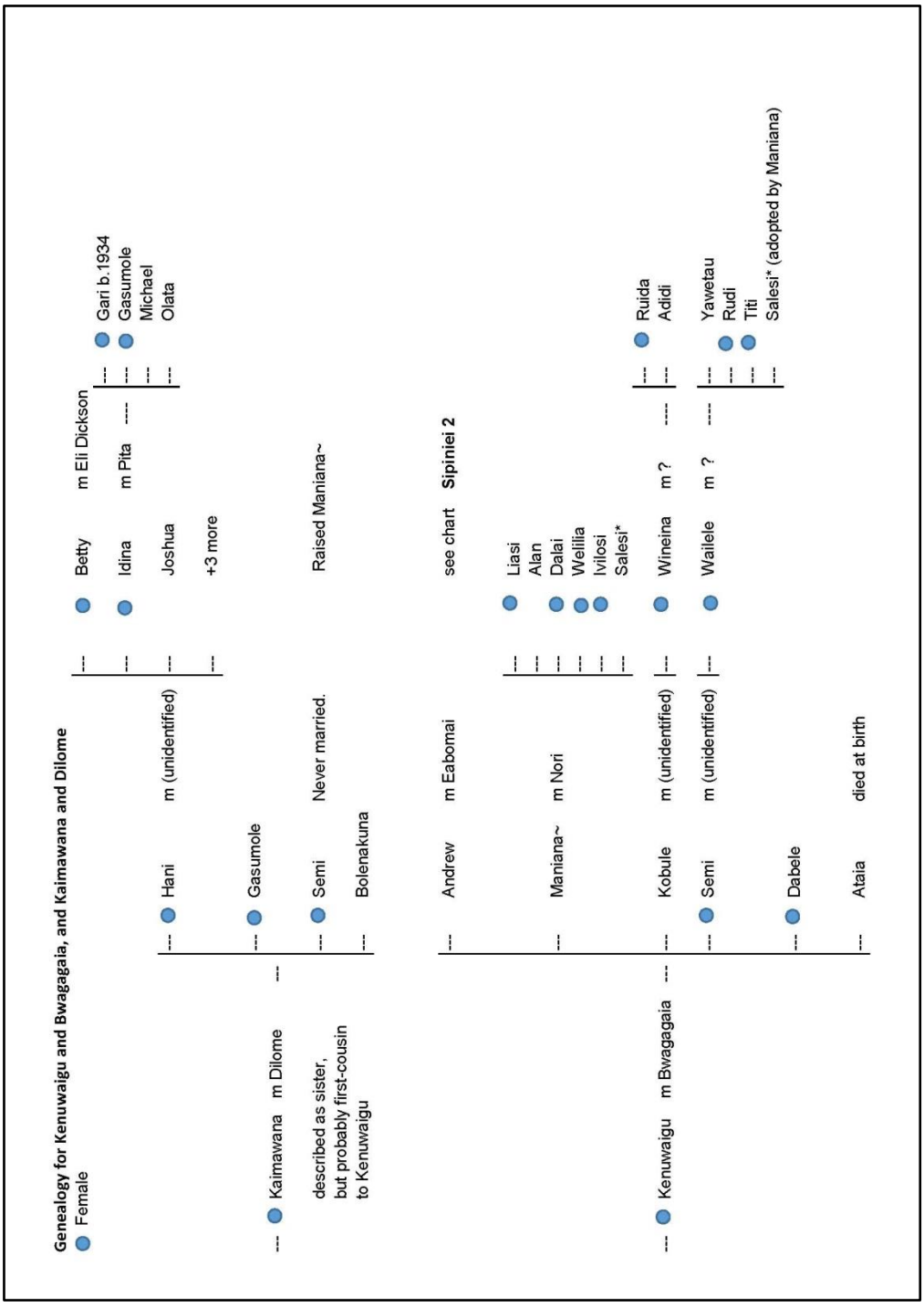
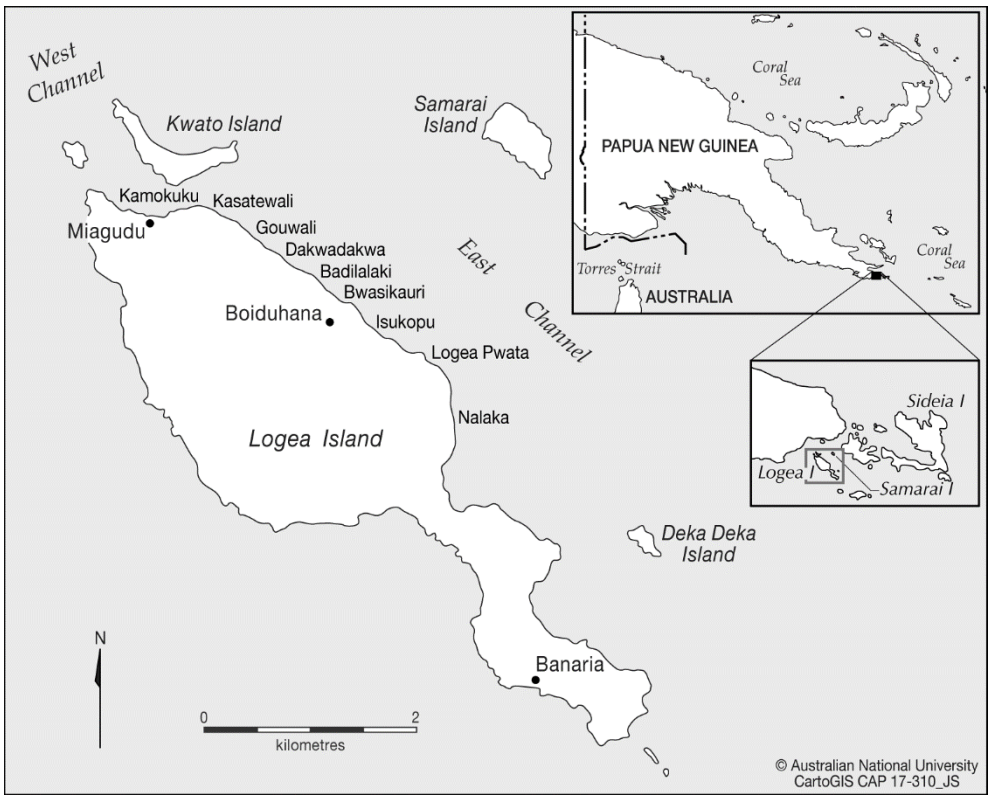


Figure 21. Some representatives of the tanuwaga of Kwato Island. Most likely taken between 1890 and 1915. L to R. Paulo Dilome, Charles W. Abel, probably Takonia, Bwagagaia
Source. Liz Abel, 1991, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, Hervey Bay: Author, 5. Used with permission.

[3] Custodianship is a more accurate translation in this context.



Genealogical Chart 3. Kaimawana and Dilome and Kenuwaigu and Bwagagaia
Source. Constructed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence



Map 7. Logea Island in 2016
Source. © CartoGIS CAP 17-310_JS. The Australian National University

Gari was born on 22 March 1934 on Kwato to Pita and Idina. Gari's great-grandfather was Dilome, leader of the Bwasikauri on Logea when the first missionaries arrived. Gari never met Dilome but growing up, even within the rigidity of the Kwato Mission, she was privy to the oral histories told by Idina's mother Hani, who was one of Dilome's offspring. I interviewed Gari on Kwato where she had returned some years prior after a life variously as a mother, businesswoman, and wife of an ambassador to Australia and Indonesia.

> I was told that when the first missionary came here, my great-grandfather, Dilome, was the chief of Logea. There were a number of chiefs but he was like the paramount chief.[4]

[4] Gari Kumaina, taped interview, Kwato, 20 December 2016. Dilome is written 'Dilomi' in European accounts but his descendants, including his namesake, spell it as I have. James Chalmers and Richard Lovett, 1902, *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*. London: Religious Tract Society, 139.

When the *Bertha* sailed from Torres Strait for east Papua there were two Rarotongans and six Loyalty (Lifu) Islanders on board. See June L. Whittaker, 1975, *Documents and Readings in New Guinea History: Pre-history to 1889*, Milton: Jacaranda, 361.

Dilome, who died in 1916, was a fighting man.[5] So many were his battles and ensuing enmities that when Samuel MacFarlane passed through the area in 1877, leaving behind the Lifou missionaries at Ware Island and at Barabara on the Tawala mainland, Dilome was in hiding on Logea having 'offended his own people, for he had waylaid and killed a man who was a guest at one of their villages'.[6] Sometime after this, according to the account given by Dilome to Abel, MacFarlane returned to the area, sailed into Logea Island and negotiated with the people of Logea Pwata to place Lifou islanders Mataiko and Gusene there.[7] The Logea people had already been informed through their trade and kin networks of the arrival of missionaries at Ware, and the news of missionary presence also at Barabara, part of the Tawala region and long-time enemies of theirs, would have been galling. They would have eagerly welcomed Mataiko and Gusene, who were the likely observers that 'the people here too much want him Word of God'.[8]

Dilome cultivated a relationship with Mataiko and in 1878 he sold the island of Samarai to the London Missionary Society (LMS), a transaction of little financial gain for Dilome but a strategic move to ally himself with the missionaries. This transaction would have entailed negotiation with the other parties who had rights to the island, most certainly women would have been involved but of them there is no mention.[9] Neither was Gari able to illuminate this matter since a matriline will store and pass on histories of women and men only of that lineage. Gari, therefore, has historical data pertaining to her

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[5] David Wetherell, 2003, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888, as told to Charles Abel', *Pacific Studies* 26: 39.

[6] Russell Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell, 89; David Wetherell and Charles W. Abel, 1998, 'First contact mission narratives from Eastern Papua New Guinea', *The Journal of Pacific History* 33(1): 113.

[7] Wetherell and Abel, 'First contact mission narratives from Eastern Papua New Guinea', 113–14.

[8] Marean missionary cited in David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930', *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4): 198.

[9] Wetherell, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888', 38.

mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who was Dilome's wife, but not of Dilome's mother and his other consanguineal female kin who would have mediated his land transactions. That Dilome is described as the 'principal owner' of Samarai in Abel's fieldnotes is likely due to significant misunderstanding of matrilineal governance and land custodianship and management in the region. I touch on some of these misunderstandings in a later section of this chapter.

Dilome converted to Christianity soon after the LMS established its station on Samara and took the name Paulo Dilome. It is quite likely his conversion was influenced by strategic considerations related to his personal safety as well as to his ability to influence. Despite conversion, Dilome was only partially convinced of the new ways.[10] Like the Dobuans to the north-east, who were also riding the crest of changing times, he was calculating about what to accept and what to reject. Dobuan warrior, Gaganumore, like Dilome, is one of many who adopted some Christian precepts but rejected church, baptism and confinement to mission spaces.[11]

Such were Diolme's skills of persuasion that he convinced the Lifou missionary Diki to accompany him on a retributive mission that had nothing to do with the latter.[12] Diki's value was in his person and also in his shotgun. Alas, the shotgun was not loaded, and once this became clear to the Watunou people who were the intended recipients of Dilome's spleen, they met aggression with the same. Adding to his legend, Dilome had to be dragged on to a canoe after receiving five wounds and with spears still embedded in his body.

It served Dilome's purpose to have missionary allies nearby just as it had served Manuegu to have Chalmers at Suau Island. These third parties were

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[10] See also Miriam Kahn, 1983, 'Sunday Christians, Monday sorcerors: Selective adaptation to Christianization in Wamira', *The Journal of Pacific History* 18(2) The History and Anthropology of the Massim (Part 2).

[11] William Edward Bromilow, 1977, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, New York: Ams Press, 124. Amongst the challenges for Bromilow was finding that the Dobuans 'wanted payment for everything, for coming to church, for sending their children to school, for taking medicine'. Ibid., 102.

[12] Wetherell, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888,' 41–42.

valuable not just for the knowledge, technology and products they provided access to, nor just for the weapons and arms they might have. They were also useful to the established tradition of using a third party to broker peace between hostile parties, a technique which continues to be employed in present day disputes inter- and intra-clan.[13] Peace, as I mentioned earlier, has its own inherent value to the Massim who had their own structures and institutions to this end.

There is a fourth reason why these foreigners were deemed to be of value by the Massim people. Melissa Demian suggests that, since the Massim are highly mobile persons—and we have seen this in the travels of Sipiniei whose descendants are now scattered all over the globe—rather than goods and technology, what impressed most on the arrival of Europeans was the possibility of expanding Massim horizons, of travelling further and faster than had been possible in living memory, and in the process, multiplying relationships and connections. As Demian has cogently argued,

> [T]hese connections could not have the effects they did, however, without Suau people themselves having 'connected up' their interactions with Europeans by means of *a set of values already prevalent* in the Suau cultural repertoire and social organisation, and arguably found throughout the Massim. These are the values of movement, speed, fluidity and lightness, which are in turn preconditions for perpetuating the fame of individuals and the longevity of lineages … [T]he LMS could not have succeeded in precisely the way it did if [the Massim people] were not able to discern an image of themselves in the actions of the missionaries [my emphasis].[14]

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[13] Abel himself notes that peace can be brokered by third parties. Ibid., 51.

I describe an intra-clan attempt to manage hostilities in Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, 2015, 'Witchcraft, sorcery, violence: matrilineal and decolonial reflections', in Miranda Forsyth and Richard Eves (eds), *Talking it Through: Responses to Sorcery and Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia.* Canberra: ANU Press.

[14] Melissa Demian, 2007, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter: the life history of a Melanesian relationship', *Paideuma* 53: 102–103.

The values that Demian describes are part of the ethic and epistemology of wonder that I have argued was the basis of the initial encounter between the Massim and European peoples.

Bwagagaia

Another person of note also mentioned in Abel's texts is Bwagagaia. On conversion Dilome's chieftainship had passed to another prominent leader and warrior, Bwagagaia. Bwagagaia's granddaughter, Semi, would marry Cecil Abel some 70-odd years later, contributing to the decline of the mission that Bubusia, Dilome, Bwagagaia and other Massim men and women were instrumental in allowing to become established in these islands. Dilome's replacement, Bwagagaia, was in fact, his brother-in-law, as they were both married to clan sisters, Bwagagaia to Kenuwaigu and Dilome to Kaimawana.[15] Although Bwagagaia was a man of authority hence a tanuwaga, he could not have been a tanuwaga of land since his matriline was not from Logea. In fact, before becoming affines, Bwagagaia had been a prisoner of war, captured during a battle with Misima peoples.[16]

> Bwagagaia was from Misima. Because of tribal fights … this is the story that I was told by my grandparents, Bwagagaia, they took him as their prisoner ... But then they decided to give their sister [a husband] … [I] remember my parents making jokes with Bwagagaia [saying] 'we were going to eat you'.[17]

This shift from reviled outsider to valued insider is common in many oral histories.[18] It is not that the stranger becomes the enemy since from the time of his/her capture, the stranger is the enemy. But how does the enemy become

[15] Kenuwaigu and Kaimawana were, most likely, first cousins.

[16] Misima is a considerable distance from Logea although travelling such distances would not have been uncommon. My interlocutors were unclear about which party travelled where. My interlocutors included Dilome's great-granddaughter, Gari Kumaina and Bwagagaia's great-grandson, Ivilosi Maniana.

[17] Gari Kumaina, taped interview, Kwato, 20 December 2016.

[18] It was also noted by G.C. Seligmann, 1910, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea, with a Chapter by F.R. Barton and an Appendix by E.L. Giblin*, London: Cambridge University Press, 486.

kin? Just as the Catholic Church made it part of their dogma to embrace the Jew, a process described in *From Enemy to Brother*,[19] so too is the doctrine of inclusion an element of the ideology of Massim matriliny. The philosophy is to be open to the possibility of inclusion in any circumstance. One might describe it as an individual right to practice inclusion since actions such as Bubusia's and Nibeta's did not require the sanction of the group. One might expand this even further to speak of a doctrine of diversity and inclusion since, as earlier highlighted—and noted by G.C. Seligman and others—the Massim peoples have widely diverse practices and languages such that even ritual cannibalism was practised by some but not by others. I will analyse further the matrilineal ethic in a later chapter on matriliny and relational autonomy.

There is no denying the warfare and ritual cannibalism that occurred. But the greater proportion of the expanse of people's lives would have been spent in the quotidian activities to do with production and reproduction. Indeed, there could not have been any wars to fight or prisoners of war to take without the re/production activities to which I now turn.

Making life not war

Bwagagaia's wife, Kenuwaigu and her sister, Kaimawana, were tanuwaga in their eanua on Logea. Kaimawana had three daughters—Hani, Gasumole and Semi—and one son, Bolenakuna. Their oral history locates their origins on the island of Bonarua to the west of Logea.

> **Gari**: Semi is the one who is not married. In our custom, the pretty girls, they tattoo her and then they won't get married. That's from Bonarua.
>
> **SEL**: Only the ones who don't get married are tattooed?
>
> **Gari**: Yes, because they are hasala. This is our custom. [S, hasala denotes youthful beauty as well as young, unmarried women].[20]

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[19] John Connelly, 2012, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933–1965*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[20] Gari Kumaina, taped interview, Kwato, 20 December 2016.

Despite Semi's tattoos and her status she would later insist on joining the mission against the wishes of her family.

Not all girls were tattooed—the practice did not occur at Wagawaga, for example, nor were Wagawaga girls and boys subject to any kind or initiation ceremony. But Suau and Tubetube girls were tattooed.[21] At Suau tattoing would commence young so that by the age of 12 the bodies of young girls would be covered in lacy glyphs.[22]



Figure 22. Suau girl with tattooed face
Source. Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 36

[21] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 489; Charles W. Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 35. Seligmann describes the process at Tubetube. See Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 493.

[22] Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*, 51.

Kenuwaigu, Kaimawana and her daughters—Hani, Gasumole and Semi—would have been the heads of their households insofar as they would have been the ones providing food from the gardens they tended on land over which they were often the proprietors. Abel had observed that where men worked the land the women were ill-treated, often receiving beatings[23] but on Logea where women do the farming, in their role as suppliers of food they were well-treated. William Edward Bromilow, too, had noted that the women of Dobu enjoyed high status observing that:[24]

> [In the Edugaula tribe] women were by no means slaves or even inferiors, but had a voice in all family and village affairs. They had ownership of land, and would frequently prevent the men from selling native wealth.[25]

This remains true into the present. During my time in the field I spent some time at Bou village in Tawala. The LMS established their first mission just down the road at Killerton Island and later the Samoans would establish a homestead, church and cemetery at Bou, most of which is now under a metre or more of ocean and visible only when the tide is out. I stayed with Safua Mataio and Koipili Samuel on these visits. Their house is built on Safua's land, inherited through her matriline. One morning as Safua and I prepared to depart for her garden, Koipili called out instructions to Safua to do this and that and bring back this or the other. Irritated at his tone, Safua responded, 'You are sitting here on my land doing nothing. I am feeding you'.[26]

In fairness, Koipili was building them a new house but at that precise moment he was, as she articulated, doing nothing. To appease her he offered to do the dishes so that she and I could depart before the sun was too high. Here, again, we see the importance of the role of being the provider of food.

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[23] Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 57.

[24] Bromilow, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, 125, 208–209.

[25] Ibid., 125.The Edugaula was the clan into which Bromilow and his wife were adopted.

[26] Bromilow, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*.

At the advent of missionisation the status of women was far more complex than the popular trope of 'beast of burden' and this applied even outside of Milne Bay. Down the coast, around Port Moresby, Mrs Edith E. Turner, wife of missionary Robert Lister Turner, observing the attendees at the LMS training centre noted that

> a [Papuan] wife is a tremendous influence over her husband's doings. Not one of the men … could offer to go as an evangelist to the west, nor present himself as a candidate for Vatorata unless his wife was also willing. Students have left Vatorata because their wives wished to return to their villages; others would never have entered the institution but for the insistence of their wives, who would give them no peace till they did.[27]

At another of my field sites at Wagawaga, Ahioma, seat of my grandfather's matriline, day to day matters were managed by tanuwaga Mose Lebasi but always in consultation with his eldest sister Bessie Tabua, resident in Port Moresby, and younger sister Vaiola Warren. In 2016 the next generation have been guided into their tanuwaga roles by Mose. Jonathan and Abel are the resident sons of Mose's deceased sister, Heumo. Since Vaiola was unable to have children, it is the offspring of Bessie and Heumo who now assume the tanuwaga role, and since Jonathan George and Abel George are resident in Alotau they perform the day to day management function. The tanuwaga must also perform the important functions of their matriline which includes providing pigs and food for mata'asi (S, mortuary feasts), and repaying the matriline's obligations—often by way of pigs and food. Women's role as agriculturalists, thus, assumes an economic importance over and above being the supplier of food for nutritional needs since she must also supply food as wealth of her matriline.

As with Mose and his sisters, so too must Jonathan and Abel consult with their sisters, one of whom, married to an international development professional, is highly and globally mobile. That these women play a prominent

[27] R. Lister-Turner, 1920, *Among Papuan Women*, Westminster: London Missionary Society, 30–31.

role in matters of land and wealth distribution is not an outcome of a patriarchal Christianisation or a white-male-privileged European modernity. It is a continuation of the tanuwaga role and relationship that is a central part of Massim matriliny in Tawala, Maiwara, Ealeba and Suau and was in operation at the advent of missionisation.

Sex and marriage

Kenuwaigu, Kaimawana and her daughters—Hani, Gasumole and Semi—as unmarried youths would have been free to engage sexually, and sex was in fact part of courtship. Seligman notes that marriage would only take place after 'prolonged sexual connection'.[28] This correlates with a practice in which young men and women would first have to prove themselves ready for marriage through making gardens, securing harvests, and building houses, such as a man might do for his prospective affines. A couple of my interlocutors, notably Mago Doilegu and Lediwa Dickson, expressed dismay that the youth of today marry young and without any preparation for life as a married couple independent of their parent's households. They defined young as between the ages of 16 and 21.

Marriages could also be arranged. At a focus group in Alotau Gegebo Manaima spoke of her mother Dinah, famous in Milne Bay for having established the Under the Mango Tree School, the first school on Logea Island. Dinah, when about 12 years of age, was betrothed to a boy from Logea. Dinah had been attending school at Kwato in the 1920s. When one day she failed to turn up to school and church, questions were asked. On discovering that Dinah was to be married the girl was questioned, replying that she did not want to marry because 'eau ea henau bena ea sikulu [S, I want to go to school]'. A Papuan home on Kwato was opened to her and there she lived until she met

[28] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 499. See also: Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press, 101–34; 2015, 'I am still a young girl if I want': Relational personhood and individual autonomy in the Trobriand Islands', *Oceania* 85(1).

and married husband Manaima, became a teacher, and opened the school Under the Mango Tree.

On Logea and in some other parts of Milne Bay it was the norm for matchmaking to be done at a young age. But the actual marriage would not take place until the pair were much older and after they had proved themselves capable of sustaining a family. Of her Tawala upbringing Mago Doilegu explained,

> In the village they had to have kawakabi (T). [Boys and girls] have to work 6 to 6 without water and without rest. They have to go off into the bush and make a garden and build a house and prove that they can look after themselves. It can take months.

Indeed, since people were working with stone tools and with much greater exposure to the elements, it could take years to generate an adequate harvest to prove oneself worthy.

Kenuwaigu and Kaimawana lived at a time when, as Seligman noted, provided social sanctions of adultery or consanguinal sexual relations were observed, an unmarried woman in the era of Kenuwaigu and Kaimawana 'might dispose of her person as she pleased'.[29] Missionary Bromilow's tone was rather more shocked: 'Up to the time of marriage the women are undisguisedly unmoral, and afterwards the restraints are doubtfully observed'.[30] But although the partnership of marriage might introduce some constraints over both women and men, divorce was possible then as it is in the present and could be initiated by both parties—a woman could order the man to leave her house or, if she lived in his, could take her children and her belongings and return to her mother's eanua.[31] Indeed, Seligman found at Wagawaga, Ealeba that women did not tolerate polygyny and marriages were easily dissolved by mutual consent prior to the arrival of missionaries and colonial administration.[32] The liberal

[29] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 567.

[30] Bromilow, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, 108–109.

[31] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 511–12.

[32] Ibid., 509–11.

attitudes towards sex combined with the rights of individuals over their own bodies prompted Seligman to observe that the sexual freedom practised by the Massim diminished sexual crimes and rape and attempted rape were rare.[33] The same observation was made by Jill Nash in the 1970s concerning the matrilineal Nagovisi of south Bouganville.[34]

Sex and sexuality were understood to be inherent individual rights and social life was structured to support this in a manner designed to minimise offence.[35] Autonomy is not, however, independent of the collective. It is relational and this is the topic of Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy. The potuma (E, men's clubhouse) at Wagawaga, Ealeba was where the men might occasionally eat and sleep.[36] But young, unmarried Wagawaga women also had their own potuma where they might welcome their male friends.[37] On Logea, a potuma was called a bosim and was also a place for the storage of weapons during periods of peace.[38] Another purpose, according to my interlocutor Sheldon Andrew, was to provide a space in which young men could indulge in lewd conversation without offending the women. The female potuma at Wagawaga very likely disappeared shortly after missionisation commenced. This is not a Massim-wide custom—for instance, the Tubetube people had no such practice for males or females.

At Wagawaga, as in places where there was no female potuma, the boy would slip into the girl's house under cover of darkness and through the

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[33] Ibid., 567.

[34] Jill Nash, 1974, *Matriliny and Modernisation: The Nagovisi of South Bougainville,* Canberra: New Guinea Research Unit, The Australian National University; 1978, 'Women and power in Nagovisi society', *Journal de la Société des océanistes* 60(34); 1981, 'Sex, money, and the status of women in Aboriginal South Bougainville', *American Ethnologist* 8(1). This has changed since the Bougainville civil war.

[35] Lepani has also written about this for the Trobriand Islanders. See Lepani, 'I am still a young girl if I want'.

[36] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 500–501.

[37] Ibid., 459–63.

[38] Wetherell, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888', 49.

women's entrance. Dwellings generally consisted of a large space with a single partition with males and females occupying separate spaces.[39] Even today, kitchens are buildings separate to the house. The boy and the girl would spend the night talking and the appearance of secrecy would be maintained by the household unless the boy fell asleep and/or was still there in the morning when the household awoke. Generally, if he was caught, it was expected that he and the girl wished to marry.[40] Continuing this practice, my cousin Glenda Dickson invited Dulo Toudikwa into her home one night sometime in the first decade of this century. On discovery the next morning by Glenda's brother and other household members the marriage was a given. Supplementing female freedoms in this matter, at both Tubetube and Wagawaga Ealeba, it was the girl who did the proposing, indeed, to be invited into her house required she take the lead.

Having proved themselves suitable for the work involved in the partnership of marriage, the young couple could begin to live together openly. The marriage would also be marked by an exchange of gifts between families. In many parts of Milne Bay and critical to the spirit as well as to the ideology of matriliny, is that exchanges had to be more or less equal.[41] However, this is not the case everywhere.

At one such exchange to which I was invited in December 2014 the general expectation was that the offerings from the groom's side would exceed that of the bride's side.[42] Clan elder, Thomas Lisenia, explained to me:

> When a sae'eno takes place, the groom and his clan have to initiate the exchange first, and not the bride's. This is to ensure that the value of what is presented by the groom's side in terms of pigs and food is observed and recorded. When the exchange is returned by the bride's clan, the value of what is returned can be equal to or in most cases, less than what the groom's clan presented earlier.

[39] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 28–29.

[40] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 502.

[41] Ibid., 504–505.

[42] Email from Thomas Lisenia, 16 May 2017. Demian describes a bridewealth exchange in Suau and elaborates the relationship between affines. Melissa Demian, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2): 100–101.

> When the exchange is initiated by the bride's side, this is termed 'hesilibuiobuio'. The pigs, food and goods presented by the bride's people may exceed the expectations of the groom's people and when the groom's people carry out their exchange, they will have to provide pigs, food and gifts that must exceed the value of what was brought by the bride's people.
>
> In short, the gifts exchanged by the groom's people must always exceed the value of what the bride's side provides.[43]

In Appendix 3 I describe one such exchange between a Logea family and a Bonaruahilihili family, both members of clans that claim pre-missionisation custodianship of Kwato Island. In a later interview Thomas Lisenia provided the following information about marriage exchange ceremonies:

> [T]here is a minimum to the value of what can be given as sae'eno, and no clan or extended family can go lower than the minimum.
>
> The minimum requirement for [an] exchange is 'waiwai kesega' which comprises three pigs in total … and any additional pigs to the three is an added bonus. The significance of the three pigs are these; there has to be one very big pig (more like the head pig), and this is specifically for the mother of the groom or bride (taulabalaba). The second pig needs to be … smaller to the first, but still big, and this is for the father of the groom and bride. The third pig will be slightly smaller than the second, and this is for the brothers of the bride. The significance of the thrid pig only relates to the bride's side and not the groom's side. The third pig signifies advanced compensation by the groom's people. Because our society is a matrilineal one, any children born to the couple actually belong to the bride's people, especially the brothers. The third pig … is advance compensation whereby when the couple's children are raised with the groom's family side, any ill-treatment or accidents that may happen to the children … have already been compensated for by the third pig. The third pig could also have some cash money put on it.[44]

In this sae'eno some of the goods may be different to those exchanged in marriage ceremonies prior to missionisation but the sentiment of female/male complementarity and partnership, and remains the same. Granted, the rules for

[43] Email from Thomas Lisenia, 16 May 2017.

[44] Ibid.

the minimum exchange do not specify absolute equality since the third pig goes only to the bride's brothers with no complementary gift for the groom's brothers, and since the groom's side is expected to contribute more than the bride's side.[45] Note, however, that no bride is being purchased, nor is she being alienated from her land or from her kin. The sae'eno is a social recognition of an affinal alliance as much as it is a pre/nuptial contract that recognises the economic value of the woman and of her offspring.

Domesticity

Other aspects of mundane life prior to missionisation included housebuilding, a communal project. A house of local materials needs constant attention in this highly humid climate in which rapid decomposition of organic matter is the norm. The roof has to be smoked regularly to keep it dry and free of insects and the rats which draw snakes. This is done by lighting a fire indoors and letting the smoke fill the dwelling. Such a house needs to be replaced every five to 10 years. This requires identifying the timber to be used—different types for posts, frame and flooring and might involve trading with other islanders or mainlanders for suitable wood which then needs to be transported to the site. Hardwoods such as puyuwa (S, black palm) are favoured for posts.

Roofing, or atohi (S) is typically made from sago palm leaves (see Figures 25 and 26). External wall coverings, bilibili (S), are also made from the sago palm, but using the thick, tough bark of the base of the palm (see Figure 23). The sago is such a useful plant that when a child was born one would be planted, reaching a maturity that enabled harvesting about the same time as she would become a young woman—some 20 years—providing her material for housing and a starchy sustenance in her diet. Internal walls would be covered with kipa (S), a lattice work also made from the sago palm (see Figure 23).

[45] In present-day Suau it is expected that siblings of the spouse will receive a tolemoli, usually a sum of cash. Ibid., 101.



Figure 23. Kipa panel at the Nuli Sape resort, modelled on Massim design
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2012



Figure 24. Bilibili made from sago palm panelling, Nuli Sape Resort
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2012



Figure 25. Making atohi at Watunou
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015



Figure 26. Benny Bagolai's house with atohi roof, Huhuna
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015

The mundane also included fishing, hunting, boat building and the decorative arts. Skilled mariners, the Massim people manufactured different vessels for the different purposes including short hops to the next island or trading voyages of hundreds of kilometres. Around the China Strait and in Milne Bay, the tavero (T) was the war ship. According to Abel, by the end of the nineteenth century, due to colonial pacification, these vessels were no longer to be seen. The waga was the smaller outrigger canoe, the outrigger providing for a small deck for cargo and passengers (waga is today used to designate all watercraft). Mainly propelled by paddling, it could also be used as a sailboat in the right conditions. In Tawala country the gebo is favoured; hewn out of a single log it could carry at a minimum 15 people. Said Abel of the gebo:

> If ever I am pushed for time, and want to make an expeditious passage, I leave my whale-boat to follow me, and journey by *gebo.* It offers the least possible resistance to the water, as it has no supporting float, like the *vaga* to impede its progress … A good crew will propel the *gebo* at a rate exceeding five miles an hour.[46]

There was also the eauga, a raft like vessel for fishing just offshore, and the more complex vaga-ue, a very fast sailing vessel that impressed white mariners and missionaries alike.[47]

Seligman noted that decorative art was particularly important to the Massim, noting also the absence of pornographic elements which he found surprising in light of the sexual freedom allowed before marriage and which contrasts with the art of the Sepik and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in which penises and vulvas are often the most prominent aspect.[48] The Massim aesthetic appreciation and the pleasure derived from putting beauty into form would be demonstrated by the isibaguna on Kwato—Josiah Lebasi, of limited European education but a master builder and craftsman could reproduce anything having set eyes on it only once. His son, Jo Lebasi, and grandsons,

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[46] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 64. Vaga = waga

[47] Ibid., 65–66.

[48] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 36–38.

Douglas Lebasi and Dirona Lebasi, would all inherit the same skill. Although Charles W. Abel with Arthur Swinfield, and later, Arthur Beavis, were responsible for establishing a boat building industry on Kwato, it would be preposterous to suggest that they were also responsible for the skills of the artisans and builders. However, this is suggested by Cecil Abel in a pamphlet for the Kwato centenary in 1991, where he proposed that Charles Abel 'laid the … foundations' for the 'tradition of excellent craftsmanship'.[49] The Europeans did bring new methods of engineering but the talents of the Massim people were inherited from ancestors who had spent millennia crossing oceans and who had built vessels of different designs according to purpose. Furthermore, skilled craftsmanship was evident prior to the establishment of the Kwato Mission, such as in the sculptures of renowned artist, Mutuaga, from Suau, whose work has been described as 'characterised by small yet monumental figurative sculpture ... [H]is ability to transform the utilitarian object—in this case, a lime spatula … and to make it into something truly attractive and covetous was exceptional'.[50]

[49] Cecil Abel, 1991, *The Background and History of Kwato and the Massim Seafarers of the China Straits*. This is a 4-page A5 insert that was printed with a 25-page booklet *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, compiled by Liz Abel and distributed to the Kwato community on the occasion of the centenary, last page.

[50] Crispin Howarth, 2010, 'Mutuaga (New Guinea): "The drummer", c. 1880–90 – National Gallery of Australia, *The World of Antiques & Art* 78: 132.



Figure 27. Sailboat with platform used around East Cape
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, December 2015

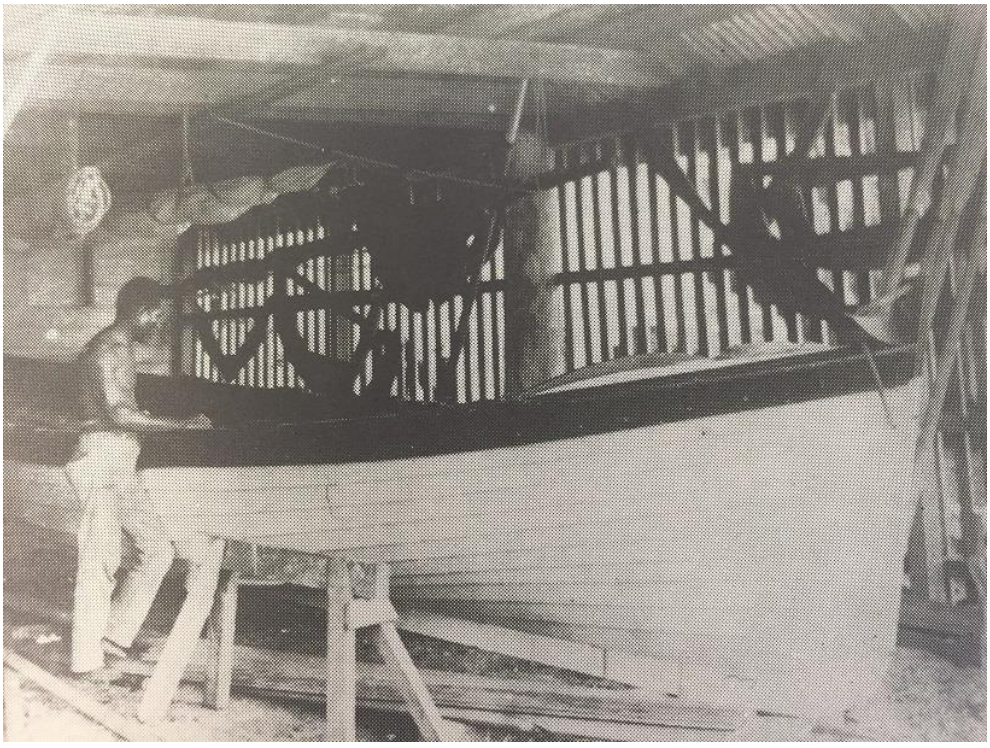


Figure 28. Iosia Lebasi in his workshop with the first European-type boat to be built on Kwato, 1905
Source. Liz Abel, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*. Used with permission

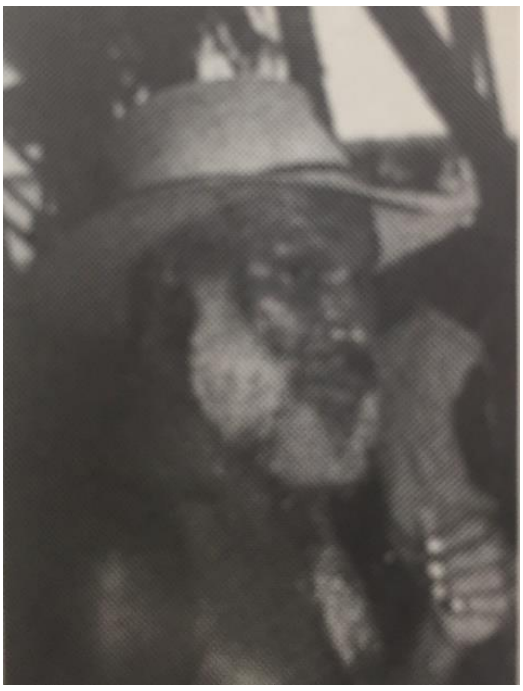


Figure 29. Iosia's grandson, Douglas Lebasi, ca. 1980
Source. Liz Abel, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, 23. Used with permission



Figure 30. The M.V. *Telita* which Douglas Lebasi built for Dinah and Bob Halstead
Source. Liz Abel, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, 23. Used with permission

Atai ponoli eo ita ponoli [misunderstandings and misrepresentations]

> White ignorance operates with a particular kind of social cognition that distorts reality. For example, the lens with which white people (and others suffering from white ignorance) perceive the world is shaped by white supremacy, causing them to mis-see whites as civilized superiors and non-whites as inferior 'savages.' White ignorance also impacts social and individual memory, erasing both the achievements of people of color and the atrocities of white people. A collective amnesia about the past is the result, which supports hostility toward the testimony and credibility of non-white people.[51]

Although Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana situate their theories in settler colonialism and racial discrimination wrought against enslaved Africans, their theory of white ignorance can be extrapolated to other contexts. Since I am concerned about mis/representation of the Massim people, in this section I visit some of the misunderstandings and misrepresentations that have their genesis in whiteness dating from the era of the tanuwaga, some of which continue to have repercussions in the contemporary. I select only key examples to demonstrate here the fallacy inherent in viewing and interpreting the world solely through a lens of whiteness.

Sine and Sina, Tau amd Tama, and tanuwaga

What we name things influences what and how we think of them and this understanding is also shaped by how we translate from one language to another. I have given the translation of the gender-neutral term tanuwaga as 'master'. I would like now to demonstrate the continued linguistic misunderstandings that see whites position themselves as the masters in Milne Bay and elsewhere in Papua and subscribe to the belief that it is the indigenous people who nurture this hierarchy.

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[51] Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, 2007, 'Introduction', in Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (eds), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 3.

In the Suau language the general terms for woman and man are, respectively, sine and tau. Mother and father are sina and tama. Since kin relations extend across patrilines as well, the more general term for family is bogao'eao (S). The family, of course, means the extended family. Missionisation endeavoured to implement the nuclear family with some success. But even for the missionised isibaguna and isimulita Kwato families the wider family was never rejected, evidenced by the flow of people and gifts between homes in the mission and those outside, as well as by the continued use of names belonging to the matrilineage such as Susan Tiraka who was also Sinepauri. And Semi Andrew who married Cecil Abel was named for her grandmother Kenuwaigu's sister's daughter, Semi (see Genealogy Charts 3 and 4). Even with the third generation of missioned families clan names are in use. My mother was Dineheilo, a name associated with the Modewa clan of Bou and that name and connection lives on with my brother's daughter, also Dineheilo.

Abel recognised the importance of the matriline but is dismissive of the Papuan's idea of family so at odds with 'our benighted way of thinking'.[52] He noted that some families would more readily part with boys but not girls because women were the 'bread-winner[s]'.[53] This is not true of all families. Some of the oral histories I have collected show that educating girls was a priority for some clans and matrilines. Still, people who feed other people are valuable. You will recall from an earlier section of this thesis that during my fieldwork, journeying to Suau by dinghy, I was titled 'sinamai' (S, L) or 'our mother' by the crew and that this was due not to my having commissioned the journey, but because I was providing the food for the crew.

Abel was called tamamai, our father, or father Abel by the converts and some of my interlocutors also referred to him and his wife, Beatrice, as father

[52] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 29.

[53] Ibid., 52.

and mother Abel.[54] In the context of southern Massim social relations this is not surprising if he was sourcing many of the goods, including food, that kept the mission operational. It should, however, be said, that the food that Abel sourced would have been dimdim food since many of the Papuans in the mission grew some of their food and also received produce from their kin outside the mission. However, without a nuanced understanding of the functional aspects of social relationships, Abel himself, and other foreigners after him, have taken it to mean an elevated status due to the man himself, rather than the services he provided. That Abel was held in high regard is not contentious, but how he came to be held in high regard should be interpreted according to Massim ethics and not European codes.

Suau is, in fact, a language of great civility and Suau-speaking peoples practise a courtesy absent in Anglophone relations in which class is often a determinant of the degree of civility bestowed. Part of the Suau courtesy is to bestow the salutation 'taubada' or 'sinebada'. The courtesy is also reflective of the practice of he'asisi (S, respect). In recognition of his function and out of respect Abel would be addressed as tama (father) or taubada, the latter he incorrectly translated as 'master'.[55] Possessing a greater attunement to status as it applied to both indigenous people and their relationships to each other and to whites, Seligman notes:

> There is a status term bada, or taubada, meaning old man which throughout the parts of the south-eastern district [of Papua] is used in the form taubada as a term of respect in speaking of, and to some extent when addressing, old men of superior status. It is also the common mode of polite address by natives to white men and is in fact employed very much as Malays use the word tuan, to which it nearly approaches in significance.[56]

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[54] David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

[55] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 94.

[56] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 454.

Tuan translates as sir or mister rather than master. Other whites, including missionaries and later anthropologists, also translated taubada as 'master' which is obviously more in keeping with their pretensions of white superiority. The gendered pair for taubada is sinebada and the same misunderstanding has been applied by whites to sinebada.

Shelley Mallett writes that in the language of the Massim Nuakata people, the word 'sinebada' is a 'respectful term for a white woman'.[57] Sinebada is, in fact, a respectful term for any woman, white or not. What does it mean when respect is appropriated to be a property afforded only to white people by others? This is, in effect, what Mallett does in this seemingly innocuous phrase and despite her insistence on her sensitivity to her white privilege she perpetuates the very same in her assumption that the designation sinebada affords respect only to white women.

There are many instances when naming race or ethnicity serves a purpose—making it visible enables one to contextualise, or perhaps, to destabilise the dominance of that which is perceived to be normative. This is not one of those occasions. Simply by inserting the word 'white' between 'respectful term' and 'woman', Mallett has reinforced the hierarchy of race and the barrier between herself and her subjects that she was keen to dissolve. It must also be said that Mallett's action is not malicious—it is unlikely she intended harm. One can speculate that since she was addressed as sinebada she assumed the meaning she put in her glossary. But were Mallet addressed as 'madame' in France or 'signora' in Italy, would she assume that this is due to some hierarchy which privileges her?

Sinebada serves the same function as madame and signora. It is the appropriate honorific used to address women with whom you have no kin relation. Mallett is by no means the only white person to place this spin of white

[57] Shelley Mallett, 2003, *Conceiving Cultures: Reproducing People & Places on Nuakata, Papua New Guinea*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 298.

privilege on local lexicon. In the language of missionaries and colonisers a taubada can only ever be a white man.[58]

Foreigners such as Mallett, have appropriated 'sinebada' and 'taubada' to consolidate race and class boundaries. One might argue that since in everyday conversation Papuans don't address each other as taubada or sinebada, it is unsurprising that both words have been misconstrued by foreigners as relating exclusively to white people.

However, the absence of these honorifics in conversations between Papuans points to a kinship relation or to some degree of familiarity between the parties. Moreover, both words are commonly used in everyday conversation to refer to third parties who are elders in that community. For instance, the indigenous male leaders on Kwato were addressed singly as taubada (S), or bada (T) and collectively as tautaubada (S) or babada (T), or as tanuwaga. The women were singly, sinebada (S), or collectively sinesinebada (S). Individually, an elder woman might also be addressed as keduruma (T) or also as tanuwaga. Furthermore, as one of my interlocutors pointed out, when Suau speakers refer to whites they specify this with 'sinebada dimdim' or 'taubada dimdim'. Clearly, there would be no need for such a distinction if these terms referred only to whites.

Ironically, tanuwaga is, in fact, more akin to 'master'. It is a designation that is relational and applies to both women and men. A man who is taubada is

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[58] Discussions with Erue Stephens, Vilia Lawrence, and Sheldon Andrew in June 2016 helped to illuminate the use of these terms.

Even today some white men in PNG routinely describe themselves as taubada giving the literal explanation of the word which, in Motu but not in Suau, is 'big man' since in Motu tau equals man and bada equals big. On one level they are correct, on another grossly arrogant. The first is that taubada is an honorific like Mr or Sir, so it is appropriate that they use it as such. Yet, these same white men who demand to be addressed as taubada, and who relish the idea of being a 'big man', do not bestow the same reckoning on Papuans. Second, the literal translation in the Motuan language is not the same as the everyday meaning attributed to the word in both the Suau and Motu languages. In fact, to give a man the attribute of bigness, in the corporeal sense and in the metaphorical sense, one would have to say tau badana. Furthermore, taubada, like sinebada, represents an age hierarchy. Unlike the 'big man' of the cultures of the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, for these Austronesian speakers of the south Papua coast, it is not about wealth or status.

not necessarily a tanuwaga but a man who is tanuwaga would also be designated a taubada by those with whom he exercises the tanuwaga relationship. Whites, neither men nor women, were ever given the universal designation of tanuwaga. If the Massim people had in mind the superiority/inferiority relationship inherent in whiteness then Abel would have been tanuwaga rather than taubada or tama.

Legitimacy

Different attitudes towards sex and more liberal attitudes towards women's bodies have, like tribal enmities and head hunting, been grist to the mill of white supremacist (il)logic—the sexualised native at once the object of revulsion, fear, as well as desire.[59] In this (il)logic bodies are not simply bodies. Bodies are legitimate or illegitimate and legitimacy, and therefore access to privileges, is decided, not just by markers such as race and sex, but also, strangely, by the marital status of one's mother. The absence of the father who might have abandoned the woman is of no consequence in this (il)logic, nor is the (il)logic flexible enough to accommodate a turn towards the perspective that Massim women had autonomy and control of their own bodies and could control their fertility.

Seligman was one who puzzled at 'the very small number of illegitimate births which take place'[60] coming to the conclusion that 'Papuasian girls are less easily impregnated than the women of the white race'.[61] Seligman enquired about abortion but he does not appear to have enquired about contraception. Massim women, however, have long practiced contraception using available herbs. Even Susan Tiraka, at 91 years of age in 2012, and mission-born and raised, was able to inform me of the specific plants useful for both contraception and abortion.

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[59] Regis Stella, 2007, *Imagining the Other: The Representation of the Papua New Guinean Subject*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 140–61.

[60] Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 500.

[61] Ibid.

Missionary wife, Edith E. Turner, was also led to note of the women in and around Port Moresby that '[i]n spite of all the looseness of sex relationships in Papua, the birth of illegitimate children, apart from half-castes, is almost unknown'.[62] Illegitimacy in this context means, of course that a woman has become pregnant and given birth outside of marriage. Are we to believe Mrs Turner's assertion—which itself seems illegitimate—that only mixed-race children were 'illegitimate'? Mixed-race children would have been visually different and thus easily identifiable. How would Mrs Turner have known which of the indigenous children was 'illegitimate' or not? Indeed, how would Mrs Turner, and perhaps Mr Seligman too, have known that what they meant by 'illegitimate' was commensurable across language and culture? In the case of the Massim, the assertion of illegitimacy is illogical in a female-centric system of descent where one's mother is of critical importance to social structure and to belonging. It does not mean that a father is unimportant but since the maternity of a child can never be challenged in the same way that paternity can, the child belongs to the mother and her clan. In this way no child, indeed no human, can ever be illegitimate.

The tanuwaga of Kwato Island

Kwato Island is a piece of real estate. It is also an institution which from its genesis as the LMS Kwato Mission, has undergone a series of metamorphoses made possible partially by the land assets under the institution's control. In 2015, I sighted the 19 titles of the properties now under the control of the Kwato Church of PNG, including Kwato Island. How did the Church acquire these properties? Tanuwaga, as I have said, has been glossed as 'landowner'.[63] In the

[62] Lister-Turner, *Among Papuan Women*, 21.

[63] Land 'ownership' is a concept introduced by whiteness. Explorations of the impact of the commodification of land in PNG and other Pacific Island nations and the impact on identity can be found in Siobhan McDonnell, Matthew G. Allen and Colin Filer (eds), 2017, *Kastom, Property and Ideology: Land Transformations in Melanesia*, Canberra: ANU Press; James F. Weiner and Katie Glaskin, 2007, *Customary Land Tenure and Registration in Australia and Papua New Guinea: Anthropological Perspectives*, Canberra: ANU E Press.

context of Kwato who were the tanuwaga landowners at missionisation? And why, in 2015, were there multiple tanuwaga groups that continued to lay claim to different parts of Kwato Island despite the fact of the island being held under freehold title by the Kwato Church of PNG (KCPNG).

David Wetherell has written in detail of the challenges that an ambitious Charles W. Abel encountered within the structure of the LMS, of his refusal to yield to the party line, and of the eventual break of the Kwato Mission from the LMS.[64] It was possible for Abel to exercise his desire for independence due to the support that the southern Massim had given the Kwato Mission. Even before the break, Abel had secured land and operated copra plantations.

But why did the various tanuwaga give land to the mission, and under what conditions? Whilst it is clear how Samarai Island changed ownership it is less clear how the entire island of Kwato became a freehold lease. Samarai was, at the request of the colonial administration, exchanged for Kwato Island before the arrival of Abel and the Samoan missionary Vavia was already living on Kwato at the time of Abel's arrival.[65] However, oral histories indicate that negotiations for land use, if not frequent, were at least periodic during Abel's time, indicating he was cognisant that the mission did not have rights to the entire island. That Kwato Island is now freehold title raises questions about the nature of the (mis)understandings over the use of land between the tanuwaga of the island of Kwato at the time of missionisation and the foreign missionaries, and between a system under which land use is relational and fluid and one in which it is fixed and unyielding. Just as there were enormous misunderstanding between the Massim and the labour recruiters of the nineteenth century,[66] who also engaged in deliberate deception, so too was there misunderstanding between missionaries and the Massim in land matters.

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[64] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*.

[65] Wetherell and Abel, 'First contact mission narratives from Eastern Papua New Guinea', 114.

[66] Margriet Roe, 1961, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 83–86.

According to Thomas Lisenia and Isaiah Peter, there are three clans that claim a stake in Kwato Island. They are the Miagudu, the Gouwali and the Magaituha. In this section my interlocutors who are members of these clans are Thomas Lisenia (Miagudu), Gari Kumaina (Gouwali) and the descendants of Bwagagaia (Magaituha).

> **Gari Kumaina**: When [the Logea people] were converted, they wanted to give this island [Kwato] to the work of God. So all the chiefs had their meeting and Dilome asked them to agree. But they did not give the whole island, just the middle part. So Father Abel asked Dilome for a little piece of [additional] land, he said for my workers to live on.[67]

Kwato had a distinct residential arrangement under which most of the Papuan residences were clustered from Tupi eastwards to Lekawakuduli with the dimdim occupying the middle section of the island (Map 2). According to Gari, the mid-section had been given to the mission but the remainder of the island was under customary control. That the entire island is now under freehold title points to a significant misinterpretation between European and Massim people over the terms and conditions of land usage.

Gari's words are re-inforced in this email from Thomas Lisenia:

> The 'Kwato Accord' [is an] agreement … between the Church and the Gouwali clan of Logea. My understanding from the oral history of the Kwato … island is that portions (deula) of the island are owned by a number of clans, one of which is the Gouwali clan. We are reliably informed through oral history (by all major clans) that it was only the portion of land owned by Gouwali that was given away for LMS to establish the church on Kwato. Therefore, that Accord was between the Church and Gouwali people for this particular portion. However, over time, when the Church refers to the Kwato Accord, it is understood it refers to the entire island of Kwato including Bonaruahilihili. However, as I understand from my father's clansmen, the Accord should refer to only the portion of land owned and given away by the Gouwali clan, not the entire island including [Bonaruahilihili]. The portion owned by my father's Miagudu Clan was given to the Church based on verbal agreement (after the Kwato Accord) upon which the Isuhina hospital was constructed.

[67] Recorded interview with Gari Kumaina, Kwato, 20 December 2016.

> [W]e are aware that Kwato including [Bonaruahilihili] is a crown lease under the Kwato Church, I am not aware of any historical information that has transpired between the Church and members of the clans in agreeing for their portion (deulas) to be transferred to the Church to be registered as crown land. If this has taken place, then it is an issue to be legally challenged.[68]

Sam Andrew is the President of the Kwato Church. He is also one of Bwagagaia's great-grandchildren.[69] One of the oral histories pertaining to the mission that had been passed down to Sam concerned the Nukili Covenant which appears to refer to the same event as the Kwato Accord.

> The Kwato Accord is a meeting which Misiebo [Mister Abel] had with his elders at a meeting house at Nukili. That is the meeting where they agreed to work with Misiebo to build the Kwato School to prepare the children for a future independent Papua.[70]

In the telling below, from Daniel Sione, to Liasi Tarua, to Sam Andrew, the history has been passed down three generations of people who are either related to Bwagagaia and the Magaituha clan and/or have some connection to the Gouwali clan. Thus, this oral history has not been public outside of these clans, even though it has not been deliberately hidden. Such is the nature of oral history, part of which is knowing what questions to ask to elicit them when one is not part of the circle with whom the history has been shared.

> Nukili is the place where Charles Abel and the elders made a covenant … the Nukili Covenant of 1917. Bubu Daniel Sioni told Liasi and Thomas [Tarua] this story. He said 'This is your story. You must know it.' The story is, in the First World War, because of the war effort in Britain LMS wrote to all their missions telling them to scale down their operations, Kwato being one of them. Charles and Beatrice Abel were very disturbed that the orphans would be sent back to the villages … [Abel] called a meeting and the meeting is what was called the Nukili Covenant. Bubu Daniel said there were

[68] Email from Thomas Lisenia, 28 April 2017.

[69] In Genealogy Chart 4, Sipiniei 2, Sam's father, Ivano, is shown.

[70] Email from Sam Andrew, 24 April 2017.

two of them [who attended], Solomona and [he] Daniela. At that time they were teenagers.[71]

The elders gathered at Nukili, including Bwagagaia. Misiebo was called. He put his case to them 'What shall we do? I don't want to send the children back to their villages'. And he presented a plan for independence to the elders. Bwagagaia gets up and he shouts 'Au ene e! Au ene e! [Come on, all of you, agree!]'. He instructed them to agree with what Misiebo was saying. Daniel passed this story. They know him [Bwagagaia] as a notorious guy.[72]

They had four spokespersons, from the islands and the mainland. The guy from the islands says 'Tamamai, ai abo doha kedewa. Haedi tau ailoea i lau doha kedewa ai abo ai hemuriwata mo'. In other words, you are the hunter, we are the dogs. Wherever you go we will follow.

The guy from the mainland says 'Tamamai, ai abo doha mota. Haedi ulu i baguna ai dele abo ai hemuriwata mo'. We'll be like a snake. Where the head goes the tail will follow.

That was like their binding covenant. Because he [Abel] explained to them 'if you want this school, I'm going to ask you to give your timber, your land. Cut the timber, build warehouses, factories … we're going to prepare this for our children. Give your lands to make copra so our children will be able to do industry.'

So that's what we call Nukili Covenant.[73]

Because of that Covenant, they've kept to it. And they always say 'eda babda edi eali' [it was the wish of the elders]. So they keep talking about babada edi eali. So for the next 10 years they sacrificed to raise money to pay off those plantations. There was a figure of ten thousand pounds talked about so it could be more.[74]

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[71] Telephone interview with Sam Andrew, 14 January 2016.

[72] Ibid.

[73] According to Thomas Lisenia the Kwato Accord was negotiated only with the Gouwali peoples. The Miagudu did not participate in the negotiation therefore the Miagudu portion of Kwato Island was never given away.

[74] Sam Andrew, interview, 14 January 2016. In 1929, it was reported that 'The Papuan Christians of Kwato and Milne Bay have contributed $5,000 during the past year to purchase the plantations. This has meant heroic, but joyful giving out of poverty'. See 'In Milne Bay', 1929, *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 8.

Wetherell describes how Abel played on the fears of the Tawala and Ealeba peoples that white planters would soon take their lands.[75] People willingly gave their land, but they gave it to the mission, not to Abel the individual, and they gave it not just from fear of predatory white planters, but from the desire to enhance their legacy to their children. Russell Abel writes:

> Early in 1911 … [a]n old chief at Koeabule had the foresight to see that the land he was offering to the mission would be secured permanently for the benefit of his descendants. He argued the matter in great detail to Abel: 'I give it, yet I keep it for my children and my grandchildren. No one can sell it when I am gone'.[76]

The binding covenant was, for the tanuwaga of Kwato Island as for others who gave their land, an exchange of their land and labour for the creation of commercial enterprise which would allow their descendants to participate more equally in the world of whites. They could not have understood that Abel's actions to convert each parcel of land into a Crown lease effectively alienated the tanuwaga forever from their land without any mechanism for renegotiation in the event of significant changes to the terms of the Covenant. So it is that when descendants of the tanuwaga today assess that the Covenant has not delivered the promised benefits they are not in a position to reclaim their land despite their frequent rhetoric. For instance, the November/December 2015 visit of PNG Prime Minister Peter O'Neill to Kwato Church and his promise of funding for the renovation of the Church triggered many Facebook conversations about the ownership of the island. Clearly for the Miagudu, the

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[75] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 102–104.

For the Papuan fear that whites would take their land, their awareness of the dispossessed Indigenous Australians, and their resistance to colonisation see also Marilyn Lake, 2015, 'The Australian dream of an island empire: Race, reputation and resistance', *Australian Historical Studies* 46(3).

[76] Russell Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*, 134. How wrong he was. To regain its independence from the United Church, Kwato Church had to pay stamp duties of several hundred thousand kina to recover the titles to Kwato Mission properties. This was done through a deal with Masurina, a business owned by Charles Abel's grandson Chris Abel, which acquired the lease of the Koea Bule Plantation from the Church. The deal was that Masurina would pay the stamp duties and also establish a development company from which the Church would also benefit. Current Church elders are unanimous that the deal has never benefited the Church.

Gouwali, and the Magaituha clans, their relationship to Kwato Island remains a point of contention, as it does with other clans and other Kwato Church (KCPNG) properties such as Killerton Island, the site of the first Samoan settlement in the Tawala region. Many of the isibaguna would not have had the same relationship to Kwato Island, nonetheless, being alienated from their land was a misadventure that the tanuwaga shared with the isibaguna, whose lives I next examine.

Chapter Eight

The Isibaguna

> **Maria Ariansen**: Kwato was a magnet. It attracted a certain type of person … curious … people who knew what they wanted from life.[1]
>
> And then again, there was the fact that the Papuan was not only capable of being taught, but that he was increasingly anxious to learn, and had remarkable capacity for all kinds of skilled work.[2]

On 8 August 1891, accompanied by an adolescent Iosia Lebasi and other youths from the mission compound at Suau, F.W. Walker and Charles W. Abel arrived on Kwato Island to commence the establishment of a mission. The densely wooded and swampy ground had to be cleared but rain made work impossible until the end of October.[3] In Abel's account of their arrival there is no mention of the landowners, the people of neighbouring Logea, except that they ignored the dimdim (S, foreigner, horizon), being more interested in their cycles of mata'asi (S, feasting and ceremony). Parts of Kwato island had been a British Government Station that the London Missionary Society (LMS) acquired when it exchanged land it had on Samarai.[4] But the Logea people obviously retained rights as Abel mentions Logea people moving freely on and off the island in the period following his arrival.[5] Their disinterest posed the problem of labour which had to be imported from Orangerie Bay and which corresponds to Dieselo's claim, made more than a century later when I journeyed to the Suau region, that Suau had been drained of its young men by Kwato. The project of filling in the swamp which became a cricket pitch employed some two hundred

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[1] Skype interview with Mariana Ariansen, 12 July 2015.

[2] Charles W. Abel and Delavan Pierson, 1923, 'Editorial Comments', *New Guinea Tidings*, 3–4 October. This quote comes from the *New Guinea Tidings*, later the *Kwato Tidings*, which was an inter-war Kwato publication established to report on the activities of the Kwato Extension Association to American benefactors. It was variously written/edited by Delavan Pierson, Charles Abel and sundry members of Abel's family.

[3] Russell W. Abel, 1934, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato: Forty Years in Dark Papua*, New York: Revell, 57.

[4] Ibid., 55.

[5] Ibid., 61.

labourers over two years (See Figures 31, 32 and 33).[6] It took four years to complete,[7] and when labourers could not be found, or could not be paid, it was the bodies of the isibaguna adults and children that completed the work since Abel found the Logea people more difficult to negotiate with than the Suau: 'The people at Logea, the large island adjacent to Kwato, had at one time been regarded by Sir William MacGregor, the first Lieutenant Governor, as among the most difficult people with whom he had to deal.'[8] It is not specified why MacGregor or Abel viewed the Logea islanders as difficult but they clearly had their own interests and priorities which did not include labouring for a mission. It signified, too, that labour needs meant that 'For some time we were entirely dependent upon the children whom we had induced to come and live with us'.[9] Child labour was justified as part of their training, a strategy used also with the labour of future Massim generations.

The work to build a mission was physically demanding since a large swamp had to be filled in with land brought down from the hill. Parts of Kwato Island may have been gifted by the tanuwaga to the mission but it was the sweat of the isibaguna that created the mission space and the descendants of the isibaguna remain as attached to the island as do the descendants of the tanuwaga.

[6] Ibid., 59.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 60.

[9] Charles William Abel, 1900, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, London: C.E. Roberts & Co., 8.



Figure 31. Transformation of the swamp on Kwato 1891 to 1895, stage 1
Source. Charles William Abel, 1900, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, London: C.E. Roberts & Co., 8



Figure 32. Transformation of the swamp on Kwato 1891 to 1895, stage 2
Source. Abel, Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900, 16



Figure 33. Transformation of the swamp on Kwato 1891 to 1895, stage 3
Source. Abel, Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900, 14

Isibaguna motives

As with the previous section on the tanuwaga I am curious about the motives of the isibaguna for joining the mission. Tanuwaga, you will recall, are the landowners, and isibaguna are the indigenous pioneers of the Kwato Mission. Isibaguna is, strictly speaking, a missionised identity. The isibaguna adopted Christianity and lived and worked in the mission, initially on Kwato Island, and later in mission stations.

Some of the tanuwaga of Logea and Kwato also became isibaguna at Kwato, others did not. Had Dilome and Kaimawana and Bwagagaia and Kenuwaigu chosen to live on Kwato they too would have been isibaguna, maintaining their tanuwaga status. However, whilst they chose to adopt some aspects of Christianity, they rejected missionisation for themselves. In the telling of Kwato history amongst the Kwato community members, these four individuals are not referred to as isibaguna but as tanuwaga.

An extension of this missionised identity is the isimulita. They are the descendants of the isibaguna. This is not a rigid demarcation since there are isimulita who have no consanguineal relation to the group identified as isibaguna. However, they are classified as such according to the temporal sequence in which they arrived at Kwato and, importantly for the first generation of isimulita, their commitment to the mission.

For instance, I am an isimulita of the fourth generation. Both pairs of my maternal great-grandparents participated in the establishment of the Kwato Mission. The parents of my grandfather, Diki and his wife Daueonei, spent some time on Kwato as adults before returning to Daueonei's eanua at Wagawaga, Tawala. They are not, in the telling of Kwato history, isibaguna. However, their children would be educated on Kwato and several of them, including Merari, Osineru, Oleva and Eli, would be committed to the mission, spending a large portion of their lives in its service. These latter are isimulita of the second generation. My other great-grandparents were Iosia and Pauline, both of whom joined the mission in their early teens, where they later married and raised all their children. They are known throughout the Kwato community as isibaguna because their lifelong commitment shaped the Kwato mission as much as they were shaped by it.

The relationship between tanuwaga and isibaguna is not an oppositional binary. There is no hierarchy between them and the success and longevity of the Kwato Mission would not have been possible without both groups. Although I have titled this section Isibaguna my interlocutors are drawn from a larger pool but with the intention of providing a portrait of isibaguna motives. This passage, the circularity from isibaguna to isimulita back to isibaguna is part of how Kwato peoples know themselves and their world.

For ease of analysis I demarcate the group known as isibaguna to those who joined the mission between 1891 and 1899 and all those who came after as isimulita of different generations. This demarcation is artificial and may not be how some Kwato families classify their ancestors. But I have chosen this since

those who arrived in the last decade of the 1800s—such as Semi and Pauline (Figure 34), and others (Figure 35) would be having children in the mission by the beginning of the next century and these children would be known as isimulita starting from about 1900.

Pauline's first child, Iva—the indigenous form of Eve—was born in 1901, the first baby girl on Kwato. Semi, whose clan had marked her with tattoos to identify she was a hasala who would never marry, and who joined the mission against the wishes of the family, nonetheless adopted and raised children.[10] One of these was Maniana, the second son of Bwagagaia and Semi's mother's sister, Kenuwaigu. Maniana's older brother, Andrew, was already at school on Kwato when one day Kenuwaigu rowed across the channel to deliver him some food. According to Gari Kumaina, Semi descended to meet her aunt, Kenuwaigu, at the beach and on seeing the seven-year old Maniana in the canoe, convinced his mother to leave him with her. Maniana spent the rest of his life on Kwato and is buried at Kwatowaila cemetery instead of on Logea. His eldest daughter, Dalai, would, along with Maria Ariansen (née Sioni), be the first two Kwato girls to attend boarding school at Firbank Grammar in Melbourne, Australia in 1951. Andrew and Maniana are in my classification, isimulita, since they were raised by the isibaguna.

Imposing inflexible borders is, unfortunately, often a hallmark of western epistemology, and leaves open the potential for misunderstanding when these epistemic rules are applied to non-European cultures. Isibaguna and isimulita are, in fact, relational terms—those who came later can only be understood in relation to those who came first, who in turn can only be understood in relation to those who came later.

[10] Hasala (S, young woman, lovely).



Figure 34. Semi Dilome, Bessie Towolei and Pauline Lebasi
Source. Liz Abel, 1991, *The Kwato Story 1891–1991 – Kwato Centenary New Horizons*, Hervey Bay: Author, 11. Used with permission

Another point I wish to clarify is that I did not set out to identify all the people who might have been isibaguna, that is those who joined and committed to the mission between 1891 and 1899. In 1894 Kwato residents numbered 30, by 1900 they were 90 and by 1911 there were 150 increasing to a peak population of 250 around 1941 and Kwato converts numbered some ten thousand across Milne Bay.[11] Not all of the Kwato residents would have been isibaguna or isimulita since some of them, although receiving an education from the mission, would not have committed to a lifetime of service to the mission. Moreover, the isibaguna who I present below are only a few of those known to me. Their inclusion in this thesis is of political, ethical and methodological importance since it is related to the access that I was granted to oral histories and the depth and breadth of those histories.

[11] David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 2.

A further point is that these classifications were generated by the missionised Massim people. The isibaguna would also generate the terminology of gana'aro (S, inside the fence) and ganamuri (S, outside the fence) to designate the missionised and non-missionised. This initially fluid and porous boundary would fossilise over the generations and come to represent such a distinct class boundary that, in order to be more inclusive, the present-day Kwato Church has written into its constitution a prohibition on the use of ganamuri and Kwato nanatuna (S, the children of Kwato) in relation to Church members.[12] This particular fossilisation is likely a western influence as one of my interlocutors told of how the Abel family, Phyllis Abel in particular, would 'use these families competitively against each other'.[13]

Figure 35 appears in Abel's publications of 1900 and 1902 undated and, as has been a characteristic of whiteness, erases the identity of the natives by not naming any one of them. It is also not possible to know whether all those photographed remained in the mission. It is possible, however, to make some inferences.

Abel arrived on Kwato in August 1891. He was accompanied by Iosia Lebasi (see Figure 35, middle row, fourth from left) who was said to be a young teenager at the time, and easy for me to identify since he was my great-grandfather and throughout my childhood his portrait hung in my grandmother's house. Since Lebasi in this image is older than a young teenager we can surmise that it was taken towards the end of the 1890s. In the front row, second from the left is probably Maori from Bwasikauri on Logea, and third from left is likely Pauline, my great-grandmother. In the middle of the back row is very likely Semi, daughter of Dilome and Kaimawana, flanked by Edidai, the first female teacher, and Mireka.

[12] Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea (KCPNG), n.d., *Constitution of the Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea and Governing By-Laws*, Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea, Article 8.2, 6.

[13] As told to Anne Dickson-Waiko by Oleva Lebasi. Personal communication from Anne Dickson-Waiko, September 2017.



Figure 35. Isibaguna
Source. Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 212

Also in this photograph of the isibaguna are Mareko and Bate. I have been unable to identify the others, but found it interesting to note that of the group of 14 isibaguna, nine are women.

Abel had observed that clans were often reluctant to give up their young girls, parting more often with boys. This certainly makes sense in a matrilineal context since the girls would be responsible for continuing the matriline. But the reverse is also true. Because of the matrilineal context many families chose their daughters to go into the mission and to receive a European education. Such was the case with Maria Ariansen's mother and aunt, and although I have classified the latter two as isimulita rather than isibaguna, their parents, who made the decision for them to go to Kwato, though not isibaguna were of that same generation.

Maria Ariansen née Sioni was born on Kwato in 1940. Her father, Daniel Sioni, ran the printing press on Kwato. After boarding school in Melbourne from 1952 and college in Brisbane, she returned to the then Territory of Papua where

she taught for two years and started a training system to help girls in rural areas to be welfare workers. Later, encouraged by Roger Hau'ofa (brother of scholar and writer Epeli Hau'ofa) she applied for a radio broadcasting role circa 1967–68. Along with Roger and Sevese Morea they became the voices of PNG radio. But Maria's marriage to an American has meant living away from Papua New Guinea (PNG) since the 1980s.

On her return to PNG after a 25-year absence, she and I happened to be on the same flight from Port Moresby to Alotau, delayed several days because of Cyclone Ita. I had not seen Maria for at least 40 years, and had met her only once or twice. Yet, looking up from my book, to see her and her son Andrew, standing in the queue, I felt a tug of recognition. I approached them and asked, 'Are you Maria Sioni?' She stared, in turn, at me, trying to place me. 'Eau Dineheilo ena taubaguna [I am Dineheilo's eldest]'. At which she embraced me, crying 'Kapole Dineheilo' (my mother had passed away in 2010). The interviews from which this excerpt is taken were done by Skype—me in Canberra, she in Utah—in July 2015.

> My mother, Ainauia, came to Kwato as part of a transaction for land that Charles Abel desired to acquire for the mission. Abel wanted to establish a mission; he identified that the land which he thought suitable belonged to Onalelewa. My grandparents, Talageha and Onalelewa wanted their daughter educated on Kwato so a deal was done—Charles took Ainauia to Kwato and he was given land for a mission. [Ainauia's] younger sister Wedilo accompanied her.
>
> The block of land given to Abel for mission work was later sold by a young man from Bisimaka to a dimdim trader, illegally under customary law. The trader registered it. Later, Cecil Abel purchased. It was willed to Andrew [Abel], who on Cecil's death gave it to the Kwato Church. Andrew [her son] and I are pursuing the return of the land to the family. The clan want the return of the land because no development has taken place.

Ainauia, whose name means 'gift' in Suau, was prepubescent when she went to Kwato. Given that Maria's eldest sibling, Maureen, was born in 1926, we can surmise that Ainauia and Wedilo came into the Kwato Mission sometime between 1910 and 1915. Ainauia's mother, Onalelewa who came from Pihoho

up the Dawadawa River and had vast landholdings, was of the isibaguna generation, the generational period of approximately 1891 to 1899. We can see from the text above the same misunderstandings between missionaries and indigenous peoples over land use as have arisen over Kwato Island.

Many of the isibaguna and their descendants, the isimulita, were eventually alienated from their matrilineal eanua and the land rights that accrue from that by dint of choosing to be missionised and to raise their children within the mission. This is not the case for all missionised families since those who maintained more than superficial contact with their non-missionised matrilineal kin over the generations continue to have rights. But since a 'more than superficial contact' entailed observing matrilineal governance around land as well as attending to the rituals of death, and obligations of kinship, the missionised, especially the isibaguna and their offspring the first generation of isimulita, would probably have experienced tense conflicts of loyalty. Mulolo, for instance, one of the isibaguna having joined the mission sometime between 1891 and 1900, snuck out of the mission to return to his village to observe 'tradition' and have his earlobes cut. He later returned to Kwato and at some point before 1902 he travelled to Sydney with Abel.[14]

Indeed, not everyone who joined the mission and/or spent time on Kwato Island chose to remain in the fold. Many are the stories both of ejection as well as rejection for across the generations there were people leaving of their own free will,[15] such as Tariowai who left Kwato in order to look after his wife's, property at Watunou.[16] Even Ainauia would follow husband Daniel to spend time away from Kwato.[17] What is evident is the agency of the Massim people in these matters. In just one volume of the inter-war Kwato publication, *New Guinea Tidings*, there are numerous examples of this agency.

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[14] Charles W. Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 18–20.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Russell Abel, 1929, 'Papuans who preach Christ', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 14.

[17] *Kwato Mission Tidings*, 1935, March, 5.

> D has just left us. She had been up at Duabo with the little children for some months and, doubtless, whilst there her people came to see her and succeeded in inducing her to leave. We have done everything possible to retain her. She has been told plainly what awful temptations await her in her village, where her people will be willing to marry her to any dirty white man or half-caste who will pay for her. But we have not moved her from her purpose. She clung to us when she said good-bye but neither prayer nor reasoning with her had any effect. She asks to be allowed to return next June.[18]

In the same issue is Dalai who in 1929 combined the roles of teacher, nurse, plantation manager, vocational trainer, and station manager, an exemplary of Kaniku's 'Those Massim women'.[19] Dalai was by no means an unusual Massim woman in her capacity for leadership despite the assertion to the contrary in the text below.[20]

> [Dalai] is an unmarried woman and is in charge of the station at Manawara.[21] To anyone who knows Papuans this is in itself an astounding fact. She has done admirable work and is one of the few and rare Papuans who are not afraid to lead. The influence that she has over the natives in her district is remarkable. A case of infectious disease and Dalai is on the spot, dismissing the relatives, isolating the patient, riding rough-shod over native convention incidentally but perhaps averting a disaster by so doing. (One ought to explain that the relatives that often have to be dismissed from a bedside gather to mourn and wail if they think a death probable. Many people hereabouts

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[18] 'Our sorrows and our joys', 1929, *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 14.

[19] Anne Kaniku, 1989, 'Those Massim women', in Sione Lātūkefu (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: A Century of Colonial Impact, 1884–1984*, Port Moresby: National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea in association with the PNG Centennial Committee.

Anne Kaniku (later Dickson-Waiko) questioned why it was that women from the Milne Bay Province had 'scored a number of firsts' (ibid., 369.) and been disproportionately represented in the country's Western education system and in the early politics of the formation and independence of the State of Papua New Guinea.

[20] Martha Macintyre and Maria Lepowsky have written about Massim women's authority. See Martha Macintyre, 1987, 'Flying witches and leaping warriors: Supernatural origins of power and matrilineal authority in Tubetube society', in Marilyn Strathern (ed.), *Dealing with Inequality: Analysing Gender Relations in Melanesia and Beyond*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; Maria Lepowsky, 1990, 'Big men, big women, and cultural autonomy', *Ethnology* 29(1).

[21] Manawara was a plantation in Ealeba, near Wagawaga. See map in *Kwato Mission Tidings*, 1931, February, 16.

have not only their last hours but their last days cheered in this way.) But, to return to Dalai, she has a small crowd of girls and youths with her whom she trains and teaches, as well as a village day school. With the help of the boarders, she runs the cocoanut plantation that helps to meet the expenses of the station. In addition to this work she visits the villages, attending the sick and helping the people generally. Doilegu, the young storeman who is at Bisimaka about a mile away, is a standby, while his wife [Iva], brought up from infancy at Kwato, helps to provide a bit of 'Kwato atmosphere' which Kwato old-boys and girls appreciate.[22]



Figure 36. Dalai
Source. Phyllis Abel, 1929, 'Diary letter from Phyllis Abel', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 11

[22] Russell Abel, 1929, 'Papuans who preach Christ', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 14.

Even children had their own spheres of influence which they leveraged in favour of the mission.

> Just before the term began, all the children went home to their villages or Christian relatives if they had any. Those who had none were sent to Dalai at Wagawaga.They came back full of news of all their doings and recounted stories of their conversations with heathen people and their efforts to tell them about the Saviour. Silota and Elsie both went home to Sariba and they had some thrilling experiences and came back bubbling over with joy for the many opportunities they had had of witnessing to the people around, having prayer with them, and gathering the children together in the evenings to teach them to sing Suau choruses.[23]

One might read this and ponder the type of conditioning to which these children were subject.[24] What I read in this paragraph is the volition of the two girls, Silota and Elsie, to engage with the people in their village on Sariba, and of the curiosity demonstrated by the villagers that drew them to participate in prayer gatherings.

I propose that the establishment and growth of the Kwato Mission was entirely dependent on the goodwill of the indigenous people—including children—and their ability to influence their own people. With their far-flung kinship networks and established trade networks the isibaguna and the isimulita had access to large populations of potential recruits. I now look at some of the isibaguna and the complex networks in which they were situated.

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[23] Russell Abel, 1929, 'Winter Months – in July', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 10.

[24] Similarly, on Dobu Island, young children were housed in a boarding school or an orphanage for those rescued from infanticide. In this manner, the mission was able to cultivate a core of loyal followers for whom rules of Christian domesticity and marriage were less problematic than for their peers in the village. See Michael W. Young, 1989, 'Suffer the children: Wesleyans in the D'Entrecasteaux', in Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 117, 128.

Complex networking and Massim agency

Mareko from Gwawili was an isibaguna and is mentioned by Abel as a man of 'very strong influence' in Milne Bay.[25] Mareko was probably born between 1860 and 1870 and his story was recounted to me by his granddaughter Maori Tabua née Ikudede. Maori was in her twenties in the late 1950s when Mareko passed away. She believes he was in his eighties, the same decade that Maori has now reached.

Mareko went to Kwato when Charles W. Abel went looking for recruits shortly after his arrival on Kwato. Mareko's granddaughter Maori thinks he joined the mission because he was curious about the dimdim. There were many who were curious and many who, like Mareko's family in the Ealeba region, held a clan meeting to discuss who would go into the mission and who would remain on the eanua to protect both land and knowledge. Mareko came from Gwawili but he had kinship relationships and networks throughout Ealeba as well as across the bay in the Tawala region. For instance, when Diki and Daueonei of Wagawaga, Ahioma were expecting their seventh child, Mareko paddled across the bay to call on them, and requested that the child be named Mareko if a boy. He was to be notified of the event by the lighting of a bonfire on the beach at Wagawaga which would be visible across the 15-kilometre expanse of ocean. The child was indeed a boy, a bonfire was lit, and Mareko duly paddled across, canoe laden with food and gifts for the mother and the newborn. The child, named Mareko Dickson, was born on 22 July 1922 and passed away in September 2012. Because of his name, Mareko Dickson always spoke fondly of the people at Gwawili, who became kin by virtue of sharing a name.

On their own, consanguineal matrilineal relations make Massim kinship networks vast and complex since for as long as one can name a common female ancestor, no matter how far back in time, one is considered to be a sibling relative to other descendants of the same generation. This is the relationship of boga esega, or one womb (S), and corresponds to the smallest indivisible unit of

[25] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 7.

a clan. For instance, the Modewa Clan of Bou and the Modewa Clan of Nebololo in Fife Bay are recognised by members to be related since, besides the common name, the clan emblem of the kulokulo bird is the same. However, both clans document different boga esega lineages to a depth of 10 generations with no common female ancestor. They are, therefore, the same asa (clan) since they have the same sulu (totem) but they are of different boga esega. It is possible that, if the genealogies were of greater depth, a common female ancestor might be identified.

Within my own boga esega, that of the Modewa clan of Bou, who trace their common ancestor back to Sipiniei, my clan brothers and sisters likely number in the hundreds. Suffice to say, I don't know all of them. In the Tawala and Suau languages there are no exact equivalents to the English 'cousin' since, on the maternal side, the words for brother and sister are the same words for cousin, and degrees of cousin-hood do not exist. In this society where age is a significant social marker, those of your generation are siblings or, if on the father's side, cousins. Those of your birth parents' generation are addressed as parent or aunt/uncle, and all in your grandparents' generation are addressed as tubu/bubu whether there is a kin relation or not.

Affinal kin networks enlarge the matrix and adding more expanse and layers of complexity are the relations that one acquires through the act of haliesa (S, namesake, giving a namesake) and also through the act of abihelai (S) or adoption, as well as through the remarriage of widows and widowers.

Mareko's first wife, Maori, was of the Duria clan from Bwasikauri, Logea, also the home of Dilome and Kaimawana. Maori, born around 1875 according to the genealogy I prepared with her grandaughter, also Maori, appears in Abel's 1900 publication (Figure 37). Mareko and Maori were married on Kwato. Later Mareko would manage plantations and Maori would teach weaving and handicrafts, and like all isibaguna families, their home would be open to other Massim people who wished to send their children into the mission. Their own

children Mahuru, Mari, Rowena and John would all be mission-educated. Maori, however, would die relatively young. According to her great-granddaughter:

> When Maori passed away … in those days when they see a man who is hardworking, they keep them. So they give one of their girls [to marry the widower].[26]

Anxious to maintain the children within their clan, Ligogome, a Duria clanswoman from Daio, Ealeba, was identified to be the new spouse of Mareko. This is a common practice which speaks to the inclusive nature of Massim matriliny which functions to retain its members however possible.[27]

Mareko and Maori were married on Kwato and it is possible that Abel arranged their match as he is said to have done for Ainauia's marriage to Daniel Sioni. Abel did engineer some marriages,[28] however, alliances between different clans who would sometimes find themselves on opposing sides of conflict and war was not uncommon before the arrival of missionaries. This is clear in the case of Lahela and Kelabutuna whose oral history was conveyed to me by Lahela's great-granddaughter, Goini Loko.

Lahela was a daughter born to a woman from Laviam, Maiwara, into the sulu Magisubu probably between 1860 and 1865. One day, out shellfishing at low tide, she was kidnapped by warriors from Divinai. In 2015, along the highway, Laviam is about 50 kilometres from Divinai. It is likely, however, that the nineteenth-century Divinai party travelled on a war canoe called a gebo (T), a hollowed out single log which could carry upwards of 20 people. The Tawala and Maiwara peoples were long-standing enemies. Lahela, kept captive at Divinai, was saved by three factors. First, she was not killed immediately since it was intended to cannibalise her during a major event, thus amplifying the act of dehumanisation of the other. Second, the taro crops necessary for that event were not ready for harvest. Even more opportunely, the girl caught the eye of

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[26] Maori Tabua, taped interview, Alotau, 11 January 2016.

[27] Macintyre writes that the core objectives of Tubetube matrilines are 'lineage integrity and self-sufficiency'. See Macintyre, 'Flying witches and leaping warriors', 207.

[28] David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 163–64; 'An elite for a nation?', 8.

local lad Kelabutuna.[29] With the assistance of his mother, Luposi, he freed Lahela and escorted her back to Laviam. Overwhelmed with gratitude and uncertain of how to repay him, Lahela's parents suggested he marry the girl. As custom demanded, the married couple then settled on the wife's land. Kelabutuna would later become Petelo (Peter) and he and Laleha would have three sons, Penua, Doilegu and Pilipo, all of whom would join the Kwato Church and establish churches at Laviam and Naura.[30] Penua is said to have reminded his congregation at Divinai that had the Divinai people been successful, then he, Penua, would not be there.

So if Abel did engineer the marriage of Mareko and Maori he had no say in Mareko's second marriage which was orchestrated by Maori's clanspeople. But Mareko chose not to stay on Kwato. He returned to his eanua where his influence and networks brought new recruits into the mission.

[29] Referred to by Abel in *Savage Life in New Guinea* as Kelabu. Kelabutuna's mother, Luposi, was from Divinai and his father, Turua, from Niue. Turua was not a missionary so he possibly had been part of a pearling vessel.

[30] Kelabutuna and Tokeriu were contemporaries.



Figure 37. Isibaguna Maori
Source. Abel, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, 24[31]

[31] Critiques of this style of mission photography include: Annie McCarthy, 2014, 'Agency and salvation in Christian child rescue in colonial India: Preena and Amy Carmichael', in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific.* Canberra: ANU Press.



Figure 38. Maori's mother from Bwasikauri, Logea
Source. Abel, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, 24



Figure 39. Maori's granddaughter, Maori Tabua, with Bwagagaia's grandson, Ivilosi Jack Maniana
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence on the occasion of a focus group meeting for this thesis, White House, Alotau, December 2015. Used with permission of the subjects

In the more detailed genealogy for Sipiniei (see Genealogy Chart 4), we see that this highly mobile woman had a daughter and of her many grandchildren I have shown only two granddaughters, Dineheilo and Sialeubo. Dineheilo had no children. Sialuebo, who was twice married, had seven. Wawaulo, her youngest daughter, was born circa 1878, and would later become Pauline in the mission. Below is an article from *The Papuan Times*, a newspaper published on Kwato in 1954, which tells the story of how Pauline came to Kwato.[32] It is told by her daughter, Iva, who was the first female child born on Kwato, hence her name. I have reprinted it in full to demonstrate the level of English spoken by Iva's generation, the first generation of isimulita to be missionised from birth. The literacy, of course, we can attribute to the education received in the mission. This command of English as well as this

[32] The *Papuan Times* was a newspaper published by Kwato man Penueli Anakapu post the Pacific War. See Iva Doilegu, 1954, 'Tiny little seeds', *Papuan Times*, 29 October, 4.

method of story-telling continue to be utilised by the second generation of isimulita, such as Magololo Doilegu, to convey historical facts and to encourage role-modelling, very much in keeping with pre-missionisation methods of teaching and learning. In Magololo's case this is perhaps unsurprising since Iva was her mother-in-law.

'Tiny Little Seeds' by Iva Doilegu[33]

A Suau story told to the children in church at Kwato

> Boys and girls! I am going to tell a Suau story. It is the story of a small boy, many years ago at Suau, who joined Father Abel (Russell's father) and followed him everywhere he went.
>
> Why did he follow him? Because he liked beads to wear and hoped for a bright handkerchief to tie around his neck. That was why he joined the missionary. This is a true story, Father Abel told it to me himself, 30 years ago. And the boy became his cook boy, and was with him wherever he went.
>
> When he wasn't cooking he used to sit under the house and make little things with his hands out of bits of wood he found. Father Abel saw how clever he was and gave him a knife and some small tools. Then he gave him some calico to make sails, and the boy who like[d] beads used to make little toy sailing boats.
>
> Father Abel was trying to find the right way to teach Papuan boys, and this gave him the idea that he should train them to use the gifts of their hands that God had given them.
>
> From that tiny little seed, the workshops at Kwato began, and the boatbuilding etc etc. All through little boy who liked bright beads, and who liked making things.
>
> Later, at the time when he was learning new crafts, five boats arrived at Kwato. They were loaded with food and pigs and stores. They belonged to the divers, who came from Torres Straits, diving for pearlshell.
>
> The people of Bou (Milne Bay) thought, 'These people have many things. If we give our daughters to marry, that will bring us riches.' So the five boats landed at Kwato, with

[33] Ibid., 4.

five girls on board. They came to ask the missionary to marry them, and everyone was pleased over the marriages.

Except one girl. She disappeared. They couldn't find her anywhere.

There was a lot of thick bush on Kwato then and plenty of places to hide. One girl was not tempted by the gifts and wealth and marriage payment. She had no desire for it, so she hid. But it came on to rain.

That night, cold and wet, she crept into the Mission house. She was shivering, and she couldn't understand when they spoke to her, for she couldn't speak Suau, only Tawala.

The missionary wouldn't let them marry her against her will. Her parents talked to her about the gifts in the boat and the big feast they were making. But in her heart she wanted something else.

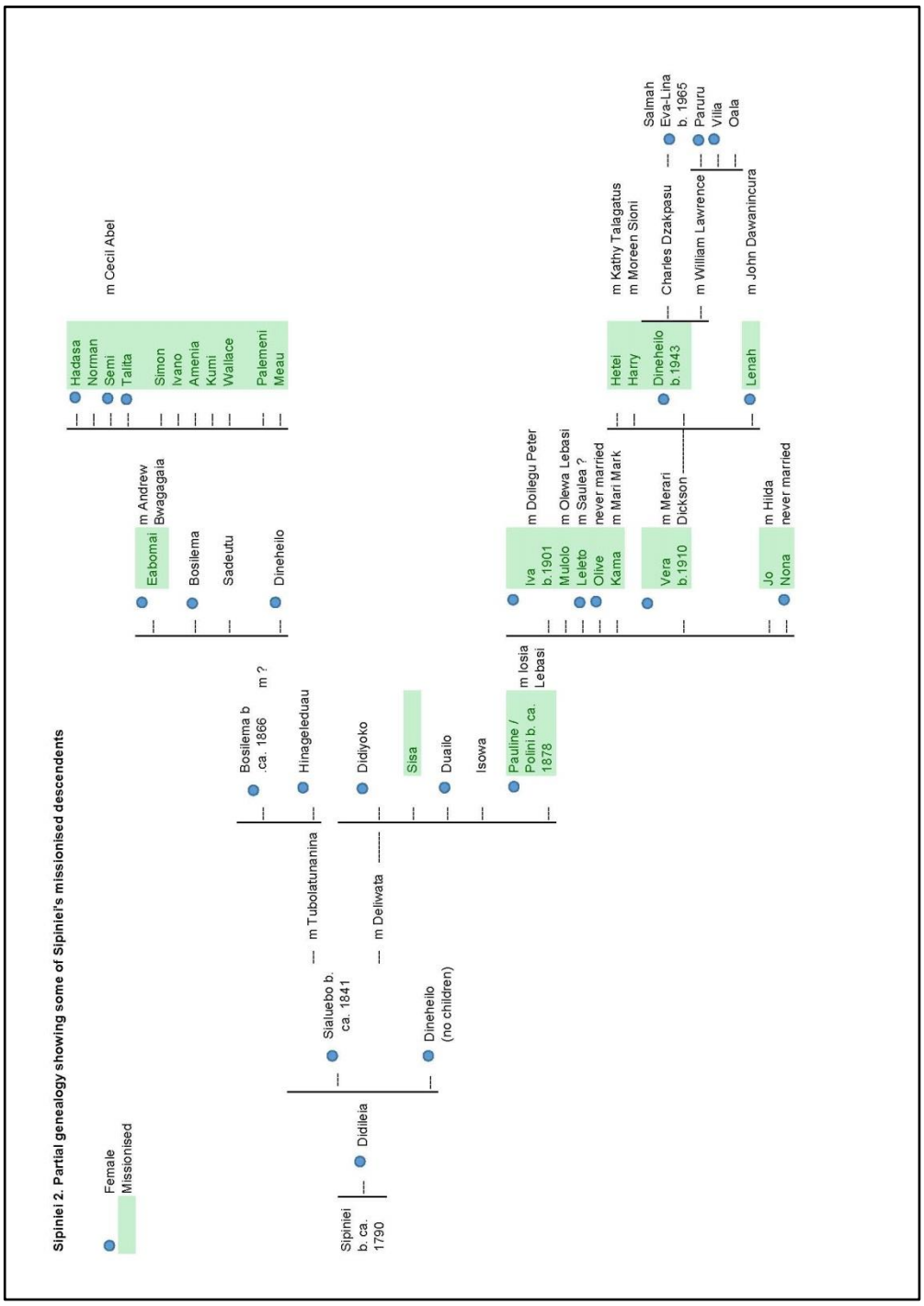
So she stayed on in the Mission. She was clever with her hands, so Mother Abel taught her to sew, and do embroidery and drawn-thread.

Beautiful things she learned to make and the other girls learned too. And that was the beginning of women's handicrafts ar Kwato and all the work that has been done over the years. It began with a young girl hiding in the bush, getting wet in the rain.

So we see from what tiny seeds of no worth, big things can grow. Let us not look down on the little things God puts into our hearts to want and to do. Who knows what great things will come from small and sometimes foolish beginnings?

Later on that boy who liked beads and who carved sailing boats, married the girl who hid in the bush and who turned her back on a boat full of goods and pigs. They made their home on Kwato. So many things on Kwato were started by them. Maybe we would not be here doing the things that we are doing today, if it was not for this story. And I certainly would not be standing here. For that boy and girl were my parents Iosia and Pauline Lebasi—who planted little seeds long ago.[34]

[34] Iva Doilegu, 1954, 'Tiny little seeds', *Papuan Times*, 29 October, 4.



Genealogy Chart 4. Sipiniei 2 – Partial genealogy of Sipiniei's boga esega
Source. Constructed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

Iva acknowledges Father and Mother Abel as teachers but her sentiment seems to be that her isibaguna parents, Iosia and Pauline, through God's grace, were fairly independent actors, and she attributes much of what took place on Kwato to these Papuans, not the Abels. And indeed, one can attribute a fairly high degree of agency and autonomy to Wawaulo who became Pauline and who preferred to run away rather than be married to the passing Malaysian who had seduced her family with gifts and wealth. Then again, she was the great-

granddaughter of the adventuring Sipiniei who made multiple forays over the Stirling Range in search of land and a husband. Of note, as well is the reference to the desire for foreign goods—marriage to a foreigner was one way to access these. But it was not the desire of Wawaulo/Pauline for either marriage to this particular foreigner or for the wealth that he brought. And it seems clear that she sought sanctuary and safety by entering the mission. Nonetheless, for many others, missionisation and Christianisation was a route to access foreign knowledge and wealth.

Pauline's influence on growing the mission is clear. Her brother, Sisa, who came to Kwato to try to persude her to return to Bou was instead convinced to remain and become a missionary; his children also following in his footsteps. Her sister, Bosilema, who, prior to the arrival of missionaries, fled persecution in Bou and migrated to Dawadawa in the Ealeba region, was convinced to send her children to Pauline on Kwato to receive a mission education. And over time, other far-flung kin would send their children to Pauline for safe-keeping and for a mission education.

And of the young Iosia who attached himself to Abel? Iva was born in 1901 and her father, Iosia, passed away probably around 1930 so Iva would have heard from Iosia himself the manner of his arrival at the mission, just as she heard from her mother, Pauline, the latter's own journey. Alas, she did not record Iosia's telling of his own history. We know from Abel that Iosia was an alert and bright lad, filled with curiosity. We know also from Abel that even when their parents did not, children would often express curiosity about the mission school, and exercise their autonomy by independently attaching themselves to visiting mission parties. On one occasion on which Abel took the Papuan children out of Kwato on an excursion which allowed them to visit their families at home, he found that an additional five, uninvited, had attached themselves to the party for the return to Kwato.[35] On another occasion on a trip to Dewadewa a young boy apparently jumped, unbidden, into Abel's canoe and

[35] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 194.

left his family behind to join the mission, just as Iosia had done ten years prior.[36] In fact, by the time of his trip to England in 1901, 10 years after he arrived at Kwato, Abel was confident enough of the attraction of the mission space to the Papuans to imply that children running away was an extraordinary situation.[37]

But are we to believe that all these children were either orphans, or fleeing uncaring relatives or some kind of ill-treatment? Cyril Belshaw had noted in 1954 that 33 of Ware's 93 children lived away from their parents.[38] This he attributed to the desire of kin to have more children in their households and also the desire of the children for novelty.[39] Abihelai, or adoption, temporary and permanent, was and remains the norm across Milne Bay. For Massim children to grow up in a household that is not their biological parent's home is not unusual—it is, moreover, the norm. In fact, by 1901, a decade on from the establishment of a mission on Kwato Island, Iosia and Pauline, who at the time had only one child, were caring for 46 children.[40] Parenting is a social role and this is reflected in the kinship terms for mother and mother's sister since both are referred to as sinagu, my mother.[41]

In addition to the norm of adoption is the value that the Massim people place on autonomy. This Maria Lepowsky observed during her fieldwork in the 1970s and 1980s, recording how Massim families in her field site encouraged independence in their children, boys and girls.[42] Katherine Lepani also noted

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[36] Ibid., 40. The DewaDewa that Abel writes about is probably Dawadawa, a river and place in Ealeba.

[37] Ibid., 196.

[38] Demian also noted that during her fieldwork in Suau she found that 'nearly every household had an adoptee in one of its generations'. Melissa Demian, 2006, 2006a, '"Emptiness" and complementarity in Suau reproductive strategies', in Stanley J. Ulijaszek (ed.), *Population, Reproduction and Fertility in Melanesia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 137.

[39] Cyril Shirley Belshaw, 1955, *In Search of Wealth: A Study of the Emergence of Commercial Operations in the Melanesian Society of Southeastern Papua*, Menasha, WI: American Anthropological Association, 15.

[40] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 198.

[41] If one needs to differentiate one's birth mother, the Suau term is tauhelabasigu.

[42] Maria Alexandra Lepowsky, 1993, *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society*, New York: Columbia University Press, 90, 305.

that 'From early childhood, Trobriand socialization allows considerable breadth for the exercise of personal autonomy'.[43] Abel himself noted that 'We have no difficulty in getting the best of these independ[e]nt young people to leave their villages'.[44] Iosia was one of these independent young people.

Iosia may have been an orphan but he had siblings one of whom, Biga, had been trained as a missionary in Port Moresby. Kin networks, matrilineal encouragement of autonomy, the social (rather than biological) parenting practice of abihelai, and the curiosity which Abel observed in the child that liked to make things would all have influenced Iosia's subjectivity and how he would come to be the leader of the isibaguna of Kwato.

In this chapter I have employed the term 'tanuwaga' to a single use, that of landowner. But from my discussion of atai ponoli, or misunderstandings generated by a lens of whiteness and white superiority, you will recall that tanuwaga can also mean master, leader, or person in authority. On Kwato 'tanuwaga' was used to refer to the leadership core of the isibaguna and isimulita, comprised of both women and men. Iosia Lebasi and Edidai were the male and female heads of the isibaguna tanuwaga who included Mareko (see above), Mireka who was the first female teacher, Muna and Tiebubu both of whom worked also as mechanics, and Pauline, Semi, Mary and Boru.[45]

In the histories of those presented above we can identify elements of wonder in the decisions of these isibaguna to join the mission—Semi's insistence on going into the mission despite the tattoos that designated her as hasala of her matriline; Mareko's and his clan's curiosity about the dimdim; Iosia's freewheeling adventuring; Pauline's preference for an experience other than marriage to a Malaysian; and assorted children who exercised their volition to join their kin and/or friends on the island. Or the young Ainauia and Wedilo

[43] Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press, 119.

[44] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 2.

[45] Ibid., 7.

who symbolised their clan's curiosity and desire to learn about dimdim ways. Though they were both young when they joined the mission and though Ainauia's tattoos were never completed her agency remains apparent in the stories that her daughter Maria shared with me. Ainauia sang alto accompanying Beatrice Abel on the piano until she began to smoke, contra to mission regulations. And despite her arranged marriage which some might interpret as evidence of the omnipotency of Abel, Ainauia taught her daughters about the eanua where she came from and to which they all belonged. For this reason her grandchildren and great-grandchildren have been able to establish homes in that eanua, unlike the present alienation experienced by some missionised families who were not taught their matrilineal genealogies and oral histories.[46]

Highlighting Massim people's agency is not to dismiss the fact that, from establishment, Abel was intent on removing children from their villages and although parents and relatives had free access to visit them at Kwato, the children were discouraged from leaving.[47] But children did run away, others were sent away for breaking the rules,[48] and there were many others who willingly joined and willingly stayed.

Analysis of Kwato sociality and its relationship to Charles W. Abel and his wife, Beatrice, often fails to distinguish between the isibaguna and the different generations of isimulita, all of whom lived in times increasingly different from the era of the previous generation. Charles and Beatrice Abel were treated with respect and love by the isibaguna; on Abel's death this appears to have been replaced by reverential awe especially by those isimulita who had no personal interaction with the man.[49] One such is Bolasa, my oldest interviewee, born, I estimated, around 1920.

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[46] Kaniku writes about loss of land rights in Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion', *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4): 269.

[47] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 192.

[48] Ibid., 194.

[49] Also documented in the oral histories in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 264–83.

Power and authority

Power and authority inside the mission

Bolasa arrived on Kwato from Buhutu as a young man in 1935. An image he showed me of him shortly after his arrival shows a lad of around fifteen years of age. He lived on Kwato until the marriage of Cecil Abel to Semi Andrew in 1951 after which he moved to Gamadoudou to live with the couple.



Figure 40. Bolasa: L. to R. research assistant Jonas Anania, Bolasa's grandson, Bolasa
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence during interviews for this thesis, Siasiada, Buhutu Valley, 25 March 2014. Used with permission of the subjects

> Misiebo ena huia lauma meta dodoga Logea bena se unui. Na ia ena gigibori eai, ena adidili eai, meta i he libadi emi ginauli au toledobeidi. To edi … saha… spears eo weapons se toledobeidi.
>
> [When Mr Abel arrived the Logea people wanted to kill him. But because of his power he told them to lay down their weapons which they did].[50]

According to Bolasa, this story was told to him by Cecil Abel, son of Charles Abel. That a war party from Logea was Abel's initial encounter on Kwato is undisputed, however, it was not Abel's 'gigibori', or power, that caused the

[50] Interview with Bolasa, Siasiada, 25 March 2014.

warriors to have a change of heart—it was, rather, the intervention of an elderly Logea woman named Bubusia whose story I shared earlier.

> Misiebo ena gigibori i lai alili. Taba au liba dudulai alinai eai abo au guli, abo au mate. Tautaubada isi mo, se liba dudulai alinai eai.
> [Mr Abel's power was immense. If one spoke to him directly one would collapse or even die. Only the tanuwaga of the isibaguna and isimulita could speak directly to him].[51]

At this point of the interview I became a little confused. I asked my assistant if I was understanding correctly what Bolasa was telling me. My interpreter, Jonas Anania, assured me that Bolasa had indeed said that Abel's power was such that only the Kwato leaders could speak to him, and even then would speak to him in a room known only as the Glass Room or the Mirror Room:

> Nige doga paisoa se awasai bili eai. Saha leaders se henua, se awasai bili eai.
> [Only the spiritual leaders could enter the room; workers [such as Bolasa] could not. Whenever the leaders had a problem they would enter this room].[52]

The room contained a mirror I was told, and Abel would face the mirror, his interlocutor would speak to Abel's back, and they would have eye contact through the mirror. This was to reduce the risk of Abel's gaze causing his interlocutor to collapse and/or die.

Bolasa attributes the events of the second excerpt to have taken place after his arrival on Kwato in 1935 but Abel had died in 1930. Granted, at age 94 when I interviewed him, Bolasa's memory may have been failing—he seemed to be otherwise in good health, upright and mobile, easily scaling a set of vertiginously steep and narrow stairs that I, a little more than half his age, had trouble with. But if his memory serves him correctly, then this story may demonstrate perhaps the beginning of the cleavage between the gana'aro and

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

the ganamuri, the isibaguna families who were the insiders and, others such as Bolasa, who were outsiders.

It was under the leadership of Iosia Lebasi in the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century that the Kwato Council began to take seriously the distinction of those inside the mission from those outside the mission.[53] When I asked about the origins of the distinctions my interlocutors claimed it was the teaching of Abel. It was, however, policed by the Massim isibaguna.

The classes of gana'aro (S, inside the fence) and ganamuri (S, outside the fence) came to have laugagaeo (S, laws) attached to the former, and a different type of sociality associated with the latter. The laws administered, and in some cases generated, by the Council were severe and much of it was to regulate contact between the sexes.[54] Punishment was equally severe—heads shorn of hair for those caught in compromising situations, hard manual labour, and even corporal punishment administered by both Abel and the isibaguna tanuwaga themselves.[55]

These social classes do not appear to have been generated with a hierarchy in mind but it would later come to pass that the gana'aro would see themselves as superior to the ganamuri. Certainly, by the time of Bolasa's arrival on Kwato in 1935, there was a distinct cleavage between the tanuwaga families, either descended from isibaguna and/or from the customary landowners of Kwato Island, and others.

It is likely that what Bolasa saw as communing with the dead Abel, to be simply a budding practice of meditation, known as seeking guidance, which under increasing Moral Re Armament (MRA) influence would become a daily ritual of communion between a person and his/her god. Nonetheless, two other of my interviewees, independently of Bolasa, advised me to research this

[53] See Wetherell for discussion of the Kwato Council Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 7.

[54] Administering these laws discussed in Wetherell, 1996, 44–46.

[55] Corporal punishment also discussed in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion'.

Glass/Mirror Room, implying unspeakable things took place there. I found no-one who could or would shed any further light.

Abel was certainly viewed as powerful by many Massim people, though not necessarily omnipotent as in Bolasa's view.[56] Furthermore, one needs to assess his influence according to several measures. The first is the temporal frame of the isibaguna and the first generation isimulita and the indigenous cosmology of the time when Christianity was absorbed. The second is the influence that the missionised Massim people themselves exerted over other indigenous people.

Power and authority outside the mission

Unlike the hierarchy and determinism of Judaeo–Christianity which fed the myth of unilinear progress springing from the European Enlightenment, prior to the arrival of christianisation the Massim people did not sustain the idea of a powerful, fearsome, supreme creator. According to missionaries and anthropologists, some people did, however, subscribe to a sky-based deity called Yaboaine who resided in the Milk Way. Yaboaine is found from from Suau to Dobu and perhaps beyond. William Bromilow reported that the Dobuans said that Yaboaine made woman but not man, since man was already on Earth. In a promethean creation myth woman was formed from earth and animated under a stream of blood poured onto her head. Yaboaine is neither fearsome or vengeful, nor judgemental nor patriarchal and seems, for the most part, to be impartial and impervious to the antics of humans.[57] Abel also wrote of 'Eaboihine, the man in the moon'[58] to whom supplication was made before a flotilla departed for war.[59]

[56] Ibid.

[57] William Edward Bromilow, 1977, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, New York: Ams Press, 87.

[58] David Wetherell, 2003, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888, as told to Charles Abel', *Pacific Studies* 26: 43.

[59] Ibid., 26, 43.

However, for the Tubetube people Yaboaine is neither male nor a deity.[60] I use the words of Martha Macintyre's interlocutor who rebuked:

> Oh no, you have made a mistake. Yaboaine is not like our god. She is our grandmother ... You call on the spirit of the woman who made you a warrior, a spear carrier.[61]

In the matrilineal ethos women possess an inherent power by virtue of their sex. In Tubetube, men's power has to be acquired whilst women's power is innate.[62] Women's power can be used to initiate a boy into a fighting man, transforming him permanently, thus a warrior is formed by an older female in his matriline. Because of name taboos this woman's name cannot be mentioned and so in invocations to her spirit for strength before battle, the phrase 'yabo wahine', or 'a woman', is used. As Macintyre's interlocutor explained, 'In Dobu and Logea they say the same, but in their language "Ebweu waine"'.[63]

Abel's and Bromilow's interpretation is obviously gender biased towards their masculinist Christianity. My efforts to find out more about Yaboaine came to naught. More than a century following the last war, and with the interventions of missionisation and christianisation, my interlocutors could not tell me any more.

So if not a parallel cosmology what might have been the attraction of Christianity to the isibaguna? Examining structures of power and authority yields some insights.

Macintyre provides a wonderfully rich account of power in Tubetube society which I believe is relevant also for the Logea and Suau islanders, and possible for the Ealeba and Tawala regions as well. Prior to Christianisation the matriline was a political unit in which power and authority were held by senior women and men whose knowledge was publicly recognised as potent and being

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[60] Macintyre, 'Flying witches and leaping warriors', 218–20.

[61] Ibid., 219.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

able to produce particular outcomes.[64] They were wealthy, articulate and able to influence. These women spoke and acted for their lineages, as did the male leaders. (To speak for another lineage is both rude and intrusive, a fact I have observed in land mediation meetings around Alotau where any affine daring to speak is shouted down and reminded forcefully of his/her place).

Similar to kaiwe, the Tubetube concept of power, is gigibori, the Suau equivalent which carried into Kwato. It also means hot, heat and prestigious. A person who possesses gigibori is not just knowledgeable and forceful, but has access to both or either of the following. In the first instance, a woman might be considered a genius in a particular domain—this sibasiba (S), or knowledge, is an asset through which she is acknowledged as having gigibori. The second instance is where she, or he, is said to have supernatural abilities and it is these skills which enable mediation of life and death and which generate acknowledgment of their possession of gigibori.

This knowledge has been typically translated into English as 'magic' since a large body of it is concerned with a non-visible world. Unfortunately, practical knowledge of plants and their properties, such as herbs for contraception, or to stimulate breast-feeding, or to heal, or to produce abundant harvests, have all been bundled into the pejorative 'magic'. Magic, is in fact, another of those words, that does not translate from its European context. There is no Suau word for 'magic'—powerful women and men had designations such as alawai or taubalau. These words have been (mis)translated as witch and sorcerer respectively, ergo, it seems, what these people engage in is magic.[65] However, in a matriline the alawai and the balau were the equivalent of priestesses and priests—the mediation they provided was not between gods and humans, but between life and death. Thus in terms of power and authority in the political

[64] Ibid., 207–28.

[65] I have written about this in Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, 2015, 'Witchcraft, sorcery, violence: matrilineal and decolonial reflections', in Miranda Forsyth and Richard Eves (eds), *Talking it Through: Responses to Sorcery and Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia*, Canberra: ANU Press, 55–73.

unit of the matriline it is women and men, rather than gods, who are invested with divine powers.

Abel was spoken of by the isibaguna and isimulita as having gigibori. So too was his son Russell. And so too were particular people amongst the tanuwaga and the isibaguna, and even amongst the isimulita. For instance, isimulita Merari Dickson was described as 'ena gigibori i lai alili [his power was immense]'.

But since the religion of Christianity operates through faith and fear, and has hijacked cause and effect into the promise of reward or the spectre of punishment, Christianisation in this respect merely changed the vision of divine powers. For the Wamirans from the north coast of Milne Bay, that God made magic was only different in one aspect to Wamirans making magic.[66] Said one:

> God's magic is different from Wamiran's magic. God wrote his knowledge down in the Bible for everyone to see. In Wamira, magic is private ... No one knows the magic of another person … In Wamira, our religion is good because after six or eight months when we harvest our taro, we can see whether [our magic worked]. If one is a Christian and believes in the Bible, it is no good. Christians will never know whether God is telling the truth or lying because they have to wait until they die to find out.[67]

For this Wamiran, religion is of little value unless there is material evidence to substantiate the claims being made.

Besides changes to the divine cast of figures of power and authority, just as pagan festivals have found their way into the Christian calendar in Europe, so too have Massim people's indigenous beliefs been reconciled with Christianity in the Massim. Dobuans believed that a shadow and a spirit complemented the physical body. On death, the spirit would go to Bwebweso, a place on Normanby Island, whereas the shadow would linger where it once lived or

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[66] Wamirans distinguish productive magic, such as taro growing magic, from evil magic such as harm caused to others. See Miriam Kahn, 1986, *Always Hungry, Never Greedy: Food and the Expression of Gender Relations in a Melanesian Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 96–107.

[67] Ibid., 98.

where it was killed.[68] On Logea, the spirit of the deceased would go to Biula, a place under the sea towards the south.[69] The feast, the rigaheruheru / ligaheluhelu, would be held to send off the dead on this journey which involved walking along the back of a giant serpent beneath the sea. At Biula an entity called Sauga would revive the body of the deceased so that he could join his family and friends in that afterlife.[70]

With Christianisation, the stage was extended to accommodate the new actors and scenery. Mediation between the polity and the divine was already in effect, now pastors, priests and preachers would also be included. Likewise, spirits and an afterlife were given a new place. Nowhere would this new stage be more evident than on Kwato where the ethos of female power and authority would remain in operation amongst the Massim people. Indeed, it was said that the most powerful alawai lived at Kwato during the time of the mission. Many were my interlocutors who had stories of their encounters with the alawai personalities of the mission-raised or -born isibaguna and isimulita. I do not use the popular translation of witch to describe these women since witch is both pejorative and one-dimensional whereas alawai represents a multi-dimensional being engaged in protecting and destroying life and using practical, visible and invisible skills to do so.[71]

Interestingly, whilst Abel was sometimes called taubalau, never have I heard of any of the dimdim women on Kwato described either as alawai or as having gigibori. However, Abel's wife, Beatrice, appears to have been held in high regard universally and her presence on Kwato likely influenced the decisions of the isibaguna women such as Semi to join the mission. Semi was a woman of authority in her matriline, just as Mareko was a man of power in his. It is not so far-fetched, then, to surmise that since leadership was an attribute of

[68] Bromilow, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, 88–89.

[69] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 95–99.

[70] Ibid.

[71] See my paper, Lawrence, 'Witchcraft, sorcery, violence: matrilineal and decolonial reflections'.

some of the Massim people, so too was an attribute of curiosity, of wonder. The combination of these attributes—curiosity, wonder, leadership—can act as a powerful stimulant that influences others. The isibaguna used it to bring people into the misson.

Isibaguna influence on growing the mission

> While we were at Kwato one young evangelist, Makura [Maori's husband], the engineer on the Mamari II, brought in twenty-four men and women from Lamhaga as candidates for church membership.[72]
>
> Bati, though blind, travels about from village to village, building people up in vital Christian living. Though blind he has a positive knack – most uncanny – of seeing everything.[73]

In the early days the Massim people were often unmoved by and uninterested in the foreign missionaries. Margriet Roe writes of Papuans' often indifferent encounter with Christianity, an interest sparked by European products, which waxed and waned according to the availability of such and Latu Latai writes of the disheartening effect on Samoan preachers of having people falling asleep through their sermons.[74] So what did inspire the Massim people? How did the mission increase its numbers?

Mission recruits came not only from the complex networks and multiple layers of kin but also from direct interaction and the influence of Massim people upon each other. Abel writes that Lebasi would sometimes preach in his stead and his sermons were influential, moving crowds to tears.[75] Such passion made lasting impressions on the people. Of note as well is Abel's admission that it was Biga Lebasi's words that influenced the followers of Tokeriu to change their

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[72] Pierson, 'What we saw at Kwato', 13.

[73] Phyllis Abel and Russell Abel, 1941, 'News from Papua', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, October, 7.

[74] Margriet Roe, 1961, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 440; Latu Latai, 'Covenant keepers: A history of Samoan (LMS) missionary wives in the Western Pacific from 1839 to 1979', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 225.

[75] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 199.

alliance.[76] Bromilow also observed that real and lasting change was brought about by Papuans who were impressed by dimdim but more swayed by the words of one of their own.[77] There was, for instance, an unnamed woman whose unconscious body was taken to be dead by the Dobuans but not so by Alesana, the Samoan teacher, at whose insistence she was not buried immediately. On her revival that evening she spoke passionately of a near-death experience in which her spirit went to heaven where she was told it was not her time to die. She regained consciousness to share her experience, the wonder of which acted as a powerful magnet for the church.[78] In a similar vein, it was the LMS-influenced southern Massim people speaking of their own experiences who most impressed their brethren to participate in Christianisation. Iosia Lebasi was one such (Figure 41).

Lebasi died young, between 1915 and 1919, after a short period of a painful illness that transformed a vibrant, curious leader into a psychotic and violent man.[79] In his obituary Abel saluted Lebasi as a genius with exceptional gifts for all things mechanical and for his organisation and leadership. He also lamented: 'I doubt whether the Kwato work would ever have been developed to its present stage, had it not been for the ability of this consecrated Papuan'.[80]

[76] Ibid., 112.

[77] Bromilow, *Twenty Years Among Primitive Papuans*, 105.

[78] Ibid., 103–105.

[79] See also Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 167.

[80] Charles William Abel, 1923, 'Iosia Lebasi', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 8.

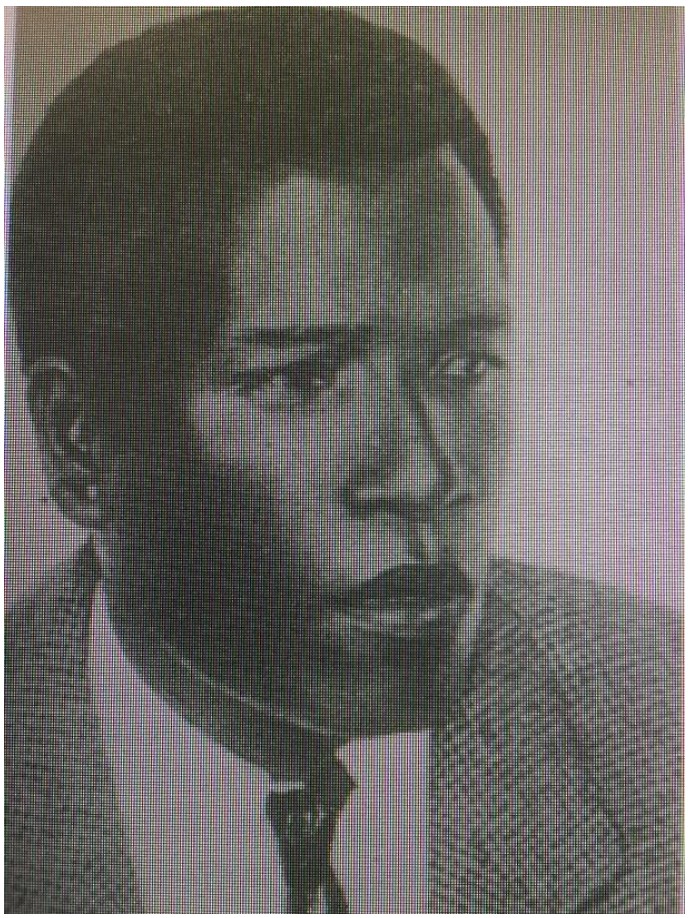
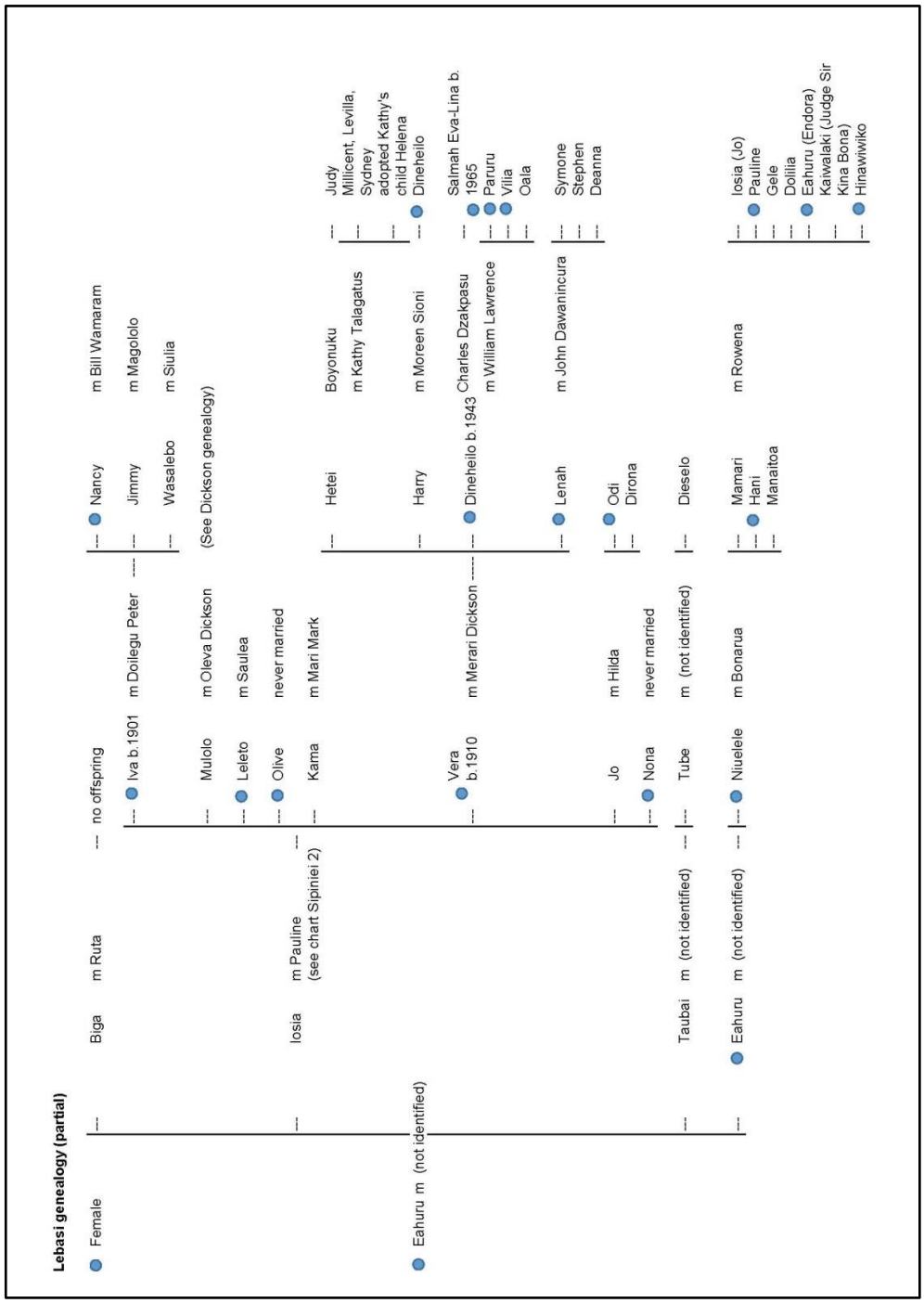


Figure 41. Iosia Lebasi
Source. This portrait of Iosia Lebasi hung in my grandmother's home throughout my childhood. It is incorrectly labelled as Dilomi in Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 215.



Genealogy Chart 5. Partial genealogy for Lebasi
Source. Constructed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

After Lebasi's death, his wife Pauline continued to work for the mission. Another one of Kaniku's 'Those Massim women', a couple of years after Iosia's passing, she was working on her own at Koea Bule from where she wrote:

> It is two years since I came here; the people have not looked kindly upon me; but I seek to help them. I am quite contented to remain in this village and I have no fear because God is with me—Jesus is my helper. My friends in England and at Kwato remember me in prayer and I am strengthened. I write this through tears of joy

> because this month the bearing of the people has changed, and they are kind to me, unlike their former manner.[81]

Wawaulo, the lass from Bou who became Pauline, spent the rest of her life working for Kwato Mission and encouraging her network of kin around Bou in Tawala and around Badilauna in Ealeba to join her in its service. She passed away on Kwato Island in the late 1950s and is buried at Lekawakuduli.[82] It is not clear whether this was her choice or whether her death from tuberculosis was a factor in not transporting her body back to Bou, the seat of her matriline.[83] Wiko Bonarua describes the importance of this:

> Abo se iene meta i eno tawai … emi tano i eno tawai. The body is the family's body not the in-law. I uio ena family abo neieai se tole abo tano I enotawai abo omi, family, abo you still have rights.
> [It will be said that she is sleeping on the land … guarding the land. The body is the family's body not the in-law. It returns to the family so they can bury it on their eanua. That way, the family will still have rights.]

They may not have been buried in their eanua but neither Pauline or Iosia, nor Mareko and Maori, nor Ainauia and Daniel, ever cut themselves off entirely from their own people. They received into their homes children from their extended family sent to Kwato for schooling and they continued the use of names that belonged to their matrilineal clan. Of Iosia and Pauline's eight children, four had Modewa clan names, and Modewa clan names continued with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren (see Genealogy Chart 4, Sipinei 2). Pauline also remained close to her elder sister Bosilema who, when accused of malevolence, chose to paddle across Milne Bay to establish her own matriline at Badilauna along the Dawadawa River. Bosilema's daughter Eabomai would spend time at Kwato with Pauline and would marry Andrew, eldest son of

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[81] Ibid., 10.

[82] Anne Dickson-Waiko recalls that Pauline was alive in 1957. Personal communication, August 2017.

[83] In the decades since 1980, because of land theft, it has become more important for women to be buried in their eanua.

Bwagagaia (see Genealogy Charts 3 and 4). Eabomai and Andrew's daughter Semi would later marry Charles Abel's eldest son, Cecil. And another of Pauline's siblings, brother Sisa, would join her in the mission. Sisa's children, too, would add to the mission's population.

As mentioned earlier, Kelabutuna and Lahela's children would join the mission and influenced by their kin, the children of Kelabutuna's brother, Moselau, would also enter Kwato, as would Mareko's kin, persuaded by him. The networks and networking of the isibaguna proved to be a goldmine for the mission.

Roe theorises that those who embraced Christianity and turned their backs on the Papuan way of life were in some way disillusioned with where they came from. She presents Lebasi as someone who turned his back on Papuan tradition.[84] But despite Iosia's enthusiasm for the dawn of the new era of which he spoke[85] he too maintained links with his people inviting his sister's daughter, Niulele, to join he and Pauline in the mission. One of Niulele's grandsons, Sir Kina Bona, is today a judge in PNG (see Genealogy Chart 5 for Lebasi). Disillusionment suggests that one would cut all ties with the past but the isibaguna did not cut ties with the most important embodiments of their past—their kin.

The asa and sulu connected peoples and provided a ready source of recruits into the mission. These connections were amplified along centuries-old trade routes as well as through particular practices. A person's name connects her to a wider group, and those haliesa (S), or namesake, relationships and the kin networks attached to them also provided potential recruits for the mission. Adoption also enlarged networks. The fluidity of family boundaries extended the circle of influence. Ironically, had the nuclear family ideal of whiteness become rooted in Milne Bay, the complex networking of kin relationships would

[84] Roe, 'A history of south-east Papua to 1930', 384–450.

[85] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 39.

not have been open to be leveraged for growing the missionised and Christianised population.

Clearly, the expanding mission population was largely dependent on the isibaguna. Indeed, it would be illogical to expect that any foreigner ignorant of local languages—as Abel would have been on his arrival—could have made much of an impact in increasing numbers. For no matter how much the locals may have wanted god and dimdim technology, if the two parties could not communicate no exchange was ever going to happen.

Certainly, Abel made recruitment drives and, equally certainly, he would have been accompanied by a translator in those early years. But the texts that record Abel's adventures omit to mention the assistance he would have received in communicating with the locals. The South Sea Island missionaries based at Killerton Island would have been of assistance with the Tawala language but the stations at Samarai and Logea had languished after the Lifou Islander, Diki, had passed away in 1887. Who then to translate for Abel into Suau, Logea, Ealeba, and Maiwara languages but locals such as Dagoela Manuegu, Biga Lebasi, and eventually other isibaguna.[86]

But what else did the isibaguna do besides recruit and make and administer onerous rules?

When James MacKay, Chairman of the Royal Commission into the governing of British New Guinea, visited Kwato around 1909 he found that the Kwato 11 had just beaten the white team from Samarai.[87] In fact, as early as 1901 Kwato cricketers were defeating the Samarai whites.[88] Mackay marvelled at the Massim men playing in their bare feet and knocking up centuries with ease. Diki Esau from Ahioma was one such who was renowned for his cricket

[86] In Wetherell's various texts he uses the name Manuweru. Manuegu is used by the Dagoela's descendants.

[87] James Alexander Kenneth Mackay, 1909, *Across Papua: Being an Account of a Voyage Round, and a March Across, the Territory of Papua, with the Royal Commission*, London: Witherby, 52.

[88] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 197.

prowess. He had adopted the name Diki from the Lifou Islander missionary who was based at Samarai from the late 1870s and who died in 1887. According to Wetherell 'Esau was [Diki's] leading Papuan ally and convert'.[89] On one occasion, still spoken of with awe, Diki Esau hit a six, the ball winging across the ocean channel to land at Gremisina on Logea Island. Diki was a well-known taubalau and his cricketing skills were seen to be an extension of his balau skills.[90] Like many of his generation and after, he reinvented himself as a Christian whilst continuing to anchor himself in his culture. Although Christian, Diki Esau rejected the space of Kwato missionisation, returning to Wagawaga with his wife to help protect her eanua and his children's inheritance whilst actively warning his community against relinquishing their land to white planters.[91]

Mackay also marvelled at the sawmill and workshop, and the Massim men engaged in the skilled work of carpentry and joinery and boat building. Then on, past the dairy cows and milking sheds, to the main house where the women, white and Massim, were engaged in needlework.[92] After dinner his party was entertained with solo and part singing.

Besides administering the mission laugagaeo (S,law), the Massim people were preaching to their own, working as teachers, building boats, constructing buildings, growing food, farming dairy cattle, playing cricket and making music. The gendered role and work distinctions of whiteness had been introduced, but in time Massim women would also manage outstations and plantations, and at all times they participated in organising and leadership roles including preaching and leading Sunday church services.

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[89] Wetherell, 'Accounts of fighting and cannibalism in Eastern New Guinea during the missionary contact period, 1877–1888', 52.

[90] Kaniku, 'Religious confusion'.

[91] Interview with Lediwa Dickson, grandson of Diki Esau, Dodobana, 7 February 2015.

Anne Dickson-Waiko, another of Diki's grandchildren informed me in an email (7 August 2017) that Diki played 'a prominent role in the Ahioma area [and] was constantly asked for assistance by patrol officers. His name appears in a number of Patrol Reports for Milne Bay. He was never made a village constable but he played the role of one'.

[92] Mackay, *Across Papua*, 54–55.

The Massim isibaguna adopted many things including absorbing the European system of numbers. This was not because they did not have their own system but because Suau numbers are lengthy when spoken and since this was an oral culture, there was no universal symbolic recording of any number. For instance, to request Hymn 37 would require uttering 'Vana tau-esega-i-mate-saudodoudoi-haligigi-labui'![93] (S, vana/wana = hymn, song, to sing).

Violence and missionisation

It would be disingenuous not to mention the violence of missionisation and thus the destructive ferocity under which some people found themselves forced to give up the old ways. Violence was exercised by the white missioniaries, by the Samoans, and also by the isibaguna. Missionisation itself was an act of psychic violence exacerbated by the structure of colonialism and the ideology of whiteness within which both operated.

The Samoans had arrived in Papua in 1883.[94] A few traces of their presence remain at Bou where in 2015 one could still see the brick remains of their house. Their cemetery now lies underwater, reclaimed by the ocean that laps at the base of the few remaining walls of the house. The Samoan missionaries have developed a reputation for violence—physical violence against their flock, as well as violent acts of destruction of any material evidence or psychic orientation to what they deemed to be paganism.[95] Carvings, buildings, masks, paintings and other sacred objects were destroyed by the Samoans.[96]

Their presence continues to loom large and judging by the adoption of Samoan names by Massim people—Manaima, Alesina and Safua, for example—they were held in high regard by the indigenous people despite the violence.

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[93] Abel, *Savage Life in New Guinea*, 192.

[94] Latai, 'Covenant keepers', 202.

[95] Ibid., 220–26.

[96] Ibid., 221. See also David Wetherell, 1980, 'Pioneers and patriarchs: Samoans in a nonconformist mission district in Papua, 1890–1917'. *The Journal of Pacific History* 15(3): 15.

The missionaries also employed a politics of language and renamed people with biblical names in their quest to reshape the person and environment.[97] But retention and use of clan names remains prevalent as a glance at the genealogies I have provided will demonstrate. It is also interesting to note that Charles, or its indigenous iteration, Salesi, is not a popular name. I know of only two Kwato families that have a Salesi and a Charlie, nor have any of the names of the other Abel family members been adopted by the Massim people in the way that Samoan names have. Haliesa means namesake, and to haliesa is to both assert belonging—to a clan for example—and to emphasise respect and affection for an individual. It is curious that the tanuwaga and isibaguna families have not made use of Abel's name or that of his descendants in this way.

Mistranslations, as we have seen with taubada/master, were often deliberate and were one way for the nonconformist missionaries to influence language usage and to create distinctions between the 'civilised' and the natives.[98] The Suau 'masigili' became a generic term for all the practices of balau and alawai which were disparaged as magic, sorcery and witchcraft. And gana'aro and ganamuri would introduce class distinctions of 'civilised' missionised and 'primitive' non-missionised. Guyau, once chief, would come to designate god.

In time, the violence exhibited by the foreign missionaries would be implemented by the isibaguna through the gana'aro/ganamuri hiererachy and in other ways. Russell Abel argues that his father did not, in fact, prohibit indigenous customs such as feasting and that, furthermore, it was the converted, the ekalesia, who made these decisions.[99]

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[97]This act of renaming is a common missionary practice. See Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1991, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 219.

[98] Ibid., 218.

[99] Abel, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*, 168.

> More than once the Christians, entirely without outside instigation, called a meeting among themselves to thrash out these problems. Abel trusted their verdict. They knew best the full significance and implication of their own rites. They knew also what it meant to follow Christ. In every case, after long prayer and debate, they advocated a clean break with old heathen ways. Their stand was entirely the result of their own decision and always the church was strengthened for its uncompromising attitude towards the world around it.[100]

Conclusion

The tanuwaga of Kwato Island and the isibaguna who arrived in 1891 lived on the cusp of an entirely new world, one which they helped usher in to other Massim people. They lived in a time of relatively simple technology but of immensely complex networking.

The oldest of them, male and female, had participated in wars of retribution and dehumanisation of prisoners of war. It is clear that there were acts of savagery and barbarity undertaken by Massim men and women, and equally clear that people also engaged in acts of generosity and caring—survival and reproduction rely on the latter. Abel was correct to highlight the often gratuitous violence, and he also acknowledged the instances of dignity and kindness that he encountered. But, in the end, what prevails is his belief in the superiority of whiteness and the urge to render the world around him into whiteness.[101]

But did the Massim people want to become white?

Caught in the spiralling madness of retributive violence, but with a desire, too, for peace amongst themselves, the Massim people embraced the missionaries as another third party that could assist them transform those relations. When the outliers of the various Massim societies—such as Dilome of Logea and his daughter Semi, or Iosia Lebasi of Suau and Pauline of Bou—were presented with opportunities for transformation they embraced the challenge.

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[100] Ibid., 169.

[101] See also Charles W. Abel, 1925, 'How [to] save the Papuans?' *New Guinea Tidings*, April, 7.

In Christianity they found a belief system somewhat similar to their own—it provided specialists that mediated between the physical and the divine, it too recognised a spirit separate to the body, and it had a place where these spirits went to after death. Critically, though, its priests had access to mesmerising novelties—different types of boats, axes of iron and blades of steel, as well as decorative baubles. They appeared to have power and they most definitely had privilege. They also had that highly valued Massim attribute of mobility. A couple of millennia prior, the Austronesian ancestors had emerged from dimdim (S, the horizon). Now the arrival of Europeans spoke of other dimdim, other horizons, other possibilities for mobility and connection, and enlarging already complex networks.

Though the Massim people did not want to become white they most certainly wanted the benefits of white power and privilege. At that time the isibaguna and tanuwaga could not have known that their desires for their children to have access to this world could not ever evolve the way they hoped since white privilege is fiercely guarded.

Chapter Nine

The Isimulita Past

> The colonizers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them in a partial and selective way, in order to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction. Cultural Europeanisation was transformed into an aspiration. It was a way of participating and later to reach the same material benefits and the same power as the Europeans.[1]
>
> Nua Teloti: Kwato Way is not dimdim way – it is a Christian-influenced path.[2]

When I asked Nua his thoughts on how much influence the dimdim had on the Kwato Way he gave me the astonished response above. For Nua, like other Kwato folk, Christianity has little to do with whiteness. His short statement tells us a lot. On the one hand it tells us that he thinks that the messages of Christianity are universal. On the other hand, his astonishment at my question speaks to a tension between worlds—one world performing an introduction, another adopting that being introduced; one world of the opinion that it is singular, the other world open to multiple possibilities of being. The (onto)logic of singularity assures that all must aspire to this state of being; not to think so is to immediately negate the state of singularity. The logic of plurality is, however, equivocal—it allows for choice, for embodied experimentation, and, paradoxically, for an unequivocal and explicit reinvention of self. Singularity cannot admit transformation since to do so renders its claim to singularity to be null. Plurality allows Nua to speak of the Kwato Way as a legitimate reinvention of self that has only a fleeting relation to whiteness just as it allowed Iva Doilegu to tell a story in church that was later published in the *Papuan Times* in which

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[1] Aníbal Quijano, 2007, 'Coloniality and modernity/rationality', *Cultural Studies* 21(2–3): 169.

[2] Interview with Nua Teloti, Port Moresby, 2 February 2014.

she attributes much of what happened on Kwato to her parents, Iosia and Pauline Lebasi, and not to Abel and other foreigners.[3]

There were two generations of Massim party to the reinvention—that destruction of the old and the adoption of the new—the isibaguna and the isimulita of the second generation. The isimulita are those who followed the isibaguna. One hundred and twenty-five years from the arrival of the isibaguna on Kwato in 1891 we can count six generations of Massim people whose lives have been influenced by the Kwato Mission. I am of the fourth generation of isimulita. Whether those of succeeding generations will continue to claim some part of their identity from Kwato is a question I have not explored in this thesis.

Although mostly deceased, I was privileged to have been able to interview two of the isimulita 2nd before they, too, passed. They were Mareko Dickson and Susan Tiraka née Frank. Other isimulita 2nd, that generation of Papuans who immediately followed the isibaguna, live quite vividly in the pages of the post-war Kwato newspaper, the *Papuan Times*, as well as in the memories of the isimulita 3rd.

The isimulita 2nd were missionised if not from birth then from a very young age. The enlargement of the mission and its sphere of influence through the regions of Suau, Ealeba, Tawala and the islands was due in large part to these isimulita who, male and female alike, evangelised, preached, converted, and gave their labour freely. As with their isibaguna ancestors, isimulita women played a prominent role in the work of the mission.[4] Global events such as the Pacific War and planetary shifts such as the wave of political decolonisation impacted and influenced events on Kwato. Involvement in the war effort would position Merari Dickson, for example, to be appointed as one of the first

[3] Iva Doilegu, 1954, 'Tiny little seeds', *Papuan Times*, 29 October, 4.

[4] E.g. see Penueli Anakapu, 1954, 'Home from the Highlands', *Papuan Times*, 22 July, 7; 1954, 'News of people', *Papuan Times*, September 2, 8.

indigenous members of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Papua.[5] And *Papuan Times* editor, Penueli Anakapu, proudly proclaimed on various page of his newspaper 'The weekly publication by a Papuan for Papuans'.[6] Isibaguna loyalties had been to matriline and mission. Isimulita 1st loyalties would shift from these localised entities to a broader national identity.[7]

This isibaguna, I have argued, were people who gazed on the world with wonder. I have employed wonder as a theoretical construct to shift the gaze on how Massim people have often been represented by whiteness. The isibaguna, as well as others of their generation towards the end of the nineteenth century, recognised that significant societal restructuring was imminent and they chose to fully engage with the new era. Because of the decisions they made to embrace change I've been able to live a life that has taken me to international development work in Kabul via international business in London and New York, encompassing as well time in Puerto Rico, Argentina and Cuba from where I appropriate my metaphor of the *Rueda de Casino*. Alas, also because of the isibauna's decision, we, the southern Massim, as a cultural entity may have lost access to much knowledge that would still be valuable and is now irretrievable because of the nature of an oral culture and the way the isibaguna and isimulita 2nd were involved in the explicit destruction of material forms. I say 'may have lost' because recovering that knowledge can be a matter of asking the right questions of the right people.

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[5] The two other native members were Aiosli Salin and Simogun Pita. See Ian Grosart, 1966, 'Native members in the legislative council of the territory of Papua and New Guinea 1951–1963', *The Journal of Pacific History* 1(1).

Dickson served from 1951 to 1957 and his speeches reveal that education and the elimination of racial discrimination were a key focus, undoubtedly influenced by his experience at Kwato. See Papua and New Guinea Legislative Council (PNGLC), *1952–1954 Legislative Council debates / Territory of Papua and New Guinea*, Port Moresby: Government Printer; *1954–1957, Legislative Council debates / Territory of Papua and New Guinea*, Port Moresby: Government Printer.

[6] For instance, Penueli Anakapu, 1954, 'The weekly publication by a Papuan for Papuans', *Papuan Times*, 19 August, 4.

[7] Nation here denotes the Territory of Papua.

The isimulita, although continuing the project embarked on by the isibaguna, nonetheless embodied a changed relationship with the world around them. The isibaguna engaged wonder in their encounter with whiteness through missionisation and colonisation. Can we say the same of the first generation of isimulita? In this section I focus on the major shifts that people recall. They are: the death of Charles Abel, the adoption of the Oxford Group/Moral Re-Armament (MRA), the war in Milne Bay, and the expulsion of Cecil Abel from Kwato.

Rather than a detailed historical recounting I focus on the words of my interviewees.[8]

The era of Charles W. Abel

From 1891 to his death in a motor vehicle accident in 1930 Charles W. Abel had presided over what must have appeared to be his own little fiefdom.[9] But in the myth of Abel's singularity the geographical factors contributing to his status have been discounted. Notwithstanding the efforts of Dilome and others to attract missionaries to the area, it was serendipity that Abel could establish a mission on a previously uninhabited—but not unused—island, strategically located in a lush and verdant region. Methodist William Bromilow also occupied an island—Dobu—but it was inhabited when he arrived. He, therefore, did not have Abel's freedom to remake the countryside, to transform the tropics into an exemplar of 'civilised' form by way of landscaping, architecture and husbandry of introduced mammals. Kwato was its own eanua with its own economy and its own citizens.[10] Bromilow, on the other hand, was a visitor to the eanua of the Dobuans.

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[8] For a detailed historical timeline see David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

[9] David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 9, 10.

[10] See also Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion', *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4): 265–66.

In David Wetherell's illuminating account, Abel is portrayed as being intent on securing a dynastic succession.[11] Indeed, along with Beatrice, his children—Cecil, Phyllis, Russell and Marjorie—managed the mission after his death. Too independent to be constrained by London Missionary Society (LMS) regulations, Abel had parted company with them in 1918. At secession Kwato had 560 members. Some 22 years later Kwato could claim 10,000 mission supporters.[12] At Abel's death there were only 800 members.[13] How did the support base multiply by a factor greater than 10 within a decade? I will address this question further below. For now I examine the era of Charles Abel.

The Kwato Extension Association (KEA) was established by Abel to lease LMS plantations and properties. By 1928 these LMS properties had been purchased by the American New Guinea Evangelisation Society (NGES) on behalf of Abel.[14] Today those properties belong to the Kwato Church of Papua New Guinea and include the island of Kwato.[15]

We have met the isibaguna before—Maleko and Maori, Iosia and Pauline, and Semi. We know that they and the tanuwaga, the customary landowners, had high expectations for their children. Were these expectations realistic?

Maria Ariansen recalling that her father, Daniel, was told by Charles Abel to get rid of stone axes that he had in his house, also stated: 'They wanted to wean them away from village life. Cut them off so they could groom them, they wanted to groom them.[16] But groom them for what? What did the day to day reality of being 'civilised' turn out to be for the isibaguna and the isimulita 2nd?

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[11] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 10. Also Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*.

[12] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 217.

[13] Ibid.

[14] The reorganisation of the mission and purchase of these properties is discussed in J.H. Righter, 1930, 'The reorganization and purchase of the mission property', *New Guinea Tidings*, February, 3–4.

[15] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 10.

[16] Skype interviews with Marian Ariansen, 12–14 July 2015.

The formal education provided to the isibaguna and isimulita 2nd extended only to grade five.[17] Abel's allocation of mission funds for education was biased towards his own offspring. For example, in the period 1924/25 an amount of US$1500 was allocated to Papuan education including the construction of schools, whereas US$3855, or approximately 250 per cent of that allocated to Papuans, was disbursed on the education of Abel's children.[18] To be fair, the colonial administration was so negligent in the provision of education to Papuans across the Territories that in 1962 John Atherton reported that after 56 years of Australian rule, the colony had produced only 20 high school graduates from an indigenous population of two million![19] Nonetheless, Kwato oral history tells of a time of great hardship when children had little to eat because funds generated from using Massim people's labour on plantations on Massim land were being used to educate Abel's offspring.[20]

Wetherell's suggestion that Abel—and, I add, his progeny—were concerned with dynastic succession[21] is corroborated by the fact that

> [t]he very few people who began to learn the specialised tasks of running Kwato … were taught these skills by other members of the staff, not the Abel family … Another informant tells of another member of staff, not of the Abel clan who first arrived on Kwato and began teaching advanced subjects, eg: algebra and fractions, but he was

[17] Aisoli Salin, one of the first indigenous members of the Legislative Council of the Territories of Papua and New Guinea—along with Merari Dickson from Kwato and Simogun Pita from the Sepik—noted also the lack in his own mission education in New Ireland stating 'The Fijian[s] … were products of Oxford University or Cambridge in England … in my time it was more or less like giving out rations. We worked most of our time cutting grass and cleaning up around the school.' Cited in Chilla Bulbeck, 1992, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages 1920–1960*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 179–80.

[18] David Wetherell, 1982, 'The fortunes of Charles W. Abel of Kwato 1891–1930', *The Journal of Pacific History* 17(4): 212.

[19] John Atherton, 1962, 'New Guinea heading for independence', *The Courier-Mail*, 29 October. For an overview of the perilous state of education in the Territory see Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea*, 179–89.

[20] Also recorded in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 266, 273.

[21] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 244.

> stopped by one of the Abel family members saying he was not to teach any of the advanced knowledge.[22]

Education for the Papuans was basic and training was gendered. Men were trained in building and women in domestic work.[23] Isimulita 3rd Ena Pita, Maori Tabua, Maria Ariansen and Dalai Farrow all recalled that their training included cleaning the Abel's house which also meant having to clean the chamber pots of the dimdim. Reflecting on that period of her life, Ena's vexation was apparent, 'I'm sick and tired of standing around the table serving them'.[24]

And David Wetherell has written that

> [d]escriptions of the Kwato Papuans before 1930 as 'servants' in the private correspondence of the Abel family are as common as the retrospective claim to have been turning out 'leaders'.[25]

Yet, despite the obvious inequalities, my interlocutors all remembered their upbringing on Kwato with great fondness, reflecting that the discipline had benefited them. As Ena Pita said, 'Because of the discipline now anyone of us can be anything … be a teacher or a nurse or run a business.'[26] Indeed, once they had completed their training in domestic work, including providing free labour as servants to the Abel household, many women did embark on careers as teachers and nurses.

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[22] Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 266.

[23] There has been wide scholarly debate about the Christian 'domestication' of women.

Anne Dickson-Waiko refers to it as the 'European missionaries … cult of domesticity' in Dickson-Waiko, 2007, 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea', in Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 210.

Jemima Mowbray points out how the traditional work and roles of indigenous women were devalued by colonisers and missionaries, who then increased women's work through various policies and through the cult of domesticity. See Mowbray, 2014, '"Ol meri bilong wok": Women, work and domesticity in Papua New Guinea', in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press, 170. See also the other papers in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press.

[24] Ena Pita, Recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[25] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 27.

[26] Ena Pita, Recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

The day-to-day reality of the isibaguna had been to receive a basic education from white missionaries and to provide free labour to white households, to the mission, its stations and plantations. The day-to-day reality of the isimulita 2nd was to receive an education from primarily the isibaguna and to provide free labour to white households in the guise of training. They would later be employed by the mission on meagre salaries and lesser conditions than white people. The daily reality of the isimulita 3rd growing up on Kwato was to receive an education from the isimulita 2nd, and for some, to continue to provide free labour to white households.

Although most are accepting of the circumstances of their early education and training, there are others of the isimulita 3rd generation—many of whom were educated in Australian boarding schools—who use the word brainwashing to describe the relationship between white and brown.[27] That is, they interpret that past through a racial lens and describe the relationship of the Abels and other white people on Kwato to the Massim as a process of indoctrinating the natives into allowing the privileges of whiteness to accrue to those dimdim. The isimulita 3rd may have later left Kwato for reasons of education and employment but it was also an escape from relationships based on racial hierarchy and subservience, unlikely to be what the tanuwaga and isibaguna had hoped for their descendants. That tension produced by a race hierarchy and privilege was apparent as well in the isimulita 2nd despite a veneer of equality between some of the whites and some of the Massim people.

The era of Moral Re-Armament

The exponential growth of Kwato supporters came after Charles Abel's demise and can be attributed to new approaches to conversion and the support of the isimulita 2nd for these new techniques. Cecil Abel had introduced the Oxford

[27] This is the gist of Kaniku's 'Religious Confusion', 264–83.

Group, later the MRA (Moral Re-Armament) and by 1934 their techniques were being used successfully to increase Kwato converts.[28]

The death of the elder Abel also opened up space for the greater involvement of Massim leaders in the mission and some would participate in the Board of Management and the Field Council.[29] Furthermore, post Abel's demise, visitors observed at Kwato a relaxed attitude amongst brown and white, the barriers of race apparently having been eased so much that some wondered how the Papuans of Kwato could negotiate a wider world of raced relations.[30] However, the supposed equalisation of racial relations within Kwato over time is not borne out in Russell Abel's book published in 1934. Just as his father did in *Savage Life in New Guinea* (1902), so too does the younger Abel pepper his text with the adjectives 'savage', 'primitive', and 'barbaric', writing elsewhere:

> The old British Empire is one of the few decent things left in the world. Justice, the trusteeship of backward races, honour, service, where is all that to be found today but in the *British Empire*. Thank God I'm British.[31]

Nonetheless, for a time it may have appeared that race did not structure some interactions in the Kwato Mission.

In 1938, in order to broaden its appeal, the Oxford Group would become the MRA. Often described as a religious movement, its founder Frank Buchman believed that war and conflict could be avoided through commitment to a moral and spiritual code captured in the Four Absolutes—absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love.[32] The Oxford Group, and

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[28] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 10.

[29] Geoffrey Baskett, 1991, *Islands and Mountains*, Castle Hill: G. Baskett, 42.

[30] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 11, 35. On race relations in the Territories of Papua and New Guinea see Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea*; Amirah Inglis, 1974, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press.

[31] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 197.

[32] Daniel Sack, 2009, *Moral Re-Armament: The Reinventions of an American Religious Movement*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Buchman, are credited with having inspired the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous by providing the basic tools that self-help groups have since engaged including the use of small groups, storytelling to share one's transformation and faith, and an accentuation of experience over doctrine and ritual. Another technique that was adopted at Kwato was a meditation known as the morning Quiet Time. In sum, the movement proposed that collective social improvement was linked to individual improvement and fulfilment within the context of Protestant Christianity.[33]

Wetherell provides a detailed account of the MRA and Kwato in his biography of Charles Abel.[34] My interest is in how the isimulita related to the MRA which they embraced so wholeheartedly. Even Wetherell notes that:

> The basis of the movement was led by the Abels, but the real process of cultural adjustment was initiated and carried through by the Papuans. Thus the opportunity was lost of sanctifying the past: old customs were simply overthrown.[35]

But why did the isimulita 2nd embrace the MRA movement?

Alice Wedega, one of the isimulita 2nd tanuwaga, wrote that the MRA technique of communing directly with God, resonated with the isimulita.[36] Recall that in the cosmology of the parents and grandparents of the isimulita there was no class of people that mediated between human and divine, though there were priests and priestesses—the alawai and balau—who adjudicated life and death. Moreover, as we have seen, the personal autonomy of individuals was pronounced in this matrilineal region. The isimulita 2nd may have been more missionised than their isibaguna parents but there were many continuities between their present and the past of their grandparents. Despite the

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Wetherell provides accounts of the MRA and Kwato in Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 212–44; David Wetherell and Charlotte Carr-Gregg, 1984, 'Moral re-armament in Papua, 1931–42', *Oceania* 54(3); 1990, *Camilla: C.H. Wedgwood 1901–1955, a Life,* Kensington: New South Wales University Press.

[35] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 222–23.

[36] Alice Wedega, 1981, *Listen, My Country*, Sydney: Pacific Publications, 30–32.

regimented and rigid mission environment, personal autonomy was still highly valued.

Autonomy in matters of faith would have been appealing to people who practised self-direction. I will note here that I do not mean European individualism when I speak of Massim personal autonomy. Instead, I speak of individual autonomy in a relational sociality which I call relational autonomy and which will be the basis of my discussion in Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy.[37]

I argued at the start of this chapter that to practice plurality is to embrace the possibilities of reinvention, to be creative and resilient. I contend that wonder and plurality are co-constitutive thus an attribute of wonder is reinvention. However, a reading of the transformation of the Other taken from a position located within that designated as singular will assess such reinventions as submission to the singular. Although the logic of singularity cannot accommodate the transformation of that which is already singular, it is perfectly ready to believe that that which is said to be non-singular will desire to imitate the singular. The non-singular must, logically, submit to the singular. But, as Nua's astonished statement at the start of this chapter illustrates, plurality does not interpret reinvention as submission.

There were many reinventions that were triggered by the practice of communing directly with God, a practice that allowed for evangelical passion and mysticism. Personal experiences of the divine was spoken of as receiving guidance. This is also not far removed from pre-missionisation practices in which knowledge can be derived from dream states, and in which the subjective

[37] My thinking has been influenced, *inter alia*, by: Katherine Lepani, 2015, 'I am still a young girl if I want': Relational personhood and individual autonomy in the Trobriand Islands', *Oceania* 85(1); Catriona MacKenzie and Natalie Stoljar, 2000, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press; Linda Barclay, 2000, 'Autonomy and the social self', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press; Margaret Jolly, 1992, 'Partible persons and multiple authors', *Pacific Studies* 15(1).

experiences of the presence of alawai, balau and the supernatural are described as visions even when they employ the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. An experience of guidance in which God speaks and the adherent hears and feels some emotion also employs the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The Christian message was not different but the practice around it had changed. And the practice appealed.

The practices that became embedded in the Kwato Way and which were influenced by the MRA included Quiet Time and Powerhouse. Quiet time was a daily meditation done in solitude then followed by a daily sharing of issues and practice of forgiveness. The adults would share, for instance, their part in conflicts that had arisen or their plans for lawasi (S, outreach). For the young, Quiet Time might mean thinking about their chores and the help they gave to the household. At Kwato the MRA adherents insisted on sharing feelings of hate and anger which might come up during the Quiet Time meditation which was undertaken before breakfast. Vocalising and externalising pain and hurt was part of the process of sharing and forgiving. Powerhouse was the evening practice in which the community would participate and at which everybody had a chance to pray and participate, although it was not necessary to do so. It was also possible to air grievances by raising a challenge during a Powerhouse session.

The April and October editions of the 1932 *Kwato Mission Tidings* brim with the evangelistic excitement of increasing Christian conversions.[38] The edition of June 1933 tells of a Leaders Conference at Koea Bule, attended by 180 men, influential in their own eanua.[39] (Women are not mentioned; from the narrative it seems that even the task of feeding the hundreds was carried out by men). In reading the text I am struck by the passion and fervour of those who attended the Conference, some already Christian, professing to a regenerated

[38] *Kwato Mission Tidings*, 1932a, April, 1–12; *Kwato Mission Tidings*, 1932, October, 1–16.

[39] *Kwato Mission Tidings*,1933, June, 12.

faith and a changed attitude to life through the practices of Quiet Time meditation and group confession.

> Each morning at sunrise one would step from the bungalow, crowded to capacity to accomodate [*sic*] the band of workers, and would catch sight of people everywhere. Under trees, on the beach, wherever any degree of isolation could be found, they were seated with their heads bent over their Suau Bibles, or else in attitudes of prayer.[40]

Isimulita 2nd Merari Dickson and his cousin Alice Wedega were amongst the early adopters of MRA. During the early to mid-1930s they and others from the Kwato Mission would journey into the rugged Buhutu Valley, another section of the Owen Stanley Range where it forks into the Pini Range. Although the Buhutu peoples had long traded with the Wagawaga, Ealeba and the Suau peoples and had some contact with European gold miners in the late 1890s, they had not been missionised.[41] They had a reputation amongst the Massim as fearsome balau. Merari and the Kwato party were met by Buhutu balau intent on making them flee. One such balau was Lobai. Lobai applied every method known to him to fell Merari unsuccessfully. And such was Merari's equanimity towards the psychic hostility and aggression of Lobai and the other balau, that Lobai, convinced that Merari's source of power was greater than his, converted to Christianity. This oral history is still known by the Buhutu peoples—Bolasa, my oldest informant, was able to repeat it to me and to tell me that his entry into the Kwato Mission was a direct result of Merari's pioneering work in the Buhutu and the confrontation with Lobai.[42]

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[40] 'In Conference at Koeabule', 1933, *Kwato Mission Tidings*, June, 12.

[41] In his chapter on Milne Bay, Hank Nelson mentions briefly attempts at goldmining in Buhutu. Nelson, 2016 (1976), *Black, White and Gold: Gold Mining in Papua New Guinea, 1878–1930*, Canberra: ANU Press, 176–82.

[42] Alice Wedega also mentions this journey in her autobiography. See Wedega, *Listen, My Country*.

In the index to the Abel Papers archive is also a reference to Merari's report from Buhutu in January 1937. See J.A. Collier, 1972, *The C.W. Abel Papers, New Guinea Collection, Library, University of Papua New Guinea*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

The success in the Buhutu Valley was replicated with the people of the Keveri Valley. So successful were the evangelists and so eager were the Keveri to participate in the new ways that the latter emigrated in their entirety from their mountain valley down to the Amau plain where they established new settlements.[43]

This pre-Pacific War period in Kwato history must have been exhilarating for the isimulita 2nd as they observed the stunning effects of their evangelising activities. Supporting the mission by running outstations and assisting in MRA camps occupied both men and women. In January 1937, the Kwato newsletter, *New Guinea Tidings* reported that:

> Of our Papuan staff, TIRAKA is at Kwato, foreman of the boatbuilding shed and in charge of the boys in training, a position that needs patience and love. He is away most week-ends attending evangelistic camps. MERARI who, with his wife VERA helps in the junior School, is also a regular camper. OLIVIA is one who holds a responsible position among the girls at Kwato. Both she and Vera are daughters of Josia Lebasi, Kwato pioneer, of whom much is told in *Charles Abel of Kwato.* All the members of his family are working with us, and his elderly widow PAULINE, a mature and most trusted helper, is at Bisimaka, in Milne Bay. At Koeabule another veteran still serves on, and that is SEME, one of Mrs Abel's first girls to come to Kwato.[44]
>
> PHILIP has returned from six months in the Duram district, where he assisted in camps at Domara, Ganai, and Segini. He is now back at Maivara. DAVIDA and EAUENIBO are back in Milne Bay again. They led a camp recently at Lauiam. Their work at Duram has

[43] The Keveri and Dorevaida episode has been covered in: Nelson, *Black, White and Gold*, 183; Wedega, *Listen, My Country*; Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, 'Moral re-armament in Papua, 1931–42', 11; David Wetherell, 1973, 'Monument to a missionary: C. W. Abel and the Keveri of Papua', *The Journal of Pacific History* 8(1).

There are requests from the Dorevaida for missionaries in Davida, 1936a, 'Davida's letter', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, January, 5. Davida reports on his trip to Dorevaida and Keveri Davida in Davida, 1936, 'When the chiefs returned home', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, November, 15–16.

[44] 'Brethren pray for us', 1937, *New Guinea Tidings*, January, 2. Olivia Lebasi was known to her family as Olive and appears as Olive in the Sipiniei Genealogical Charts 1 and 4.

Seme is known to her descendants as Semi and appears as Semi in Genealogical Chart 3, Kenuwaigu and Bwagagaia, and Kaimawana and Dilome.

been taken over temporarily by TISO and HINABONEDI. ALICE too is returning to Kwato with Mary.[45]

SISA and his wife LEA, though stationed at Sariba, have been away from home a lot lately. Though they are our oldest workers they yet display the energy and enthusiasm of younger folk. They took part in the Sariba camp at Logea, the camp at Lauiam, and at the moment Lea has gone to Buhutu, a district that entails much walking and climbing. BATI, shining example of grace, sufficient to overcome physical handicaps, whose blindness we never even consider, lives permanently in the Buhutu valley, returning to Kwato only occasionally for a short spell.[46]

TAUPIRI and his wife EVANELIA, are at Dago, Maivara district, and DANIEL and AINAUIA at Gwavili, the latter carrying on alone while her husband temporarily gives us a hand in the Printing Office. ALAEDI and BESSIE still run things at Duabo, which has lately been a centre of great blessing. DALAI is up there too, with a class of young girls who are specially needing individual attention.[47]

We would like you to remember our plantation managers. Besides the responsibility of the economical running and maximum productiveness of these estates, they have crowds of young people in their care. When one thinks of the influence that radiates from each of the plantations, and the centres of power they have to be to the surrounding community, one realizes how much depends on those in charge. Here are their names for your prayerful remembrance: PITA at Koeabule. His wife is AIDINA. They have had a lot of sickness with their two babies, and Aidina has taken them to the hill station, Duabo. OSINERU and his wife DORINI, and NARUGEI and his wife GONIA *;* they run things jointly at the adjoining stations, Manawara and Bisimaka.[48]

Finally MANIANA and NORI at Kanakope. They have just undertaken as a sideline, a weekly boarding school of 38 children. They are very bright youngsters, and living in a scattered area, there would be no chance of school for them otherwise. They go home for … week-ends, and their parents supply them with vegetables, and when they do a

[45] 'Brethren pray for us', 1937, *New Guinea Tidings*, January, 2.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 15.

[48] Ibid.

> bit of clearing or collecting of nuts the plantation helps them out with a bit of rice now and again. All this is extra for the one in charge, although he has his helpers.[49]

None of the isimulita 2nd remain to speak directly about their involvement in MRA. Some of the isimulita 3rdcontinue in 2016 to be involved with the organisation. Others such as Ilinome Tarua would withdraw. Ilinome was born on 22 September 1941 to Anaiele Ketaloi Tarua and Peni Frank Tarua. His paternal grandparents, Frank Taruakeno and Sineleloko were both isibaguna. Before his retirement Ilinome was a barrister then a diplomat. He told me about his experience of the MRA of which he counted himself a member until his mid-teens.

> From my birth MRA was present, it was in the fabric of Kwato life. The four absolutes governed. MRA meant policing your own thoughts all the time. Keeping your wits about you, catching yourself.[50]

At around 15 years of age Ilinome started to reject MRA and Kwato values. He wanted the freedom, he said, to have thoughts about girls or to have a beer, without feeling guilty. Withdrawing from the movement was a matter of self-censorship and disengaging from the vocabulary.

> You know that someone is MRA because they talk about guidance, from God. This is continuing membership criteria. There is a particular vocabulary that MRA people use.[51]

The core values of MRA had become the core values of Kwato. The practice of daily meditation and shared prayer had profound effects, not just on the Buhutu and Keveri peoples who had apparently decided unanimously to relinquish their previous practices.[52] Changes also took place within Kwato isimulita 1st households:

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Interview with Ilinome Tarua, Sydney, 29 July 2015.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Wetherell and Carr-Gregg, *Camilla: C.H. Wedgwood 1901–1955, a Life*; 'Moral re-armament in Papua, 1931–42'; Wetherell, 'Monument to a missionary'; 'An elite for a nation?'.

> The biggest change, since God controls our home, is in little things. Every night, before we go to sleep, my husband and I have a little setting up meeting for the next day. We just seek guidance about the work God wants us to do in the morning, how to share the house duties. Sometimes my husband has guidance to wash the pots and pans for me, while I do other things. If God wants me for work somewhere else, my husband is ready to free me for this. We have our family Quiet Time every morning together before we go to work. Every day I am shown some new things to do for my husband, to show my love to him. Also we used to use our money anyhow, in any way we liked. Now we put all our money in God's hands, and ask Him what to do with it, and how to use it in the best way.[53]

Furthermore, the adoption of MRA differentiated Kwato from other missions in Milne Bay since it linked Kwato people directly to global concerns of the time. Post-Pacific War this would include issues such as communism and the threat of nuclear warfare. It also provided adherents an opportunity to travel the wider world. Merari and Vera Dickson, Peni Anakapu, and Alice Wedega travelled to Australia, New Zealand and India in 1952, and Peni and Anaiele Frank travelled to Switzerland, the UK, the Netherlands, the US and New Zealand in 1957 (Figure 10).[54]

But the alignment with MRA was the cause of the withdrawal of the financial support that the New Guinea Evangelical Society had been providing since 1928, a significant financial blow to Kwato.[55] A further blow to the mission came with the arrival of the Pacific War. In January 1942 Kwato was evacuated.[56]

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[53] Lily Makura's testimony, cited in Russell Abel, 1938, 'Marriage and the "new way": Answer to domestic discord', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, January, 15.

[54] Baskett, *Islands and Mountains*, 150–54.

See also issues of *Papuan Times* between 1951 and 1952. E.g. Penueli Anakapu, 1952, 'Australian and Eastern Conference Papuan delegates join Nations for Moral Re-armament', *Papuan Times*, 10 October, 1.

[55] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 229.

[56] Ibid., 229–30.

The rupture of war

The war in Milne Bay was, of course, a major rupture.

Residents were turned out of Wagawaga (Ealeba) to make space for the allies, as was also the case at Wagawaga (Tawala). Perhaps this period was an even greater rupture than colonisation and missionisation since the upheaval was physical as well as psychic and arrived abruptly without any transition period. It was an imposition in a way that missionisation had not been, since people had retained control over their eanua even during colonisation. Many in Milne Bay had their lands first invaded by some five thousand Japanese soldiers and then by two hundred thousand Allied personnel and their planes, ships, motor vehicles and infrastructure, the scale and the likes of which would not have been seen before.[57] As the people of Wagawaga (Ealeba) gathered up their belongings to walk over the mountains into Suau, one of them asked missionary Halliday Beavis why the whites would kill Japanese when their religion preached that killing was unchristian, to which the Christian had no response.[58]

Apart from Susan Tiraka and Bolasa my informants were too young to remember many details about the war. Nonetheless, their childhood recollections illuminate some aspects of isimulita personhood.

Dilikoi Dickson was born circa 1930. When I visited her in 2015 to interview her she demanded of me, 'Do you wear glasses?' 'Yes, for reading,' was my reply. 'I don't' she stated beaming with pride. She was walking with the aid of a stick but her hearing and sight were excellent. She told me that she was taken to Kwato very young, before she had susu (S, breasts). She thinks she was about 12 years of age at the start of the war in Milne Bay in 1942 because she had just started puberty. Like many of my interlocutors, such as Bolasa, age was marked not in years but by corporeal changes—breasts, menstruation, pregnancy, menopause, greying of hair—and events such as war, famine,

[57] Peter Brune, 2003, *A Bastard of a Place: The Australians in Papua, Kokoda, Milne Bay, Gona, Buna, Sanananda*, Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin; Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 30.

[58] A. Halliday Beavis, 1994, *My Life in Papua, 1929–1967*, Templestowe: D.S. & R.J. Beavis, 73.

drought. During the war, she and other school children were evacuated from Kwato to the mainland along with their tanuwaga carers. She remembers walking through Ealeba, into Buhutu and down into Suau. She also recalls that the teenage girls and young women were taken into Buhutu for the duration of the war where they were hidden from the soldiers who would come looking for them.

Magololo Doilegu remembers Kwato-trained nurse Mayogaru sheltering an injured Allied soldier. As the Japanese approached Divinai from Bou Mayogaru said to the small Magololo:

> Lolo, edohana abo ehada ta sagui. Nuana abo ea wose, ea awasi.
>
> [Lolo, how shall we help our relative here. I think I'll have to paddle across [the bay]].

Magololo pointed out to me that 'Mayogaru i awa eha [Mayogaru used the term eha]'. That is, Mayogaru fostered a relationship with this stranger—she brought the injured dimdim into the inclusive circle of relationships of kin.

As the villagers prepared to flee to the mountains, Mayogaru, who had bandaged the injured soldier head to foot, arranged for him to be placed in a drain behind the hospital at Divinai. They provided him some cooked kanua (sweet potato), covered him with the rubbish of dead leaves and other organic matter, and abandoned the village. They returned a few days later to find the Japanese had destroyed everything, burning houses and killing pigs and chickens. But the dimdim was safe. It was immediately after this that Mayogaru put the man onto a platform in the bottom of a canoe, covered him with banana leaves, vegetables, firewood and gulewa (S, clay cooking pots), then paddled approximately 15 kilometres across the bay to Gwawili where the Allies had their main hospital and base. Crossing the bay, the lone canoe was swooped by aircraft banking sharply in an attempt to identify the craft and its cargo. Mayogaru later received a medal for her efforts.

'We were not hungry during the war' reminisced Magololo. When the ships were bombed, the villagers went down to the shore and collected the floating cargo—staples such as sugar, milk and rice. Pits had been dug

specifically to hide from air raids but as the fighting intensified the villagers evacuated. Magololo's family fled to Guga at Huhuna on the north coast using the Madayoge Dobila (S, road), the very same that I followed on my 2015 trek, retracing the footsteps of my six-times great-grandmother, Sipiniei.

They may not have been hungry but still they were not safe from the war. Allied soldiers would arrive on Huhuna shores in barges; 'they came for girls. The girls would run and hide in the forest' recalled Magololo. That young women were hidden from soldiers is also a vivid memory for Josephine Bagolai's mother who was also at Huhuna, and for Susan Tiraka who was one of the young Kwato women sent up into the mountains at Duabo for safety. Both missionised and non-missionised girls and women elected to hide from the soldiers.

The war effort transformed Milne Bay. The 200,000 troops stationed in the Bay utilised Kwato as a recreational centre for their entertainment.[59] At some point some Kwato nurses and other women returned to the island and laundry services were provided to the troops. On the mainland, the airport, the highway, and the bridges that today link the villages between Rabe and Alotau and East Cape all had their genesis in this period. The war, though, had the opposite effect on Kwato for post-war the mission never regained its former numbers, neither residents nor supporters.

Babada Cecil se he pesa

The demise of the Kwato Mission in the memory of my isimulita 3rd interlocutors had commenced post-war, with most activities halting in 1972.

With Abel's death in 1930, his family endeavoured to continue his legacy, with eldest son Cecil eventually assuming the role vacated by his father, assisted by his siblings Phyllis, Marjorie (Badi) and Russell. But by this time, the isimulita 2nd had also matured and drawn from the ranks of the gana'aro were their indigenous leaders—the men were known as the babada and the women as the

[59] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 30.

sinesinebada´o. Both were addressed also as tanuwaga. The tanuwaga would come into open conflict with Cecil Abel and for many of my interlocutors this was to be the beginning of the end of Kwato.

Over a prolonged period Cecil's attitude and behaviour had been considered heinous by the gana´aro. Lendia Leheboti lived on Kwato from around 1949 and then lived with Cecil from1951. In Lendia's words:

> Babada Cecil se he pesa.
> [The babada ousted Cecil.][60]

When I asked Lendia why this had happened, he did not answer me directly, telling me instead a story related to my question, after first saying:

> Tau awasai halihaliudi nige gonoana ai involve babada eai.
> [We newcomers could not engage directly with the babada.][61]

From 1951 Lendia would deliver mail from Cecil at Bisimaka to Kwato and Samarai. He travelled in a small dinghy with a tiny motor, so slow that it would take some 19 hours to travel a distance now covered in two hours. On arrival at Kwato he would drop off the mail at Industry then make his way up to Big House.[62] Along the way he was frequently heckled:

> Meta badalane u he mulimuliwatai, abo saha lolona abo enam i leawa.
> [You followed that badalane, what good is he going to provide you.][63]

Since badalane was not in my vocabulary I had to ask Lendia for an explanation.

> Badalane meta doga gadogado sinena.
> [A badalane is a womaniser (from the verb badala)][64]

When I asked Lendia how he felt about the heckling he replied:

> Na ia ena miamia ba'aeana debadi eai …

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[60] Lendia Leheboti, interview, Alotau, March 2015.

[61] Ibid.

[62] The area referred to as Industry is shown on Map 2 as the block labelled Power House / Timber Shed etc.

[63] Lendia Leheboti, interview, Alotau, March 2015.

[64] Ibid.

ena mauri nige ea mode alina eai, bena nima paisoa ea abi

[Well, it was a result of his (Cecil's) unsavoury living …

I wasn't concerned about his lifestyle, I just wanted to learn a trade and to work.][65]

Cecil Abel was a badalane.[66] Before his marriage he had flouted and flaunted the laugagaeo implemented by his father and policed by the tanuwaga. The first law in question was that of the strict separation of the unmarried sexes, and indeed no sexual interactions of any kind between them. The second law was based on his father's opposition to inter-racial sexual relationships. Cecil was not only having sex, he was having sex with Massim women. In some of the cases recounted to me he was clearly abusing his position of power and privilege. Third, the Suau and Tawala people place a high value on personal integrity. A person whose words and actions are aligned is worthy of respect. If the outcomes of the actions taken by that person consistently correspond to her words and actions then she is seen to be endowed with gigibori.[67] Charles W. Abel was admired partly because he demonstrated this alignment of word, action and outcome.[68] Being invested with power and authority comes with social responsibilities to be reciprocally invested in the well-being of those who recognise your authority.

Cecil, however, showed complete disdain for the MRA moral code that he himself had introduced to Kwato. The four MRA standards of absolute honesty, absolute love, absolute purity, and absolute unselfishness are, of course, aspirational but they nonetheless, set a very high bar. Cecil Abel's womanising

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[65] Ibid.

[66] This is also documented in Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 233–34.

[67] As I wrote earlier, a person who possesses gigibori is not just knowledgeable and forceful, but has access to both or either of the following. In the first instance, a woman might be considered a genius in a particular domain—this sibasiba (S), or knowledge, is an asset through which she is acknowledged as having gigibori. The second instance is where she, or he, is said to have supernatural abilities and it is these skills which enable mediation of life and death and which generate acknowledgment of their possession of gigibori.

[68] Also recorded in oral histories in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 272–79.

compromised not just Kwato's founding laws—it was also injurious to the Kwato principles of the MRA era and Massim ideas of status and responsibility.

> **Sam Andrew**: Elder Colin [Kiwiwi] told me a story … [Charles Abel] was waiting for [Cecil] at Bisimaka and he never showed up. He'd been up to visit the girls at Duabo Station.
>
> Kwato had high moral standards. To see the eldest son of the founder … it just created a lot of ill-feeling.[69]

Indeed, that ill-feeling is still remembered in 2015. Gegebo Manaima is the daughter of Dinah and Manaima Frank, who commenced a liaison whilst on Kwato Island and against mission laugagaeo (S, law). Dinah and Manaima were told to leave Kwato Island although they continued to work at other mission outposts. Gegebo pointed out that that her parents were punished for breaking Kwato laws whilst Cecil never was. She also recalled that sometime, post-war, at a 'house party' at Duabo (Kwato-speak for a weekend of evangelistic sharing) Cecil gave Manaima a tu'e (S, cane) and asked Manaima to beat him. According to Gegebo, this was part of Cecil's repentance:

> Pa'ana Kwato esana i he ba'aea.
> [Because he soiled the name of Kwato].[70]

Ena Pita also talked about the laws prohibiting liaisons with the other sex. The punishment was to cut grass and have all freedom removed such that even going to the toilet meant being accompanied by the matron. For the period of the punishment no communication was allowed with anybody. Sexual prudishness introduced by the missionaries is almost indistinguishable from the 'civilising' aims of whiteness which is replete with tropes of the amoral and immoral native.[71] Men and women who transgressed the missionaries' sexual

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[69] Telephone interview with Sam Andrew, 14 January 2016.

[70] Recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[71] Regis Stella, 2007, *Imagining the Other: The Representation of the Papua New Guinean Subject*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 40–161; Inglis, *'Not a White Woman Safe'*; Margaret Jolly, 2012, 'Women of the east, women of the west: Region and race, gender and sexuality on Cook's voyages', in Kate Fullagar (ed.), *The Atlantic World in the Antipodes: Effects*

code of conduct were banished from Kwato. Those who communicated with the opposite sex would have their heads shorn, be held in isolation, or have to perform some form of heavy labour.[72] Said Ena:

> But [Cecil] wasn't punished. He's an Abel, a white man, so … [73]

Not only did Cecil transgress the law, receiving on at least one occasion, a beating from his father,[74] he would later marry Semi Andrew, whose grandfather Bwagagaia was member of one the landowning families that had gifted parts of Kwato island to the mission (see Genealogical Chart 3, Kaimawana and Dilome and Kenuwaigu and Bwagagaia).[75] Cecil and Semi married in 1951 in the face of great hostility from the gana'aro families, including members of Semi's maternal and paternal families, who were also amongst the babada and sinesinebada'o. Said Sam Andrew of his grandparents, Semi's parents: '[Bubu Andrew and bubu Eabomai] suffered in silence'.

The hostilities over Cecil and Semi's engagement were such that Cecil at one stage pointed a gun at the brother of Semi's father, Maniana. According to

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and Transformations since the Eighteenth Century, Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

[72] Also documented in the oral histories collected in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 264–83.

These attitudes bring to my mind the time I spent working in Afghanistan where young girls were killed simply for looking at the opposite sex and where female bodies are unfairly invested with the burden of carrying the family honour, or more specifically, the virtuousness and worthiness of the patriarch. See also Lida Ahmad and Priscyll Anctil Avoine, 2016, 'Misogyny in "post-war" Afghanistan: The changing frames of sexual and gender-based violence', *Journal of Gender Studies* July; Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002, 'Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others', *American Anthropologist Ethics Forum: September 11 and Ethnographic Responsibility* 104(3); 2013, 'Do Muslim women (still) need saving?'in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press; Dicle Kogacioglu, 2004, 'The tradition effect: Framing honor crimes in Turkey', *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 15(2); Sherene H. Razack, 2004, 'Imperilled Muslim women, dangerous Muslim men and civilised Europeans: Legal and social responses to forced marriages', *Feminist Legal Studies* 12(2).

[73] Ena Pita, Recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[74] Sources: Sam Andrew, Harry Dickson (Harry's source was Sila Dickson who witnessed one beating), Mahimahi, March 2014.

[75] This does not make Semi a landowner on Kwato since matriliny here dictates that Semi could claim land ownership only through her mother, grandmother, etc. down the female line. Semi was a landowner at Badilauna but not at Kwato, but she still had status as a gana'aro (S, inside the fence).

his son, Ivilosi, because Maniana had opposed Cecil's liaisons, during the war, Cecil, an ANGAU representative, had ordered Maniana into areas where there was fighting. Their personal tensions continued after the war, amplified by the fact that Maniana felt a responsibility towards his niece. The confrontation took place at Maniana's home at Tupi on Kwato. Maniana responded by pointing to neighbouring Logea Island, the home of his father Bwagagaia and the clan of his mother, Kenu, informing Cecil:[76]

> You see all those canoes in the water. You see all those people on that island. If you shoot me, you will not leave Kwato alive.[77]

Maria Sioni recalled the hushed voices of her parents Daniel and Ainauia discussing the Cecil-Semi saga. And Susan Tiraka recalled the convening of the church councillors led by Merari Dickson, Daniel Sioni and Maniana Bwagagaia to discuss Cecil's desire to marry Semi. They were in a quandary over what to do with Cecil—some suggested sending him back to England. It was later announced, said Susan,

> Tamamiu bena i tawasola. But nobody wanted the wedding.
> [Your father is getting married. But nobody wanted the wedding.][78]

Such was the outrage that, aligning with Kwato, the Logea and the Anglican Dogura parishes refused to marry them. Eventually they were married at Wagawaga Ealeba by a Mr Clark from Fife Bay.

The colonial law prohibiting interracial marriage was no longer in force. And Lendia remembers seeing 'mixed' couples in Milne Bay during that period. Despite this, the babada and sinesinebada'o—including Daniel Sioni, Maniana Bwagagaia, Merari Dickson, Joe Lebasi, Alice Wedega and Vera Dickson née

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[76] Liasi Tarua, Maria Ariansen, Harry Dickson, and Sam Andrew were my sources. Harry Dickson shared this history to a group of us at Kwato including Anton Robinson, Dirona Lebasi, Salesi Maniana, and Vilia Lawrence, in June 2011. It correlates with what I was told by Liasi Tarua in March 2014 at Koeabule and by Sam Andrew by telephone, 14 January 2016.

[77] As told to me by Harry Dickson, Kwato, June 2011.

[78] Recorded interview with Susan Tiraka, Kwato, 16 December 2012.

Lebasi[79]—evicted Cecil from Kwato on the basis that he had broken Kwato laws too many times.[80] Indeed, Lendia proposed that it was used as an excuse to wrest power away from Cecil who had lost respect due to 'ena miamia ba'aeana [his disreputable living]'.[81]

Cecil's request for the tanuwaga's blessing for his planned marriage to Semi was the last straw. Jo Lebasi, then based at Amau, on receiving a letter from Cecil begging for Jo's intervention in Cecil's favour with the Kwato babada, apparently cursed Cecil. The curse was to the effect that any enterprise started by Cecil would never flourish, but would die young. And, according to Susan Tiraka, sometime around the time of the wedding

> Lidia ia ena tautau meta Russell ena bili i namanamali na Cecil enana i bi'i, paisoa nige aniona, i ketaketa, i yagayaga, i bi'i.
> [Lidia had a vision in which Russell's home shone brightly but Cecil's appeared dirty, all his work produced naught, it was ragged, sparse dirty.][82]

That Cecil's business endeavours later came to naught and that he and Semi were forced to adopt in lieu of having their own children, is seen by some as a fulfilment of Jo's curse and Lidia's vision.

After their wedding Cecil and Semi settled first at Bisimaka in a two bedroom home, Lendia in one and they in the other. But the Kwato tanuwaga again intervened stating they did not want Cecil in a mission house. Since the colonial councillor had returned to Gehua, the government station before Alotau was designated capital, Cecil acquired his home at Labalawa, a village between Wagawaga and Bisimaka. Recalled Lendia, 'Labalawa meta dimdim edi

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[79] Lendia named other babada of the period as Osineru Dickson, Bondai Peter, Dirona Abe, Tiraka Anderea, and Saulea from Suau. Interview with Lendia Leheboti, Alotau, 12 March 2015. Semi was also one of the Kwato sinesinebada'o but it is unlikely she participated in the meetings regarding her marriage to Cecil.

[80] An excerpt of a letter from Daniel Sioni regarding Cecil's expulsion can be found in Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 234.

[81] Interview with Lendia Leheboti, Alotau, 12 March 2015.

[82] Recorded interview with Susan Tiraka, Kwato, 16 December 2012.

numa [Labalawa was a dimdim house]'.[83] This meant they had an internal bathroom and toilet. Later, Semi's brother Wallace would join them, after having been kicked out of Sogeri High School.

But so influential were the babada and sinesinebad'o that, when Cecil and Semi attempted to move back to Wagawaga, Lendia recalls that they were driven away by the villagers in that locality acting on the request of the Kwato tanuwaga. Their kin relations with people in the villages where Cecil and Semi attempted to settle influenced the actions of those villagers. The couple eventually left Milne Bay for Port Moresby.

The sinesinebada'o did not participate in the public confrontations with Cecil, however interlocutors report that they considered these women to be equally influential as the babada in Kwato politics. In fact, asserted Susan Tiraka, Kwato alawai were considered to be the most powerful in the region, having access to indigenous knowledge, dimdim technology as well as to the power of the Christian God.

Whatever the causes of this major rupture between the tanuwaga and Cecil Abel, some of the Massim people were intent on speaking back. And later, others would identify this period as the time it began to go so wrong. Bolasa, my spritely 92-year old interviewee was in no doubt, telling me that:

> Misiebo ena laugagaio ie lau ponoli. Pa'ana Cecil ie tawasola maina Semi, Kwato ie guli. [Mr. Abel's law [concerning miscegenation] was abused. Because Cecil married Semi, Kwato disintegrated.][84]

So too did Alaluku Gowari whose son, Morris Alaluku, told me that his father had thought that the babada should have forgiven Cecil to give Kwato a chance. And even Semi Abel on her deathbed would say to Magololo Doilegu that she was sorry for her part in the decline of the mission. But times were changing. Race hierarchies were being challenged the world over with political decolonisation. The era of paternalism on Kwato was also changing. Post-

[83] Interview with Lendia Leheboti, Alotau, 12 March 2015.

[84] Interview with Bolasa, Siasiada, March 2014.

independence Cecil returned to Kwato, according to Susan Tiraka, 'giving orders to do this and to do that'. She retorted to him 'Who are you to give us orders, we are now independent'. To me she chuckled, 'Dimdim nige ea heasisieidi [I have no respect for dimdim]'.[85]

With the expulsion of Cecil the isimulita 2nd started to suspect the rhetoric of whiteness and modernity. This continues to be echoed today in the scepticism often expressed in everyday Suau conversation as 'o dimdim', sometimes wry, often disparaging, though occasionally admiring, usually where technology is concerned.

So how did the promise identified by the isibaguna go wrong?

How did the promise identified by the isibaguna go wrong?

In all these stories told me by different people, nobody spoke of Semi. Through her father Andrew, Semi was connected to the tanuwaga families of Bwagagaia and Kenu, and Dilome and KenuSister. Through her mother Eabomai, she was connected to Pauline Lebasi and the entire Modewa clan, many of whom went into Kwato. How strong her resolve must have been to defy her family and community even knowing she might be expelled from the latter. I remember Semi as a gracious and graceful lady who wanted to adopt me when my mother, unmarried, became pregnant. And perhaps had Semi been married to someone else, and my mother had been a different person, then this may have unfolded. But my grandparents were adamant that no Dickson and Lebasi offspring would go to an Abel household. And therein lies perhaps the key to some of the tensions in the Kwato community post-isibaguna that contributed to the undoing of the mission. Of course, there were serious financial problems but, even had those been resolved, it is questionable whether the model of race and class hierarchy on which the mission was built could be sustained in the long term. The promise identified by the isibaguna was constrained by three specific

[85] Interview Susan Tiraka, Kwato, 16 December 2012.

factors: white privilege, authoritarianism, and the contradiction between a sacred world and a secular world.[86]

The contradictions of authoritarianism and autonomy

From his brief time on the island, Lendia Leheboti had observed:

> Kwato ena hinehineli meta group haiona, gana'aro, ganamuri, Abels.
> [Kwato's predicament was that there were three groups – the gana'aro, the ganamuri, and the Abels.][87]

What might have caused the tensions between these three groups? Here I will address the probable source of tension between the gana'aro and the Abels. In Chapter 10, Isimulita Present, I will address the intra-Massim tensions.

Kwato was conceived as a highly paternalistic project by Charles W. Abel. This aspect of whiteness was not confined to the men; white women, too, led by Abel's wife Beatrice, were highly maternalistic.[88] Abel introduced a distinct brand of Christianity based on ealua paisoa or spiritual work and nima paisoa, or manual work. This particular brand of non-conformist Christianity included a significant orientation towards the Protestant work ethic and male converts engaged in carpentry and construction of buildings and boats, whilst females were employed in needlework, baking and the ideals of white domesticity. As befits paternalism and maternalism, daily life was highly regimented and disciplining the natives was a key objective of mission training. Following are the recollections of three of the isimulita 2nd.

Susan Tiraka née Frank, was 91 years of age when I interviewed her on Kwato in December 2012. She was born in 1921, and lived most of her life, on Kwato, and had worked as a teacher. Susan's husband was David Tiraka whose

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[86] The unfulfilled promise of missionisation has been written about by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 1986, 'Christianity and colonialism in South Africa', *American Ethnologist* 13(1).

[87] Interview with Lendia Leheboti, Alotau, 12 March 2015.

[88] Maternalistic women are explored in Margaret Jolly, 1993, 'Colonizing women: The maternal body and empire'. In Sneja Marina Gunew and Anna Yeatman (eds). *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin. See also Dickson-Waiko , 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea', 205–30.

parents were Ruta from Wagawaga and Tiraka Anderea (Andrew) from Isuisu, Suau, both isibaguna.

A day or so after my arrival that December, I walked around the island, to call on the living—occupied homes totalled eight that month—and also to visit the dead. The grave of my great-grandmother, Pauline, is at Lekaukuduli and that of my mother, Dineheilo, at Kwatowaila. Susan's house could be reached by the main road, a grassy, frequently mowed artery leading up to the church, and along which many of the buildings of Kwato's past were located. An alternative route to the eastern part of the island where many of the Papuans lived, and where Susan's house, Pauri, was situated, was by clambering up to the spine of the island from the cricket pitch, along a well-worn track, stepping over and under magnificently anamorphic roots and limbs of trees that must have witnessed the birth of the mission. From the top, one follows the narrow and steep path halfway down and along the narrow ridge overlooking the China Strait. On arrival at Pauri, Susan's residence, she announced that she would call on me the following day, and despite my protestations, the then 91-year-old, leaning heavily on her walking stick, descended and ascended the mountain twice over the next two days for our interview sessions. She passed away in October 2015 and despite having been born on, and lived most of her life, on Kwato, her body was taken to Nigila where her children participated in the customary mortuary rituals including exchanges of pigs, rituals which her mission upbringing would have condemned. As Susan Tiraki told me:

> I went to DPS - Duabo Prep School. KPS was Kwato Prep School. We were not allowed to speak Suau, only English … Merari [Dickson] was our headmaster. He was tough. Punishment … no cinema, straight to bed after dinner.
>
> My mother was one of the first students at school on Kwato. Charles Abel, Beatrice Abel and Miss Parkin were their teachers . [The first students were] Garoinedi, Dalai, Rhoda (Kalailaina) and Solatai, a Samoan. [The] males were Tiraka, Bonarua and Tom.
>
> … boys and girls were not allowed to speak to each other, not even brothers and sisters. Otherwise they shaved your head [for girls], and gave hard labour to the boys.

> Even before war we ate dry rice … no gathering greens, no aimuyuwa [shell fishing], because we might talk to boys.[89]

Nua Teloti was born in 1945. Part of the Kwato diaspora, I interviewed him in Port Moresby. He had attended a Kwato Mission school on Sariba until, aged 12, he was enrolled at the school on Kwato. In Nua's time there were about 30 boys boarding at Padipadi and at Flat House there were about 12. In all there were about eight teachers, all female, and half were Papuans. He said,

> Everyday life on Kwato, there was discipline. 5 a.m bell would start the day. Young people today do not have discipline.
>
> During the week the bell would ring at 5 a.m. We would wash and have Quiet Time. At 6 a.m. we would start cleaning, cutting grass and sweeping … according to the roster. The cooking boy and pantry boy would prepare breakfast. The pantry boy would serve us and make tea. Then each boy would do own washing up. We went to school from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. school. Our lunch would be made by the girls doing vocational training or by the senior girls.
>
> On Saturday after the 5 a.m. bell and morning duties we would be free. But we had to be back by 5 p.m. for dinner. We were all free except for the boys who were rostered to bake bread. They would bake and then take the bread to Samarai to sell to dimdims … Samarai had lots of dimdims and some cars. But I was scared of the Samarai dimdims. After dinner on Saturday night we would play games from 8 a.m. to around 930 p.m. Then lights out at 10.
>
> On Sunday the bell rang at 6 a.m. We would do light duties like clearing leaves and rubbish. Then we would breakfast and shower and go to Sunday school at 9 a.m. The main church service was at 10 a.m. At 12 o'clock we would have lunch. Sunday lunch was the best because there would always be protein! After lunch there was rest then from 3 o'clock free time and we would often gather at Gelegele or Isuhina [beaches].
>
> Discipline was tough, but it has helped me in my life, to accept both good and bad.[90] And I see this with other Kwato people. Also religious community. Kwato is like a family.[91]

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[89] Interview with Susan Tiraka née Frank, Kwato, 16 December 2012

[90] Nua experienced discipline only from Papuans never from dimdim.

[91] Interview with Nua Teloti, Port Moresby, 11 February 2014.

Lenah Dawanincura was born on 14 October 1945 at Isuhina Hospital on Kwato to Merari and Vera Dickson. She told me that

> our lives were controlled by the bells on Kwato ... The bell woke us up in the morning and sent us back to sleep in the evening when the lights are turned off at 9 p.m. and not only that the rings … were all different.[92]

What we can draw from these excerpts is that there were stringent levels of discipline and daily life on Kwato Island was highly regimented. The authoritarianism emanating from the top of the hierarchy was replicated at other levels of the pyramid. But we know already that Massim people placed a high value on individual autonomy. They knew that it was possible to be both part of a collective—be it kin or mission—and still exercise individual autonomy. The isibaguna had practised this, as had the isimulita 2nd. Even Russell Abel, although paternalistic like his father, noted as well the importance of individual autonomy.

> Good servants though Papuans may be, they are independent. They often give up lucrative work, for which they have been trained, and 'sign on' as a boat-hand at ten shillings a month. Why? Because they are moved by some passing whim. Perhaps they have grown tired of the old job and want a change. Freedom means more to them than money. No amount of reasoning will make them exchange their liberty for mere reasons of monetary gain. Small wonder that Westerners, to most of whom such reasons seem important above all else, find it hard to understand these child-like peoples of a primitive country.[93]

The authoritarianism of the mission collective was acceptable to the isibaguna and the isimulita 2nd up to a point: if it allowed them to achieve their desire of participation in European modernity on their terms. But to what extent were they able to dictate the terms of engagement within the mission? I turn to the relationship between sacred and secular for answers.

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[92] Email from Lenah Dawanincura, 10 June 2011.

[93] Russell W. Abel, 1927, 'Some Papuan characteristics', *New Guinea Tidings*, April, 12.

Exclusion and egalitarianism

Ealua paisoa, you will recall, is spiritual work and nima paisoa, is manual or secular work. The significance of ealua paisoa and nima paisoa to the identity of the Kwato Church, and indeed to the personhood of the isimulita 1st and 2nd, are such that they appear at the top of the first page of the Constitution of the Kwato Church of Papua and New Guinea. Magololo Doilegu, at the age of 80 in 2016, and even with all her children and grandchildren to support her, continues to rise at 4 a.m. to bake and sell her Kwato bread and buns as a source of income. The discipline of the Kwato Way, including the ethic of nima paisoa, is deeply ingrained.

Under the rubric of nima paisoa Kwato people undertook boatbuilding and established and managed coconut plantations to harvest copra, the proceeds of which went into mission coffers. Some who worked in these industries later described their participation as akin to enslaved labour. Indigenous people were involved in both ealua and nima paisoa, as both teachers and apprentices. But I suggest that there was also a third dimension to the Kwato mission, and this was the work of financial management of assets and capital, or moni paisoa. The indigenous people were excluded from this space.

Were the tanuwaga—the babada and sinesinebad'o—racist? Why was there so much conflict over the union of Cecil and Semi? My reading of this particular period of Kwato history relates to their exclusion from the space of moni paisoa and the continuing paternalism and maternalism after Abel's death. It was Hannah Arendt who pointed out that hypocrisy elicits greater rage than injustice.[94] In the matter of Cecil's expulsion the outrage was over moral and financial duplicity. As Sam Andrew explained,

> Apparently there was also some financial reason because Kwato was actually running quite a business [and there were concerns about how that money was being used].[95]

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[94] Hannah Arendt, 1970, *On Violence*, New York: Harcourt Brace & World.

[95] Telephone interview with Sam Andrew, January 14 2016.

Wetherell also alludes to this—'alleged misappropriation of army stores at Gamadaudau [*sic*] in Milne Bay, and postwar financial shortfalls during his treasureship of the KEA'.[96]

According to oral history, following Cecil's banishment, his younger brother Russell had intended to leave Kwato. However, the tanuwaga had demanded that Russell fix the financial situation in which the mission found itself. Perhaps it would have been captured in oral history had the tanuwaga participated in moni paisoa but the details of the financial situation are not. However, Cecil's proclivity to buy himself toys, such as fast boats, drove another wedge between him and the gana'aro. In the Abel Papers archive prepared in 1972, the index lists notes from Cecil defending himself and arguing that the failure of Kwato was not his fault.[97] A search of the archive in 2017 for Cecil's notes was fruitless.

At any rate, it was Russell Abel who then managed the Kwato Mission up until his death in 1965. He was held in higher regard than his brother, nonetheless, he would on occasion also run afoul of the Massim people.

Sila Bumeda captained Kwato's boats over a long period. On one occasion, pulling into Kwato wharf, he was asked to wait for a passenger, being Russell Abel. When, at the hour of departure, the passenger had failed to turn up, Sila, having been disciplined in Kwato time from a very young age, departed. After his circuit, and on his return to his home at Kwato, Russell descended to give the man a tongue lashing over his failure to wait. Sila listened calmly to the tirade. At the end of it he pointed out that it had been Russell who had taught Sila how to read dimdim time, and who stressed the importance of being 'on time'. Sila also retorted to Russell: 'You are on my land, in my eanua. I am feeding you and your family'.[98]

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[96] KEA is the Kwato Extension Association. Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 233.

[97] Abel Papers, Box 44, 129, January 1951, as listed in Collier, *The C.W. Abel Papers, New Guinea Collection, Library, University of Papua New Guinea*.

[98] As told to me by Harry Dickson, Mahimahi, March 2014. He was told by Sila Bumeda.

What Sila meant by this was that Kwato was Massim land. And it was the labour of people like Sila which enabled the continued operation of the mission in the post-war era, just as the isibaguna had done during the era of Russell's father, Charles. Sila went on to point out to Russell the sacrifices he and his family were making in order that Russell and his family enjoy their standard of living:

> In my house we have only rice. When we pass your house we smell many good things. We don't have those things.[99]

Australian Jennifer Andrew was a volunteer to the Kwato Mission from 1966 for two years and was charged with bookkeeping and secretarial duties. During her volunteer stint, Jenny met and married Wallace Andrew, brother of Semi, who had married Cecil Abel some 15 years prior. There was no outcry from the Kwato community over that inter-racial partnership.

On her arrival in 1966 Jennifer was able to write that Kwato was well-established in 'education, medical, boatbuilding, sawmilling, printing, plumbing, furniture making, house building, electrical work, all types of domestic work, vocational schooling, running of boats and the physical operation of copra plantations'.[100] However, mission finances were in the red, although she does not elaborate on the how and why in her memoirs.[101] The Mission was still earning an income from copra and other activities and the Kwato Papuans again made sacrifices during this period: 'to keep the mission afloat [they drew only] weekly food money for each member of their family instead of their meagre wages'.[102]

The paternalism of Abel had continued through his sons until Russell's death in 1965. Said Jennifer:

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[99] Ibid.

[100] J. Andrew, 2012, *Reflections of an Extraordinary Life*, Self-published using the Blurb creative publishing service, 56.

[101] Volatile copra prices would have impacted mission revenues.

[102] Andrew, *Reflections of an Extraordinary Life*, 60.

> It was a very new experience for [the Kwato Papuans] to be involved or even to know the financial situation and what was needed.[103]

The Papuans were excluded from moni paisoa. Although Charles Abel, and later Cecil, claimed to be preparing the Papuan for eventual independence, preserving the space of financial management for himself and his offspring, ensured that Papuan autonomy could never be realised.[104] Anne Kaniku notes, in her collection of Kwato oral histories, that Abel family members prohibited the teaching of advanced mathematics which had been started by another white missionary.[105] And one of my interlocutors, Marianna Ellingson, told of her grandfather, isimulita 1st Daniel Sioni, in old age, paddling over to Logea Island from Kwato, to participate in the school classes on math in order to acquire the basic knowledge he had been denied through his Kwato education.

The tanuwaga of the isimulita 2nd were beginning to realise this. The authoritarianism of the mission contradicted with the autonomy of matriliny. The exclusive structures of essentialised race and class privilege also contradicted the egalitarianism that is an outcome of relational authority and autonomy in the matrilineal system.[106] And, adding to those fractures, was the as yet unfulfilled promise of missionisation—access to, and benefit from, a secular, capitalist world.

The unfulfilled promise of missionisation: The contradiction between a sacred world and a secular world

> [T]here was a contradiction between these dimensions: while the mission introduced a new world view, it could not deliver the world to go with it.[107]

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[103] Ibid., 59.

[104] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 1–40.

[105] Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 266.

[106] I elaborate relational authority and autonomy in Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy.

[107] Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Christianity and colonialism in South Africa', 1.

The missionaries had introduced the European forms of sacred and secular worlds, establishing a division that had previously been absent.[108] In Abel's case, his version of remaking the native was implemented through ealua paisoa and nima paisoa. Here the secular and sacred were distinguished as discrete arenas, nonetheless, their separate-but-equal status in the Kwato Mission space would inevitably result in the conflation of material and the spiritual.

To join Kwato was to convert to Christianity. It was also to access the knowledge, techniques, technologies and products of the whites. The manner in which the mission was set up with equal emphasis on nima paisoa and ealua paisoa ensured its appeal to the Massim people since it promised access to the secular capitalist world. By establishing plantations and providing vocational skills and technical training, Kwato Mission drew the Massim into the capitalist economy, one in which they were keen to participate. Recall Lendia whose concern was learning a skill rather than judging Cecil's past.

But 'paisoa', translated as 'work', also has a more nuanced meaning in the Suau language. Says Melissa Demian:

> Work (*paisoa*), along with the accompanying principle of help or companionship (*sagu*), is perhaps the most significant concept invoked in debts between kin. Depending on the kind of work someone does – raising a child, contributing toward bridewealth and other transactions, paying the school fees of another's child – they may expect repayment in kind, help at a later date, or simply an increased degree of respect and deference because of the implicit superiority of the giver to the recipient.[109]

Paisoa of any kind, thus, implies reciprocity. In the Kwato context the reciprocity was to have been experienced as a new form of wealth and status which the children of the tanuwaga and isibaguna would embody whilst maintaining the relational authority and autonomy inherent in the matrilineal system.

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[108] This also happened in Southern Africa. See Comaroff and Comaroff, 'Christianity and colonialism in South Africa', 1–22.

[109] Melissa Demian, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2): 97.

The isibaguna stepped through the door that Abel opened. The isimulita 2nd explored and reinvented even further in the adoption of MRA practices. The isibaguna had laid the groundwork for the isimulita to benefit from European modernity. They, the isibaguna, were well aware of their limitations. Iosia Lebasi and other isibaguna had written of their shortcomings vis-à-vis European knowledge and technology employing the tropes of emerging from darkness into light.[110] The isibaguna did not expect to attain that knowledge and benefits in their lifetime. That, they expected for their children. However, the tanuwaga of the isimulita 2nd generation came to realise that the façade of racial equality that Kwato presented to outsiders following Abel's death was a myth. The structures of whiteness and white privilege practised through paternalism and maternalism had not changed from the isibaguna to the isimulita 2nd, nor had the desire for matrilineal autonomy and egalitarianism been effaced.

Interestingly, Aisoli Salin who was a peer of the isimulita 2nd and also from a matrilineal culture albeit in New Ireland, thought much the same way as the isibaguna and isimulita did. He is reported by Bulbeck as saying: '[H]e felt that command of English and other white skills should have been his passport to white society … [T]he justifications for racism had no application to him'.[111] For

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[110] A copy of a handwritten letter from Iosia Lebasi to Charles W. Abel dated May 23, 1900 can be found in Charles William Abel, 1900, *Kwato, New Guinea 1890–1900*, London: C.E. Roberts & Co., 31–32.

This is a common trope employed by Abel and across the Western Pacific. See Margaret Jolly, 1991, 'To save the girls for brighter and better lives', *The Journal of Pacific History* 26(1), 26, 34; 1996, 'Devils, holy spirits, and the swollen god: Translation, conversion and colonial power in the Marist Mission, Vanuatu, 1887–1934', in Peter Van Der Veer (ed.), *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity*, New York: Routledge, 252–53; Michael W. Young, 1997, 'Commemorating missionary heroes: Local Christianity and narratives of nationalism', in Ton Otto and Nicholas Thomas (eds), *Narratives of Nation in the South Pacific*, Amsterdam; Harwood Academic Publishers, 102–103.

In addition the Pinikindu had their own conception of black and white, dark and light which Brenda Clay suggests may have resonated with mission messages. See Brenda Johnson Clay, 2005, *Unstable Images: Colonial Discourse on New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, 1875–1935*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 224–28; Roger M. Keesing, 1992, *Custom and Confrontation: The Kwaio Struggle for Cultural Autonomy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 228–38.

[111] Cited in Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea*, 181

the isimulita, access to white privileges was not a matter of race but an outcome of having the appropriate knowledge. Alas, access to that knowledge was strictly controlled.

Cecil's marriage to Semi was indeed an affront, but it could have been negotiated with more ease had the situation been different. The marriage offered an opportunity to eject a man whose mistakes were costly in terms of both financial and moral capital. It did not, however, present the tanuwaga with the opportunity to take over the mission or realise their desire for autonomy. It was not just that the mission could not deliver a new world to go with the new world view, it was also that the paternalism and maternalism had produced a novel helplessness and vulnerability. Their dependency on the dimdim had been noted a decade before Cecil's wedding by Iosia and Pauline Lebasi's daughter-in-law who wrote in 1944:

> There are [*sic*] a lot of dependence at Kwato in the past, especially with us as Papuan Tanuagas [leaders]. This has been a weakness in the past and today we cannot grow or stand on our own feet and depend on God to guide us for any responsibility. The result is today … we can't do without your help.[112]

What does a decolonial analysis reveal?

Apropos the dethronement of Cecil, a decolonial analysis reveals that the gana´aro had developed an understanding that the rhetoric of European modernity and progress is subject to coloniality of power and race. Privilege and material benefits were distributed according to race, and not according to the effort provided. Nor was there the norm of reciprocity that guides the egalitarianism of matrilineal sociality in Milne Bay. The babada had contributed to nima paisoa. As young men they had worked in boatbuilding, on boats and on copra plantations. Later generations recall that their wages were barely enough to purchase food items from one pay to the next.

[112] Letter from Olive/Olewa Dickson Lebasi to Phyllis Abel, daughter of Charles Abel, quoted in Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?', 32.

The mission newsletter, the *New Guinea Tidings* (later the *Kwato Tidings*), in the front matter of each edition lists Mission staff members. No Massim person is listed as staff yet the pages of these same editions—as I have demonstrated—are filled with the efforts of Massim people. They received very little material reward for the significant labour they provided yet their toiling was fundamental to the establishment and ongoing operation of the Mission. In contrast, Cecil, and the dimdim in general, did not undertake any back-breaking labour, leading to Sila Bumeda's retort to Russell Abel 'You are here because I am feeding you'.

Moreover, amongst the missionary violence enacted on the Massim people was the observation made by one of Kaniku's isimulita 2nd interlocutors, who said of Abel's offspring that 'Half their education was paid for by their father and the other half was met by Kwato'.[113] If Abel was disturbed that Massim children in mission boarding schools experienced periods of starvation because of his investment in creating a dynasty, there is no record of it in oral history, nor in the texts I have consulted.[114] The gross imbalance in funding education for Massim peoples would eventually be noted by the isimulita 2nd who wanted their own children to receive education comparable to that of the whites.[115] This became a project which babada Merari Dickson later took the Legislative Council of the Territory of Papua and which paved the way for Kwato children to receive higher education in Australia.

The appeal of European modernity was tarnished during the era of the second generation of Kwato. Cecil's actions post-war, such as the acquisition of a high powered boat for his personal use during a time in which Kwato mission was experiencing financial stress, did not go unnoticed and contributed to allegations of financial mismanagement.[116] The Kwato tanuwaga could see that

[113] Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 275.

[114] Starvation is recorded in Kaniku, 'Religious confusion', 267.

[115] 'Headhunter's grandson is an educationist', 1953, *Age*, 29 January.

[116] See also Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 233.

their own progress was limited by a barrier which today is theorised as the coloniality of power and the coloniality of race. This recognition that European modernity is an exclusionary force, is also why the Suau Islanders of the present lament their stolen generation, the men that Abel took to work on Kwato in 1891. The social norm of reciprocity that governs social relations had conditioned those Milne Bay men of the first and second generation of Kwato, to give generously of their labour. They expected that at some point their sacrifice, their gift, would be reciprocated. It never was.

Despite these events, many third-generation Kwato people, born post-war, evoke a nostalgia for the apparently idyllic childhood and adolescence they experienced growing up on Kwato. Whether gana'aro or ganamuri, there is endless talk of reviving and rebuilding Kwato's fortunes. If only Cecil had not married Semi, said Bolasa. If only the babada had forgiven Cecil said Alaluku.[117] If only babada Merari Dickson and his brother Osineru Dickson had not left Kwato for Port Moresby, lamented Lendia.

How might we read this nostalgia in view of the often oppressive circumstances that the Kwato Mission generated? Appraising the Suau people's relationship to their pre-missionised past, Demian suggests a possible interpretation when she considers reflexivity as an ethnographic subject rather than an anthropological method. This relationship to the past is often expressed by the Suau in terms of their culpability in too readily embracing the new in replacement of the old.[118] But, says Demian,

> It is not the past they have lost, but the future, and they have lost it due to their own expertise at anticipating the regard of others. If Suau are nostalgic, the sentiment is not a modernist longing for an unrecoverable past. Significantly for a people with a complex colonial history, it also does not appear to transpire from a sense of

[117] According to his son Morris Alaluku. Interview with Morris Alaluku, Goilanai, 13 March 2015.

[118] Melissa Demian, 2006, 'Reflecting on loss in Papua New Guinea', *Ethnos* 71(4).

> dispossession. Their nostalgia is instead a 'nostalgia for a sense of future—for an experience, however imaginary, of possessing the means of controlling the future'.[119]

She suggests that the Suau people's reflexivity, specifically their collective forgetting of the pre-contact past is 'an old cultural technology applied to new social and economic conditions'.[120] The nostalgia expressed for Kwato is part of a technology of reflexivity. The adventure embarked upon by the tanuwaga landowners and isibaguna have not generated the anticipated outcomes for most. The nostalgia of the Kwato people is for a future in which they can experience access to the dimdim technologies that would increase their mobility and connections, and in which white privileges would be theirs, and this would unfold in the context of matrilineal relational autonomy, not whiteness.

In conclusion, Kwato's fortunes were intimately linked to the support of the babada and the sinesinebada'o. When this unconditional support was withdrawn, not just from Cecil, but from the centre itself when key leaders left the island in search of more equitable opportunities, Kwato mission's future as a spiritual and educational centre became even more precarious. Faced with the unfulfilled promise of missionisation some of the isimulita 2nd tanuwaga began to leave the island permanently. The wonder with which the isibaguna had engaged missionisation was giving way. It was time for other adventures. On his departure in the late 1950s, Merari Dickson, said to his brother Mareko:

> Kwato i ohi'o.
> [Kwato is finished].[121]

[119] Ibid., 510.

[120] Ibid., 508.

[121] Conversation with Mareko Dickson, Mahimahi, January 2008.

Chapter Ten

The Isimulita Present

The Kwato way: The memories and practices of the isimulita present

Missionisation was a process by which socialisation into the codes and structures of whiteness was undertaken. But to what extent did the isimulita want to become 'little brown dimdim', a pejorative phrase that some use to describe Kwato people.[1] This section demonstrates the elements of Kwato personhood for the isimulita and in the process, addresses this question.

Being an isimulita person has several foundations. These include a genealogical basis through one's parents or other ancestors having been born there; a geographical root for one who was born, raised, schooled, or employed on the island; and a sociological dimensions—the norms, values and aesthetics which guide the practices which Kwato people refer to as 'the Kwato Way'. All these contribute to the subjectivity of being isimulita which differs from isibaguna personhood. The isibaguna were on the cusp of a new world but still strongly anchored in matrilineal sociality. The isimulita 2nd were also still strongly guided by key Massim matrilineal values such as relational autonomy and the importance of kinship. Can we say the same of the isimulita 3rd?

This chapter captures the memories of those who remain today to speak of life on Kwato during the mission era. These people derive primarily from the third generation, that is, they are the grandchildren of the isibaguna, the Papuan pioneers who settled Kwato in the 1890s and the early years of the first decade of the twentieth century. Some were born on Kwato. All received at least some of their education on the island. And during the interviews all universally expressed a nostalgia for what was. It is important to note that their memories of life on Kwato are, for the most part, remembrances of childhood and adolescence. School on Kwato went only to grade five or grade nine

[1] This is similar to the disparaging use of 'coconut' to describe Pacific Islanders. See Vilsoni Hereniko, 1999, 'Representations of cultural identities', in Vilsoni Hereniko & Rob Wilson (eds), *Inside Out: Literature, Cultural Politics, and Identity in the New Pacific*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 137.

depending on the era. Even those who did not go to boarding school in Australia had to leave for further education, sometimes to Alotau or further. Very few returned to live on the island after they left for education, and some of those who did return because they were in the employ of the mission, also left from the 1950s, contributing to the decline of the mission.

What was, was described to me in terms that suggested an idyll. Indeed, I too have memories of an halcyon era, remembrances derived from childhood holidays, but also from stories that my grandmother and mother would share. For instance, I recall that before I started school, my grandmother, having spent the morning baking her famous fluffy, white Kwato buns which she finished with a glaze that dried to a crinkly, lace-like crisp, would lull me into an afternoon slumber with tales of growing up on Kwato as either Ronald Binge's *Elizabethan Serenade* or Mendelssohn's *Symphony No. 4* (*Italian)*, played in the background. To this day that music brings to mind my grandmother's house at Hohola, sunny afternoons napping on a mat under the ayalu tree and her stories of cows that grazed on the edge of the cricket pitch and kept the island supplied with butter and cream; memories of her father Iosia's house built at Aituha with views across the China Strait;[2] or Sunday afternoons at the house at Gelegele when my grandfather would play the organ and Kwato residents would gather on the lawn for an impromptu concert. Sometimes she would tell stories about formidable women who climbed mountains and sailed across oceans, stories I later realised, were about our ancestors. I don't recall her telling stories about men.

My mother's musical preferences were for the overtures from Mozart's operas and anti-apartheid music, such that both Mozart and Miriam Makeba are strong emotional triggers that bring my mother alive again for my siblings and me. She described a childhood of ease on this island where all the Papuan adults

[2] It is unclear what Abel's intentions were as far as Kwato Island real estate is concerned. Iosia Lebasi appears to have been the only person to have paid cash for his home at Aituha. Sometime after Iosia's early death Aituha became a property that housed dimdim, and today is leased from the Kwato Church by cousins to the Abel family.

were addressed as aunty or uncle, giving the impression of one enormous and close-knit family. Then there were the sandy white beaches and turquoise waters beckoning one to swim, a sandbank from which to fish, and a profusion of hills, trees, and rocks where one could escape from adults.

But a place, too, where one was also constrained by discipline and designated roles, where the tolling of bells structured the hours of the day, and where the rules restricting personal autonomy were many. Kwato children, girls and boys, had to learn how to bake—bread, buns, scones and cakes. My mother recalled being rapped on the knuckles frequently because her buns did not rise, and she grew into an adult who detested baking.

This section is constructed around interviews with people who were born, educated, or employed, on Kwato. Their words demonstrate an attachment to a physical body of land, as well as to the ocean that surrounds it. Evident also is a particular sociality. It is also interesting to note what is omitted when people remember Kwato. In the interviews I conducted, when asking subjects to discuss their relationship to Kwato, little mention was made of the institution of the Church, and even less of the Abel family. The island, the aesthetics, the ethics, the relationships, the ancestors—these were the main dimensions of the responses.

These interviews were conducted primarily in English, reflective of the level of education of this group of people. However, Suau interjections were frequent, and for a few, complex thoughts were better expressed in Suau. That we conversed in English at all, rather than Suau, speaks to my own limitations in constructing and speaking complex ideas in the language, although my passive comprehension is fluent.

I note the birth date of the interviewee, as well their family's history relative to Kwato. Clearly, the period when they were born, as well as the family environment in which they were nurtured, and whether this was an isibaguna (pioneer) family or otherwise, constitute their subjectivities as much as being influenced by the institutions of mission and church. Furthermore, genealogy is

how indigenous people of this region situate and introduce themselves. It is also interesting to note that life spans of Kwato people, like other Milne Bay people, are quite long relative to Papua New Guinea life expectancy which, according to the World Health Organization, was 60 years for men and 65 for women in 2013.[3] The average age of my interviewees was 72; three of them were in their nineties, seven in their eighties and the rest between 55 and 79. This longevity has nothing to do with missionisation. I suggest it is related to the consumption of a traditional diet, high in root vegetables and green leaves and moderate amounts of protein and processed foods.

The words of the isimulita are juxtaposed with the poetry and lyrics of popular songs still sung by those in the diaspora. Music, sacred and secular, is an important art form for Kwato peoples who were taught the tonic sol-fa as part of their education. However, emphasised Wasalebo Doilegu, 'We were taught music but it was already in our blood. Singing is in our blood'.[4] Many Papuans undertook translations of English hymns into Suau and Tawala. Matatia Nanumea is one of the most prolific, but of note as well was Alan Maniana. Secular music that remains popular in 2015 is composed by men—Hetei Dickson,[5] Kumi Andrew, Robin Samuel—and women—Olive Lebasi, Odi Lebasi, Liasi Tarua, the Douglas Sisters, and Marianna Ellingson. Composing primarily in Suau but also in English, many of their melodies evoke place and belonging.

Below I start with a verse of a song redolent with longing, nostalgia and homesickness for Kwato. My colloquial translations do not do the songs justice since musical transcription must contain, not just words that have an equivalence of meaning, but a balance that must be achieved in each line by

[3] World Health Organisation, 2015, 'Papua New Guinea', *World Health Organisation.*

[4] Conversation with Wasalebo Doilegu, Alotau, January 2015.

[5] The Kwato community may wonder why I have not made use of Hetei Dickson's prolific and amazing body of compositions. Hetei, my mother's eldest brother, gave me oral permission in June 2016 to use whichever parts of his corpus I found useful. In September 2017, his adopted daughter, Helena, refused permission when I had attempted to contact Hetei—via her email address—to ask his opinion on my translations. Hetei passed away in October 2017 before I had an opportunity to speak with him face-to-face.

generating the same number of syllables as the original in order to 'fit' the melody. Any wordsmith or linguist will understand how challenging this is to accomplish.

Kwato egu eanua [Kwato, my home][6]

Kwato oa egu eanua Ea gadosisiem ena ea adau sualaem Huia gamagari ea nuatuim Huia lolo esau eai Abo ea lage uioma Eda eanua kodedi, Abo ta kodeidi.	Kwato, you are my home My love for you such that when I travel I dream of you. Always thinking of you. One fine day I will again return. The happiness of belonging to this land will again bring joy.

Kapole is a word in the Suau language for which there is no translation in English, although the Portugese *saudade* is similar. Kapole evokes profound longing anchored in love, for people and place. Kwato was an idyll for the isimulita 3rd, one created by the isibaguna and the isimulita 2nd. Kapole is frequently uttered by the isimulita 3rd in reference to Kwato.

Kapole Kwato. 'We had everything'

Just as the isimulita 2nd had a different understanding of the world to the isibaguna, so too have the isimulita 3rd developed their own interpretation and appreciation of Kwato. Some of them, as very young children in the 1950s, would have been excluded from the politics surrounding the expulsion of Cecil Abel from Kwato, nor would they have known Charles or Beatrice Abel. Others, older, have memories of hushed conversations about Cecil and Semi. But, in the 1950s, all would have been too young to be aware that the halcyon days they were living were ending, and that they, the isimulita 3rd, would contribute to that decline when they left the island for education or employment.

[6] *Kwato egu eanua* [Kwato, my home], written and composed by Harry Merari Dickson, colloquial translation by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence. This song is also known as the *Hailobai'i Anthem*. This is the second verse.

Wiko Bona was born on Kwato in 1955. In three words she succinctly voiced the sentiments of all the isimulita whom I interviewed, 'We had everything …'[7] Wiko's grandmother, Niulele, came from Suau Island to Kwato, at the request of her isibaguna uncle Iosia Lebasi, brother of her mother (see Genealogical Chart 5 – Lebasi). A measure of the closeness of the Bonarua family to the Lebasi family is that Wiko's eldest siblings were named for Iosia and Pauline Lebasi. Wiko left the island in 1972 for Port Moresby where, in 2015, she still worked as Librarian at the National Library. The sense of having had everything on Kwato undoubtedly fuels nostalgia for the island.

> **Wiko Bonarua**: We were well off sort of thing, you know. We had everything. School, teachers, [hospital] … Our parents were working there. Dad is the engineer there. And mum's a housewife. All of us went to school. Jo came to Sogeri. Pauline won a scholarship down to Australia. We had everything … We had moving pictures ... We had a family shop … There were books on the shelves. We had everything. There was a lady from Samarai come to teach us piano ... We had dancing lessons. We used to dance Blue Danube … waltz. We were well off ...[8]

Anne Dickson-Waiko was born in 1950 in Port Moresby. Anne's paternal grandfather, Diki from Ahioma, and grandmother, Daueonei from Wagawaga near Alotau, joined the isibaguna at Kwato, but preferred to return Daueonei's eanua. Their children, including Anne's father, Osineru, would be educated on Kwato. Osineru joined the colonial Administration around 1947 and remained in the public service. He was awarded the Imperial Service Medal by the Queen on his retirement in 1978.[9] Like his elder brother Merari Dickson, Osineru spoke an Oxbridge English that led some to believe he was half-white since it was clearly unthinkable to whites that a Papuan could have such mastery over their language.[10]

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[7] Wiko Bonarua, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[8] Ibid.

[9] 'Honours and awards', 1978, *The London Gazette*, 28 April, 47522.

[10] As wrote Cyril S. Belshaw, 2010, *Bumps on a Long Road: Essays from an Anthropologist's Memory, Volume 1*, Vancouver, BC: Webzines, 74.

Anne's maternal grandfather, Bulegei, had worked occasionally as a pastor for the Kwato Church. Her mother, Doreen Bulegei, was a teacher for Kwato Mission schools. Anne, formerly a board member of the PNG National Council of Women, is an historian and political scientist at the University of Papua New Guinea. This is her recollection of Kwato:

> I went to Kwato in 1957 to do grade 1. I could have gone to school in Moresby, at Ela Beach or somewhere, but [my parents] felt that I had to go to school at Kwato … I had to have a Kwato background. That's why they sent me there … I was … seven years old …
>
> … Everything was on Kwato … we were introduced to classical music, we used to dance to Johann Strauss' Blue Danube [laughter], and later on, when I come to think about it, all these things, they didn't happen elsewhere in PNG … So it was quite unique, although we didn't know it at the time. They played piano and we had concerts at the end of each year and different classes put items on and people from Samarai came over, and Logea, to watch … it was quite an upbringing …
>
> … When we were growing up, on Kwato, as boarders, every afternoon they gave us chores, during the week they gave us chores to do. So like for a month we might be cleaning the church or sweeping the front lawn, so it's like they were teaching us … domesticating us, I suppose. That kind of thing did not happen in Milne Bay because [people] were just going to the garden … what took place on Kwato was completely different …
>
> … [We were] up at five o'clock every morning. They'd ring the bell and everybody gets up, goes down to have a shower, then comes back and we have prayers and quiet time.[11]

Anne's parents' insistence that she receive an education on Kwato rather than in Port Moresby speaks to a particular kind of subject formation they desired for their children. That Kwato background is often referred to as the Kwato Way.

Legu Lee was born in 1946 at the Kwato Mission at Buhutu and lived on Kwato Island and at various Mission stations until the age of 12 when she went to boarding school at St. Catherine's Church of England School for Girls in Warwick, Queensland. Legu's grandfather, Pilipo, from Divinai trained under the

[11] Anne Dickson-Waiko, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

Samoan missionaries at Killerton Island, and was amongst the isibaguna of Kwato. After boarding school Legu attended the Teachers' College and subsequently taught for a few years before joining the PNG Tourist Board in 1972. She then joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, firstly in trade promotion, later in the political section and foreign affairs. Her first appointment was as consul to Brisbane, where she was also PNG's first female diplomat in 1979. She was also Deputy Chief of Mission when Papua New Guinea (PNG) opened a new embassy in Beijing and has also held roles as Trade Commissioner to Australia, Deputy Chief of Protocol Division, and Acting Chief of State Protocol.

> **Legu Lee**: There was a [Kwato Mission] school at Bisimaka that was run by Aunty Olive. I went to that. … so very disciplinarian … you were taught to speak English. If you don't, and they[12] hear you speaking Suau, your punishment is to weed those sensitive plants, what do you call it, setania [a type of nettle] …
>
> … My parents finished from Bisimaka and my mum and dad went back to Divinai for a while and I had to go to boarding school. At the age of five. When I moved to Kwato I stayed with bubui Iva at Koihoma. It was … my big sister and I, Didi. You were boarded in homes and mostly your relatives … All of us whose parents were working for the Mission and down in the bay, we were too young to go to boarding houses like Buttercup, Edidai, PD House, Padipadi … we were billeted in homes of our families … so we stayed with bubui Iva. Until I was about seven/eight and then I moved to Buttercup.[13]

Legu's school at Bisimaka was run by a woman, Olive Lebasi. Anne's mother, Doreen Bulegei Dickson, and my grandmother, Vera Lebasi Dickson, at one time ran the mission school at Sariba. Like the formidable Dalai whom we encountered in Chapter 8, Isibaguna, they and other Kwato tanuwaga were the multitasking women—teachers, headmistresses, boarding school matrons and

[12] 'They' refers to the aunties who were also the teachers, headmistresses and boarding school matrons such as Iva Lebasi Doilegu and her sisters, Vera Lebasi Dickson and Olive Lebasi, and their sister-in-law Oleva Dickson Lebasi, as well as Oleva's sister-in-law, Doreen Bulegei Dickson.

[13] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

station managers. And we get a hint from Legu's allusion to stinging nettles about the discipline meted out by these formidable women.

We also see how important place is in the Kwato world. Legu stayed with relatives at Koihoma because she was too young to go into Buttercup, Edidai, PD House and Padipadi (see Map 2, Kwato Island). These buildings are long gone but the names survive vividly in people's memories. Indeed, Susan Tiraka made it a point to say to me:

> All places on Kwato had a name. My house is Pauri.[14] This was my parents' house. The Lebasi's block was Aituha.[15]

Kwato, the place, and the places on Kwato, are deeply embedded in the way people speak of their Kwato experience and their history.

> **Dirona Lebasi**: I was born on Kwato Island. I was raised there… Kwato … is my only home. Even though I am residing in [Koea Bule]… I always feel a difference when I go to Kwato… physically and also spiritually.[16]

When place becomes profoundly important to one's identity, naming the different sites of that place becomes a way of incorporating place into the network of relationships of importance. If my interlocutors spoke in terms of chronology it was often genealogical - they spoke as often of spatial experiences that generated physical, emotional, and spiritual reactions.

The family

Before I examine the Kwato Way and Kwato Standards, I want to look at the different meanings attached to the idea of the Kwato Family.

> **Dirona Lebasi**. [I]t's a community of Kwato people and also the wider community of the Kwato boarder, the extended families of the generations that came after me… It means a lot that even though by blood we are not related but somewhere … it's that

[14] Pauri is the mangrove tree, known for its very hard timber.

[15] Taped interview with Susan Tiraka, Kwato, 16 December 2012.

[16] Taped interview with Dirona Lebasi, Koea Bule, 23 March 2016.

> community that always brings us together. That bond … the Kwato Family… a loving community. We have that care, we appreciate each other.[17]

As Dirona indicates, the Kwato Family is composed not just of those born there as he was, it also includes all those who passed some of their life there. But there are different layers of family. The Kwato Family is also how the whites referred to the Kwato community. But, wrote missionary and one-time Kwato resident, Geoff Basket, the multi-racial Kwato Family was in name only, for:

> It is true that we worshipped together as a Christian family. We had meals together and everyone was known by his or her Christian name [and we] played sports together … [Y]et in many ways we lived in two separate worlds. Different foods, different living conditions, always being treated as 'honoured guests' when visiting villages and every [white] staff member being automatically a member of the Field Council where only a few of the older Papuans were represented – all these things contributed to the Europeans living in a separate world.[18]

Kwato's race relations may have appeared on the surface to be progressive but they reinscribed a hierarchy saturated in whiteness in which white males occupy the top rungs, followed by white females, then by brown men, and on the lowest rung, brown women.[19] Basket's observations are

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Geoffrey Baskett, 1991, *Islands and Mountains*, Castle Hill: G. Baskett, 54.

[19] There is a vast literature on how race and gender intersect. These are some of the texts that have influenced my thinking: Patricia Hill Collins, 1998, *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2002, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Routledge, 1–44, 251–90; Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989m 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989(1); 1991, 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', *Stanford Law Review* 43(6); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 1984, 'Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses, *boundary 2,* 12–13; 1991, 'Cartographies of struggle', in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 2003, '"Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles', *Signs* 28(2); 2003, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 190–251; Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002, 'Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others', *American Anthropologist Ethics Forum: September 11 and Ethnographic Responsibility* 104(3); 2013, 'Do Muslim women (still) need saving?' in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 27–53, 201–27.

pertinent also to any scholar of Kwato who chooses to rely only on the English texts currently available.[20] Since the worlds of the Europeans and the Massim were quite separate, it would be impossible to know the Massim world without engaging their oral history and the texts, often correspondence, in their languages.[21]

Missionisation and Christianisation stressed the role of woman as wives and mothers in the domestic domain whilst colonial patriarchy was biased to conceive of education for indigenous females as a menace that could orient them away from the roles of wife and mother.[22] There was, however, a paradox, identified by Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly who write:

> We demonstrate a palpable tension between an abstract ideal of Christian domestic life for the modern era and the actual practices of both the Western women missionaries and their indigenous converts. Contrary, to an idealised home life and the conventional role that women were supposed to play in it, these newly Christianised women often moved into public, sometimes even global, positions through educational and transnational Christian alliances. The new woman in the home was

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[20] Indigenous people elsewhere have a wealth of written material in their own languages. For example, Noenoe Silva's history of Hawaiian resistance to American colonialism draws on newspapers and correspondence in the Kanaka Maoli language. Silva, 2004, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*, Durham NC: Duke University Press..

[21] This is an argument that Anne Dickson-Waiko makes for women's history in general in PNG. Dickson-Waiko, 2008, 'Finding women in colonial Papua: Gender, race and sex in Papua New Guinea history', *South Pacific Journal of Philosophy and Culture* 10.

Brenda Johnson Clay argued that missionaries in Pinikindu, New Ireland did not penetrate spaces outside the mission thus spaces where daily and ceremonial life unfolded—such as homes, gardens, men's houses—do not appear in missionary evaluations of their success. Yet, missionary measures of success are compromised by the fact that 'in 1970, I was told by elderly men and women in Pinikindu that in the past they knew, had long known, matters of which white men disapproved and thus had deliberately hidden various practices from them'. See Clay, 2005, *Unstable Images: Colonial Discourse on New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, 1875–1935*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 220.

[22] Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, 1986, 'Christianity and colonialism in South Africa', *American Ethnologist* 13(1). See also Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre, 1989, 'Introduction', in Margaret Jolly & Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press; Anne Dickson-Waiko, 2007, 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea', in Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press; 'Finding women in colonial Papua', 4–9.

> also engaged in the exercise of novel power and authority through the command of new 'scientific' processes of childrearing, hygiene and household management … Those competing demands constitute the 'paradoxes of domesticities'.[23]

These paradoxes are also evident in the Kwato Mission where gendered relations following Massim practice were structured differently to the abstract ideal of Christian domestic life. Massim women were agential in exercising their authority to participate in contemporary social changes and this is evident with both isibaguna and isimulita women.

Anne and Legu were very young when they first attended school at Kwato. Like many Kwato children they lived away from their parents whose work took them to other Kwato stations or elsewhere. Paradoxically, the nuclear family ideal that Abel espoused as 'our benighted way of thinking'[24] did not operate at Kwato because isimulita women were both mothers and workers.[25]

> **Pauline Bona**: All [Kwato] children at that time went to boarding school because their parents worked for the mission in some capacity. [Boarding school] freed them from childcare. My father said the horrible thing about it was to see your parents there and not be able to be with them and half the time you were starving and you knew your house had food. [At boarding school] you were looked after by some tanuwaga with all their strict rules. So when he had his family, no way [he refused to put them into boarding school on Kwato.][26]

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[23] Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly, 2014, 'Paradoxes of domesticity: Missionary encounters in the making of Christian homes in Asia and the Pacific', in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press, 5.

[24] Charles William Abel, 1902, *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*, London: London Missionary Society, 29.

[25] This is the argument of Choi and Jolly, 'Paradoxes of domesticity'.

The same point is made also in Jane Haggis, 1998, '"Good wives and mothers" or "dedicated workers"? Contradictions of domesticity in the "mission of sisterhood", Travancore, South India', in Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. See also Dickson-Waiko, 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea'.

[26] Taped interview with Pauline Bona, Kwato, 23 December 2015.

The indigenous model of family that Abel disparaged enabled Massim women to feel comfortable about leaving their children in order to work away from home. The same logic of the extended family had operated in the era of the isibaguna. It was this, along with matrilineal relational autonomy, that brought many children into Abel's care in the Kwato Mission.[27]

The isimulita parents, like those of the isibaguna generation, knew their children would be cared for by consanguineal, or occasionally affinal, kin. And since adoption, or abihelai, is an age-old Massim practice and continues to be common, it would not have been unusual for children to be living in a household other than that of their parents'. However, it was not always clear to the children what the kinship relationships were beyond this thing called 'the Kwato Family'. 'Family relationships were blurred as everybody was aunty or uncle. Only at death did family links become clear'.[28]

Anne and Legu boarded with relatives until they were old enough to move into the residences for older children. The functions of the buildings varied over time but in Anne, Legu, and Wiko's era Edidai housed the young girls and at Padipadi were the young boys (see Map 2). Older girls were at Buttercup, the Mission House, and PD House. The teenage boys boarded at Flat House, and those attending vocational training were housed at Saevaru. Since their parents were either mission- or government-employed school fees were not an issue. However, those without an income would make a contribution through the provision of agricultural produce to the school. Throughout their years in a Kwato school the girls addressed their Massim teachers as aunt or uncle whether or not there was a consanguineal or affinal relationship, although in many cases there was. The Kwato Family at this level, resembled the village

[27] Melissa Demian suggests that 'it is possible and even probable that most families did not see themselves as "giving up" their children at all, but rather adopting them out to the missionaries in order to establish a precedent for transactions between them'. Demian, 2007, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter: the life history of a Melanesian relationship', *Paideuma* 53: 99.

[28] Taped interview with Paulina Peter, Port Moresby, 20 February 2014.

structure of extended kin with designated elders/teachers albeit within the mission space.

Kwato people, of course, also had family outside of the mission. And the elders in the mission were cognisant of the potential tensions between the missionised and the village people.

> **Legu Lee**: [O]ur grandfather was very protective too. And he sees us as growing up on Kwato, which is like, different … they set standards at Kwato. When we go down [to see him] he always says to us 'when you go out to the villages, people are your assets. You look at people as people. And don't look down on them when they call you in to sit down and they give you food, or anything'. But he was always very protective because he knows … doha [S, like] … the village people can be very jealous.[29]

Indeed, in his study of the Milne Bay economy in the 1950s Cyril Belshaw pronounced of the Kwato Mission that:

> In few places in Melanesia can the cleavage between elite and villager be more pronounced, the sense of superiority over other Missions and pagans more marked, or the jealousy which accompanies movements for social and individual betterment more sharp.[30]

Yet, despite the bounded mission space sequestered on an island, the isimulita maintained contact with their kin outside the mission.

> **Pauline Bona**: Our parents always taught us ehameau se gamagali.
> [Our parents always taught us that our relatives are many].[31]

> **Maria Ariansen**: [M]y parents [Daniel and Ainauia] shared with us a lot about where they had come from. My grandfather, Sioni, would come to visit regularly [from Logea]. [And] extended family would also visit [Daniel] to discuss and take advice on land matters … Family ties in our society are much stronger, more binding than for dimdim. Our house was always full of people who needed a bed or a meal.[32]

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[29] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[30] Cyril Shirley Belshaw, 1954, *In Search of Wealth: A Study of the Emergence of Commercial Operations in the Melanesian Society of Southeastern Papua*, Menasha, WI: American Anthropological Association, 7.

[31] Taped interview with Pauline Bona, Kwato, 23 December 2016.

[32] Skype interviews with Maria Ariansen, 12–14 July 2015.

Yet again, it is the sense of the Massim ideal of family that prevails even with the isimulita 3rd. Still, while there is continuity in the sense of extended kinship, this and later generations of the isimulita were often ignorant of the kin-based leadership and governance structures in the village, especially as they pertained to land matters.

> **Ataia Andrew**: Having been brought up on Kwato I didn't know that my roots and my land is at Ahioma [where his mother comes from]. And then when we move back the people there think we are foreigners. When we are landowners! Charles Abel bringing our grandmothers and mothers to Kwato was detrimental to our traditional way of life. Now we are having court cases trying to establish the legal rights, traditional rights to [land].[33]

The isimulita 2nd were cognisant of matrilineal governance—it was even written about in the Kwato newspaper, the *Papuan Times*:

> Some who have inherited land according to the old matrilineal way think they should pass it on to their sons according to some new way … Since you have no authority to change customs that are centuries old, that the Government recognises, you may find what you have been thinking is yours, may not be yours at all.[34]

I analyse the relationship between matriliny and land in Chapter 12, Matriliny and Relational Autonomy. For now it is sufficient to note that many of the isimulita 3rd and beyond have found it challenging to re-establish rights to resources that their isimulita 2nd parents did not adequately explain to them. I propose that this is in part due to Abel's attempts to establish the nuclear family ideal in which descent is also reckoned through the male. Within the mission space the ideological emphasis was on the male as the head of the household. All my interlocutors knew their kin outside the mission. Where they experience problems today is that they grew up knowing their father's kin but not those of their mother. School holidays would see them at their father's eanua, not their mother's country. This would have a profound impact on their access to land.

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[33] Taped interview with Ataia Andrew, Alotau, 7 December 2015.

[34] Penueli Anakapu, 1954, 'In native custom women owns the land. Who owns it?', *Papuan Times*, 4 April, 1.

Whiteness gender norms show up as well in how the isimulita 3rd speak of their Kwato ancestors—the male ancestors and genealogy are often given more prominence than that of female ancestors. I frequently had to ask for names and specific relationships to Kwato for the women who did not occupy tanuwaga status whereas information about homologous males was readily offered to me. And herein lies one of the contradictions of a matrilineal missionised identity in which an official church and national identity is linked to one's father's name yet the status of legitimacy in a particular eanua is predicated on one's mother.

Apropos Belshaw's observation about intra-Massim cleavages, my final observations on the Kwato family concern these differences, a distinction that I elaborated in Chaper 9, Isimulita Past. I do this by contrasting the positions of Ilinome Tarua and Morris Alaluku.

Gana'aro and ganamuri

Gana'aro and ganamuri were terms used initially by the isibaguna to designate mission and non-mission influence. But usage expanded by some to be disparaging of those not Kwato-born or those without an isibaguna ancestor. 'Abel isi edi lau heata [the Abels, it was their teaching]' is frequently proposed to be the cause, nonetheless, it was implemented by the isibaguna and ideas of class and hierarchy were readily adopted by some.

Ilinome Tarua was born at Koeabule, a Kwato Mission station near Alotau, on 22 September 1941. He lived on Kwato from 1945 to 1958. His paternal grandfather, Frank Taruakeno, and grandmother Sineleleko were amongst the isibaguna of Kwato. Ilinome studied Law at Sydney University and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and was later Legal and Constitutional Advisor to the Office of the Chief Minister of Papua & New Guinea from 1972 to 1975, Secretary to the Department of the Prime Minister, and held diplomatic roles including Ambassador to the UN and to the UK. He recalls London with fondness because of cricket and being down the road from Lords. Now retired in Sydney, he is writing his memoirs.

> **Ilinome Tarua**: My father was raised in the gana'aro (enclave) of the Kwato Mission. He was educated at Kwato and was one of the first intakes of the Kwato High School before the Second World War … In 1930 [my mother] attended Kwato Primary School … and after that she began training as a mission school teacher. She was a Kwato Mission school teacher all her working life until she retired in 1968.
>
> My overwhelming memory of Kwato is of a sense of family, not necessarily based on kinship … The sense of community was one of the most important values I acquired at Kwato.[35]

For Ilinome, the gana'aro and ganamuri distinction is not a hierarchical one—it is merely a tool to contrast, as one might with two types of trees, without judging one to be better than the other, merely different. Yet, others have experienced acts of exclusion based on this distinction.

Morris Alaluku was born on Kwato Island on 7 July 1947. His father, Alaluku Gowari, had lived and worked there for 16 years from March 1933 and was the Foreman for the construction of the Kwato Church, which was interrupted by the war. During the war, Alaluku, along with Alasina Iapeta, remained on Kwato when all other residents, European and indigenous, were evacuated. He assisted in the war effort by helping transport wounded Allied soldiers from Koeabule to Gamadoudou on the mission boat, *Osiri*. Post-war, he completed the church and was the first to be married there. Alaluku and his wife, Letima, left Kwato in 1949 but Morris returned for schooling from 1952 to 1958 until he won a scholarship to continue his education in Australia, following which he attended UPNG.

> **Morris Alaluku**: My childhood memories of Kwato are happy ones—playing, fishing, swimming. But there is a cleavage between gana'aro and ganamuri. Zen [wife] and I were called ganamuri who knew nothing at a Kwato Association Meeting [in Port Moresby in the 1970s]. We never again participated in those meetings.[36]

Morris was born on Kwato but not born to an isibaguna family. Ilinome was born at Koeabule but to an isibaguna family. In the encounter which Morris

[35] Correspondence from Ilinome Tarua, 29 July 2015.

[36] Taped interview with Morris Alaluku, Alotau, 11 January 2016. Morris' wife, Zen, is a Filipina.

recounts genealogy has been utilised to form class distinctions which had been absent prior to missionisation.

According to Maria Ariansen the gana'aro hierarchy was headed by the Lebasi, Sioni, Tiraka and Bwagagaia families. In Maria's generation she was one of 'the chosen', as were Hetei Dickson (grandson of Iosia Lebasi, Genealogical Chart 5) and Dalai Maniana (granddaughter of Bwagagaia, Genealogical Chart 3). Said Maria:

> We were chosen to benefit from travel and education opportunities and privileges. And this was on basis of proximity of our families to Charles and Beatrice.[37]

Paulina Peter was born in 1956 at Koeabule Hospital, Alotau. Her grandmother Iva, was the first female child to be born on Kwato, circa 1901, to isibaguna parents Iosia and Pauline Lebasi (Geneological Chart 4). Paulina's father is from Vanuatu and was undertaking training at Kwato when he met Nancy, her mother. Paulina grew up on Kwato then left for further education. After a year at the University of Papua New Guinea she opted for a career in insurance.

> **Pauline Peter**: When asked 'where are you from', I say Milne Bay or, more specifically, Laviam. Never Kwato. Kwato doctrine, Kwato Way is an everyday living practice and church practice. I will say that I have a Kwato upbringing but not that I am from Kwato. 'Kwato upbringing' is a way of describing school, education and church influence. Very few people were actually born on Kwato. Some of them, as well some who spent time on Kwato, actively practised exclusion, making the distinction of gana'aro / ganamuri. I remember that bubui Alice (Wedega), though not Kwato born, was exclusionary.[38]

Besides genealogy, tanuwaga status was used to emphasise class distinctions, as in the case of Alice Wedega, who came to Kwato at the request of her aunt, Bessie.[39] The exclusivity of the gana'aro tag is still so palpable that

[37] Skype interviews with Maria Ariansen, 12–14 July 2015.

[38] Taped interview with Pauline Peter, Port Moresby, 20 February 2014.

[39] Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion', *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4): 280.

the Kwato Church has written into its Constitution the barring of its use and the use of related phrases such as ‘Kwato’s Children’.

The politics of language

Through the gana’aro/ganamuri distinction we are introduced to the politics of language that missionaries often utilised to create distinctions between the ‘civilised’ and the natives.[40] In the Suau language the word ‘masigili’, meaning dark/ness has become a generic term for all the practices of balau and alawai, disparaged as magic, sorcery and witchcraft. Indeed, the time before the arrival of missionaries is now referred to as the time of masigili. ‘Guyau’, once chief, has become one of the terms to designate God.

The politics of language also saw the missionaries rename some people with Biblical names in their quest to reshape the Massim person and environment.[41] But we must be careful about assuming this to be a usurping of agential capacity. In the deed of renaming there are at least two actions. On the one hand there is an act of renaming, on the other there is the act of accepting a new name. Massim people had to accept their new name or else the process of renaming failed, and many of them made their own choices of new name. However, retention and use of clan names remains prevalent as a glance at the genealogies I have provided will demonstrate.

Despite these divisions introduced through a politics of language Kwato remains a family in more than one sense. Ataia Andrew, born on Kwato on 2 December 1955, was also raised there, leaving after grade six for further education. He was a boarder in the home of his grandfather’s brother, Maniana, since his mother, a teacher, and his father, a pastor, were off working on Kwato stations.

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[40] See also: Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1991, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 218.

[41] Ibid., 219.

> **Ataia Andrew**: Somebody must have given advice [to the first misisonaries] about who to pick when they went around the villages. Cause we are all relatives. If you look at the pioneers, they are close relatives.[42]

There were multiple versions of the Kwato Family and multiple cleavages across race and class lines. But it was the case that the tanuwaga (landowners) and the isibaguna populated the early mission space with their kin. In this sense, Kwato really was a family.

The ruptures, the reinventions and the continuities

The isibaguna and the isimulita experienced significant ruptures. But they also participated in significant reinventions and also in enabling the continuity of other practices. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the unit of the family. Extended families were ruptured by missionisation, as various members left the village to join the mission. Fledgling nuclear families within the mission were also ruptured when parents put their children into boarding schools in order to be freed to perform work for the mission. But continued practices such as abihelai enabled the reinvention of the extended family within the mission.

We can also deduce that the customary communal living of extended family was also part of the Kwato Way. Customarily across Suau, Ealeba and Tawala regions households would ordinarily comprise a couple and their children, possibly a widowed parent, and often other children they might be caring for. This would be the extent of the extended family in that household although typically, nearby and within the hamlet, would be resident cognates. This is still the case in Bou, Huhuna, Garuahi and Leleiafa, villages and neighbourhoods that I visited during my fieldwork.

The missionised family and the mission households would have to observe the Kwato Way. From earlier discussions we can already ascertain that the Kwato Way had strict codes surrounding sex and miscegenation. This is in contrast to the autonomy that boys and girls, women and men, had over their

[42] Taped interview with Ataia Andrew, Alotau, 7 December 2015.

own bodies in the village. Although my interlocutors speak of The Kwato Way and Kwato Standards as one and the same thing, I make the distinction between an ethical and aesthetic code—the Standards—and a set of practices. For example, the Kwato Way is influenced by English rituals such as morning tea, afternoon tea, and cricket. But these are practices which some engage in more than others, rather than a code which when broken, is viewed as a transgression.

This next section, which speaks to reinvention through the Kwato Standards and the Kwato Way, is constructed solely from the words of my interlocutors. It will become apparent that both the Kwato Way and Kwato Standards are intrinsically enmeshed with an ideal of domesticity, of which cleanliness is a part. Domesticity was, indeed is, highly gendered. I analyse domesticity in the section after the next, which I have titled, riffing off Anne Kaniku's memorable paper, Those Massim women.[43]

Kwato standards and the Kwato way

> **Dirona Lebasi**: Kwato, the initials, KWATO, there's a meaning to these letters. K stands for knowledge. W stands for winning. A stands for attacking, advancing. T stands for truth. O stands for opposing evil.[44]
>
> Kwato had an influence or cleanliness … in a village around the Bay area and the islands around the Samarai area one can tell if someone has been trained at Kwato by the cleanliness of their homes.[45]
>
> **Legu Lee**: And you were domesticated. You know, at a young age, how to live in a clean house … It was all about standards, all about living standards. In the midst of it was Christianity … [46]

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[43] Anne Kaniku, 1989, 'Those Massim women', in Sione Lātūkefu (ed.), *Papua New Guinea: A Century of Colonial Impact, 1884–1984*, Port Moresby: National Research Institute and University of Papua New Guinea in association with the PNG Centennial Committee.

See also Anne Kaniku, 1981, 'Milne Bay women', in Donald Denoon and Ronald Lacey (eds). *Oral Tradition in Melanesia*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies.

[44] Taped interview with Dirona Lebasi, Koea Bule, 23 March 2016.

[45] Email from Morris Alaluku, 10 March 2016.

Ataia Andrew: Yes, [I could recognise a Kwato person even if I didn't know they were from Kwato]. Mostly it's their upbringing. They have respect … A Kwato person's house is tidy, clean, no dirty plates and cups in the sink. Respect, cleanliness, love for family, Kwato was a big family. It was only later that we realised we were actually family [consanguineal].[47]

Nua Teloti: Kwato people behave differently to other regions and other religions. They are slow to react. They stop and think before acting. Humility is part of Kwato people. It is being loving, sharing … always a sense of community and caring. Everybody is equal, men and women.[48]

Maori Tabua: No lipstick, no earrings, beauty from the inside.[49]

Magololo Doilegu: Kwato standards have been spoiled. Pastors chew [betel nut].[50]

Nua Teloti: Discipline was tough, but it has helped me in my life, to accept both good and bad. And I see this with other Kwato people. Also religious community. Kwato is like a family … Oleva Lebasi was a strict disciplinarian. Oleva would check that our hair was short, combed and parted. Appearance was very important … our hands and fingernails had to be clean. No jewellery. Don't make style. Be humble. Kwato people, their ways, their music, [their] singing is admired. In the Kwato sound females only sing alto and soprano and males only sing tenor and bass. Other churches mix up parts.[51]

Alimita Baroa: People don't shout, they speak calmly and kindly to each other.[52]

Magololo Doilegu: Pastors don't shout like they do today.[53]

Nancy Wamaram: Kwato people speak good English. Dress is simple … we were taught how to match colours.[54]

Legu Lee: I guess it was … the place where you were given the foundation … The Abels brought you out of … I shouldn't say ganamuri [laughter] … village life. They started a

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[46] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[47] Taped interview with Ataia Andrew, Alotau, 7 December 2015.

[48] Taped interview with Nua Teloti, Port Moresby, 11 February 2014.

[49] Maori Tabua, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[50] Magololo Doilegu, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[51] Taped interview with Nua Teloti, Port Moresby, 11 February 2014.

[52] Alimita Baroa, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[53] Magololo Doilegu, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[54] Nancy Wamaram, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

foundation … you have to live like this … you have to be clean, you have to [have] hygiene and education. You have to speak English. Aunty Dai used to teach 'The cat sat on the mat'. And you know how [Papua New Guinean's] say 'Da cat sat on da mat'. She would say 'It is not da. It is the'.[55]

Magololo Doilegu: Anyone could lead a service. Merari and Osineru … Their messages were short and sharp. Not like pastors today who have a lot of words but say nothing.[56]

Legu Lee: It's very English. Morning tea at 10, afternoon tea, the rituals … Even my ex-husband in the 1970s, after meeting my parents at Saugere [near Alotau] where they had morning tea and afternoon tea, asked 'are you people English?' He was Australian.[57]

Legu Lee: Kwato set standards. And the people they bring in from outside to teach, to train [were also of a high standard] … Doris Purcell taught singing and violin. Dr Vaughn came from Harley Street [in London]. The hospital had the best equipment. Kwato was unique.[58]

Anne Dickson-Waiko: The hospital was clean and had polished floors.[59]

Legu Lee: Kwato had a huge impact on us but also on the European community … I remember Meg Taylor, when she was at university,[60] she was very close to Pauline [Bona, Wiko's eldest sister] … because she'd heard her father say that these people are different to others in Papua New Guinea.[61]

Anne Dickson-Waiko: With your mother [my mother, Dineheilo], you can see it straight away with all of you [that you have Kwato DNA].[62]

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[55] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[56] Magololo Doilegu, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[57] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Anne Dickson-Waiko, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[60] Dame Meg Taylor is the first female Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum. She is also the daughter of Jim Taylor, one of three Australians who led the first government patrol into the highlands of PNG in 1938.

[61] Legu Lee, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[62] Anne Dickson-Waiko, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015. Anne was concurring with Legu who had made a comment about 'Kwato DNA'.

Those Massim women

I first mentioned Anne Kaniku's 'Those Massim women' in my Prologue. Kaniku argued that women from the Milne Bay Province had 'scored a number of firsts'[63] in the formation and independence of the State of Papua New Guinea and that his could be attributed to the high status of women in relatively egalitarian Massim societies,[64] combined with early contact with Europeans. This resulted in Massim women achieving the following: first woman Local Government Councillor in 1949; the first woman to enter the Legislative Council in 1961; the first woman to be admitted to an Australian university in 1963; the first woman to be elected to Parliament in 1972; and, in 1989, three of the eight Papua New Guinean women with masters degrees (1989).[65] This section engages with Massim women via an analysis of the Kwato Way.

In the transcripts above, as well as from the potted biographies I have provided throughout, a number of themes emerge as central to the Kwato Way. These are: the idea of family; education, work, and discipline; attitudes towards sex; and domesticity and cleanliness. Missionary attitudes towards these domains were often highly gendered.[66]

Attitudes towards sex and marriage

Although policed by the isibaguna and later the isimulita, ideas of sex only for procreation rather than pleasure, the linking of honour to sexual conduct and the legitimisation of a body according to the marital status of the mother, were all introduced by missionaries. Divorce, of course was anathema to the ideal of

[63] Kaniku, 'Those massim women', 369

[64] Kaniku, 'Milne Bay women'.

[65] From personal communications I know these women to be Mrs Elenise Sadisi in 1949, Ms Alice Wedega in 1961, Miss Dineheilo Dickson in 1963, and Ms Josephine Abaijah in 1972. Masters recipients were Mrs Anne Kaniku, Ms Eleina Butuna from Bonarua, and Mrs Rona Nadile from Sariba.

[66] See also Dickson-Waiko, 2007, 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea'; Margaret Jolly, 1991, 'To save the girls for brighter and better lives', *The Journal of Pacific History* 26(1).

the nuclear family, but this did not stop some missionised women from taking that option, particularly when spouses were violent.[67]

One of the ways in which David Wetherell amplifies Abel's agency is to attribute to the man the life-long unmarried status of certain Kwato women, amongst them Alice Wedega, Elsie Joseph and Dalai Kitalapu, who are said to have remained unmarried because Abel rejected their suitors.[68] It robs these highly accomplished women of any agency in the matter of marriage. It is also to overstate Abel's authority even though he did make such decisions. He was able to do so because of the context in which he found himself—it was not unusual for the elders to comment on such choices, as Wetherell himself notes.[69] And a woman remaining unmarried was also not unusual. The tattooed Semi remained unmarried because she was designated hasala of her clan. We saw also in Chapter 7, Tanuwaga that women did the propositioning and the proposing, and even on Kwato, despite mission laws, women and men who were unmarried engaged in sexual relations.

Alice Wedega went on to become Dame Alice Wedega. She travelled extensively, first to Australia as a servant in the 1920s then to present at the Pan Pacific Women's Conference in New Zealand at the invitation of UNESCO in 1952 and also to the Moral Re-Armament conferences in Ceylon and India.[70] In 1971 she went to Switzerland then Northern Ireland where she found herself talking about peace, then on to Scandinavia. In between she found time to be a Legislative Councillor and to found a training centre for women at Lilihi, Ahioma where she negotiated with landowners and villagers for land and labour and was one of three women who managed the centre.

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[67] Russell Abel, 1938, 'Marriage and the "new way": Answer to domestic discord', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, January, 15.

[68] David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 8.

[69] Ibid., 7–8.

[70] Alice Wedega, 1981, *Listen, My Country*, Sydney: Pacific Publications. Also Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 12.

Wetherell's phrasing—'In consequence, a number of outstanding women at Kwato remained single'[71]—behoves an unpleasant outcome and that unpleasant outcome is to have no husband. But the state of being unmarried does not carry the same stigma as in whiteness since a Massim woman's identity is not derived from being a wife.[72] Commenting on the many unmarried Kwato women, isimulita Nedi Tariowai said:

> Yes, quite a lot of women didn't get married. We will have to ask them why they chose to remain single. *It was their decision*. When they were still young they didn't look at men. They never found men they wanted to marry. They made up their minds not to marry at all [my emphasis].[73]

Although I have been unable to verify whether those hasala—such as Semi—designated by their clan to remain unmarried were able to have sexual relationships, according to Kwato gossip, Dalai, Alice and Elsie, the three women named above, exercised sexual autonomy. It is well known that Alice Wedega was one of Cecil Abel's paramours before his marriage to Semi.

Cleanliness

Cleanliness is the most dominant theme in the recollections above. Spaces were ordered, bodies made neat, and cleanliness imposed by Massim women teachers and matrons whose isibaguna ancestors had learnt these lessons from

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[71] Wetherell, 'An elite for a nation?' 8.

[72] African theorists have challenged western feminism on this point arguing that different cultures conceive differently the categories of woman and man such that woman's identity is not dependent solely on being a wife. See Oyèrónḳé Oyěwùmí, 1997, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2012, 'Conceptualizing gender: The Eurocentric foundations of feminist concepts and the challenge of African epistemologies', *African Gender in the New Millennium 7–10 April 2002*, Cairo, Egypt: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Nkiru Nzegwu, 2005, 'Feminism and Africa: Impact and limits of the metaphysics of gender', in Kwasi Wiredu (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishing; 2006, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

A first-person account of gender fluidity and woman as husband to many wives can be found in Eucharia Madueke, 2014, 'Equality or complementarity: Gender relations seen through African eyes', *Global Sisters Report*.

[73] Cited in Kaniku, 'Milne Bay women', 194.

Beatrice Abel.[74] Ideas about hygiene as well as European biomedical knowledge were also disseminated including birthing and neonatal practices.[75] Indeed, Abel was given to celebrating the relatively large families of the mission born (six to eight children), contrasting them to the village where families were often half that size.[76] In fact, 'In the heathen villages the Medical Officer notes the average family consists of one child'.[77] An average of only one child outside the mission can be attributed to Massim practices of fertility management including contraception and abstinence.[78]

Undoubtedly Kwato's hospitals, the first located near Tupi, the second at Isuhina, would influence the rates of mortality—infant, maternal, and other—and would contribute to the desire for foreign technologies and knowledge. But the doubling of number of births per woman in the mission is likely linked to other factors, the most prominent being a space where access to traditional

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[74] On how white women were colonial actors see: Margaret Jolly, 1993, 'Colonizing women: The maternal body and empire', in Sneja Marina Gunew and Anna Yeatman (eds), *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin; Diane Langmore, 1989, 'The object lesson of a civilised, Christian home', in Margaret Jolly and Martha Macintyre (eds), *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, Cambridge and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.

[75] The following texts analyse the same but in different cultural contexts: Margaret Jolly, 1998, 'Introduction', in Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific,* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; 1998, 'Other mothers: Maternal "insouciance" and the depopulation debate in Fiji and Vanuatu, 1890–1930', in Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; Kalpana Ram, 1998, 'Maternity and the story of enlightenment in the colonies: Tamil coastal women, south India', in Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; 1998, 'Epilogue: Maternal experience and feminist body politics: Asian and Pacific perspectives', in Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Maternities and Modernities: Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

[76] Charles W. Abel and Delavan Pierson, 1923, 'Papuan need and how it may be met', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 6.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Some of these are documented in: Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press, 95–96; Shelley Mallett, 2003, *Conceiving Cultures: Reproducing People & Places on Nuakata, Papua New Guinea*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 185–88.

contraceptives was limited. When matrilineal women can control their fertility they tend to have fewer children.[79]

The whiteness ideals of family, domesticity, cleanliness and hygiene were highly gendered. And what was ideology in the time of the isibaguna, had become hegemony by the time of the isimulita 3rd. Hegemonies and ideologies are not fixed. Time and space displace and rearrange worldviews and parts of those worldviews often pass from mere ideology into a dominance that becomes naturalised, or hegemonic.[80] An ideology of domesticity in the time of the isibaguna had become a hegemony by the time of the isimulita 3rd—the socialisation had become so embedded over the course of three generations that the Kwato domestic goddess became the norm.

Domestic goddesses

> **Anne Dickson-Waiko**: My son always tells me when Kwato people are coming 'these are Kwato people, you have to clean the house. You have to keep the Kwato standards mum'.[81]
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> When we struggled into Duabo [a Kwato outstation in the Buhutu Valley] I was amazed to see stained and polished floors and freshly cut Hibiscus [*sic*] in water in several vases. No expats lived there, but it was looked after by Kwato trained people hence the 'English style' welcome.[82]
>
> The concentration of evangelical effort on houses and bodies was not happenstance: the family home, centered on the conjugal chamber, was the Mansion of the Lord, the domestic sanctuary in which the righteous Christian was to dwell if s/he was to be redeemed; the body was the plane on which the commodity met the self, where

[79] Shih demonstrates that the matrilineal Moso women control their fertility when there is no pressure on them to reproduce. Pressure to reproduce is minimised when other women in the multigenerational and matrilineal Moso household birth daughters to continue the household lineage. Chuan-Kang Shih and Mark R. Jenike, 2002, 'A cultural–historical perspective on the depressed fertility among the Matrilineal Moso in Southwest China', *Human Ecology* 30(1).

[80] The relationship between ideology and hegemony is neatly articulated by Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (who acknowledge a debt to Gramsci) in Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1*, 25.

[81] Anne Dickson-Waiko, recorded interviews of focus group, Port Moresby, 22 November 2015.

[82] J. Andrew, 2012, *Reflections of an Extraordinary Life*, Self-published using the Blurb creative publishing service, 71.

> external civilities intersected with interior proprieties and where inward virtue was outfitted for the world to see. The endeavor to transform both brought the European fashion system to Africa, where its designs were recommissioned, restyled, and drawn into the processes by which local populations made and marked emerging social distinctions. Indeed, if there was anywhere that the Europeans lost control over the encounter with Africa quickly and visibly, and were themselves tangibly affected by it, it was here.[83]

At White House, Magololo Doilegu's residence at Koea Bule (KB) near Alotau, she starts the day with a Bible reading and a prayer and every meal is preceded by grace. All in the house are expected to participate. The table has a lace cloth and fresh flowers—from her colourful garden laid out in neat beds—form a centrepiece. Her home is spotless.

At every Kwato home in Alotau that I visited as part of this project I noticed the same things that had been part of my mother and grandmother's homes. At Aba Mark's home, also in KB, a gravel path lined with roses of all colours meanders from the road to her front door. In the back garden there is a wood-fired oven fashioned from a 44-gallon drum and concrete blocks in which she bakes Kwato buns and bread. At Alimita Baroa's house in another part of KB, a green lawn is edged with hibiscus. Many of the homes in Alotau possess beautiful gardens, not just the homes of Kwato people. But it would be safe to say that all Kwato homes with women resident are graced with gardens. In fact, it would be fair to say that growing flowers is a highly gendered activity in the Kwato community. Vegetables and some food crops are also grown, although this appears to be less gendered. However, on Kwato Island itself the beautiful flower gardens around the residences seem to be maintained by both men and women, as is the case at Tupi, and at Hawaiian Point.

Kwato buns and bread are part of a Kwato home. Aromas of freshly baked bread mingle with sun-dried washing. Although baking buns and bread is

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[83] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, 1997, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 60.

today highly gendered, it was not always the case. My male interlocutors recall having to learn how to cook and bake as part of their education. This may have been due to financial reasons. As part of their income-generating activities the boys would take turns to travel to Samarai on the weekend to sell their baked goods.

Hair had to be cut as the first outward sign of conversion.[84] And, it goes without saying, cleanliness of home and of body is of paramount importance and a clean body wears clean clothes.[85] The Kwato dress code was part of the process of socialising bodies into the new habits of embodied morality.[86] Breasts, to which no sexuality had been attached since they were a functional appendage for mothering, had to be covered.[87] Fibre skirts and loin cloths had to be discarded since they were symbols of an 'uncivilised' sociality. Bodies had to be made shapeless and invisible lest illicit passions arise.[88] Kwato women, unlike other Papua New Guinean women, do not wear Mother Hubbards, that particular item of clothing favoured by missionaries to cover up women from neck to toe, and which has now been adopted as a form of national dress in PNG. Instead, Kwato women were given lessons in etiquette and aesthetics, and taught to combine colours and fabrics (Figure 43). Pinafores were the dress of choice in the mission but styles did vary although the emphasis was always on simplicity.

Men wore long shorts to work and Sunday best was a pair of trousers or a kaleko (from the English calico), a long piece of cloth wrapped around the waist and worn like a sarong. A kaleko was generally white. Shirts, worn with a

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[84] Russell Abel, 1932, 'Sunday morning at Maiwara', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, January, 11; 'Some Papuan Characteristics', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, 1932, April, 11.

[85] See also 'The influence of Kwato', 1926, *New Guinea Tidings*, June, 12.

[86] Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2*, 218–73.

[87] See also Margaret Jolly, 2014, 'A saturated history of Christianity and cloth in Oceania', in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press, 445.

[88] There are scholarly debates over the extent to which European dress was an imposition or a creative appropriation. See ibid., 429–54.

kaleko, were short-sleeved and also white (Figure 42). At funerals the dress code for men and women continues to be a black bottom and a white top. When travelling to Port Moresby or outside of the Territory, men might wear a suit, as did Penueli Anakapu (Figure 10).



Figure 42. Maniana Bwagagaia, Daniel Sioni, Nori Maniana, possibly Andrew Bwagagaia, outside Kwato Church, circa 1964.
Source. Merari and Vera Dickson family album.

Much is made of aesthetic mimicry.[89] Wetherell writes how men such as Merari mimicked Charles Abel down to the short, cropped moustache that he wore.[90] No comment is made about Abel's son Cecil wearing a similar moustache à la his father. Mimicry is a pejorative. It implies the absence of creativity on the part of the one doing the mimicking and in the literature it often presents the mimickers as caricatures of the real thing, that which is being mimicked.[91] It raises a number of questions. In the context of Kwato, who is being mimicked and why, and who is doing the mimicking and why? Merari, it is

[89] Some discussion can be found in: Clay, *Unstable Images*, 12–13; Homi Bhabha, 1997, 'Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse', in Frederick Cooper and Anne Laura Stoler (eds), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

[90] David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 163.

[91] See Bhabha's critique of the colonial discourse of mimcry in Bhabha, 'Of mimicry and man', 152–60.

imputed, mimicked Charles. On the same judgement, Cecil also mimicked Charles. Is it a matter of lesser interest that Cecil mimicked Charles? And is it a matter of lesser interest because Charles was Cecil's father, and/or because it is not within the realm of the logic of whiteness that a white man would mimic another white man? But, should a brown man adopt some habits of a white man it immediately becomes a matter of judgement. Writing of Papua in the early part of the twentieth century Amirah Inglis had a keen eye for the contradictions that one might also call hypocrisies. On the topic of native mimicry of European dress she observed:

> It was clearly civilized to cover the body since Europeans did it so Papuan adults were forced to wear a loin cloth in towns where they came in contact with Europeans. But when Papuans emulated Europeans to the extent of wearing clothes all over, then wearing of clothes for Papuans was not proper. So in 1922 Papuans were forbidden to wear too many … [and told] that wearing clothes was one of the white man's ways they should not try to emulate.[92]

But did the women and men of Kwato aspire to be little brown dimdim given the apparent mimicry of Charles and Beatrice Abel?

From my corporate background in global organisations come the concepts and practice of role-modelling and mentoring, both of which are encouraged. Indeed, in business schools would-be entrepreneurs are actively encouraged to learn from and imitate the likes of Steve Jobs, Warren Buffet and Richard Branson. (Yes, in my time business school was still gendered.) Role-modelling was even applicable in training for club level tennis matches where our coach would encourage us to watch the top seeds and to mimic the way they inhabited their bodies on the tennis court so that we might reproduce some of their champion attributes.

[92] Amirah Inglis, 1974, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920–1934*, Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 6.



Figure 43. Magololo Doilegu returning from the Kwato Church
Source. Photographed by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence, Koea Bule, December 2015.
Used with permission of subject

I propose that the Kwato Massim were engaged in role-modelling as part of their multi-pronged strategy to access dimdim knowledge and technology. They did not aspire to be little brown dimdim for if that were the desire then there would be no continuity of Massim practices. This is clearly not the case. Photographs of the first and second generation of Kwato show that in European spaces the Kwato dressed like Europeans, in their villages and other non-European spaces, or at church, even those who have been accused of mimicry of Abel adopted a Pacific Island dress code, the men in kaleko and the women in pinafores or similar. We can again conclude that Kwato people did not aspire to be white even when they wanted the privileges of whiteness. They never gave up the essence of that which anchored them within their own culture—they merely layered on other things when it suited them, and discarded them when no longer suitable. Neuropsychologists recognise this today as being tuned-in to

specific contexts, a behaviour that enables one to adjust to the different rules and expectations of different contexts.[93]

Whether mimicry or not, the changed aesthetics, contributed to different demands on Massim women's time. Infelicitously, becoming a domestic goddess in the manner demanded by whiteness served to increase Massim women's workloads. Although none of my interlocutors made any reference to this, there are records of women in the villages influenced by missionisation who made clear their frustrations. In Belshaw's 1954 economic survey he found at Wagawaga (Ealeba) that proximity to the mission station which had been managed by isibaguna or isimulita since inception, had influenced the amount of work that Wagawaga women had to undertake. The Massim teachers and nurses—such as Dalai—were Kwato-trained, lived a semi-Europeanised life, and offered, in Belshaw's opinion, a high standard of service.[94] They were also a model for the villagers to imitate and aspire to. Village women, in addition to continuing their role as the major providers of agricultural produce, now had to undertake:

> Modern cooking (including cakes and complicated foods for general feasts), making handicrafts for commerce, and carrying heavy loads of coconuts and copra from plantations and smoke sheds to the jetty. Necessity for cleanliness and tidiness increases with education and the complexity of modern personal bric-a-brac. The women must now sweep and scrub floors, wash modern utensils, and wash and iron clothes sometimes even including babies' diapers … The women feel that domestic chores, added to agriculture and the heavy plantation work, result in a pressure that is almost beyond capacity. No wonder a typically modern complaint is becoming common and beginning to worry village leaders: 'Why should we bear children? We

[93] For example, see Richard J. Davidson and Sharon Begley, 2012, *The Emotional Life of your Brain: How its Unique Patterns Affect the Way You Think, Feel, and Live–and How You Can Change Them*, New York: Hudson Street Press.

[94] Belshaw, *In Search of Wealth*, 9.

> have all the work to do and are tired.' And when the children die, the women's reward is to be accused of sorcery.[95]

In Belshaw's study, Wagawaga people readily acknowledged missionisation as the cause of the increase in women's work yet they also acknowledged their agency in rejecting the old ways in order to embrace the new. But 'the people have not compensated themselves by succeeding to European habits or power… [and] speak slightly contemptuously or sadly of those who initiated the break, tending to blame them for the present failure to achieve European standards overnight'.[96] Here, we are again confronted with the contradiction between the sacred and secular lifestyles that was part of the promise of missionisation.

Belshaw's observations at Wagawaga (Ealeba) were not mirrored at Ware where his study showed that missionisation was less intrusive than in Kwato Mission spaces. It does, however, support my thesis that Massim people were highly agential in allowing missionisation and in adopting Christianity and some of the habits of whiteness.[97] Furthermore, these Massim were becoming cognisant that the power and material privileges of whiteness to which they aspired were not so readily accessible.

Like other Massim, the Wagawaga people had made conscious decisions to accept Christianisation and missionisation. But they were unaware that both processes are enmeshed in a global political economy. They were also unaware that the logic of white supremacy would never permit them to attain equal levels of power and material privilege.

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[95] Belshaw, *In Search of Wealth*, 7. See also Jemima Mowbray, 2014, '"Ol meri bilong wok": Women, work and domesticity in Papua New Guinea', in Hyaeweol Choi and Margaret Jolly (eds), *Divine Domesticities: Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific*, Canberra: ANU Press.

[96] Belshaw, *In Search of Wealth*, 8.

[97] This agency in adopting missionisation is also explored in Demian, 'Canoe, mission boat, freighter', 89–109.

Teachers, matrons, nurses, and station managers

> Aimania, the native girl-teacher, has done marvelously with the school. Without assistance, she has had to educate small boys, some of whom know little and some knowing nothing. Yet she has taught them so that they speak English, some brokenly with a mixture of native words. Their singing is quite remarkable, with all the parts in perfect tune and time.[98]

Those Massim women were also teachers, nurses and station managers and we've already met many of them in the preceding pages. Such was the demand to be educated in a Kwato mission school that there was a ready channel of work as a teacher. Literacy had become highly valued since it provided access to the dimdim world.[99] And since western biomedicine also produced its own demand so too was there a demand for nurses to be trained to work in Kwato's hospital.

Not all of those Kwato women worked for the mission. I have already mentioned that people moved in and out of the mission fold according to their temperament and needs. Andrew, son of Bwagagaia had married Eabomai, daughter of Pauline's sister (see Genealogical Chart 4, Sipiniei 2). Andrew and Eabomai were both educated on Kwato but following custom, after their marriage they settled at Eabomai's eanua where they put their education into practice, establishing their own educational centre outside of the Kwato mission sphere:

> [W]e landed up at the river-mouth where Andrew and Eabomai, old Kwato students, have a little school and center on a little neck of land that divides the sea from the river. Eabomai had refreshments ready for us in her little house, which was spotless with fresh mats on the floor. We sat round on the floor and yarned, while she served tea, delicious baked *godibu* (a kind of native asparagus) and pawpaws. We enjoyed the fellowship with them.

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[98] Phyllis Abel, 1926, 'Our Tour of the Kwato District', *New Guinea Tidings*, January, 10.

[99] The Comaroffs note the same in Southern Africa— 'sought after, even by people "with no intention of converting"'. See Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 1*, 233.

> Eabomai is a real patriot who has done a lot for her country. She has been responsible for teaching scores of adults to read. Everywhere she has lived she has made it her duty to see that people could read their Suau Gospels. Papuan adults with their ossified brains are no joke to teach. But Eabomai has dogged perseverance, a quality Papuans are supposed to lack. There are many who have New Testaments today, and owe this great privilege to her patience. Added to this, she has run a little boarding school for quite ten years now. Some of her old pupils have married and built their homes at Davadava, where quite a flourishing little village has developed in the past few years …
>
> … On top of all this Eabomai has given eleven children to her country.[100]

Of Eabomai's 11 children, one, Semi, would marry Cecil Abel. Eleven offspring is an unusually large number for a Massim woman to bear. It is possible that the particular circumstances of Eabomai's mother, Bosilema, had a part to play in this.

Bosilema was accused of being a malevolent alawai by her Modewa clanspeople in Bou. She was driven out of the village and first settled with her mother's sister in Divinai before deciding to paddle 15 kilometres across Milne Bay in search of a husband. This was prior to missionisation and in the era of cannibalism. I find it remarkable that the young Bosilema had the physical strength to cross the bay on her own and the mental fortitude to enter into potential enemy territory. Then again, she was doing what her great-grandmother Sipiniei had also done (see Genealogical Chart 4, Sipiniei). At any rate, she found a husband. But she would have been the sole Modewa clan member in those parts. There was, thus, an imperative for her and her female offspring to grow the Modewa population along the Dawadawa River.

Ena Tamby is another exemplar of those Massim women. Born on Kwato in 1930 where she was also educated, she became Ena Pita on her marriage to Bondai Pita, also Kwato raised. (Bondai was instrumental in setting up local level government in Milne Bay.) Ena's parents, Makura and Lily, were isibaguna who also grew up and were trained on Kwato. Lily's family was from Laviam whilst

[100] Russell Abel, 1939, 'Leaves from my diary', *Kwato Mission Tidings*, October, 11.

Makura's mother was from Lamhaga and his father from Nigila, another example of cross-eanua intermarriage before the arrival of missionaries.

Alotau informants referred to Ena, Matilda Pilcapio and Josephine Abaijah as the 'gang of 3', so-called because of their shared focus on women's rights.[101] Ena established an association of Women's Clubs in Milne Bay and then the Milne Bay Women's Association in the 1970s. She also helped draw up the Milne Bay Provincial Government Constitution. Ena was a Councillor for 12 years from the late 1960s, one of four women councillors in Milne Bay at the time. She was also President of the Women's Association whilst raising four children. In 1982 she was elected National President of the Council of Women, a role she held until 2000. Like Legu, Anne, and others she was looked after by a Kwato tanuwaga.

> **Ena Pita**: I was at boarding school. My parents were so busy working at Kwato. My mother was responsible for the girls on Kwato … and my father [was] a carpenter and, you know, they were so busy I was in the boarding school.[102]

The isimulita women were undoubtedly busy, so much so that the contrast between isimulita women's roles within the Church of the past and the institution of today is a grievance for some.

> **Ena Pita**: Women were very active [in the Church]. Not like now when only men are [church] councillors … [The men] sit around and chew all day. Not like women before.[103]

Magololo's observation speaks both to temporal and spatial conditions. The former because she includes the isimulita 2nd and the isibaguna in her assessment and the latter because the current institution, the Kwato Church of

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[101] Dame Josephine Abaijah was born near Tufi and grew up in Milne Bay although she was not associated with the Kwato Mission. She led the political party, Papua Besena, at the time of independence and her book is partly autobiographical. See Josephine Abaijah and Eric Wright, 1991, *A Thousand Coloured Dreams*, Mount Waverley: Dellasta Pacific.

Matilda Pilcapio, also from Milne Bay, is a well-known activist for women's equality.

[102] Ena Pita, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

[103] Ibid.

PNG (KCPNG), has few women in its structure of 52 congregations over four wards—KB (Koea Bule) Centre, Kwato Centre, Duabo Centre and Abau Centre. This was confirmed by Jeffrey Mimigina, the Pastor and Ministry Board Chairman for Kwato Church, who informed me in a discussion:

> **Jeffrey Mimigina**: We see that the men are taking the pastoral work. Women we have not allowed yet, only them taking the deaconess. That is, they work under a pastor. But at the moment now we don't allow women to be pastors.
>
> When we allow women to take leadership, they also try to take over the role of the men … We don't want to see that.
>
> **SEL**: So you don't want them to have too much power?
>
> **Jeffrey Mimigina**: That's right.
>
> **SEL**: What would happen if they had too much power?
>
> **Jeffrey Mimigina**: Well, they take over. And try to lead the men. And you find in the [Kwato] Church that women are very active and men are not. And sometimes they can overrule the men.
>
> When it comes to the work in the Church we share the work. But it's the leadership … Men only can be able to hold this. Especially the pastoral work.[104]

Jeffrey's comments about women and leadership in the Kwato Church were refuted by Diambo Ietero, former General Secretary of the Kwato Church, who continues to be involved in the day-to-day management of the organisation. It is the intention of the Kwato Church to become more inclusive of women Diambo told me, blaming a lack of knowledge of the history of KCPNG and the role that women played in its formation.

Acknowledgement of women's power is implicit in Jeffrey's words—even without my prompting—as is an ambivalence towards that power. In the following excerpt of our conversation I had the sense that Jeffrey was struggling to avoid a particular characterisation of those Massim women that contradicted, perhaps, with his Christianity. The ellipses below are not omissions. They are pauses, silences and unfinished thoughts.

[104] Taped interview with Jeffrey Mimigina, Koea Bule, 30 November 2015.

> **Jeffrey Mimigina**: We are a culture that women … when there's this group that they can be together and try to … I'm talking about like … it's just when we give them the position to lead … as a pastor we are careful that we don't allow that to happen.[105]

He did not name it but I had a palpable sense that this conversation was as much about alawai as anything else. You will recall that in southern Massim society powerful women and men had designations such as alawai or taubalau which have been (mis)translated as witch and sorcerer respectively but who were more akin to priestesses and priests. Even in the present, alawai are recognised to be powerful and their potential malevolence is feared. Alawai were known on Kwato. In fact, the most powerful of them were said to come from Kwato.

Final thoughts

At the start of this chapter I pointed out that the isibaguna were on the cusp of a new world but still strongly anchored in matrilineal sociality and that the isimulita 2nd were also still strongly guided by key Massim matrilineal values such as relational autonomy and the importance of kinship. I also asked if we could we say the same of the isimulita 3rd?

Vis-à-vis Kaniku's 'Those Massim women', it is clear that those whom I have presented in this thesis can be viewed as high-achievers. Certainly, the Kwato Way, born of missionisation and matriliny, has had an impact on how Kwato Massim women have engaged with the wider world—early contact and familiarity with whites has eased communication between them. But the strength of character to conceptualise and implement one's own life projects—Eabomai's centre and school at Dawadawa, nurse Mayogaru's heroism, Dinah's Under The Mango Tree school at Logea, Ena's activism for women's rights—are a continuation of a history steeped in relational autonomy in which ancestors like Sipiniei, Bosilema, Pauline and Semi exhibited a pioneering spirit of wonder and adventure that was independent of the mission ideology. It was, in fact, an

[105] Ibid.

outcome of Massim matriliny and thus an integral part of the 'Kwato way'. Theorising Massim matriliny and the relationship to wonder, plurality, and relational autonomy is the objective of the final substantive section of this thesis. Before I turn to that, and since the ancestors figure so deeply in Kwato personhood, I leave the last words to them.

The ancestors

> Our families are buried there, thrown there, without any recognition [of the contribution they made to Kwato].[106]

In the early morning of 8 December 2016 Harry Merari Dickson passed away at Alotau General Hospital. Harry was the younger of my mother's brothers. He had been a guide and a teacher through my periods of fieldwork in Milne Bay. For a while I shared his home at Mahimahi near Alotau. He would rise early to light the fire and put the kettle on, refusing to use the gas cylinder I had purchased preferring, he said, to save it for a rainy day. And, he would add, food tastes much better cooked on a wood fire. I had to agree—even water tastes different when boiled over fragrant wood. Besides helping me with complexities in the Suau and Tawala languages and the nuances between Suau and Tawala philosophy he shared his love of music. He was fond of saying 'Ta kode gogo', let's all be happy, and he lived this mantra. To him go the penultimate words about Kwato and the Kwato Way.

> Kwato meta ana au doha Milne Bay dodogadi maudoidi edi home. Se gamagali alilili nei se lailai... Suau, Kwato dubu se he tolo meta paana Suau dodogadi. Taba nige Suau, taba nige Kwato. Meta ita tubudaeau, ehadaeau. Edi maori se gabai Kwato bonabonarua se he tolo. Alinai doha huiadi ai abi doha ai nuasaisai paana ai tubumaieau edi maori se gabai. Se sacrifice. Edi sacrifice paana abo dubu. Se paisoa adidili, nige moni, paisoa alinaidi se modei. I lau bubu taubada alidi eai, nanatudi eai, i lauma ai hinage, ai paisoa. Ai paisoa meta ai abi matemate. Wau ta nige lolo saha esau ai lobai. Tautaubada maudoidi se lau'o. Ai hinage ese'esega mai ai miamia.

[106] Ena Pita, recorded interviews of focus group, Koea Bule, 29 November 2015.

> Eau egu nuanuatu alinai eai meta bubus, tautaubada bagubagunadi—we say Diki and Daueonei, Iosia and Pauline- ok nanatudieau, se sacrifice. Isi hinage se sacrifice. ... Wauta omi paisoa lolodi au abidi. You are blessed. Paana tubumuieau edi mauri se gabai dubu debana eai. Eaubada ena paisoa debana eai. Se sacrifice.
>
> Kwato is there. It's blessed already. Na ita mo, edohana abo … dodoga dudulaidi bena ta lage neai'ai na eda eanu ta lausini uioi. The blessing is already there.[107]

Colloquial translation by Salmah Eva-Lina Lawrence

> [Kwato seems to be the home of all Milne Bay peoples. There were so many who grew up there. And Suau. The Kwato Church exists because of Suau people. If not for the Suau, there would be no Kwato. They were our grandparents, our relatives. They threw their lives away establishing Kwato. So you know, we are proud since it was our ancestors who sacrificed their lives. They worked hard. There was no money, they were concerned only with doing a good job. And this has been the way from the ancestors to us today. We worked so hard. And for what good. To this day we have received nothing. All the elders are gone. And we too are going.
>
> My feeling is that the ancestors made a sacrifice. And so today you are blessed, your generation have found good jobs. You are blessed. Because your ancestors gave their lives away in the service of the Church. In the work of God. They made sacrifices.
>
> Kwato is there. It's blessed already. It's us … we've got to return with the right people to rebuild Kwato. The blessing is already there.]

The attachment to Kwato Island runs deep. Despite spending most of their lives away from Kwato, despite leaving as adolescents, despite the loss of infrastructure and population on the island, many of the isimulita 3rd I interviewed still have very strong Kwato identities and many yearn to return. Indeed, it was the labour of their isibaguna ancestors that shaped both the sociality—giving rise to the Kwato Way—and the landscape—excavating a hill to fill a swamp (Figures 31, 32 and 33). To the diaspora of those Papuans who were born and/or raised there, Kwato is home. Though their experiences of Kwato differed across generations and across class distinctions, they are unanimous in invoking Kwato as an enchanted isle.

[107] Taped interview with Harry Merari Dickson, Mahimahi, 22 March 2016.

Chapter Eleven

Reorchestrating the *Rueda* of Kwato

Oral history and methodology

Although I have drawn from a variety of texts, I have privileged the Massim peoples' presentations and interpretations. Clearly, much of my information about Kwato history has come from oral history. How certain can one be of veracity? In an oral history culture, which the Massim people were at the time of the isibaguna, the truth value of oral history was dependent on the spread and depth of that history. In other words, how many people of recognisable merit, geographically independent of each other, could repeat the details and provide corroboration. This continues to be how land mediation councils operate. A clan can obviously provide its genealogy to a land council without recourse to external parties. However, historical rights to resources often require corroboration.

My ethnographic fieldwork was not spatially delineated nor was it temporally bounded. The absence of written records, as is the case of pre-missionised Milne Bay, does not correspond to the absence of history. Genealogies were my means by which to excavate the past because they often included information on the how, what, where and why: how people arrived to where they settled, what they might have been fleeing, where they came from, why they settled where they did. Below I demonstrate some of the processes of oral history with an example from my field notes.

February 2015

> On each of my visits to Bou I have explored the clan genealogy with Gologota, clan elder of the Modewa, Sipiniei's clan. On this visit I stop by his house to drop off the food parcel I have brought him. His sago-thatched and walled house is considerably cooler than the corrugated iron roofed home of Safua and Koipili's where I am staying. I tell him that I shall return tomorrow to visit with him and he promises to tell me of his recent trip to Garuahi, invited by the descendants of the clanspeople that Sipiniei had left behind.

The next morning I return to Dahidahina, accompanied this time by Koipili. Where Safua was my guide the previous day, Koipili is now both guide and translator as my Tawala language skills are inadequate for this task. Gologota is seated on a mat on the tiny pebbles brought from the river to landscape the hamlet, and which keep the dust down in the dry, the mud at bay during the wet, and alert one to intruders at night. A gentle breeze blows off the ocean. Eealasi (S)—the vigorous south-westerly—has not yet started and fortunately, few vehicles pass along the dusty highway that snakes between the cluster of houses and the Dahidahina beachfront. It is Monday morning and the last weeks of the January school holidays. Gologota is surrounded by children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Gologota was born on 30 June 1931. His maternal grandmother Didiyoko was one of Sipiniei's great-granddaughters, descended through the female line. In the year of his birth a man named Bagolai from Daduwe came to Bou looking for Sipiniei's kin. The new-born was given the name Gologota Bagolai, haliesa to the old man from Dabala. Haliesa (S) means namesake but represents rather more than the sharing of a name.

Bagolai's commitment to the Bou kin extended beyond gifting his name. His initial visit to Bou had been to locate the descendants of Sipiniei, who appeared in the genealogy and life histories of people from Dabala and also from Garuahi on the north coast.

During the war Bagolai returned to lead the Bou people to the north coast, away from the war activities of allies and Japanese in the Bay. When the war ended a feast was held and pigs were exchanged, following which family groups made their way back to their dobu (T, eanua in Suau). Gologota and his family went home to Bou. The temporarily displaced returned with various manifestations of a continuing relationship to the dobu of their ancestor, Sipiniei. One of these manifestations is the naming of the Bou Modewa clan children with names from Garuahi.

In 2014 Gologota accompanied by clansmen Umau, Sisa, Tudapun, and others, returned to Garuahi, to the place of Sipiniei's birth. Here, for the comprehension of the younger generations, they located Sipiniei in the genealogy of the people of Garuahi. When told this, I was excited at the possibility of moving further back in time than the late 1700s to identify Sipiniei's mother and grandmother and possibly earlier ancestors. I suggested to Gologota that he might accompany me to Garuahi later in the

year. The 84-year-old laughed, 'I'll be dead by then.' 'No,' I retort, 'you'll live till at least 90.'[1]

The pertinent point for my argument about the techniques of oral history is this: clan elders, Bagolai and Gologota, of different geographies and generations, know that the oral histories relating to their clan genealogies can be corroborated by both geographically distant clan members as well as others who are geographically proximate but external to the clan. In land mediations, for example, the Duria clan of Wagawaga, Ahioma will call upon the Duria of Maiwara, as well as other clans to provide witness.

Of course, there is no written and rigid technique that is followed in oral history. But distinctions are made between different types of orality. John Waiko, for instance, demonstrates how the Binandere distinguish between narratives of history and those that are fictitious such as myths. The measures include how the narrative is constructed, who conveys it and for what purpose, who the sources are, and when the event is said to have occurred. Indeed, '[t]he litmus test for the distinction is to apply the basic rules underlying history: when, how why, and who'.[2] Another form of oral history is the use of song. In this thesis I have made use of songs about Kwato to demonstrate how place is imbricated with Kwato personhood.[3] Moreover, although many people may have knowledge of a particular narrative, they will refer to, and defer to, a narration by either the central character, or the keeper of that narrative. In other words, there are usually designated experts, even when there are no roles

[1] Taped interview with Gologota, Bou, February 2015. In November 2017 Gologota is still going strong.

[2] John D. Waiko, 1995, '"Head" and "tail": The shaping of oral traditions among the Binandere in Papua New Guinea', in Ruth H. Finnegan and Margaret Rose Orbell (eds), *South Pacific Oral toTraditions*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 183.

[3] The Binandere employed chants, poetry and songs to record events and history and, to those familiar with the nuances of the Binandere language, offer a rich trove of material by which to reconstruct the past and, in some cases, may provide data further back than a genealogy See John D. Waiko, 1986, 'Oral traditions among the Binandere: Problems of method in a Melanesian society', *The Journal of Pacific History* 21(1): 35–38. On dance and ways of knowing see Sarah Hunt, 2013, 'Ontologies of indigeneity: The politics of embodying a concept', *Cultural Geographies* 21(1): 5.

designating a specialist clan historian. For the Binandere, as for the Kwato people, every individual is responsible for learning, maintaining and passing on traditions and history.

A further point about applying the techniques of oral history as part of one's methodology is the importance of building personal relationships. I have a lifetime of personal relationships with some of my interlocutors but by no means all. I met Gologota for the first time in 2012. Lendia Leheboti, I also for the first time at our first interview in 2015, likewise Dieselo from Baibaisiga whom I introduced in Chapter 6, The Dimdim. I had no kin relationship with Lendia although we knew people in common and we were introduced by Morris Alaluku, kin to Lendia and also an isimulita. Building and maintaining a relationship with Gologota, for example, involves calling on him whenever I am in Bou and taking small gifts, usually of food for the household. I did the same with Dieselo when I travelled to the Suau region, although my gifts were more substantial since I was staying in his house.

Building personal relationships clearly means some degree of emotional involvement. When I left Baibaisiga in Suau after three days with this uncle whom I had never met prior to this trip, taking farewell on the stretch of white sand I was overcome.[4] My eyes teared. I wondered if I would see this old man again. He read my mind because he replied

> Tabu u mode. Abo eau inai.
>
> [Don't worry, I'll be here (when you come back).]

That was in March of 2014. He passed away the following September.

Validation of oral histories can also be undertaken through the comparison of topogeny and named objects. In Sipiniei's history, she travelled with wealth in the form of two bagi named Gadogalewana and Oyapopotalina. Sipiniei's history, dating from the early 1800s, was corroborated by Bagolai in

[4] In Massim kinship Dieselo is an uncle rather than a cousin as all those of my parents' generation are addressed either as parent or aunt or uncle. Most people use the English. People of my grandparents' generation are, universally, bubui.

the late 1930s. Indeed, he went in search of Gologota's family specifically for that purpose. Material evidence of Sipiniei's existence can be found at Watunou where she built a gahana, a stone circle used for gatherings of importance. The remnants of that gahana were still visible some 170 years later when I visited in November 2015.

Gadogalewana was used in Sipiniei's mortuary ceremony since she was an immigrant to Watunou and thus had to pay for the land on which she settled and was buried upon. Oyapopotalina was used in the mortuary ceremony of Sipiniei's daughter, Didileia, since the latter was an immigrant to Bubuleta. These bagi then appear in other clans' oral histories as being sourced from Sipiniei and Didileia. The people at Bubuleta told me that Oyapopotalina had in fact disappeared into the ocean when the woman who had acquired it had capsized in her canoe when out fishing near Mahabalina Island.

In the case of the oral histories relating to the tanuwaga involvement in expelling Cecil Abel from Kwato, I was able to corroborate the details with three different sources and the more general points about Cecil's maori ba'aena [S, disreputable living] were corroborated by many others besides those I quoted. Liasi Tarua, Harry Dickson and Sam Andrew were my sources about the incidents between Cecil and Maniana and the other tanuwaga. Liaisi had recounted this to me when we both happened to be visiting Magololo Doilegu although it was only the two us during the actual telling. However, Harry Dickson shared this history with a group of us at Kwato including Anton Robinson, Dirona Lebasi, Salesi Maniana and Vilia Lawrence. Communicating important information to a group rather than an individual is a common practice in an oral culture since it provides for the substantiation that written records allow. And herein is my final point: group ratification is crucial. Genealogical data and oral history becomes knowledge only when they can be corroborated.

The *rueda* of Kwato

> [S]ocieties may seem to differ in their cultural/symbolic attention and interest in reproductive processes. But what is basic to all such systems … is a cyclical world view in which the processes of reproduction and regeneration are perceived as essential cultural concerns. From this perspective, exchange interaction is reflective of the kinds of symbolic and material values a society accords in reproductive and regenerative flow … [that] must be 'fed' or the system … begins to collapse. The *modus operandi* of this 'feeding' [in Melanesia] is exchange.[5]

I set out, at the beginning of this process, to untangle the idea of Kwato guided by the questions this thesis set out to address: 1) what is Kwato personhood and; 2) what happens to representation when framed through an indigenous methodological and theoretical lens, indeed what would be that indigenous theoretical and methodological lens?

My objectives were to write from the decolonial employing critical race theory and feminist theory, and to complicate the colonised-missionised-victim / coloniser-missionary-agent binary. I started the untangling by providing conceptual precision around 'wonder' and 'whiteness'.

In deconstructing the choreography of the *rueda*, I suggested that a lens for viewing the actions of the Massim people is the feminist-inflected 'wonder'. I suggested too that wonder is an openness to difference that springs from generosity and I employed the indigenous method of oral history to illuminate the concept of wonder as it applies to the Kwato peoples. I also made the claim that that the lived experience of the Kwato Massim people is a collection of practices and performances that value sexual difference. I have not yet provided the entire basis for this argument. This will come in Chapter 12 Matriliny and Relational Autonomy.

I argued that the phenomenon called Kwato refers in the literature to the arrival of whiteness via the twin projects of colonisation and missionisation and that this recent past is a racialised past. I maintained that the literature to date

[5] Annette Weiner, 1980, 'Reproduction: A replacement for reciprocity', *American Ethnologist* 7(1): 72.

has not engaged with the question of race even when whiteness—a set of material and ideological practices of privilege attributed to racial superiority—is inseparable from European expansion through colonisation and missionisation. Furthermore, this literature has, for the most part, been generated from whiteness. I have demonstrated that reliance solely on the white observer's language and cultural framework to interpret different ways of being is inherently unreliable.

Employing decolonial and critical race theory I have taken a journey into the deep past to demonstrate that Massim history did not commence with the arrival of whites and that the Massim people, through their Austronesian ancestors, were engaged in the first human migrations across the Pacific Ocean. I pointed out that the founder-focused theories of Austronesian expansion were gender biased since they were blind to the matrilineal descent of much of island Melanesia where Austronesian languages are spoken, including Milne Bay. In the process I demonstrated the wonder and agential capacity with which the Massim people's Austronesian ancestors engaged the world they lived in.

At the onset of the modern era there came a series of major ruptures in a relatively short space of time—the 'discovery' of Papua by Europeans followed by white settlement by way of missionaries, mercenaries and colonial settlers. In the space of one generation Massim people stopped warfare and embraced peace. Colonial pacification was one cause, but the Massim people also recognised the value of peace and actively embraced it, with the result that Milne Bay people are today known throughout the country as the most peaceful and gentle of all Papua New Guineans.

I examined the establishment of the Kwato Mission from the perspective of the indigenous people—the tanuwaga and the isibaguna—and looked at the ruptures that influenced mission life for the isimulita. The 'Kwato Way' and its influence on Kwato personhood was also considered. Like their Austronesian ancestors, the Massim people who claim Kwato as some part of their identity also demonstrated a high level of agential capacity in their relationship with the

mission. The tanuwaga actively invited the missionaries to settle with them. The isibaguna—adults and children alike—actively sought out the mission space. Both tanuwaga and isibaguna would draw on their complex networks of kin to bring people into the Kwato Mission. The attribute of wonder guided these interactions with whiteness.

Those of the isimulita past also demonstrated a self-reflexivity that articulated their own agency in engaging missionisation—they realised too late the unintended outcome of dependency on whites. Their chafing against this dependency, as well as against the privilege accorded to whites, produced the unanticipated result of internal rupture and contributed to Kwato's decline as a spiritual and educational beacon and magnet. The isimulita present, those of the third generation, would also come to view the relationship with the whites and whiteness on Kwato as constraining. With each passing generation it was becoming more apparent that the promise of access to white power and status was unfulfilled.

Nonetheless, Kwato personhood does have recourse to whiteness. The Kwato Way and the Kwato standards and their emphasis on the ideals of cleanliness and white domesticity, the importance of the mastery of the English language and the value of a European education, as well as the instigation of a class barrier between gana'aro and ganamuri can all be attributed to whiteness.

Yet much of Kwato personhood is still derived from a matrilineal ethos. The idea of family remains far broader than the whiteness ideal of a nuclear family and the practice of abihelai (S, adoption) continues to be widespread. Notwithstanding the stress on English, all Kwato people speak Suau, and many also speak other Milne Bay languages. And despite separation from their matriline, sometimes lifelong, indigenous people did not dismiss extended family, maintaining communications and acts of reciprocity between mission and eanua, between city and village. Of note as well, is that many of the babada and sinesinebada'o were not willing to sacrifice all indigenous meaning-making

for introduced norms—the existence of alawai in the heart of the Kwato tanuwaga hierarchy is one powerful example of this.

As much as whiteness was imposed there was also a strategic engagement on the part of the Massim people. We see from their actions and practices a high degree of agential capacity—that is, we see them acting with intention. You may have noted that my sparing use throughout of the concepts 'complicity' and 'resistance'.[6] Kwato people practised both. But what is evident is the urge to reinvention. People, by and large, do not plan their lives around how to resist. Rather, they plan around short- and long-term goals and the actions necessary to achieve these. Here, Annette Weiner's theoretical innovation in the study of the Massim region becomes apparent. Anthropologists had typically analysed the Massim through gift exchange and reciprocity, a trend started by Bronisław Malinowski. Weiner had two criticisms.

First, the ahistorical treatment of particular exchanges obscures 'a long-range set of obligations that switch back and forth between giver and receiver through time'[7] where time can mean generations. Second, the tendency was to reify reciprocity to the extent that Massim and gift exchange have become coterminous, concealing the actual priorities of Massim peoples, of which she says 'we codify properties that seem significant to us, but in fact … these properties may be much less salient to the individuals we study'.[8] Indeed, earlier I made a comment that we, the Massim subjects of anthropological examination, frequently do not recognise ourselves in the ways that whiteness represents us.

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[6] Keith Camacho, who also makes extensive use of oral sources, notes that resistance is not the only form of agency that Oceanians engage in, they also 'actively participate in processes of historical change'. See Keith L. Camacho, 2008, 'The politics of Indigenous collaboration', *The Journal of Pacific History* 43(2): 208.

Using collaboration as a unit of analysis, Camacho examines how Chamorro peoples were complicit in the presence of the Japan's Pacific empire between 1914 and 1945.

[7] Weiner, 'Reproduction: A replacement for reciprocity', 73.

[8] Ibid., 74.

Weiner's theoretical innovation was to propose that exchange and reciprocity are part of a system of reproduction—'a reproductive system—in which the reproduction and regeneration of persons, objects, and relationships are integrated and encapsulated'.[9] In the context of Kwato, both of Weiner's criticisms as well as her innovation, are paramount to understanding the Massim peoples who engaged with this mission. In this so-called 'gift-economy', labour is also an item of exchange.[10]

The tanuwaga of Kwato and the isibaguna were concerned with the future of their boga esega (S, matriline). They were people who were accustomed to looking to the dimdim (S, horizon) for novelty whether in trade or marriage or innovation of other kinds. The tanuwaga landowners exchanged land and the isibaguna exchanged their labour with the mission/aries. Other Massim people sent their children to Kwato, thereby establishing relationships for future exchanges. All parties did so with a clear mandate that this would benefit their descendants.

The isibaguna and isimulita 2nd marshalled significant amounts of energy to grow the mission's sphere of influence. They embraced reinvention. The trouble with transformation, though, is that one cannot know in advance the outcomes, and these can be unanticipated as well as unintended. Over the course of Kwato's history, the relationships of exchange in which the Massim people invested land and labour have not gone the way intended. The isimulita 2nd came to see that their strategic engagement with missionisation and Christianisation did not produce the reciprocal benefits expected in an ethic of matrilineal relational autonomy.

Before theorising this matrilineal relational autonomy I will finish with a tale from Africa. Obioma Nnameka (2004) writes of the advice given her by her great-uncle as she was departing Nigeria for *obodo oyibo*, land of the white

[9] Ibid., 71.

[10] Melissa Demian examines the value of work in Suau. See Demian, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2): 94–95,106.

people. 'My daughter,' he said, 'when you go to obodo oyibo, walk like the chameleon'.[11]

The advice is to walk *like* a chameleon, not to be a chameleon. When walking, a chameleon

> keeps its head straight but looks in different directions. It does not deviate from its goal and grows wiser through the knowledge gleaned from the different perspectives it absorbs along the way. If it sees prey, it does not jump on it immediately. First, it throws out its tongue. If nothing happens to its tongue, it moves ahead and grabs the prey.[12]

The babada and the sinesinebada'o of Kwato, indeed all Kwato people, walk like the chameleon. Multiple subjectivities fashioned from matrilineal sociality based on egalitarianism, reciprocity and relational autonomy combined with elements drawn from whiteness contribute to the *rueda* of Kwato. The choreography of this *rueda* is also influenced by the maritime environment where horizons are broad, marking the playground of the Austronesian ancestors. They too made circular voyages setting out into the then unknown western Pacific some 4,500 BP to make a return voyage some 2800 BP.[13] The Kwato Massim people were equally adventurous but, for some, the advent of missionisation turned out to be a misadventure.

However, we know now that creativity and reinvention are also part of the *rueda* of Kwato. Within the circularity of the *rueda* Kwato people dance from ancestor to present, engaged in world-making, looking back but always also looking forward, generating and implementing strategies to further their causes, constrained by the structures underlying modernity/coloniality or supported by the decolonial, indigenous ideas of plurality, wonder, and relational autonomy. In the present, matriliny and its obligations continue to structure the lives of even the most western-influenced. Perhaps because this

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[11] Obioma Nnaemeka, 2004, 'Nego-feminism: Theorizing, practicing, and pruning Africa's way', *Signs* 29(2): 382.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Table 1. Some milestones in years Before Present (BP).

female-centric ideology is inherently decolonial, the world-making actions of the matrilineal Kwato people, were also decolonial actions that asserted, and continue to assert, the legitimacy of Massim ways of world-making.

PART THREE

EXPANDING THE *RUEDA*: MATRILINY AND RELATIONAL AUTONOMY

Chapter Twelve

Expanding the *Rueda*: Matriliny and Relational Autonomy

Revisiting the victim/agent binary

> Contemporary accounts of individual autonomy hold that autonomy, or self-determination, involves, at the very least, the capacity for reflection on one's motivational structure and the capacity to change it in response to reflection.[1]
>
> The temporal shifts of relational subjectivity and the power of the autonomous mind are made clear in the self-account of a twenty-year-old mother who, acting on her decision not to stay married to her baby's father, [said]: 'My mind is strong; I am still a young girl if I want'. Such an assertion speaks of willed transformations rather than a teleological life course.[2]

At the start of this thesis I wrote about my intention to 'trouble' the colonised-victim/coloniser-agent binary. Throughout this thesis I have provided evidence of the Massim peoples engaging in reflection to come to decisions which influenced the actions they have taken across the generations, including before the arrival of whiteness.

Whiteness is part of the structure of race, as are colonisation and missionisation, and I have argued that race itself, is a technology of power. The relationship between structure and agency has been perceived to be problematic and, often, undue emphasis is given to the conditioning force of structure.[3]

Writing about epistemology rather than ontology, Lorraine Code tells us that

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[1] Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar, 2000, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press, 13.

[2] Katherine Lepani, 2012, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk: Culture and HIV in the Trobriands*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbuilt University Press, 128.

[3] Margaret S. Archer, 2007, 'The ontological status of subjectivity: The missing link between structure and agency', in Clive Lawson, John Latsis and Nuno Martins (eds), *Contributions to Social Ontology*, Abingdon: Routledge, 17–31; 2000, *Being Human: The Problem of Agency*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

> women—and other 'others'—are *produced* as 'objects of knowledge-as-control' by S-knows-that-*p* epistemologies and the philosophies of science/social science that they inform. When subjects become objects of knowledge, reliance upon simple observational paradigms has the consequence of assimilating those subjects to physical objects, reducing their subjectivity and specificity to interchangeable, observable features [author's emphasis].[4]

The same logic that converts subjects into objects lies behind the turn from agent to victim. A victim, like an object, is acted upon. A victim becomes dehumanised when the condition of victimhood is taken to be the only observable feature of her subjectivity.

Agents exercise reflexivity to make decisions. However, since it is impossible to accurately predict the decisions of any number of agents given the same conditions confronting them, we have to attribute the variability to personal subjectivity.[5] If agents' actions were predictable given the same structural conditions then the logical conclusion is that it would be possible to know any and all outcomes in advance for any given structure. Subjectivity, then, is that part of agency that influences the response to structure.[6]

Subjectivity is influenced by a constellation of social and environmental factors. Since many of these factors change over time and since the human body ages, provoking physical and social changes, subjectivity is also dynamic. Agents classified by social scientists into homogenous social categories may seek very different outcomes when faced with the same challenges and may also respond differently to the same challenge at a different point in time.[7] The paradigm of relational autonomy enables us to think through the relationship between subjectivity and agency.

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[4] Lorranie Code, 1993, 'Taking subjectivity into account', in Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter (eds), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York and London: Routledge, 32. Marilyn Strathern has famously challenged the binary logic of European epistemology and its application to Melanesian societies in Strathern, 1988, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

[5] Archer, 'The ontological status of subjectivity', 22–23.

[6] Ibid., 17–31.

[7] Ibid., 29.

What is relational autonomy?

Relational autonomy is an umbrella term for the various ways in which feminist theory conceives of the connections between an individual and society.[8] The concept of autonomy has had a fraught history in feminist theory since the traditional liberal abstraction, taken to its extreme, results in the normalisation of hyper-individualism and hyper-masculinity.[9] There are five types of critique categorised by Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar into symbolic, metaphysical, care, postmodern and diversity.[10]

The symbolic critique of liberal autonomy, such as argued by Lorraine Code, takes issue with the abstraction of the autonomous man and how this idea has influenced western society and institutions.[11] The metaphysical critiques posit that, since all humans are socially embedded, agential autonomy is an erroneous concept.[12] The care critique argues that, in the western tradition, autonomy is a masculinist conception that is positioned in opposition to femininity, women's experience, and values such as love.[13] Postmodernist critiques of conventional notions of autonomy typically reject the idea of an integrated, unified self that is able to exercise an unimpeded free will that is supposedly the essence of some kind of true self.[14] The fifth critique of traditional white liberal conceptions of autonomy has come from women of

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[8] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 4.

[9] Ibid., 3–31. See also John Christman, 2004, 'Relational autonomy, liberal individualism, and the social constitution of selves', *Philosophical Studies* 117(1–2).

[10] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 5.

[11] Ibid., 6–7; Lorraine Code, 2000, 'The perversion of autonomy and the subjection of women: discourses of social advocacy at century's end', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[12] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 7–8.

[13] '[C]are critiques differ from metaphysical critiques because of their emphasis on the *value* of relations of nurturance and dependency for agents, rather than the implications of these relations for the metaphysical self [author's emphasis]'. Ibid., 9.

[14] Ibid., 10–11.

colour, who assert that agents have multiple and intersectional identities.[15] In European epistemology which is based on the AND/OR rather than the BOTH-AND paradigm, multiple identities theoretically suggests fracture and confusion. This is not necessarily the case in a culturally different epistemology that does not rely on hierarchical binaries. Nonetheless, it does suggest that theories of autonomy must attend to both group and individual identities.

> The critiques emphasize that an analysis of the characteristics and capacities of the self cannot be adequately undertaken without attention to the rich and complex social and historical contexts in which agents are embedded; they point to the need to think of autonomy as a characteristic of agents who are emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling, as well as rational, creatures.[16]

Notwithstanding all these critiques of the conventional concept of autonomy, and since an individual without any autonomy could not conceivably practice any form of freedom and self-determination, feminists have had to robustly engage with the concept.

Reworking autonomy

Mackenzie and Stoljar suggest that the reworking of the concept of autonomy falls into three streams. Procedural theories of autonomy demand that an agent has the capacity to reflect critically on her motivations and actions.[17] Substantive theories, on the other hand, set out to define what it means and what

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[15] Ibid., 11–12.

See also: Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1991, 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color', *Stanford Law Review* 43(6); 1989, 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989(1); María Lugones, 1987, 'Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception', *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 2(2); 2008, 'The coloniality of gender', *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise* Spring.

[16] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 21.

[17] Ibid., 13–19.

conditions are necessary for an agent to reflect critically.[18] In the third stream flow the theories of relational autonomy.[19]

Relational autonomy entails two crucial reworkings. First, any reconceptualisation of agency must take into account actors who are emotional and rational, embodied but also psychically different.

> [C]onceptualising agents as emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling, as well as rational, creatures highlights the importance to autonomy of features of agents that have received little discussion in the literature, such as memory, imagination, and emotional dispositions and attitudes.[20]

Therefore, in considering the social, the associations between autonomy and the factors of self-esteem and self-worth are examined.[21] The second concern is to analyse the specificities of oppression through socialisation and through social relationships as well as to analyse what capacities and competencies are necessary to develop autonomy.[22]

But, however you look at it or define it, western feminism conceives of relational autonomy in opposition to the historical framing of self and person in European thought since the European Enlightenment.[23] What does autonomy look like in a different historical and cultural context?

In Chapter 3, Wonder, I introduced Boru, nanny to the family of Charles Abel who travelled with them to England in 1905 where she gave public lectures in the Suau language with Abel as her translator. Recall how she found herself

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[18] Ibid., 19-21.

[19] Theories of intersectionality—that consider race and other influences on subjectivity—come under the umbrella of relational autonomy. For example see Diana Tietjens Meyers, 2000, 'Intersectional identity and the authentic self', in Catriona Mackenzie and Natalie Stoljar (eds), *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*, New York: Oxford University Press.

[20] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 21.

[21] Ibid., 22.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Marilyn Strathern famously critiqued the projection of western metaphysics on Papua New Guinean societies. See Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift*, 3. She stated, 'The difference between Western and Melanesian (we/they) sociality means that we cannot simply extend Western feminist insights to the Melanesian case'. Ibid., 7.

berating white people in their territory for their rudeness, and recall how her self-worth was not derived from whiteness but from some other ideology entirely.[24] Relational autonomy enables us to see how Boru's agency is a function of her self-esteem and also linked, through her memory and imagination, to the attribute of wonder. Boru is one embodiment of how matrilineal relational autonomy unfolds in practice.[25] In the next section I examine matriliny and then I provide other examples of Massim relational autonomy from my research. I finish with a theory of Massim matrilineal relational autonomy.

What is matriliny?

> The prevalence of matrilineal versus patrilineal inheritance—inheritance through the female or male line—has deep and far ranging consequences. The extent of female land ownership, which tends to prevail in matrilineal societies, affects the productivity of labour and economic efficiency … welfare … in particular the relative welfare of women and men … the effectiveness of land right reform s… public good provision … as well as sex-biased mortality. The prevalence of matrilineal kinship in itself is an important driver of behavioural differences between men and women … and affects household bargaining and children's welfare.[26]

Land is transferred through women in 13 per cent of the 1265 societies listed in the Ethnographic Atlas.[27] This is one of the characteristics of a matricentric society, which is also typified by one or more of: descent through the mother, matrilocal residence, other wealth transmission through the daughter or, as in the case of the Ponape people, a system valued because

[24] Boru first appears in Chapter 3, Wonder.

[25] Boru was actually born in Mailu. The Mailu and the Massim peoples had long established trading relationships.

[26] Ariel Ben Yishay, Pauline Grosjean and Joe Vecci, 2017, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny: Reef density and matrilineal inheritance', *Journal of Development Economics* 127(July): 234.

[27] Ibid., 127, 237.

connecting peoples and groups (matrilaterally and patrilaterally) is inherent in its structure.[28]

Because matrilineal kinship traces descent through the mother matriliny is said to be a 'puzzle'. This supposed 'matrilineal puzzle' has perplexed those scholars who project the norms of whiteness—heteronormative white masculinity in which men are dominant over women and children—as the 'advanced' kinship and social organisation against which all other systems should be measured.[29] However, what is a puzzle for the European mind need not be so in other cultural logics.[30] The 'puzzle' is that men in a society of matrilineal descent will pass their matriline's wealth on to their sisters' children, not to their own offspring thereby setting up a potential tension in their roles as brother/uncle and husband/father. A lot of effort has been invested in solving this so-called 'puzzle' which has also involved examining the origins of this descent system.

The hypothesised origins of matriliny are based on two arguments.[31] The first argument posits that biology and environment determined social roles—

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[28] Ponapean matriliny does not rely on residence or land tenure. See Glenn Petersen, 1982, 'Ponapean matriliny: Production, exchange, and the ties that bind', *American Ethnologist* 9(1): 139, 141–42.

[29] David Murray Schneider, 1962, 'Introduction', in David Murray Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds), *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

[30] Alexander H. Bolyanatz, 1995, 'Matriliny and revisionist anthropology', *Anthropos* 90; Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke, 1992, 'Masculinity and the "Matrilineal Puzzle"', *Anthropos* 87(4–6): 475–88; 1995, 'Revisionism or the recovery of matrilineal women's centrality? A reply to Bolyanatz', *Anthropos* 90(4–6): 582–85.

[31] The history of matriliny as a European scholarly enterprise probably commenced with Johan Jakob Bachofen whose 1861 theories of matriarchy influenced Lewis Morgan who in turn influenced Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. See Chris Knight, 2008, 'Early human kinship was matrilineal', in Nicholas J. Allen, Hilary Callan, Robin Dunbar and Wendy James (eds), *Early Human Kinship*, Oxford: Blackwell.

There were also big debates about the relation of matriliny and matriarchy, and then a resurgence of matriarchy debates in second wave feminism. Landmark studies of matriliny include: David Murray Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds), *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkeley: University of California Press. Schneider's introduction typifies matrilineal descent. See Schneider, 'Introduction', 1–32.

See also chapter by David Aberle who argues that matriliny is an adaptive feature, associating it with horticulture, and predicting its disappearance as the features of European modernity

men might be hunters or fishermen depending on the environment they inhabited and women would be horticulturalists.[32] The second argument concerns the relative evolutionary benefit of passing wealth to daughters rather than sons. Some researchers have demonstrated that where paternity is uncertain then daughter-biased investment is less risky than investing in sons. This makes evolutionary sense since the marginal benefit of passing wealth to daughters is the lesser risk.[33] In other words, the benefits they will derive determine whether parents invest in their daughters, sons, or both. Paternal uncertainty has a high correlation in societies where men are away for prolonged periods. There is also a high correlation with societies with matrilineal descent.[34] However, like the supposed 'matrilineal puzzle', many of these evolutionary theories predicate a male subject position which is not necessarily universal.

An example of the first hypothesis is borne out in the work of Ariel Ben Yishay, Pauline Grosjean and Joe Vecci who have demonstrated a high correlation between communities where men specialise in fishing and the transmission of land through women.[35]

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take hold. See Aberle, 1962, 'Matrilineal kinship in cross-cultural perspective', in David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough (eds), *Matrilineal Kinship*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 725.

Alice Schlegel shows how kinship systems play a central role in determining gendered roles, residential rights, control over property and the autonomy of individuals. Schlegel, 1972, *Male Dominance and Female Autonomy: Domestic Authority in Matrilineal Societies*, New Haven, CT: HRAF Press, 134–44. See also Peggy Sanday, 2002, *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.

[32] Ben Yishay, Grosjean and Vecci, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny', 239.

[33] Laura Fortunato, 2012. 'The evolution of matrilineal kinship organization', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 279(1749); Siobhán M. Mattison, 2011, 'Evolutionary contributions to solving the matrilineal puzzle: A test of Holden, Sear, and Mace's model, *Human Nature* 22(64); Clare Janaki Holden, Rebecca Sear and Ruth Mace, 2003, 'Matriliny as daughter-biased investment', *Evolution and Human Behavior* 24(2).

[34] Ben Yishay, Grosjean and Vecci, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny', 239; John Hartung, 1985, 'Matrilineal inheritance: New theory and analysis', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 8(4).

[35] Ben Yishay, Grosjean and Vecci, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny', 234–49.

> [R]eliance on fishing in a horticultural society is a favourable condition for matrilineal inheritance … Where fishing is abundant, land is a relatively less important resource, and its transmission to sons may not improve sons' relative fitness enough to outweigh the potential negative effects on daughters' incentives. Fishing is also risky, which reduces the incentives to rely on the paternal line; and it entails male absence from the village, which increases paternity uncertainty.[36]

However, Chris Knight has argued that the 'grandmother' hypothesis is the evolutionary explanation for matriliny. This hypothesis proposes that 'the selective advantage of distinctively human postmenopausal lifespans is that it enabled older women to assist their adult children in caring for and provisioning grandchildren'.[37] Because of the potential for paternity uncertainty, grandmothers would be more inclined to care for their daughters' offspring, and there is some evidence to support this.[38] Perhaps more compelling is his argument for the exponential growth of *Homo sapiens*. Our female primate relatives often have to contend with aggressive males that are not the fathers of their offspring—infanticide is a threat that primate mothers must guard against. Moreover, throughout her pregnancy and nursing, a primate mother is responsible for providing for herself. Food security and physical security, therefore, absorbed a large amount of energy for our *hominid* ancestors.[39] But the offspring of *Homo sapiens* require an enormous investment of effort to raise to emotional and sexual maturity. Since we share common beginnings with primates, what was it that allowed populations of *Homo sapiens* to grow and to far surpass the numbers of others of the *Hominidae* family? According to Knight:

> If unusually large numbers of unusually large-brained offspring were being successfully raised to maturity, the quality of childcare must have been exceptional. We know what the optimal solution would have been. There can be no doubt that mothers would

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[36] Ben Yishay, Grosjean and Vecci, 'The fish is the friend of matriliny', 239–40.

[37] Knight, 'Early human kinship was matrilineal', 80.

[38] Ibid., 81.

[39] I use *hominim* for the members of the genus *Homo*, as well as the genera *Australopithecus*, *Paranthropus* and *Ardipithecus*. *Hominid*, on the other hand, includes the ancestors of *Homo*, the chimpanzee, as well as other bipeds such as gorillas, orang-utans, and their ancestors.

> have done best by cooperatively resisting male sexual control, relying for protection on supportive male kin, motivating multiple suitors to work hard for them – and taking advantage of every available childcare resource.[40]

Evidence for matrilineal Austronesians

We can identify if a society was historically matrilocal through DNA testing.[41] The genetic argument for a matricentric society is based upon the degree of variance in a given population of the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) from the Y chromosome DNA. However, since genetic testing can be inconclusive or give varying results, the data needs to be interpreted in accordance with the residence rules of human populations which can be patrilocal or matrilocal. Since the mtDNA can only be passed through the mother, if it does not show much variance relative to the Y chromosome DNA, then the historic female populations must have been grouped in one place. In other words, they were matrilocal. The variance in the Y chromosome DNA is a result of different groups of men marrying into a matrilocal population.

Genetic testing of some Polynesian populations demonstrated that their mtDNA was primarily Asian and their Y chromosomes originated in primarily Melanesian male ancestors.[42] One of the tests revealed a NRY haplogroup (Y

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[40] Knight, 'Early human kinship was matrilineal', 81.

[41] Archaeology and genetics have been paired in archaeogenomic testing such as in Douglas J. Kennett, Stephen Plog, Richard J. George, et al., 2017, 'Archaeogenomic evidence reveals prehistoric matrilineal dynasty', *Nature Communications* 8(14115): 1–9.

[42] Manfred Kayser, Silke Brauer, Richard Cordaux, et al., 2006, 'Melanesian and Asian origins of Polynesians: mtDNA and Y chromosome gradients across the Pacific', *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 23(11): 2234; Manfred Kayser, Silke Brauer, Gunter Weiss, et al., 2000, 'Melanesian origin of Polynesian Y chromosomes', *Current Biology* 10(20): 1237; Per Hage and Jeff Marck, 2003, 'Matrilineality and the Melanesian origin of Polynesian Y chromosomes', *Current Anthropology* 44(S5): S121–S127.

More recent testing has revealed that the Austronesian ancestors of some Polynesian populations must have travelled directly from Asia to parts of Polynesia where they were the first settlers. Their genetic material shows little mixing with the indigenous populations of Near Oceania. See Pontus Skoglund, Cosimo Posth, Kendra Sirak, et al., 2016, 'Genomic insights into the peopling of the Southwest Pacific', *Nature* 538(7626): 510–13.

chromosome data) with likely origins in the Bismarck Archipelago of Papua New Guinea (PNG).[43] The implications for matrilineal Austronesians are as follows:

> The observation of more Asian mtDNA haplogroups than Asian NRY haplogroups on the Admiralty Islands as well as in other Austronesian-speaking groups from coastal New Guinea and Island Melanesia suggests that the Austronesian language replacement in Melanesia was driven by Austronesian women rather than men, perhaps as a consequence of a matrilocal residence pattern in combination with a matrilineal social structure. Sex-biased admixture is also observed in those groups speaking non-Austronesian languages in coastal New Guinea and Island Melanesia, but here there was a much bigger contribution inferred for Austronesian women than for Austronesian men, in keeping with the patrilocal residence and patrilineal social structure of non-Austronesian (Papuan) groups in Melanesia. The major Asian NRY haplogroup on the Admiralties (O-M110) can be ultimately traced back to Taiwan, which provides a genetic parallel to mtDNA data evidence and strikingly intersects with linguistic and archaeological evidence for a Taiwanese source of the Austronesian expansion.[44]

Examining linguistic patterns in kinship terms can also provide evidence of the existence of matricentric sociality.[45] In matrilineal descent the mother's brother is attributed an importance absent in patrilineal descent systems where the father and father's brother are the privileged males. Robert Blust uses comparative-historical linguistics to analyse the terms for 'orphan' across a number of Austronesian languages. He demonstrates a correlation between the Proto-Malaita-Micronesian reflex of 'tina mate'—literally, mother dead—with historic matrilineal descent.[46] In the Suau language, orphan is tintingen or

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[43] NRY is non-recombining Y chromosome DNA. A haplogroup is a line of descent. In human genetics the haplogroups most studied are Y chromosome (Y-DNA) and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA). See Manfred Kayser, Ying Choi, Mannis Van Oven, et al., 2008, 'The impact of the Austronesian expansion: Evidence from mtDNA and Y chromosome diversity in the Admiralty Islands of Melanesia', *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 25(7): 1362.

[44] Ibid., 1372.

[45] Per Hage and Jeff Marck, 2002, 'Proto-Micronesian kin terms, descent groups, and interisland voyaging', *Oceanic Linguistics* 41(1).

[46] Robert Blust, 1986–1987, 'Language and culture history: Two case studies', *Asian Perspectives* 27(2): 217–20; Fiona M. Jordan, Russell D. Gray, Simon J. Greenhill and Ruth

tautaugen. I will leave it to the linguists to hypothesise about the linguistic clues to historical matriliny in Milne Bay. However, developments in cultural phylogenetics, lead Fiona M. Jordan, Russell D. Gray, Simon J. Greenhill and Ruth Mace to suggest that matrilocal residence—and by extension, matrilineal descent—'was predominant in earlier Austronesian societies ca 5000–4500 BP, at the root of the language family and its early branches'.[47]

Effects of matrilineal inheritance on behavior and female welfare

> Vanatinai, a small island Society of [Massim] New Guinea, is [matrilineal and] egalitarian, with no indigenous formal systems of rank or authority ... Overt aggression is condemned and violence is rare. Women were the aggressors in four out of five incidents over ten years … The Vanatinai case is evidence that the rarity of intragroup violence, especially of attacks by men on women, is a characteristic of egalitarian societies.[48]

Despite the challenges to matriliny from whiteness through colonisation and missionisation, matrilineal descent and inheritance continue to structure Massim sociality.[49] The benefits of matrilineal inheritance for women are material and psychological. For many Massim women, these include inheriting land, participating in leadership and decision-making, and wealth creation and accumulation.[50] However, it is not the case that matrilineal inheritance always

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Mace, 2009, 'Matrilocal residence is ancestral in Austronesian societies', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 276(1664): 1957–64.

[47] 'This suggests their descent systems may have also had matrilineal aspects'. See Jordan, Gray, Greenhill and Mace, 'Matrilocal residence is ancestral in Austronesian societies', 1960.

[48] Maria Lepowsky, 1994, 'Women, men, and aggression in an egalitarian society', *Sex Roles* 30(3–4): 199.

[49] On the impact of colonialism on women in PNG see Anne Dickson-Waiko, 2007, 'Colonial enclaves and domestic spaces in British New Guinea', in Kate Darian-Smith, Patricia Grimshaw and Stuart Macintyre (eds), *Britishness Abroad: Transnational Movements and Imperial Cultures*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press; 2008, 'Finding women in colonial Papua: Gender, race and sex in Papua New Guinea history', *South Pacific Journal of Philosophy and Culture* 10.

[50] Annette Weiner, 1977, *Women of Value, Men of Renown: New Perspectives in Trobriand Exchange*, St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press; Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*, 75–83; Susanne Kuehling, 2005, *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 92–98; Maria Lepowsky, 1990, 'Big men, big women, and

leads to an enhanced status for women. For instance, in parts of the Solomon Islands, despite the matrilineal sanction of women's authority, it seems female leadership is contentious.[51] In Vanuatu matriliny does not appear to benefit women in the way that it does in Milne Bay.[52] Yet, in other places there are clear links between matriliny, female behaviour and welfare.[53]

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cultural autonomy', *Ethnology* 29(1); 1993, *Fruit of the Motherland: Gender in an Egalitarian Society*, New York: Columbia University Press.

[51] Ruth Maetala, 2008, 'Matrilineal land tenure systems in Solomon Islands: The cases of Guadalcanal, Makira and Isabel Provinces', in Elise Huffer (ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 39.

[52] Ana Naupa and Joel Simo wrote:

> The central function of customary land tenure has been to ensure social security and cohesion and the majority of Vanuatu continues to operate under customary law, which recognizes land rights of both men and women. This is however being threatened by the trend to view land management as a male-only domain, partly through the manipulation of *Kastom* which is marginalising women from the decision-making process. This trend is aggravated by the growing pressure on limited land resources and the increasing commodification of land.

See Naupa and Simo, 2008, 'Matrilineal land tenure in Vanuatu: "Hu i kakae long basket?" Case Studies of Raga and Mele', in Elise Huffer (ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 77–78.

[53] In this conversation between Watson-Franke and Bolyanatz triggered by the former's critique of the 'matrilineal puzzle', a key point of contention seems to be that, for Bolyanatz, matriliny does not influence behaviour, or, at least, does not influence positive outcomes for women, which is the basis of Watson-Francke's argument.

See Watson-Franke, 'Masculinity and the "Matrilineal Puzzle"'; Bolyanatz, 'Matriliny and revisionist anthropology', 169–80; Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke, 1995, 'Revisionism or the recovery of matrilineal women's centrality? A reply to Bolyanatz', *Anthropos* 90(4–6).

Comparing matrilineal and patriarchal societies, Steffen Andersen, Seda Ertac, Uri Gneezy, et al. find that girls in patriarchal societies become less competitive around puberty. See Andersen, Ertac, Gneezy, et al., 2013, 'Gender, competitiveness, and socialization at a young age: Evidence from a matrilineal and a patriarchal society', *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 95(4): 1438.

Uri Gneezy, Kenneth L. Leonard and John A. List find that for the patriarchal Maasai and the matrilineal Khasi, the Maasai men were more competitive than Maasai women, and Khasi women were twice as competitive as Khasi men. See Gneezy, Leonard and List, 2009, 'Gender differences in competition: Evidence from a matrilineal and a patriarchal society', *Econometrica* 77(5): 1658–659.

See also Gary Charness and Uri Gneezy, 2011, 'Strong evidence for gender differences in risk taking', *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 83(1); Rachel Croson and Uri Gneezy, 2009, 'Gender differences in preferences', *Journal of Economic Literature,* 47(2).

In addition to material security, matrilineal land inheritance gives women a strong sense of psychological security.[54] Said one of my interlocutors:

> The word that best describes how I feel about being a female in a matrilineal society is BIRTHRIGHT. Even if I never build a house at Numarome next to bubu Mabel's house, I can pass it on … as part of my legacy. It's comforting to know that - the land is secured and indisputable [author's emphasis].[55]

Similarly, in a report on matrilineal land inheritance in Oceania, one of the subjects declared:

> The women here are so sure of themselves … maybe it's that we know for sure that we have land … Even if I don't get land from my husband, I still have it from my mother and nothing can change that …[56]

On the other side of the globe, the psychological benefits of matriliny are also evident:

> [In Malawi we] find that material resources trump social ones in explaining female empowerment, but that access to land through matrilineal inheritance matters above and beyond the short-term material implications of owning land. This suggests that it is the long-term expectation of resource entitlements conferred by matrilineal inheritance, rather than a single positive economic shock, that ultimately empowers women.[57]

However, land is not merely a resource for Massim people. I have earlier explained that the concept of eanua contains within it the relationship of a person to a place, without which land is merely tano, or soil.

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[54] Elise Huffer, 2008, 'Introduction', in Elise Huffer (ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, vii.

[55] Email from Massim woman, Mabel Daure, 24 October 2016.

[56] Palauan woman [no name given] cited in Huffer, 'Introduction', vii.

[57] Amanda Lea Robinson and Jessica Gottlieb, 2016, 'The effects of matrilineality on gender differences in political behavior across Africa', presented at the Working Group on African Political Economy, George Washington University, 29 April, 1.

There is also clear evidence that when women have property rights they are less likely to experience violence, including rape.[58] According to Peggy Sanday:

> (H)uman sexual behaviour, though based in biological need, is an expression of cultural forces …The data suggest that rape is part of a cultural configuration which includes interpersonal violence, male dominance, and sexual separation. Rape is interpreted as the sexual expression of these forces in societies where the harmony between men and their environment has been severely disrupted.[59]

Building on Sanday's work, Maria-Barbara Watson-Francke finds that

> the specific gender dynamics in matrilineal cultures reduce the significance of man's sexual persona and thus male heterosexual authority which mitigates the potential of male dominance and rape.[60]

Note that Watson-Francke says that violence is reduced not that it is absent. Matrilineal societies are often compared to patriarchal societies—even though the former classification is about descent and the latter about power relations—

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[58] Bina Agarwal, 1995, 1995, 'Gender and legal rights in agricultural land in India'. Economic and Political Weekly 30; 1997, '"Bargaining" and gender relations: Within and beyond the household', *Feminist Economics* 3(1); 1998, 'Disinherited peasants, disadvantaged workers: A gender perspective on land and livelihood', *Economic and Political Weekly* 33(13 March); 1994, 'Gender and command over property: A critical gap in economic analysis and policy in South Asia', *World Development* 22.

See also: Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke, 2002, 'A world in which women move freely without fear of men: An anthropological perspective on rape', *Women's Studies International Forum* 25(6).

Sara Lowes observes that: 'Despite less spousal cooperation, I find that children of matrilineal women are healthier and better educated and that matrilineal women experience less domestic violence. The results highlight how broader social structures affect bargaining within the household.' See Lowes, 2017, 'Matrilineal kinship and spousal cooperation: Evidence from the matrilineal belt', *World Bank Blog Post.*

Reduced violence against women is also evident in Mexico—when women 'live in close proximity to their consanguineal kin, specifically to their male kin, the risk of spousal abuse from their partners' decreases'. See Tomás Cabeza De Baca, Marcela Sotomayor-Peterson, Vanessa Smith-Castro, et al., 2014, 'Contributions of matrilineal and patrilineal kin alloparental effort to the development of life history strategies and patriarchal values', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 45(4): 549.

[59] Peggy Reeves Sanday, 1981, 'The socio-cultural context of rape: A cross-cultural study', *Journal of Social Issues* 37(4): 5.

[60] Watson-Franke, 'A world in which women move freely without fear of men: An anthropological perspective on rape', 599.

and such discussions often will result in the vindication of patriarchy by pointing out that violence is also present in matrilineal societies. But is this a valid comparison?

If we agree with Knight's 'grandmother' hypothesis as the evolutionary explanation for matriliny, then it would seem that the ideal outcome for females is a situation in which they are free from male aggression and have assistance from their mothers in child-rearing. In this era of human rights and gender equality, patriarchy posited as a societal ideal would be absurd whereas, clearly, the ideal of zero violence against women and men and girls and boys is of merit. The fact of not being able to achieve that ideal in the complex turmoil of lived reality does not make the ideal any less valuable. If that were so, then humanity would have collectively abandoned any faith in the ideal of human rights.

There is no situation under a totalitarian patriarchy where women could be considered to have autonomy and to live free of violence. However, under a totalitarian matrilineal society, it is conceivable that women and men and boys and girls could have autonomy and could live free of violence.

Let us be clear that the mitigation of violence against women in a matrilineal society is an outcome of a particular sociality. In Massim matriliny, women have property rights *because* the female sex is acknowledged to be important for social cohesion and continuity. Furthermore, women are not regarded as property. Instead, they are equally entitled to a share of wealth and resources, and to engage in self-determination.

Inheritance of land in southern Massim matriliny

Throughout this thesis I have written about Massim personhood as it pertains to Kwato. In the following pages, I will extract specific examples from my research to sketch relational autonomy as it has manifested in the lives of the different generations of Massim people. Before that, I wish to bring more clarity to the southern Massim concepts of eanua, tanuwaga, natulea and eogaeogaisini as these are critical to the understanding of the relationship between land and

people. The importance of the paired tanuwaga/natulea concept is such that one finds the same words in the linguistically different regions of Suau, Tawala, Maiwara and Ealeba, as well as in the islands from Logea to Ware.[61]

Earlier I explained that eanua is the conjunction of person and place. Eanua means place, or, more accurately, the place to which I belong and which belongs to me. However, the specific relation between person and place is governed by genealogy. Three important categories describe these relations.

Tanuwaga, as I glossed earlier, means 'landowner'. Landowner is part of a capitalist vocabulary and does not capture the relationship between a person and her eanua, which is fundamental to her identity. Nonetheless, for Suau and Tawala speakers, this is a common translation of tanuwuaga.

In any generation, the tanuwaga are the offspring of the women of the matriline, and they are the leaders/custodians of the eanua of their boga esega. All offspring of women become tanuwaga of the eanua of their mother. All the offspring of the women's brothers become natulea in relationship to their father's matrilineal eanua, although they are tanuwaga in their mothers' eanua. Massim matriliny is thus pragmatic and adaptive. Both matrilineal and patrilineal heirs possess land rights, however, the paramount and enduring authority is vested in the tanuwaga.[62]

To give a specific example, I am tanuwaga in my mother's mother's eanua, Bou. I am natulea in my mother's father's eanua at Wagawaga near Alotau. Since I have land at Wagawaga, I have to observe the rules laid down by the tanuwaga who, here, are the offspring of my grandfather's only sister, Oleva. Now, in 2017, the tanuwaga are the offspring of Oleva's daughters. In

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[61] In Tawala the word is taniwaga.

[62] Likewise in the Marshall Islands:

> It is important to note that within the *bwij*, both matrilineal and patrilineal heirs possessed land rights. However, primary permanent authority on the land was determined, possessed and passed down through the maternal line.

Kristina E. Stege, 2008, 'An kōrā aelōn̄ kein (These islands belong to the women)', in Elise Huffer (ed.), *Land and Women: The Matrilineal Factor. The Cases of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu*, Suva: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 11.

time, the tanuwaga role will be given to the children of Oleva's daughters' daughters.

This relationship of tanuwaga and natulea between my cousins and me exists only in relationship to Wagawaga. It does not exist outside of Wagawaga. The tanuwaga/natulea relationship is hierarchical but not a relationship of inequality.[63] The dominance is relational, since it pertains only to a specific eanua. In southern Massim matriliny hierarchies are not universally embedded—they are relational and contextual.

This matrilineal ethic also allows for the incorporation of strangers into a given eanua. Strangers who are given permission by the tanuwaga to settle in a particular eanua are designated as eogaeogaisini in the Suau language and telegeletana in the Tawala language. Recall my adventuring ancestor, Sipiniei, who crossed the Stirling Ranges multiple times?[64] She was designated telegeletana by the people who invited her to settle near them at Watunou. Only by fulfilling obligations towards the original custodians, which culminated in Sipiniei's daughters paying for the land they had settled on with the bagi that formed part of Sipiniei's wealth, did they become tanuwaga of the eanua where they had settled.

Since this thesis is about Kwato, I must mention that, for some Kwato people, missionisation has fractured the relationship between them and their matrilineal eanua.[65] Although never cut off completely from their kin, some of

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[63] See also Serge Tcherkézoff, 2009, 'Hierarchy is not inequality, in Polynesia for instance', in Knut M. Rio and Olaf H. Smedal (eds), *Hierarchy: Persistence and Transformation in Social Formations*, New York: Berghahn Books, 324.

Natulea status can also change if the tanuwaga determines that the contributions made by the natulea to tanuwaga obligations have been so great—described by the Suau phrase 'em haisagusagu I lai alili'—that the tanuwaga can never repay that assistance. This recognition allows the natulea to be buried in the tanuwaga's eanua and may involve other negotiable rights.

[64] Sipiniei makes her first appearance in the Prologue.

[65] See also Anne Kaniku, 1977, 'Religious confusion', *YAGL-AMBU: Papua New Guinea Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 4(4): 269.

the isibaguna and isimulita would raise their offspring to know only their paternal relations.

Although these relations are valuable and necessary to southern Massim personhood, the lack of familiarity with maternal kin ultimately meant a lack of knowledge of genealogy and oral history without which no claim can be made of any eanua. In other situations of fracture, it is because isibaguna or isimulita women were absent from the land and did not fulfil the obligations of the tanuwaga relationship, such as contributing to mortuary ceremonies. In the present, these contributions comprise cash and store goods, as well as pigs. As Anne Dickson Waiko pointed out to me:

> A woman may be tanuaga but she must be seen to exercise social, and economic standing/authority in her eanua. Yes, she will always have land but her standing in her matriline is somewhat extinguished due to overlooking her obligations.[66]

Despite these ruptures, it is unlikely that these isibaguna and isimulita intended for their children and grandchildren to be disinherited and quite likely that they envisaged that a western education for their children and access to white status and privilege would replace land as a means of inter-generational wealth transfer.[67] However, in general, the designation of tanuwaga through the inheritance of land gives southern Massim women economic and psychic security.

Massim relational autonomy in practice

> [C]onceptualising agents as emotional, embodied, desiring, creative, and feeling, as well as rational, creatures … has drawn attention to the connections among an agent's self-conception, her social context, and her capacities for autonomy. It is for this

[66] Email from Anne Dickson Waiko, 02 October 2017.

[67] Agnes R. Quisumbing and Keijiro Otsuka hypothesise the same in Quisumbing and Otsuka, 2001, 'Land inheritance and schooling in matrilineal societies: Evidence from Sumatra', *World Development* 29(12): 3093.

> reason that many relational approaches investigate the relationship between autonomy and feelings of self-respect, self-worth, and self-trust.[68]
>
> [In Vanatinai] [a]ssertiveness and autonomy are highly valued as personal qualities and equivalent for males and females.[69]

So what does autonomy look like in a different historical and cultural context?[70] Below I set out in historical order, some of the women who have made an appearance in this thesis, in order to demonstrate Massim relational autonomy.

Both women and men can transact and inherit land and wealth

Sipiniei made her first appearance in the Prologue. Highly mobile circa 1820, she had her own wealth and was able to transact in land and other trades. On her death, her wealth passed to her daughters.

Women's roles in peace and conflict

In 1887, Nibeta intervened in her husband's decision to wage war against the missionaries thus enabling the establishment of a London Missionary Society (LMS) station at Suau Island.[71] Likewise, in 1891, Bubusia prevented the Logea men from murdering Charles Abel making possible the establishment of Kwato Mission.[72]

Women have autonomy over their bodies

Around 1895 we see Pauline exercising autonomy. Refusing marriage to a Malay, she decides instead to join Kwato Mission. About the same time, Semi, the designated hasala (S, youthful beauty) of her matriline also joins the mission against the wishes of her clan.[73] Having autonomy over their own bodies meant

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[68] Mackenzie and Stoljar, 'Introduction: Autonomy refigured', 21–22.

[69] Lepowsky, 'Women, men, and aggression in an egalitarian society', 199.

[70] On relational autonomy in Africa see Polycarp Ikuenobe, 2015, 'Relational autonomy, personhood, and African traditions', *Philosophy East and West* 65(4).

[71] Nibeta first appears in Chapter 5, The Deep Past, then again in Chapter 6, The Dimdim. Women in the matrilineal Marshall Islands have the same power to initiate war and peace. See Stege, 'An kōrā aelōn̄ kein (These islands belong to the women)', 13.

[72] Bubusia first appears in Chapter 6, The Dimdim.

[73] See Chapter 7, The Tanuwaga.

that—outside of the mission—unmarried women (and unmarried men) were free to have sexual partners up to the time of marriage and women engaged in fertility management.[74]

Children have autonomy over their own bodies.

Throughout the first two decades of mission establishment, and often independently of their parents, children—such as Iosia Lebasi—chose where to live and who to live with, and whether to join or depart the mission. So independent were the children that the *New Guinea Tidings* once noted:

> [The Massim child] never acquires the habit of obedience. If his parents ask him to do something- against his will, he objects, and usually the matter ends there. A mother will excuse herself for having failed to send her little boy over to the mission to be doctored, by saying, 'I told him, but he would not hear.' Parents seldom punish their children unless they do it in anger. Thus the boys and girls grow up without correction.[75]

Autonomy in life choices

In the 1920s, Eabomai left the Kwato Mission to establish her own school at Dawadawa. Superwoman Dalai Kitalapu, who stayed in the mission, combined the roles of teacher, nurse, plantation manager, vocational trainer and station manager in 1929.[76] And in the 1930s, Alice Wedega, along with others adopted the Moral Re Armament practices of 'quiet time' and group sharing. With Merari Dickson and others, she took these practices outside of Kwato Island to influence the conversion of some 10,000 people across Milne Bay.

Two other Kwato women round out this section on autonomy in life choices. In 1942 nurse Mayogaru laid an injured Allied soldier in the bottom of her canoe, covered him with garden produce, and braved the Japanese to paddle 15 kilometres across Milne Bay to deliver the soldier to the Allied

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[74] For fertility management in the Trobriand Islands see Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*, 96.

[75] 'Child life in New Guinea', 1926, *New Guinea Tidings*, June, 11.

[76] Russell Abel, 1929, 'Papuans who preach Christ', *New Guinea Tidings*, October, 14.

hospital. From the 1950s, Ena Pita would establish institutions for women's rights under colonial conditions and continue this work post-independence.

Relational autonomy

From these few examples, we can see Massim women exercising their agential capacity from the early 1800s into the present. They were active in economic transactions and influencing outcomes in conflict and peace. We see also that Massim women exercise autonomy in their life choices and that women and men and children have autonomy over their own bodies. Their autonomy is derived from a group identity framed by the ideology of matriliny which promotes self-determination and an ethic of wonder. Their autonomy is also influenced by individual subjectivities in which self-worth and self-esteem are developed in conjunction with self-determination.

But, we know that Massim personhood is embedded in relationships within the matriline, with affinal kin, and with eanua. The autonomy that the Massim people exercise is, therefore, embedded in relationality. The awareness of the actual connections to others, as well as the need for these connections, is expressed in paired concepts such as tanuwaga and natulea, as well as in gender relationships.

Matrilineal relational autonomy and gender

That Massim women and men and girls and boys are able to exercise relational autonomy speaks to a relationship between the sexes that is not founded on either dominance or competition. It is, instead, a relationship of complementarity. Explaining this complementarity, Melissa Demian observes: 'Men's work and women's work are paired concepts because they are performed for each other and are categorically indebted to each other'.[77]

The origins of matriliny in Milne Bay may have derived from the evolutionary and adaptive considerations that I summarised above. However,

[77] Demian Melissa, 2000, 'Longing for completion: Toward an aesthetics of work in Suau', *Oceania* 71(2): 98.

these theories do not account for the widespread practice of adoption throughout contemporary Massim society, where nurture is dissociated from biological parenting. The evolutionary benefit of Massim matriliny may derive from biological facts but social facts and values, such as complementarity, are also critical.[78]

Across the Suau, Tawala and Ealeba regions matrilineages cannot function correctly, or endure, without both sexes. Since specific roles are attributed to men and women, completeness in adult social relationships can come only when both girls and boys comprise a family. Male and female children are equally desired due to gendered working relationships and an ideal family composition in the Suau context comprises two girls and one boy.[79] There is an imperative to have children of both sexes and adoption is undertaken as a strategy to achieve complementarity of sexes of children within a family.[80]

There is no hierarchy whereby men's work is more important than women's.[81] Men's work without women's work—as women's work without men's—is an incomplete state of affairs. Therefore, Massim families desire children of both sexes who will help their parents, care for them in old age, and preserve their memory into the future.[82] Brothers will help their sisters, husbands will help their wives, and across generations, boys will help their fathers and girls will help their mothers. This configuration of gender is described by Demian as: 'A set of notions about the necessity of having both

[78] In a piece on matrilineal kinship Chris Knight distinguishes between 'brute facts', by which I take it he means biological facts, and 'institutional' or 'social facts'. Birth and death are biological facts. Descent group membership is a social fact. Knight, 'Early human kinship was matrilineal', 61.

[79] Demian, 'Longing for completion', 96–97.

[80] Ibid., 95–96.

[81] Ibid., 94–109; Melissa Demian, 2006, '"Emptiness" and complementarity in Suau reproductive strategies', in Stanley J. Ulijaszek (ed.), *Population, Reproduction and Fertility in Melanesia*, New York: Berghahn Books; Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*, 75–83; Weiner, *Women of Value, Men of Renown*, 91–136.

[82] Demian, 'Longing for completion', 97.

men and women to do different work in order to maintain complementary pairs of relationships'.[83]

These statements could imply that marriage and the role of wife and husband are central to identity which would conflict with the statements I made above about some women choosing to remain unmarried. In a matriline, however, the most important cross-sex relationship is sister/brother and brothers continue to work for their sisters even after marriage.[84] Furthermore, a brother exists in the much wider sense of 'clan-brother', which, besides siblings from the same mother, includes all those males descended from a common female ancestor. Moreover, an unmarried woman can also abihelai, that is, adopt children.[85] Massim women's identities, therefore, do not rely primarily on being a wife.[86]

Through the discussion of southern Massim social concepts and through stories of individuals we see what relational autonomy means, and how it manifests, in an historical and cultural context that is not European. So how might we theorise southern Massim relational autonomy?

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[83] Demian, 'Longing for completion', 99.

[84] For example see: Martha Macintyre, 1983, 'Changing paths: An historical ethnography of the traders of Tubetube', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University, 224–71; 1989, 'The triumph of the Susu: Mortuary exchanges on Tubetube', in Frederick H. Damon and Roy Wagner (eds), *Death Rituals and Life in the Societies of the Kula Ring*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 133–52; Frederick H. Damon, 1983, 'Muyuw kinship and the metamorphosis of gender labour', *Man* (ns) 18(2); Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*, 77–78.

[85] Abihelai (S) is utilised as a noun and a verb. An abihelai often has limited rights in the eanua of the adopted mother but retains full rights in the eanu of her biological mother. In Tawara, an abihelai is woilata, or alunimawogo if adopted as a baby.

[86] This is also true in parts of Africa and African theorists have challenged western feminism on this point. See: Oyèrónkẹ́ Oyěwùmí, 1997, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2012, 'Conceptualizing gender: The Eurocentric foundations of feminist concepts and the challenge of African epistemologies', *African Gender in the New Millennium 7–10 April 2002*, Cairo, Egypt: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa; Nkiru Nzegwu, 2005, 'Feminism and Africa: Impact and limits of the metaphysics of gender', in Kwasi Wiredu (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Blackwell Publishing; 2006, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

For a first-person account of gender fluidity and woman as husband to many wives, see Eucharia Madueke, 2014, 'Equality or complementarity: Gender relations seen through African eyes', *Global Sisters Report*.

Theorising Massim relational autonomy

When descent and inheritance flow through the female, particular practices arise. In Massim sociality, girls and boys, men and women, are equally valued and each and all are necessary for a balanced functioning of family and society because of the types of relationships they hold to each other. Pluralism is valued.

Besides pluralism, another feature of this Massim ethic is that relational autonomy as a moral philosophy and a lived practice are the same thing. The concerns of theorists of relational autonomy—actors who are both emotional and rational, embodied but also psychically different, and the relevance of agents' emotional dispositions and attitudes—are evident in Massim sociality. Massim persons are agential because of the practices of matrilineal ethics and because of their individual subjectivities.

Collapsing the boundary between theory and practice is also the case for Native Americans. Native American philosophers have been of great value to me in thinking through Massim relational autonomy. This is unsurprising since I have always argued that we of the majority world—the majority world being Other to the European—have more in common with each other than the experience of being colonised.

The concept of wonder that I have proposed as the basis of a Massim ethic of communication and approach to difference also appears in a Native American ethics of communication.[87] Shay Welch also suggests that, compared to western feminist theory, Native American ethics is grounded in a radical-cum-relational autonomy.[88] It is radical because children are viewed as autonomous beings and because:

> [It] signif[ies] a pluralism that emerges from interdependency and fosters individuality … Imagination[,] wonder [and] respectfulness reflect, broadly, the core ethical virtues

[87] Shay Welch, 2013, 'Radical-cum-relation: Bridging feminist ethics and native individual autonomy', *Philosophical Topics* 41(2).

[88] Ibid., 203–204.

> at the heart of Native interaction and knowledge acquisition and, specifically, respectful self-determination in relations with others.[89]

Wonder and respectfulness, I have argued, formed the basis of the encounter between the Massim people and the dimdim. Matrilineal descent is combined with an ethic of communication which encompasses this wonder and reciprocity. Such an ethic of communication is also an approach to difference, an acknowledgment of pluralism and the diversity of human social life.

The Massim individual, from conception, is an autonomous *and* relational being.[90] Autonomy is encouraged through learning by engagement and participation in one's environment and is preferred to any practice which limits one's freedom to explore the world and generate one's own answers.[91] Because it is expected that individuals are autonomous decision-makers, and since a strong leader potentially compromises that autonomy, many Massim societies demonstrate diffused leadership and are often described by white observers as egalitarian.[92]

However, autonomy does not mean separation. Massim personhood is inconceivable without relationships giving rise to the vast and complex kinship networks that enabled the growth of the Kwato Mission. Massim personhood allows for individual identity and desires but, since an individual is embedded in a boga esega and in asa, sulu and eanua, it is also unimaginable that an individual will have no responsibilities.[93] In comparison to western feminism, this is a radical relational autonomy because, like Native American children, Massim children are also vested with relational autonomy.

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[89] Ibid., 216

[90] From conception since the gifting of names through haliesa can occur before a child is born.

[91] As for Native Americans, see Welch, 'Radical-cum-relation: Bridging feminist ethics and native individual autonomy', 216.

[92] Lepowsky, 'Women, men, and aggression in an egalitarian society'; *Fruit of the Motherland*, vii. Other Massim societies are described as hierarchical. See Mark S. Mosko, 2013, 'Omarakana revisited, or "do dual organizations exist?" in the Trobriands', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19(3): 482.

[93] Suau language: boga esega = matriline, asa = clan, sulu = totem for that clan, eanua =place of belonging.

Western feminism, although it acknowledges the importance of the social, is still very much concerned with the rights of the individual. Responsibility seems predominantly to be about the responsibility of society towards the individual. Approaches to relational autonomy in western feminism are largely focused on defining what comprises individual agency, how individual agency can be enhanced and how it should be exercised. Much less space is given to elucidating what individual responsibility means and how it should be exercised.

Indeed, the human rights discourse, which shapes the era in which we live, also invests more effort in defining individual rights than it does in explicating what human responsibilities are to other humans, to other life forms, and to the planet.

In Massim ethics rights are embedded in responsibilities. The tanuwaga who grants me land on her eanua bears a responsibility for my well-being as I do for hers. Mortuary rites across the Massim region are the most public means of acknowledging the responsibilities one has to fulfil because of the rights one has been granted.[94]

This matter of responsibilities is, for me, the major difference between western feminist relational autonomy and Massim radical relational autonomy. In the radical relational autonomy of Massim matriliny it is explicit that an individual who has rights is a person who has responsibilities. In the context of this thesis, the Massim people who gave land to build the Kwato Mission and the isibaguna who joined the Mission did so because they felt a responsibility to

[94] I have not written about Massim mortuary rites in this thesis. These were not practiced on Kwato and do not form part of the 'Kwato Way' since they were a highly visible manifestation of paganism, unlike, for example, alawai and balau practices which are not public spectacles, and so found their way into Kwato.

But see: Kuehling, *Dobu: Ethics of Exchange on a Massim Island, Papua New Guinea*, 229–79; Lepani, *Islands of Love, Islands of Risk*, 75–79; Maria Lepowsky, 1989, 'Death and exchange: Mortuary ritual on Vanatinai (Sudest Island)', in Frederick H. Damon and Roy Wagner (eds). *Death Rituals and Life in the Societies of the Kula Ring*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press; Macintyre, 'The triumph of the Susu: Mortuary exchanges on Tubetube', 133–52.

their children and grandchildren. They wanted the benefits of white mobility, power and privilege for their descendants.

Relevance to the contemporary

> Conceptualizations of problems that treat women in the developing world as abject victims stripped of agency lead to responses that prioritize the interveners' judgement about what these women need.[95]

Epeli Hau'ofa was long concerned with the attacks on the autonomy of the peoples of Oceania through a discourse of whiteness that first portrayed Oceanians as savages, in need of civilising through missionising and colonising. In the present era of developmentisation,[96] the narrative depicts our nation-states as insignificant, 'mired in dependency, indebtedness, and seemingly endless social fragmentation and political instability'.[97] Hau'ofa urges us to also consider that

> Is this not what neocolonialism is all about? To make people believe they have no choice but to depend? … Belittlement in whatever guise, if internalized for long, and

[95] Kate Cronin-Furman, Nimmi Gowrinathan and Rafia Zakaria, 2017, *Emissaries of Empowerment*, New York: Colin Powell Center for Civic and Global Leadership at City College, 6. The imperial feminism of white feminists is scrutinised under the tag 'Emissaries of Empowerment'. The authors analyse the depoliticisation of term 'empowerment'. In its original usage by Global South feminists it 'was a profoundly political project [which] has been co-opted into a long-standing history of efforts by white women in the West to "save" women in the developing world'. See Cronin-Furman, Gowrinathan and Zakaria, *Emissaries of Empowerment*, 1–2.

[96] I use 'developmentisation' to distinguish a process that is saturated with whiteness and neoliberal economics, from 'development' which is a process that many individuals and communities pursue over the course of a lifetime. My thinking in this area has been influenced, *inter alia*, by: Arturo Escobar, 2012, *Más allá del tercer mundo: Globalización y diferencia*, Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historía, 11–18; 2008, 'Development, trans/modernities, and the politics of theory', *Focaal* 2008(Winter): 129; 1995, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press; William Russell Easterly, 2006, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, New York: Penguin Press.

[97] Epili Hau'ofa, 1994, 'Our sea of islands', *The Contemporary Pacific* 6(1): 150.

> transmitted across generations, may lead to moral paralysis, to apathy, and to … fatalism.[98]

Many Papua New Guineans, including some Massim peoples, have already internalised that belittlement and now believe they are the savages they have been described to be by whiteness. If missionisation and colonisation did not transform them, then developmentisation will. But will it?

My interest in the concept of relational autonomy was triggered by that conversation in Kabul with my Afghan colleague who was puzzling over the differences between her religion and my culture, and the links with male domination and violence. She too, had subscribed to the narrative of the violent and savage Papua New Guinean man, peddled by missionaries, colonisers, and more recently by those in the development sector. I do not deny the existence of violence in PNG but I do find extremely problematic this very one-dimensional narrative projected on all Papua New Guinean men. As I mentioned at the start of this thesis I also find troubling the casting of Papua New Guinean women solely as victims. Examples of these portrayals come from the UNICEF and Human Rights Watch websites:

> The causes of such widespread violence are complex, but among the contributing factors are the country's traditional tribal practices, which relegate women to the status of chattel.[99]

> PNG is one of the most dangerous places in the world to be a woman or girl, with an estimated 70 percent of women experiencing rape or assault in their lifetime.[100]

Massim women are clearly not chattels nor do their 'traditional tribal practices' attribute to them a lower status. The Human Rights Watch does not give its source so there is no information on how they derived the figure of 70 per cent nor on the methodology used to collect the data. If true, then 70 per

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[98] Ibid., 150–52.

[99] Chris Niles, 2008, *UNICEF Strives to help Papua New Guinea Break Cycle of Violence*.

[100] Human Rights Watch, 2015, *Papua New Guinea Events of 2015*; See also Charlotte Alfred, 2016, 'The shocking reality of the sexual violence epidemic in Papua New Guinea', *Huffington Post*, 5 March.

cent of my female interlocutors should have experienced rape or assault. Yet only one assault was reported to me by an interlocutor, who was also a male nurse and it did not concern anyone of the 88 people in my sample population.

Aggregating data to present a national picture is an act of representation, and in a country with the extent of linguistic and cultural diversity of PNG, it can quickly become an act of misrepresentation. Again, this is not say that this should not be done, but there is an ethical requirement to attend to the relationship of power that underlies acts of representation by those in positions of dominance.

Once an anthropologist, Epeli Hau'ofa was led to say of the misrepresentations made by that discipline:

> We have contributed insufficiently in our professional writings towards redressing the distorted image of Melanesians [that anthropology has produced]. We have neglected to portray them as rounded human beings who love as well as hate, who laugh joyously as well as quarrel, who are peaceful as well as warlike, and who are generous and kindly as well as mean and calculating.[101]

The narratives of developmentisation, like those of the anthropology of which Hau'ofa writes, also present an extremely distorted view of Massim Papua New Guineans and these portrayals led me to ask, à la Lila Abu-Lughod, do Massim women need saving?[102] In view of Massim radical relational autonomy I would argue not, and certainly not in the vein of the white man's or white woman's burden which portrays Other cultures as childlike and naïve, whilst, paradoxically, also savage and demonic, and in need of redemption through whiteness.[103]

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[101] Epeli Hau'ofa, 2008, *We are the Ocean: Selected Works*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 7.

[102] Lila Abu-Lughod, 2002, 'Do Muslim women really need saving? Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others', *American Anthropologist Ethics Forum: September 11 and Ethnographic Responsibility* 104(3).

[103] Aileen M. Moreton-Robinson, Maryrose Casey and Fiona Nicoll, 2008, 'Introduction: Virtue and transnational whiteness', in Aileen M. Moreton-Robinson, Maryrose Casey and Fiona Nicoll (eds), *Transnational Whiteness Matters*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

However, as Diane Meyers warns:

> Recognizing that autonomy is possible despite structures of domination and subordination is no reason for complacency. On the contrary, to advocate expanded opportunities for autonomy is to endorse significant social and economic change.[104]

The question 'do Massim women need saving?' is, therefore, a different query to questions about economic justice such as: 'Is there a moral obligation to assist in economic development towards parity in global distribution of wealth when history demonstrates how global wealth accumulation and distribution is skewed to whiteness?'[105]

Social justice, as I have argued, is also a question of epistemic plurality. The current discourse of developmentisation is constructed through, and constrained by, the politics of nation-states entwined with global governance institutions. But, these institutions have all been generated from whiteness, historically projected as a universal and superior way of being in, and knowing,

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> Virtue, the claiming of a morally superior position that at the same time denies any moral authority to others, functions as a usable property or currency that is deployed to support, defend and perpetuate white dominance (x).

On how virtue and imperial white feminism function in the present see Cronin-Furman, Gowrinathan and Zakaria, *Emissaries of Empowerment*, 1–17; Jawad Syed and Faiza Ali, 2011, 'The white woman's burden: From colonial *civilisation* to Third World *development*', *Third World Quarterly* 32(2).

On how aid and development perpetuate the myth of the white wo/man's burden see Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*.

[104] Meyers, 'Intersectional identity and the authentic self', 153.

[105] Sundhya Pahuja, 2011, *Decolonising International Law: Development, Economic Growth, and the Politics of Universality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sundhya Pahuja's deconstruction of international law demonstrates that, despite its promise to equality, it has failed to deliver for the majority world. Examining the impact of the rule of law on three narratives, that of decolonisation and the creation of the developmental nation state; that of the protection given to foreign investors in lieu of the claim to Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources; and that of the 'internationalisation of the *rule of law* as a development strategy [author's emphasis]' (3), she finds a contradictory duality of purpose, at once 'regulatory and emancipatory … imperial and anti-imperial' (45) which have had the consequence of legitimising increased intervention in the domestic affairs of majority world countries by the West (254) and embedding a dynamic under which each time the Third World or its champions make an attempt to capture the potential offered by the asserted universality of international law, that attempt is subsumed by a ruling rationality which operates in terms of a claim to universality (47).

the world. And the types of development interventions that are pursued from these core premises are also modelled on the culture of whiteness even in places, like PNG, where whiteness is not the norm.

Commenting on the absence of women in parliament following the 2017 elections in PNG, Fiona Hukula's plea is that we need to rethink how we frame gender in PNG:

> As Papua New Guineans, we need to ask ourselves the hard questions such as, should we be talking about getting women into parliament in terms of gender equality and participation or should we be talking about what makes a good leader? Also, when we talk about getting women into parliament, are we using the right language when addressing different audiences?[106]

This is precisely the argument of this thesis. Rethinking the idea of gender in PNG means first of all, understanding what gender and what equality and what gender equality actually mean across the myriad of linguistic groups that comprise the nation, before defining what gender equality means for the nation, and what form gender equality and social inclusion programming should take. As Hukula points out, we Papua New Guineans know, and the evidence is there (as well as in this thesis) that women are leaders in their communities and in local level politics. At the community level, Milne Bay women have roles in conflict and in peace, they formulate and act upon their life choices, they accumulate wealth and they inherit land. Land provides all Milne Bay women a means of participation in political decision-making.[107] Land is a source of independence.[108]

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[106] Fiona Hukula, 2017, 'PNG after the elections: Reimagining the future by reflecting on the past', *DevPolicyBlog*, 2.

[107] So too in Micronesia:

> Land provides Marshallese women with a critical platform in a modern political environment dominated by men. At the national level, there has never been more than a one female senator serving in the 33-member parliament at any given time.

See Stege, 'An ko̅ra̅ aelo̅n̅ kein (These islands belong to the women)', 19. Since January 2016, Hilda Heine has been President of the Marshall Islands.

[108] As for women in Malawi:

But what happens in PNG in the shift from local to provincial and national politics? What norms of gender, and whose norms of gender, operate at the level of the State? How do these norms influence policy?

Let's take the matter of land custodianship which is not a factor in the autonomy of white women, although property alienated through title, is recognised as economically empowering.[109] Perhaps this is why the gender and development discourse across Oceania and Africa has historically been less interested in this particular configuration of person and place, which culminates in relational autonomy. If the discourse has its roots in whiteness it will fail to recognise the components and practices of power and self-determination that are generated from this different historical and social background. Likewise, if the praxis is based on the implicit or unconscious bias that the desire of the majority world person to be white is an ontological and epistemological certainty then development practitioners will ignore, wilfully or otherwise, factors which do not conform to practices of whiteness. Indeed,

> Empowerment-based interventions arise in part out of a failure to take women in the developing world seriously as subjects. [White, imperial feminists] undertake programming that further undermines [non-Western] women's agency.[110]

In this, development practitioners further resemble those white missionaries who did not see the invisible structure of matriliny that gave Massim women

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> [T]he findings give reason to question narratives common to development that view household-headship and responsibility for farm labor as disempowering for women, rather than understanding them as potential sources of independence when they co-occur with cultural gender norms that endorse women's rights to control their own property and wealth.

See Jennifer L. Kuzara, 2014, 'Shifting roles in gender, kinship, and the household: Women's empowerment in matrilineal Malawi', PhD thesis, Emory University, 4.

[109] International finance and development agencies, such as the World Bank, claim that the commodification of land is empowering for women. However, that is an assumption of whiteness which flows from the belief that majority world peoples desire to be culturally white. I have already demonstrated that the Massim do not desire this. Moreover, there is evidence in Oceania that land commodification is not empowering for women. See Siobhan McDonnell, 2016, 'My land my life: Property, power and identity in land transformations in Vanuatu', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.

[110] Cronin-Furman, Gowrinathan and Zakaria, *Emissaries of Empowerment*, 17.

power in their domain, because it was so different to their own ideas of both actual and normative gender and kinship relations.

Hukula rightly questions whether merely counting the number of women in parliament can ever be an accurate barometer of PNG women's participation in decision-making spaces. So much focus on this sole indicator has the effect of so narrowing the field of vision that we fail to see the myriad of ways in which women do act as decision-makers.[111] Moreover, by relegating these to the perimeter and out-of-sight, we send a signal that all these other ways in which women exercise their power are unimportant, and the only credible and relevant way in which power can be exercised is by being in parliament.[112] Through this narrow lens, the discourse of PNG women's lack of decision-making ability and power, just as the narrative of PNG men's violent tendencies, become self-fulfilling prophecies.

The relations of land custodianship are critical to women's relational autonomy in Milne Bay, as it is in Bougainville, and probably a strong factor in the other matrilineal provinces of New Britain and New Ireland.[113] Yet, no part of the gender and development discourse on PNG acknowledges it, or acts upon it, to protect and strengthen the relational autonomy of the people of these regions. The charge that this would be positive discrimination against women is without merit since, in the Massim region, I have provided evidence that women and men have equal access to wealth and both participate in political

[111] For critiques of the indicator culture, see Kevin E. Davis, Benedict Kingsbury and Sally Engle Merry, 2012, 'Indicators as a technology of global governance', *Law & Society Review* 46(1); Sally Engle Merry, 2011, 'Measuring the world: Indicators, human rights, and global governance: with CA comment by John M. Conley', *Current Anthropology* 52(S3).

[112] Women in parliament is but one aspect of a strong framework for equality and social inclusion. A strong civil society is also a requirement. See Jacqui True, Nicole George, Sara Niner and Swati Parashar, 2014, *Women's Political Participation in Asia and the Pacific*, Conflict Prevention and Peace Forum CPPF Working Papers on Women in Politics: No. 3.

[113] Ruth Saovana-Spriggs and Maev O'Collins, 2003, 'Australian aid in the South West Pacific insider/outsider perspectives', State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, Working Paper 2003/1, The Australian National University, 1–25; Ruth Vatoa Saovana-Spriggs, 2007, 'Gender and peace: Bougainvillean women, matriliny, and the peace process', PhD thesis, Canberra: The Australian National University.

and economic management. Moreover, girls and boys are also recognised to be relationally autonomous.

Of course, this is not to say that increasing women in parliament is not a worthy and important goal. But, in the context of PNG, is it the most important? Is it not as important to strengthen women's political participation in local and provincial levels of government? Is it not *most important* to encourage women to continue to exercise relational autonomy in whatever their domain is, instead of destroying it? Should we not, as Hukula demands, be asking how the global language of gender equality translates across the multiple environments that comprise PNG, and how we might vernacularise it so that it is more meaningful?

The conceit that brown and black people want to be white is an implicit premise of developmentisation, as it was for missionisation. Embedded in this implicit premise is the devaluation of indigenous ideas of women's roles and women's work, which can ultimately lead to the devaluation of indigenous women because they do not conform to whiteness. However, in this thesis I have demonstrated that missionisation in southern Milne Bay was possible to the extent it occurred only because the Massim people made it possible. But, I have also established that these brown people had no desire to be white although they were open to the prospect of reinventing themselves if it served their objectives. They were able to reinvent themselves, first, because they recognised an image of themselves in the arrival of the foreign. But, they also made reinvention possible by translating the foreign into their own language and experience. The Massim people developed the mission by leveraging their kinship networks, and by continuing the practice of abihelai (S, adoption) and caring for the children of kin they continued the norm that positions parenting as a social, not merely biological, role.

The isimulita did not achieve the outcomes the ancestors envisaged, but the ancestors could not have known that engaging with whiteness would draw them into a space and time of white supremacy. But, there is no teleology of progress of human social life. Empires have come and gone. So too have other

Homo species. The *rueda* of life dances on—the pairs change, the choreography changes, but the wheel itself keeps rotating.

And the choreography has changed. We have an advantage our ancestors lacked. We are now witness to half a millennium of the destructive tendencies of whiteness and the pernicious effects on majority world cultures and peoples. Our ancestors vernacularised missionisation and Christianity. The time is overdue for us to vernacularise development and gender and to assert more strongly the legitimacy of our own ways of knowing and being.

Epilogue

1 September 2017

Salaam Alaikum H,

It is now some seven years since our conversation in the back of that armoured 4 x 4 driving us through the streets of Kabul in which you made a casual connection between religion, culture and gender relations. Intrigued by your comment, I have devoted much of the last half-decade to the investigation of the specific practices of social justice and gender equality employed by the different generations of the Massim people of Kwato. In employing a decolonial methodology I have demonstrated how very different history and personhood appears from a majority world perspective.

More so than other missionaries of the time, London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary Charles Abel set out to remake the Massim person. He writes of taking children away from their villages to raise and educate them in exclusion on Kwato Island. Abel's account of his work in Milne Bay, as well as the hagiographies by his son Russell Abel and family friend Nancy Lutton in her MA thesis, and to a lesser extent David Wetherell in his biography, depict Abel as omnipotent in his relations with Massim peoples.

In Wetherell's illuminating account, Abel is portrayed as being intent on securing a dynastic succession.[1] Too independent to be constrained by LMS regulations, he parted company with them in 1918. At secession Kwato had 560 members. At Abel's death in 1931 there were 880 members.[2] Some eight years later Kwato could claim 10,000 mission supporters.[3] But by 1951 internal

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[1] David Wetherell, 1986, 'An elite for a nation? Reflections on a missionary group In Papua New Guinea, 1890–1986', *Pacific Studies* 9(1–2): 9, 10. See also, David Wetherell, 1996, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press

[2] Wetherell, *Charles Abel and the Kwato Mission of Papua New Guinea 1891–1975*, 217.

[3] Ibid.

conflicts precipitated a decline and by 1965 the organisation that Abel, Walker and numerous Massim people had created in 1891 had been absorbed by the larger United Church. Kwato Church did regain its independence a decade later but that is another story.

I argue, and I demonstrate, that the mission grew its membership through the kin and trade networks of the missionised Massim pioneers, the isibaguna. I demonstrate that the phenomenal growth following Abel's death was a result of particular techniques that resonated highly with Massim ideas of relational autonomy. And I also demonstrate that the Mission declined partly as a result of the withdrawal of support by influential Massim people.

As befits a matrilineal society, women were highly influential in the formation of Kwato Mission. Indeed, Massim radical relational autonomy is an ethics which produces people who have rights and responsibilities, the principles of which have served to reduce inequality and injustice, including violence, between Massim women and men, boys and girls.

To acknowledge Massim peoples as agents rather than victims challenges so many ingrained racial stereotypes. This includes your conception of the violent Papua New Guinean man as representative of all Papua New Guinean men.

At the level of global institutions social justice requires that we think through what an ethics of difference means in a world of seven billion *Homo sapiens*. But how can we think about difference meaningfully when the ideal of the universal holds so much sway? The ideal of human rights and gender equality, because it is so embedded in the assumptions and interests of whiteness, can actually be an impediment to emancipatory struggles.[4] Ways of being and ways of knowing that are not generated from whiteness have historically been labelled backward and irrational. In the contemporary, this

[4] On the contested space of human rights see the collection of papers in Gurminder K. Bhambra and Robbie Shilliam, 2009, *Silencing Human Rights: Critical Engagements with a Contested Project*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

labelling takes the form of telling majority world peoples that we are in need of being developed. I maintain that, as people, we are not undeveloped nor do our cultures need wholesale transformation to concur with whiteness.

I will finish now with this observation. Marcel Mauss was so taken by the idea of gifts and reciprocity across Oceania and in Native American societies that he wrote *The Gift*, a work that had a profound impact in its time. Indeed, in a recent reissue, editor Florence Weber suggests that this work deeply influenced the formation of the French social security system.[5] Interestingly, of the societies from which Mauss drew ethnographic details, four are matrilineal, one of them the Massim, the other three Native American.[6] I propose that feminism, and contemporary society and the discourse of human rights and gender equality, have much more to learn from the majority world in general and matrilineal sociality in particular.

Khuda hafez

Salmah Eva-Lina

[5] Nicholas Olivier, 2008, *Marcel Mauss, Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, Lectures: Presses universitaires de France.

[6] Marcel Mauss, 1969, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London: Cohen & West, 19, 32.

Appendix 1. Suau Glossary

Suau	English
abihelai	to adopt, adoptee
adidili	strength
agutoi	thank you
aiyoni	farewell
alotau	bay
atohi	thatch roofing made from sago palm leaves
bagi	traditional currency, often metres long, worn looped from shoulder to opposite hip today worn in a single strand choker
bauri	north wind
bilibili	wall tiles made from the trunk of the sago palm
bolibolima	south-easterly trade wind
damuni	tide flowing out of Milne Bay. Damuni and nawa (S) are the currents that flow through the China Strait, into the bay and around the islands. A good sailor knows to ride nawa into the bay and to travel out of the bay to the islands with damuni. They also refer to high tide and low tide, respectively.
daumori	calm seas
dimdim	foreigner, horizon, person from the horizon, white person
ealasi	south-westerly trade wind
eanua	conjunction of person and place, land that belongs to me and where I belong
eauwedo	greeting
gadosisi	love
galiauna	gravediggers who must perform a cleansing ceremony after the burial.
gama, tau	boy
gana'aro	Kwato usage – inside the fence, referring to those raised in the missionised space
ganamuri	Kwato usage – outside the fence, referring to non-missionised people
gigibori	hot, heat, prestige, prestigious
hasala	young woman
hewali	young man
isibaguna	those who went first; the pioneering Massim people of Kwato.

isimulita	those who came after; the succeeding generations of Massim people of Kwato.
kaleko	calico, sarong
kamkam	chicken
kapole	exclamation of nostalgia for person, place, or situation
laugagaeo	law
lauhe'a'a	to clean. Also mortuary ritual in which the deceased's spouse and children are released from the period of mourning and thenceforth free to resume their daily routines.
mahana	sun
mana	wind
maniota	cassava
mata'asi	mortuary feasts
natu	child
natulea	the offspring of the male siblings in a given family and given eanua
nawa	tide flowing into Milne Bay
numa	house
sae eno	bridewealth exchange
sine, sisine	woman, women
sinebada, sinesinebada	woman elder, women elders
siu, sine	girl
sugelu	pumpkin
tano	land that is merely soil; no belonging as in eanua
tanuwaga	the offspring of the female siblings in a given family and given eanua. Popularly translated as landowner. Also means master, custodian, boss.
tau, tatau	man, men
taubada, tataubada	man elder, men elders
tautaugen	male orphan
tintingen	female orhpan
tubu, bubu	ancestor, grandparent
udo	taro
yama	fish

Gender-neutral pronouns

ea, eau	I, me
ia	he, she
isi	they
oa	you

Kinship terms

bada	uncle who is mother's brother
bubu	grandparent
madia(gu)	uncle who is father's brother
natu(gu)	(my) child
sina(gu)	(my) mother, aunt who is mother's sister (see also tauhelabasigu)
tama(gu)	(my) father
tauhelabasi(gu)	(my) birth mother
tubu, tubugu	ancestor or descendant depending on context, my grandchild
waha	great-grandparent
yaya(gu)	aunt who is father's sister

Appendix 2. List of Interlocutors

First name	Last name	née
Aba	Lebasi	Mark
Alimita	Baroa	Mark
Anne	Dickson-Waiko	Dickson
Ataia	Andrew	
Balau		
Beatrice from Garuahi		
Benny	Bagolai	
Bessie	Tabua	Lebasi
Biga	Lebasi	
Bolasa		
Daisy	Philip	
Dalai	Farrow	Maniana
Diambo	Ietero	
Dieselo		
Dilego (Josephine)	Bagolai	
Dilikoi	Dickson	
Dineheilo	Lawrence	Dickson
Dirona	Lebasi	
Ena	Pita	
Eva	Wamaram	
Gadi	Jonathan	
Gari	Kumaina	Pita
Gologota	Nanumea	
Harry	Dickson	
Hetei	Dickson	
Hilo from Logea		
Hilton from Garuahi		
Ilinome	Tarua	
Isaiah	Pita	
Ivilosi Jack	Maniana	
James	Bagolai	
Julius	Violaris	

Kalewasi from Gumine	(Balau Lobai's	granddaughter)
Ken	Misigai	
Koipili	Samuel	
Lapa	Daure	
Lato	Bonarua	
Lediwa	Dickson	
Legu	Lee	Bate
Lenah	Dawanincura	Dickson
Lendia	Leheboti	
Liasi	Tarua	Maniana
Mabel	Daure	
Magolele	Doilegu	?
Mai	Maddox	Samuel
Maori	Tabua	Mark
Mareko	Dickson	
Mari	Keni	
Maria	Ariansen	Sioni
Marianna	Ellingson	Sioni
Marie	Liddle	Saulo
Matatia	Nanumea	
Morris	Alaluku	
Mose	Lebasi	
Nancy	Wamaram	Doilegu
Nua	Teloti	
Pastor Jeffrey	Mimigina	
Pastor Mika	Arioka	
Pastor Rima	Doboela	
Paulina	Peter	
Pauline	Fox	Bona
Poniu	Alan	
Robert	Igara	
Ruamai	Evi	Philip
Sabita	?	Nanumea
Safua	Mataio	
Wikili	Mataio	
Salesi	Maniana	

Sam	Andrew	
Sheldon	Andrew	
Sinalele (Kedu)	Bagolai	
Susan	Tiraka	Frank
Thomas	Lisenia	
Vilia	Lawrence	
Wasalebo	Doilegu	
Wiko	Bonarua	

Bou Women's Group

Didileia	Poi
Goini	Tapeneto
Hinageleduau	Tokania
Sheena	Freddy
Sinepi	Dagu
Atelen	Graham
Milia	Roro
Miriam	Inman
Wikili	Lukiso

Contacted but not able to be interviewed.

Bitali	Andrew
Bonalei	Lebasi
Sir Kina	Bona

Appendix 3. Sae'eno

31 December 2014

Lato Bonarua drops me off at Nulisapi Resort around 10:30 a.m. There's a flurry of activity on the beach. A 'bride price' Lato explains, between the Magaituha of Logea Island and the Miagudu of Bonaruahilihili Island.[1] The ceremony turns out to be that of Isaiah's youngest brother. [Isaiah Mwado is a partner in the Nulisapi Resort]. I join the Nulisapi party, which besides Isaiah and his family consists of business partner Kayleigh and three Australian volunteers who are guests at the resort. Family, of course, means extended family. The groom is a member of the same boga esega, being the son of Isaiah's mother's sister. He is therefore Isaiah's brother.

Seven pigs are loaded onto the assembled dinghies, strapped tightly onto frames carried by six or eight men. Sacks of rice and other store goods are also loaded. The twin engine Nulisapi dinghy leads the way, a man standing in the bow blowing a conch. We convoy down the Kwato-Logea channel, six dinghies, one carrying the musicians comprising two guitarists and a host of singers, all making music as we approach Bonaruahilihili.

The bride's mother's gifts are taken up the hill first and we follow, the bride's father's gifts coming behind us. There is merry-making as the bride's brother has donned a skirt and sunglasses, and has a beer in hand dancing to the band, parodying his city-living sister. The Australian volunteers observe that it is similar to their custom of speech-making at the wedding reception where the bride and groom are teased. We assemble in a clearing in front of the house. The band plays until the speeches commence.

The first speech is made by a spokesperson chosen by the groom's family, Kabasi Didi. [Thomas Lisenia later explained to me that Kabasi Didi was an affine, being married to the sister of the groom. In Thomas' words 'Customarily,

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[1] Bonaruahilihili, means the circular motion of the current that passes this island on its passage through the China Straits.

the uncle of the groom should be rightfully speaking for the nephew, however, modernisation is starting to erode these practices. Now clans can choose the best orator to speak of their behalf.']

Then Isaiah's father speaks. The third to speak is the groom himself, although he is actually the husband, since they've been married a number of years and have several children. At the end of his speech, the groom presents bagi to the bride's eldest sibling, a brother, then to the bride's mother, draping it over their heads. Then there are speeches by the bride's side led by Thomas Lisenia, brother of the bride's mother. Then a prayer by the church councillor. I am surprised that no woman speaks, not even the bride's mother. The speeches are all in the Logea language. But each of the men stressed a similar message—that of the equal importance of the ceremony of a customary marriage exchange ceremony such as this, to a civil or church wedding. Every single one of them iterated this theme. They also stressed gadosisi, love. The church councillor, however, made much of woman being made from the rib of man, being weaker and needing man's adidili, strength. But even his prayer noted the importance of man and woman complementing each other.

Then all guests formed a queue to shake hands and congratulate the wedding party—bride, groom, and their elders. Following this refreshments were served—home-made bread, and a cake that I think was presented to the bride's mother by the groom, just after he gave her the bagi. The Logea language is closely related to the Suau language but I occasionally have difficulty following it.

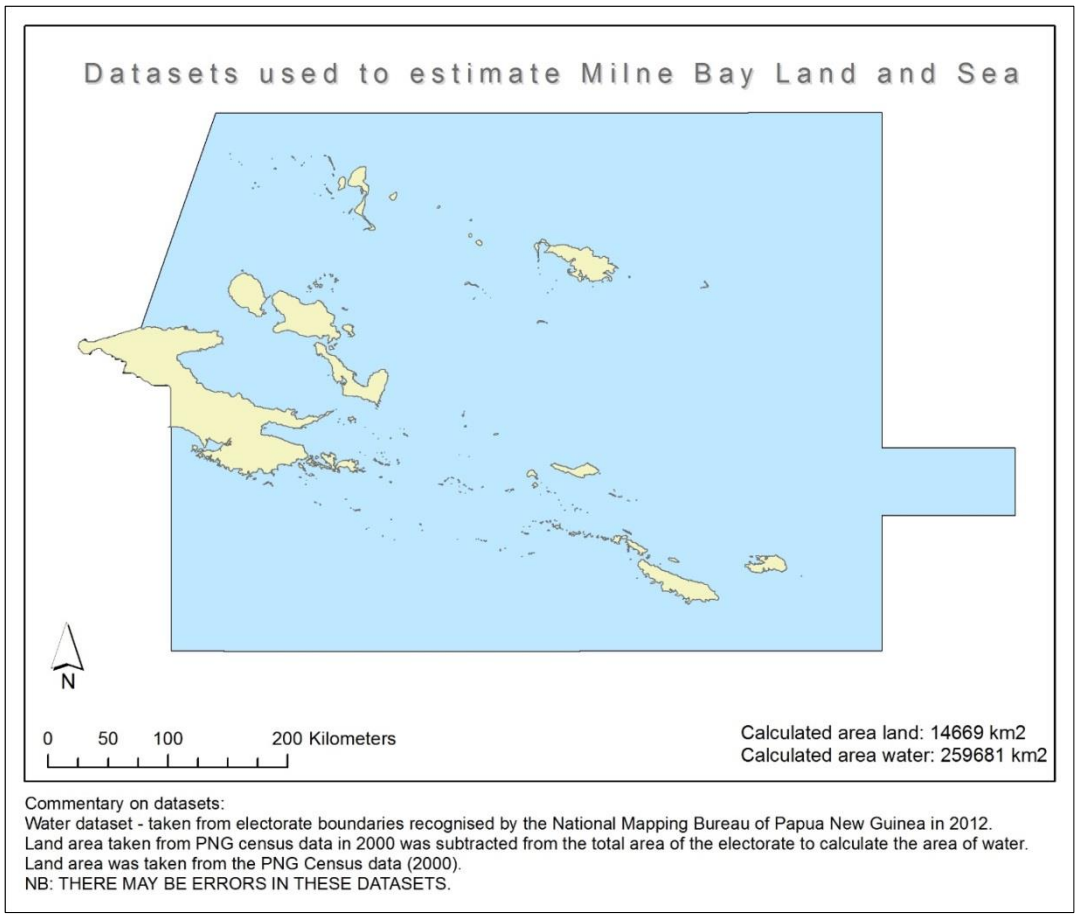
This marriage exchange ceremony, a sae'eno, was held at the request of the groom's mother, the head of their matriline—Isaiah's mother—who wanted to settle accounts before her death. Her poor health did not permit her attendance at Bonaruahilihili. Part of the groom's speech was to say that his family's gifts were not given from haidebasai (pride or vanity) but from gadosisi (love).

As a hot meal was served, the band started up again. I requested everybody's perennial favourite, Kumi Andrew's ' Oea ne nige asuna' popularly known by the first line of the first verse, 'Asubena esau eai'. The band launch into it with enthusiasm and soon everybody is singing along, even dimdim Kayleigh. Then the women who are serving the refreshments start a sing-off as they launch into peroveta. Peroveta is a style of gospel singing introduced to the Papuans by the South Sea Islander missionaries. Although it lacks the hand-clapping of African-American gospel, it generates heightened emotion and passion through the complement of soprano and alto to tenor and bass, in a call and response format, with occasional foot-stomping. The string band is all male, the peroveta singers mainly female but with a male or two to provide bass.

The counter-offering which makes Milne Bay marriage ceremonies an exchange rather than a 'bride price' as Thomas Lisenia stressed to the Australian volunteers, happened, on this occasion, on the same day. All the seven pigs brought over by the husband's people are to be gifted back, but all gifts are first recorded by Thomas in a green and white book. The counter-offering is taking place immediately, he explains, because there is currently no water on the island, therefore, slaughtering pigs, and even keeping them, is an impossibility. The recording is to ensure all obligations are acknowledged so that all debts may eventually be repaid or support provided to those who have assisted in this event.

We leave about 3.30pm, before the counter-offering occurs.

Appendix 4. Milne Bay Province Area Estimates



Map 8. Milne Bay Province area estimates
Source. © Prepared by CartoGIS, CAP, The Australian National University, November 2017

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