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Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain: Articulating Gendered Historicities between Mortuary Time and Archival Space[1]

Nayahamui Michelle Rooney

Website
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Introduction

The unfortunate thing about documentation is that it becomes a permanent record and we're held against that. Sometimes, I am offended, I, visiting some foreign country and someone will give to me, pick up a quotation from one of Margaret Mead's and because I'm from Manus, I'm supposed to say yes that's true or that's the way we're still living there today. (Nahau Rooney in Gullahorn-Holecek and Dee 1983: timestamp 00:12:17–00:12:40)

History in Papua New Guinea, however, moves very rapidly and before I could settle into the new ministry I found myself an opposition backbencher. … my attention was directed more towards party politics and election strategies. It is at the election time that being a woman is perhaps the most contentious. My achievements and the controversy of my ministry days were not, in fact, election in issues in the way that I had expected. The biggest challenge came from educated men who seemed to think that it somehow reflected on their 'manliness' that I, a mere woman, had achieved fame and recognition. It was in this second campaign that the question of whether it was right for a woman to lead became an issue. (Rooney 1985:44–45)

[Margaret Mead] never made it clear as to what she was studying. This is true of most anthropologists. Most of them come to study a preconceived idea of what they want to find out. … If what they find does not fit their hypothesis, then they "make up" the community. They force the description of the community in such a way so that they can collect the data. … These villagers became guinea pigs … Moreover, she did not adequately acknowledge the relationship between the community and herself. (Nahau Rooney in Gilliam 1992a:41–42)

Nahau Elizabeth Kambuou Rooney,[2] a Manus, Papua New Guinean woman whose words I quote to open this paper, was one of the 10 female politicians who have successfully contested Papua New Guinea's (PNG) national elections since it gained independence in 1975. As her generation passes away, PNG faces challenges about how to preserve their stories as part of its national heritage. PNG's Constitutional Planning Committee's (CPC) Report (1974) included eight national aims known as the Eight-Point Improvement Plan which have endured as a guiding set of principles for the country's national planning processes. The seventh of these national aims is 'a rapid increase in the active and equal participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity' (CPC 1974: ch 2, para 7). The CPC report highlights that in traditional society all people, including women, exercise leadership in their different capacities (CPC 1974: ch 2, para 10). It recognises the increasing role that women play in national political affairs and the need to remove all barriers to women's engagement in the nation's political arena (CPC 1974: ch 2, para 59). Yet nearly 50 years later, only 10 women have ever been elected to PNG's national parliament: Dame Josephine Abaijah, Waliyato Clowes, Nahau Rooney, Dame Carol Kidu, Loujaya Kouza, Delilah Gore, Julie Soso, Kessy Sawang, Rufina Peter and Francesca Semoso. Women face challenges and exercise varied agencies in the diverse cultural and state political spheres that characterise PNG society (see for example Baker 2019; Dickson-Waiko 2003; Haley and Zubrinich 2018; Meki 2022; Rooney 1985; Sepoe 1998; Tararia 2022).

Nahau Rooney's words capture the fraught articulation between documented records and Indigenous people's ways of knowing the past; between a cultural political arena dominated by men and the contested issue of women and power; and between the anthropological or historian outsider scholar and the people they study. In this paper, I examine how these gendered articulations of women and political power are important for telling the stories of PNG's national

heritage as they relate to the CPC's aim of the active and equal participation of women. This is important because of the paucity of documentation of PNG women's historical experiences, including women's engagement in the political arena (Dickson-Waiko 2013).

Nahau Rooney's death in Port Moresby on 15 September 2020 set in motion a series of events culminating in her post-burial mortuary ceremony in Manus one month later. Such mortuary events can be understood as spaces where moral communities express their grief and engage in dialogue reflecting their positions in a changing world (Silverman and Lipset 2016:1). For example, Nahau Rooney's *haus krai* — the Tok Pisin idiom for the place and period of mourning in contemporary PNG — involved delays, adjustments and dialogue about how best to proceed in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (Rooney 30/3/2021). As Bablis (2020) discusses in relation to the *haus krai* of prominent PNG leader Bernard Narokobi, mortuary rituals of PNG leaders reflect their leadership and relationships across various spheres of contemporary PNG society. From a women's perspective, Nahau's *haus krai* also occasioned an opportunity for women leaders to advocate to the prime minister for affirmative action to support women's political engagement (Tekwie and Rooney 6/8/2021). Such dialogue includes contested narratives of memory, history and heritage which, as Hartog (2015) and Salesa (2014) suggest, catalyse articulations between past, present and future time. Nahau's caution about documentation and the rapidly moving gendered political history of PNG exemplifies Greg Dening's argument that a 'poetic for histories' is needed to capture all forms of culturally specific 'public knowledge of the past' (Dening 1991:348). Indigenous people's notions of history and time are not just parts of broader notions of time or history, as conceived by white outsiders. They are rather to be understood on their own terms, in their own contexts, engaging distinct historicities. With the colonial arrival, these different pre-existing understandings of time now articulate with written forms of history (Salesa 2014; Waiko 1992). Thus, beyond documentation, historicity includes things like oral, performative and sensorial forms of knowledge that 'exist in the present and are remade in the act of their communication' (Ballard 2014:96). It may include memories because, unlike written history, 'there are as many collective memories as there are groups, each of which has its own sense of duration' (Hartog 2015:122). In addition, by contrast to written history which is external to an event, 'memory, since it is within the event, primarily involves not going outside of it, remaining within it and going back over it from the inside' (Péguy cited in Hartog 2015:128). It is not just who remembers and who or what is remembered but also *how* the past is remembered (Salesa 2014). I draw on these different conceptual approaches and the idea that historicity is 'a human situation in flow, where versions of the past and future (of persons, collectives or things) assume present form in relation to events, political needs, available cultural forms and emotional dispositions' (Hirsch and Stewart 2005:262). Events themselves, such as those that occurred during Nahau's death are artefacts of history, revealing the past, present and future in terms of the meanings attached to them by those who participate in and bear witness to them (Rooney 2022; Strathern 2021). Nahau's words also point to the asymmetric power between anthropologists and 'their' subjects and the need to problematise the role of anthropological study in shaping what constitutes history or knowledge about the past.

Taking historicity as relational and always in motion, how might we then go about the preservation of PNG's national heritage or memory as it relates to the CPC's nation-state vision of advancing women? This question suggests that a gendered historicity is needed. I explore this through two related processes that I refer to as Nahau's 'mortuary time' and 'archival space'. Both involve time and space, but I distinguish between them to highlight the multiple dimensions and forms of knowledges about the past. I define mortuary time as a relational process when death catalyses individual and collective reflections on the past, present and future. By contrast, I define archival space as a relational space that epitomises an attempt to apprehend time in documented form and contain it in a particular kind of space. These frames enable me to explore time as having 'a diffuse, continually ramifying character' (Hirsch and Stewart 2005:269) that is pervasive and an 'inescapable dimension of all aspects of social experience and practice' (Munn 1992:93). In exploring how Nahau's community were individually and collectively 'contemplating the past and producing knowledge about it' (Hirsch and Stewart 2005:266), I respond to Ballard's (2014:107) call to move beyond the dichotomy between textual and oral sources to consider other possibilities of understanding historicity in Oceania. For example, in his Binandere community, Waiko describes how the '*arapa*, a kind of wide street, was in between the *mando* [women's houses] and the *oro* [men's houses]' (Waiko 1992:234). It was a central physical space in which everyone is constituted as a single entity, each existing in relation to each other (1992:235). Through the social interactions occurring in and around it, the *arapa* is where knowledge and deliberations about past, present and future issues flow and it 'is the starting point of both the living and the dead' (1992:242). To my mind, Waiko's (1992) experience with writing his PhD thesis in English and Binandere and seeking for it to be examined in both English and orally in his Binandere, by elders at home, offers insights into the challenges of the preservation of a relational, always in motion, historicity. Waiko's successful completion of his PhD is a testimony to the possibilities of a relational historicity.

The visual and sensorial data for this paper is a film titled *Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain* (Rooney 2023). This ethnographic material is complemented by the collection of documents titled 'The Nahau and Wesley Rooney Collection'. The film, as I will refer to it, is my amateur attempt to document what I consider to be an important event for women's political history. Noting that my film is amateur is important because filmmaking in PNG is a technical sphere of expertise

with a historical and contemporary dynamic to which I make no expert claim. Filmmaking in PNG has historically been dominated by expert white filmmakers portraying PNG for their home audiences (Maden 2019). Pioneering PNG filmmakers like Leonie Kanawi, Maggie Wilson, Martin Maden and Llane Munau have had diverse experiences, such as those documented by Maden (2019), Spark (2013) and Sullivan (1993). Though amateur, my experience resonates with Maden's (2019) discussion about process filmmaking which, by contrast to an artistic genre, is documentary and aims to create space for community reflection about various processes, including helping to preserve knowledge about people, culture and language (Maden 2019). Likewise, my experience resonates with women's experiences as documented by Spark (2013). I am aware that I may be criticised for filming during my mother's funeral, but my desire and ability to film and make it available to others is intimately tied to my relationships with her, and with the local and broader community. My filming practice also involves my reframing the discourse on women's political participation away from expert-driven national and development policy discourse. It offers a different kind of 'insider' perspective of someone embedded in the relationality and the discourses I speak about in this paper — that of a daughter, a family member, and an academic engaging in discourses about gender equality and women's empowerment in PNG. I was also motivated by the sense that there was less likely to be media or film attention on this story because of COVID-19 and because Nahau is female. In Manus, at the key official government ceremonies, the local radio station journalist covered the events using an audio recorder. Like many people today, including others around me during this time, technology enabled me to film through my smart phone and other devices, and access to internet video platforms like YouTube allowed me to share the film with a variety of my own 'home' audiences and communities in which I engage including in PNG, Australia and the academic community. Given my ethnographic approach to historicity, film also provides a way for moving our understanding of historicity beyond the dichotomy between oral or textual sources. In the following, I use the numerical notation 00:00:00 to denote the timestamp in the film of the scene that is being discussed.

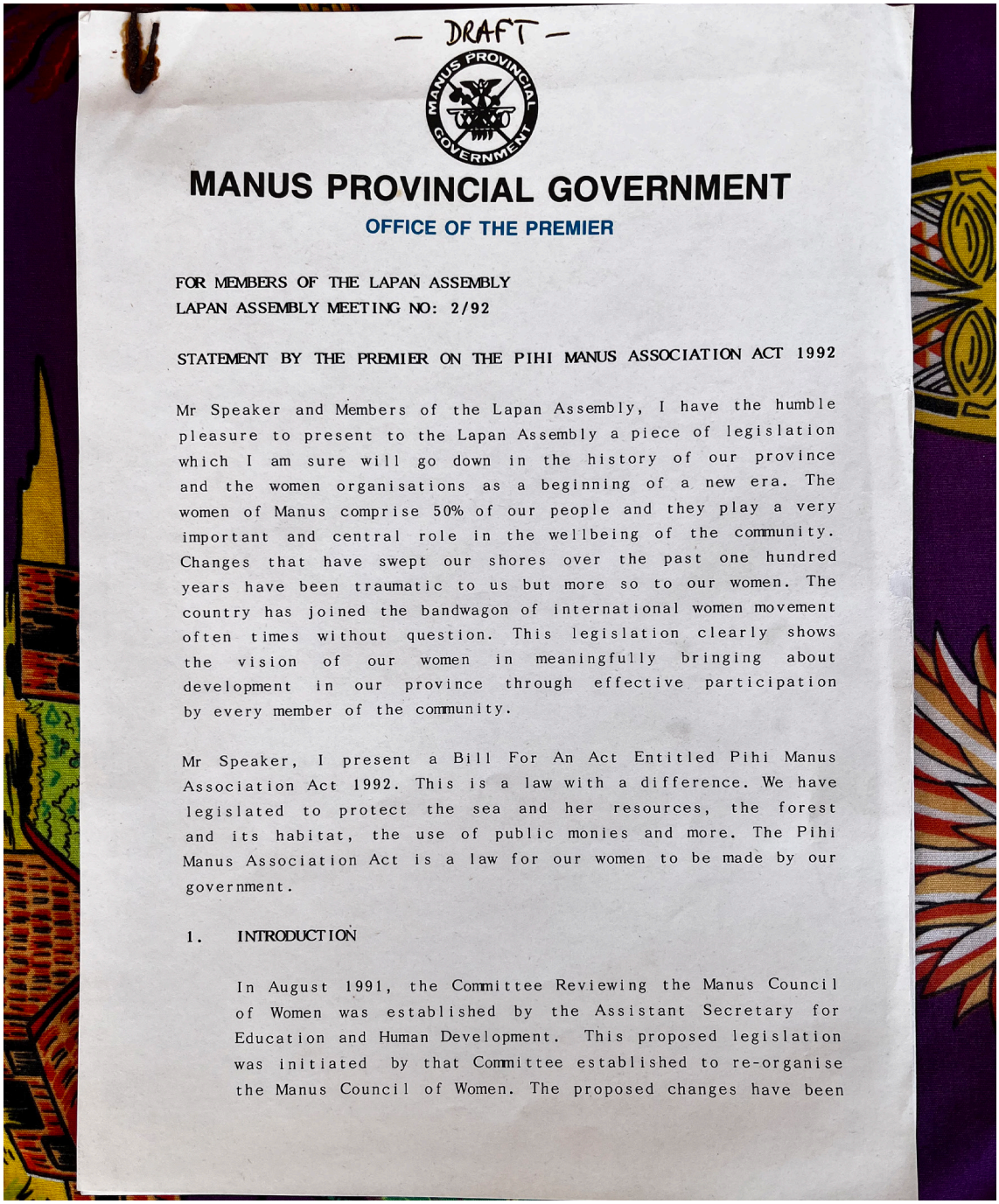
This paper is structured in three parts, each aimed at illuminating the interwoven gendered articulations of historicity. In Part 1, I briefly introduce the ethnographic context. In Part 2, I focus on the concept of discourse which refers to the ways knowledge about a particular subject or place or people is constructed through statements and formal language. Discourse is usually dominated by powerful experts, officials or scholars to construct knowledge that is used to represent or portray the non-Western Other. (Foucault 1971; Hall 2019; Said 1978). Focusing on Papua New Guinea, I cursorily problematise the different but interrelated discourses about Melanesian exchange and gender relations or women to highlight two things. First, historicity, as I use it here, is gendered. Second, the different discourses on Melanesia shape portrayals of the PNG gendered subject. In Part 3, I apply the analytical frames of mortuary time and archival space in the ethnographic context to reflect on historicity as gendered and relational. I am deeply implicated in this story, and to help me put some distance between myself and personal relationships I refer to family members by name while I make visible my positionality in the writing. To foreground her singularity, I refer to my mother as Nahau, eclipsing her relationality to her patrilineage and marital identities in her identity. This is not to deny the role of men and other women in Nahau's life and political success, nor does it erase her beloved roles and place in her family. On the contrary, as the following discussion will show, she was dearly loved, and indeed many men and women played important parts in her political success. Though this framing of Nahau as singular may appear to be at odds with the broader stress on relationality in this paper, it allows me to explore her as a female who held political power in a male dominated context. In this context, the question of whether a female can even hold political power and leadership is contested. As Wardlow (2006) and Lepani (2015) show, examining women's agencies in their cultural contexts can reveal important insights into the coexistence and fluidity between categories like singular, relational, dividual and individual. Foregrounding Nahau's singularity is important, given the high stakes in the competitive male dominated arena of political leadership because, although PNG politicians are often narrated as acting in a relational society, in PNG's democratic elections there can only be a singular individual, usually a man, who emerges to successfully claim political power. It is also important, given that this paper focuses on Nahau's death; a singular person's death that compelled living others into animating a variety of events and acts in relation to her and others.

Part 1: Returning to Manus through Nahau's mortuary time and archival space

Nahau Rooney's deceased body was repatriated from Port Moresby to Manus on 9 October 2020. The Manus Provincial Government (*Gavman*) honoured her with a procession through Lorengau town. This event was significant because Nahau's entry into national politics is related to a request from Manus elders who admired her work as the executive officer for the Manus Provincial Government in the mid-1970s. She successfully contested the 1977 elections and was appointed as PNG's first female cabinet minister. In 1979, as the minister for justice, she was jailed for contempt of court. After losing the 1987 national elections, and the murder of her husband, Wesley (Powes) Rooney in Manus in 1990, she became active in the provincial women's organisation, playing a key role in establishing the Pihi Manus (Manus Women's) Association.

The Pihi Manus Association replaced the former Manus Provincial Council of Women. Among her archives is a draft 1992 statement by the premier for the Manus Provincial Government on the enactment of the Pihi

Figure 1: Excerpt from statement by the premier, Manus Provincial Government, on the Pihi Manus Association Act 1992



— DRAFT —

MANUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

FOR MEMBERS OF THE LAPAN ASSEMBLY
LAPAN ASSEMBLY MEETING NO: 2/92

STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER ON THE PIHI MANUS ASSOCIATION ACT 1992

Mr Speaker and Members of the Lapan Assembly, I have the humble pleasure to present to the Lapan Assembly a piece of legislation which I am sure will go down in the history of our province and the women organisations as a beginning of a new era. The women of Manus comprise 50% of our people and they play a very important and central role in the wellbeing of the community. Changes that have swept our shores over the past one hundred years have been traumatic to us but more so to our women. The country has joined the bandwagon of international women movement often times without question. This legislation clearly shows the vision of our women in meaningfully bringing about development in our province through effective participation by every member of the community.

Mr Speaker, I present a Bill For An Act Entitled Pihi Manus Association Act 1992. This is a law with a difference. We have legislated to protect the sea and her resources, the forest and its habitat, the use of public monies and more. The Pihi Manus Association Act is a law for our women to be made by our government.

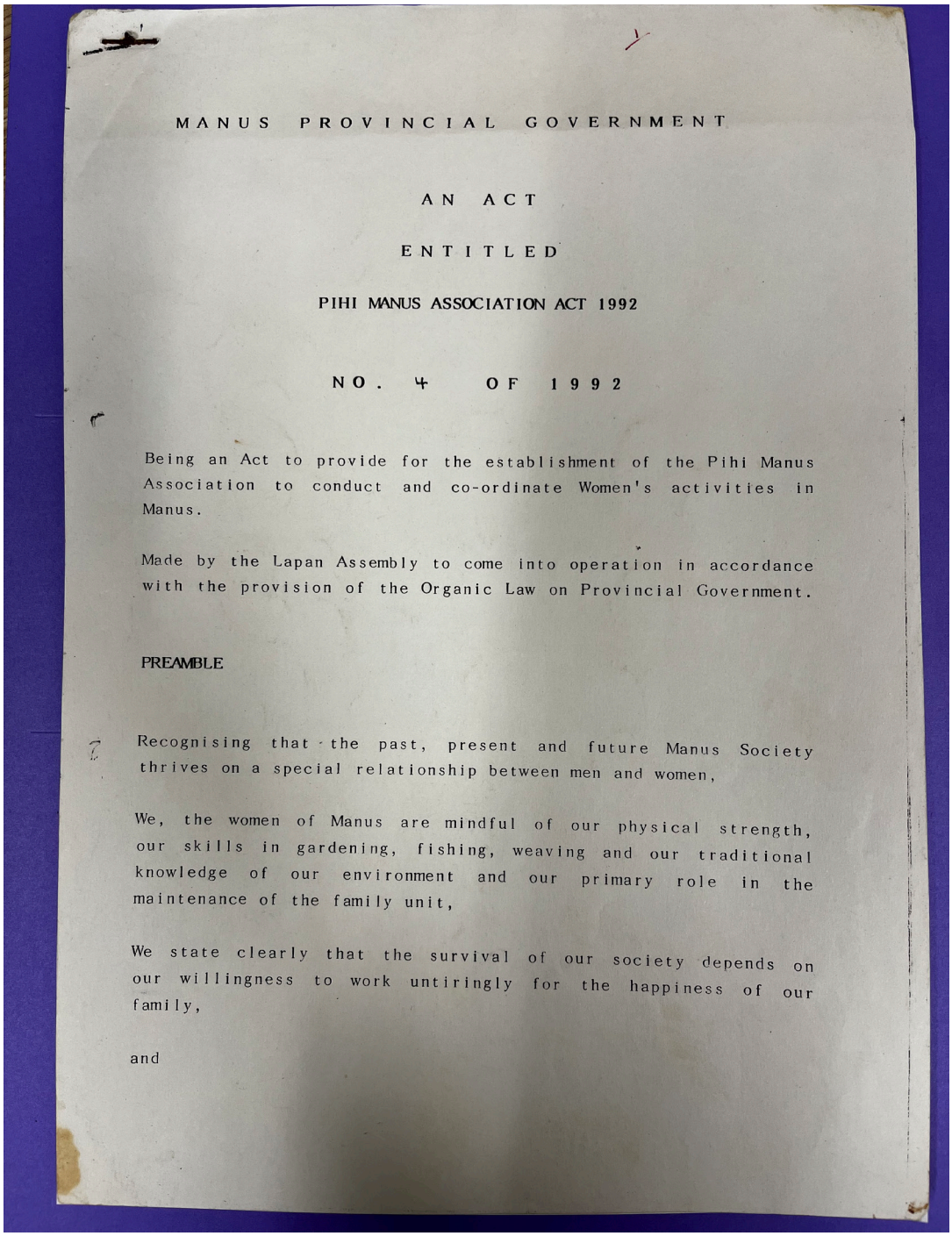
1. INTRODUCTION

In August 1991, the Committee Reviewing the Manus Council of Women was established by the Assistant Secretary for Education and Human Development. This proposed legislation was initiated by that Committee established to re-organise the Manus Council of Women. The proposed changes have been

Source: Nahau and Wesley Rooney Collection, Author's photograph.

Manus Association Act of 1992 (Figure 1). Subsequently, the Pihi Manus Association Act 1992 was certified as an Act of the Lapan Assembly (Figure 2). The Lapan Assembly is the Manus name for the Manus Provincial Legislative Assembly. *Lapan* is a gendered male term in Manus political structure that distinguishes between *lapan* — male chiefs, leaders or men of high rank — and *lau* — their followers or commoners. Though *lapan* is hereditary, one must earn the title through one's own leadership and performance in the political and cultural arena. Furthermore, anyone can attain *lapan* status through their own work and performance in the leadership arena. *Pilapan*, or *pihi lapan* (in Nali language), is the female equivalent of *lapan* (for discussions see Mead 1934; Fortune 1935; Otto 1992; Schwartz 1993; Wanek 1996). My reading of Mead (1934), Fortune (1935) and Schwartz (1993) suggests that there is equivalence, rather than a male dominant/female subordinate hierarchy, between the terms *lapan* and *pilapan*. I argue that this suggests that, though rare, there is a precedent for female leadership in the Manus political arena (for discussion, see Rooney 2022). Moreover, as seen in the early writings of Mead (1934) and Fortune (1935), women held influence through various culturally sanctioned roles in society. As discussed in Carrier and Carrier (1989), Gustafsson (1999), Ohnemus (2003) and Rooney

Figure 2: Manus Provincial Government, Pihi Manus Association Act 1992



MANUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

AN ACT

ENTITLED

PIHI MANUS ASSOCIATION ACT 1992

NO. 4 OF 1992

Being an Act to provide for the establishment of the Pihi Manus Association to conduct and co-ordinate Women's activities in Manus.

Made by the Lapan Assembly to come into operation in accordance with the provision of the Organic Law on Provincial Government.

PREAMBLE

Recognising that the past, present and future Manus Society thrives on a special relationship between men and women,

We, the women of Manus are mindful of our physical strength, our skills in gardening, fishing, weaving and our traditional knowledge of our environment and our primary role in the maintenance of the family unit,

We state clearly that the survival of our society depends on our willingness to work untiringly for the happiness of our family,

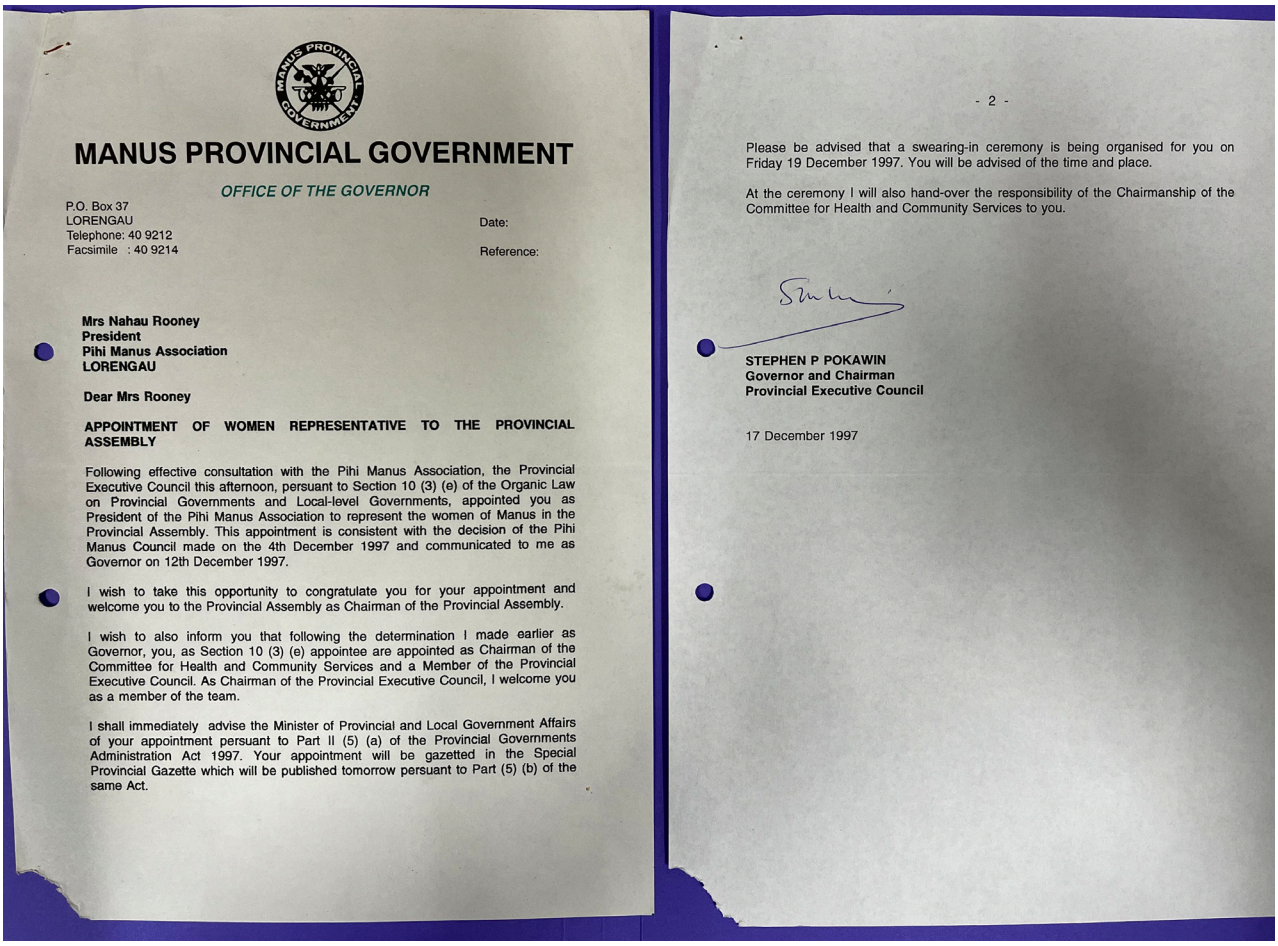
and

Source: Nahau and Wesley Rooney Collection, Author's photograph.

(2021), women still exert considerable influence in various cultural and state roles in contemporary society. Yet there is also ambivalence in relation to the question of whether women are allowed to hold leadership positions or engage in the political arena in discourses about Manus politics (for discussion see Rooney 2022). Thus, the enactment of the Pihi Manus Association Act 1992 by the Lapan Assembly has political, cultural and legal significance because it is an official sanction of the place of women in Manus political structure.

The Pihi Manus Association replaced the Manus Provincial Council of Women, which had been established under the National Council of Women Incorporation Act 1979. Later, as provided for under the PNG Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments (OLPGLLG), the Pihi Manus Association Act paved the way for Nahau, as president of the association, to be appointed as the nominated women's representative in the Manus Provincial Government (Figure 3). The Pihi Manus Association Act legally institutionalises the Association into the pre-existing social, cultural and political fabric of Manus society. The Pihi Manus Association is a bold contribution to PNG's national CPC vision for the advancement of PNG women.

Figure 3: Letter — Nahau Rooney's appointment as women's representative to the provincial assembly



MANUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 37
LORENGAU
Telephone: 40 9212
Facsimile : 40 9214

Date:

Reference:

Mrs Nahau Rooney
President
Pihi Manus Association
LORENGAU

Dear Mrs Rooney

APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY

Following effective consultation with the Pihi Manus Association, the Provincial Executive Council this afternoon, persuant to Section 10 (3) (e) of the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local-level Governments, appointed you as President of the Pihi Manus Association to represent the women of Manus in the Provincial Assembly. This appointment is consistent with the decision of the Pihi Manus Council made on the 4th December 1997 and communicated to me as Governor on 12th December 1997.

I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you for your appointment and welcome you to the Provincial Assembly as Chairman of the Provincial Assembly.

I wish to also inform you that following the determination I made earlier as Governor, you, as Section 10 (3) (e) appointee are appointed as Chairman of the Committee for Health and Community Services and a Member of the Provincial Executive Council. As Chairman of the Provincial Executive Council, I welcome you as a member of the team.

I shall immediately advise the Minister of Provincial and Local Government Affairs of your appointment persuant to Part II (5) (a) of the Provincial Governments Administration Act 1997. Your appointment will be gazetted in the Special Provincial Gazette which will be published tomorrow persuant to Part (5) (b) of the same Act.

- 2 -

Please be advised that a swearing-in ceremony is being organised for you on Friday 19 December 1997. You will be advised of the time and place.

At the ceremony I will also hand-over the responsibility of the Chairmanship of the Committee for Health and Community Services to you.

STEPHEN P POKAWIN
Governor and Chairman
Provincial Executive Council

17 December 1997

Source: Nahau and Wesley Rooney Collection, Author's photograph.

The *Gavman* procession included a stopover at the Pihi Manus Association office where its executive members paid their respects. From there, it went to the Manus Provincial Government offices where the Open Member and Speaker of National Parliament, Hon. Job Pomat, and the governor for Manus, Hon. Charlie Benjamin, and members of the Manus Provincial Lapan Assembly paid their respects. Nahau's deceased body was then taken to Kohai Lodge at Portion 214, Lorengau, which is still registered in the name of her late husband, Wesley Rooney, some 30 years after his burial on this land. After his death, Nahau had held this land and its buildings which housed their documents. She wished to be buried next to him. At Kohai Lodge, *Gavman* officially handed over her body to her family. On Saturday 10 October 2020, her body was taken back to the Pihi Manus Association office where Manus women held an overnight wake. On Sunday 11 October, her casket was returned to her family home. She was buried on Monday 12 October. On Thursday 15 October, her post-burial mortuary ceremony was held.

After her burial, we cleaned her rooms, including collecting her and our father's documents. This immense task added to the emotions and political dynamics amidst our grieving. People asked me why I was cleaning the room so soon after her burial. I explained that we faced time limitations given the various necessary customary events and my return travel to Australia, which was constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nahau held important documents that were at risk of damage or loss. Given the uncertainty presented by COVID-19, I decided to transport as many of these documents as I could to Canberra where I could continue to work on them. In November 2022, I returned to Manus and, with help from family, packed and shipped more documents to Australia. People acknowledged the documents were important for Manus and PNG, while also discussing the need for suitable archival repositories in Lorengau. Although it was a time consuming, labour intensive, emotional and costly exercise, the process of arranging for the papers to be sent to Canberra helped to allay anxieties about the preservation of the documents and has proven to be relatively cost-effective. My brief overview of this context simplifies an emotionally complex time while highlighting how processes of honouring and remembering a female political figure in PNG are relational and always in motion.

This contemporary process occurs against a cultural backdrop characterised by male dominance and a long tradition of gendered discourse aimed at understanding gender and social relations in PNG and

Melanesia more widely. Nahau Rooney's words about documentation and anthropological practice cited in the opening of this paper point to the power dynamics between anthropologists and 'their subjects'. Given Nahau's critique, it would be remiss of me to present her, and Manus people, as ethnographic subjects without some attempt to problematise diverse gendered discourses about Melanesia that include both insider Indigenous PNG discourses and outsider discourses such as those of anthropologists. The problematisation and historicisation of discourses about Melanesia in PNG is an ongoing process. An early example of Indigenous Papua New Guineans critically engaging with anthropology is Lepani Watson's (1956) engagement with Malinowski's anthropological study of Trobriand people. Watson's text, along with films like *Anthropology on Trial* (Gullahorn-Holecek and Dee 1983), are part of contemporary efforts to decolonise anthropology. Another example is Foerstel and Gilliam's (1992) edited collection, which brings together a range of perspectives about the legacy of Margaret Mead in PNG and reflects on alternative ways of framing knowledge about PNG. My discussion in the following section is limited to a brief comment on three strands of discourse about Melanesia including those of insiders and outsiders that I consider to be important for this paper. These include: (i) the now hegemonic tradition in anthropology to frame gender in relation to Marilyn Strathern's (1988) conceptualisation of Melanesian gender relations; (ii) Margaret Mead's Manus ethnography; and (iii) the postcolonial emergence of PNG discourse on gender and women. I focus on these different spheres of discourse because, though they stem from different social and cultural forms of knowledge production, their nexus is pertinent for this paper. Though different in form, these gendered discourses about Melanesia intersect in complex, sometimes mutually reinforcing, ways that shape our contemporary understanding of gendered subject positions and relations.

Part 2: Discourses about Melanesia: Aesthetics, science, and gendered subjects

Anthropologists' Melanesian gendered relations

Strathern's (1988) *Gender of the Gift* has attained canonical status in anthropological conceptualisation of gender relations and personhood in Melanesia. Strathern argues that there is an epistemic gap between Western anthropological approaches to understanding PNG and Melanesian society and Melanesian epistemic understandings of their own society. Strathern argues that this epistemic logic is flawed because it relies on a Western distinction between the individual and society, and the inequality or antagonism between men and women. In 'Strathern's Melanesia', rather than gender relations being about the inequality between dominant men and dominated, oppressed, subordinate women, 'gender is the categorisation of persons, artifacts, events and sequences which draw upon sexual imagery' (Strathern 1988:ix–x).

Strathern's 'aesthetic of Melanesia' postulates that persons are neither male nor female and as such the Western feminist focus on the antagonism between the sexes cannot be applied to Melanesia. Instead, in Melanesia a person is dividual and the 'plural and composite site of the relationships that produced them' (Strathern 1988:13). In Melanesian exchange relations, the exchanged 'gifts' materialise social relationships. Generally, exchange can be mediated and public and between men, such as those transactions between men of a single clan or between men of different clans, or it can be unmediated and less public involving cross-sex relationships such as those between husband and wife, who produce food and pigs and so on, and reproduce clan children.

Put simply, as I understand *Gender of the Gift*, the diverse, complex, prolific exchange processes that characterise Melanesian societies materialise people's gendered relationships and their respective agencies in that context. What may be observed as a male dominated publicly mediated exchange between men encompasses cross-sex relations. Although women are eclipsed from the public arena, they and their cross-sex relations are embodied by and manifest in the males that play more visible roles in exchange. It is not their biological male or female characteristics that matter on such occasions but the gendered relations that their presence, words and acts bring to bear in the exchange processes.

Strathern's conceptualisation of gender relations suggests that historicity, in the sense used in this paper, is gendered. For example, in terms of the collective performance such as that undertaken in exchange, people act such that:

> [i]t is their particular historicized form (all with their own histories) that such entities are analogues of one another. … In other words, one must aggregate the impact of people's interactions with reference to temporality, whether particular relations are taken as prior to an act or as a consequence of it. (Strathern 1988:279)

The temporality of gendered relations is highlighted by Gell (1999), who explains that for Strathern:

> any given exchange is part of an unfolding history of interactions between individuals and collectivities, rather than a one-off 'swap' [, and] the physical transaction will be articulated to the underlying code such that a history of exchanges will be put in place, a past, present and future consisting of overlapping, mutually implicatory transactions in gendered attributes of persons and collectivities. (Gell 1999:65–66)

I read from this that relational exchange and relational historicity in PNG are gendered and mutually embedded.

‘Experimental paradise’ and ‘common aesthetics’

Strathern’s analysis extrapolates from mainly PNG highlands ethnographic material, a region which, she notes in her introduction, ‘has long been regarded as an experimental paradise’ (Strathern 1988:4–5). Strathern concludes that ‘Melanesian societies share a common aesthetic [and that they are] varieties of or versions of a “single” instance’ (1988:340–41); her ‘aesthetic of Melanesia’ (Strathern 1988:344). As Gell notes, Strathern’s *Gender of the Gift* offers anthropologists a system of thought in which Melanesia is ‘the site of certain problems of expression and understanding, peculiar to the cultural project of anthropology, which is (almost) exclusively a “western” project … the setting for a sustained thought experiment [where Western thinkers] may take profitable if imaginary trips’ (Gell 1999:34).

Critiques of Strathern’s conceptualisation of gender relations in Melanesia, such as Biersack (1991), Jolly (1992, 2018), Josephides (1991) and Macintyre (1995), highlight its flaws and contradictions, which I summarise as follows. Ironically, Strathern’s analysis, which begins by eschewing the notion of a bounded society, concludes with a singular ‘Melanesian society’ (Josephides 1991; Macintyre 1995). Although Strathern’s conceptualisation of gender relations is a powerful ‘thought experiment’ (Jolly 1992), it reinforces difference between the West and the Melanesian Other, and it is ahistorical because it does not consider how colonial and capitalist processes have transformed social relations and reinforced inequality and male dominance (Jolly 2018). By reframing ethnographic questions to focus on gender relations, Strathern, inter alia, renders invisible or erases problems about men’s dominance over, exploitation of, and violence against women that have long been identified in Melanesia. It does not account for the gendered dimensions of violent conflict between individuals or groups, and it does not adequately account for gendered power politics (Josephides 1991; Macintyre 1995). In uncritically using the metaphor of the gift she precludes the opportunity to critically analyse while reinforcing long-standing non-gendered anthropological discourses that emphasise difference between Western — commodity — and the Melanesian Other — gift — economies (Biersack 1991). Moreover, as noted by Jolly (2018), Lepani (2015), Morgain and Taylor (2015) and Wardlow (2006) there is a coexistence of and fluidity between individual and dividual forms of personhood within and across all societies.

The idea of Melanesia as a scientific laboratory for Western anthropological thought experiments is not new. Anthropologists’ ethnographic studies espouse immersing, participating in and observing the lives of people being studied. In what many may also consider to be a thought experiment, anthropologists enter communities, eat, sleep, live and enter long-term relationships with ‘their subjects’ while, in their own thinking and writing, they claim to be objective observers. Anthropological projects focused on the study of social and cultural practices are fraught with power, contradictions, and ethical dilemmas. As Anderson (2000, 2008) highlights of Gadjusek’s biomedical research on Kuru, some studies entailed direct study of the people’s bodies and body parts with far-reaching and complex relationships between researcher and communities and the biomedical scientific research community beyond PNG. That said, as discussed in Clifford and Marcus (1986) and more recently West (26/9/2018), there have been changes towards decolonising anthropological practice and acknowledging that knowledge is situated.

Putting aside contemporary progress to decolonise anthropology, I now turn to Margaret Mead’s anthropological practice in the Manus context, to highlight the framing of people and places as scientific laboratories and the ways in which she portrayed Manus women.

Manus, a scientific laboratory

Nahau’s words that open this paper, ‘[t]hese villagers became guinea pigs’ (Gilliam 1992a:42), resonate with the ways in which anthropologists frame Melanesia as a scientific laboratory. Mead is often celebrated for her pioneering contributions towards Western understanding about other cultures, including her work on Manus. At the same time her work provides a stark example of the asymmetric power dynamics between anthropologists and their subjects. From her first visit, Mead’s subjects, the Pere people of Manus, became her scientific laboratory where she could study societal issues that Western society ‘would never be willing to study by experimentation upon [their] own children’ (Mead 1930:12). On her return visit to Manus in 1953, this time with Theodore Schwartz and his then wife Lenora Schwartz (later Foerstel) she writes:

> So when I made my trip to Australia to reconnoitre the general conditions of my “laboratories,” the primitive peoples of the southwest Pacific, my sense of urgency of this problem was accentuated by the insistence of my anthropological friends in Australia that I go back to the Manus of the Admiralties, to the people I had studied as children twenty five years ago, to a people who were changing so fast, so unaccountably, that no one knew quite what was happening. (Mead 1956:14)

Lenora Foerstel (1992) provides a chilling account of Mead’s study, noting that Mead’s interests included psychological projective and somatotyping studies aimed at examining physical body types. Such studies generated debate because of the racial implications of linking physical body type and personality traits (Foerstel 1992; Ramachandran and Vertinsky 2022). Despite World War II bringing a heavy presence of outsiders to Manus, Foerstel notes that the team did not record Manus people’s stories of their interactions with outsiders because ‘this would have contradicted our exotic belief that the villager was isolated’ (Foerstel 1992:64). Working alongside Mead and Schwartz in 1953 and 1954, Foerstel describes the projective and somatotyping tests conducted on their Manus subjects:

> There was rarely a day when testing did not take place. Whole hamlets were assigned a time to meet with us and accommodate our needs. Parents with their children would arrive as if going to a clinic, prepared to take motor, visual, and cognitive tests. … Due to our Western focus on individuality, we would separate a mother and her child from the cooperative efforts of family or neighbors, who traditionally participated in problem solving. Basically, we were observing the culture in the context of Western psychoanalysis, which focused on individual rather than cooperative behavior. (Foerstel 1992:64–65)

According to Foerstel, the somatotyping tests involved photographing 'their' Manus subjects in the nude using criteria for posing that complied with standards based on the contemporary classification of body types. The anthropologists told Manus people that 'an examination of their physical types was necessary to enhance human knowledge' (Foerstel 1992:64). The women were understandably nervous and 'embarrassed to pose nude in front of an outsider observer' (Foerstel 1992:66). Mead's interest in somatotyping led her to collaborate with anthropologist Barbara Honeyman Heath, to whom she granted access to the Manus data and facilitated further field studies in Manus. '[T]he Manus expeditions' proved to be profitable in advancing Heath's career as a somatotype expert (Ramachandran and Vertinsky 2022:55). One published article (Heath and Carter 1971) is based on anthropometric data and somatotyping photographs of 438 children taken in 1954, 1966 and 1968. The article contains nude somatotyping photographs of the children. Reflecting the concerns and changes in local attitudes towards these invasive tests on Manus children and the attitude of anthropologists involved in this study, Heath notes in an interview that:

> In 1953 they were nude. After the photographs were all taken, a priest got into the act and raised hell — a little too late fortunately. After that, Ted [Schwartz] was very self-conscious and was afraid to repeat the 1953 procedures. I think if I had been on my own, I would have just gone right ahead. (Roll 1994:277)

Also noted in this interview, by the period of the 1966 fieldwork, the children wore loin cloths for the somatotyping photographs (Roll 1994:277).

Whether and how approval was sought to conduct the somatotyping tests depends on who is telling the story. According to Foerstel (1992), the Australian administration approved the study. Manus participants cooperated even though the anthropologists did not seek their permission (Foerstel 1992:67). Foerstel expresses shock that Manus people did not resist the tests and if they harboured concerns, they did not let the anthropologists know. By contrast, during an interview when Heath was asked if they had sought approval from the Australians for the study, she replied, 'No, I don't think so' (Roll 1994:277).

The number of tests compared to the small population, the regularity of the tests, the organisation of Mead's fieldwork in the community, and the invasive approach of the tests raise important ethical questions about the kinds of immediate and longer-term, likely gendered, impacts on the community. For example, according to Foerstel (1992), in 1953 Mead departed Manus leaving Foerstel and Schwartz to continue with the tests. Prior to leaving she conducted a meeting with the people of Pere to 'prepare them for this new type of testing, which would require each male and female to be photographed in the nude' (Foerstel 1992:65). A glimpse of the gendered dynamics of these tests can be seen in Foerstel's description of one interaction:

> On April 8, 1954, I spoke to the women of Peri village, repeating Mead's claim that a study of their physical types was necessary to enhance human knowledge. The nervous women followed me to an area set up to protect their privacy, but suddenly the woman who led the procession threw off her lap-lap and performed a mock dance. This broke the tension and produced general laughter among the women. Two women helped me to arrange the proper pose for the somatotype photographs, but since all were embarrassed to pose nude before an outside observer, it was agreed that everyone, including the two women, would be photographed. (Foerstel 1992:65–66)

Reflecting the sensitivity of the somatotyping data collected during this period, Schwartz's archive finding aid (OAC 2018) includes a Box 71, Folder 1–13 titled, 'Somatotype photographs 1953–1954'. Box 71, Folder 17 is titled 'Somatotyping name index', with the added notes that there are 'Conditions Governing Access' [to these files and that] 'Restrictions Apply. Index may be released in 2050' (OAC 2018). I had not heard about these tests or these archive materials until my research for this paper led me to a deeper reading of Foerstel and Gilliam (1992). Discovering the existence of such photographs has raised many questions for me about the processes involved during these tests and how participants would have remembered these events. Personally, I wonder if there might be photographs of members of my family among these archival materials. I am also curious about why there seems to be little known about this history of anthropology on Manus.

Portrayals of Manus women and the question of women and leadership

As noted earlier, Manus women have always held important roles in society (see Carrier and Carrier 1989; Gustafsson 1999; Mead 1934, 1956; Ohnemus 2003). Mead's (1934) and Fortune's (1935) earlier publications provide important historical evidence of women's leadership and political engagement, such as documenting the above-noted pre-existence of the female equivalent — *pilapan* — of high-ranking men, chiefs or leaders — *lapan* in Manus society. Yet, Mead's writings resonate with the ways anthropologists and other writers portrayed their PNG subjects in infantilising ways (see below). For example, Mead's

(1956) book about her second field trip to Manus contains a chapter dedicated to Women, Sex and Sin, which she opens with the words, 'The Manus didn't know what to do with women twenty-five years ago, and they know almost as little today' (Mead 1956:399). Mead's words suggest 'the Manus' was male and by reductively referring to simply 'women', Mead evacuates the Manus belonging and identity from the women in her study. The sentence belittles Manus men and disregards the generations of gendered knowledge over thousands of years. As if the Manus people — men, women, children, families — did not share and survive thousands of years of journeys, of life and love, of wars and grief, of everyday life and ceremony, of gender relations in discursive and remarkable material culture as evidenced in Ohnemus (1998) and Parkinson (1999). According to Mead's observations:

> Twenty-five years ago, the most valued women were dominating women, even those who dominated their husbands, women who had strong clear minds, and who, as mediums, controlled a good part of the public affairs of the village. The woman who was regarded as the most dangerous woman in the village was a good-natured, easily responsive, slightly stupid widow, who was said to have been responsible for the deaths of six good men. Young women who were recalcitrant at marriage could be disciplined into shape, if necessary, as had been done in the case of one Peri wife who was finally shaped into compliancy on one of the smaller islands by a week end of rape in which her husband and a group of his age mates participated. The pliant, the warm, the responsive were simply so many danger spots — girls who might be persuaded into running away or simply yielding to seduction. As daughters, as sisters, as wives, and as widows they were regarded as both dangerous and essentially unattractive. (Mead 1956:399–400)

Mead goes on to compare the restrictions placed on women in the past in relation to marriage and the emphasis on the brother–sister relationship in which 'women were the helpless pawns of complicated marriage exchanges, completely controlled by fathers, brothers, husbands' (Mead 1956:405). While by the 1950s, transformations had brought about some 'emancipation of women' and freedom and choice in marriage, Mead notes that:

> Manus women, twenty five years ago [in 1928], were singularly unattractive, angular, assertive, walking without any sense of appeal of their own femininity, muting and constricting their femininity, emphasizing, with strident voice and sharp, unappealing gestures, that it might be possible to rape them, it might even be possible to seduce them — if enough risk attached — but what love and tenderness they had was already bespoken in formal terms by brothers. Manus women today are almost equally unattractive, but they look and act very differently. … It is easy to see how husbands who once would have beaten them — as opponents in an unresolved contest, now beat them to get any response out of them at all. (Mead 1956:404)

Thus, although Mead documents important observations about the Manus gendered kinship system, the important role of women, and the cultural restrictions placed on women, her words are powerful in shaping how Manus women are perceived and portrayed. Mead's observations rather uncritically frame violence, including sexual violence, as a necessary way of disciplining of recalcitrant women into compliance with societal expectations on them.

Despite Mead's caricature of Manus women as lacking agency, as mere 'unattractive' appendages caught between powerful men and who were disciplined when recalcitrant, her observations suggest important insights into the question about whether Manus women can be leaders. This is important given the ambivalence among scholars of Manus politics about whether women were/are 'traditionally' allowed to hold leadership positions (Rooney 2022).

Mead's above-noted observations can be interpreted to suggest that in the past, women whose characteristics conformed with what might be regarded through Western stereotypes as masculine characteristics — dominant, strong with clear minds, and controlling — were most valued by society, while women whose characteristics conformed with what are too often normalised as feminine characteristics — good-natured, easily responsive, slightly stupid — were regarded as dangerous.

Mead's and Schwartz's field trips in the 1950s coincided with the spread of the Paliau Movement, led by Paliau Maloat, a charismatic and influential Manus leader. Maloat, who had occupied various positions in the colonial administration, returned to Manus and gained a reputation for his resistance to the colonial structures and equality, as well as early forms of local government and influential religious and spiritual ideas. Depending on who is narrating the Paliau Movement, it has been characterised variably over time as a cult, a millenarian movement, or one of the emergent Indigenous movements shaping community government in the postcolonial and pre-independence era (see Maloat 1970; Otto 2020; Schwartz and Smith 2021). The Paliau Movement and its subsequent iterations have continued to shape political leadership, religious and spiritual discourse in Manus. Maloat sustained a prominent place in Manus political leadership for a long period (Otto 2020).

Schwartz's long-term study of Maloat and the Paliau Movement forms a key documentary reference base for subsequent studies of political leadership on Manus. Perhaps because of a long-standing anthropological focus on a singular male political figure that shapes understanding of politics and leadership on Manus, there is limited scholarship on the gendered shift in political leadership in Manus that occurred when Nahau was elected as a member of parliament in the inaugural national elections in 1977, her position as an

elected leader in Manus and national politics until 1987, and her subsequent roles in the Manus political arena. Indeed, Manus is a male dominated society, and this is especially so on matters related to land and political power. This means that Nahau's story is as important for PNG's national heritage as it is for a nuanced gendered understanding of Manus politics and leadership.

Postcolonial Indigenous gendered discourse on Melanesia

The foregoing discussion about gendered anthropological discourse in PNG and Melanesia prompts the need to also consider the gendered dimensions of postcolonial discourse on PNG and Melanesia. 'Profitable if imaginary trips', 'expeditions', and experimentation on the Melanesian subject in 'their laboratories' were not confined to anthropologists. Postcolonial scholars like Said (1978) have highlighted how literary and artistic representations of non-Western people worked to support colonialism and dominance over the non-Western Other.

The anthropological imagination about the Melanesian as Other lies on a continuum of diverse colonial outsiders portraying the Melanesian subject such as explorers, missionaries, colonial officials, travel writers and visual artists. The accounts of male European voyagers and artistic impressions have framed the 'Pacific' as a gendered, sexualised, racialised vision reflecting early male-dominated encounters. They were constructed as part of powerful imperial processes of conquest, control and possession (Jolly 1997; Kabutaulaka 2015; Smith 1960; Stella 2007). PNG scholars have argued that outsider scholars reflect their own social perspectives and self-representations in their depictions of PNG people (for discussions, see Iamo 1992; Waiko 1992; Stella 2007). These mutually reinforcing, outsider literary, colonial and anthropological discourses create a stigmatisation of Papua New Guineans (Iamo 1992) such that the portrayal of the PNG subject is 'never neutral and is always a site of (power) struggle' (Stella 2007:10). As Gilliam (1992b) discusses, such representations can be extended to the framing of geopolitical discourses. In contemporary development discourse, such representations lead to the dispossession of self-representations of PNG people (West 2016).

One legacy of colonial and anthropological discourses about Melanesia, which is embedded in Strathern (1988), is the simultaneous amplification of the 'big man' and the eclipsing or belittlement of the PNG woman. This creates debates about equality/inequality in PNG that are further complicated by equality principles enshrined in the nation-state's constitution (see Dickson-Waiko 2001; Jolly 1987). Dickson-Waiko (2001) highlights that the colonial process excluded women from public life and that:

> today women are seen by the male dominated societies as somehow existing outside the state. Though women may be part of the nation, men seem to assume that the according of individual rights does not apply to them. The overwhelming male view of the Papua New Guinean woman today is that she should exercise a role which is determined by custom and tradition. (Dickson-Waiko 2001:55)

Inequalities between men and women, including in their portrayal by outsiders, also reflect and are complicated by social transformations. Stella's (2007) study reveals how this double reading represents the PNG male subject as sexualised and violent and the PNG female subject, as fetishised, and metaphorised as the landscape (Stella 2007:141; Riman 2009). This is clear in Mead's above-noted caricatures of Manus men and women. PNG women are marginally present in histories of PNG and this legacy continues in the male dominated post-independence nation-state (Dickson-Waiko 2001, 2013; Johnson 1984).

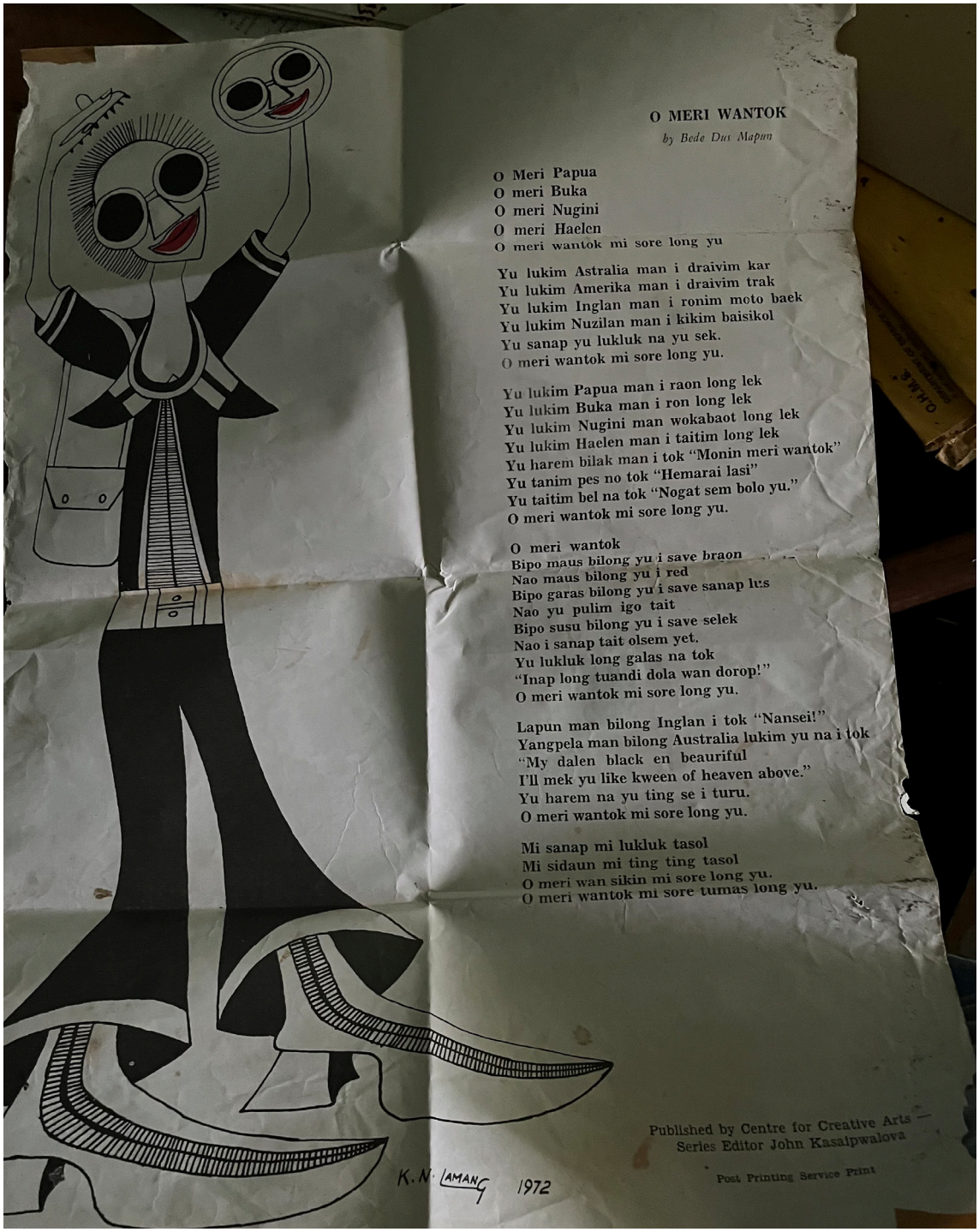
Indigenous discourse is palpably gendered. The debates or conceptual approaches to understanding gender equality/inequality in PNG have been further complicated by the nation-state process which enshrines equality principles in the constitution. Scholars of, and from, PNG and Melanesia like Dickson-Waiko (2001, 2013), Johnson (1984), Jolly (1987), Riman (2009), Sai (1997) and Zimmer-Tamakoshi (1993) have highlighted some of the gendered dimensions of Indigenous discourses about Melanesia that work to undermine PNG women and the ways women have resisted or pushed back. While women have always held important roles in society, including roles of power or leadership, they are often portrayed as lacking agency or, when powerful, as dangerous threats. Though notions of individual autonomy and relationality coexist, and agency is mutable (for discussion, see Lepani 2015), across the diverse social contexts of PNG, there is a tendency to characterise contemporary women's expressions of individual autonomy negatively, as being influenced by modernisation or Western feminism. The negative framing of contemporary forms of femininity — urban, educated, engaged in national politics, advocating for equality and so on — is often juxtaposed against a more valued romanticised past traditional woman — rural, virtuous, supportive and subordinate to men. According to Sai (1997), some of PNG's male literary authors tend to portray the stereotypical 'good' PNG woman as strong, hardworking and able to endure arduous physical labour, while the archetypal role of women is in relation to men, as girlfriends, mothers, wives or sex objects.

As for PNG women's writings, Nora Vagi Brash's plays (Brash 1996), such as *Which Way, Big Man?*, exemplify the contested gendered character of Indigenous discourses. Stella (1990) criticises Brash for forgetting that she is a woman whose 'primary moral obligation is to write profoundly and faithfully about issues which face women' (Stella 1990:52). For Stella, Brash's radical reversing of roles to depict women as more powerful was unrealistic and undermined what he felt the function of women's writing ought to be; to highlight the real issues faced by women. Brash responds by explaining that while she was aware of the

issues women faced, her intent was to draw attention to social and political issues facing PNG and to the pitfalls of neo-colonialism (Gorle 1995). As Tusitala Marsh (1998) points out, Stella (1990) was 'blind to Brash's use of subversion, her deconstruction of society through parody and her use of powerful mythic women to critique existing oppressive structures within society and the family' (Tusitala Marsh 1998:670). Bablis (2020) draws on *Which Way? Big Man* to examine the leadership career of Bernard Narokobi, highlighting the kinds of questions (which way?) asked of the kinds of people who dominated the decision-making arena (big man). Bablis (2020) reminds us that the term big man or bigman was brought into popular use by anthropological studies about leadership styles across Melanesia (Bablis 2020). His focus on Narokobi as an exemplar of contemporary multifaceted bigman leadership can be contrasted with Brash's role reversals in which powerful contemporary and mythical 'big women' loom large in the narrative.

Stella's words highlight the fact that some of the most scathing criticisms and undermining of contemporary PNG women seeking to engage in nation-state processes, whether as writers, politicians or in other roles, come from their elite male counterparts.

Figure 4: Poster with image by K.N. Lamang and poetry by Bede Dus Mapun



Source: Nahau's documents, Manus. Author's photograph.

PNG women often find themselves caught between conforming to or challenging these traditional feminine characteristics (see for discussion Dickson-Waiko 2013; Johnson 1984; Jolly 1987; Riman 2009; Sai 1997; Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1993). This position between modern and Western and past and traditional also involves being caught between the influence of White men and PNG men. This is highlighted in one of the OndoBondo poster poems by Bede Dus Mapun in the poster photographed in Figure 4 (for discussion see Dawrs 2012) in which a PNG man can see PNG women gravitating towards the influence of the Western world, personified by the White man. The PNG man laments the loss of a meri wantok — a woman who is familiar and similar to him, who speaks the same language, is of the same place and culture, who is black, like women of the past, and Papua New Guinean. Bede Dus Mapun's poem in Figure 4 is translated loosely into English as follow:

O meri wantok (by Bede Dus Mapun)

O Papua woman
O Buka woman
O New Guinea woman
O Highlands woman
O meri wantok I am sad for you

You see an Australian man driving a car
You see an American man driving a truck
You see an English man riding a motorcycle
You see a New Zealand man pedalling a bicycle
You stand and watch and you are excited (shake).
O meri wantok I am sad for you.

You see a Papua man going by foot
You see a Buka man running on his feet
You see a New Guinea man walking barefoot
You see a Highland man struggle on his feet
You hear a black man saying 'Morning meri wantok'
You turn your face and say, 'No shame'
You pull your stomach in and say 'You have no shame.'
O meri wantok I am sad for you.

O meri wantok
In the past your lips were brown
Now your lips are red
In the past your afro hair loosely stood
Now you pull it taught
Before your breasts naturally sagged
Now they stand upright like that
You look into the glass/mirror and say
'Enough for twenty dollars in one drop!'
O meri wantok I am sad for you.

Old man from England says 'Nansei!'
Young man from Australia sees you and says
'My darling black and beautiful
I'll make you like a queen of heaven above.'
You hear and you think it is true.
O meri wantok I am sad for you.

I stand and only watch/observe
I sit and only think/ponder
O woman of the same skin as me I am sad for you.
O meri wantok I am very sad for you.

Nahau's words and the multifold discourses about Melanesia

In Part 2 of this paper, I provided examples of different strands of discourse about Melanesia, from outsiders and insiders, all of them powerfully gendered. Despite Strathern's caveat, the hegemonic frame is a culturally male-dominated society with the big man at its apex. At the bottom is the virtuous culturally subordinate, varyingly valued strong or weak, dangerous, and threatening woman, ever present, ever ready to emerge powerful, while always subjected to men's control and discipline. The different spheres of gendered discourses about Melanesia intersect in complex ways to shape our understandings about and portrayals of gender relations and PNG women, including women and political leadership.

As noted in the introduction, the seventh point of the CPC's Eight-Point Plan pertained to the advancement of PNG women in all sectors of life. In terms of PNG women's engagement in the national political arena, Dickson-Waiko (2001) and O'Collins (1985) draw attention to a 1974 observation made by Margaret Loko that either consciously or unconsciously, the seventh point of the Eight-Point Plan omitted an explicit mention of women's political activity. Despite some progress, in the post-independence period, 'the value of a formal political role for women had not been fully accepted' (O'Collins 1985:1).

Debates about women's political engagement in the immediate years after independence acknowledged that big man dynamics threatened to politicise the Eight-Point Plan. Reflecting this, in a critical statement in 1982, directed towards the then deputy prime minister, Bernard Narokobi wrote, 'I believe there is a strong case for the appointment of at least two women by Parliament, precisely because Mr. Wingti's concept of the big men would never give a chance to a woman in the election process' (Narokobi 1983:85). Whether this was merely another moment of political posturing between PNG big men is a matter for a different study. Though women have made progress, evidence from recent election reports (Haley and Zubrinich 2018) highlights that PNG has a long way to go before achieving parity in national politics and currently there seems to be a limited appetite for discussing policies aimed at women's political empowerment in PNG.

Nahau's words at the opening of this paper point to the different gendered discourses about Melanesia highlighted in this section. These spheres of gendered discourse relate to the relationship between anthropologists and subjects; between written and Indigenous forms of knowledge, and between portrayals of Melanesians and Indigenous knowledge and self-representation. Thinking about Nahau's words concerning her experience in the PNG elections prompts questions about PNG women's own self-representations in these discourses about Melanesia. If the writings of outsider scholars and PNG men reflect their own social perspectives and self-representations in their portrayals of PNG people and PNG women

respectively, then in the political spaces of male-dominated power in PNG, one might imagine powerful PNG women to be holding a mirror up simultaneously to outsiders and PNG men alike. Another way to consider this is through an interpretation of women depicted in Figure 4. When women look in the mirror, they see themselves engaging in a changing world, aware of their agencies, appearances and the transformations happening around them. Women engage and adapt to express their agency as they contribute in their own ways. Lamang's portrait of a woman seeing her own reflection in the mirror, juxtaposed against Mapun's poem of a PNG man lamenting the loss of *meri wantok* (Figure 4) raises the question: how do we tell the stories of PNG women in ways that honour their self-expression, and are reflections of themselves and of their experience during their time?

In Nahau's words, '[t]he unfortunate thing about documentation is that it becomes a permanent record and we're held against that' (Nahau Rooney in Gullahorn-Holecek and Dee 1983: timestamp 00:12:17–00:12:40). She was held to the written words of Mead when she travelled abroad. Yet, for contemporary scholars like me trying to understand the gendered historicity of women in political leadership in PNG, early anthropological observations, like those of Mead (1934) and Fortune (1935) in the Manus case, set down a permanent record that helps to evidence past societal value placed on strong powerful women like Nahau. During elections, Nahau noted, her political achievements dissipated as she, a 'mere woman' who had achieved fame and recognition, became a mirror for educated men, reflecting their 'manliness' for them to see and raising for them the question of whether a woman could be a leader (Rooney 1985:44–45). As an Indigenous woman she both animated a documented past and defied the contemporary written and cultural male-dominant norms. Nahau's story mirrors both past and present discourses about Melanesia. In Nahau's absence, I now turn to explore one way of reflecting her story, in relation to others, through an exploration of the articulations of gendered historicity in the ethnographic context of Nahau's mortuary time and archival space.

Part 3: Articulating gendered historicities in mortuary time and archival space[3]

Today is the time for it!

Mortuary time stems from my reflections with Nali speakers about the meaning of time in the Nali language. Like other cultures (for a discussion, see Hirsch and Stewart 2005; Salesa 2014) various Nali words capture different and changing registers of time. Words like *koluw* (past), *mamu* (prior), *mahapo* (today, present), *pihe* (yesterday), *moh* (tomorrow), *hu lang mulan andre kisa* (future or the days behind that are yet to come) capture time along the continuum of past, present and future. Time is related to the diurnal cycle: *mwandrai i ngas* (sunrise), *mandroulang* (morning), *ndrukolo lang* (midday), *piyahon* (afternoon), *mwandrai i ya pwan* (the sun sets), *ping* (night); *lang* (day); and the lunar cycle, *walah* (moon or contemporary month). In the past, the counting of days — *ndromdromiya lang* — or counting of moons — *ndromdromiya walah* — was measured by various means like tying knots in strands of fibre to mark a unit of the cycle. Colonial and mission actors introduced European and Christian registers of time. *Krismas* (Christmas), *Sandre* (Sunday), *Sabat* (Sabbath) denote the annual and weekly church cycle. *Potnait* (fortnight) coincided with the two-week waged labour cycle. The diurnal cycle was changed to conform to clock time, the European 24-hour cycle. My questions about a deep ancient past led to reflections about the Biblical Genesis creation story and a Nali world view of the past reflected in myths.

One word — *lenge* — refers to occasions that may include multiple events involving exchange, stories, plans, memories, emotions, negotiations which reveal relationships about the past, present and future. This understanding of time focused around important events resonates with Otto (1992:266n12). *Lenge Nahau i mat* — the event of Nahau Rooney's passing or Nahau's mortuary time — was one such occasion. As Sparks-Ngenge (2020) argues, language is vital for preserving cultural identity. Although the film records people speaking mainly in Tok Pisin and I am writing in English, the Nali word *lenge* helped me formulate mortuary time as an analytical frame. For me, *lenge Nahau i mat* captures mortuary time as an event in the Manus cultural context in which exchange and historicity are mutually embedded and gendered. Such mortuary time dynamics on Manus have been examined by Otto and Suhr (2009) and Otto (1992).

The film opens with *Gavman* arriving with Nahau's deceased body to Kohai. The ceremonial arena is gendered. As male soldiers from the PNG Defence Force carry her casket into the building, her female relatives and close friends take the lead from *Gavman*. After the casket is set down on the *keyau* (chiefly platform) the women wail over her. Across the arena, a symbol of male collective power, men beat *garamut* — slit drums. Male representatives of Nahau's family stand along the edge of the arena adjacent to the *garamut*. *Gavman* settles under the tarpaulin shelter between the wailing women and the men beating *garamut*. People bring in food items and arrange them in piles corresponding to the provincial and local levels of *Gavman*. The call 'Hey!' of the master of ceremony, Poyap Ponau, opens the proceedings (00:15:02).

Gavman: Historicising Nahau's political success

Resonating with Dalsgaard (2013), *Gavman* is personified and male. I use the Tok Pisin term *lain* (groups of people or lineage or clan) because it was used by the master of ceremony to refer to the groups of people who arrived through Nahau's fathers' and mothers' lineages, through marriage, or through collegial or friendship relations. In the ceremony, Nahau's *lain* are represented by her brother, John Pomoh Kambuou who is the head of her Kambuou patrilineage.

Job Pomat elaborated her story (00:17:07) while reflecting the position of the current government towards affirmative action for women's political representation, challenging women:

> today, you young Manus women who are saying you want to enter for free through reserved seats. Do you think my fathers in the past were crazy and blind and they could not see that this young woman, Nahau Rooney, could become the leader of Manus, and they backed her? So, the challenge for all you young women on this occasion, any Manus woman who wants to become a member of parliament, reveal yourself like Nahau Rooney! Then everyone will stand behind you! (00:22:36–00:23:06)

Responding to a social media debate about whether Nahau should be given a state funeral, Job Pomat explains that the *Gavman* could not accord her a state funeral because these are reserved for current and former prime ministers and governors general. Because of this, the Manus Provincial Government had stepped in to provide official state support towards Nahau's funeral (00:23:35–00:24:30). The expectations on *Gavman* to meet cultural obligations towards deceased leaders is reflected in the words of Nura Parkop, the president of Pere Nali M'bunai Local Level Government, where Nahau's ancestral Lahan, Bulihan and migratory M'bunai homes are located (00:59:33–01:06:20). Charlie Benjamin noted the respect Nahau's colleagues and Manus had for her and explained the difficulties of accessing funds. He emphasised that she had laid her roots in Manus and in turn we, her children, must return to contribute to home.

John Kambuou receives and thanks *Gavman* for supporting the funeral costs (00:31:03–00:39:35). He explains how COVID-19 delayed her repatriation. He introduces his clansman Richard Popi (00:39:42) who humorously notes the discrepancy between *Gavman*'s gifts and the lack of funds to support Manus development. Popi's intervention highlights the temporality of exchange relations. Kambuou gave Nahau to Manus via *Gavman*. Upon her death, Manus, via *Gavman*, gives her back to Kambuou's *hausboi*.[4] Noting *Gavman*'s generosity, Popi incorporates all of Manus citizens into Kambuou and Popi's *hausboi* and notes that he and John Kambuou's *hausboi* are indebted to Manus people.

Historicising Nahau as a *lapan*'s daughter

What appears initially as an exchange between male-dominated *Gavman* and Kambuou's *hausboi* encompasses gendered relationships. By contrast to the masculine *hausboi*, the non-gendered term *lain* allows the singular Nahau to be foregrounded. Though Kambuou's *hausboi* took the lead, Nahau's multiple familial *lain* were present. Nahau was born as the daughter of Kambuou's clan brother, Paranis, and his wife Nayahamui.[5] After Nayahamui passed away, Paranis tried to adopt their children out. Kambuou's first wife, Nambuleu, intervened and asked Kambuou to take Nahau and her sisters into their household. Later, baptised in the church and married, she became Nahau Elizabeth Kambuou Rooney. Nahau's family *lain* therefore comprises these five lineages — Paranis, Nayahamui, Kambuou, Nambuleu and Powes (Rooney).

Kambuou, who was referred to as Kampo in Schwartz's study of the Paliau Movement, was a *lapan* and as his daughter, Nahau, thereby inherited some of this cultural status (for a discussion, see Gilliam 1992a). After World War II, Kambuou led Lahan people to join the Paliau Movement. As noted earlier, the Paliau Movement significantly shaped religious, political and cultural life in the aftermath of the war. According to Schwartz and Smith (2021), the Paliau Movement began among the South Coast people and reached a few inland communities. During his fieldwork, Schwartz learned:

> of only one significant local effort to foment radical change in the villages of the interior of the Great Admiralty. Its leader was Kampo …
> Kampo possessed all the legitimate authority that a preferred position in the old social structure could give him. He was a *lapan* and early in life he had given some of the larger feasts needed to validate his rank. … As a *luluai* and an influential man by traditional standards, he tried to make as many changes as possible in his own village. … Some older villagers opposed him, but his leadership rested on a firm foundation and his ideas could not be dismissed lightly. (Schwartz and Smith 2021:115–16)[6]

Kambuou and other leaders like Peter Tapo, whose family are now influential business leaders in Manus, led their people to M'bunai to join the Paliau Movement. During Nahau's mortuary time, contemporary state and historicised cultural power and authority is manifested in the official exchange between *Gavman* and Kambuou's *hausboi*.

Historicising Nahau as a wife

Nahau's breakthrough into the masculine domains of cultural and political power in Manus marked her as an equal among men. Other gendered relations surfaced during her mortuary time. Kevin Rooney highlighted his father's role in Nahau's political life and invoked past exchanges to argue that Rooney was part of this exchange. Not only did Kambuou give Nahau to Manus but Kambuou, via his son, also gave Nahau to Wesley Rooney in marriage. Powes reciprocated by 'paying' Nahau's bride price. Wesley Rooney built a relationship with Nahau's *lain* and with Manus in general. Kevin's intervention activated the Rooney *lain* as a public part of the exchange. Kambuou and Wesley Rooney, in relation to Nahau, were manifested and embodied in their respective next generations in Kambuou's son and Wesley and Nahau's son, Kevin.

Yet, the master of ceremony reminded us that people had arrived today because of the singular Nahau:

> These *Lau* [people who are constituents or followers in relation to *lapan*] are Nahau's *Lau*. They are not Kambuou's *Lain*. They are not your mother's *Lain*. It is because of Nahau's good deeds that all these people

> came here. We speak about Nahau's good deeds. If you hold onto these, you will see them tomorrow. If you don't it is finished. (00:52:18–00:52:39)

Historicising land | Land as archive

During Nahau's mortuary time, land was publicly discussed several times. As Otto (1992) notes, mortuary time in Manus may include negotiation or mediation regarding access to, claims or ownership over land. Land can be transferred, ownership confirmed or disputed. Land can form the basis for an intervention. Land discourse is an important aspect of historicity. For example, in the film Kevin Rooney noted that:

> Here, where we are standing. It is Powes. When he died, Rossun [Referring to Job Pomat] you came. It is stone, not ground. We were confused and thought it was ground, but it was stone. Rossun, you broke the land. (00:47:17–00:47:32)

Job Pomat responded by raising questions about a Facebook post that he had been informed about.

> They came and told me that, 'Hey, they have put Kohai Lodge on sale.' … I did not know that Nahau would be here today. When they were burying Rooney here. Now, I remove, and wear another cap and come. They called us customary fathers of this land, and we Rossun came and broke the ground so they could bury him. I thought about it and wondered, 'Is Kevin planning to sell this land and will Rooney go with the land? Will he dig up his father's bones and take the bones and leave?' I am speaking at a different level now. Now Nahau is going. Will you try and sell this land again tomorrow? I do not think so. I do not think you will sell this land and another person will come and take over the way others do. Here, Powes and his wife, Nahau, will sleep. So, Kevin. You and [Poyap]. Michelle is there, she is married and left. She is a woman who now belongs to another place. Poyap is there. Both of you think carefully. Will you sell this land or will one of you return and stay at Kohai and look after these two elders. (00:52:53–00:54:22)

Kevin Rooney acknowledged Job Pomat's position as a customary landowner of the land while also emphasising that this was an internal *hausboi* matter, thus activating Rooney (Powes) as a *hausboi* unto itself in this Manus cultural context. Job Pomat responds with, 'You have all heard now, Kohai is not for sale. It is his land' (00:57:08). The interaction highlights the sometimes tumultuous character of Manus exchange (see Carrier and Carrier 1989 and Otto 1992 for a discussion). Though Job Pomat publicly eclipsed me, a woman married and belonging to another man's place, in relation to claims or responsibility over the land, hints of my positionality can be heard in my interaction with a woman. We were bearing witness to an important moment in the story of that land in Lorengau (00:57:38–00:58:03 and 00:58:46–00:59-32). My and others' engagement related to these land issues are important but beyond the scope of this paper.

Pihi Manus: Historicising Nahau as a Manus woman

Throughout the ceremony, the men privileged men — her father, elders, her husband — in Nahau's political life. Representatives of Pihi Manus Association were eclipsed physically and discursively from the arena. I grappled with how to help them enter the arena. I was also sad, tired, emotional and aware of the dominant masculine structures and powers at play. I was also mindful of my place as her daughter and that I needed to adhere to my place as part of the family. Having found a sense of purpose and solace behind the camera, I resisted relinquishing control over it. This was my emotional state when one of the Pihi Manus Association representatives asked me how they might deliver their contribution into the arena. I suggested that they approach Kevin or one of the men in the arena. I understood her hesitation given the gathering of people (00:14:26–00:14:57). The ceremony proceeds amidst disruption caused by Pihi Manus trying to deliver their contribution (Figure 5).

As the speeches concluded and the crowd began dispersing, I asked the master of ceremony to acknowledge them. He explains that *Gavman* needed to leave, and the women would have their turn afterwards (01:11:47–01:12:05). As *Gavman* departed, the Pihi Manus representative, Elizabeth Tanou, raised her voice to speak:

> Today is the time for it! *Gavman*, you have come. Children, father, mother you have come. Us mothers too have come. On behalf of Pihi Manus. We have come. We do not have men with us. We are women. … We want to show that the leader who broke the laws of the *hausboi* of Manus. She broke the Manus *hausboi*. She came. We women must hold betel nut. This woman who is down here. We will follow and carry her strength and her power. (01:12:10–01:13:01)

As she speaks, Elizabeth Tanou holds up a bundle of betel nut, the cultural symbol signalling her intention to speak formally and publicly (Figure 6). *Gavman* was compelled to pause. Job Pomat receives the women's contribution and publicly reaffirms that Pihi Manus Association is a part of *Gavman* enacted under an Act of the provincial government (Figures 2 and 7). He publicly hands over their contribution to John Kambuou for it to be added officially to *Gavman*'s contribution (01:15:47).

Pihi Manus's actions reminded everyone about the vital role of women in Manus society (for discussions, see Gustafsson 1999; Ohnemus 2003; Rooney 2021). It reminded everyone that Nahau was a role model, a symbol of women's aspirations, struggles and agencies. Their interruption in the ceremony epitomised Nahau's ability to breakthrough all levels of male-dominated state and cultural political spaces. They reminded everyone of the legally instituted connection between the Pihi Manus Association and *Gavman* and society. Pihi Manus, like Nahau, refused to be eclipsed from the

Figure 5: The speeches are disrupted by a commotion as men carry a dugong for the Pihi Manus Association into the arena

Source: Screenshot from *Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain* (00:21:09)

state political and cultural exchange. They broke the male-dominated state and cultural barrier and engaged directly in the ceremony as a political social category.

Nahau's mortuary time unfolds to mirror transformations in PNG's social and political fabric. Kevin Rooney's and Elizabeth Tanou's interventions symbolise important social and political transformations. Nahau herself, and the gifts she received and gave in life, embodied a gift in life and returned in death. From my perspective, initially the exchange appeared to be construed as animating the relationship between Kambuou and *Gavman*, both of whom symbolise masculine cultural power and authority in Manus. Kambuou was the personified symbol of *hausboi* and male cultural authority and *Gavman* personified the male-dominated contemporary category of state power. The interventions by Kevin and Pihi Manus symbolise important institutional and social transformations. Nahau's marriage to Australian man Wesley Rooney extends her *lain* internationally beyond

Figure 6: Elizabeth Tanao holds up betel nut and money along with the food. She calls *Gavman*, family and Nahau's children to come and receive their contribution

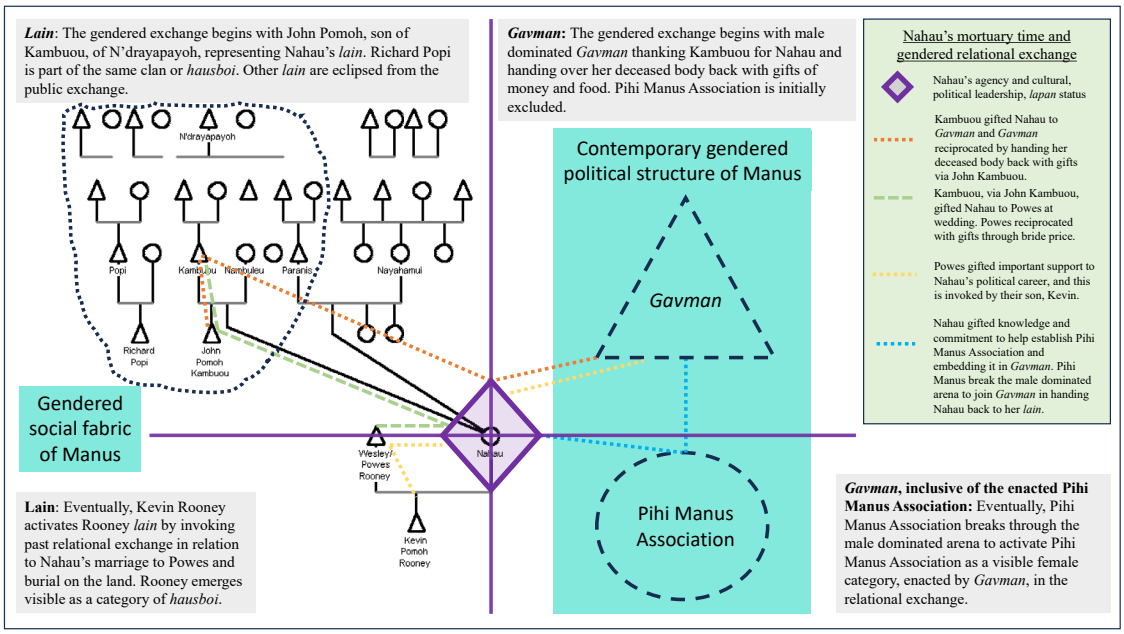
Source: Screenshot from *Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain* (01:15:28)

Figure 7: Elizabeth Tanou, representative of Pihi Manus Association, presenting Hon. Job Pomat, Open member for Manus and Speaker of Parliament, with *buai* (betel nut)

Source: Screenshot from Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain (01:15:47).

the cultural sphere of Manus. Her son Kevin's invocation of his father's receiving of Nahau as a gift and his reciprocation in bride price and his burial on the land made visible earlier exchange and relational processes in the present exchange. Emerging from this, Kevin invokes, through his father and mother's marriage, his own distinct *hausboi*. The intervention by Pihi Manus representatives animates the seventh aim of PNG's Eight-Point Plan to advance PNG women. Nahau embodied subtle and not-so-subtle shifts in gendered political and social relations, and the contemporary gendered political structure of Manus. As can be seen in Figure 8 some of these were activated and made visible during her mortuary time.

Figure 8: A diagrammatic representation of part of Nahau's mortuary time



Note that this diagram is for illustrative purposes to highlight the main speakers and gendered relational exchange during the handover ceremony seen in the fiilm *Nahau: Gavman, Pihi Manus, Lain*. The diagram does not show or name all family members or other *lain* nor does it show the nuances in the relationships. Siblings and spouses are not in order of birth or marriage status.
Source: © The author.

Relational temporal archival space

Nahau's private rooms at Kohai contained documents that constitute an archival space in motion from Manus to Canberra. Further relational processes are required to transition these archives for preservation at a library. Archival practice as a form of knowledge about the past is associated with European traditions of written history in which custodianship is generally held by historians, archivists, and museums. While archives are important for a nation's memory and heritage (Hartog 2015:116), they are more than just inanimate objects contained in archival spaces serving Western approaches to the preservation of history. Like a mortuary time arena, archival spaces are, as Strathern (2021) notes, also artefacts of history. Wehner and Maidment (1999) note that archives are more than just being about the past, because:

> the archive is haunted by ancestral voices, anomalous histories, murmurs which disrupt boundaries between past, present and future. Subject to forces of suppression and repression, the archive shapes collective and individual consciousness. (Wehner and Maidment 1999:25)

Asymmetric powers in practices related to control, possession and sharing of archival records have implications for 'social memory and knowledge in the Islands' (Wehner and Maidment 1999:37). Archives are a political project that serve a Western dominated approach to preserving knowledge about the past and therefore, access to archives by Pacific islanders is vital (Wehner and Maidment 1999:27). As elders pass away, we are losing the relational knowledge they embodied. While PNG has diverse forms of historicity including myths, oral histories, performance, language as part of history (see Denoon and Lacey 1981; Minol 2000; Waiko 1992; Riman 2009), written records can also contribute to the 'inward study of the Melanesian way, in order to develop our true identity' (Narokobi 1980:9). Nahau and her contemporaries ushered in PNG's Independence and an ambition to transform diverse gendered relational cultures into a nation-state. They embodied the articulation between the diverse forms of PNG historicity and emergent textuality. Indeed, across the Pacific, the arrival of colonialism also brought with it the written form or tradition of documenting the past that joins Indigenous forms of knowledge about the past (Salesa 2014). Their written records can potentially add to what Ballard (2014) expresses as a productive synergy between oral, performative, and other forms of historicity. Nahau's case reveals the enigmatic simultaneity of a relational celebration of a powerful woman and her custodianship of written archives. Nahau's archival space can be understood as a live, dynamic relational space where historicity is articulated beyond the dichotomy between textual and oral sources. As Stuart Hall states:

> Archives are not inert historical collections. They always stand in an active dialogic, relation to the questions which the present puts to the past; and the present always puts its questions differently from one generation to another. (Hall 2001:92)

For example, Wesley Rooney's description of Kambuou's mortuary time provides insights into the process. He explains:

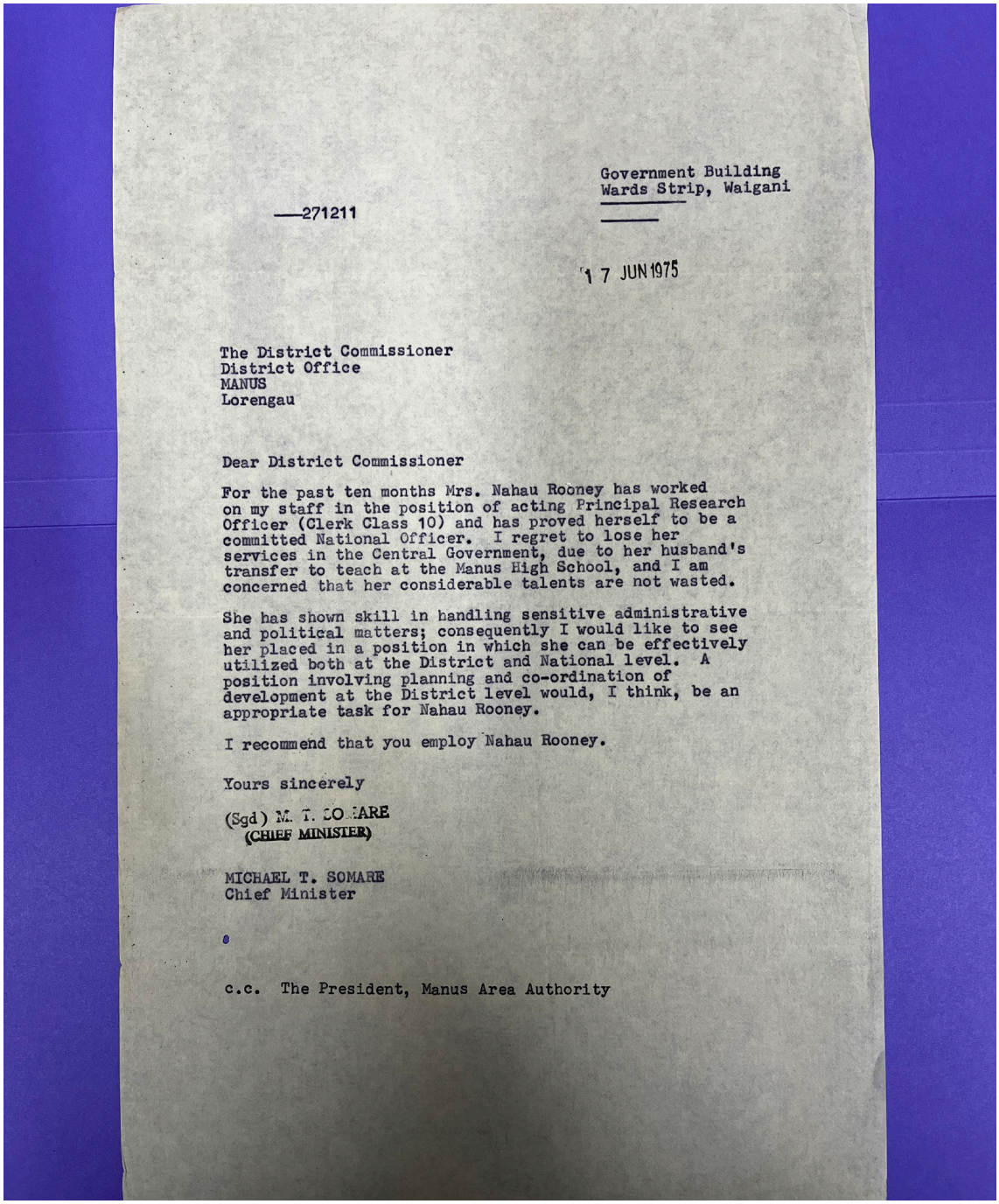
> It is hard for me to describe to you the significance of death on Manus, in particular the death of a 'Big Man' like Kambuou … There is a particular tune and rhythm to the cry and then as time goes on other people join in with praise of the man's life. All the things he was famous for are sung into the cry to make it like a ballad of his life. … While this was going on in the family house in the men's house about 300m away a group of men and visitors were drumming the message of death on the garamut drums superimposed on the drumming of Kambuou's call sign. … It was very complex and I couldn't follow it all but it did obviously provide security for those needing it and also it built alliances with people who can be called upon in the future if ever the family needs help. A lot of it was also the beginning of subtle redistributions of power and influence in the family, clan, village now the big man had gone.
>
> Wesley Rooney, n.d. [c. 1976]. Unpublished letter

Wesley Rooney's description of Kambuou's funeral combined with Nahau's contemporary mortuary time provide insights into social and cultural change. Similarly, Nahau's archived documents reveal further insights into her ascension to national politics. By 1975, Nahau had progressed in the national public service and was employed in Chief Minister Somare's office. Rather than lose her, Somare recommended Nahau for a position in the Manus Administration so that she could join her husband (Figure 9). Nahau's archives, replete with documents charting her political story and containing insights into other stories, are part of PNG's national heritage, memory; its gendered relational historicity.

Conclusion

Nahau's words in the opening of this paper point to the intersecting discourses about Melanesia, highlighting the relationship between anthropologists and subjects; between written documented portrayals of Melanesians and Indigenous Melanesians' own knowledge and self-representation; and the gendered characteristics of these discourses. I reflected on the complex ways that the multiply constructed and layered discourses about Melanesia — historical, anthropological, traditional and Indigenous Papua New Guinean — have intersected to shape our contemporary understanding of gendered subject positions and relations. I posed the question: How might we preserve PNG's national heritage as it relates to the nation-state vision of advancing women in a way that acknowledges gendered relational historicity and that moves beyond the oral or written dichotomy? I drew on visual and sensorial ethnographic data from Manus to explore the notion of PNG national heritage as it relates to

Figure 9: Letter from Chief Minister Michael T. Somare to the district commissioner recommending that Nahau Rooney be employed in the District Office



Government Building
Wards Strip, Waigani

—271211

17 JUN 1975

The District Commissioner
District Office
MANUS
Lorengau

Dear District Commissioner

For the past ten months Mrs. Nahau Rooney has worked on my staff in the position of acting Principal Research Officer (Clerk Class 10) and has proved herself to be a committed National Officer. I regret to lose her services in the Central Government, due to her husband's transfer to teach at the Manus High School, and I am concerned that her considerable talents are not wasted.

She has shown skill in handling sensitive administrative and political matters; consequently I would like to see her placed in a position in which she can be effectively utilized both at the District and National level. A position involving planning and co-ordination of development at the District level would, I think, be an appropriate task for Nahau Rooney.

I recommend that you employ Nahau Rooney.

Yours sincerely

(Sgd) M. T. SOMARE
(CHIEF MINISTER)

MICHAEL T. SOMARE
Chief Minister

c.c. The President, Manus Area Authority

Source: Nahau and Wesley Rooney Collection, Author's photograph.

women's advancement. I then elaborated mortuary time and archival space as two relevant and reciprocally relational forms of historicity to understand Nahau Rooney's legacy in PNG's national heritage, resulting from her multiple relationships at local family level, through her (international) marriage and her provincial and national political roles.

Material culture, events, written archived records, performances, dance, poetry, art, film and architecture are just some of the diverse artefacts of historicity or forms of knowledge about the past. In this paper, I have tried to show how the 'eclipsing of women' is also an artefact of historicity, embedded in these multifold gendered discourses about Melanesia. Gender inequalities, rules, power dynamics, norms in gendered relations, discursive practices, and hierarchies within different discourses about Melanesia vary in kind and intensity. However, their mutual articulation leads to the special, but rare, opportunities for women to break through, as evidenced by Nahau's life and her mortuary event. Nahau's mortuary time and archival space demonstrate how historicity can be understood as a gendered relational process that requires us to move beyond the textual and oral dichotomy. Reflecting temporality and social change, Nahau's case also shows how gendered relational exchange and historicity are shaped by and in turn shape contemporary government,

nation-state constitutional aspirations for women's advancement and changes in social structure due to marriage outside of the cultural context.

In her words, her life, and her death, we see how Nahau's story is a mirror reflecting the multiply complexly formed, mutually implicated gendered discourses about Melanesia. As an Indigenous PNG woman, who wrote and preserved documents in her archival space, she mirrors the male-dominated archival spaces. Seeing her own image in the mirror reflected for all to see, Nahau's life responds directly to the vexing question in discourses about Melanesia: Is it right for a 'mere' woman to lead, to achieve fame and recognition?

Further anthropological and historical analysis about these issues can wait. For now, I give myself permission to unsee and undo Nahau and Manus people involved in Nahau's mortuary time as anthropological subjects. The scenes, words, actions seen in the film stand on their own, marking a moment in time, in individual and collective stories of Manus. I feel humbled and privileged to have been among the people who were present to witness this event. People who worked hard, coordinated, negotiated, exercised patience, exerted influence, and made decisions every day towards and beyond this day. Women especially who cooked food tirelessly to feed everyone who arrived. People who kept going, through their grief, exhaustion and frustration. Children and young people accompanying their families, who will one day tell their stories about witnessing this event. I see people who journeyed from their homes and lives to be part of the events and to contribute financial, in-kind, and emotional support. I see people in various relations with each other sharing the knowledge that we were witnessing and farewelling a great woman who was loved by many people.

I do not claim to be the authoritative truth about these events. I am one family member, one witness, a person holding the camera, a person who helped bury our mother and collect our parents' written documents. I am one of many people who have their own perspectives of these events. I respect and leave space for others to narrate and exercise their own agencies in the ways they understand these events. Our individual and collective expressions and memories combine in and across various times and spaces to reanimate Nahau's story: powerful, bold, humorous, beautiful, poignant, contested, joyful, celebratory, sad, negotiated, frustrated, loved, loving, generous, persistent, defiant, contradictory, unapologetic, enigmatic, fun, and so, so much more. That is, that was Nahau. Pihi Manus.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge and thank everyone who supported the process of farewelling Nahau and the subsequent work of this project. In deciding whether and how to share this film and paper, I considered my mother's story as part of PNG's national heritage and memory. The ceremony shown in the film and the subsequent archive work have been supported by public funds and involve public institutions, including, as evident in this paper, the Manus Provincial Government and The Australian National University. I therefore decided to share this film and paper. I thank Ton Otto and Jaap Timmer for the opportunity to engage in the Pasts in the Making Conference in 2022 which helped to frame the paper in terms of historicity. They and Margaret Jolly provided important comments on an early version of the paper. The Gender, Media and Cultural Studies Department, School of Culture, History and Language, supported an initial screening of the film in 2023 which generated important feedback. I thank Angela Terrill, Sinclair Dinnen and the DPA editors and reviewers for feedback and help with finalising the paper. All views expressed and mistakes are mine alone.

Notes on author

Nayahamui Rooney is currently a lecturer at the School of Culture, History & Language, College of Asia and the Pacific, ANU. Her research, focused on Papua New Guinea, explores urban issues, gendered violence, and Australia's Regional Processing Centre for asylum seekers in Manus Province. She is currently working on her mother's, Nahau Rooney's, archives and biography.

Endnotes

1. This paper is a work in progress that is part of a larger project comprising: (i) a series of video explorations of Nahau Rooney's mortuary time; (ii) the process of archiving her documents, and (iii) the writing of her political biography.
2. For details and highlights of her life and political career, see Gilliam (1992a); Rooney (1985, 1986).
3. All translations of Nali and Tok Pisin terms in the text and in the film are mine and all errors are mine.
4. *Hausboi*, with colonial roots, has multiple meanings in contemporary PNG Tok Pisin. I use it here as it is used in Manus to variably refer to the patrilineage or clan and the men's house in a village, or patrilineage or clan hamlet. This use reflects Manus languages. For example, the Nali word *kamai* refers to both male or men/man and the men's house located in a village, or patrilineage or clan hamlet. Reflecting colonial racial and spatial hierarchies, in urban contexts, *hausboi* refers both to a male domestic servant and domestic servants' quarters at the rear of a property.
5. Like other family genealogies, details of stories are often concealed or adjusted for public narration due to sensitivities. Here, I narrate Nahau's lineages as they are publicly told on such occasions. Depending on who is telling the story, others may privilege a different perspective. Part of the reason why she was so loved was her deeply held sense of indebtedness and obligation and her reciprocation to people who helped raise her and her sisters.
6. *Luluai* refers to a title and position instituted under the German administration to refer to chiefs or leaders.

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Department of Pacific Affairs

Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs
ANU College of Asia and the Pacific
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 2600

E dpa@anu.edu.au
W dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au

DepartmentofPacificAffairs
@anudpa
DepartmentofPacificAffairs