THE SECOND DECADE: THE THEME OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEAN LITERATURE, 1979-1989

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In common with other new literatures written in English, Papua New Guinean literature emerged in a period of political upheaval and rapid social change. Building on an earlier essay, the theme of social change in Papua New Guinean texts published in the period 1979-1989 is discussed. Prose fiction, poetry, drama; autobiographical pieces, and essays are examined, setting this body of writing against selected letters written to the editor of the *Times of Papua New Guinea* during the 1980s and personal interviews with several writers in the Port Moresby area. Four specific aspects of social change are examined in detail: development, education, leadership, and urbanization. Taken together, this pair of essays offers a survey of Papua New Guinea's first twenty years of English-language literature by indigenous writers.

IN A RECENT ARTICLE I EXAMINED the theme of social change in the first decade of literature written in English by indigenous Papua New Guineans (Gorle 1995). I expressed the view that the writing of the 1970s was characterized by intense nationalistic fervor and enormous political energy, fueled largely by the buildup to independence in 1975. This essay is a sequel to that article, examining the next decade of writing[1] and arguing that it shared many of the earlier concerns together with a new commitment to cultural consolidation, self-appraisal, and growth.

Papua New Guinea's second decade of English-language literature began with a notable lack of sound and fury. Bernard Minol identified this phenomenon in 1980 in a newspaper article titled "The Death of PNG Writing." Pinpointing the "scarcity of publishing outlets" and "the lack of an interested reading public in PNG," he called for a greater emphasis on "literature and

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other humanities related subjects in the syllabi at every phase of formal education" (Minol 1980:21). More recently, Russell Soaba has described the gradual decline in literary activity since independence: "All the excitement waned away from the 1960s to 1989" (personal communication, 25 August 1992). Certainly there was less new creative literature published by Papua New Guineans during the second decade--at least in the first few years.

In discussing this periods literary production I would like to juxtapose the dwindling creative output against other forms of serious writing from the 1980s: essays, unpublished drama scripts, and letters to the editor of the ***Times of Papua New Guinea.***[2] My central argument--that the practice of Papua New Guinea's writers was both dynamic and mimetic--draws substantially from the essays and the letters, because both genres have direct political objectives, working to form opinions and shape attitudes. My discussion of these various texts points to social change as a common concern in the writing of the decade: while a range of ideas and possible solutions are explored, the writers generally agree on the problems needing attention.

In 1980 a new collection of short pieces was published: ***Voices of Independence: New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea,*** edited by Ulli Beier. This anthology featured poetry, drama, and fiction written during the 1970s. Some pieces were published here for the first time; others were reprinted from the journals ***Gigibori*** and ***Kovave.*** From this quiet beginning, a new momentum gradually developed. The "Melanesian Voice" articles (originally published in the ***Papua New Guinea Post-Courier*** newspaper) were collected and published in book form in 1980 and again, slightly adapted, in 1983 (Narokobi 1980).

There was also a steady trickle of new creative work. Ignatius Kilage's novel ***My Mother Calls Me Yaltep*** was published in 1980 and reprinted in 1984, 1987, and 1989. Russell Soaba's second novel, ***Maiba,*** appeared after a long delay in 1985, the same year in which Wilhelm Tagis's novella "Michael Tsim" appeared. Among the drama offerings were John Kasaipwalova's ***Sail the Midnight Sun*** and ***Sana Sana*** in 1980 and 1982 respectively; three new plays by Nora Vagi Brash ***(Black Market Buai*** in 1982, ***Taurama*** in 1985, and ***Pick the Bone Dry*** in 1986); and, towards the end of the decade, drama scripts by Adam Vai Delaney (1991a) and William Takaku (n.d.***a;*** n.d.***b).*** The University of Papua New Guinea's newly launched ***Ondobondo*** magazine, together with the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies' journal ***Bikmaus*** and its Annual Literature Competition, provided publishing outlets for poems, short stories, critiques, and other literary pieces.[3] In addition, poetry collections by Uma More (1984), Benjamin Nakin (n.d.) and Steven Winduo (1991b) were published.[4]

In my view the writing of the 1980s has a different tone from that of the

1970s. Although sharing certain earlier concerns, this new body of work is substantially less angry, more consolidating, and more committed to looking ahead and building for the future. Anticolonial feelings still surface at times, but the tone is generally more practical and constructive. Prominent among the new publications are collections of essays by Bernard Narokobi (1983) and Utula Samana (1988), dealing respectively with leadership and development in the newly independent nation.

My sources for this essay include the letters to the editor of the ***Times of Papua New Guinea,*** written between 1980 and 1989.[5] The ***Times*** is a weekly newspaper that first appeared in September 1980, celebrating the country's first five years of independence. This newspaper offers a more leisurely and reflective approach to current affairs than does the daily ***Post-Courier:*** An examination of the letters through the 1980s indicates some of the major concerns felt by ordinary people during the period.

According to Steven Winduo, Papua New Guinea's English-language literary history to date comprises three distinct periods (interview, 6 October 1992). The first extended to the Writers' Conference in 1976, when "they really wanted to re-live that '60s experience, that euphoric experience of writing. But it didn't actually come through." The second period, "from '76 to about '82," was

> a bit . . . silent. . . . By about '82 the Language and Literature Department [at the University of Papua New Guinea] started trying to help rediscover those experiences. There was a term we used for it: "re-lighting the flame." . . . From '82 up to '86 and onwards, a new group of writers emerged and began to publish in the ***Ondobondo*** magazine.
>
> ***And you were one of those?***
>
> Yes, I came in around 1984 and published my first poem in ***Ondobondo.*** . . . I was involved with the PNG Writers' Union. . . . The only remaining writers of the early period I came to know were Kumalau Tawali, Russell Soaba, John Kasaipwalova, John Waiko . . . Russell made a distinction between three categories in which writers belong. The first was political antagonism; the second was nostalgia and self-reflection. The last one was writers writing for their own entertainment. It's a good categorization but I don't totally agree with it. To me, the significance of each writer comes with the time spent in a particular period, . . . because it reflects the social, economic, and political changes of that period.

> In the '80s we were writing about the changes that were affecting us--this whole problem of the "haves" and the "have-nets." [In the early '70s] there was all this political antagonism; there was a need for a counterdiscourse to the colonial discourse. . . . After independence there was more self-assessment, people assessing whether they had actually done the right thing or not. . . .

During this interview, Winduo commented that there has always been a stark contrast between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in Papua New Guinea. In his view this has become more alarming recently because the lines of demarcation extend beyond racial differences. Similar thoughts were expressed by Father Bart Advent Setavo Jr. in a letter to the ***Times*** identifying "real black colonialism . . . evident in the many inequalities and disparities existing in our beautiful country" (29 June-5 July 1989: 8.)

The 1980s were a time of poignant contrasts: political consolidation on one hand, heightened social division on the other. This was a time in which the material circumstances of the small, well-educated, indigenous elite appeared, almost inevitably, to move further from the reach of ordinary people. In addition, the social, economic, and attitudinal gap between urban and rural districts grew wider. During this period many people questioned the basic justice of their changing society. A few courageous individuals suggested solutions. Perhaps more fundamental than this questioning, however, was a widespread commitment by writers to look at present and future directions for their country.

One writer who took this commitment seriously is John Kasaipwalova, whose thirty-five-page poem ***Sail the Midnight Sun*** looks to the future of all Papua New Guineans. Kasaipwalova has described this poem as "a major piece on the soul of Kabisawali philosophy" (1980:3). In fluent and lyrical style the poem affirms the importance of holding on to dreams and believing in the power of love to bring good out of painful experiences. The poem is a Kesawaga, a form of dance-drama that Kasaipwalova has described as "Kiriwina ballet" (ibid.:2). It was written while Kasaipwalova was serving a prison sentence, and, according to Greg Murphy (ibid.:introduction), it has a strong connection with the writer's own life story. The following passage indicates the strength of his belief:

> Who has not stood petrified and hopeless
> When wrathful destruction reeks all around
> And inevitable death swings down to kill?
> The weak of heart die before their deaths
> The foolish smile to hide what their eyes behold

> But cool and lithe are the waiting sinews
> Of the midnight sun who carries a dream of love
> A heart of fountain strength no wave can swamp. (Ibid.:53)

Kasaipwalova's concern for the future of the "dream of love" is shared by all the writers of the period 1979-1989. The concept of development is probably the greatest single concern emerging in their work. My discussion now focuses on this concern, and then turns to the related issues of education, leadership, and urbanization.

The "Development" Debate

Deeply inscribed in the discourse of any postcolonial society is the concept --or, more frequently, widely differing concepts--of development. Closely tied to any discussion of development are the sensitive and potentially divisive issues of decolonization, exploitation, and neocolonialism. My research suggests that the discourse of Papua New Guinea is no exception. These concerns were deeply felt and much debated in the writing of the period 1979-1989, and remain so today. As they did in the 1970s writers have adopted a dynamic, opinion-shaping role, seeking to alert people to the dangers threatening their country's future and their own well-being.

Utula Samana has much to say about the problems associated with conventional development in his collection of essays, ***Papua New Guinea: Which Way?*** (1988). Written during the early 1980s while Samana was serving as premier of the Morobe Province, these essays argue strongly in favor of reassessment and change. In their account the very fabric of Papua New Guinean society is at risk and will be further damaged unless the country's development policies undergo a radical reappraisal.

> The current trend of development is destabilising the social system of Papua New Guinea. . . . The question of quality of life is one that needs to be raised more and more because Papua New Guineans are being taught to see change in terms of material things. If there is a road going through they say: "Now development is coming." Then all of a sudden people realise that along that road come drunken people, road gang hold-ups and all kinds of negative effects. . . . We need to look at development from the point of view of people. (Samana 1988:9)

Samana's view is widely shared. Benjamin Nakin's poem "Highlands Highway" is just one text that endorses his concern (198413). In 1981

Michael Somare said: "Unemployment among young people is potentially the most explosive situation the country will be facing this decade" ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 18 September 1981: 2).[6] Sadly, his prediction proved accurate. Unemployment and law-and-order problems feature regularly in correspondence to the ***Times of Papua New Guinea*** during the 1980s. For example, Gima Temu of the Department of Primary Industry calls for a strengthening of "all elements of the subsistence food production sector. . . [for this will] contribute to increased rural employment and social stability" (25 August 1985: 8).

In a similar vein Kible A. Bonga, from the University of Papua New Guinea's School of Economics, notes that in 1973 the Faber report, "Eight Aims of PNG," "specifically emphasised self-sufficiency and social justice (i.e. to feed itself and distribute wealth evenly to the masses). . . . PNG has not yet achieved these objectives in any significant way" ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 14 April 1985: 10). In Bonga's view, the two most important policy issues at the time were high unemployment and the need for "more meaningful economic development." His concern is echoed by James P. Arlo, who wrote the ***Times*** from the Capricornia Institute (in Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia) to warn against the trading of "people's lives for short-term gain" and to remind readers that "a nation's most important resource is its people" (2-8 November 1989: 8).

Two writers who pinpoint development as a key issue are Nora Vagi Brash and William Takaku. Brash points to the gap between rural and urban services:

> The village people in the provinces are crying out, "Independence has come. All it means is that development has taken place in town." In December when I was here I went out to Dagoda village. . . . It was election time for the central provincial government. I interviewed a village man who doesn't speak any English. . . . Here's a beautiful image he gave me. "All these politicians come and their words are sweeter than sugar." This was all said in Motu. "But really it's like chewing gum: you chew it until the sweetness has gone, and then you throw it away. We village people are like that. They come and sweet-talk us but when the sweetness is gone they throw us away. They go up to their offices and when they become big men and so forth, we go to see them and they say, 'Come tomorrow.' So we go tomorrow and they say, 'Oh, come next week.' So we go and come back next week and they say, 'Come back six weeks later,' so we go six weeks later. Then they tell us, 'Go. We'll send word to you and you can come back.' When indepen-

> dence came we were all enthusiastic. . . . But then everything went to sleep." And that's the attitude of village people nowadays. (Interview, 13 April 1992)

Brash's satirical play ***Pick the Bone Dry*** highlights the gap between urban and rural services. Set in a government office and then a village, the plot revolves around a sum of money the government has promised to give Munibi village for its new community hall. Originally set at K50,000, the total has steadily dropped to K10,000 because of various demands on the available funds; yet the minister publicly informs the villagers: "We at the national level are very keen to see rural development" (Brash 1985-1986:29).

William Takaku's concern about development focuses on the environment. He is a committed conservationist who worries about logging and other signs of "progress" in the country Logging was a particularly urgent problem in Papua New Guinea during the 1980s and remains so even today; one of the world's few remaining rain forests stands there.[7] Takaku's play ***The Conference of the Birds,*** written around 1989,[8] dramatizes the dangers commercial logging poses to both human and animal life (n.d.***a).*** The action is set in the year 1999. The "island of New Guinea," once lush and forest-covered, has lost most of its trees and become the gloomy scene of strange phenomena. Prominent among the fauna facing extinction is the bird of paradise, an important national emblem whose likeness appears on coins and official letterheads and may soon become just a memory.

A younger writer sharing Takaku's vision is Adam Vai Delaney, who notes that

> cultures and values of indigenous peoples have been suppressed without any real concern for the people. It's all been done in the name of civilization, which translates to money instead of respect. . . . [I]ssues such as environmental damage, pollution, excess logging, cigarette advertising are now principal issues raised at international levels. The co-existence of man and his environment is the history of any indigenous peoples around the world.

This comment comes the playwright's notes to Delaney's musical drama ***Chant of the Witchdoctor*** (Delaney 1991a),[9] a play that explores the impact of cargo cult beliefs on community attitudes and behavior.

Interesting insights into the issue of development are offered in Ignatius Kilage's novel, ***My Mother Calls Me Yaltep.*** Set in the Simbu district of Papua New Guinea's highlands, this fictitious account "based on facts" offers

a fascinating glimpse into changes that immediately preceded the arrival of the first ***kiaps*** (Australian patrol officers). Told with wry humor and an exquisite gift for detail, the story makes no attempt to romanticize village life or gloss over the impact of Westernization. With delightful self-irony, Kilage relates the terrifying rumors that accompanied the first cows and horses to be seen in the highlands: "There were other creatures which were very big and ate up all the green grass overnight. . . . These monsters were rumoured to be eating up every blade of grass--soon they would be devouring us when they finished all the greens in the Valley" (Kilage 1980:23).

Kilage highlights the colonial threat to vulnerable, time-honored customs and values with considerable sensitivity. For example, the traditional courtship ritual, known as Kuanandi, was changed almost beyond recognition in a bid to entertain visiting officials. In the original custom "boys and girls used to meet in front of the fire and in the presence of the old people and children. They sat side by side with both hands interlocked and sang songs, laughed and had innocent fun together" (ibid.:25). Many people in the community were distressed to see this custom give way to a new, promiscuous ritual arranged by

> local dignitaries . . . for the ***kiaps*** and their followers, who knew nothing about the customary way of conducting it. . . . The new form of the ***Kuanandi*** could not be recognised from the original so there were whisperings abroad that the strict moral codes of the Kuman people were going overboard. The older people who believe so strongly in the purity of those to be initiated prohibited us from going near the rest houses, lest we might get contaminated. . . . This was the beginning of the breakdown in the strict moral code of behaviour of our people as handed down to us. (Ibid.:26)

Yet Kilage shows that, for all its attendant problems, Westernization did bring benefits; thus, the tone of his novel is predominantly optimistic. While missionaries from different churches add more confusion to this "age of contradictions" (ibid.:77), the adolescent Yaltep gradually understands change in positive terms. As a young adult, he comments, "The people came to see that to get on in this rapidly growing and progressing country they had to change their views on life and the social system had to be remodelled. . . . In assimilating the Western civilisation they clearly saw the need for education" (ibid. : 101). This last observation is particularly significant, coming as it does from a young man who left home as a very small boy and lived with his grandparents in another part of the highlands to avoid going to school.

Although few (if any) Papua New Guinean writers would deny the need for structured education, there has been much criticism of Western-style pedagogy and of the social "remodelling" that Yaltep appears to feel is beneficial to the country's progress. It is interesting to note that the setting and the experiences in Kilage's novel are close to those of his own life. His autobiographical details at the end of the book include this comment: "I am happy to say I have seen a lot of changes and I am glad I was asked to give my bit for the development of our people as we form our young but vigorous society" (ibid.:121). Kilage's assessment seems reasonably optimistic--an uncommon view in the 1980s when most texts portray Western influences as detrimental. Another exception is Andreas Hara Wabiria's story "Mangove" (1985), which makes an oblique reference to the positive influence of Westernization in reducing the amount of tribal fighting.

The Dilemma of Education

Education systems, inevitably influenced by current political conditions, can never be immune to challenge and potential conflict. The establishment and growth of any system of pedagogy raises many possible questions, some of which are explored in the poem "Education" by Benjamin Nakin (1984a). Having considered several alternative views of the educational process, the poem ends on a note of ambivalence: "Perhaps it's a dream / A nightmare. / Who knows?" Questions of education and training, and the dilemmas to which they can lead, are particularly sensitive in a postcolonial context.

Russell Soaba's second novel, ***Maiba*** (1985), asks searching questions about the implications of a Western educational system in the previously idyllic world of Makawana village, on the coast of Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province. ***Maiba*** is a complex novel that explores many aspects of social change: it sheds light not only on questions of education, but also cultural identity, development, leadership, and exploitation.

The story is set in the village and is written as a parable. The word ***maiba*** in the Anuki language refers to a traditional genre that communicates truth through parables, and the novels central character is named Yawasa Maibina, meaning "the parable of life." This, together with the inclusion of unglossed Anuki words in the narrative, poses an intriguing challenge to the non-Anuki reader.[10] Commenting on his intentions as a writer, Soaba has said,

> I write in English as a way of inviting people from outside to come and realize the significance--and the dangers--there are in seeing my own language die out. So you notice that even in a novel such as ***Maiba*** there are a lot of words in my language. The idea there is to

invite as many outsiders as possible to go through literally trying to see what the word ***maiba*** means.

So when someone reads your book it's an invitation to step into that world and learn a little about that culture and that language.

Yes. (Interview, 25 August 1992)

In this novel, a sharp contrast is developed between Doboro Thomas and Yawasa Maibina (or Maiba, as she is more frequently called). Both have been educated in the Western style. Doboro, an eloquent orator and a crafty rogue, had declared himself the village leader by default soon after the rightful leader died of tuberculosis in his early thirties. This was Chief Komeroana Magura, Maiba's father. By means of a skillful blend of foreign learning and basic terrorism, Doboro establishes almost total control of the village. Maiba, on the other hand, has no apparent power at all.[11] Orphaned and unwanted, maligned by local gossip and tormented by her schoolmates, she has a lonely childhood. Perhaps this isolation from her peers serves to foster her development as a leader: it is her honesty, clear-sightedness, compassion, and courage that enable her to confront Doboro and his thugs, and to gain the villagers' respect at the novel's end.

Doboro's veneer of apparent wisdom sways most people in the village. Not everyone, however: the young schoolboy Percy sees through him and recognizes that his authority lies in "deliberately throwing hard English words at an audience that can't understand them" (Soaba 1985:81). Young people who speak English and are familiar with Doboro's foreign terms of reference can assess his arguments and find them wanting. Older people in the village cannot.

The extent to which Soaba intends the reader to identify with Doboro is not altogether clear. Doboro and Maiba are depicted as the most intelligent characters in the novel. Maiba is the epitome of many good qualities, while Doboro is a liar and a cheat. Yet we cannot simply dismiss him. The story he tells about Westerners exploiting local art is perceptive and probably accurate. It reveals his sensitivity, his understanding of international market forces, and his disillusionment. He is unquestionably talented, but ultimately it becomes clear that these talents, coupled with his dishonesty and greed, are being used purely to further his own advancement. His learning and power benefit no one in the end.

In her review of ***Maiba,*** Jennifer Evans has commented that the story ends on an optimistic note (1986). My own reading suggests that the ending is open and ambiguous. One thing is certain: the peaceful world symbolized

by Mr. Wawaya and his house has been shattered beyond recovery. We are left with the possibility of new leadership in Makawana village, but no predictions are offered as to what kind of leadership we might expect. It is arguable that either Maiba or Royal Bob Rabobo may become the next leader. Both have aristocratic blood, the advantages of higher education, and--perhaps most important of all--credibility. We know enough of their behavior to be confident that they would use their position and educational opportunities to empower the people, not exploit them as Doboro did. Soaba seems in this novel to be examining the possible effects of "development," including formal Western-style education, and exploring the potential it has for either undermining or enriching a community.

Other texts that explore formal education as a vehicle of change in society include Ambrose Waiyin's autobiographical piece "Crossing the Flooded Sipi" (1983), Wilhelm Tagis's novella "Michael Tsim" (1985), Daniel Kumbon's story "Ambarep Taiakali" (1985-1986), and John Kil's narrative "King of the Marbles" (1985). None of them presents a flattering picture of school.

Kil's story is about three schoolboys who play truant one time too many. Having enjoyed a successful day winning hundreds of marbles from children in a nearby village, the boys return home to find they have been expelled from school. Not surprisingly, their parents are distraught. The boys' ringleader, thirteen-year-old Thomas, endures a beating and an angry lecture from his father, who upbraids him for his lost chances and his bleak future without education. Thomas defiantly resolves to get "all the boys" to work for him and further build his marble empire (Kil 1985:32), thus securing his future without the need for any more formal schooling. The final triumphant note belongs to him. In addition to this, however, the story offers a sensitive insight into the boys' fathers and their way of thinking. They are furious about the expulsion--"not that they were angry at the committee for expelling the boys but angry at the younger generation. They were angry at the way they were dealing with life" (ibid.:29). In particular, Thomas's father questions the value of Westernization: after working hard to build a future for his sons, his hopes are dashed and he is forced to acknowledge the fact that none of the boys has good prospects.

Western education, particularly that with a Christian emphasis, is subjected to close scrutiny by Bernard A. Kaspou in his poem "Education for Confusion." Depicting pupils seated cross-legged on "worn-out mats" and stretching their necks "heron-like," he writes:

> Our half-baked Teacher
> Always said that
> Jesus was the way of life . . .

I now see that
there is a mental war
Between
Christ, Plato, Karl Marx
Mao Tse-Tung and I
And Heaven seems remote. (Kaspou 1987)

The implication is that the poet is ill-equipped to assess critically these conflicting philosophies and make his own choice. Thus he may become a victim in the "mental war."

Similarly, Steven Winduo's poems, written during and immediately after his undergraduate university days, make some incisive comments on the potential pitfalls of conventional learning. "Life in an Evening Glass" expresses disdain for "incompetent academics" who "Cast an evil omen on corridors / Of disasterous [*sic*] learning / In this young country's soil" (Winduo 1991b:B).

In a different but related vein, the poem "Different Histories" highlights the gulf that often separates educated young people from their traditional roots. This possibly draws on Winduo's own experience: he grew up in the East Sepik Province and left home to attend Aiyura National High School in Papua New Guinea's highlands, then the universities of Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby) and Canterbury (Christchurch, New Zealand). This poem concerns a traveler returning home, where he discovers the gap between himself and his background:

. . . [W]atching the sky again
I realise the clouds have moved
So has my Buk'nholi life
Which has drifted
Into a different world,
Making different histories.
My people no longer to me
Are the people of my childhood's history,
My papa and mama are no longer to me
The protectors of my life,
My home no longer to me
My place of being
But a mere reference of my whole history. (Winduo 1991b:3)

Winduo has remarked that a crucial element in this distancing process for him personally has been his movement away from his mother tongue (the

Boiken dialect) to English (interview, 6 October 1992). For some years now, English has been his "thinking" language and the context in which every aspect of his academic and professional life takes place.

The distance between the two worlds is explored from another perspective in his poem "Letters After Graduation." Here it is apparent that a university education is perceived by many as a ticket to wealth and an open door for needy members of the extended family The poem's speaker has no guests at his graduation ceremony because his "parents cannot afford a trip" and his relatives are "too busy to attend." Yet before long

> Letters arrive requesting financial aid
> Not from mother and father who do not even write
> I refuse to respond to these letters
> I fear more to come like locusts. (Winduo 1991b:10)

The problem described here is a common one in Papua New Guinean society Young professionals are often caught in a "Catch-22" trap. Although many aspects of traditional Melanesian cultures are praised, this particular feature of the ***wantok*** system is often described as a problem by local people.[12]

Uma More is another poet who has written about the problems that can accompany Western-style education. His poem "Blame Civilisation" poses a series of bitter questions:

> Why am I isolated
> from my people? . . .
>
> Why am I not sharing
> the problems confronted
> by my people? . . .
>
> Why am I facing
> many unknown diseases? . . . (More 1984:n.p.)

In reply to each question the poet repeats the title, "Blame civilisation."

In two other poems, More focuses on the emotional dislocation that often accompanies Westernization. "Whelma (My Name)" explores a young man's feelings about his vernacular name and traces his transition from low self-esteem to cultural pride. So intense is his discomfort at one point in the process that he decides to go by the name "Frank / A sweet little foreign name," only to find that he knows neither its meaning nor its origin (More

1984:n.p.). This discovery prompts him to return to his vernacular name, Whelma, with a new sense of identity and pride. More's poem "All Dad's Weren't Mine" ***(sic)*** offers a poignant insight into the process of leaving home, and with it, familiar horizons. The speaker recalls the "door to the world" that beckoned him as a young man, and his father's sad prediction that he would soon belong to a totally different world, one from which there could be no complete return (More 1984).

The new world that education introduces can promise neither safe return home nor secure integration into the new society. Loujaya Kouza's poem "Face the Naked Facts" looks at school-leavers' job prospects and draws a sharp contrast between their bright career hopes and the grim realities that will probably arise in their place:

> Everywhere
> you turn, there's a dead end.
> . . . .
> Face the naked facts. The low-paid
> dead-end jobs available can't compete
> with the fast life and easy money you
> can make by doing something illegal. (Kouza 1981a)

Papua New Guinea's educational system received substantial attention in letters to the ***Times of Papua New Guinea*** during the 1980s. Gabriel Pama (from the North Solomons Province) and Augustine Turi (from the University of Papua New Guinea) both wrote in to underline the importance of offering "true education" and to point to reasons why this is not happening in the country. In Pama's view, the problems spring from popular misconceptions about the role of formal schooling. Many seek education for their children "so that they will obtain a well-paid job, or get an important role in the country. For example, . . . to be politicians so that people will look up to them! . . . Some parents say their children are useless if they fail to go on to higher institutions. . . . The purpose of education is to develop as a person. . . . Are money and importance always what we want to gain from education?" (26 June-2 July 1981: 2). Turi agrees that misconceptions exist but looks for deeper causes: "it was not the people of this country who were to be blamed for wrong attitudes but the government's adoption of the Australian education system" (10-16 July 1981: 2). In his view, foreign expertise needs to be used judiciously--"not in excess because this will create other problems."

The need for more-relevant teacher education is stressed by Brother Andrew Simpson, who wrote to the ***Times*** from Vunakanau to support the

1986 Matane report and the 1989 McNamara report, with their separate calls for a "different approach to education," one that is committed to preparing "reflective teachers able to meet change" (12-18 October 1989: 8). Addressing a slightly different concern, M. B. Peril (assistant secretary for education) contests claims that education is "a recipe for disaster" (14 December 1989: 8). He asserts that such arguments reveal "a disease which the education system has been trying for decades to eradicate--elitism." My contact with teachers and curriculum advisers in Papua New Guinea suggests that Peril's concern about elitism is still strongly supported in several quarters today.

Leadership Woes

The perceived need for honest, just, and courageous leaders is clear in the writings of the period 1979-1989. Different writers employ different genres to explore this theme, but they agree on the essential principles and speak with a substantial measure of unity. In general, letters sent to the ***Times*** during this decade express disillusionment with the nation's democratically elected leaders--at both local and national levels. Much is said about the disparity between urban and rural districts and the services available to them, a concern shared by writers of essays and imaginative literature generally. These different bodies of writing all attempt to sensitize leaders to the needs of ordinary citizens and to make "grassroots" people more aware of their rights.

During the 1980s the ***Times*** printed many letters touching on the leadership topic. Peter Walus of Boroko is perhaps unusually forceful in his language, but he is certainly not alone in his anger about the "fat cats" and their exploitation of ordinary people:

> In recent times a number of leaders have called on Papua New Guineans to put their country first. . . . This will not be accepted in silence. . . . For how long will the working class of PNG go on struggling for their day-to-day survival in this very expensive country while the fruits of their toil are siphoned off to feed a few "fat cats"[?] . . . Sir, I pay taxes for the development of PNG--not to feed a few parasites living off the labours of real Papua New Guineans. ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 3 February 1984: 2)

Notable among the many other letters to the ***Times*** expressing people's disappointment in their leaders are those from Stephen Toimb of Mount Hagen (15 March 1984: 2), Basil Petaulo of Boroko (5 April 1989: 8), Maria

Kopkop--at that time president of Women in Development (22-28 June 1989: 8), and Joseph Sukwianomb (13 February 1981: 2) who was then based at Kenyatta University College in Nairobi, Kenya.

The difficulty of defining good leadership, particularly when political and religious questions collide, is illumined by correspondence to the ***Times*** regarding the controversial Father John Momis. In Leo Hannet's assessment, Momis's behavior as a politician was "extremely divisive"--and this was because of a fundamental divide between the functions of church and state:

> Paradoxically, I maintain with Ivan Illich, the view that the less effective the "church" is as a power in politics the more effective she can be as a celebrant of the mystery and then she can reveal to us more the full meaning of integrated human development. . . . She can, then, unmistakably present the seamless truth of Christ and speak more succinctly in season and out of season on issues such as the morality of politics rather than be involved in the politics of morality. ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 14-20 May 1987: 9)

Several weeks after Hannet's letter appeared in print, Moro R. Nime wrote to the ***Times*** from Simbu Province to defend the controversial cleric against such "vicious attacks": "Papua New Guinea needs poor, but principled people like Fr Momis . . . to ensure that this country is not sold to foreign interests. He is the one . . . true leader who doesn't sell our country while he is in the position" (11-17 June 1987: 9).

Correspondents to the ***Times*** were not the only ones to be worried about the corruptibility of leaders during this second decade. This theme is satirized in Nora Brash's play ***Pick the Bone Dry,*** already discussed briefly in connection with development, and in Bernard Minol's story "The Kongan Way" (1987b). In her play, Brash cleverly dramatizes a conflict of vested interests among a government minister, the director of his department, and "Waitad" (a European adviser). While trying to maintain a public facade of concern and generosity towards villagers and their development projects, these men squabble behind the scenes over the allocation of promised money and the use of a discretionary fund. As a result, the finance actually given to the village amounts to a small fraction of the figure promised earlier.

Minol's story is set in the imaginary country of Konga, where public servants enjoy many social privileges at government expense. In addition to making full use of their convenient cover-all "Special Services Account" that caters for food, drink, and entertainment, they welcome appropriate advice from overseas experts: "An Australian psychologist who visited the Kongan

capital two years earlier had strongly recommended that their daily booze sessions be built into the normal office hours. In fact the professional psychologist had used the phrase 'therapeutic sessions' not 'booze sessions.' For the Konga public servants and Members of Parliament these fine semantical differences were meaningless . . . as long as they meant, partying and drinking beer" (Minol 1987b:64). The tone of both these texts is deliberately tongue-in-cheek, but there can be little doubt about the serious intention behind the plots. Brash has specifically said that she believes writers have a responsibility to comment on social trends and problems, even if this makes them unpopular (interview, 13 April 1992).

In a more sober vein, Bernard Narokobi casts a thoughtful and critical eye over the quality of leadership in Papua New Guinea and the wider community. His collection of essays titled ***Life and Leadership in Melanesia*** sets high standards for community, church, and national leaders to emulate. One area of his concern is the possible impact of private business interests on leaders' ability to act with integrity. Although unwilling to state that such interests are necessarily a corrupting influence, he argues that this is often the case (Narokobi 1983:9). In his view it is essential for leaders to be committed to the equitable distribution of wealth.

On this particular point, Narokobi is in agreement with Brash (interview, 13 April 1992), Utula Samana (1988), and many writers of letters to the ***Times.*** Narokobi observes:

> As far as most ordinary people are concerned, most leaders are hypocrites and liars, concerned primarily for their own interests and secondarily for the benefit of their country. . . . One of the most important needs of the Melanesian nations is to take control of the economy. . . . This poses a critical ideological question. . . . Our political sovereignty and independence cannot be authentic if we leave control of the economy to foreigners. (1983:12)

Some quite similar terms are employed in a letter by Andrew U. Baing, titled "Time to be Independent": "Could it be that the 1980s is an era of struggle against colonialism and domination by foreign elements? As for us in the Pacific our awareness is crucial to the survival of independence, culture and national interests" ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 14 November 1980: 2).

Narokobi has scant respect for leaders who commit "sins against their people and against democracy" (1983:12-15). These "sins" include using parliamentary time for their own work, failing to represent the views of their electorate, absenting themselves from important or controversial discussions (especially those that involve "having to make decisions on conscience"),

doing inadequate study, being lazy or irresponsible, and neglecting the needs of provincial areas. In his account, "One of the acts village people find most offensive is to be ignored" (ibid.:15).

This last observation is endorsed by my interview with Brash, and by the poem "Democracy," in which Elsie Mataio points out that everyone receives their fair share of government rhetoric, but real services (symbolized in the poem by smart new aircraft) are a different matter: "Only the bigmen have wings / the small men have dead roots" (1983). This problem is treated just as seriously in Wilhelm Tagis's novella "Michael Tsim" (1985). The character Makule (who is eventually jailed for five and a half years) is an extravagantly corrupt leader in his official capacity as a member of the Toberaki Community Government. Michael (the novella's narrator and central character) is appalled by Makule's behavior but finds the community's apathy equally devastating.

Willful blindness to known problems is not unique to this fictitious community, as Loujaya Kouza's poem "Tell Me Brother to Brother" makes clear:

> . . . all I know is I'm working on an order
> What happens next
> don't blame me brother.
> The ostrich has its eggs to lay
> Let's rest this matter
> another day. (Kouza 1987)

Both Narokobi and Samana stress that PNG leaders need to tap into their traditional cultures and create an appropriate, uniquely Melanesian path for the future. Both writers caution against the dangers of exploitation in the form of foreign investment and large-scale "development." In the 1970s much was made of Narokobi's writing about the "Melanesian Way." In this more recent writing he notes "the oppressive and exploitative regimes of Indonesia and the West," and argues that Melanesian principles, such as respect for others and communal ownership, need to be applied to industry: "This is a dynamic application of the Melanesian Way. Unless industry is democratised and humanised, there will be no end to industrial strike action. No man strikes against himself, or walks off his own industry" (Narokobi 1983:19).

Urbanization--A Country Drifting Apart?

According to Steven Winduo (interview, 6 October 1992), an important commitment among the writers of the 1980s was to look at the changes

occurring in society and attempt to assess them. My reading suggests widespread concern during this period over the breakdown of the traditional fabric of PNG society--particularly relationships. Two letters to the ***Times*** expressing this concern are "Fast Going Down Hill" by Phillip Apa from Mount Hagen (15 April 1987: 9) and "Take a Pride in PNG" by John Bonam of Hohola, near Port Moresby (16 December 1984: 9). The same concern over deteriorating relationships is also prominent in Utula Samana's essays (1988). In his account, it is vital that the youth in the rural areas be "stabilised" with gainful employment and a viable way of life away from the major centers. If true development occurs at this level, many urban problems--especially unemployment, vandalism and crime--will diminish, he argues.

The short poem "Papua New Guinea" by B. Elijah notes changes so great that the country is scarcely recognizable. The text is the work of a high school student, but it adopts an old person's perspective in examining "the beginning of a new era" and asking in a bewildered tone, "So this is Papua New Guinea?" (Elijah 1987). The writers I interviewed in the course of my research all stressed the importance of strengthening links within society. Nora Brash and William Takaku specifically mentioned urbanization as a worrying phenomenon because of the accompanying problems, particularly urban drift, youth unemployment, "raskolism," and the breakdown of traditional lines of communication and support.

Speaking to Dr. Adeola James on an earlier occasion about the work and responsibilities of the media, Loujaya Kouza stressed the value of traditional channels of communication: "We consider the total development of the human being--physically, spiritually and morally, according to our national goals, as our main purpose. We try to communicate with people according to our traditional custom of the ***Wantok*** system. People are free to come and talk to us and they do so freely. It means a lot to them" (quoted in James 1991:238). Kouza's work with the National Broadcasting Network, her role as assistant subeditor of the ***Times*** and assistant editor at the National Research Institute, and her continued involvement in creative writing (including songwriting) equip her to speak firsthand about the opportunities open to writers and journalists.

Increased urbanization seems to have made it more difficult to maintain --much less strengthen-- traditional lines of communication. In "Michael Tsim," Wilhelm Tagis offers a graphic description of the rapid growth of Arawa from sleepy little community to town (1985). Tagis does not apparently attempt to gloss over the considerable associated problems. Prominent among the casualties of such rapid change are family relationships, security and law-and-order. A much shorter piece, Shem Yarupawa's story "Kita Basara, the Lone Traveller" (1985), touches on the problems that arise when

a person leaves the village but retains the expectation of traditional values and mores. To such people, urban life can come as a severe shock.

Several poems in Steven Winduo's collection--notably "Fraternity of Boroko," "Hanuabada," "The Rising Heat," and "Gahunagaudi Street"--highlight the ugliness of modern life in the city, with its incongruous juxtaposition of rundown houses and glossy new cars. In "Sheltered Silence," the poet builds up a crescendo of night noises so disturbing that even the insects seek "refuge / Behind their shelled wings," and people who were hoping for peace find instead that "Nature threatens to fall apart" (Winduo 1991b:18).

"Gahunagaudi Street" is particularly powerful in its evocation of despair and alienation. Here the poet depicts "the stray dogs" of the area: the refuse of society, rummaging silently through rubbish bins. In the second stanza it becomes evident that these "dogs" are not necessarily four-legged:

> We strive for discovery
> Possessed by desire and lust for imported goods.
> Disappointed by rising posts and melted metals
> Desperate prayers for another bin will not answer
> Displaced citizens of our own soil.
>
> Who gave us this history? . . .
> This moment of betrayal! (Winduo 1991b:35)

The poem's impact is enhanced by the strategic repetition of key sounds, words, and phrases. On a different level, the poem is especially evocative for residents of Port Moresby and its suburbs, where stray dogs are numerous. The dogs are all the more memorable for their extremely thin and destitute appearance. The theme of urban despair is explored elsewhere, including Abba B. Bina's "Port Moresby" (1983) and Loujaya Kouza's "Morning Comes" (1981c). Similarly, the poem "The City" by Sorariba Nash Gegera depicts a place that is characterized by "[n]oises of laughter, cries and yells," a place in which every morning "[h]uman life explodes with rage" (1981).

Many other texts deal with urbanization problems. For instance, Joyce Kumbeli's poem "Caught Up" (1983), Loujaya Kouza's "It's Friday" (1981b), and Jack Lahui's "Fed Up with Consumerism" (1983) all highlight the insidious effects of materialism once people begin living in a cash society. The harshness and potential brutality of urban life, especially as it affects personal relationships, is afforded honest and disturbing treatment in many stories from the period. Notable among them are Russell Soaba's "Traffic Jam" (1983), Adam Delaney's "Machine Tragedy" (1983), Malum Nalu's "Rambo" (1987), and Sorariba Nash Gegera's "A Sordid Affair" (1987).

Adam Delaney's play ***When Two Tribes Go to War*** takes a harrowing look

at the pressures facing "successful" professional families in a contemporary urban setting (1991b).[13] While news reports on the radio tell of tribal fighting in the highlands, a personal conflict escalates between Peter (a bank clerk) and his wife Maria, an articulate and ambitious lawyer whose higher wage threatens his traditional role as family provider. The possibility of violence is never far away. Commenting that his play "pinpoint[s] a lot of the defects of society," Delaney observes, "Social commentary is political commentary as I see it. You can't give a social commentary without making a political statement. . . . ***Two Tribes*** is political: two people killing each other mentally" (conversation, 22 October 1992).

Although a concern in the letters to the ***Times*** from this period, increasing urbanization tends to surface more obliquely than in the creative writing --often arising amidst more general comments about development. For example, Peter I. Peipul (at that time Papua New Guinea's ambassador to the European Economic Community) stresses the importance of the country's agriculture and the need for greater focus on "small cottage industries in rural areas" ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 6 September 1984: 2). In his view, this would help to alleviate urban drift, unemployment and "raskolism." Two correspondents who write directly about the economic tensions between-urban and rural areas are John Tambi of Boroko (9 March 1983: 2) and Mend Max Kep of Gerehu (30 September 1983: 2).[14] Tambi remarks: "There is much debate on the two tier structure of salaries of nationals versus foreigners. However, the proportion of Expatriates to Papua New Guineans is surely decreasing. . . . What appears to be ignored is the huge discrepancy between urban and rural wages of Papua New Guineans." (Currently urban basic wage is about double the rural basic wage.) This point is endorsed by Kep, who argues that the country's economy needs urgent attention; he cites "the high urban-rural gap" as a problem in the wages policy.

One aspect of the ugliness of life in a rapidly growing city is highlighted by Joseph Manau of Boroko, in his letter "Transportation Chaos": "Port Moresby is growing so fast that the problems associated are evident in traffic congestion and the highly ineffective and unreliable public transport system" ***(Times of Papua New Guinea,*** 22 September 1985: 8). Manau asserts that a better system is needed. As evidence he points to "astronomical" prices, noise and air pollution, and illnesses such as "lung cancer, asthma and chronic bronchitis."

The Decade in Summary

Social change thus emerges as a significant concern in the writing of the period 1979-1989. Both the "literary" and the "popular" texts indicate that

during this decade writers and correspondents from many different localities were willing to take a close look at their country. Their approach was twofold: first, assessing the changes that had already occurred; and second, pointing to further changes they considered necessary. The objective the writers had in common during this decade was to foster national pride and integrity as they sought to build something uniquely Papua New Guinean for their children's generation.

The much-debated question of development is most prominent among the various aspects of social change that the literature explores between 1979 and 1989. Writers and correspondents alike express anxiety over the depletion of the country's valuable natural resources and what they perceive as a large-scale "selling out" to foreign companies. Questions of leadership and education are closely connected with development issues in the imaginative literature, the essays, and the letters to the ***Times.*** The rapid growth of urban centers is generally regarded with a measure of distaste--although on this particular topic, the "literary" work has considerably more to say than the letters do.

Conclusion: The Two Decades Together--Changes for the Better?

In 1977 John Waiko took an uncompromising stand in his polemic essay "The Political Responsibility of a Writer," arguing that there can be no soft options where writers' commitment and accountability are concerned. "It is a terrible thing to be a writer, because any writer is under threat from Big Finance and the call of internationalism: the former restricts the publication of anything a writer produces, while the latter robs him of his language and his culture. It is a strange feeling indeed, for one's first lesson in writing is to be involved in translating one's people's view of the world to an outsider" (Waiko 1977:36).

The need for cultural or philosophical "translation" Waiko mentions here is uniquely complex for Papua New Guinea's writers, because of the vast geographical, linguistic, and cultural diversities that characterize their country. Russell Soaba is one writer who has commented on the position of the English language in the midst of this complexity. Paramount to him is the goal of developing a distinctively Papua New Guinean literature. For him personally this means working in the "borrowed" English language, a medium he uses "out of choicelessness" (interview, 25 August 1992).

Twenty years before my interview with Soaba, and five years before the publication of Waiko's essay, Apisai Enos offered this insight into his country's cultural diversity and his own paradoxical position in it: "Talking about traditional literature, I can only generalize and rely on my limited knowl-

edge of the various cultures of Niugini. Although I am a Niuginian, I am at the same time a stranger, an outsider in cultures other than my own. . . . Such cultural, linguistic and geographical spectra make it hard for me to reduce Niugini to a uniform scale" (1972:46). This diversity is vitally important to Papua New Guinean writers and thinkers alike.

My research demonstrates that Waiko is not alone in taking the writer's role so seriously. John Kasaipwalova has spoken of the "onerous responsibility" resting on his particular generation of Papua New Guinean writers (interview, 24 September 1992). A similar view was expressed in 1978 by Kumalau Tawali, who asserted that writers and artists "are meant to be the conscience, the inspiration and the prophets of a new world order. . . . Those who have offered their artistic might to the remaking of their nation should bum with revolutionary flames to lead their nation and humanity into fresh thinking and living" (1978:l). Much more recently, Loujaya Kouza has supported this idea by describing writers as "the mirror of society's many faces" and "a conscience, a reminder of the realities of ourselves and our surroundings" (personal communication, June 1992).

Nora Vagi Brash is equally serious about the role of writers. Addressing the Pacific Women Writers Conference at the University of Papua New Guinea in April 1992, she declared that people who are afraid of opposition should not call themselves writers. In my interview with her soon afterward, she elaborated on the responsibility of writers to comment on changes and trends in society: "It is their duty to point some of these things out. . . . Otherwise, how is anyone going to make things clear? . . . I feel writing should be a lifetime commitment. . . . There have been writers who've been thrown into jail, or tortured, or banned. That's a commitment they make. It's a commitment we are making" (interview, 13 April 1992).

In common with other new literatures written in English, Papua New Guinean literature emerged in a period of political upheaval and rapid social change. The theme of social change has been an important concern all the way through the twenty years of writing I have examined. In general, social change has been treated seriously and seen as inevitable and unfortunate. The impact of Christianity and Westernization has been neither acclaimed nor censured unanimously. Instead, it has been explored with profound ambivalence. Writers have tended to focus more on the negative aspects of foreign influences, particularly where these have jeopardized time-honored cultural patterns and attitudes. During the two decades under investigation, few writers expressed a syncretic vision of social change.

The writers I have met in the course of my research represent a diversity of views on the value of social change. Nora Brash points sadly to the increase in urbanization and the presence of more beggars on the streets of

Port Moresby--an indication to her that traditional relationships and lines of support are deteriorating (interview, 13 April 1992). Russell Soaba laments the weakening of the country's traditional cultures but says "there is no denying that . . . change has had some positive influences" (interview, 25 August 1992). Loujaya Kouza comments: "No society is immune to change. The pace of change determines whether it is destructive or otherwise" (personal communication, June 1992). In Adam Delaney's assessment, change is inevitable "so long as there's a cross-cultural balance that exists within a society. . . . But unfortunately in Papua New Guinea we're trying to imitate what [the Western countries] have done, and emulate Australia all the time. . . . Change is beneficial, definitely. But it's also destructive. [Regarding] the environmental impact which change is bringing . . . people should really listen to the ground" (conversation, 22 October 1992).

Steven Winduo asserts that his "personal politics" involves looking at the changes that are occurring and examining "the transition, the sacrifice. . . . A lot of people are losing their values--values that make them a person of dignity, a person of respect, and a person of worth" (interview, 6 October 1992). In William Takaku's assessment, "social changes have been destructive to . . . traditionally creative people" (interview, 23 September 1992).

On a more positive note, John Kasaipwalova describes social change as "the engine and the dynamic" of his writing and says, "I thrive on social change. . . . Change . . . is always a good thing. What is classified as 'destructive' or 'beneficial' is really a description of. . . two polarities. . . . Change . . . does in fact mean that you have to destroy something. But you also have to build onto something. You cannot have change without having to destroy some preconceived ideas" (interview, 24 September 1992).

The world of all these writers has altered dramatically since 1969. Notable among the questions raised in the process is the evolving role of the writer and of English writing in Papua New Guinea's fast-changing society.

NOTES

1. As the focus of the research was on indigenous Papua New Guinean writers, John Kolia's work is not included.

2. Other media items such as news articles fell outside the scope of the research project. So did literary material published after 1989.

3. The Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (in Boroko, Port Moresby), already established as an important publishing outlet, continued to fill a major role during this second decade of writing.

4. Steven Winduo's collection, *Lomo'ha I Am, in Spirit's Voice I Call,* was published in 1991, but the poems were written between 1984 and 1988. The collection represents an edited version of "Shrivelled Shrine in a Smoke Crowned House," an unpublished set of poems for which Winduo was awarded the inaugural poetry anthology prize in Papua New Guinea's National Literature Competition in 1988.

5. I am indebted to William Takaku for the idea of including newspaper letters in my research. During a conversation at the National Theatre Company's Waigani office in November 1991, he remarked that very few people were writing literature anymore: they were writing letters to the editor instead.

6. Michael Somare was Papua New Guinea's first prime minister, serving from 1975 to 1981. When he made this statement, Somare was leader of the opposition (heading the Pangu Pati) and Sir Julius Chan was the new prime minister.

7. Dr. David Suzuki, speaking at the University of Papua New Guinea in mid-1992, stated that there are only four remaining rain forests in the world. Earlier that week, he had been invited to observe a low-impact logging operation in Papua New Guinea's rain forest near Finschhaffen--an experience that he described glowingly during his university address.

8. Personal communication, 23 September 1992. My copy of this unpublished drama bears no date.

9. The play, first entitled "Vailala Madness," was written between 1988 and 1991, and has been published privately.

10. The Anuki language is spoken by only a few hundred people in Papua New Guinea's Milne Bay Province.

11. The following passage from the novel indicates the gulf that existed between Maiba's power as a young child and that of Doboro:

> "The girl is possessed by the devil," continued the old orator. "One wonders if her kind will survive the changing seasons. I have a good mind to declare openly that your adopted daughter suffers considerably from the hereditary curse of phobic depression; she's a moral reprobate, to be exact; a criminal and murderer in the making; an evil whore who isn't aware that she is suffering from schizophrenia . . . truly she was born with the disease, for wasn't she paralyzed until she was four years old?" Those who surrounded Doboro Thomas agreed with him, seeing that he was using words that they had never heard before, and if anyone similarly used big English words for the first time in Makawana, he was automatically believed. (Soaba 1985:53).

12. *Wantok* literally means "one talk' or one language. The *wantok* system refers to the network of support among speakers of one language or people from one area. It is similar to an extended family network but has wider parameters. My experience suggests that many Pacific Islanders who have had tertiary education are ambivalent about the *wantok* system--particularly as it affects issues of personal freedom, possessions, and decision

making. Many report the extreme difficulty of saying no to a *wantok* in need--and this can open up a kaleidoscope of personal and social conflicts.

13. This play won the drama prize in the 1988 National Literature Competition. It was performed by the Moresby Theatre Group in 1990 and was published (in a slightly shortened form) in 1991.

14. Both locations are suburbs of Port Moresby.

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APPENDIX
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