

**“WAY BACK IN PAPUA”: REPRESENTING SOCIETY AND
CHANGE IN THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE
LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN NEW GUINEA, 1871-1932**

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From the commencement of their mission to New Guinea in 1871 to the early 1930s, members of the London Missionary Society (LMS) published a stream of articles and books describing the peoples they encountered. Addressing mission supporters and scientific audiences, the missionary ethnographers inevitably drew on the anthropological assumptions of both in making sense of Papuan societies. This article examines the shift in LMS representations of Papuans from racialist constructions of the person to more relativistic understandings of whole societies. I argue that this shift reflects changing fashions in metropolitan anthropology, greater familiarity with Papuan society, and a deepening and more humble sense of the missionaries' power to bring change. The missionary ethnography literature forms a kind of intermediary discourse, drawing on both evangelical and anthropological assumptions and concerns of the day.

THIS ESSAY DISCUSSES the large body of writings describing the indigenous peoples of southeastern New Guinea published by members of the London Missionary Society (LMS) from the organization's arrival there in 1871 to its consolidation in the 1920s and 1930s.¹ These writings provide a rich, if controversial, source of information on Papuan societies at the time of contact,² on early missionary efforts, and on missionary aims and understandings. I intend to examine these publications more broadly as an example of "colonial discourse." In particular, I wish to explore how the missionary authors' thinking about Papuans may have been conditioned by the necessities of winning continuing financial and material support from home congregations,

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on the one hand, and by changing fashions in the anthropological representation of non-Western cultures, on the other.

If we define ethnography in its broadest sense, most missionaries working in the Pacific Islands can be said to have attempted at least some ethnographic description in the course of their careers. They needed some familiarity with indigenous cultures and languages if they were to have any hope of success. Most of these fragmentary efforts ended up in letters, journals and reports, but a few missionaries attempted more sustained descriptions inspired by personal inclination and talent and often the direct encouragement and guidance of metropolitan scholars. Prior to the First World War, and in a few places for a time afterwards, missionary ethnography dominated the published firsthand accounts of Oceanic peoples. These contributions dropped off owing to a combination of factors including the consolidation of missionary work and, most importantly, the gradual displacement of amateur ethnographers by professionally trained academic anthropologists. Missionary anthropologists, however, have continued to make significant contributions to the academic literature up to the present (e.g., Böhm 1983; Gesch 1985; Tippett 1967; Whiteman 1983). More intriguing, and still awaiting study, is the critically influential position the Pacific churches have developed in supporting regionally based and published studies of indigenous society, culture and language.³

At mid-century, no less an authority than A. P. Elkin, himself an Anglican minister, dismissed most mission ethnography dealing with New Guinea as hopelessly ethnocentric (1953:3). The charge is far too sweeping. Even flawed writings provide an indispensable record of cultures in the early contact period--and, in fact, many are very good.⁴ As with all documentary sources, missionary ethnographies need to be read critically; and critics, in turn, need to be humble enough to acknowledge the concerns and biases they bring to their readings (Whiteman 1985).

In this article, I limit my attention to the *published* LMS writings, viewing them as public statements addressed to specific audiences. Hence I do not consider the ethnographic value of these books and articles, an assessment which can be made only from intimate local knowledge of the people described. Nor do I read this published literature as a direct reflection of missionary attitudes toward local people or as a history of their efforts in New Guinea.⁵ Though a handful of reports, theses, and books have appeared we still await a solid history of the London Missionary Society in Papua.⁶ Such a history will depend less on the published works than the very extensive archival sources available as well as oral histories from local historians.⁷ Here I consider what the missionaries *wanted* the outside world to know about their mission and about the people they were encountering.

The LMS authors addressed two distinct audiences in their published writings: scholars interested in New Guinea and mission supporters. The literature in turn reflects two genres of colonial writing, tailored to the audience. The first genre can be described loosely as that of the natural sciences. From the 1870s on, missionary writers addressed audiences of anthropologists and geographers, attempting to make use of both their “language” and key concepts. The second genre can be described, for lack of a better term, as “propaganda”: information designed to solicit support from readers and encourage new recruits.⁸ Missionary propaganda, as Thomas observes in the case of Methodists in the Solomon Islands (1992), employed ethnographic descriptions coupled with reports of mission progress to drive home the point that the natives needed salvation, were capable of salvation, and were actually being saved through the intervention of the missionaries.

In their respective histories of Western ethnographic thought, Fabian (1983) and McGrane (1989) draw a sharp distinction between the universalist and relational discourse of salvation, associated with Christian thought, and the particularist and essentializing discourse of nineteenth-century natural science. The LMS writings strike me as a kind of intermediate discourse, lying in a state of creative tension between the developing practices and guiding ideas of the missionary project and the shifting natural-scientific discourse of scholarly anthropology. Although salvation and the natural sciences rest on radically different premises, they each informed the other in the LMS publications, leading to complementary shifts in mission propaganda and the “scientific” presentation of Papuans. Before turning to the literature, we need to briefly review the historical circumstances that favored and conditioned this particular merger of salvation and science.

Missionaries and Anthropologists in Southeastern New Guinea

In 1870, the year the directors of the London Missionary Society decided to extend their seventy-three-year-old Pacific mission westward, the south-central coast of New Guinea remained largely unexplored. While Holland had already claimed the eastern half of the island, fourteen years would pass before Britain and Germany annexed the rest. The pioneer missionaries, all veterans of the established missions to the east, operated with meager resources. They concentrated on exploring the coast and coastal hinterland, establishing friendly relations with the inhabitants, and settling Islander teachers from the older missions in local communities. These teachers, who greatly outnumbered their European supervisors, carried out the routine work of teaching and preaching (Crocombe and Crocombe 1982). A. W. Murray and William Wyatt Gill, who wrote early reports, only briefly visited

the Torres Strait and southern shores of the big island. Samuel McFarlane, who left his successful mission on Lifou in the Loyalty Islands, supervised teachers mostly in the western end of the mission field from a base in the Torres Strait between 1871 and 1886. William Lawes became the first European to settle on the southern New Guinea coast, building a house at Port Moresby in 1874. The most famous of the early LMS missionaries, James Chalmers, arrived from Rarotonga in 1877. He spent most of his years in New Guinea exploring the coastal regions, until he was murdered at Goaribari in 1901 (Langmore 1974).

These pioneer LMS missionaries attracted a large audience both inside and outside missionary circles. They were invited to speak before political, geographical, and anthropological societies. The early missionary ethnographers appear to have been independent and respected partners in the ethnographic enterprise.⁹ William Wyatt Gill, for example, became an Oceanic ethnographer of note and one of the founding members of both the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science and the Polynesian Society (Gunson 1974:193). He is also remembered for convincing A. C. Haddon to visit the Torres Strait in 1888 and later encouraging him to switch from zoology to ethnological studies (Quiggin 1942:21, 90).

The LMS missionaries gradually consolidated their hold over the south-central coast and Torres Strait islands. By 1900, they had divided the mission field into twelve districts, had trained the first Papuan pastors, and had established schools for advanced education and industrial training on several mission stations. A steady flow of prospectors, planters, administrators, naturalists, and travelers had by this time entered the region, many of whom also put their impressions to paper. With the arrival of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait in 1898, professional anthropologists became the latest invaders.

Many of the LMS missionaries from the 1890s on had some direct contact with British anthropologists. They began by responding to questionnaires prepared by the Royal Anthropological Institute and other organizations (see, for example, Chalmers 1890, 1903a, 1903b; Hunt 1898). The association developed into a partnership after 1898 (Langmore 1989: 110-116). Several missionaries served as translators and informants for A. C. Haddon and C. G. Seligmann during their survey tours of (then) British New Guinea (Seligmann 1910). Haddon sponsored J. H. Holmes as a special correspondent for the Royal Anthropological Institute (Reid 1975, 1978; Holmes 1902a, 1902b, 1903, 1905, 1907). Haddon also edited the mission handbook (Martin 1908) to reflect the anthropological orthodoxy of the day and provided seminars for missionaries on the way to the field. In the 1920s, three missionaries with extensive experience wrote ethnographic monographs on Papuan peoples.

Holmes summed up his studies of the Gulf of Papua tribes (1924). E. Baxter Riley, encouraged by linguist Sydney Ray, wrote about the Kiwai people at the mouth of the Fly River (1925). And William Saville (1926), once the reluctant host to Bronislaw Malinowski, wrote a monograph on the Mailu people after attending Malinowski's seminar at the London School of Economics (Young 1988).

This collaboration resulted in articles and books differing significantly in content and tone from earlier works. Utilizing questionnaires provided by anthropologists, missionaries now covered a broader range of topics more systematically and in far greater detail. The mission ethnographers attempted to adopt (not always successfully) a neutral stance in their writings. They dropped most personal references and they described native ideas and behavior in dispassionate, seemingly objective terms (e.g., Hunt 1898:5). For example, Holmes began his major work on the gulf tribes with a salute to scientific relativism: "at the cost of disappointment to many old friends, I have deliberately endeavoured to portray the Papuans I have known as they regarded themselves. Their views of life do not lack a philosophy which was intelligible to them. I do not endorse them, neither do I condemn them" (1924:1). Several of missionary ethnographers adopted some of the ruling anthropological concerns of the day: social evolution, the diffusion of cultural traits, the integrative function of social institutions. This literature thus marks a notable instance of the "capture" of missionary ethnography by a professionalizing anthropology, based on the discourse of the natural sciences (cf. Thornton 1983).

This anthropological makeover, however, was far from complete. When read in conjunction with missionary propaganda of the time, as I do below, the "scientific" writings of the missionaries show clear connections with contemporary reflections on the progress of the mission. The more relativist and sociological stance adapted by missionary anthropologists complemented a gradually liberalizing mood in the missionary movement as a whole, on the one hand, and a more realistic assessment of the pace of possible change in Papuan communities, on the other. There was no simple cause and effect at work here, but one can discern a dialogue between two quite distinct perspectives over time.

Early Impressions, 1871-1890

Most of the LMS writings on New Guinea in the 1870s and 1880s presents native life in the context of the missionary encounter. The missionary is usually present in the text; his direct observations and anecdotes provide the key source of information. Missionary writings fell along a continuum, rang-

ing from the popular to the scientific. At one extreme, James Chalmers, the "Livingstone of New Guinea," wrote popular travel books describing his adventures and explorations. At the other extreme, Williams Lawes wrote systematic descriptions of the customs of certain New Guinea peoples, making only limited references to his own presence and experiences (1879, 1880). Narratives of mission visits to local communities, peppered with ethnographic observations, occupied the broad center.

Race and Character in Early LMS Ethnology

Samuel McFarlane opens his book, *Among the Cannibals of New Guinea*, with a vision of a lost world.

Whilst empires have risen, flourished, and decayed; whilst Christianity, science and philosophy have been transforming nations, and travelers have been crossing polar seas and African deserts, and astonishing the world by their discoveries, New Guinea has remained the same . . . where the natives can be seen in the cocoanut groves mending their bows and poisoning their arrows, making their bamboo knives and spears, and reveling in war and cannibalism as they have for ages . . . it comes with a sense of relief to visit a country really new, about which little is known, a country of bona fide cannibals and genuine savages, where the pioneer missionary and explorer truly carries his life in his hand. (McFarlane 1888: 14-15)

Laying on the purple prose, McFarlane evokes a picture of New Guinea as a place simultaneously exotic and familiar, new and ancient, filled with unspeakable savagery and dangers, indescribable beauty and riches.¹⁰ Although the land and peoples of New Guinea really were new to the Victorian reading public, this picture was surely familiar. Brian Street describes a similar setting found in contemporary novels set in Africa. The distant lands possess a "dream-like quality" into which intrude "the latter-day orders of chivalry": white explorers, travelers, military men, and, of course, missionaries (1975:21).

New Guinea was nonetheless "really new" to the missionary pioneers. Confronted with strange and sometimes frightening practices, struggling with languages they could not understand, they initially made sense of the encounter through what they already knew of exotic places, of "savage" peoples, and of their own ancestors in ancient Europe.. Hence even the most novel discoveries took on familiar colorations: "a creature of the monkey tribe" and a twelve-foot-long feline that sounded like a tiger, both rumored

to live in the deep jungle (Chalmers and Gill 1885:110, 112); a “queen” holding such great power over her people that she was carried in a hammock by men whenever she traveled (ibid.:189-190); and an island inhabited by “Amazons” reported by the Motu living at Port Moresby (ibid.:74-75; McFarlane 1877:356).¹¹

Reflecting popular racist attitudes of the day, the pioneer missionaries believed that the physical appearance of New Guineans provided immediate insight into native society and character. On their maiden voyage to New Guinea from the Loyalty Islands, McFarlane and Murray concluded that two races inhabited south-central New Guinea: the light-skinned “Malays” in the east and the dark-skinned “Papuan” in the west. They unhesitatingly identified the former with Polynesians and the latter with Melanesians. The racial framework gave the missionaries comfort, for they believed they knew what to expect. Hence William Turner’s confident ethnographic description of the Motu. Although he had lived with them only a few months, he could draw upon his longer experience with comparable Samoan “Malays.” Like the Samoans, the Motu demonstrated “ingratitude, circumlocution in speaking, kindness to children, freedom and carelessness in boating”; both peoples became excited and noisy only “when working in great companies . . . and in war” (Turner 1878:493). There were differences as well, but Turner had no doubt he was dealing with essentially the same people.

Turner (1877) and Lawes (1880) refer to Wallace’s *The Malay Archipelago* (1869) as their source on the Malay/Papuan races. But the hierarchical racial distinction already had wide currency in the South Pacific and survives today, according to Thomas (1989), in the Polynesian/Melanesian cultural contrast. For those nineteenth-century writers inclined to polygenist positions, the distinction was undoubtedly racist.¹² Langmore (1989), however, argues convincingly that the missionaries were monogenists, who saw the contemporary differences between the New Guinea races as the result of history and environment, not biology, and hence remedial. Otherwise there would have been no possibility of conversion and no point to missionary efforts. McFarlane (1888), for instance, placed the New Guinea races within the broad framework of Christian history, identifying them as descendants of Noah’s cursed son, Ham. New Guinea society and language, he claimed, showed definite evidence of degradation from a higher state of civilization. Only Christianity could stop and reverse this decay. Mutability, however, need not imply equality. Few missionaries speculated on the future relationship of whites and natives and their writings leave one with the impression of deeply ingrained differences between the races.¹³ In this racist framework, therefore, we find a convenient marriage of natural science and biblical history.¹⁴

Race provided a very loose framework within which the missionaries could

locate their key concern: the nature of native character and morality. This they directly deduced from outward appearance and actions. Impressed by the attractive village setting of the Kerepuans, McFarlane saw them as intelligent and industrious, with a keen sense on how to drive a bargain (1877: 353). Hanuabada's "filth," on the other hand, spoke to Turner of the conservative and indolent character of its inhabitants (1878:494). The "Papuan" and "Malays" were compared and ranked according to various indices. Most missionaries pointed to male treatment of women. "Papuan" women appeared as little better than slaves (e.g., Gill 1876:223-224; Murray 1876: 455), but "Malay" women enjoyed a much stronger position (and thus the missionaries could seriously consider that their numbers included some "Amazons"). During the initial contacts, clothing (or its lack) also provided a good indicator of civilization. While the Papuans, according to Gill, "glory in their nakedness, and consider clothing to be fit only for women," the Malays of Redscar Bay readily accepted cloth offered by the missionaries, thus demonstrating "the instinct of shame, which alone elevates them immeasurably above the black aborigines of the south-west coast of New Guinea" (Gill 1876: 230). Chalmers considered the Maiva to be superior in many ways to the Motuans, not least because they were "more respectfully dressed, having nearly as much covering as necessary. When they came to call on me each had a piece of native cloth hanging down his back" (1902:194). The missionaries were less critical of women for their nakedness, seeing this as evidence of their suppression by men. "To woman, in her lowest degradation," wrote Gill (1892:7), "is given an instinctive modesty; but the men in heathenism are very different, 'glorying in their shame.'" Gill thus approved of the "Malayan" men of Redscar Bay who both appreciated gifts of clothing and treated their women well (1876:242).¹⁵

While not regarding the "Malays" as saints, most of the missionaries considered them superior to the "cannibalistic" and dark-skinned "Papuans" to the west. According to Turner, "The opinion that the Motu are distinct from the Papuan is strengthened also by the fact that they look down upon the black people as being much inferior to them. For example, Papuan teachers from the Loyalty Islands were looked upon as an inferior class of men, while Malays--Polynesian teachers from Eastern Polynesia were received and treated as equals" (1878:473).¹⁶

Gill proposed even finer distinctions: "Although the Papuans of New Guinea were superior to the natives of the islands of the Torres Strait, they were inferior to the Papuans of the South Seas; while . . . the Malays of New Guinea were superior to any he had met on the South Sea Islands" (1874: 48). Yet the missionaries did note anomalies. The New Guinea "Malays," for

instance, were surprisingly rude. Gill complained about an annoyed woman who ran him out of a house he was inspecting in Manumanu, and Turner reported, "When visiting in a European house [Motu natives] choose the best seat . . . and never squat upon the floor in token of respect, as do the South Sea Islanders" (Gill 1876:249; Turner 1878:495). Further, the missionaries soon discovered that the "Papuan" in the Gulf of Papua-Fly River area had elaborate ritual complexes with superior architecture and arts to those of the "Malays." This led Chalmers to suggest "there is a kind of civilization amongst these people" (1902:54). McFarlane, who made his base in the Torres Strait and worked closely with the "Papuan," rose to their defense. They were "as a rule a good-tempered, liberal people--greatly superior in these qualities to their lighter coloured neighbours who look down upon them" and also possessed advanced material skills compared to easterners (McFarlane 1888:103-104). Gill also noted "an inventiveness about the Papuans which I have never seen in Polynesia; and yet in the matter of clothing the latter far surpass the former" (Chalmers and Gill 1885:321). He concluded that "the darker race has learnt much from the light-coloured" (Gill 1892:7). Lawes, on the other hand, was already arguing in 1878 that the racial and tribal diversity along the coast prevented easy generalization (1879, 1880).

Assessing the Good and Bad in Native Life

An implicit comparison with European life lay not far beneath the surface of these early accounts. This is very clear in Lawes's ethnography survey of people around Port Moresby (1880), which is written as a compendium of facts concerning native houses, canoes, occupations, customs, government, and moral conditions. Lawes assumed a neutral stance toward those subjects that could be seen as primitive forms antedating modern European practices. Native dwellings reminded him of prehistoric pile houses while canoes "furnish an interesting illustration of the earliest stages of naval architecture" (ibid.:609). The natives deserved praise for well-made fishing nets, skillful bartering, and "healthy exercise" gained from the daily round (ibid.:612). Many of their customs were indeed "peculiar," such as greeting a person by running one's hands from the forehead to the nose to the stomach; yet, although ignorant of civilized shaking hands or kissing, such practices demonstrated that "these rude and barbarous tribes have recognised rules of politeness and etiquette which are rarely violated" (ibid.). In these and other ways, New Guinean practices could be compared favorably with those of Europeans--indeed, they obviously reminded Lawes, as they had Murray, of

“customs which seem to link [New Guineans] to countries far remote, and ages long gone by” (Murray 1876:451) and thus to European civilization itself.

There was also much to object to. “The Moral Condition of the people is deplorably low,” sighed Lawes (1880:613). The natives had no “religion,” only unchecked superstition.

All calamities are attributed to the power and malice of. . . evil spirits. Draught and famine, storm and flood, disease and death are all supposed to be brought by “Vata” [i.e., sorcery] and his hosts, so that the people are an easy prey to any designing individuals who claim power over these. Some disease harmers and rain-makers sometimes levied heavy toll on the weak-minded and superstitious people. They seem however, to have no idea of sacrifice, worship, or prayer, by which to avert their wrath or secure their favour. (Ibid.:615)

Similarly, the New Guineans lacked a sense of private property, and thus had “no sense of shame . . . in stealing”; they had little government, and thus continually engaged in warfare; no sense of the sanctity of human life, and thus proudly murdered one another (ibid.:613). In these and other ways, the natives suffered for a lack of “civilization.”

The early LMS ethnographic writers in this fashion focused on surfaces. The appearance of New Guineans and their routine practices were considered in themselves sufficient to say much about the inner character of the people. As the quotations I have reviewed indicate, different writers read the signs of race and behavior rather differently. All could agree, however, that the New Guineans fit into the racial picture of Oceanic peoples and consequently shared certain features with other Pacific Islanders. Further, all did agree that although the New Guineans shared elements of civilization with the white “race,” they were deficient in several regards, especially in their morality and spiritual beliefs.

Early Writings as Mission Propaganda

The propaganda function of missionary writing is rarely far from the surface in this early literature, even in articles like Lawes’s ethnographic survey that was directed at an anthropological audience. The “fact” that New Guinea was inhabited by two races already familiar to the missionaries not only had scientific merit but seemed to answer the pressing question of how minister to so pagan a population given the tiny resources available. This constraint should not be a problem, McFarlane announced:

It so happens that the London Missionary Society has just the kind of agency needed for the evangelisation of these two races. In the Loyalty Islands it has what is needed for the dark race; and for those of Malay origin it has the Tahitian Mission, the Hervey Island Mission, and Niue Mission, and the Samoan Mission; each of which is in a position to furnish its quota of labourers for the great undertaking, who are just the kind of labourers needed. (1873:385-386).

“These native teachers,” McFarlane explained elsewhere, “are better acquainted with the habits and manners and customs of the heathen than missionaries are, and so are well adapted to fill the gap between the debased savage and the European missionary” (1888:137-138). Indeed, the Islander teachers were themselves perhaps the best advertisement of the civilizing power of the gospel. Many of them, according to Lawes, had come from savage backgrounds “in many respects worse than those in New Guinea” (1879:376).

The missionaries did not consider the racial characteristics of the New Guineans to be fixed and immutable. The Islander teachers would reach the people by stressing common traits, but the point was to use the commonalities to bring change. The positive accomplishments of New Guineans and other Pacific Islanders served to assure European readers that, however revolting certain beliefs and practices, the natives shared enough common humanity to be redeemable (cf. Thomas 1992). The artisan practices, which the missionary writers openly praised, formed the foundations for a new society. Christianity itself would fill in the moral vacuum that blighted the New Guineans’ otherwise promising way of life. The missionary authors imagined the changes they wished to stimulate and guide in New Guinea as a kind of completion.

Ignoring such ambiguities, missionary authors went to some length to suggest that New Guineans themselves anticipated and desired the great gifts brought by the mission. “Savage life,” wrote Chalmers, “is not the joyous hilarity that many writers would lead us to understand” (1887:334). Far from it. The pagan native was trapped in a world of constant fear of attack from warriors, ghosts, and sorcerers and longed for freedom. This assumption sets the stage for a recurrent scene in LMS accounts in which a previously uncontacted village welcomes the unarmed missionary into their midst and listens raptly to his words about the Savior (Chalmers and Gill 1885:108, 165). A Motumotan “chief” thus thanks Chalmers for bringing peace, concluding: “Soon our fathers’ ancient customs will be given up, and you will see us, old and young, coming to be taught the word of the great and good Spirit” (ibid.:311). And while visiting the village of Par-i, Gill hears a “cry of

surprise and pleasure” when a “temple” for unspecified reasons bums down (ibid.).

And what of the future Christian society? McFarlane, the most enthusiastic of missionary propagandists, imagined a total overthrow of the native past:

Instead of the war song, the cannibal feast, and the night dance, churches and schools and family worship are established. Instead of the wild-looking appearance of the people, dressed in feathers and shells and paint, they are now respectably clothed, and ashamed of their former appearance and habits. Instead of dirty huts, lazy and cruel husbands, and neglected children, there are now well-built houses, industrious and kind husbands, and bright and intelligent children. Instead of every man doing as he liked, which led to village quarrels, plunder, and war, there are now laws established, magistrates and policemen appointed, and law and order prevail.¹⁷ (1888: 188-189).

This radical vision was unusual. More often the missionaries pictured the change to come as a liberation and fulfillment of the good already present among natives. Christianity would replace the evil of native superstition and violence, but the New Guineans were not to be “Anglicized” (Chalmers 1887: 125). Instead, a new Christian order would rise on the already present agrarian foundations of native society. To this end, the New Guineans had to be protected from the corrupting temptations and the outright threats of European society. Bad as New Guineans undoubtedly were, “white savages” were far worse and much more difficult for the gospel to reach (McFarlane 1888: 129-136; Chalmers and Gill 1885:11; Lawes 1880:614; McFarlane 1893). With the disastrous example of the Australian Aborigines fully in mind, the LMS missionaries imagined a society in the future in which independent native farmers would remain firmly in control of their lands and their destinies.¹⁸ Only the mission, they insisted, could bring peace to warring tribes, touch the hearts of the people with the gospel, spread the benefits of civilization, and protect the people from unscrupulous whites to allow this vision to come to reality.

This was an audacious vision, although common in the grand missionary rhetoric of the time (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991:55-70). The next generation of LMS missionaries proclaimed more modest goals in the face of slow progress, the reality of the colonial presence after 1886, and their growing appreciation of the complexities of local societies. In this last respect,

some were greatly assisted by anthropologists and developing anthropological models of tribal societies.

Custom and Social Transformation, 1890-1932

The Tyranny of Custom: Three LMS Ethnographies

Starting in the 1890s, missionaries began writing ethnographic accounts specifically for anthropological audiences. In this section, I examine the work of the three most prominent LMS ethnographers: J. H. Holmes, E. Baxter Riley, and William Saville. These men wrote monographs concerning “tribes” that were far more detailed and comprehensive than earlier reports. The thirty-two chapters of Saville’s book on the Mailu, for instance, dealt with kinship, social institutions, village, food, canoe building, warfare, burial, and religion, among many other topics. Whereas earlier missionary ethnographers dismissed the presence of a religious sense among New Guineans, these three writers detailed ritual, magic, and religious ideas. Saville stated that religious beliefs and concerns “permeated” Mailu society, forming a key basis for the social order (1926:296). Riley wrote careful descriptions of Kiwai initiations and other rituals (1925). And, in a manner reminiscent of the old Malay/Papuan contrast, Holmes distinguished between the Ipi¹⁹ and Namau peoples of the Gulf of Papua along religious lines. Ipi society, he argued, was rooted in beliefs in gods and totems. Every Ipi, like Eni in Holmes’s novel *Way Back in Papua* (1926), found comfort in the knowledge that the gods created and controlled all things. The embracing totemic religion of the Ipi set a moral standard between the sexes that was even higher than modern civilization (Holmes 1924:52). The Namau tribes inhabiting the swamps of the Purari delta represented a lower stage in the evolution of religious sensibility. They were pure animists, living in awe and fear of objects containing the mysterious essence, *imunu*. Holmes argued that the Namau’s cannibalism and polygamy “were excrescences of their animism,” sharply distinguishing the tribe from the morally upright Ipi (ibid.:156).

It is “by no means easy,” Holmes stated, “to interpret [native] theology in modern ideas and language” (ibid.:177). This is a striking assertion in light of earlier attitudes. Holmes accepted, as did his colleagues, that New Guinean societies had to be approached as complete entities. Their distinctiveness could not be adequately understood in terms of the absence or presence of familiar Western institutions and sensibilities.²⁰ Nor could such societies be understood in terms of the character of the natives, for this character was itself formed within a specific social and religious milieu. Age-old customs de-

finer New Guinea societies, customs that had taken shape many years before and then atrophied in the jungles, beaches and swamps. Thus Holmes wrote,

The Papuan of the Ipi and Namau groups of thirty years ago was what his forbears were three hundred years ago. He was aggressive but not progressive. His laws, customs and mental outlook were fundamentally the same as governed his ancestors from time immemorial; to depart from them would be to incur the displeasure of the spirits of the ancestors. His past circumscribed his present and future; it was the vicious circle that encompassed his being. (1924:37)

"Custom is a tyrant that must be obeyed irrespective of consequences," wrote Saville. "I have not been able yet to discover the much-talked-of liberty of the savage; to me, he has always seemed the most fettered and hide-bound individual I have ever met" (1926:33). Where once the "savage" had appeared to lack law and personal control, he was now revealed as the slave to or victim of a comprehensive system of customary rules and demands.

While agreeing that custom formed the essence of primitive New Guinea society, the three missionary ethnographers worked from different premises concerning its origins and purpose. Riley thought Kiwai custom reflected senior males' interests. Initiated men staged dramatic initiations, backed by elaborate supernatural threats, to terrify and keep women and children in line. "To see the women in tears is a source of much enjoyment to the male members of the community" (Riley 1925:65).²¹ The initiations also served to teach young boys the power of custom, in effect bringing them into collusion with the senior men they would eventually replace. Male domination and fear thus locked the Kiwai into their ancient customs.²²

Writing of culturally related peoples to the east of the Kiwai, Holmes also saw custom as an oppressive presence in native society. But Ipi and Namau custom oppressed all equally, for it embraced every aspect of life. In a harsh world where enemies might attack at any moment, children learned that whatever "serves the highest interests of the tribe is justifiable" even to the extent of determining what is "right and wrong" (Holmes 1902a:422). Custom made each person part of a superorganic body.

His tribe was a complete entity: the whole man. Its conscience was its supreme chief; its headmen, or sub-chiefs, were the respective faculties which thought for the tribe, but the right or wrong of their combined deliberations was ultimately determined by the super-

chief. His concern was the maintenance of the best interest of his tribe; his tribe was the alpha and omega of his life, the sole reason for his being, for his social position in it. His people were the respective members of that corporate body, his tribe. To do his bidding without question was natural to his people, not merely because he was their chief by inheritance, but for their good. (Holmes 1924:37)

Every person was born into social divisions with set responsibilities. The distant past had bequeathed the gulf people a comprehensive but rigid social system: generations had selected the best man for each position, and each man did his specific duty with clockwork precision.²³

Saville, however, observed that custom caused as much dissension as unity among the Mailu. Mailu society was organized at the levels of kin, community, and clan. Units at the three levels operated in a state of tension in a sort of segmentary opposition. Unity at any level could be eroded by "continual jealousy between clan and clan, man and man--and still more between woman and woman--which every provocation will cause to burst out into flame" (Saville 1926:75). Villagers constantly watched each other, looking for the slightest breach in public etiquette, in custom. A Mailu did not always find customs easy or possible to follow, but breaking them inevitably led to quarreling and fighting. But the Mailu also had positive reasons to follow custom. Ritual practices and religious beliefs, for instance, provided the means to address the supernatural powers "for the perpetuation of the good. . . that shall work for the maintenance of life and the well-being of the community" (ibid.:294).²⁴ In Durkheimian fashion, though, the Mailu forged a tribal unity at times of major feasts and rituals. "In spite of all his tabus, in spite of the lurking evil of the sorcerer, in fact in spite of everything, it would be unfair to the native to think of him as going about his daily tasks with some ghost always dogging his steps. He moves as a free man because he is the willing slave of the community's conscience, and as long as he does not offend that he is care-free" (ibid.:294). Rather like the Eloi in H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, the Mailu willingly gave up personal freedom and responsibility for the security of customary ways.

The three ethnographic monographs differ from earlier missionary writings on the New Guineans in one final respect. They describe societies existing in the past. This is signaled in several ways. The subtitles of the books, for instance, suggest that these are memoirs of extended missionary careers.²⁵ The authors relate anecdotes from the early years of their mission, they refer to old men who remember the "former ways" as key sources of information, and they remind us from time to time that the society has changed. Holmes

drove home the point by writing *In Primitive New Guinea* entirely in the past tense. Although the missionaries say little about the changes that have taken place, their writing conveys a much stronger impression of change than the earlier missionary literature that focused on immediate encounters.

From Custom to Christianity in Mission Propaganda

Custom provided a general framework for detailed and often sophisticated ethnographic descriptions. LMS authors developed the custom theme much further in writings directed to mission supporters and detractors. The notion of custom suggested that the New Guinea native was willing to relinquish responsibility and even consciousness to the ways of the ancestors. Harmless in some contexts--making a garden, sharing food with one's family, and so on--custom drove New Guineans to unspeakable acts of barbarism in others. The severest critic of native custom, Charles Abel, observed that the war practices of the New Guineans placed them in "a very low scale of savage peoples." Whereas for more civilized people, like the Maori of New Zealand for whom warfare reflected underlying and redeeming patriotic and nationalist sentiments, war for New Guineans was "very often nothing better than murder" (Abel 1902:134). While leading them to violence against each other, custom also left New Guineans victims to their own superstitious fears. In any heathen community, one would find a sorcerer extorting wealth and spreading terror, as in the Kerepunu district: "The old man's face was one whose evil expression of cunning could not easily be forgotten, and his house was surrounded by a most unattractive and unsavoury collection of the skulls of sharks and dogs and pigs, stuck upon poles or ornamenting the walls" (Thompson 1900:50).

Children, who appeared to the readers as "naturally innocent," were especially vulnerable to the dictates of custom (Thomas 1992:376). Almost all missionary writers described Papuan childhood as a time of great freedom and license. Parents provided little moral guidance or protection for their children. Writing of Suau parents, Abel declared,

They have no love. It seems a terrible thing to say of any human beings, but it is true of these people. . . . They have no word corresponding to our great word "Love". . . . I know of no other animal, except perhaps the duck, which is more careless in attending to its young, than the average Papuan mother. . . . I do not mean you to understand that there is no kindness shown by mothers to their children. I mean that their interest never rises to what we know as love. It is a mere animal propensity, compared with the love which reigns in a Christian mothers heart. (1902:42)

Edith Turner described finding a very young boy and girl playing together in an indecent manner while the girl's mother ("an absolutely ignorant heathen woman") watched them "smiling and unconcerned." "Such instances point," she wrote, "not to the depravity of individual children, but rather to the degradation of society, where the purity of even little children is not protected" (Turner 1920:21).²⁶ Henry Dauncey agreed. In Delena on the central coast, the "father does not interfere with the child's actions, or thwart its wishes, and so arises one of the greatest defects in the Papuan character, and most serious obstacles in the way of progress. Of obedience the Papuan knows nothing, unless there is a big stick, or a heavy hand, or the fear of the sorcerer, at the back of the command" (Dauncey 1913:5). Parents did work hard to teach the "conceited youth" one lesson, however: "for every wrong he must exact payment" (ibid.:20).

Such passages seem to suggest that while the child might be saved from the tyrannical hold of custom, the parents are beyond redemption. But this was countered in other passages where New Guineans as a whole were represented as infantile (Langmore 1989:126-130)--at once the witless victims of past traditions and innocents open to the saving words of the Gospels. G. Currie Martin stated: "The people are as a whole very responsive to kind and frank treatment. They have shown themselves faithful and loyal friends when their trust has been won. They are reliable if suspicions of the foreigner as such have been allayed. Naturally the savage looks upon a man of different colour and habit at first as an enemy, for all strange things are inimical to childlike people" (1908:17). The key weakness of the Papuan--his simplistic trust in what the elders told him to be true--actually made him a good prospect for missionary efforts, for conversion then became a matter of substituting one authority for another. Martin praised the sincerity of new converts: "they quickly grasp the deepest essentials of the Christian faith" (ibid.91). Indeed, in this context, Martin found even the treatment of children to be praiseworthy: "One excellent feature of the native life is the love of children and the great freedom that is permitted them" (ibid.:17).

If the New Guineans were like children, the missionaries thought they must be their parents and educators. Much of the mission propaganda from this period was taken up with descriptions of the "home" and "school" in which the social transformation was supposed to take place: the residence of the missionary himself. Although most routine missionary work took place within scattered villages, missionary writers tended to focus on the operations of central head stations. These stations, which varied greatly in size, offered several specialized services, all under the direct supervision of white missionaries: training schools for pastors and their wives, advanced general schools, technical shops, stores, and so forth. The accomplishments of converts on the stations testified to their natural abilities, abilities stymied within the vil-

lages. Furthermore, missionaries could point to the successes of their station converts as evidence that they, alone among Europeans resident in New Guinea, were best prepared to bring civilization to the natives. Wrote Abel,

In theory, our country protects the aboriginal natives of her Colonies; in practice she destroys them. . . . The quickest way to this end is to refuse to educate them in industrial and civilized pursuits. . . . The fact that the Papuan is capable of being taught to use his brains, as well as his hands, and to rise in the scale of humanity from the low position in which we find him, is surely an argument that it is our duty to give him the opportunity he is able, and even anxious, to turn to good account. (1902:207)

Missionary books included testimonials from administrators praising mission education on the stations (e.g., Thompson 1900:38).

It was a short step to accord the mission station with an even greater symbolic importance: as the model of a new Christian order. An LMS director visiting the districts in 1917 was moved to write, "Amid the wilderness each station is an oasis. Travel anywhere along the coast, and, after passing raw native villages . . . suddenly you will come to the Mission Station. There . . . you will feel that you have reached a haven for spirit as for body. . . the place is physically and morally clean" (Lenwood 1917:202-203). Abel, the most radical of the second generation of LMS missionaries, regarded his station on Kwato Island as the abode of a utopian social order, in which Christian morality and practical knowledge could flower and replace the degraded existences New Guineans lived under the rule of custom. He advocated taking young children from their parents so they could be brought up within the "clean" environment of the station. Once on the station, the children had to be kept separate from their kin, forcibly if necessary. "We put ourselves in the place of Christian parents to them," Abel explained to British Sunday school classes, "and just as your father and mother would prevent you from going where you would get harm, and would shield you from mixing with evil companions before you were old enough to judge rightly for yourselves, so we acted towards our large Papuan family" (1902:193).

Reared on a strict regimen of hard work, discipline, and cricket, the graduates of Abel's school on Kwato Island could either settle into their new life or return to their natal villages and begin to replace them with Christian communities (Wetherell 1973). The other LMS missionaries writing at this time took the familial metaphor less literally. Dauncey, for example, suggested that the people of Delena were very gradually becoming Christian,

assisted by the teaching and examples of the church (1913). His book shows the evils of custom--fears of the sorcerer, warfare, and the lack of care of children--to be gradually fading while good aspects of customary life merge into the developing Christian society.²⁷

The LMS ethnographic writings of this later period showed the New Guinean living within social orders, albeit societies stymied by tyrannical custom. There was a corresponding shift in the way mission propagandists portrayed change. They now suggested a lengthy process, a process that entailed resistance from elders still mired in custom and backsliding on the part of converts. It was a process that involved not only the invisible guidance of God, but the very visible mechanics of mission schools, regulations, and bureaucracy.

Conclusions and Further Reflections

Colonial discourse includes several distinct genres, which together share a broad "common ground" (Thomas 1992, 1994). Missionary propaganda, travel accounts, and ethnographic studies differ not so much in the range of topics and tropes they employ as in the ways these are put together to form coherent narratives. Sharing overlapping elements and concerns, as well as participants and audiences, colonial genres appear ever entangled with one another (cf. Scott 1992:331). Particular genres find their distinct voices in creative tension with others. Thus the books and articles the LMS missionaries wrote concerning their work in New Guinea reflect, in style and content, several concurrent genres: mission biographies and popular histories, popular secular works on exotic peoples, memoirs by colonial officers, travel literature, and scientific works. Most of the LMS writings conformed to themes and styles found in contemporary evangelical missionary propaganda from around the world.²⁸ But several authors wrote for wider publics, borrowing themes and narrative styles from other colonial genres. Hence Chalmers, like his hero David Livingstone, published popular exploratory accounts; and he also wrote ethnographic articles for scientific audiences.

Chalmers and other LMS writers were clearly aware of the differences between "scientific" description and mission apologetics. Yet there is nothing to suggest that they regarded their ethnographic excursions as inherently contrary to evangelical principles and practices. The LMS writings reviewed here form a kind of intermediate discourse, reflecting a sensitivity towards both anthropological audiences and mission supporters. The anthropological signature is clear enough. During the 1870s, missionary writers borrowed from an already declining racialist anthropology. Their accounts, however, took the form of narratives of encounter, narratives in which the missionary

purpose and practice remained visible. Professional anthropologists gradually influenced missionary ethnographic writings more directly, first by providing questionnaires and later through direct training and sponsorship. Missionaries abandoned their initial focus on the character of the New Guinean for evolutionary and functionalist understandings of society, thus reflecting the theoretical orientations of their mentors.²⁹ Although overt missionary concerns never entirely disappeared from ethnological writings, they became far less conspicuous (cf. Thomas 1992:379).

Nonetheless, the missionaries had a purpose that differentiated them from secular anthropologists and that inevitably found voice in even their most "scientific" publications. Indeed, ethnological writings provided missionaries with an apparent ethnographic basis on which to proceed and to defend their efforts. Holmes was most explicit about this intention in the introduction to his monograph: "The savage is soul-sick and we cannot help him satisfactorily until we can diagnose his disease of heathenism" (1924:2). Taken in the context of other missionary writings, public and private, even the most relativistic of the ethnological reports cannot be seen as arguments in support of maintaining traditional societies, even if the missionaries sometime suspected anthropologists of making precisely this kind of association.

This article has shown that there was also a strong, if often implicit, resonance between ethnological writings and shifting concepts of the mission's role in social change. The pioneer missionaries, encountering the New Guineans for the first time, associated outward appearances with inward character. There was a certainty to the early ethnographic assessments, which measured the New Guineans against other Pacific races and, more importantly, European civilization. The missionaries' aims seem astoundingly confident, given their small resources and ignorance of New Guinea. Imagining the New Guineans to be incomplete, having the basics of life but lacking in civilization, the missionaries pictured them anticipating a conversion that would complete them. Later generations of missionaries, however, observed the New Guineans from the vantage point of large mission stations that formed the hubs of routinized evangelistic efforts. They came to know those people settled around their stations as communities in their own right. This changing perspective supported the shift in ethnographic descriptions from race and character to community and custom. The missionaries now pictured themselves as patient teachers, coaching converts as together they rebuilt New Guinea societies previously locked into and victimized by age-old custom. The missionaries likened such change to the raising of children within a family. Eventually--not yet--the Papuan Christians would be ready to assume their responsible role as "parents" of their own communities.

In creating these shifting images of New Guinea, the LMS missionaries

necessarily glided over some complicating realities, downplaying their own doubts and uncertainties. The missionaries maintained, first of all, a virtual silence about the presence of other Europeans in New Guinea. Only exploitative whites, the blackbirders and harsh planters, appear in mission propaganda and then only for brief moments. In effect New Guinea appears, quite misleadingly after the early 1870s, as inhabited almost wholly by the natives and their missionaries. Everyone else is an intruder. As with the Methodists in the Solomon Islands, the “mission . . . is identified as the sole author of positive social change” (Thomas 1992:381). The one exception to this are some positive remarks on the administration. But this exception proves the rule, for the missionaries were themselves instrumental in the establishment of the British colonial administration (see Prendergast 1968).

The missionaries were only slightly more forthcoming about the New Guineans' own initiatives and creative responses to themselves and other Europeans. Ethnographies portray passive natives: living out racially received characteristics or cowed by unchanging custom. The silence concerning indigenous actions and desires accords the mission a godlike power to mold New Guinea character and society. The missionaries naturally considered their influence to be benevolent. The duty of the missionary, wrote Martin, “is not primarily one of destruction, but of rearing a new fabric whose beauty and strength will soon replace the poor and unsatisfactory shelter of the old one” (1908:91). The missionaries imagined themselves as the artisans of this transformation. They portrayed New Guineans as followers reacting to but not instigating change. The reality was far more complex. On the southeast coast of New Guinea, as elsewhere in Oceania, converts shaped Christianity along the lines of received cultural assumptions and structures, their developing understanding of the colonialists, and their own shifting aspirations (Barker 1990, 1992).

On rare occasions one hears a note of doubt. In his novel, *Way Back in Papua* (1926), Holmes portrays a gulf village a generation after the arrival of the mission. The village is ordered and clean, with cannibalism and polygyny things of the past. But the people, for all these changes, have not become joyful, confident Christians. Old Eni, the chief character, lives with his memories of a nobler past, and the younger villagers respect and consult him. Much of the novel is taken up with Eni's stories about tribal days and the portentous coming of the “Peace-maker” (presumably Chalmers, or possibly Holmes himself). Although now Christians, the people are still New Guineans, bewildered by the complexities of the new world while hanging on to the thread connecting them to a rapidly receding past. It is not hard to detect in Eni's confused reminiscences Holmes's own doubts and regrets concerning the mission's impact “way back” upon the indigenous peoples of Papua.

APPENDIX
Publications by Members of the London Missionary Society
about New Guinea
(By Date of Publication)

This listing includes publications by resident missionaries, visitors, and mission historians. Although I have tried to be inclusive, I expect that I have overlooked several pamphlets and perhaps some of the more obscure journal articles. I have made no attempt to track down missionary correspondence in newspapers.

McFarlane, S.

1873 *The Story of the Lifu Mission*. London: James Nisbet.

Gill, W. W.

1874 Three Visits to New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 18:31-50.

Murray, A. W.

1874 *Wanders in the Western Isles*. London: Yates and Alexander.

1875 *Forty Years Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea, from 1835 to 1875*. London: J. Nisbet

McFarlane, S.

1875- Ascent of the Fly River. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 1876 20:253-260.

Gill, W. W.

1876 *Life in the Southern Isles; or, Scenes and incidents in the South Pacific and New Guinea*. London: Religious Tract Society.

McFarlane, S.

1877 Voyage of the *Ellengowan* to China Straits, New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 21:350-360.

Turner, W. Y.

1878 On the Ethnology of the Motu. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 7:470-499.

Lawes, W. G.

1879 Ethnological Notes on the Motu, Koitapu, and Koiari Tribes of New Guinea. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 8:369-377.

McFarlane, S., and James Chalmers

1879 *The Mission in New Guinea*. London: London Missionary Society.

Lawes, W. G.

1880 Notes on New Guinea and Its Inhabitants. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 2:602-616.

Chalmers, James

1880 New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 2:315-316.

1881 Further Explorations in New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 3:226-227.

- Lawes, W. G.
 1883 An Excursion in the Interior of New Guinea. *Popular Science Monthly*.
 1884 Recent Explorations in South-eastern New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 6:216-218.
- Gill, W. W.
 1885 *Jottings from the Pacific*. London: Religions Tract Society.
- Chalmers, James, and W. W. Gill
 1885 *Work and Adventure in New Guinea, 1877-85*. London: Religious Tract Society.
- Chalmers, James
 1886 *Adventures in New Guinea*. London: Religious Tract Society.
 1887 Explorations in South-eastern New Guinea. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 9:71-86.
 1887 New Guinea: Past, Present, and Future. *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute* 18.
 1887 On the Manners and Customs of Some of the Tribes of New Guinea. *Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow, Proceedings* 18:57-69.
 1887 *Pioneering in New Guinea*. London: Religious Tract Society.
 1887 Two New Guinea Stories; History and Description of the Pottery Trade. In *Picturesque New Guinea*, by J. W. Lindt, 106-117, 118-125. London: Longman's, Green.
- Lawes, W. G.
 1887 The Condition of New Guinea. *British New Guinea, Annual Report, 1886-1887*:24-26.
 1887 The Effect of the Climate of New Guinea upon Exotic Races. *Australasian Medical Gazette* 6:185-186.
- Murray, A. W.
 1888 *The Bible in the Pacific*. London: Nisbet.
- McFarlane, S.
 1888 *Among the Cannibals of New Guinea*. London: London Missionary Society.
- Lawes, W. G.
 1890 Comparative Views of New Guinea Dialects. *British New Guinea, Annual Report, 1889-1890*: 158-167.
- Anonymous
 1890 The Bibliography of the Australasian, Papuan, and Polynesian Races. *Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Report 2*.
- Chalmers, James
 1890 Report on the Australasian, Papuan, and Polynesian Races: New Guinea. Toaripi and Koiari Tribes. *Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Report 2*:311-323.
- Gill, W. W.
 1892 *The South Pacific and New Guinea Past and Present*. Sydney: Charles Potter.
- McFarlane, S.
 1893 British New Guinea and Its People. *Transactions of the International Congress of Orientalists* 2:771-783.

Chalmers, James

1895 *Pioneer Life and Work in New Guinea, 1877-1894*. London: Religious Tract Society.

Lawes, W. G.

1896 *Grammar and Vocabulary of the Language Spoken by the Motu Tribe, New Guinea*. Sydney.

Timoteo

1897 Notes on the Kabadi Dialect of New Guinea, translated and edited by J. E. Newell. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 6:201-208.

London Missionary Society

1897 *Report of the Deputation to New Guinea and the South Seas*. London: London Missionary Society.

Chalmers, James

1898 Toaripi and Anthropometrical Observations on Some Natives of the Papuan Gulf. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 27:326-342.

Chalmers, James, and S. H. Ray

1898 Vocabularies of the Bugilai and Tagota Dialects, BNG. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 27:139-144.

Hunt, A. E.

1898 Ethnographic Notes on the Murray Islands, Torres Strait. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 28:5-19.

Holmes, J. H.

1899 Notes by Rev. J. H. Holmes on the Work of the London Missionary Society in the Gulf of Papua. *British New Guinea, Annual Report, 1898-1899*: 98.

Abel, Charles W.

1900 *Kwato, New Guinea, 1890-1900*. London: C. E. Roberts.

Thompson, R. W.

1900 *My Trip in the "John Williams."* London: London Missionary Society.

Lennox, C.

1902 *James Chalmers of New Guinea: Missionary, Pioneer, and Martyr*. London.

Abel, Charles W.

1902 *Savage Life in New Guinea: The Papuan in Many Moods*. London: London Missionary Society.

Holmes, J. H.

1902 Initiation Ceremonies of Natives of the Papuan Gulf. *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 32:418-425.

1902 Notes on the Religious Ideas of the Elema Tribe of the Papuan Gulf. *Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 32:426-431.

1903 Notes on the Elema Tribe of the Papuan Gulf. *Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 33:125-134.

Ross, C. Stuart

1903 *Tamate*. Melbourne: M. L. Hutchinson.

- Chalmers, James
 1903 Notes on the Bugilai, British New Guinea. *Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 33:108-110.
 1903 Notes on the Natives of Kiwai Island. *Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 33:117-124.
- Lovett, R.
 1904 *Tamate: The Life and Adventures of a Christian Hero*. London: Religious Tract Society.
- Holmes, J. H.
 1905 Introductory Notes to a Study of the Totemism of the Elema Tribes, Papuan Gulf. *Man* 5:2-6, 17-20.
- Kelman, J. H.
 1906 *The Story of Chalmers of New Guinea*. London.
- Holmes, J. H.
 1907 Introductory Notes on the Toys and Games of the Elema, Papuan Gulf. *Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 38: 280-288.
- Martin, G. C.
 1908 *The New Guinea Mission: Being the Story of Its Fields, Its Pioneers, and Its Progress*. London: London Missionary Society.
- King, Joseph
 1909 *W. G. Lawes of Savage Island and New Guinea*. London.
- Gill, W. W.
 1911- Extracts from the Papers of the Late Rev. Wyatt Gill. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 20:116-151, 189-223.
- Papuan Industries, Limited
 1912 *The Appeal of the Backward Races to the Business Man*. London: Tate.
- Saville, W. J. V.
 1912 A Grammar of the Mailu Language, Papua. *Royal Anthropological Institute, Journal* 42:397-436.
- Lovett, R.
 1912 *James Chalmers: His Autobiography and Letters*. 8th edition. London: Religious Tract Society.
- Dauncey, H. M.
 1913 *Papuan Pictures*. London: London Missionary Society.
- Holmes, J. H.
 1913 A Preliminary Study of the Namau Language, Purari Delta, Papua (with bibliographic notes by S. H. Ray). *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, Journal* 43:124-142.
- Lenwood, Frank
 1917 *Pastels from the Pacific*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Nairn, W. P.
 1920 *Greatheart of Papua*. London.

- Turner, Edith
 1920 *Among Papuan Women*. London: London Missionary Society.
- Abel, R. W.
 1922 *Tales Told in Papua*. London: Livingstone Press.
- Small, A.
 1923 *Chalmers of New Guinea*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Riley, E. B.
 1923 Dorro Head-hunters. *Man* 23:33-35.
 1923 Sago-making on the Fly River. *Man* 23: 145-146.
- Holmes, J. H.
 1923 *By Canoe to Cannibal Island*. London.
 1924 *In Primitive New Guinea*. London: Seeley, Service.
- Riley, E. B., and S. H. Ray
 1924 Kiwai Seasons. *Man* 24:56.
- Turner, Robert L.
 1924 Malignant Witchcraft in Papua and the Use of Poisons Therein. *Man* 24: 117-119.
- Riley, E. B.
 1925 *Among Papuan Headhunters*. London: Seeley, Service.
- Parry, C. G.
 1925 *Everyday Life in Papua: An Illustrated Handbook*. London: Livingstone Press.
- Saville, W. J. V.
 1926 *In Unknown New Guinea*. London: Seeley, Service.
- Holmes, J. H.
 1926 *Way Back in Papua*. London: George, Allen and Unwin.
- Hayes, E. H.
 1930 *Chalmers of Papua*. London: Pilgrim Press.
- Riley, E. B.
 1931 Some Myths of Origin from the Fly River, of Kiwai. *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 61: 323-330.
 1932 A Vocabulary: Kiwai and English. In *A Grammar of the Kiwai Language, Fly Delta, Papua*, by S. H. Ray, 77-173. Port Moresby: Government Printer.
- Saville, W. J. V.
 1932 Are the Papuans Naturally Religious? *Territory of Papua, Annual Report, 1930-1931*: 24-25.
- Robson, W.
 1933 *James Chalmers of New Guinea*. London: Pickering & Inglis.
- Anonymous
 1933 *Heroes of the Cross*. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott.
- Abel, R. W.
 1934 *Charles W. Abel of Kwato*. New York: Fleming H. Revell.

Northcott, W. C.

1935 *Guinea Gold: The London Missionary Society at Work in the Territory of Papua*. London.

1937 *My Friends, the Cannibals (John H. Holmes of Papua)*. London: Edinburgh House Press.

Hurst, H. L.

1938 *Papuan Journey*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.

Reid, T. W., editor

1960 *A Man Life Bati, the Rev. Reginald Bartlett*. London: Independent Press.

Butcher, Ben

1963 *My Friends, the New Guinea Headhunters*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Chatter-ton, Percy

1969 The History of Delena. In *The History of Melanesia*, edited by K. S. Inglis. Canberra: Australian National University; and Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

1974 *Day That I Have Loved*. Sydney: Pacific Publications.

Saville, W. J. V.

n.d. *A Vocabulary of the Mailu Language*. London: London Missionary Society.

Butcher, Ben

n.d. *Many Faiths: One Essential*. Sydney: Sven Productions.

Goodall, Norman

n.d. *Pacific Pilgrimage*. London: Livingstone Press.

Turner, Robert L.

n.d. *Our Papuan Mission*. London: London Missionary Society.

Seton, W.

n.d. *Chalmers of New Guinea*. London: Sunday School Union.

NOTES

This article began its long journey as an appendix to my master's thesis (Barker 1979). I want to take this opportunity to give my long overdue public thanks to Ann Chowning for her marvelous support, advice, and encouragement as my supervisor. Harold Turner thought the appendix worth publishing but I was not able to return to it until a few years ago when Mac Marshall organized a session on representations of Oceania at the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania meetings. I owe a special debt to Nick Thomas for his careful reading and critique of an early draft. My thanks as well for the criticisms and suggestions of the anonymous readers for *Pacific Studies*, which together have made this a much better paper, I believe. I first encountered and read the publications reviewed here in the lovely (if cramped) former Victorian home of the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand. My belated thanks to the research staff for their assistance and interest.

1. A full listing of LMS publications related to New Guinea is provided in the appendix.

2. Over the six decades reviewed in this article, LMS writers referred to the southeastern coast of New Guinea as either "New Guinea" or "Papua." I use the terms interchangeably here.

3. In the case of Papua New Guinea, the best known are the Point and Catalyst series published by the Melanesian Institute, a pastoral and socioeconomic research organization based in Goroka. The Summer Institute of Linguistics has published an extensive collection of indigenous narratives, often in the vernacular, as well as studies of languages. Students at the theological colleges often tackle aspects of indigenous cultures for thesis topics. Finally, all of the major churches have published ethnographic materials in their own magazines, as privately commissioned reports, and in collections. Most of this scattered material is difficult to access outside of the region. To date, Gary Trompf is the only international scholar who has made much use of church-sponsored local studies (Trompf 1991, 1994).

4. A small selection of outstanding studies would include Codrington 1891; Ivens 1930; Saville 1926; Vicedom and Tischner 1962.

5. Nelson (1969) and Langmore (1989) have published comparative reviews of the ethnographic thought of the major missions in early colonial Papua. See also Wetherell 1977 and Hilliard 1978 on Anglican writings in Papua and the Solomon Islands. Huber (1988) and Nancy Lutkehaus (in Böhm 1983) provide useful overviews of the important ethnographic work undertaken by members of the Society of the Divine Word on the northwestern coast of New Guinea. The most intimate review available on the ethnographic thought of a missionary, Maurice Leenhardt in New Caledonia, is provided by Clifford's biography (1982). Gunson has recently published a comprehensive review of the scientific writings of British missionaries across the Pacific Islands (1994).

6. The most detailed academic histories of the LMS are Prendergast's (1968) unpublished doctoral dissertation and Langmore's biography of James Chalmers and comparative history of the four main Papuan missions (1974, 1989). Wetherell provides some information on the LMS in his history of the Anglican Mission and has also published a series of papers on Kwato and Charles Abel as well as LMS Polynesian teachers (see Wetherell 1973, 1977, 1982, 1986).

7. Langmore (1974) makes limited use of oral histories in her biography of James Chalmers. This is clearly a critical area crying for immediate attention from researchers.

8. Given the negative connotations that many associate with "propaganda," I am reluctant to use the term but can find no synonym that conveys the idea of writings meant to solicit support. Suffice it to say that I do not consider missionary writings to be any more (or less) misleading, let alone dishonest, than other works written to serve colonial and anticolonial projects.

9. Mulvaney notes that missionaries accounted for fifty-one of the ninety-four ethnographic papers read before eight sessions of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science between 1888 and 1900 (1989:200).

10. Lawes and Chalmers took issue with McFarlane's claims that New Guinea held immense riches, and they worried that these claims would attract white prospectors and

settlers. While never matching McFarlane's flamboyance, Chalmers nevertheless presented equally exotic pictures of New Guinea and its inhabitants.

11. This turned out to be Mailu Island, which women had to themselves during those times their men left for the mainland to plant new gardens.

12. On nineteenth-century debates between polygenists and monogenists, see Stocking 1968.

13. I would thus hesitate to attribute "an ethic of potential human equality" to the LMS missionaries (Thomas 1992:386; cf. Langmore 1989). Sanders (1992:223-225) and other historians give innumerable examples of Christian leaders drawing on biblical verses in support of racist regimes. This is a question that, at least in the case of the LMS missionaries, requires more careful study of both the published and archival sources.

14. Trautmann suggests that racist ethnology rested on the assumption that humans had existed on earth for a very brief time, a period established by the Bible and other ancient texts on which scholars relied "as sources of our knowledge of the original human state" (1992:388). Following the 1859 publication of Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*, scholars began to perceive a vastly expanded human past. For those accepting this new conception of human history, racist and Mosaic ethnology became equally impossible.

15. Lawes, Chalmers, and their successors did not share the older generation's obsession with European clothing (Langmore 1989). A later missionary working on Murray Island blamed dirty European clothing, which had been originally donned at the urging of Murray, Gill, and McFarlane, for the precipitous drop in the island's population (Hunt 1898).

16. Compare with the Presbyterian missionary John Inglis, writing about the New Hebrides: "wherever these Malays, these children of Shem, go in the South Seas, these Papuans are willing to be their servants . . . but nowhere do we see the Malays serving the Papuans, or Shem being the servant of Canaan" (1890:10).

17. McFarlane's vision provides a vivid example of the "before and after" motif common in much missionary writing and imagery (see Thomas 1992). In this instance, it also may have had some basis in truth. Beckett writes that a mission theocracy, with considerable local support, did develop in the Torres Strait islands during this period (1978).

18. As both Prendergast (1968) and Langmore (1974) clearly show, the LMS developed and proclaimed their ideas about the future of the New Guineans in the face of the pending annexation of the region by Australia. When Germany revealed its own interest in northwestern New Guinea, Chalmers and Lawes changed course, advocating that a protectorate be set up, but under British control with full protection of indigenous lands (see Barker 1979:27-32).

19. More generally known as the Elema.

20. I do not want to suggest by this that the missionaries made no comparisons, overt or covert, in understanding New Guinea society. My point is that they now *presented* the New Guineans as living within distinct social orders. This discursive construction required a more relativistic stance than the earlier racially grounded accounts.

21. There are parallels here with earlier literature on the "Papuan race," which was partly defined in terms of the men's mistreatment of women.

22. I should note that Riley's ethnography was the least cohesive of the three reviewed here. His observations on custom and male domination form a very small, if important, part of a compendium of ethnographic notes. Apparently the publisher deleted large sections of the monograph without first consulting the author (Ray 1926).

23. Whatever the value of Holmes's more detailed ethnographic observations, particularly concerning religious beliefs, his general claims appear exaggerated and implausible. F. E. Williams dismissed most of them in his monograph, *The Drama of Orokolo* (1940). Williams found polygamy common among the Elema ("Ipi"), no gods of any sort except for the introduced Christian one, and not even a vague memory of a "super-chief." "As for our respective results," Williams concluded, "any one might shrink from the task of trying to make them square" (1940:xii).

24. Saville's debt here to Malinowski requires little comment.

25. For example, Saville's *In Unknown New Guinea*: "A record of twenty-five years of personal observation & experience amongst the interesting people of an almost unknown part of this vast island & a description of their manners & customs, occupations in peace & methods of warfare, their secret rites & public ceremonies" (1926: title page).

26. As Margaret Jolly observes in her review of early Presbyterian writings from Vanuatu (1991:36), such attitudes also reflected Evangelical missionaries' notions of domesticity and their widespread concern that women were more interested in raising crops than moral children.

27. Thompson writes of the sorcerer, for instance: "His power is declining as knowledge spreads among the people. Meanwhile he regards the missionary with no great favour as a rival medicine man who has greater power than he has" (1900:50).

28. Missionary journals, rather like professional anthropological journals, included articles from around the world. Such publications seem to have conditioned the expectations new recruits had of the various mission fields (e.g., "cannibals" in New Guinea, "rice Christians" in China) while providing an evangelical ideology that could embrace very different situations and cultures.

29. See Trautmann, who has recently argued that anthropology went through two major transformations during this period (1992): from a contracted biblically based concept of time to an extended developmentalist one, and from studies of the broad sweep of human history to synchronic functionalist studies of single societies. Both transformations are clearly visible in LMS ethnographic writings.

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