MAKING THE PAPUA NEW GUINEAN WOMAN: THE EXTENSION OF WOMEN'S INITIATION PRACTICES TO SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CENTRAL NEW IRELAND

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This article describes the emergence of the Papua New Guinean woman, socialized by experiences in formal education at the provincial high school and created through ritual exchanges in her home village. These experiences, however, are not disjunctive. Instead, the Mandak of central New Ireland extend their exchange obligations for the *linnendaven* rites from the village's mortuary cycles to provincial high school education. My analysis of these acts elaborates Foster's argument (1995) that alternative practices of mortuary exchange provide the means of social reproduction. Whereas Foster shows trepidation for the Tangan's future as he analyzes those practices that ensure the creation of *malaggan* funerary arts even as they open Tangan society to the dangers of the market economy, I suggest a different future for the Mandak. Among the Mandak, cross-moiety and cross-generational exchanges "create" the female initiates as if they were yet another kind of mortuary art. As the Mandak discharge *linnendaven* ritual obligations to the elder generation of the opposite moiety by making gifts in support of the school fee and the education of the younger generation of that matrilineal moiety, they relinquish the power of tradition in the present and assert new interests in the sociality of the future.

IN AUGUST 1993, Margaret Taylor, the newly appointed Papua New Guinean ambassador to the United States (at that time the country's most senior serving female bureaucrat) issued a public challenge to the leaders of Papua New Guinea. Speaking at the Twenty-third Waigani Seminar at the University of Papua New Guinea, a biannual gathering of bureaucrats and intellectuals that in this year focused on Community Development and the Environment, Taylor drew attention to the utter failure of the male elite to

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collaborate with women in the social development of the nation. She explained first that she spoke not as a politician but as a mother. Then, pointing to the burden of political responsibility carried by women as mothers and as agents of community development, public health, and environmental conservation, she called male leaders to task. 'We need the fathers of this country as well as the mothers if we are to develop as equals. Papua New Guinea, like our national bird, the ***kumul,*** needs two wings to fly." Comparing the present body politic to a one-winged bird--a dramatic image of the mutilation of the bird-of-paradise, ubiquitous national symbol of Papua New Guinea--she posited a national political culture in which male and female Papua New Guineans might complement each other and the bird take flight. Taylor's decision to eschew diplomatic rank and to speak as a mother who hopes for a gendered political role for future citizens of Papua New Guinea is highly significant. It speaks to a dynamic process already at work in the country by which older women encourage younger women to take up social responsibilities. That process is the subject of this article.

Taylor's speech seemingly demonstrates the emergence of a new authoritative voice for Papua New Guinea women. Moreover, Taylor appears to represent a new PNG bureaucratic and intellectual elite that would exalt the emergent individuality of PNG women. However, as we shall see, Taylor's demand for the political recognition of women's contributions stems from deeper Melanesian roots of the exchanges of gender politics rather than a new graft of feminist consciousness. This attention to putatively anachronistic Melanesian habits of woman's socialization provides a window on the nature and dynamics of political participation in national development that can add another perspective to the articles in this volume as they address the changes in women's lives that have occurred in the space of a generation. The question I seek to answer is: what are the political implications of knowledge transmission across two generations of women, especially two generations who have had radically different educational opportunities such as those in the new state of Papua New Guinea? In order to answer this question, let us first consider a brief history of decolonization in Papua New Guinea, especially the New Ireland experience.

Decolonization through Education in Central New Ireland

Papua New Guinea came to independence in 1975 after a sustained effort by Australia to decolonize the protectorate territories of Papua and New Guinea through the development of formal educational institutions.[1] Following the request of the 1963 United Nations Visiting Mission to bring this largest Pacific Island territory (with nearly two million inhabitants) to inde-

pendence, Australian administrators first educated an indigenous bureaucratic service. Among other Australian development efforts, Papuans and Melanesians formed a national community teachers' service. Later, by independence, the young nation boasted a secondary education system served by the newly established Goroka Teachers' College. Under the tutelage of this new Papua New Guinean intellectual elite, the annual increase in secondary enrollments continued through the next decade, with hopes for universal secondary education by the twenty-first century (Weeks 1990; Ahai 1992). The University of Papua New Guinea and Lae University of Technology, both instituted in 1968, provided leadership for the achievement of these broader goals and enrolled more than two thousand students by 1990. These are the successes of decolonization.[2]

In the postindependence era, education has been the primary focus of criticisms of modernization. Early critics and policy analysts were quick to point to the formation of a new bureaucratic elite and of an educated, unemployed generation of youth as the darker side of national development (Bray 1985a, 1985b; Bacchus 1985; Weeks 1978; Johnston 1975). Beyond these warnings of the formation, of a new underclass, Lyons-Johnston (1993) and Wormald and Crossley (1992) argued that formal education created a new gender hierarchy in the emerging state that privileged men over women for positions as political leaders and for employment as bureaucrats. In their assessment of the circumstances that made such new social relations possible, the National Department of Education, Women's Education Group, has attacked any claim, state or local, that women are unworthy of advanced education. While numbers of women students reached nearly 50 percent of New Ireland provincial high school enrollments in 1992, the problem appears more serious at the postsecondary level, where women's attendance remains at 25 percent of total advanced secondary school enrollments (Department of New Ireland 1992). However, the anthropological problem has not been simply understanding women's subordination per se, but addressing how women understand the state ideology of national development. This article will consider instead the relations between older and younger women in New Ireland as they plan high school attendance.

Critical accounts of education in colonial or postcolonial societies have described the processes by which students and their families assimilate their cultural concerns to the educational demands of the new nation. While it is tempting to believe that powerful institutions of international education might force the homogenization of local particularities in schooling, this assumes that the innovations made by students and their families to make education for youth possible are a willing surrender of traditional cultural knowledge to that of the formal state education system. This perspective

creates two fallacies in representing social development in Papua New Guinea. It not only divides village from nation as if the well-documented reticulation of youth between town and village did not exist (Carrier and Carrier 1989; Gewertz and Errington 1992; Conroy 1972), but also misrepresents the relations between the generations as if elders placed the interests of youth ahead of their own--which they do not. Indeed, Gewertz and Errington have described the fatal tension between the generations over arranged marriage (1992:126-146).

On the Lelet Plateau in central New Ireland, the Mandak speakers extended their customary exchanges for the women's initiation ceremony to the new context of formal schooling in the late twentieth century. The decision marked a new relationship between a younger generation who matured in an independent Papua New Guinea and an older generation who attended mission schools or none at all. Although missionaries built many academic and vocational schools in New Ireland, few survived more than a year or two. Some villages, Lelet villages included, erected permanent schoolhouses as recently as 1970. Before independence, haphazard educational planning marked the colonial period in New Ireland despite the most carefully set policies (Threllfall 1975; Downs 1975). The District of New Ireland Reports on Education from 1952 forward demonstrate little new growth in central New Ireland notwithstanding the establishment of Methodist Mission schools in Kimidan and Mesi.[3] As centers for academic study, the schools fed pastoral education programs in more distant Rabaul, New Britain, toward the ultimate end of Christian education. By comparison Catholic missions in the region, at Karu and Lamasong, worked to send youth to vocational schools at mission centers Namatanai, Lemekot, and Kavieng. As an administrative region and mission field, central New Ireland includes the Mandak-speaking peoples, with whom this research was conducted, as well as their immediate northern neighbors, the Noatsi, and those to the south, the Barok. The region includes the offshore islands of Tabar, Lihir, and Tanga.

The Lelet Plateau is distinguished from the rest of New Ireland by its elevated remove from the long history of trade and business contact with Europeans, who landed in the few small harbors that spot the coastline of this long, thin island. The earliest visitors sought to contract labor for Samoan and Queensland plantations and found central New Irelanders only a little less eager than their northern coresidents to travel to distant places for work. Later, after a short period of difficulty in establishing settlements (Brown 1908; Hahl-1937; Firth 1983), Europeans finally planted the shores of the long island with coconut palms.[4] The devastation wrought by development and trade in the region found its deepest tragedy in the depopulation of the island. From 1902 to the decade following the Second World War,

rural villages declined. However, Lelet residents described their experiences as more moderate than those of their coastal relatives. Their genealogies and oral histories confirm the claims.

Unlike coastal New Irelanders, who first contracted as laborers abroad (Foster 1995) and later made business cooperatives as copra marketers (Clay 1986), the Lelet residents first met those missionaries and teachers who came to the hilltop villages to share their Christian theology and Western education. The Mandak of Lelet conducted most meetings with Germans and later with Australians through the formal channels of religious and secular education instead of as business. Hence, with the arrival of such new forms of esoteric knowledge as Christian theology, numeracy, and literacy, the politics of knowledge transmission looms large in the history of the Lelet region.

History, Social Reproduction, and Gender

The politics of knowledge transmission between older and younger Melanesian women conjoins the theoretical problems of two countervailing trends in Melanesian research. While, charting a historical anthropology, one ethnographer of New Ireland has clarified a counterpoint between the new Melanesian ethnography and the new Melanesian history on an axis measuring the comparative similarity and difference between Western and Melanesian social structure (Foster 1995). As Foster points out, most researchers would agree with the aim of Melanesian ethnography to expose the mistaken assumption of a commodity logic of individual agency when assessing the nature of customary exchanges and gender politics. At the same time, other anthropologists would agree that to produce ethnographic descriptions of Melanesian people without acknowledging the engagement of these people with colonialism, Christian missionization, and capitalist markets is "politically and intellectually irresponsible" (Foster 1995: 13). Foster ingeniously resolves these diverging approaches to Melanesian political life in a comparative historical anthropology of disparate concepts of exchange as social reproduction. Such an understanding is vital because exchange reproduces sociality throughout the colonial history of Tanga Island, New Ireland. Foster believes Melanesians may yet be authors of their own futures, because they approach the world from alternative practices of social reproduction, one of which he calls "transformative exchange" since it has permitted Tangans to manage the incremental changes in their wealth (1995: 194). Through transformative exchange Melanesians make their own historical contingency. Foster argues that the product of ceremonial exchanges is not social structure per se but, ironically, human agency. This agency is recognizable as the collective individual, a form with which Foster identifies the matrilineal clan.

> It is an instance of deliberate collective action through which agents define relations of similarity amongst themselves-bound themselves as a group--by differentiating themselves from other persons likewise grouped as similar to each other. . . . These groups are matrilineages ***(matambia)*** paired through intermarriage, which exchange nurture between them and so effectively father each other's children. (Foster 1995:12-13)

Accordingly, he argues that the basic constitutive process of such a sociality is "replacement" and that the basic constitutive unit of such relations is "identical exchange," for it is in the exchange of like goods for like goods, in this case paternal nurture for paternal nurture, that the social group discovers its coherent similarity (Foster 1990b).

Other anthropologists of New Ireland have focused on the redefinition of social reproduction in vernacular terms appropriate to the central processes of New Ireland ceremonial exchange in mortuary ceremonies. Ethnographies of the last decade focused on the rethinking of "work," "paternal nurture," "reproduction," and "social power" in order to discuss more effectively the Melanesian politics of these rituals (see Albert 1987; Clay 1986; Foster 1995; Wagner 1986a). In similar critical spirit, my description of ceremonial exchanges in the ***linnendaven*** ritual accounts for social reproduction in terms of New Irelanders' apprehension of generational relations and historical contingency in the ***linnendaven*** ritual. Moreover, I will describe the process by which central New Irelanders enter into exchange relations in the ***linnendaven*** ceremony in order to make the prestigious Ladaven of the next generation anew, even as they honor debts to the generation of the past.[5]

In attending to these cross-generational relations among the Mandak, effected to make women socially powerful, we can complicate Foster's claim that social reproduction in Tanga provides the appropriate focus for a "New Melanesian Anthropology" (1995:248) by attending to social reproduction in gendered relations across the generations. Whereas Foster described the exchanges leading to the making of shell disks for ***malaggan*** ceremonies, I describe the exchange relations leading to the making of the Ladaven. Moreover, whereas Foster described the ***malaggan*** exchanges in the context of wage labor, I analyze the socialization of the Ladaven in the context of postindependence education.

Although the ceremony of ***linnendaven,*** like other ***malaggan*** ceremonies described by Foster (1995), does articulate the existence of the collective agency of the composite of persons known as the matrilineage in relation to changing global politics, my concern here is with the processes by which

New Irelanders create the power of the Ladaven to effect social changes. In the following, I shall argue that those ritual exchanges necessary to the completion of the combined rites of schooling and ***linnendaven*** create the Ladaven's social power. While an analysis following Foster would describe how these exchanges were first expressed as the obligations of the father's to the mother's matrilineage, I argue that they also evince the person of the prestigious Ladaven herself.

My argument also attempts to address several related traditional indigenous claims about the Ladaven: first, that the clan of the Ladaven's father ensures that the child will become a powerful woman in the future by providing for the ceremony of the Ladaven; and second, that the ***linnendaven*** ceremony evinces the Ladaven as the ultimate image of womanliness. Moreover, because the Mandak imagine the Ladaven to be potentially full of these characteristics, they observe the ***linnendaven*** rites so that women might act out the best of Ladaven habits. The Ladaven is a woman of strength ***(lanatlolos),*** of industry ***(lanatgungu),*** or of Christian compassion ***(lanatmarimari,*** a hybrid word of Tok Pisin and Mandak). If the contemporary ***linnendaven*** rites for formal education evince the social ethos of the ancient Ladaven in the schoolgirl, then the current practice of initiation requires closer analysis. In the following I will discuss the exchange relations that made the ***linnendaven*** ceremony possible.

The Ladaven Goes to School

The Lelet Mandak practiced aspects of the traditional ***linnendaven*** at the time of a young girl's departure for secondary school. When the student left the alpine valleys of the Lelet Plateau for coastal boarding schools, she distinguished herself from other girls of the four small villages by pursuing an educational opportunity that they did not have. The typical Lelet girl would leave grade six to return to her mother's house and gardens. Among the renowned taro horticulturists and market gardeners of New Ireland, the girls who remained in the village pursued a daily routine of garden work. Market gardening, rather than contractual plantation labor, sustained the flow of cash into the village during the early 1990s. As the backbone of the village market economy, women and young girls ensured a steady but uneven income from vegetable and taro sales and redistributed it among the six hundred people in the region. As in other regions, men still labored to cut, prepare, and plant gardens while woman planted, tended, and harvested them. However, in central New Ireland the women of Lelet marketed the vegetables up and down the coastal roads and in the markets of the towns of Kavieng and Namatanai, thereby gaining the reputation of

being industrious, strong businesswomen with a bounty of fine vegetables in their woven market baskets.

Educated women exercised a certain amount of choice in joining the village market business. Without wage-paying employment, an educated woman might return to the village to grow fine vegetables such as lettuce and capsicum. Once she had found employment in the shops or offices, she would make financial contributions to the projects of her siblings so they could buy seeds, fertilizers, and herbicides. The educated woman thereby maintained a prestigious role as a benefactor in village social and political relationships. In enacting such a role with goodwill, she demonstrated that her personal ethos had earned her the name of "Ladaven."

The tale of the Gifts of Nirut demonstrates the proper enactment of the ethos of the Ladaven. The Lelet villagers told a story of the coming of a stem, industrious, and generous woman named Nirut with bountiful gifts of taro, banana, sugarcane, and other food to the first Mandak to live on the plateau.[6] Nirut got up from the ground and entered the village as a mature woman with a wealth of garden produce on her back. The elderly men and women insisted that the garden itself became Nirut and that the ground became a body and walked among the humans of Lelet. After she had given food to the children on several different occasions, the confused parents' ambushed Nirut. After suffering their attempt to tear the food from her back, Nirut finally stopped the parents with her cries. She recognized the need to share her food with these humans who had no knowledge of horticulture. Hence, she taught the adult Mandak not to take but to give and how to reciprocate the gift. Nirut modeled this ethos that the Ladaven is responsible for enacting.

Lelet kin challenge young women as they leave the village to keep up such an ethos. Now, when leaving for one of five provincial boarding schools at the secondary level to take up a place won by those scoring in the top 50 percent of the sixth-year examination, some children are jokingly referred to by the name used for all female initiates, "Ladaven." Moreover, the farewell party that honors a girl departing for high school mimics the ***linnendaven*** ritual of a generation past. Small gifts to the departing girl to help her with her new undertaking in the boarding school--a dictionary, a skirt, some powder--recall the bits of special food pressed into the hands of the Ladaven who was about to go into seclusion. The girl's mother welcomes these well-wishers into her house with a small feast of chicken, fish, and wild pig with roasted taro just before the girl's departure. The girl's mother thereby honors these guests who had contributed to the school fee and who overtly support her attendance at boarding school at the same time she cele-

brates the girl's departure. Those members of her own matrilineal clan who help to prepare food for the guests speak of the girl's departure with pride yet with much sadness. Because secondary school, like the ***linnendaven*** ritual, separates the girl from the everyday transactions of the village, the relatives weep as they speak of how deeply they will miss seeing her face around their hearth. Thus, instead of capitulating to the official culture of the new nation, the New Ireland residents have extended the tradition of women's initiation to high school.

This is only the first point of comparison between the initiation ritual and secondary education. Lelet guests at the graduation ceremonies in the provincial high school explicitly liken the procession of young women into the school auditorium to the customary parade of Ladaven from the house of seclusion. Indeed they greet the postgraduation procession with the same vigorous joking that was part of the customary rites. In the midst of the joking about the young women's future, New Ireland parents often announce that they have paid money to the professional educators at the school. This payment of school fees to specialists in allegedly esoteric Western knowledge parallels the customary gift of shell wealth to the ritual specialist who made the magic for the ritual. At the school, however, villagers give money in exchange for the diverse knowledge their children learn in four years of formal education.

Both events, the graduation and the parade of Ladaven, were a time for teasing and frivolity, even sexually explicit joking. In the graduation ceremonies the boy and girl graduates don "modem" PNG dress. Boys wear shoes and long trousers, while the girls dress in long ***laplaps*** and ***meri***-blouses or in dresses bought from used Australian clothing shops. Schoolgirls joked about Target Clothing, a popular chain of used clothing stores across Papua New Guinea. At the same time, they praised it as a good source of well-made and stylish frocks. Alternatively, they called it "Tanget Clothing," a lexical joke that uses a word from the New Ireland dialect of Tok Pisin. ***Tanget*** names the broadleaf grass that grew around the men's house enclosure and that men and women dancers used for decorative dress at mortuary rites. Hence, the joke equates traditional ceremonial dress with graduation attire. The dress of the girls receives much attention from the participants. They choose to distinguish themselves by dress from the "village girls" they would have been if they had not attended school. Girls do not wear certain kinds of "European" attire--stylish dresses and skirts or sleeveless blouses--because they fear rebuke as "Australian women." Elders say that such "Australian women" abandon local values in favor of the Australian ethos of "freedom," by which they mean freedom from traditional obligations to kin. The dress

of the graduation ceremony is an expression of both governmental and clan interests in the body of the graduates, since both provided for the students throughout their residency in the boarding school.

The new significance of the women's initiation ritual in the village eludes explicit indigenous criticism. Residents do not see that the extension of the Ladaven to high school graduation presents a problem. By 1990 the Mandak speakers of the Lelet Plateau no longer practiced the customary initiation rites of ***linnendaven*** as a part of the mortuary ritual sequence. Instead, they distinguished the "Ladaven party" as a separate rite of education. The elderly men and women made little of this shift in performance, denying that there had been any significance in the coproduction of mortuary and initiation rites. Whatever significance once lay in conjoining the rites of sexual maturity with the rites of death, it was no longer central to contemporary Mandak interests in sponsoring Ladaven parties. Had the Mandak women willingly rendered their customary rituals meaningless? I shall argue here that they have not and that more important indigenous historical processes are already under way in the practice of exchange.

In describing the contemporary women's rites for making the Ladaven through secondary education in 1992, it seems clear that the extensions of the village political interests in initiating the youth to a national education system are more than simple relabeling of formal schooling with local terms. In discussing the exchange relations that make Ladaven or students, I will show that these exchanges sustain Mandak visions of the future. Debts and obligations across the generational divide of the moieties establish Mandak futures. Moreover, the Mandak admit the possibilities of creative innovation within those relations because they consciously undertook these ritual exchanges, even at the simple level of face-to-face relations across the generations. For example, an elder woman anticipated the time when she might as an old woman rely on the younger Ladaven to provide her with the money and store goods that are accessible to those educated few with regular incomes from wage-paying jobs. In the domain of national culture in contemporary New Ireland, the rites of initiation both enhance the political potential of the young initiate's clan and encompass the education rituals of the modem nation.

The School Fee as Ceremonial Exchange in the *Linnendaven* Ritual

Before discussing the exchanges for the creation of the Ladaven rites, let us make the ethnographic context explicit. In the traditional central New Ireland experience, for example in Mandak villages, ceremonial gift exchange became salient in the complex of mortuary ceremonies sponsored by matri-

lineal moieties bearing the totemic name of Malam or Tarangau (referring to the greater and lesser birds, the eagle and the sea hawk). In the past, the feasters marked the completion of each sequence of mortuary rites with the creation and display of a singular art form, the ***malaggan.*** After commemorating the dead person with the revelation of the ***malaggan,*** the Mandak burned, destroyed, or left it to rot in the men's house enclosure where the remains of the dead rest. Across central New Ireland, the initiation rites known as the ***pinnewu*** and the ***linnendaven*** followed the redistribution of the ceremonial shell wealth of the deceased and preceded final acts of restitution of normal social relations (Clay 1986). As such, the initiation rites also marked the successive stages of the passing of the dead person from collective memory. Among the Mandak, the ***linnendaven*** parade fell in between the rites of redistributing the ***mis*** or shell wealth (Mandak ***lakmittoran,*** the manifestation of the spirit) and the rites for the resolution of all disputes and social obligations (Mandak ***lengkobus,*** knotted-rope ***malaggan*** used for ***laxabis)*** when the specialists displayed the ***malaggan*** art.

In traditional lore, the revelation of the ***malaggan*** art marked the end of the initiation sequence for both boys and girls. Among the Mandak, the male ***pinnewu*** and the female ***linnendaven*** initiates emerged from the houses of seclusion transformed. The new ***pinnewu*** males made ceremonial orations and the females made a ritualistic parade (Clay 1986). Some of the elderly Mandak listed the ***linnendaven*** of old as but one of the many kinds of ***malaggan,*** thereby equating the transition rites for death and the regeneration of sociality to the transition rites for making the adult out of the child. Most important, the ceremonial gift from the members of one moiety was always reciprocated by the other moiety in the later generation. Thus filial obligations to the elder generation were discharged to the younger generation by the performance of ***linnendaven*** rites.

The successive layers of indebtedness involving education demonstrate this social fact. For example, at the insistence of her senior female relatives, the student Mary entered high school. The older women felt that high school attendance would enable the girl to assist in the prosperity of the clan in the future; they made secondary education available to her to further the future of their own clan. Mary's attendance at secondary school ended when it became clear that she would be unsuccessful as a student there. However, female relatives argued for her to continue her studies in the vocational school. Her mother's sisters, all of whom had been successful in postsecondary education, had adamantly supported the younger woman's continued education. When Mary had failed to maintain her position in high school, these elder clanswomen were clear about the importance of continuing her education. When the headmaster of the high school predicted that she

would not be able to hold her place in the classroom and advised her father that he not "waste the school fee" on her education, the women of Mary's clan complained angrily that her father would consider not sending her to school. Indeed, they were adamant that the girl from the Kanesides clan must continue her education beyond the village and proposed that she attend a vocational school for girls.

Eventually, Mary did go to school, but not with the financial support of her mother's sisters. Even though each sister held a job and received a regular wage, they did not forward any support for the payment of school fees to Mary's father. Instead, her father amassed the school fee from among his own clan members to appease his wife's sisters. Mary's father and his clansmen took up the full responsibility for the education of the young woman because they believed they were accountable to the demands of the young woman's senior clanswomen. Primarily, the payment of the school fees was considered to be a father's concern. Second, the young woman was deserving of an opportunity to go to school because her clan had supported the women of her father's clan as they prepared for the formal initiations of ***linnendaven.***

Classificatory fathers and their clansmen support such young students out of respect for the history of transactions between their own clan and that of their daughters. If traced, the gifts of money and shell wealth between the clans through three generations would appear as a long, twisting string of gifts from the past into the future. The twists alternate across two generations from Kanesides to Bungaring and again across two generations from Bungaring to Kanesides. Sometimes, these obligations to reciprocate the gift of one clan to the initiation of a woman can be carried by her daughters, passing back and forth across four and five generations. In the above example, the effort by Kanesides for the ***linnendaven*** of Minas of Bungaring was retuned by Bungaring for the ***linnendaven*** of Rachel of Kanesides. Then, the effort of Bungaring was again returned by Kanesides for the ***linnendaven*** of Suunan of Bungaring, after which the effort of Kanesides was returned by Bungaring, who finally supported the education of Mary. Whereas the father of the child once secured her participation in the Ladaven rite of the colonial period, he now secured her place in high school at the encouragement of her female clan members. Both the Ladaven rite and high school strengthened the future of the clans of the participants--providing public respect for the woman's own clan as well as for her father's clan, because he supported her participation with gifts of shell wealth and food. Moreover, the other kin and village residents were obliged to honor the exchange obligations to her clan and her father's clan in the future.

Hence, the decision to send a child to secondary school, like the decision

to support her in a ***linnendaven*** ritual, is an act of paternal care giving. This is no small matter in New Ireland, where the exchange of paternal nurture between clans underlies the history of kinship politics. On the one hand, clans generally approve and insist on the attendance of older children at secondary school, when it is possible after the selective examination. The student's eventual success furthers the success of the clan by expanding their future sources for loans of money--either through the graduate's own employment or possibly by marriage to a wage earner. Generally, a knowledge of European ways acquired at secondary school is useful in informal clan negotiations. In this way secondary education enables a girl to become a better mother in her clan, a claim that has powerful implications for clan politics.

On the other hand, a father must make careful decisions about the child's education that are respectful of her matrilineal clan. I recount the case of Anna as an example. At the completion of the sixth grade, Anna received an offer of a place in the secondary school. Although older siblings were willing to support her with the payment of school fees, her father insisted that she remain in the hamlet to care for her parents, who were now elderly. She turned to her eldest brother, who was the oldest reasonable male in her immediate clan, as her mother's brother was very elderly and senile. He protested that their father was stifling Anna's future and that of her clan. In consideration of his son's protests as senior spokesman of his daughter's matrilineal clan, the father relented, and Anna went to the high school with the goodwill of both her father and her own clan. In making school attendance possible by arranging for the payment of the school fee, both clans met their divergent interests.

The goal of the extension of the ***linnendaven*** rites to secondary education has been to make women powerful in their own matrilineal clans. However, fathers and their clansmen also hoped that they would gain power through the marriage of the graduate. A successful marriage would help them create new exchange alliances with other powerful men from her husbands clan at a regional, provincial, or national level. However, a father might also encourage his secondary school--educated daughters to marry into his own clan (Tok Pisin ***mari bek).*** In some cases, the child attended school in order to make her a partner worthy of a man already residing in the village. Just as the Ladaven was betrothed before attending ***linnendaven*** rites in the past, a girl was betrothed on the condition that the young man and she both attend secondary school.[7] I witnessed a conversation between two men in which they discussed the happiness that they might enjoy in their old age--each as the father-in-law of the other's child. They concurred that secondary education would evenly match the two children and make them ideal adult mar-

riage partners. At the time of their conversation, the children were but five years old and they played together within the view of their scheming parents. Each father spoke of his intention to support his own child through secondary school, thereby assuring the other that he saw it as a part of their mutual commitment to the future of their joined families.

Marriages made after graduation or after initiation reknit the long history of social transactions that made the girl's education possible. An elderly male relative who once gave support with gifts of food, spending money, or school fee contributions receives repayment from the wealth given to the young woman's clan from the man's Central New Ireland women marry without feasting or public ceremony when the woman's mother accepts the suitor's gift of traditional shell wealth and redistributes it to her matrilineal clansmen. A woman's clan is generally enthusiastic that she marry soon after graduation so that she can begin to live purposefully. Women say they "work for nothing" before marriage and that after marriage they can work and make gifts of wealth and food all to the greater social good. More particularly, after marriage a woman can reciprocate the generosity extended to her throughout her period of schooling or initiation. Sometimes relatives insist on the girl's marriage at the end of secondary school if they are to remain friendly to her.

Hence, rather than providing the means to transform village girls into sophisticated individuals who finally sever their village ties, schooling is an opportunity for a woman to broaden and intensify the net of relationships with village relatives. I have mentioned that transactions that enabled the girl's education expose the extended relations of exchange because relatives came forward to amass the school fee. In more particular and restricted ways, they provided the girl with small gifts of spending money, school supplies, and food. Upon graduation, the employed girl recognizes those relationships by sharing her income with those relatives who supported her. Then, when she marries, the resources of her household are at the disposal of those relatives who had supported her at school. Contrary to the expectation that these obligations constitute a burden, girls say they feel ashamed of failing to reciprocate their relatives' support. In explaining their situation, graduates insist that they have honored the efforts of those kin who made gifts to them in order to avoid criticism for arrogance or selfishness. One school-leaver said, "I don't want to be criticized for European women's behavior."

In the preceding pages I have argued that secondary education replaces the ***linnendaven*** rites by continuing the network of social obligations and responsibilities that began with this initiation ceremony several generations ago. I also have described the ways in which kin in 1992 supported girls at

school with gifts of money and food during their absence from everyday village life in the same way kin in the early years had supported them in the house of seclusion in the weeks preceding the feasts at which the Ladaven finally reappeared. I have also described the process by which the student's father's moiety assembles the school fee and pays it to the school as an analogue of the way in which they gave ceremonial wealth to the ritual specialists and the feast organizers. These practices of preparing a young woman for school create future social obligations for her to meet. Moreover, in meeting these obligations to her kin, the graduate exercises her duties as a New Ireland woman by reknitting her relationship to the village. However, the question arises as to how the new Ladaven makes her educational experience salient for what it is; that is, what is the social knowledge acquired in secondary school?

Social Power in the Rites of Ladaven and Secondary Education

The New Ireland capacity to endure one of the most powerful European institutions of social transformation and yet remain Melanesian derives from an alternative critical ontology that posits that the power of contingency lies in human hands (see Wagner 1986a, 1991 on Barok history; Foster 1995 on Tangan reproduction; Clay 1992 on Mandak agency). Contemporary and past debates over the symbolic aspects of ritual itself elaborate a concern for the contingencies negotiated in the ***linnendaven.*** In New Ireland the negotiations over the rites of socialization of the Ladaven concern the correct adornment and deportment of the young woman's body. In secondary school concern is shown for girls' adherence to Papua New Guinean customs of womanly dress and deportment. These debates raised the concern that replacing the Ladaven with the student might have an unintended result. Do the rites of schooling create the new Papua New Guinean woman?

In order to estimate the depth of change resulting from the shift of preparations for initiation to education, it is useful to look at the concern with authenticity in New Ireland terms. Much of my discussion of the implications of creating new Ladaven in new contexts mirrors Foster's discussion of the dangers of the creation of replicas ***(tintol)*** of ceremonial wealth ***(warantang).***

> This undercurrent of retention, this pervasive keeping while giving, characterizes replication as a specific form of social reproduction., Both keeping and keeping while giving work as strategies to control the social identities and relationships iconically signified by ***warantang*** and ***tintol,*** respectively . . . Keeping ***warantang*** out of circula-

> tion involves a kind of hoarding, a strategy by which the continuity between MB and ZS that defines lineage replacement is safeguarded. (Foster 1988:375-376)

The student in 1992 merely replicated the earlier Ladaven. Indeed, women insisted that these students were not powerful in the same way that an earher generation of Ladaven might have been. The Ladaven ritual, in contrast to education rites, required that the lineage act to reproduce itself with the service of the other matrimoiety and to protect the continuity between mothers and daughters. The student, once distinguished from the Ladaven, still carried the burden of ceremonial exchange, just as the copy ***(tintol)*** did, once distinguished from the ceremonial shell disk ***(warantang).*** The decorative work missing from the ***tintol*** rendered it powerless, however, in comparison with the original ***(waratang).*** Indeed, the importance of the decoration lay in its magical power to transform social relations and to prove the disks authentic.

By comparison, it would seem that authenticity of the Ladaven's dress was very much a matter of her decorum, which entailed her circumstances. While her dress was not magical, we will see that it did engage the magical properties of the female body that all women possessed and some women used expertly. Indeed, the debate over girls' decorum raged throughout the secondary school as if their dress and behavior alone presented stumbling blocks to the mutual advancement of national and clan politics.

The attention given to the management of girls' sexuality in Mongop High School never produced a written code of behavior. Instead, teachers discussed "women's behavior" in ad hoc meetings. The debates about the nature of sexual antagonism were pedagogical. They insisted on the need for adolescent girls to learn about the social power of desire, that is, to manage body movements and dress so as to communicate effectively the message that they were or were not sexually mature "women." Group assemblies of all of the female students discussed the specifics of action.[8] Concerns of the PNG women's movement enhanced the conversation.[9] Teachers told students that they "stood at the doorway to a new Papua New Guinea" ready to begin "the work of being a Papua New Guinean woman" in the new nation. The women teachers and their students struggled to define a new "Papua New Guinean woman" unlike both the "village woman" and the "European woman." Notably, they emphasized the bodies of girls as containers for potent substances. Claiming women's bodies to have power over men mirrors the emphasis in the ***linnendaven*** ritual on the potency of the Ladaven's body in the transformation of social relationships. Moreover, the attention to the control of the body's movement and its dress, like the atten-

tion to the confinement and the skin of the Ladaven, created the image of the girl as a responsible New Ireland woman.

With explicitness equal to that of the teachers, the elderly women from Lelet discussed the emergent understanding of sexuality in both the contemporary rituals of education and the old rites of initiation. They commonly spoke of a young woman's sexual power with reference to the Mandak ***lamas.***[10] The semantic domain of ***lamas*** included body fat, fecundity, and feminine sexual desire. Indeed, it was common to speak of body fat as evidence of both fecundity and sexual desire, or to speak of fecundity as evidence of feminine sexual desire and body fat (or ***gris,*** as it is described in Tok Pisin). Elderly women recognized the rites of education and ***linnendaven*** as equally important to the development of the social and sexual power of the student and the Ladaven. As we shall see, during the rites the young women came to understand their own sexuality as a power acquired through feeding and painting the body to make it desirable. The Ladaven and the student thereby authentically embodied imminent sexual power. However, the Ladaven established her authenticity by more complex means.

In the past, hosts of the ***linnendaven*** ceremony asked a specialist to perform the ritual. Gifts of shell wealth assured the authenticity of the specialist's work by creating a moral obligation to ensure the accuracy of every detail of the performance. These details included the secret names for each Ladaven, the techniques of preparation of paints for the Ladaven's body, the construction secrets of the house of seclusion, and the forms of presentation for the parade of Ladaven. The Ladaven hid this information as specialized secrets that they might reveal should they need to initiate a new generation of Ladaven. Complicit with this rule of authenticity, Rachel, a Ladaven for some fifty years, insisted that the older generation of Ladaven and their ritual experts knew the truth about the ritual.

This referral of authority to the elder generation reflects a New Ireland habit of giving respect to the benefactors of knowledge and rite. By the same token, New Ireland women claim they can never be authorities in ritual knowledge until they pass it on. Indeed, they see an irony in the fact. Herein lies a New Ireland trick, a dissembling act: the authentic rite exists in the imagination of the elderly community, while the contemporary enactment of the ritual is but an image of it. The elderly women say that the new Ladaven is but a manifestation of the real memory of Ladaven. Such a logic makes it necessary to consider the young girl in school nothing but the image of the Ladaven. Further, it causes the elder generation to carry the burden of responsibility for the accuracy of the contemporary ritual form, making it necessary for them to discuss its authenticity.

These dissembling acts of custom make a distinctly New Ireland social

transformation possible. Elderly Ladaven discussed the symbolic value of the basic organization of the ritual as evidence of its transformative power. They explained the details as follows. The ritual hosts collected young women together and housed them in the dark house for Ladaven ***(lonuladaven)*** for several months. The ritual expert (Mandak ***lunkak),*** an elder man employed by the feast organizers, oversaw the construction of this small house and managed the symbolic and ritualistic aspects of becoming a Ladaven as he supervised the seclusion of the young girls "away from the light of the sun" ***(lexunkingkimo).***

The feast organizers and the ***lunkak*** built the ***linnendaven*** house and prepared special foods for the Ladaven. The ritual house was small and built within a larger house for the purpose of the ***malaggan*** display. This display occurred only after the completion of the Ladaven rites. Within the house the girls sat upon an elaborately carved bench, finely emblazoned along its posts in one ***linnendaven*** ritual with spear and leaf motif, marking hunting and gathering as two technologies of food production in wilderness areas.[11] These were painted in red, yellow ochre, white, and black. During the seclusion, the girls ate wild meats such as marsupial and pig, as well as domestic pigs provided by the feast organizers with the help of the girls' families.[12] Such food eaten in daily meals made them grow fat with beautiful shining skin. During the seclusion they were prohibited from exposing the skin to the sun, which blackened it. Mandak women say red skin is more attractive than black. The shining red corpulent body, created by the seclusion and feeding, symbolized self-indulgence and epitomized feminine sexuality. Here, the power of the ***lunkak*** to manage the girls' ritual process established the power of human action in establishing the alterability and contingency of human affairs.

The feasters joked aggressively as the ***lunkak*** led the young women from the ritual house ***(lonuladaven)*** into the main feasting area. The girls' painted bodies caught the sunlight and reflected it into the eyes of the crowd. The ***lunkak*** had used magic to paint the girls so that they would stir the desire of the feasters. While it was the work of elder Ladaven women to feed and paint the younger Ladaven, the magic of Ladaven paint was men's property. During the parade, the feasters often made salacious remarks to the young women and joked about sexual fecundity. Much of the play took the form of erotic teasing. During their dash from the Ladaven house to the benches that surrounded the speakers platform in the feasting ground, women feasters often grabbed the initiates and pressed them into mock sexual poses to tease them about upcoming marriages. It was said that the bodies of the Ladaven were red, full, and desirable, hence betrothals or marriages followed the rites. For example, one woman said she had entered into the rites of Lada-

ven at the request of her future husbands family in order to make a marriage.

As with the ***malaggan*** images at the mortuary rites that discharged power to the assembled feasters, the participants at the female initiation ritual assumed that similar power was awaiting release from the Ladaven's body itself. Toward this end, each initiate learned the techniques of painting and decoration for the construction of the female body in the Ladaven ceremony and claimed to keep them inside her mind. By describing his actions as he completed each one, the specialist enhanced the power of the Ladaven by sharing his knowledge with her. For example, the specialist repeated, "I'm washing the skin of the Ladaven" ***(lanasusu lamas atne Ladaven),*** while he painted the body of the girl ochre red, as if to clarify that this was an act of washing and exposing, not painting and covering.

The redoubling of the action, by this I mean describing the act while completing it, enhanced the verisimilitude of both the acts and the words. By washing the skin of the Ladaven, the Lelet Mandak revealed the woman's red beauty by ridding the skin of all of the matter that had darkened its light. Red matter was a euphemism for the history of shame felt at moral infractions. It was also a symbol for the social conventions of respect that dictate gendered behavior in everyday village life. The act of washing made the Ladaven women without shame, capable of acting beyond the conventions of social behavior. In sum, the fabrication of the body as the natural ground of self-evident knowledge raised women's consciousness.

In discussing how to interpret the meaning of the ritual, my elderly informants insisted that Ladaven no more participated in a symbolic rite of rebirth than they would literally be born again in a Christian conversion. As Tom Maschio has argued for the Rauto in New Britain (1995), interpreting the symbolic aspects of the Ladaven ritual is tricky. He describes how Rauto divulge the history of social relations leading up to the ritual. Gifts welcomed the Ladaven's arrival as a concrete demonstration of the previous social transactions that had made her.

In New Ireland, the same conceptual apparatus, the same concrete symbology usefully illuminates an analysis of the arts of the men's house. Thought of in its most material dimensions, the men's house is a container for other cultural forms. One such form from the men's house at the turn of the century, described by Marianne George as a wooden wall mural depicting the Ladaven with exposed heavy wombs (1987), privileged a view of the unborn child. We might well say that the men's house enclosed the mural, which enclosed the picture of the body of the woman that, in turn, enclosed the picture of the future children of the clan. From the observer's perspective, George writes: "Dawan are girls who have matured into women; ready to

realize their innately creative feminine capacity for production of new clan members and wealth, they are regarded as self-sufficient symbols of this capacity" (1987:93). Perhaps, by contemplating the body of the Ladaven on the mural, the chain of meanings became apparent to men. The screen displayed inside the men's house confirmed that the Ladaven had the power to transform the clan from one set of social relations into another. The power of the Ladaven, like the power of the newborn, existed in her ability to make other social relations apparent.

The ***linnendaven*** rituals celebrate human creativity in social relations, reminding participants that women, with men, have made the world in an image of their mutual choice. On the basis of conventional arguments that assume the capacity of symbols to represent other experiences, one might interpret the initiation ritual as symbolic rebirth, the initiate emerging as a powerful woman made by her social relations into a prestigious person. Yet Mandak women themselves had denied any suggestion that the ritual was a rebirth. Instead, the symbology of the Ladaven rite reflected concerns with pregnancy and parturition as feminine acts that altered conventional social relations. Such a critical commentary presses the claim that meaning in island Melanesia eludes easy comprehension. Indeed, we must comprehend the materiality with which Melanesians express the significance of relationships (Maschio 1995; Wagner 1986a; Strathern 1988).

As participants in the ***linnendaven*** ritual, women contemplated their power to change social relations through concretely symbolic acts. The symbolism of the ritual confirms that women who distinguished themselves from the matrilineage also became socially powerful. The elderly Ladaven I knew compared their separation from the rest of their clan to parturition. The hosts separated each Ladaven from the group as if she were a newborn red-skinned child parted from its mother. The analogy elaborated several idiomatic expressions used by women to discuss their genitalia: the ritual house for the Ladaven referred to the womb, and the doorway through which the initiates appeared referred to the birth canal. Such a concrete demonstration of social power, whether in giving birth or parading decorated bodies in the crowd, iterated the previously latent capacity of the Ladaven to demand the fabrication of new social relations. In what appears to be a new agreement with George's analysis, Roy Wagner has argued that a singularly New Ireland logic of materiality understood the mature New Ireland body to be inscribed as itself (1987). Wagner's claim for the significance of the Ladaven ceremony focuses on creative and generative powers. In his study of Barok mortuary rights, he argues that New Ireland residents establish tutelary relationships in ritual not to reproduce the ritual, but to teach themselves about the means by which the world becomes significant. The

semiotics of the Ladaven were revealed in the acts of reduplication-the washing and rewashing of the protected skin to make it glow red brown, the fattening of the potentially fertile body. He argues that these practices inscribed on the body that which was readily recognized: its red color and its fecundity. In underlining as cultural those facets of the body we deem natural, New Irelanders learned that the significant world has a kind of density of meaning that the Mandak respectfully described as strength (Mandak ***lolos).***[13]

The vernacular concept of strength ***(lolos)*** has its contemporary translation in Tok Pisin as weight ***(hevi)*** and power ***(pawa),*** but I will discuss only the semantic domain of ***hevi*** in New Ireland Tok Pisin. The contemporary postindependence student and Ladaven of the colonial era described their social power as strong or weighty ***(hevi).*** As with the vernacular concept of strength, central New Irelanders understood weight to refer to the significance contained in things. The ceremonial gift of shell wealth, a ***mis,*** was ***hevi*** because in receiving it the recipient recalled all of the many men and women who had transacted some political relationship by the giving of that strand of ***mis.*** In another example, women described a favorite church hymn as ***hevi*** because its words referred ambiguously to distant places and events, thereby conflating details of Mandak and biblical history with spiritual experiences.

Most important, they described the Ladaven as ***hevi.*** New Ireland men and women remembered each Ladaven of the distant past by recounting her offspring. The case history of the orchestration of a Ladaven ceremony by a tiny and diminished matriline exemplified the claim. Lelet women said that the body of Teptep, the sole female member of the clan Lengko, was ***hevi*** with the future of the clan after she became a Ladaven. As she bore its future members, her latent power finally became apparent. Her living daughters and granddaughters point emphatically to the expansion of the clan to its contemporary fullness by naming the women members of each generation of her descendants. In such recitations of six, even seven generations, the younger teller memorializes the Ladaven and claims to demonstrate the weight of her significance. Women tell the tale to demonstrate that the Ladaven carried the burden of social power to create the clan; hence it could be said that her body contained the power to extend contemporary social relationships between the clans into the future.

Women speak wittingly of the different historical contexts in which the Mandak moieties hosted the Ladaven rites. In so doing, they compare the weight of the Ladaven of one generation with that of another. Their grandmothers, of Teptep's generation, celebrated the rites during the years of severe population decline following the decades of migration to plantation work in an effort to encourage population growth following those years of

deprivation. Their mothers participated in a revival of the Ladaven rites after the Japanese occupation of New Ireland. During this time, New Ireland men worked with the Australian administrators toward the social and economic development of the province. In those rites of Ladaven, the women established privileges of participation in ceremonial exchanges and the right to deliver public speeches at civic events. As well, the Ladaven of the postwar generation advised on plans for marriage in the clan or about plans for mortuary feasts. In these roles they emulated the power of prestigious men who might speak to the plausibility of a marriage between two clans, calculating the history of relationships that better enabled their interests in reclaiming ceremonial wealth in their own clan. This timely award of social powers enabled women to stay abreast of the intensification of the local politics of prestige that accompanied the effort to establish capital business cooperatives in the central New Ireland region in the postwar period.

In postwar New Ireland, the Ladavens' consciousness of their social power also enabled them to take up responsibilities for public oratory. Like the contemporary secondary school graduate who enjoys the privilege of participation in national politics, the renowned Ladaven of central New Ireland enjoyed a privilege unknown to her sisters of speaking publicly about clan interests. As one Ladaven, now the deputy headmistress of the community school, said to the assembled parents at a school meeting: "Forgive my lateness, but I cannot speak to you as a teacher today. I have come from the gardens, where I work to carry food to my family. I speak to you as a Papua New Guinean mother who worries for the future of these children in the school." Everyone knew that years ago she had "sat on the Ladaven bench" when the gifts of her fathers clan had enabled her to become a nurturing member of the larger community. Only now did she give that fact significance in public debate. In this moment of speaking, as she took up the responsibility of exercising her promised authority to care for the community at large, the deputy headmistress revealed her social power as the Ladaven.

The New Ladaven as a Papua New Guinean Woman

In the wake of such criticisms as those by Lyons-Johnston (1993) and Wormald and Crossley (1992) that education has created new inequalities between men and women in Papua New Guinea, might we hope for the Ladaven to provide a feminist revision of the PNG state? Certainly, in the performance of ritual New Ireland women came to understand the feminist argument that gender is malleable. But they also learned that, like their grandmothers, they can create women through puberty rites known as Lada-

ven, Dawan, or Luan (Clay 1986; Wagner 1986b; Fergie 1995).[14] Through reflection on their participation, initiates in these central New Ireland rituals claim to have become ***"hevi,"*** their heads filled with the "meaning" of their experience, by which they mean that they comprehend the weight, the responsibilities, and the significance of their social power. New Irelanders make initiates into powerful women in two ways. A student displays her femininity by meeting obligations to the relatives who supported her through school. This makes and sustains her womanly reputation as industrious and compassionate, the qualities exhibited in their best form by the Ladaven. In the effort to raise student awareness to womanly responsibilities, femininity is also created by raising the student's consciousness to feminine aesthetics. The Ladaven's sexual beauty echoes the aesthetics of carving or rattan artwork prepared for the last stage of ***malaggan*** mortuary rites. The glistening ***malaggan*** art and the glistening Ladaven body strike the eyes of the beholder, refracting the light of the sky down into the crowd of feasters (Mandak ***ixumes).*** After they have viewed the carefully crafted bodies or seen the ***malaggans,*** the members of the crowd feel the desire to have a younger woman of their own clan attend a ritual or to make the ***malaggan*** for themselves. Thus,' the Mandak acknowledge and sustain the Ladaven's ritual.

As much as the consciousness raised by the Ladaven bears similarity to some aspects of a feminist one, it fails as a radical political ideology critical of the arbitrariness of men's social power. Hence, we can make only tentative claims for the Ladaven's feminist politics. Instead of revealing men's power to contain or control all women, the display of Ladaven facilitates the recognition that the enactment of the ***linnendaven*** ritual remade village social relations because men and women all consent for that to be so. Further, the graduates of secondary school, these contemporary Ladaven, advance a Melanesian perspective on the politics of the nation and its international relations. In so doing, women do alter New Ireland social relations in their own network of exchange relations. Indeed, the Ladaven could alter social relations more widely, more quickly, and more extensively in the broader net of trades than the Melanesian woman could. The Papua New Guinean woman's continued capacity to alter social relations and her future opportunity to work critically to adjust and reshape their emerging forms depend on the extension of Melanesian innovative processes into the future.

Curiously, the way to critical political participation in the interest of empowering women was found in the enactment of the traditional prestigious role for women. Traditionally, the burden to authenticate one's own role as a Ladaven was discharged by meeting social obligations to one's affinal relatives. In contemporary Papua New Guinea, the power to create new

women's duties in the nation evinces this social ethos of the more ancient Ladaven. Woman graduates' status as authentic Ladaven obliges them to make the nation anew, to speak for small community development and against international investment, to speak of women's duties to the state as its mothers and against the liberties taken with their role as statesmen by the fathers of its independence; to speak for the need to pay taxes and against the use of tax shelters. These are aspects of their power in the role of Ladaven more than their role as feminist critics of the state.

Here, let me return to the first concern of this article, the making of the Papua New Guinean woman. Decolonization through educational development in Papua New Guinea from 1963 through to the present created contexts for new social relationships among women with shifts in the interrelations of state- and village-based knowledge. As newly enfranchised citizens of Papua New Guinea, Melanesian women worked to create a role for their daughters in the young state. Those daughters, the first generation to be born Papua New Guinean women with all the possibilities that such a woman's citizenship promised, confronted anew the burdens of the Ladaven obligations. From about 1970 forward, finding a national role for women as Papua New Guinean mothers became a concern of social policy planners and developers. Village mothers worked as local resource managers and community developers in the fields of agriculture, health, and education. In New Ireland, in fact, the new national image appeared to be but a patriotic rendering of a long-standing, traditionally recognized role of women.

This new role for Papua New Guinean woman was so deeply entrenched by 1993 that Papua New Guineans could reject immediately an accusation made by an international environmental group. The environmentalists claimed that women had harmed the environment through slash and bum gardening. But PNG women argued that little more than Western aesthetics informed their judgments. Moreover, they challenged the conventional antagonism between developers and environmentalists, proposing their mutual encompassment by giving evidence that Papua New Guinean women had been both developers and conservers of the wilderness for generations. Indeed, Melanesian women had chosen to develop their wilderness respectfully, using their expert knowledge as gardeners and by restoring the fertility of the land through magic learned from their clanswomen. In their public reply at the conference on environment conservation, they focused on women's work as "mothers of local development" (see the example of the ***wok meri*** movement documented in Sexton 1986). They thereby usurped the public attention from environmental to national politics by conjoining the work of nurturing the environment with nurturing the community.

I have argued that the Melanesian roots of formal education enabled the branching out of Papua New Guinean women in various arenas of political participation. At the same time, a feminist graft onto their formal education undoubtedly sharpened their critical insight. Throughout I have investigated the possibilities for Melanesians to comprehend their social position and to discharge the obligation to those who made their contemporary relationships possible, whether they be the father's moiety, the state, or both. Self-awareness that is raised through raucous joking and through magic ultimately comprehends a Melanesian conception of the Ladaven as powerful and of social weight (Tok Pisin ***hevi).*** The person of the Ladaven is ***hevi*** in the sense that bodies are believed to contain the history of relationships to other persons. The practices of reciprocal exchange evince once again those relationships.

In sum, extending Foster's interest in a new Melanesian anthropology, this article has undertaken the analysis of the articulation of disparate processes of women's socialization in the context of national development. It has described the extension of a women's initiation rite called ***linnendaven*** to the contemporary generation. This process reproduces or sustains the social relations of kin politics by replacing the Ladaven of the elder generation with the graduate of the younger generation. In doing so, gifts toward the school fee of a young woman from the clan of the father reciprocate gifts once given by the matrilineal clan of the young woman for the Ladaven ceremony of a generation past. Indeed, young women secondary school students are sometimes called Ladaven in order to stress the equation of one with the other. This process of replacement, as Foster has named it following Tangan practices, is a common exchange practice throughout New Ireland and much of Melanesia.

Descriptions of earlier rituals have also made clear that the goals of those ceremonies were particular to their contemporary history. Moreover, the rites performed expressed confidence in Melanesians' control over their own innovative cultural changes. Two generations ago, the Ladaven stimulated clan fertility toward the future. Because women had been held accountable for village depopulation of the early twentieth century by their husbands' brothers, the exercise of the ***linnendaven*** ritual was demonstrable proof that a woman's clan wished her future children and wished her husband the good fortune of a large family. In the ***linnendaven*** ritual of a generation ago, the woman emerged with the privilege of public speaking. This fit in with the development of business cooperatives for copra production in the region and both government and kin politics as they affected these business developments. Hence, the contemporary ***linnendaven*** ritual assures the authority of the present over the lives of the future rather than establishing

the power of tradition over the activities of present. Perhaps, given such a history of innovation, the extension of these rites to the generation of young women going to high school was only to be expected.

NOTES

This article is based on twenty-eight months of research between 1990 and 1993 in Lengkamen village on the Lelet Plateau, in central New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. I thank the residents of the Lelet and the teachers of the provincial high schools who assisted me with their thoughtful comments on the issues I address here. I also thank the provincial secretary of New Ireland Province, Mr. Ephraim Apelis, and the National Research Institute of Papua New Guinea for permission to conduct research in New Ireland. I thank the following foundations and institutions for their support: the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Institute of Intercultural Studies, and the graduate school of Princeton University. For remarks on earlier versions of this article, I also thank the members of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Wales. Jeanette Dickerson-Putman and the editors of this volume also made careful remarks on drafts of this article.

1. Independence in Papua New Guinea came a full decade after the decolonization of most African nations and followed a much briefer period of colonial rule than in any of those nations. Moreover, Papua New Guinea elided those stages of sociopolitical colonial development that are common elsewhere. It never was an industrial economy, but moved from plantation to service economy in twenty years after the Second World War (Keesing 1937; Downs 1975).

2. As a state that intensified its formal relationships with the Australian administration toward the end of decolonization, Papua New Guinea has sought to sustain its dependency on the former administrating state without remaining a protectorate of that nation (Cleland 1983; Hasluck 1976; Todd 1974). However, the extensive extraction of timber and minerals undertaken after independence by foreign companies highlights the threat of a new economic colonialism. The implications of contemporary foreign economic investment for urban-rural relationships have yet to be fully documented, and efforts to analyze the opportunities for capital accumulation by PNG bureaucratic and business elites involved in mining or forestry have been thwarted by political intrigues.

3. Most schools established with administration grants in 1956 closed by 1958 for lack of staff or failure to keep a student roll.

4. During the period of its greatest success, just before the First World War, the copra trade escalated to three times its volume in 1902 (Firth 1983).

5. Throughout this article I refer to the initiate in the *linnendaven* ritual as Ladaven. The use of uppercase indicates that the name is commonly used as if a title or an honorific. I refer to the ritual as the *linnendaven,* using lowercase for consistency with other vernacular names.

6. The food that Nirut brought to the Lelet Mandak includes more recent varieties such as sugarcane and bananas in some accounts. Others insist that the Nirut brought only the

kinds of foods used in ceremonial feasting, including taro, bananas, and sugarcane. The discrepant classifications of varieties are not officially resolved in village discussions.

7. The discussion was not a binding agreement but a pretext for future agreements. As if to remind the girl's father of his respect and continuing interest in the plan, the boy's father sent a bundle of taro to the house of the girl. This gift is conventionally recognized as an early betrothal payment that the girl's father could choose to acknowledge by reciprocating with a small gift of firewood.

8. I attended a meeting at Mongop High School for the discussion of girls' dress and movement. It was said that the girls needed to learn to control the "messages" they were sending to the male students. About dress, it was said that girls were to wear knee-length uniforms with small, tidy armholes at all times. Shorts covered by loose long shirts were to be worn only for athletic purposes on the playing fields. Otherwise, casual clothes to be worn at free time should consist of T-shirts and skirts, or *meri*-blouses and *lap laps.* About movement, it was said that girls should not seek permission to go off campus in order to go to the nearby shore and beaches, where they might meet *raskels* from the villages; that girls should not seek the company of such school support staff as the bakers and the maintenance people; that girls may ask a male student to carry any item they wish to send into the boys' area so as not to interrupt the thoughts of boys from their work and activities; and that girls should not walk alone across campus, as this may signal that they are seeking the company of boys. Girls should never talk or laugh loudly in the company of boys, as this will attract inappropriate attention from them.

9. High school teachers are well informed of the efforts of the national women's movement through both the newsletters and workshops of the PNG Teachers' Association and their years of teacher training at the secondary school teachers' college in Goroka.

10. See Fergie 1995 for a different discussion of how central New Ireland women learn to manage sexuality through the rites of initiation.

11. An elderly woman remembered seeing axe and snake emblems in a different Ladaven rite.

12. In the *linnendaven* in the postwar period of the late 1940s strands of *mis* were given by the father of the girl to the feast organizer in exchange for her care during the seclusion.

13. This New Ireland epistemology is further elaborated in Wagner's theoretical work *Symbols That Stand for Themselves* (1986b). Here, Wagner compares this alternative nondiscursive semiotics with the more explicit, conventional representational logics, especially those of speech, in order to remind his reader of meanings that abound in domains of communication beyond language, such as sexuality.

14. In stating this I diverge slightly from Fergie's 1995 analysis of Tabar women's ritual as the means for the inculcation of cultural controls over feminine sexuality by emphasizing that Ladaven women come to comprehend how to use sexuality to achieve social ends.

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