KULBOB AND MANUB: PAST AND FUTURE CREATOR DEITIES OF KARKAR ISLAND

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KARKAR IS ONE of a chain of volcanic islands extending in an arc along the north coast of New Guinea and the island of New Britain to the east (see Map 1). It lies 53 kilometers north-northeast of the town of Madang in Madang Province. A lush growth of plantations and dense bush covers much of its 324 square kilometers, which are dominated by Mt. Kanagioi on the southern flank of the main volcano. In the center of the island is a vast crater, known as Bagia after one of the two cones rising from its lava floor. The other, Mt. Uluman, erupted during 1972-1975 after eighty-two years of dormancy, causing two deaths and considerable damage.

The Austronesian-speaking Takia, who live on the lower slopes and coastal plain of the southern half of the island, were still encroaching northward on the earlier non-Austronesian-speaking Waskia when the Pax Germanica halted them in 1890. A rapidly increasing total population of some 35,000, European alienation of 12½ percent of the limited arable land, and inroads on food gardens by cash cropping impose potentially serious tensions over land. But so far, exploitation of the rich volcanic soil and a usually adequate rainfall have resulted in an "affluent subsistence" envied by the inhabitants of the drought-prone nearby Madang Province coast.

During the 1960s, Karkar became a showplace for successful government programs for economic development. With its natural beauty, productivity, and forward-looking people, visitors sometimes referred to it as "paradise." Some villagers have interpreted this metaphorical allusion as a reality and the reason for the European presence there; others see it as a goal to be

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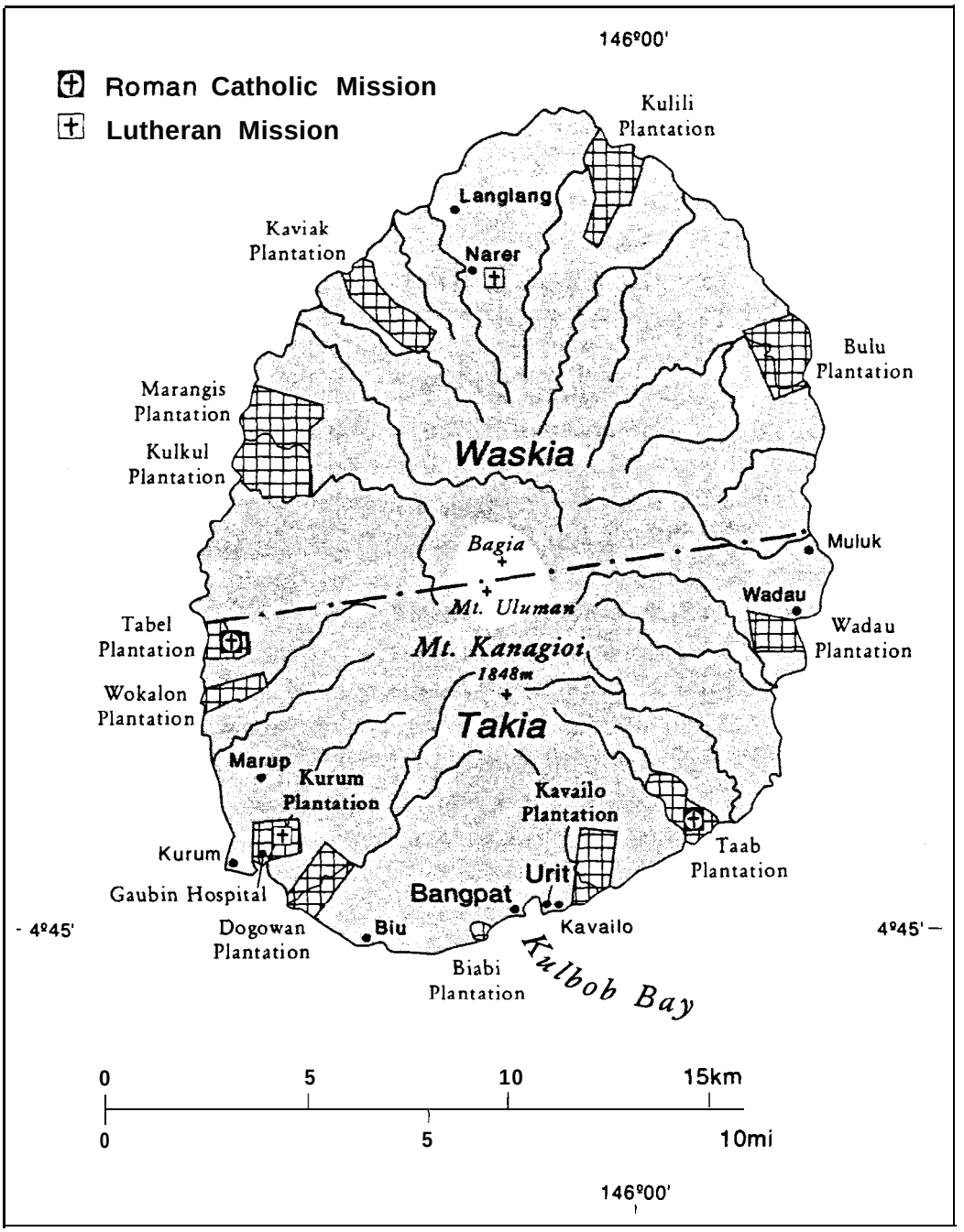


Map 1. **Karkar Island.**

striven for. In this special context, they continue to draw, as they did in the past, on the powerful mythology of their creator deities, Kulbob and Manub, to explain their place in a changing world and to explore its potential. In its synthesis with Christianity, the myth is both backdrop and charter for political and socioeconomic aspirations and activities against perceived European superiority and control.

In an article published in 1988, Lawrence restated his position regarding southern Madang Province: religion is of paramount importance, dominating epistemological systems and providing ritual techniques as essential components of secular success; coastal practitioners require an intellectualist explanation of ritual: they must be able to understand and accept the ideas underlying it (1988:15). Thus, in cases of failure, they can refer back to these ideas to check and rework them: "There are always theological experts in the back room--the Greeks in the Empire--busily at work, seeking for a new formula when the last one was proved wrong" (Lawrence 1988:23).

Lawrence might have been referring explicitly to the Karkar, and especially to the Takia. The religiosity informing their attitudes has been in no way weakened by their disappointment over unfulfilled expectations. Thinkers, theologians, and politicians are endlessly analyzing and clarifying mythical directives within the framework of their belief in a sacred source of knowledge.

Specifically, what they are seeking is a wider social unit with whites, beyond lineages and clans, guaranteed by a political morality so far denied them in a system of unequal relationships. Similarly, the Kaliai of West New Britain use myths to draw "Others," those outside the established and, therefore, moral framework of Melanesian behavior, into relationships essential for them to control their world (see Counts elsewhere in this volume).

This article, extrapolating from Lawrence's metaphor of "experts in the backroom," considers the consistency and persistence of Karkar intellectualist solutions, in terms of religious epistemology, to the frustration of the colonial and postcolonial periods up to 1977. The Kulbob-Manub myth presented here is a discernible core common to a majority of Karkar villages from 1966-1977. Fullest accounts come from Takia, where I made my base, leaving to spend periods in Waskia. My aim was to obtain the myth as it is known by contemporary villagers, not to establish its "truth" or "falsity" (cf. Pomponio's article in this volume), for this version informs their thinking and their responses.

In spite of local alternative myths of origin, both language groups accept the one broad outline. Pech credits the Lutheran school system, with its texts in Bel, the language of villages in the vicinity of Madang, for this wide-

spread dispersal, but qualifies my assessment of its acceptance (pers. com., 1990). What matters is the common structure or message (Leach 1967:12). The Waskia and the Takia agree that Kulbob and Manub were indigenous to Takia, that Kulbob was the more successful, and that what he created was the more desirable. Yet the Waskia claim their descent and language from Manub, while the Takia claim theirs, with their culture (ultimately widely adopted in Waskia), from Kulbob. Thus each language group's patriclans acknowledge a common legendary ancestor, forming a phratry that symbolizes the common identity of its members (McSwain 1977:10). Differences promulgated by the myth continue to influence the way people see themselves as distinctly Waskian or Takian, but modern political change has brought them under the one administrative umbrella as Karkar Islanders.

The Myth as Pragmatic Charter

The question of the power of charter myths over a people's actions is addressed by Harding and Clark (in this volume): where people believe precedents that appear to determine past events to be true, they behave in terms of these perceived truths or mythic charters. Further, true myth concerns matters currently relevant, and the narrative form explains events, as well as placing them in a time sequence.

These are the very reasons why Karkar people perceive the Kulbob-Manub myth as the charter not only for their origins and culture, but for their present and future actions. Its theme of oppositions, in the persons of the two deities and their conflicts and relationships, bears directly on how they envisage contemporary problems. As a living epistemological force, it sanctions, even inspires efforts to cope with upheavals attendant on the new, the unknown, and the threatening. As an open-ended story, it provides scope for a plethora of possible solutions not only to continuing postcolonial trauma, but to the story itself. Even Wabei, Karkar's only modern dramatist to date, brings Kulbob back to Takia in his play *Kulbob,* but leaves the outcome indecisive and unlikely to satisfy the myth's custodians (Wabei 1970).

Like the Namor of Siassi and other peoples discussed here (see Pomponio's article and others in this volume), villagers do not account for the creation of the universe, their island, or those beings inhabiting it prior to Kulbob and Manub, of whom few survived a volcanic eruption and consequent flood. The Karkar only refer to those physical features directly related to and believed to legitimize the creation myth. Among them, Sagantali, the stream flowing into Kulbob Bay, means "cut thighs"; the dugong (sea cow) is called *ruipain* in Takia, after Manub's unfaithful wife, who, taking refuge from her angry husband in the sea, assumed the dugong's characteristics; the

rock, Magirpain, on the Bagabag Island coast is the transformation of Kulbob's wife; and the rocks at Bangpat are Manub's doomed crew.

A major concern of the myth is material culture and technology. But the emphasis is on the theme of why people are as they are, including the origins of social structure and the two languages, struggle and competition, power and survival. The realities of life are addressed in images, symbolized by the two deities, of the individual in his or her ingenuity, persistence, and pride, as well as in his or her greed, lust, deceit, and vulnerability. As Janssen comments: "Gods . . . live with men and are very like men, but still they are not men" (1973:xii). His statement embraces the Kaliai concept of "Others'‘--those outside convention. But his emphasis on the humanness and, therefore, the ambivalence of gods suggests the uncertainty and vulnerability suffered by those who see no alternative to dealing with them.

Oppositions in Myth

If myths identify areas of strain within a society, as Counts here proposes, they are also where striking oppositions or, in Leach's terms, "binary aspects" occur. Leach's list of these aspects includes "we" versus "they," human versus superhuman, and legitimate versus illegitimate (1967:1-4). To these I must add intellectual independence versus conformity and black versus white. All binary discriminations, Leach maintains, require intermediaries: human beings oppose gods, but the gap must be bridged.

To contemporary Karkar villagers, the Kulbob-Manub myth summarized below establishes their historic relationship with and opposition to Europeans. They have made this intellectual adjustment in their interpretation as a result of the trauma of white contact. It explains their dilemma and motivates their efforts to regain their lost autonomy.

Kulbob and Manub

> Kulbob came into being on Mt. Kanagioi. He and Manub lived at either end of Kulbob Bay on Takia's southeastern coast. Kulbob's house was at Urit on the northeastern point and Manub's at Bangpat at the southwestern end (see Map 1). A fine hunter and carver, Kulbob was tall and fair in contrast to Manub, an industrious fisherman of stocky build and dark complexion.
>
> Kulbob precipitated a crisis when Manub's wife cajoled him into carving his signatory pattern on her thighs in return for his missing arrow, carved in the same design. Another Takia version has Kulbob saving Manub's two wives from an unpleasant trap their husband had set for them, after they beat him for his deception in secretly consuming his entire day's catch of

fish alone. Kulbob caused them to become beautiful young women again, drawing them, with their fingers holding the petals of a flower in his hand, from their place of concealment in his house, before publicly presenting them to the chagrined Manub. According to northern Waskia villagers, Kulbob climbed a tree and threw leaves on women's breasts when they came to the stream for water, thus making them pregnant. In all cases, the obvious message was adultery. Angered, Manub swore revenge.

Repeatedly, Kulbob's powers of disguise and nimble wits saved him and humiliated his enemies, for by now followers of both deities were grouped against each other. Increasingly violent quarrels culminated in Kulbob's escaping up a *ngaul* tree in the form of a lizard, a creature also associated with spirits in the Siassi Islands (A. Pomponio, pers. com., 1990). Manub's men chopped away at the tree by day, only to find Kulbob renewing it by night. Only when they burned the wood chips to prevent their reuse were they able to fell the tree, with Kulbob in it, into the waters of Kulbob Bay.

Then Kulbob established his superiority once and for all. Either he escaped along a subterranean passage to Mt. Kanagioi, where his mother, Dabanget, awaited him, or he set to work under the waters of the bay. In any case, he built a great canoe from the fallen *ngaul* and a flotilla of smaller ones from its branches and leaves. When Manub tried to follow his example, his canoes sank and their crews drowned.

One version of the myth claims that small pinnaces emerged from beneath the water, followed by a large ship with a funnel and stocked with European goods. Whatever the situation, Kulbob filled the large vessel with the finest artifacts, animals, and food plants. When he broke open bamboo containers of his mother's blood, out poured beautiful young people to accompany him. Then the sky became dark, rain fell, the earth shook, smoke poured from Mt. Kanagioi, and Kulbob separated night from day and sea from land. In the midst of this confusion, he sailed away.

Reaching Badulu on Bagabag Island, Kulbob quarreled with his wife Magirpain. Some claim that he had two wives with him and that he tricked them into cooking food while he went, in all his finery, to a singsing. Tell-tale signs of red paint near his eyes on his return angered them. Thereupon, he returned alone to Karkar and then, taking his sister Kamgi, set off again, calling at Muluk, on the central eastern coast. Here, a "wild man," Buroi, called out to him, "Hello friend! Where are you going with your wife?"

Pleased with this polite reference to his sister, Kulbob rewarded him with gifts of food plants, house and canoe-building plans, and cooking instructions, since Buroi had lived under a giant leaf, eating only stone scrapings, until then.

Back on Bagabag, Kulbob's incestuous relationship with Kamgi angered the islanders. Defiantly, he turned his wife Magirpain into a stone. Then he and Kamgi traveled either to Siassi via Arop or to Sek and other mainland

places first. Manub went to Waskia, where he gave the people their non-Austronesian language and distinctive personal characteristics. Langlang people there relate how he sailed away in a canoe with his little daughter. But the wind blew away her simple dress, and it was lost on the waves. They managed to pick up a piece of flying fox to fasten about her waist. On they went toward the Sepik River, where she married and gave the people her language and the custom of wearing a waist cloth, which Sepik women practice to this day. (Map 2 outlines the journeys of both deities.)

On Kulbob's arrival at Sek, he found Manub already established there. When the latter tried to steal his "sea cows," or dugong, Kulbob ordered him to leave and to distribute those cultural items and skills peculiar to himself along the coast toward Aitape. He himself sailed eastward, forming islands and reefs as he went and bestowing his Austronesian language, his people, goods, techniques, certain ceremonial dances and songs, and the secret cult, Barag. At various named places, he caused springs and other physical features to emerge. In this way, the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the north coast of New Guinea came into being.

After stopping at Malai, Mandok, and Tuam in the Siassi Islands, at the Tami Islands, and at nearby Bukaua, Kulbob probably went to New Britain before sailing south. Perhaps he pulled his canoe up onto a high mountain in Australia, where he now lives with his people and goods, or he may have returned to live on Mt. Kanagioi.

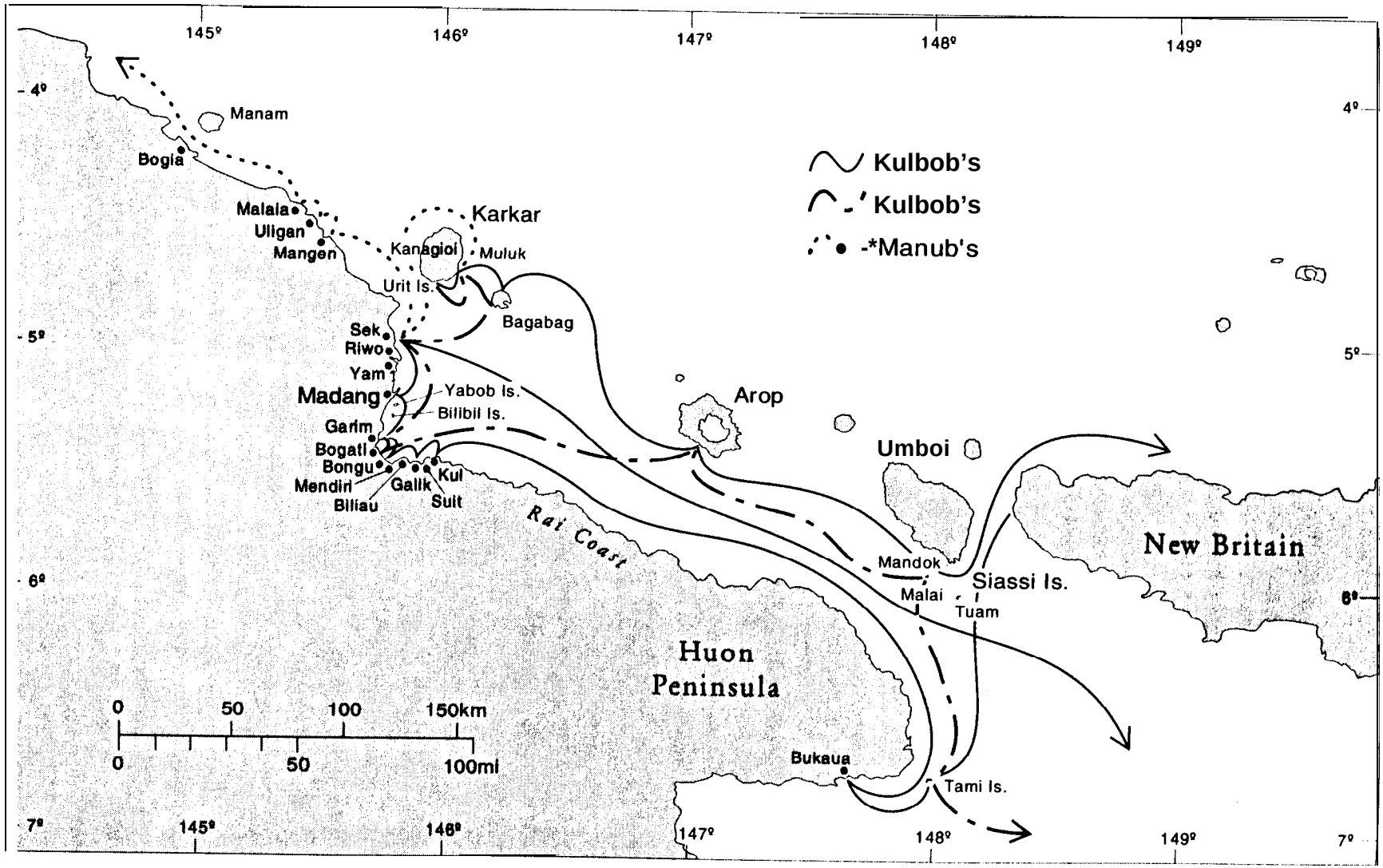
Kulbob, Manub, and Europeans

Traditional trading networks doubtless determined the deities' routes. The alternatives given for Kulbob's journey may be taken as indications of changes and extensions of trading journeys over time. Or they may reflect the various trade orientations of the southern Takia, on the one hand, and the western Takia and the Waskia, on the other. The brothers' exploits along these trade routes link them to the earliest white visitors. In a sustained theme of a recognizable but variously presented creator who departs, what is more natural than that he should one day return?

"Oh! Kulbob is going to visit Manub now!"

"See! Manub wants to 'try' Kulbob again!"

Thus exclaimed the Karkar ancestors on first seeing European ships, as did their trading partners, the Yabob, on the Madang coast (Lawrence 1964:65). They may have seen Tasman's ship in 1643 (when he recorded observing the adjacent island of Bagabag) and Dampier's in 1700 (Lawrence 1964:34). The latter may have renamed Karkar after himself, for it was known as Dampier Island until at least 1927 (Mackenzie 1942:10, 18). Today people refer only to the English buccaneer Dampier and the Russian scientist Miklоucho-Maclay.



Map 2. **Journeys of Kulbob and Manub from Karkar along the north coast of New Guinea.**

Maclay's presence on the mainland at Bongo was well known. In his diary (Miklouchо-Maclay 1975), he refers to visits by Karkar men and records sailing past the island in December 1872, when he named Isumrud Strait at the conclusion of his first stay in New Guinea.

"Well," explained some old Takia men, "Kulbob and Manub left in their canoes and weren't seen again. So, of course, when the ancestors saw these ships, they thought they were these creator beings returning in good big vessels with all kinds of cargo. That's why they said, 'Oh! Kulbob and Manub are sailing on the ocean.' "

Lawrence confirms the Karkar view that Maclay had "white skin, like Kulbob. Like him, he travelled in a big ship. He had good clothes and cargo. He could not die!" (1964:63-64).

So great an impact did the Russian scientist have that contemporary mythology frequently includes him in a variety of creative roles, as the father of Kulbob, as a Kulbob figure himself, or as a son of Kulbob--a fine example of adaptation within a constant structure.

Such reports produce strong feelings of close, almost personal involvement with Kulbob and Manub and certainly of ownership of the myth. The latter is claimed on three further grounds. First, the mainland Sengam, Som, and Yam also acknowledge Karkar as the deities' birthplace (Lawrence 1964:21). Second, white eulogy of Karkar as paradise, as noted above, hints that Paradise is the islands real name and that therefore it is the universally acknowledged source of all humankind and of superior material culture. Close parallels drawn between the traditional and the Christian legends encourage such beliefs: "God began here and went away. He lives on Kanagioi, but Europeans conceal this." Clearly, Kulbob and God are assumed to be one. Third, even where trading has ceased, people maintain patrilineally inherited trading friendships along the deities' routes, where their exploits are known and still considered significant.

European Contact

Europeans have commonly assumed that the arrival of whites instigated Melanesian appeals to superhuman beings through ritual for new goods (or cargo) and techniques (cf. Williams 1928). But according to Burridge (1954: 252), a primal myth will provide a framework for cargo cults. For southern Madang Province, Lawrence shows that the practice of cults logically derives from traditional basic assumptions of a sacred source of knowledge (1964:7). He emphasizes the versatility of the system and the people's pragmatism about the social and intellectual significance of wealth.

This claim for versatility is often overlooked in criticisms of Lawrence's

emphasis on the consistency of indigenous thought. My understanding of the Karkar world view resembles Lawrence's: change and the ability to handle it did occur logically within established structures, and these structures still exist.

Karkar people envisage life as being on a horizontal plane and shared by deities, spirits of the dead, tricksters and humans (cf. Janssen 1973:xiv). Not only does wealth come into this sharing, but so do understanding of one's place in the world through myth, and protection through the performance of ritual to certain deities and the ancestors. Waiko describes the similar traditional use of ritual in his own Northern Province to control events in major, threatening confrontations (1973). There, nature presented its own dangers in the form of volcanic eruptions, fierce storms, floods, and crop failure. Ritual responses helped people to cope and to adapt to consequent changes. Once a threat subsided, so did ritual. What could be more logical than to respond ritually against that "extraordinary and unique phenomenon," the white man, when physical resistance has proved useless? Because this threat has not receded, neither has the ritual response, especially since its suppression by whites is seen as a sign of its potential success.

Waiko sees the use of ritual in the uneven struggle in terms of the whole event of the European arrival, rather than merely as a means of obtaining cargo to achieve equality. In Melanesian society, he deems every effect to have a cause comprising three categories: deities, spirits of the dead, and humans, with only the latter actually motivating harm. In these terms, for the Karkar the presence of or belief in Kulbob, Manub, and the ancestors is an imperative for ritual on an important scale to be performed. And only humans (in this particular confrontation, administrators, planters, and missionaries) can be blamed for ensuing cultural and material damage.

Administrators

The Karkar experienced the presence of the German New Guinea Company in Madang from its arrival in 1885. Its dual role of administering and planting inevitably established a pattern of harsh, white exploitation in people's minds, and this memory still exists. It took sixty-six years and seven remote colonial administrations before the island was to experience official interest in its welfare in any real sense.

Village life was undermined early. Heavy recruitment, head tax, and the banning of warfare and polygamy preceded the decline of religious ceremonies and considerable land alienation. But firsthand experience of administrations was slight until a patrol post was established in 1952, to be followed

by two local government councils, one in Takia and one in Waskia, which in 1962 amalgamated with that of Bagabag Island into one interisland council.

Planters

Actual power resided in the planters on a de jure basis until 1919, then on an increasingly de facto basis (cf. Lawrence 1964:37-45). Relatively isolated from colonial headquarters in Madang, their power on Karkar exceeded that of the administrators, and their role in pacification was their first raison d'être as far as early administrations were concerned.

In 1912, the first settler arrived with a mandate to "tame and develop" the island (Hansen 1958:86). His harshness caused the western Waskia to attack him in 1915, when severe official retribution was carried out by means of ranging the Takia against them. Old Takia men described their hatred and fear of the German "managers," who had established four plantations by 1921. Consequent expansion under the Australians resulted in the alienation of 2,818 hectares of fertile land. Although some planters encouraged villagers to establish cash crops and small businesses, on the whole, their extravagant life-styles, coercion, economic exploitation, and belief in their own inherent superiority all contributed to unsatisfactory race relations.

Missionaries

The concern of missionaries for villagers' personal welfare and relationships with the supernatural earned them a position of continuous and pervasive influence plus a genuine affection and respect.

Lutheran missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society arrived in 1890 at Kulbob Bay, then called Urit, significantly, the home of Kulbob himself. People believed the first, Kunze, to be Kulbob and suspected other missionaries of being deities. But then, as one Kavailo villager explained, "We saw that they did not create things, so we knew that they were spirits of the ancestors."

Volcanic eruptions and an outbreak of smallpox forced the Lutherans to withdraw from 1895 until 1911. After 1921, when the Australian Military Administration, established at the outbreak of war in 1914, handed over control to the Australian Mandate Administration, German missionaries stayed on, the Australian government having annulled all earlier restrictions in August 1925. Lutheran interests were administered from Australia and America. Ten months' occupation by Japanese forces in 1943-1944 caused

relatively little damage. But Allied bombing and strafing, in the mistaken belief that the Japanese still remained, destroyed gardens and left the people decimated by sickness and death. Little wonder that they flocked to help a lay missionary, Edwin Tscharke (now Dr. E. G. Tscharke, AO MBE), and his wife, Tabitha, build Gaubin Hospital in 1946. In time, it became the central secular and spiritual focus for the island.

A small Catholic presence under Society of the Divine Word priests has existed on the central west coast of Karkar since the 1930s, with a small outpost on the east coast. In the face of strong Lutheran opposition, adherents are few. Hence I concentrate here on Lutheran influence.

God-Kulbob

In Karkar traditional society, the existing intellectual system positively enabled people to absorb Christianity. The logic of ancient values and beliefs dictated an inevitable connection between Christianity and the material culture of even the missionaries. For the Takia in particular, the mission offer of the good life and the "brotherhood of man," should the new precepts be followed, facilitated the exchange of traditional for Christian ritual. For them, there was a single structure, within which names varied. Parallels they drew between their own myths and Christian myths, such as the fall from grace and the flood with the survival of only a few, suggested that God (or Jesus or Noah) was another name for Kulbob, known only to whites hitherto. The various pairs of names for the creator deities on Karkar gave credence to this idea, and their departures, as noted, left great scope for imaginative sequences incorporating the new knowledge, as the following comments from a group of Takia men show:

"Kulbob will come back with Jesus."

"When God made Adam and Eve, he made another line of men--Kulbob's men."

"When Kulbob went away to the white man, he came back at the time that the missionaries brought this talk of God."

"The mission brought all good things, and Kulbob was the source of all good things."

Unlike the mainland Ngaing and Sengam under the influence of the cargo cult leader Yali (Lawrence 1964:187-188), the Karkar remained loyal to their syncretic Christianity. But their ambivalence toward the European invasion as a whole persisted: enforced acceptance of planters and administrators sustained an implacable antagonism; even missionaries were believed to conceal knowledge vital for people to command their radically changed environment. From the 1920s, Karkar "theological experts," wres-

tling with this problem of loss of control, organized a series of religious revivals and cargo cults, invoking mainly the Christian God.

Baptisms, Religious Revivals, and Cults

Mission influence thrived earliest on the Takia south coast. In Kavailo, 101 people were baptized in 1921. In a final celebration of Barag, the secret male cult, they displayed their sacred objects and burned them along with the cult house (Kriele 1927:172-174). A large-scale baptism followed in Waskia.

In 1926, influenced by similar events among Madang trading partners (Hannemann 1948:945), Wadau villagers prepared for Jesus' return in a dramatic religious revival: fasting and sleepless, they marched along the south coast crying, "We are Christ! We are Christ!" They tossed people they met high in the air to "strengthen" them. They held some over boxes and beat them.

"This was the beginning of this work," the people say. The word "work" usually refers to ritual efforts to obtain material goods. But here it means those tremendous efforts to weld together pagan and Christian belief systems that followed the realization that Christianity held the key to Europeanism. Mission workers searched the scriptures, with apparent success, to fuse ancient beliefs and ritual with new; they discovered natural features that they could relate directly to those described in the Bible, such as the stone Moses struck to produce water--as Kulbob had done before him; they believed that Noah and Kulbob building their great vessels were one and the same; Noah's sons symbolized Europeans, Chinese, and themselves, with Ham's disrespectful behavior to his father responsible for their dark skins and inferior material possessions. People summed up the problem as follows: "Kulbob was the story of New Guineans. Then the white men brought their story of Noah, Adam and Eve, and the flood. Which is the true story? Theirs or ours?"

The tablets God gave Moses on Mt. Sinai aroused particular interest. Some Karkar mission workers equated them with the Bible or "books" that they believed New Guineans owned originally, until they were stolen by whites. The fact that missionaries were suspected of removing crucial sections of the Bible explained why some of the old beliefs could not be matched with the new (cf. Burridge 1960:5; Lawrence 1964:90; Williams 1940:438).

According to villagers from Biu on Karkar's south coast, "Once there were two books. One stayed in New Guinea and one with the Europeans. Then the whites took the New Guinean book. When Jesus comes back, he'll

bring it and give it back. Then Europeans and New Guineans will stand up together. Jesus actually came to New Guinea and went back."

One variation of the myth nominates Kulbob as the father of two sons. It was they who were responsible for establishing the people, languages, and culture around the island and elsewhere. From this version comes the Biu claim that "when God made Adam and Eve, he made another line of men of God: Arraugunin and Sililai. They were the sons of Kulbob." It was a short step from there to equate God with Kulbob and his son with Sililai.

In the 1930s, ritual activity took a political direction. People wove seemingly inexplicable occurrences into a body of omens of impending upheavals: reddish-skinned occupants of two canoes traveled at fantastic speed to the Madang coast, warning of approaching war (cf. Lawrence 1964:91). Two flying boats, with crews of similar appearance, landed at Kurum, and a local man who flew on with them to Kavailo died mysteriously, it is said, soon afterward.

In 1941 a revival movement to combat quarrels and sorcery spread from Bagabag Island to Takia. It was called Kukuaik, meaning "Look out! Be wary!" Initially a sincere effort to overcome animosity and increase knowledge of Christianity (Henkelmann 1941), it soon became a fully fledged cargo cult. Strange natural phenomena attendant on a severe drought, the appearance of a comet and meteors, a disastrous influenza epidemic, and rumors of war filled people with foreboding. Frantic preparations for the millennium engulfed the island, bringing all work to a halt. People beautified cemeteries. In their villages, they built enclosures where they made public confessions, danced every night, and spoke in tongues. Plantation workers emptied the trade stores of white clothes and returned to their villages, ready to step into the promised land and never more be the servants of others. A Marup man reminisced: 'We called first God, then Jesus, then the spirits. We looked toward the sun or to Kanagioi, where the sun would come from. . . . We sang and waved our arms and kept on singing and singing."

Official response in answer to the planters' pleas for help was prompt and harsh. A patrol officer held impromptu courts around the island and handed down punishment. The police imprisoned presumed leaders in Madang. A few days later, the Japanese bombed Madang, the prisoners escaped back home, and Kukuaik's predictions appeared to have been fulfilled. Not surpisingly, after the war, the names of Kulbob and Manub were heard regularly in the villages (Fr. Tschauder, pers. com., 1967).

The exploitative and conservative nature of European postwar plantation rehabilitation programs fueled the people's disillusionment. From 1947-1948, an army-style "rehabilitation" scheme was inaugurated by Yali (Law-

rence 1964:116-221), but it collapsed when Yali opposed the missions and took a second wife. Small cults broke out in Waskia and Takia over the next decade.

All this time, Kukuaik remained in people's memories as an exciting, dramatic, and independent period, and its doctrines, rethought and reworked, persisted. Two aspects of the movement seem relevant to the myth of Kulbob. One is that, from a Christian revival, it moved into a cargo cult and ended as a militant anti-European activity. In its last stage, Kukuaik was approaching Waiko's concept of ritual against a powerful enemy, where all other means have failed. A Papuan pastor, Avi, describes how a desired new way of life is tied in with the old (1979:9); there is an echo here of Lawrence's connection between religious pragmatism and the pervasive nature of religious belief: "It is not correct to separate 'material' or 'matter' from 'spiritual.' . . . The thinking found in the cargo movement is the hope of a great change in the way people, riches and government are set up and mix. In this is the search for goodness. . . . There is a hunt for the way life was meant to be in the beginning."

Surely Avi considers the cult an institutionalized structure, as Waiko sees it, to be utilized in any major agitation, in this case, a disturbed moral order (cf. Burridge 1969:9-10). He then treats it in a manner reminiscent of Burridge's "fine Christian humanism" (cf. Worsley 1957:336).

The second aspect relevant to Kulbob is that Kukuaik participants stretched their arms and prayed toward Mt. Kanagioi, Kulbob's birthplace, where spirits of the dead go before moving to Bagia. So although, as Christians, they claim to have prayed only to God, either they now located him on Kanagioi, or they were praying to the ancestors there or to that being Lawrence calls "God-Kilibob" (1964:62).

Kanagioi's epistemological importance seemed confirmed in 1962, when American geophysicists built a temporary research station near the peak. It had long been whispered that Kulbob directed the ancestors in the crater, Bagia, in the production of European goods and that some Takia had heard sounds of hammering and engines. The Americans' visit aroused a spate of rumors about ships and submarines along Karkar coasts. In an anti-European mood, people drilled with wooden rifles again and practiced the cult. As recently as 1988, guides taking a visitor to the crater confided that this was where scientists had discovered the very secrets that had enabled them to reach the moon (Lawrence 1988:16).

Disappointment over returns from cash crops and bitterness over official land demarcation to formalize clan boundaries from 1966 to 1968 raised questions about the European presence on Karkar (McSwain 1977:120-125). There was talk of the millennium in terms of Kulbob's return with

Jesus, when foreigners would have to leave. But the idea of a European departure was merely an angry response to frustration. The people knew that they needed them: in 1967 they elected to the Local Government Council first Tscharke from Gaubin Hospital, then even a planter.

They chose another planter as their first representative in the House of Assembly. Yet the moral network usually engendered in regular human interaction was still denied them.

People began to see that the flaw in their situation lay in the ancestors' failing to appreciate Kulbob's power and to keep it for themselves. They themselves had not fully recognized his Europeanness not only in his intellectual independence, but in his lack of conformity and his self-confidence, illustrated in his violation of the moral order--all white characteristics. Manub had been quite right to seek revenge and ordinary villagers to protest at Kulbob's high-handedness and incest. But on the point of departure, Kulbob created spectacularly, and they lost their chance for European goods, skills, and power, which were their natural inheritance.

Although the Karkar admired Kulbob's appearance and panache, society could not contain him. But true to Leach's proposal that binary discriminations require intermediaries, contemporary villagers found a bridge between the deity and themselves, as I show below.

By 1970, strong local government and impending independence had influenced Europeans to seek the villagers' goodwill. With limited but increasing miscegenation and genuinely friendly overtures from overseas visitors, the conviction grew that whites were indeed spirits of the dead, and all but the most antagonistic ones on Karkar were spirits of dead kindred. Could they be drawn by the claims of kinship into mutually rewarding relationships? Villagers would then share control within a traditional framework of cooperation, reciprocity, and obligation. They would gain the knowledge the spirits (whites) had learned after death from Kulbob.

Seven years later, on a brief visit to a Takia village, I found a people bitterly disillusioned. Two years of independence had not brought the expected changes. Quarrels, sorcery, adultery, and disease now ravaged society. In an attempt to combat the breakdown, all able-bodied people were attending a weeklong religious revival, studying and debating the Bible and making public confessions day and night.

Yet while the majority sought the answer to their problems in the Bible, some leaders called a formal meeting in the deserted village with me. Perhaps the "innovative" role of the revival or cult had released them from dependence on ritual toward a felt need for creative, secular skills for themselves (cf. Burridge 1960; Stephen 1977; Waiko 1973; Avi 1979). Briefly, what they demanded of me was help in learning the secret of science.

Here was a different concept from that involved in well-documented earlier requests for the key to reckoning, reading, or speaking English, none of which would have solved the specific problem and which had been mastered by some of those present in any case. If these men understood in some small way what science signified, then they were beginning to move into an arena where goods do not arrive in response to religious ritual. If, however, the secret of science merely replaced the secret of religious ritual, then the deity brothers myth remained the basis for belief in extrahuman, instantaneous creativity.

In the broad view, how different are the two approaches? Almost certainly, the New Guinean will see very little difference, especially in terms of the concept of "work." Beckett, in the *New Scientist,* proposes that

> The creation of myths is one of the most important functions that scientists and technologists perform in the modem world. Religions once provided the myths that helped people make sense of the world and their place in it, but people are increasingly turning elsewhere. Where better than to scientists, with their wealth of explanations . . . (often rich, diverse and contradictory), their spectacular achievements, their proven mastery of many apparent mysteries?" (Beckett 1989:67)

He gives an example: the moon landings were not about gathering data, but were the playing out of myths of national pride and humanity's ability to overcome the impossible and to conquer the entire universe. This statement strikingly resembles the Karkar intellectual environment centered on Kulbob.

The reality of the creator deities is that they too generate a kind of "national pride," through their stature and control of knowledge. This encourages and maintains a determination to achieve and expand through proven ritual channels into a world that is both threatening and tempting. The quote from Beckett above suggests that the Takia villagers' nascent interest in learning--not merely getting--the secret of science was structurally similar to their interest in Kulbob. He did all that scientists do in the way of explaining, achieving, and mastering mysteries. As an independent thinker, he was able to diminish Manub, who was not. Perhaps, in the quest for power, it was time for people to use Kulbob as a model rather than as a pool of knowledge to be absorbed. Such a step was consistent with traditional beliefs, for, as Kulbob's children and unacknowledged kindred of the whites he symbolized, the villagers were entitled to express their distinctiveness from others.

Conclusion

Karkar villagers' working out of the "metaphorical" creation myth confirmed dependence on a religious epistemology, while the colonial experience proved fertile ground for its use in attempts to regain control. Persistent, even in the face of failure, people examined and reexamined the problem at their main reference source: the Kulbob-Manub myth.

For over forty years, the villagers relied on ritual in the hope of obtaining prestige and equality with Europeans or, failing that, European withdrawal. Later, in efforts to achieve total cosmic collaboration, they proposed expanded kin structures to accommodate their presumed European spirit ancestors, to be accompanied by appropriate reciprocal behavior. Belief in a sacred source of knowledge underlay both.

Finally, learning science seemed the solution, at a time when, as with Kulbob's major creating, village society was in chaos. But far from signaling the breakdown of traditional religious beliefs, this interpretation of contemporary needs derived its intellectual basis from the ingenuity and "Otherness" of the creator deity himself, and to that extent it maintains that "strong thread of consistency" Lawrence found so impressive in the religions of the Seaboard (1988:20).