THE LEGEND OF TITIKOLO: AN ANÊM GENESIS

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UNLIKE MANY of the surrounding speakers of Austronesian languages, the Anêm have no oral literature relating the settlement of their ground by people from some other area. They inhabit the ground where all humans, regardless of the color of their skin, were created by a more powerful human and where Titikolo abandoned them to become progressively more powerless as a portion of their knowledge is lost with each generation. The narrative provides an intellectual framework within which to understand, from the Anêm viewpoint, the order of the universe, the place of individuals, the processes of historical change, the nature of knowledge, and the relationship between knowledge and material comfort. The premises underlying the story also reveal how the Anêm have made sense of their contacts with colonial and postcolonial administrations, missions, and multinational business interests.

The version of the legend presented here is based largely on that given in several sessions by the late Mr. Paulus Oalasoang of Karaiai village. The tapes were later transcribed and translated from the Anêm with the patient help of Mr. Hendrik Sasalo Kunang of Pudêlîng village. Additional information has been gleaned from other informants in northwestern New Britain and incorporated where appropriate. The analysis here owes a great deal to the model developed by Lawrence in his analysis of cargo cults in the Madang area (1964).

Two aspects of the narrative given here should be kept in mind, both relating to contact with Europeans: first, both Europeans and the Anêm are created at the same time; and second, parts of the narrative sound suspi-

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ciously like the Judeo-Christian tradition. I have eschewed any attempt to edit out the European referents for several reasons. First, although there have obviously been adjustments to the original story, these were made so long ago that most informants reject the possibility that the story has been altered to match Bible stories. Second, any attempt to purify the story is likely to risk removing authentic Anêm sequences that just happen to correspond to Christian traditions, and, in the process, the coherence of the story would be impaired. Third, the European content is minor: white-skinned people are created at the beginning, but then they are ignored until the end. Fourth, the European content is important per se, because it reflects the genesis of the Anêm universe as it is construed in the late twentieth century, and that universe includes Europeans, Roman Catholicism, and rifles. It is important to note that the Anêm of a few generations ago were so profoundly affected by the initial contact with Europeans that they were motivated to make an intellectual adjustment, however minor, in their central creation story, Finally, and most important, this is how the story is told.

Anêm creation begins with the earth, sea, forest, animals, and a group of humans already in place. First causes are of no concern, and there is no cosmological place for deities of any kind. Kapimolo, the first character mentioned, is a human just like modern humans, but long ago people possessed much more knowledge and consequently had the power to perform tasks that modern people no longer know how to do, such as creating humans out of wood. The implication is that if people had the same level of knowledge today, everything related in the story would be possible even for ordinary people.

Although the narrative given here focuses on Titikolo, it is part of a larger view of the course of history, which consists of a sequence of regimes, each created out of a previous apocalypse by a human creator, who then becomes disgusted with his own creation and destroys it either by direct action or merely by departing with the knowledge that holds the social order together, With each revolution, the residual body of knowledge is diminished and people become progressively more powerless.

Kapimolo

> According to the old people, Kapimolo, a man just like us, carved us out of ironwood using the lighter outer layer for Europeans and the dark inner wood for Melanesians. As a test, he carved a rifle for the Melanesian and a spear for the European. The Melanesian stood and fired the rifle, but he fell down. The European took the spear, danced, and speared a tree, but he too fell down. So Kapimolo told them to exchange weapons and try

> again. The European fired the rifle without falling. Then the Melanesian danced back and forth with the spear, knelt on one knee shaking it, and then threw it, splitting the tree in two. So Kapimolo said that Europeans should keep the rifle as their weapon, while Melanesians should keep the spear.

Kapimolo's actions set the stage for the world in which the Anêm now find themselves. Since Europeans are notoriously inept with Melanesian technology, it is appropriate that they should fail to cope with a spear. Similarly, the Anêm are less than confident when dealing with items from the Western world. Once these different worlds are set up, Europeans are not mentioned again until their turn comes to reap the power that comes with ancient knowledge.

Kapitai

> Years later, people began to disregard Kapimolo. When he rang the bell to call them to church, they just wandered off to hunt. After a while, Kapimolo decided to send a tidal wave to kill them all. Only Kapitai knew of the plan; so, while everyone else was wandering around foraging, Kapitai went secretly up onto the mountain and built a huge raft with many rooms. When he knew that Kapimolo was about to send in the wave, he collected animals like ants, skinks, rats, phalangers, and so forth, and put them on the raft. When the wave started in, everyone panicked. Some climbed to the treetops, but the sea killed everyone else. Meanwhile, Kapitai and his clan floated as the sea rose. When the wave went out, those still clinging to the treetops had no way down and died as they fell. Finally, the sea level dropped and dry land emerged like a sandbar. Punting the raft along, Kapitai sent Kokxak the crow to find out whether the forest had grown back. The crow flew away but stayed to eat the rotting flesh of all the dead people lying around. After Kapitai had waited a long time, he sent Ugîm the dove to see whether the forest had grown back. The dove went and saw that the grasses and trees had grown again and flew back with a branch to show Kapitai. So Kapitai landed the raft, and his clan spread out into the forest. As the land continued to grow, the forest followed it, and people were able to walk around. Whenever they dug holes for houses or to plant gardens, they found people who had been killed by the wave, and they brought them back to life. Those who were missed became lonely spirits forever trapped without company.

This episode contains the only reference to the church and exhibits several instances of religious syncope. Just as the Christian church reserves a special day on which one shows respect for God by resting and contemplating the creator, so traditional Anêm mortuary practices require that people

show respect for the recently dead by abstaining from any kind of activity that might distract them from thinking about their departed loved ones. During a period of mourning, attending to one's hunger instead of one's grief signals a callous lack of concern for the deceased. At times when heedfulness is expected, foraging is considered particularly disrespectful, because it is akin to animal behavior: lazy people are often likened to wild pigs who root around in the forest for food instead of planting gardens, and wild food is never used in ritual exchange. To be truly human, one must expend one's own labor in planting crops for the consumption of others and, at the same time, put aside the gratification of animal drives to pay heed to those who have already expended part of themselves (in the form of labor, knowledge, or vital essences) on one's behalf. By continuing to revere those from the past, one can also hope for continued assistance from the spirit realm. By ignoring their ultimate benefactor, the people of this era ensured that Kapimolo would reciprocate their indifference and selfishness with wrath.

This episode also recalls the story of Noah in several details, but these have been melded into an Anêm format. Whereas Noah sends out a dove to find land, Kapitai sends first a crow and then a dove. In modern times, the crow is one of the birds most likely to be an *eni* in disguise. An *eni* is a ghoulish monster of the forest that takes the form of a woman with long fingernails and glowing eyes. Driven by the desire to eat human flesh, she chases people found alone in the forest, steals people from their beds at night, or suddenly appears to eat a fresh corpse that is left unattended. Just like a monster, the crow is seduced by all the carrion lying around and forgets about its responsibilities.

In the Anêm flood story, people are punished by being killed, but this is not the end of their lives. Most are retrieved when found during the period of rebuilding. Those who are missed by chance become lonely spirits, forever trapped where they fell and doomed to an eternity without companionship. Places can be inhabited by male or female lonely spirits, both called *masalai* in Tok Pisin. The majority are male and are called *ebli* in Anêm. This term can refer to (1) "a male lonely spirit," (2) "a mature but unmarried man," (3) "a man traveling without his wife," or (4) "love magic." The few female lonely spirits are called *sape,* which can refer to (1) "a wife," (2) "a widow" (who dresses in drab colors), (3) "an old woman," (4) "a cricket" (with its drab colors), (5) "brown shell money" (the color of a cricket), or (6) "a female lonely spirit."

Lonely spirits are pathetic because they exist in total, eternal solitude, the ultimate horror for most Anêm. They are also dangerous, however, because, out of desperation for companionship, they cause illness by capturing the souls of any living humans who come into contact with them in the places

where they are trapped. The An&m divert paths around places where they live and avoid hunting, gardening, or camping in the vicinity. The category of *masalai* that Lawrence describes for the Madang area (1964:23) is very different from the Anêm usage of the term. To gloss Anêm *ebli* or *sape* as "gods" or "deities" would distort the concept significantly. Like all the characters of the narrative, lonely spirits are human.

Like lonely spirits, widows and bachelors are also pathetic and dangerous, because they have no one to live with and because they might cause social disharmony by capturing the affections of someone who is already married. The behavior of widows and bachelors is also socially constrained. Bachelors and other unattached men are segregated from women by the men's lodge, while widows are segregated from men by their black mourning paint and plain clothes.

Titikolo

> Appointed by Kapitai as the leader of the new régime, Titikolo used his knowledge to provide everyone with a good life. They lived in fine houses in a fine village, and there were gardens full of taro everywhere.
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> Titikolo and his mother, Peauke, lived by themselves in a separate hamlet up in the mountains near the Vanu River. Titikolo was the child of an immaculate birth; Peauke's husband, Bibli, did not live with her when Titikolo was born.

Under Titikolo, the new order is similar to Eden in Judeo-Christian mythology; no one had to work and no one died. In this context, Titikolo's immaculate birth seems to be a transfer from Christianity, but, given Titikolo's physical characteristics, it is equally congruent with another interpretation. Some informants claim that Titikolo and those associated with him (Moxo, Alu, and Semila) were herpetanthropoid--snake from the armpits down but otherwise human. They did not die, but shed their skin like a snake when they got old and emerged with youthful bodies. Procreation through sex becomes necessary only when the cycle of birth and death are instituted as part of Titikolo's revenge later in the narrative. Herpetanthropoid figures have been seen carved on some of the main posts of men's lodges in Kabana villages (see McPherson, this volume), but not in Anêm villages. Details surrounding Titikolo are open to dispute among informants. Some claim that Titikolo was fully human in form, whereas others claim that he could change his form at will. Some claim that Titikolo's birth was not immaculate, but the result of incest between Moxo and Peauke. Most Anêm agree that Alu and Semila were herpetanthropoid and that the genealogy should be drawn as in Figure 1.

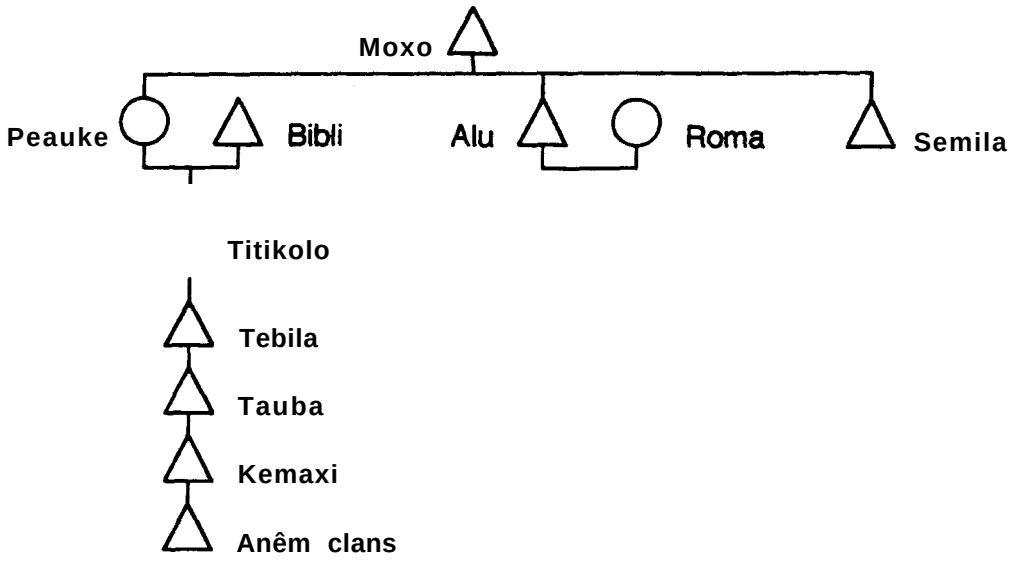

FIGURE 1. **Titikolo's genealogy.**

Titikolo's Spear

One day during the rainy season, when the rivers were badly flooded, Titikolo carved himself a spear and decorated it with a beautiful design. He amused himself walking around, throwing it into taro, picking it up, and throwing it again. That day, Roma, his uncle's wife, was collecting taro and heard the spear bounce off a branch near her. She was so taken by the dazzling design on the spear that she wondered who owned it. Standing up, she looked around amidst the taro and saw Titikolo looking for his spear. The decoration had so bedazzled her that her judgment was confused, and she took the spear and hid it in a midden of taro leaves. Meanwhile, Titikolo, still looking for his spear, caught sight of Roma and thought, "The old woman has probably seen it." He walked toward her, saying, "Hey, Auntie, have you seen my spear?"

"What spear?" she replied. "My eyes were down preparing the taro, so I didn't see it. Keep looking for it. It's probably lying close by."

So Titikolo kept on looking for it in vain. After a long time, he said, "Hey, Auntie, you must have seen it. Tell me where it is!"

"No, I haven't. I haven't seen it."

After another long period of fruitless search, Titikolo said, "Hey, Auntie, you must have seen my spear. Tell me where it is, so I can get it!"

Then she replied, "Well, come here, and I'll show you where it is."

"Just tell me where it is, and I'll get it myself."

"Oh, just come on and let me talk to you for a minute. Then you shall have it back. I saw it come down right over here, so come on." She kept on calling to him in this way.

> When she grabbed his hand, he jerked it back in astonishment, saying, "Hey, Auntie, leave my hand alone. Just show me where my spear is, so I can get it."
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> Then she said, "Your spear is so beautiful. It has such a beautiful design on it. I want you to tattoo the design on my groin here."
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> "No, no! I refuse. You live with my mother's brother, and that makes you my aunt. Certainly not!"
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> "Your thing has such a beautiful design that I'm obsessed with it, so tattoo it here on my vulva." They struggled with one another for a while, and then she got up and said forcefully, "Listen, I really like your design, so obey. Tattoo it here on my vulva!" Since she was not about to give up, Titikolo started to weep, and he bent to the inevitable and had sex with his aunt. When he had finished, he tattooed his design onto her vulva, When he had finished, she showed him the spear and said happily, "I put your spear into the midden heap there." Titikolo took it home and stayed with his mother.

In terms of Western culture, Titikolo seems too easily pushed around by his aggressive aunt, but in the terms of Anêm ideology, it is men who are pretty, not women, and it is women rather than men who offer themselves sexually. In addition to physical appearance, masculine features that are attractive to women include strength, the demonstration of success in gardening and hunting, knowledge, and artistic talent in dancing, singing, rhetoric, and carving, During public rituals, for example, men get dressed in their finest, dance and sing as lasciviously as possible, and, perhaps, perform love magic, but the aim is to induce women to make sexual advances. At least ideologically, it would be quite inappropriate for a man to proposition a woman, because it would suggest that he was not attractive enough to charm a woman according to the normal rules; furthermore, it would leave him open to public ridicule if the woman rejected him. A rather cocky man might offer food, tobacco, or betel to a woman to show his interest--there is always the possibility that these have been ensorceled with love magic--but according to the rules, men wait for women to make the first move. In Anêm culture, it makes sense that Roma rather than Titikolo should make the sexual advances.

A second point of contrast between Western and Anêm culture involves the response to persistent demands. To the Westerner, the degree of resolve not to comply is likely to escalate with the degree of nagging. Only a wimp caves in, especially when a moral transgression is involved. To the Anêm, however, blocking someone else's most pressing demands can place one in correspondingly serious danger, for ill feeling by itself can be the agent of sickness. As a result, Anêm parents are likely to give in to the wishes of a child having a temper tantrum. Furthermore, the person who is angry one

day may get revenge through a deliberate act of malice the next day. Consequently, Titikolo's only course of action is to give in to Roma's demands. Here, incest has been forced upon him, and he is the victim.

A third point of contrast between Western and Anêm culture involves the theory of conception. The Anêm view conception as a baby-building procedure in which semen binds to menstrual blood over several acts of sexual intercourse. Men find repugnant the notion of having sex with a woman who has had sex with another man, first, because it would be possible for a monster child to be born with two or more fathers; and second, because the semen from other men could be injurious to the health, both menstrual blood and semen being potent fluids. By having sex with Roma, Titikolo has placed his uncle, Alu, at risk. The tattoo is also a copyrighted design that, like a signature, marks the place where Titikolo has been.

At this point, events have been set in motion that lead inevitably to the destruction of Titikolo's order. Titikolo is so attractive that he indiscriminately charms the wrong woman; Roma is too weak to resist Titikolo's inadvertent love magic and forces Titikolo into the crime of incest; and when Alu finds out, he is within his rights to demand revenge. The tragedy is that all three characters are victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Alu Finds Out

Roma carried the taro on her head back to the village. She cooked it, and after she and her husband, Alu, ate it, they went to sleep. As usual, they went to the gardens every day, and at night they would have sex. When Alu tried to have sex with her during the day, however, she would run away, back to the village, alone to get away from him. This was odd, and he worried about it.

One afternoon, Alu sat on his veranda and called his clan together to tell the young men to cut a central post for a new men's lodge. Before the post could be raised, it would have to be decorated. The following day, the men chopped down a tree and cut away the outer layers to reveal the hard central shaft for the post. Alu told the men that they should have a celebration before decorating it and told the women to prepare food for the feast. The following day, stone ovens were laid out, and enough food was ready in the evening by the time the drums were brought out.

Everyone else was dancing, but, since it was night, Roma was sleepy and wanted to go to bed. Her husband forbade her, saying that this was a celebration for the new men's lodge and that she had to stay up and dance until dawn. At first light, she lunged into her house and fell fast asleep, while her husband slept in the men's lodge.

Later that day, Alu got up and went to check on Roma, but she was still

> deep in sleep. As he pushed aside the door covering to enter her house, he saw her sleeping with her legs apart, exposing the design on her vulva, and suddenly he understood why she would not have sex with him on their walks in the forest during the day. He had no idea who was responsible, but was determined to find out who had tattooed his wife. He poked at her and shook her suddenly out of a deep sleep. Although he berated her, she would not tell him. At an impasse, they went to sleep again.

The men's lodge is a central feature of most villages in northwestern New Britain. Traditionally, each Anêm hamlet had two men's lodges, one for each matrimoiety, but more recently, the Anêm have adopted the Lusi practice of having a men's lodge for each patriclan or subclan represented in the village. Before conversion to Roman Catholicism, a boy moved from his mother's house into the men's lodge after super-incision. When married, he built a house on the periphery of the hamlet for his wife and children, but continued to live in the men's lodge. After marriage, each woman had her own house, where she lived with her daughters and young sons. Married women prepared food for their husbands and older sons and delivered it to the men's lodge, where the men would eat in private. On pain of death, women and children were banned from entering the men's lodge, a secret domain housing a spirit controlled by the men. At death, both women and men were buried under the hearth of the men's lodge. Today, married men live in their wives' houses, but unmarried initiated boys, widowers, and male travelers continue to sleep in the men's lodge. Although most villages still have several men's lodges, they are now more utilitarian in design (more like women's houses) and function more like dormitories.

Having a proper (i.e., traditional) men's lodge is still a point of clan pride. It is often built as a preliminary to a series of important rituals, usually honoring the recently dead ancestors of the men associated with the men's lodge. As in the narrative, most of the labor is performed by the initiated unmarried men, but the artistic and ritual direction comes from the most prominent man of the clan, who usually has to orchestrate the collection of debts to finance the operation, The traditional men's lodge has a large, decorated central post to support the main ridge beam.

Roma's open desire to sleep during the dancing is a sign of disrespect for Alu specifically and for tradition generally. By definition, a good woman is expected to prepare food for a celebration during the day and to dance enthusiastically all night. Like all good people, a good wife should not place the gratification of her personal desires ahead of her responsibilities to others. Roma disgraces herself further by sleeping with her genitalia exposed. In Anêm terms, she is an *axala* (slut), a woman who fails to perform her duties because of her unrestrained sexuality. Consequently, Alu is

quite within his rights to wake her up violently. Like people in many societies, the Anêm believe that the spirit wanders during sleep and that waking up a person too quickly may prevent the spirit from returning to the body, resulting in fatal dementia. Alu's shaking Roma awake is both an expression of his rage and a warning of what might happen to an *axala.*

Finding the Culprit

In the morning, Alu ordered the post to be decorated. People gathered ochre and sap to make red paint. One man after another came to try painting a design on the post, but Alu would look at it, decide he didn't like it, and order it to be erased. And so it went until all the men in the village had tried without success. In despair, they sent a message to another village, asking the men to come and try to paint the post. Both bachelors and married men came and tried, but no one could paint a pleasing design, and so men from yet another village were called in, and again, when there was no success, they were told to go home. It seemed that everyone from all the villages had tried and still there was no acceptable design. Then, late in the afternoon, it finally occurred to Alu, sitting on his veranda, that his nephew had not yet tried. That night, he went to his sons and instructed them to go, early the following morning, to find Titikolo.

Early the next morning, the boys followed the rivers inland looking for Titikolo. He was asleep at Nil Aniol, his rock shelter, so that, although they saw his footprints here and there, they couldn't find Titikolo and returned home. The following day, Alu sent them back. They followed Titikolo's footprints, but kept losing track of him. After following many rivers, they finally came to a pool. The wind had caught a cockatoo feather in Titikolo's hair, making it wave back and forth while he slept. The boys saw the reflection of the feather in the pool, and then Titikolo sleeping soundly, belly up. They explained about the post and conveyed Alu's request that Titikolo come to try a design. Though Titikolo was incredulous, he sent the boys off to tell Alu that he would come the following day.

In the morning, Titikolo walked down to Alu's village. After listening to a reiteration of the situation by his uncle, Titikolo started to paint the post. When he had finished, his uncle came to have a look at it. Alu glanced at it disapprovingly and told Titikolo that he would like some other design. So Titikolo started again, but this time, elements of the design he had tattooed onto Roma's vulva appeared in different places along the post. When Alu came to look at the finished product, he recognized the elements scattered here and there, and stood staring at them. There were four sections that he recognized. He told Titikolo that he wanted him to erase most of the design, but he pointed to the elements he recognized and told him to join them into a single coherent design.

Tears began to fall from Titikolo's eyes as he erased the design, and his

> hand shook as he reproduced the tattoo on Roma's vulva. When he was finished, he called Alu over to check it. "Finally, a design that I like," Alu said. "Everyone else painted horrible designs; no one could paint a design as good as yours. So when you've put the finishing touches on it, you shall have the honor of digging the hole for the post yourself."

Although Titikolo was not initially a suspect, the events surrounding the preparation for the post conspire to reveal his guilt. Alu is not systematically screening all the men of the area to find the culprit; he just wants a good design for the post, but it is part of the natural order that the identity of lawbreakers is eventually exposed--there is no tradition of the perfect crime for the Anêm. Titikolo cannot help using the design elements from his spear and Roma's vulva. His tears indicate his awareness that he has been caught.

Alu's Revenge

> Titikolo started digging and digging, and when he was up to his waist, he called to Alu, asking if the hole was deep enough. Alu replied, "Not yet. Keep digging." Titikolo resumed digging, and when it was up to his chest, he checked with Alu again, but was told to keep digging. He called again when it was up to his neck but, again, was told to keep digging.
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> As he dug, he wailed out to his friends, Kuduke the rat and Mîxmîx the wasp, that the people were going to kill him. They told him not to worry, and the rat started to dig a tunnel, while the wasp cleared away the rubble. The tunnel went under the river and emerged on the other side. Then they collected tree sap and chewed it with lime powder to make red paint, which they spat into coconut shells placed at the bottom of the post hole.
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> Still digging, Titikolo was now totally below ground level, but Alu insisted that he keep digging while others cleared the rubble. Finally, Alu called down the hole, "That's deep enough, but stay there and clear out that bit of loose dirt first. When you come up, we'll throw the post down." While Titikolo was still gathering the remaining loose dirt, Alu told everyone else to line up along the post to carry it. They hauled it to the opening and threw it down into the hole. Everyone heard it crunch down onto the coconut shells and thought they heard the sound of Titikolo's bones being mashed. Then the red paint spurted up from the hole, covering them with what they thought was Titikolo's blood. Alu shouted out in vengeance, "That'll teach you to tattoo designs on my wife's vulva!"
>
> Meanwhile, Titikolo had escaped safely to the other side of the river. Just before nightfall, Alu was sitting on his veranda with Roma, peacefully chewing betel and spitting, when Titikolo swooped into the village plaza, hanging on a vine as though suspended from the sky and shouting, "Hey, Alu! Just whom do you think you killed? Not me! I'm still here!" Shocked, Alu looked up to see his nephew shouting down to him. Titikolo then swung

back to a tall tree and just sat there. By that time, night had fallen, so Alu shouted to the bachelors, "At first light tomorrow, I want you to chop down that tree along with the man in it."

In the morning, Titikolo was still in the crown of the tree. They brought out the axes and started chopping. They chopped away at the tree all day, but at dusk the tree was still standing, and they went to bed again. During the night, Ênîg the tree ant collected all the chips and stuck the tree back together, so that, in the morning, when the people came back to resume the work, the tree was whole again. Frustrated, the people started to chop it down again, but they couldn't finish before nightfall. As they disappeared back to the village to sleep, the tree ant gathered all the chips and stuck the tree back together again. In the morning, when the people returned, they found the tree back in its original form. With even more determination, they tried again but couldn't fell the tree before it was time to go back to sleep.

On that day, however, a woman found her baby sucking on a chip from the tree, and, fearing it might make her baby sick, she tossed the chip into a fire. That night, the tree ant came to reconstitute the tree, but the missing chip left a hole.

In the morning, the people arrived with their axes again and found the tree standing complete except for the small hole. They asked around, and when the woman told what she had done with the chip, they decided to bum all the chips they hacked off the tree. The men chopped away at the tree all day, while the women carried the chips away to bum. They followed this procedure for three more days, stopping only to sleep. Although they were close to felling the tree, they still had to sleep another night. Finally, the tree began to creak.

Titikolo kept sending the tree ant running to check on the state of the tree, and finally the tree ant returned shouting, "It's now as thin as my neck! It won't be long before it breaks!" The tree ant ran off to prepare coconut shells of red paint and arrange them on the branches of the tree. When the tree finally crashed down with a great roar, the red paint splattered everywhere, drenching the people with what they thought was Titikolo's blood. As they walked back to the village, Alu shouted, "That'll teach you!" In celebration, they prepared a feast.

Anything that does not behave normally is suspected of being under the influence of spirits, sorcerers, ill will, or magic. Such influences are blamed when no pigs are caught during a hunt, when a person gets lost in the forest, when a woman has no children, or when a wild animal appears in the village. Those who come into contact with things under special influence are subject to contamination. Babies are particularly vulnerable in such situations, because they are not yet strong. Since a tree that refuses to be chopped down is not behaving normally, it is likely to be under the power of poten-

tially dangerous forces, and coming into contact with any part of it puts one at risk of illness. Consequently, the woman who finds her child sucking on a chip from the tree that the tree ant reconstitutes every night is acting in the interests of her child when she tosses the chip into a fire.

At this stage in the narrative, Alu not only has the right to try to exact revenge on Titikolo, but is under a moral obligation to do so. Not to act would set a dangerous precedent, legitimizing adultery with his wife and revealing himself as a man unworthy of respect. At the same time, the events have forced Titikolo's hand; it is now his turn to exact revenge on Alu and on all the people who have helped Alu.

Titikolo's Revenge

> While they were eating, Titikolo reappeared, flying in a cagelike device. He came to a halt, hovering over Alu, and shouted down, "Hey, Alu! Missed again, Uncle! I'm still here!" Alu was confused, but Titikolo had more to say. He confronted Alu face-to-face, saying, "Alu, if you had not chased me, then I would stay, but you're chasing me away, so I'm leaving, and it's all because of you. While I was here, you didn't have to plant food. Your food grew by itself. You didn't have to clear gardens or fell trees to get food. All you had to do was eat it. I'm leaving, but you have to stay, and when I go, you'll have to fend for yourself and eat whatever you can find in the forest. If you have the strength to plant gardens, then you'll eat; if not, then you'll die of hunger. You'll suffer illness and die. Women will suffer pain in childbirth and die. Men will kill one another with spears and sorcery and lie dead, scattered around the forest. If you stay in the village, you'll have nothing good to eat. You'll have to sleep in houses built in the middle of the forest, and, if you stretch out your legs at night, they'll get caught on thorny vines. You would have lived in fine houses forever, but you've decided to chase me away, so I'm going. Tonight, sit on the veranda with your wife and watch the sky. Have a seat and you'll see." And then he took off.
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> That night, Alu sat with Roma on the veranda in the dark, and when they looked into the sky, they saw that all the taro had gone and turned into stars. Later, as Alu slept, he stretched out his legs, and they were stabbed and scratched by thorny vines. When the *kaudêk* bird crowed, Alu expected to wake up in a proper house, but he found himself instead in the middle of dense jungle in a place congested with vegetation and not a taro or anything else to eat in sight.

Direct confrontation is normally avoided in Anêm society, because anything said in anger, face-to-face, is impossible to take back later and can be put to rest only with a payment of shell money. That Titikolo denounces Alu in public is a sign that he is deadly serious, and the changes that Titikolo lists

are equally devastating and final. The most central change is that people lose their immortality for the first time. They get old, suffer illness, and become vulnerable to famine and death. As punishment for Roma's part in the affair, women are made to suffer the pain of childbirth: and as punishment for Alu, men are set against one another to fight over women with spears and sorcery. After Titikolo, people find themselves in a Sisyphean life: they are forced to plant gardens if they are to avoid famine, and they have to work continually just to keep the forest from encroaching on their villages.

The Aftermath

> Feeling sorry that her husband had chased Titikolo away and depressed by the way they now lived, Roma picked up a braided rope, climbed a tall tree, tied the rope around her neck, jumped, and turned to stone. Near the site of Nil Aniol, Titikolo's rock shelter, there is a large stone with a pronounced slit, which represents Roma's vulva.
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> Angry about the loss of Titikolo, Kamluk the golden orb spider sent Tuntunu, a large black stinging ant, to collect some bodily dirt from Alu. Tuntunu gave it to Suxum, a bird, who carried it back to Kamluk. As the spider bound it, Alu got sicker and sicker and eventually died. They buried Alu's body, but his bones were washed out to sea and became coral.
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> Meanwhile, Titikolo flew off and landed on a mountain near Cape Gloucester, where he rested for a while. He planted his spear in the ground and went off to the West, to the land of Europeans, where he now lives, Because of his knowledge, Europeans live well, but if the old men had not chased him away, it would be Melanesians who live well.

It is appropriate that Roma should be the first human to commit suicide. Like women in Lusi villages (Counts 1980b), Anêm women commit suicide more frequently than men, and the helplessness associated with marital strife (particularly adultery) is the most common cause. Suicide is also an appropriate death for Roma because she is the root of so much trouble. As a suicide, her soul is doomed to join those killed in battle and become a ghoul driven to eat human flesh, forever at the social periphery of the spirit village.

Within living memory, the tree on which Roma committed suicide was still standing beside the stone with the prominent slit. There are other monuments to Titikolo's presence in the area. Several rock shelters have interior walls decorated with petroglyphs and paintings; a stone platform with a depression roughly in the shape of a human is said to be Titikolo's bed; and a round depression that fills with water, known as Titikolo's mirror, contains a nearly spherical rock said to be a ball of Titikolo's hair turned to stone. As with the Wamira (Kahn 1990), these durable features of the landscape,

some of them altered by humans, are considered tangible evidence of the truth of traditional stories.

Warned about sorcery by Titikolo, Alu becomes the first victim. Sorcery is performed by collecting any product of the target's body, including feces, urine, sweat, saliva, hair, voice, or body heat; then restricting it, either by confinement in a container or by binding; and then exposing it to heat. The kind of malady experienced by the victim depends on the bodily product used and the kind of magic performed by the sorcerer. The sorcery can be fine-tuned to yield either sudden death or prolonged agony. In the latter case, the victim can be released from the punishment by throwing the package of bodily products into water. Sorcery is usually performed by a man who is coerced into the act by being given a short length of white shell money by relatives of the intended victim, who want to teach him or her a lesson. Unable to refuse a request accompanied by shell money, the sorcerer becomes an unwilling accomplice. Although people from distant villages are more likely to be publicly accused of sorcery, the Anêm fear sorcery most from their closest relatives. The effects of sorcery can also be caused unintentionally merely by the focus of ill feeling, such as jealousy, on the victim. Consequently, fear of retaliation through sorcery, intentional or accidental, is a major factor encouraging people to maintain friendly relationships with other people and to avoid flaunting wealth in public. A serious illness is usually cause for a community review of social relationships, a time to make amends for even minor slights that might have inadvertently stimulated the illness. Even without the intentional sorcery of Kamluk, the community anger would have led predictably to Alu's demise, because the very stars are a nightly reminder of what was lost with the departure of Titikolo.

The other face of sorcery is healing magic. Those revered for their power to restore health are also rumored to possess knowledge of the most powerful sorcery. Indeed, a man with several wives, numerous pigs, and a large supply of shell money is normally suspected of having accumulated these through the practice of sorcery. By the same reasoning, an individual who stands out from others by living in a large house or by conspicuous consumption is suspected of having magic so powerful that he can deflect sorcery caused by the jealousy of others. This places the Anêm in a double bind: while individual achievement through hard work is highly valued and essential for social success, the resulting differential achievement is at odds with Anêm militant egalitarianism. Excessive personal achievement can be a liability in that it sets one apart from others, creates resentment, and makes one a target for sorcery. As a result, high achievers normally go to great lengths to conceal their personal success: they hide the number of pigs they

own by having trusted relatives look after them: their houses are calculated to be slightly smaller than the average; and, at public meetings, they speak only after they have gauged the community consensus, and never in anger. The most important men in Anêm villages, called *maxoni,* are invisible to outsiders. They are soft-spoken, gracious, and somewhat shabby looking, but quietly powerful. The *maxoni* is a leader who influences others by gently convincing them with wisdom, not a ruler with authority to give orders.

At the time of Titikolo's departure, there were three generations of men directly ancestral to the Anêm--Tebila, Tauba, and Kemaxi. The connection of these three men with Titikolo is no longer known, but Tebila is the father of Tauba, the father of Kemaxi, who is the common ancestor of all the modem Anêm clans. These men continue the pattern revealed in the narrative by setting up new social systems that are suddenly destroyed and replaced by newer orders when something goes wrong.

Kemaxi, Alu, and Semila

Kemaxi was born with an *êlîm moi,* a stone carving of a taro used in taro fertility magic, attached to his navel. He was appointed by Titikolo as the guardian of all knowledge dealing with gardening. Depending on his mood, he could cause major environmental swings. When he was angry, volcanic ash would bury the gardens, or there would be drought or war. When he was happy, the rains would return to wash away the ash. People became angry with Kemaxi because of the tyrannical power he had over their lives, and decided to kill him. Knowing this, Kemaxi gave explicit instructions about the disposal of his body. If these were not followed, he warned, everyone would die, because the fertility of gardens would wane. Following his instructions, the people eviscerated him and buried the rest of his body face down. (In 1988, no one could explain the reasons for this bizarre burial.) His viscera were thrown into the river and provide the vital power that enables all food crops to grow.

In a swampy area inland where heavily mineralized water emerges, taro is said to grow without planting, wherever one clears the forest. This mineralized water, called *plêxî amdang* (snake shit), is from Alu and Semila, Titikolo's herpetanthropoid uncles. Since they belong to the era when taro grew with no work, their powers are invoked to help the gardens of today. Different categories of taro are planted at different times in the same garden; the first planting is accompanied with magical rituals involving cordyline, coleus, ochre, ginger, two circles of stones in a river, and one of

the carved stone taros handed down from the time of Kemaxi. Once well established, the initial taro planting passes its procreative power on to other crops in the same garden.

Food, especially taro, is the basis on which all cultural activities are built. Without taro, the Anêm could not support pigs, let alone children; without taro and pigs, there could be no exchange to get wives, to initiate boys into manhood, and to honor the spirits of the recently dead properly; and, to complete the circuit, without the help of the dead, taro would not grow. Kemaxi, Alu, and Semila are associated with specific places within Anêm territory and connect the Anêm ability to produce food and to reproduce their culture with specific geographic locations. This conceptual framework makes land an inalienable commodity. The Anêm can live only in their current geographic location, and they can survive there only because they know how to tap the procreative power of their ancestors inherent in the ground.

At the time of Titikolo, people like Alu, Semila, and Kemaxi possessed an enormous body of knowledge and, consequently, the power to live well. Because of the cycle of birth and death, however, a portion of the residual ancestral knowledge is lost with each successive generation. Although parents are responsible for passing on as much of this knowledge as possible, the most careful efforts can only slow the inevitable entropy that accompanies its piecemeal transgenerational loss. The evidence of entropy is everywhere: old people can remember only fragments of songs that their grandparents sang; varieties of taro, banana, and sugarcane that they ate as children have been lost to drought or pests; they cannot conjure up the names for vines and trees or even some of their ancestors; and they are sure that, when they were younger, people were larger and stronger. Young people who can name even fewer trees just confirm their worst fears about the world fading painfully away. To the Anêm, Titikolo's wrath is quite real.

Although the Anêm lament the loss of power that comes with the knowledge that people from earlier eras possessed, they do not remember the characters of this narrative with bitterness or malice. Even though the Anêm attribute their current hard life to actions of these ancients, they still revere them for the power they bring to the cultivation of their gardens. This attitude is congruent with life in any small community where people have to be able to put the misdemeanors of others to rest in order to get on with life in relative peace. Even though each character in the legend acted legitimately, given the circumstances, the chain of revenge could have been broken had Titikolo merely compensated Alu for the transgression, as per current protocol.

Knowledge and Prosperity

Much of the narrative is ultimately concerned with material comfort. The Anêm see the ability to produce material goods as a product of knowledge, but, as Lawrence points out for the Madang region (1964:9, 30, 243), they consider knowledge to be a product of revelation rather than human intellect. They also understand knowledge to be finite and believe that only people in Titikolo's generation and before possessed the full complement of knowledge. Through each generation since that time, knowledge has been trickling away.

Titikolo's departure to the West is congruent with the source of traditional wealth items, such as the carved bowls and ceramic pots that come by way of the Siassi trading network described by Harding (1967b). In addition, certain pigments required for taro and mortuary ritual also come from the south coast by way of the Lolo, the people to the west around Cape Gloucester. The Anêm have always been on the lookout for a sign of Titikolo's return, and before European contact, the stream of wealth items that arrived from the west must have indicated that Titikolo was to be found in that direction. Since European contact, however, all the evidence and logic has pointed to the conclusion that Titikolo eventually made his way to where Europeans live.

Especially among older people in northwestern New Britain, there is a large body of lore about Europeans that expatriates in Papua New Guinea inadvertently but frequently reconfirm. Europeans are not human in the same way Melanesians are human. While in Papua New Guinea, they do nothing recognizable as work, yet food and major wealth items are delivered to them at regular intervals. Europeans claim that these goods are manufactured by people,' but human artifacts are individually different, if only in minor details; only spirits or people with the knowledge of spirits can make an unlimited number of exactly identical objects.

To the dismay of most Anêm, Europeans act as though they are uncannily unconcerned with and ignorant about sorcery. Europeans who have been in Papua New Guinea long enough to be familiar with Melanesian fears of sorcery openly display disbelief in the power and seem to go out of their way to tempt fate by collecting their feces and urine in latrine pits, where any sorcerer could easily find them, instead of hiding their bodily effluvia in the forest. At the same time, most Europeans in Papua New Guinea travel with a medical kit and have the knowledge to treat severe illnesses, both in themselves and in Melanesians. Furthermore, Europeans display their wealth openly. In Melanesian eyes, they must have powerful protective magic

against the jealousy and ill will that such conspicuous consumption would generate.

Until recently, most Anêm believed that Europeans do not get sick or die, and the secret explanation was revealed during the Second World War by Japanese soldiers who spoke freely of reincarnation. Just like the herpetanthropoid ancestors of the Anêm, those Europeans who appear to die are really brought back to life. This explains why Europeans all look alike and why they do not express genuine grief, even at funerals. Their pale, odorous skin, clammy to the touch, recollects a corpse and connects Europeans with the spirit world. Just as Papua New Guineans plant crotons around graves to separate the living from the dead, so Europeans live in houses surrounded by hedges of crotons. Goulden also points out that many New Britainers believe that Europeans communicate with spirits by whistling, just like the birds who bring messages from the dead (1990:8).

Finally, Europeans do not value food: they eat less than required to sustain human life and seem never to get hungry for taro. To those whose only exposure to Europeans consists of getting orders from plantation managers and patrol officers or getting saved by priests and nuns, the evidence is overwhelming: like the tree that refuses to be chopped down, Europeans do not behave as expected and are therefore suspected of being in touch with special powers. They are benefiting from the power that emanates from the kind of knowledge only immortal humans like Titikolo are likely to possess. For many people of northwestern New Britain, then, Europeans hold the key to a new and better order based on the old knowledge, and even minor events involving Europeans are fraught with possible meaning.

The Anêm have been swept into a sequence of new regimes since the beginning of colonial control in New Britain, starting with the Germans, then the British and Australians, then the Japanese, then the Americans, then the Australians again, and finally the government of independent Papua New Guinea, which the Anêm view as foreign. Each succession has been marked by new laws, new currencies, and new expectations. Older Anêm remember that they initially embraced the Japanese as liberators from the Australians, and since the Japanese ate taro, the Anêm were hopeful. The Americans arrived just as relationships with the Japanese had soured, and the Anêm were ecstatic. The Americans arrived with mountains of supplies, which they proceeded to hand out. They also provided crucial medical aid. Not only were the American soldiers generous, but they also allowed New Britainers to eat with them out of the same pot. Furthermore, many were American blacks. Among some interior groups, there is still some confusion about African Americans resulting from the similarity of

names in Tok Pisin. In these groups, *Merika* (America) and *Aprika* (Africa) have been conflated into a single word, *Ambrika,* which places special significance on the fact that dark-skinned people like themselves live in America, the place whence material wealth comes. Equipped with the revelation about reincarnation from the Japanese, the skin color and Melanesian food-sharing customs convinced many New Britainers that at least some Americans were former Melanesians; and the fact that Americans had come to save them from the Japanese demonstrated that their ancestors were both aware of their predicament and still concerned with their welfare.

The majority of people in northwestern New Britain were bitterly disappointed after the war, when the Australians returned. Recalling the trial by which Kapimolo decided to give rifles to Europeans, some felt that they had somehow failed an unspoken test administered by the Americans, by their ancestors. Others came to believe that the Australians were deliberately interfering with American attempts to reestablish prosperity in New Britain. Certain Australian actions inadvertently confirmed this belief. For example, when the American forces departed, they left most of their supplies behind to be divided, they believed, among those New Britainers who had helped in the war effort, but returning Australians, trying to control explosives and spoiled food, indiscriminately confiscated all the supplies and ordered them to be buried. The people of northwestern New Britain were left with the feeling of a near miss: they had almost made the transition into the next era, but had been frustrated yet again. Ever since, intellectuals among the Anêm, Lusi, Mouk, Amara, and others in the area have been pondering the question of how best to make the transition to a new era of prosperity, Whether they believe in the literal details of the story of Titikolo is irrelevant. Regardless of creed, the narrative acts as a window into commonly held beliefs about the nature of historical change and the relationship between revealed knowledge and wealth. Christians, agnostics, and Titikolo fundamentalists all debate the merits of traditional custom versus development from within the same conceptual framework.

Among the Anêm and their neighbors, competing strategies have been devised to tap into the old knowledge base that they perceive to be now under European control, These include (1) rigid adherence to Roman Catholicism, which promises rewards in an afterlife; (2) hesitant rejection of tradition in favor of small-scale private enterprise, usually in the form of copra production, but including village trade stores, fishing with monofilament nets for cash, and even a video theater; (3) altruistic investment in the education of children, who may benefit even if the older generation is sacrificed; (4) earnest rededication to traditional custom with concomitant rejection of anything European; (5) spiritual rebirth into the fundamentalist

Christianity of the New Tribes Mission, which promises the rewards of an American standard of living in this world and white skin as well as rewards in the afterlife; and (6) uncritical invitation to logging and mining megaprojects that promise instant wealth through the destruction of their land.

Although some of these strategies are compatible, others are in direct conflict with one another, and there is no consensus among the Anêm about either the characteristics of prosperity or the proper way to achieve it. On several occasions in the recent past, the Anêm and other groups in the area have reached a near consensus. When a consensus results in community behavior that matches government plans, little notice is taken, or the community is called progressive. But when a different consensus puts the community at odds with the administration, the activities are labeled cargo cults, and the police are brought in.

For example, under direction from patrol officers and agricultural officers in the 1950s and 1960s, the Anêm planted large areas along the coast with coconuts. While copra production has provided the major source of cash since then, swings in the price paid for the crop have discouraged most from thinking that this is the best path to prosperity. In the early 1970s, a charismatic leader from the Mouk-speaking area convinced virtually all the Anêm and most of the Lusi to abandon their coastal villages and to concentrate on reactivating traditional custom in order to appease the ancestors who might return with the lost knowledge. Conditions of near starvation, natural catastrophes attributed to an angry Roman Catholic God, and the police convinced people to return to the coast, where their children would have access to education. Political independence arrived with great expectations, but most people were disappointed when little dramatic change occurred. Although several Anêm completed high school, jobs in towns became scarce, and the few Anêm employed elsewhere in Papua New Guinea were able to send only token gifts of cash back to their parents, who had sacrificed to provide the education. Consequently, the Anêm have very mixed feelings about education as a path toward prosperity. In the 1980s, the New Tribes Mission, an American-based fundamentalist organization, established ministries among the Lamogai, Aria, and Mouk. At least among the Mouk, the new mission managed to reactivate the cargo cult of the 1970s--the outward expression is different, but the inner form, the charismatic leaders from the 1970s, and the ultimate goals are the same. The Anêm have vehemently rejected the New Tribes Mission, partly because of the experience of the earlier 1970s fiasco and partly because of a new offer on the horizon.

Since the late 1970s, Japanese factory ships have been fishing just beyond the reef, logging operations have been started, and Mt. Andeua has been

surveyed for gold and copper. The latest news from informants reports that the Anêm are now in a bitter debate over land claims and mineral rights as well as whether the environmental destruction of their land, including sacred sites on Mt. Andeua, is worth the promise of prosperity. In outward appearance, the ruckus seems equivalent to similar conflicts in North American communities where bitter debates are conducted over the placement of a highway, airport, or garbage dump. The premises underlying such debates in New Britain, however, are quite different. Unlike Westerners, the Anêm cannot pack up and buy land elsewhere in Papua New Guinea at any price, because land is not an alienable commodity. The Anêm have rights only to the land on which Kapimolo created their ancestors. Food derives from the procreative power emanating from Kemaxi's viscera and the help of Alu and Semila. The Anêm may, indeed, be on the brink of a new era, perhaps even one in which they individually prosper, but at the cost of losing the remnants of knowledge inherited from the time of Titikolo.

NOTE

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