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# PACIFIC STUDIES

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## RUMORS AND THE LANGUAGE OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY HAWAII


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In the first months of 1831, a pair of rumors ripped through Honolulu and Lahaina, the two major port towns of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and from there rippled outward to distant islands and districts. The first of these surfaced in February, and although elements of it would change in the ensuing months, it contained a consistent message: Liliha, wife of Boki, late governor of Oahu, was preparing a revolt against Kaahumanu, who was serving as *kuhina nui* (regent) of the Islands until Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) came of age. The reports reached these two most powerful members of the Hawaiian royalty while they were conducting a tour of the windward islands, traveling with a host of high-ranking chiefs and American Protestant missionaries. Not only did they hear that Liliha would oppose the entourage's return to Oahu but that the opposition she and her conspirators would offer would indeed be bloody; she was said to have declared that "there will be no peace until the heads of Kaahumanu and Mr. Bingham are taken off ."[1]

Hiram Bingham, one of the pioneer missionaries to the Islands and a close ally of Kaahumanu's, was also the target of that spring's second rumor. This one was not born of an islander-led revolt, but seemed to emerge from among disgruntled foreign residents in Honolulu; they at least helped to circulate it during the second week of April 1831. In this one, Bingham's fate was described in only slightly less gruesome terms: It was widely reported that he might be assassinated, though how and

by whom was not as clear as it had been with the earlier rumor. Still, one story whispered around the town had it that "foreigners were going in a body to drag him out & kill him."[2]

How does one account for these rumors, for their violent language and dire predictions for social change? In part one's tendency is to discount them. After all, neither deadly end came to pass. Liliha's revolt was defused—her high-ranking father, Hoapili, asked her to make amends with the regency and she did so peacefully—her troops were scattered, and the threats against Kaahumanu, Bingham, and others consequently evaporated. The second rumor and its threat also dissipated, though its demise is complicated by the fact that both Bingham, on whose death it centered, and the foreign residents, who allegedly plotted his death, repeatedly denied the rumor's very reality! The foreign residents, for example, claimed that it was Bingham who first gave voice to the rumor, by speaking of it from his pulpit, a charge Bingham and his parishioners stoutly refuted. Other members of the American missionary community indicated that they had first heard of the plot when Stephen Reynolds, an American merchant, came to Bingham's home to verify whether the missionary had mentioned his impending assassination in his Sunday sermon. It is not clear, therefore, that the rumor even existed except through its denial.[3]

Assessing the importance of these two rumors is made trickier still when one turns to Bingham's later account of them. The striking thing is the lack of discussion of these threats to his life in his semiautobiographical *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (1849). Only if one knows of their existence does his brief comment—"the life of some of the missionaries was threatened . . . [but my] peculiar circumstances and relations, at this period, may be passed chiefly in silence"—suggest that something happened that spring, but presumably it was of comparatively minor importance, to judge from the emphasis he would give to other life-threatening incidents recorded in his book. He spilled a lot of ink, for instance, on three such events: In 1827 the Binghams visited the William Richards family at its mission at Lahaina, and the two families had to flee to the cellar to escape cannonballs fired at the compound by an enraged British whaling captain; one year earlier a foreign resident had burst into the Binghams' home in Honolulu, seeking to cane some sense into the missionary; and in that same year a group of club-wielding sailors surrounded him, while another of their number threatened to disembowel him with a knife. Why did these incidents receive extensive coverage when the rumors were ignored? The difference in reporting may be due to the palpable nature of the

threats—it is hard to ignore cannonballs, canes, and knives. The rumors, on the other hand, were but words.[4]

And why should Bingham not dismiss these rumors as simply talk, the kind of talk that forever engaged those who lived in the nineteenth-century port communities of the Pacific? Robert Louis Stevenson, for one, loved this element of life in Samoa in the latter part of the century. "I never saw a place so good as [Apia]," he chortled. "You can be in a new conspiracy every day." Such conspiracies, by his definition, were short term and good fun, adding color to an otherwise drab—and insular—existence. Honolulu was no different. It was a veritable rumor mill, according to David Gregg, United States commissioner to the Hawaiian Islands in the 1850s. "Scandal may have its fill in this town. There is no place like it in the wide world." The 1831 rumors have that feel of delicious scandal, made all the more so by the fact that they were of short duration and (apparently) of little consequence.[5]

But the very commonness of rumors in Honolulu—in Gregg's shocked tone, "no place is so bad in the countenance it gives to slander"—should make us pause before dismissing this pair out of hand. They might have served an important social and psychological function in island life, and to begin to understand what roles they may have played, we need first to assess these rumors *as* rumors. But to ask what a rumor is perforce raises another set of difficulties, for rumors by their very nature are slippery to handle and tricky to analyze. Usually dependent on oral communication and the vagaries of human memory for existence, they tend to undergo considerable permutations before dying out. For this reason rumors seem to leave behind little trace of their path and of the significance they may have held for those who created or spread or responded to them. Rumors, it would seem, have little history and are thus of little value to historians.[6]

Although ephemeral, rumors can nonetheless cut a swath through a community and damage social relations, as Liliha, Bingham, Kaahumanu, and others found out. That at least is how scholars frequently characterize them, as signs of chaos and disarray. On one level, then, rumors seem simple distortions of reality that can confuse those who participate in them and might lead people to act irresponsibly or irrationally as a consequence. Shakespeare captured this disquieting connection between rumor and subsequent behavior in the induction to *King Henry the Fourth, Part Two:* "from Rumour's tongues / They bring smooth comforts false, worse than true wrongs."[7]

That rumors play false with human sensibilities is not an observation unique to Shakespearean imagery and imagination. Such is often

asserted as well in scholarly studies of the American and French revolutions, and indeed forms a key to analyses of the mob violence that played such an important role in the timing and character of those eighteenth-century political upheavals. The connection has also been made as a means by which to grapple with the voluminous number of anti-German and anti-Japanese rumors unleashed in the United States during the early days of World War II, rumors that have been tied to repressive legislation concerning German and Japanese immigrants then living in the United States. Rumors can be perfidious things, as the ancient Roman world understood. The "swiftest traveller of all the ills on earth," rumor gleefully announces "fact and fiction indiscriminately," Virgil wrote in the *Aeneid,* becoming in the process "a winged angel of ruin."[8]

Their destructive capacity notwithstanding, rumors might take on a different cast if one interprets them as a form of social communication, as a language that gives shape and meaning to human behavior. If so, then the nature and significance of rumors are altered both for those who participate in them and for those who later study that participation. For the former, rumors may in fact clarify (rather than confuse) social relations; they may reveal, for instance, antagonisms and animosities that will enable the participants to gauge more effectively where they stand in a given setting (and act appropriately.) As Raymond Firth observed in his study of rumor on Tikopia, one of the Solomon Islands, rumors can play a "positive" role: "not simply the product of idle curiosity or fantasy, [they can] serve as a social instrument, helping groups or individuals to achieve their ends." Terry Ann Knopf extends this interpretation: A rumor, she writes, is a "social phenomenon arising out of group conflict," a phenomenon that requires a flexible analytical approach. She suggests that the origin of a rumor (and the multiplicity of its meanings) can best be located by an intense focus on the social context in which it was produced, that is, on the manifold ways that people give order to their lives. When viewed in this light, rumors can become "facts" that historians and other scholars can "read" like any other historical document in search of clues to the complex character of human behavior in the past.[9]

This perspective is especially helpful in analyzing the significance of the pair of rumors that burst forth in Hawaii during the spring of 1831. Hiram Bingham, for example, understandably personalized what he called these "scarish things," seeing them as a consequence of his missionary labors. As he later observed in a letter to the Reverend Rufus Anderson, corresponding secretary of the American Board of Commis-

sioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the rumors were a reflection of "the present struggle in which we are engaged . . . [and] will speak volumes of the nature of our work." Indeed that is true to a degree, and a close assessment of these two rumors will help locate some of the sources of his political and religious influence on Hawaiian affairs.[10]

But Bingham's vantage point can only take us so far in explaining the generation, spread, and ultimate demise of these rumors. It becomes quickly apparent, for instance, that his actions as a Protestant missionary played but a small role in their creation. Instead, to understand them fully one must probe the wider context in which they were nourished and disseminated. That probe in turn suggests that this was an especially turbulent period in Hawaiian history, one in which the relations amongst the Hawaiians themselves, chiefly and nonchiefly, and between the Hawaiian royalty, American missionaries, and foreign residents were undergoing fundamental transformations. And that these rumors enable us to illuminate the social change of this period further testifies to their value as historical sources, for they served to articulate an ongoing dialogue between the various elements of Hawaiian society. It was on the basis of this conversation that the royalty, missionaries, and members of the foreign resident community developed a language that gave purpose to their behavior and helped make sense of the world around them, a world they hoped to change.

* * * *

Not everyone could comprehend the whole of the conversation, of course. Maria Ward, a missionary teacher stationed at Kailua, Hawaii island, heard the confusing reports about Liliha's intentions (and those of her co-conspirators) and happily decided that the revolt, which seemed to lack cause, also lacked purpose and direction. "Who they are going to fight or what they [are] calculating to do is probably more than they know themselves," she concluded.[11]

Ward could not have been more wrong. For instance, the origins of the rumored revolt are quite clear. The immediate source lay in yet another "report," this one originating from the island of Hawaii in January 1831. There, during a meeting between high-ranking chiefs, Kaahumanu, and Kauikeaouli—a meeting from which Liliha was purposefully excluded—it was allegedly decided that Liliha would be compelled to forfeit her tenuous claim to the governorship of Oahu. Boki had conferred the post upon her prior to his departure from the Islands in 1829; he had sailed to Melanesia, heading for the island of Erro-

manga in search of fragrant sandalwood, the discovery of which would have relieved him of his massive debt to Western merchants; he had apparently died in the attempt. Liliha would not be removed so conveniently, however, and the rumors about her decision to remain at her post could be seen simply as part of her effort to maintain the legitimacy of her position and status, and to communicate her displeasure to those arrayed against her.[12]

Nothing is ever so simple in the combative arena of Hawaiian politics, however. The chiefs' action, and Liliha's reaction, did not depend just on Boki's departure and subsequent death. Instead, they were predicated on a decade-long struggle in which Boki, Liliha, and their supporters had continuously clashed with those chiefs, including Kaahumanu, who were now in 1831 trying to drive Liliha from office.

The key to this struggle lay in the Hawaiian royalty's effort to refashion the nature of political power, one that Kamehameha I had set into motion in the late eighteenth century. Traditionally, political legitimacy for the *ali'i* (high chiefs) had depended on one's rank at birth, familial lineage, and birth order; it was usually through such means, for example, that a son obtained his father's lands. This status could be enhanced through marriage, military prowess, and shrewd diplomacy, something the *ali'i nui* (highest of chiefs) accomplished, enabling them to trace their ancestry and *mana* (spirit; power) to the most powerful gods. Jealous of one another's prerogatives, none of the *ali'i nui* was able to conquer the whole of the archipelago, for the rise of one led the others to band together in opposition.[13]

Such internecine strife marked Kamehameha's attempt to conquer the various islands, but he succeeded where all others before him had failed, largely due to his military genius that combined traditional forms of warfare with the new technologies—guns and cannons—brought by Western explorers. To insure the maintenance of his authority across time, Kamehameha I established a new political form of authority that would transcend time, lineal succession—a concept that necessarily shattered the traditional cultural constructs of rank and ancestry. When Kamehameha unified the Hawaiian archipelago under his sole authority, a union that came into effect in 1810, he had refashioned himself from a local Hawaii-island chief into the paramount chief of the islands.[14]

What was good for Kamehameha was not necessarily good for the future course of Hawaiian politics. At the very least his actions created difficulties that emerged when Kamehameha I died in 1819, and his son Liholiho succeeded him. The son's first (and only) major act as king,

one in which he followed the lead of others, was to destroy further the traditional order his father had already severely disrupted. Under pressure from Kaahumanu, who had been one of his father's favorite wives, the newly-crowned Kamehameha II defied the *kapu* system, which had prescribed social relations between the social classes and between the people and their gods; he further ordered the destruction of religious symbols and temples, thereby directly challenging priestly authority. In a relatively short period of time, then, the first two Kamehamehas had generated a social upheaval of no little significance.[15]

Its significance would become clear in 1824, when Liholiho died while on a visit to England, leaving as political heir a brother, Kauikeaouli, as yet a minor. Until he came of age, Kaahumanu, as *kuhina nui,* would rule the island nation. And although her authority had been precisely laid out in Liholiho's will, and her status and rank high, her regency (1823-1832) was nonetheless constantly challenged, a measure of the political instability and religious vacuum that were the Kamehamehas' legacy. These challenges cut along kinship lines, as Caroline Ralston has shown. Kamehameha I's collateral kin, including Liliha, found themselves shut out of the more important posts in the Hawaiian government; in their place stood Kamehameha's affinal Maui relations, of which Kaahumanu was head. One step she and her Maui kin took to further consolidate their power was to convert to Christianity, the first profession of which was made in June 1825, within a month of Liholiho's funeral. The timing was not coincidental. The conversion of some of the highest-ranking *ali'i* had everything to do with their effort to bolster their political control, to locate an alternate source of authority, during a time of uncertainty. Six months later, after formal baptism administered by Hiram Bingham and other American missionaries, the converts adopted the Decalogue as the law of the land, introducing a new (and Christian) system of *kapu.*[16]

Resistance to the new order was swift, at the center of which stood Boki and Liliha, who could lose much with its implementation. For them, this must have been an inflammatory shift, as they had been closely associated with Liholiho and his wife, Kamamalu. They had journeyed with the king and queen to England, had managed to escape the measles epidemic that carried off the two Hawaiian regents, and had returned with the bodies for burial. Prior to their departure from England George IV reportedly advised the grieving Hawaiians to take seriously the word of the Christian god, a message they relayed to Kaahumanu upon their return, and one she seized upon to justify in part her decision to convert. The messengers in this case bore the brunt

of that conversion, for as Kaahumanu, the Christian chiefs, and their missionary allies sought to codify Christian mores and eliminate vice—including the desecration of the sabbath, the sale of alcohol, gambling, and prostitution—they challenged Boki's very economic existence; as governor of Oahu he sold the licenses for grog shops; as an entrepreneur, he owned billiards halls and other gaming houses. These activities, and by extension Boki's political authority, were consequently threatened, leading him and Liliha, together with other afflicted merchants, traders, and foreign residents, to test (and contest) Kaahumanu's ability to determine social affairs in Honolulu and elsewhere. Known as "the moral wars," these battles raged throughout the 1820s and periodically drew in officers and crews of visiting whalers, and those of the navies of Britain, France, and the United States cruising the northern Pacific. And when Roman Catholic missionaries arrived in Hawaii in the late 182Os, Boki and his allies immediately became their unofficial sponsors, using these prelates to challenge Kaahumanu's development of a Protestant theocratic state.[17]

It was in the midst of one such battle that Boki, learning of a hitherto untapped supply of sandalwood on Erromanga, sailed from Honolulu, never to return. And it was the longstanding struggle with Kaahumanu that two years later, in 1831, led Liliha to begin to call for troops from Boki's district of Waianae and quarter them in the fort at Honolulu and in the battery at Punchbowl, the better to defend her claims to the governorship of Oahu. There would be great speculation as to the number of troops—some said ninety, others five hundred, and still other sources claimed one thousand—exaggerated claims that led contemporaries and later historians to discount the seriousness of Liliha's intentions. However many troops there were rumored to be, one thing is clear: Their presence was a calculated and understandable reaction to recent political events.[18]

Liliha's choice of alleged targets for decapitation was understandable, too, in light of the immediate past. Indeed, from her perspective there were no better candidates for execution than Kaahumanu and Hiram Bingham. The former at once symbolized and had deftly exploited the social change that so altered Hawaiian society since the late eighteenth century, alterations that were particularly evident in the lives of *ali'i* such as Boki and Liliha; they, after all, were collateral kin of the Kamehamehas, and felt their loss keenly. And Bingham, of course, was the most visible instrument of Kaahumanu and her allies. Stationed in Honolulu, now the seat of national government, and holder of the prized missionary pulpit at Kawaiahao, he was well situated to provide

the *kuhina nui* with a new god and a new system of religious symbols and social control that so effectively hemmed in its opponents. Given this, Liliha's was a rational, if bloody, course.[19]

Had these two been eliminated, then the political resolution for which Liliha (and Boki) had long yearned might have occurred. As Bingham understood, Liliha had to sever the relation between Kaahumanu and her charge, Kauikeaouli, to succeed: "I can hardly suppose that there's so much madness in the *kue* [opposition] party as to venture on a war without being able to have the king, at least in appearance, on their side." And Liliha was not crazy, for she knew she already had Kauikeaouli's allegiance. One of the many stories circulating in Honolulu in mid-March 1831 suggested how this allegiance would be manifested publicly. When the king and the *ali'i* returned from their extended tour of the windward islands to Honolulu later that month, the king would be escorted ashore first. Liliha and her supporters would then "get him into their circle and gain his assent to their plan." Once he had thrown in his lot with Liliha, a signal would be given and the Christian chiefs and missionaries who remained on board would be attacked and presumably killed.[20]

This was not only a shrewd bit of strategy—had it been successful Liliha would have wiped out those who had opposed her and inextricably linked her future with that of the king—but it may have received some encouragement from Kauikeaouli himself. Maria Ward, for example, heard that he had written to Richard Charlton, British consul to the Islands, "stating his dissatisfaction with the proceedings of the chiefs respecting Liliha," dissatisfaction that Charlton, an opportunist of the first order, would have readily passed on to Liliha. Although Ward qualified her report—"whether there is a word of truth in it is more than I know"—the king's reaction to the revolt's failure gives it credence.[21]

In March, after being dissuaded from revolt by her father, Liliha sailed to Lahaina on Maui, there to be reconciled with Kaahumanu and the other high chiefs. Her reception from the king was particularly striking: He seemed "greatly affected" by her arrival, so much so "that he seated himself in her lap & *wept* greatly," a submissiveness that angered the *ali'i* gathered nearby; one was so offended that he hauled the king off! The missionaries also sensed the political import of his act, of his tears. "We cannot but feel moved with the disposition of the king, manifested towards such a person and under such circumstances," Levi Chamberlain would write in his journal. And yet "in view of it [we] are constrained to look upon the movements of the Governess here as some-

thing which would have met with the King's cooperation. . . ." At the very least, the rumors of Liliha's revolt spoke to (and for) Kauikeaouli's own ambivalence about the direction that the Christian chiefs were taking the Hawaiian kingdom. Stephen Reynolds offered a suggestive comment in this regard. When told by a missionary that in any other country Liliha would "have been HUNG for her rebellion against the King," the American merchant retorted, "I wish to know what her rebellion was. She was put into office by the King. She supported his side." From Reynolds's point of view, Liliha was doing for Kauikeaouli what he could not do for himself.[22]

To forestall Liliha's acting on his behalf, Kaahumanu ma (and her followers) moved swiftly to assert and reestablish their authority. Concerned by Kauikeaouli's emotional embrace of Liliha, by his evident (and dangerous) vacillation, and convinced that she had in fact intended to revolt, despite her protestations to the contrary—the rumors, she said, were *"wahahee loa"* (exceedingly deceitful)—they stripped her of her offices, redistributing these and her land holdings to more demonstrably loyal *ali'i.* Some of her supporters suffered the same fate (among them Nahienaena, Kauikeaouli's sister), retribution that revealed how effective the new form of sovereignty, against which she and her collaborators had protested, could be. In the end, the Christian chiefs' reactions to Liliha had been as precise and as calculated as had been her threats, real or imagined.[23]

* * * *

Not all rumors so neatly illuminate social tension or give us access to the language in which that tension is addressed (and resolved). At first glance, the second (and parallel) rumor that bedeviled Honolulu in the spring of 1831 would seem to fall into that category. Compared to those rumors that encircled Liliha, for example, the one surrounding the assassination of Hiram Bingham was of short duration; hers had lasted more than a month and a half; his survived less than a week. The threat it posed was also more narrowly focused, on one individual, and consequently drew in only the affected parties, specifically the foreign resident population, missionary and merchant alike. True, Kaahumanu expressed a "lively interest" in the affair to Bingham, but that interest was considerably less lively, less pronounced than it had been when she and her government had been directly threatened a few short weeks earlier.[24]

Furthermore, the language itself of this later rumor seemed con-

strained and without broad significance. Basically the rumor centered on a heated exchange of letters between Bingham and a group of American merchants, including Stephen Reynolds, William French, Henry Pierce, and the United States agent for commerce and seamen, John Coffin Jones. Each side accused the other of giving voice to the rumor of an assassination attempt on Bingham, and each took the accusation seriously, as the sheer number of exchanges attests. Bingham saved every one of the twenty-one notes, accusations and countercharges, and when he reproduced them in a letter to his superiors at the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Boston, the letter ran more than fifty pages! It is not immediately obvious, however, after poring over this voluminous and excited correspondence, why the two parties expended so much effort. Indeed, the whole seems to devolve into a question of semantics, as each side sought to prove that the other had been the first to discuss Bingham's death, proof gleaned from what the opposition said or wrote or did not say or did not write.[25]

Illustrative of this is the recounting of a meeting between Bingham and Reynolds on the evening of April 6, fittingly a dark and rainy night. In his journal, Reynolds noted that he visited the Binghams' mission compound personally to ascertain two things. First, he wanted to determine whether Dr. T. C. B. Rooke, an English physician, had been the one to tell Bingham that "the foreign residents were going in a body to drag [Bingham] out and kill him." His second motive was to learn whether Bingham had mentioned the report, and Rooke's association with it, from his pulpit during afternoon services, as one islander source had indicated. He did not get the answers he was seeking. Sybil Bingham, whom he queried first, had not heard of the rumor and said her husband "could answer for himself," but apparently Hiram Bingham did not do so: According to Reynolds's journal, the missionary twice failed to reply to a question about his knowledge of the rumor; "every one must make his own inferences" from the missionary's silence, Reynolds concluded ominously.[26]

Bingham's account of the visit and conversation with Reynolds, captured in the letter he wrote to Boston several months later, is quite different. Upon arriving at the missionary's abode, Reynolds handed Bingham "a curious note, signed by himself and three other American merchants including the American Consul." The merchants' letter noted a rumor was circulating in Honolulu that Bingham had been informed "the principal residents in this place have conspired againt your life"; its authors wanted "an explicit answer if it be the fact or no." Uncertain as to the letter's "real design," suspecting that the rumor was

a "mere trick," Bingham nonetheless composed a one-sentence reply: "I can state that I have not 'been told that the principal residents have conspired against my life.' "[27]

Believing that he had provided the explicit denial the merchants requested, Bingham was surprised to learn the next day from a third party, Dr. Rooke himself, that J. C. Jones had asserted that Bingham had in fact confirmed the rumor and Rooke's dissemination of it. From that misinterpretation on, things seemed to have spun out of control, as each side spent the next two days and nights firing off missives accusing the other of evasiveness, letters that engendered equally heated rebuttals that carried countercharges of equivocation. Typical of these was Reynolds's observation in his journal for April 9: "Mr. Bingham wrote me a letter in answer to one from me last evening in which he made some . . . twistings and turnings if not falsehoods." Each day the letters grew in length as the combatants, armed with selected portions of the previous day's exchanges, incorporated this evidence in the next salvo. It was an all-consuming affair. In the understated language of missionary Levi Chamberlain: "It is very certain that no small excitement exists in the village." But after the three-day barrage, which left Bingham and the merchants exhausted, the strongest words Chamberlain could muster about its net result were that "it was not improbable that threats have been made touching the life of Mr. Bingham," a conclusion even "Mr. Reynolds thought not unlikely." With that, the letters ceased flowing, and the rumor of the missionary's imminent demise disappeared.[28]

One way to interpret this material is as Harold Bradley did in his *The American Frontier in Hawaii* (1942). He dismissed the episode, declaring it "more ridiculous than reasonable." The correspondents, he noted, failed to make a "serious effort to obtain an amicable solution of the problems which vexed the community" and instead indulged in an "acrimonious exchange of letters [that] served chiefly to confirm the correspondents in the views which each already held." The power of confirmation was of but pedestrian value.[29]

That confirmation, though, is exactly why these letters should not be dismissed, why they are so important. Because they in fact confirm positions and postures that the merchants and missionaries adopted toward one another, they can give us much-needed insight into the texture of the often-contentious relationship. This is particularly important, for that relationship was undergoing a radical change in an environment still reeling from the implications of and reverberations from Liliha's revolt. Rather than avoiding the serious problems facing con-

temporary Hawaiian society, as Bradley supposes, the rumor (and the letters it spawned) directly confronts and comments upon them.

* * * *

The proximate cause of the rumor was a public meeting held on 1 April 1831, which all residents of Honolulu—chiefs and *makaainana* (commoners), merchants and missionaries—were required to attend. The purpose was to inform those who gathered before the king's house about recent decisions the chiefs had reached about the future governance of Honolulu in particular and Oahu in general. The meeting was held at Kauikeaouli's house, but everything about it bore the mark of Kaahumanu. It was she who had commanded all to attend, she who stood at center stage, flanked by armed guards. And when Kauikeaouli "called for the attention of the people" and the audience grew silent, he immediately deferred to the regent, pointed to her and "said she would communicate his mind." In fact she communicated her own mind, and that of the council of chiefs, as her announcement makes plain, an announcement that in each of its particulars indicated that the foreign merchants' position in Hawaiian affairs was under assault.[30]

The first declaration was the pivot on which all else turned. Because of the disappearance of Boki (*nalowale ka kiaaina* [lost governor]), the king now took full possession of the island of Oahu, together with Honolulu and its two forts, Kaahumanu declared, possession of which he then passed on to her. She in turn appointed her brother Kuakini governor of the island, a post he would hold concurrently with his governorship of the island of Hawaii. This formal transfer of power further solidified Kaahumanu's political control and did not bode well for those foreign residents who had sided with Boki and Liliha, a presentiment of which emerged in her more informal address to the assembled throng. In it she called upon "all classes to attend and obey to the law of God," for such service would promote "prosperity, peace and happiness" for all, making the kingdom itself "stable and prosperous."[31]

Kaahumanu had an odd idea of what promoted stability and prosperity. No sooner had she taken her seat than the newly appointed governor of Oahu arose, walked to where the foreign merchants were seated, and declared war: Henceforth the sale and distribution of spirituous liquors would cease, grog-shop licenses would no longer be sold, gambling was prohibited, and the sabbath would become a holy (and quiet) day. Kuakini made it abundantly clear that he would not act as

had Boki, who ran interference for the merchants and failed to enforce governmental edicts designed to restrict public and private behavior. Those who flouted the law under his administration, Kuakini announced, would have their property seized and, if they continued to resist, their homes would be razed. The Christian chiefs' perspective now reigned supreme.[32]

That supremacy would be tested. The chiefs' tough stance provoked the foreign merchants and for many weeks thereafter they clashed with Kuakini's soldiers over the operation of billiards halls, fought in the streets over wine casks, and in those same streets on Sunday mornings would battle over the right to ride their horses, said to be a desecration of the sabbath. Although neither side could claim outright victory in these engagements—Kuakini may have had the upper hand—neither were they exercises in futility. Instead they reflect the significant shift in authority that the April 1 meeting proclaimed, the contours of which both groups sought to probe. The Hawaiian Christians, now rid of Boki and Liliha, were determining how far they could extend their sovereignty and how fully they could unify the various island peoples around the new codes, actions they took without soliciting the opinion of the foreign merchants, That by itself is important, for those merchants had once heavily influenced the council of chiefs through Boki and Liliha. The street fighting following the meeting, then, testified as much to the rise of the Christian chiefs as to the decline of the merchants' abilities to shape public policy.[33]

Further testimony to this alteration in the foreigners' fortunes was the rumor of an assassination plot against Bingham that emerged, significantly enough, right in the midst of the street battles between the beach community and Kuakini. Indeed, the two were inextricably linked, for the rumor's first appearance can be traced to a meeting on Wednesday, April 6, at the Oahu Hotel of those J. C. Jones liked to call "the principal residents ." They had assembled there, in the words of Stephen Reynolds, "to take into consideration the best method to represent to the government their views of the latest outrage. . . ." It was while engaged in writing a petition, in which they expressed alarm at and sought redress for "the encroachments made on our *liberties, religion,* and *amusements,*" that the report that Bingham would be assassinated first surfaced.[34]

Why was Bingham singled out? Why were not Kuakini and Kaahumanu included in the death threat? The reason, in part, may be because the resident merchants believed that Bingham had orchestrated the implementation of the new laws, that the governor and the regent were

merely his mouthpieces. Reynolds in particular was convinced of this arrangement: "Report in circulation that Mr. Bingham wrote Gov. Adams [Kuakini] a letter last evening [March 31, the night before the new laws were publicly pronounced] saying he must not give the licenses—nor show his letter to any of 'our enemies.' The hypocrite dare not show himself before men."[35]

It is, of course, a convenient rumor that contains within it an assertion that no solid evidence of its truth will be forthcoming. Bingham moreover was in fact open about his involvement and encouragement of the changes. As he later boasted, "the clear, decisive and healthful tones of the pulpit throughout the islands, and the special favor of God, strengthened and cheered on the native friends of sobriety, morality and piety." But it was just as clear that these so-called native friends—the Hawaiian Christian chiefs—had their own, indigenous reasons for championing temperance; they derived profound benefits from the new codes, benefits that are not only especially meaningful from a Hawaiian perspective, but that also help explain why Bingham and not the chiefs was the rumor's subject.[36]

In this regard Kaahumanu's efforts "to make God's law the foundation of the law of the country," as a recent biographer of the regent puts it, are instructive. The significance of the April 1 meeting, Jane Silverman argues, is that Kaahumanu essentially returned religion "to the center of law and chiefly power" after a hiatus of twelve years, a reintegration that had far-reaching consequences. During the last stages of her regency, for instance, she "reincorporated religion, with herself the primary motivator, again at the center of authority, as delineator of law and of *hewa* [sin]." Even if outsiders such as the foreign residents (including Bingham) did not recognize the way in which she refashioned Christianity to suit her Hawaiian ends, there was no mistaking her centrality. That centrality made it difficult for the merchants to threaten her, too. They had witnessed what had happened to Liliha and knew well the costs involved when one lacked the protection of the high chiefs.[37]

This situation supplied all the more reason to focus their animus on Hiram Bingham, albeit in the cautious and indirect fashion of a rumor. They could no longer confront him as directly as they had in the 1820s, when Reynolds, Jones, and any number of visiting captains had periodically threatened to bloody his nose, pummel him to the ground, or string him up from the nearest yardarm. Then, Governor Boki had held sway over Oahu and Honolulu, and Bingham was in the challenger's position, making him a more acceptably confrontable target. That situ-

ation had changed, however, as the events of spring 1831 show. Now Bingham was an important player on the winning side, a turn of fortune that generated frustration and anger on the part of his antagonists, feelings that, due to the changed context, must be vented in a different, less confrontational manner. The very resort to rumor, in short, reveals an important evolution in Honolulu's social hierarchy.[38]

The rumor is also an accurate gauge of another element in the evolving texture of Honolulu society. It gives, for example, a sensitive reading of the inner workings of the merchant community itself, a group of men who were now in somewhat straightened circumstances. They faced a series of external challenges to their economic endeavors and political power, not to say their physical safety. They would meet these challenges in a variety of ways, and in time would secure the king's favor. But Kauikeaouli did not openly join them until after he placed most of his royal responsibilities fully in the hands of the Christian chiefs in 1833, a move that correspondingly reduced the political import of his favor.[39]

The turmoil the rumor produced also instigated an important internal challenge as well, one to group identity and cohesiveness. The principal figure in this aspect of the crisis was Doctor T. C. B. Rooke. He would later gain status in Hawaiian society and a place in history in two ways. The first was his marriage to Grace Kamaikui Young, daughter of Kamehameha I's close friend John Young and granddaughter of Keliimaiki, full brother of the great Kamehameha. The second was through the couple's adoption of Grace's niece, Emma (born Kalanikaumakeamano), who would later become the wife of Kamehameha IV. Those royal connections lay in the future, however. Rooke's present, as of 1831, was considerably less regal (or stable).[40]

A relative newcomer to the islands—he "has been practicing physic in this place about two years," Bingham noted at the time—Rooke had arrived in Honolulu during one of the most tumultuous periods in Hawaiian political life. It was not the best moment to commence a medical practice, especially for an Englishman (and an Anglican) seeking to make his way in a community of foreign residents increasingly dominated by Yankees (and Congregationalists). That he was able to do so was due in large part to his willingness and ability "to keep on good terms with all parties," Bingham thought .[41]

Even in the best of times establishing and holding such a middle ground must have been fraught with difficulties. It could only have become a more intensely complicated task when, on Wednesday, April 6, a committee of American merchants led by U.S. Consul J. C. Jones

accused Rooke of spreading the report that Bingham would be assassinated and of naming names, an accusation that perforce threatened to sunder his ties to these men and to undermine his strategy of neutrality. But then that was part of the point of the rumor, or at least of his association with it. Through it the merchants, consciously or otherwise, were testing Rooke's stance in the current struggle, endeavoring to force a clear distinction between those who supported and opposed them, something that Bingham also sought to distinguish in his conversations and correspondence with the English physician.[42]

The incident began innocently enough. On Wednesday morning Rooke called at Bingham's home in what the missionary thought was an "agitated state." The previous evening he had witnessed a battle royal between Hawaiian soldiers and foreign residents in a billiards hall, and came to urge Bingham to use his influence with the Christian chiefs to slow down their punitive raids, to instruct them in "the differences between gambling and playing for amusement." If things continued as they were, Rooke predicted, blood would again flow, probably initiated by what he called "the lower class" of residents. Wishing "to feel the pulse of the doctor, as well as he mine," Bingham asked his visitor whether "there is influence enough in the higher class of residents to keep down the lower class, should they be disposed to raise a mob to do mischief." Rooke replied negatively: "They would not if they could. They are all exasperated—all classes are crossed in some way . . . the grog shop keepers are disappointed in their gains, and others are interrupted in their pleasures." If things were in such a sorry state, the American missionary countered, then "it is time the chiefs knew what they were about," concluding that the "marbles had better lie still for the moment."[43]

The die, it seemed, was cast. Even as Rooke sought to negotiate a compromise with Bingham, the missionary continued to prepare a handbill "for the people containing the general principles of abstinence," a document that would make compromise all the more difficult to achieve. It would be distributed later in the day at a massive rally of Hawaiians at Kawaiahao Church; all the leading chiefs and about a thousand *makaainana* would subscribe to the principles. The rally, a public demonstration of support for Kuakini's aggressive actions the night before, would only exacerbate matters. And as Bingham and Rooke's conversation continued, the white merchants were themselves gathering at Oahu Hotel to draw up angry resolutions to protest the enforcement of Kuakini's edicts. No one but Rooke was interested in compromise.[44]

What brought matters to a head for Rooke was his notable absence from the latter, well-attended meeting. He had warned the women of the mission not to bother shopping that day as "the merchants have all left their shops to attend to this business," and he suspected that his presence at the mission would cause problems, so he asked Bingham to keep his confidence. His suspicions had merit: He *was* at the wrong place at the wrong time. He had been seen at the Bingham house, and, as near as one can tell, that is what led to the rumor of his involvement in spreading the story in the first place.[45]

The question Rooke's fellow foreign residents had about him was not simply whether he had informed Bingham that they intended to assassinate him. That query was paired with what was apparently a somewhat more significant one of allegiance. When Reynolds visited Bingham that evening, for instance, he not only wanted to ascertain if Rooke had been the bearer of ill-tidings, but also whether Rooke was "the missionaries' friend." Reynolds was apparently unable to determine this from his conversation with the mission family, and it was at this point that he and the other residents exerted greater pressure on the doctor. Thursday morning Rooke received a summons from the American consul to appear before a "com[mittee] of gen[tlemen]" to explain his actions of the day before. The real thrust of the summons lay in its final sentences, however. Jones observed pointedly that Bingham had publicly and privately confirmed Rooke's involvement in the spread of the rumor. "That Mr. Bingham has asserted the above can be proved; if false he should suffer for the consequences." Jones's prevarication was designed to separate Rooke from Bingham, to set the two against each other. The physician was then given an opportunity to clear his name with his peers, but in such a context that he would come to share their hostility towards the missionary.[46]

Before Rooke met with the committee, and perhaps motivated by self-protection, he sent a copy of Jones's summons to Bingham, indicating that he planned to testify as requested. Bingham recognized that Jones's ploy was calculated "to prejudice [Rooke's] mind against me," and he immediately launched a two-pronged counterthrust. He dashed off a note to Rooke urging him to ignore the committee's demand for an interview and assured him that Jones was lying: "I [have] no apprehension that any man or set of men could prove what Mr. J. asserted." Bingham's letter arrived too late, so, "hoping to check the process against Dr. Rooke founded on a false charge against me," Bingham composed a stinging rebuke to Jones. "I call on you to take back the whole length and breadth of [the allegation], and without any unreasonable

delay." If he did not, Bingham warned darkly, "I shall feel at liberty to complain of you for abuse both to the Government of the Sandwich Islands and to the Secretary of the Navy."[47]

The battle over Rooke was as tangled, and the tenor of its language as hostile, as the larger confrontation between the two contending factions. And it lasted as long. In the end, Rooke managed to do the seemingly impossible: He exculpated himself from the charge of informing on the other residents, which led Jones to send a smug note to Bingham to the effect that "with Doct. R. and all the gentlemen of the village all is at rest." But so it was with Bingham, too. Although he sensed that the Englishman had been swayed to Jones's side, he nonetheless wrote him that "I regard you with increasing confidence and esteem and hope our trials in which you and I seem to know how to sympathise, will do us good." Flattery had supplanted acrimony.[48]

The rumor, then, did not succeed in driving a wedge between Rooke and either of the two groups contending for his soul. But the larger point is not that he nimbly escaped a trap, but that a trap had been set, set to enforce a particular code of behavior and sense of allegiance at a time of collective stress. The whole affair, Bingham later observed without a hint of irony for his role in the protracted psychological tug-of-war, "shows in some small measure how difficult it appears to be for a young man here to maintain a dignified independence of mind and character."[49]

* * * *

As voices from the past, these two rumors from the spring of 1831 have much to offer. They provide, for instance, a close view of the inner dynamics of social relations on the islands. This is especially true of those between the three groups—the *ali'i,* foreign merchants, and American missionaries—who sought to determine the direction and degree of change in Hawaiian culture and society in the early nineteenth century. As an example, the various accounts of Liliha's revolt indicate that her contemporaries took the rumors far more seriously than have historians, understanding the nature of her threat and its possible (and wide-ranging) repercussions for those she reportedly sought to destroy. It was on the basis of this understanding, after all, that Kaahumanu and the Christian chiefs immediately moved to undermine, if not cripple, those arrayed against them. Liliha was summarily deposed from office and denied access to sources of authority. Her allies in the merchant community were similarly confronted with a vengeful gov-

ernment; their political influence shrunk as rapidly as their income from the sale of alcohol.[50]

By itself this-rumor did not cause the chiefly leadership to initiate such sweeping reforms; they had been contemplated for some time. But it certainly intensified the debate and influenced the timing of the chiefs' actions. The rumor did so, moreover, by casting in sharp relief the differences between the competing visions for Hawaii's future, validating these differences as "facts," and then providing the language and imagery by which these disagreements could be expressed publicly.[51]

These circumstances suggest something else: that the events of the first months of 1831 were crucial to the growth of the supremacy of the council of chiefs, and with it of Kaahumanu's followers. Their place in the governance of Hawaii became so secure after this period that they easily weathered Kaahumanu's death the next year. And when Kauikeaouli then assumed the throne, and threatened to undo all that she had accomplished, they compelled him to relinquish most of his sovereign powers without a serious struggle. The present and future belonged to these chiefs, to their vision of politics and morality.[52]

These months were no less critical to the parallel ascendance of the American missionaries, a rise attested to by the rumors of plots against the life of Bingham. In the ensuing years the mission would capitalize on its alliance with the council of chiefs, and the mission's presence and power would increase markedly. The Catholic missionaries, for example, were forcibly expelled from Hawaii in late 1831, an expulsion that the Protestant mission helped to engineer. Its own numbers rose rapidly during the 1830s and in time some of its members would resign to hold high-ranking posts in the Hawaiian government. This blend of politics and piety found further expression in 1839 when P. A. Brinsmade, a Congregationalist, replaced Jones, arch foe of the mission, as U.S. agent for commerce and seamen; Reynolds could only lament that the "mission villain will crow," Again the rumors did not by themselves cause this social transformation within the foreign resident population, but they helped construct the stage on which the contending forces would act it out.[53]

Beyond these considerations, and in light of the historical context in which the rumors emerged, were nourished, and then evaporated, we can now more readily appreciate these rumors as forms of social discourse. Each contributed to the heightening of what Martin Luther King, Jr., called "creative tension," a healthy tension that can force a community to speak to, confront, and then resolve pressing, perhaps long-standing, social problems. In this respect the rumors were rational

responses to the world in which they came to life, a rationality that counters the pejorative connotations with which the word has long been freighted.[54]

Even a rumor that seems hallucinatory, one beyond the realm of reason and possibility—and the two discussed here are not at that extreme—can communicate something important to its listeners and therefore to those who come upon it later in the historical record. Such is true for a third rumor that blossomed forth, only to wither and die, all within one day sometime in the late spring or early summer of 1831. On that day, a Hawaiian from Boki's old district of Waianae entered the port town in "great haste." He headed directly to Liliha's home, startling her with the news that her husband, presumed dead, was in fact alive. Alive and well armed, for according to this source, he had arrived with two vessels bristling with cannon, evidently hoping to foment a revolt: Upon landing, Boki allegedly "ordered that a profound silence be kept about his return until his partizans could be informed."[55]

Things were not silent for long. After intense questioning of the informant, Liliha and her cohort were "persuaded of the truth of the story," and word traveled swiftly throughout Honolulu, electrifying the village. "The people were in an uproar, some frightened, some pleased," Hawaiian historian Samuel M. Kamakau recorded. Among the latter was Kauikeaouli who, as one observer noted, "forgot his dignity out of joy." Messengers by land and sea were dispatched to Waianae to welcome the once-mourned governor of Oahu. So many islanders and foreigners raced from town on horseback that "red dust rose in clouds from the plain of Kaiwiʻula." It was all for naught; the rumor had less substance than the dust clouds that billowed up into the sky. No ships were located. No one in Waianae could confirm the story of Boki's return. And the original messenger, once greeted with great joy, was now reviled: He was whipped through the streets of Honolulu for his transgression, for his ill-founded rumor.[56]

Boki's return was, perhaps, a mere fantasy. That is how it was interpreted at the time, an interpretation that has shaped contemporary analysis as well. Father Alexis Bachelot, a Catholic priest then living in Honolulu, afterwards wrote that "the messenger of this startling report had simply taken a dream for reality." Historian Gavan Daws reached a similar conclusion. The islander had but dreamed of Boki's return, a particularly vivid dream that "was all a hallucination." Reality, Daws concluded, "had dealt Boki false to the last."[57]

But it was not Boki who had been dealt false. After all, he was dead. Rather it was his wife and her supporters—including the king—who

had responded with such alacrity and enthusiasm to the news of his return. Why had they so quickly embraced the rumor? Why did it speak to them in the ways that it did? Why, in short, did they equate it with reality?

Part of the answer is that Boki's death had never been confirmed. It was widely assumed that his boat had exploded in the waters of the New Hebrides and, although parts of the wreck had been gathered, his body had never been recovered. This ambiguity about his survival, however, is of secondary importance. Instead Bachelot's account begins to point to the answer by locating the story in time. He gives no precise date, alas, but the first sentence of his narrative notes that the rumor occurred "after the overthrow of the faction of Liliha." Although the Catholic prelate did not comment further on the relationship between this rumor and her revolt (and thus the earlier rumors), the relationship is clear, Historian Kamakau recognized, for example, the rumor's meaning for those who accepted it as fact: As word of Boki's return spread, "the church party who declared Boki a stinking spirit became like a blunted needle." For a moment, the new political order was not as secure as the Hawaiian Christian chiefs might have liked.[58]

Boki's rumored return was thus an aftershock of no little importance. It spoke to many of his former supporters' greatest hopes, to their dreams of reversing the recent triumph of Kaahumanu and the Christian *ali'i* and reestablishing an earlier political order. That bit of wish fulfillment cut both ways, of course, for the story also testifies to the magnitude of the failure of Liliha's faction to neutralize or destroy Kaahumanu, Bingham, and other political opponents. The level of their loss (and frustration) was manifest in the crack of the whip across the messenger's back, each lash of which—in different ways to be sure —taught the unfortunate *makaainana* and his once-avid audience that rumors are not just idle talk.[59]

Collectively the three rumors remind us of the extent to which such idle talk was integral to everyday life, to the social construction of reality. Deeply woven into the web of culture, these rumors emerge as representations of the social sphere, and only by probing them with this perspective in mind can one begin to explain why, in the spring of 1831, some Hawaiians, missionaries, and merchants thought, spoke, and behaved as they did. This is not a perspective exclusive to Hawaii, however; it has, I think, wider applications. Yes, rumors were a particularly well-developed idiom in the Islands in the early nineteenth century, but so have they been in other places at other times. Precisely for this reason historians should begin to address more systematically the role of rumor

in history. Of perhaps most immediate aid in this quest is one of anthropologist Clifford Geertz's insights: Those who would pursue cultural analyses, he writes, need be alive to those "symbolic forms—words, images, institutions, behaviors—in terms of which, in each place, people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another." His is a powerful declaration of the interpretative possibilities of symbols—a catalogue to which rumors now must be explicitly added. But its application comes with a qualification, one that reflects a fundamental difference between anthropology and history. William Sewell, whose *Work and Revolution in France* (1980) is indebted to Geertz's ethnographic perspective, nonetheless observes that the anthropological model is static, "little concerned either with processes of change or with the social and political struggles that so often act as motors of change." Time is not of the essence for anthropologists as it is for historians.[60]

The methodological gap is not so wide that it cannot be bridged, of course, and analyses of rumors might help in this regard. What made the Hawaiian rumors particularly potent contemporary symbols, after all, was their evocation, their *assertion* of change over time, change that unfolded in part because of the rumors themselves. If this melding of the two disciplines' central concerns holds true for other rumors, then a more concerted focus on them in a variety of contexts should enable us to continue to assess the contact points between anthropology and history, contact that has already done much to transform historical scholarship in recent years. That assessment will, in turn, compel us to reexamine the very symbolic forms by which we conceive of and reflect upon the meanings of the past, and the manner in which we represent them to ourselves.

## NOTES

I am grateful to Mary Jane Knight of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society for tracking down a number of invaluable primary documents. My thanks, too, to Erik Neilsen, dean of Humanities and Arts, Trinity University, for inviting me to present a much condensed version of this article to a humanities symposium in the fall 1987; its participants provided much guidance and support as did Daniel Horowitz, Gary Kates, John Martin, and Mary Ellen Ross. Caroline Ralston and an anonymous reviewer for *Pacific Studies* offered most helpful commentary.

1. Maria Ward to Mrs. Ruggles, February 1831, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society (HMCS), Honolulu. The most complete account of Liliha's revolt emerges in Samuel M. Kamakau, *The Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii* (Honolulu: The Kamehameha Schools, 1961), 297-305; secondary source accounts of the rumor do not address its specifics and thus miss part of its significance: See Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Huwaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854:*

*Foundation and Transformations* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1938), 130; Howard S. Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii: The Pioneers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1942), 196-198; Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1974), 88-89. For an overview of the city's important social and spatial development see Daws, "Honolulu in the 19th Century: Notes on the Emergence of Urban Society in Hawaii," *Journal of Pacific Histoy* 2 (1967): 77-96.

2. Stephen Reynolds, Journal, April 7, 1831, Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. On Bingham's career in Hawaii, see Char Miller, *Fathers and Sons: The Bingham Family and the American Mission* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), chapters 1 and 2.

3. Hiram Bingham to Jeremiah Evarts, 23 November 1831, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Harvard University; Reynolds, Journal, l-8 April 1831; Levi Chamberlain, Journal, 1-8 April 1831, HMCS; Bradley, *American Frontier in Hawaii,* 201-202.

4. Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Hartford, Conn.: H. Huntington, 1849), 409, 313-314, 277, 286; see also his account of a revolt in Kauai, 234-236.

5. Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote in History* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1895), 26; Pauline King, ed., *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982), 286.

6. King, ed., Diaries, 286. Caroline Ralston offers the best accounts of race relations in Pacific port communities; see "The Pattern of Race Relations in 19th Century Pacific Port Towns," *Journal of Pacific History* 6 (1971): 39-59, and *Grass Huts and Warehouses* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1978). She notes in passing the commonness of rumors, especially within the beach communities, a term applied to the often transient populations of European and American sailors, merchants, and others that collected in the ports during the nineteenth century.

7. Samuel B. Hemingway, ed., *Henry the Fourth, Part Two* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), induction.

8. Gordon Wood, "A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution," *William and May* Quarterly, October 1966:635-642; George Rude, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France,* trans. Joan White (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); G. W. Allport and L. J. Postman, *The Psychology of Rumor* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1947); Terry Ann Knopf, *Rumors, Race, and Riots* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1975), 8-11; Ralph L. Rosnow and Gary Alan Fine, *Rumors and Gossip* (New York: Elsevier, 1976); Virgil, *Aeneid,* book 4, lines 179-189.

9. Raymond Firth, "Rumor in a Primitive Society," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* 1956:122-132; Knopf, *Rumors, Race, and Riots,* 164, passim. Knopfs contextual approach, which she calls the "process model," is particularly appealing to a historian, for its emphasis is upon the significance a rumor has for those who participate in it and what that can tell us about the world in which they live; this is not an emphasis that is at the

center of most social psychological or sociological research on rumors. Echoes of this approach can be found in Tamotsu Shibutani, *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), 10-17, chapter 6. He argues that rumors are one way that a community can develop consensus through shared interpretations of events, doing so by "pooling their intellectual resources." His is a point well taken, but he implicitly assumes that all draw upon the same pool, from which a coherent world-view will emerge. This may be more true for a homogeneous setting than in multiracial Hawaii. For the current debate over methodological approaches to the study of rumors within the discipline of psychology, see also Ralph Rosnow, "Psychology of Rumors Reconsidered," *Psychological Bulletin,* 1980:578-591; Rosnow and Fine, *Rumors and Gossip;* and Jack Levin and Arnold Arluke, *Gossip: The Inside Scoop* (New York: Plenum Press, 1987). Michael O. Murphy offers a parallel argument for the validity of employing rumor in ethnography, especially in setting the social context, in "Rumors of Identity: Gossip and Rapport in Ethnographic Research," *Human Organization* 2 (1985): 132-136. Max Gluckman, "Gossip and Scandal," *Current Anthropology,* 1963:307-316.

10. Hiram Bingham to Levi Chamberlain, 22 March 1831, HMCS; Hiram Bingham to Rufus Anderson, 21 April 1831, HMCS.

11. Maria Ward to Mrs. Ruggles, February 1831, HMCS; Wards response underscores the fact that not everyone had access to the same information, to the same pool of knowledge (which runs counter to Shibutani's assumptions in *Improvised News.*) Nor could they: Hawaiians, missionaries, and merchants operated from different principles and perspectives.

12. Chamberlain, Journal, March 1831; Gavan Daws, "The High Chief Boki: A Biographical Study in Early Nineteenth-Century Hawaii History," *Journal of the Polynesian Society,* March 1966:65-83; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 82-87; Bradley, *American Frontier in Hawaii,* 53-120; Dorothy Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 1967), offers the most comprehensive analysis of the lure of and the profits to be wrought from the sandalwood trade.

13. K. R. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 63, 152-154; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 29-60; Patrick V. Kirch, *Feathered Gods and Fishhooks* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).

14. Howe, *Where the Waves Fall,* 152-154.

15. Ibid.; Jane L. Silverman, *Kaahumanu: Molder of Change* (Honolulu: Friends of the Judiciary History Center of Hawaii, 1987), 61-67.

16. Caroline Ralston, "Early Nineteenth-Century Polynesian Millennial Cults and the Case of Hawaii," *Journal of the Polynesian Society,* December 1985:314-323, 327-328; Silverman, *Kaahumanu,* 87-97; Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Island Kingdom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), 55-66; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 73-76. The commoners' reaction to this political and social shift is discussed in Caroline Ralston, "Hawaii 1778-1854: Some Aspects of *Maka'ainana* Response to Rapid Cultural Change," *Journal of Pacific History,* January 1984:21-40.

17. Silverman, *Kaahumanu,* 101-117; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 82-89; Miller, *Fathers and Sons,* chapter 2; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 270-296; Reginald Yzendoorn, *History of the Catholic Mission in the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1927), 26 52.

18. Bingham to Chamberlain, 22 March 1831; Chamberlain, Journal, 12 March 1831; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 297-305; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 88-89.

19. Silverman, *Kaahumanu,* 80-84.

20. Bingham to Chamberlain, 22 March 1831; Chamberlain, Journal, 12 March 1831; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 300-301; Kinau to Kaahumanu, 31 March 1831, reprinted in Bingham, *A Residence,* 406.

21. Ward to Ruggles, February 1831; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* chapter 23.

22. Chamberlain, Journal, 11 March 1831; Reynolds, Journal, 21 April 1831.

23. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 303-304; Chamberlain, Journal, 1 April 1831; Reynolds, Journal, 24 March 1831.

24. Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831.

25. Ibid.

26. Reynolds, Journal, 7-9 April 1831.

27. Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831.

28. Reynolds, Journal, 7-9 April 1831; Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831; Chamberlain, Journal, 9 April 1831.

29. Bradley, *American Frontier in Hawaii,* 201-202.

30. Chamberlain, Journal, 1 April 1831; Reynolds, Journal, 1 April 1831; Silverman, *Kaahumanu,* 126-136.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 88-91.

34. Reynolds, Journal, 7 April 1831.

35. Reynolds, Journal, 1 April 1831.

36. Bingham, *A Residence,* 391.

37. Silverman, *Kaahumanu,* 128-131.

38. Hiram Bingham to Lydia Bingham, 4 April 1829, HMCS; Bingham, *A Residence,* passim; Miller, *Fathers and Sons,* chapter 2; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 61-87.

39. Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom,* 133-153.

40. A. Grove Day, *History Makers of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 1984), 39, recounts Emma's genealogical connections.

41. Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831.

42. Reynolds, Journal, 7-9 April 1831; Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Bingham to Evarts, 23 November 1831.

49. Ibid.

50. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 297-305, provides the most sustained and serious account of her revolt.

51. Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 65-87; Knopf, *Rumors, Race, and Riots,* speaks of the ways by which rumors can crystallize, confirm, and intensify hostile beliefs, and when these are linked to actual events, can then provide the "proof' necessary for action (chapter 4, but especially 164-165); the rumors in Hawaii seem to follow this pattern. See also Shibutani, *Improvised News,* 172-176.

52. Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 91-94; Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom,* 133-152; Bradley, *American Frontier in Hawaii,* 271-277, all emphasize the turbulence in Hawaiian affairs after Kaahumanu's death—and there was a good deal. But what is truly striking is how easily the chiefs asserted their power to rein in Kauikeaouli in 1833. They could not have done so if they had not already absorbed his authority in 1831; their actions then, to which the rumors clearly contributed, laid the foundation for his later capitulation. For manifestations of the deterioration of relations between Kauikeaouli and the *ali'i,* see Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors,* 65-66.

53. Reynolds, Journal, 24 February 1839. In 1839 another symbolic victory occurred: Liliha converted to Christianity shortly before she died.

54. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (New York: A. J. Muste Institute, 1985), 17-19; Firth, "Rumor in a Primitive Society," 122, seconds the possibility of the creative, salubrious nature of some rumors. This is not to deny the damaging impact rumors can have, but to focus so exclusively on this aspect of them—as most scholarship does—is to miss their complexity and thus the multiplicity of their meanings.

55. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 305; Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 87; Yzendoorn, *Catholic Mission,* 52-53.

56. Daws, *Shoal of Time,* 87.

57. Ibid. It is from this incident that one can date the emergence of a Hawaiian colloquial expression: When "a Hawaiian wishes to speak of something that cannot possibly happen, he says it will take place 'when Boki comes back' " (A. F. Judd, quoted in Laura Fish Judd, *Honolulu: Sketches of Life in the Sandwich Islands, 1828 to 1861* [Chicago: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1966], 83).

58. Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs,* 305; Yzendoorn, *Catholic Mission,* 52-53.

59. Ibid.

60. Clifford Geertz, "On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding," *American Scientist,* January-February 1975:48. Also helpful in thinking about mental symbols by which people represent themselves to others are Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and William Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980), 10-13. Not all anthropologists are unconcerned with time and context: See Geertz, *A Social History of an Indonesian Town* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), especially chapter 5; Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors,* 3-9, 67-72.

# LAW AND TOKELAU

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In 1984 the elders of Tokelau resolved to accept law in the Western European sense as a necessary and desirable tool for assisting Tokelau to prepare for self-determination under the aegis of the U.N. The elders also resolved to reform and develop the laws and legislation of Tokelau in a way that was adapted to the needs of Tokelau and that reflected as far as possible the custom of Tokelau.

Constitutionally Tokelau has had law to the exclusion of custom since 1969. In 1984 the body of law was not known in Tokelau even in broad terms, was not suited to Tokelau, and was dysfunctional. The result was that much that happened in Tokelau was contrary to law: the villages operated in their traditional way and were therefore frequently outside the constitutional protections provided by the government.

In 1984 the elders and officials of Tokelau gave visiting lawyers a description of the rules and institutions that they saw as lawlike and of the role they saw for law in Tokelau.

The purpose of this article is to place on record these perceptions of law, as stated by the elders of Tokelau before the current period of major law reform began, and also to indicate something of the background against which the decisions on law since 1984 have been made.

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More specifically this paper provides a brief introduction to the status and role of law in Tokelau and deals with the reality of social ordering there in 1984 as described by the elders and in the available village and government records of disputes reported to the police or brought before the local lay magistrate. Our concern is not with the broad body of custom, but with the interface between custom and law at a key period of Tokelau's history.

## Introduction

Tokelau[1] is situated about three hundred miles north of Western Samoa. It is part of New Zealand and consists of three small atolls—Atafu, Nukunonu, and Fakaofo—which are separated from each other by forty to eighty miles of sea. Each is made up of a ring of islets around a lagoon; each island is very small and at its highest point is only a few feet above sea level. Because the islands lack soil there is not a great variety of food crops, but the coconut palm grows readily and each island is clothed in coconut trees. From the sea the coconut palms are virtually all that can be seen and the impression is one of a heavily wooded area.

The total population of Tokelau is 1,690[2] distributed among the islands as follows: Atafu, 603; Nukunonu, 426; Fakaofo, 661. Tokelauans are categorized as Polynesians and their language bears a close relationship to Samoan. The significant contacts with the outside world today are with Western Samoa and New Zealand. The way of life on each island is communal, centered on the village. There are no major health problems; the biggest worry is the elements.

Not only are the islands of Tokelau geographically isolated from the rest of the world, but for the visitor there is the final physical barrier of the passage from ship to shore. There are no anchorages or natural harbors, so going ashore is a trip by small boat from the ship, through the surf into an artificial channel blasted in the coral, to a landing place. Having passed that barrier the visitor moves quickly and thankfully out of the tropical sun in under the umbrella of coconut palms and breadfruit trees, into the coolness of the shade and the intimacy of the village —similar to stepping directly from the street into somebody's living room. The intimacy has a clear bearing on the nature of the customary rules.

The immediate visual impact is one of order. The paths are straight and regular, and the houses take their places in the village in an orderly pattern. The impression is not only of physical order, but also of a cer-

tain discipline. There is the feeling also of people in their right place. All call greetings and welcome the visitor with a smile. However, whether on the paths or in their houses, all give the impression of going about their daily round.

## The Law and Political History

Between 1877 and 1916 Tokelau (then known as the Union Islands) was a British protectorate and was administered variously from Western Samoa, Tonga, and Ocean Island. From 1916 to 1926 the islands were part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Then in 1926 the association with New Zealand began and Tokelau was administered till 1949 through the New Zealand Administrator of Western Samoa. In 1949 Tokelau became part of New Zealand and has since been administered from Wellington and Apia.

### *Western Pacific High Commission*

By virtue of the Pacific Islands Protection Acts (U.K.) of 1872 and 1875 and of the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts (U.K.) of 1843 to 1875, the Western Pacific Order in Council of 1877 was made by the Queen in Council on 13 August 1877. This Order in Council was declared to apply to the Union Islands, among other places in the western Pacific Ocean. The Order in Council established the High Commission for the Western Pacific and gave the High Commissioner's Court jurisdiction over British subjects in the area. Article 24 of the order gave the High Commissioner power to make regulations for the government of British subjects or "for securing the maintenance (as far as regards the conduct of British subjects) of friendly relations between British subjects and those authorities and persons subject to them." The first legislation reasonably specific to Tokelau was made under that authority in 1884, the Arms Regulation No. 1 of 1884.[3]

As far as Tokelau was concerned there was little legislative activity prior to 1908. There were only eleven short pieces of legislation and many of those were simply the repeal and reenactment of rules on the same topics—principally arms and liquor control. A somewhat greater variety came at the end of the century with provision for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages; the control of contracts made with native peoples; native lands; and wireless telegraphy.

The Pacific Order in Council, 1893, repealed and replaced the 1877 order; it also applied to Tokelau. By 1893 there had been formal decla-

rations of protectorate status made in each atoll and the system of 1877 was continued after 1893 in a stronger form. Some of the procedural flexibility of the 1877 order was lost,[4] but the main thrust of the new order was similar.

Until 1909 it appears that the general spirit of the protectorate system was still being honored in respect of Tokelau and that the main area of operation of Western Pacific High Commission legislation was in respect of British subjects and matters of particular concern to the British administrators, such as merchant shipping, quarantine, arms, and liquor control.

### *Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate*

A step toward a new law future was taken by the Gilbert and Ellice (Union Group) Regulation No. 7 of 1909.[5] This regulation extended all existing Gilbert and Ellice Islands legislation to Tokelau and provided that all future Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate regulations should also apply to Tokelau.[6] The fate of Tokelau and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate was, in terms of legislation, then a common one until the forming of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony on 12 January 1916. On 5 May 1916 a further Order in Council added the three atolls of Tokelau to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony.

The volume of legislation for Tokelau and the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate increased markedly in the period between 1909 and 1916.[7] The law continued to be concerned with British interests, revenue, and shipping, but extended into new areas such as plant import regulation, protection of birds, and sale of food.

### *Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony*

The Order in Council that established the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony gave specific legislative power for the colony, but did not provide for the general extension of English law to the colony. The provision was in fact to the opposite effect. The government was empowered to legislate in all areas but with specific respect for native laws and customs. That is to say, legislation was to be compatible with the local conditions and made only to the extent necessary for the proper administration of the colony.[8]

Tokelau remained in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony until 11 February 1926. During that colonial period, laws with significant local impact were made—laws for prisons, weights and measures, a licensing

system, a capitation tax, control of medical practitioners, restriction on the importation of dogs, liquor control, currency control, regulation of native passenger traffic, guano control, prohibition of the use of explosives, exclusion of undesirables, divorce, the reciprocal enforcement of judgments, the protection of native lands, death and fire inquiries, and the immigration of aliens.

*Dependency of New Zealand*

In 1926 immediate political control over Tokelau shifted to New Zealand. New Zealand administered Tokelau on behalf of the British government through the Administrator of Western Samoa, who was based in Apia. The relevant Order in Council of 1926 provided for the continuance in force of the existing laws and gave the Governor-General of New Zealand the power to legislate for the "peace, order, and good government of Tokelau" within the territory. During the period of New Zealand administration only five pieces of legislation were promulgated and while some, such as the declaration of Apia as the port of entry for Tokelau,[9] had administrative importance, there was no great significance in any of the others.

*Tokelau—Part of New Zealand*

The latest step in the development of the situation in Tokelau occurred on 1 January 1949 when, by virtue of an agreement between the United Kingdom and New Zealand and by the effect of the Tokelau Act 1948, Tokelau became part of New Zealand. Tokelau was at that stage living under custom and a limited amount of legislation from the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony era.[10]

Since the coming into force of the Tokelau Act 1948, there has been a noticeable increase in the volume of legislation for Tokelau. Forty-three acts of the New Zealand Parliament are now in force as Tokelau law, and seventeen sets of post—1949 regulations have been made specifically for Tokelau.[11] Of the acts only one could be said to have any internal impact in Tokelau-the Tokelau Act itself. Other acts may be of relevance to the operation of the Tokelau Administration, but are not relevant to the daily lives of the people on the islands.

The regulations are more important. They fall into two main classes —those that directly affect individuals in Tokelau (the Tokelau Adoption Regulations 1966, the Tokelau Births and Deaths Registration Regulations 1969, the Tokelau Crimes Regulations 1975, the Tokelau Mar-

riage Regulations 1986, the Tokelau Village Incorporation Regulations 1986, and the Tokelau Divorce Regulations 1987) and those of relevance to external or governmental matters (the Tokelau Copra Regulations 1952, the Tokelau Customs Duties Regulations 1957, the Tokelau Finance Regulations 1967, the Tokelau Coinage Regulations 1978, and the Tokelau Administration Regulations 1980).

The Tokelau Act 1948 arguably continued the British attitude to custom: custom was the rule in those areas for which there was no specific legislation. By amendment to the act in 1969, however, a new section—4A—was added. Its precise relation to the other sections in the act relating to sources of law was not then, nor at any subsequent time, indicated. The most obvious and likely effect was that it reduced Section 5 of the act—which included the customary rules of Tokelau—from a provision of great importance to one of little import. The addition of Section 4A[12] to the Tokelau Act 1948 was said to be a reform move motivated by a desire to make Tokelau the same as New Zealand in respect of its basic law.[13]

The recognition of things customary was dealt a further blow in 1970 with another amendment, which became effective in 1975.[14] That amendment repealed the Native Laws Ordinance of 1917 and gave Tokelau a New Zealand-oriented court system. The promulgation of the Tokelau Crimes Regulations 1975 and the Tokelau Divorce Regulations 1975 further eroded the status of custom. By 1976 the only significant area of activity left by law for custom was matters relating to land.[15]

In 1986, however, the balance was slightly redressed with the enactment of the Tokelau Amendment Act 1986 and the Tokelau Village Incorporation Regulations 1986. The main purpose of the Amendment Act 1986 was to provide a viable court system for Tokelau.[16] The system technically in force before 1 August 1986 was constitutionally defective.[17] In practice no harm was done because the pattern in Tokelau was not to use the law or take any case beyond the village to which it related. The Amendment Act 1986 extends the civil jurisdiction of island commissioners and reflects the current pattern of punishment for criminal offenses used on the islands.[18] Most criminal matters are dealt with either by way of fine or by an order for the performance of community work; the commissioner may, during the proceedings, discuss the case with the Taupulega (Council of Elders) of the island for which that commissioner is appointed. This is a recognition of the customary input and procedure in criminal cases on the islands. Where the penalty imposed by the commissioner is a small one, the communities felt that it would be inappropriate to involve the court in New Zealand or have a

High Court judge travel to Tokelau to deal with the appeal. There is therefore the possibility of locally heard appeals in petty criminal matters and the possibility that a commissioner other than a commissioner of the island concerned might be a member of the appeal body.[19]

The Tokelau Village Incorporation Regulations 1986, for the first time in eleven years,[20] give legal recognition to the existence of the villages, to their administrative importance, and to the functioning of their officials. The legal importance of the village leader had been recognized since 1970 in the conferral of judicial power on the *faipule* (village representative). The law now recognizes the executive existence and role of the elders and of the other two officers of the village—the *pulenuku* (village mayor) and the *failautuhi* (village clerk). The regulations also empower the making of law by the villages.[21] As a matter of practice the villages have always made rules,[22] and the villagers have abided by them as the only recognizable normative system in Tokelau. The practical consequence of the legislation-making power will therefore be procedural rather than substantive.

## The Law in Tokelau

Social ordering in Tokelau, however, is not as the Tokelau Act 1948 and its amendments might suggest it to be. Social ordering in Tokelau is not that of metropolitan New Zealand. Law in the New Zealand sense is largely unknown and, subject to a few exceptions, is irrelevant to the daily life of the communities on each of the three islands. Tokelau lives by a system of customary rules.

The rule-makers and decision-makers appear to be the elders, the administrators, and the church. These three interact and relate to each other in varying ways according to the subject at issue. Most significant is the Council of Elders in each village. The elders make rules, both written and unwritten, they administer the rules, and they make the decisions on those rules. The most visible organization is the village, personified by the Council of Elders,[23] but also visible is the administration and its technical services—the radio link, the health services, the education facilities, and the post office. At one step removed, but of undoubted significance at a Tokelau-wide level, is the General Fono—a twice-yearly meeting of delegates from each of the islands to discuss policy matters that affect all Tokelau.[24]

The influence of the churches extends beyond Sunday churchgoing to daily evening prayers and affects significantly all matters of personal status. Particularly in marriage and divorce the church norms are likely

to be the dominant ones and at point of conflict to be preferred by the elders to the rules in legislation. Indirectly this gives a great deal of power to external church governments.

Current New Zealand research on the law of Tokelau began in 1981 through the Tokelau Law Project[25] and proceeded at a rather uneven pace till 1984. In July 1984 the first law meeting ever held in Tokelau was convened and at a three-day session a statement was made, by two lawyers from Wellington to the specially convened Fono, about the nature of law, its relationship to custom, and the nature and purpose of law reform. A number of areas of basic legal need were explored in discussion[26] and the way prepared for dealing with specific law proposals at future meetings.

The visiting lawyers presented papers in Tokelauan on the nature of law and on the relationship of law and custom[27] and also a draft handbook on the criminal law then in force in Tokelau. The response of the delegates of the host island, Fakaofo, was to present to the meeting a document that set out rules of their village. The document was presented on the basis that it would be useful, in the context of discussion about law, for the delegates from Wellington to be informed of the rules operating within the local community.

Most of the law meeting was spent working through the Fakaofo village document with an eye to the meaning of the rules and their use in practice. Delegates from the other two islands expressed the opinion that their village rules were basically the same as those of Fakaofo and elaborated, where they thought appropriate, on the details on which their village practices differed from those of Fakaofo. When asked if they had written village rules of the kind that Fakaofo had, the Nukunonu delegates produced a document in Samoan[28] that was the Native Laws Ordinance of 1917 and the Atafu delegates reported that they too had rules, but that they did not have a copy with them. Following the meeting, and on the same voyage, inquiry was made in Atafu of the village rules and a document was provided from the village records. Some time later, in response to a further inquiry whether Nukunonu had rules like those of Fakaofo and Atafu, the leaders of Nukunonu wrote down what they perceived to be its lawlike village rules. The documents[29] individually, and perhaps even better together, present a picture of social ordering in Tokelau.

### *Tokelau Custom: General*

Tokelau custom appears to have three main forms: (1) the written rules of each village, (2) the body of unwritten rules accepted in each vil-

lage,[30] and (3) the response of the elders to situations not covered by the other two forms of rules. Discussion here will first focus on the written rules of each village that were presented during and shortly after the 1984 law meeting. The second point of focus is on data related to lawlike practice, which was gathered on visits to Tokelau in 1985 and 1986.

### *Custom: Written Rules*

Fakaofo. The customary rules of Tokelau[31] as presented in the Fakaofo document began with a statement about the authority of the elders,[32] and was followed closely by a rule requiring all able-bodied men *(aumaga)* to participate in the communal, village-organized work programs. Curiously perhaps, the rules also ended with a statement about the relationship of the elders and the *aumaga* that highlighted the predominant role of the elders and the village council exactly as indicated by anthropological studies.

A dilemma for the elders of all three atolls and for the metropolitan government has been the maintenance of this role in the current period of change from a subsistence economy to a money economy and of adjustment to the impact of the desired material benefits that come in the form of state-provided education, health, communications systems, and the like. There are also the associated difficulties of adaptation to the reality of paid employment for the professional people who provide the desired nontraditional services. Some of this is reflected in the relationship between the elders and the government employment agency[33] and in the relationship between the elders and the traditional, unpaid work-gang, the *aumaga.* With the slow but inexorable approach of self-determination the villages and the elders are likely to assume a number of the external government functions and thus indirectly regain power at a constitutional level. The dilemma is now being addressed by the elders, in the context of the Law Project, by asserting the Tokelau reality through the medium of the law. The powers of dispensation for marriages in respect of the prohibited degrees of consanguinity are now vested in the elders,[34] as is the power to grant divorces.[35] And notably the law now recognizes the customary village and its officials.[36] The Tokelau Amendment Act 1986 and several other legislative proposals recently approved by the General Fono[37] evidence a similar tendency. The tension created in the villages by a fear of the eclipse of the traditional power base by the externally located government is now substantially reduced from the level of a few years back.[38]

Rule 2 of the Fakaofo report spoke of the big meetings convened to

announce new proposals to the whole village and made clear the difference in Fakaofo between the elders and the heads of family. The other rules dealt with theft,[39] trespass,[40] curfew,[41] fishing rules, *moetolo,*[42] marriage prohibitions,[43] assault,[44] noise,[45] bird catching,[46] authority over land, and the *tama tane/tama fafine* concept.[47]

In Tokelau fish are a resource second only to the coconut palm. Ten of the documented rules concerned fish or fishing and much time was spent at the 1984 meeting explaining the operation of these rules and related fishing traditions. Many of the stories were nostalgic[48]—the days of a fisherman's surrendering part of his catch to a woman on the reef seem largely to be in the past.

The fishing rules were concerned with safety, ensuring the proper sharing of significant catches, good fishing practices (to ensure a good catch), and the graduation of new fishermen. Safety was a prime interest in dealing with the *ika ha* (sea life that is covered by a restriction, prohibition, or ban): turtles, marlin, and wahoo had all caused loss of life or injury. Turtles and marlin also figured in the rules that guarantee sharing because of the value and amount of their flesh; the safety requirement that these fish should be caught by a group served to protect the village from an individual's selfishness as well. The subtleties of noosing wahoo, taking flying fish by night, and catching bonito also justified special rules of behavior in those areas. The graduation of fishermen *(kaukumete)* was not a rule in the sense of a prescription or a set of punishments affecting the unqualified. It was purely descriptive of an important feature of Tokelau life and would not have been described as a law or a rule by an outsider. The ceremony before the elders involves advice to the graduands, blessings, gift giving, and feasting. The ritual invokes the pre-Christian deity Tui Tokelau.[49]

Three of the matters in the Fakaofo document loom large in the anthropological discussions of Tokelau—the role of the elders, control of the land, and the brother/sister relationship. The remaining matters are of a more typical public order or public safety nature.

As might be expected in an oral tradition, and in the circumstances that gave rise to the stating of these rules, not all the customary rules were expressed. For example, the prohibition on sexual intercourse outside of marriage is regularly enforced and offenders punished, but that offense was not mentioned in the document.[50] Where the rules prescribed or prohibited a line of conduct the sanctions imposed for breach of the rules were reprimand, community work,[51] fine, or caning for children. On two occasions the document suggested that an appropriate penalty might be to take the offender to court. The instances in question were theft and assault.[52]

*Nukunonu.* A longer but less descriptive document sets out the fifty-seven rules that the people of Nukunonu saw as relevant to the task of explaining their customary activities to foreign lawyers. Those rules dealt with the key cultural topics of the *tama tane/tama fafine* concept, the role of the elders, and the sharing of produce. Fourteen of the rules dealt with fishing, three with the protection of coconut plantations, and one with the control of pigs. The bulk of the remainder were concerned with typical criminal offenses—curfew violation, drunkenness, rumor-mongering, noise, lighting of fires, trespass, and rape. As in Fakaofo some actions that are clearly prohibited (e.g., theft) were not included. Different from Fakaofo were the indications of licensing and price controls. Penalties suggested were reprimand, caning, community work, fine, and police supervision.

The fishing rules were more detailed than those of Fakaofo but similarly motivated. The *ika ha* were even more specifically dealt with and the customary manner of sharing turtle meat given a rule of its own. The *kaukumete (or taukutukuga)* appeared also, with a sanction against anyone who improperly took the place of a qualified fisherman at the back of a canoe.

The sexual offenses carried the heaviest penalties—a fine up to $10 or banishment;[53] the list included *moetolo,* incest, public display of romantic attachment, adultery, fornication, rape, and *fakapouliuli.*[54]

The *lafu* (restricted lands) and ownership of reef areas were obviously matters of concern—four rules addressed the issues. Both the Fakaofo and Nukunonu documents spoke of the reef areas; neither was aware of the possible Crown rights under the Tokelau (Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone) Act 1977.

*Atafu.* The people of Atafu prepared no written rules for discussion. The customary village administration, however, is interesting because, unlike Fakaofo and Nukunonu, it had some written rules already in existence in 1984 and has since amended those rules on occasion by resolution of the elders. What Atafu had in 1984, and still has, is village legislation that is recognizable as such to a lawyer and is of the kind that was first envisaged by the Native Laws Ordinance 1917.

The topic specificity of the thirteen short rules, and their failure to deal with any of the central cultural matters or most of the other topics presented in the Fakaofo and Nukunonu documents, suggests that the "rules for village order" of Atafu are supplemental to longer-standing traditional rules. The written rules as they stood in 1984 were all criminal in nature. The topics were trespass, Sunday observance, the *lafu,* spearfishing, making fires,[55] pig raising,[56] the curfew, and selfishness.[57]

In February 1985 a penalty was added for failure to cover a water tank with a mosquito screen and special rules were elaborated for controlling the consumption of alcohol in specified gatherings. The rules provide community work and fines as the standard penalties.

### *Custom: Unwritten Rules*

A survey of the data available for the three islands shows that the problems most commonly submitted for formal decision of a judicial nature have related to land disputes, fighting, stealing, illicit sexual relationships, spreading false rumors, and unjustified complaints. Some of these matters are not listed in the written documents that the islanders discussed and some are not in the law. The source of these other rules is clearly within a body of unwritten custom that is well known and accepted in each village. The origin of these other rules is not clear, but the Native Laws of the Union Group 1912 and the Native Laws Ordinance 1917 may give a clue (see Table 1).

The *Native Laws of the Union Group 1912* was published in 1914 by the Government Printer in Fiji. It follows the pattern of the Native Laws of 1894 and appears to be the precursor of the Native Laws Ordinance 1917. Whether these rules were ever *law* for Tokelau is a moot question. They were, however, more important than any other published rules of Tokelau, because they were in English and Samoan and because they dealt with the customary system of the atolls. They reflected to a small degree the administrative presence of the British. The rules recognized the native customary authorities' administrative role, linking the head of each island and the British authorities, and also established a rudimentary court system to deal with criminal offenses and civil matters. A village clerk was required to keep records and hold the money submitted as payment for fines, and the meetings of the elders and the holding of courts were provided for in broad outline. A rudimentary criminal procedure was also established; the procedure was an inquisitorial one. Following the constitutional clauses of the document was a brief criminal code. The punishments, which had a particular local flavor, were also listed. In most cases male offenders had to perform community work and female offenders were employed in the making of various handicrafts. Fines could be paid, according to an established rate, with coconuts. The rules also required obedience by the people to the elders and good land use.

The Native Laws Ordinance 1917 contains the Native Laws of the Gilbert, Ellice, and Union Group passed by the native governments in

1916, and had the effect of repealing earlier native laws. The judicial and administrative system set up in the 1912 laws was retained in the 1917 ordinance. The significant difference between the two laws is that some new offenses were promulgated and some of the offenses from the earlier laws were omitted. The 1917 ordinance also provided procedures for celebrating marriages and for dealing with offenders who had previous convictions for similar crimes.

Most of the offenses referred to in police records, the punishments used, and the procedures and village organization that are accepted as custom are those outlined in the 1912 laws and the 1917 ordinance.[58] One might speculate, not having access to the relevant British records, that the British built their legislation on customary systems that they found operative in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands area, and that between 1914 and 1975 that body of principle melded with and came to be regarded as the custom in Tokelau.

### *New Problems: Trouble Cases*

That leaves the third head of custom. How are new problems dealt with? What of the passing yachtsman who decides to drop in on Tokelau? Should he be welcomed, turned away, revictualed? Or what of the unexpected or unacceptable use of alcohol on an island? In these areas the village councils have shown themselves ready and able to act very quickly, and in so doing have established precedents for dealing with similar problems in the future.

Written records of the practice of the local judges or police are virtually nonexistent.[59] Discussions, however, with police officers, village clerks, and other government and village officials on each of the islands established the following data.

*Fakaofo.* Between 1977 and 1983 evidence was available of approximately fifty cases that were not concerned with land matters and that were handled "judicially" by the village. The cases were primarily assaults of various types, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, attempted suicide,[60] restitution of property, and the spreading of rumors. The typical sanction was the performance of community work. Tokelau had prisons during the British period but there have been none now for many years. Nevertheless, detention is occasionally mentioned by the police. In one case of an illicit relationship the recidivist couple were "detained" for two months, that is, they were kept on separate islets by police supervision.

TABLE 1. **Comparison of Early Native Law Regulations**

| Native Laws of the Union Group 1912 | | Native Laws Ordinance 1917 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offense | Punishment | Offense | Punishment |
| Murder | Death | Murder | Death |
| Assault | Fine or imprisonment. If weapon used—imprisonment, flogging | Assault | Fine or imprisonment with hard labor. If weapon used—imprisonment. If assault on women or children-flogging |
| Theft | Imprisonment with hard labor. If violence used—assault also punishable. For male recidivist—flogging. Compensation possible | Theft | Imprisonment with hard labor. If violence used—assault also punishable. Goods returned |
| Adultery | Imprisonment. Male offender—damages to husband complaining; female offender—make mats, sennit hats, or other articles | Adultery | Imprisonment with hard labor. Exchanging wives—double penalty |
| Fornication | Imprisonment and compensation to betrothed man | | |
| Exchanging wives | Imprisonment and punishment for adultery | | |
| Rape | Imprisonment | Rape | Imprisonment with hard labor. If girl under 16—flogging as well |
| Fires (causing) | Imprisonment with hard labor, compensation | Fires (carrying, lighting) | Fine, imprisonment with hard labor, compensation |
| Threatening or abusive language | Fine or imprisonment with hard labor | Threatening or abusive language | Fine or imprisonment with hard labor |
| Slander | Imprisonment with hard labor | Libel and slander | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| Drunkenness | Fine or imprisonment with hard labor | Drunkenness | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| Damaging trees | Hard labor | Malicious damage to cultivation | Imprisonment with hard labor, compensation |
| Visiting steamers | Fine, imprisonment with hard labor | | |
| Possession of a firearm without license | Fine or imprisonment with hard labor | | |

TABLE 1. **Continued**

| Native Laws of the Union Group 1912 | | Native Laws Ordinance 1917 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offense | Punishment | Offense | Punishment |
| Trading without license | Fine | | |
| Dog without license | Fine | | |
| Failure to register births, deaths, and marriages | Fine | Failure to register births and deaths | Fine, or imprisonment if in default |
| | | Attempted suicide | Imprisonment, hard labor |
| | | Abortion | Imprisonment |
| | | Incest | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| | | Adultery with daughter-in-law | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| | | Procuration of women for immoral purposes | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| | | Contravention of marriage laws | Fine, or imprisonment if in default |
| | | Sorcery | Imprisonment with hard labor |
| | | Gambling and games of chance | Fine, or imprisonment with hard labor if in default |
| | | Contempt of court | Fine, or imprisonment if in default |
| | | Aiding and abetting the commission of a crime | Same punishment as if committed the crime |
| | | Attempted crime | Similar punishment as if committed the crime. In case of attempted murder—imprisonment with hard labor |
| | | Not aiding the police | Imprisonment with hard labor |

*Source:* See n. 52.

In 1985, better data were available. There was evidence of ten cases and they concerned fornication, the spreading of rumors, boundary disputes, gossiping, fighting, and pregnancy of unmarried women. All penalties imposed were those found in the customary rules: fines, orders of community service, and reprimands. The range of punishments was from one to two months of community service and fines of from ten to twenty dollars.

*Nukunonu.* In 1983 there appear to have been nineteen cases other than land disputes.[61] They concerned pig trespass, the breaking of curfew, drunkenness, fighting, making rude noises in the village, and theft. The usual penalty was a fine and the range was between fifty cents and two dollars. Detention was the typical immediate reaction to drunkenness; in 1985 on three occasions drunk persons were detained by the police until they were sober.

In the period August 1984 to May 1985 the same types of offenses were noted: theft, drunkenness, fighting, and sexual intercourse between persons not married to each other. Additionally, there were cases of underage drinking,[62] *moetolo,* one of use of tobacco by children, trespass, contempt of court, and one of conversion of a motorbike. There was a total of eighteen cases for that period. The fines imposed ranged from two to twenty dollars, restitution was used as a remedy, and community service orders of between one week and two months were imposed by the commissioner.

*Atafu.* Atafu showed 220 cases between 1974 and 1984. In 1983 there were twelve land cases and five others. The nonland cases involved adultery, theft,[63] and assault. No evidence was found of any offense against the written village rules. The emphasis in the criminal law decisions in Atafu was on fines: they varied between one and twenty dollars. There were additionally orders for community service of up to three months and orders barring the offenders from access to the supply ship on its regular visits in cases where theft had been committed on the ship.

In a nine-month period from 1984 to 1985, twenty-six incidents were recorded by the police. Offenses were sexual intercourse outside of marriage, assault,[64] spreading of false rumors, property damage, and drunkenness. Additionally there were, atypically, complaints of forgery of a pay receipt, home-brew making, and an abortion. For those offenses for which penalties had been imposed, the community service orders ranged from one to eighteen months and fines were of one to seventy-two dollars. The use of police supervision, reprimand, and police

mediation services were also noted. The level and nature of penalty imposed were clearly dependent on the age, previous record, and contrition of the accused as well as on any special circumstances of the case.

## Overview

Tokelau has not moved quickly or readily to the use of law in the Western European sense of the word. For those accustomed to rape, murder, and extraordinary violence as regular headlines in the newspaper, the pattern of life and of offending in Tokelau is very mild. That is the impression gained from what the records show and what has been reported as having happened. The picture is of a generally peaceful community.

Tokelau has accepted the notion of a bureaucratic governmental rule system. Some legislation even operates much as it might, from the legislator's viewpoint, have been expected to operate. Notable in this context are the Tokelau Marriage Regulations and the Tokelau Births and Deaths Registration Regulations. Law in these areas has been known in Tokelau since at least 1917 and the registration and government record-keeping aspects are firmly established in the communities.

Next in point of strength as an area of legitimate law interest, a number of common criminal offenses have been accepted: theft, assault, adultery. The offenses have definitions that differ from the common law paradigms, but the elders nevertheless see them as law matters. Adultery most likely took its law connotation from the 1917 legislation, where it appeared first in official legal guise. It ceased to be an offense at law in 1975, but there was no change in Tokelau because there was no access to the post-1975 law in either of the languages used in Tokelau. Even had the 1975 regulations been known it is unlikely attitudes would have changed, because thinking about adultery is clear and very much alive in the society.[65] Typical offenses that were legislated for in the colonial era are therefore treated as law. Similarly very serious public order matters are regarded as matters for the law. Evidence of this is less easy to find because of the absence of rapes and murders. The British practice is again relevant and reflected in recently expressed views in Tokelau that if serious offenses were committed they should be dealt with by judges from outside of Tokelau and that preferably the offenders should be removed from Tokelau.

The fact that Tokelauans regard some classes of offenses as law matters does not preclude some overlap or duplication with custom. A serious assault might well be taken before the commissioner as a law mat-

ter, while other assaults are dealt with directly by the elders in their traditional capacity. Though some Tokelauans speak in terms of a clear distinction between the law (that which has to be dealt with by the commissioner) and village custom (a matter for the elders), there is no indication how the distinction is made in a given case.

The data presented in 1984 showed little evidence of offenses against what were seen as purely village rules. Significantly there was no mention of those areas of custom that were dominant and uncontradicted.[66] An explanation may be that those areas are considered a purely Tokelauan affair and thus of no concern to outsiders, or that there may not be much offending in those areas. It should also be noted that the lack of income of many in the community, the general absence of individual property (such as would be suitable for seizure and sale), and the extensive network of family relationships make the typical European law enforcement measures inappropriate to the Tokelau legal system.

Some new rules are created and new problems handled in customary fashion by decision of the elders; many other new problems are conceived of as law matters and either local rules are made (as in the case of Atafu) or the Tokelau Administration is asked about the law on that matter. A marine disaster and salvage will be handled on the spot in the customary manner. Less urgent matters, particularly if modern in aspect and likely to be of a recurring nature, will be regarded as law matters. Thus speargun fishing, trade licensing, price controls, and controls on the activities of foreigners in the communities are all seen as possible and proper areas for the operation of law.

The law has a limited but increasing role in Tokelau. In Tokelauan perception it is closely related to criminal law, to the activity of the government (as distinct from the village), and to the newer features of life in Tokelau (such as the radio telephone, the post office, and a planned airstrip).

This analysis of the perception of law, if correct, provides an explanation for the dearth of evidence about the practice of traditional rules. In the fields of communal living and familial and personal relationships there are clear and operative rules, but in 1984 they were not discussed as law nor typically are they yet seen in Tokelau as within the proper realm of law. The analysis also offers some explanation both for the absence of a view that typical civil matters[67] might be matters for law and for the lack of desire in law discussions to extend legislation into civil law areas.[68]

Law is related to *palagi* (Europeans, foreigners); it is viewed primarily as a cultural concept. It is not seen in a functional perspective as sim-

ilar to the rules of custom. It is the social ordering mechanism that foreigners used in Tokelau independently of custom and that foreigners can be expected to use to deal with modern problems. This dichotomy is the way Tokelauans view the realms of law and custom in the present twilight zone between the dominance of custom and an increased awareness and use of law.

## Conclusion

In Tokelau generally the law is not known, is not accessible to the people, and is therefore not used. Its effect in 1984 was that it technically rendered illegal much of what was happening on a daily basis in Tokelau. Notwithstanding the contradiction of law, the custom followed in Tokelau provided a viable system of social order. That system of social order was not rights-oriented or encouraging of individualism-it was tailored to a community and its environment, and functioned well. It was centered not on laws, courts, and lawyers as predicated by the Tokelau Act, but on the traditional village.

## NOTES

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1. For general background information see *Report of the Administrator of Tokelau for the Year Ended 31 March 1986,* New Zealand Parliament House of Representatives, Appendix to the Journals, E14; *Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Tokelau,* 1986, U.N.G.A. A/AC 109/877.

2. Recorded on 10 October 1986, *Tokelau Census of Population and Dwellings 1986* (Christchurch: Department of Statistics, 1987).

3. *Fiji Royal Gazette,* 1884, 87.

4. For example, that contained in Article 34, the promotion of reconciliation and reference to arbitration. Cf. Articles 131-134 of the 1877 Order in Council.

5. *Fiji Royal Gazette,* 1909, 1065.

6. The effect was to make the following law for Tokelau: The Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate (Consolidation) Regulation 1908, No. 3 of 1908; the (Merchant Shipping) Fees Regulation 1909, No. 3 of 1909; the Distillation (Prohibition) Regulation 1909, No. 5 of 1909; the Gilbert and Ellice (Quarantine) Regulation 1909, No. 6 of 1909.

7. See *Tokelau—Subdelegated Legislation (1877-1948)* (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington/Tokelau Administration, 1986).

8. Gilbert and Ellice Islands Order in Council 1915, *S.R. and O. 1948* Vol. 9, 655:

> VIII. In the exercise of the powers and authorities hereby conferred upon him, the High Commissioner may, amongst other things, from time to time, by Ordinance, provide for the administration of justice, the raising of revenue, and generally for the peace, order, and good government of the Colony, and of all persons therein, including the prohibition and punishment of acts tending to disturb the public peace. Provided as follows: . . .
>
> (3) That the High Commissioner, in making Ordinances, shall respect any native laws and customs by which the civil relations of any native chiefs, tribes, or populations under His Majesty's protection are now regulated, except so far as the same may be incompatible with the due exercise of His Majesty's power and jurisdiction, or clearly injurious to the welfare of the said natives.

9. "Port of Apia Deemed Port of Entry for Union Islands Ordinance," *Western Samoa Gazette* Supplement, No. 1, 4 March 1941, 805.

10. Without doubt the most important piece of legislation from that era was the Native Laws Ordinance of 1917. *Western Pacific High Commission Gazette 1917,* 39.

11. See A. H. Angelo, "Tokelau—Its Legal System and Recent Legislation," (1987) 6 Otago L.R. 477, 495-498.

12. Section 4A: "The law of England as existing on the 14th day of January in the year 1840 (being the year in which the Colony of New Zealand was established) shall be in force in Tokelau, save so far as inconsistent with this Act or inapplicable to the circumstances of Tokelau. Provided that no Act of the Parliament of England or of Great Britain or of the United Kingdom passed before the said 14th day of January in the year 1840 shall be in force in Tokelau, unless and except so far as it is in force in New Zealand at the commencement of this section."

13. Speech by Hon. J. Hanan (Minister of Island Affairs), N.Z. Parliamentary Debates Vol. 360, 1969:481.

14. The Tokelau Amendment Act 1970 came into force on 1 December 1975.

15. The jurisdiction of custom in land matters had been reaffirmed by Section 20(2), Tokelau Amendment Act 1967: "Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, the beneficial ownership of Tokelauan land shall be determined in accordance with the customs and usages of the Tokelauan inhabitants of Tokelau." During the debate on the 1967 amendment bill, Mr. M. Rata stated that "[c]ustom in the Islands is for land normally to go to the eldest son, and when his occupation ceases, it reverts to the group. When there was some dispute as to inheritance, the village councillors were able to decide the issue. . . ." He then asked the minister of island territories (Hon. J. T. Hanan) whether this would still apply under the Amendment Act. The minister replied, "If it is in accordance with their customs, with meetings of elders to determine the question, this would still apply; there would be no change" (N.Z. Parliamentary Debates Vol. 353, 1967:3070).

16. See Angelo, "Tokelau—Its Legal System and Recent Legislation."

17. That system, which is to be found in the Tokelau Amendment Act 1970, provided for primary jurisdiction in a commissioner on each island. The court of general jurisdiction and the court of appeal for petty matters was the Niue High Court, with jurisdiction of an

equivalent nature for some matters in the New Zealand High Court. Appeal was to the New Zealand Court of Appeal and potentially there was, as a matter of prerogative, appeal to the Privy Council.

18. Section 7.

19. Section l0(3): "No appeal shall lie pursuant to subsection (1) of this section in respect of any judgment of a Commissioner in any proceedings for any offence punishable by imprisonment for not more than 3 months or any offence punishable only by a fine of not more than $150, but any party to any such proceedings may appeal from the judgment of the Commissioner to such body, and in accordance with such procedures, as are prescribed by regulations made under the principal Act."

20. Since the repeal of the Native Laws Ordinance 1917 by the Tokelau Amendment Act 1970, which took effect in 1975.

21. Regulation 18.

22. Cf. Rule 15 of the Native Laws Ordinance 1917: "(1) The Magistrate and Kaubure may make Island Regulations for the good order and cleanliness of the Islands, such Regulations to be subject to the approval of the District Officer on behalf of the Resident Commissioner. (2) The penalties imposed under the above Regulations shall not exceed a fine of ten shillings or one month's imprisonment."

23. In Atafu the Taupulega comprises the head of each family group, together with the *faipule* and the *pulenuku.* In Fakaofo the council is made up of the *faipule,* the *pulenuku,* and the village elders: meetings involving all the heads of family groups are held only infrequently. The Nukunonu council consists of heads of extended families, together with the *faipule* and the *pulenuku.*

24. The definition of the General Fono in Section 2 of the Tokelau Act 1948 is vague: "General Fono means the representatives of the people of each island of Tokelau, usually consisting of 15 persons from each island of Tokelau selected in accordance with traditional custom and usage and usually meeting in session at least once a year." As a matter of practice and convention the General Fono now makes all policy decisions for Tokelau and controls the Tokelau budget.

25. The Tokelau Law Project is under the aegis of the Tokelau Administration and was instigated by the government of New Zealand and the United Nations. Its terms of reference were as follows:

1. To prepare a statement of the law presently in force in Tokelau
2. To provide, by way of commentary or otherwise, the basis for a consolidated edition of the legislation in force in Tokelau; to indicate any legislative change by way of repeal, amendment, or addition necessary for the legislation (a) accurately to reflect the present constitutional and legal structure of Tokelau and (b) to be internally consistent
3. To report on the revision and reform of the Tokelau legislation with a view to the production of a systematic text of a revised laws of Tokelau for the ready reference and use of those concerned with Tokelau law
4. To investigate Tokelau custom with a view to its recognition by or incorporation in legislation where appropriate. *(Research and Revision of the Law of Tokelau* [Wellington, 1981], 2)

Published products of the Law Project to date include the working paper *Tokelau Law Lexicon* (Wellington: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1986) and *Subdelegated Legislation* (1877-1948) (see n. 7); the Tokelau Amendment Act 1986, which provides a viable court system for Tokelau; the Tokelau Village Incorporation Regulations 1986; and the Tokelau Divorce Regulations 1987.

26. For example, a viable court system, extension of the commissioner's jurisdiction, marriage regulations consistent with the local rules of incest, and the Crimes Regulations.

27. For some discussion of these issues see A. H. Angelo, "The Common Law in New Zealand and Tokelau," paper written for the conference "Common Law in Asia," University of Hong Kong, December 1986; publication forthcoming in Melanesian L. J.

28. The missionary language of Tokelau.

29. The Fakaofo document contained sixteen rules; its pattern was to set out the rule, outline the policy behind the rule, and list the penalties. Nukunonu had a longer document with fifty-seven rules; the rules and penalties were briefly stated and covered a wider range than those of Fakaofo and Atafu. Atafu presented the shortest document; its thirteen rules followed a pattern similar to that of Nukunonu's.

30. See generally A. Hooper, *Aid and Dependency in a Small Pacific Territory* (Auckland: University of Auckland, 1968); A. Hooper, *Outline of the Social Oganisation of Fakaofo* (Auckland: University of Auckland, 1968); A. Hooper, *Land Tenure in the Tokelau Islands,* Working Paper 11, Proceedings of South Pacific Commission symposium on "Land Tenure in Relation to Economic Development," Fiji, 1969; J. Huntsman and A. Hooper, "The Desecration of Tokelau Kinship" (1976) 85 Poly. Soc. J. 257; J. W. Huntsman, "Concepts of Kinship and Categories of Kinsmen in Tokelau Islands" (1971) 80 Poly. Soc. J. 317-354; J. Huntsman and A. Hooper, "Male and Female in Tokelau Culture" (1975) 84 Poly. Soc. J. 415-430.

31. Entitled *Tulafono Fuka—Aganuku a Tokelau* (Fakaofo) [Customary Rules of Tokelau (Fakaofo)].

32. "Dignity and peace is controlled by the elders, as is safety in the islands of Tokelau" *(E pulea e toeaina te maalu ma te (nofo) filemu, vena ma te haogalemu i na motu o Tokelau).*

33. The State Services Commission of New Zealand.

34. Regulation 5(4) of the Tokelau Marriage Regulations 1987.

35. Regulation 8 of the Tokelau Divorce Regulations 1986.

36. The Tokelau Village Incorporation Regulations 1986, especially regulations 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, and 18.

37. The pattern of legislative development is for the General Fono to formulate, discuss, and approve proposals that are then submitted to the Administrator for promulgation as legislation.

38. There has been no increase in the size of the Tokelau Public Service (T. P. S. ); work contracts *(konekalate)* are made between the Tokelau Administration and the village elders for employment of casual labor in the villages; and the official secretary for the Tokelau Administration (the head of T.P.S.) is now a Tokelauan.

39. The rule defined theft as *kaihohoa.* This is the appropriate definition, but the Samoan *gaoi* is also heard. (The village records were until very recently written in Samoan and

prayers at meetings may still be said in Samoan). The most serious act in traditional society was theft, consequently it had the most serious penalty: for example, Fakaofo had the drowning stone. The fact that this rule was stated early in the document probably reflects the traditional seriousness of the offense. If the theft is from the village land, the offender is usually dealt with by the elders only, but if private property is involved the individual who has suffered the loss may go directly to the commissioner.

40. It is not going on the land but residing there or taking coconuts from the land that is the offense.

41. The curfew rule covers the evening prayer time and night curfew. The evening prayer time, which is signaled by the ringing of the church bell at about 7 P.M., lasts for about an hour and is policed by the elders. The night curfew is from about 10 P.M. until dawn and involves a general prohibition on movement about the village.

42. Attempting to possess a woman while she is asleep. *Moe* means sleep, *tolo* to take. Intercourse is not required. A touching or disturbing of clothes is the usual physical element.

43. See the Tokelau Marriage Regulations 1986, which provide for dispensations, for example, a relaxation by the Administrator of the prohibition on the marriage of first cousins (see Hooper and Huntsman, "The Desecration of Tokelau Kinship"). For many years there has been discussion and concern in Tokelau about the prohibition of marriage in respect to degrees of consanguinity. The Tokelauans prohibit marriages at least to second-generation relations and often to third- or fourth-generation relations (that is, second and third cousins). There was in Tokelau considerable feeling that the law (which from 1975 prohibited only first-cousin marriages) should prohibit all relationships that are prohibited customarily. By 1984, however, when discussions on the regulations took place, other forces were at work, notably the impact of greater freedom of movement for people in and out of Tokelau and between Tokelau and metropolitan New Zealand. The elders were therefore conscious of the fact that young Tokelauans in metropolitan New Zealand could, as first cousins, marry and return to Tokelau and confront the elders with a *fait accompli.* The answer of the elders to this problem is set out in regulations: no new prohibited degrees were added to the regulations and the power of dispensation was vested in the elders.

44. The Tokelauan word is *miha.* There is no assault in Tokelau unless there is injury.

45. The proscription is on noise at any time and refers mainly to unnecessary shouting and rowdy behavior. Thus noise generated by properly organized games, work-related noise such as that from chainsaws and outboard motors, and noise from radios and cassette players (because they are still few in number) are not covered by this rule.

46. The prohibition is on catching birds on the *puka* trees. Only certain men are familiar with the technique of catching these birds and permission to catch the birds must be granted by the elders.

47. See Hooper, *Aid and Dependency;* and Huntsman and Hooper, "Male and Female in Tokelau Culture."

48. Of the days before aluminum dinghies and outboard motors, when quietness was treasured and disturbed schools of fish could not be followed at speed.

49. After the invocation to Tui Tokelau, the chant finishes with a recitation of the name of fish from the various zones of the sea, that is, open sea, reef, lagoon.

50. Nor was murder. In none of the three documents was anything written or said about burials, though obviously the rules are clear and often used.

51. Supervised by the village police and interchangeable with fines.

52. Cf. *Native Laws of the Union Group 1912* (Suva: Fiji Times Ltd., 1914) and Native Laws Ordinance 1917, *Western Pacific High Commission Gazette,* 1917, 39.

53. Banishment is no longer in practice. In the Atafu document, however, it is still listed as the traditional punishment for couples who use the pastor's grounds as a meeting place.

54. Living together as a couple without being married; literally, "living in darkness." The indications were that the concern was with de facto relationships of visitors, as the practice is not common among the local people.

55. Prohibited on the seawalls on the lagoon side of the village, except when there is a northwesterly wind that will direct the smoke away from the village.

56. The pigs are to be fed between 6-10 A.M. and 2-4 P.M. Feeding pigs outside these set times, pig trespass, and not tethering a sow if it is outside the fence are offenses.

57. A particular aspect treated by the Atafu rules is *kafaga-tahi,* in Nukunonu called *kafaga-lua.* This refers to a man's going separately to his family's land to get coconuts for himself instead of going with the other men of the family and sharing the produce among the whole (extended) family.

58. The Native Laws Ordinance 1917 was law until 1975 and in 1984 still claimed by Nukunonu as its law.

59. There were few records in 1984 and the hurricane and tidal wave of 1987 destroyed many of those.

60. That is, running away in a canoe.

61. In Nukunonu the *faipule* decides land matters. First, agreement is sought between the parties. If that fails the *faipule* gives a decision. If the dispute is still unsettled the parties are asked to take an oath and await divine intervention to settle the land dispute.

62. The relevant age is eighteen.

63. Among these cases was one in which five boys were punished for taking three gallons of ice cream from the supply ship and eating most of it. The fines ranged from $2 to $3.

64. Often associated with drunkenness. In one of these cases a wife struck her husband on the head in a domestic dispute. She was fined $20 for assault and he was fined $10 for drunkenness.

65. The new criminal code approved by the elders in 1986 contains adultery as an offense.

66. For example, the checking of boats on their return from fishing or a visit to the plantation.

67. For example, contracts, torts, and succession.

68. For example, execution of judgments for debt.

# "THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH": THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF QUEENSLAND MELANESIANS IN NEW GUINEA, 1893-1956

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A little-known migration in Oceania has been the movement of over eleven hundred Pacific Islander teachers and families between island groups in the service of Protestant missions. Among these migrants were Melanesian teachers who went to Papua New Guinea from the sugar fields of Queensland, having been recruited earlier by Australian labor traders from their homes in the Solomon Islands and the New Hebrides.

Bachelor Melanesians from Queensland made up 70 percent of the staff of the Anglican Mission in northeastern Papua before World War I. They were meant to be cultural interpreters, smoothing the difficult road of understanding between the villagers and European mission agents. They were not as well educated as the seminary-trained Polynesian teachers from the Cook Islands, Samoa, and Fiji who served other Protestant missions; and their relations with Papuan peoples were based on cultural closeness and simplicity of life rather than patriarchal dominance. Their death rate far exceeded that of Europeans in the colony.

This article examines the recruitment for mission work of these "middle men," their expectations and performance, and their attitudes to their own illnesses and approaching deaths. Unlike Polynesians and Europeans, the Queensland Melanesians did not disappear from the land of their adoption: many of them married Papuan women, and their descendants have mingled with the people of Papua New Guinea.

In June 1987 the Ewage-speaking people of Gona village, in Oro Province, Papua New Guinea, staged a reenactment of the landing of the first Solomon Islander teachers with their English mission patrons some

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eighty years earlier.[1] Through song and dance, the coming of the Solomon Islanders was affirmed in popular memory beside that other event that made Gona and nearby Buna famous during World War II: the arrival of invading Japanese forces in 1942. Harry Locar of Malaita in the Solomons, the last of the South Sea Islander teachers among the Ewage-speaking people, died at Gona in 1952; the last islander teacher, Johnson Far, died at Dogura in the Milne Bay Province four years later. They were among several hundred South Sea Islanders who lived and died in New Guinea as part of the missionary endeavor to convert the Papuan people to Christianity.

The work of the South Sea Islander teachers has received little attention from anthropologists and historians, yet the records of the missions in Papua New Guinea contain valuable testimony of the teachers' contribution to cultural change. The title given to a little book about indentured Pacific Islander laborers in Queensland, *The Forgotten People,*[2] might well have been applied to the islander missionaries in New Guinea. "They leave their own islands . . . and lead a life of privation and monotonous isolation amongst the Papuans," wrote William MacGregor, first Administrator of British New Guinea, and "many die in service . . . unknown and unheeded by the 'outside world.' "[3] Altogether, over eleven hundred Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian teachers and their wives traveled to other Pacific Island groups in the service of the Protestant missions.

Beginning in the 1820s, when Tahitian teachers had begun to spread the faith of evangelical Christianity to the Cook Islands and Tonga, the use of Pacific Islanders as agents became a standard Protestant missionary practice. In Papua New Guinea, a corps of Loyalty Islanders was sent by the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) in 1871 to staff its pioneer mission. The Loyalty Islanders in Papua and the Torres Straits were joined by groups of Rarotongans from 1872; then the Rarotongans were overtaken numerically by the Samoans, whose initial party arrived at Port Moresby in 1883. Fijians made up the majority in the first Methodist mission contingents sent to New Britain and the D'Entrecasteaux group in 1875 and 1891 respectively. Similarly, the Anglican Mission, whose initial party arrived in northeastern Papua in August 1891, came to be represented by Melanesian and European agents in almost equal numbers during the first two decades of work by the Church of England, In the field claimed by the Anglicans on the northeast coast of Papua, as elsewhere, village people in many places first heard the gospel stories as they squatted on the sand with other Pacific Islanders.

**"You Send Me Down to New Guinea"**

Working as agents of the Church of England in New Guinea before 1910 were 144 men and women. They may be divided into three distinct groups: sixty-four Europeans, nearly all from Britain and Australia, supervised thirty-three indigenous Papuan staff, products of the mission itself. The remaining forty-seven came originally from the western Pacific, from the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands. All non-Roman Catholic missions at work in British New Guinea—L. M. S., Methodist, and Anglican—used Pacific Islanders; unlike their neighbors, however, the Anglicans possessed no missionary bases in Polynesia. The sole Anglican agency in the Pacific before 1891, the Melanesian Mission, was still in its infancy and provided New Guinea with none of its converts.[4] The initial Anglican effort in New Guinea was meager indeed: two clergymen led a small working group to Goodenough Bay in eastern mainland Papua. This compared unfavorably with the Methodists' party of seventy strong, including Fijians —claimed at the time to be the largest mission company ever sent to a foreign field. MacGregor had already published his opinion that the Anglicans could not hope to occupy their field, which encompassed three hundred miles of coastline, without "at least a score" of South Sea Islander teachers.[5]

For their islander agency, then, the Anglicans turned to the Melanesian converts of their church already resident in Australia. Thus the South Seas teachers who contacted village populations in northeastern New Guinea had all been adrift from their home islands and domiciled in Australia for some years. In Queensland, the Melanesians were invariably referred to as "Polynesian" or *"Kanaka"* (man), though their descendants in Australia now prefer the designation South Sea Islander. Being among the sixty-two thousand islanders recruited for colonial sugar plantations between 1863 and 1904, the Melanesians had taken part in a circular migration pattern between their home islands and the Australian colonies, having been engaged (or, in the early years, taken by deception) for work in Queensland. This total includes many who had remained in Queensland or had been recruited again for the colonies after returning to their homes following an initial three years' service. The majority of the Melanesian laborers were young, unmarried males.[6]

The churches' initial efforts to reach the South Sea Islanders in Queensland were paltry and sporadic. For the churches, the European population spreading from towns made the outback seem the more

urgent flock. The Brisbane Church Chronicle bewailed the fact that many Melanesians who might be the means of carrying civilization into the Pacific were returning to their islands in no way bettered by their sojourn in Queensland.[7] Beginning in the late 187Os, attempts were made to overcome the evangelistic paralysis of the major churches. Schools were opened for Pacific Islanders by Anglican clergy at Bundaberg and on the Herbert River. The evangelical cause was represented at Bundaberg after 1882 by Florence Young, founder of the Queensland Kanaka Mission.[8] To reach the greatest concentration of islanders, in Mackay, missions were conducted by Presbyterians at Homebush and Walkerston, while two devout Anglican women opened night schools. Elizabeth Watt Martin and Mary Goodwin Robinson offered instruction after 1882 to Melanesians in reading and arithmetic, singing, and scripture "to make them good Christian citizens."[9] Mrs. Robinson's school later became known as the Selwyn Mission. But such efforts were exceptional, and it was unsurprising that only two thousand out of eight thousand islanders in the colony in 1895 were numbered as converts of any Christian sect.[10]

In the 1880s two Anglican clergymen in Queensland conceived a particular interest in the Melanesians. One was the Reverend Albert Maclaren. A Scotsman born in England, he prepared for missionary work at St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, but was rejected for service in Africa on grounds of health. Maclaren had then migrated to Queensland, where he was ordained. Appointed to Mackay, Maclaren won the esteem of the four thousand Europeans in the parish and the two thousand South Sea Islanders on the nearby plantations. He, in turn, encouraged the educational work of the Selwyn Mission among Melanesians: "It seems a great pity that something is not done for these poor fellows when they come to our country." He added reproachfully, "The white people are against my doing anything in the way of teaching them, their argument being that they pay me not to look after the souls of black but of white people."[11] Maclaren was commissioned by the primate of Australia, Bishop Alfred Barry of Sydney, to lead the New Guinea Mission and (though dying four months after arriving in the field) his links with the islanders were maintained by his successors in New Guinea. When islanders moved from the plantations south to Brisbane there was an influx into the schoolrooms run by the Church of England at St. John's Procathedral. Canon Montagu Stone-Wigg, subdean of the cathedral, had begun classes for Melanesians and acquired a home in South Brisbane for men with a church connection.[12] Maclaren had hoped to recruit Stone-Wigg for his New Guinea staff: but after his

consecration as first bishop of New Guinea, Stone-Wigg made the South Seas agency an important part of his expansionist policies. On a single return visit to Queensland alone, Stone-Wigg engaged twenty South Seas volunteers. Thus the first priest and the first bishop of the mission brought to New Guinea strong personal associations with the Queensland Melanesians.

Among those who had drifted south to Brisbane in the wake of the 1891 sugar industry recession were two islanders, Harry Mark and Willie Miwa of Maewo island in the New Hebrides. They were the first to respond to the call to preach to the Papuans. Overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task in New Guinea and encouraged by MacGregor's testimony as to the usefulness of Polynesians to the L. M. S., the Anglicans wasted no time in pointing to the divine command to do the work of an evangelist as a convert's duty. In particular the New Guinea cause was urged on Melanesians by Canon Stone-Wigg, and the first to volunteer were scholars at St. John's School, Mark and Miwa among them. Mark and Miwa offered to go in 1893. A service of commissioning was held, and the islanders were farewelled. A second party left two years later. At their valediction in Brisbane, the second group of Melanesian missionaries-to-be told their audience how they had come to Australia in ignorance of God and had learned of his goodness and love. They now felt compelled to tell others who were still ignorant of those glorious truths and so were going to New Guinea.[13]

But this was not the whole story. Melanesians assumed that since missionaries had status and respect in society, they too would be accorded status and respect if they became missionaries. Their religious motives were overlaid by other considerations. Their elaborate dress in missionary photographs—waistcoats, watch chains, striped trousers, and straw hats—speak of a desire for a white man's rank. One volunteer, William Maso of Palmer island in the New Hebrides, was a coachman-gardener in Brisbane. Another, John Dow, was the son of a Fijian sailor shipwrecked on the north Queensland coast who subsequently married one of his Aboriginal rescuers. A few were domestic servants in the suburbs of Brisbane. Offering her servant Joe to Stone-Wigg, Mrs. Lucy Benson conceded that he was no missionary zealot, but was of excellent character, honest and sober. She did not know whether he would like teaching but he would certainly help the bishop to boss the boys: "Give Joe a position and make him feel his responsibility and he would do well."[14]

The secular aspect of missionary enthusiasm therefore cannot be overlooked. The South Sea Islanders could look forward to the attrac-

tive prospect of a £25 yearly missionary salary, paid quarterly. This compared favorably with Melanesian laborers' wages that averaged £8 in Mackay and £20.1 in Maryborough in 1901.[15] The extra money could purchase such luxuries as shirts, hair oil, scented water, and tinned meat. Some islanders wanted to enlist because their friends were going. Peter Mussen of Ashfield, Sydney, said he wanted to go with his friend Willie Holi of Brisbane; both men later made an important impression in the Anglican mission. From Thursday Island, Jack Newa asked the head of Dogura station to let him come to New Guinea with his friend Ambrose Gela: "If he go, I would go with him. Please tell me whether you want any teachers," he wrote.[16] Moreover, the Melanesians had known of the New Guineans who had worked earlier in the Queensland sugar fields and considered them men "of their own kind." Between 1895 and 1906 no fewer than sixteen Selwyn scholars from Mackay and eight from Bundaberg threw in their lot with their companions and journeyed to the Anglican headquarters at Dogura in Goodenough Bay, Smaller groups came from schools on Thursday Island, the Herbert River, Maryborough, Brisbane, and Ashfield.[17] European privileges on a mission and Anglican status were assets not to be turned down lightly. "I will come Down to Bundaberg," wrote prospective candidate John Gela to his teacher, "and you send me Down to New Guinea. I like it very much to go there for the way of life."[18]

So worldly motives were well mixed with the spiritual ambitions usually associated with missionary endeavor. But, from the beginning, a strong religious and sacrificial element appears to have been in evidence among Melanesian candidates. Edgar Meduedue, a Papuan student who accompanied Stone-Wigg to the South Sea Islander schools of Queensland, told Papuan villagers that in North Queensland "the Bishop preached to the Islanders. . . . He asked them to come to New Guinea. It would not be for money or for food, but to do God's work, and then at last they would die in New Guinea. He said the same thing in Bundaberg."[19] The fact that ten Melanesians in Bundaberg and forty Melanesians in other centers forsook the opportunity to return home and instead went "Down to New Guinea," where at last they died, cannot be understood in terms of the allure of secular status and salary alone.

The arrival of Harry Mark and Willie Miwa at the New Guinea Mission in May 1893 was looked upon by the staff as a momentous event. Melanesians were now going to preach to other Melanesians, and their interposition would smooth the difficult road of understanding between Europeans and the villagers. The Wamira people shouted a loud

*"Kaion"* (Greetings) to the two islanders as they landed.[20] After his first attack of fever at Dogura, Mark was installed at Awaiama near Taupota, where two men had been hanged by MacGregor in 1889 for murdering a white trader. Here there was trouble. A syncretistic Christian cult had been launched by Abrieka Dipa, a former laborer returned from Townsville who had been an intermediary in the sale of Dogura plateau to Maclaren in 1891.[21] With a red calico band on his arm, Dipa was conducting prayers and religious instruction known as *tapwaroro.* According to the mission's senior priest, the Dipa sect had become entirely separate from the English mission and was holding its own services. Anyone who opened his or her eyes during prayers was liable to be beaten with a stick. Soon Mark was trying to impose orthodoxy on the followers of the wayward Dipa, holding school, and canvassing Taupotans "to tell them no work Sunday."[22]

Miwa died shortly afterwards near Cape Vogel from a meal of poisonous fish for which the sorcerers claimed credit, although the missionary had told the people that his illness was due to natural causes. Despite this melancholy beginning, a number of Melanesians swelled the mission staff before the turn of the century. Four teachers joined the mission before 1897, and in 1898 the address of welcome by the mission staff to Stone-Wigg was signed by seven islanders. During the first two decades of missionary work in New Guinea, the Anglican diocese was more Melanesian than European in character. After 1904 the South Sea Islanders outnumbered the Europeans; for a period of several years after 1907 over 70 percent of the foreign staff of the Anglican mission were Melanesians.[23]

Islander teachers were endowed with abilities that helped them carry the prayers and hymns of the mission to many firesides on the beaches of northeastern Papua. The first resident missionaries at Awaiama (Harry Mark, 1893), Menapi (Willie Miwa, 1893), Wamira (Jack Newa, 1895), Boianai (Willie Holi and Robert Tasso, 1895), and Naniu (William Maso) were all Melanesians. David Tatu accompanied Europeans in 1900 when the first permanent mission was established on the Mamba River in northern Papua.[24] The fragmentary records extant suggest that villagers had little trouble adjusting to the Melanesians. Accompanying Willie Holi to Boianai in 1895, E. H. Clark wrote that "Holi being a dark-skinned man was not so extraordinary to them, but I being white was a great curiosity. . . . Some of them said I was a child of the Sun."[25] Sharing a common cultural background with the people, the missionaries from the New Hebrides and the Solomons had considerable success with their congregations. At first, it is true, they were baffled by the lin-

guistic intricacies of the local dialects—Wedauan in Goodenough Bay, Ubir in Collingwood Bay, and Binandere on the Mamba River. But as Dick Fohohlie explained in a letter to Mary Robinson in Mackay, this was overcome by contact with the villagers: "I don't understand much of the language here yet—it is hard. Nothing is wrong with us. . . . On Sundays we go to other places to hold services. Some places are too far then two of us go on a Saturday morning—sleep there—and Sunday morning after Service held we come back to 'Ambasi'—the name of this place where I live. . . . There is not one Christian here yet in Ambasi—it is a new place."[26]

One missionary, Timothy Gori, had great difficulties in 1904 with the language of his village, apparently as troublesome a language to him as English. He poured out his difficulties in a letter to Dogura: "Please Bishop of New Guinea am very sorry am . . . [unable] to quite understand this language . . . please you send me home in Gela." In spite of such problems, Stone-Wigg could say that the teachers his mission attracted might not be great scholars but at least they were all men "of the very best type."[27]

## The Exemplar

Some Melanesians in northeastern Papua were well fitted for the task of interpreting Christianity to village people. The special role of the New Hebridean James Nogar in articulating the gospel message was vividly remembered in Collingwood Bay. Born in 1876 at Sonamlo, Tana, Nogar was recruited, probably at the age of seventeen, for work in the Tweed River fields south of Brisbane. Since older men on Tana controlled marriage and monopolized eligible women, young bachelors such as Nogar had fewer ties to keep them from traveling. Known as a "thoroughly good fellow and very willing to work,"[28] Nogar was seen by an Anglican parson in the Tweed fields and offered the position of supervisor of islander scholars at St. Barnabas' School, Bungalore.

Energetic, masterful, and not without ambition, Nogar accepted the superintendent's post and was baptized on All Saints' Day 1894, having renounced his father Yogai's Presbyterian connection. In the following year he obtained Anglican confirmation at the hands of Bishop Green of Grafton and Armidale. Soon he determined to seal his new status in the farming community by proposing marriage to a young white lady in the Tumbulgum church choir. This brought him down. The sugar planters, indignant at Nogar's audacity, easily turned his fellow laborers against him and St. Barnabas' School emptied. "There has been a good deal of

jealousy that Nogar was ever made a teacher," wrote his clergyman. "He will never be a success there."[29] When the work languished, Nogar and his friend Fred Menena (or Menema), who had been at Stone-Wigg's school in Brisbane, elected to labor in a more productive field and accompanied the bishop to New Guinea. Nogar left Brisbane on the steamer *Titus,* having been photographed clad in the striped tie and straw boater, black coat and trousers he had worn on the day in 1897 when he had proposed marriage to the planter's daughter on the Tweed.[30]

Wanigela, with its population of over five hundred, was recognized as one of the best organized and most prosperous communities on the north Papuan coast. The people were engaged in continual warfare with the Doriri of the Musa River and had already engaged in an affray with MacGregor's constabulary. "There will be rough work there," wrote King, "and we want fellows with plenty of game in them, and with good heads on their shoulders."[31] Nogar was an obvious choice and arrived at Wanigela on 12 July 1898. Within two years the enterprising New Hebridean was turning his career to good account. He applied for a lay reader's license, declaring that he "allowed the Book of Common Prayer to be agreeable to the Word of God" and that he would "knowingly teach nothing contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of England as contained in the Thirty-Nine Articles."[32] But he saw no harm in a little side business. By 1899 Nogar was conducting a flourishing trade in Maisin artifacts and was selling curios at £2 10s. each, with a cut rate of £1 10s. to trading confederates.[33]

Nogar thoroughly concurred with the Reverend Wilfred Abbot's vigorous handling of the proud Wanigela people. At first Abbot found Nogar "obstinate" but the two soon adjusted to each other.[34] Both the clergyman and his lieutenant believed in the maxim about not sparing the rod, and night school as well as day school became compulsory at Wanigela. Children were instructed in the morning, and their fathers, home from fishing and hunting, were corralled by the vigilant Melanesian into learning their letters in the evening. When Abbot promised Lieutenant Governor Sir George Le Hunte that he would erect government buildings at Tufi for the first magistrate, C. A. W. Monckton, Nogar executed the order in the teeth of opposition from the Korafe residents of Cape Nelson. Wrote Abbot, "[Jimmy] has quite adopted my methods of dealing with unruly natives. They had not cut a stick or plaited a leaf before his arrival. . . . The chief men threatened to kill any man who did a stroke of work. Jimmy promised the two chiefs a big hiding if they did not set their men on the work immediately. The rebel-

lion was quelled."[35] At least once, three years later, Jimmy put his threat of a beating into action, severely thrashing a Wanigela girl. The girl died the day afterwards. Copland King, the clergyman who went to inquire into the incident, learned that the girl's father had attributed her death to poison. "I told Jimmy he could make that explanation to those who spoke to him," wrote King.[36] Nogar was simply reprimanded.

In June 1901 Nogar was in charge of Wanigela mission. He was observed by Lieutenant Governor Le Hunte conducting the largest school in the mission, made up of seventy children and seventeen boarders, who "sang a hymn in their own language with their arms folded." Le Hunte wrote of a striking difference between the children of Wanigela and those of neighboring Uiaku. Nogar's students looked "as if they had no more knowledge of savagery or of fighting" than children in rural England.[37]

In many other ways, however, Nogar was sympathetic to the traditional preoccupations of Papuan villagers. He counseled the village constable, Nonis, to stay awake in the evening to combat the influence of evil spirits. Even visiting officer C. A. W. Monckton noticed Nogar's apparent fear of the power of *puri puri* (magic). In conversation with Monckton, the lay missionary P. J. Money said he was "of the opinion that in spite of the Mission's teaching Jimmy still had an inclination towards his native belief in sorcery."[38] The Reverend A. K. Chignell was less circumspect, saying that among the weaknesses of the Queensland Melanesians at Wanigela was "to get up in the middle of the night and fire off guns on [the] verandah, to scare away the *Daus* ('spirits') that most Melanesians, as well as every Papuan, dreads."[39]

In the daytime, away from nocturnal spirits, Nogar's energetic work was noticed by Monckton, who commended the unusually large attendance at St. Peter's School. Outside school hours Nogar mediated between quarreling clansmen. When two rival factions met in battle array in the villages, it was recorded that bloodshed had been prevented only by the "bravery and determination" of the New Hebridean.[40] Hoping to further the enforcement of peace, Nogar offered to accompany Monckton and the Administrator of British New Guinea, Captain F. R. Barton, in an expedition against the marauding Doriri. To Nogar's chagrin, however, Stone-Wigg decided that missionaries should not be identified as armed combatants, and Barton set off leaving him in the classroom.[41]

One problem that particularly troubled South Sea Islanders was the state of celibacy in which Anglican agents were enjoined to live. A handsome man like Nogar was so plagued by village women that he had

to appeal to Stone-Wigg: "My Lord remember me in your prayers to God because temptation very strong."[42] In 1899 Wilfred Abbot confided, "He [Jimmy] *is pure,* a great thing." But later, Abbot—whose relations with Melanesian teachers were anything but harmonious—suspected that Nogar had succumbed. This the harassed teacher strenuously denied: "Mr. Abbot . . . think I did samthing [sic] wrong in Wanigela," he wrote, "but he not true I call him lie he tell you same thing. I very sorry to he[a]r he lie."[43] Nogar decided to end his state of celibacy in May 1903 and married Mary Maniarun of Kumarbun village.

Compared with some of his islander contemporaries, who were "not nearly strong enough" for the Maisin, Nogar was credited with having gained an immense influence over the people between Wanigela and Cape Nelson.[44] In spite of Nogar's difficulties with written English, his letters convey the imperative spirit in which he introduced Christianity. Returning from a visit to the Winiafi of Cape Nelson, he wrote to his bishop: "I say you all won [want] missionary in your place all says we [want] you if you would come and I say I see about it my Lord."[45] Nogar made a major contribution toward the planting of mission Christianity in Collingwood Bay. "Less than twelve years a Christian, eight years a missionary! Does not that represent the spirit of the New Testament?" exclaimed Stone-Wigg.[46] Esteemed by magistrate and missionary, fully occupied at his large school at Wanigela, and accepted by his Maisin kinsmen as one of their own, Nogar worked for three more years in Collingwood Bay. When he died of fever at the age of thirty, he was buried in the midst of "the greatest lamentation and mourning from the whole population." Stone-Wigg's epitaph for Nogar perhaps best summed up the Anglican ideal for the Pacific Islander teacher: "a herald of the Gospel, simple, unlearned, faithful unto death."[47]

## Morbidity and Mortality

Nogar had been ill for only a week when he died. Unexpected illness and sudden death dogged the islanders in all agencies of all missions in New Guinea from the start—not only the Anglican. In the L.M.S. field, the high death rate of Pacific Islander teachers was a cause of much anxiety among the society's European superintendents. One of them devoted an article in the *Australasian Medical Gazette* to an analysis of mortality among the teachers.[48] The major causes of death among Rarotongans, Samoans, Niueans, and others seem to have been malaria and pneumonia, but the full scope of ailments contracted by Polynesians is a

matter involving some speculation. "How terribly they suffer!" wrote E. Pryce Jones from the L. M. S. station of Moru in the Papuan Gulf. "It is a wonder that any work is accomplished, seeing what a number of breaks there are through illness."[49] At the society's institute for Papuan teachers at Vatorata east of Port Moresby, a memorial window in the chapel reminded students that in the thirty years from the opening of L.M.S. work in their country in 1871 until 1901, eighty-two Polynesian missionaries had died in New Guinea. By 1916 another forty had died. The deaths of wives and children—the latter not always recorded—would have brought the total by 1916 to a minimum of 160.

In Queensland the high Melanesian death rate has been cited as proof of harsh treatment meted out to the South Sea Islanders. One statistic has frequently been quoted: over the four decades of the Queensland labor trade (1863-1904), fifty Melanesians in every one thousand died each year on an average. These were young men and women in the prime of life, aged mainly between sixteen and thirty-five. The death rate among European males in the colony of similar age to the predominantly male Melanesian population was closer to nine or ten in every one thousand.[50] Until the completion of work by K. E. Saunders, P. M. Mercer, and C. R. Moore on Pacific Islander hospitals and indigenous healing practices in the 1970s,[51] historians had tended merely to catalogue the more obvious causes listed by late nineteenth-century observers: lack of immunity to disease, long hours and monotonous work, poor accommodations, and so on. Following Saunders's studies, C. R. Moore compiled a representative sample of mortality in Mackay and Maryborough listing sixteen possible causes of death. Of the 426 deaths in Moore's case study, spanning the three decades before 1895, respiratory diseases were the most frequent (tuberculosis, pneumonia, bronchitis, pleurisy: 131 deaths). Next most frequent were infectious diseases (cholera, typhus, typhoid, dysentery, measles: 70 deaths) and gastrointestinal illnesses (65 deaths).[52]

In falling victim to illness, newly arrived Melanesians in Queensland fared far worse than the returned Melanesian laborers. The death rate of first-generation laborers was three times greater on average than that of the others. At Mackay, for instance, every one of the 1,514 Melanesian deaths in the period 1882-1884 was of an islander who had resided in Queensland for fewer than three years.[53] If, however, a Melanesian survived his first three years in Queensland his chances of living to old age were good. The gradual numerical increase of more seasoned workers in the time-expired and ticket-holding groups[54] meant that as the labor trade progressed, the average crude death rate declined.

As such recent studies show, when assailed by disease in an epidemic such as measles, the newly arrived Melanesians tended to succumb. Many died in Pacific Islander hospitals, where primitive treatment and often insanitary conditions hindered rather than helped recovery.[55] The reaction of other ailing recently arrived laborers, to run away and refuse help, was typical of thousands of Melanesians who found themselves ill in a foreign land surrounded by alien people. In his salient research on epidemiology and the slave trade, P. D. Curtin argues that the most significant immunities are acquired, not inherited. Childhood disease environment is the crucial factor in determining immunities among a population. The genetic makeup of a community is important, according to Curtin, insofar as each succeeding generation will shift slightly towards a tendency to mild rather than fatal infection.[56]

The more isolated a human community, the more specialized and individual its disease environment is likely to become. Thus Polynesia and Melanesia with their small, isolated communities were sheltered, the whole from the outside world and each from the other.[57] As a result, the sudden interaction with Europeans, Aboriginals, and Chinese was devastating to the newly arrived Queensland recruits.

In addition, there were also sharp conceptual differences between European and Melanesian understanding of illness and death in the nineteenth century. Melanesians commonly assumed that misfortune was caused by sorcery uttered by enemies. As Moore notes, the strange food and acccompanying gastrointestinal illnesses, although not always directly responsible for deaths, must have exacerbated anxiety felt by Melanesians that they were being attacked by spirits.[58] Moore ascribes the high rate of morbidity and mortality not simply to a lack of physiological immunity to a variety of diseases, but also to a lack of psychological resistance. Since Melanesians typically attributed disease and death to sorcery, becoming ill or being "poisoned" in Queensland must have seemed especially threatening to the sufferer. The assumption that recovery was impossible, and the rapid descent to passivity and death following the onset of illness, put in mind the condition known colloquially as "fatalism."

In the New Guinea mission field it is not surprising that the death rate among Queensland Melanesians far exceeded mortality among the other volunteer groups on the staff. Of the sixty-four Europeans, twelve were clergy; only one of these apart from Maclaren died in the field. Of the twenty European women staff members among the sixty-four, only one succumbed; and among laymen, only two of thirty-two present died. This represented a death rate in service of 17 percent among

clergy and 8 percent among European lay workers between 1891 and 1909. Mortality was similarly low among the young Papuan pupil teachers employed by the mission. By contrast, the death rate in service of Queensland Melanesians in New Guinea was 25 percent for the same period.

The causes of death among Melanesians in New Guinea have not been comprehensively reported. Living conditions were poor for Melanesian teachers dwelling in sago-palm thatched huts (though European staff living beyond the better-equipped stations at Dogura and Mukawa did not fare much better). Melanesian teachers grew vegetables, caught fish, and complemented their subsistence diet with rice supplied by the mission. In the dry season they were forced to become largely rice eaters. Diet does not seem to have contributed to morbidity and mortality. Among those islander teachers the nature of whose illnesses are known, malaria, consumption, and pneumonia are prominently listed.

Belief in the power of sorcery was an enduring force among Melanesians in Queensland[59] and it is most unlikely that it played no part in the Queensland Melanesian interaction with Papuans. James Nogar's advice to a villager about avoiding *puri puri* has already been noted.[60] Nonetheless, the Queensland Melanesians whose lives and deaths have been documented do not seem to have been in the thrall of belief in the power of sorcery. Willie Miwa, the first islander to die, roundly told listeners in 1893 that a meal of poisoned fish, not sorcery, had brought about his illness. Willie Holi and Jack Newa, though apprehensive about the prospect of physical violence, remained unmoved by threats from sorcerers. Thomas Bebete, "a very strong character," was sent to Menapi to put down manifestations of sorcery "rife" there.[61] Sixteen years after Miwa's death, his companion Harry Mark succumbed to a chill, having much to say during his decline, but without any accusations of witchcraft. Quiet resignation, not a show of fatalism, seems to have been the manner in which the South Sea Islander staff anticipated their passing. In this they resembled their European mentors. One of the oldest of the teachers, Alfred Rerep from Mackay, used the Mukawa version of a phrase from Psalm 19 to express his last thoughts before dying of tuberculosis: *"Tabinewau e botubotu"* (The bridegroom cometh).[62]

Such expressions of resignation, after all, were not foreign to the missionary ethos in which the Queensland Melanesians worked. The capacity of a missionary, black or white, to endure hardship was closely related to a mentality that glorified death and accepted suffering without complaint. To the European, mainly Anglo-Catholic, mentors of

the South Sea Islanders, fever, discomfort, and death were signs of the life of renunciation that would be rewarded ultimately by the triumph of the cross. Suffering was part of the divine plan; to question the wisdom of the plan suggested lack of trust in Providence. "Those damned churchmen are like the Papists," said M. H. Moreton to a fellow magistrate, "plenty of them willing to be martyrs."[63] The remark of the Papuan observer on the New Guinea bishop's telling his Melanesian audiences in Queensland that they would die in New Guinea if they volunteered evokes this spirit well.[64] Sacrifice, not sorcery, was the motif of islander death speeches.

Years later, an anthropologist visiting northeastern Papua marveled at the remote, almost sealed-off existence of the Dogura community.[65] New Guinea Anglicans were remote not only from the world of magistrates and merchants, but from other missions as well. While the churchmen in their isolated environment sanctified poverty and suffering, their Protestant neighbors adopted a less austere and more pragmatic policy. The Methodist general secretary of missions, the Reverend George Brown (1887-1908), argued that there was a religion of the body as well as of the soul, and told his mission staff in New Guinea that they had no more right to break laws given to preserve life and health than to break those given for their spiritual conduct. No one, Brown advised a Methodist minister stationed close to the Anglican coast, would expect a man to endanger his health in New Guinea.[66] The Anglican bishops at Dogura who supervised the Melanesian and European staff belonged to a more idealistic, less practical school that believed a missionary, like a soldier, could retreat from a position won only with disgrace.

"Our people die well" was a Fijian missionary saying.[67] It might have applied equally to Queensland Melanesians in New Guinea. Some of these mixed attributes of soldiery and resignation were evident in the death of Harry Mark in 1909. Like other Queensland islanders, Mark was fond of making journeys into the mountains behind the New Guinea coast to preach. On one of these chilly mountain visits he caught pneumonia, which resulted in his death. Henry Newton, acting head of the mission, reported the sequel:

> The ambulance was sent to the river, the stretcher was taken on, and he was carried on it. . . . He did not seem to think his illness would be fatal . . . he knew we were short-handed. . . . "We are soldiers of Christ" were words he was constantly repeating. . . . Before the funeral, the school children were

> taken in for a last view of their teacher's face, four at a time, and then the men and then the women in the same way. . . . It was a wonderful sight to see big, old men bursting into tears when their teacher's face was uncovered.[68]

For Queensland Melanesians in New Guinea, moreover, resignation to hardship and death in New Guinea was enforced by severe practical limitations. The closure of Queensland by the Pacific Island Labourers Act of the Commonwealth Parliament in 1901 had left the islander teachers with no home other than the mission they had chosen to employ them in New Guinea. They had already decided once not to return to their islands. Before Federation in 1901, Queensland Melanesians such as Holi had been under contract to the Australian Board of Missions to work for a fixed term, usually of one year; further contracts beyond a year could be determined by negotiation, with either party giving three months' notice before termination and departure. One or two Melanesians had resigned from the mission before 1900 and returned to Queensland.[69] But the Immigration Restriction Act, passed at the same time as the Pacific Island Labourers Act, effectively prevented reentry to Australia for non-Europeans, and made it difficult for islanders even to take holidays in the south. The acting head of the mission had to write directly to the prime minister, Sir Edmund Barton, to allow islander Dick Bourke to reenter Australia on furlough in 1903. By 1905 the mission's *Paper of Conditions* was stipulating the ideal of "indefinite service" for both Europeans and Melanesians in New Guinea. Only three islanders thereafter were given permission to return to Australia or their home island, dispensation from a lifetime of service being given on grounds of previous matrimony.

If the conviction that service was for a lifetime was strongly held in the mission, it had little force among the European laymen, the staff group that most closely approximated the islanders in sex and unmarried status. Able to return to Australia, these single European males could not afford to stay too long as volunteers in the prime of life if they hoped to establish themselves and raise a family afterward. Of the thirty-two white males who volunteered in the twenty years from 1891 to 1911, more than half stayed only one term, or at most two.[70] The lifetime of service upheld by the mission had more practical impact on the Queensland Melanesians, who literally had nowhere else to go.

Mark had been in New Guinea for sixteen years before dying, Nogar for eight, and a number of Queensland Melanesians eventually lived there for more than three decades. While the South Sea Islander death

rate in New Guinea was higher than the European death rate, their mortality was still markedly lower than among their compatriots in the Queensland labor trade. Consistent with Curtin's analysis, this was only to be expected; the New Guinea volunteers were among those already toughened by previous exposure to an exotic disease environment. They were among the survivors: a transfer from Queensland to New Guinea was preceded by at least two, or even three, terms away from their home islands, with a correspondingly high resistance to disease.

## Sex, Marriage, and Career

Having survived the passage into a new environment in New Guinea, the great majority of teachers could now face the prospect of settling down for a long life on the mission. Of the ultimate domestic questions facing young men, that of sex and marriage was the most persistent. Willie Kyliu from Gairloch on the Herbert River was the only volunteer to bring a wife, Annie.[71] Melanesian and European laymen together totaled seventy-nine unmarried males on the mission between 1891 and 1909. The Europeans came from a metropolitan, English-derived society in which racial intermarriage was frowned upon. Two bachelor European laymen who fell in love with Papuan mission girls—Sydney Ford at Dogura and Eric Giblin at Mukawa—were not permitted to marry.[72] Both later left the mission, largely on that account. Moreover, the milieu of the New Guinea Mission was celibate and monastic, so married men were rejected even when their spouses were of the same race.

It is therefore not surprising that a Queensland Melanesian volunteer described by the bishop's commissary, H. M. Shuttleworth, as "first rate" was rebuffed because of his European wife. "The worst of it is the fellows that offer have got wives for the most part," wrote the commissary. "There is too ready a disposition to forsake all (!) when I object to the white wife. . . . A *white* wife seems impossible to me," Shuttleworth concluded. "Please let me have your views about wives white and black."[73] Overwhelmingly, the mission was to be staffed by single people. Before 1910 a clause was inserted into the mission's *Paper of Conditions* forbidding "matrimonial or other engagements." Two Melanesians, Peter Sukoku and Thomas Bebete, worked for three years at Menapi before mission leaders realized that they were married and had left their families behind in the Solomon Islands. They were released from service.

In areas of northeastern Papua unmarried islander, teachers worked in an atmosphere not conducive to celibacy, an atmosphere, according

to P. J. Money, "of fornication and abortion with occasional clouds of adultery and infanticide."[74] A few teachers succumbed and had to he suspended. Only one was reported to the government. Philip Nodi was jailed for an offense at Wedau: he had kept a schoolgirl in class and put her on his knee with his trousers unbuttoned. Some Wedauans were watching through the open schoolroom window, and they did not rest until Nodi was sentenced to six months in jail at Samarai.[75]

Most teachers who found the strain unendurable were treated with compassion. When Willie Pettawa had a sexual relationship with a favorite girl at Wanigela, he had a dream in which Jesus Christ appeared, telling him to repent and saying he would have to suffer some time for his sake.[76] Money was sensitive to the matter of Melanesian celibacy: "Many of the S.S.I. teachers have had trouble of this kind; they are very close to the Papuan in sympathy and general living in their native homes and I am not surprised that they fall in a sin which, I, a foreigner, in every sense . . . find so hard to keep free from. To me the temptation is severe. What must it be like to them? I make no boast of having withstood it for wicked lustful thoughts have often filled my mind."[77]

European bachelors who fell short of the celibate ideal of the mission were treated more severely than Melanesians. In matters of sexual morality the mission leaders expected less of a South Sea Islander than of a European. Nonetheless, a Melanesian who found it difficult to withstand a woman's advances or made overtures himself and "fell" was suspended and made to do manual work. A European who erred sexually was dismissed. To avoid this, at least one Melanesian protected a European from betrayal. Thus Nogar did not inform his superiors about a sexual scandal involving three Wanigela women and Norman Dodds, the engineer on the mission launch *Albert Maclaren.* To Nogar's surprise, Newton chastised him for concealing the Dodds affair: "When you heard you should have spoken at once so that people would know that sin is bad with Missionaries and with New Guinea people just the same. . . . You keep quiet and say nothing and . . . that makes a bad thing very much worse. . . . Bishop put at Wanigela to help Gods work not to stop Gods work. This time you stop God's work and it is very bad."[78]

The Melanesians' attempts to solve their problems sometimes offended Papuan villagers as well as missionaries. In 1898 Willie Holi asked King to write to the Melanesian mission school on Norfolk Island to obtain a wife for him. "But then," Holi anxiously asked, "s'pose I no like her face when she come?" The next day, hearing of her teacher's predic-

ament, a Boianai girl came to say she wanted to be his wife. When Holi replied that he liked her but that she would need more training, her parents were angered and complained to King about Holi's attitude.[79] As King said perceptively, a New Guinea village girl's marrying the teacher corresponded to "a country girl in the colonies marrying the curate and never able to get free from all the jealousies and cliques of the place."[80] Holi died unmarried in 1899. The teachers' search for wives cast some of them into a pit of recrimination in the villages. It sparked jealousy, angered relatives in a matrilineal society in which all kinsmen had a say in the marriage of their girls, and upset matrilocal inheritance procedures in which a husband worked his wife's land.

In spite of matrimonial difficulties, Melanesian teachers were not criticized by Papuans for their personal behavior in the villages. On the contrary, the villagers often took to the newcomers with an alacrity that delighted their superiors. Chignell reported that Peter Seevo, Nogar's successor at Wanigela, was in some ways the most prominent and popular person in the neighborhood. MacGregor, no admirer of the islanders' classroom talents, agreed that they appeared to get on very well with the natives.[81] Holi won the confidence of the people of Boianai, and before his death in 1899 had turned opposition into friendliness. Seevo, whose rumbustious personality figured prominently in Chignell's *Outpost in Papua,* was a notable in Wanigela: "These . . . men do indeed spend 'much of their time' with Peter, and you may find them, at almost every hour of the day or night, seated in rows upon his verandah, or around his table while he sits at meals."[82]

European praise of the Melanesians was often tempered by criticism of their behavior in a crisis. At Mackay in Queensland, islanders had been blamed for the decline of bird life around their settlements. Similarly, in New Guinea, missionaries noted the complete absence of birds near the teachers' stations and reasoned that shotguns were used too often and sometimes for the wrong reasons.[83] In 1905 Newton had to report two islander missionaries to the government. There had been a fight between the people of Wamira and Wedau after the Wamira village constable married the widow of a Wedauan Christian without village permission, and both Harry Mark and Johnson Far fired guns into the air to break up the fray that threatened. Further north, some men were fired upon when mission cattle were speared and Seevo was cautioned.[84] One of the strictest disciplinarians in the mission was Peter Mussen, the senior Melanesian teacher, recruited at Ashfield in Sydney. Mussen once grabbed a sorcerer at Taupota and carried him to a cliff, over which he held him dangling by the ankles for quite a long time.

Afterward, the sorcerer seldom forgot to remind Mussen how regularly he attended divine service.[85] Physical dominance is more in evidence in Melanesian than in European missionary behavior, though the sketchy nature of source material makes reconstruction of conflict very difficult.

A few examples of clashes between Melanesian mission teachers and a particular local Papuan custom have come to light. One concerned the timing of a traditional ceremony, the *Walaga,* a great agricultural festival staged at Gelaria in the mountains behind Dogura. At the *Walaga* of 1901 about two thousand villagers were present. The celebrants believed the mango—the symbol of fruitfulness whose approval was believed necessary for the growing of crops—must be propitiated by the squealing of sacrificial pigs, produced by the twisting of a spear through the pigs' hearts. At the festival of 1901, the pigs were shot by European missionaries anxious to prevent suffering. But the efficacy of the ceremony was thereby lowered in Papuan eyes. At the staging of the second *Walaga* in 1905, the Europeans sent the teacher Johnson Far of Malaita in the Solomons and another South Sea Islander to hold a church service on the Sunday of the festival. What happened is not clear, but it is likely the teachers desired to interfere in the spearing. For, as a missionary wrote later, "The people suspended operations during the Sunday. On Monday, when Johnson Far was investigating some matters connected with the feast, he was gently but firmly told, 'We considered your feelings yesterday and waited for your service, you must consider ours today and mind your own business.' "[86]

Few Melanesians left a deep impression on folk memories in northeastern Papua. Perhaps, like most Melanesian islanders, they were not dominating men. At Dogura there were glimpses of severity. Ill feeling was aroused among Papuans at Dogura by Dick Bourke, who tied the hands of a runaway school boarder and locked the boy up until the station priest returned. Complaints were made about thrashings administered to school girls by Johnson Far. Nogar's thrashing of a girl at Wanigela the day before she died has been noted. However, there is more evidence of Europeans' lamenting the weakness of islanders than condemning their severity. Newton thought most "too easy going with the Natives" and withdrew Willie Kyliu from Menapi for weak leadership, replacing him with the "strong character" Thomas Bebete, the married man with a family in the Solomons who later had to return home.[87] "It does not appear as though the South Sea Islander teachers are able to manage the Maisins," wrote Newton about the islanders at Uiaku. David Tatu, an Ambrimese from Bundaberg who worked for seventeen years on the Mamba River, reported friendly relations with the Binan-

dere: "We get on very well. . . . The native *[sic]* get on very well to come for service [and] we have the school going very well."[88] Like most of his colleagues, Tatu was a quiet, blameless, unexceptional man.

The dominant numerical group in the Anglican staff was severely impaired by lack of academic training. Schoolmasters the Melanesians were meant to be; yet as schoolmasters, said Chignell, they were probably as ill-instructed and incapable as any body of men who ever handled a piece of chalk or flourished a duster. They knew no more about teaching children then they did "about running a steam laundry or making boots."[89] European overseers said William Maso and Peter Seevo were "shocking writers"; Peter Mussen was unable to read, write, or do simple arithmetic; Robert Tasso could not teach arithmetic involving numbers larger than the total of his fingers and toes.[90] Another Melanesian was reported to be unable to read or learn figures, though he knew *1, 0,* and *6* by sight. As early as 1896, when the mission had been at work only five years, some Papuans at Dogura were said to be superior in learning to the Melanesian teachers.[91] Stone-Wigg wrote that "the inability of most of them in Queensland to do any arithmetic is a draw back. Still they learn the language very well, and can evangelise if really in earnest, tho' their knowledge be limited."[92]

Mission logistics mitigated the disadvantage of a poorly trained soldiery by a system of control from headquarters. The Melanesian-staffed outstations were arranged concentrically around a European-staffed station where weekly in-service classes were held. Such classes were certainly necessary, in Chignell's words, to remedy "silly nonsense imbibed from well-meaning people in Queensland."[93] Chignell was sometimes appalled at classroom instruction: "I have caught Peter chanting, with the children after him, 'Four fundle one penny', 'ten fardles t'ree penny', each formula repeated ten or twelve times over . . . and I have heard them go on, 'Fourteen fartles seven peness', 'Fifteen bartles eight penny', and I wrote the very words down at the time, that there should be no mistake."[94]

As mentors of Papuan pupil-teachers, such islanders illustrated the saying about a little learning being a dangerous thing. King wrote that because New Guinea teachers had examples of incompetence before them they might assume that the Anglican mission did not care about education.[95] Those Papuans who had been taught arithmetic and English in islander schools were often ill educated compared with those at Dogura. Amos Paisawa, who entered St. Aidan's College for teachers in 1934, was regarded as one of the finest Christians at Cape Vogel, but as a student was noted to be "a difficult learner, having learnt to read and

write under a[n] . . . S. S. I. teacher, who knew practically nothing of arithmetic. . . . A poor reader, a very slow learner, and knows no arithmetic."[96] King continued hoping for the improvement of the islanders as pedagogues: he thought they knew their limitations and did not resent correction.[97]

Being better acquainted with Bible stories than arithmetic, the islanders were more at home in the pulpit. Each Sunday morning Seevo set off from Wanigela with hymnbook and smoking tackle tied up in an old flour bag, returning from his preaching tour at one o'clock "soaked, when the tide and creeks having been high, up to the very armpits" and "still [wearing] his newest soft felt hat just as he did 'along-a-Queensland.' "[98] Devout, earnest, and pious, the islanders favored long sermons, being even more voluble in church than in the classroom. Unlike their Polynesian contemporaries in the L. M. S. and Methodist fields, they did not speak much about the Old Testament, of which, said King, they were absolutely ignorant. With New Testament topics they were thought "excellent and reliable." As a result, the Papuans of the northeast coast were never exposed to the kind of fire-and-brimstone Christianity favored by the Polynesian missionaries of the L.M.S. and the Methodists.[99]

Chignell, author of two books, *An Outpost in Papua* (1911) and *Twenty-One Years in Papua* (1913), did more than any other writer to represent the general outlook of the mission: indeed, he did much to create it. The anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski described Chignell as "a good natured missionary with absolutely no understanding of the natives."[100] It was a perceptive, if exaggerated thrust; more a statement about Chignell's lack of rigorous scientific training and his not being an anthropologist. Chignell was a gifted writer; he created unforgettable portraits of his Queensland teachers in *An Outpost in Papua.* He lived alone at Wanigela from 1909 with Reuben Motlav (Sukulman), Peter Seevo, Samuel Siru, Willie Maso, Ambrose Darra, and Benjamin Ganae. His chapters on Reuben, Peter, Samuel, and William are, on first reading, humorous and even affectionate; yet on greater familiarity, they betray exasperation. Chignell's satiric pen found its mark in the teacher Peter Seevo, "a fat old fellow" in blue dungaree trousers, the son of Tom Vulau of Taumbaru on Santo in the New Hebrides. In spite of the entertaining outlines of Chignell's vignettes and the affection with which he depicted his characters, his books and articles tended to caricature islanders behind their backs. "And then with a grunt or a sigh," he wrote, "and a glance along the room, and a sailor-like hitch at his capacious trousers, he would wheel and stump along to the next

small victim of his solemn incompetence."[101] Seevo probably never knew what Chignell wrote about him. In Chignell's writing, Pacific Islander teachers come alive for the first time in English literature, but only as figures of ridicule. Portly, puffing, wheezing men or perspiring schoolmasters equipped with a big stick, glittering teeth, and coal-black countenances were comic-opera characters rather than messengers of civilization. Though islanders often appeared ludicrously overdressed, the surfeit of comedy suggests that, unlike their Protestant neighbors, the Anglicans never really took the islander missionaries seriously as communicators.

Following his marriage, Chignell returned to Britain in 1914. There he organized and edited the New Guinea Mission's biannual *Occasional Papers,* containing regular news of the South Sea Islanders. His literary ability was recognized in England: he was chosen to help edit and handle the proofreading of James Joyce's *Ulysses,* which he did in his rambling Yorkshire vicarage.[102] He spent the rest of his life supervising an almshouse for old men. In his books appear the most vivid pen-pictures of the Queensland Melanesians ever drawn.

## The Last Melanesian Recruits

Before 1905 Melanesian teachers chose missionary careers freely. Those who came to New Guinea after 1905, however, were among the four thousand islanders expelled from Queensland by legislation. Some of the most articulate opposition to the Pacific Island Labourers Act was organized by islanders at Mackay led by a New Hebridean, Henry Tongoa, chairman of the Pacific Islanders' Association.[103] A letter attributed to a scholar at Selwyn Mission, Jack Malayta, was widely circulated: "We have worked well in this land for white people. Then why do they want to turn us out? . . . I am only a poor South Sea boy and may be I do not know much, but if white people know the true God . . . how can they think that right, to send us back into a land . . . where there is always fighting, where life is never safe, where there can't be schools for many years yet . . . ?" Among Malaitan Christians there was an anxiety that a return to Malaita might endanger life; in any case, at home they would "mix with bad people," a reflection of the tardiness of the Melanesian Mission in extending northward into the Solomons.[104]

In Anglican circles there was in 1906 an incipient dream that newly converted laborers would volunteer to take the gospel to their benighted brethren in New Guinea. There were hopes that some of the thirty-

seven hundred Melanesians who had passed through mission classes in Maryborough in the years since 1899 would wish to go to New Guinea. A former New Guinea missionary, Charles Sage, succeeded Mary Robinson as head of the Selwyn Mission at Mackay in 1905 and began fostering missionary vocations among the four hundred adherents there.[105] With the additional help from those islanders, Stone-Wigg hoped to open up the whole coastline from Samarai to the Mamba River to missionary influence. "What an army of them the Mission will have!" wrote a lady supporter.[106]

Between 1905 and 1908, visits by Stone-Wigg to the canefields resulted in an influx of over twenty-five Melanesians to the mission, most of them better educated than earlier volunteers. Ten came in 1905 from a class taught by a Miss McIntyre at Bundaberg and another five from the same class the next year. In 1907 another seventeen arrived, two from the Reverend Francis Pritt's mission at Gairloch on the Herbert River and fifteen from the Selwyn Mission. Sage had hoped for more but there was little hope of persuading most of his Selwyn scholars to go to the mission field. The islanders told him that if they were forced to leave Australia they would sooner go home. At the Tweed River Mission in northern New South Wales Melanesian interest in the church was said to be "as dead as any nail that is in any door."[107] In spite of the large force of twenty-five Melanesians, Anglican hopes of a large-scale emigration of exiles from Australia, entertained in the confusion of the deportation of islanders, were largely illusory.

The largest islander contingent to Dogura in 1906-1907 was from Malaita in the Solomons. Of the six thousand Melanesians in Queensland in 1906, almost five thousand were from the Solomon Islands and twenty-five hundred of these were Malaitans. Frances Synge, who interviewed several Malaitans in Brisbane, said their interest in New Guinea was "not a little bit caused by fear of returning to the islands."[108] Malaita had a widespread reputation for violence, which was borne out by experiences in Australia. Eight Melanesians were executed in Queensland between 1895 and 1906, and seven of these had been from the island of Malaita. After Mary Robinson's life had been threatened at Mackay, the Malaitan students quickly nailed up a public notice that promised death to anyone who touched her.[109] When the Malaitan contingent arrived at Dogura, it was decided to place half of them in the "undeveloped" Mukawa district of Cape Vogel, and the other half along the Mamba River, where work among the Binandere demanded the toughest natures.

There were three leaders among the Malaitans on the Mamba River.

Two of the three, Peter Arbunarie and Harry Quy, quickly established a Malaitan influence near the Mamba mouth. Quy took charge of the workshop that produced church furniture at Ambasi and began traveling on the river to help David Tatu conduct trade-store services for carriers on the goldfields. Arbunarie also began voyaging on the river to conduct services. As teachers, the Malaitans were more thoroughly prepared than earlier Melanesians, with a stronger grasp of arithmetic.[110]

All the Malaitan missionaries knew of the health hazards on the Mamba. Quy proposed marriage to a girl at Ambasi if he lived and made up a joint will with Arbunarie if he died. In any event the marriage did not take place, as both men died on the pestilent Mamba between June and November of 1907. The third of the leading trio among the Malaitans was Harry Locar. He lived for forty-five years in New Guinea, having survived his first wet season on the Mamba.

## Race Relations

Relations between Melanesian and European missionaries were not smooth in northeastern Papua. The initial appearance of an easy equality sprang from an intimacy between leaders and followers. Lured by the prospect of a white man's status, islanders did not at first look back with nostalgia to the Selwyn Mission where relations were harmonious. Dick Fohohlie wrote affectionately to Mary Robinson from Ambasi: "I never forget you. I pray every day and night for you. All your own boys we are, and all trying to do good work for God in New Guinea. We have been put to teach here quickly because you been teach us fellows so much in Queensland. I think you were best teacher in all Queensland. . . . God bless you always for ever and ever."[111]

From the beginning, however, latent tension was evident in the mission, as some Europeans felt that Melanesians lost interest quickly when the novelty of New Guinea life wore off. After the turn of the century, Stone-Wigg emphasized the brotherhood of black and white missionaries by conferring lay readers' licenses on Melanesians, entitling licensed islander lay readers to wear white surplices and black cassocks. On the only visit to New Guinea by an archbishop of Brisbane, St. Clair Donaldson in 1907, an islander gave the speech of welcome and an islander preached the sermon at the first Evensong. All foreign missionaries attended the annual conference. But even here there was trouble, for as they sat round a common table to take corporate action, the islanders spoke Pidgin, not English.

Discovering that the business of consultation was laborious, King

explained that the Melanesians' speech was very puzzling. Chignell wrote disparagingly that islanders conversed "with that complete elimination of mood and tense and number and concord" that was "characteristic of the right 'pidgin' English."[112] Having spent years mastering Wedauan, Ubir, or Binandere, Anglican missionaries steadfastly refused to learn Pidgin. When Stone-Wigg declared in 1900 that "on one point I am sure we all agree—we will have the Queen's English, if any, and not that mongrel tongue which the white man usually introduces," he unwittingly reduced enormously the potential for communication between racial groups in the mission.[113]

Difficulties over Pidgin caused the dividing of the Anglican annual conference into two sections, one for Europeans and the other for Melanesians. Newton reported a very strong feeling among islanders about the "cleavage along the colour line."[114] The reason given by Stone-Wigg—that linguistic difficulties among a staff of sixty missionaries made discussion unwieldy—did not satisfy the islander teachers. Moreover, there was considerable indignation among Melanesians in New Guinea when letters from the scholars of Norfolk Island reported that Mrs. Cecil Wilson, wife of the bishop of Melanesia, had ended fifty years of male egalitarianism by refusing to eat at the same table as islanders.[115] The Queensland Melanesians who were admitted to fuller fraternal association with Europeans in New Guinea were men such as Willie Miwa, Peter Mussen, Harry Mark, Ambrose Darra, Robert Tasso, and Reuben Motlav. As individuals they were more trusted or better educated, and were regarded as more capable, than other Melanesians, who were judged not to have been very intelligent.[116] Common meals ceased in New Guinea, though on some occasions the Europeans entertained the Melanesian staff with refreshments and music.[117]

In the Anglican mission the Europeans, not the South Sea Islanders, were the center of authority. They managed the rest of the staff, made the decisions, and controlled the finances. The Europeans were given an allowance of £20 per annum, lower than the Melanesians' allowance, but their daily living expenses came directly from mission funds. They were repatriated, free of cost, to Australia once every three years, and once each five years to England if their homes were there. The Queensland Melanesians were expected to maintain themselves entirely from their £25 yearly allowance. The mission expected the islanders to have gardens and receive support from the villagers. The teachers were not given furlough expenses to Australia, though they were permitted to go if they paid their own passage. King was appalled in 1904 to learn that Dick Bourke of Boianai had paid his own fare to Sydney on fur-

lough. King's sister, Madeline Ethel King, paid Bourke's return fare when she discovered he was stranded in Sydney. If the teachers were not given furlough allowance, King told Bishop Stone-Wigg, neither would he accept traveling assistance from the mission in the future.[118]

One quarrel of a racial nature was recorded. Fred Menema, a missionary at Taupota, was one of the only two islanders who had been educated by the Melanesian Mission at Norfolk Island. In 1898 he had a quarrel with the Reverend Wilfred Abbot: "Mr. Abbot that time he went Down Awaiama he get on me about our work and said to me We Don't like Black men in this work if you like take your thing[s] and go so I told him I said Yes I will go. . . . Sir Bishop I leave my work in Awaiama true."[119] Menema resigned, but not before his Melanesian brethren had taken up his cause. For several months afterward, Abbot's gibe "We Don't like Black men" was chorused by Melanesians. There was always plenty of time on a Papuan outstation for an islander to brood. Even the quiet David Tatu, when ruffled by King, replied with smoldering bitterness, "No need to make a row. . . . I know all about it. . . . I know what you did along of Fred."[120]

It is doubtful whether the South Sea Islanders accepted the subordinate role in which some Europeans were willing to cast them. Unlike Papuan converts, who often clung helplessly to their *taubada* (leader), there was a streak of independence in these island men. Talk of "simple coloreds," "good boys," and "poor fellows" expressed European perceptions and were not the way the teachers saw themselves. On the contrary, the older and more experienced the men grew, the more formidable they became. One, Johnson Far, at Wedau was described as "virtually King of the village."[121] Harry Mark, said one observer, "knew more about the people of New Guinea from Wedau to Awaiama than any other man living. He had a most wonderful gift for language, and a marvellous memory for faces, and for the intricate relationship of New Guinea folk."[122] Some teachers certainly would not have been easily intimidated into obedience. Timothy Gori's reply to Stone-Wigg suggests an independence at odds with mission authority: "My dear Lord Bishop, I been think over what you say to me . . . but I must make up my own mine *[sic]* myself."[123]

The Melanesian missionaries deserved pity in one respect. Of the seventeen mission graves dug between 1891 and 1910, only five were for Europeans: the rest were for Melanesians. They served their life sentences, the majority of these Melanesians, until they died. Some teachers left tiny legacies to help the endeavor of the mission, or "God's work" as Melanesians called it. Three shirts, a hat, a plate, a saucepan,

a mug, and a box of matches were left by Willie Ope, at a total value of £2 5s. ½d. A suit of clothes, a silk handkerchief, £10, and a silver cross were left to the mission by Willie Tari.[124]

Yet, as MacGregor noted, they were unheeded by the outside world for the most part. In 1910 a memorial fund was established by Lady Lucinda Musgrave, wife of a former governor of Queensland, to erect monuments to the New Guinea Melanesian missionaries. Four years later, many brass tablets commemorating those who had "fallen in action" had been placed on the wooden walls of Dogura chapel. (The placing of tablets was discontinued in 1920.) In the Kingdom all men were equal, and the twenty-four brass tablets bear testimony to the ideals that the South Sea Islanders and Europeans shared. These include the roles of brothers, evangelists, preachers, sufferers; but the imagery of servant and soldier is continual.

> Frank Arbinsau
> Who died at Ambasi 1910
> No longer do I call you servants, but friends
> Jn 15:15

> Benjamin Saroa
> Died 1913
> He that is faithful in that which is least
> Is faithful also in much
> Luke 16:10

> Simon Devi
> Died 1910
> Be clothed with humility
> 1 Peter 5:5

Among the soldier epitaphs:

> James Nogar
> Island teacher at Wanigela 1898-1906
> Died at his post June 16 1906
> Fight the good fight of faith

> Willie Pettawa
> Island teacher at Uiaku
> 1901-1907

More than conquerors through Him that loved us
Rom 8:37

The tablet to Willie Kyliu (died 1908) is inscribed,

Lord Thou knowest that I love thee
Jn 21:15

## Conclusion

The numerical strength of the Queensland Melanesians was waning by World War I, and by 1922 there were only twenty-three Melanesian teachers still employed. Five old islanders were left in the mission at the beginning of World War II. Johnson Far and Harry Locar, the two Malaitans who came to Papua in 1900 and 1907 respectively, were still living in retirement in the early 1950s. Locar died at Gona in 1952. Four years later, Far, "a picturesque figure with his snow-white hair" in his eighties, was tending a herd of cattle at Dogura. One day in February 1956, fifty-six years after arriving at Dogura, Far "received the Sacrament of Holy Unction and the Laying on of Hands for the Sick, followed by the Blessed Sacrament."[125] Within an hour he was dead. Locar and Far were the last of the Queensland Melanesians. Like their colleagues, they conversed in the language of their villages and left wives and children among the people with whom they had lived.

The Melanesian teachers contrasted vividly with their Polynesian counterparts in the L.M.S. and Methodist missions. The experiences of a sugar worker, adrift from his own society in Australia, shaped a missionary contribution very different from that of the Samoan and Tongan patriarchs sent forth by vigorous churches in Polynesian strongholds. In number and in erudition, the Polynesian teachers of the L.M.S. and Methodist missions far exceeded the Melanesians in the Anglican stations. The Polynesian teacher had an air of distinguished urbanity that the Melanesian cane cutter from Queensland did not possess. Unlike the Polynesians, however, no teachers in the Anglican Mission ever attracted the criticism that they saw themselves as of higher caste than their converts, for there did not exist any gulf in outlook between them and the people they came to convert. And no Polynesian became as close to coastal villagers in Papua as the Melanesian teacher. The Melanesian married a village woman and died where he had lived.

The Melanesian islanders in northeastern Papua were admirable frontiersmen. Moving gently among the village people, such men as

Willie Holi and Johnson Far introduced the people to the influences of an outside world that would change their ways forever. These island, ers were thoroughly familiar with the sacramental character of the Anglo-Catholic movement. They also had the flexibility of mind that prompted them to learn from their converts. Above all, they showed how Christianity in the Pacific could be separated from both the narrow cultural triumphalism of some Polynesians on the one hand and the material affluence of the Europeans on the other; and there was need for this separation. As Charles Helms remarks, the Melanesians were capable of strong leadership, of eloquence and declamation. But they were not dominating men; their method of communication was oblique rather than by direct assertion.[126] It was thus that the celebrations at Gona in 1987 showed that, for people in Oro Province at least, the islanders were not forgotten people. Such reenactments as that at Gona had the same purpose as Lucinda Musgrave's fund, to commemorate the "devotion and self-sacrifice" of the Queensland Melanesians, so they might be "remembered by the people of New Guinea for whom they lived and died."[127]

## NOTES

I should like to thank Dr. Clive Moore for comments made on an earlier draft of this article and Frank Coppock for recording twenty-four South Sea Islander memorials in Papua New Guinea. The term New Guinea is used here to describe the territory claimed by Britain in 1884 and transferred to Australia in 1906. The Anglican mission retained the original name of New Guinea in its title. But more generally, the name Papua—officially used to describe the territory after 1906—is used in this article.

1. *Family* (Lae, Papua New Guinea), no. 31 (Christmas 1987). The occasion of the reenactment was the launching of the Ewage New Testament at Gona.

2. Clive Moore, ed., *The Forgotten People: A Histoy of the Australian South Sea Island Community* (Sydney, 1979).

3. British New Guinea *Annual Report* (hereafter cited as BNG *AR),* 1892-1893, p. 6. For previous publications on the South Seas Islander teachers see Charles W. Forman, "Missionary Force of the Pacific Island Church," *International Review of Missions* 59 (1970): 215-226; David Wetherell, "From Fiji to Papua: The Work of the *Vakavuvuli*, " *Journal of Pacific History* (hereafter cited as JPH) 13 (1978): 153-173; David Wetherell, "Pioneers and Patriarchs: Samoans in a Nonconformist Mission District in Papua, 1890-1917," *JPH* 15, no. 3/4 (1980): 130-154. The only book published on the teachers in Papua New Guinea is R. and M. Crocombe, eds., *Polynesian Missions in Melanesia from Samoa, Cook Islands, and Tonga to Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia* (Suva, 1982). A list of Pacific Islander teachers is held in the chapel of the Pacific Theological College, Suva, but records of teachers' wives are incomplete.

4. The Anglican church established by William Floyd at Levuka in Fiji was a parish church for Europeans rather than a mission.

5. *Australasian Methodist Mission Review,* May 1894. Among the seventy-member Methodist group in June 1891 were twenty-one Fijians, twenty Samoans, and eight Tongans including wives and children (BNG *AR,* 1893-1894, p. xxvii). A substantial number left to reinforce the New Britain Mission once the Dobu-based D'Entrecasteaux Mission had become established.

6. Among recently published works on the Queensland labor trade, the most significant are J. M. Ward, *British Policy in the South Pacific, 1789-1893: A Study in British Policy Towards the South Pacific Islands Prior to the Establishment of Governments by the Great Powers* (Durham, N.C., 1964); D. Scarr, *Fragments of Empire: A History of the Western Pacific High Commission, 1877-1914* (Canberra, 1967); P. Corris, *Passage, Port, and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870-1914* (Melbourne, 1973); K. E. Saunders, "The Pacific Islander Hospitals in Colonial Queensland: The Failure of Liberal Principles," *JPH* 11, no. 1 (1976): 28-50; P. M. Mercer and C. R. Moore, "Melanesians in North Queensland: The Retention of Indigenous Religious and Magical Practices," *JPH* 11, no. 1 (1976): 66-88. K. Saunders, *Workers in Bondage: The Origins and Bases of Unfree Labour in Queensland, 1824-1916* (Brisbane, 1982); C. R. Moore and P. M. Mercer, "Australia's Pacific Islanders, 1906-1977," *JPH* 13, no. 1/2 (1978): 89-101; and C. R. Moore, *Kanaka: A History of Melanesian Mackay* (Port Moresby, 1985).

7. *Church Chronicle* (Brisbane) (hereafter cited as CC), 1 June 1895.

8. In later years, when Florence Young moved to the Solomon Islands, the mission was renamed the South Seas Evangelical Mission.

9. *CC,* 1 March 1901; J. O. Feetham and W. V. Rymer, eds., *North Queensland Jubilee Book* 1878-1928 (Townsville: Diocese of North Queensland, 1929), 64-65, 38.

10. *CC,* June 1895.

11. Quoted in Feetham and Rymer, *Jubilee Book,* 38.

12. *CC,* May-June 1894 and November 1894.

13. *Missionary Notes* (hereafter cited as *MN*), 15 March 1895, Needham Library, Australian Board of Missions (Anglican) Head Office, Sydney. The occasion was a farewell to the teachers Peter Mussen, Willie Holi, Robert Tasso and Jack Newa. See also David Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission: The Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea, 1891-1942* (Brisbane, 1977), 102.

14. A. K. Chignell, *An Outpost in Papua* (London, 1911), 74; according to C. Whonsbon Aston, a priest formerly in the New Guinea Mission, John Dow's father was a black American. L. Benson to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Brisbane, 10 October 1905, Anglican Archives, University of Papua New Guinea (hereafter cited as AA).

15. Figures for Melanesians in Mackay in first year of work, in Maryborough with more than three years' experience, calculated over the period 1884-1903, cited in Moore, *Kanaka,* 172-173. For Melanesian wage scales during the period 1883-1904, see ibid.

16. J. Newa to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Thursday Island, 16 September 1903, AA. Newa's application was evidently refused: he had already served in, and resigned from, the mission.

17. These islanders were influenced by Francis Pritt (Herbert River), C. C. Sage (Selwyn Mission, Mackay), R. S. Hay (Bundaberg), and M. J. Stone-Wigg (Brisbane).

18. J. T. Gela to G. C. McIntyre, Bundaberg, 15 February 1906, AA.

19. E. Meduedue, *Address by Edgar Meduedue with Theodore Lodi's Story* (Sydney, 1906).

20. Dogura Log, 13 May 1893, AA.

21. N. Yaumalauna and Hezekiah Tauloa, interview with Father Robert Barnes, Awaiama, 9 March and 16 July 1975; Robert Barnes, pers. comm., July 1975.

22. H. Mark to M. J. Stone-Wigg, [New Guinea], n.d., AA.

23. New Guinea Mission, *Annual Report* (hereafter cited as NGM *AR*), for years 1898-1899 to 1909-1910.

24. Charles Helms, "The Impact of the Anglicans' Settlement in New Guinea, 1891-1909" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Melbourne University, 1981), 230. A European layman, Cyril Elwin, had gone with Holi to Boianai in April 1895, followed by Tasso the next month. Tatu arrived at Ave on the Mamba in June 1900, following the withdrawal of an Anglican party on account of ill health.

25. *MN,* 15 February 1896.

26. Quoted in Diocese of New Guinea (Anglican), *Occasional Papers* (hereafter cited as *OP*) 13/9 (1907).

27. T. Gori to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Mukawa, 1 January 1904, AA; NGM AR, 1899-1900, p. 9.

28. A condensed version of this section appeared in David Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission,* 106-109. J. Nogar, Certificate of Marriage with Mary Maniarun, 28 May 1903, AA. C. B. Humphreys, *The Southern New Hebrides: An Ethnological Record* (Cambridge, 1926), 17. F. C. Reynolds to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Murwillumbah, 30 September 1897, AA.

29. F. C. Reynolds to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Glen Innes, 10 February 1898, AA. Japhet Nogar [son of James], interview, Maivara, Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea, 27 April 1972.

30. See *MN,* 22 June 1898.

31. *CC,* 1 August 1895.

32. J. Nogar, Lay Reader's Licence, 12 August 1901, AA.

33. J. Nogar to [ ] Johnson, Wanigela, 28 August 1899-5/23 [sic] 1899, AA.

34. W. H. Abbot to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 8 November 1899, AA.

35. W. H. Abbot to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 27 March 1900, AA.

36. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, at sea, 26 January 1904, AA; quoted in Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 286.

37. *OP* 12/8 (1907); BNG *AR,* 1900-1901, p. 15.

38. Resident Magistrate, North Eastern Division, Station Journal, 26 June 1904, Australian National Archives, Canberra, Records Series, G91.

39. Chignell, An *Outpost,* 48-49.

40. C. King to M. Stone-Wigg, at sea, 13 February 1900, AA.

41. For an account of this expedition, see C. A. W. Monckton, *Some Experiences of a New Guinea Resident Magistrate* (London, 1921), 210.

42. J. Nogar to M. J, Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 10 November 1900, AA.

43. W. H. Abbot to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 8 November 1899, AA; J. Nogar to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 10 November 1900, AA.

44. *MN,* 30 June 1903.

45. J. Nogar to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 10 November 1900, AA.

46. NGM *AR,* 1906-1907, p. 41.

47. Ibid.

48. *Australasian Medical Gazette* (Sydney) 6 (May 1887): 144.

49. E. Pryce Jones to R. W. Thompson, Moru, 10 May 1905, L.M.S. Papua Letters, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

50. Moore, *Kanaka,* 244. The major instance of inhumanity cited is the notorious year of 1884 when 147 of every one thousand Melanesians died. In 1884 the death rate was swollen by the extraordinary mortality among New Ireland laborers; it occurred when Pacific Islands migration was at its height and the health of the laborers at its lowest in a span of forty years. For a seminal study of islander death rates, see Ralph Shlomowitz, "Mortality and the Pacific Labour Trade," *JPH* 22, no. 1/2 (1987): 34-55.

51. See n. 6.

52. Moore, *Kanaka,* 247, table 18.

53. Ibid., 262.

54. Time-expired laborers were Melanesians who had completed a single three-year indenture agreement, but opted to remain in Queensland. The ticket holders were 835 Melanesians resident in Queensland more than five years before 1 September 1884, who had no restrictions on the type of work they undertook (Moore, *Kanaka,* 139). A number of New Guinea volunteers beginning with Peter Mussen, who had been in Australia since 1880, appear to have been time-expired laborers.

55. P. D. Curtin, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade," *Political Science Quarterly* 83 (1968): 190-216.

56. Ibid., 194-195.

57. Moore, *Kanaka,* 251.

58. Ibid., 225.

59. P. M. Mercer and C. R. Moore, "Melanesians in North Queensland: The Retention of Indigenous Religious and Magical Practices," in *JPH* 11, no. 1/2 (1976): 66-68.

60. See above, p. 62.

61. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, n.p., 19 June 1895, cited in *CC,* August 1895; *CC,* October 1905.

62. *OP* 21/10 (1910); S. Tomlinson to H. Newton, Mukawa, 17 September 1922, AA. The phrase is from Psalms 19:5.

63. C. A. W. Monckton, *New Guinea Recollections* (London, 1934), 75.

64. See above, p. 58.

65. Camilla Wedgwood, quoted in John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva, 1982), 251.

66. G. Brown to [ ] Pearson, Sydney, 27 November 1901; G. Brown to J. T. Field, Sydney, 4 September 1896, Mitchell Library, Sydney, Methodist Overseas Mission, Box 45.

67. New Guinea District Synod Minutes (Methodist) 1907, in United Church Archives, University of Papua New Guinea; *Ai Tukutuku Vakalotu* (Suva), May 1910.

68. *OP* 21/9-10 (1910).

69. Willie Holi, Memorandum of Agreement with Australian Board of Missions, 11 March 1895, AA.

70. Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 256.

71. Ibid., 254.

72. Wetherell, *Reluctant Mission,* 67; Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 450.

73. H. M. Shuttleworth to M. J, Stone-Wigg, Brisbane, 5 August 1904; R. S. Hay to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Bundaberg, 10 February 1905, AA.

74. P. J. Money to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Uiaku, 5 April 1907, AA.

75. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Dogura, 13 December 1905, 10 January 1907; Resident Magistrate, Eastern Division, Official Journal, 10 January 1906, Australian National Archives, Canberra, Commonwealth Records Series, G91. Nodi's sentence seems to have been two years, rather than the six months reported by King.

76. P. J. Money to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Uiaku, 5 April 1907, AA. Pettawa's death was reported in the following month (A. M. Campbell to H. Newton, Samarai, 24 May 1907, AA).

77. P. J, Money to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Uiaku, 5 April 1907, AA.

78. H. Newton to J. Nogar, Boianai, 17 November 1904, AA.

79. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Dogura, 4 January 1898, AA.

80. Ibid.

81. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 50. BNG *AR,* 1895-1896, pp. 9-10.

82. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 50.

83. Moore, *Kanaka,* 232.

84. H. Newton to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Dogura, 3 December 1907, AA.

85. R. H. Dakers to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Taupota, 13 November 1899, AA.

86. See C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea, with a Chapter by F. R. Barton, C.M.G., and an Appendix by E. L. Giblin* (Cambridge, 1910), 581, 651; M. J. Stone-Wigg, *The Papuans: A People of the South Pacific, with Later Additions by the Right Rev. Henry Newton, D.D.* (Sydney, 1933), 28; Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 391-397.

87. Dogura Log, 21 September 1902, 16 April 1904, AA. H. Newton to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Dogura, 20 September 1900, AA; CC, October 1905; P. J. Money to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Wanigela, 30 September 1907, AA. John Barker, an anthropologist who lived for nearly two years at Uiaku, reported that the Uiaku people could remember only two of the Queensland Melanesians who were stationed there, Ambrose Darra at Uiaku and Benjamin Ganae at Sinapa (John Barker, "Maisin Christianity: An Ethnography of the Contemporary Religion of a Seaboard Melanesian People" [Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985], 97, 103).

88. D. Tatu to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Mamba, 15 March 1905, AA.

89. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 104.

90. E. L. Giblin to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Hioge, 8 March 1906, AA.

91. S. Tomlinson to E. S. Hughes, Dogura, 3 January 1896, copy in my possession.

92. M. J. Stone-Wigg to H. H. Montgomery, Bartle Bay, 23 July 1899, LRA & P United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives, London, cited in Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 249.

93. Wanigela Log, 22 November 1914, AA.

94. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 57.

95. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Ambasi, 10 January 1910, AA.

96. St. Aidan's College Report, 1933-1934, AA.

97. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Ambasi, 10 January 1910, AA.

98. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 58.

99. Barker, "Maisin Christianity," 440.

100. B. Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (London, 1967), 10.

101. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 54-55.

102. Margaret Barclay [Chignell's daughter], pers. comm., 13 February 1983.

103. Peter Corris, " 'White Australia' in Action," *Historical Studies* (Melbourne) 15, no. 58 (April 1972): 237-251.

104. *MN,* July 1901. *CC,* July 1894.

105. C. C. Sage, lay missionary in New Guinea (1898-1904), succeeded Mary Robinson as head of Mackay's Selwyn Mission. In 1905, four hundred islanders attended Sage's first annual general meeting, but owing to the rapid repatriation of Queensland Melanesians the mission's lands were sold two years later. Sage drowned in the Solomon Islands in 1913 while repatriating Queensland Melanesians (North Queensland Diocesan Council Minutes, 27 February and 30 May 1907, Registry Office, Townsville; *OP* 37/3 [1914]).

106. E. Scarth to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Torquay, 16 January 1907, AA.

107. C. C. Sage to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Mackay, 15 June 1906, AA; F. R. Newton to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Murwillumbah, 15 December 1905, AA.

108. F. M. Synge to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Brisbane, 26 July 1967, AA.

109. J. Norman, *Life's Varied Scenes* (Devon, n.d.), 74-75.

110. *OP* 21/11 (1910); NGM *AR,* 1909-1910, pp. 43-44; L. B. Drury to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Ambasi, 28 May 1907, AA.

111. *OP* 13/9 (1907).

112. Chignell, *An Outpost,* 65.

113. M. J. Stone-Wigg, Conference Address, 26 July 1900, AA.

114. H. Newton to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Ganuganuana, 8 May 1905, AA.

115. Ibid.

116. M. J. Stone-Wigg to H. H. Montgomery, Bartle Bay, 23 July 1899, LRA & P, United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives, London. The reasons for Melanesian-European social separation were not based simply on race. The basis was due to difficulties in communication. St. Paul's School at Samarai, run by the mission, was open to children of all races. (Likewise, when Melanesians were excluded in 1906 from the Halifax State School in North Queensland, the Anglican bishop of North Queensland protested [North Queensland Diocesan Council Minutes, 19 June and 6 October 1906, Registry Office, Townsville].)

117. Compare the informality of early meals between South Sea Islanders and Europeans before 1900 with a 1911 mission notice, "The SSI teachers were entertained at 'Dogura House' to a Musical Evening and light refreshments after Evensong" (Dogura Log, 17 August 1911, AA).

118. C. King to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Samarai, 23 April 1904, AA. Bourke's brother, Reuben Bourke, lived on Thursday Island, which may explain Bourke's declining while in Sydney an offer by Bishop Cecil Wilson for employment in the Melanesian Mission (John E. Done, *Wings Across the Sea* [Brisbane, 1987], 12).

119. F. Menema to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Awaiama, 16 July 1898, AA. The other islander teacher educated at Norfolk Island was Ambrose Darra (*OP* 48/10 [1915]).

120. C. King to H. Newton, Mamba, n.d., AA. A fragment from a letter by Newton to Nogar suggests the same subordination: "You must remember that at Wanigela your master is Mr. Money . . . You are not master up there. Mr. Money is your master and you must tell him things" (H. Newton to J. Nogar, Boianai, 17 November 1904, AA).

121. G. E. Downton to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Dogura, 13 November 1907, AA.

122. *OP* 21/10-11 (1910).

123. T. Gori to M. J. Stone-Wigg, Menapi, 2 April 1907, AA.

124. Wills of W. Ope and W. Tari, n.d., AA.

125. *OP* 134/6 (1956).

126. Helms, "Impact of Anglicans' Settlement," 463.

127. Australian Board of Missions *Review,* November 1910; ibid., August 1914.

# THE DEMOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION OF EBEYE

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The islet of Ebeye, located at the southeastern corner of Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, currently has one of the worlds highest population densities. This essay traces population change on the small islet throughout the twentieth century, focusing in particular upon the demographic processes that led to this dense concentration of people. In documenting the demographic history of Ebeye, the study contrasts the evolving population structure on this islet with similar developments on Majuro Atoll (location of the largest concentration of people in the Marshall Islands) and in the remainder of the Marshalls. The demography of Ebeye is evaluated in ecological and regional terms, in an attempt to assess the long-term impact of its extremely dense population.

## Introduction

Micronesia has experienced several changes during the past four centuries as a consequence of interaction with other, more technologically advanced cultural systems. Of the numerous developments that occurred in this period, none have been more widespread, or have had a greater impact on the peoples of Micronesia, than changes in *demographic structure.* Early examples of such changes often took the form of population decline, with the most dramatic instances the result of diseases introduced by European and American explorers, whalers, and

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traders (Yanaihara 1940; Joseph and Murray 1951; Hezel 1983:141-149). More recently, Micronesia has experienced general population growth, usually as a consequence of increasing survivability and rising birth rates. In this region of frequent, substantial demographic change, one of the most striking cases of population growth has occurred on Ebeye, a small islet located at the southeastern corner of Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Claiming less than twenty inhabitants only one-half century ago, Ebeye currently is estimated to contain at least 8,000 people within its scant 0.12 square mile—making it one of the most densely populated places in the world.

In the following essay we examine the demographic evolution of Ebeye during the twentieth century. To help put this development in context, we also explore demographic change on Majuro Atoll—the present capital of the Republic of the Marshall Islands as well as the other major population center in the region—contrasting the population changes experienced at these two locations with those experienced in the remainder of the Marshalls. The article explores possible causes of population growth on Ebeye, evaluating this growth in terms of two fundamental issues. The first is the cultural change that has accompanied the increasing concentration of population on Ebeye—particularly with regard to land tenure, the traditional foundation for the authority structure in Marshallese society. The second issue examined concerns the adaptive pressures that have accompanied the growing population on Ebeye; such ecological concerns have broad regional implications, and ultimately challenge the Marshallese sociocultural system's ability to maintain itself.

## The Foundation for Change: Colonization and Its Demographic Consequences

The Marshall Islands consist of twenty-nine atolls and five islands located between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 161° and 173° east longitude, in the central Pacific Ocean some 2,500 miles west of Hawaii. Situated in the eastern portion of Micronesia, the Marshalls comprise two chains running north-northwest to south-southeast: the western Ralik or "sunset" chain, and the eastern Ratak or "sunrise" chain. Kwajalein Atoll, the largest atoll in the world, consists of ninety-three islets surrounding an 839-square-mile lagoon in the Ralik chain (Bryan 1971). Two of the islets in Kwajalein Atoll are of interest in the present study: Kwajalein itself, the main islet in the atoll and since 1944 the site of a United States military installation; and Ebeye, a small islet lying

approximately four miles north of Kwajalein islet and currently the residence of virtually all Marshallese living within the atoll. Also of interest, for comparative purposes, is Majuro Atoll, a collection of fifty-seven islets (with population largely concentrated on two) in the Ratak chain, located some 270 miles southeast of Kwajalein Atoll (Figure 1).

As is the case with most of Micronesia, the demography and cultural history of the Marshall Islands in general and Ebeye in particular have been greatly affected by contact with other, more technologically advanced societies. This contact began more than four hundred years ago, yet the impact of outsiders on Marshallese demography has been quite recent for the most part. Although the Marshall Islands officially became part of the Spanish Empire in 1494, and various islands

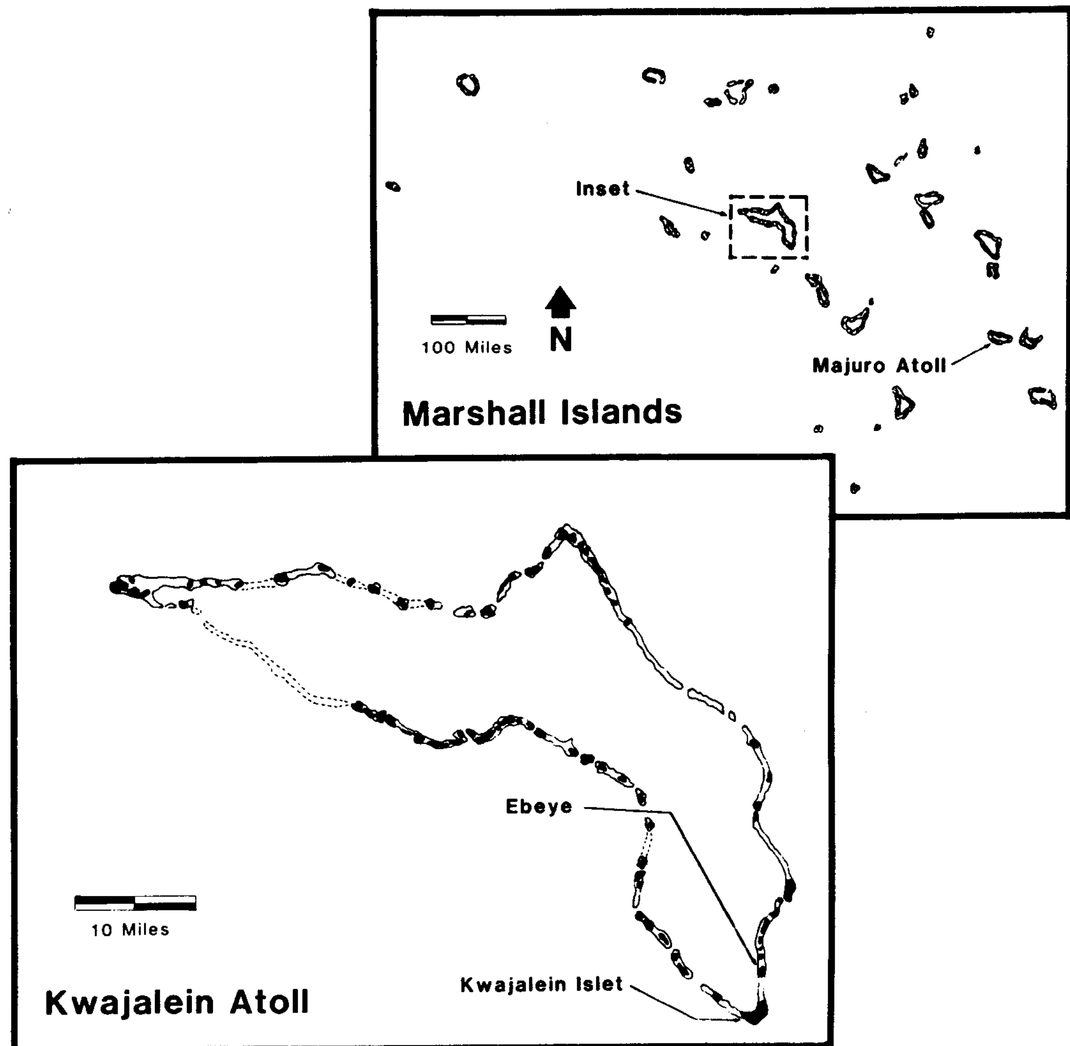



FIGURE 1. **The locations of Kwajalein Atoll, Ebeye, and Majuro Atoll within the Marshall Islands.**

throughout the Marshalls were sighted, described, and occasionally visited from as early as 1526, very little interaction between the Marshal lese and Europeans occurred during the first three centuries following initial contact. Indeed, the islands were not even explored systematically until the early nineteenth century, when the northern Ratak chain was visited by a Russian naval expedition led by Kotzebue (Kotzebue 1967, 3:140-180). With the exception of a few missionaries scattered throughout the region beginning in the 1850s (Hezel 1983:201-210), prolonged contact with outsiders would not begin until the late nineteenth century when the Marshalls were colonized by Germany (see Hezel and Berg 1985:396-435).

After roughly two decades of competing with companies from other nations, in 1878 German traders established their dominance in the Marshalls with the negotiation of trade relations in the Ralik chain and the right to use the harbor at Jaluit Atoll (Shinn 1985:334). In 1885, Germany gained control of all of the Marshalls when the islands became a German protectorate. Germany's role in the Marshall Islands was an active one, as it attempted to develop the region economically. In general, the Germans tended to impose their will on the Marshall Islanders indirectly, through relatively few administrators who worked as much as possible within the traditional authority structure of the Marshallese culture (Oliver 1961:348-350). Despite the small number of Germans in residence, and apparent efforts to change native culture as little as possible, the population of the Marshall Islands appears to have declined by some unspecified amount during the period of German rule. This decline was due largely to a succession of diseases (venereal disease, pulmonary disease, and influenza) and a devastating typhoon during the first decade of the twentieth century (Kramer and Nevermann 1938: 172).

Japan began developing an interest in various portions of Micronesia during the late nineteenth century. In 1914, with Germany involved in World War I, Japan occupied the Marshall Islands militarily—its presence recognized officially first by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:13), and then by a Class C League of Nations mandate in 1920 (Clyde 1967; see also Hezel and Berg 1985:436-475). Japan attempted to expand the regional economic development begun under German rule, as well as introduce Japanese culture, education, and language to the area (Mason 1946:8). To achieve these goals, a number of Japanese administrators, businessmen, and teachers began to reside in the Marshalls. In contrast to the period of German rule, Marshall Islands population remained relatively stable

during thirty years of Japanese occupation (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:19), with the most notable demographic changes taking the form of additional foreigners in residence and the relocation of native Marshallese from certain areas during World War II (Mason 1946:9). Japanese administration of the Marshalls continued until 1944, when the islands were occupied by U.S. military forces.

Without question, the greatest changes in population and culture in the Marshall Islands have occurred during the extended American presence in the area following World War II (Gale 1978). For much of the past forty years the United States was an active force in the region, administering the Marshall Islands and other island groups that comprised the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Some of the changes linked to the American presence have been particularly dramatic, such as the relocation of entire populations from Bikini and Enewetak to enable nuclear tests at these atolls (Mason 1954; Kiste 1968, 1977; Tobin 1967; Alcalay 1984). But the most notable, long-term impact over the past four decades has been population growth throughout most of the region (see Gorenflo and Levin 1989), particularly on Ebeye. Demographic change on this small islet has been associated closely with American military activity in its immediate vicinity. The U.S. Navy established a military installation on the islet of Kwajalein immediately following the defeat of Japanese forces there. This installation remains active, providing at various times in its history important logistical support for atomic tests conducted in the Marshalls beginning in the late 1940s, a key research and development installation for various missile programs from the late 1950s to the present, and more recently a site for "demonstration/validation" testing of certain Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") technologies (Alexander 1984; Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:45; Strategic Defense Initiative Organization 1987). Since U.S. military activity began at Kwajalein, Marshallese natives have been hired to perform a variety of jobs at the installation. This source of employment, coupled with the availability of Western trade goods and other modern amenities, has attracted thousands of Micronesians to the small islet of Ebeye just north of Kwajalein.

## Changing Population of Ebeye, Majuro, and the Marshall Islands

Population estimates were first compiled for portions of the Marshall Islands in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the form of records kept by missionaries and administrators, the notes of various explorers and traders, and portions of the studies prepared by a German

scientific expedition to the Marshalls between 1908 and 1910 (see Kramer and Nevermann 1938:172-174). But detailed population data for the Marshalls were not collected until the census conducted by the Japanese South Seas Bureau in 1920 (see Table 1). Such temporal limitations do not detract significantly from the current study, for it is the last fifty years that have witnessed the most dramatic population change in the Marshall Islands as a whole, and on Ebeye and Majuro Atoll in particular. Two aspects of this change are especially noteworthy. One is the absolute growth in population. During the half-century spanning 1930 to 1980, the populations of the Marshall Islands and Majuro Atoll increased by more than three and fifteen times, respectively; Ebeye, in turn, saw its population grow by more than 325 times during the same period, with the average annual increase exceeding 30 percent during one of the time spans examined (Figure 2; Tables 2 and 3). A second noteworthy aspect of demographic change in the Marshall Islands con-

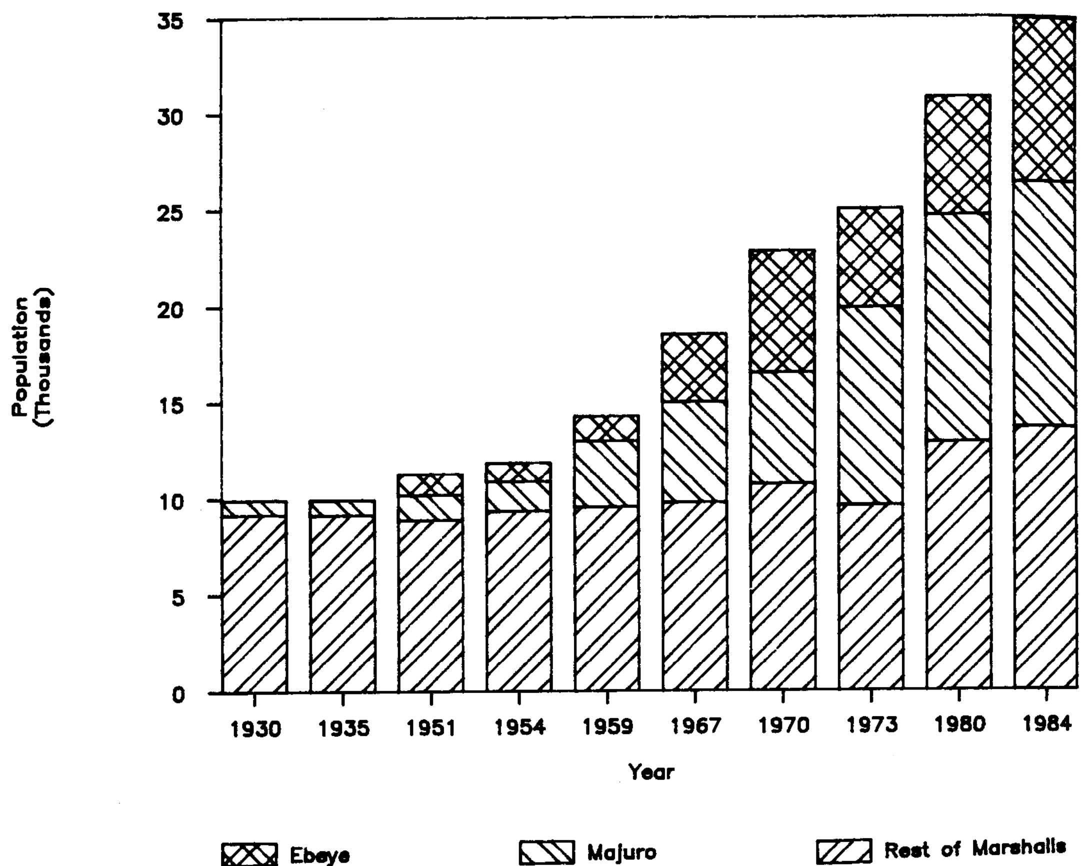



FIGURE 2. **The evolving populations of the Marshall Islands, Ebeye, and Majuro Atoll.**

cerns the regional distribution of population. In the same fifty years between 1930 and 1980, the populations of Ebeye and Majuro Atoll grew from less than 0.2 percent and 7.4 percent of the total population of the Marshall Islands to 20.0 percent and 38.2 percent, respectively (Figure 3; see also Table 2).

The number of inhabitants of the Marshall Islands appears to have remained relatively constant at approximately 10,000 people from 1874 until the late 1930s (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 1943:19), although population figures ranging from 7,000 to 16,000 before the German occupation in the 1880s have been suggested (Kramer and Nevermann 1938:172). The first detailed demographic data for Ebeye, in addition to the rest of the Marshall Islands, come from the 1930 Japanese census of the region (Japan 1931; Table 4). These data as well as those from the following census (conducted in 1935, also by the Japanese; Table 5) confirm the notion of a stable population where the Marshall Islands as

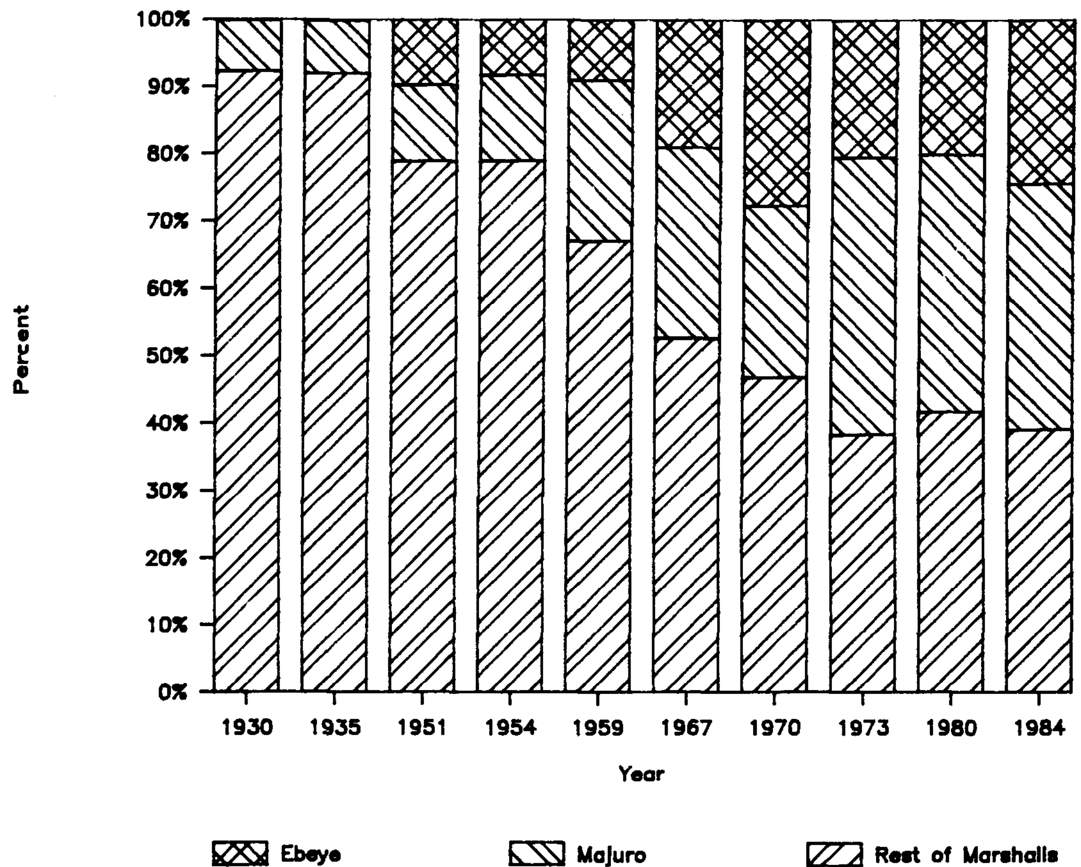



FIGURE 3. **Geographic composition of Marshall Islands population as it has evolved over time.**

Table 1. **Population Data for the Marshall Islands, Ebeye, and Majuro Atoll: Select Years**

| Year | Marshall Islands | Ebeye | Majuro Atoll | source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1920 | 9,693 | NA | 526 | Japan 1937 |
| 1925 | 9,528 | NA | 685 | Japan 1926 |
| 1930 | 10,130 | 19 | 753 | Japan 1931 |
| 1935 | 10,126 | 16 | 779 | Japan 1937 |
| 1945 | 9,471 | NA | 1,237 | Dean 1947 |
| 1947[a] | 7,843 | NA | NA | U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1948 |
| 1948 | 10,495 | NA | NA | U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1948 |
| 1949 | 10,802 | NA | 1,479 | U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1949 |
| 1950 | 11,033 | NA | 1,295 | U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1950; Tobin 1954 |
| 1951 | 11,299 | 1,095[b] | 1,292 | U.S. Dept. of the Navy 1951 |
| 1954 | 11,878 | 981 | 1,522 | U.S. Dept. of State 1955; Tobin 1954 |
| 1955 | 14,260 | 1,622[b] | 3,053 | U.S. Dept. of State 1955 |
| 1956 | 13,984 | 1,371[b] | 2,706 | U.S. Dept. of State 1956 |
| 1957 | 13,231 | 1,387[b] | 2,921 | U.S. Dept. of State 1957 |
| 1958 | 14,163 | 1,284[b] | 3,415 | Office of the High Commissioner 1959 |
| 1959 | 14,290 | 1,292[b] | 3,429 | U.S. Dept. of State 1959 |
| 1960 | 14,907 | 1,576[b] | 3,603 | U.S. Dept. of State 1960 |
| 1961 | 15,399 | 1,443[b] | 3,900 | U.S. Dept. of State 1961 |
| 1962 | 15,710 | 1,971[b] | 3,933 | U.S. Dept. of State 1962 |
| 1963 | 17,363 | 2,388[b] | 3,940 | U.S. Dept. of State 1963 |
| 1964 | 18,205 | 2,663[b] | 4,612 | U.S. Dept. of State 1964 |
| 1965 | 18,062 | 3,249[b] | 4,516 | U.S. Dept. of State 1965 |
| 1966 | 18,239 | 2,879[b] | 5,187 | U.S. Dept. of State 1967 |
| 1967 | 18,578 | 3,540 | 5,249 | School of Public Health n.d. |
| 1968 | 18,998 | 3,702 | 5,602 | U.S. Dept. of State 1968 |
| 1969 | 19,328 | 3,841 | 5,957 | U.S. Dept. of State 1969 |
| 1970 | 22,888 | 6,320 | 5,829 | U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973 |
| 1971 | 23,166 | 5,064 | 8,541 | U.S. Dept. of State 1971 |
| 1972 | 24,248 | 5,604 | 9,059 | U.S. Dept. of State 1972 |
| 1973 | 25,045 | 5,123 | 10,290 | Office of Census Coordinator 1975 |
| 1975 | 26,569 | NA | NA | U.S. Dept. of State 1976 |
| 1977 | 25,457 | 4,577 | 10,087 | U.S. Dept. of State 1978 |
| 1980 | 30,873 | 6,169 | 11,791 | U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982a |
| 1981 | 32,104 | 6,889[b] | 12,261 | U.S. Dept. of State 1983 |
| 1982 | 33,339 | 7,165[b] | 12,751 | U.S. Dept. of State 1983 |
| 1984 | 34,923 | 8,500 | 12,747 | U.S. Dept. of State 1984 |

NA = not available.

*Note:* Data for 1920-1935 are for natives only; remaining data are for de facto population.

[a]Estimate based upon partial census records, and believed to be inaccurate.

[b]Population for "Kwajalein Atoll," virtually all of which resided on Ebeye during these years.

TABLE 2. **Population of the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: Select Years**

| | Number | | | | Percentage in Each Area | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| 1930 | 10,130 | 19 | 753 | 9,358 | 0.2 | 7.4 | 92.4 |
| 1935 | 10,126 | 16 | 779 | 9,331 | 0.2 | 7.7 | 92.1 |
| 1951 | 11,299 | 1,095 | 1,292 | 8,912 | 9.7 | 11.4 | 78.9 |
| 1954 | 11,878 | 981 | 1,522 | 9,375 | 8.3 | 12.8 | 78.9 |
| 1959 | 14,290 | 1,292 | 3,429 | 9,569 | 9.0 | 24.0 | 67.0 |
| 1967 | 18,578 | 3,540 | 5,249 | 9,789 | 19.1 | 28.3 | 52.7 |
| 1970 | 22,888 | 6,320 | 5,829 | 10,739 | 27.6 | 25.5 | 46.9 |
| 1973 | 25,045 | 5,123 | 10,290 | 9,632 | 20.5 | 41.1 | 38.5 |
| 1980 | 30,873 | 6,169 | 11,791 | 12,913 | 20.0 | 38.2 | 41.8 |
| 1984 | 34,923 | 8,500 | 12,747 | 13,676 | 24.3 | 36.5 | 39.2 |

*Sources:* Japan 1931, 1937; U.S. Department of State 1955, 1959, 1984; U.S. Department of the Navy 1951; Tobin 1954; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973, 1982a; Office of Census Coordinator 1975; School of Public Health n.d.

TABLE 3. **Population Change over Time for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: Select Years**

| | Number | | | | Average Annual Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| 1930 | | | | | | | | |
| 1935 | -4 | -3 | 26 | -27 | 0.0 | -3.4 | 0.7 | -0.1 |
| 1951 | 1,173 | 1,079 | 513 | -419 | 0.7 | 30.2 | 3.2 | -0.3 |
| 1954 | 579 | -114 | 230 | 463 | 1.7 | -3.6 | 5.6 | 1.7 |
| 1959 | 2,412 | 311 | 1,907 | 194 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 17.6 | 0.4 |
| 1967 | 4,288 | 2,248 | 1,820 | 220 | 3.3 | 13.4 | 5.5 | 0.3 |
| 1970 | 4,310 | 2,780 | 580 | 950 | 7.2 | 21.3 | 3.6 | 3.1 |
| 1973 | 2,157 | -1,197 | 4,461 | -1,107 | 3.0 | -6.8 | 20.9 | -3.6 |
| 1980 | 5,828 | 1,046 | 1,501 | 3,281 | 3.0 | 2.7 | 2.0 | 4.3 |
| 1984 | 4,050 | 2,331 | 956 | 763 | 3.1 | 8.3 | 2.0 | 1.4 |

a whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the remainder of the Marshall Islands are concerned. Population totals remained roughly constant over time, as did the age and sex structure for each area (Figure 4).

As noted in Table 1, several estimates of Marshall Islands population were prepared in the years immediately following World War II. These

TABLE 4. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1930**

| | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 10,130 | 19 | 753 | 9,358 | 100.0[a] | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| < 1 | 278 | 0 | 24 | 254 | 2.7 | 0.0 | 3.2 | 2.7 |
| 1-5 | 1,091 | 4 | 82 | 1,005 | 10.8 | 21.1 | 10.9 | 10.7 |
| 6-14 | 1,734 | 1 | 67 | 1,666 | 17.1 | 5.3 | 8.9 | 17.8 |
| 15-19 | 869 | 4 | 46 | 819 | 8.6 | 21.1 | 6.1 | 8.8 |
| 20-24 | 697 | 3 | 53 | 641 | 6.9 | 15.8 | 7.0 | 6.8 |
| 25-39 | 2,383 | 1 | 150 | 2,232 | 23.5 | 5.3 | 19.9 | 23.9 |
| 40-59 | 2,029 | 5 | 131 | 1,893 | 20.0 | 26.3 | 17.4 | 20.2 |
| 60+ | 1,049 | 1 | 200 | 848 | 10.4 | 5.3 | 26.6 | 9.1 |

*Source:* Japan 1931.

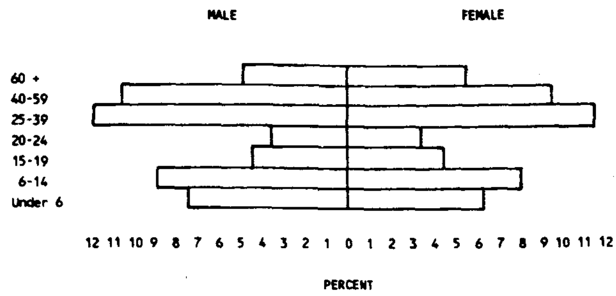
[a]Totals in this and following tables may not sum to 100%, due to rounding.

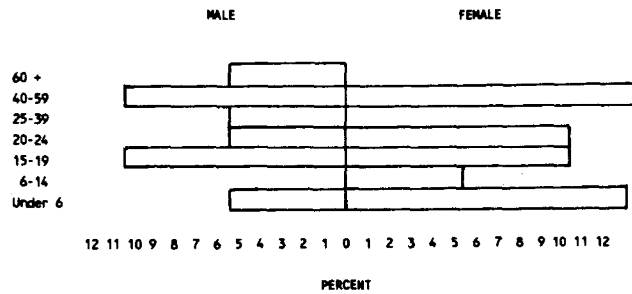
TABLE 5. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1935**

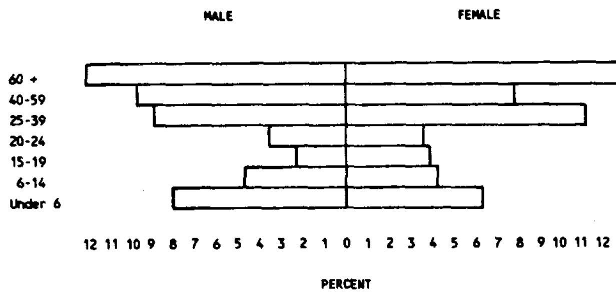
| | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 10,126 | 16 | 779 | 9,331 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 231 | 0 | 21 | 210 | 2.3 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 |
| 1-5 | 943 | 2 | 71 | 870 | 9.3 | 12.5 | 9.1 | 9.3 |
| 6-14 | 1,788 | 2 | 97 | 1,689 | 17.7 | 12.5 | 12.5 | 18.1 |
| 15-19 | 916 | 2 | 57 | 857 | 9.0 | 12.5 | 7.3 | 9.2 |
| 20-24 | 907 | 3 | 51 | 853 | 9.0 | 18.8 | 6.5 | 9.1 |
| 25-59 | 4,327 | 5 | 305 | 4,017 | 42.7 | 31.3 | 39.2 | 43.1 |
| 60+ | 1,014 | 2 | 177 | 835 | 10.0 | 12.5 | 22.7 | 8.9 |

*Source:* Japan 1937.

data suggest that the overall population of the Marshalls remained at about 10,000 persons through the 1940s, the apparent decrease recorded in 1945 quite likely a result of war-related deaths and relocation to remote areas of the region during the war. Immediately following the defeat of Japanese forces on Kwajalein in early 1944, approximately 300 Marshallese and Pohnpeians were recruited to help clear battle debris



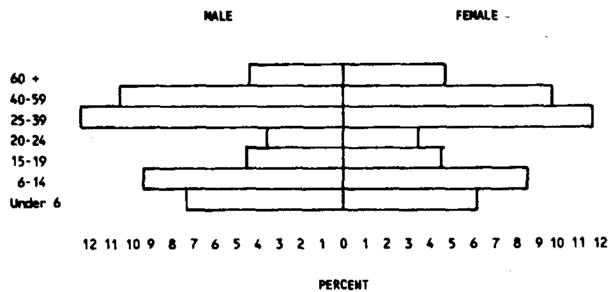




FIGURE 4. **Population pyramids for the Marshall Islands as a whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1930.**

and reconstruct the airstrip and hangars on Kwajalein islet (Tobin 1954). Once this work was completed, the Pohnpeians were sent home; Marshallese women, in turn, were allowed to join their men, and the Kwajalein Labor Camp was formed. By early 1950 the population of this camp had swelled to 559, and the Navy decided to move it to nearby Ebeye. In 1954 another systematic census was conducted—this time under the direction of the district anthropologist and focusing solely on Ebeye (Tobin 1954). Despite the rapidly growing number of people living in conditions greatly removed from traditional Marshallese culture, the 1954 census of Ebeye suggests that its population structure remained roughly similar to that of the prewar Marshall Islands as a whole (Table 6; Figure 5). However, two changes are evident in this first detailed documentation of Ebeye's emerging role as a population center, providing early clues to the demographic future of this small islet: a relative increase in the number of children, particularly ages 1-4, probably due to a combination of rising fertility and declining infant mortality; and a relative increase in individuals aged 20-29, providing possible evidence of migration to Ebeye in search of employment.

TABLE 6. **Population by Age and Sex for Ebeye: 1954**

| Age | Number | | | Percentage | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females |
| Total | 981 | 523 | 458 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 27 | 16 | 11 | 2.8 | 3.1 | 2.4 |
| 1-4 | 134 | 68 | 66 | 13.7 | 13.0 | 14.4 |
| 5-9 | 110 | 65 | 45 | 11.2 | 12.4 | 9.8 |
| 10-14 | 57 | 27 | 30 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 6.6 |
| 15-19 | 44 | 18 | 26 | 4.5 | 3.4 | 5.7 |
| 20-24 | 117 | 63 | 54 | 11.9 | 12.0 | 11.8 |
| 25-29 | 110 | 65 | 45 | 11.2 | 12.4 | 9.8 |
| 30-34 | 68 | 32 | 36 | 6.9 | 6.1 | 7.9 |
| 35-39 | 85 | 53 | 32 | 8.7 | 10.1 | 7.0 |
| 40-44 | 77 | 32 | 45 | 7.8 | 6.1 | 9.8 |
| 45-49 | 51 | 28 | 23 | 5.2 | 5.4 | 5.0 |
| 50-54 | 29 | 13 | 16 | 3.0 | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| 55-59 | 17 | 9 | 8 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| 60-64 | 37 | 25 | 12 | 3.8 | 4.8 | 2.6 |
| 65-69 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.1 |
| 70-74 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| 75+ | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Not Stated | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.0 |

***Source:*** Adapted from Tobin 1954.

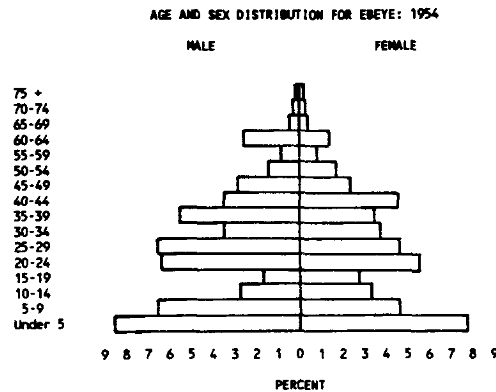



FIGURE 5. **Population pyramid for Ebeye: 1954.**

Several population estimates for the Marshall Islands, Ebeye, and Majuro Atoll were prepared by the U.S. Navy and the U.S. State Department following World War II, in the process of providing annual reports to the United Nations on the administration of the Trust Territory. However, it was not until 1958 that another detailed census of the Marshall Islands was conducted—as part of a census of the Trust Territory organized by the Office of the High Commissioner (Office of the High Commissioner 1959). Only total populations for each administrative subdivision are available from the 1958 census (see U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982a:6). Much of the data necessary for the current study, such as the population of Ebeye and the age and sex composition of the Marshall Islands population by geographic area, unfortunately are absent. But the 1958 census does provide the first systematically collected evidence of population growth throughout the Marshalls following the war. Since the last systematic census of the region in 1935, Marshall Islands population had grown by 39.9 percent, with much of this growth apparently occurring after 1948 (see Table 1).

Another detailed census of the Marshalls was conducted in 1967, the result of a joint effort by the Peace Corps and the University of Hawaii School of Public Health (School of Public Health n.d.; Table 7). Population pyramids constructed from the 1967 data for the entire region, and for the geographic components of present interest, suggest a continuation of relatively high fertility (Figure 6). The population of Ebeye in particular continued to grow rapidly, increasing to over 3.5 times the total recorded by the 1954 census of the islet.

Data from the 1970 census conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census indicate that during the late 1960s population growth continued throughout the Marshall Islands, with particularly marked increases in

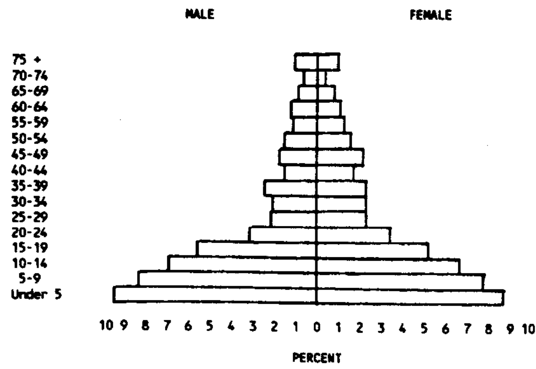
TABLE 7. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1967**

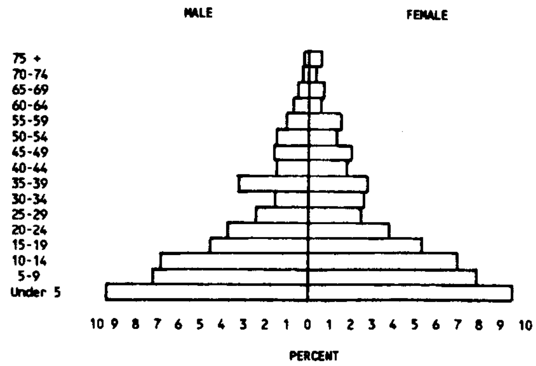
| | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 18,578 | 3,540 | 5,249 | 9,789 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 734 | 157 | 233 | 344 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 3.5 |
| 1-4 | 2,649 | 516 | 744 | 1,389 | 14.3 | 14.6 | 14.2 | 14.2 |
| 5-9 | 2,977 | 529 | 780 | 1,668 | 16.0 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 17.0 |
| 10-14 | 2,523 | 484 | 652 | 1,387 | 13.6 | 13.7 | 12.4 | 14.2 |
| 15-19 | 1,959 | 343 | 589 | 1,027 | 10.5 | 9.7 | 11.2 | 10.5 |
| 20-24 | 1,157 | 264 | 332 | 561 | 6.2 | 7.5 | 6.3 | 5.7 |
| 25-29 | 766 | 172 | 234 | 360 | 4.1 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 3.7 |
| 30-34 | 767 | 150 | 239 | 378 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 3.9 |
| 35-39 | 875 | 208 | 275 | 392 | 4.7 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 4.0 |
| 40-44 | 601 | 126 | 158 | 317 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| 45-49 | 725 | 134 | 186 | 405 | 3.9 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 4.1 |
| 50-54 | 575 | 104 | 160 | 311 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.2 |
| 55-59 | 414 | 92 | 99 | 223 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 2.3 |
| 60-64 | 407 | 49 | 105 | 253 | 2.2 | 1.4 | 2.0 | 2.6 |
| 65-69 | 288 | 42 | 64 | 182 | 1.6 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.9 |
| 70-74 | 198 | 18 | 41 | 139 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| 75+ | 351 | 24 | 72 | 255 | 1.9 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 2.6 |
| Not Stated | 288 | 48 | 114 | 126 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 2.2 | 1.3 |
| Foreign | 324 | 80 | 172 | 72 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 0.7 |

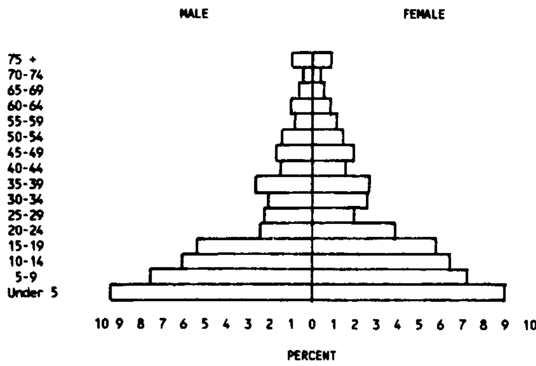
*Source:* School of Public Health n.d.

the populations concentrated on Ebeye and Majuro (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973; Table 8). The 1970 data provide the first evidence that the population of Ebeye had surpassed that of Majuro Atoll and that the populations of these two centers together exceeded the population in the rest of the Marshalls. The demographic structures characterizing the areas were broadly similar, and although half of the inhabitants were in their teens or younger the age distributions for all areas were slightly less skewed toward younger ages than the 1967 distributions (Figure 7).

Because of certain weaknesses in the 1970 census—namely problems in some areas with "misplaced persons" (persons being moved from one island to another during the process of tabulation) and undercounts—another census was conducted in 1973. The problems with the 1970 census do not appear to affect the Marshall Islands data; nevertheless, the 1973 census organized by the High Commissioner's Office in conjunction with the South Pacific Commission covered the entire Trust Terri-



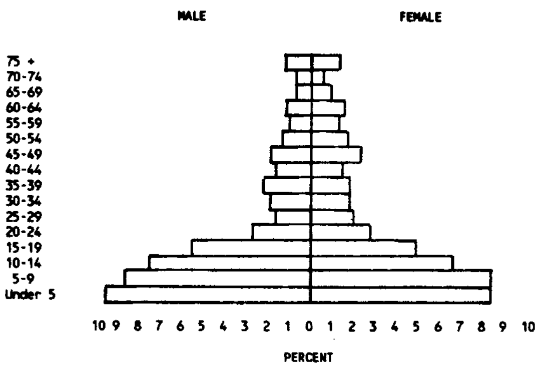




FIGURE 6. **Population pyramids: 1967.**

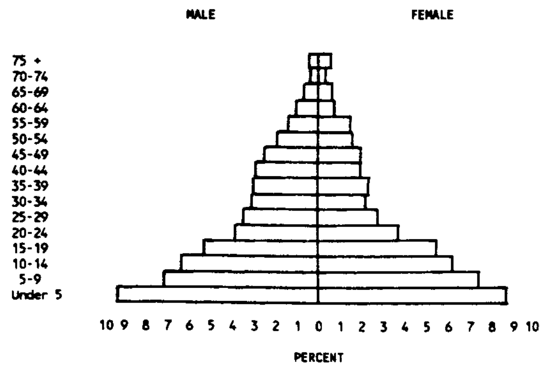
TABLE 8. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1970**

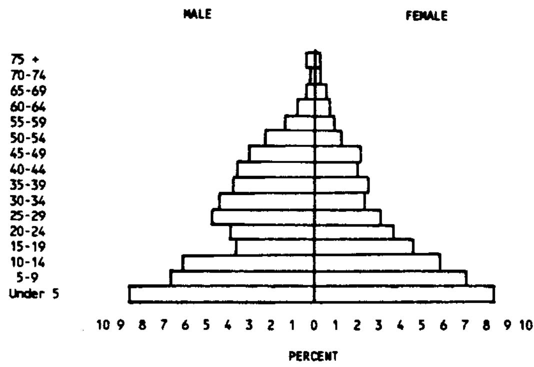
| Age | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 22,888 | 6,320 | 5,829 | 10,739 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 1,084 | 271 | 263 | 550 | 4.7 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 5.1 |
| 1-4 | 3,032 | 816 | 773 | 1,443 | 13.2 | 12.9 | 13.3 | 13.4 |
| 5-9 | 3,271 | 867 | 817 | 1,587 | 14.3 | 13.7 | 14.0 | 14.8 |
| 10-14 | 2,833 | 761 | 716 | 1,356 | 12.4 | 12.0 | 12.3 | 12.6 |
| 15-19 | 2,405 | 521 | 705 | 1,179 | 10.5 | 8.2 | 12.1 | 11.0 |
| 20-24 | 1,737 | 482 | 534 | 721 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 9.2 | 6.7 |
| 25-29 | 1,428 | 497 | 355 | 576 | 6.2 | 7.9 | 6.1 | 5.4 |
| 30-34 | 1,190 | 430 | 245 | 515 | 5.2 | 6.8 | 4.2 | 4.8 |
| 35-39 | 1,192 | 405 | 277 | 510 | 5.2 | 6.4 | 4.8 | 4.7 |
| 40-44 | 1,093 | 362 | 253 | 478 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 4.3 | 4.5 |
| 45-49 | 1,024 | 337 | 210 | 477 | 4.5 | 5.3 | 3.6 | 4.4 |
| 50-54 | 800 | 222 | 214 | 364 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.7 | 3.4 |
| 55-59 | 662 | 150 | 191 | 321 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 3.3 | 3.0 |
| 60-64 | 393 | 94 | 90 | 209 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.9 |
| 65-69 | 321 | 48 | 103 | 170 | 1.4 | 0.8 | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| 70-74 | 177 | 28 | 39 | 110 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 1.0 |
| 75+ | 246 | 29 | 44 | 173 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1.6 |

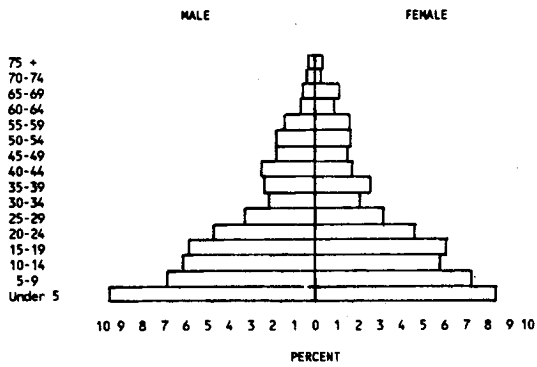
*Source:* U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973.

tory (Office of Census Coordinator 1975). The data collected suggest that the population of the Marshall Islands continued to increase rapidly, particularly on Majuro Atoll, with a slight *decrease* in the population of Ebeye (Table 9). Ebeye apparently continued to experience high fertility—contributing to a demographic structure where nearly half of the population was younger than 14 years old (Figure 8).

The most recent census of the Marshall Islands was conducted in 1980, once again by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982a). The results suggest a continuation of past trends: rapid demographic growth throughout the Marshall Islands, with the populations of Ebeye and Majuro Atoll increasing as well (Table 10). In general, the population structures remained similar to those of earlier censuses, with high fertility apparent throughout the Marshalls and age distributions skewed more heavily toward young ages for all areas (Figure 9).[1]



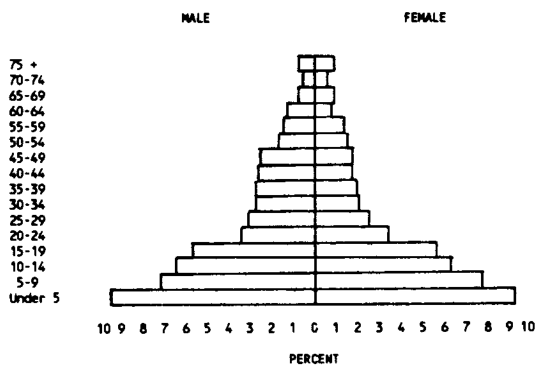




FIGURE 7. **Population pyramids: 1970.**

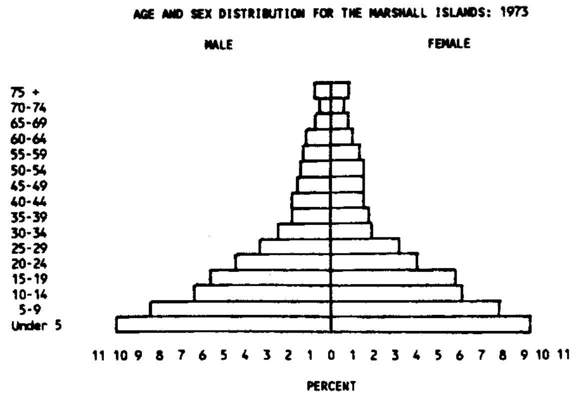
TABLE 9. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1973**

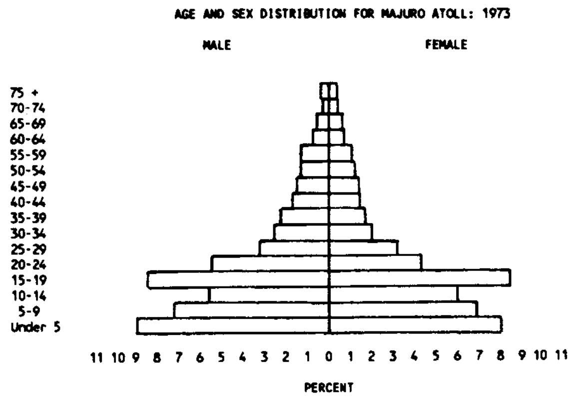
| | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 25,045 | 5,123 | 10,290 | 9,632 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 1,067 | 250 | 387 | 430 | 4.3 | 4.9 | 3.8 | 4.5 |
| 1-4 | 3,743 | 828 | 1,360 | 1,555 | 14.9 | 16.2 | 13.2 | 16.1 |
| 5-9 | 3,983 | 849 | 1,424 | 1,710 | 15.9 | 16.6 | 13.8 | 17.8 |
| 10-14 | 3,135 | 620 | 1,187 | 1,328 | 12.5 | 12.1 | 11.5 | 13.8 |
| 15-19 | 2,835 | 322 | 1,743 | 770 | 11.3 | 6.3 | 16.9 | 8.0 |
| 20-24 | 2,119 | 458 | 973 | 688 | 8.5 | 8.9 | 9.5 | 7.1 |
| 25-29 | 1,603 | 422 | 645 | 536 | 6.4 | 8.2 | 6.3 | 5.6 |
| 30-34 | 1,059 | 250 | 433 | 376 | 4.2 | 4.9 | 4.2 | 3.9 |
| 35-39 | 929 | 198 | 400 | 331 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 3.4 |
| 40-44 | 847 | 208 | 348 | 291 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 3.4 | 3.0 |
| 45-49 | 772 | 188 | 318 | 266 | 3.1 | 3.7 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| 50-54 | 741 | 185 | 277 | 279 | 3.0 | 3.6 | 2.7 | 2.9 |
| 55-59 | 659 | 124 | 266 | 269 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| 60-64 | 519 | 89 | 178 | 252 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 2.6 |
| 65-69 | 358 | 44 | 143 | 171 | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.4 | 1.8 |
| 70-74 | 255 | 45 | 79 | 131 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| 75+ | 374 | 37 | 102 | 235 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 2.4 |
| Not Stated | 47 | 6 | 27 | 14 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.1 |

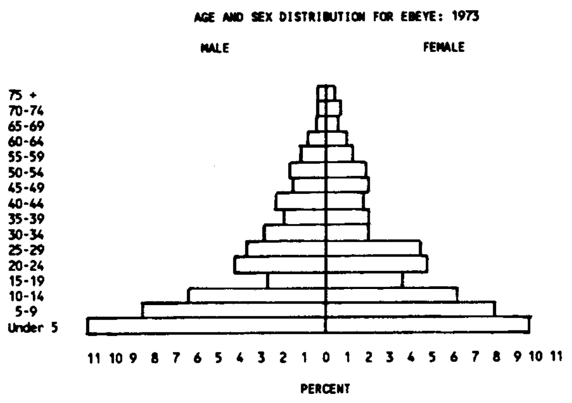
*Source:* Office of Census Coordinator 1975.

## The Causes of Population Change on Ebeye

Two reasons for the increase in Ebeye's population were briefly discussed in the preceding section: high fertility rates and net in-migration. The heavy representation of young persons in the census years following World War II provides evidence of the high fertility rate for the Marshall Islands as a whole. The possible reasons underlying this skewed distribution of age classes include increased births, reduced infant mortality, or some combination of the two. As indicated in Table 11, although the data fluctuate it appears that the latter combination of factors characterized the Marshalls during the 1960s and 1970s. Table 11 also contains basic information on general mortality in the form of the crude death rate. Values of this measure decreased over time—and in conjunction with the changes in crude birth and infant mortality rates led to an expected increase in population, supporting the contention that shortly after World War II births began to exceed deaths in the



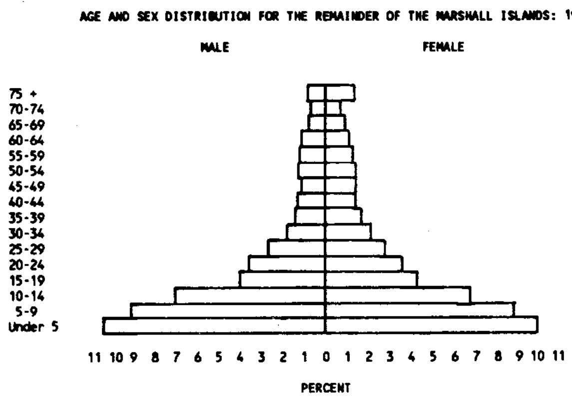




FIGURE 8. **Population pyramids: 1973.**

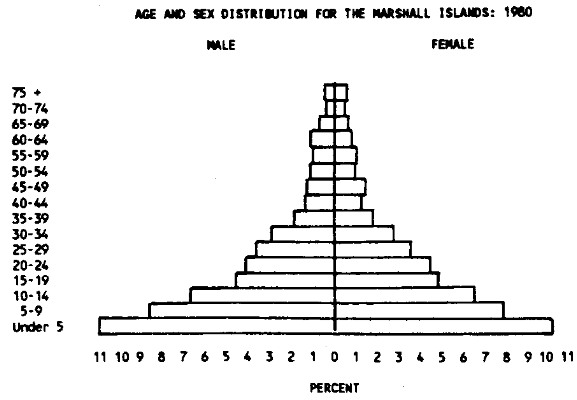
TABLE 10. **Population by Age for the Marshall Islands as a Whole, Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1980**

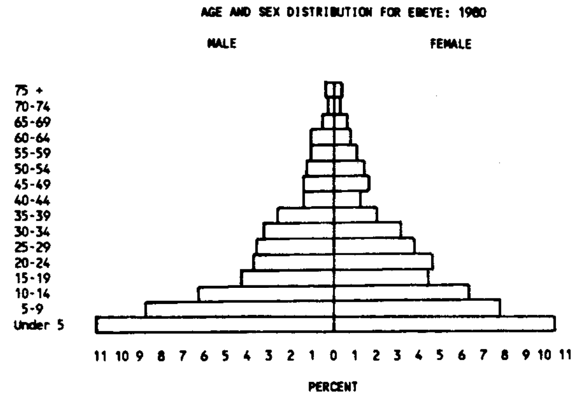
| | Number | | | | Percentage | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls | Total | Ebeye | Majuro | Elsewhere in Marshalls |
| Total | 30,873 | 6,169 | 11,791 | 12,913 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| <1 | 1,545 | 321 | 520 | 704 | 5.0 | 5.2 | 4.4 | 5.5 |
| 1-4 | 4,957 | 1,019 | 1,694 | 2,244 | 16.1 | 16.5 | 14.4 | 17.4 |
| 5-9 | 5,023 | 1,021 | 1,753 | 2,249 | 16.3 | 16.6 | 14.9 | 17.4 |
| 10-14 | 4,054 | 768 | 1,590 | 1,696 | 13.1 | 12.4 | 13.5 | 13.1 |
| 15-19 | 2,956 | 527 | 1,329 | 1,100 | 9.6 | 8.5 | 11.3 | 8.5 |
| 20-24 | 2,601 | 511 | 1,039 | 1,051 | 8.4 | 8.3 | 8.8 | 8.1 |
| 25-29 | 2,225 | 454 | 874 | 897 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 6.9 |
| 30-34 | 1,779 | 395 | 708 | 676 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 6.0 | 5.2 |
| 35-39 | 1,136 | 275 | 464 | 397 | 3.7 | 4.5 | 3.9 | 3.1 |
| 40-44 | 819 | 158 | 365 | 296 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 2.3 |
| 45-49 | 809 | 175 | 321 | 313 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.7 | 2.4 |
| 50-54 | 699 | 169 | 285 | 245 | 2.3 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| 55-59 | 664 | 138 | 256 | 270 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| 60-64 | 642 | 112 | 241 | 289 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 2.0 | 2.2 |
| 65-69 | 423 | 68 | 165 | 190 | 1.4 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| 70-74 | 244 | 28 | 101 | 115 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| 75+ | 297 | 30 | 86 | 181 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 1.4 |

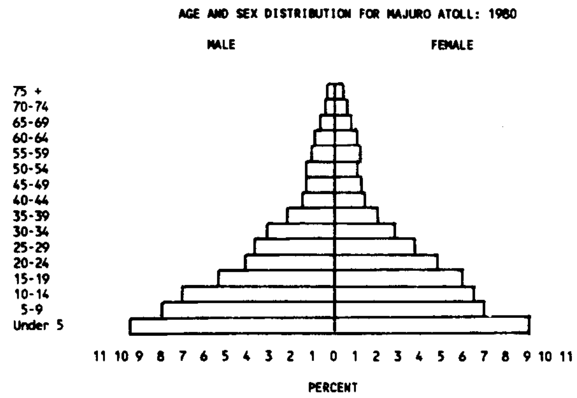
*Source:* U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982b.

Marshall Islands (U.S. Department of the Navy 1947) as well as the Trust Territory as a whole (Taueber 1961:231-232). The mortality characteristics for the Marshall Islands also can be broken into their age-specific components for certain years, though we average these measures for four census years to compensate for small values in some age groups (Table 12). None of the age-specific mortality rates appear to be excessively high for the region, with postchildhood mortality remaining in relative check until ages 55-59.

Unfortunately, the data needed to conduct detailed comparisons of fertility for Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the remainder of the Marshall Islands across several years are not available. We can, however, make such a comparison for the years 1973 and 1980. Table 13 provides information on the number of children ever born, surviving, and born in the preceding year for the areas of interest during 1973 (with Majuro defined only for the Djarrit-Uliga-Dalap [D.U.D.] Municipality, the



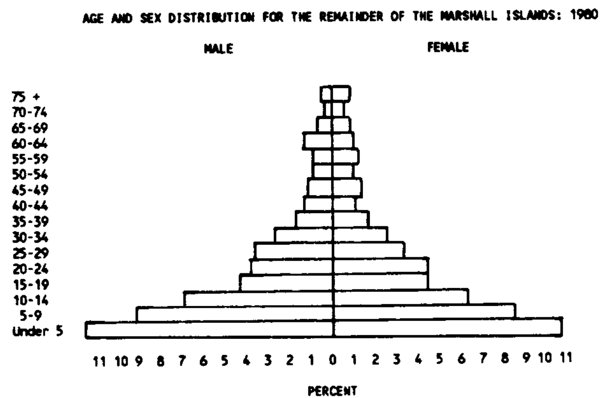




FIGURE 9. **Population pyramids: 1980.**

TABLE 11. **Crude Birth Rate, Death Rate, and Infant Mortality Rate for the Marshall Islands: 1963-1979**

| Year | Crude Birth Rate | Crude Death Rate | Infant Mortality Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1963 | 35.8 | 6.7 | 65.9 |
| 1964 | 35.0 | 5.3 | 37.6 |
| 1965 | 38.3 | 6.3 | 34.7 |
| 1966 | 43.0 | 5.2 | 20.4 |
| 1967 | 41.0 | 6.4 | 27.1 |
| 1968 | 41.6 | 7.6 | 36.7 |
| 1969 | 42.3 | 6.0 | 22.0 |
| 1970 | 41.2 | 6.1 | 24.2 |
| 1971 | 39.4 | 4.3 | 34.4 |
| 1972 | 38.0 | 3.1 | 25.4 |
| 1973 | 42.6 | 6.4 | 27.3 |
| 1974 | 45.8 | 5.5 | 15.8 |
| 1975 | 43.3 | 5.0 | 33.4 |
| 1976 | 41.5 | 3.9 | 17.4 |
| 1977 | 41.4 | 6.1 | 44.6 |
| 1978 | 16.4 | 2.9 | 55.8 |
| 1979 | 35.2 | 3.0 | 24.7 |

*Source:* U.S. Dept. of State 1981.

*Note:* Infant mortality rate for 1973 refers to deaths per 1,000 infants less than 1 year of age; the remainder of infant mortality rates refer to deaths per 1,000 live births and thus are not strictly comparable with the 1973 figure (the latter being excessively low).

TABLE 12. **Age-specific Death Rates, Marshall Islands: Averaged for 1967, 1970, 1973, and 1980**

| Age | Mortality Rate | Age | Mortality Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 4.7 | 35-39 | 1.7 |
| <1 | 24.6 | 40-44 | 3.9 |
| 1-4 | 2.2 | 45-49 | 6.0 |
| 5-9 | 0.5 | 50-54 | 8.2 |
| 10-14 | 0.8 | 55-59 | 14.2 |
| 15-19 | 1.2 | 60-64 | 14.3 |
| 20-24 | 1.1 | 65-69 | 18.0 |
| 25-29 | 0.7 | 70-74 | 36.6 |
| 30-34 | 2.7 | 75+ | 60.7 |

TABLE 13. **Children Ever Born, Surviving, and Born in Last Year for Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1973**

| Age | Females | Children Born in Preceding Year | Age-specific Fertility Rate | Children Ever Born (CEB) | Children Still Alive (CSA) | CEB Per Female | CSA Per Female | % Alive of CEB |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ebeye** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1,009 | 251 | 7,894.5 | 4,010 | 3,514 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 87.6 |
| 15-19 | 173 | 21 | 121.4 | 64 | 61 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 95.3 |
| 20-24 | 239 | 71 | 297.1 | 370 | 332 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 89.7 |
| 25-29 | 221 | 85 | 384.6 | 893 | 786 | 4.0 | 3.6 | 88.0 |
| 30-34 | 97 | 37 | 381.4 | 557 | 505 | 5.7 | 5.2 | 90.7 |
| 35-39 | 97 | 26 | 268.0 | 786 | 689 | 8.1 | 7.1 | 87.7 |
| 40-44 | 87 | 11 | 126.4 | 664 | 561 | 7.6 | 6.4 | 84.5 |
| 45-49 | 95 | 0 | 0.0 | 676 | 580 | 7.1 | 6.1 | 85.8 |
| **Majuro (D.U.D. Municipality)** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1,739 | 324 | 5,928.9 | 5,194 | 4,588 | 3.0 | 2.6 | 88.3 |
| 15-19 | 542 | 57 | 105.2 | 126 | 113 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 89.7 |
| 20-24 | 364 | 113 | 310.4 | 575 | 527 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 91.7 |
| 25-29 | 266 | 87 | 327.1 | 894 | 810 | 3.4 | 3.0 | 90.6 |
| 30-34 | 164 | 31 | 189.0 | 865 | 787 | 5.3 | 4.8 | 91.0 |
| 35-39 | 145 | 29 | 200.0 | 1,056 | 922 | 7.3 | 6.4 | 87.3 |
| 40-44 | 130 | 5 | 38.5 | 841 | 724 | 6.5 | 5.6 | 86.1 |
| 45-49 | 128 | 2 | 15.6 | 837 | 705 | 6.5 | 5.5 | 84.2 |
| **Remainder of Marshall Islands** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 2,148 | 485 | 7,832.9 | 7,557 | 6,649 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 88.0 |
| 15-19 | 705 | 83 | 117.7 | 222 | 203 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 91.4 |
| 20-24 | 398 | 145 | 364.3 | 738 | 668 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 90.5 |
| 25-29 | 309 | 119 | 385.1 | 1,291 | 1,164 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 90.2 |
| 30-34 | 206 | 63 | 305.8 | 1,247 | 1,115 | 6.1 | 5.4 | 89.4 |
| 35-39 | 206 | 52 | 252.4 | 1,553 | 1,366 | 7.5 | 6.6 | 88.0 |
| 40-44 | 164 | 17 | 103.7 | 1,347 | 1,186 | 8.2 | 7.2 | 88.0 |
| 45-49 | 160 | 6 | 37.5 | 1,159 | 947 | 7.2 | 5.9 | 81.7 |

*Source:* Office of Census Coordinator 1975.

area at the eastern end of the atoll containing most of its population). These data support the notion of continued high fertility throughout the Marshalls, with most values greater for Ebeye than for the other areas examined in this study. Fertility in general remained high in 1980, the values of some of the measures decreasing, and some increasing (Table 14). One point worth noting about these fertility measures is that values

TABLE 14. **Children Ever Born, Surviving, and Born in Last Year for Ebeye, Majuro Atoll, and the Remainder of the Marshall Islands: 1980**

| Age | Females | Children Born in Preceding Year | Age-specific Fertility Rate | Children Ever Born (CEB) | Children still Alive (CSA) | CEB Per Female | CSA Per Female | % Alive of CEB |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ebeye** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 1,256 | 311 | 7,640.4 | 4,228 | 3,882 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 91.8 |
| 15-19 | 270 | 33 | 122.2 | 90 | 84 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 93.3 |
| 20-24 | 282 | 104 | 368.8 | 488 | 461 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 94.5 |
| 25-29 | 232 | 77 | 331.9 | 749 | 702 | 3.2 | 3.0 | 93.7 |
| 30-34 | 192 | 54 | 281.3 | 974 | 902 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 92.6 |
| 35-39 | 115 | 30 | 260.9 | 745 | 678 | 6.5 | 5.9 | 91.0 |
| 40-44 | 74 | 8 | 108.1 | 498 | 446 | 6.7 | 6.0 | 89.6 |
| 45-49 | 91 | 5 | 54.9 | 684 | 609 | 7.5 | 6.7 | 89.0 |
| **Majuro Atoll** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 2,556 | 430 | 5,908.7 | 7,437 | 6,859 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 92.2 |
| 15-19 | 692 | 43 | 62.1 | 186 | 180 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 96.8 |
| 20-24 | 547 | 129 | 235.8 | 816 | 768 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 94.1 |
| 25-29 | 430 | 98 | 227.9 | 1,319 | 1,206 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 91.4 |
| 30-34 | 339 | 77 | 227.1 | 1,571 | 1,465 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 93.3 |
| 35-39 | 217 | 50 | 230.4 | 1,366 | 1,283 | 6.3 | 5.9 | 93.9 |
| 40-44 | 175 | 19 | 108.6 | 1,125 | 1,015 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 90.2 |
| 45-49 | 156 | 14 | 89.7 | 1,054 | 942 | 6.8 | 6.0 | 89.4 |
| **Remainder of Marshall Islands** | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 2,331 | 588 | 7,959.2 | 8,437 | 7,732 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 91.6 |
| 15-19 | 560 | 72 | 128.6 | 286 | 264 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 92.3 |
| 20-24 | 549 | 185 | 337.0 | 1,242 | 1,139 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 91.7 |
| 25-29 | 421 | 149 | 353.9 | 1,681 | 1,566 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 93.2 |
| 30-34 | 318 | 105 | 330.2 | 1,798 | 1,672 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 93.0 |
| 35-39 | 196 | 51 | 260.2 | 1,346 | 1,213 | 6.9 | 6.2 | 90.1 |
| 40-44 | 134 | 13 | 97.0 | 964 | 881 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 91.4 |
| 45-49 | 153 | 13 | 85.0 | 1,120 | 997 | 7.3 | 6.5 | 89.0 |

***Source:*** U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982b.

for Ebeye are not excessive by Marshall Islands standards. As was observed in terms of population structure for these areas in the census years 1967 to 1980, although measures of Ebeye's demographic characteristics may vary slightly when compared to analogous values for Majuro and the remainder of the Marshall Islands, they do not indicate an entirely different demographic setting.

The reasons underlying recent trends in fertility and mortality in the Marshall Islands quite probably include a number of factors: less morbidity due to previously debilitating illnesses, particularly respiratory and venereal diseases (the latter often a cause of high infant mortality); the availability of better medicine and medical facilities; and education on health-related matters (Tobin 1967:61). It is unclear if current high fertility is also a consequence of changing cultural attitudes toward limiting population. Abortion and infanticide have been proposed as mechanisms for population control used in the past by some Micronesian cultures, including the Marshallese (Erdland 1914:124-127; Kramer and Nevermann 1938: 190; Kotzebue 1967, 3:173). However, at least for certain portions of the Marshall Islands, these and other cultural mechanisms appear to have been absent during aboriginal times—the effects of food shortages and typhoons instead acting as the main forces limiting population (Hainline 1965; Tobin 1967:61-63). Whatever the traditional methods might have been, particular types of cultural behavior do not serve to curb Marshallese demographic growth appreciably in modern times.

In-migration has been suggested as a second factor—indeed, possibly the main factor—underlying the excessive population growth on Ebeye. As with fertility and mortality, it is difficult to obtain detailed data on mobility throughout the time period being considered. However, by employing slightly different means of defining mobility we can conduct a rough comparison for 1930, 1954, 1973, and 1980 (Table 15). Although the sample for 1930 is small, the data clearly indicate that most of the individuals residing on Ebeye originated either on the islet itself or nearby. Largely the opposite is true for the 1954 and 1973 data, when many of the inhabitants of Ebeye claimed home areas elsewhere. Data for 1980 are not strictly comparable to the three earlier years; the census question asked residence in 1975. Nevertheless, they do indicate a reduction in mobility, with the great majority of individuals living on Ebeye in 1980 having lived there five years earlier.

There are several possible explanations for the heavy migration to Ebeye following World War II. For a number of years the opportunity for employment at the Kwajalein military installation has been suggested as the main reason underlying the movement of Micronesians to Ebeye. The relationship between jobs and in-migration is not entirely clear, however. Micronesian employment at the installation has varied over time, but the resident labor force on Ebeye has always been much larger than the number of jobs available (see Table 16). Ultimately more elusive cognitive factors, such as the *anticipation* of employment due to

TABLE 15. **Home Areas of Individuals Living on Ebeye: Select Years**

| Home Area[a] | 1930 | | | 1954 | | | 1973[b] | | | 1980 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| Total | 19 | 8 | 11 | 981 | 523 | 458 | 5,342 | 2,771 | 2,571 | 4,518[c] | NA | NA |
| **Summary** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ebeye/Kwaj. Atoll | 17 | 8 | 9 | 257 | 128 | 129 | 1,576 | 815 | 761 | 4,291 | NA | NA |
| Elsewhere in Marshalls | 2 | 0 | 2 | 718 | 393 | 325 | 3,452 | 1,784 | 1,668 | 186 | NA | NA |
| Outside of Marshalls | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 314 | 172 | 142 | 41 | NA | NA |
| **By Island Group** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kosrae | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | NA | NA |
| Marianas | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Marshalls | 19 | 8 | 11 | 975 | 521 | 454 | 5,028 | 2,599 | 2,429 | 4,477 | NA | NA |
| Palau | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 5 | NA | NA |
| Ponape | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 219 | 112 | 107 | 3 | NA | NA |
| Truk | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yap | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Outside TTPI | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 84 | 52 | 32 | 26 | NA | NA |
| Not Stated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | NA | NA |

NA = not available; TTPI = Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

*Sources:* Japan 1931; Tobin 1954; Office of Census Coordinator 1975; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1982b.

[a]Definitions of home area: 1930: Place of origin (where "registered") 1954: Home atoll 1973: Home area 1980: Residence five years earlier

[b]Data are for population of Kwajalein Municipality as a whole, 95.9% of which resided at Ebeye.

[c]Includes only those individuals five years old or older.

TABLE 16. **Number of Micronesian Employees at Kwajalein Military Facility: Select Years**

| Year | Total | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1954 | 226 | 159 | 67 |
| 1955 | 226 | 159 | 67 |
| 1956 | 219 | 188 | 31 |
| 1957 | 107 | 106 | 1 |
| 1958 | 219 | 182 | 37 |
| 1959 | 108 | 108 | 0 |
| 1960 | 155 | 155 | 0 |
| 1961 | 174 | 162 | 12 |
| 1962 | 174 | 162 | 12 |
| 1963 | 710 | 410 | 300 |
| 1964 | 670 | 380 | 290 |
| 1965 | 670 | 380 | 290 |
| 1966 | 560 | 523 | 37 |
| 1967 | 500 | 463 | 37 |
| 1968 | 781 | 613 | 168 |
| 1969 | 692 | 526 | 166 |
| 1970 | 579 | 440 | 139 |
| 1971 | 577 | 447 | 130 |
| 1972 | 577 | NA | NA |
| 1973 | 578 | NA | NA |
| 1974 | 679 | 543 | 136 |
| 1975 | 539 | 444 | 95 |
| 1976 | 650 | NA | NA |
| 1977 | 686 | NA | NA |
| 1978 | NA | NA | NA |
| 1979 | 658 | NA | NA |

NA = not available.

*Source:* U.S. Department of State 1981.

increased activity at the installation, may underlie job-related migration to Ebeye. The limited data available support this tenuous conclusion. Activity at the Kwajalein military installation appears to have been high through the late 1960s and early 1970s, as is suggested by a nonindigenous staff of nearly 4,000 persons in 1970, reaching a maximum in 1972 of approximately 6,000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1973:11; Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:45). Corresponding to the high levels of installation staffing during the late 1960s, Ebeye's population increased at an average annual rate of 21.3 percent. Similarly, although the decrease in Ebeye's population between 1970 and

1973 *may* be a product of problems with the 1970 census, it may also indicate out-migration in response to the roughly 50 percent reduction in personnel at the military installation between 1972 and 1975 (Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:45). The apparent link between activity at the installation and in-migration to Ebeye has important implications for the near future, as the nonindigenous staff on Kwajalein is expected to grow substantially between 1988 and 1990 to support research and development activities connected with the Strategic Defense Initiative (Johnson 1988).

Other possible factors affecting in-migration include the designation in 1965 of the central portion of Kwajalein Atoll as a target for missiles launched from California (Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:48). As a result, approximately 350 persons living in the mid-atoll target area relocated to Ebeye. Moreover, several other individuals who had traditional land rights in the central atoll also moved to Ebeye during this time. An amendment to the U.S. Fair Labor Practices Act in 1968, guaranteeing U.S. minimum wage to all Micronesian employees at the Kwajalein military installation, also led to a burst of migration to Ebeye (Office of Economic Adjustment 1984:48). In addition to jobs on the military installation, as the population of Ebeye has grown additional employment opportunities on the islet itself have emerged (largely in the service sector), which also may have attracted people to the area. Finally, probably the most important consistent attraction to Ebeye over the last several decades is the availability of various amenities of modern Western culture. The allure of such amenities was confirmed recently by inhabitants of Ebeye (Alexander 1978:63-64; Alexander 1984: 18), as it has long been expressed by people from other portions of the Marshalls (e.g., Richards 1947:528).

## Cultural and Ecological Consequences of the Demographic Growth on Ebeye

Whatever the causes of demographic change on Ebeye, at the time of the last census in 1980 its population density exceeded 50,000 persons per square mile. To help better understand the ramifications of such density, we briefly examine select aspects of Marshallese cultural ecology. Unfortunately, detailed knowledge of traditional Marshallese adaptive strategies before colonial times is limited. Many of the following statements on adaptation and associated cultural institutions are based ultimately upon the observations made by Kotzebue in the early nineteenth century (1967, 3:140-180), when the area was culturally

pristine (Hezel 1983:92); and upon the tendency of native culture to survive acculturation in some form, both in the Marshall Islands and throughout Oceania (Valentine 1970).

An understanding of Marshall Islands cultural ecology must begin with an appreciation for the constraints on human adaptation inherent in the coralline atoll environment (see Wiens 1962). In general, atolls provide a small amount of land amidst vast expanses of ocean. Soil on atolls tends to be only slightly altered from limestone deposits, covered with a thin layer of humus and ranging in texture from coarse rubble to sand and silt (U.S. Army 1956:20). Surface water is scarce on atolls, as rain quickly seeps through the porous soil to collect in underground lenses. Rainfall can vary in different areas, with precipitation in the Marshall Islands becoming increasingly scanty and unpredictable toward the north (see Environmental Sciences Services Administration 1968:385-388; National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration 1981:348-350; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration n.d.). This general absence of fertile soil, in conjunction with other environmental problems such as inadequate fresh water and excessive salt spray, limits the density and kinds of plant life that atolls can support (Fosberg 1949, 1953; Mason 1968:277-279). Traditional subsistence strategies of atoll dwellers, including the Marshall Islanders, allowed for such limitations; food grown on the atoll was usually supplemented heavily by several types of food collected from the sea (Kotzebue 1967, 3:149-159; Bryan 1972: 125-134; see also Bayliss-Smith 1974).

The Marshallese sociocultural system seems to have evolved at least partially in response to this scarcity of land resources, with the indigenous social, economic, and political system ultimately based upon control of the land itself (Tobin 1958). This region apparently was organized in a series of chiefdoms before German colonization, with one or more chiefs inhabiting each atoll. These chiefdoms, in turn, were divided into a series of exogamous matrilineal clans (*jowi* in the Ralik chain), each composed of a number of lineages (the term *bwij* was most often used). The *bwij* were the building blocks of the sociocultural system. They provided the primary means for tracing one's identity. More importantly for ecological concerns, the lineages also formed the framework of land tenure—in essence land rights—with a piece of land owned by a particular matrilineage and used by its members. Geographically, land was divided into a series of plots called *watos.* Each *wato* usually comprised a strip running across an islet from the ocean to the lagoon (thus encompassing all microenvironments), and was inhab-

ited by a nuclear or extended family (Alexander 1978:18-20). Administration and authority ultimately were based upon allocating rights to these plots, the determination of access to land usually passing from a lineage head *(alab)* through a subchief to, ultimately, the paramount chief himself (Tobin 1967: 100-101).

In the face of ever-present threats of food shortage due to droughts and typhoons (Knudson 1970; see also Wiens 1962:476-478), the rights to land and the food grown upon it achieved an importance among the Marshallese that has been called "almost sacred" (Tobin 1967:72-74). The basic structure of the land tenure system persists today, on Ebeye (L. E. Mason, pers. com., 1988) and throughout the Marshall Islands (Mason 1987). In addition to providing a basis for access to land in outlying atolls, land tenure rights also serve as a basis for the distribution of rent payments received by the Marshallese from the U.S. Department of Defense for the use of sections of Kwajalein Atoll. And yet in many ways the demographic situation on Ebeye has begun to undermine key facets of Marshallese culture—including the land tenure system. These changes may be traced from the most basic components of Marshallese society to components that concern only the social elite (see Alexander 1978:82-84). We can begin at the household, a social unit traditionally defined by those who had residential access to a *wato.* This definition no longer holds for Ebeye, as most residents on the islet have no rights to the land upon which they reside. Local authority, previously in the hands of the *alab,* also has eroded. This change appears to be due at least in part to the reduction in *alab* authority over allocating rights to local plots of land. One direct consequence of such cultural changes on Ebeye is that the traditional unit of political organization, the village council, no longer consists entirely of *alabs.* In terms of secondary consequences, deterioration of authority at its very foundation ultimately affects the entire social hierarchy; even the paramount chief, who in modern times controls little of the economy, has limited authority and receives limited respect on the islet (Alexander 1978:78-79). Thus cultural mechanisms originally based upon the matrilineage and rights to a scarce resource are frequently overridden by other concerns on Ebeye—concerns often rooted in the money economy that has come to dominate the islet.

If increasing population on Ebeye has led to difficulties in integrating its inhabitants through mechanisms prescribed by Marshallese culture, it has created an even greater practical challenge in terms of subsistence. Regrettably we have no reliable data on the population of Ebeye, or any portion of the Marshall Islands, prior to their colonization by

Germany in the nineteenth century, Data from the Japanese censuses of 1930 and 1935 place the population of Ebeye at less than twenty persons —a number that in all likelihood could have been supported even during lean times. This in no way is true for the current population of the islet, estimated conservatively to exceed 8,000 people. The calculation of carrying capacity for Ebeye in the absence of empirically documented land-use patterns requires a number of major assumptions that at best would be open to challenge (see Wiens 1962:459). But through taking a different approach and assuming minimal energy requirements for the islet's inhabitants, we can estimate the amount of food that would be required to support the population on Ebeye both in the past and in the present—and provide an appreciation for the amount by which the islet has exceeded its demographic bounds.

In examining the energetics of Ebeye we follow the lead of Bayliss-Smith (1975:296), who concluded that atoll populations with medium birth and death rates would contain populations with average per capita daily requirements of 1,800 kilocalories (kcals) (see also United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 1957). In the absence of evidence on early native agricultural practices on Ebeye, we shall assume that the environment of the islet would have led to an emphasis on coconuts and pandanus (see Wiens 1962:365-366; Knudson 1970:56-61). Seafood is assumed to have provided another key source of subsistence. The caloric content of each of these food sources can vary greatly —the first two depending on the form in which they are consumed and the latter on the species of seafood concerned. Although coconut palms yield edible nuts that change in nutritional value as they ripen, for the following calculations we focus upon the meat of mature nuts, yielding the greatest number of calories per unit of weight (4.21 kcals/gram) (Murai et al. 1958:52). The energy provided by pandanus likewise has been reported to vary, and once again we have selected the highest values (0.71 kcals/gram) for our calculations (Murai et al. 1958:76). For seafood we use here a value representative of several varieties of fishes and mollusks (1.10 kcals/gram). These three foods would likely have been the major sources of subsistence on an islet setting like Ebeye (see Murai et al. 1958:58-59, 79)—though under normal conditions they would have been eaten in some combination with one another, as well as with small amounts of other foods. In the absence of data on diet composition, our estimates of subsistence requirements treat each of the foods considered as if it were the only type available (Table 17). Even allowing for the combination of the different food types detracts little from the impact of subsistence requirements for the conservatively esti-

TABLE 17. **Estimated Amounts of Food Required to Sustain the Population of Ebeye at Minimal Energy Levels**[a]

| | Requirements for 20 Persons (kg) | | Requirements for 8,000 Persons (kg) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Food Source | Daily | Annual | Daily | Annual |
| Coconut (mature) | 9 | 3,121 | 3,420 | 1,248,456 |
| Pandanus | 51 | 18,507 | 20,282 | 7,402,817 |
| Seafood | 33 | 11,945 | 13,091 | 4,778,182 |

[a]1,800 kcals per day per person (Bayliss-Smith 1975:296).

mated present population of 8,000, when at the least more than three metric tons of food would be required daily.

Obviously the population of Ebeye survives through the purchase of imported food; it has no choice. Our calculations are not meant to challenge this fact, but rather to highlight the degree to which the islet's population has outgrown the bounds that would be placed upon it by traditional subsistence—and the impossibility of sustaining such a large number of people without substantial outside assistance. In the majority of complex societies, population centers tend to be maintained in part by their hinterlands through a regional system of settlement. In most basic terms, surrounding communities help to support the concentrations of population by providing subsistence goods, with the idealized regional patterning of this process in terrestrial settings resembling a hierarchical Central Place system (Losch 1954; Christaller 1966). Although tribute extraction by political elites has long been a part of Marshallese culture (Mason 1946:27-37; Kotzebue 1967, 3:170-171), a systematic regional means of supporting large concentrations of nonproducers of food is evident neither in the past nor the present. Moreover, heavy in-migration by individuals of working age to population centers such as Ebeye has modified the demographic structure of outlying areas —further reducing not only the potential to increase hinterland production, but also the ability of those outlying areas to sustain themselves (see Gorenflo and Levin 1989).

## Conclusion

In the preceding pages, we have documented a particularly dramatic case of demographic change: the growth of population on Ebeye. The

number of people residing on this small islet in Kwajalein Atoll has increased from fewer than twenty inhabitants in 1930 to more than 6,000 in 1980, with current estimates exceeding 8,000. Although the population on Ebeye has grown rapidly, many characteristics of its demographic structure have remained similar to those of Majuro Atoll, the other main concentration of population in the Marshall Islands, as well as to those of the remainder of the Marshalls. Population has grown throughout the region since World War II due to a combination of increased fertility and survivability. In addition, Ebeye has experienced extremely high rates of in-migration, as Marshallese (mostly) have moved to the islet from other areas for a number of reasons: in search of employment at the nearby Kwajalein military installation; to find a place of residence after being forced to relocate from elsewhere; and to obtain access to various amenities of modern Western culture such as processed food, medical technology, and modern housing and facilities.

Two characteristics of the population of Ebeye make it particularly noteworthy: it has reached a density in excess of that found in most urban centers; and it has achieved this density without the support of a surrounding hinterland. The resulting demographic situation on Ebeye has generated a number of problems. In terms of practical considerations, this extremely dense concentration of people far exceeds the limits of self-support as well as broader regional support. Moreover, the concentration of population on Ebeye has produced major challenges to the maintenance of traditional Marshallese culture. Although these challenges in great part are linked to the exposure of relatively large numbers of Marshall Islanders to modern Western culture, they also are linked to the declining role of traditional land-tenure mechanisms, and the related authority structure upon which so much of the society was built.

History is replete with instances where a particularly large center dominates a region (Berry 1961). Examples of demographic change similar to that described for the Marshall Islands and Ebeye may even be found in Micronesia; the Gilbert Islands, for instance, also have experienced general population growth since World War II, with much of their population concentrated at Tarawa (Lundsgaarde 1966). But Ebeye is a particularly extreme case, both in the population density it has reached and in its lack of regional support. In the final analysis, places like Ebeye can exist solely through external support, such as that currently provided by the United States government. If the external support disappears, so too must the densely concentrated population.

## NOTES

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1. The final draft of this essay was submitted before results were available of the November 1988 census of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. We have since examined the preliminary results of this census (Republic of the Marshall Islands 1988; *see* Gorenflo and Levin 1989). Available data indicate continued rapid growth in Marshall Islands population, the total of 43,335 persons resulting from an average annual increase of 4.3 percent between 1980 and 1988. Concentration of population also continued: Ebeye grew to 9,254 persons, or 21.4 percent of the total population of the Marshalls (essentially the same as in 1980); Majuro Atoll contained 19,695 persons, or 45.5 percent of the total for the region.

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Robert Borofsky, *Making History: Pukapukan and Anthropological Constructions of Knowledge.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. xxii, 201, illustrated, index. US$34.50 cloth.

*Review:* JAMES HOWE
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Robert Borofsky's *Making History,* one of the most original and thought-provoking ethnographies I have read in some time, takes as its point of departure the *Akatawa,* a dual form of social organization briefly instituted on the island of Pukapuka in 1976. Borofsky wonders why, even though previous ethnographers had not mentioned this institution, his informants claimed that it had appeared repeatedly in the past. Although the *Akatawa* itself would seem a slight subject for even a short monograph, it provides a convenient excuse for parallel investigations of how ethnographer and native gather and validate knowledge, how they construct understandings of a culture's past and present, and how these understandings influence each other.

As a contribution to anthropological theory and methodology, *Making History* has multiple strengths. (As a contribution to Pacific ethnology, it falls outside my area of competence—I am a Latin Americanist.) Tactful and gentle concerning his predecessors, Borofsky steps quietly around the polemical pitfalls into which Freeman leapt. Stronger on fieldwork than on history and theory, perhaps a bit myopic about himself and his relationship to his predecessors, Borofsky is nonetheless always provocative and incisive.

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In my opinion, the book is strongest in chapters 3 through 5, on acquiring and validating traditional knowledge and constructing historical understandings. Like Edwin Hutchins's *Culture and Inference* (1980), it focuses on learning and thinking in natural situations applied to real-life tasks rather than to an investigator's test or protocol, Borofsky's approach makes good sense, given that many of the contentious issues concerning cross-cultural cognitive difference must be tested against natural thinking, and the richness of the cases drawn from interviews and observation, along with Borofsky's judicious matching of cases to theory, makes it work. Among the many gems in his cases, my favorite concerns a man who added a completely new and idiosyncratic detail to a myth (p. 124), all the while insisting that most of the people he and Borofsky had surveyed told the story that way—a vivid illustration of the creativity within the seemingly mechanical transmission of culture.

Rather than limiting himself to cognition per se, Borofsky considers a wide variety of factors bearing on how Pukapukans learn—personality, socialization, cognitive and emotional styles, speech forms, and norms of interaction—and persuasively links all of these elements to status rivalry, which, though muted by an egalitarian ethos, is pervasive on Pukapuka. Perhaps most impressive, he suggests how these factors influence the content and organization of cultural knowledge, as well as the process of learning. For instance, because Pukapukans are discouraged from asking direct questions, even more so from asking the same question again, "changes in people's accounts over time may thus not always be discernable, either to Pukapukans or to anthropologists" (p. 85). And a preoccupation with relative status, by first encouraging people to learn from public discussions (thus avoiding subordination to a teacher) and then prompting speakers to challenge each other, seems to prevent consensus on many points, promoting cultural diversity and ambiguity (p. 122).

One of Borofsky's greatest strengths is his ability to move back and forth between the subject culture and its ethnographers, showing, for instance, how anthropologists and Pukapukans share many rules of thumb in collecting and evaluating information. He demonstrates that interaction between ethnographer's and informant's assumptions can shape or even distort research, as when Julia Hecht wrongly inferred that membership in burial lineages is tentative from informants' ignorance of other people's membership (pp. 67-68); as when Borofsky's own insistent questioning on a point forced informants to give a definite answer to a question on which their own culture lets them remain hap-

pily vague (pp. 151-152); as when he and others try too hard to decontextualize indigenous cognition (pp. 125-128). Borofsky's discussion of the "native point of view" as a goal of ethnography is especially useful: He shows how native formulaic constructions of a domain can drastically oversimplify it (pp. 70-71) and, more generally, that an ethnography aimed at members of other societies cannot and should not replicate native understandings (p. 153). As he himself points out (p. 154), his conclusions on these and other issues have force precisely because he embeds them not in a programmatic discussion but in a revealing examination of particular ethnographers dealing with particular issues and particular informants.

Borofsky's insistence on the mutual influence of status rivalry and learning is valuable, even overdue in anthropology: Many ethnographies allude to competition through esoteric knowledge, but few take it seriously enough to focus on the process and effects of competition. Even a handful of well-documented cases opens up possibilities for comparison. Richard Price, for instance, in his *First-Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People* (1983), shows that the Saramaka Maroons of the Guianas, as contentious and concerned with who knows what as are the Pukapukans, not only discourage direct questions, but also conceal historical knowledge in small, disconnected fragments. These fragments, however, are often remarkably accurate concerning events as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which Borofsky indicates is not the case on Pukapuka. The San Blas Kuna of Panama, among whom I have worked, compete for prestige through esoteric learning, but institutional and normative constraints make traditional knowledge less changeable and variable than its Pukapukan equivalent: Kuna learners, for instance, though they dislike subordination as intensely as Pukapukans, cannot substitute learning from public displays (pp. 100-101) for formal apprenticeship. I hope Borofsky's monograph will stimulate further interest in this topic.

As the comparison with Price's path-breaking book suggests, Borofsky's work bears strongly on the question of historical consciousness, another topic whose importance is widely acknowledged in anthropology but so far seldom studied in depth. Concerning the *Akatawa,* he suggests that "a few individuals' private (and probably vague) conceptions were drawn into the public realm and supported by both the 'Council of Important People' and the populace at large. Calling into question beliefs about earlier *Akatawa* after the revival began became a questioning of the authority and competency of these groups" (p. 141) —to the extent that this authoritative consensus even molded individual

memories of participation in past revivals. Despite Borofsky's delicacy on this point, the reader ends up concluding that the *Akatawa* may in fact never have appeared before 1976.

If *Making History's* greatest strengths emerge in chapters 3 through 5, its limitations appear most clearly in chapter 2, by far the books longest and most heterogeneous. The chapter describes contemporary Pukapukan social organization, reviews earlier descriptions by Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole and Julia Hecht, and details differences and discrepancies among the accounts. In this chapter, though convincing and lucid in his own descriptions and insightful about ethnography in general as well as work on Pukapuka in particular, Borofsky misses some important aspects of the ethnographic continuum in which he situates himself and those who came before him.

In the gentlest possible way, Borofsky finds the Beagleholes' account of Pukapukan social organization seriously lacking, in terms of distorting oversimplification as well as outright error, and though less critical of Hecht's more recent work, he does charge her with both oversimplification and misunderstanding patrilineal affiliation on Pukapuka. In his sympathetic but nevertheless detailed and unsparing account of how his predecessors went astray, Borofsky emphasizes the topical interests and academic loyalties of Hecht and the Beagleholes, their fieldwork practices, the compression demanded by publication, and the goal of historical reconstruction. Interesting and convincing as far as he goes, Borofsky in my opinion gives too much weight to the immediate field situation and the background of each ethnographer, too little to wider currents in anthropology. In particular, he misses the constraining effects of analytical categories and expectations in the idiosyncratic field of kinship studies.

To a large degree—even more than is the case in studying, say, subsistence or shamanism—ethnographers attempting to make sense of the incredibly complex and confusing web of relations we call kinship have had to depend on inflexible and heavily aprioristic typologies, which told them what to look for as well as why it mattered. Categories such as matrilineal and patrilocal used to have (and sometimes still have) the character of ideal types. No particular case fit very well—see the Beagleholes' remarks on why Pukapukan residence choices would not conform to rule (1938:251)—but, given that "none of the above" was not an option, these categories were unavoidable.

The effects of the categories and expectations prevailing in the 1930s on the Beagleholes' work are immediately apparent in, for instance, their attempts to account for residence choice by manipulating the

patrilocal/matrilocal distinction (1938:250); in their taken-for-granted evolutionary reconstruction of kinship (1938:224, 232); and in their claim that a Pukapukan is born into precisely six kinds of groups (1938:219), even though the nature and ontological status of one of the six, the "bilateral kin group," never becomes clear.

The question of bilateral or cognatic kinship shows the grip of typology on ethnography with particular clarity. In explaining why the Beagleholes and Hecht differed in analyzing land tenure in terms of, respectively, unilineal and cognatic descent, Borofsky notes that not only did Hecht collect genealogies more assiduously but that "cognatic descent theory has become a topic of considerable interest among anthropologists" (p. 65). What mattered, in fact, was less Hecht's interest in this social form than recognition of its existence. For the Beagleholes and most of their generation, descent was by definition unilineal and bilateral kinship was a matter of kindreds and diffuse ties: Cognatic descent groups could not exist on Pukapuka because they did not exist yet in theory. Similarly, Borofsky can subtly depict the Pukapukan (cognatic descent) *koputangata* as ambiguously category and group, alternately ego-focused and ancestor-focused (pp. 24-35), only because several decades of terminological and descriptive deconstruction in kinship studies since the Beagleholes' time have empowered him to do so.

One can see the effects of current theory on Borofsky's own descriptions of social organization in the matter of cross-cutting ties, which, following Sahlins, he finds everywhere on Pukapuka, and which he credits with "dampening disruptive intergroup conflicts" (p. 18). Given this concept's long history of use, especially by Africanists and the Manchester School (Gluckman 1956, 1965; Colson 1953, 1974; Kroeber 1917; Murphy 1957), Borofsky would have strengthened his analysis by taking it less for granted and by paying some attention to its application outside Polynesia, especially since Hallpike (1973) has seriously called into question the reality and conflict-reducing qualities of cross-cutting ties (see also Kang 1976; Dillon 1980).

More to the point here, theory—not the field situation—led Borofsky to perceive those ties and to attribute integrative and harmonizing functions to them (and to ambiguity and fluidity in social alignments as well), a theme he returns to repeatedly throughout the book (pp. 18, 23-24, 42, 45, 72-73, 134). His language is teleological as well as functionalist, especially on page 45, when he leaves the impression that atolls require cross-cutting ties, a need filled in different eras on Pukapuka by matrilineal versus patrilineal descent and by village affiliation versus residence Like the great majority of anthropologists today,

Borofsky would presumably reject the label of functionalist, and yet, as is often the case, the assumptions of functional analysis (which refuses to die no matter how many stakes we drive into its heart) inform his understanding of Pukapukan social organization.

Borofsky, for his part, sees the crucial theoretical difference separating himself from the Beagleholes and Hecht as their emphasis on "uniformity at the expense of diversity, stasis at the expense of change" (pp. 66, 2, 50-51, 53, 68-69). Although this difference is indeed readily apparent in his own descriptions, Borofsky never gives the issue of cultural diversity the attention his remarks call for. The heterogeneity he demonstrates, for instance, largely falls within the area of social organization, not in cultural constructs concerning kinship but in complex aggregates and accumulations of choice and practice, where diversity could be expected to be greatest. Concerning cognition and learning, on the other hand, he emphasizes variation only in *content:* The way in which people go about acquiring, validating, and displaying knowledge he describes as more or less uniform throughout Pukapuka. In other words, for all that Borofsky embraces cultural diversity, he ultimately explains variation in one domain in terms of more or less invariant patterns in another.

I also have mixed feelings about Borofsky's version of where he himself fits in this ethnographic tradition and how his work relates to his predecessors'. Certainly, his conclusion that any single ethnography is necessarily partial and one-sided and that "a much better sense of the atoll's social organization developed from the compilation of our various accounts" (p. 152) is right on target. One also needs to know, however, how successive field studies and monographs are related. Borofsky cogently suggests that Hecht got into difficulties by letting the Beagleholes' report overly influence her research agenda, thus leading her to "the merging of different temporal orders" (pp. 69, 61). What of Borofsky himself, who had presumably also read the Beagleholes' report before beginning fieldwork? How much did each fieldworker follow or reject those who went before? How much did she or he try to test, to confirm or refute earlier works? My own fieldwork experience in a society studied by numerous anthropologists is that mutual influence is strong and that the ethnographic tradition is best seen as a chain of interconnected ethnographic texts, along with the questions and agendas they establish, rather than as a succession of fieldworkers independently working in the same place.

Borofsky also strikes me as incompletely reflexive on another aspect of his relationship to Hecht and the Beagleholes. For all his respectful

acceptance of their work—which, although strained in a few places, seems both genuine and commendable—his book is a kind of status challenge. He is, after all, presuming to interpret in detail *their* work, picking it apart and putting it in its proper place. His rhetoric, moreover, implicitly asserts his dominance: After we have been properly impressed by his forty-one months of fieldwork and ten thousand pages of notes (p. xv), Borofsky lets us know that the Beagleholes spent a mere seven and a half months on Pukapuka, Hecht a respectable thirteen, and that the Beagleholes' notes on some topics are thin. Similarly, by opening his book with two and a half pages of acknowledgments written in Pukapukan and ending with an appendix in the same language, Borofsky not-so-subtly establishes his mastery of the field language, as do various linguistic quibbles throughout (e.g., p. 14). What is striking is that, just as in other matters that Borofsky himself points out, the ethnographer and his informants end up resembling each other.

This convergence adds, in fact, to the interest of the book, and if, as I argue, Borofsky misses part of the picture in chapter 2, he more than makes up for it afterwards. Especially in its implications for culture theory, namely that the way in which culture-bearers interact with each other may affect the content and form of cultural knowledge and the degree to which it is shared and consistent, *Making History* offers a great deal to think about.

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*Review:* JULIA A. HECHT
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Borofsky's *Making History: Pukapukan and Anthropological Constructions of Knowledge* focuses on the *Akatawa.* This is a form of social organization into moieties that he purports had been missed by previous anthropological students of Pukapuka including me, to whom he credits a "vague" recollection (p. 13).

When Borofsky interviewed me, I was not aware of being so much the subject of his work. I had written an article on community organization and land tenure in Pukapuka (Hecht 1987), which had been in press since 1980—long before I discussed these matters with him. I did not share the article with Borofsky, expecting it to be published at any moment and not realizing that he was going to build such an elaborate edifice (his dissertation and *Making History*) on the very small foundation of the *Akatawa.*

In the article I state that following a natural disaster some hundreds of years ago, the population of Pukapuka as a whole is said to have moved into one settlement and operated as a single unit in order to husband resources. Some informants suggest that, following this "island as a whole" organization, and before moving back into three villages, the island was organized on the basis of the Tawa Lalo and Tawa Ngake moieties or sides. This was all I could say about the *Akatawa* form of organization, admittedly a "vague understanding." I am also baffled about how the "island as a whole" form operated, and suspect that it, like the moiety organization, was short lived.

In the absence of activities based on a particular form of organization with little cultural elaboration, it is difficult to ascertain much about a phenomenon like the *Akatawa.* Borofsky had an opportunity unique among the anthropologists who have worked on Pukapuka. Yet his book

is disappointingly weak on the social and political organization of the island during the period he was there, given that he purports to describe modern social organization in detail (chapter 2).

Borofsky clearly recognizes that the village and *Akatawa* coexisted as frames of reference and modes of social organization during the period (p. 36). He says that, at least initially, the *Akatawa* was regarded as temporary, but his evidence indicates that it was never regarded as more than that. It does not appear to be the fully fledged alternative to village organization that he suggests. For example, he speaks of household heads belonging in Ngake *village* in 1978, that is, during the *Akatawa.* Apparently affiliation *through the moieties* was never organizationally or culturally expressed.

While I was vaguely aware of the *Akatawa* form of organization, I never heard it called such. I wonder if use of the term *"Akatawa"* is in fact new, as Borofsky seems to imply (pp. 6-7).

I particularly enjoyed Borofsky's chapters on acquiring and validating traditional knowledge, which give one a real sense of how discourse operates on Pukapuka. David Friedman's illustrations, based on Rob and Nancy Borofsky's photographs, are an additional pleasure.

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*Review:* CAROLINE RALSTON
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As a Polynesian historian I have written this review from a historian's viewpoint. This labeling may seem misguided and inappropriate, particularly since I consider anthropological data and interpretations essential to any understanding of Polynesian history, but I want to concentrate on the historical rather than the anthropological aspects of the book under review.

*Making History* is a significant contribution to the growing dialogue and interpenetration of the disciplines and methodologies of anthropology and history, especially in the field of Pacific studies. Borofsky's investigation of the nature and antecedents of the *Akatawa* on the atoll of Pukapuka provides Pacific specialists with another example of the

dialectic between past and present: of the re-creation and reinterpreta, tion of past tradition to explain, organize, and structure present realities. The subtleties, ambiguities, and complexities of Pukapukan social organization and beliefs are carefully highlighted to emphasize that, while one form of social organization may predominate over a given period of time, there are others known to older members of society that can quite legitimately be invoked if circumstances require. Borofsky does not fully investigate the causal conditions that gave rise to the 1976 "re-creation" of the *Akatawa,* but he reports many Pukapukans as saying that it was good for the young to know about the past (pp. 10, 132-134) and, by implication, for them to recognize that there were other forms of social organization.

Borofsky's recognition that most ethnographers have standardized and overgeneralized complex and conflicting bodies of data, and forced them into atemporal frameworks, is a welcome addition to a growing body of criticism on this subject. In the past most ethnographies and, even more so, most histories have been overdetermined—too structured and too homogeneous. No human society can be so succinctly encapsulated. Historians, however, have been more willing than anthropologists to recognize that there will be different interpretations of the same events both over time and by various investigators. Among anthropologists on the other hand the tendency has been to believe that conflicting data or interpretations meant one or the other anthropologist had got it wrong, rather than to recognize that different viewpoints and different points in time will inevitably influence both observation and interpretation.

Borofsky scrutinizes the work on Pukapuka of anthropologists Ernest and Pearl Beaglehole in the 1930s and Julia Hecht in the 1970s in an attempt to understand why none of them discovered or discussed the *Akatawa.* Mercifully no Freeman/Mead-type histrionics are indulged in; rather, Borofsky outlines the intellectual backgrounds and preconceptions that these anthropologists brought to their study of Pukapuka over a time interval of forty years. He recognizes that contextual factors are crucial components in the differing analyses each presents, although he is surprisingly blinkered or else reticent to mention the gender politics involved. He concentrates on the work of Ernest rather than Pearl Beaglehole, justifying his choice with the claim that Ernest collected most of the material, although he recognized that Pearl had done some outstandingly original work (p. 48). In the 1980s it is still extraordinarily difficult for the import of an accompanying wife's contribution to fieldwork and the resultant publications to be fully acknowledged: In

the 1930s it was probably unthinkable. Surely the patrilineal bias in Ernest Beaglehole's published ethnography of Pukapuka, which Borofsky later reveals (p. 53), can in part be traced to the androcentric milieu in which Ernest Beaglehole was trained and in which he operated? Similarly the fact that Julia Hecht is a woman and that her work was done in a period when many anthropologists were applying feminist critiques to the practice of anthropology has clearly influenced her approach and interpretation.

To date Pacific historians have been cavalier toward the history and experience of atoll dwellers. For obvious reasons they have concentrated on the high-island archipelagoes where the majority of Europeans visited, settled, and left documentary evidence of at least some of their activities. But as Pacific history becomes more truly island focused, the atolls can no longer be ignored. For this reason Borofsky's book will be of great value, not only for the material on Pukapuka, but also for his illumination of a number of problems historians must recognize and come to terms with. Pukapukans' desire to reach a consensus in public discussion can lead to silence on the part of participants who do not agree with the consensus that develops, while others sometimes become convinced of the correctness of the consensus point of view although earlier they had espoused very different positions (pp. 10-11). Borofsky also reveals that when a consensus could not be achieved the Pukapukans let a number of ambiguous interpretations remain unresolved rather than bring the matter to a conclusion (p. 147).

The problems these traits posed for Borofsky in dictionary work make fascinating reading (pp. 147-149). Borofsky also gives a telling account of how the Pukapukans themselves described the events surrounding the decision to terminate the *Akatawa.* The role of individuals, as Borofsky had observed it, was subordinated in the Pukapukan account, which emphasized the consensual nature of the discussion and decision. Integrating the atolls into the general history of the Pacific will not be easy. But it is crucial that any future, non-island historian be aware of these cultural characteristics and weigh all evidence from whatever source in the light of them, for otherwise the complexities and nuances of atoll dwellers' experience will be lost. Furthermore, historians would be most unwise to believe that the desire for consensus and the lack of closure over contentious issues were not important characteristics of many Pacific cultures.

The preface and opening chapter of *Making History* led me to believe that the book would be a further contribution to the growing literature on the invention of tradition and the anthropological interpretations of

history, which have been so excitingly developed in recent years by, among others, Sahlins, Clifford, Marcus, and Dening. In fact Borofsky presents very little further material in this genre. Even the antecedents, operations, and final demise of the *Akatawa* are not fully analyzed, Chapters 3 and 4 (of a total of five chapters) explore questions of cognitive anthropology—both Pukapukan and anthropological ways of knowing. It would be quite unfair of me to argue that Borofsky should have written a different sort of book, but there is a discrepancy between the theory of cultural invention in which he sets his work and what he finally offers in that mode. As a historian I am also critical of Borofsky's limited historical vision and interests. From his account only anthropologists and Pukapukans appear to influence the creation of Pukapukan knowledge, The presence of foreign missionaries and government agents, of traders and trading activities is fleetingly mentioned but none is recognized or acknowledged as having had any influence on the Pukapukans' past, or their knowledge or interpretation of that past.

The growing dialogue between Pacific anthropologists and historians has raised new questions and offered more complex and subtle interpretations of Pacific peoples, both past and present. *Making History* offers historians in particular much food for thought.

*Response:* ROBERT BOROFSKY
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Since Howe's, Hecht's, and Ralston's thoughtful comments provide much to consider, I appreciate the opportunity *Pacific Studies* has provided for reply. I will organize my comments around certain general themes and then turn to specific points raised by the reviewers.

## Themes

*Making History* compares Pukapukan and anthropological ways for constructing a Polynesian atoll's traditions. Chapters 3 and 4 explore the dynamic nature of Pukapukan traditions—how Pukapukans, in the process of learning and validating their cultural traditions, often alter them. Chapter 2 focuses on two sets of anthropologists—the Beagleholes and Hecht—and their tendency to overstructure the traditional social organization in their analyses, emphasizing stasis, for example, at the expense of change. Comparisons between Pukapukan and anthropolog-

ical ways of constructing the atoll's past are developed through anecdotes and case studies. Most prominent among these is an exploration of the *Akatawa,* a reputed form of traditional social organization revived between 1976 and 1980, but about which little anthropological information existed prior to that date. On the one hand, the *Akatawa* represents an example of the fluid, dynamic character of Pukapukan social organization, involving changing social alignments through time. On the other, it constitutes an anthropological conundrum. Was it or was it not traditional? Had it or had it not occurred in the past despite limited anthropological reports on it?

Pervading the book are three implicit tensions. The first involves my attempt to escape the overstructuring tendencies in earlier anthropological accounts of the atoll. The second centers on the degree to which we can accurately know the Pukapukan past. And the third concerns how to best address certain issues regarding the construction of ethnographic knowledge.

The first tension focuses on the questions: If anthropological accounts overstructure indigenous perspectives and forms of social organization, how can I accurately describe them myself? How can I overcome the biases I attribute to others? Various techniques are used for coping with the problem in *Making Histoy.* I put considerable emphasis on the ethnographic data, indicating not only what informants told me (or what I observed), but also what particular informants were like as individuals. To allow readers to follow particular informants through various contexts, the index contains their names. Readers can thus relate one anecdote to another, building up a picture of informants as individual personalities (and the degree to which they adhere to generalizations I make regarding Pukapukans). Rather than supporting my analysis about the fluidity and diversity of Pukapukan knowledge with scattered examples, I focus on one particular issue—the Akatawa—and, through an in-depth accounting, try to provide a sense of the subtleties and complications involved in describing it. In addition, I use statistical presentations to indicate patterns of diversity. The statistical format is somewhat stilted. But we need to ask, How else—besides statistical presentations combined with anecdotes and case studies—can one provide a sense of diversity? Most anthropologists recognize the importance of diversity. But its range and its depth seem to be repeatedly downplayed. What is needed is a better understanding of the forms diversity takes under particular circumstances and how best to represent them.

I also attempt to handle this tension through what might be called negative description. In describing the *koputangata* (or cognatic de-

scent groups), I focus on the cultural constructs people use in their discussions and how actual experience tends to diverge from these. While this creates an ambiguity regarding what the *koputangata* are (in contrast to what they are not), I feel the style of presentation provides a more reasonable picture of the situation than a straightforward, structured account. The latter would be appropriate for the village organization, not the *koputangata.* The *koputangata* are too ambiguous to define with precision.

Various readers of *Making History* have stressed the value of the anecdotal material in conveying a sense of individual informants. And the negative description also seems to be well-received. But I do not say I have by any means resolved the issue. Anthropologists must continually grapple with this problem.

The second tension revolves around the questions: How can anthropologists formulate constructions of the Pukapukan past in regard to what "really" happened in earlier times given the problems with oral transmission noted in the text? How can one know the past independent of the present that preserves it and gives it meaning? This is an issue of much concern to Pacific historians of the "island-centered' approach (see Borofsky and Howard 1989). In considering the problem, I emphasize the importance of understanding the subtle dynamics involved in indigenous constructions of the past and how these constructions change over time.

> Pukapukan traditions, in being preserved, are being altered. But in being altered, they are also being preserved. The past is being made meaningful to those upholding it in the present. Perhaps Pukapukans and anthropologists preserve a past that never was, but they preserve it in a way that is meaningful to present-day audiences. (P. 144)

A central theme of *Making History* is that indigenous and Western constructions of the past may diverge because they are formed in different contexts and are intended for different audiences. One should not blithely combine indigenous with Western accounts of an islands past. Carter makes this point well in a discussion of Reynolds's book on Australian Aboriginal history:

> Bringing together a host of scattered oral and written data, in a manner wholly foreign to an oral culture, ordering them under the aegis of a culture-specific discourse known as history, [does

> it not] merely continue by other means two hundred years of white [Australian] history, a history founded on the successful appropriation (and suppression) of neighboring cultures? This is not Reynolds's intention, of course, but it is an unfortunate consequence of his assumption that what goes on on the other side of the [cultural] fence is strictly comparable with what goes on here. (Carter 1987:160-161)

Discounting indigenous histories would be unwise. But beyond a certain level of generality, it is uncertain to what degree they represent accurate recountings of the past. Some accounts clearly are accurate (see Price 1983 for an example). But it is equally clear others are not. The question is how to separate accurate from inaccurate (or only partially accurate) accounts. That is not easily determined, especially since a number of variables extraneous to the accounts are involved, such as who related the material, in what contexts, how was it learned, and so forth. A real need exists for understanding why some individuals and groups preserve aspects of the past more effectively than others. Our understanding of these processes is only beginning.

For the above reasons—plus those listed by Ralston in her review—I prefer to err on the side of caution in presenting reconstructions of (1) how various revival movements started, (2) past forms of the *Akatawa,* and (3) traditional patterns of Pukapukan social organization. In each case I attempt to make certain points. But I do not propose a full-scale reconstruction for any of these. To do so would be to disregard my own cautions. One way ethnohistory is practiced today is to note various problems that exist in presenting accounts and then to subtly ignore them in one's own presentation. I raise problems and note issues that must be considered in ethnohistorical accounts. But I have chosen not to go beyond the limits of my knowledge to a discussion of what might (or might not) have been in times past.

The third tension concerns how best to address certain issues regarding the construction of ethnographic knowledge. These issues raise critical—and, to some degree, threatening—questions about how anthropologists construct their understandings of other cultures. The problem is how to present the issues in a positive way that draws people into a dialogue about them.

One issue involves the inevitable overstructuring of ethnographic materials that comes with the asking of questions. As I point out (pp. 150-152), asking certain questions not usually raised by Pukapukans stretches the material in artificial ways. Knowledgeable informants, in

trying to uphold their reputations, may formulate answers that are not part of everyday discourse. The difficulty is that Pukapukans do not necessarily ask each other a host of questions that interest anthropologists. Pukapukans do not go about trying to construct ethnographies of themselves. In writing accounts meaningful to Western audience, anthropologists are often drawn into asking inappropriate questions. But limiting oneself to questions Pukapukans find "culturally meaningful" does not necessarily solve the problem—it may only lead at times to asking no questions at all. The anthropologist thus becomes caught in a bind in writing a culturally sensitive account. Will it be incomplete or distorted?

Related to this is the question of "to what degree . . . can ethnographic accounts properly represent indigenous perspectives—and still be read by others" (p. 153). Indigenous knowledge—as expressed in everyday life—does not always possess a coherent order. It may be open, ambiguous, fluid, or contradictory. But anthropologists must give this material a certain structure in conveying its meaning to others, such as Western readers who do not use the knowledge in the same contexts as the anthropologist's informants. In writing a dictionary, for example, anthropologists must repeatedly sort through disagreements and ambiguities in defining a word for outsiders. The fact that various people interpret a word differently—and at times have a social investment in keeping a words meaning ambiguous—must be set aside in the need for closure, in the need for coherency, in writing a dictionary.

There is also the issue of the informant-anthropologist dialogue. Ethnographic knowledge is not generally produced by isolated anthropologists. It is produced by anthropologists interacting with informants. And this dialogue not only is shaped by the context in which it occurs but also reshapes the context itself. Hecht's questions regarding the atoll's traditional social organization within a particular context, for instance, apparently helped reshape that context. Her questions encouraged a set of traditional revivals that, in turn, altered Pukapukan perceptions of their former matrilineal organization (see pp. 69, 132; Borofsky 1988).

Taken together these points raise important questions and offer much food for thought. Given their complexity, my goal was to stimulate others to reflect on them with me and to rethink their own data in light of them. In developing my points, I tend to focus on ethnography more than theory. Given the abundance of theoretical perspectives that have come into prominence during the past two decades and the ambiguous results achieved through them (see Salzman 1988), I have tried to stick

close to the data themselves. I often focus on a particular ethnographic context or interaction in dealing with an issue. I do not stress in chapter 1, for example, the ambiguities surrounding Pukapukan assessments of knowledgeable elders in relation to anthropological assessments. But I do describe Molingi's knowledge of the *Akatawa* (pp. 7-11). From Molingi's answers, one would be hard pressed to view her as one of the foremost experts on the subject. Yet that is the role she took in a group meeting. Similarly, rather than wax at length about the problems inherent in capturing indigenous perspectives, I focus on the issue of closure in writing a Pukapukan-English dictionary (pp. 147-149).

This does not mean I do not have opinions. I do, and I try to make them clear. Following on the central theme of comparison, I stress the need for a "dialogue of perspectives," especially in overcoming the limitations of ethnographic constructions. When anthropological accounts open themselves to differing perspectives that raise critical questions regarding the ethnographic record, they have an ability to overcome some of these difficulties. The refined discourse, the thicker description, that develops about a culture comes not from one account but from a comparison of various accounts over time, in which a set of perspectives can be seen in relation to one another. This is what I seek to do in regard to the Beagleholes', Hecht's, and my accounts of Pukapukan social organization and in regard to Pukapukan and anthropological perceptions of the atoll's past.

Rather than lecturing readers, then, I seek to intrigue them with problems—hoping they will reflect, with me, on the complexities involved. This way important issues are raised without oversimplifying the problems or their possible solutions.

## Responses

In responding directly to each reviewer's remarks, I will frame my comments within the context of the preceding statements. I begin with Hecht since she raises a set of specific ethnographic questions.

I was surprised by Hecht's representation of our interaction as minimal. My perception is that we had several interactions between 1982 and 1986. For example, she wrote detailed comments—first in September 1985 and then in January 1986—on a nearly final draft of *Making Histoy;* her remarks on the *Akatawa* are included in a note (p. 166 n. 3). Our conversations during this period implied a fairly close reading of the material. She suggested, for instance, that I rephrase my description of her role in stimulating the revival of the matrimoiety organization in

1974. (The change can be seen by comparing p. 132 with Borofsky 1982:209.) And I discussed with Hecht the specific passage in my book (p. 13) that she cites in her review, making sure that it was indeed accurate. Thus, while Hecht is right to note the value of the first conversation we had on Pukapukan matters in 1982, it was only one of several in which I sought and obtained valuable feedback on my analysis of the *Akatawa* and her work.

Hecht raises an important set of questions about the *Akatawa:* Did it (or did it not) constitute a fully fledged alternative to the village organization? Was it (or was it not) always conceived of as a temporary change? And did affiliation through the moieties ever become organizationally or culturally expressed between 1976 and 1980? Let me take each question in turn.

Different people might well draw different conclusions regarding whether the *Akatawa* constituted a fully fledged alternative to the village. From the Pukapukan perspective, it clearly was a distinct alternative in 1979-1980. The problems centering on its demise—discussed in my dissertation (Borofsky 1982:225-229) and briefly in *Making History* (pp.149-150)—emphasize that. Perhaps in the *Akatawa's* early stage, especially in 1976, it was seen as only a brief respite from the village pattern. But by 1980, it had clearly become an organizational alternative. There would not have been so much tension in 1980 about the decision to return to the village pattern if the *Akatawa* had not been perceived as an alternative form of organization. It should be stressed that there were distinct advantages and disadvantages for various groups imparted by the *Akatawa.* People who previously belonged to Yato and Ngake villages, for example, now had greater access to taro in Motu Uta (Loto village's reserve under the village system). The new alignments also drew people together who normally did not participate in the same activities or share the same resources. For the former members of Loto village, which was split in two under the *Akatawa,* there were real disadvantages. They were at times overshadowed in meetings involving Tawa Lalo and Tawa Ngake (the two "sides" or groups of the *Akatawa*) by people formerly affiliated with Yato or Ngake. *Koputangata* descent groups previously belonging to these other villages, moreover, increasingly made claims on land in Motu Uta. Also, there were obvious tensions during certain sports competitions with the whole island involved in two fairly evenly matched teams. (The 1980 Kavekave fishing competition, for example, ended in disarray and dispute.) In its own manner, the *Akatawa* was reshaping resource allocation and social relations in ways that some saw as beneficial and others as detri-

mental. That is why, from my understanding of Pukapukan perspectives, it clearly constituted an alternative form of organization to the village in 1980.

Whether other anthropologists would view the *Akatawa* as a full-fledged alternative is another matter. On the one hand, some of the changes the *Akatawa* introduced seem fairly major. A considerable portion of the islands resources and all of its people were reorganized into a bipartite rather than tripartite pattern. These changes, over time, were bringing about additional alterations in Pukapukan social organization. On the other hand, the changes surrounding the *Akatawa* could be viewed as relatively minor. The transformation between the two patterns was achieved with relative ease because such organizing structures as the food-sharing units *(tuanga kai)* remained intact. With the exception of the obvious tripartite to bipartite transformation, the patterns of allocation and organization essentially remained the same. And while various other changes did develop, they were gradual, apparent only with time. The problem is, then, that the *Akatawa* essentially retained the same underlying structure as the village organization. But the structure was manifested in different ways with different implications. The question for anthropologists is at what point an "alternative organization" is alternative enough to be seen as such. If one focuses on the underlying structure, one might make a case in either direction regarding the *Akatawa.* It would depend on one's perspective and how one defined certain structural elements in relation to resource allocation. If one focuses on surface manifestations, it clearly was an alternative.

As readers can see, Hecht splits the *Akatawa* into parts in her discussion. She separates the land division and moiety organization (of Tawa Lalo and Tawa Ngake) from the term *Akatawa.* She is able to thereby state that the moiety organization is seemingly old while wondering if the term *Akatawa* is perhaps new. This leads back to the atoll's flexible social organization and the anthropological analysis of it. When is the *Akatawa* really the *Akatawa?* Is it when a moiety social division exists with a certain land division and a particular name? Or can it occur with some but not all of these properties—for example, the moiety and land division without the name? I can only note that for Pukapukans between 1977 and 1981, the period of my fieldwork, it was when all of these elements were combined.

What I sought to do in *Making History* was to give the *Akatawa* equal billing with the village organization—no more, no less. Both involve essentially the same resources and people. If one downplays the village organization—emphasizing instead an underlying set of cross-cutting

ties centered by certain corporate groupings—it would certainly he appropriate to deemphasize the *Akatawa's* significance. But if one gives credence to the village organization, its *Akatawa* transformation is significant as well. Since anthropologists studying the atoll have repeatedly emphasized the village organization, I feel it appropriate to also emphasize the *Akatawa.*

The question of whether the *Akatawa* was "never regarded as more than" temporary is an ambiguous matter. First, how long must a form of social organization last before it can be regarded as enduring? For some, four years' duration would classify it as more than a temporary change. Pukapukans took various attitudes toward the permanency of the *Akatawa.* Some, who wanted to return to the village system, viewed the *Akatawa* as a temporary alternative and only that. Others, who favored it, viewed it as an experiment that, once it had a proven track record, should permanently replace the village organization. Clearly the *Akatawa* was initially seen in 1976 as a temporary alternative to the village organization. But as it became established, it took on a momentum of its own. In 1980 it came reasonably close to replacing the village system (p. 149; Borofsky 1982:225-229). Its permanency, in other words, was something negotiated by Pukapukans over time. In hindsight, from afar, it may now seem only a temporary alteration. Its permanency, though, was an open question in 1979-1980.

This raises a related question: the demarcation of change. Does change have to disrupt the whole established order at one fell swoop? Or can it come gradually, subtly working its effects through time? I believe the *Akatawa* developed in the latter way. One wonders, in this respect, how the village system came about, probably sometime near the turn of the century (note Hecht 1987:196-199). Might a "temporary" alteration have gradually overturned an earlier system—with the support of missionaries (p. 45; Hecht 1987:196), government agents (Hecht 1987:196), and population changes (see p. 40)? In retrospect, it might seem a simple decision was made to organize the atoll by villages. In fact, organizing by villages might well have been a gradual process, negotiated over time—readily delineated only in hindsight.

I am a little puzzled by Hecht's remark that "apparently affiliation *through the moieties* was never organizationally or culturally expressed' (her emphasis). She seems to differentiate between moiety organization and the *Akatawa* here. But generally, I would say the distinction between Tawa Lalo and Tawa Ngake was well expressed: organizationally in the division of land, food, and people during the 1976-1980 period and culturally (if Hecht makes a clear distinction

between the two aspects) in its competitions, religious observances, and celebrations.

Howe's comment regarding the "grip of typology" is particularly relevant here. The atoll's social organization, for good ecological and social reasons, is not a neat structure that can be fit into a little box. (I wonder if this is not the case for any social organization.) Ultimately, it seems to me that my differences with Hecht, regarding the *Akatawa's* character, relate to how to bound (and describe) some very complex processes.

My view is that the 1976-1980 *Akatawa* expressed certain underlying Pukapukan structural elements that were quite old but that probably had not been combined in precisely that form prior to 1976. The specific organization that arose in 1976, I suspect, was the result of a momentum developing out of earlier, less successful, efforts to revive traditional forms of social organization in 1974 and 1975. The connection of the *Akatawa* to the past derived partly from an accurate perception that certain elements (such as the land division in Motu Uta) were quite old and partly from the ways Pukapukans acquire and validate their traditions. Personally, I doubt the *Akatawa* existed around the time of the 1914 hurricane. From my examination of the Beagleholes' field notes and from the types of questions they apparently asked, I believe they would have gathered information on it had it occurred. But I also well understand that placing the *Akatawa* at that time makes considerable sense to modern Pukapukans (see p. 11).

While valuing all three reviews of *Making Histoy,* I find Howe's especially thought provoking. He elaborates on subtleties in the material in ways that further my understanding of several issues. Like Howe, I hope *Making History* will stimulate additional interest in styles of learning and how these shape peoples' understandings of the past. It is an important topic that deserves greater attention.

Generally I concur with many of Howe's comments. I agree that more attention could have been paid to the wider currents within which the Beagleholes, Hecht, and I operated and how these shaped our constructions of texts. Howe's comment on cross-cutting ties is intriguing and, I suspect, essentially correct. Having focused on literature related to Polynesia, I missed the Hallpike, Kang, and Dillon references. And it is true that theory, as much as fieldwork, led me to perceive the integrative functions involved. Nor will I deny that the argument relating to cross-cutting ties is essentially functionalist. Whether it is teleological requires explication on Howe's part of what he is specifically referring to. And whether functionalism is a bad thing, a label to be rejected and a perspective to have stakes driven through its heart, depends on how he

defines the term. But it is certainly true that I perceive positive aspects in the cross-cutting ties and a reanalysis of the situation might well also indicate the theme alluded to by Howe (note in this respect, p. 164 n. 5). Concerning the overstructuring of typologies, I thought I had made that point relative to the Beagleholes' account of Pukapukan residence rules (pp. 51-53). I state: the Beagleholes "tended to fit the data into somewhat arbitrary, somewhat inaccurate categories that overstated the degree of cultural uniformity" (p. 53). Howard comments on this theme in his foreword.

Howe is correct that I do not fully contextualize myself in the ethnographic continuum. Howard's foreword does do this to some extent, And the preface (p. xvii) and the notes indicate individuals and texts that influenced the construction of my analysis. But I draw back from an elaboration of my biases in the text. There is, it seems to me, something essentially incongruous and self-serving about an anthropologist's explaining his biases to others. How do we know that these are the essential ones? And if they are important, why did he or she not try to overcome them? More revealing, I think, are other scholars' comments on one's work—such as Howe, Hecht, and Ralston have presented here. I suspect this is intellectually more productive in the long run.

Howe is also correct about the value of examining interconnecting texts. But I would not substitute examining texts for examining anthropologists' backgrounds. Both have a role to play. A study of interconnected texts illuminates the traditions shaping ethnographers' agendas. A study of individual backgrounds suggests the perspectives ethnographers bring to the texts.

By way of introduction to Ralston's review, let me note I appreciate her historical perspective and concern with the "growing dialogue and interpenetration" of history and anthropology. There is much to be gained on both sides by this dialogue—as the works of Dening, Oliver, Sahlins, and Ralston herself indicate. My contribution to this dialogue focuses on the processes by which Western and Polynesian groups construct cultural traditions. If we are going to include indigenous formulations of the past in historical and anthropological accounts, then we should understand the nature of these constructions and the processes that went into shaping them. In this respect, I hope historians will see *Making History* as relevant to a number of cultures, not just those involving atolls.

I concur with Ralston that historians seem more willing to recognize the validity of differing interpretations than anthropologists. One might ponder why. Perhaps it is because historians often work on the same

topic as others (for example, the French Revolution). Anthropologists tend to seek out their "own" society in fieldwork. With few others to contradict him or her, each anthropologist has been seen as the "expert" on the society—though this is clearly changing today.

While certainly open to a feminist perspective in the matters Ralston discusses, I would be more cautious than she is in definitely assuming "gender politics" were involved—at least without further clarification. Pearl Beaglehole was a better linguist than Ernest, but she lacked his interest in theory according to Jane and Jim Ritchie (her daughter and son-in-law). The acknowledgments in *Ethnology of Pukapuka* indicate that "Ernest Beaglehole was especially responsible for collecting material on social and economic organization, religion, traditional history, and material culture" and "the bulk of the manuscript was written" by him (Beaglehole and Beaglehole 1938:3). This would be appropriate for Jane Ritchie, Pearl's daughter, to comment on, but my impression is that Pearl Beaglehole held her own intellectually with Ernest. (If one is to believe such books as *The Feminine Mystique,* woman could be quite independent and assertive during the 1930s.) I would also like to know more regarding how Ralston believes the trend toward feminist critiques in anthropology affected Hecht's work. I would not assume a direct relation simply because Hecht is a woman and because she wrote during a time when these critiques were prominent in the literature. I believe David Schneider and his perspective on cultural analysis, for example, had a greater impact on Hecht. But I would defer to Hecht's opinion in this matter.

Though I wish to avoid quibbling over details, I would not lump Sahlins, Clifford, Marcus, and Dening into the same category. Sahlins and Dening yes, Clifford and Marcus yes, but not the two groups together. The former are involved in the anthropological interpretation of history; the latter are more concerned with the construction of ethnographic texts. My not stressing theoretical themes more explicitly in *Making History* stems partly from a sense that the issues raised by Marcus and Clifford require less abstract discussion and more concrete ethnographic case studies, especially those involving more than one anthropologist at a field site (see Borofsky 1988). It is all too easy in interpretive discussions to lose sight of the issues involved unless they are tied to specific ethnographic analyses.

Finally, I basically concur with the premise of Ralston's remark that a variety of groups—both Polynesian and Western—probably influence Pukapukan constructions of their past. But I do not see that my analysis denies such a possibility. To focus on two groups about which I have a

reasonable amount of data in order to develop a comparison-and the book is about a comparison—is not to preclude other influences. Still I have no problem with Ralston's more general point that one needs a broad perspective in such matters. What I ask for is a dialogue with her and others. Despite the real interpenetration that has occurred between history and anthropology, much remains to be done. I appreciate Ralston's seeing *Making History* as contributing to the developing dialogue.

In summary, *Making History* is a comparison of the ways two different groups, Pukapukans and anthropologists, construct knowledge of the atoll's traditions. It attempts through concrete ethnographic comparisons to reflect on a number of critical issues in anthropology and history. But it is only an initial effort. Its themes need to be developed further. In this respect, I am in the process of finishing a number of articles that elaborate on points raised here and in the book. My desire is that they will stimulate additional dialogue paralleling the valuable comments by Howe, Hecht, and Ralston here. I perceive *Making History* as part of an ongoing discussion concerning our and other people's constructions of the past—how we, individually and collectively, make history.

## NOTE

I would like to express my appreciation to Alan Howard and Jan Rensel, who commented on an earlier draft. Their remarks proved quite valuable.

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## REVIEWS

Claire D. F. Parsons, ed., *Healing Practices in the South Pacific.* Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1985. Pp. xiii, 250, maps, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index, US$22.50 cloth.

*Reviewed by David E. Lewis, Jr., Medical Anthropology Program, University of California, San Francisco*

Traditional healing practices and practitioners are often resistant to the kind of detailed inquiries that anthropologists have wanted to undertake because of both a history of repression from imposed, imported health care systems and traditions of secrecy attached to medical knowledge. These circumstances require an investigator to devote considerable resources to identifying and then establishing rapport with informants. In addition to being difficult to conduct, such studies are also subject to criticism for small numbers of informants and mixed motives on the part of both investigator and informant(s). Once access is granted, however, Pacific societies often reveal flourishing systems of knowledge and practice that parallel and to some extent complement Western health care systems.

All this may induce some investigators who have learned a considerable amount about indigenous healing during the course of fieldwork on other topics to avoid publishing their results. Yet it is precisely their long residence with the host society and the rapport acquired that allows them, often fortuitously and indirectly, to learn about beliefs and behaviors many recently decolonized peoples are adept at camouflaging or concealing from the attention of physicians, government officials, and missionaries. These inhibitions make all the more welcome the

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advent of this volume. It is a preliminary contribution to the study of healing practices in the Pacific.

The very nature of this attempt to assemble accounts of healing practices from all areas of the Pacific results in limitations on the information presented. Some of these are alluded to by Parsons in her preface; others are discussed by the authors of individual chapters. Most of the chapters are based on fieldwork that was undertaken with different topical focuses, which may account for the lack of integration of these works with studies of healing practices in other Pacific societies. Despite efforts to include all culture areas, this volume focuses on Polynesian societies (Samoa, Tuvalu, Tikopia, Tonga, East Futuna, Rarotonga, Pukapuka, Tahiti, and New Zealand Maori) with only one Melanesian society, the Kiai speakers of Espiritu Santo, Vanuatu, included. Micronesia is not represented.

The eleven chapters range from detailed descriptions of autochthonous concepts of disease diagnosis and treatment (Macpherson, Parsons, Ludvigson, Biggs, Baddeley, Hecht, and Hooper) to attempts to relate indigenous healing practices to the overall health status of a population (Macdonald and especially Chambers) and descriptions of specialized practitioners (Kinloch). The primary focus, however, is on traditional healing, with most authors making only limited attempts to present a holistic picture of contemporary healing practices in these societies. Some are content to list recipes for plant medicines and descriptions of treatments; others seek to understand the roles of patients, healers, and concepts of illness in the social systems in which they are embedded. Hooper and Macpherson provide valuable insights into historical changes in "traditional" medical paradigms. The resulting smorgasbord is both a strength and a weakness of the book.

The predominantly ethnomedical approach of these authors results in enough topical overlap that cross-cultural comparisons almost leap out at the reader. Similarities such as ghost sickness, the need for secrecy in medical knowledge, the danger of incorrect performance of therapeutic techniques, and the perceived dichotomy between Western and traditional illnesses are abundant. Yet Parsons, in her preface, has explicitly ruled out such an analysis as premature, alluding to the preliminary nature of some of the analyses presented. In light of such warnings, it is disappointing that only a few authors discuss the limitations of their data and analyses. Biggs is to be commended for his fine discussion of methods of presentation for ethnomedical data and of the problems encountered in data collection.

The reader would have specially benefited if Parsons had used her

final chapter, on New Zealand Maori healing, as a case study on the often formidable problems of field investigation into traditional healing. Since most of the volume's authors are associated with the University of Auckland and have been trained in New Zealand, it is not surprising that a number of articles make allusions that may puzzle readers from other countries. This is especially apparent in the brief explanation Parsons offers for the last-minute substitution of her "Notes on Maori Sickness Knowledge and Healing Practices" for the chapter that a Maori scholar decided not to present. My discussions with other New Zealand anthropologists make it clear that there is much more going on here than meets the eye and a close reading of Parsons's chapter reveals that her research was conducted in a highly charged political atmosphere. The significance of healing practices in the ongoing revival of *maoritanga* seems to be critical to evaluating this chapter. Furthermore, this may be only an extreme example of the kinds of wider cultural and political factors that impinge on this type of research in any society.

Overall, this is a valuable contribution to the study of indigenous healing systems in the Pacific and one that should stimulate additional research and analysis, especially cross-cultural comparison. Well produced with useful maps and reasonably priced, this book will be a useful addition to the library of anyone interested in traditional medicine.

D. K. Feil, *The Evolution of Highland Papua New Guinea Societies.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. 313, maps, plates, tables, index. US$49.50 cloth.

*Reviewed by Virginia D. Watson, Burke Museum, University of Washington*

Feil's scholarly monograph comprises a useful compendium of contemporary highland Papua New Guinea societies in a fairly compact format. Couched in a comparative framework, the book addresses societies in the ethnographic present, emphasizing the cultural differences between eastern highlands groups and those in the midsection and west. In addition, there is an attempt to seek the roots of cultural diversity in the prehistoric past. Eschewing the outmoded pan-highland model of cultural history, the author sometimes views the region as a continuum with Simbu a buffer between east and west, at other times as a bipolar construct with the people living west of Daulo Pass included in the western camp.

Feil deals with the east-west gradient or opposition under the themes dominant since the inception of anthropological investigations of highlands cultures at mid-twentieth century: settlement patterns, social structure, political organization and leadership, warfare, male-female relations, ceremonial exchange. The increasing intensity of pig and plant production through time, and their concomitants, are other focuses.

Feil is at his best in his contrastive comparison of the variation in recurrent themes among twentieth-century highland societies, plumbing, as he does, the rather extensive literature and conjoining the pieces into a coherent whole. The chapter on male-female relations, for example, the longest in the book by far, is a well-constructed exploration of psychological and cultural variation to which is given added perspective through the inclusion of people occupying the geographic area immediately to the southeast of the highlands proper. Other facets of culture are no less fruitfully treated.

In the chapter on prehistory, previously published with few modifications (1986), Feil attempts to project, millennia into the past, some of the basic east-west differences observable in the ethnographic present. It is here, in my opinion, that his argument is weakest. A clue to the Achilles heel may be embedded in the chapter's title, "Papua New Guinea Highlands Prehistory: A Social Anthropologist's View." One of Feil's major stumbling blocks is his apparent lack of appreciation of the disparate history of archaeological and ethnographic enterprises in highland Papua New Guinea. Without doubt, very much more is known about the protohistoric and postcontact cultural spectrum in the highlands than about the prehistory on which Feil bases his evolutionary interpretation. We can agree that the ethnography of highland Papua New Guinea is vast—there is an impressive sampling of cultures from Kainantu to Kiunga. In sharp contrast, archaeological research has been much less intensive and geographically more patchy. Feil not only fails to acknowledge these fundamental differences in the local histories of two anthropological subdisciplines, but some of his interpretations of the archaeology may be open to question.

Feil finds it "perplexing" that no sites older than two hundred years of age were discovered during the initial archaeological survey of the Arona valley. He seems not to sense that this by no means indicates an absence of earlier human occupation. Rather, it reflects the nature of archaeological survey. Sites are not easy to locate in an area such as Arona, where they may be buried at some depth or covered with an impenetrable mass of *kunai* grass that not only impedes but, in many cases, prevents detection. As a matter of fact, there are older sites in the

general area such as NFB, NGG, and NGH, to mention but three (Watson 1979).

A more serious misapprehension is Feil's failure to accept that an attempt at valid comparison between archaeological manifestations known only from bodies of cultural material quite diametrically opposed to one another (apples and oranges, again) is ill advised. Equally serious is his failure to recognize the pitfalls of using a single site or site complex to typify an entire region. At the same time as acknowledging the impropriety in so doing (p. 18n), Feil accepts the intriguing Kuk site as reflecting prehistoric cultural development in the western part of the highlands to the almost total neglect of other archaeological sites in that area, most of them sites with quite different cultural inventories. Yuku, Kiowa, Nombe, Wanlek, and perhaps the Manim valley sites (Tugeri, Etpiti, Kamapuk, and Manim) may well suggest greater similarity between east and west in early prehistory than does the extensive complex of ditching systems at Kuk with the paucity of other kinds of cultural information retrieved from the site.

Although the knowledge of highland prehistory is still in its infancy, regional patterns of cultural development that transcend the rather gross east-west opposition are perceptible, although in very schematic and incomplete form (Watson 1979). It may not be unreasonable to expect that when the verdict is in, evidence will emerge of a more complex prehistory than the simple contrast that Feil envisions. At the present time archaeological research in the highlands appears to be much too spotty and incomplete to serve as the basis for even gross comparisons.

The volume is attractively designed. Editorial transgressions are minimal although a certain laxity can be detected in some textual inconsistencies and errors introduced into quoted material. My criticism notwithstanding, the value of the book as a contribution to comparative studies of highland Papua New Guinea societies is considerable and dictates that Feil's monograph be in the library of any scholar concerned with sociocultural studies in the Pacific. Substituting "comparison" for "evolution" in the book's title might be salutary.

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Jeremy Beckett, *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. xiii, 251, maps, illustrations. A$39.50.

*Reviewed by Raymond Evans, University of Queensland*

I received Jeremy Beckett's book for review at approximately the same time as the lush production *Australians: A Historical Atlas* (1987) arrived for my perusal. Yet I was disconcerted to find virtually no intersection of the approximate worlds these two productions inhabit. Torres Strait Islanders, and indeed the Torres Strait Islands themselves, simply do not seem to exist for that latter, expensive volume. Neither historically nor geographically do people and place merit even a glancing acknowledgment, even though their fate and environment have been absorbed within Australian boundaries since the late 1870s. Translated into European terms, a commensurate snub would be to drop Tasmania peremptorily from sight at the southern declination of the Antipodes.

Torres Strait Islanders feel this marginality keenly, particularly the material neglect embodied in being consigned always to the periphery of concern. That is why Australia's bicentennial year carried yet another niggling little surprise for its generally rejoicing citizenry when Jim Akee's Torres United Party renewed calls in January 1988 for the independence of Torres Strait from Australian jurisdiction, last heard in a full-throated way in the mid-1970s. Although there is by no means unanimity upon this issue among the diaspora of some twenty-five thousand Islanders—scattered from Thursday Island to Perth—the independence movement, nevertheless, is fired by a burgeoning sense of deprivation and neglect.

Islanders, as Beckett shows, resent the contrast of their meagre, subsistent life-styles with what they observe as the glittering affluence of white Australian society. Specifically, they resent the relative powerlessness associated with being a "remittance economy," dependent upon that "uneasy condominium" of state and federal control. They demand greater share in the extractive prawning, pearlshell and trochus industries of the strait; and they angrily wonder why Augold NL and Mount Isa Mines Limited should be granted mining leases to islands (such as

Horn Island) by the Queensland government without any negotiation for mineral royalties with the traditional landholders. They enviously observe the annual A$25 million that the privately owned Sydney company, Torres Strait Pilots, receives for its services in guiding an average dozen vessels per day through Prince of Wales Channel, including oil tankers from the Middle East and bauxite carriers from Weipa.

Islanders obtain little of this largesse themselves, while their major connection with mainland Australia, run by Air Queensland, operates at inflated prices in antiquated Fokker Friendship aircraft. Crippling water and energy restrictions have been common on these islands and concern is also expressed at lax border controls that permit an unwanted influx of illegal Papuan migrants into the strait. Piloting this entire flotilla of specific irritants is the urgent complaint that white political parties and white bureaucrats ultimately decide the Islanders' future, while possessing little understanding of their sacred culture or knowledge of their extensive past.

Beckett's *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism* is thus a timely production; for, prior to its appearance in 1987, no single, in-depth study of this community existed, apart from Nonie Sharp's "in-house," typewritten monograph, "Torres Strait Islanders 1879-1979: Theme for an Overview" (1980), which, although revealing and percipient, enjoyed only limited circulation. Timeliness in Beckett's case, however, should not be equated with any sense of expediency or a rush to publication. Indeed, quite the opposite is true. Beckett has only slowly and cautiously arrived at this substantial publishing milestone across the stepping-stones of several field trips to the islands and the production of numerous scholarly papers and articles upon various aspects of Islander life during a span of almost three decades.

The result is a work that, to say the least, has been intellectually well honed—as thoughtfully crafted and polished as the pearlshell artifacts of this fascinating region. The study operates upon numerous levels: as anthropology, as history, as human geography, as race relations theory, and as a political economy, in microcosm, of Western colonialism. Each level sustains and fortifies the rest, building a solid and skillfully imbricated structure, well defended against external criticism. The book begins and ends with a "tombstone opening" ceremony on Murray Island. Yet, whereas such attention to funereal rites would have once been the stuff of maudlin Western pronouncements about a despondent and dying race, here the ceremonial is shown to betoken largely the optimism, vitality, and resilience of Islander society. In between these examinations, the reader is regaled with insights into precontact culture

(which are perhaps overemphatic about its negative connotations), the rich and often tumultuous history of culture contact (particularly that of Badu and the Murray Islands, which, along with Saibai, Beckett has most closely investigated), as well as the varied implications of what he terms "internal colonialism" and "welfare colonialism."

The term internal colonialism is, perhaps fortuitously, not extensively employed; for, upon reflection, it seems to broach a theoretical minefield of problems. For example: Are we simply dealing here with "people brought within national boundaries as in the case of Britain's 'Celtic fringe' " (p. 13)? Or are we dealing, rather, with people essentially colonized from without—by missionaries from the British metropolis and the South Pacific, by pearling and fishing companies operating from Sydney in the distinct colony of New South Wales (and even, incidentally, from Germany), and eventually by an intrusive administrative process emanating, in political collusion, from both Brisbane and Whitehall? The concept, as developed by Stavenhagen (1965), Blauner (1972), Hechter (1975), and Wolpe (1975), seems at best a fuzzy one that does not entirely mark off the process that it purports to delineate from "classic colonialism," wherein "a country's native population is subjugated by a conquering colonial group" (Cashmore 1984: 136-137). Beckett deals fairly cursorily and somewhat gingerly with the term; and, in one significant footnote, even renounces the applicability of Harold Wolpe's analysis of internal colonialism in South Africa, which had informed an earlier article on pearl fishing in the Torres Strait. Rather, what seems operative here is a style of administrative colonialism, overseeing (usually with laconic ineptitude) a relatively intense mode of resource extraction, coupled with considerable labor exploitation (sometimes bordering literally upon slavery) and a thoroughgoing ideological indoctrination by white missionaries and their Pacific Island functionaries. In short, it is a highly complex situation that does not lend itself to easy theoretical labeling.

Beckett's anthropological skills allow him to perceive how, despite such an exterior onslaught, the Islanders were (and are) rather more than the passive victims of Western expansionism: how, in practice, the activities of the fishers of bêche-de-mer and pearlshell, as well as the "fishers of men," were mediated by the responses of Islander society and how the former's imperious demands (both material and spiritual) were overwoven stubbornly into customary practice. Colonialism becomes in the process less the story of white power's naked imposition and more accurately one of subtle symbiosis, wherein each community "was able to negotiate the terms of its surrender" (p. 110) as its members reserved

"an essential part of themselves, outside the relations of production and consumption, which constituted the dominant order" (p. 10). As well as indicating far-reaching cultural retentions, what Beckett seems to be concretely emphasizing here is the point that Torres Strait Islanders, not violently decimated as mainland Aboriginal tribes usually were, retained supportive kinship ties; and by not being forcibly dispossessed of their islands and uprooted—again unlike reserve-bound indigenes on the mainland and in Tasmania—they preserved an environmental advantage beyond that of numerous other colonized groups.

The contrast is an instructive one; but it is not one, I feel, that should be taken too far. The missionaries, the fisheries, and extension of the British "rule of law" did make forceful inroads, which cut a swath through traditional practices—so much so that it is arguably impossible to determine in retrospect how much has been lost. Secondly, Islander communities may not often have been shot or poisoned wholesale (although the degree of frontier violence was arguably greater than admitted here), yet much more could be made of the negative repercussions to kinship involved in various epidemics of exotic diseases that halved the original Islander population by 1900—as well as in male life expectancies being seriously truncated by the hazards of deep-sea diving from the 1870s onwards. Such profound developments are merely mentioned in passing by Beckett and their impact upon the overall analysis does not seem sufficiently absorbed.

Thirdly, although Islanders were not so dramatically displaced by white settler colonialism as mainland blacks were, the marine resources that helped underpin their livelihood were rigorously plundered (as were their cultural artifacts) and their quality of life was consequently undermined. They lost, in effect, a considerable degree of environmental control as well as the easy mobility offered by traditional trading routes and conduits of cultural exchange. This loss was accentuated by the fisheries and mission stations that came to dot the islands (often operating as tiny company townships and petty theocracies), the "mosquito fleets" of pearling luggers and the occasional British man of war that moved through Islander waters, and the hand of white government that, by 1879, had scooped all of the islands to the New Guinea coastline into the imperial net. The Islanders, as they would later discover to their intense dismay, henceforth walked Crown Land.

Indeed, upon approaching this question from the perspective of a race-relations historian, one can question the often more sanguine conclusions of the anthropologist upon the matter of ensuing agency and the amount of room actually left to maneuver voluntarily once Western

commerce and imperial power elbowed their way forcefully into the scene. I do so, however, with requisite caution and with a marked respect for the author's interdisciplinary grasp. Beckett rather shyly admits to being "an anthropologist with historical inclinations" (pp. x-xi). Yet, like Charles Rowley and Peter Lawrence before him, his historical methodology is invariably sophisticated and thoughtfully integrated. It is never that ill-digested, precursive melange of dates and events, concocted in afterthought and served up as a hasty hors d'oeuvre to the main course, as in so many other social science texts.

Yet, as Beckett also emphasizes, the study's "centre of gravity" (p. 21) lies in a two-year anthropological field trip to the Torres Strait between 1958 and 1961. The time frame stretches backwards and projects forward from that experiential encounter and, in so doing, the focus possibly becomes less distinct at the outer edges—particularly in its backward projection. For instance, Beckett makes less use of documentary material than he might; he believes that such sources "do not allow us to form more than a vague impression of island life in pre-colonial times" (p. 30). Granting that such sources do tell us more about ethnic contact than precontact, and granting that Westerners' initial impressions are often peremptory and misleading, one can nevertheless suggest that a closer reading of such sources does disclose considerably more than the author here allows.

Beckett does not seem to have seen, for instance, H. M. Chester's detailed "Narrative of a Cruise of the North East Channel," written in October 1871, during which he visited Mabuiag, Badu, Moa, Murray, Warrior, and Prince of Wales islands (although an earlier, unprinted report by Chester is cited). A short review article is undoubtedly not the place to disclose all that Chester reveals in this lengthy report of the "Gamaleega" of Mabuiag, the "Badooleega" of Badu, the "Italeega" of Moa, and the "Korarega" of Prince of Wales Island. Detailing such a report—as well as those by Frank Jardine, Commodore Sterling, immigration agent Robert Gray, H. Kennett (master of the *Southern Cross*), government agent D'Oyley Alpin, Commodore Heath, John Douglas, and others during the 1870s—may also appear as carping and perhaps even nit-picking in the context of the range of primary sources Beckett's account does actually feature. Yet the existence of such exemplary historical data should induce a cautionary rider to be added to our otherwise happy acceptance of Beckett's study—and that rider is that a comprehensive race-relations history of the Torres Strait is yet to be written.

In such a history, I would suggest, the impact of fishery, mission, and colonial administration will be shown by primary documentation as

more dramatic, violent, and devastating than we presently acknowledge; Islander resistance and intransigence will be revealed as more intensive and prolonged; and subsequent labor relations will emerge as more intrusive, exploitative, and harmful to these peoples' general well-being. Moreover, a history of the Torres Strait, rather than an investigation of Torres Strait Islanders per se, will emphasize the immense complications of Australian race *relations* operating in these waters, as representatives of literally dozens of ethnic groups meet and interact haphazardly, acting out that complex drama of "lived dominance" (p. 91) both cooperatively and abrasively, industriously and riotously. Such a history, too, should coax more of the accumulated folk-memory from the throats and the pens of the Islanders themselves. We already catch such resonances here in the Islanders' expressive phrases—" 'ardwork for nothing" (p. 147) and "all belly scar long crawl" (p. 195)—reflecting the realities of labor relations and welfare colonialism from the perspective of black worker and state ward. Yet we need to see more productions in the future like Tom Lowah's *Edad Mer* (My Life; 1987), published recently by the cooperatively run Ram's Skull Press at Kuranda, the first extended autobiography of a Torres Strait Islander to be printed.

With Beckett's weighty contribution, therefore, the doors to this emporium of long-neglected research should be seen to open, rather than to be resealed by the imprimatur of the ostensibly definitive investigation.

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