RIGHTING WRONGS ON ANUTA

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Apology and compensation are commonly employed to reestablish social harmony when one person causes injury to others, thereby disrupting social order. Here I explore the way in which these mechanisms are utilized by the people of Anuta, a Polynesian outlier in the Solomon Islands. I suggest that compensation and apology need not be counterposed and, in fact, are often intertwined as aspects of a single process. Historical transition from the widespread Polynesian emphasis on rank, respect, collective responsibility, and mutual assistance to a more individualistic and competitive cultural environment has led to changes in Anutan views of right and wrong. This, in turn, adds to the difficulty and complexity of moral judgment, and it has affected Anutan understanding of the consequences of illicit behavior—consequences that range from the automatic workings of the cosmos to curses, physical punishment meted out by chiefs, and composition of songs intended to shame the offender. Woven through this article is a consideration of Anuta's cultural logic and the strain under which that logic has been placed as a result of the community's exposure to the wider political and economic realities of late-twentieth-century life.

In any community, people occasionally cause unjustifiable injury—sometimes inadvertently, sometimes with purposeful intent.[1] Among Pacific Islanders, as elsewhere, reaction to such injury may include demands for compensation, apology and self-humiliation, or some combination thereof. New Guinea Highlanders, with their elaborate exchange networks and competitive political structures, have been characterized as emphasizing compensation as a prerequisite to healing social rifts, while Polynesians, with their consummately hierarchical political systems, emphasize respect for chiefs, apology, and sometimes self-humiliation.[2] Here, through an exploration of

Pacific Studies, Vol. 21, No. 3—September 1998

ways and means of righting wrongs among people of Anuta Island, I will suggest that compensation and apology need not be counterposed; in fact, they may be intimately intertwined as aspects of a single integrated process.

Anuta is an isolated Polynesian outlier in the eastern Solomons Islands. As such it was, until recently, spared the cultural disruption experienced by most Pacific communities in the aftermath of European contact. Thus, the cultural assumptions underlying Anutan social control reflect an ancient, widespread Polynesian emphasis on rank, respect, collective responsibility, and mutual assistance. Nonetheless, external pressures with their resultant cultural and social change have been inexorable. A major focus of this article is these changing circumstances and their impact on Anutan views of right and wrong as well as mechanisms for restoring equilibrium once it has been disrupted.

I begin by considering Anutan views of "right" and "wrong," "good" and "bad," and just what constitutes injurious behavior. I then review the goals that guide Anutan responses to such behavior and the mechanisms through which those goals are realized. In the process, I show the difficulty and complexity of moral judgment and the myriad responses, ranging from the automatic workings of the cosmos to curses, physical punishment meted out by chiefs, and composition of songs intended to shame the offender. In many instances, compensation and self-abasement are not distinct; rather both are aspects of a single action.[3] Woven through the essay is discussion of the underlying logic and the strain under which that logic has been placed as a result of Anutan exposure to the wider political and economic realities of late-twentieth-century life.

Ethnographic Background

Anuta is a small volcanic island, a half mile in diameter and seventy miles from Tikopia, its nearest populated neighbor. It is more than two hundred miles from the Santa Cruz group of the eastern Solomon Islands, which constitute the closest significant population center. The nearest island to the east is Rotuma, five hundred miles distant; another five hundred miles eastward are the Polynesian archipelagoes of Tonga and Samoa. Over the generations, Anutans have interacted extensively with Tikopians, whose language and culture are similar to their own. Contacts with other Solomon Islanders, most of whom Anutans see as very different from themselves, have been few and sporadic until recent decades. Even in the 1990s, shipping is infrequent and radio communication unreliable.[4]

Owing to Anuta's isolation, small size, and absence of commercially

exploitable resources, its traditional culture has remained remarkably intact up to the present. Subsistence gardening and fishing dominate the economy. The polity is led by two hereditary chiefs whose status is sustained by awesome mana, a spiritual force attributed to their divine ancestry. Houses and canoes are constructed of traditional materials in the traditional manner. Gardens are cultivated and fish caught using old techniques. Kinship remains the cornerstone of economic and social organization and itself is intimately associated with *aropa*—positive affect as expressed through economic sharing and cooperation.

Anuta's strongly Polynesian character has inevitably been modified by contact with the wider world. Over the two centuries since the island's first sighting by a Mr. Cherry of the HMS *Pandora,* Anutans have availed themselves of access to expanded travel, new ideas, worldly experience, and a variety of European goods. A few islanders have traveled as deck hands to locales as distant as Australia and America's Pacific Coast. During the second decade of this century, the Melanesian Mission established the Anglican Church on Anuta, and since that time the population has been at least nominally Christian. Metal axes, knives, and fishhooks were introduced relatively early; now commodities including kerosene, lanterns, cotton cloth, and nylon fishing line are regarded as necessities.

In order to acquire cash to purchase foreign-made commodities and as a safety valve for an expanding population, Anutans in increasing numbers have moved off their home island. At first, such emigration was limited to a few individuals joining groups of Tikopian plantation workers—mostly at the Levers copra plantations in the Russell Islands of the central Solomons (see Firth 1969; Larson 1966, 1977). Starting around 1960, the number of Anutans traveling for a variety of purposes increased dramatically, and by 1972, the time of my first visit to the island, every adult male had been overseas at some time during his life. In some cases this travel amounted only to brief stays on Tikopia; in others it involved a permanent move to the central Solomons. Most émigrés have worked as low-paid manual laborers for the Levers plantations, the Honiara Town Council, or one or another shipping company. A few, however, have attended secondary school and even held prestigious jobs. About half the Anutans who travel to the central Solomons go on to the Russell Islands; the other half remain in Honiara.

Defining Rights and Wrongs

"Righting wrongs" must be considered in the context of local conceptions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Such conceptions are culturally constructed and, therefore, vary from one community to the next. In Anutan, as

in English, "right" and "wrong" carry a degree of ambiguity, the same words being used to convey moral opprobrium or to dispute empirical correctness.

The Anutan word *tara* can be translated as "wrong" or "incorrect" and contrasts with *tonu,* which means "right" or "correct." However, these terms are used in the empirical as well as the moral sense. Thus, in response to the statement *"Kau maanatu ko te mea na ko te kope o John"* (I think that object is John's knife), one might answer, *"E tonu aau"* (You are correct) or *"E tara"* (That's wrong). If one goes in the wrong direction and gets lost, it is said, *"te mea na ku aru ara"* (that person has gone astray). One may also say of another's improper customary behavior, *"Ona tukutukunga e tara"* (His habits are misguided).

Similar observations can be made about the Anutan term *kovi* (bad), which contrasts with *rerei* (good). *Kovi* can mean unappealing, as in describing unappetizing food, or it can mean that something is not working properly. Of an injured leg one says, *"toku vae e kovi"* (my leg is bad); a stomachache may be described as *"na manava e kovi"* (his belly is bad). On the other hand, a chronic thief, a bully, someone failing to perform his civic duties, or one who does not properly respect a chief may be described as a *"tangata kovi"* (bad man).

Despite some ambiguity, however, there is a clear, identifiable moral component to each of these terms. To behave properly (*aru pakarerei,* "go well," or *taute pakarerei,* "act well") means acting in a manner that accords with ancient custom *(nga tukutukunga tuei)*—particularly those aspects of custom that emphasize respect for authority—and maintaining harmonious relations within the community. A good man is easygoing, pleasant, and sociable. He is humble and speaks quietly, is honest in his dealings with others. He knows his place in the social order and takes responsibility for the support of those below him while he honors and obeys those higher than himself. Most of these characteristics are summarized in the term *aropa*—a word that denotes positive affect as expressed through sharing and material assistance.

Aropa is usually translated as "love," but it may also connote "sympathy," "empathy," "pity," or "affection." Thus, at first blush, it is an emotional state. However, it is only recognized insofar as it is expressed through concrete behavior, particularly through giving, sharing, or cooperation in such productive activities as fishing, house building, gardening, harvesting, or cooking. It means treating others well, helping them, and avoiding any behavior that will injure others. Expressions of *aropa* without the actions to support them are taken as empty verbiage.[5]

Anutans identify *aropa* as the single most important element in the island's ancient custom *(nga tukutukunga o te penua mai mua rea).* In one sense, "custom" connotes ways of the ancestors, but custom on Anuta, as elsewhere, is a fluid, constantly evolving phenomenon.[6] Thus, Anutan notions

of custom have been modified over the years in such a manner as to incorporate aspects of Christianity. The result can be seen in emphasis on respect for church leaders, Jesus, and the Christian God, and the church's stress on "love" and "brotherhood," which are regarded as synonymous with *aropa.*[7]

An important element in "good" behavior is honesty and dependability. "True" and "truth" are expressed in the terms *maori* or *mooni,* and to be correct is *tonu* (see above). These terms contrast with *roi,* which denotes a falsehood or a lie. As with *aropa,* however, internal psychological states of others are said to be unknowable, so people are evaluated on the basis of their words and deeds rather than their intentions. For this reason, Anutans do not distinguish between an unintentional falsehood and a purposeful lie; both are termed *roi.* (To tell an untruth is *ngutu roi; ngutu* = "mouth," *roi* = "falsehood.") Apparently in contrast with some other Polynesians (Korn and Decktor Korn n.d.), Anutans consider it important to be able to depend on the truth of each other's statements and on people's keeping verbal commitments. Those who habitually break appointments without warning or who fail to deliver promised assistance are severely criticized. Anutans experience few greater irritants than repeated, unannounced postponements of a ship's departure.

For the most part, Anutans are consistent in their insistence that one cannot know others' internal states and that judgments must be based upon overt behavior. Nonetheless, they formulate hypotheses about each other's feelings for a variety of purposes. During the mid-1960s, for example, Pu Tokerau was blown off course on a voyage to Patutaka, an island thirty miles to the southeast. Instead, his canoe traversed a storm-swept sea to Tikopia, seventy miles to the southwest. Years later, in relating his experience to me, Pu Toke insisted that throughout the voyage he was never frightened. When I mentioned this claim to his brother, the senior chief, who also was aboard the vessel, the response was ambivalent. He acknowledged that his brother's claim might possibly be true since one cannot know what is going on in someone else's mind. But he wryly noted that Pu Toke "was crying like everybody else" about how they were all about to die at sea.[8]

Similarly, Anutans often are suspicious of each other's motives and intentions. They suspect one another of nefarious schemes to take advantage of the community for their own personal aggrandizement and predict a variety of unpleasant consequences. Although such attributions of motive are based on inferences from past behavior, and their validity is judged by the accuracy of predictions about concrete results, the predictions depend on hypotheses about mental states. Yet, while there is a complex interplay between internal states and external evidence, and denials of interest in the subject may be overstated, conversation about both current events and oral history devotes little energy to discerning motives and maintains a primary focus upon

observable actions. Visual observation is particularly important in the Anutan epistemological scheme, and sometimes commentators will deny firm knowledge about an event despite overwhelming circumstantial evidence, because it took place long ago and "no one presently living saw it happen" (see Feinberg 1996b).

This emphasis on visual observation is relevant to righting wrongs in that people are judged by their actions rather than their intentions. It does not matter that an injury or disruption of community harmony was unintentional. One is responsible for the consequences of one's deeds and—if those consequences are injurious—for undoing the damage insofar as possible.

Anutans may well be the most peaceable people I have known. In the time that I have spent with them over the past two and a half decades, the only fights that I have witnessed were among young children. Domestic arguments and discord are fairly common, but I have never observed an instance of domestic *violence* among Anutans; and both men and women react with bemused derision when they see physical confrontations involving married couples from other islands. The one man I knew who had a reputation for starting fights was regarded as mentally ill *(varea)* and eventually was exiled to the mental hospital in Honiara, from which he was never permitted to return home (Feinberg 1979).[9] Fighting is a constant theme in Anutan oral traditions, and islanders still place a great deal of positive value on physical strength and martial skill. Over the years many Anutan men, who are renowned as big, strong, courageous, and disciplined, have joined the Royal Solomon Islands Police. However, violent crime within the community is not a significant preoccupation.

In contrast with their attitude toward violent crime, Anutans evince a great deal of concern about theft. They compare their island favorably with Tikopia and the Reef Islands of Temotu Province, which they regard as hotbeds of thievery. Nonetheless, a seemingly inordinate amount of time is spent in church sermons and island councils *(pono)* discussing problems of theft—particularly of food from other people's gardens—and how such behavior might be discouraged. Once during my first visit to Anuta in 1972, the senior chief issued an edict forbidding children to venture out of their houses unless accompanied by an adult. This measure was in response to complaints about food disappearing from garden plots and a widespread belief that the children were responsible. And for several months during that same visit, the chief had a guard posted at my house to forestall theft of my supplies.

Of equal concern to Anutans is failure to assist kin and to respect and obey senior relatives or chiefs. Such behavior is particularly disconcerting, because it contravenes the principle of *aropa,* which forms the basis of kin relationships (see Feinberg 1981a, 1981b, 1990a, 1996a). People's moral fiber

is evaluated on the basis of their demonstration of *aropa,* loyalty, humility, and obedience. A high priority is placed on maintaining community harmony, knowing and accepting one's place in the social order (Feinberg 1983), contributing accordingly, and not making waves.

As far as I can tell, there is universal agreement among Anutans with respect to the principles for discerning correct and incorrect behavior. Not surprisingly, however, the evaluation of particular cases is more problematic. People disagree about what constitutes loyalty, honor, and obedience, or they cite extenuating circumstances to justify failure to obey a chief's instructions, to honor requests, or to assist their kin. At times, people may feel that a chief has overstepped the bounds of his authority, and they are ambivalent as to which side is right in a given dispute. Final assessments depend as much on the aftermath of such episodes as on the acts themselves.

Objectives

To speak of goals or objectives for the Anutan approach to righting wrongs perhaps implies a greater sense of conscious purpose than is warranted. Still, the system operates in such a way as to produce a state that is compatible with Anutan cultural premises about the nature of society, and people clearly express a sense of gratification when it works properly.

At the most general level, the system works to maintain social harmony or to restore it when it is disrupted. Anutans place a premium on amicable, cooperative social relations and are distressed when such relations are replaced by tension and suspicion.

Harmony, for Anutans, is implicitly linked to maintenance of their hierarchical social order. In this order, gods and chiefs are at the top (see Feinberg 1978, 1981a, 1995, 1996a, 1996b), and others are ranked according to age, gender, genealogical seniority, and demonstration of *manuu* (mana). Those at the higher levels use their mana to promote general well-being and to protect the interests of others who are lower in the hierarchy, thereby expressing *aropa* for those less powerful than themselves. Persons at the lower levels express *aropa* for their superiors by offering obedience, respect, and occasional ceremonial prestations. When everyone knows his or her place in the social order and acts accordingly, the system works to everybody's benefit. When social order is replaced by quarreling and suspicion, those responsible are punished by misfortunes such as illness, accident, crop failure, or natural disaster.

Such misfortunes are said to be imposed by God or the ancestral spirits. Thus, the commonweal depends on maintenance of a proper relationship between the human community and the world of supernaturals. The numinal

beings inhabiting Anuta's world are displeased by social discord; therefore, the system of social control is designed, as much as anything, to maintain a balance between the worlds of human and of superhuman beings—between the world of mortals and the cosmos.

Finally, the system acts to reinforce the moral code, which is in turn tied to the social, spiritual, and cosmic order. Moral conduct on Anuta involves such strictures as caring properly for kin and showing appropriate respect for social superiors—in short, for displaying *aropa* in all one's dealings.

Mechanisms

An Anutan's first line of defense when he or she feels injured by another is to try to maintain harmony by ignoring the insult. When disputes arise, one party typically withdraws rather than respond to provocation. Thus, face-to-face confrontations are extremely rare, and in direct dealings during normal day-to-day affairs, people who dislike and distrust each other often behave as if they were the best of friends. However, an affront is rarely forgotten and only temporarily stays hidden.

Instead, people tend to gossip behind each other's backs, vilifying enemies to whom they speak directly in the most cordial tones. One tells an opponent what he or she wants to hear, then sabotages his or her efforts through quiet noncooperation. Others are privately warned to distrust the offender's statements and watch for the results of his or her actions, which will prove the culprit's bad faith or serious miscalculation. In addition, sometimes one will quietly proclaim that the opponent is about to suffer some misfortune. Should the misfortune then eventuate, it is thought to prove the accuser to be factually and morally correct.

An Anutan who feels wronged may experience a seizure or an altered state of consciousness that is interpreted as spirit possession. Such possession can send messages that exonerate the injured party and cast blame on his or her opponent, at least in the minds of some observers, without requiring direct interpersonal confrontation.

Despite Anutans' best efforts to keep conflict hidden beneath a veneer of good manners, however, serious disputes eventually reveal themselves. At this point, a variety of social and cosmologically based sanctions come into play. These sanctions may manifest themselves in natural, supernatural, or social terms, or any combination of these. What happens depends upon the character of the offense, who is involved, and the immediate response of the offended party.

Unless chiefs or others in authority opt to intervene (see below), punishment depends upon the automatic workings of the cosmos. When an Anutan

behaves inappropriately, the culprit suffers some misfortune—most often sickness or serious accident. Usually the victim of supernatural retribution is the culprit himself/herself; occasionally it is another person who is close to the perpetrator—typically a child, grandchild, or other relative. The punishment is thought to work independently of any person's (or even any spirit's) conscious will. The only way to avoid the expected outcome—and this is only sometimes effective—is for the culprit to acknowledge publicly his or her misdeed, offer presents and other signs of ritual subordination to the offended party, and be explicitly forgiven by the person who was wronged.

This mechanism is most effective when the person wronged is of superior rank to the offender. Failure to obey a chief, parent, or grandparent, or failure to care properly for a senior relative when the latter is old and infirm are commonly thought to trigger this sanction, which is based on the mana of the senior party. Because rank is associated with mana or spiritually derived potency, leading individuals are *tapu* and must be treated with respect (see Feinberg 1979, 1980, 1986, 1996a, 1996b).

In cases where the relative rank of the offending and offended parties is less clear, the automatic workings of mana and *tapu* are less certain. One who feels wronged may respond by cursing *(tautuku)* the perpetrator. In most cases, this simply involves the offended party uttering words foretelling disaster. Should the speaker have sufficient mana to bring to bear, the content of the words will be realized, usually quite literally.

In practice, Anutans find it difficult to distinguish the results of voluntary curses from the automatic consequences of tabu violation. This is so because curses are most effective when uttered by someone with considerable mana, which means someone of high rank. However, vindictiveness is negatively valued and forgiveness positively viewed. Thus, people judge one who resorts to curses rather critically even if he is a chief and is, in some sense, fully justified in seeking retribution. For that reason, people rarely acknowledge responsibility for cursing one another, and the diagnosis that one is suffering because of another's curse must be inferred from circumstantial evidence.

When social norms are flagrantly violated, physical sanctions are regarded as justifiable. In theory, a chief can order offenders to be whipped, sentence them to hard labor, or, in extreme cases, exile them to the sea. To implement such sanctions, however, is extremely rare. The only case of which I am aware where such a sentence has been executed over the past generation involved the children who were believed to have stolen crops from another family's gardens. Given the seriousness with which Anutans view theft, stealing crops was regarded as a major offense. All the children of the island were forbidden to set foot outside their houses unless accompanied by an adult, and several children who violated this edict were publicly

flogged with a long, thin stick. The punishment did not appear to produce physical injury, but wounded pride kept the culprits in line for quite some time thereafter.

One other case in which such sanctions were threatened seriously dates to the early 1960s. A woman became pregnant by her first cousin, who was also a member of her domestic unit (*pare,* "house"). The relationship violated Anuta's incest prohibitions, and the couple's clan chief sentenced them to death at sea as punishment for their indiscretion. But as they prepared to launch their vessel, he had a change of heart, and the sentence was commuted.

One of the most potent forces for social control among the Anutans is *pakamaa* (shame; embarrassment). As elsewhere in Polynesia, *pakamaa* is an external sanction; one feels *pakamaa* not about the knowledge that one has acted inappropriately but at being found out (or being falsely accused).[10] According to Anutans, the difference between children who are *koi vare* (still incompetent) and responsible adults is that children have not yet learned to be *pakamaa.* That is why young children do not wear clothes. When they learn modesty and are *pakamaa* at being seen naked, they are on their way to social competence. Similarly, on my last visit to the Anutan community in Honiara, a three-year-old boy was in the habit of wearing a little girl's dress. None of the adults did anything to discourage him, nor did they seem concerned about his sexual identity. They were confident that when he got a little older he would become *pakamaa* and change his dressing habits on his own initiative.[11]

In addition to serving important functions in the process of enculturation, *pakamaa* is a strong deterrent to antisocial behavior among competent adults. The most common reasons for powerful feelings of *pakamaa* are suspicion of adultery, fornication, or incest; failure to care properly for one's relatives or to obey a chief; and accusation of theft.[12] In extreme cases of *pakamaa,* one finds it impossible to face one's fellow islanders and resolves the problem by putting out to sea on what often amounts to a suicide voyage (cf. Firth [1961] 1967).

During the 1980s a Tikopian schoolteacher was living on Anuta and married an Anutan woman. Later, he was accused of having an extramarital affair, shortly after which he disappeared while fishing on the ocean by himself. The assumption among Anutans was that he had committed suicide because of his unbearable feelings of *pakamaa.* Tikopians, on the other hand, believed that he was forced into exile and regarded his disappearance as homicide, followed by a cover-up involving the chiefs and a high-ranking police official. The incident poisoned the relationship between the two communities for several years and illustrates the frequent difficulty of identifying which sanction is at work.[13]

A second case had a happier ending. Two teenaged boys were accused of having stolen watermelons from another household's garden. Feeling disgraced, they put out to sea and sailed to Vanikoro, two hundred miles distant. They stayed there for several months, after which the community's anger and the boys' embarrassment subsided. The younger of the two then returned home on a government ship. The elder soon put out to sea again, sailing an additional two hundred miles to Santa Ana Island, just east of Makira. Upon completion of his voyage, he became a local—and indeed even something of a national—hero. Time plus his remarkable accomplishment had washed away all sense of *pakamaa* and anger. Even irritation about the canoe that he had stolen to make the voyage was muted in the afterglow of the adventure.[14]

Anutans also exploit one another's sense of shame as a method of achieving retribution for perceived slights and insults when more formal mechanisms are unavailable. This practice commonly involves composing songs of a genre termed *tauaangutu* and singing them in public settings.

Ngutu means "mouth" and *tau* is "war" or "battle." *Tauaangutu,* then, means something like a "war of words." Anutans describe *poi mako tauaangutu* (dance-song word battles) as "songs about something bad." When asked to expound, they usually explain that these are songs intended to announce to the community another person's antisocial deeds, most often related to matters of romance or sex. The idea is to create a song so appealing that it is incorporated into the island's regular dance repertoire. Every time it is sung or the dance performed, the entire community is reminded of the offender's lack of grace, tact, or compassion, and the culprit experiences pangs of embarrassment. The challenge is to produce a song sufficiently engaging to create a sense of *pakamaa* in one's adversary without humiliating him or her to the point of suicide. Should the latter occur, the composer would be blamed for the victim's death, and triumph would be transformed into chagrin.[15]

Change

Despite Anuta's geographical isolation, the community has experienced significant political and economic changes over the past several decades. Christianity, which was introduced during the second decade of this century, has been effectively incorporated into Anutan life without challenging the fundamental premises of the island's religion or society (see Feinberg 1978, 1981a, 1995, 1996b). By contrast, incorporation of Anuta into the world market economy combined with opportunities for formal education, wage labor, and geographical and sociopolitical mobility have wrought major changes. In particular, what I have elsewhere termed the commercialization of inter-

personal relations (Feinberg 1996c) is undermining Anutans' emphasis on *aropa* and the traditional hierarchy. People with ambition may now improve their socioeconomic standing by moving overseas, receiving formal education, and earning wages in government service or private enterprise. The world economic order based on principles of competition and private accumulation of material wealth has made some Anutans loath to share, and in one extreme instance, several families sold produce of their gardens to other Anutans in return for cash. When the senior chief attempted to suppress such conduct he was first ignored, then vilified, until a series of disasters convinced his opponents that continued resistance was not in their interest (see Feinberg 1986, 1996b, 1996c).

Experience in the wider world, new political alternatives, and exposure to more Western interpretations of Christianity have led many people to lose their sense of intimidation and constraint by chiefly edict. These changes have produced a situation in which the chief must lead by moral example rather than by fear based on supernatural power. Hence, the senior chief, on several occasions, has felt compelled to withdraw in protest at what he perceived to be unconscionable behavior on the part of his wayward subjects.

In the early 1980s, when the chief reached an impasse with a number of his leading men *(maru)* over sale of food and his assumption of the role of catechist in addition to *ariki,* he moved to a small shed on the hilltop and resided there for two months (see Feinberg 1986). The second case of which I am aware involved a handful of Anutans who joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The chief felt strongly that just one denomination should be active on his island, and he attempted to persuade the Seventh-day Adventists to rejoin their Anglican counterparts. However, they refused. Since the ultimate sanctions of execution or exile to the ocean have been removed from traditional leaders by Solomon Islands national law, the chief had no way to enforce compliance with his will.[16] At last, in frustration, he proclaimed that he would leave Anuta and move to Patutaka, an uninhabited island thirty miles away. This conflict was resolved when the Seventh-day Adventists agreed to depart Anuta, but the crisis underscores the challenge to traditional authority and its effect on righting wrongs as conceptualized in indigenous terms.

Geographical mobility has altered Anutan social control in a variety of other ways as well. The government has outlawed interisland canoe voyages and made suicide voyages more difficult to carry out, thereby eliminating one important vehicle for protesting perceived injustice. This prohibition is largely offset, however, by improved shipping, which has increased people's opportunity to deal with shame by moving away.

Since the 1960s substantial numbers of Anutans have moved overseas,

primarily to attend school or to work for wages. Most of these have settled, either temporarily or—in a few cases—permanently, in two locales: the Russell Islands and the Honiara area. The Russells are under control of the Unilever multinational corporation; Anutans residing there are either laborers on the company's copra plantations or they are staying with husbands, parents, or other relatives. Honiara is the Solomon Islands national capital, located on the island of Guadalcanal, and Anutans have moved there for a variety of reasons—to attend school, to work for wages, to conduct other business, or to visit kin. Most Anutans on Guadalcanal live in a compact cluster of houses in White River, just west of the Honiara city boundary. There is considerable movement back and forth between Guadalcanal and the Russells as well as between these islands and Anuta; thus, despite the geographic dispersal, Anuta continues to exist as a single, more or less unified community. While virtually all Anutans continue to express support in principle for the traditional hierarchy and chiefly authority, however, it is difficult for chiefs to exercise authority over a community that is dispersed over many hundreds of miles.

Through the 1980s the structure of authority, in principle, was clear. The senior chief was represented in Honiara by his brother, Frank Kataina (Pu Teukumarae), who also was a leading officer in the national police. Frank had one or two close confidants with whom he consulted on important matters; but when he spoke, it was with the chief's authority.

The major difficulty with the authority structure was less one of ambiguity or lack of legitimacy than it was the fact that the leaders cannot be everywhere at once. Frank and his lieutenants had no enforcement powers but relied on moral suasion and their subordinates' cooperation to implement decisions. Thus, for the most part, their pronouncements could be ignored with impunity. The one exception involved cases where a breach of custom also was a legal violation. Thus, when a man used funds belonging to a relative for his own bridewealth payment, Frank and his associates presented him with the choice of repaying the relative or having the matter turned over to the courts. The accused decided on the former option.

For the most part the system continues to work reasonably well, because the vast majority of Anutans continue to accept the legitimacy of the chief and his assistants and because they remain convinced of the effectiveness of supernatural sanctions. The possibility of remaining overseas indefinitely, however, has removed coercive power from traditional authority figures, and the availability of alternative life paths has reduced the potency of traditional sanctions. The ultimate sanction now is social ostracism, but confusion about the correct path for the community has made even this difficult to apply forcefully and consistently.

Finally, incorporation into the Solomon Islands' national political and legal structure has made it possible to resolve disputes by means of resorting to the court system. Several Anutans, moreover, have become familiar with the legal process through involvement in the Royal Solomon Islands Police. Consequently, when major issues of contention arise, police investigation and legal adjudication are commonly discussed as possibilities. In contrast with many Pacific communities, however, for Anutans actually to take internal disputes to court remains extremely rare.[17]

Righting Wrongs: Compensation and Apology

At the outset of this article I discussed the use of compensation as opposed to apology and self-humiliation in attempts to right injurious behavior. Anutan responses involve elements of both, but neither alone captures a sense of the process. Compensation may be involved in that an offender often is expected to present a gift of some recognized value. However, a gift is presented primarily when the offended party is of superior rank to the culprit. In such a case, it is a matter of underscoring respect for the social superior, acceptance of that person's authority, and acknowledgment that one has behaved inappropriately, rather than compensation for a loss. At least as important as the prestation is apology, typically accompanied by pressing one's nose to the superior's knee or foot as a gesture of submission and atonement and a request for forgiveness. This might also be thought of as self-humiliation, except that Anutans do not consider such gestures to be particularly humiliating. Ordinary people are supposed to acknowledge their subordination to superiors, especially chiefs, and it is taken for granted that properly respectful people will perform this gesture from time to time.[18]

What is humiliating is not the gesture of subordination but having been caught in a compromising position. Awareness that others know of one's misdeeds leads to a sense of shame or *pakamaa. Pakamaa* involves humiliation, but it is externally imposed and, thus, not *self*-humiliation. In the most extreme of cases, a male does not attempt to make amends to the community or to the injured party; rather, he responds by trying to escape on a dangerous voyage. This action may have the effect of protesting his innocence and of making friends and kin feel empathy for the accused. If he should die, he has the satisfaction, in his last moments, of believing that he has caused his tormentors to reprimand themselves for driving him to such a desperate adventure. Should he survive and eventually return home, his relatives will be relieved to have him back and do their best to avoid making him self-conscious with respect to earlier events.

As elsewhere in Oceania, from the egalitarian New Guinea Highlands to

the most stratified of Polynesian chiefdoms, acknowledgment of one's responsibility for injuring another requires some material prestation. In this sense, compensation and apology are features of a single process. On the other hand, the underlying logic of Anuta's system for restoring social harmony and righting wrongs reflects the common Austronesian pattern emphasizing rank and individual subordination to the commonweal.[19] Thus, the present case supports the arguments of those (e.g., Hickson 1986; Scaglion 1996a, 1996b; Watson-Gegeo and Feinberg 1996) who have asserted that the salient line of separation in Pacific Island social systems falls between the Austronesian- and non–Austronesian-speaking worlds rather than the older tripartite division into Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia as firmly bounded and supposedly contrasting culture areas.

NOTES

1. This article grew out of a series of sessions at meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO). I am indebted to the other contributors—particularly to organizers David Akin and Jan Rensel, and to discussant Richard Scaglion—for raising salient issues and offering helpful criticisms on earlier versions of this essay.

2. Melanesian communities that emphasize material exchange and compensation range from the Austronesian-speaking Kwaio, who view monetary compensation by the Solomon Islands government for a decades-old massacre as an essential element in vindication of their moral correctness (see Akin 1999; Keesing and Corris 1980; Keesing 1992), to the Urapmin in the highlands of Papua New Guinea's West Sepik Province (Robbins 1996), who view equivalent exchange as a prerequisite to reconciling antagonisms and healing rifts within their own community. Formal apology is typified by the Rotuman *faksoro* (Howard and Rensel 1996) and the Samoan *ifoga* (see, e.g., O'Meara 1990).

3. Others in the ASAO symposium and elsewhere have acknowledged that apology, in itself, can become a form of compensation. Yet, apology and compensation are often still discussed as if they were distinct procedures. It is this assumption, often implicit, with which I take issue.

4. As recently as 1988, all of Temotu Province (through which Anuta is administered by the Solomon Islands government) was without a ship for approximately six months and without air or radio contact for two or three. For further details, see Feinberg 1990b.

5. The Anutan concept of *aropa* has been discussed at greater length in Feinberg 1978, 1981a, 1981b, 1996a, and elsewhere.

6. See Keesing and Tonkinson 1982, Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Handler and Linnekin 1984, Keesing 1989, Hanson 1989, Jolly and Thomas 1992, Feinberg and Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1995, and others for further discussion of this topic.

7. I put "love" and "brotherhood" in quotes here because Anutans take these terms from English versions of the Bible and their Anglican prayer books.

8. This dependence on overt behavior appears to contrast with a number of Melanesian societies such as Manus (Mead 1956) and the Urapmin (Robbins 1996), where internal feelings can be as central as directly observable actions as a basis for moral evaluation.

9. The psychiatric evaluation corresponded with the Anutans' assessment of this man's condition. According to the hospital's official diagnosis, he was "paranoid and of subnormal intelligence."

10. Discussions of shame, its connection to such other emotional states as fear and anger, and its relationship to rank, titles, suicide, and social control in Polynesian communities are abundant. A statement by one of Robert Levy's Tahitian informants—"I had the impulse, I felt a sense of fear that I might act on it and then experience *ha'ama* or some other punishment" (Levy 1973:338)—could equally well have been uttered by an Anutan. Comparable points are made for Hawai'i (Linnekin 1985:147–151; Ito 1985), the Marquesas (Kirkpatrick 1983:113–115, 1985), Samoa (Freeman 1983; Gerber 1985; Shore 1979, 1982), Tikopia (Firth [1936] 1961:473, [1961] 1967), and elsewhere. In no case is shame exclusively a reaction to injuring another person. In every instance, however, it is one likely reaction to accusations of antisocial behavior of any variety.

11. In contrast with children, who may function largely on their own but have not become fully socially aware and self-conscious, Anutans term babies who cannot yet speak *koi kovi* (still bad).

12. Incest is occasionally suspected with a cousin, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece. Anutans appear to rule out the possibility of incest with primary kin as inconceivable.

13. The official inquest by the national police found no evidence to merit prosecution. However, many Tikopians, both inside and outside the police force, were unsatisfied with the results.

14. This event is described in detail in Feinberg 1991.

15. Examples of *tauaangutu* and how they work are described in Firth 1991 and Feinberg and Love n.d.

16. Anuta has retained a considerable degree of legal and political autonomy. Minor offenses can be addressed by locally constituted authorities who have the power to mete out mild punishments. Such serious crimes as homicide and severe punishments, such as incarceration, are handled by provincial and national authorities.

17. On Nukumanu, a Polynesian atoll in Papua New Guinea where I conducted research in 1984, disputes over land, alleged theft, sexual offenses, and accusations of domestic violence were regularly taken to court. Most of these issues were addressed by the local community court, but many cases found their way into the provincial and even the national legal system. Similarly, reliance on courts to settle disputes was discussed in several of the papers in the ASAO symposium that gave rise to this essay (see particularly Philips 1996; see also Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 1996; Howard 1996).

18. Modesty and humility are also valued among those at the apex of the social hierarchy, as a matter of noblesse oblige.

19. The complex articulation of respect for titles and sense of noblesse oblige, of combining abject apology with material representations of contrition in an attempt to restore social harmony, is nowhere better illustrated than in the well-known Samoan practice of *ifoga.* Shore characterizes this process as the humbling "that the senior chief of [a] family must undergo toward the chief of another group against which an offense has been committed" (1982:111). The process involves the chief "publicly kneeling or sitting before the house of the offended group with a mat placed over his head. The mat is then offered, often along with a payment in money, in the hope of reconciling the descent groups involved and avoiding serious reprisals by the offended group." The sensitive political maneuvering, the tension and ambivalence, and the threat of violence associated with *ifoga* are dramatically portrayed by O'Meara (1990:121–125).

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