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What is a Trick? Relations and Possession in Misima, Papua New Guinea

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

by

Jordan Haug

Committee in charge:

Professor Suzanne Brenner, Co-Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair
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Professor Courtney Handman
Professor Richard Madsen
Dr. Rupert Stasch

2020

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2020

DEDICATION

This dissertation is possible only because of the people of Misima, Papua New Guinea, and their nearly infinite patience and support. In particular, this dissertation is dedicated to the villagers of Liak. *Ateu owa tutuwau*.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

What is a trick?
Relations and Possessions in Misima, Papua New Guinea

by

Jordan Haug

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Suzanne Brenner, Co-Chair
Professor Joel Robbins, Co-Chair

This dissertation traces the history of colonialism, Christian missionization, and large-scale gold mining on the small island of Misima, Papua New Guinea. Situated on the southwestern edge of the Kula Ring, the island of Misima provides a fascinating case study of dramatic shifts in cultural change. However, most of all, it addresses how Misimans talk about mining as a form of trickery (*kakauwi*). Trickery, Misimans argue, is central to the efficacy of persuasion, political power, and productivity. I follow this theme of trickery in traditional Misiman models of magic, Kula exchange, mortuary feasting, millenarian "cargo cults," Christian worship, schooling, the development and eventual closure of a large open-pit

goldmine, and, lastly, the emergence of political parties on the island. The central argument of my dissertation is that Misimans' instance on the opacity of others' minds not only reflects particular ideas about Melanesian personhood and communication, but it also provides a model that challenges many commonly held assumptions in cultural anthropology, particularly the centrality and transparency of intersubjectivity in phenomenological approaches to ethical problems.

I am exploring the discursive and performative aspects of trickery found throughout Misiman history and contemporary life. The problem of Misimans' engagement with "trickery" is an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the political nature of intercultural articulations (primarily between Misimans and white people) and intersubjective relations (in everyday Misiman life) as epistemologically uncertain. I argue throughout the dissertation that it is the very uncertainty of these relations, the opacity of others' minds, and the capacity to "trick" others that make these interactions salient, productive, and recursive. In this dissertation, there is also a theme of trying to accurately describe Melanesian egalitarianism, and argue that taking Melanesian egalitarianism as an ultimate value in cultural life does a great deal to make sense of how "trickery" is not just a negative or antagonistic experience on Misima, but also has highly desired and positive connotations around the making and maintaining of egalitarian relations.

INTRODUCTION

I clearly remember the moment I first escaped constant bewildering confusion during my anthropological fieldwork on the island of Misima, Papua New Guinea. Things first started to click was when a pastor healed my son. It is, however, impossible to understand that experience and its significance in isolation from its broader context. A lot preceded that event, and a lot followed, both of which dramatically colored how I have come to understand what had happened that day.

I had been living in Liak village on the northern side of Misima for a little more than six months. With the vital assistance of my hosts, I had recently finished building a house for my wife (Ashley), our two children (Kimball and Silas), who had joined me in Liak about a month earlier. My fluency in Pana Misima, the Austronesian language spoken on the island, was passable but not particularly impressive. Misimans liked making fun of how choppy my speech was, but I was making discernible progress.

At the time, I felt like the most significant progress in my research was in the close relationships I was developing with the families that lived in our hamlet and the hamlets just adjacent to our home. Misimans loved our children, especially our youngest, Silas, who was only one-year-old and enjoyed chasing pigs in the nude. He was a source of constant levity among our friends, who would remark that his presence had restored something that was lost, although precisely what had been lost was left vague for a long time.

I eventually surmised what people were referring to when I later learn that a child exactly our son's age disappeared a year before at the very same spot where we had built our house. People feared that a witch (*olal*) had kidnapped (*gutaguta*) the child, partly because no one found

a body. Later still, I learned that people considered the hamlet we lived in, Panakoloba, cursed since it had been the epicenter of a deadly, albeit undefined, epidemic in the distant past. One of my clan sisters later explained that *koloba* is an esoteric word for death from illness and that Liak, correctly pronounced Liyak, means "of tuberculosis" (I retain the traditional spelling for historical continuity). Because of these events and associations, residents of Liak thought Panakoloba lacked laughter, and my son was playing a role, however small, in bringing it back to that hamlet. He was, after all, a naked 'dimdim' (white person) who was just learning how to speak and was objectively rather funny to watch toddling around our residence while terrorizing pigs and chickens.

However, most of the hamlet's residents were ambivalent about my son's presence in Panakoloba. Several residents were worried about the associated risks of having a young white child living in the hamlet. These concerns partly stemmed from a health scare that occurred soon after his arrival on the island. Six days after my wife and children arrived on Misima, Ashley and I woke to find Silas completely unresponsive. He was awake, but he would not acknowledge our presence. We would wave our hands in front of his face, talk to him, and hug him, but he seemed unconscious, even though his eyes were wide open. It was one of the scariest moments of our lives.

As soon a the word spread of Silas's condition, the whole hamlet was concerned that jealous witches had targeted Silas. The local Pentecostal pastor wanted to pray with us, but we demurred. Insisting we did not have enough time for prayer. We found a Public Motor Vehicle (PMV) to take us to Bwagaoia township on the southeastern tip of the island, where there was a partially staffed medical center. The medical center was really just the remnants of an old

hospital built when the Misima Gold Mine was in operation from 1985-2000, and because of this, it was sparsely staffed with some healthcare workers but no doctors or pharmacists. On our way to the medical center, Keo, my adopted brother and principal host in Panakoloba, joined us.

When we arrived at Bwagaoia, everyone around us was terrified by Silas's unresponsiveness. Nearby, I heard women whispering that Silas's "mind was wandering" (*wana nuwatu i bwagabwaga*), "his eyes could not be directed" (*i bolamatana*), or that his mind (*wana nuwatu*) had been taken (*i tok*) by some "love magic" (*epapabola*). They speculated that it may have been intended for Ashley or me.

Despite the dire state of the medical center, the healthcare workers were experienced and knew how to respond to situations like ours. They prescribed a common antibiotic without diagnosing Silas with anything in particular. However, while attempting to diagnose Silas's illness, the healthcare workers tried in vain to get him to follow their fingers as they passed across his field of vision. While writing the script for the antibiotic to give to the tradestore clerk by the wharf, an older Misiman man, who later identified himself to me as a healer (*tosowalsowal*), walked quietly passed us. As he did so, he placed his hand on Silas's bare belly. Almost immediately, Silas started crying and then acting as if he were perfectly fine. He was entirely back to his cheerful self within minutes.

Later, when we rode the PMV back to Liak, my adopted brother Keo jumped out of the truck early and decided to walk back to Liak from Gulewa, the village east of Liak, preceding it by about an hour walk. When Keo returned to Panakoloba he was drunk. Our houses were only two meters apart from each other, so we heard everything. When he got back, he took his bush knife and started striking nearby trees, making as much noise as possible, and yelling threats to

the witches in the area. He threatened them to leave our family and Panakoloba alone while accusing them of being jealous (*lomaketa*) of his relative good luck (*malul*), and that the witches had "big eyes" (*matapwala*) for the white people ('dimdim').

By that night, our son was back to normal, and it all soon felt like little more than an odd health scare that could have happened anywhere. The whole situation largely receded from our attention just as quickly as it had appeared. That is, until July 4th 2015, when our entire family visited a wedding at the adjacent village of Bagalina, just to the west of us.

Christian weddings on Misima are a rare affair because they tend to be too expensive for families to host. A marriage, typically, is recognized as soon as a prowler (*tohebwagabwaga*) is caught (*i lib*) and publically outed (*loviya*) by a single woman's family. In such a case, Misimans will say that the family "caught" the prowler (*i lib*) like you grab a pig in a pen or trap. The girl "catches" (*i kos*) her spouse like you would catch a fish (*moti i koskos*), possibly scaring the fish out of the reef and causing it to rush into a set trap or net (*moti i gale*).

Because of its rarity, it was a considerable honor for us to receive an invitation to the wedding. Since the walk was long and featured arduous portions, we took a boat on our journey to the village. We made sure we had brought cash and a pig as our wedding gift to the new couple, and we were excited to take part in the all-day-long festivities.

About an hour after we landed at Bagalina, Silas, our youngest son and the one who had the previous health scare, started screaming a blood-curdling cry that was unlike anything we had ever heard from him before. It was terrifying. We took him away from the rest of the wedding party down to the beach, where he screamed as if some invisible force was torturing him. It was so loud that the wedding stopped so that a local Pentecostal pastor named Abraham,

a friend of mine and an aspiring politician, could attend to our son. Ashley was holding Silas, trying to console him, while women from Bagalina surround them, praying over our son. Being released from his duties as a witness at the wedding, Abraham calming walked down to the beach, paying little attention to the women praying over Silas. Then, with a startling intensity, he yelled at Silas, "In the name of Jesus. Out!"

Suddenly, Silas completely stopped crying and within seconds acted as though nothing had happened at all, that he had never been in pain or fear. It was an extraordinary event for us. At first, I thought Abraham would claim some divine authority over his ability to conduct the miracle, but he surprised me. He told me that all I had needed to do was "capture Silas's attention because witches were consuming his mind" (*matana ta tagabub olal wana nuwatu hi anan kaiwena*). Dila, my wife's adopted sister and my affine, had accompanied us, and she grilled Abraham, "Why would they attack the 'dimdim' child" (*Hauna kaiwena, 'dimdim' natu hi gila?*). He answered, "I do not know. No one sees witches' minds" (*Nige ya atena, olal wali nuwatuau nige ta'al kite*).

It was at this point that I had an epiphany. I realized that people's attention and their minds were a fundamental part of how Misimans thought about their relations with others. In terms of witches, they captured and consumed the minds of others. In terms of the healer (*tosowalsowal*) and pastor, they redirected the attention of others so they could retake possession of their minds. Not only that, but love magic (*epapabola*) seemed to operate under the same mechanics of taking possession of others' minds, agency, or intentionality. However, in Abraham's response, there was a similarity to what some anthropologists of Melanesia have dubbed "the opacity of others' minds" (Robbins & Rumsey, 2008; e.g., Stasch 2008; Schieffelin,

2008; Robbins, 2008; Rumsey, 2008, 2013). These two tensions between perspectival exchange and opacity are somewhat at odds with one another. On the one hand, there is a concern about the transferability, or exchange, of others' minds, perspectives, and agency. On the other hand, there is an affirmation that those things, minds, in particular, are inherently opaque.

This whole event later took on an added urgency to understand. Three months later, Edward, a man from Bagalina with ties to Liak, went missing while deep in the interior of the island. When he did not emerge from the bush for several days, long passed his expected return, rumors began spreading all along Misima's northern coast that he had been kidnapped (*gutaguta*) by jealous witches (*olal matapwapwalapwalina*), much like the toddler boy who had gone missing at Panakoloba years before.

With many Misimans terrified by the news, a Pentecostal revival swept through villages in on the northern coast, from Gulewa to Ebora, with Liak (the most populous village) in the middle. For a week, confessions of witchcraft and calls for iconoclasm, including the public burning of lime containers and combs used in love magic (*epapabola*) and sorcery (*kukula*), became an almost daily mainstay of village life. Eventually, fellow villagers accused each other of witchcraft, something that was previously rare since making such an accusation carries the inherent risk of outing yourself as a witch (*ni ketabu*) (cf. Munn, 1990).

By the end of the week, a group of Liak men thought they ought to raid a hamlet on the western periphery of Bagalina, to scare the witches living in that village. According to oral history, this particular kind of raid, called "striking out their days" (*love lol' an*), has been a part of the cultural background of Misima for centuries. If a village or hamlet experiences a considerable amount of disease or misfortune, surrounding communities will attack the place

with the idea that they were frightening the witches to either reveal themselves or give up whatever they had stolen. By "striking out their days," a neighboring village would cut down and destroy dwellings, coconut or sago plantations, and other things belonging to the hamlet or group of people to whom the missing person belongs. For example, when the toddler went missing from Panakoloba, fellow villagers burned his mother's home and the home of her parents to the ground. They also destroyed all of the family's "economic" trees, such as coconut and betel nut trees. Men from Liak, went to Bagalina to do similarly at Edward's hamlet.

After burning down some homes, cutting down trees, and destroying a sailing canoe around Edward's hamlet, the men from Liak promised the residents of the hamlet that the raid was for their good and that the violence would scare the witches, who would give up their hostage. Sure enough, a week later, Edward wandered out of the island's interior into Ebora, the village at the most western tip of the island. Edward was dehydrated and unable to speak. It took weeks for him to make enough of a recovery to communicate at all.

I continued to keep tabs on Edward for the duration of my fieldwork, and in that remaining year, he never fully recovered mentally. He spoke in scattered phrases that were hard to stitch together, and he would yell at inanimate things, like trees, for hours. Even still, once he was able to communicate at all, he told a harrowing story of being led to a bathing spot by a bunch of nude women, who subsequently took off their second skins and revealed themselves to be witches. He then claimed that the witches took him to Guwai, their secret underworld, where they incapacitated him and feasted on his liver. He said that one day the witches were distracted by something else and that, taking the opportunity, he escaped their clutches to find himself wandering into Ebora. He claimed that he was able to do this because the witches could not find

his mind. He had "kept it secret in his pocket" (*Ya losumesumehikan kalopu iya gamana*).

Soon after learning of these events (residents of the hamlet I lived in participated in the raid), these stories started blending. The kidnapping of the child from our hamlet, our son's two health scares, and the disappearance of Edward all had common threads running through them. Misimans were speaking of minds as readily taken, vulnerable to manipulation, and even as objects of consumption. However, this discourse was simultaneously happening while people were assuring me that their minds were inaccessible and that others' minds were far to opaque to speculate about others' intentions.

The Anthropology of Intentions

This dissertation is an attempt to make sense of these events and the seemingly contradictory responses to them. It is not an attempt to argue over the validity of any particular approach to these problems, but more of an effort to demonstrate that the problem of others' minds is central to understanding social relations in Melanesia, and, perhaps, to anthropology itself. Nor do I wish to reduce all anthropological analysis to political epistemology. However, I believe any anthropology that seeks to explain intersubjective problems of social interaction must also deal with problems of personhood, alienability, and mindreading.

In coming to terms with these problems, I have learned that a kind of playfulness exists in social orders. This playfulness is not to suggest that we are all having fun, but I am suggesting that social relations require a fiction about the transparency of each other's minds. Influenced by speech act theorists like John Searle (Searle, 1983; see Duranti, 2015), phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl (Sartre, 1970 [1939]; see Duranti, 2010), the phenomenological sociological interactionalism of Alfred Schütz (1967), the pragmaticism of George Herbert Mead (2015; see

Perinbanayagam, 1975), to the ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel (1967; see Heritage, 1991); the anthropology of intentions have shared similar concerns those I am expressing (Duranti, 2015; see Danziger, 2017; Gallagher, 2017). A methodological concern lies at the center of the anthropology of intentions, which argues for a recentering of our attention to "mindreading" (Nichols & Stich, 2003), theories of mind (Lurhmann, 2011; Astuti, 2012; Bloch, 2013; Wassmann, Träuble, & Funke, 2013), and the role empathy plays in social life and social scientific research (Hollan & Throop, 2011; Throop 2010). While this broad set of approaches to what is essentially the same problem—the problem of pluralistic intersubjectivity and communicability—have varying ways of dealing with this problem, what is even more striking to me is the variability in how seriously intentions are being treated in these projects.

John Searle (2006), for example, treats intentionality as something people "buy into" to make their social ontologies real. Others talk about ontological commitments as though they are kinds of contracts, in which persons are no longer recognizable within any given community without sharing the same types of intentional states (e.g., Holbraad, 2012; Pederson, 2011; cf. Laidlaw, 2013). This level of cultural agreement not only seems implausible to me; it is entirely unrecognizable in Misima.

Before I left to begin my fieldwork on Misima, Martha Macintyre, who had done fieldwork at the island and other parts of the southern region of Milne Bay Province, told me something almost offhandedly while dropping me off at the airport in Melbourne. I have consistently revisited her offhanded comment since that time. She said something like, "people in the Massim [Milne Bay Province] seem to me to be cultural pragmatists, ontological opportunists, and epistemological skeptics." In my experience, this observation has only aged

better with time.

While the academic study of religion has historically oscillated between methodological extremes from positivistic atheism to constructivist speculative realism (Bialecki, 2014; Hoolbrad & Pedersen, 2017), I believe a more promising perspective is appreciating the "playfulness" of religion (Droogers, 2014; Droogers & Knibbe, 2011). Putting aside the lack of logical and descriptive congruency used by some anthropologists who affirm the concrete ontological realness of their research subjects (Heywood, 2012), or the lack of internal critique recognized by many in these communities (Bessire & Bond, 2014), it seems clear to me that Misimans are less concerned with the hard realities of ontological positions than they are with the possibilities of those realities, or what those possibilities can afford them.

A ludic stance toward ontological possibility seems to be a more appropriate approximation of how Misimans approach such things as the reality of witches (*olal*), tree spirits (*totowoho*), and the Christian God (*Yehoba* or *Yabowine*). Furthermore, it is not as though Misimans treat all things as ontologically flat. While witches, tree spirits, and God may be open to skepticism, other "fantastic" parts of everyday life on Misima are not open to the same kind of skepticism.

Sorcery (*kukula*), healing (*sowalsowal*), and love magic (*epapabola*) are not things that so much require belief, since they capture you, regardless of your intentional states. For this reason, Misimans will mostly seem confused if you question the reality of these things. This is because people experience them as active forces in their lives. Sorcery, healing, and love magic are usually just afforded the status of descriptive observations about how people and things relate to one another, not idealist categories that Misimans must, for lack of a better phrase, grapple.

While they incorporate elements of what outside observers may identify as "the fantastic," Misimans tend to classify them instead as shared observations about human and non-human persons in social life, without having to grapple with the question of their existence. For example, all three are defined by how they identify the mind, attention, or intentions of people and things as available for exchange, control, and consumption.

"Sorcery" is a rather unfortunate translation of what should be transliterated as "doing Kula," but is nonetheless colloquially used by Misimans since late-nineteenth-century Methodists missionaries first introduced the translation. At its core, "doing kula" is about capturing the attention of others and controlling the routes of others' attention. Healing (*sowalsowal*) operates in a similar manner of capturing out of sync parts of the person and realigning them to act harmoniously with their other parts. Thus, by capturing the "attention" of a person's shadow or breath, they can anchor (*sowal*) the parts of the person together. Love magic (*epapabola*) carries similar connotations as sorcery and healing, where the components of a person are captured, manipulated, and, through sex, consumed by another. More than anything, each of these three types of Misiman magic relies most on observations of human behavior in how people relate to each others' minds.

The reluctance to state the absolute reality of things like witches, tree spirits, or God fits with the more underlying Misiman reluctance to speculate about the contents of others' minds. Definite assertions of knowing the contents of others' minds will simultaneously reveal you as a *ketabu*, or someone who claims to know the others' minds, thereby confessing to having consumed them in the past. Such a person, it is generally recognized, must be either a powerful Kula master (*tokukula*), healer (*tosowalsowal*), or witch (*olal*). Holding the title of a Kula master

may have a certain level of desired distinction, and healers are not necessarily ostracized. However, it is still risky to self-identify as a Kula master or healer. People who "do Kula" (*lokukula*) risk their reputations as Christians by being identified as "a clever person" (*tosiba*), and healers are often held responsible for the failure of their techniques when someone dies. For many Misimans, a failed healing is evidence of true intentions, since it is the product of intentions that have been hidden by the healer. The outcome of the healing is, therefore, understood as a sign (*etotohi*) of hidden intentions.

Few people, other than politicians, will admit to being involved in Kula, even though it is far more common on Misima than what anthropologists have previously recognized (cf. Leach & Leach, 1983). Even fewer will admit to possessing any expert knowledge in healing. Nevertheless, every time I was sick, someone from the village would give me magical remedies and perform ritual healings on me. Interestingly, being well versed in the kinds of magic (*tokabigasisi*) used in love magic and the protection or cursing of garden plots holds no stigma at all. It is just an assumed and necessary part of everyday life.

On Misima, admissions to witchcraft are the most vividly paradigmatic example of risky self-identification on the island. However, it is far more common for someone to admit to witchcraft than it is to admit to participating in Kula or healing. The rarity of these public boasts about participating in Kula is, partly, because the Pentecostal crusades that regularly sweep through the island provide safe places for people to confess their sins publicly. Through these crusades, there is a considerable incentive structure set up for people to admit to witchcraft. An admission to participating in witchcraft within the context of a public Christian confession allows people to mark themselves as Christians and, therefore, out of the scope of those assumed

to share liability over death or illness. Still, public confession is dangerous because it is an admission of guilt to past crimes associated with witchcraft. For this reason, former witches will say that through their repentance and the forgiveness of God, Christ "cleaned" their minds, and their memories of others have been wiped away, much like someone sweeping rubbish out of their house.

Trickery

Here we see distinct reasons for the reluctance many Misimans have in asserting certainty about the internal states of others' minds, but, I hope, it is clear that this reluctance to certainty extends beyond speculations about others' minds. It includes states of definite ontological reality or statements about historical events. Being able to recount or tell the history of a thing, to tell its story, is an assertion of authority that few Misimans will engage in without the explicit framing of play.

Perhaps, this reluctance is partly due to how Misimans tell or relate stories to children, and other risky, albeit highly entertaining, narrative genres such as gossip. Telling lies (*lobakakauwi*) to children is a favorite past time in Misima. Telling lies to children is probably a significant pastime in most parts of the world, but it was striking how thoroughly integral it is to childhood on Misima (e.g., DuBois, 1994; Goldman, 1998; Berman, 2019; Fortune, 1963). For example, if a child cries or pays too much attention to something adults disapprove of, the adults around the child will try to distract them with outlandish stories or statements like, "the ogre (Kantutubwai) is going to come and eat you," to mundane lies like, "Hey, look at the plane," or "look at the truck," when neither is present. These lies (*kakauwi*) are much more than just "lies." Instead, the "lies" are a medium by which people exert influence over others' minds.

It is an unfortunate part of history that Misimans commonly translate *kakauwi* as "lies." It is likely a partial artifact of the Tongan and Australian missionaries who first proselytized on Misima, although it is impossible to know who exactly is responsible for this translation. It may have also been Misimans own translation of a cultural tradition that focuses on how people capture others' attention and influence them. However, I like the fact that the earliest word list collected on Misima features a translation for the English word "true." The translation Misimans provided was "*kaka[u]wi*," rather than "*tuna*," which is the Pana Misima word for truth (Thompson, 1892: 305). In other words, when asked what was the Pana Misiman word for "true," the Misiman informants told the pesky British official asking the question that it was the same word as "lies" (*kakauwi*). It is striking that the rest of the word list is more or less correct, with a few obscure words that have fallen out of use. I speculate that it was intentional on the part of the Misiman translators who were likely having a bit of fun with the white people, a favorite pastime. This speculation is bolstered by the fact that I review this document with Misimans while I was on the island, and they almost immediately laughed when they saw it, claiming that someone was playing a trick (*i kakauwi*) on the translator. The whole thing is somewhat meta.

The example of my Misiman friends laughing at the 19th century English translator demonstrates that a wide variety of things falls under the umbrella concept of *kakauwi*. They may include, as indicated above, "lies," but may also "traps," "stories," and "charisma." Each of these, "traps" (*kimul* or *epamwa*), stories (*liwan*), and charisma (*mana*) share a common thread at the heart of all "tricks." They share the power (*mesina-*) to capture and use the will of others. Because of this, I have decided to usually translate *kakauwi* as a "trick" or "tricks" (as it does not

require a suffix to denote plurality).

Possession

This power to capture attention is something that can only be inalienably possessed by a person. Partly because of that, I will be exploring the importance of possession in Pana Misima and Misiman sociolinguistics later in this dissertation. Still, I will highlight one aspect of the attention, as it were, given to possession in Misiman social life in this introduction.

A great deal of the anthropological literature in Melanesia gives the impression that because people value relatedness in unfamiliar ways, their lives are necessarily porous due to the constant threat of someone appropriating a part of them as they use their agency as a medium of exchange. This can be seen clearly in how the Melanesian person is often talked about as though they are a microcosm of a social network, rather than an individualized node within that network (Strathern, 1996). Thus, persons flow through each other and through the reification of their labor relations as objectifications of these relations (Strathern, 1988). In this way, pigs, axes, and shell valuables become personified as agents within the network. This partibility may all sound like a rather standard Maussian version of reciprocity, especially when "in giving one gives *oneself*, and if one gives *oneself*, it is because one 'owes' *oneself*—both personally and materially—to others" (Mauss, 2016 [1925]: 144 [italics in original]). The anthropological version of this kind of attention to reciprocity gained considerable influence in the early 1990s, after Marilyn Strathern (1988) argued for the existence of a kind of the dividiual in Melanesia. Such a person was defined as such primarily because of their partibility, or ability to attach and detach parts of themselves as if they were a gift (e.g., Mosko, 1983, 2000; cf. Josephides, 1991).

I think this contribution to anthropological literature has been incredibly productive and

deserves the positive attention heaped upon it over the last several decades. However, a competing anthropological sentiment that runs counter to it seems just as valid to my experience of Misima.

Annette Weiner's (1976) anthropological fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands, years after the groundbreaking fieldwork of Bronislaw Malinowski (1925), yielded many fundamental contributions to not only our understanding of the cultures of the Milne Bay, but also anthropological knowledge more generally. Her insistence in reevaluating Malinowski's blind spot to the lives of Trobriand women was an essential contribution to feminist anthropology (Weiner, 1979), but her ideas were not merely defined by her interests or identity as a female researcher (cf. Strathern, 1981). Instead, Weiner (1992) argued that possession was a fundamental part of not only in how hierarchy established and maintained itself in Oceania, but she also argued for renewing the attention we give to the role of possession more generally. The Maussian tradition, that focus on the exchange of persons and things had given a false impression that reciprocity was the prevailing tendency in all of social life in Oceania. However, Weiner, and generations of other anthropologists, have demonstrated that this is not necessarily true. Hierarchy plays a significant role in almost all Oceanic societies, and few of these hierarchies do not depend on some kind of opposition to reciprocity—a tendency towards possession (Ibid; see Robbins & Siikala, 2014; Eriksen, 2009). Perhaps, anthropologists, in their attempts to counter the biases of their cultural backgrounds, had given the false impression that people do not go to incredible lengths to possess things and other people.

While I think Weiner built some of her argument against the Maussian tradition on straw person version of that tradition (Friedman, 1995, Mosko, 2000), I do believe her general caution

that acts of possession, and how a thing possesses a person, are essential in both the production and reproduction of hierarchies, but they are also just as deliberatively considered among Misimans as acts of giving, or in the Misiman parlance "throwing" (*alialiyoho*), a gift.

The cultures of the Milne Bay Province, often called "the Massim," all have well-defined strategies for syntactically denoting different types of possession, and on Misima this feature of their language is so vital that it is virtually impossible to refer to anything without first denoting its rightful, current, and, possibly, future possessor(s). The sole exception, in which a speaker does not denote the possessor of a thing in order to refer to that thing, would be when a speaker points at a thing in front of them, clearly within their sight (e.g., *toto bugul*, lit. "that thing"). Later in this dissertation, I will argue that this exception supports my argument about the importance of possession in Misima.

Furthermore, in Pana Misima, possession is not only tied to notions of something extending from the person or, conversely, capturing and holding on to an item that has been exchanged, but that it is also tied to potential consumption of the thing being referred to. Thus, if something is meant for consumption, or even if someone is just able to consume it, it will be classified as a different type of possession, called by linguists "semi-alienable" possession (Macintyre, 1984). While I explore the particulars of how these types of possession work later in this dissertation, I think a more critical take away is found in the broad observation that capturing, possessing, and consuming are all significant ways in which Misimans classify how they are related to others and other things. Thus, in a sense, the Maussian tradition is correct to highlight the intensity of exchange in which persons detach and attach parts of themselves through their exchange relations. Still, I think it is equally powerful to note how fervently

Misimans will attempt to keep others from detaching parts of themselves, possess through concealment, and consume things to make the alienable inalienable. Possession through concealment or consumption, Misimans frequently told me, is a trick (*i kakauwi*).

For example, a fine Kula master not only knows the routes, tempo, and etiquette of Kula exchange, but they also know how *not* to give. Contra the writings of Malinowski, prominence, and fame in the Kula often involves presenting the image of giving, while accumulating debts and withholding payments (see Damon, 2002). On Misima, mortuary feasting is an almost infinitely more critical "game" (*galevanu*) than Kula, but it follows similar principals (see Young, 1971a; Damon & Wagner, 1989). Feast givers present themselves as givers, and many feasters will indeed become financially destitute because of their feasting. Nevertheless, a feast giver is ultimately recognized as "rich" because of the accumulation of debts, and, even more importantly, Misimans will say that a feaster may give of their food and "things" (*bugul*), they will ultimately possess the minds of others because of how others will speculate through gossip about what escaped the demands of exchange.

I clearly remember one mortuary feast hosted by a fly-in/fly-out mine worker in Kaubwaga village where guests devoted so much attention and gossip to speculations about what the host had failed to give those guests made a more accurate accounting of what the host continued to possess than what he had given. All of this resulted in a bit of vigorous gossip toward the host about his greediness. However, more than anything, it highlighted his ability to pay his debts while still retaining possessions for himself. Because of this, his fame, or name (*ala<u>n</u>a*), grew, and people continued to seek him out as an exchange partner, partly out of the hope that they may be the one who finally convinced those things to leave him. This political

calculation was why the host was known as a "clever man" (*tosiba*). He had "tricked" (*i kakauwi*) his guests by seeing all that they could have, but were not currently getting, thus "tightening a snare over his guests" (*hi bwabwaliau i epamwa yamanagil*). It is likely no mistake that a friend told me this while we watched men capture pigs in a pen. While pointing at a large pig with tusks that the was being left alone, my friend acknowledged that a figurative snare was tightening around him and his fellow guest. That unexchanged pig was the real main event. It had been purposely revealed to the guests, as if to say, "look what you are not getting."

Concealment and Revelation

The dialectic of concealment and revelation has long been a focus of anthropological literature about Oceania (Mondragón, 2005; Siragusa, 2017; Sissons, 2011; see also Meyer & Pels, 2003; Nakamura & Pels, 2014). Recognition of that dynamic has been central to the anthropological understanding of Melanesian men's houses (Jorgensen, 1981; Tuzin, 1980; Hauser-Schäublin, 2015; Kulick, 1992, Bell, 2005; Gell, 1975; Herdt, 1982), and Polynesian religions often involved the controlled revelation of divine beings and powers who were typically concealed from commoners (Valeri, 1985; Kirch & Ruggles 2019, Shore, 1982; cf. Valeri, 1994). Hierarchies of knowledge, and how knowledge is revealed, may even be the center posts of political life in Oceania, and Melanesia more particularly (Lindstrom, 1984; Harrison, 1985; see Bellah, 2011: 175-209). This control of revelation as knowledge is seen not only in how exchangers reveal themselves as a personification of the labor and exchange that went into a gift (Strathern, 1988), you can also find it in how the ritual contexts of these men's houses segment "truth" and knowledge. For example, many men's houses in Melanesia utilized a grade system where the "true" myth of their creation or appropriation of women's power is revealed as

one advances up the ladder of ritual grades associated with the house (Jorgensen, 1990; Tuzin, 1980; Layard, 1942; Godelier, 1986). At each grade, an initiate learns that what his initiators told him in previous initiations was a lie, and what he was now receiving was "the truth" (e.g. Barth, 1975; Jorgensen, 1990; Crook, 2007). The result is a kind of dislocation of certain knowledge or an acknowledgment that those who assert their authority in possessing truth reveal too much (see Robbins, 2012). They reveal, as it were, an empty hand.

On Misima, part of the trick of social life is understanding what to conceal; but an even more critical part of the trick is understanding *what* to reveal, *when* it ought to be revealed, and *how* to reveal it. By showing what you want others to see, you can further possess what you have concealed from view.

The attitude towards the "ownership" of things on Misima could appropriately be labeled "fiercely egalitarian," since secret possession is almost universally looked down upon on Misima as the beginnings of social distinctions as rank or possibly ascendant hierarchies. Much like Pierre Proudhon (1994 [1840]), Misimans will often identify "property" as theft, not in any formal sense. However, with a nod to the idea that those who accumulate things and refuse to depart from them are not only selfish and greedy; they are thieves. They are thieves because they refuse to acknowledge the proper claims others have over their things. However, it is not just anything that someone can claim. Instead, whatever is being claimed must be visible. It must be directly in front of you, within your clear line of sight, to be referred to without a designated possessor. I vividly learned the importance of this social life through two different but regular occurrences on Misima.

Requesting the Revealed, Possessing the Concealed

Every morning, except for mornings during tropical storms, at least one member of every Misiman household will visit other households in their hamlet. This ritual visitation is not only understood as a requisite of keeping good relations with your neighbors, but it is an essential part of procuring needed goods. This ritualized visitation, called *awanun* or "showing face," consists of people visiting each other and asking for mundane, and readily available, products, like betel nut, but often escalates to requests for things inside a person's house (e.g. Berde, 1974; Young, 1983c). However, the requester must be able to see the item they are requesting. If a person makes a request under those conditions, the demands of hospitality (*lolobwabwali*) are such that it is essential to freely give up what your guests request. Misimans often live in homes without rooms blocked off from the view of guests sitting on a verandah, so people will go to great lengths to hide their possessions, partly out of fear of having to give up their possessions.

The same principle applies to how people request betel nut from each other outside of a home or verandah. When people walk on the road, trek to a garden, or encounter each other at a public meeting, someone will, inevitably, ask for betel nut. If you deny the request, saying that you are not able to provide the betel nut, the requester has every right to look in your bag or handbasket (*nabwa*) to see if their contents reflect your account of them, or not. This norm for inspecting the contents of other peoples' belongings often led to people rummaging through my bags or baskets, making sure that I did not deny them something that could be within their view. Because of the assertiveness expected by peering into each other's bags, Misimans will go to great lengths to hide things within their bags, baskets, and clothing, as long as it is outside of the view of any person who inspects them. Thus, weavers apply false bottoms to baskets, and Misimans will sow secret pockets into the sides of bags and clothing. These compartments and

pockets, known as *kalopu*, provide the opportunity for Misimans to reveal while simultaneously concealing what they continue to possess (see Hauser-Schäublin, 2011). Thus, we see how Misimans both reinforce values of transferability and exchange while also maintaining the importance of possession through concealment.

What I find so fascinating about this possession is that the concealment of a betel nut you wish to continue possessing is accomplished only through a partial or false revelation. This revelation as concealment is, in the parlance of Pana Misima, a "trick" (*kakauwi*). It is also a trick that children learn to replicate at an early age, sometimes before they can even speak. It is also a trick that has a great deal in common with how Western Entertainment magic works.

In some ways, Western European rationalists have invested a great deal of effort in debunking local displays of magic with an orientalist tinge of unmasking professed "trickery" (During 2004; see Tambiah, 1990). This interest in debunking magic as local irrationality or con had existed long since before the colonial era, although colonialism probably accelerated it (Zubrzycki, 2018). This labeling of magic as trickery has continued from that era to bolster claims of secular reason, and underline magic as frivolous entertainment, if not an outright scam (see Jones, 2017).

Even professional magicians today will publicly operate under the self-identified guise of trickery (Lamont & Steinmeyer, 2020). Very few audience members of any performance of entertainment magic operate under the impression they are witnessing the extraordinary harnessing of supernatural powers, or, even, an ontological reality beyond their perception. Instead, their awe is at the skills of concealment employed by the magician (Jones, 2011; Siegel 1991). Furthermore, any professional magician knows that the more they reveal in the course of

their show while still concealing the mechanism behind the trick, the better (Daniel, 2019; Thompkins, 2019).

All of this is similar to how Misimans think about trickery—that "the secret" is only powerful as long as one reveals the possession of the secret without revealing its contents, and that such possession creates an allure that can pull at the secret contents of others' minds (Bellman, 1987; Pernet, 1992; Fernandez, 1992). It is, in effect, a type of mind control (Klass, 2003; Cohen, 2007). However, Misimans also depart significantly from this explanation of magic.

While "trickery" in the Western European tradition holds a particular morally dubious character, the same is not necessarily true in Misima. Instead, plenty of things that are considered normal and even morally upright are part of trickery. Fishing is a paradigmatic example of the Misiman "trick" (see Malinowski, 1918, 1929). After all, when fishing with nets, people will "trick" the fish out of the reef into the net or use a lure to draw the fish to a hook.

The trick is not necessarily a lie, as if it were "untrue." After all, people do violently threaten the fish out of its coral reef, and the lure is bright and shiny. Instead, the "trick" refers to a particular way of relating to others that involves the manipulation, possession, and consumption of their wills. While it may sound jarring to learn that Misimans typically view love and sexual relations this way, it is worth pointing out that a common English idiom is that someone "falls in love," signaling their loss of will, or passiveness in the face of something acting upon them. Misimans use similar idioms to talk about love, romance, and sex, but they also use it to talk about their relationship with the outside world.

White People and the Trick

The relationship people in Melanesia have with white people has been an object of anthropological curiosity since the mid-Twentieth century when cargo cults became subjects of classics by the likes of Peter Lawerence (1964), Peter Worsley (1968), and Kenelm Burridge (1960). While a great deal of the interest in Melanesian millenarianism and cargo cults has been fueled by different flavors of primitivist exoticism and nostalgia for difference (Lindstrom, 1993), there is an interesting thread that has mainly gone underappreciated in those ethnographies. The fascination with the irrationality of cargo cults, or "cargo cult mentalities," seems to be little more than an Orientalization of Melanesians, and, in particular, a racist dogma that Melanesian people desire, or at least deserve, their colonial subjugation (Rollason, 2014; cf. Macintyre, 1990, Cox, 2018). However, in each of these classic ethnographies, and others, there is also a kind of reversed anthropological gaze, where the cargo cultist looks at white people and marvels at all the irrational things they do and their bewildering desires (Wagner, 1981; Lindstrom, 2004; cf. Leavitt, 2004). Furthermore, just because people can use colonial nostalgia to underwrite racist narratives about colonialism, this does not mean that such nostalgia does not exist (Leavitt, 1989, 2005). After all, a great deal of the negative nationalism expressed in Papua New Guinea today reflects a moral critique about the past and the present as it is collectively imagined (Robbins, 1998; Handman, 2015).

I think the mutual accusations of irrationality are not only impossible to adjudicate, but they are also, even more so, ultimately unhelpful for any project with an increased understanding of people and society as its stated goal. However, part of what I find compelling about the historical ethnography of cargo cults is the fact that it documents, perhaps unintentionally, the affects of attentional pull that Misimans are convinced plays a significant role in not only the

emotional response to "trickery," but also the engine, as it were, that propels "trickery" forward (cf. Throop & Duranti, 2015). On Misima, something as utterly bizarre as white people is impossible to ignore (e.g., Lepowsky, 1989; Rollason, 2010), and for many Misimans, that is the whole point of magic— making something impossible to ignore.

The point of magic is not only to conceal what one possesses from the vision of others, but it is also to flood their vision with the kind of distracting brilliance anyone finds impossible to ignore, like a fish to the lure (Scoditti, 1989, 2017; Kuehling, 2003, 2012; MacCarthy, 2016; see Gell, 1997). Awe inducing magic, whether it is performed on Misima or in Las Vegas, indeed is about the ability to pull at the attention of others. After all, the magic of capitalism is to both conceal relations while providing the spectacle that glosses over that concealment (Debord, 2014 [1967]; Friedman, 1974; Pignarre & Stengers, 2011; Krause-Jensen & Martin, 2018). Because of their relationship to capitalism, white people, their material wealth, and their social advantages in colonial and post-colonial Papua New Guinea may be subjects of fascination, condemnation, or desire all at the same time (see Jebens, 2004). Still, few would claim that it is possible to be indifferent to what white people represent in Papua New Guinea. In my experience, the most accurate description of the emotional orientation Misimans have towards white people ('dimdims') is ambivalence, but not indifference (Bashkow, 2006; see Nuckholls, 1996).

Part of what makes white people so fascinating and infuriating is the persistent sense that they are hiding something (see Robbins, 1998; Bashkow, 2006). White people, in the experience of most Misimans, exacerbate this suspicion of concealment by being insufficiently hospitable and not engaging in ritual forms of requesting and giving goods (*awanun*). They, effectively,

hide their faces from others by not asking for support and not giving freely when someone gives them a request. Yet, every Misiman knows that it is not because white people, or at least the highly privileged ones they meet, are poor. After all, they can travel to Misima, while Misimans find it incredibly costly to travel outside of Misima. You could say that Misimans know that the reluctance to share is not because there is nothing in white people's basket—quite the contrary. Misimans understand white people's reluctance to reveal the contents of their purse as evidence that white people refuse to share.

This observation about the possessiveness of white people leads to my final point about trickery and magic. People just expect to play tricks on another. These tricks could be morally dubious. They could also be a sign of budding or healthy relationships. Whatever they are, they are instances of people pulling on each other's attention and engaging with the most possessive elements of the person, their inalienable parts. During my time on Misima, I witnessed very few, if any, instances of someone declaring ties with someone else permanently cut, no matter how severe the consequences of a trick may have been. To cut off relations with someone is not only a horrific act that harms them intimately; it also hurts you. After all, if you cut off relations with those you tricked you, who would be left for you to trick? However, this severance of ties is exactly now Misimans understand the historical trajectory of their relationship with white people.

Misimans typically understand the mission and colonial-era as being defined primarily by the intensification of their relationship with white people, or 'dimdims.' When independence from Australia came in 1975, Misimans understood the event in precisely the opposite terms that most Australians understood it. While Australians understood independence as the granting of

autonomy and severance of their paternal relationship with a former colony, Misimans instead understood independence as an opportunity to intensify their relations with Australia, but now only as an equal nation-state. Unfortunately, a nation of peers was not precisely how Australians came to view their former colony (Downs, 1980; e.g., Hasluck, 1976).

When the Misima Gold Mine began construction in 1985, Misimans understood this as the beginning of a new era that alluded them in the ten years that had followed independence. Finally, Misimans would be able to have access to the same kinds of wealth and social prestige possessed by white people, and it is undoubtedly true that a small minority of Misiman landowners did end up benefiting from large financial payouts and even moved to Australia, where they became citizens. Nevertheless, that those fortunes largely escaped the vast majority of Misimans, and those who did benefit most sustainably—the Misimans trained by the company, Placer Dome, Inc., to occupy professional positions in the mining industry of Papua New Guinea—eventually realized that they sold their labor and were part of a command and obey hierarchy reminiscent of the colonial era. The imagined contents of white peoples' lives, where they are all treated equally with the respect and privilege enjoyed by white people, turned out to be a lure or a trick.

White People as Tricks and the Tricks of White People

During my first year on Misima, it was typical for someone around me to whisper a question to their companions in Pana Misima, not knowing I could understand them just fine. Often, these questions were about my place in this whole scheme of trickery, white people, and magic. People would ask if I was a liar (*tokakauwi*) or a clever man (*tosiba*). They also worried that my status as someone who frequently entertained guests at his home and enjoyed the

company of others (*tolobwabwali*) was a ruse for some other nefarious adventures. Usually, these concerns were centered around the possibility that I could secretly be a miner, looking for ore loads and collecting genealogies that could eventually dispossess people from their potential compensation. Similarly, rumors quickly spread that I had learned a great deal of magic from various older men, whom everyone knew actively sought me out. My whole experience with these *tokukula*, or "men who make Kula," seemed to me to perfectly encapsulate what I came to understand about trickery in Misiman life.

It was true that older men would come and visit me late at night to chew betel nut. They would tell me stories, but usually, these stories where little more than rapport-building exercises. They would tell a funny story from their youth about love gone awry, and I would tell a funny story of my adventures as a bumbling white guy who was only barely able to survive on the island. Stories about getting bit by mosquitoes, awkward movements of defecation, and nausea were favorites. It seemed clear to me that the point of these encounters was to enjoy each other's company, and little else. They rarely tried to instruct me in anything or direct my studies. However, there was an inevitable feature of these encounters that happened at the end, every single time. The old man or men I was talking to would turn to me and say something like, "next time, I will tell you my secrets because I know plenty of things." This statement always struck me as odd since I was neither asking for anyone's secrets nor was I interested in any "secrets." I was not even aware of what these secrets *could* be, although I eventually gathered that they were usually referring to magic spells, genealogies, and the markers or signs (*etotohi*) that designate proper land boundaries on the island.

What eventually became clear to me was that these men were using me as a way to prop

up their self-presentation of prestige. They never visited me alone; in fact, no one visited me alone. It never happened. My presence was always a social occasion, and when these men promised they would give me their secrets, they were revealing their possession of secrets to those around them without revealing what those secrets where. Furthermore, as time went on, people assumed that those secrets had been passed down to me. So my reputation as a *tokukula*, or person who does Kula, grew as well, even though the secrets given to me were relatively negligible, and I usually found out that they were, if anything, widely known by most Misimans.

Leaving Misima was an emotional experience that is hard to write about, even today. My family had left me on Misima almost a year before, and I desperately missed them, but something felt off about my departure. It did not feel right. In the weeks before my departure, Misimans became increasingly vocal about their frustrations with white people. How white people cut ties with them as soon as they had extracted whatever it was they came for, whether it was souls (missionaries), gold (mining companies), or information (anthropologists). Simultaneously, there was a rush among my closest friends, adopted relations, and co-residents in my hamlet to claim as much stuff of mine as possible. There was not a lot, but I did leave behind a home, cooking supplies, tools, clothing, bedding, and some other items of considerable local value. A few days before I left Misima, I noticed after returning from the garden that a whole pile of stuff I had reserved in my house for my adopted cross-cousin and close friend was missing. Someone had stolen everything. While, in retrospect, this is hardly a surprising experience, it did come as a shock to me. Theft is deeply stigmatized in Misima, especially since all things can theoretically be taken if they are only requested for properly.

The twist came when I learned who stole my things. I learned that my cross-cousin who

had been expecting the items and was also my joking partner had taken the items from my house while I was on my way to visit him at his house so that we could arrange a time for me to discretely give him the gifts without raising jealousy. While I initially thought this had been an attempt on his part to just bypass steps he thought were unnecessarily risky, it turned out that he had taken the stuff as a deliberate attempt to "trick me." I learned this the morning I was to leave for Bwagaoia Township, where I was to catch a boat on my way to Alotau, the provincial capital, before heading back home. My cross-cousin confessed to the theft but was not apologetic. He was laughing. He jested about his cleverness, saying that now that he had tricked me, it was my turn to do the same to him. He looked forward to seeing what I would do in the future. "Perhaps, you are are not leaving after all? Maybe you are staying here, and are just tricking me?" He reconsidered, "Or, maybe you will return with things far better than I what took and give them to those you are indebted? Maybe you tricked me into tricking you?" Each scenario he considered featured my reciprocating his gift of trickery, but he ended his confession by hugging me tightly and telling me, "We are the same, you and me. We smile together at our gullibility" (*Yagu, ta maisena. Ta na nival wala tunuwa kaiwena*).

From this parting experience, I learned a powerful insight into how Misimans think about tricking. In many ways, it is not all too dissimilar from the jovial hijinks friends play on each other during April Fool's Day. Tricking (*lokakauwi*) creates, maintains, and equalizes relations. Many leveling mechanisms exist on Misima, from ritualized requests (*awanun*) and hospitality (*lolobwabwali*) to gossip (*loloba*), and these mechanisms demonstrate that Misimans are not only interested in making relationships, but making sure they are, at least ostensibly, as equalitarian as possible (see Besnier, 2009). Because of this, it should be no mistake that tricking takes such a

prominent place in the Misiman social imaginary.

The Trick of Social Structure

One final aspect of this dynamic between trickery, possession, and the problem of others' minds is how both Misimans and white people talk about social units and collective mental states. Like many other parts of Oceania, Misimans have a complicated relationship with the organization of social units (Wagner, 1972). On the one hand, Misimans share several characteristics of Melanesian social structures that call into question the very idea of a social structure, or something resembling the classic models of social structure (Pouwer, 1960; Golub, 2014). One of these characteristics is the fierce egalitarianism of Misimans, who strongly oppose individuals who place themselves in a hierarchical relationship over their fellow Misimans (Rio, 2014; see Robbins, 1994; McDowell, 1990). Furthermore, few things seem as sacrosanct on Misima as personal autonomy (Stasch, 2014, 2015). Exercising your will over someone else, in any kind of command and obey structure, is one of the most reprehensible things a person can do on Misima (see Strathern, 1988a, 1988b, cf. Strathern, 1985).

An essential part of this dynamic, however, is that white people seem to have consistently mistaken Misiman relations for social structures. It is as if they often betray those misunderstandings as projections of their hopes for Misiman society (see Bainton, 2010). For example, in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), signed before the construction of the Misima Gold Mine, the Misima Towoho Siune Association (MTSA) (a landowner group), Placer Dome Inc., and the National Government of Papua New Guinea treated clans as though they were clearly defined landowning units with firm hierarchies that can appoint spokesperson and representatives who can act for clan collective (cf. Rynkiewich, 2001; Golub, 2014). However,

this not what a clan *is* in Misima at all (cf. Martin, 2013). Clans (*un*) are not the landowning units of Misiman society. People consider clans meaningful only in terms of establishing alliances in feasting and through marriage (see Bainton & Macintyre, 2016). A subclan (*tini*), of which each clan has hundreds scattered across regions and villages on the island, can be an indicating factor in how claims to land stewardship are recognized matrilineally, but, since other factors such as debts incurred by fathers or their children through feasting can also factor into the calculus of who gets to make claims on what land, matrilineal descent is far from the only factor in determining rightful stewardship of the land. Nevertheless, Placer Dome, Inc. and the National Government recognized the MTSA as social unity comprised of landowners who represented each clan, not subclan, that could make claims for compensation over the use and destruction of their land.

This kinship survey and the agreement over land tenure are but one example of how outside actors, like white people, have consistently assumed the concreteness of social structures, rather than stepping back and looking at the kinds of social relations that comprise those assumed structures. Over the last century, an extensive catalog of examples where both white people and Misimans have acknowledged the failings of this approach has grown. During the early Methodist missionization of the island in the late 20th century, missionaries pathologized Misimans as incapable of collective social action, such as collective repentance and conversion, because of their "stubborn hearts" (Berde, 1974, 1979). Soon afterward, Australian colonial authorities would complain that the island lacked recognizable leaders. Authorities considered this acephalous society a problem because they could not identify leaders whom they could convince to persuade people to organize collective labor, like those leaders they found in the

Trobriand Islands (see Macintyre, 1994). However, these two concerns, the "heart" of a people, and the ability to collectively organize, particularly their labor, are not just the moralizing of white people.

Misimans frequently observe and remark on the lack of leaders among them. Of course, the lack of "leaders" (*topamasal*, lit. 'those who get things done') is not for lack of trying. Plenty of pastors, landowners, businessmen, and local politicians go through laborious adventures to try to accrue social distinction. However, in my observation, the breaking point for all of their careers is the moment they have tried to impose their wills on others through some kind of command and obey structure. As David, a young apprentice to a Misiman Pentecostal pastor, once told me, "they act like white people, and then they boast, and then inside they only have shame" (*hi na dimdim wali paganina abwe loba hot ge hi tuwali pulawi gamana*).

While missionaries and colonial administrators pathologized the difficulty of collective social action, it is not like Misimans do not have a similar endogenous critique. Social unities, however fleeting, are highly desired by many Misimans, perhaps, partly because of how difficult they can be to see through successfully (see Lindstrom, 2011; Handman, 2015; Golub, 2014). Perhaps the most vivid example of the kind of social imaginary of what is possible and desired in social organization, also gives a good sense of how Misimans tend to think social unities are a thing of the deep Misiman past, rather than a present reality. Probably the most frequently recalled example of a social unity on Misima is a Misiman raiding party, which has not existed since at least the late 19th century, only increasing the nostalgic pull for what it represents.

Contemporary Misimans narrate war before missionization as a highly organized, albeit temporary, affair. A war leader would hold a war shield, and chant spells as the raiding party

lined up behind the shield-bearer, matching his movements exactly (Bartlett, [date]). The skill the shield-bearer had in dodging spears and the assaults of their enemies would transfer to those who followed the shield bearer's movements exactly. Yelling out the name Yabowine, the shield-bearer and de facto leader, would impart Yabowine's blessing on the party (Róheim, 1946). Who exactly Yabowine is has mostly been lost to history. However, contemporary Misimans explain that Yabowine's blessing was vital because it made the party act in unison by possessing, for a time, "one heart." It is telling, then, that the early Tongan missionaries who first translated Christian scripture into Pana Misima translated "God" and "Lord" as Yabowine in Pana Misima. Undoubtedly, this was because they sought to make Misimans "one heart" in Christ.

Becoming "one heart" dovetails on the common concerns Misimans, white people, and anthropologists have about collective mental states. From Pentecostal crusades where Misimans collectively feel the Holy Spirit, to political campaigns feature rousing speeches where politicians use their *mana* (the Pana Misima word for both a hurricane wind and charisma) to move people, to the liberal anxiety that capitalism and "development" requires education and the right kind of "mentality" (see Lévy-Bruhl, 1923, 1928), we see a consistent theme that the interior states of others are both seductive and repulsive. However, they are also at the core of social organization. Others' minds can be the source of collective effervescence or collective guilt over the inability to "think correctly" (*nuwatu bubun*). This guilt and anxiety are because, in contrast to the 19th-century Misiman war party, "the minds of people walk aimlessly" (*wala nuwatu i na bwagabwaga*).

Attention as a Political Object

From trickery, possession, to problems of social coordination, there is a consistent concern in Misima for what a mind is and how people relate to it. While I believe I have come to be interested in these problems because Misimans are interested in them, I have to admit that I am struck by the relevance of these concerns to contemporary politics beyond Misima. It is not so much that I think Misimans have answers to global problems, but it seems that highlighting the social ontology of others' minds is an urgent political project.

Today, a pressing problem across the world is the capturing and monetization of attention through social media and the bombast of right-wing populism (Wu, 2016; McGranahan, 2017; Gusterson, 2017; Mazzarella, 2019). While many social media companies champion their platforms as tools for speaking truth to power and creating novel communities, I believe the purpose and effect of social media would be immediately cautioned as potentially dangerous by Misimans. When I was doing my anthropological fieldwork in Misima, from late 2014 to 2016, there was very little internet connection possible on the island. In 2014, someone may be able to post to Facebook, but they would likely be unable to load a feed off of the 2G network that extended to the island. Then in 2015, the Digicell towers providing the photo network and internet coverage failed due to lack of maintenance, leaving only one tower at Bwagaoia. By 2016, the fuel for running the Bwagaoia tower had not been paid for in months, so Digicell cut off service to the island. Subsequently, there was no coverage on the island at all for six months. Very few Misimans were aware of social media and able to use it. However, when I told a group of Misimans in Liak about hopefully using it in the future to stay in contact with me, the village councilor, Puate, asked, "Why would I do that? Let people know what is in my mind. There must be only lies on that phone."

Just a few months after that discussion, I returned home to California to land in LAX, knowing very little of what had transpired in the United States since 2014. I arrived just days before the Republican National Convention, where Donald Trump was nominated as the Republican candidate for President of the United States. Since then, the public has become even more aware of the role social media has played in our public discourse and the political fortunes of demagogues, with a disturbing rise in the mainstreaming of conspiracy theories (Merlan, 2019).

I often think about Puate's question. How Misimans captured my attention and how I captured theirs seems to be the kind of model of trickery that can be described as the kind of playfulness required for social life with others. However, there is a dark side to trickery, one that seems to be just as active in the Misiman social imaginary as good forms of trickery are. I sometimes wonder what kind of trickery we are involved in, on a global scale. What good comes from sharing our minds on social media? If I was to take Misimans' forms of argument seriously, it seems to be no other conclusion possible than that social media has become the new Kula circuit, with people vying for attention, and thus preying on the minds of others.

CHAPTER 1: History and Myth

Misima Island, formerly known as St. Aignan, is situated about 185 kilometers from the southeastern tip of Papua New Guinea. The island belongs to the most northern part of the Louisiade Archipelago in the Milne Bay Province, otherwise known in anthropological literature as "the Massim." The Milne Bay Province encompasses more than 600 islands in the region, spread over an area over 250,000 square kilometers. Geographically the islands can be divided into northern and southern counterparts. The northern islands consist of the D'Entrecasteaux island group (Fergusson, Goodenough, Normanby, Dobu, and Amphletts), Trobriand Islands, and Woodlark (Muyuw) Island. Numerous other smaller islands are also scattered throughout the northern part of the province. The southern islands consist of Sideia, Basilaki and Wari, the Engineer Island group, and the Louisiade Archipelago. Misima Island is part of the Louisiade Archipelago, along with larger islands of Panaeati, Sudest, and Rossell.

In Panaeati, Panapompom, the small islands of the Western Calvados island chain, Renard island group, and Conflicts Islands, people speak a language that is the same as the vernacular spoken on Misima, Pana Misima. The languages spoken in islands of the Eastern Calvados Chain, including Sabarl, share a great deal of similarity with Pana Misima. However, they are collectively called Saisai and are not necessarily mutually intelligible.

The largest of the islands in the northern portion of the Louisiade Archipelago, Misima, is widely considered the breadbasket of the region. Misiman pigs are numerous, well-fed, and healthy, from having large areas to roam and hide in the cover of expansive mango trees. The island has an area of between 144 to 160 square kilometers, being 40 kilometers long an east-west direction and irregular in width, varying from 8 to 10 kilometers at the eastern end to 1 to 3

kilometers near the center of the island. It is one of the three largest islands of the Louisiade Archipelago, and the most populous.

Misima is unique among the islands of the Louisiade Archipelago for lacking extensive coral reefs along its shores. The island is relatively mountainous, with large parts of the island being challenging to walk across, and the steep vertical drops across the shoreline continue deep into the sea without the shallow seabeds necessary for coral growth. A rare exception to this Managun Lagoon, at the far southeastern side of the island, which is enclosed by a frigging reef (Brass, 1959).

The island is considered the very southeastern tip of a submerged Owen Stanley Mountain Range that runs across the spine of New Guinea. A colonial government geologist, Stanley wrote in his survey:

> The island is extremely mountainous, particularly the western narrow portions. Mount Oiyatau, 3,400 feet above sea level, is the highest point on a steep range trending more or less parallel with the island. This range is broken about halfway where the island begins to widen, and where there appears to be a change in the geological feature… Owning to the narrow, steep character of the island and the moderately heavy rainfall in the western portions, many deep steep cracks, gorges and waterfalls have been formed. Most of them are cascades and narrow waterfall, which have formed steep V-shaped valleys in the high metaphoric country, and have cut deep gorges through the raise coral limestone fringing the coast" (1915: 6).

Liak

I completed most of my fieldwork in the village of Liak, about 32 kilometers from Bwagaoia on the northern coast of the island. Liak is strung along the shore for almost a mile, with the houses being built on the narrow strip of flat land bordering the beach. Behind the village, the mountains rise quite steeply, initially covered by gardens and secondary growth but then, with increased height, by primary forest. The black pebble beach that curves around the bay

is broken occasionally by a rocky outcrop or a depression where a stream flows down into the sea. There are very few coral reefs since the ocean floor slopes steeply away from the shore.

By Misiman standards, the village is relatively compact. A contributing factor to this compactness is the fact that the village is also the most populous village on the island. It consists of nineteen named hamlets, the divisions between these are only sometimes marked by physical features like streams. In the center of the village is an old copra plantation that has fallen into disuse. The old plantation splits the village into two different wards, East and West Liak. The cleared space of the old plantation once housed a co-op store and government rest house, but both buildings are now gone, and all that remains is the concrete foundation to the co-op. Next to this area is a large ficus tree that spreads its shade all directions, enveloping the road the ends and the far western side of the village. Village meetings used to take place beneath this tree, that is until Liak was split into two wards, and a land dispute between two clans made the area of the plantation a virtual “no man’s land.” Close to this area, on the western edge of East Liak, is a medical aid post and a primary school with a large football field.

The four major streams which run from the mountains through the village and into the sea provide focal points for much of the daily domestic activity, as well as a popular place for women to catch up on the latest gossip. These streams are where most people wash their clothes and dishes, peel their vegetables, and gather water for cooking. Children also wash at these same streams on their way to and from school, and each evening everyone comes to these streams for an evening wash.

The houses in Liak are built on either side of the road, although most line themselves against the southern edge of the road. They vary in their state of repair, but very few are derelict.

Residents will dutifully sweep the area around their house of any rubbish (especially leaves from trees), and many houses have the paths leading up to them that are marked by aromatic flowers, flowering shrubs, or crotons. Interspersed between the houses are coconut trees, mango trees, various edible nut trees, and citrus trees. On any given sunny day, there is always enough shade for someone to escape the heat of the bright sun if they can find a verandah or large tree to sit under. This potential shade stands in strong contrast to the blistering sun and heat of the black pebbled beach that runs the length of the village.

Almost all of the houses today are built in the "European" style—pitched sago leaf roof, sago bark walls, windows with shutters, a front, and a back door, and usually a front verandah facing the road. All houses, regardless of their style, are raised some three to five feet off the ground, thereby providing a convenient shelter for the various dogs, fowls, and unpenned pigs which roam freely about the village. A small yams storage house is sometimes built beside a house, but these are rare. In most cases, the newly harvested yams are stored in a room or platform inside the house out of sight of covetous eyes. Pig pens, where all pigs are theoretically supposed to be confined, are usually built a short distance from their owner's house on the mountainside of the road. There is also the area where the obligatory, though rarely used, latrines are located.

In the balmy period between October and December, before the Northwest monsoon season begins, some families build temporary houses on the beach itself. The primary reason for doing so is that this the time for harvesting and drying the breadfruit. As the drying process is carried out in stone "ovens" built on the beach, living on the beach facilitates a rather lengthy operation requiring constant observation. For this reason, Misimans also like to smoke fish on

the same fires since both require the same amount of attention. It also enables people to take full advantage of the excellent weather. In the early morning and late afternoon, small groups gather on the beach to gossip, smoke, and chew betel nut. The men watch the sea for signs (*etotohi*), usually diving seabirds, of a shoal of fish. Their small outrigger fishing canoes are kept on the beach in readiness to paddle out after such a sighting. During this season, the gatherings continue well into the night. People will light fires, and if there is insufficient moonlight, they will light kerosene lamps, although today flashlights charged by solar panels are more popular than kerosene lamps. These solar flashlights may be briefly used, but they are usually not very dependable. The talk at night goes on and on, until everyone just falls asleep, listening to stories. People will plan sailing trips to the other surrounding islands, discuss future feasts, gossip about the state of their neighbors' gardens, affectionately laugh at children's behavior, or reminisce about past events. Inevitably, people will spin tales of fish they had caught or fish that got away. In the background, you can almost always hear the sound of small mp3 players, guitars, or young people singing, usually for the benefits of the opposite sex. These memorable evenings epitomize a great deal of Misiman life. Companionship, relaxed evenings filled with conversation, and occasional laughter is a setting that is difficult to describe as anything other than idyllic.

The breeze (*leuleu*) was a constant presence during the Misiman evenings I spent on the beach. It should be no surprise then that Misimans recognize the wind as a significant part of their cultural life. It is common for regular conversation to include long speculations about the wind and the messages its direction or strength may be telling gardeners, fishers, and school children. One telling example is the Misiman word for charismatic power and influence, *mana*. For example, Misimans will say that a Pentecostal preacher or a Village Councilor who speaks at

a public meeting and holds people's attention possess *mana*. A great deal of debate exists in linguistic anthropology about the meaning and connotations of *mana* as a pan-Oceanic word that is often ill-defined or, at least, untranslatable (see Keesing, 1984; Rumsey, 2016; Salmond, 1975; see Mazzarella, 2017). However, on Misima the meaning of *mana* is very clearly defined and widely understood. There is no ambiguity about its meaning. It means "a strong wind," but more specifically, the kind of wind that shakes the sturdy house posts. Thus, Misiman will refer to a cyclone wind as *mana,* and someone who holds the attention of others is said to possess *mana*. This identification with their ability to hold others' attention with a cyclone wind is part of a common Misiman idiom about how the power of persuasion can move even the most stubborn characters.

The seasonality of wind also divides the Misiman calendar year (*baliman*) into two seasons, each dominated by separate wind-streams, which in turn affects the rainfall. The northwestern monsoon winds (*yalas*) typically blow from December until April. Tropical cyclones can unpredictably occur during this time, usually preceded by a strong northern wind (*bwaulia*) developing in December. During *yalas* the low tide occurs during nighttime. The two seasons of changing and often unpredictable patterns (early November to early December and late February to March) are both called *haptomwa*. In November, many villages mark this transformation through a special, although relatively modern, Haptomwa festival of food, games, and traditional dancing. This festival marks the ending of having plenty of food, and begins a season of hunger (*huwalu*), since from November to late March most yams are planted in gardens and are not ready for harvest. The principal supplements for food at this time are breadfruit (*wakai*), sago (*kabole*), and fish (*moti*). However, since all three are in relatively short

supply and breadfruit and fish must be eaten quickly, they are typically unable to stave off hunger on their own.

A strong northwestern wind called *lanu ana to'ol* marks the end of the northwestern winds (*yalas*). It shortly shifts into a robust northeastern wind called *kenholak*, which blows shortly in March. *Kenholak* marks the transition period (*haptomwa*) that leads to the second season of yam gardening, which begins after a southern wind called *yanbabal* blows in sometime in late March or April. This season of the southeastern trade winds (*babaliman*) can last from late March until October. These weeks can blow unceasingly for weeks and can produce onshore winds of up to 30 km an hour (Kinch, 1999: 7). Around April, the wind briefly shifts as a strong northwestern wind (*lagu ana to pwet*) marks the falling of the *dausia* nuts falling, but this wind typically only lasts a week.

The onset of the *babaliman* winds signals the beginning of the yam harvest (S. Callister, 2000:7), and planting must be completed before the *babaliman* winds cease. Cyclones are rare during this time, although a mighty southeastern wind called *kapaleli* briefly blows around July. When the *huwal* constellation appears in its proper position in the night knight sky, it presents a sign that the *yalas* will once again appear (*huwalu yalayalasina*).

Some named winds do not mark the contours of seasons. For example, the regularly reoccurring *yavana*, a southern wind, provides a gentle breeze from February to March and cold gusts from July until November. However, the *yavana* does not mark seasons as much as Misimans recognize it as a regular visitor during the more dominant trade wind seasons. Nonetheless, Misimans consider the *yavana* winds to bring with them a genre of events, such as disease, illness, and misfortune.

Vegetation on Misima consists primarily of a mixed rain forest, which varies somewhat with the underlying soil and rock formations. Rapid shifting cultivation without proper fallow periods as deforested the coastal slopes and made small valleys of grassland. However, the grassland pales in comparison to that found on other large islands in the Louisiade Archipelago. Where land is not actively in use for gardening, scrubby secondary growth covers the landscape. There is very little swamp on the island; consequently, the distribution of naturally growing sago is limited. It is, however, planted by those with access to suitable ground as sago is an important storable food during months when food is in short supply, and its leaves and bark are essential building materials for houses.

Coconuts abound at the appropriate altitude, and the number of bearing trees increases every year as planting is a minor but regular activity for most families. “Native chestnuts” and other edible nuts provide a welcome addition to the diet when in season. The trees also provide much of the shade in the village scattered as they are between the houses and along the foreshore. Breadfruit trees are numerous and are usually planted within the village, close to houses to mark possession of land by those who planted the tree. The fruit of the breadfruit tree is eaten both fresh and in a dried form. It is an essential supplement to the diet at the time of the year before the harvest of the new season’s yams, when food is relatively scarce.

The staple food is yams, but taro is also an important food. Sweet potato, tapioca, various greens—some cultivated, some wild, snake beans, tomatoes, watermelons, along with bananas, pawpaws, and pineapples are all grown and eaten. Coconut cream is an

invariable addition to any cooked dish.

In the past, fish were plentiful but hard to catch. Since the coral bleaching of the few coral reefs found throughout the Louisiade Archipelago and the illegal overfishing of the early 2000s, fish have become scarcer and even more challenging to catch. Besides, as stated earlier, coral reefs are almost non-existent around Misima itself, and the coastline is frequently precipitous and pounded by waves—even beaches are rare. Fishing from the shore is therefore infrequent and mainly left to the women and children. Most men fish in deep water from canoes, although some women may also do this. Turtles are also hunted by young men who disregard the danger of sharks and swim in deep water for hours searching for a catch. They usually wear goggles and are armed only with a spear. Sometimes, people will use nets while fishing, but today traditional nets are no longer made by anyone in villages. Children may also use small nets to catch fresh-water prawns in the streams.

Pigs are the primary source of warm-blooded protein, although some bats and marsupials, especially Cuscus, are occasionally hunted with dogs. There are wild pigs in the forest interior, but almost all pigs eaten are of the domesticated variety. In the 1970s, the Local Government Council, after over five years of opposition to the idea, passed a law requiring the enclosure of pigs. Because of the implementation of this law, many of the animals died from contagious diseases and malnutrition. Since the initial decline, the pig population has slightly risen as people adapted their ideas on pig husbandry to the conditions. This law caused considerable disruption, hardship, and resentment in the community. Firstly, people had to plant extra gardens to provide the food necessary to

feed the animals. Secondly, the decline in the pig population has caused considerable hardships for people. This is because people believe a feast without a pig is inadequate to "make people happy" (*gamagalau yaliyaiyaina i pamasal*). As a result, people now say that it is hard to get others to help in co-operative activities such as house building. Helpers now know that they will only be given pork at the main feast, or *kivi*, instead of at each of the intervening feasts, as would have previously been the case before the 1970s. While the laws governing the enclosure of pigs are passed by the Local Level Government nearly every year, and the text of the law is painted on to the side of the Local Level Government building, these regulations are routinely ignored by most Misiman villages, especially on the north coast.

Methodist missionaries introduced cattle during the turn of the 20th-century. However, cattle were isolated to the mission until a cattle program was introduced by the Department of Agriculture in the 1970s, partly to supplement the shortage of pigs. Today, the cattle stock has dwindled to only a few more than a dozen, all of whom reside close to the village of Eiaus on the south coast of the island. The lack of suitable grassland for grazing put a considerable constraint on the success of any cattle herds.

Coffee has been attempted on the island many times over, but it continues to be unstable without only a few groves of coffee trees remaining outside of Eiaus village on the south coast. When I spoke with the owner of those trees in 2015, he claimed that he no longer evens bothered with harvesting the coffee beans as he barely received enough to cover his costs. In the 1970s, colonial administrators who were tasked with preparing the local economy for the transition to independence flouted the idea of cocoa as a viable alternative to coffee. The attractiveness of

cocoa is because it does grow much more easily on the island than coffee. Despite various efforts by Misimans living in Australia to market Misiman cocoa as an exotic ingredient and boutique cosmetic, infrastructural problems that restrict the movement of commodities, cocoa has yet to be to produce consistently profitable harvests.

For much of the 20th-century, copra was the principal commercial crop on the island. Some Misimans even believe that coconuts were introduced to the island by white people. What is undoubtedly true is that white people introduced Misimans to copra as a commodity. Before the construction of the Misima Gold Mine in 1985, the islands' co-operative society bought most of the copra, with white plantation owners and local trade stores providing some limited competition. When the price of copra collapsed in the early 1980s, the maintenance of smokehouses and plantations declined. By 2000, when the Misima Gold Mine was beginning its official plans for closure, there were no longer any operating plantations or smokehouses. In the next four years, there were several attempts to revitalize the copra industry on the island. However, they all failed, and by 2015 not a single plantation or smokehouse operation was functioning. The only buyers of copra were on the mainland of Papua New Guinea.

The Secret History of White People

The imagined introduction of coconuts is just one of the many examples of how Misiman history has been intertwined with the misadventures of white people. While some of these misadventures, like mining, have been evident on the geological and social landscape of Misima, others are only hinted at in Misiman myth. One example, the myth of Gere`u and Marita provides a unique perspective on the early history of Misiman contact with white people.

In his last and greatest ethnography of Trobriand society, *Coral Gardens and their*

Magic, Bronislaw Malinowski (1932) records an origin myth of gardening magic that is shared widely across the Milne Bay Province. The principal characters of the myth are two men named Tudava and Gere`u, and a woman named Marita, who was Gere`u's sister. Malinowski records three versions of the myth, only one of which names Gere`u and Marita. However, each version shares the same basic story of how Tudava "was the first to make garden magic, to institute garden taboos, and tell people what to plant and what not to plant" (Malinowski, 1935: I.70). Malinowski (1925) demonstrated a broad familiarity among Trobrianders of a whole mythic cycle centered around Tudava and his exploits across the northern part of the Milne Bay. However, Gere`u and Marita are barely known, save for Marita's name featuring prominently in a few powerful gardening spells (Malinowski, 1935: 1.70).

In Malinowski's version featuring Gere`u and Marita, the three travel companions, Gere`u, Marita, and Tudava venture out from Kiriwina to Muyuw, where Tudava sets out to explore the northern edge of the island, while Gere`u and Marita explore the southern edge of the island. After spending significant time apart, Tudava finds a large garden planted by Gere`u. He asks Gere`u, "Who makes this garden?"

> "I cut one small tree," Gere`u tell him "an all the saplings fall down. I cut a large tree and all the big trees fall down. I have a small fire and everything burns. I break one stick and plenty of sticks come. I start to make the fence and the fence makes itself. I plant one taro and many others grow. I plant on taytu and plenty of taytu grows. I plant one yam, and lots of yams brow."
>
> Tudava answers: "Oh, this is no good. This quick work is no good. Supposing we make too much food, man will not work. It is better that a strong man should make a big garden and a weak man a small garden. A weak man will go and fish and exchange fish for taytu" (Ibid: I.70).

Tudava also chides Gere`u for building an earthen oven (*umu*) that will cook any animal, including rats, snakes, and iguanas. Tudava tells Gere`u that he should eat only pigs, marsupials,

and fish. Upset with Tudava's intrusion and demands that everything must be down through hard labor, Gere`u and Marita leave Muyuw and sail south to Misima, where they "left plenty of betel-nut there" (Ibid: I.70).

In the Trobriand version of the story, hardly any attention is paid to Gere`u and Marita's stay on Misima. In that version of the story they promptly leave Misima and sail towards Duau, where their "canoe broke on the reef. At Duau Gere`u and Marita drowned and transformed into stones" (Ibid). The yams and taytu they had grown and brought with them on their journey floated on the ocean current until the yams reached Duau, with the taytu reaching Kiriwina. This, Malinowski argues, "is why in the north Fergusson Island [called Duau] there are very good big yams, and in Kiriwina there is plenty of taytu" (Ibid).

The Misiman version of this story differs in significant ways. First, it is revealed that while Tudava was black, Gere`u and Marita were twins whom both had albinism, a relatively common condition in the Milne Bay. In other words, for many Misimans, Gere`u and Marita are at least iconic of white people. Furthermore, Gere`u and Marita did not go straight to Misima after sailing away from Tudava in Muyuw.

In the Misiman versino of the story, Gere`u and Marita first sailed to Budibud, or the Laughlin Islands, and then further east. Somewhere across the Coral Sea, Gere`u and Marita found land, and there they used the magic Tudava had condemned. Using this magic, they built a large garden, which perpetually grew without any labor applied. Fueled by Gere`u and Marita's magic, the garden, called "the Dimdim gardens," required no maintenance or labor, beyond the initial slashing, burning, digging, and planting. There were no weeds, and every step of the labor process was entirely automated. After Gere`u cut and burned his first plot of land, the entirety of

the land was burned and would continue repeating its cycle of lying fallow for overgrowth, slashing, and burning all by itself. After Marita planted the first yams, Gere`u and Marita had intercourse over the seedlings. The heat from their bodies awakened the yams, and they sprung to life, fully animated, from the ground almost immediately. At first, a half dozen, then a couple of dozen, then hundreds, and, eventually, thousands of their yam children emerged.

Soon the exponential growth of yams and children overwhelmed Gere`u and Marita. Their new home was loud and crowded, with children continually fighting and demanding things. There was so much food that they could not eat quickly enough, and they soon found themselves unable to enjoy any of it. Regularly consuming food had become the real labor of their lives. Exhausted by the children and bloated from overeating, Gere`u and Marita left the Dimdim gardens to return to their home. The first island in the Milne Bay that they arrived at was Misima, where they decided to rest and try settling once again.

Before arriving on Misima, Gere`u and Marita decided that Tudava was correct. Their magic was too strong. There needed to be limits on how much food they could produce and consume, and without having to labor for that food wherever they built their gardens, they would become overwhelmed by new children. When they arrived on Misima, Gere`u and Marita made two promises to each other. First, they would never plant anything using their magic again. Second, they would never sleep with each other again.

Finding Misima to be already an island filled with plenty of nuts, Gere`u and Marita decided to settle on the island instead of returning home. After several years on the island, Marita was lonely and desired to sleep with her brother again. She developed a plan to seduce him. She knew that he loved chewing betel nut, and that chewing betel nut often made him think about

sex, so she surreptitiously planted some betel nut trees so that Gere`u would chew more.

At first, her plan worked. With the proliferation of betel nut palms, Gere`u soon found himself with plenty of betel nut to chew. At first, he did not consider the source of this proliferation of betel nut and was just pleasantly surprised by his newfound luck. However, the betel nut palms sprouting at an unnatural rate soon overcrowded the island. Gere`u figured something was wrong and approached Marita, asking her, "Did you plant a betel nut palm?"

She answered that she had.

"Why?" Gere`u asked.

"Because you love to chew betel nut," Marita responded, "and when you chew betel nut, you think about having sex with me. I know you do because I put a spell on your betel nut. I know that is what you want."

Furious that Marita was trying to trick him into sleeping with her and that she had broken their promise to refrain from plant anything, he hit her in anger. Two variations of this Misiman version of the myth diverge at this point. One variation has Gere`u killing Marita and then defiling her corpse and the other has them reconciling after their argument. Both variations agree that Gere`u and Marita, or Gere`u and Marita's corpse, soon leave Misima, considering it cursed by too much betel nut. Like Malinowski's version of the story, Gere`u crashes their canoe on the coral reefs outside of Duau, and both Gere`u and Marita are transformed into large stones that can be found to this day just off the coast of Duau. With their deaths, Gere`u and Marita's magic faded from the world, leaving only the garden magic of Tudava.

The Trobriand and Misiman versions of the Gere`u and Marita story contain within them several prominent themes of Misiman mythology—past prosperity that is beyond the grasp of

present Misimans, incest, and trickery. However, the most prominent feature of the Misiman version of the Gere`u and Marita's story, at least the one that captures the attention of contemporary Misiman's the most, is the origins of the Dimdim gardens.

Gere`u and Marita, Misimans say, are the original parents of white people, who islanders throughout the Milne Bay refer to as 'dimdim.' White people ('dimdims'), at least the islanders of the Louisiade Archipelago, will say, are from the Dimdim gardens, and that is why they are called 'dimdim.'

The historical record is fuzzy on exactly when white people earned this moniker. By, at least, the late 19th-century, the islanders of the Louisiade Archipelago were calling white people 'dimdim.' With colonialism and Christian missionaries standardizing English instruction, islanders of the Louisiade Archipelago and, eventually, the entirety of the Milne Bay, began referring to white people collectively by appending the English suffix of *-s* to mark them as plural, so that white people themselves could recognize it as a collective label, and not just a personal insult.

There is some evidence to suggest that the label 'dimdim' was used for both the benefit and the mocking of white people. Today, most people in the Milne Bay recognize the label as an endogenous commentary on the "dim" skin of white people. At least that is what they tell white people. Another possible meaning is that it refers to white people's "dimwittedness." Regardless, oral history seems to indicate that before these semantic word plays were widely adopted, the term 'dimdim' referred less to a collective class of people, and more to a place— the Dimdim coral gardens to the east of the Louisiade Archipelago, past the Coral Sea (Battaglia, 1990).

Catching White People

No one knows for sure exactly when Guwama "caught" white people ('dimdims'). In the late 18th-century, Guwama was something of a pariah in his village of Liak. According to oral history, he suffered from chronic fungus infections and open sores. His eyes were also bright yellow. Moreover, Guwama was not a very good gardener. He seemed to detest gardening. His dislike of gardening was partly because of the role men play in clearing, burning, and digging the land in preparation for women to plant yams or taro in gardens. These activities are often intense social affairs with large groups of men working in tandem. In contrast, Guwama was a loner, and that is why he took to fishing. Today, villagers in Liak remember Guwama as the villages most prominent fisherman since he dared to paddle his small outrigger canoe many kilometers away from the shore, to where large schools of yellow-fin tuna still swim through deep trenches.

Guwama or his fellow Misimans may have heard of white people's ships. Whether he had heard rumors of white people before would not belie who white people were as his ideas about white people most certainly differed significantly from those white people held of themselves.

In the contemporary telling of Guwama's adventure, Misimans point to the Dimdim gardens as the source of white people's ('dimdims') wealth and power. However, it is ultimately the dimwittedness quality of 'dimdims' that Misimans highlight. After all, Misimans say that Guwama tricked the 'dimdims' into visiting Misima by first "catching" (*i kos*) them.

According to contemporary villagers in Liak, Guwama was fishing in his small outrigger canoe off the northern coast of Misima, off the coast of Liak, when white people were first spotted. Guwama had been using a traditional net weaved from tree fiber with polished seashells and a fishing line with a polished *kepa* shell hook that acted as a lure. Although oral history

recognizes Guwama as a skilled fisherman, even the best of fishers depends on a great deal of luck and magic for a successful outing.

As the afternoon wore on and the sun began to set, precisely the prime time for fishing, Guwama began to lose patience at his lack of success. Looking at a brewing storm across the horizon of the coral sea, towards his Kula partner in Muyuw, Guwama decided it was time to act. He reached for the gourd container (*patuna*) that held his lime (*kauli*) for chewing betel nut (*lehi*). In his hair, he had a small comb fashioned from ebony wood that a trading partner in Sabarl had given him as an opening gift. He took the comb, licked its teeth, and dipped it in the gourd so that the delicate white lime powder clung to it without caking on. Then, pointing at the developing storm with his comb, Guwama spoke a spell that as long been lost to time, although Misimans agree it involved some kind of boasting about his beauty, his trading partners, and that he was an accomplished lover. When Guwama finished, he told the fish who were ignoring his lures, "I will give you my body. There is always plenty more. Eat my body, and you will breathe the air." Leaning over the edge of his small canoe, he then masturbated into the sea, waiting for fish to come and eat his ejaculate.

No fish came to meet Guwama's invitation to eat from his body and breathe the air like humans, but something else entirely unexpected did happen. In the distant horizon, in the approximate direction he had been pointing, two large sailing vessels appeared. At first, Guwama thought they were floating islands, but as the vessels came into focus, it was clear that it was unlike anything he had previously seen. He had planned on tricking fish, but instead, he summoned the "dimdims." Of course, the account of this same encounter looks significantly different from those on the ships.

In 1606, Louis Vaez de Torres was the first European explorer to discover the Louisiade Archipelago (Annual Report, 1892: 77; Brass 1959: 14). Louis Antoine de Bougainville sailed through the area in 1768 and named the 320-mile stretch between Oragerie Bay on the mainland and Cape Deliverance on Rossell Island, Golfe de la Louisiade, the northern parts of what subsequently became the Louisiade Archipelago. The archipelago remained unexplored by Europeans until Bruni d'Entrecasteaux arrived in the area while searching for the lost expedition of Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse. d'Entrecasteaux was unsuccessful in finding any evidence of Lapérouse's 500-ton ships, *L'Astrolabe* and *La Boussole*, which many years later was discovered to have wrecked at Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands. Among the islands d'Entrecasteaux chartered and named was St. Aignan (now Misima), which d'Entrecasteaux named after one of the commanding officers on his frigate, the *Recherche*. At the same time, St. Aignan continued to be used by Europeans for the next century, but by the mid-19th-century, the island was almost exclusively known by its native name, Misima (Brass 1959: 15).

From the deck of the *Recherche*, Jacques-Julien Houtou de La Billardière, the voyage recorder of d'Entrecasteaux's expedition, watched as the Rhône-class scow, Espérance, contacted Guwama off the coasts of Liak on June 17th, 1793. He wrote in the official record of the journey that single canoe held still in the bay as people on the beach scrambled to hide in the bush, outside the view of the French ships. The canoe drew close to the *Espérance* but would not park against the *Espérance*'s hull.

Eventually, "Citizen Legrand, being very desirous of an interview with the natives, threw himself into the sea, and soon swam up to the canoe" (La Billardière 1800: 441). Citizen Legrand would later report that Guwama did not have weapons on him and that he did not understand the

use of iron, as he "seem to set little value upon that he presented" (Ibid). The French recording of this encounter does not go much beyond this description of the brief encounter between Guwama and Citizen Legrand. The next morning, twelve canoes from Liak swiftly approached the *Espérance* and *Recherche*, but they stayed a considerable windward distance from the ships. Deciding to take advantage of their discovery d'Entrecasteaux ordered the ships to double back and sail across the southern edge of Misima (Ibid: 442).

The Misiman version of this story was that Guwama had brought the 'dimdims' to Misima, but no one was sure why Guwama had brought them. Guwama certainly was not telling. Soon after his encounter with Citizen Legrand, Guwama decided that he would not dock his canoe on the beachhead and would, instead, continue fishing. He would later say that it was a mistake. The wrong fish had answered his invitation.

On the southern end of the island, the *Espérance* and *Recherche* once again contacted Misimans, but this time it was one of Guwama's rivals, Bwage`i, who was an accomplished gardener at Eiaus. According to Misimans, Bwage`i, convinced his fellow villagers that the ships were floating logs carrying the children of Gere`u and Marita, so after Eiaus villagers paddled their outrigger fishing canoes close to the *Recherche*, the villagers presented the *Recherche*'s crew with "roots baked in the ashes, and carefully peeled" (Ibid).

"The savages wished us to land upon their land," La Billardière recorded (Ibid), but, alas, the ships were unable to find anchorage. "[S]ome of the native came alongside of our vessel… They showed themselves very fraudulent in their dealings with us, bargaining at any price for the commodities which we had to barter with them, and as soon as they had got them in their possession, refusing to give us any thing in return" (Ibid: 443).

Later that night, the Misiman canoes retreated to the shore. The French crew noticed that the Misimans had "lighted several fires" along the shoreline. While they lit fires for burning lime (*kauli*) to present as a gift, Bwage`i convinced his father to join him in revisiting the French ships at dawn. After they approached the *Recherche*, the Misimans gave baskets of lime powder to Bwage`i's father, whom the French crew invited to board their ship. However, as the old man began climbing aboard, he "was prevented by the rest [of the Misimans], who eagerly pulled him back to them, as if they imagined him to be about to expose himself to some great danger" (Ibid: 444).

Indeed, this was their concern. Bwage`i first imagined the French crew to be the long lost children of Gere`u and Marita, but as his father approached the *Recherche* a woman in who had joined Bwage`i in his canoe and was a *ketabu* (person who is familiar with witches), cried out that she could smell crouton flowers (*webaya*) on the white men and that she had seen them in Guwai, the spiritual abode of witches. Panic ensued, and the Misiman party hurriedly retrieved Bwage`i's father from the clutches of the French sailors. The debate among the Misimans over the exact nature of their new visitors intensified, but Bwage`i prevailed in convincing the rest of his party that French ships were visitors from the Dimdim gardens.

Bwage`i and his companions climbed aboard the *Recherche* and presented to the crew sago pudding (*moni*) in a large carved bowl made from the trunk of a mango tree (Ibid: 444). A long and boisterous meal ensued between the Misimans and the French sailors, with the two parties exchanging whatever they could find to give to each other. Misiman started hurriedly called for different gifts from those onshore, while the French presented things like cloth and iron. "The islanders," La Billardière recalled, "are very fond of perfumes; most of the things we

got from them were scented. They had pieces of the bark of different aromatic trees" (Ibid: 445).

As this meal drew on, villagers from Eiaus surrounded the *Espérance* in their canoes, and the French started to panic. Suddenly, the crew of the *Recherche* became convinced that the sago pudding Bwage`i had given them was filled small chunks of human flesh. Revolted, the French started vomiting and screaming for help as they believed they were about to be ambushed and eaten. La Billardière claims that "a ferocious expression of pleasure was visible in their countenances, as if they were to partake of this horrible banquet." However, Misimans today assure me that was not the case. Instead, they were first laughing at the French men vomiting but then became angry after it was clear that the French were trying to blame them for this distress. La Billardière claims that a skirmish lasting "half a quarter of an hour" followed (Ibid: 445), but no one was injured. My Misiman informants confirm this account, but after the skirmish, both sides were not eager to see much more of each other, and d'Entrecasteaux's ships promptly left Misima.

In the following years, Bwage`i spread stories across the island of his party's interactions with the 'dimdim' ships. He would boast at every feast he attended about the time he feed the children of Gere`u and Marita. He would tell terrifying stories about these creatures, who resembled ogres more than people. These men, Bwage`i, would recall, smelt like feces, and looked diseased. They also could not recognize food and could not speak. The woman in their company would continue to insist that the French sailors were witches, not the children of Gere`u and Marita, and that is why they turned on the Eiaus villagers. The white people ('dimdims') were trying to consume the Misimans. The symmetry of mutual misunderstandings between Bwage`i's party and the French sailors is remarkable. At some level, both the Misimans and the

French were convinced that the other party was desiring to consume them.

A Growing Resentment

Guwama mostly stayed out of the fray. Years before d'Entrecasteaux's visit, Bwage`i had humiliated Guwama during a feast by calling out Guwama's less than the desired contribution of yams. Guwama was much more into fishing than he was into gardening or hunting pigs, but now everyone in Liak and Eiaus was aware of Guwama's shame. Still, as the years stretched on Guwama grew resentful that Bwage`i and somehow upstaged him, yet again. He tried reminding his fellow villagers that it was he who had tricked the ships into coming to their island. It was his power of fishing magic that led the French ships to Liak.

Unfortunately for Guwama, Bwage`i, and pretty much every other Misiman, ignored Guwama's side of the story. Resigned never to be humiliated by Bwage`i again, Guwama took his cross-cousin's sailing canoe and sailed to Muyuw, to find the garden first planted Gere`u and Marita. Eventually, Misimans were convinced that Guwama had died at sea after no news of him returned to the island for years. Nevertheless, Guwama had made it to Muyuw, and there he married a woman, who like him, was an albino who struggled with open sores. With the help of his new wife and affines, Guwama built several gardens in Muyuw, and developed a reputation on the island as a skilled gardener who never went fishing.

During Guwama's absence, the whole of Misima broke out in a devastating war. Traditionally, southern Milne Bay societies differed from those in the north in that they did not have ranked clans or chiefs, and they practiced far more regular raiding or warfare than those societies found in the northern Milne Bay (Macintyre, 1981). The women of the southern Milne Bay held relatively higher status than those in the northern islands, mostly because of their

management of food production. On Misima, and throughout the southern islands, men still held most publicly recognized leadership roles, such as raiding leaders (*asuaka*), feast givers (*guyau*), or political negotiators (*tohouna*). Men also held firm control over alliances through marriages. The kind of authority or prestige men could hold was not inherited as a man had to acquire it through calculated strategy or skill in war. Bwage`i was a feast giver (*guyau*), which was probably the most prestigious of all roles or titles on Misima. However, Bwage`i's extensive trading network stretching across the island and nearby islands had stretched his capacity to maintain his obligations. When the war broke out in Guwama's absence, Bwage`i was in a tight spot. In his efforts to acquire personal prestige through acting as a conduit for feasting, he had publicly let down too many of his exchange partners. Eventually, a spurned exchange partner from Panaeati came to Bwage`i's village in Eiaus to exact his revenge. Bwage`i and his family escaped the raid, but the raiders also destroyed Bwage`i's home, his sailing canoe, and two of his three gardens. Perhaps seeing the writing on the wall, Bwage`i's other spurned partners called for their debts upon hearing of his fate.

All this time, Guwama was building sailing canoes and gardens with a new family in Muyuw, accruing both material goods and a reputation as a productive gardener. When Guwama returned to Misima, he sailed to Bagalina, the village to the west of Liak, and returned quietly without fan fair back to his hamlet in Liak. The word of his return soon spread throughout the village, and northern coast of Misima. All anyone knew was that Guwama was alive and had brought home with him a second wife from his journey. No one saw or suspected that Guwama also had four other sailing canoes filled to the brim with shell valuables, stone axes, yams, and pigs. This was because he had told his wife's family to sail out towards Nasikwabu, a small

island between Muyuw and Misima, and not arrive on Misima until the moon had gone through a whole cycle.

Bwage`i was now destitute, but when he heard that Guwama had returned and was looking for an exchange partner, Bwage`i jumped at his opportunity. Convinced that Guwama did not know of his current condition, Bwage`i decided to misrepresent himself to Guwama as someone who could help him find good connections if Guwama would first open the relationship by giving to him.

Bwage`i did not care about what Guwama had to give to him. Bwage`i just wanted him to open up the relationship with a starting gift so that he could once again publicly humiliate Guwama. Bwage`i's goal was to demonstrate his prowess as a giver (*guyau*) by giving far too much for Guwama to reciprocate. Bwage`i assumed this would be easy because, from all he knew, Guwama was still the quiet albino who hated gardening and whom he had once bested before.

When Guwama heard of Bwage`i's invitation, he immediately sent the ebony comb he had used to summon the 'dimdim's while fishing all those years before. Laughing at the inconsequential gift, Bwage`i then proceeded to gather as many yams as he could find in his one remaining garden and call on any of his last debts within his village. He would hold a *bakubaku* feast in celebration of Guwama's return at which he would present to Guwama the entirety of his wealth as a grand gesture that he was certain Guwama could not repay. By humiliating Guwama once again, Bwage`i imagined that his prestige as a strategic giver would be invigorated, and more people would come to exchange with him.

The *bakubaku*, a laborious feast where Misimans expect the host to feed and entertain

guests until they either fall asleep or until the sun rises, is probably the most expensive feast on Misima. Nearly a century later, Methodist missionaries tried to ban the practice permanently, but Misimans still practice it today, although only very rarely.

On the day of the *bakubaku* feast, Bwage`i prepared to host Guwama and his small family from Liak. Unfortunately, he could not find his youngest daughter, and Bwage`i was forced to perform chores usually reserved for young women. Still, he was confident the present humiliation of performing women's labor would be erased as soon as he was able to humiliate Guwama in front of all Eiaus.

When Guwama arrived at Eiaus, he politely thanked Bwage`i for the feast and apologized for the meager attendance of his small party of family members. However, he asked Bwage`i if it was all right if he had guests slowly join them throughout the night as not everyone had been able to make the arduous journey across and over the central mountain range of the island to Eiaus. Again, confident that he was approaching victory, Bwage`i assured Guwama that he could have any guests join him he wanted. Then, Bwage`i presented Guwama with an obscene amount of sago pudding and yams, with an invitation to eat with him while being entertained through the night.

Several hours after dark, howling started at Eiau's beach. Guwama's visitors were arriving. A large sailing canoe filled with young men and arrived looking for Guwama. Then, an hour or so later, another canoe arrive, and then another, and another. Soon the beach was crowded with sailing canoes filled to the brim with feasting stuffs and operated by young men from Muyuw. Overwhelmed with the prospect of visitors he did not anticipate, Bwage`i demanded to know what was happening. Guwama replied that he was just reciprocating

Bwage`i's gift.

Flummoxed, Bwage`i angrily replied that any reciprocation of his gifts was unseemly. He was still in the process of giving Guwama his debt (*vaga*) from the ebony comb. He started berating Guwama for skipping a step and just giving aimlessly (*bwagabwaga u pewa*). It was then that Guwama revealed his most dramatic secret. He claimed that Bwage`i had already returned the gift of the ebony comb. He had done it just a few days earlier, in the person of his daughter. At that moment, Guwama grabbed a basket from inside a canoe and displayed the head of Bwage`i's daughter for all to see. At the revelation of the decapitated head of Bwage`i's daughter, chaos broke out. Immediately, Guwama's companions raided Eiaus and Bwage`i attacked Guwama, stabbing him in the eye with his ebony comb. As Guwama's companions laid siege to the unsuspecting participants of Bwage`i's *bakubaku*, the two men struggled for their lives.

The story diverges into two separate and contradictory paths at this point. One version of the story is that Bwage`i survives, but just barely. Dejected and in total ruin, Bwage`i then swims into the ocean towards Kimuta never to be seen again. In the other version of the story, Guwama took the sago pudding first presented to him at the beginning of the *bakubaku* and force-fed the pudding to Bwage`i. When Bwage`i finished the entire wooden bowl (*mwaha*) of pudding (*moni*), Guwama used a magic spell he had learned at Muyuw, a spell rumored to have been passed down from Marita, and the bowl magically filled with more pudding. Guwama did this, again and again, force-feeding Bwage`i until he started vomiting. Guwama laughed at how Bwage`i vomited like the 'dimdim' sailors and accused him of not understanding the magic of the Dimdim gardens, the magic of exponential increase. Eventually, Bwage`i passed out, and

Guwama split his head open with a stone ax.

With much of Eiaus on fire, and his rival either defeated or expired at his feet, Guwama yelled a menacing scream, declared this the dawn of a new age— the "time of the dimdim" (*sauga ana dimdim*). He promised that this was only the beginning, that soon more 'dimdim' ships would come, and they would consume everyone, but that Misimans would not be able to stop it. Misimans would foolishly think the children of Gere`u and Marita could be exchange partners, but, he warned, that was not possible. He said:

> Behold my strength (*gasisi*), my *mana*. You see, this is the magic of Gere`u and Marita, perpetual growth, and constant consumption. You cannot control that kind of exchange. It will consume you like I have consumed my enemy. Bwage`i was a foolish man because he thought he understood Dimdim magic. But he did not. I was the one who tricked the children of Gere`u and Marita into coming to this island. It was I who invited them here, and I retraced their path to their garden in Muyuw.

With that, Guwama and his companions boarded their sailing canoes and sailed to the east. Guwama and his companions were never heard of again, neither on Misima nor on Muyuw.

A Brief Sketch of Visits from Dimdims

After the founding of Sydney, boats going from Port Jackson to China sometimes threaded their way through the Louisiade Archipelago. In the 1830s and 1840s, whalers worked the Solomon Sea as far as we know few, if any, whaling ships landed on Misima. Misima would not have been a good anchorage for the whalers, but they would have spent a considerable amount of time just in the Coral Sea between Misima, Muyuw, and Budibud.

Few stories exist of these boats are remembered today on Misima, but there is a general agreement about their appearance. They looked like floating fires. During the day, you could see large plumes of smoke, and by night they glowed hot orange and red with the fires used on their

decks to reduce and store whale blubber. These ships horrified Misimans as trails of blood and packs of sharks would follow them. Misimans seemed to be aware that these were the same 'dimdims' that they had encountered before, but somewhat different. They took almost no interest in the locals beyond the rumored points of anchorage that resulted in orgies of rape and murder.

In 1849 Captain Owen Stanley and his crew of the HMS Rattlesnake re-charted the Louisiade Archipelago making extensive contacts with islanders across Sudest and the Eastern Calvados Chain. Thomas Huxley, "Darwin's Bulldog," was the assistant surgeon on the voyage and kept an extensive diary. Unfortunately, it seems he was unaware of the details of d'Entrecasteaux's previous voyage. He bitterly complained in his journal:

> Truly our voyage might have been one of discovery… but in a very different sense. For the Frenchmen, although they cruised along these shores and surveyed them for the purposes of navigation, never landed and were therefore wholly ignorant of their productions, etc. In this department might we with proper claim have been considered discoverers; but this was denied us" (Huxley, 1935: 366).

By 1850 many islanders were accustomed to taking their canoes out to trade with the crews of passing ships; already some of the axes which men carried hooked over their shoulders were fitted with blades ground from hoop-iron, bolts, and fittings from wrecked vessels; and stories of how the Laughlan and Woodlark Islanders had killed more than twenty men from the whaler Mary in 1843 traveled the trade routes of the Milne Bay.

> Following the discovery but proceeding the first establishment of government (in the area) but probably none of them to be considered as settlers or residents, was a sprinkling of adventurers, and by all accounts often not very ethical, British, French, Greek, Chinese, Filipino, Malay and other traders, trepanger and seekers of pearls and other primary produces, who came in small ships and in some cases set up stations ashore. In the later stages of the 'black birding' of the South Sea labour for the sugar plantations of Queensland in about the 1870's and early 1880's recruiters visited [the] islands, especially it would seem, the Louisiades….

> The evils of the traffic led to the retaliatory killings of often quite innocent white men on the coasts" (Brass, 1959: 18).

The Louisiades certainly acquired a reputation for murder and treachery in this period. With romantic colonial bravado, likely meant for the benefit of his Victorian readers, Theodore Bevan reacted to anchoring at Paneati Island, just off Misima, in 1885 by writing:

> How shall I describe the sensations that surged within me as I beheld headland, cape, and promontory, of these terrestrial nebulae, clear-cut against the lurid glow of a stormy sunset? It had long been my ambition to view these islands, where crews of ship and steamers had been massacred and their vessels looted, where murders had but recently been enacted, and where still more would assuredly follow; to see these murderers with my own eyes, and possibly hear the story from their own lip…. Guard the while against similar treachery to one's self" (1890: 109).

A year after this account, islanders on Misima nearly decapitated Captain Marx of the HMS Swinger. Sir William MacGregor, the first Administrator of British New Guinea after Britain had annexed it in 1884, stated that he thought "the natives of Misima to be the least trustworthy with which we have to deal" (Annual Report 1893e: AppH; see Fortune, 1963). However, by 1896, after considerable difficulties and frustrations, he was able to state that the "tribes of Misima are now so completely pacified that only petty breaches of Native Regulation have to be dealt with" (Annual Report, 1896-97).

A factor that undoubtedly contributed to "pacification" was the increased administration activity resulting from the discovery of gold in 1888 by two prospectors who had abandoned previous prospects on Sudest. The whole of the Louisiade Archipelago had been previously declared a goldfield in May 1889, and the Administration station was moved from Sudest first to Siagara on the north coast and subsequently to Bwagaoia. By 1890 there were 400 miners on Misima, the majority of

whom were “making a living and little or anything more” (Annual Report, 1890: App. A). Soon, however, the payable alluvial was worked out, and by 1892, only 26 miners remained on the island. At about this time, the headquarters of British New Guinea’s South-East Division was moved from Bwagaoia to Nivani Island in the Deboyne Group (Brass, 1959: 19).

The Beginnings of a New Century

In 1891, MacGregor invited William Bromilow to leave his post in Fiji and begin his work in the South-East Division in the Milne Bay, among the Dobu Islanders. The Dobuans were tenacious raiders and had been especially troublesome to the administration, so MacGregor wanted to pacify them through the Bible before other islands (Murray, 1912; Fortune, 1963). It is also true that Dobu was a central node for much of the Kula trading routes, and, therefore, acted as a good launching point for introducing a wide variety of islanders to Christianity.

Bromilow and his staff of Polynesian teachers were so successful in their pacification efforts that within one year after their arrival, they extended their mission activities into islands far to the southeast of Dobu, in the Louisiade Archipelago. Rev. Samuel B. Fellows led the first mission to Panaeati, which extended into Misima.

The Methodist mission to Panaeati and Misima quickly grew and was far more successful on those islands than on the southern and eastern islands of the Louisiade Archipelago. Subsequent missionaries like H.K. Bartlett and the Tongan missionary Isikeli Hau`ofa observed that one key reason for the success of the mission was its reliance on the collection of tithes, which Misimans used as a medium for competitive

gift-giving. Public meetings called Pem-Pewa, or "you give, I give," were organized with hamlets competitively giving copra as a tithe, or "thanks" (*mulolu*), to the Church. These events still occur regularly throughout Misima, and in many cases have supplanted Kula activities, with various Churchmen (*totapololo*) representing different hamlets accrue large pools of *mulolu* money and then seek to humiliate their competitors through the generosity of their gifts.

In 1904, Australian minders located several gold-bearing lodes on Misima, but little work was done on them until 1914 when extensive development and construction began at Umuna on Mount Sisa ([citation] [date]). The social impact of gold mining for the next six years was concentrated on the north of Misimsa, especially around Siagara, initially the principal anchorage of the island. The mine closed in 1922 due to excessively high running costs but re-opened again under new owners in 1924. From this time onwards, the mine operated on a large scale and became an enormously profitable producer.

In the 1930s, the Umuna lode became the house of significant gold mining. By 1936 the Cuthberts Mine was an elaborate underground operation. It employed some Misimans, principally from Bagalina village (Nelson, 1976: 66), but most of the national workforce was from the Oro Province and other parts of Milne Bay, particularly Fergusson, Goodenough, and the Suau area. In 1939, for example, there were 160 white and 1,400 indentured laborers working at the mine. In that same year, £103,163 worth of gold was exported (Annual Review, 1939).

These native nationals worked under the colonial indentured labor regulation; the

Oros concentrated in the timber gangs and the 'Goiagos' working as 'hole bois' down the mine shafts. The mine even boasted the only railway in colonial Papua, which the mine used the railway to transport supplies and ore between Bwagaoia and the mine. Today, all that remains of this railroad is a long tunnel blasted through a limestone cliff.

Labor supply at the mine was a perennial problem. The Misimans tended to work the alluvial gold themselves long after the white miners had ceased to find it profitable to do so. As Stanley pointed out, "this… makes the local natives more or less independent, and it is with great difficulty that local boys will sign on for periods of six or twelve months…. Indentured labour from other divisions is therefore essential; but even this is scarce, due largely in fact that reports on dysentery on Misima have become known, thus creating an unwillingness to work on the island" (1915: 8). Besides, as there appears to have been little fraternization between the indentured laborers and local women, "sexual starvation," according to the annual report of 1936, was "a problem in a district where native 'morals' are so rigid as they are at Misima."

In the ten years before the Second World War, the Umuna mine produced over £500,000 worth of gold and was then Papua's largest gold mine (Nelson, 1976: 42). The mine remained in operation until 1942 when the Japanese advanced into the Southwest Pacific. The white population both at the mine and at Bwagaoia, which had once more become the administrative headquarters for the sub-district in 1920, were evacuated (Mackay, 1992). The indentured laborers were, however, abandoned at the mine-site. Only the Fijian missionaries remained on the island for the duration of the war. The government was in the hands of ANGAU, which had both civil and military authority.

The Japanese had a seaplane base at Nivani, and large concertation of ships was built up there before the Battle of the Coral Sea, which the Americans and Japanese fought off the Louisiades, partly within sight of Misima (Brass, 1959: 22).

There was a brief attempt to resurrect the Cuthberts Mine after the war. However, the mill had was buried in the Cooktown Creek bed during the war, and the mine quickly worked out the remaining lode as the returns did not justify the capital investment required to resume underground mining.

During the 1950s and 1960s, European mining continued intermittently, but because much of the high-grade ore "pockets" had already been exhausted, no company could prove a sufficient load to justify mining. For years, all that remained of the workforce was a caretaker of the property and a small labor line of Misimans who did maintenance work on the remaining equipment. The mine closed entirely in 1974.

Following this period, the focus of gold mining on Misima shifted to alluvial mining. These local miners had produced most of the gold recovered since the war. That is until the construction of the open-pit Misima Gold Mine in 1985. Misimans had begun alluvial mining in the early 20th century, being taught the craft by the Australian alluvial miners. The early post-War Misiman miners had all worked with Australian minders at some stage of their lives. Misiman alluvial gold production continued until the late 1970s but virtually ceased by the 1980s. During the 1970s, various international companies, including Cultus and Noranda, conducted exploration drilling on Misima before Placer obtained the mineral explorations lease.

The fifteen years in which the Misima Gold Mine operated seemed to be a

cataclysmic event in the Misiman imagination, and, yet, I found it incredibly difficult to find anyone who actively wanted to describe those years to me. There were the occasional accounts people would give that was a definite genre of recounting grievances—the kind directed to someone with the power to address those grievances. As soon as Misimans figured out how useless I was in redressing their concerns about broken promises or deceptive agreements, most Misimans gave up any interest in talking about the mine with me. This was a frustrating disappointment since I had planned to study the long-term impacts of the mine on the island. At nearly every step of the way, Misimans were insistent on either talking about the distant past, something that had a significant cognitive pull on their imaginations, or the present. Misimans were actively interested in *not* talking about the mine.

I gathered that some of this reluctance was due to the collective trauma felt from dislocation and rapid cultural change on the island. Alienated wage labor was particularly disturbing to Misimans, especially when the model of compensation for labor time started spreading to other parts of Misiman life, like paying someone to help watch your children or help you in the garden. The wage system bleeding into regular parts of Misiman life was, and continues to be, the epitome of the kind of "bad relations" (*paganina hi nak*) that breed resentment.

Plenty of Misimans also talk about the mine as an exciting and enjoyable development on the island—the money allowed for an increase in both the frequency and extravagance of mortuary feasting (Bainton & Macintyre 2016). For this reason, many Misimans, especially in Liak, refer to the time of the mine as a "hot time" (*sauga*

wawaiwai'ina) where things were exchanging hands at a rapid pace. Misimans agree this pace was because of all the pig grease "loosening" relations (*ununa lolavalava toiyam*).

One of the most significant "loosenings" was with Misimans' relationships with white people. Misimans tend to think of the mine as a realization of the development promises given to Misimans during the colonial era. Construction of new buildings was rapid, and the mine helped build new schools, a hospital, a bank, and many community halls. The road was widened and extended further than ever before, and commerce on the island reflected the height of Samarai Island in the years before World War II. A frequent recollection was that eating ice cream and watching movies on a VHS projector was a typical past time for young people in Bwagaoia. Now, it is occasionally possible to buy ice cream in one of the trade stores left in Bwagaoia, but I never met anyone who had done it in the last ten years. No one had any money.

Another problematic aspect of talking about the era of the Misima Gold Mine was that so many of those who directly benefited from compensation payments simply left the island for good soon after receiving their payments. They were never heard from again. They simply disappeared, so a lot of Misimans were confused about exactly what happened during those years, and they always felt like there were at the periphery of the action. It is likely because they were.

Bwagaoia Today

Bwagaoia is now the administrative center for the Samarai-Murua District and the Louisiade Rural Local Level Government. Until 1975, when Papua New Guinea gained

independence from Australia, the township was the site of the only government-owned and privately alienated land on the island. Throughout the colonial period, Bwagoaia had several large concrete buildings that were either the government offices or residences for colonial officials. As the headquarters for the Samarai-Murua District, the town features several government buildings and administrative centers. However, these buildings have not been maintained since their construction after the Misima Gold Mine was announced in the early 1980s.

Dilapidated and often lacking access to dependable power, many of the buildings are abandoned or only partially utilized. Today, these buildings are mostly in ruin, but a couple have been converted into a Woman's Association Guest House, a district grant application processing center, and a trade store. As the center of economic activity on the island, there is also a Western Union bank branch that consisted of a small trailer. I never saw the bank open the entire time I lived on Misima, but employees were insistent that it was still functioning; it had just run out of money.

The trade store, the largest of the buildings, is often colloquially referred to as merely "the Barn." A Korean man now owns and operates the store, which he had bought from the former landowners' association Misima Towoho Siune Association (MTSA) when they encountered money troubles. The building lays on the foundation of the old Burns Philip Trading store, which had been built in the early 20th-century. Adjacent from "the Barn" are three other trade stores and a bakery. The bakery owned and operated by a man who proudly calls himself a "half-caste," bakes about fifty loaves of bread a day. However, the popularity of the story is more likely because it supplies free condoms. A recently built trade store hugs the dock of

Bwagaoia harbor. Some Chinese businessmen sponsored by a rival landowners' association own the store, and a third much larger trade store that was bought by a Korean family after Alby Munt, the former store owner, copra plantation owner, and a long-time Australian resident of the island died in the late 1980s. Both Korean owners and managers of "the Barn" and "Alby Munt's old store" speak limited English and some Tok Pisin. The owner of "Alby Munt's old store" knows Pana Misima enough to give basic commands and tell dirty jokes. The owners and operators of the Chinese store on the dock at Managum harbor do not speak Tok Pisin, English, or Pana Misima. However, they are still somehow able to get by just fine with one Misiman man, who knows limited Chinese, usually acting as their interpreter. All three trade stores are the first thing a person would see when they arrive on a boat at the Bwagaoia harbor. The fourth trade store, which is more of a "canteen," is located on the road to the Bwagaoia High School. A Misiman owns this store but it is rarely frequented by anyone and it has fallen into disrepair with few items for sale. When I last talked to the owner, he said he was keeping it going so that he could maintain a presence on disputed land.

There is an all-weather wharf next to these trade stores along the side of Managum Lagoon, from which the harbor was created when the lagoon was dynamited in the early colonial era. During the construction of the goldmine, another wharf was built closer to Narian village for the exclusive use of the mine. After the mine closed, the wharf began to crumble, and today all that exists of the wharf are a few concrete slabs, partially submerged in a state of perpetual falling.

The former hospital in Bwagaoia downgraded to a medical clinic, no doctors work there, and whole sections of the hospital are condemned, with barrels of DDT from

the 1950s still exposed in a janitor's closet. The hospital's kitchen, which used to have industrial cooking equipment like deep fryers, now only has a single gas stove, in which the cook makes ramen noodles once a day. The Bwagaoia High School is the only public high school in the Louisiade Archipelago (a small Catholic High School is run in Namoa island by Sudest). It was promoted to a high school after the Misima Gold Mine was constructed, but it too has succumbed to the ravages of mildew and time.

There is an airstrip at Bwagaoia, and from 2010 to 2016, a plane would land every few days. Usually, these planes were filled with Misimans who worked as fly-in/fly-out mine workers throughout Papua New Guinea. During the height of the Misima Gold Mine's operation, a customs and border office was maintained at the airport, which was, for a short time, the only international airport in the country outside of Jackson International Airport in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea.

Why White People Are Fat

Probably the most common thing anyone ever said about me was that I was losing weight while I was in Misima. The rapid weight loss I experienced was commented on by almost everyone I met. These comments did not necessarily bolster my self-image as most of these observations started with a comment like, "you used to be so fat." Eventually, I learned that people's comments on my changing body were due to concern for my health, but it was also a more general observation about the bodies of white people.

Misimans tend to be small in comparison to Americans, but even more dramatically, most Misimans are lean and muscular. In contrast, I was quite pudgy. My fatness was, according to the Misimans I knew, not because of any unique biological tendencies on my part; it was

merely because “white people consume.” However, since I had been on Misima, they saw that I frequently shared my things and food with others.

“White people (‘dimdims’),” my friend Sam told me, “are like the opposite of a father. A father gives his body to his children, and he slowly wastes away. White people eat the labor of black people and become fat, while black people waste away.” He said, “You’re being becoming a Misiman. You must leave Misima before you die and waste away. You must go back to your place since you refuse to consume here.” Looking wryly at me, he quipped, “You would have been a very bad miner.”

CHAPTER 2: The Meaning of Cargo and Independence

"The world is upside down. It needs to be set right." These were Joe's parting words as he descended a deep but slender old mine shaft found at Kuyabwa, the base of Mt. Wawaiyaowa. The shaft, it was said, led first to the center of the island of Misima, Papua New Guinea, and then on to the center of the world. Australian miners likely dug the shaft during the 1910s, and it remains today of the only visible markers of that era of early shaft gold mining on Misima. This shaft, with visibility of only about three meters from the outside, is structurally precarious, but has, until now, held the test of time as it was blasted by dynamite out of a hard rock, rather than dug out of the soil like the rest. I have never been down the shaft myself, but when Joe emerged about two hours later, he had a story to tell. Joe's journey into the center of Wawaiyaowa had been wet, lonely, and dark. His flashlight was undependable, and he heard voices. They were not the voices of his friends above him. They were the voices of the ancestral dead, tree spirits (*totowoho*), and white people ('dimdims') negotiating over his future. Would Joe descend to his death? Would he lose his mind? Would he emerge with the secrets to cargo?

After emerging from the shaft, Joe related how he had conversed with a spirit residing in the center of the mountain. The spirit, an intelligent and gigantic version of the *matayuyu*, or "smoking snake" (a thin diurnal snake with a yellow hue and a venomous bite [*Toxicocalamus misimae*]), instructed Joe on how to obtain the wealth of white people—speaking to Joe in English and Pana Misima, the snake slivered in an out of the shaft's walls while detailing a specific "program" for "overturning the world" (*panayawi gegewena i pilpil*). By following this "program," he could capture the wealth, power, and autonomy of white people ('dimdims') for himself and all Misimans. Joe was already well on his way to becoming a millenarian prophet—

predicting an apocalyptic end to the world, a reversal of global fortunes, and a folding of time, but it was his "program" for change that struck me as most deeply millenarian.

Before I explain what that "program" was, and why I think it speaks to the core definitional problems of millenarianism, this chapter will first provide a framework for thinking about millenarian movements in terms of their ethical demands. These demands, I will argue, depend on a temporal folding that causes people to image apocalyptic futures in terms of a nostalgic reimagining of the past, moral critiques of the present, and action plans to experiment with transcendent values in an immanent plane. After doing this, I will trace the historical development of prophetic and millenarian movements in colonial Papua and New Guinea. I will then consider the subsequent spread of a millenarian movement on the island of Misima that fits many of the classic motifs of the infamous "cargo cult" literature, common to much of Melanesia. I will conclude the chapter with a discussion of how Joe's program was a millenarian movement that reflected much of the moral world-building found in movements preceding it. By doing so, I will demonstrate how transcendent concerns over the quality of social relations become an immanent political project for restoring lost vitality through material reorganization.

Millenarianism Revisited

At its core, millenarian activities are generally understood as organized attempts to bring about "an immanent transition to a collective salvation" (Wessinger, 2011: 5). While this tends toward an overtly broad definition encompassing all movements that seek social change, we mustn't respond to that broadness by succumbing to nominalist temptations—understanding millenarian activities only through their "historically specific expressions," rather than tracing how they share particular "family resemblance[s]" in both their virtual and actual articulations

(Faubion, 2001: 102, 103). This includes tracing the patterns of variation across commonly held assumptions about what constitutes immanent tradition and collective salvation (Bialecki, 2017).

For most anthropologists, this tracing usually comes down to the questions of what drives millenarian movements. What drives these hopes are usually assumed to be at least one of two factors. First, is the assumption that "organized efforts to perpetuate a culture," such as nativist movements with millenarian aspirations, often arise when people become conscious that their "own culture is threatened" by social change (Linton, 1943: 230). This assumption accounts for some descriptions of millenarian actors as "conservative," despite their reliance on novel, perhaps even revolutionary, social formations (e.g., Macintyre, 1990: 94). Second, millenarian efforts to overturn existing social orders are often assumed to be driven by experiences relative deprivation, along with desires for social reorientations outside of the colonial experience, including future autonomy and self-determination. This assumption has led some to claim that "the birth of these movements," especially among indigenous people, "can only be understood in the light of historical conditions relating to the colonial experience [and] to the striving of subject people to become emancipated" (Lanternari, 1963: vi).

Attempts to explain away millenarian activities as responses to cultural crises have similarly found a home with advocates of relative deprivation theory. While contemporary anthropologists rarely invoke the theory by name, the influence of relative deprivation theory on the contemporary ethnography of millenarian movements is hard to dismiss (e.g., Scott, 2009; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2000; Wessinger 2011; Landes, 2011; Jebens, 2004). Such perspectives usually understand these activities as epiphenomenal to the first experiences of encountering vast inequalities of resources and power, rather than as social experimentations in of themselves (see

Aberle, 1970; Thrupp, 1970).

Two problems result from these perspectives. First, is a denial of millenarians' purposeful agency in fostering these new formations. This can lead to misunderstanding these movements as only products of the overwhelming influence of colonial subjugation and the agency of white people, rather than ongoing experiments with new social formations outside of the imaginative repertoire of white people. Second, it becomes tempting to see these movements as examples of material denialism. It becomes a denial of the immanent demands of the ordinary, a kind of cultural critique that seeks transcendent transformations at the expense of the material here and now. Social reproduction and immanent concerns of the present are halted to make the ordinary transcendently vital. While this indeed acknowledges the countervailing forces that exist between world renunciation and the political, it fails to see that the brake is rarely so complete. For example, those Melanesian movements, typically called "cargo cults," are profoundly interested in the material and quotidian demands for immanent transformations, yet they also demand a temporal break in history as an expression of transcendent transformations.

One way that millenarian movements do seek to transcend the immanently ordinary is in how they resist uniform, homogenous, empty time by evaluating epochs according to their quality, rather than quantity (Benjamin, 1969). This is a widely acknowledged aspect of millenarian movements. However, a commonly overlooked point of comparison is how millenarian actors see time as folding in on itself. That may be an odd claim to make since most millenarian literature deals with the temporality of social change. However, the difference is in acknowledgments of how millenarian actors propel change toward either an inchoately never-yet-realized, albeit perfect, future, or a restoration of an imagined original state that contrasts

with a deficiently realized present. This restoration of hidden things, an apocalypse in the formal sense of the word, often includes the discovery of hidden secrets whose occlusion had prevented a perfect order. For example, in the wake of the second great awakening in Upstate New York, Joseph Smith discovered buried golden plates that he claimed were a written record of ancient Christian civilization in the Americas. The discovery of these neglected secrets led to a prophetic career of restoring what he believed was the original Christianity, long forgotten since the death of Christ's initial disciples. This restorationist bent is seen again and again throughout the literature, with the "New Church" of Karavar promising a restoration of the original gospel, different from that taught by white missionaries (Errington & Gewertz, 1994). The Paliau movement promised the deliverance of a "long story of God" that restored those secrets from the Bible, which white missionaries had hidden from the people of Manus Island (Schwartz, 1962).

This meaningful folding of time itself includes "connoting the adoption of new assumptions…implying the making of a new culture or community" out of the old (Burridge 1969: 47). The apocalyptic vision of millenarian movements very often includes nostalgic imaginings of an idealized past, a morally dubious present, and future that is either hoped for or warned against. In other words, millenarian demands for social change are nostalgic, contemporarily grounded in their critique, and propelled towards the future. In this sense, millenarian movements make transcendent claims over the entire temporal spectrum that is continually folding in on itself. Here, every epoch is meaningful because each becomes a gauge for the possibilities of collective, total, and miraculous salvation (Cohn, 1970). As far as this transcendent moral imperative connotes nostalgic imaginations of the past, critiques of existing social formations, and an ethical program for actualizing the two, its millenarian logic pervades

everyday life (Robbins, 2001b).

If the millenarian logic pervades everyday life, it is perhaps best seen in how people orientate themselves toward ideals of the good in the less-than-ideal of everyday life. Famously, Immanuel Kant defined deontological moral reasoning through transcendental questions of how we ought to act and what we can hope for (Critique of Pure Reason, Preface 1A). However, some anthropologists have recently argued that ordinary life is less subject to reflexive reasoning than it is to the immanent and habitual (Lambek, 2010). For example, Das (2012) argues that ethical sensibilities are cultivated as almost hypocognized habits of living within the demands of everyday life rather than as introspective evaluations. Similarly, Zigon argues that moral frameworks are "constructed as total and unified [only] after the fact" (2009: 287). Like explaining away millenarian activities as mere reactions to relative deprivation, these anthropologists understand living towards the good as epiphenomenal, rather than belonging to evaluative practices that structure primary experiences. It is also clear that considering millenarian activities as transcendental escapes from the ordinarily quotidian and material demands of life fails to recognize that insofar as millenarian activities are examples of moral world-making, they also demand ethical negotiations with the everyday.

An ordinary ethics perspective encourages sensitivity to the lack of introspective reasoning common in everyday life. Yet, it seems inefficient for explaining how people intentionally organize around hopes for the good—revitalization movements, as A.F.C. Wallace argued, are "deliberate, organized, conscious effort[s] by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture" (1956: 265). These organized efforts imply deliberative hopes, introspective definitions of the good, and collective social action. For example, the Seneca

prophet Handsome Lake organized his movement around "the imminence of world destruction; the definition of sin; and the prescription for salvation" (Wallace, 1972: 249). Sin is a departure from original innocence, the punishment is given through the end of the world, and the prescription for salvation is a return to an original but previously hidden state. Like Handsome Lake's revitalization movement, millenarianism illustrates how actors immanently enact moral critiques, political movements, and novel social formations as efforts to fold time in on itself.

Prophetic Movements in New Guinea

Soon after John Moresby anchored his 1,031-ton paddle steamer, the HMS Basilisk, at Wagawaga in 1873, remarkable power shifts occurred throughout the Milne Bay. This was, in no small way, partly due to a small contingent of former indentured South Sea Islanders and Christian teachers from the Loyalty Islands who soon set up a mission outpost at Wagawaga. There they extended the colonial reach of the Empire into its newly minted Protectorate (Wetherell, 1996; Abel, 1902).

Life for these foreigners was difficult. The teachers stuck together in small clusters out of their fear of sorcery (Wetherell 1996: 38), but their presence at the outpost had a profound effect on the region. A series of smallpox epidemics followed, and rumors circulated that the Loyalty Islanders were responsible for both the disease and the season's ruined crops (Chalmers 1887: 318; Beswick to Whitehouse, 1880). None of these teachers would survive their mission (Wetherell, 1980).

By the early 1880s, around the same time the Tuka movement was driving colonial powers into a panic, "a heathen (?) [sic] prophet" named Domu of Mita went around the island of Samarai and the coasts of Milne Bay in the Eastern Division of British New Guinea

"proclaiming a new era" (Gill, 1884: 688). LMS missionaries "heard with pleasure" that Domu's message resembled their sabbath-conscious Evangelicalism, but some of their contemporaries were more alarmed (Chalmers and Gill, 1885: 324). An indigenous teacher at the Kwato mission recalled that Domu's teachings were lies and that they had caused "havoc" (Abel 1902: 111). Either way, Domu's warnings of a new era proved to be prophetic, if not keenly observational of the contemporary world around him.

Less than a decade after Domu had disappeared into obscurity, but in the wake of massive depopulation, illness, and Christian iconoclasm, the Native Magistrate at the Eastern Division of British New Guinea reported that a new Papuan prophet, Tokeriu, had "made a great stir" (Kennedy, 1894; Abel, 1902: 104). This time, the message was a little more disconcerting, and a little less easily dismissed. Tokeiru warned his fellow Papuans that a tree spirit had told him of imminent doom. At the next moon, a series of natural disasters would commence, eventually culminating in the emergence of a volcanic island from the underworld of the dead in the middle of the bay (Abel, 1902: 107; Seligman, 1910: 655-656). The island's appearance would cause tidal waves large enough to submerge all but the highest peaks in the region for months. While the destruction would be extreme, his followers could escape the worst through his instructions. They could, like the foretold volcanic island from the underworld, emerge from the wreckage better off than before.

Tokeiru led his followers in burning their houses on the coast, adorning themselves in traditional attire, and returning to the mountainous interiors. His followers cleared all gardens, destroyed all material possessions associated with white people, and slaughtered hundreds of pigs for large feasts held before the expected apocalypse (Abel, 1902: 108). Escaping inland,

where “the tidal wave and the white man” could not find them (Ibid: 123), Tokeiru told the people that after the deluge subsided a “large steamer…after the style of [the government’s gunboat,] the ‘Merrie England,’” would anchor off the newly emerged island, “laden with the spirits of the dead” (Kennedy, 1894: 71; Abel 1902: 109). Likely piloted by Tamudulele, the “white-skinned and smooth-haired” “‘big’ man” or Paramount Chief of the underworld (Seligman, 1910: 655), the steamer and its deceased passengers would bring material gifts, initiating a “new regime” (Abel 1902: 111); one where Tokeiru “would form a Government” and his followers would “live in comfort” like the white men (Kennedy, 1894: 71).

The evangelical missionary Charles W. Abel (1902) was able to talk with Tokeiru at the height of his influence. Abel agreed that the coasts would soon encounter radical cultural transformations, in all reality that had already begun, but, while Tokeiru advocated retreat into the mountains and the destruction of manufactured ‘dimdim’ goods, Abel advocated a retreat to the mission and the adoption of western clothing, protestant industry, and other postmillennial indices of somber British modernity, like cricket. Both agreed with a certain “sense of ending,” where they stood at the edge of a new millennium (Wetherell, 1996: 40-41). In the end, like so many other millenarian prophets, Tokeiru’s prophetic career ended in a local jail, dejected, and having gifted his gardens to his enemy, Charles Abel.

In the intervening period between Tokeriu’s ascendancy and WWII, the British colonial apparatus and Christian missions intensified their efforts to transform the cultural and economic landscape of British New Guinea and the Territory of Papua. In tandem with these transformations, new millenarian movements emerged along the Central, Gulf, and Northern coasts of British New Guinea.

In 1914, an Orokaiva man named Bia began prophesying of a new time of abundance. Bia had been the personal assistant to the former Resident Magistrate C.A.W. Monckton during some of Monckton's infamous punitive raids into the New Guinea interior (Monckton 1921, 1922), but it was not until after these traumatic experiences with Monckton that Bia returned to his natal village and proclaimed that he had spoken with the taro spirit, Kekesi "a big chief of food." Kekesi was "a Strong spirit" and a "friend of Jesu Kerisu (Jesus Christ)." Through Kekesi's instructions, Bia would "make some laws for the people, and if they obeyed them, he would look after their interests, but if they disobeyed them, he would injure their food supply." In doing so, Kekesi was considered the "same as Jesu Kerisu and Government" (Chinnery and Haddon: 1917: 452). Two years earlier, a Tufi man named Aede claimed responsibility for the fatal illness that killed Patrol Officer Louis P. Hogan. Aede had "been invested with power" by another man from Cape Nelson (King, 1913: 154). Men from Baigona took this power to be a novel kind of "craft," or "priesthood" (Williams, 1928: 8; Worsley, 1968: 55). While their cosmological vision seemed to center around various snake taboos and thaumaturgical magic (Wilson, 1973), it was their organization, not underwritten by the church or the state, that disturbed Europeans the most.

Bia's Taro Cult disturbed Europeans for similar reasons. It persisted as a Pan-Papuan movement between the World Wars as an "ill-defined" or "elementary hierarchy" separate from both traditional power structures and the colonial structures missions and the government intended to impose (William, 1928: 32, 95). The central "new idea" of the Taro Cult was the emphasis "good fellowship," or Pan-Papuan solidarity, as essential to the kinds of organized social formations that could bring about a new world order (Williams, 1928: 19; PAR 1914-

1915: 49). Papuans marked the eventfulness of this new social unity through deliberative co-operation and fellowship between formerly hostile groups, often through efforts to communally construct buildings like Churches (Beaver, 1916; Worsley, 1968).

Europeans came to Melanesia bringing, and taking, many things. The resulting experience of encountering vast discrepancies in material wealth led to humiliation, resentment, and then anger over the new racial configurations of the colonial experience. Despite this, Europeans seemed surprised when Tahitians responded to the Christian message in 1828 by declaring the prophet Teau as the true Christ (Moerenhout, 1837: 502). They were equally disturbed by the anti-European movements like the Tuka movement that swept across Fiji (Kaplan, 1995).

The colonial administration understood the "sporadic" appearance of these prophets to be emblematic of a more extensive transhistorical process in which "Nascent Christianity in all countries and all ages seems to have been favorable to the rise of the prophet that predicts the speedy end of the world" (MacGregor 1894: 12). Colonial officials were afraid of the movements, seeing them as acts of resistance, as well as miscomprehensions of the moral value of labor, industry, and salvation resulting from the stubbornness of the natives' "primitive mentality," or even ecstatic manifestations of "temporary mental derangement or hysteria" (Wuth 1916: 58; Williams 1923). When these millenarian movements converged with indigenous hierarchies, they were often quickly treated as rebellions to be violently repressed (Elsmore 2012). However, when Europeans found these often-iconoclastic movements in the more loosely structured societies of New Guinea, they typically pathologized them as examples of cultural neuroses, and even collective suicide.

For example, after the Taro Cult in the Papuan Gulf dissipated, it was the iconoclastic destruction of men's houses, gardens, and other indices of traditional Papuan life along the Southern Gulf coasts that perhaps disturbed white observers the most. Papuans ran through villages ransacking any tangible reminder of the traditional past, proclaiming that a new era was imminent. By physically destroying a deficient past, a future that returned to an original order could be made present. The Resident Magistrate Huber Murray and the colonial government anthropologist F.E. Williams (1928) would call this iconoclasm along the Southern Gulf Coasts "The Vailala Madness," after one of the most dramatically affected villages. This pathologizing of the phenomenon ended up being a particularly significant move on the part of white Europeans. William's description of The Vailala Madness as a hysteria that was "on the one hand a set of preposterous beliefs… and, on the other hand, collective nervous symptoms of a sometimes protester and idiotic nature" (Williams in Schimmer, 1977: 331), explained away the movements as pathological responses to social stress. It was, in the crudest sense, a precursor to relative deprivation theory that saw such movements as collective psychological processes of accommodation. What this occluded was the fact that such acts of iconoclasm were actively being encouraged by missionaries and the government. The only problem was that the Church or State had not authorized this iconoclasm, so they were potentially "uncontrollable" in Denning's sense of the word.

Cargo on Misima

In the early twentieth century, the island of Misima hosted the Uma gold mine as the only profitable mining venture in the colonial Territory of Papua (Nelson, 1976). Because of this, the

Uma mine supported a significant white population on the island, along with a whites-only golf course and dance hall. Throughout this period, more indigenous laborers from other parts of Papua, particularly Southern Gulf coasts, interiors of Cape Nelson, and the island of Goodenough resided on Misima than indigenous Misimans. Several Orokaiva laborers had participated in Bia's Taro Cult or affiliated with the Baigona men, and laborers from other parts of Milne Bay, particularly Goodenough Island, had been deeply affected by the teaching of Tokeiru and similar Milne Bay prophets. These men, it was later claimed, believed they were participating in the mining ventures of white men to find their gold, to discover their secrets of wealth and power.

A Misiman man named Buliga was particularly interested in these Papuan strangers and their rumors of hidden knowledge. While he did not work for any white miners, colonial administrators, or missionaries, he would regularly deliver food and betel nut to these native laborers. They, in exchange, would share with him stories of white wealth and power. Inspired by these stories, Buliga emerged as a Misiman prophet shortly before WWII. He prophecied of a new age and his central role in ushering it in. This new epoch, he promised, would reverse the racial hierarchy of colonial Melanesia.

Although he was from the southern coast of Misima, he initially avoided the industrial activity there. He started his work as a prophet in the northern coastal village of Siagara, where he lived according to his previously deceased father's invitation. As paternal kin grew increasingly frustrated with his alien presence on his father's land, Buliga's place was becoming more precarious each year. Because of this, Buliga sought the advice of his dead father's spirit. He claimed that after returning from the garden, he saw the ghost of this father breaking

chestnuts next to his gravesite. Buliga's father once again gave his verbal permission to live on the land, but, as almost an afterthought, the spirit of Buliga's father included a warning. He said a new era was approaching. The mythic Paramount Chief of Misima, the founder of clans, had long ago left Misima with the secret magic of cargo. Rebuffed by Misimans, he had given his secret magic to white people, to the exclusion of Misimans. Buliga's father claimed that Misimans could recover the secrets of cargo, but they would have to trick the Paramount Chief into returning to Kuyabwa in hopes of luring his deceased wife from Tuma, the land of the dead. To do that, he would require skulls of white men as an enticing gift.

The Paramount Chief was first known as Mwasai. He was born in Nobuleyan, the place of origin for witches in the southern Massim, to Sinaloa and Taulai. With his wife, Noka, he lived at Abpalu on the south interior of Misima. Mwasai had become a great sorcerer and warrior who traveled throughout the southern coast of Misima. At Kuyabwa, Mwasai's wife died and left him to care for his daughters and their children by himself. Eventually, his daughters began fighting amongst themselves when each refused to clean the feces belonging to each other's babies. In response, he charged each of his ten daughters with founding a clan to spread throughout Misima, each family settling different but equal, parts of the island. After instituting the matrilineal clan system on Misima, he left the island with all the world's cargo.

Mwasai took his witchcraft canoe, Mwago'igo, to Sudest, where he displayed his traditional pipe (*baubau*), to the islanders residing at Mt. Rio. From the pipe, he shook out "shell valuables, ax blades, pig's tusks, lime pots, and spatulae" (Macintyre 1990: 84). Because of his use of the pipe, he was named Bauwa by the islanders and asked to stay, but he once again sailed Mwago'igo towards the east to find the spirit of his dead wife, Noka. He traveled throughout

Polynesia and eventually to the land of white people, where he shared his cargo and the secrets to reproducing it. There, some Misimans argue, he became Jehovah. However, when he realized his wife resided in Tuma, he decided to mediate between the living and dead as Tamudulele, the same Paramount Chief of the witches. They were to bring cargo in Tokieru's telling of the end of the world. Today, many Misimans claim that Tamudulele is the polygynist partner to all witches (both male and female) and that he might even be Satan himself. Mwasai became Bauwa to the people at Sudest, then became Jehovah to white people, and lastly, Tamudulele/Satan to witches. At each step, he provided endless supplies of cargo while transforming himself and the societies around him. The only thing that could convince him to return would be offering him a skull he could use to lull his dead wife from Tuma, the land of the undead.

After meeting his dead father, Buliga went throughout Misima preaching the Mwasai/Bauwa/Jehovah myth and its millenarian message of a resentful hero. He would, after all, one day return to provide cargo and reverse the current racial order (see Young, 1971b, 1983c). For example, in Siagara, Buliga blew a conch shell and called a public meeting. He "sat at a table like those used by patrol officers. It was covered with a tablecloth, and on it were flowers and a Bible. His two 'lieutenants' at Siagara were Madiu, the village constable, and his brother Misa who was a mission preacher" (Whiting 1975: 247-248). "They gathered all the villagers together at the meeting, and Buliga then asked each person to come forward, kiss the Bible and swear that they had no magical possessions; others kissed the Bible and said they were 'clean'; some were ashamed of their magical knowledge and lied to him.

"Buliga then stood on his table and proceeded to expose those who had lied to him by implication to Jehova[h]. He began by revealing that a Meisoga woman had hidden a small piece

of human fat at the bottom of a pile of baskets staked over the fireplace. He told Madiu and Misa that she had lied and then direct them to the hiding place. They returned with a small parcel. Bulge opened the banana leaf wrapping and revealed a piece of fresh yellow fat. He smelt it, gave it to Madiu and Misa to smell, and then invited the rest of the people to do the same. All were unanimous that they had never smelt anything like it nor hunted any animal with similar fat. All agreed it must be human fat.

"He then exposed all the others who lied and identified all their particular magical aids. These were then collected by Madiu and Misa, displayed by Buliga as proof of his omniscience and then threw them all into the sea. The sea became glassy and suddenly, about 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, a black ship appeared on the horizon and sailed toward Siagara and Buliga's meeting place at Kalatauwa. It anchored, and its crew slowly lowered a dingy into the sea. In it were three or four people. They started to paddle toward the waiting crowd. Suddenly to the astonishment of all, the dingy disappeared along with its passengers." Someone had not quite believed in the cargo.

When the news of Buliga's message and meetings reached the mission, the Polynesian missionary, Isikeli Hau`ofa, the father of the Tongan anthropologist and public intellectual Epeli Hau`ofa, immediately condemned the movement, urging the white missionary H.K. Bartlett to suppress the movement. However, Bartlett thought the movement was harmless and paid it little attention.

When the Japanese invaded Rabaul, they took the Australian colonial government by total surprise. The casualties were high, and the Japanese took many white plantation owners hostage. Two weeks later, the Resident Magistrate on Misima received a panicked radio message

that the Japanese were headed their way. Within hours nearly every white European left the island on two large government steamers.

Buliga quickly pointed to the departure of the white Europeans, the chaotic closure of the gold mine, and the abandonment of the non-indigenous Papuans on the island as signs that the end was soon approaching. At this time, he decided to reveal the previously hidden truth that Hitler was, in fact, Jehovah and that the battle against the British and Australians was a cosmic battle over the Papuan's right to cargo.

For the next two years, a bitter battle raged between Buliga, Hau`ofa, and Kenneth Kaiwa, the non-indigenous Native Clerk. He was given the government storehouse keys for safekeeping until the Australians returned. When the Australian military did return, it was as Patrol Officer Ralph Mader.

Ralph Mader was looking for native labor to work in building prisons for Japanese soldiers and constructing runways. When Hau`ofa approached him during one of his recruiting drives through the Southcoast, Hau`ofa told him of a Misiman who worships Hitler and preaches the violent overthrow of the colonial government and Christian mission. After chasing Buliga throughout the island and into the Calvados Chain, Mader finally met his match. Buliga and his compatriots ambushed Mader, killing him and everyone in his party. It was said that Buliga was attempting to take Mader's skull so that it could enter into the traditional exchange system around Sudest, something that did happen.

A few months later, when a military patrol came to check on why Mader had not returned, they found Hau`ofa and Kaiwa in a full out war with Buliga. Within days a warship assisted in the arrest of Buliga and his accomplices in the murder of Mader. ANGAU held

speedy trials, and the presiding officer gave death sentences by hanging. The night before the executions, Buliga hung himself in his jail cell. The next morning the government made every man, woman, and child (including the young Epeli Hau`ofa) watch as fifteen men hung from makeshift gallows.

In the "confused period" after WWII, when the colonial administration was still trying to reestablish its presence, the remnants of Buliga's movement was also asserting its primacy as an autochthonous government. Even though Buliga was dead, the cult persisted. Cult leaders endowed themselves with titles like "President," "General," "Treasurer," "Secretary," or "Magistrate." The movement spread throughout the Massim, and "strong elements of the native population of Goodenough Bay and the Cape Vogel peninsula banded together to set up a 'government' of their own and defy existing authority. Led by an ex-government clerk, who had been dismissed for embezzlement, the organization was called the Wedau Development Company, or a similar high-sounding name. Several thousand pounds in cash were collected from 'shareholders' who, after the ring was broke, recovered only about two-thirds of their money" (Brass, 1956: 100).

After the war, the Cuthbert and Uma gold mines closed due to mismanagement. For the next forty years, Misimans copra, cocoa, and coffee were the only business ventures on the island. Two white men who returned to the island would pay for the commodities in tobacco rolls, and, eventually, cash. These men and the state-sponsored copra co-operatives became central to the moral imagination of native autonomy and independence, being the only means of generating a cash income on the island. These business ventures introduced Misimans to ideas like variable interest, currency exchange rates, and new ways of growing money through labor,

faith, and financialization.

By the 1950s, Buliga's nephew, Vile, started a co-operative tradestore in Siagara. There Misimans could buy shares in the co-operative for between K1 and K5, and in return, they would receive "a new name," a kind of bank account identification number. Soon, the bureaucratic structure of Vile's co-operative resembled the previous Wedau Development Company, with members receiving titles like "Governor-General, a General, public servants, and others bearing titles of rank that appear to be neologisms, having no meaning in the local language or in English" (Macintyre, 1990: 94).

Vile soon founded his hamlet deep in the interior of Misima outside of Siagara. There he built a large church called, "Seven Church," in the style of a colonial Resident Magistrate's house. The three-story building featured a small attic, the main floor just below for main worship activities, and a ground floor for co-op meetings and storage for the trade store. Vile and his followers actively called their group, "Cargo Cult," and their meetings mostly consisted of attempts to contact the dead, often with makeshift telephones. Group members would pass around bowls of money on the main floor while Vile would hide in the level below, bellowing admonitions and other messages from the ancestors of dead members. Then Vile and his followers would have orgies in the perfumed attic above, wholly lined with pillows and sheets. Vile collected semen from those orgies and mixed the semen into potions that he then sprinkled onto graves.

The trade store church operated as a place for communing with the dead, worshipping Jehovah, and investing. Through their new account identification numbers, they could buy shares in a future utopian nation called "Secret Citizen." By joining the "Cargo Cult," worshipping in

the “Seven Church,” and buying shares in “Secret Citizen.” Misimans could become “secret citizens” themselves. The savings accounts of “secret citizens” were held in a bank branch in Tuma, the land of the dead. Vile would regularly provide public audits of the accounts, which would grow from small kina bills into millions of kina within a few years. Members to the “Cargo Cult” were ranked not only by their status as “secret citizens,” but although various initiatory stages Vile would periodically introduce. I was told of a former high ranking initiate, the secret knowledge given to followers at some of the highest stages was the knowledge that Hitler was in the group’s accountant. Vile said that Jehovah was the identity of Mwasai when he was helping white peoples, and Hitler was again Mwasai among white people. However, he took on that identity whenever he was actively and openly opposing white people.

Just as people in Boma and Siagara grew impatient with Vile’s delayed promises of cash windfalls, the Papua New Guinea national government proposed the Misima Gold Mine joint venture with Placer Dome, Inc. The large open-pit gold mine was the most significant development in the island’s history and one of the first mining projects to be approved in Papua New Guinea after the disastrous closure of the Panguma mine in Bougainville. Soon white miners, engineers, and company men started returning to Misima as part of the new mining crew. Misimans started whispering that Buliga’s prophecies of Mwasai’s return were accurate, and Vile promptly claimed, like Buliga had, that he had located the burial site of Noka in Kuyabwa. Vile told his followers that he intended to trick Mwasai/Tamudulele into returning to Misima by convincing Tamudulele that he could lure Noka out of Tuma with not a human skull but a solid bar of gold. At around this same time, Vile had impregnated a young woman from a prominent family in Siagara. One night, her brothers surrounded the Church of Seven and burnt the building

to the ground. The next day a resident of Boma told the local police of Vile's plans to steal gold from the mine.

Vile protested that he never planned on stealing gold from the mine itself, but instead sought gold buried deep inside the Mt. Wawayaiaoya. He planned on entering in through a small shaft found in Kuyabwa, at the base of the mountain. Therefore, Vile explained, a snake should tell him how to obtain the gold that seeds the core ore Placer Dome, Inc. was mining. However, Vile did not thrive under his short-term imprisonment, and he died shortly after being released.

Nostalgia for Cargo

The post-mine closure economy of Misima, Papua New Guinea, provides a particularly illustrative account of how and why these ambivalent desires might flourish in some communities. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, the development and operation of a gold mine on the island transformed Misima. However, by the early 2000s, the mine's closure initiated a revaluation of gold mining and national independence as adverse developments in the island's history. Misimans warmly reminisce about the mine's operation and the high expectations of long past Papuan independence movements. Misimans typically experience this historical memory in contraposition to present social life. Because of this, Misimans often frame the present through the persistent absence of state governance, mining wealth, and lack of convincing explanations for their respective departures from the island. Co-rumination about these absences is a ubiquitous feature of everyday life, but the affective attachments people may hold to these absences remain ambivalent. Tropes of resentful heroes in Misiman myth reflect a similarly ambivalent nostalgia for morally repugnant, yet prosperous pasts. This chapter explores the possibilities for comparisons between colonial nostalgia, moral reflections on gold mining,

and the problematic resentful heroes of Misiman myth. Misimans morally condemn while simultaneously yearning for their return. In doing so, this chapter compares Misiman enticements for the attention of the state, mining companies, and resentful heroes with their moral reflections on the meaning of their absences.

We may tend to think of colonialism as very bad, very bad indeed, but I have struggled to come to terms with the fact that a great deal of the people I interacted with during my research on the island of Misima, Papua New Guinea, flirt with colonial nostalgia. In doing so, they regularly argue that Papua New Guinea's independence from Australia in 1975 as a trick, or at least a masterclass in dissimulation. How Misimans identify their independence as a trick alludes to what they see as the more sinister nature of white people's ('dimdim') relations, that their granting of independence had nothing to do with autochthony, autonomy, or equality, but had everything to do with enclosing and then cutting off relations, something white people are very good at. Following this logic of obligation, closure, and cutting, I think of this account as a kind of microhistory of this trick, that self-reliance is freedom because it cuts you off from obligations.

Amid a contentious election in 2016, I started studying how politicians in Papua New Guinea make friends. The contest was a by-election in Papua New Guinea's Samarai-Murua District, which encompasses the southern half of the Milne Bay Province. The parliamentary seat was for is one of the largest districts in PNG, with the Louisiade Archipelago stretching across a vast expanse of over twenty-six thousand square kilometers of ocean separating approximately three hundred islands. Reliable traditional trading routes connect these islands, and the government built maritime infrastructures that have been steadily weakening since their

construction during the colonial era, more than fifty years ago.

For the people of the Louisiade Archipelago, "making friends" (*loheheliyam*) is often the gloss used for practicing politics. However, it is also the glue that has held trade networks together since long before colonialism. However, it would be a mistake to assume that "making friends" is an unambiguously desired practice. The positive connotations of "making friends" with politics were not the only association's people made with metaphor. Instead, throughout the Louisiades, "making friends" connotes possible chicanery, sexual impropriety, and even violent intimidation, as well as the possible affiliations of trade, love, and safety. To say that Louisiade Islanders consider "making friends" with a deep ambivalence would be an understatement.

In my efforts to study this ambivalence toward politics during the 2016 Samarai-Murua by-election, I would learn in advance the itinerary of political candidates and travel to the islands and villages in their planned tour well in advance of their visits. There I would ask residents what they thought "making friends" might have in common with politics, politicians, and the government. One day, while waiting for a campaigner's boat to arrive in Sabaral, a Misiman man told explained to me that government was two things, both of which are captured by the notion of "making friends." He explained that the government is referred to as a network of tracks, roads, or routes on the land or seascape that connect people. These ever-shifting tracks connect people of far-flung destinations. The support the tracks lend to the "making of friends" provides a picture of the State as merely the infrastructural support behind the movement of actors. In this version, "making friends" is most closely tied to the inter-island trade, romantic quests, and warfare. This is because on Misima, and much of the Louisiades, you would identify your trading partners, sexual partners, and opponents in any contest as your "friends" (*heliyam*). The

State exists as a network that facilitates the agency of its citizens to link up with one another in dyadic pairings that recursively replicate webs of interconnection. The citizens remain in the foreground, while the State recedes to the background as the vestiges of those connections.

The alternative explanation is given by the State, and "making friends," reifies the State as an operative agent in the foreground of folk analyses of power. My friend explained that the government could also be identified with a singular person, a man who gives (*toguyau*) to such an extent that he becomes something akin to a clan chief (*tolulugi*) who can pass judgments with authority (*-lulugi*) over all matters involving his territory (*abalulugi*). The most significant material marker (*etotohi*) of any hamlet (*awan, abamasio,* or *gieban*) is its graveyard (*salai*, *butuman*, or *gieban*). However, it outside of most graveyards is a small clearing with at least three stones arranged in a pattern like the three cooking stones (*esai*) used in cooking. These large stones (*epupwet*) provide a place (*aba-*) for sitting (*-masio*) while negotiating (*awota*) and sharing speeches (*bahikan hi guyauan*). A subclan (*epupwet*) is often identified as the sitting stones (*epupwet*) where people sit and make decisions. It is there that the leader (*tologugui*) of the subclan (*epupwet*) makes decisions (*logugui*) concerning the use of land in the subclan's territory (*abalogugui*). This entire process of speech making, negotiation, and decision making is called "making friends" (*loheheliyam*).

Reflective Nostalgia

While visiting Misiman's main township of Bwagaoia relatively early in my fieldwork, I had a unique experience, which I have now realized is more common than I had initially assumed. At Bwagoia's dock, I found Peter chewing betel nut and contemplating the past. Peter remembered colonialism. After sitting next to Peter, he asked, "What do you think? Was this all

a mistake?"

"What was a mistake?" I asked.

"Independence," he answered.

I told him that I thought independence was needed and good, but after a long pause and continued gaze over the harbor, he replied, "Something was a mistake then."

I have long thought about this interaction and have wondered why someone like Peter may come to question the wisdom of Papua New Guinea's independence in 1975. There is the obvious issue that Peter may have had many similar interactions with 'dimdims,' particularly Australian 'dimdims,' who occasionally bond over nostalgic sentiments for Australia's colonial benevolence. It is somewhat of a whole genre of phatic interracial speech for people to bond over the days when places like Misima had golf courses, freemason dance halls, and even movie theaters. After all, roads were maintained, the post was delivered, and broadcast radio hummed in 'dimdim' and Papuan homes alike. I still believe Peter could have been following this interracial script, but I think there was far more to his question than just that. Peter's brother-in-law and another Misiman man soon joined our discussion and Peter resumed his remanences of colonialism:

"Independence. It was supposed to be enough. Were we ready? Did they trick us to fail? Papua, we would be our own nation, a sovereign nation by Crown Decree. We would stand next to Australia, other nations of the Commonwealth, and would no longer be looked down upon. No longer would we gravel and bow at sight of the 'dimdim.' Papua Besena, it was supposed to be enough. Besena, isn't that right?"

"Yes, yes. That's the truth. Lie," said the Misiman man.

Peter turned to his affine, an Engan, “But now we marry these people, and they take our land, build stores, and then run away after they’ve sold a story to us. Now the problem is who is better. You [again nodding toward Baidu], or us, the Papuan people.” His affine laughed and interjected while gesturing toward me, “with the dimdim looking over both of us. Isn’t that right? After all, doesn’t it take a trickster to beat a clever man.”

Peter’s countenance changed as he laughed and slapped his hand against his thigh. “You caught me, clever man. But the dimdims are the real tricksters, they claim they are gone, that the time of gift-giving is complete, now is the time for self-reliance, but they are there the whole time. Just invisible, refusing our offer. Very bad friends.”

Josephine Abaijah and the Papua Besena Movement

Through expressions of negative nationalism, reflective nostalgia, and the colonial racial order, Peter and his expressed frustrations with the politics of recognition, with the acknowledgment that whatever status they may able to achieve, autonomy did not mean equality, at least not to ‘the dimdim,’ but I want to now explore more about what they meant by Papua Besena, not being enough.

Papua Besena was a political movement that formally coalesced into a political party on June 3rd, 1973 (Abaijah, 1976: 13). It was named after a popular phrase at the time used to emphasize Papuan pride. “Papua Besena” being a Hiri-Motu phrase, roughly translated as “Papua’s tribe, nation, or family.” Josephine Abaijah, the first woman elected to the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly just a year before, was the movement’s most prominent member.

Abaijah spent most of her childhood on Misima, during a period she called “the most important” of her life (Abaijah & Wright, 1991: 14). After WWII, her father, who was originally

from Wamira, had found work with Australians stationed on Misima. His job was "to make a few dollars for a colonial master by selling canned meat from Australia, coloured cloth from China, fish from anywhere canned in Japan and few other foods and trinkets. All this was designed to relieve the natives of the few dollars they acquired from selling copra of working for wages in the local economy which consisted of the government, missions and a foreign-owned gold mine" (Ibid: 10). In her memoir, Abaijah often reflects on Misima as an idyllic paradise "full of sensuous magic. Elegant, delicate and untamed… the kind of island dear to the hearts of those addicted to the magic, if not the reality, of South Sea island romance" (Ibid: 9). Her memories of Misiman colonialism are ambivalent, as she is aware that this "South Sea island romance" was mostly the product of the white ('dimdim') imagination, all while marveling at the "worldly wealth" her father was able to procure from his employment by the Australians (Ibid: 10). Abaijah would later argue the Papua Besena movement would free "the minds of the Papuan people from the colonial mentality and the feeling of inferiority given to them by their Australian colonial experience" (1976: 13). Essential to this decolonization of Papuan minds was the realization that "Papua was administered by Australians with [either] a big yawn," or they "enjoyed being big fish in a small pool" (Abaijah & Wright, 1991: 15, 19). The disinterest in Papuans was just as offensive to Abaijah as their tendency to "lord over" them (Ibid: 19). For Abaijah, colonialism was defined less by violence and dispossession than by humiliation and disinterest. As she later put it to me in an interview, "it was like a lover who you give everything to, only for you to find out that they were only interested in taking away your innocence. Nothing more. Now they no longer return your letter."

Abaijah, did not necessarily see this humiliation as only a product of white supremacy.

Her "'anti-colonial' movement," she said, was "aimed at wiping 'out all forms of colonialism in Papua—white colonialism and black colonialism" (1976: 13; Abaijah & Wright, 1991: 284). However, the thrust of Abaijah's critique was over the concern of continued subservience and inferiority of Papuans, to whomever it was that was "lording" over them.

"Papua Besena has only one aim," she wrote, "TO MAKE PAPUA FREE… MASTERS OF THEIR OWN LANDS, THEIR OWN RESOURCES, THEIR IMMIGRATION AND THEIR OWN LIVES." It would "achieve this aim or objective by freeing the minds of the Papuan people, lifting from the Papuan people the slave mentality of colonialism, and destroying the colonial myth in Papua," which she argued was rooted in the infantilization of the Papuan people as a subservient class (Abaijah, 1974: 356).

She argued that through the unification of Papua and New Guinea, "The role of Papua," had been relegated to becoming "a baby farm to provide temporary labour for the economic and political development of New Guinea" (Abaijah, 1976: 13). She claimed that in order for New Guinea to be developed, someone had to be underdeveloped and that someone was Papua. "What Australia decided to do was a crash program of development, develop one country instead of two, destroy the economic and political self-reliance of Papua, and dump Papua as a dependent colony of New Guinea" (Ibid: 16).

Initially, Abaijah advocated for Papua's continued designation as an Australian territory, with independence for New Guinea. At her home in Hohola, Abaijah hosted the association's first public meeting on June 3, 1973. There she argued that Papua should "retain the status of an Australian territory and Australian citizenship" (Anonymous 1973a: 3) because "Papua is a natural trading partner of Australia" (quoted in McKillop, 1982: 337).

Bill Morrison, the Australian Minister of External Territories, privately worried that if Papua Besena brought their case for retaining Australian citizenship, the Papuan separatists could win (Denoon, 2005). However, the demand soon lost steam as letters to the editor of the Post-Courier quickly pointed out that "Miss Abaijah forgets that history shows the Australian unions to be among the most racially prejudiced in the modern world" (Pemulo, 1973: 2). Amo Mark, Abaijah's former classmate at Misima, shot back that "he did not want to be a second-class Australian" (Anonymous, 1973b: 12).

At the time, a significant feature of Abajiah's complaints was the growing prominence of Tok Pisin in government and daily life in the Central Province. She claimed that thought and language were co-constituent. For her, decolonizing Papuan minds meant protection from Tok Pisin, in favor, without a tinge of irony, retaining the privileged status of English and Hiri Motu. "[T]he new pidgin imperialism," she said, was aimed at the "New Guinea exploitation of Papuan land and resources and New Guinea suppression and colonialism of the Papuan people" (Anonymous 1973e: 3). The integration of Tok Pisin, which she called a "kanaka language" (Anonymous 1973a: 3), was "an act of discrimination… a new colonial language which has no use other use than as a language of colonial control." This was all in contrast to English, which she called "an important national asset" (Anonymous, 1973c: 8).

Abaijah's critics were fierce. Bill Morrison, labeled Abaijah's speeches "xenophobic and nihilist[istic]," full of "incoherent" demands (Denoon, 2005: 125-126). New Guinean critics accused her of being "confused" (Mokoi, 1974: 2), a woman full of "wild emotionalism… border[ing] on hysteria" (Taureka, 1977: 10), who "reckons women have power to speak in their political affairs" (Sakalef, 1973: 2), and her former classmate at Misima, publicly implored her

to “go back to the village and have six or 12 children” (Anonymous, 1973b: 12).

Michael Somare largely ignored Abaijah, but as tensions flared throughout 1973, he started making more public criticism of the Papuan separatist movement. He called “Papua” a colonial invention (Anonymous 1973d: 11), saying, “When the white man came then we Papuans and New Guineas were not strangers to each other… It was the white men who drew a line across our country” (quoted in O’Brien 1973: 4). “What is separating us from each other? Is it the imaginary line drawn by the early colonialists?... yet some people such as Miss Abaijah are cutting it into even smaller pieces” (quoted in Seneca 1973: 2). Somare’s comments drew upon earlier abominations for national unity, “we must disregard tribalism,” one Misiman man wrote to the Post-Courier in 1970, “The sooner the people realise the significance of…unity the better… I am not against associations… but there is a danger to unity that we should not disregard. They could be a source of conflict and hatred” (Mark 1970: 2). Rev. Percy Chatterton responded by saying that the “single nation movement’ was the most expatriate inspired of all Papua New Guinea’s movements” (O’Brien, 1973b: 18).

As independence approached, Abaijah’s initial claim that the push for unification was Australia’s attempt “to thrust any sort of plan on this country that will free Australia of its obligations” (Anonymous, 1972: 12), seemed vindicated. Australia clearly approached the process as less of a project of uplift and reciprocal equality than as an exit strategy. On March 15th, 1975, Papua Besena held its independence ceremony at Baruni. They sang their national anthem beneath their red, white, and blue flag of Papua. After the flag ceremony, Abaijah displayed a hunting knife, some calico cloth, two sticks of tobacco, three navy biscuits, and an ax. “Take them back Australia,” she said, “we wish you well…but we are free now” (quoted in

Special Correspondent, 1975: 1). Later, two village elders attempted to return the goods to Tom Critchley, the High Commissioner, at the Government House. The two men gave his Critchley's wife a note written in Motu that said, "Take your goods back again as we are going to take back the land that belongs to us.' She told the two men she would give the bundles to her husband and that he would send them to the Australian Government" (Ibid: 4).

Abaijah had explained earlier that she believed that by remaining an Australian territory, and then later Papuan independence, would enable Papua to compete on "equal terms" with the rest of the world (quoted in Steinbauer, 1974: 39). It's clear that she saw autonomy as an intensification of relational exchange with 'dimdims,' not a breaking away. I believe even her return of the old colonial goods could properly be understood as Abaijah once again trying to remind the Australian government of its unique history of exchange with the Papuan peoples.

Like many others, Abaijah soon embraced the "self-reliance" promoted by the national government's Eight Point Plan. Bernard Narokobi argued that equality, self-reliance, and decentralization were the guiding principles of the Eight-Point Plan, but like any good buzzword, "self-reliance" was given to polysemy. On one hand, it pointed to the values of self-determination and autonomy that were one of the few uniting threads of intellectual life during the late colonial area. Narokobi believed that while equality was an important "social goal" in "harmony…with our social values" and the "basis of Christianity," it was self-reliance that would bring Papua New Guinea true equality. He wrote,

> Some people think that by inviting tourists, big Japanese, Australian, English and American businesses, we will be making a lot of money and 'be equal to each other and to them.' No, that is a big mistake." His answer, and the answer to Abaijah's concerns over the National Government's neglect of Papua, was decentralization, which meant for Narokobi making "our villages the starting points for development, pray with God to get faith in long and careful thinking,

and work hard, then we can build happy homes and villages (Narokobi, 1977: 12).

There was a tinge of neoliberalism attached to it— self-reliance as possessive individualism against obligatory exchange with the state. All the sudden development was a problem for the grassroots, not the government. For example, one Port Moresby resident wrote that "The Eight Point Plan is not for the Government to implement but for the people to achieve" (Dubarere, 1975: 2). The problem with self-reliance, Oscar Tammur, the Education Minister, argued, was less about resources or capacity, than about acquiring the proper "attitudes" (Tammur, 1977: 5).

These were, of course, convenient opinions much easier to maintain in Port Moresby than in the village. The skeptics of self-reliance were quick to point out the irony in all of this, that self-reliance was being used as an excuse for reneging on the obligations the state had to its citizens. Furthermore, it seemed to manifest itself in direct opposition to Narokobi's stated aspirations of social harmony or Abaijah's autochthony as autonomy and equality. It had turned into a kind of war of all against all. One bible student wrote into the Post-Courier, "The Government does aim to develop people. It aims to make them self-reliant. And that is where it fails… Look at other countries who have relied on self. Being self-reliant ultimately meanings killing the brother so that the self can be 'free'" (Strelan, 1975: 2).

Misima Besena

Having been raised on Misima, Abaijah had to have known the Pana Misima translation of, Papua Besena as "Papua is enough." This concept of "enoughness" is the primary mode in which Misimans have engaged the legacy of the Papua Besena movement. It is also the preferred form for translating the concept of self-reliance, or Nau-Besena, as "the self is enough." The

concept of Nau-Besena is widely used by Misiman Christians today as a way of talking about what they believe is proper modern ethical orientations of idiocentrism, as opposed to the allocentric concerns of traditional Misiman exchange and social life.

This concept of Nau-Besena did not arrive out of nowhere; it started gaining prominence once Misima Gold Mine began construction in 1985. Soon after the construction was announced, Amo Mark, the same former classmate of Abaijah's whom I quoted earlier, returned to Misima. There he founded a short-lived, but capable, pressure group called Misima Besena. While some of the more imaginative members of the group had fantasies of Misima as an independent nation, the vast majority of the group's efforts were into advocating restricted labor immigration to the island throughout the mine's operation. Placer Dome argued that this was an unrealistic expectation since there simply were not enough Misimans trained as mine workers to operate a modern mine on the island.

Still, inspired by Papua Besena's nativism, Amo Mark and his Misima Besena compatriots persuasively argued their case during the drafting of the mine's social impact study. The mine eventually agreed to restrict the number of foreign employees on the island to a bare minimum, and even develop a fly-in/fly-out scheme so that non-Misiman employees of the mine only stayed at the island for a maximum of three consecutive weeks. Today, many Misimans now work as fly-in/fly-out mine workers throughout Papua New Guinea, just as Australians did before them on Misima.

The sudden influx of Australian professionals in the early days of the mine reminded Mark of his experience of late colonialism in Port Moresby, where there was a rush of white Australians whose primary job was to replace themselves with a Papua New Guinean. However,

for Mark and many other Misimans, the process went as independence should have, the replacements being Misimans, not New Guineans. Mark, had, despite his initial resistance to Abaijah's separatism, came to adopt the same nativist politics.

The Misima Besena group argued that by relying on themselves, they had turned their attention away from the rest of Papua New Guinea, and by doing so, they had become better Christians. A Pentecostal revival spread throughout the island as Misimans were encouraged to "develop the self and all things will follow."

Courses run by the United Methodist Church called "Self-Reliance and the Gospel Message" were well attended as Misimans. The cheer for the crusades was "Jesus i Besena," or Jesus is Enough. At the time, a Canadian employee at Placer Dome, Inc. remarked how frequently public meetings, even work-related meetings, started with lengthy prayers that would inevitably state that "Misima is enough," "You are enough," "I am enough." He reasoned that "Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher would be proud of the good Misiman people."

Of course, by 2004, when the Misima Gold Mine closed, Misimans learned, like the Papua Besena movement before them, that the 'dimdim' idea of self-reliance was not as much of an idea that encourages the equality of parties through an autonomous exchange. Instead, it was a trick aimed at canceling obligations of exchange. Since that time, there are almost monthly public meetings held on how to convince the PNG National Government and Barrick Mine to visit the island and resume their relationship with the Misiman people. Most of these meetings are for the express purpose of redressing compensation concerns. However, they often have a feeling of betrayal about them, as if they did not realize that by saying "Misima is enough" they were canceling their long relational chains with their exogenous partners.

At their 40th Independence Day celebration, Liak village re-enactment of the first flag ceremony when the Australian flag was lowered, and Papua New Guinea's flag was raised for the first time. Amo Mark was there. He held my hand while we watched the ceremony and looked at me with tears in his eyes. He said, "after all these years, you are all they send us." It was hard to miss his disappointment in my ability to continue the exchange that the Papua Besena movement, the Misima Besena group, and he had hoped for. I was, in his estimation, a very nice 'dimdim,' but hardly impressive. My presence seemed to Mark an indicator of just how little the rest of the world thought of Misima. He padded my hand, "maybe next time you'll bring your boss, okay."

On Misima, an exchange partner, whither in Kula or any other venture, is called a "friend" (*heliyam*). It is in this light that I wish to revisit Peter's closing comments from the earlier vignette. He said, "the 'dimdims' are the real tricksters, they claim they are gone, that the time of gift-giving is complete, now is the time for self-reliance, but they are there the whole time. Just invisible, refusing our offer. Very bad friends."

Decline and Independence

On a Tuesday morning in April 2016, I was half paying attention to a lengthy discourse on personal accountability, Christian citizenship, and community work by a local ward councilor to members of his village when I heard someone suddenly start shouting. A member of the crowd begun fighting with someone else sitting close by. Soon, the couple started throwing beach pebbles at each other. The local ward councilor started admonishing the village residents to calm down and listen to his speech. In response, a third resident retorted, "who are you that we should listen to and obey you?" The local ward councilor responded that he was the authority of

the village, a representative of the government. Then a fourth resident, sitting even closer to me, stood and replied, “the government left a long time ago. Who is this government that I never see and never does anything?” Almost immediately, the entire crowd, consisting of nearly a hundred people stood up and calmly walked away to their respective homes. Not a further word of explanation was uttered to the ward councilor. Until everyone left, I continued to sit on the pebbled beach facing the ward councilor’s shaded pavilion. After we were alone, I approached the ward councilor and asked what he thought had just happened. He said, “the people are right. There is no government here. There are only my gray hairs, my loose teeth, and my memories of what could have been.” This ward councilor is likely the most popular politician on Misima.

2016 was a politically tumultuous year. While right-wing populist movements swept across the globe, a different kind of political malaise was washing over the island Misima in Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. The absence of meaningful government services had defined the last decade of political elections, and this absence was blamed mainly on the instability of regional politics during this era. A by-election was being held, one year before the 2017 general election, to fill a vacant parliamentary seat for the Samarai-Murua District. Gordon Wesley, the incumbent before his previous victor, was declared null and void by the National Courts, won the election, but would later lose the seat again to this political nemesis, Isi Henry Leonard in the following 2017 General Election.

In 2002 Gordon Wesley was first elected as a Member of Parliament for the Samarai-Murua District, occupying one of the first two seats for People’s National Congress party, which would go on to dominate politics in the country after the 2011 constitutional crisis in which PNC member Peter O’Neill was elected Prime Minister by Parliament during Michael Somare’s

absence. Wesley, a bêche-de-mer broker and fishing supplies businessman, primarily based in Alotau, had maintained ties to Samarai and Engineer Islands to the east of Alotau and west of Misima. While Gordon Wesley belonged to the ascendant party and represented Samarai-Murua for more than a decade, his tenure was marred by continually unfulfilled promises of economic development.

Wesley's inability to deliver the expectations of government-funded development, expectations he often encouraged through his campaign rhetoric, was further compounded by accusations of bribery, election rigging, and nepotistic corruption on a scale that shocked many Misimans. In every election, Wesley's victory was challenged in the courts by his opponents, most prominently the future MP Isi Henry Leonard. In the 2016 by-election, Leonard campaigned tirelessly against Wesley's perceived corruption. However, the message that resonated the most was his argument that Wesley had not contributed to the district's economic wellbeing. Instead, Leonard argued, the district and the island of Misima especially, had experienced a decline in its fortunes. He said that the "government had gone" ('govman' *hi egon*), it had gone prowling in the night (*i lulubwalal te*), roaming, without purpose (*i nauanaua bwanabwana hot*). Alluding the lurid accusations often whispered against Wesley, Leonard argued that if you wanted to find the government, you should check your daughters' beds, because that is the only place the government seems to be these days.

By the 2016 by-election, the Samarai-Murua district had lacked parliamentary representation for two years after Wesley was convicted of election fraud and bribery in 2014 when Wesley's previous 2012 election victory was declared null and void by the National Court. During that time, the district did not have access to any funds allocated by the National

Government through its District Support Improvement Plan (DSIP). While these DSIP funds are widely believed to facilitate corruption, as MPs often use dispersals of the funds as rewards to their political supporters, they play an essential role as potential sources of cash injections into the local economy. However, even if the Misimans did have an MP during that time, it likely would not have mattered. The district administrator for the Samarai-Murua district had hardly appeared at his office in the district headquarters in the township of Bwagaoia, Misima, since 2012. During that hotly contested election, a group of Misimans had threatened his life if he ever returned to the island. Administration of the district government had primarily ground to a halt.

Shortly before the 2016 by-election, the Louisaide Local Level Government (LLG), also headquartered in Bwagaoia, had run out of money. Most of the money had gone to the maintenance of a small decrepit hydro generator that, when working, provided power to the township's hospital, high school, and shops. Another high cost had come from the added burden of fueling the local Digicell tower that provided 2G cellular coverage to the township and the Renard Islands, to the island's south.

Two years earlier, in 2014, a shipment of medicines expired while being exposed to the sun outside of the hospital for months because no government officials were available to sign for the delivery. A doctor had not visited the island for years, and when the provincial pharmacist visited in 2015, he found a hospital of primarily expired antibiotics. By the end of 2016, a major reclamation and habilitation fund set up by the Provincial and National Governments was set to dry up without hope of renewal. The post office had closed long ago. The Misima branch of Westpac Bank, a lone trailer that I saw only open twice in my nearly two years on the island, closed that same month the reclamation funds ran out in 2016.

The steady decline of civil services on the island Misima from 2000-2016 stood in marked contrast to the previous decade and a half of economic prosperity the island had enjoyed during the life of the Misima Gold Mine. At that time, the island had its international airport, with its own customs office. The Samarai-Murua District headquarters in Bwagaoia was a booming center of regional intrigue, and the LLG was flush with cash from both the mining company and the Provincial Government.

CHAPTER 3: How to Tell a Story- The Magic of Narratological Entrapment

Few things on Misima are as regular as the morning and evening ritual of "showing face" (*awanun*) and "telling stories" (*liwanliwan*). Every morning, as households wake up and start fires to burn rubbish or heat leftovers (*bweyu*) from the night before, those who are unoccupied by their chores will meander through their hamlet, greeting their neighbors with an enthusiastic "good morning" (*mwululuga waiwaisana*).

During my main stint of fieldwork from December 2014 to June 2016, I lived in the hamlet of Panakoloba in Liak village, on the north coast of the island. Liak is a beautiful village crammed between a steep mountain face and a long flat beach the stretches across the shoreline. Large mango trees densely populate the hamlet of Panakoloba, and every morning the hamlet is inodiated with the sound of parrots, roosters, and chickens, all trying to outcry each other.

Liak is the last village on the north coast connected to the long winding road the leads from the old mining site by Eiaus and Siagara on the south coast to the main township of Bwagaoia on the southeastern tip. It is always the last destination for Public Motor Vehicles (PMVs) that make the regular trip down to Bwagaoia, and as such most of the island's PMV operators live in Liak, where they will park their trucks at night, waiting for their morning passengers.

Every morning in Liak, residents will visit their hamlet neighbors and ask if anyone is getting on the PMV to visit another village or the four small stores found at Bwagoaia harbor. People are curious about who is going where and why, but all of this talk about who is and is not going to catch a PMV is just a pretext for the real action—telling stories. This telling of stories

was occasionally called “birds, our work” (*bwasumu ala tuwalali*), which is significant since Misiman metaphors often conflate the identities of birds and humans.

While leftover yams or tea is warming on the fire, Misimans will sit on their verandahs, exchanging stories while they chew betel nut (*lehi*). Sometimes these stories will consist of what a person plans on doing that day, some gossip heard the night before, or merely an exchange of jokes. Jokes (*ba’nival*) involving humiliating experiences of failed sexual pursuits from the night before are among those most enjoyed by hamlet neighbors who are all too familiar with the quarks of each other’s personalities.

As the PMV engines begin revving and the morning dew evaporates, the village is filled with raucous laughter and loud morning greetings yelled across hamlets. Laughing and yelling at my naked one-year-old son was a favorite pastime in my hamlet. Because ‘mustard’ (*muka*), a vital ingredient in chewing betel nut, begins to rot soon after you pick it from its vine, ‘mustard’ has an incredibly short shelf life. This short shelf life encourages the rapid exchange of ‘mustard’ since people will frequently find themselves with either none at all or too much. Misimans will scream at each other in the morning, “mustard, you give me” (*muka u pem*). These demands are almost always met with a laugh as the addressee knows that the speaker wants to chew betel nut with them, and no one chews betel nut without telling a story.

Chewing betel nut is an intensely social practice. The chemical reaction from the combination of chewed ‘mustard’ (*muka*), lime (*kauli*), and betel nut (*lehi*) produces bright red saliva that stains teeth pink-red, and eventually black. The combination of these ingredients and their bright red saliva will make a person “hot” (*waiwai*), which is the feeling people have when

they are friendly and actively exchanging with one another. When people are "hot" from the chewing of betel nut, the main thing they exchange is stories.

During these morning excursions to neighbors' verandahs, the standard greeting "What is in your story?" (*Tab liwam awana ya?*) is used by those hosts. The phrase seems simple enough. Like many people in the world, Misimans are curious about the contents of others' lives, and visitors (*bwabwali*) often provide uniquely entertaining and informative stories. However, the unique construction of the Misiman "what is *in* your story" provides a fascinating avenue for thinking about what stories are, what they contain, how they are told, and what they are said to do in the world.

First, in this greeting, a story (*liwan*) is inalienably possessed by the addressee (*liwam*) as if it were a part of their body. Second, there is an "inside" (*awana*) of the story, as if it were a container. In this case, *awana* denotes both the "inside of a container or box," but also the "appearance" of the story, since *awan* means the "face" or "appearance" of a thing (explain this phenomenom later in the dissertation). Similarly, *ya* marks the question as referring to the specific action of entering something, in this case, a "story." It is as if the appearance of the story is found only through entering the story's box. Thus, when someone says in Pana Misima, "what is *in* your story" (*tab liwam awana ya?*), they are saying, "when you go into your story, what does it look like?"

Of course, the answer to this question is specific to the addressee's life and their reply. However, it is also widely expected that this is less of a direct question, and more of an invitation to "tell stories" (*liwanliwan*). This invitation contains specific metapragmatic expectations, but

paramount among them is that the point of the story, what is inside the story's box, is a trick (*kakauwi*).

"Who among us," one of my adopted clan sisters, Beisi, once motioned to our hamlet neighbors, "does not like to hear a good story that captures your attention?" She further explained, "A good story hides within it something that you cannot see at first. Its appearance is not what you see at first. Instead, you have to wait until the time you are caught by it. You have to enter a story to find what is there, and when you have done that, the story has captured you." "A story," she said, "is like an ogre's cave. You are compelled by curiosity to enter, but when you do, you are consumed."

Her husband, Steven, an adopted affine, introjected, "No. It is not a cave. It is a lime pot (*patuna*)." His identification of a "story" with the lime pot is illustrative. After, all a "messenger," or "deliverer of a 'story,'" is translated as "a thing (*e-*) that always (*lo-*) is a lime pot (*papatuna*)." As is common in Pana Misima, there is a double meaning here since "lime pot" (*patuna*) also means "to make" (*pa-*) "truth" (*tuna*). This association with "the truth" is vividly displayed every morning when people request lime for chewing betel nut from hamlet neighbors. These requests (*ba'awanun*, lit. "words that make one visible") are almost always met with an apology for how little lime the addressee has in their container. "I am sorry, but there no lime in this container ('sori' *kauli nige i gan patuna gamwana'a*)," they will say while visibly displaying the contents of their container with a punctuated, "you see" (*u kite*).

Steven continued:

> You request lime from someone, and they give it to you. Your heart is filled with goodness because you think, 'now I have lime to chew with.' But there are only the remnants of lime dust in the container. There is nothing there. Nevertheless, that does not matter, because your hearts have been warmed. You have been

> giving and receiving, and you no longer remember why you are talking in the first place. It is good because you are giving and receiving, but you have forgotten the point.

I believe these brief vignettes of greetings (*ba'mulolu*) and requests (*ba'awanun*) for lime provide concrete examples of why I argue in this chapter that the metapragmatic expectations of telling stories (*liwanliwan*) in Misima are essentially the same as those found in doing tricks (*lokakauwi*) and doing magic (*lokukula*), both of which seek to capture the attention of their targets and overcoming or consuming their agency. To buttress these claims, I will sketch out how things as desperately varied as ethnographic practice, the categorization of intentional metalinguistic speech genres, and the reading and telling of history are, at their core, types of magic.

The Demands of Narrative

Before considering what is *in* the "lime pot" of a story, we should first ask what does it mean to tell a story? For most readers, this may seem like an almost silly question. Many may argue that a story is a well-defined and universally common thing and that telling a story is just that, a self-evidently transparent act of communicatively relating a thing (cf. Salmon, 2017 [2007]). In other words, most may assume that "a story" is an account of imagined or real events. It may have a dramatic arch, and it may not. It may be told for entertainment or told to instruct. Either way, "a story," acts as an umbrella term to capture a wide variety of narrative genres. Because of this ambiguous ubiquity, narratives have either been approached as transcultural phenomena or as genres of oral performance particular to their cultural settings.

Roland Barthes provides one of the most famous examples of universalizing the transcultural aspects of narratives. He argues,

> The narratives of the world are numberless… Under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is or has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narrative, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with very different, even opposing, cultural backgrounds. Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself (Barthes, 1977: 79).

While Barthes overly broad conception of what Todorov called "narratology," fails to provide any specific insights into the relative values narrative practices can have in different societies, it is, nevertheless, the "fuzzy categories" (László & Viehoff, 1992: 5) that make stories and storytelling so productive to think within Misima. Like any speech genre, stories "have value leadings, social distributions, and typical performance styles according to which they are shaped in the course of utterance" (Hanks, 1987: 670), thus their diversity becomes a source of valuation and for cultural improvisation.

That narrative genre would be sites for intense valuation in a society that should not be of any surprise to any anthropologist who has done anthropological fieldwork. Because of how metapragmatic registers are often figured in the performance of narrative genres, "Boas emphasized the value of myth texts, both in the determination of cultural historical relations among North American Indian groups and as a necessary companion to the grammar and the dictionary of a language for its complete description" (Philips, 1987: 25). In other words, the content and performance of mythic narrative were essential to understanding not just the macrocosmic orders of history and culture, but also of microcosmic speech acts.

Storytelling in Anthropological Practice

As a kind of meta-source for content and pragmatic performance, stories and storytelling, narrate interactional orders. Thus, like a ritual, the oral performance of storytelling can constitute a "poetically dense figuration of macrocosmic orders in [a] microcosmic act" (Stasch, 2011: 169). It is my contention in this chapter that the Misiman macrocosmic order of "trickery" is figured, reproduced, and disseminated through the microcosmic acts of formalized "storytelling" in Misima (*liwanliwan*). The implications of this macrocosmic figuration is that epistemological "capture" is held by Misimans as a fundamentally relational act and one that is often best done by telling a story.

While some anthropologists "through the filter of their own native language ideology" value narrative genres over other text times, like conversation, gossip, or maledictions (Foley, 2003: 1), it is also undoubtedly true that, for many years, indigenous research collaborators have been trying to convince anthropologists to think of their research as less of a treasure hunt for ethnographic bits of data that serve their own theoretical aims. The theoretical potential of self-directed narratives and life course histories has long been understood by anthropologists (Levy & Hollan, 2015; Hickman, 2014), but part of recent efforts to decolonize research methodologies has been to emphasize the narrative character of the research encounter itself. By thinking of anthropological research as dialogical (Feld, 1987), as an exchange of "stories," or as intentionally co-constitutive "storywork" (Archibald, 2001: 1). Margaret Kovach (2009), a Plains Cree and Saulteaux anthropologist, argues that when led by indigenous research collaborators, stories can be the research method, the epistemological basis for anthropological knowledge, and

the content of our research objectives. This is because the knowledge production done through indigenous practices of storytelling cannot be divorced from participants.

Similar, sentiments have been shared by indigenous researchers of Oceania (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012; Gegeo & Watson-Gegeo, 2001), with some adopting the Tongan practice of *talanoa*, or a ritualized story exchange, as a decolonized research methodology (Tecun, et al., 2018).

Since Papua New Guinea gained independence in 1975, indigenous researchers have been arguing that the recording and dissemination of local stories for local consumption are crucial to decolonization (Morauta, 1979). The importance of these oral histories, they say, is because of the colonial erasure of historical memory found in many parts of the country (e.g., Waiko, 1986; Young, 1975).

When I first visited the southeastern Papua New Guinean island of Misima in 2012, most of my initial conversations with Misimans centered around what my intentions were as an anthropologist. Some Misimans were confused about the purpose of my research. I told them that I intended to study the long-term impacts of the Misima Gold Mine by revisiting a mining site long after it had closed. The reasoning for my research was three-fold: First, only one industrial gold mine in Papua New Guinea had gone through a full planned decommission, closure, and reclamation plan— Misima, so it was essential to learn a potential lesson from that closure experience. Second, the urgency of learning from the Misima mine was growing by the year as more and more large-scale oil, gas, and mineral mining extractive projects were beginning construction throughout the country. Third, there had been no longitudinal studies of the economic and social impact of any gold mine in Melanesia that focused on life *after* closure. This understanding was critical because the economic and social impacts may look like one thing

when the money is flowing from mining wages or compensation payments. It may look like something entirely different when all of those payments and wages dry up.

After some negotiation, I was able to find a village to live in and develop a research plan for how I would study the mine closure when I was to return for my primary research in 2014. When I returned two years later, the Misimans I had told my plans to already made up their minds that my proposed research project was misguided, if not a dead end. Instead of researching a particular topic, in this case, the long-term impacts of the mine and its closure on the island's economy and possibly resulting in social conflicts, Misimans assigned me to study their "our stories" (*Misima gamagalau liwam*, "Misimans' stories").

My first visit to Misima was not the first time an anthropologist had spent time on the island. Susan Whiting, a graduate student at Monash University, lived on the northern shore of the island, where she researched a cargo cult movement for about eight months between 1972 and 1974 (Whiting, 1975). For several months in 1985, Martha Macintyre, a prolific anthropologist with extensive fieldwork experience in the Milne Bay, researched Misima as the principal anthropological consultant and co-author of the social impact survey that the national government had commissioned in anticipation of the Misima Gold Mine's construction (Gerritsen & Macintyre, 1986; Macintyre 1990, 2004). At the late stages of the Misima Gold Mine's operations, Julia Byford, a trained midwife and graduate student at Australian National University, spent sixteen months from 1990 to 1991 studying maternal health on the remote western tip of the island (Byford, 1999). Additionally, many Misimans had either come into contact or remembered stories of anthropologists who had researched the surrounding islands.

Stuart Berde (1974) spent 18 months from 1970 to 1971 on the island of Panaeati, to the direct west of Misima, where he conducted one of the first ethnographic studies of Christian missionization and practice in Papua New Guinea. Will Rollason (2011) also conducted research at Panapompom, to the south of Panaeati, where he studied football clubs. Jeff Kinch (2002, 2003) studied sailing canoes and fisheries at Brooker Island in the Western Calvados Chain. In the Eastern Calvados Chain, Deborah Battaglia (1990) studied material culture and traditional mortuary exchanges on Sabral. Interestingly, many of her informants were either from Misima or frequently visited Misima, and I came to personally know several of them. The same was true for Martha Lampland (1993), who studied egalitarianism and gender inequalities in Sudest. During her field research, he spent considerable time in Bwagaoia township on Misima.

Many Misimans had known or remembered one of these anthropologists, although fewer had seen them. They were, in the words of some Misimans, like ghosts. They would disappear as readily as they would appear. The reasons for the anthropologists' stays were usually opaque to Misimans. However, there was a clear sense that each of these preceding anthropologists had a particular research project with defined parameters. Whether it was sports, maternal health, or cargo cults, the view of the Misiman experience was, according to my informants, too narrow.

Their goal for me was to "capture everything." This lofty goal, unsurprisingly, quickly set me up for failure, but it was fascinating to see what the "everything" encompassed. Almost everyone I met on Misima wanted me to tell them a "story" (*liwan*) and, if my stories were sufficiently entertaining or informative, they would reciprocate with a story of their own. I spent most of my days telling stories with my friends and collaborators. Whether we were gardening,

building a house, or walking to another village for a mortuary feast exchange (*bobuton*), we were telling stories.

About a year into my fieldwork, I was once walking up a mountain with my friend Benjamin to find wood for the posts to his new house. After we exchanged stories about fishing, love, and the curiosities of our respective cultural backgrounds, Benjamin turned to me and said, "you know, they say you are a sorcerer (*tokukula*), or a powerful magician (*tokukula i gasisi owa*)."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because, you are patient with getting news from people. You talk, we talk, and we talk together, and that is why more people keep coming. You give a story (*liwam u pem*), we give a story (*liwama ha pek*), and that is how a stranger becomes a friend (*bwabwali na paheliyam ginol ola*). Telling stories (*liwanliwan*), it is like love magic (*loloepapabola*)."

Here Benjamin was explicitly drawing a comparison to something I had never before considered, that "telling stories" (*liwanliwan*), his label for my anthropological research, was similar to a specific Misiman category of magic practice— "love magic" (*epapabola*). I will delve further into what constitutes "love magic" in a later chapter, but, for now, it is worth pointing out that while *epapabola* is associated with romance and seduction, its connotations are much broader. Benjamin seems to be playing with these broad implications by reminding me that it is "how a stranger" (*bwabwali*) becomes a friend" (*paheliyam*).

In Pana Misima, a "stranger" is synonymous with a "guest" and therefore denotes opportunities and obligations for hospitality (*lolobwabwali*), or the continual entreating of strangers. Misimans find this kind of relationship to be incredibly exciting because, unlike those

relations formed between kin or co-residents, it is not fixed. The relationship could become something advantageous to you, or it could be a burden to you. It could go either way; you do not know. This ambiguity is highlighted even more by Benjamin's specific choice of words, that a "stranger" becomes a "friend" (*heliyam*). While *heyliam* can and should be translated as "friend" the translation is slippery since there are two different classes of people that are potentially referred to by that label— 1). lovers, and 2). exchange partners, and both classes retain an ambivalent quality to them. This will be explored further in a later chapter, but many Misimans, both male and female, view sexual relations as inherently predatory (cf. Boylston, 2018). They may be relations that are productive and highly desired. However, the arts of seduction practiced by both men and women involve overwhelming their partner's agency, so much that a person "falls in love," "succumbs to another's advances," etc. That person who succumbs to your advances is called your "friend" (*heliyam*) (e.g., Malinowski, 1932).

Similarly, when people practice Kula exchange, they seek out their exchange partner who is in charge of protecting and entreating you with hospitality during your visit to his village. However, while he is entreating you with copious amounts of hospitality, there is also a deep hostility between you and your exchange partner. Ultimately you are trying to best each other. He is trying to humiliate you with his generosity while you try to humiliate him with your more valuable shell valuables.

All of this is not to say that the ethnographic encounter is necessarily a hostile one or that Benjamin was accusing me of seducing him and others. However, it does highlight an essential element of anthropological fieldwork— it involves a gradual transformation of relations as merely figured by the potentiality of ambivalent poles, to a much more grounded relation in

which "stories" are exchanged, and qualities of duration are known, but the ambivalence about the kind of relationship that exchange entails remains.

This ambivalence perfectly captures why people participate in the Kula, the seduction of the hope for potentially advantageous exchanges is palpable in the planning of Kula expeditions. For example, when men meet during these planning sessions, they will often describe their journey as "making friends" (*loloheliyam*). While some expedition members will busily prepare, love charms to beguile kula partners or potential lovers, they would hone with their hamlet neighbors the stories (*liwanau*) they planned on sharing during their trip as their principal "charm" (*epapabola*). These stories would capture the mind of those they sought to make their friends. The connection to exchanging stories and kula is even more pronounced when one pays attention to what people spend most of their time doing while on a Kula expedition. Malinowski (1922) briefly mentions this. However, on the two separate Kula expeditions I went on during my fieldwork, the entire sailing trip was filled with the expedition members exchanging stories about past Kula adventures, past lovers, and their knowledge of the Kula routes. When we landed at our destination, we were almost immediately met with invitations to sit in a home where they will then exchange even more stories with their hosts.

In everyday contexts of meals and gardening, Misimans believe the practice of "telling stories" (*liwanliwan*) is relatively unremarkable; it is just what it means to be a person who converses with others. Nevertheless, in relatively formalized contexts, like those found in providing "hospitality" (*lolobwabwali*) or "making friends" (*loloheliyam*), Misimans will explicitly classify the exchange of stories as belonging to "doing Kula," or *kukula*. Even more telling, "doing Kula" does not exhaust the meaning of *kukula*, as *kula* means "capture," like

when you fish with a hardline or sinker (*papakukulau*), or "cut," like when you cut your hair (*sakula*). Thus, the broad umbrella term for Misiman magic, or *kukula*, can more productively be thought of as the art of capturing and cutting relations with others (Gell, 1996; cf. Nichols, 2009). As I will demonstrate in later chapters, it is the part of influencing people, and the principal means in which that art is practiced is through telling stories.

In his *Ethnographic Sorcery*, Harry West (2005) makes the provocative claim that ethnographic research is a kind of "sorcery." This claim is not necessarily unique (e.g., Taussig, 2001), but a provocative one, nonetheless. While West understands "the magic" of ethnography to be in how a text can straddle, or blur, the boundaries between the imaginary and the real, I believe Misimans understand anthropological research as potentially "magical" for an entirely different reason. They see the actual practice of research to be an example of cognitive capture, or entrapment, facilitated by the exchange of stories and opinions, the very kind of dialog necessary for any anthropologist to grapple with the "*corpus inscriptum*" of daily life (Malinowski, 1922: 34).

Many of the anthropologists who had previously studied in Misima and the surrounding islands of the Louisiade Archipelago have written excellent ethnographies. Will Rollason (2011) and Debborah Battaglia's (1990) research is profoundly productive and inspired me to find my research site and agenda in the nearby Misima. Similarly, Martha Macintyre's (1990) contributions to Misiman ethnography are valuable additions to the ethnographic record, despite her short time on the island. However, when talking with me, Misimans voiced a distinctive critique of anthropological research practices. They argued that anthropologists had come to Papua New Guinea to study this or that research question, without first being "captured" by the

stories Misimans tell. On one level, Misimans are pragmatic people, and they understand the constraints placed on the academic knowledge production more than most would assume. They are not naïve about the realities of grant proposals having to have distinct research goals and theoretical contributions. Still, they wondered what would happen if they captured an anthropologist and took over the story. What would happen if the research was not boiled down to a set of survey or semi-structured questionaries? What would happen if they caught a 'dimdim' and transformed them from a "stranger" to a "friend?"

An attempt to "capture" an anthropology was, apparently, their intention with me. I had come to Misima with a distinct research agenda, to learn more about the Misima Gold Mine's operation, decommission, and the economic aftermath of its closure. However, Misimans almost entirely blocked me from conducting that research. Instead, Misimans would focus our conversation on a much broader story, the history of 'dimdim' "strangers" (*bwabwali*) on Misima. While this may initially sound like Misimans were attempting to narrativize a history of dispossession and victimization by exogenous others, this could not be further from the truth. It is true that Misimans had biting comments on the behavior of 'dimdims,' but the 'dimdims' were far from the most compelling characters of their stories. Instead, the narrative focus of most stories Misimans shared with me about 'dimdims,' "strangers," and the mine was braggadocios accounts of conquering the 'dimdims,' by capturing them and tricking them.

As we descended the mountain that day with our freshly cut house posts, Benjamin laughed at me, "You 'dimdims' always think you are the hero of the story. Has it occurred to you that we tricked you? After all, you are in our place. I am not in your place. It was what we have

here, this beautiful island and our vast knowledge that attracted you to us. We caught you. Poor Jordan. You have been tricked."

Months after that excursion with Benjamin, I was attending a Church meeting with Benjamin in an adjacent village. At the service, after the appropriate time to introduce visitors was announced, Benjamin introduced me to the Pentecostal congregation. Speaking in English, he introduced me with: "This is my brother Yolidani [Jordan]. He is our historian. He thought he was studying the mine, but we caught him. Now he is our historian. Trust me; you should listen to his stories. They are very good."

Before delving into narrative genres as non-diatopical registers in Pana Misima, it is worth considering what we mean by a "story" and why Benjamin was so comfortable converting "telling stories" (*liwanliwan*) into "history."

The Rhetoric of History

When Papua New Guinea was gaining independence from Australia, anthropologists were beginning to document a curious research development in the region. Anthropology in Papua New Guinea, it seemed, was no longer being valued in quite the same way as before by both the global research community and by research subjects themselves. Contrary to popular liberal sentiment at the time, this was not because of globalization and the homogenization of cultural diversity in New Guinea. Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1952, 2013 [2011]) concern that the ascendancy of the 21st century would erase human difference and therefore render anthropology mute was not founded. Instead, as Michael Young (1975) documented, the utility indigenous Papua New Guinean's saw in anthropology increasingly shifted from what anthropologists

themselves understood their role to be. This was further illustrated by the fact that while anthropologists helped train a young generation of Papua New Guinean elite, these Papua New Guinean anthropologists almost exclusively understood their role in their societies, and the national intellectual culture, as something akin to oral historians (Morauta, 1979). The various anthropological fashions of the day— kinship, political economy, and ritual performance— had little value to most Papua New Guinean anthropologists if those very same fashions were not grounded in history, and its oral production through particular and formalized modes of storytelling (Young, 1975; e.g., Kasaipwalova, 1971).

That history would be understood and valued as a type of formalized storytelling, should not be a surprise to English speaking readers. The connection to "history" (Gr. *histôr*) to "story" (La. *stori*) should be etymological obvious to most speakers. Beyond obvious lineages, Émile Benveniste (2016 [1969]: 447), finds the connection in even more ancient ideas of being "witness." Thus, the Greek "*Histôr* [ἵστωρ] (like *historein* [ἱστορεῖν] and *historia* [ἱστορία]) goes back to *idein* [ἰδεῖν], "to see," and to *(w)oida* [οἶδα], "I know." "I see," "I know": already the intertwining of seeing and knowing is laid down" (Hartog & Werner, 2004: 439). Similarly, one who "inquiries into" (*historei* [ἱστορεῖ]) is thought to be in the habit of "looking into," or inhabiting a certain kind of stance towards looking at the unknown, rather than a specific kind of investigative practice (Ibid: 440). Homer seems to identify the *histôr* as not just a witness to what they see but as a kind of mediator or guarantor of disputes (*neikos* [νεῖκος]) (*Iliad*, 23.482-487, 497-502). Because of this, "history" is not just an act of inquiry or looking, but a conduit for mediating relations (Ballard, 2013).

The Latin term for "past events" (*gesta*) reveals another wrinkle in how one bears witness to history. *Gestus*, denotes the act of carrying or wearing the achievements of the past. When *gesta* is grammatically transformed into a feminine singular, it becomes synonymous with *historia*, or the narration of facts about events.

> [It] "comes to refer to one of the four historiographical subgenres: chronicles, which relate to a historical theme, usually developed from its origins down to the present time; annals, which record facts year by year; the vita, biography, especially of the hagiographical sort; and the *gesta*, which relates the actions of a series of dignitaries, and through them, the history of an institution (the papacy, the empire, etc.)" (Hartog & Werner, 2004: 444).

This points to not only to the idea that "a story," or history, belongs to differing metalinguistic speech genres, but that it has physical contents, with weight. It is, after all, something that is borne and carried as much as it is witnessed. In that vein, Karl Marx argued that "The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living" (1972 [1852]: 595). Through these acts of bearing witness, carrying, and inquiring, the storyteller and those who receive these stories find themselves in narrative exchanges that mediate their presence in the world.

The differentiation of types of "stories" or "histories" into separate metalinguistic speech genres should be familiar to the English speaker. While most may have a difficult time explaining the exact differences between folklore, myth, legends, urban legends, or history; they signify different genres, even if the exact contours of those genres are considered ill-defined by most speakers. In the Latin world, this tendency toward genre differentiation can be found back as far as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (86-83 BCE; anonymous), which differentiates between narratives that contain "elements which are neither true nor likely" (*fabula*, from which we get

"fable" and "fabulation"), "events which have taken place" (*historia*), and "invented narrative which could have taken place" (*augmentum*, or "fiction") (*Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.12).

Metapragmatics of Truth and Exchange

Perhaps, we can find in early Latin antiquity the origins of the English emphasis on the "truth" of the narrative, so far as it is an account of what has or has not happened. Folklore and legends seem confined to the world of fabulation, history to the accounting of actual events, and myth and fiction as straddling the in-between, where the events themselves are merely vehicles for more fundamental truths.

Ever the pragmatist, Bronislaw Malinowski reproduced much of these same distinctions between the "fabulation" and "the actual" in his discussion of Trobriand myth. He asked, "[W]hat is myth to the natives? How do they conceive and define it? Have they any line of demarcation between the mythical and actual reality, and if so, how do they draw this line?"

He answers his question by attempting to classify different genres of Trobriand narrative. He ultimately identifies three exogenous narrative types: 1). "*The Oldest Myths*, referring to the origin of human beings…;" 2). "*Kultur myths*," or "stories about Rogers and their conquerors"; and 3). "*Myths in which figures only ordinary human beings*, though endowed with extraordinary magical powers" (Malinowski, 1922: 304-305), but these categories stand in contrast to the endogenous categories Trobrianders use themselves. For example, Malinowski preceded that three-tiered classification with an entirely different set of narrative genres that Trobrianders themselves had adopted:

> Their folk-lore, that is, the verbal tradition, the store of tales, legends and texts handed on by previous generations, is composed of the following classes; first of all, there is what the natives call *libogwo*, 'old talk', but which we would call

> tradition; secondly, *kuwanebu*, fairy tales, recited for amusement, at definite seasons, and related avowedly untrue events; thirdly, *wosi*, the various songs, and *vinavina*, ditties, chanted at play or under other special circumstances; and last, not least, *megwa* or *yopa*, the magical spell. All these classes are strictly distinguished from on another by name, function, social setting, and by certain formal characteristics….
>
> … the 'old talk', the body of ancient tradition, believed to be true, consists on the one hand of historical tales, such as the deeds of past chiefs, … stories of shipwreck, etc. On the other hand, the *libogwo* class also contains what the natives call *lili'u*— myths, narratives, deeply believed by them, held by them in reverence, and exercising an active influence on their conduct and tribal life. Now the natives distinguish definitely between myth and historic account, but this distinction is difficult to formulate, and cannot be stated up in a somewhat deliberate manner… (1922: 299).

In contrast to Malinowski's tripartite classification, Trobrianders themselves seemed to model for him that history and myth (*lili'u*) were only two types of recognized speech genres commonly fused with narrative. Instead, Malinowski's informants recognized the following as potential genres.

1). 'Old talk' (*libogwo*), which can be divided into two subsets.
   a. accounts of historical events without connotations of "reverence" or special reference "conduct."
   b. "myths" (*lili'u*) which demand "reverence" and model "conduct."
2). "fairy tales" (*kuwanebu*).
3). "songs" (*wosi*),
4). "ditties" (*vinavina*), and
5). "spells" (*megwa* or *yopa*).

While Malinowski was probably intent in think of these classifications as distinct from the mythic genres he proposed because the indigenous classification seemed to lump, songs, fairy tales, ditties, and spells all together with more traditionally recognized narratives vehicles, this differentiation is ultimately silly. Even a casual glance at contemporary Trobriand poetry, drama, and short stories demonstrates that songs, spells, and ditties have just as much of a

narrative quality as any other traditionally recognized narrative genre. However, there are still further reasons to doubt the veracity of Malinowski's record of Trobriand classifications.

Gunter Senft (2010) documents that Kilivila, the language spoken in the Trobriand Islands, utilized at least eight different non-diatopical registers or "situational-intentional varieties" of speech. Each of these registers— 1). "Good speech" (*biga bwena*); 2). "Bad speech" (*biga gaga*); 3.) 'Old speech' (*biga tommwaya*/*biga baloma*); 4). "Magic speech" (*biga megwa*); 5). "Church speech" (*biga tapwaroro*); 6.) "Greetings" (*biga taloi*); 7). "Heavy speech" (*biga pe'ula*/*biga mokwita*); and 8). "Joking/lying" (*biga sopa*)— organize speech genres, such as mythic narratives (*lili'u*) or ditties (*vinavina*) as either being "good" or "bad," "heavy" or "lying."

I am less interested in interrogating the empirical truth of Malinowski and Senft's dueling classifications and more interested in the possibilities they seem to suggest about Kilivila. I see similarities and possible implications, for we should understand Misiman discursive practices. Like, Kilivila, Pana Misima seems to be organized by binary differentiations between non-diatopical registers. For example, Misimans utilize binary metaphors to classify their speech as either "heavy" (*ba'pupulowanina*) or "light" (*ba'mwemweahanina*); "hot" (*ba'wawaiwaina*) or "cold" (*ba'tutultulina*); "strong" (*ba'gagasisina*) or "weak" (*ba'pwepweyataina*). While each of these registers are metapragmatically identifiable, they are marked in typical Misiman speech through non-verbal performance. Thus, gesture and situational context will typically give away speech as belonging to one of these categories.

While these non-diatopical registers are commonly used, they are, typically, none of these binary metaphors is the assumed default register in everyday discourse. Gunter Senft

claims that "joking/lying" (*biga sopa*) is the "default register of Trobriand discourse" since it "represents the speakers 'unmarked non-commitment to truth'" (2010: 13; 2008). A similar claim could be made of Pana Misima, where an "unmarked non-commitment to truth" is the general assumption of all communication (cf. Lindstrom, 1992). "Telling stories" (*liwanliwan*), "staying with talk" (*ba'hikan*), "boasting" (*ba'pahivaha*), "telling an exaggerated story" (*ba'siman*), or "talking back" (*ba'sikal*) are all thought of as ways to both entertain and trick or capture the minds of others. Telling a "true" story is less important than telling a "good story."

Gossip (*loloba*) is probably the most discussed of the potentially predatory conversational genres. Gossip, with its associations to witchcraft (*nomnom*), is a highly potent example of the risky ambivalence Misiman discourse has to "truth" in the narrative. As a semiotic category, gossip itself is marked by its ambitious semantics as it is indexically tied to both "always (*lolo*-) talking (*ba*)" and to "making (*lo*-) grass skirts (*loba*)." Regardless of its ambiguity, both potential meanings mark the practice as "women's speech" (*ba'yova*), even if men engaged in it. What I find fascinating about gossip is that while it was considered a highly transgressive and gendered genre, it was also one of the most common conversational genres I encountered on Misima (see Haviland, 1977).

Every morning, I was inundated with greetings (*ba'mulolu*) from passersby declaring "good morning" (*mwululuga waiwaisana*). If I was sitting on my verandah, and acknowledged their greetings it was taken as an invitation for them to join me, and which case they would almost always engage in asking for requests (*ba'awanun*; or "speaking by showing one's face") for either labor or material support. To first "test" (*labose*) out my reception to their planned requests, Misimans would engage in formalized "teasing" or "flirting" (*palawokik*), which

almost always consisted of some form of village gossip. After telling the gossip, they knew they had entrapped me in their debt, for they had shared a "story" with me, and it was now my turn to reciprocate by assisting them with their request.

This kind of trickery (*kakakauwina*) in debt exchange, is the assumed norm of conversational implicature on Misima. Because of this, exchanging stories, perspectives, or opinions is widely recognized as analogous to the expeditions for exchanging shell valuables in the Kula circuit. "Speaking opinions" (*ba'tomwatomwa*), or the genre of speech acts most closely associated with public meetings, essentially means "to speak of (*ba-*) your alienable shell valuable (*kitomwa*)." As such, any public meeting is almost entirely consumed by speakers' "fame" (*ala'alan*, lit. "name by mouth") as they competitively exchange their opinions (see Munn, 1986; Brison, 1992). In recognition of the default assumption of their "unmarked non-commitment to truth," speakers who engage in this genre of discursive exchange will regularly attempt to mark their speech as explicitly *not* within this default register by following their arguments with the assertion "it is true! (*tuna hot*)," as if everything else that is said is assumed to be ambiguously false.

What I hope to have demonstrated in this brief outline of how Misimans engage stories, history, and narrative is that their engagement is less about the truthfulness of the historical record, and more about its persuasive power to entrap or "capture" (*kula*) those who exchange stories. Marx's narrative "tradition of all generations" may weigh heavily on Misimans, but it is not because of some generational truth that they are consigned to witness. Rather, ancestral traditions (*mumuga paganina*) may be enregistered as "heavy" (*pulowan*) because of the interpersonal obligations they entail, not because a "truth" "weighs like a nightmare on the[ir]

brains." A story makes relations; it does not merely witness them. Thus, a story about an ancestor may weigh down on an addressee as a kind of hailing, a moment when they find that they are in exchange not only with the speaker but with the dead as well. Perhaps, Misimans are in agreement with the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, in so far as the author considers history of being, first and foremost, a rhetorical genre. Thus, for Misimans, telling such stories is valued less because of its specific content, but more out of the capacity of the narrative genre to entrap others in an exchange. Hence, the Misiman art of storytelling is less about instruction and more about persuasion.

Entrapment and Reading the Story of the Misima Gold Mine

If history is about persuasion and the telling of stories is about the entrapment of others through a kind of metacommunicative debt obligation, I can think of few better stories to illustrate this point than an interaction I had with a good friend of mine in Liak. George was a heavy set and stout man who also worked as "fly-in/fly-out" mine worker at another industrial gold mine in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. George was also a no-nonsense kind of character. He liked being direct, but he also thought my attempts at understanding Misiman culture were hilarious. George thought I was silly. He would occasionally introduce me to strangers as "Yolidani [Jordan], the truth seeker," which inevitably resulted in laughs at my expense.

One morning, when it was already hot and humid, and most other villagers had gone to the bush to clear their gardens, George and I sat on the verandah of his small kitchen house. After staring at me with almost befuddling confusion, he asked me, "You want to know our story?"

"Absolutely," I answered. "Are you going to tell it to me?"

"Better, I show you," and George left the verandah and crept into his house in an attempt to not wake his granddaughter. After a few minutes of rummaging through a large wooden lockbox, he came back with two weathered pamphlets made of, formerly, glossy photos. Both pamphlets had been printed by Misima Mines Pty Limited and the office of Placer Dome Inc. in Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. Placer Dome Inc., the former operator of the now-closed Misima Gold Mine, had printed these pamphlets as part of a public relations campaign run by the Canadian mining company to promote its "sustainable mining" practices abroad. The pamphlets are difficult to obtain on Misima but were widely popular there, as Misimans generally understood it as a necessary step in familiarizing a global public with the natural and cultural beauty the island of Misima had to offer. Both pamphlets present an idyllic picture of Misima, a quiet island paradise that just also happens to host a world-class open-pit mine, and development. In other words, the pamphlet offered everything foreign investors wanted to see, a peaceful mining operation with thankful island inhabitants. The latter, for the most part, seemed mostly unaffected by the mine, except for the benevolent introduction of modern schooling, healthcare, and commercial infrastructure. Since Misimans understood the potential appeal the pamphlets presented to foreigners, they were, for the most part, happy with the pamphlets. Understandably, they wanted their best face presented. In the late 1990s, at the time the pamphlets were complied, Misimans generally did feel like they were at the vanguard of modern capitalist development in Papua New Guinea.

George again sat down next to me on the verandah and dropped the two pamphlets in his lap. He flipped through the pages at a leisurely pace, occasionally stopping to look at someone he

knew or remember what life was like on the island nearly 20 years before. Halfway through the pamphlet, George arrived at the right page. Pointing at a photo of gold bars, watches, and other jewelry, the kinds of prestige items the gold mined in Misima was crafted into, George said, "The earth is full of things" (*bilibili i gogomwau*). Tapping the images of gold bars, watches, and bracelets, he said, "it is filled with stories" (*liwan i gogomwau*).

George explained that the history of Misima could be divided into seven time periods. However, it was "the time of money" ('mani' *ana sauga*) represented in that photo. This fifteen-year period in Misiman history, from 1985 until 2000, was an incredibly transformative period of material prosperity when the influx of money from mining compensation payments and wage labor forever changed life on Misima.

To understand Misimans' stories, George felt, that I first needed to understand "the time of money," and what followed until the present day in the "time of beggars" (*togulgulau ali sauga*). Money, I was told, transformed the Misiman social landscape in ways that Misimans could not have anticipated. Nevertheless, it was not necessarily a surprise to them when these transformations came. They were, in effect, very similar to the kinds of transformations that had been initiated in earlier stages of Misiman history after white people first established contact, colonialism began, a Methodist mission was established, and when Misimans gained their independence. Many Misiman recognized the change during the latter half of the "time of money" and the initial "time of beggars" as an intensification, even apotheosis, of previous transformations. It was, in the words of another Misiman collaborator, "as if our stories all touched each other like we were living the lives of our ancestors, but with each round, everything became hotter."

After a long pause, George opened the second pamphlet, titled *Misima Advances* (1995). This pamphlet, George assured me, was the story of the "time of money" ('mani' *ana sauga*). However, in that story, you could find the structure of all other stories held within the historical memory of Misimans. It was, at its core, a story of "guests" (*bwabwali*) who became relatives and trading partners (*muli*), who would ultimately betray or ignore (*awatautau*) their obligations. It was a story of Misimans and their relations with white people ('dimdims'), but it was also more than that.

Tracing his finger across the English text, George read aloud,

> "Although the Misima gold and silver mine is a project with marginal grades, the operation has been very successful, as a result of the dedication of its people. We have a very efficient operation, that cares about its employees, the people of Misima Island and the environment…. The project enjoys good relations with its workforce, the surrounding population, the landowners and the various levels of government… [This pamphlet] shows that the mining operation has made a positive contribution to the development of a remote district. A better infrastructure is emerging, access to education at all levels as improved greatly and quality health services are now available to all the people of the island….
>
> Gold has figured prominently in the history of Misiman Island for the past 100 years. The wave of gold exploration that contributed to the opening of the South West Pacific alluvial mining begin in Misimas coastal creeks in 1888.
>
> "By the mid 1930's underground miners were chasing the richer quartz veins through Mount Sisa and surrounding outcrops. After a shutdown caused by World War II, operations were never successfully resumed although several attempts were made through the 1960's.
>
> In 1977 Placer acquired an interest in Misima through a joint venture, and in 1985 increased its interest to 100%.
>
> In 1988 the PNG Government acquired a 20% share through Misima Mines Pty Limited, the owner of the present-day mine.
>
> Placer took a different approach to the dormant Misima ore body. The deposit was very large, but of low grade and highly weathered.
>
> Using mining expertise developed over many years in PNG and elsewhere in the world, Placer focused on large open-pit mining techniques and high volume processing.
>
> In today's open-pit, ore is first broken by blasting, and loading hydraulic shovels into large haul trucks for transport to the treatment plant on the coast.

> Misima Mines treatment processes are state-of-the-art and recover a high percentage of contained gold and silver.
>
> The two millionth ounce of gold was recently poured, witnessed by interested local visitors in the mine's gold room….
>
> The provision of hundreds of well-paid new jobs has been one of the major benefits enjoyed by the people of Misima. Both men and women have found employment in the mine, the mill, administration, community affairs and other areas of the company's operations.
>
> Of 588 Papua New Guineans employed on the project, 546 are local villagers, competent operators of the mine's massive machinery and complex processes.
>
> The fortnightly payroll paid directly into the Misima island community averages K130,000, and in late 1995, as the mine quietly celebrated two million ounces of gold production, wages and salaries earned by Misimans totaled K17 million, with a further K3 million in compensation and K9 million in royalties.
>
> Misimans have proved to be quick learners, and have provided the bulk of the mine's work force from the early days of operations.
>
> The dedication and efficiency of these employees enables the mine to continue to be a viable operation, and allow the benefits of the improved infrastructure and services to be enjoyed by the whole community…
>
> Not all Misimans are employed by the mine, and not all landowners receive royalties. However, the mine makes every effort to spread benefits widely through the community, including the outlying islands…
>
> "When the mining phase is over, MMPL hopes that the people of Misima will continue to prosper through fishing, forestry, tourism and other commercial activities made possible by the infrastructure created to service the mine" (Misima Mines, 1995: 1, 5, 8, 15, 22).

George's recitation of the entire mining pamphlet was almost liturgical. After finishing, he flipped back to a picture of children looking at a gold bar milled at the mine. Pausing again for a long time, he patted the pamphlet and said, "you know, this was all a trick." At first, I thought George was saying that the corporate public relations or the promises of Placer Dome were false. I asked what they lied about, and he replied, "oh, it is the truth, but it is a trick. All of this was."

"So, they told half-truths?"

"No. What they did is the story of Misima and the 'dimdims' (white people). It's the story of Misima, from the time of ancestors (*mumuga ana sauga*) until today, the "time of beggars" (*togulgulau ali sauga*). Even without the 'dimdims,' our story is a trick."

"So, those stories are false?"

"No. You do not understand. Misimans, our way (*misima gamagalau wama pagan*) is to trick, but not as well as 'dimdims.'"

After a few more clarifying points, I asked, "How so? What makes the 'dimdims' such good tricksters?"

George answered, "Tricking is about capturing the attention. It is about taking someone's mind. You see there." He again patted the image of the Misiman mine worker displaying a newly minted gold bar to Misiman grade students. Reading the lines again, "The two millionth ounce of gold was recently poured, witnessed by interested local visitors in the mine's gold room" (Misima Gold Mine, 1995: 5), he looked up and said, "You see how their eyes are fixed on that gold?"

"Now," he reopened the first pamphlet displaying the gold watches and jewelry.

> This is how 'dimdims' trick each other. Those things are so beautiful, but what are they for? Are they not for capturing the mind of someone else? Of course, that is what 'dimdims' do. It is a trick (*i kakauwi*). That gold— it is a tricky thing ('gold' *i ekakaui te*). It captures the mind. It is white people's love magic, isn't it? ('dimdim' *wali ebababola, age*). But you know what? That is what we do too. We love that magic. That is why the 'dimdims' came to Misima. Because we would trick each other. By tricking each other we would become stronger together. We would trade like in-laws (*muli*). You see, we are doing it together, right now.

I regret to admit that I did not immediately understand what George was saying. It seemed almost contradictory to me. A trick that was true? A trick that was desired? Tricks that

could be exchanged? What was George saying about anthropological fieldwork, race relations in post-colonial Papua New Guinea, or intercultural dialogue?

For some time, I thought George might have been simply referring to what he felt were broken promises or deceitful assurances that accompanied the building of the Misima Gold Mine. I knew George as a practicing Christian, but he was also a bit of a skeptic. While other Misimans in his Methodist congregation would regularly watch videos on their phones of sermons by American evangelicals, George rarely joined them. If anything, he would say he had better things to do than listen to promises. I knew George as someone who was deeply skeptical of promises. "To keep a promise (*epakuna*) was harder than making a promise (*ba'teli*)," I heard him say on multiple occasions.

While George viewed promises (*ba'teli*) as potential tricks (*kakauwi*), I believe it would be a mistake to reduce his summary of intercultural relations between Misimans and the mostly white pastors and miners to just acts of potential deception. Similarly, I think it is a mistake to view his summation of what I was doing with him as just deception. After the "writing culture turn" and the movement towards greater reflexivity in anthropological practice became an essential aspect of the anthropological zeitgeist it became hip to identify things like anthropological fieldwork and ethnography deceptive authority (Clifford, 1983), or with mutual lying (Metcalf, 2002), or even sorcery (West, 2007), but I think it would be unduly self-centered to assume that George was talking about our specific encounter, and not as much about a genre of encounters (Haviland, 1977).

It is telling that George does not focus on any broken promises or false expectations he read from the pamphlet. They were indeed there. Prosperity through "fishing, forestry, tourism

and other commercial activities" not only did not happen after the mine closed but those activities almost entirely collapsed after the mine's closure. As intimated by the pamphlet, not all landowners received compensation from the mine, which the mine and the government felt justified as only the landowners were immediately impacted by the digging of the pit, destruction of the garden or timber resources, and diversion of water supplies could seek redress. Similarly, after a century of Christian missionization that included messages that all Papua New Guineans were just as much God's children as Australians, Americans, and Canadians, the inequality of racial color lines and global capital, persisted.

Nevertheless, George went out of his way to make sure his comments could not be interpreted as a condemnation of the deception, broken promises, and false expectations given to him by the Misima Gold Mine or a century of Christianity. Instead, George was quick to identify the kind of trickery he saw in those relations with what Misimans do to each other, and what he understood as white people doing to each other. The trick was less about a lie and more about a certain kind of practice of grabbing one's attention.

From the displaying of the gold bar to Misiman grade students, to the gold watches, George was saying something not just about deception, or about the material qualities of gold, but about people's capacity to be distracted, to have our attentional pulled from us by some other thing. He later clarified to me that what he had meant by identifying our discussion on the veranda as a trick. He explained that his almost liturgical reading of the text was similar to the performance of magical spells as taught to him as a child. The monotony and lack of affect was not a problem, the route recitation was necessary, but in that recitation, the content is almost lost.

George asked me:

> Can you remember exactly what I said?" I responded that I could not without reviewing the recording or reading the text. "But you do remember that we have a history? A history tied to gold?... That is a distraction. It is a small part of our story, but it is a shinny one. It is what the 'dimdims' think our story is. Our story, the story of Misima, cannot be the mine alone. That was only 15 years. It is true the mine was big, and it changed everything, but everything has changed many times before… You 'dimdims' think you are the agents (*topapamasalau*, lit. "those who make something appear") of these stories. You built the mine, showed us the gold, and now you changed us, but that is not true. Yes, it is not true, but more than anything, it is a trick. It is distracting you from the real story.
>
> "What real story is that?" I asked.
>
> "We brought you here. The gold brought 'dimdims' here. We changed your society as you used our gold. You see, look at all the things you 'dimdims' made because of our gold." George motioned toward my voice recorder, a small Bluetooth speaker, and a cell phone. "But that is people's ways, you look at one thing, you look at the gold bar, but what is going on is something much bigger. You think I am just reading you a story from a booklet, but I am taking over your mind, making you think what I am saying." He paused and uncharacteristically looked me directly in the eye, "I do not know what is in your mind, but I do when you read along with me. That way, you become mine. I have made your mind appear."

What Captures Your Attention

Several themes emerge from this interaction. The pamphlets read by George portray a compelling narrative arch, albeit highly truncated, of late 20th-century Misiman history. However, George points out that while this story of gold discovery, mining, development, and the hope for sustainable self-sufficiency is technically correct, at least as far as it aspires to gloss Misimans' diverse responses to a complicated phenomenon, it is ultimately a trick. It is a trick because it ignores the other side of the interaction. It encourages its recipient to ignore a vital

question and implies that the principal agents of change were the ‘dimdims,’ while Misimans were passive objects. If Misimans were changed by ‘dimdims’ and their introduction of gold mining, how were ‘dimdims’ changed by Misimans and the gold Misimans dug? By ignoring this question, and taking the pamphlet’s word at face value, Misimans are then considered to be merely passive recipients of of ‘dimdims’’ agency. This, George revealed, was the trick of the story. It is false even though it reveals a true story, and, regardless, it is a distraction.

In this distraction, we get a hint of what Misimans mean by tricks (*kakauwi*) and trickery (*kakakauwina*) as having the “power to get things done” (*pamasal*). The “power to get things done” (*pamasal*) can literally be translated as “making things” (*pa-*) “visible” (*-masal*), which poses an interesting wrinkle in how we are to understand the Misiman concepts of trick and trickery. While typical English speakers may interpret “trickery” as a type of deception, often with connotations of hiding something from visible view, the Misiman concept of trickery is the exact opposite. A trick first and foremost makes something visible, much like Steven offering up others to look in his empty lime pot. It presents something as an offer to its recipient. However, what makes this presentation or revelation “tricky,” is that it captures the attention of its target, confining the target’s attention to an object of the trickster’s choice, thus hiding some other vital action happening in the background (see Radin, 1972 [1956]; Boon, 1999),

Take, for example, George’s brief mention of the recitation of the pamphlet’s narrative as a kind of spell. By reciting the text without discernible variations in affect, George was iconically mimicking the incantation speech genres belonging to either spells (*ebaya*, lit. “the things I speak”) or the recitation of Christian scripture (*ba’tatapaloloina*) in Methodist liturgy, each belonging to separate ends of the same evaluative scale. What George hints to in his

commentary is that while the locutionary act conveys its semantic content as one message, the perlocution force of the recitation is a kind of cognitive entrapment that may differ significantly from the illocutionary force. This performative quality of ritual communication or the pragmatic ability of oral ritual figure Misiman ideas about revelation and concealment, a theme common to much of Melanesia (see Tambiah, 1979; Robbins, 2001a; Stasch, 2011). By revealing one thing, the speaker takes control of the mind of another, and thus conceals his true intentions (see Tomlinson, 2014). George guessed I would be interested in his reading and interpretation of the mine pamphlet (he was correct), and by reciting the text with such deliberate exactness, he knew that I too would be captured by the locutionary act, for that is the purpose of the narrative speech genres he mimicked.

This ultimate aim of entrapping the minds of others through recitation, repetition, and bewildering glamour is a consistent theme in the literature concerning magic in the Milne Bay Province (Tambiah, 1968; Gell, 1992, 1996). As I stated earlier, to practice magic (*kukula*) on Misima, means to *do* kula, and *kula* means "to capture." This etymological legacy is, perhaps, best illustrated by the fact that the paradigmatic, and climatic, event in kula exchange is "throwing" exchange valuables (necklaces, arm shells, axes, or pots) to your exchange partner. This act of "throwing" is called *tagabub*, or literally translated as "to throw something to capture their attention."

CHAPTER 4: The Content of Myth

In the last chapter, I explored what it means to tell a story and how storytelling is a kind of exchange that can be tricky. In short, my argument was that oral performance of narratives could be tricky because of how minds can be captured through the exchanging of stories. Part of the magic of Misiman storytelling is that the pragmatic function of storytelling is the same as the aim of Misiman magic itself— the capturing of minds. Unfortunately, I had not yet firmly explained what it means to possess a mind, or any other thing, and why that possession is considered a magical act. In the following chapter, I argue that possession is a problem of central concern to Misiman social life, and that to possess something is not only to control or consume it but is be constituted by the thing you possess.

In the last chapter, I highlighted the overlapping performative aims of storytelling and magic. I argued that both storytelling and magic could be first and foremost understand by what they do, or through the pragmatic effects of storytelling as magical entrapment. This approach to storytelling and magic has a rich history. However, in the previous chapter, I neglected one of the elements of that genealogy— the tension between form and content in ritual action. In the previous chapter, we saw that narrative form itself could be understood as a kind of trap or magical device that captures the minds of others, and it would seem that the content of the story, or the content of the magic, took a back seat. This was certainly the case with George, who recited the history of the Misima Gold Mine through a pamphlet but focused on how the form of the narrative captured my mind, rather than the exact content of the story. However, I do not mean to imply that content is unimportant at all—quite the opposite. While I do not intend to use Misiman magic as a solution to that fundamental conflict, the aim of this chapter is to address

what I neglected in the previous treatment of Misiman magic— its content. In doing so, I argue that the trick (*kakauwi*) is the content of Misiman magic. I mean this not in a sense familiar to Western entertainment magic, but in the more Misiman sense of tricking (*lokakauwi*) as cognitive entrapment. This cognitive entrapment, I argue, provides a possible avenue for dealing with tensions in the anthropological literature between Melanesian forms of personhood as partibility and exchange, and Austronesian problems of possession.

This problem of possession is fundamental to Misiman magic precisely because of its relation to personhood, the opacity of minds, and the possession of those minds. However, it is also a more significant cultural theme in Misiman social pragmatics that elucidates many other categories of social action. Continual attention is given to questions of what is "inside of" (*gamana*) something else, and what proximity that thing has to a person through questions of possession or consumption. While I will end this chapter in a discussion of how this relates to questions concerning the constitution of a mind as an opaque, but ultimately consumable, part of a person, I will first demonstrate how this questions of what how someone possesses a thing, is "inside" something, and what it is control is central to understanding Misiman sociolinguistics, kinship, and myth.

The Sociolinguistics of Misiman Possession

What does it mean to possess and thing, and what kinds of possession are possible? One answer to this question seems obvious. Possession, in its most basic sense, is a relation, but it seems to be so much more than that. To possess a thing is not only to relate to it as a medium of exchange, but to hold on to it, to control it, and possibly consume it, as is the case in Misima (see Kuehling, 2003; Kockelman, 2010). Pierre Bourdieu's (1972, 1990) contribution to gift theory is

apt. In explaining the tempo of Berber giving and reciprocation, Bourdieu argued that men sought to control the temporality of theirs's and others' possession. "A man possesses," he wrote, "in order to give. But also possess by giving. A gift that is not returned can become a debt, a lasting obligation; the only recognized power—recognition, personal loyalty, or prestige—is the one that is obtained by giving. In such a universe, there are only two ways of getting and keeping a lasting hold over someone: debts and gifts" (Bourdieu, 1990: 126). Berber men will draw out their possession of a thing, or draw attention to another's usury obligation. The act of giving is not the main event for evaluating the relative prestige of a gift giver. Instead, it is the giver's mastery over the tempo of possession relative to the demands to give that confer status and prestige.

Pana Misima follows a standard Austronesian convention of giving considerable morphosyntactic attention to possession. This attention marks ways in how things are attached, belong to, or are temporarily possessed by others. In Pana Misima, three classes of possession are articulated in the grammar through possessive classifiers attached to items being possessed. As insinuated above, these three grammatically marked classes of possession are for: 1.) inalienable things that are attached and cannot be detached from a person, 2.) semi-inalienable things that belong to a person as a consumer, and 3.) alienable things that are freely attached and detached from a person. These classes demarcate the ways people relate to things through both possession and exchange.

Inalienable objects are typically parts of a thing, such as parts of a body or branches of a tree. For example, a person's face (*manin-*) must be attached to a clitic to designate its proper possession by the speaker(s), addressee(s), or subject(s) of conversation. Thus, face (*manin-*) can

only be referred to as "my face" (*maniniu*); "your [singular] face" (*maninim*); "your [plural] face" (*maninimiu*); "his/her/its face" (*maninina*); "our [inclusive of addressee] face" (*maninila*); "our [exclusive of address] face" (*maninima*); or "their [plural, exclusive to speaker and addressee] face" (*maniniliya*). The same would go for an extension of a thing, such as "your [singular] injury" (*lolim*). The same is true for objects which are themselves products of another thing, such "my tears," which is translated as in "my eye its juice" (*matau suina*), or oil and grease, which could be referred to only in respect to what they belong to, such as "coconut's oil" (*nui enonona*) or "the pigs' grease" (*bobu ununilya*).

Some inanimate objects or abstract concepts are attached to a person, but are not consumed or easily exchanged with another, and are, therefore, considered inalienable. "My house" (*limiu*) or "their pet" (*agulelia*) are examples of these object relations. While some of these objects, such as a house, could be classed as alienable (e.g., speaking of "my house" as an alienable object would be translated as *no limi*). Do this could signal mine or another person's distance from the object and its possibilities for exchange. Thus, when a speaker chooses to use an inalienable suffix, they are marking their intimacy with the object and the converse distance between the object and the addressee. The latent message being, "this object is not for your consumption."

Semi-alienable objects are those that have been clearly assigned as consumable by a designated person or thing. This is most commonly found with food. For example, a flat sago pancake (*pelet*) would be "my sago pancake" (*o pelet*) if I, as the speaker, was recognized as the designated consumer of the sago pancake. Hence, you would refer to "your sago pancake" (*am* [singular]/*ami* [plural] *pelet*) if the addressee(s) were the assigned consumer(s); "his/her/its sago

pancake" (*ana pelet*) if a subject besides the speaker and addressee was the recognized consumer; "our sago pancake" (*ala* [inclusive of addressee]/*ama* [exclusive of addressee] *pelet*) if a mixture of the speaker, addressee, or subjects were the recognized consumers; and "their sago pancake" (*ali pelet*) if subjects out outside of the speaker and addressee were the recognized consumers. These possessive classifiers of *o-*, *am-*, *ami-*, *ana-*, *ala-, ama-*, and *ali-* all mark an item as consumable and signal relations between speaker(s), addressee(s), and subject(s), all while designating the consumer(s).

While semi-alienability is most clearly exemplified by food stuffs, other goods, such as clothing, are also considered consumables to be classified as semi-alienable. Thus, "my clothing is torn" (*o 'kaliko' malelena*) designates my clothing as something that is used, consumed, and ultimately destroyed by me as the designated consumer. However, if I wanted to mark my clothing as to be given without designating a consumer, then I would use the alienable possessive classifiers, as in "my clothing is torn" (*no 'kaliko' melelena*). Again, we can see marking something as semi-alienable classifies it as an item that is possessed to be consumed while marking it as alienable classifies the object as an item of possible exchange. In semi-alienability or alienability, the designation of the penultimate or ultimate consumer is not necessary. Instead, it is about marking who immediately holds on to the item.

Alienable objects are then those that can be readily attached and detached from a person. This classification marks the possession as not intrinsic to their person but as a potential item of exchange. For example, "my pig" (*no bobu*); "your [singular] pig" (*wam bobu*); "your [plural] pig" (*wami bobu*); "his/her pig" (*wana bobu*); "our [inclusive of addressee] pig" (*wala bobu*); "our [exclusive of addressee] pig" (*wama bobu*); and "their pig" (*wali bobu*) are all commonly

heard ways of discussing pigs, since they are generally considered to always been possessed by someone, and typically possessed as a potential gift to another unspecified person. In fact, pigs are rarely given or exchanged on Misima outside of feasting contexts. In those contexts, they are almost always immediately killed for consumption as soon as the beneficiary of the pig gift is announced, that person is recognized as the consumer even if they do not do the actual consuming of the pig. Likewise, an object can move from a semi-alienable object with a fixed consumer to an alienable object that is more likely meant for possible exchange, like the clothing example above. The inverse is also true.

An example of this reclassification of the relative alienability of an object can be found in the differentiation between the common expression "Jehovah's love" [the love Jehovah has to give you] (*Yehoba wana nunuwana*) to "Jehovah's love" [belongs for him to consume] (*Yehoba ana nunuwana*). By reclassifying the God's love as something of Him, that is given to His believers to something that He has received, to be consumed by Him. Classifying something as alienable or semi-alienable may not only signal the relative proximity of the thing to the person's body, as in food that becomes incorporated into the body but may also mark actions associated with the possession as consumptive or productive, as in using the object to produce or maintain relations through its gift-giving.

These classificatory designations demonstrate the centrality of giving, receiving, consuming, and producing, but they also signal the importance these elements have to Misiman personhood. The Misiman person is socialized into referring to objects as things that are either only temporarily possessed by the person, possessed as consumable and thus integrated into the person, or completely inalienable to the person.

Inalienability: The Body and Kinship

In Misima, the predominate image of an inalienable thing is the body of a person or "trunk" of a tree. Both are referred to as the "body" (*tuwan-*), which is found only in its inalienable sense. "His/her/its body" (*tuwana*), like "the tree's trunk" (*i ebwakil tuwana*), is clearly distinguished from "my body" (*tuwau*), or any other combination of speakers, possession, and addressee morphosyntatic suffixes mentioned earlier. Because of its rootness, the body or trunk is never said to be given, taken, or received; it belongs to the subject in question. As a kind of inalienable container for the soul, a canvas for feeling, and the object that moves through the breath or life of a person, the body then be said to be *the* person, and to speak of a body is to speak of a person or thing.

A common collective address for kin, particularly for consanguines, is "this body of mine" (*toto tutuwau*). This designation of kin is entirely consistent with the earlier observations about possession— in that only parts of your body, and kinship relations are designated as inalienable. However, the metaphors of the body in kinship does not stop there, as a subclan is called "the intestines" (*tini*). The impression made from these comparisons is that kinship is fundamental to not only the construction of the body (something that will be discussed later), but that kinship is fundamental to the person. As I was routinely told when I first arrived on Misima, it was impossible for me not to have a clan and not know whom my kinship relations were on the island. Since it is generally taboo to mention the name of non-consanguines, such as your father or affines, spouses, spouses, sexual partners, and other relations that demand respect, such as a mother's brother or cross-cousin, knowing what your relationship is with a person is far more important than knowing their name. In fact, I often found it difficult even to learn some people's

names as they were rarely spoken by anyone since few would be considered their peers. Thus they were referred only through honorifics like “important man” (*tonowak*), “important woman” (*nevanak*), or by whatever kin relation they shared with the speaker.

For something to be alienable means to possessive a certain degree of distance and authority over the object. It is significant that most kinship relations are then exclusively inalienable, just as a person’s body is. Kinship relations are by themselves, something that makes the person the person, as they are typically understood as a product of the nested relationships within them. However, some of these relations are alienable. The relationship between the mother’s brother (*valehe*) and sister’s son (*gan*) and sister’s daughter (*gamalok*) are good examples of this alienability as there are exclusively referred to through alienable classifiers.

Similarly, a same-sex sibling (*tali-*) would be always be “my same-sex sibling” (*tali-u*); “your same-sex sibling” (*tali-m*); “your [plural] same-sex sibling” (*tali-miu*); “his/her/its same sex-sibling” *(tali-na*); “our [inclusive of addressee] same-sex sibling” (*tali-la*); “our [exclusive of addressee] same-sex sibling” (*tali-ma*); or “their same-sex sibling” (*tali-liya*). These possessive clitic suffixes of *-u*, *-m*, *-miu*, *-na*, *-la*, *-ma*, and *-liya* hold for virtually all inalienable parts of things (like body parts) and kinship terms, both consanguine and affine. The sole exception in kinship terminology is the dyadic relations between a mother-brother (*valehe*) and his sister’s son (*gan*) or sister’s daughter (*gamalok*), which are always referred to as an alienable relationship, which I will explain more about below.

The first principle of Misiman social identity is that of matrilineal descent, which is understood through problems of consanguinity. Thus, a person is born a member of a particular clan (*un*) and a subclan lineage (*tini*) stemming from a clan ancestress who first settled in a

particular portion of land, and retains this identity throughout their life.

The clan is the largest group identification as having rights over land. Within each village, two or three clans are the major landholders, but the village could possibly be comprised of members from all clans, many of whom arrived in the village through marriage ties. That "clans" (*un*) are associated with ties or tying is not a mistake, or remnant from familiarity with English phraseology. Instead, the word of for clan (*un*) means explicitly "a knot," and even more specifically, the knots of a fishing net (*gubena wana un* or *vineya wana un*). This associating with clan relations with knots and knot tying can be found through many different aspects of Misiman social life. However, they are most pronounced in commensality, exchange, and sex.

Gift exchanges and sexual relations are often talked about under the idiom of knots. For example, exchanges between kin, or members of an age-set, are literally called "knotted exchanged" (*un pepelahi*), and several people tying knots at once (*amamhikan*), loosely translated as "barren (*amam-*) staying (*hikan*)," is also the term used for sodomy. In another telling example, probably the most cogent taboo in the Misiman moral imagination, incest (*sowasowa*), refers to the tying of an anchorage rope (*sowa*) used in sailing canoes. The metaphor is that, by its connotations to immobility and proximity to risky sexual relations that await you on shore, tying the anchorage rope is a potentially dangerous act, much like incest.

Sowa is not only understood as an anchorage knot (*sowa*), rafters or cross beams of a roof (*limi sowasowa*), or incest (*sowasowa*), but it also refers to cuts of pork fat, which are the least prestigious cuts of a pig given to those who arrive late at a feast. However, these cuts of pork fat are also directly linked to illicit sexual encounters. Hence, "to be late" (*esowal*) or "crave illicit sex" (*esowal*), literally means "the thing (*e-*)" "because of fat" (*sowal*).

This points to another telling metaphor for Misiman kinship in the identification of clay pots with clans. The name for a clay pot (*ulun*), literally means "to wash" (*ul-*) "the clan" (*un*). Here, the identification with the clan is squarely placed with female labor, as women are the sole persons responsible for the production, decoration, and utilization of clay pots. This makes a great deal of sense not only because women are in charge of almost every step of clay pot production, but also because consanguinity, descent reckoning, and most food production are done almost exclusively through women, who pass on clan membership to their children. This intra-clan commensality and the mutual consumption of food constitute one of the single most essential acts of Misiman bond making. As one common Misiman idiom goes, "the family is in the clay pot" (*tutuwana iya ulun gamana*).

To translate, *tutuwana iya ulun gamana* as "the family" (*tutuwana*) "is inside" (*iya…gamana*) "the clay pot" (*ulun*), does not quite do the genius of the phrase justice. As is the case in many Pana Misima idioms, the phrase is highly polysemic, as both "the family" (*tutuwana*) and "inside" (*gamana*) have differing denotations that are also being hinted in the idiom's usage. In Pana Misima, "family," quite literally means, "of" (*tu-*) "the body" (*tuwana*). Therefore, when addressing kin as "my family" (*tutuwau*), I would be quite literally saying "those of" (*tu-*) "my body" (*tuwau*) (*tutuwau*). Similarly, to be "inside" something (*gamana*), is also the same word used for a women's womb (*gamana*), something that can also be seen in the designation of a woman's first-born child as being a person "inside the pot" (*gamaun*). So, when saying "the family is in the clay pot," a person could just as likely be saying, "those of my body are the clan washed, or prepared, in the womb" (*tutuwau iya ulun gamana*).

The designation of the body (*tuwana*) with kinship is well established, but the latent

associations with the body and kinship are particularly fascinating. For example, the two main principles of Misiman kinship, descent through the matriline and alliances maintained through affinal gifts during mortuary feasting, can be seen as mapping over binary oppositions in how Misimans talk about the body, mobility, and temperature.

Consanguinity

For example, descent, which is tied as an extension of the body in Misiman cosmology, is clearly associated with fence posts (*tutula*) that demarcate and enclose garden land. The fecundity of that land is thought to, partly, be the result of women encouraging the land to "stay still" or "wait" (-*hikan*) on the land (note how this contrasts with "barren waiting" or "sodomy" above).

How the body is "tied" to food and kinship is also telling. For example, "lumps on the body," like a wrist bone, wart, or the "knot on a tree," are called *tupi*, which is also the nickname used for yams (*la* or *laha*). The planting of yams (*la*) in a garden is said to be women planting "knots" (*tupi* or *la*) in their womb (*gamana*) (*nevanakau hi pelpel tupi iya eyowa gamana*). One significant overlap in pregnancy and yam gardening is how Misimans believe the chief cause of miscarriage, or crop failure, is that the woman's body, or garden (*eyowa*), is too warm (*waiwai*). This concept of needing to stay still (-*hikan*) is directly tied to being "cold" (*tutul*), which literally means "making the body" (*tutu*-) "wet" (*ul*).

While the clan (*un*) may be the largest matrilineally defined social group in Misima, the subclan (*tini*) is the group mostly intimately associated with consanguinity and the possession of land rights. While Misimans may recognize each other's clans as starting points, or endpoints, for certain kinds of relations, such as feasting alliances or incest prohibitions, it is the subclan

that Misimans most readily identify. However, the subclan's associations with the body are even more pronounced than those of the clan.

Two different words can be used in referring to a person's subclan. The less common term of reference is *epupwet*, which refers to the stones clansmen sit on during subclan meetings (these stones will be examined later in this chapter). The more common term, quite literally, means "the intestines" (*tini*), which, people are saying, are "bound together" (*yowan*). Thus, to take a child captive in war and adopt them into your subclan, as was discussed earlier, is to "bind" (*yowayowan*) "the child" (*wawaiya*) "with the intestines" (*tiniya*) (*wawaiya yowayowa tiniya*).

The subclan may refer to a woman and her direct matrilineal descendants, but a subclan is not necessarily composed of only small sets of descendants. Instead, subclans trace their lineages to the clan ancestresses who initially settled in a specific location. Each subclan holds rights over these particular areas of land for use gardening, coconut or sago groves, or harvesting building supplies. This is because Misimans typically recognize a right of the first usage, in which once a tract of land is cleared by members of a specific subclan, that land is identified as belonging to them and their descendants. Forest land that has not been cleared is clan territory, and any subclan of that clan can fell timber, collect firewood or gather wild nuts or fruits from that area. As the population as expanded, each successive generation has cleared more virgin forest, so that there is virtually none left on the island.

Most of these subclan founders are recognized as having multiple daughters, and each of these smaller lineages is recognized as having some kind of hierarchical importance, usually recognizing some kind of authority of the descendants of the founder's firstborn daughter over

the descendants of the other daughters. Still, the recognition of this authority is rather tenuous since who exactly constitutes the lineage of this first-born daughter is somewhat amorphous or easily contested.

Because of these ties to the land and a shared genealogy, the subclan constitutes the widest group whose members tend to identify themselves as a single cohesive unit. The response, however, is not automatic but conditional on the situation. The subclan is also the broadest unit on behalf of which its leading personalities may speak with any authority. Members of the various subclans in a clan would not submit to one or more men of any subclan (*tini*) speaking for an entire clan (*un*). While it is true that no one would presume to do so in the past, the construction of the Misima Gold Mine in 1985 dramatically changed that (the next chapter will discuss that phenomenon in more depth).

I do not want to mislead; however, by giving the impression that the very concept of "being inside" (*gamana*) is exclusively associated with women or principals of matrilineal descent. While the body (*tutuwana*) is directly associated with matrikin and *gamana* may refer to the womb, it can also refer to the subclan of a father (*tamanu tini*), to whom the matrikin (*tutunau*) of the child give food to soon after the child is born. Years later, members of that same subclan, now called "the people" (*to-*) "from inside" (*gamagaman*), will be the recipients of yams given the case of the father's death. From this concept of "being inside of" (*gamana*) we can see how one polysemic concept indexes a multiplicity of gender and non-gender connotations about the proximity of a person to the idea of "contents" or "what is inside."

Alliance

As I demonstrated earlier, while the clay pot (*ulun*), is associated with "washing" (*ul*) and

"the clan" (*un*), what is inside the pot, a yam (*la*) or "knot," is associated with the making of kin through commensality. This is both because of how the "knot" (*la*) ties people together, just as the intestines tie a person to the body of their matriline, but also in how the yam becomes part of the body or family. The giving and sharing of food are intrinsically tied to the mutual exchange of substances, but it is also clearly defined by the result of that exchange— pleasure.

Sitting with friends and family while eating yams in the single most important event of any day, and the main components and persons involved in communal eating are closely associated with sex. Not only is the making of friends, and the giving or receiving of gifts activities iconic of sexual relations, as I noticed earlier in this chapter, but the preparation and consumption of food are similarly "tied" to the sexual relations that bind together affines. For example, the boiling of water or oil in a pot is said to be "washing the oven" (*ulum*), which is the same term used for orgasmic pleasure during sex. Thus, when someone orgasms or mimics sexual pleasure, they may say "my body 'tastes' hot" (*tuwau amnan i waisi*) or "my body 'tastes' hot" (*tuwau amnan i waiwai*). This is the same theme clearly seen when looking at the properties of coconut oil, transliterated as "of the clan" (*<u>un</u>una*), which is regularly used in cooking. As such, the coconut oil is associated with the reproductive potential of a clan, and its preparation codes it as a liquid that is "hot" (*waiwai*), in contrast to the coolness (*tultul*) of the water that nourishes the garden's soil.

When sago porridge (*moni*), a meal requiring excessive amounts of coconut oil, is made during a mortuary feast the hosts of the feast, usually sharing the same matriline, will prepare the sago and cook the coconut oil, while the recipients of the feast, the affines, will stir the sago and hot coconut oil together using a large wooden spatula (*tomilibakubaku*). The action of stirring the

coconut oil and sago together makes slurping sounds called *kapakapa*, which is also the name used for the sound of two bellies slapping together during intercourse. Aware of this, men will joke about this while stirring the sago porridge, by laughing "*kapakapa oo*" and thrusting their pelvises as if they were having intercourse with one another. The association with sago porridge and sexual relations is even more pronounced in the prestation of the sago porridge by a widow to her affines as a sign that they will soon be recipients of a *hagali* mortuary feast. In the past, this gift of sago porridge was required for any widow to leave her home after her partner's death. For this reason, this gift is called *nawanawa*, or "to walk around," which is most certainly in reference to her emergence from her home. However, *nawanawa* also means to have searched for sex and to be promiscuous, or sexually active with many partners, is called "walking from home to home" (*gala nawanawa*).

All of this is, of course, not relegated only to the preparation and consumption of coconut or sago. Yams (*la*) are said to be children, something is seen clearly in the myth of Gere`u and Marita. Husbands will often clear the land for their wives' gardens, which women keep as their own. When men are doing this, they are said to make the land of their affines "hot" by burning away the overgrowth. After the land is cleared by fire, men will arrange the garden plot, planning with their wives where crops will be planted. Then, after the potential garden has been clearly plotted, men will spot till (*giyal*) the soil for the yam seedlings (*yopehe*) with large sticks (*suki* or *egiyalgiyal*). This process is said to iconically contrast with how, later in life, older men will walk laboriously with the assistance of long sticks (*suki* or *enawanawa*). The idea being that while men make gardens and their bodies "hot" through clearing, burning, and tilling for women, their life essences or energies are slowly sapped from them. This same ideology of substance and

heat transfer is a significant part of how people understand sex and the nurturing of children. Like the stirring of sago porridge, men will often laugh and joke about how the tilling of land, digging holes with repeated thrusting of large sticks, is similar to intercourse. It is for this reason men will occasionally tease each other by grabbing each other's penises and call them "my walking or digging stick" (*no suki* or *no enawanawa* or *no egiyalgiyal*). When men feed their children, the child is said to become sleepy because of the heat the father transfers to his children.

The commensality between fathers and children is not the only model for filial exchange. A visitor (lit. "that body," *tutuna*) of any kind is key to a successful meal. A meal in private is said to be gravely immoral and worthy of gossip, so Misimans will enthusiastically welcome even strangers to eat with them. To share food with strangers is to make them either adopt them, as is the case with children or make affines out of them.

This is particularly true with children who can be adopted just through sustained feeding. During my time on Misima, I frequently saw this. Children who may be dissatisfied with their family because of abuse, neglect, or the inability to provide properly, would simply pick up and leave. They would first start eating a someone else's home, usually the home of a mother's brother or mother's sister. However, it was occasionally the case that children would gravitate to the home of their paternal cross-cousins. If a child ate with that family consistently, they might start sleeping at that home as well. If this continued for a considerable amount of time, the family may start calling the adoptee "our child" (*natula*) and use sibling terms, but the child's clan was thought to change. In the past, the only instance when a person's clan membership could be changed was in the case of the adoption of a child who was a prisoner of war from another

island. While the child was brought up as a member of his adopter's clan, it was said that in the child's "heart" or "liver" (*atena*) they knew they belonged to the clan of their birth. Regardless of whether their clan changed or not, the "adoption" of a child was accomplished through the collective recognition of consistent care for the child. In either case, an adopted child, whether their clan had changed or not, and regardless of the specific nature of the relationship between the matrilineal relatives or cross-cousins, adopters were caretakers, and they would call their adoptee's "my precious thing" (*no kawasaisai*). So while an adopted child is referred to as inalienable (*natula*), they may also be referred to using the alienable possessives (*no*, lit. "my possession").

A similar kind of ambiguity exists with affines, who are indexically tied to semi-alienability, through their associations with food, while ultimately being classified as alienable. The alienable form of "your affine" (*wam muli*) is almost indistinguishable from the semi-alienable "your food shavings" (*am muli*), and people will playful equivocation between the two as a kind of joke about how affines are always eating your food. This is further spelled out in how to grate food in preparation for cooking or to exchange food with affines at a feasting exchange are both referred to through the same transitive verb, *mulimuli*. Similarly, the term for "friend" or "lover" (*heliyam*) can be used interchangeably with what is typically reserved for affines and food shavings (*muli*). This association with food, sex, and exchange is further supported by the identification of the grater (*emuli*) used for shaving betel nut (*lehi wana emuli*) as an instrument for love magic (*epapabola*), which will be explored more thoroughly in the next chapter. The metaphor extends further into ideas of generational reckoning with the obligations "generations" (*heyan*) have to one another being referred to in the same terms used for debts

incurred through gifts given at feast exchanges. For example, the debts incurred (*vaga*) by a previous generation's labor (*hahouwa ala tuwawali*) are colloquially called "the next generation's in-law's food" (*hamula ala muli ana anan*). In contrast, the payments (*maisa*) of these debts are called "the previous generation's food" (*hahouwa ala anan*). This is further reinforced by the fact that "to boast at a feast" or "boast of your giving" is "to speak" (*ba-*) "of generations" (*heyan*), or *baheyan*, and a familial nickname used by children for their fathers (*tamana*) is "man of" (*to-*) "food" (*anan*), or *toanan*, which denotes a father's role in providing food for their children.

On Totems and Taboo

The same concern for consumption can be found in Misiman totemism, where multiple taboos exist around ideas of consumption and totemic animals. However, totemic identification is also a vehicle for differentiation. Claude Lévi-Strauss's (1963; 1966) argument that totemism consists of using animal classificatory schemes as models for social difference holds within the Misiman context. It is not just happenstance that totemic etching patterns, some of which are understood as indexical to the representation of birds. In contrast, others are purely symbolic, decorate the edges of clay pots throughout the southern Massim (May & Tuckson 2000). Clans are a basic structure of social organization throughout the area, and Misimans employ various means of quickly using mimic devices, such as totems, for mapping the differentiation of clans onto everyday social life. This basic pattern was identified by C.G. Seligman (1910: 9) early in the 20th century.

> the most characteristic cultural feature of the Massim is the existence of peculiar form of totemism with matrilineal descent. The members of each clan have as totems a series of associated animals belonging to different classes of the organic

> kingdom; ordinarily these linked totems are bird, fish, snake and a plant…. It is certain that special importance is attributed to the bird totem over the greater part of the Massim area.

As part of the Massim, this observation holds in Misima today, where totemic birds, or "their birds" (*wala bwasimu*) are the major labels that Misimans refer to identify each other's clan membership. Occasionally elderly Misimans will be able to identify the fish, plants, and even songs associated with their clan, but this increasingly rare as this knowledge has gradually faded.

Few articulated beliefs can be associated with why totem animals or trees are identified with each clan. My suspicion is that these identifications are mostly retroactive explanations that have arisen from pesky questioning from anthropologists. However, the few examples of why specific totems are assigned to groups are interesting. Sometimes the physical outlook and actions of the totem birds are used to explain certain behavior of members they represent. For example, if a Gamatal clan member steals bananas from some other clan's garden, the members of that clan will agree that Gamatal clan members are expected to behave along the lines of a Coconut Lorikeet (Weigali), which is widely derided for being a "thief" (*tokauma*). Likewise, when the members of the Linawia clan begin harvesting their yams before the proper harvesting time, other clans will comment that the Cockatoo (Apwaiowa) never allows pawpaw to ripen before eating it entirely. Worse still, it is widely gossiped that the Linawia clan eats their yam seeds and are always nearly left with nothing to plant for the next yam season. Like the Cockatoo, they are impatient and greedy. Thus, some will argue that totems represent commonly held stereotypes about clan behavior, either good or bad, depending on the kind of totem they have and its appearance or actions. Occasionally, a person's behavior can even be explained

away as being the product of their totem's influence over them. However, like the basis of stereotypes, I find very little evidence of this in everyday Misiman life.

Because strong name taboos exist with specific configurations of kin relations, Misimans will often playfully refer to each other by the name of their totemic birds, rather than their names. Either way, identifying someone through their bird is a common practice throughout the Massim. For example, I had been adopted into the Meisoga clan, whose bird is identified mainly as Magisobu, or the White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*). When traveling outside of Misima, either at the provincial capital of Alotau or during kula expeditions, it was common for people to ask what my bird was. If I replied Magisobu and explained it as the White-bellied Sea Eagle, people would be quick to identify ways they or someone in their company was related to the same clan, whether through descent or through marriage.

In this way, people could quickly identify each other relative to the ten clans that have historically existed on Misima. The following table outlines the primary associations the ten clans known on Misima have with their totemic birds, fish, and trees. The table demonstrates that while the clans are widely known, and there is basic agreement on the bird totems associated with the clans, the fish and tree totems are less agreed upon and, in some cases, unknown.

Clan Name	**Bird Totem**	**Fish Totem**	**Tree Totem**
Manilobu	Lawat, Lesser Frigate Bird (*Fregata ariel*). Because the Lawat follow schools of fish they are considered the best sign (*etotohi*) of good fishing. They are also used "in observations of the weather, if the wind is	Belibeli, the Double-headed Maori Wrasse (*Cheilinus celebicus*), found on steep outer reef slopes around Misima and throughout the Louisiade Archipelago. Synonyms: Gamatawalayan, Lablab, and Baibai.	The Manilobu clan is named after the Manilobu tree, known in English as the Cananga Tree (*Cananaga ordorata*). This tree found in the forest and in secondary regrowth. Its flowers are used for body oil

	strong it will be seen flying near the surface, if the wind is slight it will be seen flying higher in the sky" (Kinch 1999: 92). Manilobu is the only clan to also have a snake totem--Kumakala, or the Salvador's Monitor (*Varanus salvadorii*).		(Hughes and Sullivan 1987: 16).
Mwaowa	Okok, a Torresian crow (*Corvus o. orru*).	Baewa, a generic term for sharks (*Carcharinus* spp.). Synonym: Kau.	Bwaiobwaio, likely "Kerosene wood" (*Cordia subcordata*), used for its medicinal gum and flammable resin. In other parts of Milne Bay, Bwaiobwaio means "crow."
Guau	Boi, Eastern Reef-Egret (*Egretta s. sacra*). Synonym: Logaloga.	Tupatupa, a Generic term for Trevalleys (*Caranax* spp. & *Pseudocaran ax dentex*). The name Tupatupa comes from "come up against" (*tupa*), the action observed when these species eat small hardyheads and scads (Kinch 1999). Synonym: Getula (in Western Calvados Chain) (Kinch, 1999: 22).	Aiguwau, possibly a Guioa tree (*Guioa misimaensis*).
Linawiya	Apwayowa, Sulphur Crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita triton*). Synonym: Koki and Atakena.	Enipola, the two spotted Red Snapper, also known as the Red Bass (*Lutjanus bohar*). Traditionally a *tabu* was associated with eating this fish, even for those unrelated to the totemic taboos associated with the fish. It was believed you would develop sores if you consumed it (Kinch, 1999: 68).	Unknown.

Gamatal	Weigali, Coconut Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus haematodus micropteryx*).	Tawiya, a generic term for certain cod and coral trout fish species found in coral reefs, lagoons, and outer reefs throughout the Louisiade Archipelago (e.g. *Plectropomus leopardus*/*maculatus*; *Plectropomus areolatus*; *Plectropomus oligocranthus*; *Plectropomus laevis*). Traditionally a *tabu* was placed on eating these fish, even for those unrelated to the totemic taboos associated with the fish. It was believed you would develop sores if you consumed it (Kinch, 1999: 68). Synonym: Kosa.	Unknown.
Meisoga	Magisobu, White-bellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*). Has mythological associations, particularly is the island of Nagobi (Kinch 1999) and is said to be the son of Sinekalawata.	Pilihul, the Bicolor Goatfish (*Parupeneus barberinoides*) found in sand, rubble, and weedy areas adjacent to coral reefs throughout the Louisiade Archipelago. Traditionally a *tabu* was placed on eating these fish, even for those unrelated to the totemic taboos associated with the fish. It was believed you would develop sores if you consumed it (Kinch, 1999: 68). Synonym: Lagalaga.	Kilimu, Kaidage, or Bibib. I was unable to identify this species.
Lailoga	Gelgel, Purple-bellied Lory (*Lorius h. hypoinochrous*). Has mythological associations (Kinch 1999).	Tameyala, a generic term for sea turtles. Synonym: Gonamwa.	Unknown.
Mutuna	Sikosiko, the Papuan Black Myzomela (*Myzomela nigrita louisiadensis*). It is	Loloya, a generic name for Mullet species (e.g. *Valamugil buchanani*; *Liza*	An unidentified species of flowering tree that Sikosiko live in.

	sometimes called a "fly catcher." Synonym: Tikotiko.	*vaigiensis*; and *Mugil cephalus*).	
Ewau	Kisakisa, the Western Osprey (*Pandion hallaetus*).	Nabewalele, a generic name for particularly patterned Sweetlip species (e.g. *Plectorhinchus lessoni*; *Plectorhinchus obscurum*; *Plectorhinchus lineatus*; and *Plectorhinchus goldmanii*).	Unknown.
Gamwaola	Wagamwaoya, an unidentified eagle species.	Yui, the Dugong (Dugong dugon), found feeding on sea grasses in lagoons throughout the Southern Louisiade Archipelago, particularly in Sudest and Rossel.	Unknown.

Identification of each other's' totems allows people to quickly slot each other as either matrikin, patrikin (through their father's clan totem), or possible affines. This can be helpful in several different kinds of social settings, primarily those involving taboos concerning sexual relations, commensality, and name taboos.

Following terminological conventions closely resembling the Omaha system, members of the same clan call each other by inalienable sibling terms (ss: *tali-*; os: *nu-*), and thus any sexual relations with a member of the same clan is considered incest, probably the single most condemnable breach of taboo on Misima. Cognizant of this possibility and other possible benefits of finding a clanmate who can assist you, men and women, who are presently strangers meeting for the first time, will quickly ask each other, "what is your bird (*tab wam bwasimu*)?"

Another taboo not as strictly followed, mostly because the possibilities for its violation are infrequent, involves the anxiety of eating the totemic bird of your father. In the past, Misimans considered the consumption of these animal totems taboo (*tabu*), but the taboo only

applied to the totem of your father. You could consume your bird or fish, but very few birds are hunted or consumed at all, and several of the fish species are poisonous. It was not taboo to cut down or use your own or father's totemic tree. As far as I have been able to reconstruct, the intentional planting of trees was used as signs (*etotohi*) of clan land or an individual's identification with a clan.

The pragmatics of honorifics and word avoidance shows similarly ambivalent approaches to taboos. It is typically considered rude to use people's names when addressing them. When referring to a person when speaking with a third party, it is generally considered uncouth to use their name unless it is absolutely necessary for establishing the exact subject. Even then, people generally like to use nicknames, as opposed to their real names. What a "real" name is, by itself, something up for debate. Most Misimans have at least a Pana Misima name, a Christian name, and several "hamlet names" or nicknames. These nicknames are what closely related kin to tend to use in conversation. These names typically refer to some humorous events or characteristics of the person. For example, residents of the Panakoloba hamlet in Liak called me "Tupa" after a Tupatupa fish nibbled on my anus while defecating in the ocean. They joked my wife, who is identified with the Guau clan and whose totem fish is a Trevalley (Tupatupa), would "eat my ass."

While these name taboos and use of nicknames are widespread across all categories of Misimans, it is especially true too of those in the clan of your father. For example, the clan of my father would also be the recipients of a *hagali* feast sponsored by myself and my mother sometime after my father's death. To refer to any of these potential recipients of the *hagali* feast by their name rather than by the kin terms or honorifics would be extremely disrespectful. Using

the personal name of anyone in your father's clan could lead to someone from that clan throwing the invective, "you have my semen on your head."

Emplaced Kinship

As I mentioned above, the distribution of these matriclans is not confined to Misima, as they share broad similarities with other prominent clans throughout the southern Massim. However, while their exact names will vary across the Massim, they are almost all the same throughout the Louisiade Archipelago and Calvados Chain (excluding Rossel Island), and thus play an essential role in identifying not only who people are to you, but where they are from.

The most general level of descent reckoning it found in the clan (*un*). Here, the emergence of each clan is traced to a founding ancestress. A myth describing the emergence of the clan system explains how the system is itself tied to possession of the land. The myth goes:

> Originally, in the time of our ancestors (*mumuga ana sauga*), everyone belonged to one clan, Manilobu, and lived in Nobulean, a mountainous area in the interior of Misima close to Eiaus village on the southern side of the island. The leader of Manilobu was Quim Bwawa. In some versions of the myth Quim Bwawa is a female ancestress, or a twin sister of a chief, or male Paramount Chief like those found in Kiriwina. Either way, regardless of the gender or exact hierarchical title, Quim Bwawa was the leader over all the people living on Misima, who had sprung from the ground when Gere`u and Marita planted them as yam seedlings centuries earlier.
>
> Although Gere`u and Marita were the originators of human habitation on Misima, Quim Bwawa was recognized as the eldest, or perhaps parent, of all those indigenous to Misima. Quim Bwawa would insist on gathering together everyone in the hamlet every day to discuss hamlet affairs.
>
> While Quim Bwawa giving a speech, a young child defecated in the center of the compound, called "the place of ruling" (*abalogugui*). When the meeting was over one of the attendees who had not noticed the feces on the ground stepped on it. Soon, the women the hamlet were all accusing each other of not watching their children and demanding that another mother should clean up the mess.

Quim Bwawa was furious over the refusal to accept responsibility for cleaning up the mess and thought the squabbling over the feces were evidence that no one had listened to their admonitions for obedience. The family of Manilobu had grown too large to control.

Quim Bwawa walked to the stone circle in the center of the compound and authoritatively demanded everyone's attention. "Why are you arguing over shit? It wouldn't take long for one of you to remove this shit. Do you realize you all have done? No longer are we of one spirit. Now fight amongst each other, refusing to accept responsibility or giving assistance, regardless of who is at fault. We cannot live together anymore."

All eyes were now focused on Quim Bwawa who reached into a hand basket (*nabwa*) and pulled out a polished pearl shell (*kepu*) used as a spoon for sago porridge (*moni*). Without speaking Quim Bwawa stooped down to the spot where the feces laid and used the shell to slice feces into ten equal sections. Pointing to each section Quim Bwawa called out the name of ten of the family's daughters.

"This group!" Quim Bwawa successively called to each daughter's family, "Your clan is will be called thus and your hill, mountain or place is this." It was on this occasion that clan system was established, as the sisters dispersed across the island, settling in the allotments given by Quim Bwawa. These allotments were:

Clan Name	**Founding Ancestress**	**First Place**	**Adopted Name**
Manilobu	Sinemboboyoma.	Kelatawalayan or Mwaonola.	Tawalaian
Mwaowa	Gagaela.	Panamwaowa.	Bwaiobwaio
Guau	Yokalio.	Laluwa or Wekuweku. The clan split at Lalava.	Unknown.
Linawiya	Yoholval.	Tolutubuna or Wakwak, near Bagalina.	Unknown.
Gamatal	Bomyowau.	Nobuleyan.	Unknown.
Meisoga	Sinekepu.	Panawiwilia.	Mamanian
Lailoga	Bosilelei.	Patnabwala, near modern Gibobo.	Wadaia
Mutuna	Yobwai.	Biawa, a ridge next to Akimowan. Close to modern Kaubwaga.	Kanahina
Ewau	Lilibaku.	Mananaveta or Panawidiwidi.	Talpunuan
Gamwaola	Yobulagege.	Luvavala or Panagamwaola.	Manelanu

At these initial settlements founded by each sister, their families grew, until they too found that their settlements were not large enough for their populations. Each clan dispersed further as many of them left the places they were

> initially entitled to. Driven by crowding, the daughters and sons of this first generation of daughters soon settled into uninhabited coastal areas of Misima and islands of the Louisiade Archipelago. Many of them went as far as Woodlark, Fergusson Island, Duau, and the Suau area mainland of Milne Bay. Others went further east to Sudest and its neighboring islands. At these different locations these clans would adopt new names.
>
> Today Misima Society is based on this clan system. All the clan mentioned are still in existence. The social names and welfare and property are all traced through the movements of the clans. For trade expeditions where Misima people are involved, they use their clan name to introduce themselves to their neighbors. Usually if they find they belong to the same clan, the conclusion always is they originated from the same place and, undoubtedly, had the same ancestors.

Inheritance of rights to use land ideally follows matrilineal descent stretching back to founding ancestresses. However, most land is only traced to the descendants of one of these ancestresses, since it was them, not the ancestress and her brothers, who first cleared the land in question. Land usually lies fallow for at least eight years, and the land used for gardens each year depends on what land is ready for use. While women typically garden maintain gardens only on their subclan land, men (with the assistance from their wives, sisters, and children), will make gardens on their subclan land one year, their wives' the next, their fathers' or cross-cousins' another year, and so on.

While the passage of land rights "flow" through women, it is typically men, the brothers of these women, who regulate the collective use of land. This means that if someone wishes to clear and plant a garden on land claimed by their subclan or lineage, they must first ask a senior man in their lineage for permission. This may mean their actual mother's brother (*wana valehe*), but it is most commonly a great maternal aunt's brother or their maternal grandmother's brother. While multiple men can provide this permission of usage, it is common for the "authority" (*logugui*) to lie with one man, called the "man of authority" (*tologugui*), for each lineage set. The

responsibility lies with the "man of authority" (*tologugui*) to understand the various signs in the landscape that demarcate land boundaries. At the same time, the gardener must "hear," or obey (*hago*), his instructions.

How Something Becomes Alienable

At the invitation of their fathers, children and wives regularly work on the land not technically belonging to them. If a child has spent considerable time working on their father's land, it is common for members of their father's clan to recognize the child as possessing certain informal usufructuary rights over the land. Recognition of these rights is strengthened when children assist their father's clan with feasting activities or mortuary obligations.

Over the past century and a half, areas of Misima have been alienated from customary owners in various ways by governments, private individuals or companies, and Christian churches. Some of these areas, such as the Bwagaoia Township, have been the subject of disputes that customary owners still believe are unsettled, but for the most part, people appear to accept that some areas had been permanently alienated, called *bilibili pali*, or "bought land." This is particularly true of the contemporary settlement of Lagoa, in which the original Methodist Mission is still located and where residences for permanent expatriate mine workers were built in the early 1990s.

Traditionally, permanent alienation of clan land was extremely rare. A form of ownership transfer, called *an mamahiya*, involving payment of skulls or shell valuables (*bagi leau*) (cf. Berde 1974: 26). This was practiced in the distant past on Misima, but is no longer recognized as means of acquiring land. Today land transactions, whereby a clan relinquishes control over a particular area all fall in the category of *enovin*, which can be literally translated as "the fruits of

arriving" or "from the marriage." Strictly speaking, it is not the land that is given as acknowledge of indebtedness, but the trees and rights to plan on the area. However, as trees are, more or less, permanent, the outcome is often a de facto transfer of land as the relinquishing clan cannot use land entailed by *enovin*.

Women will encourage their children to work hard in their fathers' gardens, as this will give both mothers and children some security in finding land in the future, especially if the husband and father dies. The work done by women on these gardens or in feasts is done on behalf of her children, so whenever the husband's clan holds a feast, his wife will try to become one of the significant contributors to the feast. She gives large baskets full of yams (*la*) and will say to the host of her husband's clan feast, "your sweet and sperm I give to you" (*alutamiu ge puhumiu ya pek eliyamiu*).

This phrase construction is impressive for two reasons. First, it involves someone giving something inalienable to them, a part of their body, back to them. Second, it recognizes reflects a central ideology about the transfer of substances through labor common to much of the Massim. Here the yams (*la*) are held to be metaphorical of children, who are said to be "knots" (*la*) in the subclan (*tini*). In addition, Misiman men widely believe the care they give to children, and the resulting sweat expired during that labor, is a transfer of their life substances. Thus, when bragging about being excellent fathers, men will frequently wiggle a loose tooth, point to gray hairs, or slap a bad knee to demonstrate that their children are sucking the life out of them.

Similarly, intercourse is thought of in similar terms. The semen (*puhu*) given to women during intercourse is often understood as a life-threatening transaction, in which men transfer their life substances to women. It is only through payments yam of *laken*, or prestations of raw

yams given by a woman to honor a dead relative of her husband's, during *hagali* mortuary feasting and regular contributions to the husband and father's clan feasts that women are said to return what was given to them through intercourse, and thus gain usury rights.

Envovin land is invariably land already planted with useful trees- breadfruit, coconuts, areca palms, and fruit or nut trees. Part of the ceremony where usufructuary rights are given over involves the pacing of the boundaries and a public declaration about the land and its trees. This declaration is often tied to either a *lobek* mortuary feast, the last in a series of mortuary feasts in which headstones are placed on graves, or to *bakubaku* 'singsings,' where the host of a *lobek* feast feeds and entertains guests with food, song, and dance from dusk until dawn. Areas of land vary according to the degree of indebtedness; sometimes a large coconut plantation is given, sometimes just a plot for a home, others a small stand of mixed trees is given.

In the past, there was no equivalence between money, pigs, or yams. The debts created by food prestations are moral as well as economic, and the loss of the use of clan land is as much a symbolic loss of prestige as it is economic payment for a debt. Everything grown on *enovin* land becomes *tabu* to its original caretakers, and the productivity of the land is viewed as an acknowledgment of a woman's prodigious gardening skills and her devotion to her husband and his lineage as wife and mother. To harvest things from someone else's land *enovin* land would not be simply theft, but also an insult to the people who honored the relinquishing lineage's dead.

However, for a long-time, pigs have been sold for cash, and people have firm views about the monetary value of pigs. The problem that arises when *enovin* land is occupied or damaged by constructing a home, or from something more drastic like construction from the gold mine, is that *enovin* owners will be compensated at a rate that in no way balances out the cumulative debt

of years of feasting, giving *laken* and pigs. For example, if a person were paid for the destruction of trees, this would be equivalent to the value of two or three pigs, whereas in all likelihood the owner would have given more than this over a period of years, and the enormous quantities of yams given would, to a Misiman, be invaluable.

As *enovin* does not involve the transfer of land (insofar as the areas is still identified as being within the territory of the original clan owners) if trees are destroyed then complication arise that have no traditional precedent. Strictly speaking, the owners could redeem at a stage *enovin* land by feasting its occupants. This process is called *nima pwelpwel* and requires the clan owners to feast the *enovin* owners, giving *laken* and pigs that cancel the original debt. This would involve the repayment of many pigs and would undoubtedly require that a unique yam garden be planted by women of the lineage. Redemption *by nima pwelpwel* appears to be a rare occurrence, partly because in most villages, there is no shortage of land but also because it would entail severance of long-term alliances between inter-marrying clans in a particular village.

It is highly likely that because of the cultural and social value of *enovin* land, people who hold it would be reluctant to accept compensation based on an assessed value of the trees on it. It would be inequitable, however, were two types of compensation paid, one for clan land and the other for *enovin*. We doubt very much whether any agreement could be reached whereby a monetary value could be placed on the cultural meaning of feasting obligations.

Either way, what is clear from *enovin* land, as a category, is that something typically understood as an inalienable extension of the body, clan land (*bilibili*), is capable of becoming alienable. It becomes alienable through the mediation of semi-alienable categories, hence, the gifts of *laken*, or mortuary prestations of raw yams for affines to consume, sweat, and semen are

all parts of the body of either the person or the clan which is then consumed by others. Through this consumption and its proximity to semi-alienable classifications, the land itself becomes alienable, even if only for a generation.

What I find instructive about this approach to thinking about land a consumable object, is that it reveals a central concern of Misiman social life. Land is not just land to be transferred or exchanged between indebted parties; instead, the land is something that has people inside (*gamana*) of it. Therefore, the clan and its land are so closely associated with the clay pot, it contains people, but more importantly, it contains the substantive remnants of their labor—yams or children. Furthermore, people and their labor are here being thought of as consumable objects, who's inalienability can be transformed into alienability through consumption.

The Content of Myth

At the beginning of this chapter, I started with an acknowledgment that stories are not just oral performance. Instead, they do have content that is important on their own terms. I have used this chapter, up until this point, to point to one such example of how content outside of the narrow confines of storytelling. Kinship is not just the structural arrangement of relationships and debt obligations; it is not just a set of terminology that interpellates the subject. Moreover, I have attempted to show that consumption as a transformation of possessive properties is a crucial component of Misiman kinship. It is my goal to demonstrate in the remainder of this chapter that the same is true of narrative storytelling (see Salmon, 2017 [2007]). I will do so by focusing on a particular genre of storytelling I have already introduced in this chapter—myths about kinship and land.

When I first arrived in Misima and was still learning Pana Misima, I would occasionally

ask in English if there were any "myths" or "legends" that my collaborators could share with me. At first, most Misimans denied they their culture had any "myths" at all. Soon it became apparent that Misimans, like many other contemporary evangelical Christians, understood "myth" to connote fictional "falsehood." Much of the same problem existed with the term "legends." However, Misimans were also quick to associate "legends" with stories of the ancestral past (*mumuga ala liwan*), irrespective of their truth value. Soon, I came to realize that what I would typically classify as myths, legends, or folklore where understood by Misimans as "children's tales" (*pepeliwan*), or the kinds of stories adults tell children, particularly to scare them. Still, most Misimans I knew would claim that they did not know any of these tales or if they did, they did not know the full version. All of this changed when I started actively gardening with my family and hamlet neighbors in Liak.

I noticed how often people would tell stories during their rest breaks while chewing betel nut. It occurred to me to ask questions about our surrounding environment. Inevitably, whomever I was with would proceed by telling a story about the place. They would say, "Oh, that river there. That's where the two brothers killed their sister and distributed her entrails in a bowl. That's why you shouldn't eat in front of your sister at a feast." I would ask when this story took place, and they would be utterly non-committal in their answer. Their only response would be that it was "a story belongs to this place" (*panaeloloman*). You could say this same thing with a different construction (*i liwan ana panuwa*), which I did hear often. However, the former construction I find particularly helpful in understanding how Misiman myth (*loloman*) is emplaced.

Breaking it down, *panaeloloman* begins with the locative prefix *pana-*, which indicates

"belonging to a place." It includes *e-*, which means "a thing," and ends with *loloman*, which literally means "making (*lo-*) markings (*loman*)" and is an archaic Pana Misima term for myth. This particular esoteric meaning of myth (*loloman*) can be found in the verb used for "planting short term crops in a place" (*galoman*, lit. *ga-* "where" *loman* "markings happen"). Significantly, to shatter (*gala galoman*) like you would shatter seeds, may be said to be both a way of "making marks" (*loloman*) and "things of a myth" (*eloloman*). In other words, *panaeloloman* means "story that makes a place," which contrasts with "it is a story" (*i liwan*) "of this place" (*ana panuwa*). This seems to indicate that while a story does not just "belong" (*ana*) to a place (*panuwa*), the story makes the place. Thus, possession is caught up as a form of co-construction.

From this example of mythic emplacement, we can deduce how a key theme of Misiman cultural life, possession, extends to stories, and storytelling itself. A story is not just narrative content, nor is it only the pragmatic performance of a ritual form (Tambiah, 1979; Tomlinson, 2014), but it is something that belongs to a place (Feld & Basso, 1996). A story without a place, Misimans would eventually explain to me, is like a person wandering without purpose (*nawanawa bwagabwaga*), and places (*pana-*) without stories are empty (*panabalabala*), like a place (*panuwa*) is empty (*balabala*) without gardens or homes (*panuwa eyowa ge limi nige i gan i balabala*; lit. "the place without gardens or homes is empty") (see Rynkiewich, 2001; Ballard, 1994; Rumsey & Weiner, 2001; Jorgensen, 1997).

Emplaced myth is only one example of how story and narrative are tied to forms of possession. Fairly early on in my fieldwork, I learned that while many Misimans claimed ignorance of broadly shared myths (at least until the landscape's mnemonic qualities kicked in), there was one class of myths that many Misimans, particularly senior men of renown, actively

claimed to know, but would refuse to share— clan genealogies (*lihu*) and migratory myths (*un wana nem*, lit. "the clan's arrival"). Genealogies and migratory myths are not just chronological lists of persons and places, but they are claims of rights to residence or possession (Rumsey & Weiner, 2004; Ballard, 1997).

Three Myths from Liak, Misima

In reviewing emplacement in Misiman myth, it is worth exploring some examples. Already in this chapter have introduced the mythic account of how Misiman clans originated, the implications for how Misimans think about inter-clan relations, and how clans related to migration myths. Now, I will first provide an example of one of these migration myths belonging to Guwau, one of the two principal clans of Liak village and the clan which adopted my wife and my children. After that, I will give two examples of myths belonging to the Guwau Pantaval subclan in Liak that establish some vital information about the history of land tenure in the village of Liak.

> Nobuleyan mountain was the original place for all Misima people. From there, we moved on to live in Wekuweku. The third move we made still in one big group, was to Abpalu mountain.
>
> Abpalu means "deliver plenty" or "born plenty." It was on this mountain that we became a crowd. Because of this, we were divided into clans and sent off to live on our own. The rest did the same.
>
> We, the Guwau clan, left Abpalu and made our way towards the coast. We took the route through Niu Vavaluka, Gegelanahavia, Lalaga, and Lava.
>
> For a short period, we resided at Lalava then moved down to the coast at Liak village. Not long after that, we multiplied ourselves again. At that time, food was scarce, and our ancestors still ate people and roots of vines and wild bananas.
>
> Every mealtime, many members of the clan hardly ate anything. So it became evident that when cooking, the pot must be filled up with water.
>
> On one of those evenings, most of them longed for the liquid of the food cooked. The first lot of them finished the soup. When the rest came, there was nothing in the pot.
>
> The others catching the murmurs that there was no food, got angry. Soon

they were all fighting against each other.

Because of the inadequate *sui* or soup, they fought, and after that, most of them left Liak village. Some went to live on the south coast of Misima, especially in Alhoga village. Others traveled to Sudest and its neighboring islands. The few who were satisfied with life stayed at Liak.

Wherever Guwau members are found on and around Misima, it has become a standard joke to them that the wives must always cook enough food and use enough water for the soup.

The members of Guwau clan now living in Liak village know why they are part of those who live in Liak.

From this story, we can seem many themes like those set out in the origin of clans described earlier in this chapter. Those themes are concerns of autochthony, the migratory movement across a landscape, first settlements, and the problems of population density. Since many Misiman villages have been growing more and more crowded over the last couple of decades, many Misimans reiterate these concerns today. The problem, inevitably, becomes one of establishing who has the first rights of settlement in an area. This problem is particularly acute in Liak, one of the two largest villages in Misima.

The current population of East and West Liak put together is around 1,600 people, and the mountain slopes alone the northern side of Misima, next to Liak can sometimes be so steep that it is hard to find suitable garden plots that will not give out to landslides soon after they are cleared. This scarcity of gardening land and housing density within the village has led to general anxiety among older residents of Liak about possible social disintegration akin to that found in Nobuleyan and that experienced by ancestors in Liak.

I believe it is also not a mistake that cannibalism makes an appearance in this myth. It is common for many of these founding myths to incorporate some *tabu* relationship; many are about an incestuous brother and sister, or a violation of contemporary social norms. It is also

fitting though that the myth incorporates consumption at the heart of a story about how land is settled and emphasizes that even people, even kin, are consumable.

In the next two myths, we see other aspects common to myths in Misima that demonstrate how exactly they are emplaced in the landscape. First, we see mythic representations of the physical characteristics of the places described. Second, we see the use of the etiological function in myth as they attempt to explain the origin or presence of natural phenomena, like moonlight, or unique topographical characteristics of the landscape portrayed in the story. What this does is ground the myth not only in a story, often about how and why some group is associated with that area, but also why a feature of the landscape exists. This gives the impression of people and the landscape being co-constitutive.

Bolovaila's Ginuba, the Shell Moon

> Bolovaila lived in Pantaval in Liak village. She had a daughter who was married with three children. They were all sons.
>
> These boys helped their grandmother to make the garden and work in it every day. Very early in the morning, they would leave and return by late in the evening.
>
> Bolovaila had a special *ginuba,* or *kepu*, pearl shell (*Pinctada margaritifera*). It was secretly kept, and no-one knew she had it with her everywhere she went.
>
> When they were returning home from the garden, she would place the *Ginuba* shell on her cheek. It gave out light that lit up the path in front of them.
>
> The boys played in the light all the way home. It became a habit for them to come home late every day, the parents of the children realized.
>
> The father of the children became suspicious of his mother-in-law. She could be teaching these children destructive magic charms, he thought.
>
> It was nearing the time they usually came home. The son-in-law went and hid on the roadside and waited. It sounded apparent that these children were playing, "but in the dark?" he thought to himself. For surely, a mysterious thing was happening with these four.
>
> When they approached him, he saw the shiny thing on the woman's cheek. The children were playing with their spears slaying the insects near the roadside.

Without waiting for them, he ran home first to tell his wife. “Your mother is a sorceress. She shines while the children play in her light”.

As they drew near the house, she picked the shell off her and tucked it away in her basket. The daughter waited, still not believing what she had heard.

“Mother,” the children’s father said, “you own something that shines.” He said, “You are a sorceress too.” The woman became very upset.

The next day she told her daughter to do some gardening while she decided to take a day off for rest. Both the daughter and the husband went gardening that day.

Bolovaila cleaned the village, cooked the best of her yams kept for special occasions, and her grandsons bathed themselves and sat down to the yams the grandmother had cooked.

From Pantaval, they walked towards the west end of the island. They walked as far as Ebora village.

The grandmother saw an accessible *bukabuku* fruit tree (*Burckella obovate*; P.M.: *kapoi*) to climb. The climbed ahead of the boys. In those days, the trees grew to higher than today’s trees.

Having reached the top, Bolovaila stepped across to the moon. Her two grandsons also crossed, but the third one was still climbing up when Bolovaila broke the tip of the *bukabuku* tree.

It was too far for the boy to step across. He sat on the branch and wept. The grandmother looked at him and told him not to cry. “Go back to your parents and inform them of all that has happened. When the night falls, go out to the beach and look up towards the west. Should you see any shining thing know that it is us; your grandmother Bolovaila with your two brothers on either side of her. It will be from the *ginuba* shell that you will tell where we are. You will still play in the light of this *ginuba* shell.”

The moon never had a light of her own. It was Bolovaila who took her *Ginuba* to the moon that gives off the light every time the moon comes up.

In the story of Bolovaila, a story closely associated with the Guwau Pantaval subclan, we see to separate functions at work in the myth. First, we can see how a myth is located in a specific plot of land. The formal telling of the myth does not relate this, because the storyteller assumed their audience would be familiar with the landscape. However, Pantaval is a singular waterfall and the area immediately around it on the far western edge of Liak, close to Bagalina village. To this day, the area is covered with *bukabuku* trees, but, more significantly, when the moon is shining brightly in this area, the water spray seems to illuminate a whole cliff face,

giving the impression of a glowing stairway up the mountain. The myth portrays this phenomenon not only in its brief description of Pantaval but also in the emphasis on light as a magical thing (something which will be discussed in the next chapter). Second, the myth has an etiological functionality to it. It attempts to explain the presence of the moon in the person of Bolovaila. Thus, the myth not only emplaces a specific plot of land within an imaginary landscape of its own, but it also ties Bolovaila, an ancestress of the Guwau Pantaval clan, with the qualities of moonlight prominently associated with Pantaval. The following myth of Bolinamilia and Namenemlia has similar concerns.

Bolinamilia and Namenemlia

> This story depicts how Bolinmelia saved her little sister Namenamelia (from Pantaval) from her husband, Didiko, from Tomoka.
>
> It all happened when Namenamelia and Didio went to the garden daily. At that time, Bolinamelia would stay at home, doing housekeeping chores.
>
> With Bolinamelia's knowledge, Dididо has fallen in love with Namenamelia, how was a beautiful looking young girl. Every time Didiko will ask Namenamelia to accompany her to the garden.
>
> It came to a time when Didiko asked Bolinamelia if should have an affair with her sister. Namenamelia was so afraid that she declined.
>
> Didiko was full of scorn and hatred. He made his mind up that someday he would get even with this young girl. Moreover, it means murder. Now Bolinamelia, the older sister, has sensed that something was wrong. When the next day came, Didiko rose from his bed, stretching and chanted, "Namenamelia! Namenamelia!"
>
> Namenamelia answered him, "Yes!"
>
> "We are going to the garden," he said.
>
> Bolinamelia added, "Are you ready?"
>
> Namenamelia answered her sister and Didiko, "Yes. I am ready to go! We go."
>
> The three left for the garden, and Didiko began his day's work in the garden doing planting of taro, sugar cane, and other seedlings.
>
> Bolinamelia was busy searching for other edible roots and yams to eat. Once she had collected enough, she signaled to Didiko that she must leave to prepare the evening's meal.
>
> Leaving behind Bolnamelia and Namenamelia, Didiko planned to ask

Namenamellia if she would sleep with him that night.

Didiko called out, “Namenamelia!”

“Yes,” she answered.

“Over here, quick, he replied.

“Namenamelia sensed trouble. She took something to move over to Didiko. However, Didiko was very aggressive in his speech, “Whenever I call, you must respond! Do you understand?” Didiko then grabbed Namenamelia and caught her.

Frightened, Namenamelia tried to run from Didiko, but she stumbled as she tried to escape and free herself from Didiko’s grasp.

Didiko realized that if Namenamelia escaped, she would inform Bolinamelia about what Didiko was doing to Namenamelia. During the struggle, Didiko stroke Namenamelia in the head, killing her almost instantly.

Didiko now has murdered the young Namenamelia and quickly wrapped her dead body [with?] and threw it into, *ulubwal*, a deep pool of the running river.

It was now evening, Bolinamelia was very uneasy as she was waiting, Didiko arrives and asks if Namenamelia is at home.

Now Bolinamelia knows that Didiko has murdered Namenamelia. Bolinamelia was filled with sorrow for her little sister. Bolinamelia weeps all night, waiting for the new dawn. As dawn came Bolinamelia armed herself with a knife made of bone. She then walked her way up the track to the garden, searching and shouting, “My sister, my sister! Namenamelia, Namenamelia!” At last, she found the place where she was murdered. As she started to look down in the river, she saw her murdered sister floating face downward.

Bolinamelia climbed down the ravine to the pool of water. She held on to her younger sister’s body and pulled it out to the riverbed. There she began to inspect the body to determine the cause of her sister’s death. She removed Namenamelia’s heart, cautious not to destroy it. She then wrapped the heart in a taro leaf and left for the village.

As Bolinamelia reached the village, she placed the heart in a clay pot and secretly placed it in the upper shelf into the house. She was very mindful of how the heart of Namenamelia will someday burst open to a new Namenamelia. Every day, she took care to observe the heart as it slowly transformed. During her inspection, Bolinanamelia saw the heart transformed into a strange fetus type of a living thing, about the size of a small turtle, but in the form of a human growing within the clay pot.

Capturing the attention of Bolinamelia, the growing fetus gave her confidence and faith that Namenamelia would be revived and made to breathe again. Namenamelia’s death had been interrupted by a long coma, and Bolinamelia hoped she could resurrect Namenamelia by caring for the mutating heart. Each evening she would take the heart out of its clay pot and place it in a fire until it was warm to the touch. Each time she would do this, the heart would expand and let out noises. Each time the noise was heard, the neighbors would ask, “What is that sound?” to which Bolinamelia would answer, “it’s only the

sound of burning wood."

As time went on the fetal Namenamelia grew steadily into a recognizably human form. It was not long before Bolinamelia saw that Namenamelia had grown into a beautiful young girl. Didiko had no idea of what Bolinamelia had hidden in her mind. She had made plans for her and her newly resurrected sister to escape from the abusive Didiko.

Bolinamelia harvests ten times the taro seedling and left them in the garden for Didiko to plant. As the new day came, Didiko did his regular daily routine of gardens. He was very busy digging and planting. Suddenly, he heard a chant-like a bird singing. As he carefully strained to hear the song, he heard "*Bolinamelia oo, Namenamelia oo*, *tawina Didiko inunun Dikodiko ee*."

It was Bolinamelia taunting Didiko as she rushed Namenamelia to the beach. With Didiko looking directly at the sisters, she again sang, "*Bolinamelia oo, Namenamelia oo*, *tawina Didiko inunun Dikodiko ee*."

After seeing Bolinamelia and the resurrected Namenamelia taunt him and escaping to the beach, Didiko quickly persuaded them, panting and running with all of his strength. From far away, Bolinamelia and Namenamelia looked like a mother and her young daughter, but he recognized Bolinamelia's voice and understood what he saw as her and the resurrected Namenamelia.

In their effort to outrun their pursuer, the two sisters wadded into the ocean, eventually becoming completely submerged. Because of his evil deeds, the sisters did not listen to Didiko's pleas with the sisters to wait for him, and they quickly sunk to the bottom of the ocean floor.

Didiko was forced to swim after the two sisters whom he could see sitting on the ocean floor. Didiko dove in to find and rescue the drowning Bolinamelia and Namenamelia, but their bodies had begun to merge with the ocean floor. In a panic, he pulled at them and struggled to release them, but to no avail. In his struggle, he lost his breath and drowned in his efforts to save the sisters. Today Bolinamelia and Namenamelia's bodies, which have been transformed into two large stones, can be found deep in the ocean along the shoreline outside of Pantaval in West Liak. They lie at the bottom of the ocean floor, but they were still able to escape the clutches of Didiko.

Here we see many of the same themes expressed in the myth of Bolovaila, but it even more reflects themes introduced in the migratory story of the Guwau clan. Like Bolovaila, the story of Bolinamelia and Namenamelia explains a prominent feature in the landscape of Pantaval. Just off the coast of Pantaval are two large boulders submerged about 10 meters below the ocean surface. These two boulders are said to be Bolinamelia and Namenamelia, and part of establishing personal belonging to Pantaval and rights over

usage of Pantaval land is knowledge of this story, including some elements of the story I intentionally left out of this recording. Like the story of Guwau's settlement of Liak, we see in this story a myth of extreme transgression, but also a story of the tensions that exist between clans currently residing in Liak. Meisoga Tomoka is the subclans of Meisgo claiming land on the far eastern edge of Liak village, as far opposite from Guwau Pantaval as possible. According to oral genealogical reckoning, Meisoga Tomoka and Guwau Pantaval have been marrying each other for centuries, but they also have a significant rivalry. Both Meisoga Tomoka and Guwau Pantaval have far more land dispute conflicts with other Meisoga and Guwau subclans than each other. Both subclans often join in supporting each other during land disputes with their neighboring buffer subclans. However, Meisoga Tomoka and Guwau Pantaval often joke about tricking each other into either giving too much or too little during feasting activities. Part of what is happening in their relationship is a mutually antagonistic dependency on each other, and the story of Namenamelia and Didiko, who is a prominent figure in many Meisoga Tomoka stories, reflects this antagonism. I once heard Guwau Pantaval women mocking Meisoga Tomoka men during a feast by calling out. "*Bolinamelia oo, Namenamelia oo*, *tawina Didiko inunun Dikodiko ee*."

Another fascinating aspect of the story is now Bolinamelia grows her sister, Namenamelia, in a clay pot. When I asked Guwau Pantaval members about this aspect of the story, they seemed confused by my questioning, not because it was an obscure aspect of the story to focus on, but because the answer seemed so transparently evident to them. They were adamant that Namenamelia was raised in a clay pot, just like yams are grown

in the ground, and children are grown in women's wombs. Taking a yam, washing it, and placing it in a clay pot for future cooking, one Guwau Pantaval woman demonstrated, "You see, here is the clan, we'll wash it and give birth to it inside the clay pot" (*U kite, Guwau Pantaval wana un te, ta i ul abwe ta ab ulun gamana*).

What we see from these two myths is that the content of the story is not irrelevant. Instead, the content of the story points to particularly relevant themes of Misiman social life. However, even more importantly, it contains the knowledge of particular landscapes that authorize or legitimize people's claims to the land. By being able to point to Bolinamelia and Namenamelia while telling the full story of the myth, which has been left out of this recording, a person can establish a claim over the area where those boulders can be found. The case of the waterfall in Pantaval and the story of Bolovaila's *ginuba* shell.

Possession and Knowledge

Knowledge of the content of these genealogies and migratory myths is widely assumed to lie with elders, who will occasionally intimate their possession of this knowledge at opportune times. This is usually done during subclan meetings, called *epupwet ala bugogo*, where men tell each other stories or compete for recognition. Traditionally these meetings were held while men (*tonowakau*) sat on large stones that had been embedded in circular formations in a secluded corner of a hamlet. These stones are widely recognized as iconically similar to the three large stones embedded in the ground and used as supports for cooking pots over a fire. Both sets of stones are called *epupwet*, or "a ridge or spine (*epu-*) that is broken (*-pwet*)." This most certainly refers to a vertical outcrop of stones that have been broken and embedded in the ground to

stabilize a cooking pot or a person. However, there is another interesting possible latent reference in the word. A back or spine (*eputetena*) that is "stiff" (*eputetena eloeloina*), is the most popular metaphor used for disobedience, and a great deal of the rhetorical work displayed during these meetings is aimed at instilling in young men the importance of listening (*hago*) and obedience (*henapu*). It then should be no wonder why one word used for subclan is *epupwet* (the more familiar word being *tuban*). In other words, most Misimans' collective experience of subclans is through these meetings (*epupwet ala bugogo*). The last half of the phrase is also worth unpacking, as it means "our (*ala*) disclosing (*-gogo*) the contents of (*bu-*)" (*ala bugogo*). Therefore, the common word used for these meetings, *epupwet ala bugogo*, means "disclosing the contents of our subclan."

Since Misimans practice matrilineal reckoning, there is a great irony in this experience of men recounting genealogies and myths in official meetings. Women are, after all, the nodes in which these genealogies propagate. Aware of this irony, most of the women attending these meetings will occasionally speak up and contribute to the discussion. However, most of the time, they will gossip with other women at the periphery of the meeting. When I had the opportunity to help these women in their duty to prepare refreshments for the men gathered together, the contents of their gossiping was usually playful ridicule of their clan brothers, uncles, and, occasionally, husbands for their predilection for talking too much. However, they also had an exciting genre of gossip, particular to these gatherings. At the periphery of these meetings centered on the controlled disclosure of clan secrets, women would also reveal secrets to their clan sisters. Usually, these secrets were about the infidelity of their clan brothers and the shame they had brought to the subclan. However, they would also occasionally reveal contradictory

information to what was being officially disclosed, insisting that while men talk to remember the genealogies, women have embedded the knowledge of these connections in their bodies and the products of their labor. For example, some of the patterns women weave in baskets (*nabwa*) are said to be memetic devices for recalling genealogical reckoning, although those patterns were never shared with me. Either way, the relation women have to these stories is starkly different from men.

While men focus on the disclosure of their secret (*kitoma*) knowledge as an exercise in disciplinary power, women focus more on secrets as gossip (*loloba*), closely associated with the "making of skirts (*lo-loba*), but also seem to focus on the narrative of the myth as a model for their lives, rather than a series of secret "signs" (*etotohi*) to be used in land or feasting disputes. For example, my adopted sister subclan sister, Diuma, closely identified the struggles of the founding ancestress of her clan, Sinekepu, with her struggles. This identification with Sinekepu was so reliable that her interpretation of Sinekepu's life story became the inspiration for a dramatic play held at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby, the nation's capital. This play, Meisoga, casts Sinekepu as a doggedly stubborn woman who struggles for her voice to be heard among the throng of men jockeying for prestige and power. The identification with mythic figures was something I saw primarily among women.

One reason that observation about the relative place of women during these clan meetings is relevant is that the men and women seem to be modeling two separate forms, at least in their most idealized state, of utilizing myth's content. The men tend to use their knowledge of these genealogies and myths as a form of alienable wealth they can pass on to later generations and best their inter-clan competitors who contest their claims to a given plot of land. As alienable

wealth (*kitoma*), the knowledge of these genealogies is strategically passed from mother's brothers (*valehe*) to sister's sons (*gan*). The sister's son apprentices to his mother's brother, performing manual labor and mundane tasks to see if the sister's son listens (*hago*). When the mother's brother is satisfied that his sister's son is obedient (*henapu*) he tells his nephew, "my eyes are satisfied" (*matau yaka i yona*) and passes on the final secrets that imbue him with authority to speak for others. Thus, this process of apprenticeship was also a form of disciplinary power, with men grooming their sister's sons as future subclan leaders. This contrasts with women's less utilitarian approach to myth.

CHAPTER 5: The Magic Trick

In the last chapter, I focused on the problem of possession as it relates to sociolinguistics, kinship, and the emplacement of myth in Misima. I demonstrated that the importance of myth is found just as much in its content as in the pragmatic performance of storytelling discussed in chapter three. The content of myth is, in of itself, part of the knowledge held in immediate possession by Misiman elders over the workings of kinship and land tenure.

One of the aspects of possession highlighted in that chapter is how inalienable forms of possession were tied to Misiman ideas about the body and how acts of consumption could alienate move inalienable things into semi-alienable and, eventually, alienable things. People complete this transformation by capturing things, incorporating them into the body, and then making them transferable. However, all of this leaves out the problem of what is and is not able to be captured, and how Misiman personhood falls on the scales of inalienability to alienability.

Earlier, I argued two things. First, the problem of possession is mediated by concepts of consumption as a transformation of possessive prosperities. Second, that Misiman myth is one way in which people become possessed by and come to possess the landscape, and that the exchange of mythic stories is a kind of consumption that allows for the transformation of possessive forms. In this chapter, I want to reintroduce a problem that I have only hinted at until this point. What exactly is "trickery?"

Earlier in this dissertation, I have discussed the history of trickery, how oral performance of narrative can be considered a "trick." In the last chapter, I hinted at ways in which other clans attempt to "trick" one another in feasting and over disputes involving land boundaries. Part of the

aim of these tricks is a kind of antagonistic consumption, in which people consume others, through their constitutive parts, to take possession of them (cf. Vilaça, 2010).

Staying with myth provides a good segue into better understanding precisely what it means to trick someone, and how it could be related to problems of possession and consumption. In this chapter, I will first introduce how trickery is portrayed in Misiman myth. Then I will discuss how trickery is related to Misiman personhood and problems of inalienability and possession. My argument is that trickery is coded as a socially productive way of relating to others because it enables the consumption of otherwise inalienable things, particularly others' minds.

In the last chapter, I covered three prominent myths belonging to the village of Liak. One was the story of how Guwau came and settled in Liak. The other two were stories grounded in specific places that reveal a person's knowledge of a place, giving them claim over it. All three stories belonged to the Guwau clan, in which my wife and children had been adopted.

In this chapter, I wish to start by sharing a myth belonging to the Meisoga Tomoka, as an example of how myth provides a kind of Malinowskian "charter" for Misiman trickery. The myth centers around Sinekalawata, an ancestress of Meisoga Tomoko, and Kaisilisili, an ancestor of Didiko mentioned in the last chapter. However, at its core, the story is really about the dangers of *epapabola* and trickery.

> A *haluwa* is a frightening specter with a mat (*helagi*) of flattened and sowed pandanus leaves stuck on his back. The *haluwa* has a putrid smell of rotten flesh and can be found near *didiko* trees soon after someone has died. The *haluwa* also carefully listens to people's plans for where they are going each morning. If he learns that you plan on going to collect *didiko* nuts, he will wait at the tree and kill you when you are least expecting it. This is why people are so cautious about telling each other where they are going. The story that follows in the explanation of how Kaisilisili eventually became a *haluwa*.

Sinekalawata was the most beautiful girl the world had ever known. Her light shown like the moon, and every young boy wanted to marry her. **She** lived at the eastern end of the village is near the hamlet of Tomoka. On the far western end of the village, near the hamlet of Pantaval, is a sizeable *didiko* tree that still stands there even today.

One day, the *didiko* tree dropped one of its nuts, which carried out to sea by the small creek next to the tree. A young naked boy broke out of the shell soon after it touched the ocean water. Embarrassed because of his nakedness, the boy ran to find a pandanus leaf and string to cover himself. Soon after making his *sivi* loin covering, he found some coconut fronds and made himself a basket (*nabwa*), in which he hid all of these things. As he did these things, he became a fully-fledged human.

All of the sudden, he breathed out his first breath (*yawalina*) and began to talk to the birds around him. Then he saw his own shadow (*ana kakanun*), and it made him aware that he had a soul (*yayaluwana*) since his shadow mimicked him perfectly.

Seeing the light shining from Sinekalawata, the boy's heart (*atena*) leaped with excitement, so he decided to walk the length of the beach towards the eastern edge of Liak to find the source of the light. Around the time he made it to Panakoloba (the place of death), he met an old woman who called out to him, "Where are you going?"

Correctly understanding the older woman's question as a sexual proposal, the boy looked to see who was calling him, but when he saw the older woman, he was repulsed and ran from her. Scared by the woman's questioning, the young boy decided to hide his mind (*wana nuwatu*) forever in the secret compartment (*kalopu*) of his hand basket.

When he was done running from the older woman, he reached the end of eastern Liak, near Tomoka and found Sinekalawata sweeping the rubbish around her home. She called to him, "Where are you going?" Weary of intrusive questioning, the boy refused to answer. "What is your mind?" Sinekalawata asked. Again, the boy refused the answer. Met by the boy's refusal to engage, Sinekalawata sat down on her mat, but when she did, she did not take care to cover herself with her skirt, and the shadow of the boy disappeared under her skirt as her body glowed even brighter. "Now, tell me where you are going. What is your mind."

No longer able to control himself, the boy responded, "To see you," and Sinekalawata took the boy's handbasket and said, "first, we will chew." She reached inside and took out to betel nuts and mustard. "You silly boy," she said when she found no lime in his basket, "where did your lime go?" The boy did not know where he had misplaced his lime. "Oh, here it is," and she reached in from under her skirt pulled out a gourd full of lime powder (*kauli*).

The boy chewed with Sinekalawata and was overcome by her love magic (*epapabola*) and so then they proceeded to have sex. However, soon after intercourse, an eel within Sinekalawata's vagina bit off the boy's penis. Quickly

the boy's body broke out in sores, and he was unable to stop the bleeding. When he fell dead, his body (*tawal*) immediately rotted, turning into a *didiko* tree.

Days later, more nuts from the tree fell into the creek, floating out to the ocean. A young naked boy would emerge from the nut, clothe himself with a *sivi* loin covering and basket, and make his way down to see the bright like on the eastern end of the village. He would have the same encounter with the older woman, meet Sinekalawata, and die from the eel bite. This same process repeated itself three times as three more young boys died and rotted into a *didko* tree. However, the last boy, the fifth one, was different.

When the fifth boy emerged from his nutshell, his body was covered in sores. While the rest of the young boys had been beautiful and healthy, this last boy was ugly. His body was so covered in sores that he had a hard time fitting on his *sivi* and was named Kaisilisili, or "being covered by sores." Despite his situation, he too journeyed to the eastern part of the village to investigate the source of light.

When Kaisilisili reached the old woman by Panakoloba, the woman once again cried out, "Where are you going, my poor boy." Unlike his brother, Kaisilisili responded to the woman, "Up that way, to the light. I will follow the path of my brothers. Did you see them?" To which she responded, "I did see them. I saw all of them. Do you have any betel nut?"

Perhaps because of his sores, he was not afraid of the woman, and he reached inside of his basket and took out some betel nut to share with the woman. After she invited him to her verandah and chewed some betel nut together, they went inside her house and slept together. While in his embrace, she told him about Sinekalawata and the fate of his brothers. She also warned him about the eel.

Kaisilisili listened carefully to the news and asked the woman, "What should I do?" She replied that she ought to follow her into the bush where she had a gift for him because of the respect he showed her.

The woman took Kaisilisili to a *mwak* tree, which she split open, creating a hole in the middle of the trunk. She then instructed him to walk through the tree, and after he did, his sores healed, and he became the most beautiful of all of his brothers. Then the woman took him to a breadfruit tree and was plucked out one of the red spear-like blossoms (*wap*) that precede the breadfruit.

The old woman said, "Take this, peel it, and after foreplay, you should make sure you insert the *wap* into Sinekalawata, instead of your penis. This way, you will trick the eel inside her." The woman then fastened the end of the *wap* with a fishing net string. She told him, "Now, after you have inserted the *wap* inside Sinekalawata the eel will start to come out and eat the *wap*. Tie the fishing net string around the eel's neck and kill it."

Kaisilisili then went to Sinekalawata at the edge of Tomoka. Finding her sweeping rubbish around her house. She called to him, "Where are you going?" Kaisilisili answered, "To see you."

Struck by Kaisilisili's forthrightness, Sinekalawata was dumbfounded. This time Kaisilisili broke the silence, "Would you like to know my mind?"

Again, scared by his proposals, Sinekalawata was speechless. Kaisilisili then opened his handbasket to show her the contents of his bag, showing two betel nuts, and some mustard. "Would you like to chew?"

Eager to chew, but afraid of the Kailsilisili's advances, Sinekalawata pointed out that neither of them had any lime power. However, as soon as she made the observation, Kaisilisili pulled out a gourd filled with lime powder from his anus.

Sinekalawata agreed to chew with Kaisilisili. It was, after all, her favorite activity. But as soon as her spittle turned red, she was overcome with a passionate desire to have sex with Kaisilisili.

Stunned by the power of Kaisilisili's love magic, Sinekalawata unfolded (*tanal*) her legs and invited him to sleep with her. However, soon after intercourse, an eel within Sinekalawata's vagina bit off the boy's penis. Quickly the boy's body broke out in sores, and he was unable to stop the bleeding. When he fell dead, his body (*tawal*) immediately rotted, turning into a *didiko* tree.

But when he killed the eel, the brightness of Sinekalawata immediately dimmed, only for the whole home to be enveloped in darkness. No longer did she have a shadow, and soon her breath failed her.

In a panic, Kaisilisili grabbed Sinekalawata's broom, whacked it against her limp body. After one swipe, she gasped with a breath. After a second, her sight returned to her. Then, after a third swipe, her luminescence returned, and her shadow followed. Her heart began to beat again, and she immediately hid from embarrassment, knowing that the Kaisilisili knew her secret. "You killed my mind," she yelled at Kaisilisili. At this, Kaisilisili felt a surge of power (*maesa*) flow through him, and he became a wicked man.

Scared for her life, Sinekalawata took the broom again and whacked it against the four *didiko* trees in her yard. Immediately, each *didiko* tree transformed back into Kaisilisili's brothers. "Protect me from your evil brother," she begged the boys. The oldest brother then plucked a gourd filled with lime powder from inside in anus and dipped his comb in the powder. Flicking the comb dipped in power towards Kaisilisili and spitting the fresh red spittle of the betel nut in his mouth, the brother cursed Kaisilisili with sores, which broke out across his body, causing him to smell of putrid flesh.

"Now, your body will resemble your image (*am kakanun*) will resemble your soul (*yayaluwau*). Forever you will haunt the *didiko* trees with only your mat (*helagi*) to sleep with, but unable to unfold (*tanal*) it," Sinekalawata said. After Kaisilisili fled, his brothers all planned on sleeping with Sinekalawata. However, she looked at them and said she could have better-looking boys now, so she left them, and they wandered Liak village until they settled in the four main hamlets of the village.

If healing magic (*sowalsowal*), sorcery (*kukula*), and witchcraft (*olalolal*) are said to have power (*maisa*) because of their identification with trickery, it is worth exploring what other

forms of trickery (*kakauwi*) are ascribed power in Misiman social life. In this myth we are given a clear example of other forms of relating, in this case sharing betel nut and employing "love magic" (*epapabola*) are also, more or less, the ability to take over another's otherwise inalienable mind, and thereby exercise transformative or manipulative agency over their very person (or "breath," "heart," "soul," "body," or "image/shadow").

While it is tempting to perform a structural analysis of this myth, with its various oppositions between Sinekalawata and Kaisilisili, I hope to use this theme instead to set the themes of this chapter—trickery as persuasion, appropriation, and possession of others' minds. First, I will explain the composited Misiman person, which was beautifully outlined in the myth. Second, I explore how this composite person, with its recognition of alienability and possession, are tied to the Kula and the problems of fame and influence. In doing so, I will argue that being able to utilize fame, drawing the attention of others, is itself "magical" and a trick (*kakauwi*). Third, I will argue that organizing and influencing others' minds through persuasion and temptation is a powerful byproduct of this magic (see De Martino, 2015), which is most clearly seen in how people collectively organize their labor in building homes, conducting feasts, and gardening. Lastly, I argue that all of this is a kind of "love magic" like that used by Sinekalawata and Kaisilisili, where people expressly seek out ways to take possession of each other. In doing so, I hope to answer, in what other ways beyond magic do Misimans desire or utilize similar modes of agency as intersubjective predation? How are inalienable minds occasionally alienated, and what role does intentionality play in recognition of social action if opacity is the assumed stance of intercommunication? What is the possession and manipulation of others' minds, if

minds, even your own, are ultimately opaque? Nevertheless, first, it is worth considering, "what *is* magic?"

What is Magic?

In both popular consciousness and the social sciences, there seems to be a distinction between two different kinds of magic—serious magic, and magic for show. The presupposition is that magic as a trick is played for entertainment or as a form of secular disenchantment. For example, Graham Jones (2017) demonstrates that French magicians used their art of deception, secrecy, and revelation as secular disenchantment in efforts to combat enchanted views of the world that imbued everyday life with a "magical" quality. By revealing their magic as a trick, they were able to expose charismatic magicians in the colonies as charlatans who exploited the irrationality of the premodern mind. The magicians' modern magical performance was a self-consciously understood trick, which they used in their Orientalist project of demystification. The legacy of French magic as secular entertainment continues today. No one watches David Copperfield, Criss Angel, or Justin Willman, not knowing they are being tricked. The entertainment comes in recognition of the skill held by each magician in hiding the mechanics of the trick from their audience. Even Penn Jillette and Teller have a popular Master Class tutorial where they reveal the mechanics of their tricks to their paying audience. Everyone knows they are experts in tricks (see Jones, 2011).

On the other hand, magic seems to be the part of social life carved out by anthropologists as the serious work of influencing the world, whether it is the cosmos, the material plane, or the fate of human action. Sometimes this magic can have a secular quality, as in the charisma of a politician who gives no alms to transcendent or supernatural realms outside of their exceptional

ability to influence others. Other times, this magic is explicitly tied to the extraordinary abilities to harness something imminent too, but still, beyond the immediate experience of everyday life, such as magic used to make the luck required to win a baseball game, Powerball, or have a successful Kula expedition. Typically, this more serious form of magic is thought of as explicitly not a trick. It is sincerely engaged in as a practice that brings about the desired effects through ritual performance. Their engagement of the magic, and its treatment as explicitly not a trick, is sincere, nonetheless.

This chapter asks if what if this distinction between these two kinds of magic, magic as a trick and magic as serious work, is false. What if magic the former category, magic as a serious work, is also a trick? I argue in this chapter that on the island of Misima, Papua New Guinea. The very serious magic of medicine and healing (*sowalsowal*), sorcery (*kukula*), and witchcraft (*olal*) are also understood as forms of trickery. To dramatically impact the world in the way these forms of magic do, they must trick other forces that regularly structure life. On Misima, magic's pragmatic and agentive character is found in its ability to trick (*kakauwi*). Similarly, skill in deception is a key ingredient in what Misima's consider a person's intelligence, as a smart person (*tosiba*) is a person who uses controlled deception and revelation as ways of influencing various kinds of actants in the world (i.e., people, fish, yams, and other agentive objects like shell valuables or money).

Another way Misimans acknowledge how dissimulation is integral to how magic affects the world is through how they talk about a secret as having the power to draw a person out, to pull on their attention, to split their minds without every revealing the content of the secret. This attentional pull is not all that dissimilar from modern entertainment magicians. If you listen

carefully, contemporary entertainment magicians will typically deemphasize the role of obfuscation and dissimulation in their tricks, and more accurately describe their tricks as being accomplished through ritual attentional pull. They are, in effect, fewer merchants of lies and more merchants of attention (see Wu, 2016).

Similarly, the draw of "the secret" has the power to affect others and their minds through the mere fact that it pulls on others by making explicit the presumption of hidden, maybe even forbidden, content. This "draw" was brilliantly demonstrated to me when one Misiman pastor claimed to read everyone's mind and demonstrated his skill by not revealing the actual content of others' minds, but by revealing the shame people felt because of their thoughts. He would say, "Judith is shy because her thoughts are far from Jesus," or "David is shy because his mind is not one with God." He did not reveal the content of Judith and David's thoughts, per se. The pastor revealed "the heaviness," or shyness (*puluwawi*), that resulted from their thoughts (something that was generally assumed to be the case for almost all good Christians on Misima). What the pastor held back, or did not reveal, was how he knew their shyness. He was highlighting his capacity to hold a secret by his ability to intuit that others had secret shame. He did not reveal the exact reasons for their shame, although he did say that he knew their shame through the Holy Spirit.

I acknowledge that explicitly tying magic to trickery may feel like a step backward to some reading this. It might, after all, feel like the French secular magicians rising from the grave, crying "all magic is a trick, nothing more" (see Graham, 2017). While I find this concern understandable, I do not think it is well-founded. Not all aims of magic, or trickery, should be understood through the political interests of late Victorian era stage magicians and their secular

humanism. While I think most readers can quickly understand that such magicians have a particularly self-interested definition of magic at play, I think many readers would not understand a "trick" to be similarly slippery to define. Perhaps, the "trick" of the late Victorian stage magicians is not the "trick" of Misimans.

The common problem is that a "trick" is not necessarily a negative or morally dubious thing to most Misimans. It can have negative connotations and be classified as morally problematic, if not nefarious, but it can also be understood as an essential of relatedness. Many Misimans are quick to point to moments of the Hebrew Bible where God's prophets seem to express God's power through deception (see Nicholas, 2009). Many Pentecostals on Misima have a fondness for the story of Gideon's ambush of the Midianites. In that story where Gideon concealed the true extent of his forces by giving every soldier a torch covered by an empty pitcher that was to be strategically broken when shouting a war cry of "For the Lord and for Gideon!", in effect startling their enemies by inflating the perceived numbers of their company (Judges 7). Most Misimans, whether they are Pentecostal or not, will interpret the famous struggle between Pharaoh's "wise men and sorcerers" and Moses not as a struggle between false tricks and the real power of God, but between Satanic tricks and God's tricks, or good and bad tricks (Exodus 7).

Similarly, the contest between the Apostle Peter and Simon Magus is not between the false stagecraft of a Samaritan magus and the true faith of Peter. Instead, the contest was between the tricks of a sorcerer (commodities easily acquired through exchange, preferably an exchange of fundable mediums like money) and the tricks of God (conferred on a person because of their righteousness). The contest between Simon Magus and Peter is not between false stagecraft and

real magical power, but between the superiority of kinds of magic and the methods of their acquisition.

Misimans mostly hold ambivalent orientations toward magic and trickery, but it is worth addressing how people morally evaluate tricks. Magic's capacity to trick, or "draw" the attention of others, is highly desired, yet also a source of incredible frustration and even fear. I rarely met anyone on Misima who had a fixed and stable evaluation of "tricks" (*kakauwi*) as solely good or bad. Instead, a "trick" was more of a way to talk about the efficaciousness of social action, the opacity of others' minds, and the almost transitive proprieties people experienced by going in and out of others' bodies through the manipulation of their minds (Bloch, 2013). In short, Misiman magic is not morally coded in the same way it is code for most readers today. It is merely descriptive of a kind of practice that focuses on how to affect the world and influence others when their minds are ultimately shut to you. It is a practice that turns the opacity of others' minds in on itself, getting a person to doubt their mind, to doubt their desires, and take on what is provided to them. As one Misiman Bible school student told me, "I learned I didn't even know my own desires, I didn't know what they were, or why I had them. I was of two minds. But then I found God, and God gave me a new mind. It was the greatest trick of my life."

Possession and Personhood

The literature on Melanesian personhood is wide-ranging, with vigorous debates on the scope of dividual notions of personal partiblity, where persons are not considered bounded, non-porous, or possessive individuals, but are instead nodes of networks of relations within their person. Famously, Marilyn Strathern (1988) argued that the Melanesian person was dividual who exchanged particle parts of themselves. Thus, in contrast, the stereotypical Western European

individuals was a unit that exists within a network of relations through families, institutions, and societies; the Melanesian dividual was themselves a network of relations. Because of this, society is not an externalized reality like that imagined by Durkheimians; instead, each person was a microcosmos of the relations of exchange that constituted them as a person. Thus, to be objectified as a person a synchronic move of reification, where relations of exchange, the dynamism of movement and flux, are frozen for a moment of recognition.

This highly influential model of Melanesian personhood has not been univocal in his reception or understanding. Some anthropologists have taken Strathern's argument as an abstraction, or kind of thought experiment, even if it is illustrative of a broader relational problem. Others take the initial insights of the Maussian like focus on exchange, relations, and the making of persons through material things as a starting point, but hardly a dogma.

The Misiman person consists of six composite parts that operate in persons harmoniously. Together, a person's breath (*yawal*), soul (*yayaluwa*), body (*tuwan*), shadow or "image" (*kakanun*), heart (*ati*), and mind (*nuwan*) distinguish people (*gamagalau*) from animals (*bwasimu*). While animals may possess these parts, they are not subject to the same transformations or operations that make a person.

Life, or "Breath"

The breath of the person gives them life (*yawal gaganina*) or holds their potential for life, like a seed (*yawaina*) holds the full potential of a plant inside it. Panting (*yawalulubwa*) because of a persistent cough (*bwehebwehe*), asthma (*yayak*), or tuberculosis (*yawalinabwehebwehe*) is as much of a sign of a person's life as their life escaping them. Animals also possess life, as they clearly breathe, but breath uniquely leads to speech in humans. Through breath, a person can

make connections with others by conversing with them. It is for this reason that a senior affine, an oppose-sex spouse of a cross-cousin, or the spouse of a person's child, is said to be their breath (*yawaliya*). They are examples of the kinds of kinship obligations that drive people to find life in others and typify inhalation and exhalation as metaphorical of the in-ward and out-ward flows of gift exchanges necessary between affinal kin groups. Lastly, the breath of a person may also be called their "shining," as in it is their ability to shine (*yana*). Such phrases as, "They breathed in, and they breathed out" (*Hi yanatukan ge hi yanatagilan*) are used examples to not only convey how people's breath brightens their countenance, but also that through breathing in and out exchanges (whether of air or gifts), people "shine properly (*yana bubun*). To shine (*yana*) means to attract life (*yawal*) and gifts (*guyau*), while exuding life (*yawal*) and fame (*ala'anan*).

The Soul

The heart of the person may be the seat of their sentiment and their mind the seat of cognition and desire, but each of these features of the person enables ambivalent expressions of how they may or may not be alienated by a person. The heart may be given and received, but never possessed. The mind may be taken, but never given or received. In sharp contrast to these ambivalent expressions, the soul (*yayaluwa*) of a person is entirely alienable. The soul is said to dislodge itself from the person during sleep routinely. While sleeping, a person may leave their body, as Misimans recognize that in sleeping a person is not feeling, seeing, or thinking in quite the same way as when they are awake. However, they are said to be capable of a kind of eating, talking, drinking, and even feeling of pain. The difference between those experiences as embodied and disembodied is that while an embodied person may find sustenance through eating

or be wounded through bodily harm, the disembodied person is only harmed through harming the body and when they consume, they are neither able quince their thirst or satiate their hunger.

While most people do not consciously disembody themselves, they may be disembodied by others (cf. Rival, 2005). Even more disturbingly, the witch (*olal*) is said to have full control over their disembodied soul, while a person would regularly lack this control. Furthermore, the soul of a person is not necessarily stable as it can take different forms or images (*kakanun*), such as those of regular animals, ghosts, or other ghastly monstrosities. The soul is what persists of a person after their death, and even many contemporary Christians identify the soul traveling to Tuma after death. Before the soul of a person begins its journey to Tuma, it must be weighed by a witch who waits at a waterfall that acts as the entrance to the road or route (*kamwasa*) to Tuma (Bartlett, [date]). Like many other cultures in the Milne Bay, Misimans understand Tuma as a place where the soul lives an idyllic life, free from scarcity and suffering. However, the soul of the grows restless after seeing the fun living people have with their bodies and desires to be reunited with a body. While the soul of a person does assume a gender, it typically assumes whatever gender the person last had, but that does not necessarily determine it. If it wants, a soul may change its gender when reunited with a body in its rebirth. Today, many Misimans will recognize this belief in rebirth to be historical; they no longer accept it and consider it part of their "pagan" past. However, most Christian Misimans will, at the very least, recognize Tuma as either heaven or purgatory and understand the Misiman concept of the soul as consistent with Christian dualism.

Another point of convergence between traditional Misiman and contemporary Christian Misiman ideas about the soul is that without the body (*tuwan*) the person cannot experience

pleasure, or "good feeling" (*amnana i waisi*). The disembodied person may experience happiness (*yaliyaya*), but they will not experience somatic pleasure. Therefore the spirits of Tuma desire bodies, and witches grow greedy because their disembodied lives of plenty can never satisfy their desires for pleasure (see Macintyre, 1995).

The Shadow

It is often said on Misima that a person with many descendants or a vast network of family support, casts a long shadow. I believe this is idiom is used in ways very similar to how it is used in English since to cast a shadow would mean to cast the appearance of a broad impact on something else. Since the body is the site of action, and kin are parts of the body, this idiom is a recognition of the person extending their sphere of influence beyond their immediate body, as if kin are an extension of themselves and their influence. There is an important observation to be made though in how a name, which is inalienable, is said to be the same as the shadow of the person, which is alienable. While the distinctions between alienability and inalienability may be significant, it is, perhaps, more significant that the comparison draws out the possibly illusionary or allusive nature of a person's name.

A person's "shadow" (*kakanun*) is not only the darkness caused by their body blocking a light source but is an indication of a person's indexicality with their environment. It is the evidence of their impacts on it. Since their "shadow" is the appearance of influence as detached from their body, it is the evidence of exertion of influence without "breath" (*yawal*) or "work" (*tuwalali*). Thus, a photograph, video, or iconic representation of a person are all said to be "shadows." Photographs and videos are translated as "shadow," as in the suggestion "let us watch a movie" (*ta na kakanun gagayauwa*).

Simone Namunu claims that the "shadow" of a person "represent[s] his real being or self" (1981: 22). However, Misimans almost always contradicted these claims. It was essential to them that an "image" was an "appearance" of a thing, not the thing itself. It would be a mistake to think that meant that the image of a thing could not affect a thing, as quite the opposite is exact. A shadow or image could readily be taken from a person and possessed by another without their consent. This is widely believed to be the case with some sorcerers (*tokukula*) and witches (*olal* or *nomnom*) who can affect a person through possessing an image of a person and manipulating it in some way, such as possibly making the person cold or hot by placing the image in cold or hot water.

While a shadow is then the evidence of a person's agency, their presence on the landscape, there is also something fundamentality false, or illusionary about it. The shadow of a thing, such as a photograph or a video, is considered a "trick" (*kakauwi*), as it resembles something but is not the thing itself. The shadow is distinct from a person's body, mind, or breath. It is an illusion that is both the person and not the person. It is where lies (*kakauwi*) are said to germinate. They provide an image of a thing but fail to realize it in its full mobility. A shadow may reveal the presence of something not presently seen, such as a person standing around a corner, outside of view, but shadows are, by their very nature, acts of concealment since they are the absence of light.

All of this is potentially important for Misiman epistemology, as it seems to depend on a kind of negative Cartesian dualism, with the recognition of illusions, partial concealment, and the ultimate opacity of others' minds seem to dominate. One potentially meaningful distinction between knowledge and the heart may be found in linguistic remnants that predate Christian

influence. For example, "a knowledgeable person" (*tosiba*) quite literally means "a person" (*to-*) who doubts (*siba*). If "a person that doubts" is a knowledgeable person, then, perhaps, we have a window into seeing how Misimans consider intelligence, cleverness, and knowledge to be less about feeling (*atena*) or seeing (*kite*), but to be about doubting (*siba*). I believe that according to Misiman conceptual categories, doubting a thing may mean calling into question the contours of a thing, recognizing that it could be merely "shadow." Even more so, to possess a person's shadow, or the limits of their influence (said to be exceptionally rare), may be even more dangerous than possessing someone's mind (a relatively common occurrence).

The Heart

When it comes to parts, or extensions, of the body, few things are given as much metaphysical weight as the heart or liver. Both "the heart" and "liver" share the same name (*ati-*). Both the heart and liver are considered integral parts of a person with, more or less, the same attributes. Simone Namunu argues that the "heart" (*ati*) of a person is "is the foundation of a person's personality" and includes a "person's senses for making ethical judgments which are essential parts of his being and for building good harmonious relationships" (1981: 34). From this description, it seems clear that the heart is then understood as a critical element to what may be argued are moral sentiments. The heart (*ati-*) is the seat of those emotions that give people humanity, such as the impulse to give out of pity or "heartache" (*atiloman*). Animals also have feelings (*amnan-*), but they lack moral reasoning, and their feelings belong to somatic experiences like taste, such as the question "how are you feeling" (*amnana ga i ola*), or the answer "the food tastes good" (*aanan amnana i waisi*). This impulse, or "heartache," is referenced in the most popular form of both expressing gratitude and salutations, "my heart to

you" (*ateu owa*). This emotion of "heartache" and the need to give a part of one's self is what gives people the capacity to make ethical judgments.

In contrast, the heart (*ati*) is something humans exchange between one another. The most common expression of gratitude (*ba mulolu*) is to say, "my heart to you" (*atieu owa*), but any such expression is to "greet from the heart" (*ba mulolu i pek atena elena*). To promise the gift of an inalienable thing, something that is a part of yourself, is a particularly valuable gift, but it is also a gift that can ever fully be possessed. At no point does that gift transform into something consumable by the recipient of the gift. The heart (*ati*) not only retains the inalienable classifier when given, but its designation of possession also belongs to the giver, not the recipient, and never at any time is the heart understood as semi-alienable, to be consumed. It is is something that remains a possession of the person who can promise it as a gift but never indeed alienate it from their person.

A further wrinkle alluded to above is that the heart (*ati*-) is the organ most closely associated with understanding. While the evidence is not definitive, it is possible that associating the "heart" with knowledge or understanding was the work of Methodist missionaries, who stressed the importance of knowing God through the somatic experience of the Holy Spirit. Previous to missionization, it seems that the key Misiman bodily metaphor for talking about knowledge, or knowing something, was sight (*kite*), which is today used to talk about instruction, as in "something that" "makes [things] (*pan*-)" "visible" (*kite*), or teachers as "people (*to*-)" "who make [something] visible" (*pankite*; *topankite*). This will be significant in the next chapter.

Today "knowledge" or "understanding" as a noun are typically transliterated as "<u>its</u> heart" (*ate<u>na</u>*), but, as a verb, "I know" (*ya atena*) or "cause to understand" (*papa'atena*) could

adequately be understood as “I’m going about having its heart” or “making its heart mine” respectively. It is possible, then, that Misimans traditionally made a distinction between “knowledge” and “understanding” as something akin to the distinctions between nomothetic knowledge as mastery of externalized information and idiographic understanding as a phenomenological comprehension of people’s lifeworlds. I believe this comparison to Kantian epistemology ultimately fails. However, it is worth thinking about the possibilities of the distinction, since Misimans still typically talk of understanding as something that arises from one’s sympathetic capacities and moral sentiments (e.g., *atiloman* as “heartache” or “sympathy”). In contrast, knowledge, or learning, is something more closely associated with sight (e.g., “teach,” as “to make something visible” [*pankite*]).

However, even inalienable things are said to be given and received. For example, the most common expression of gratitude is a promise of giving an inalienable object. Misimans will say, “my heart to you” (*atieu owa*) as the equivalent to the English, “thank you.”

Mind

Associating the heart with something like “ethical judgments,” it may seem that the heart is then the part of the person associated with reason, perception, or anything that would typically be classified as “the mind,” but that is not the case. In Pana Misima, the mind (*nuwatu*) is a verbal noun. For example, in “he/she/it thinks” (*i nuwatu*) or to think (*nuwatu*) uses the mind in its verbal form, while the mind as an object of possession, “my mind” (*no nuwatu*) would take the alienable form of possession. Thus, the mind includes acts such as thinking, intending, planning, but is also a thing that can be taken from you. This use of the mind as something that is alienable to the person would stand in contrast to how Misiman’s refer to the parts of the body,

which are inalienable, like the heart which are only really referred to as objects that are possessed inalienably by the person.

Interestingly, I never heard the phrase, "his/her/its mind" as a gift (*guyau*) given to someone, which would have been spoken as *wana nuwatu i guyau*. I think this is significant because, in Pana Misima, denoting the giving of a thing also connotes the possession of a thing, such as in "My things (*no bugul*), I have to him/her/it/them (*ya pek*)," or "their things (*wali bugul*), they gave to me" (*hi pem*). As I discussed in the last chapter, these necessary connotations of possession are required because things simply do not exist in Misiman sociolinguistics without being attached to a possessor. Furthermore, because Misimans must refer to things as possessions, verbs used for giving and receiving index the ultimate destination of the gift, wither it goes outward from me to someone else or inwardly from someone else to me. A prepositional pronoun may be added after the verb (*pek* or *pem*) to designate to establish the direction of the giving, such as "to/at/in from me" (*elau*/*eliyau*), "to/at/in/from you (s.)," etc. Such prepositional pronouns may also be used when just communicating the directionality of movement in general. For example is, "I am walking to my brother's house" (*ya na nawanawa tailu wana limi elana*, or more informally *ya na nawanawa wana limiya* with the added suffix of *-a* at the end of *limi* [house] to designate moving in the direction of that object).

What this means is that when discussing the movements of people or things that come for the agency of a giver, receiver or actor causing or reacting to the movement. This stands in sharp contrast to when the speaker wants to emphasize the lack of agency in the causation or ability to react to an action. These connotations about agency may play a role in why I frequently heard statements about a mind being taken, as in "my mind was taken" (*no nuwatu i pwatanik*), without

denoting who the taker was. When I heard, "my mind was taken," a common idiom used in Misima to express a lack of self-knowledge or reflexivity about one's decisions, the speaker was expressing alienation from their mind without implicating a specific person or groups of persons in that alienation, something that would be an incredibly dangerous accusation. The point of these kinds of statements is not only to express a lack of reflexivity, but to argue that you have lost agency. If your mind has been taken, who has your soul? What about your shadow? The point is that the person is saying something about how their actions are not their own. They are alienated from themself and passive actors.

While "the mind" and "thinking" are tied to deliberative cognition, thinking is also closely associated with desires (*nuwan*), which are considered less deliberative. Moreover, what throws a wrinkle in the possible alienability of the mind is that people's desires are inalienably possessed. Thus, "I desire" or "I want" would be translated as *nuwau*, or "his/her/its desire" would be translated as *nuwana*, rather than *no nuwan* or *wana nuwan*, which would be meaningless in Pana Misima. "My desire" (*nuwau*) is homologous to a "truck" of a tree (*nuwau*). This is reflected in Misiman metaphors about the "trunk" of a person being their "desire" and idioms about frustrated desires being akin to felling trees.

Fame and Power

From this composition of the Misiman body as an assemblage of alienable, semi-alienable, and inalienable things, we can arrive at what it means for Misimans to exert influence, or magic, over one another. The dual aspect of thinking or desiring as something that is both alienable and inalienable to the person is a crucial element of magic. In this, there is a triple

concern for what is taken, who is doing the possessing, and how something is concealed or revealed through exchange and possession, respectively. When something is taken, it is consumed or incorporated into the person. Taking something into yourself or making yourself the conduit for transformation from alienable to inalienability makes you a nexus for exchange. When conducting an exchange, a person reveals hidden things they possess so that others may take them, but in doing so, they inevitability hide some possessions from view. To exert influence, then, is to initiate or cause any one point in the circuit of possession, exchange, and simulation by revealing what is hidden.

Will Rollason (2011) brilliantly demonstrates how on Panapompom, an island close to Misima, people will emphasize the importance of "appearance" (*masal*), as something distinctly different from a shadow (*kakanun*). This is because "appearance" is probably a bad translation of *masal*. Instead, *masal* would best be translated not as a noun but as a verb, such as in "becoming" or "make," or "appear." Thus, "to make [something] appear" or "make [something] happen" would be translated as *pa-masal*. For example, if I were to say, "if the northwesterly wind (*yalas*) blow (*towa*), then it will bring rain (*kehe*)," I would translate that as "*ebo i yalas i towa he kehe i pamasal*."

Throughout Melanesia, "making things happen" is something that is highly desired and valued since so many people's lives are largely structured by waiting for things to happen. André Iteanu (2015: 140) has speculated that this is why so many Melanesian languages "use an unusually high proportion of action verbs in relation to nouns and adjectives." As discussed above, Pana Misima relies heavily on these linguistic features. Knowing that something or someone is moving, where the movement is going, and if something will appear is tantamount to

a kind of power in Misima. Waiting at PMV stops, waiting for friends or family to visit, waiting for the garden to produce food, waiting for fish to appear, are all experiences with which almost all Misimans are intimately familiar. Thus, "making something happen" or "making something appear" (*pamasal*) is the most obvious way of exercising agency in the world.

Making things appear is not the only revelation through exchange or a kind of anti-possession; it also is a form of possession itself. In the course of making something visible, a person increases the circulation of their name. A person's "name" (*alan-*) not only refers to their proper name or terms of reference but also their "fame." A person with a great deal of fame or prestige has a "big name" (lit. "its name is bigness," *alana i bwabwatana*). From that example, it should be clear that like parts of the body, or kin, the "name" of the person is also inalienable, as seen in the examples of "my name" (*alau*), "your name" (*alam*), or "their name is big" (*alaliya hi bwabwatana*).

How does someone increase the size of their name? The answer is having people talk about you. A reputation (*wasawasa*) is closely related to this concept since it is, quite literally, "telling the news (*wasa*)." A reputation may not necessarily be useful or be a sign of what is influential per se; instead, it merely means to be a subject of discussion— to be the subject of a story. To establish a "big name," then, is to become the center, or "body" (*tuwan-*), of attention. By displaying their wealth, or beauty, a person can exert a kind of gravitational pull on others, and thus increase their name. To have a "big name," then, is to be an agent who has recognized influence over others by being the subject of their storytelling.

Kula and Kitom

Since Malinowski's famous ethnography of the Kula Ring, there has developed a robust

comparative literature about the politics, art, and cosmological schema of the Kula Ring circuit. Over the years, diverse perspectives on what the Kula Ring is and why people participate in it have proliferated. Today, two competing, but not necessarily mutually exclusive; explanations exist for the Kula Ring's origin and persistence through the modern era. First, Martha Macintyre's (1983a, 1983b) exploration of the origins of the Kula Ring in the Southern Massim still stands as a persuasive account for how and why the Kula circuit developed. She claims that Kune, the name for Kula in the southwestern corner of the Massim, developed in a time of endemic warfare as a mechanism for ensuring safe trading of vital goods, like clay pots, in an environment where islands developed intensive specialization based on their local environmental resources. Thus, a "friend" (*heliyam*), in the Milne Bay, is both your trading partner and a potential rival or enemy from a neighboring island. In this almost functionalist account, the Kula developed as a mechanism for safe trade in a region defined by hostile relations between neighboring islands.

The other account for the origins and explanations of the Kula relies less on the material demands of interisland trade, where some islands have rich but varied sources of clay for pottery, hard stone for tools, sago, yams, betel nut, and pigs for consumption. In this alternative account, the Kula developed as a means for establishing social and political control in a fiercely egalitarian environment (see Young, 1971a). The Kula Ring allows the establishment of hierarchy and prestige in societies without hereditary rank (Forge, 1972). The Trobriand Islands, where tabalu clan ranks do establish a hereditary distinction, is the exception to the rule in the Milne Bay, and even then, it has is argued that the hierarchy of tabalu rankings is a new artifact of the early colonial era (Macintyre, 1994). One piece of evidence supporting this claim is that

the pan-Massim word for "chief" is *guyau*, which means "a gift" and "to give." Significantly, this is one of the few honorific pronouns in Pana Misima without the *to-* prefix classifying a person as a possessor of a verb. In this came, the person is the same as the action or embodies the gift.

In the southern Milne Bay, from Tubetube to Misima, a *guyau* is not a "chief" of inheritable rank. However, it is instead a person who establishes a favorable reputation, and by extension—authority, through generous giving. However, my Misiman collaborators told me that it was not merely the fact that a person was generous or situated themselves as a conduit for exchange that designated a person as *guyau*. A *guyau* was recognized as such because they could attract others and valuable items to them. Thus, a person's fame, or "name" (*alon*), was their ability to elicit attention within the circuit of giving and receiving. On Misima, people will say that the fame of a person is a result of them controlling reveletions of their possessions so they may pull on the attentions of others. Those things that remain hidden from exchange partners, outside of the regular accounting of exchanged goods are called a person's *kitomwa*.

This valuable has been widely discussed in the literature of the Kula after Malinowski and Weiner's reevaluations of gift-giving in the Trobriands. In Misima, the *kitomwa* is homologous to a "secret," or a valuable that draws people in, but kept from exchange. Because *kitomwa* are valuables outside of the regular circuit of exchange and are, generally, held in secret, they can move in any direction and are used according to the strategic interests of the possessor (see Gregory, 1983: 108-109; Thune, 1983; Weiner, 1982; Berde, 1983; Macintyre, 1983; Campbell, 1983). In this way, possessors of *kitomwa* can create new routes of exchange by initiating new friendships through the gift of a *kitomwa*, but they are also able to amass expectant

recipients of future *kitomwa*. A possessor of a *kitomwa* may indicate the possible existence of *kitomwa*, but immediately conceal it from view, enabling them to exert influence over those who hope to one-day extract the *kitomwa* through their intimate friendship.

The *kitomwa* was not merely a secret, which can also be called *susumena*, instead, the *kitomwa* is the "content inside of something else." It may help to understand that "a secret" (*susumena*) as an abstract noun derived from the verb "to hide" (*susumi*), and connotes the idea of being a container of something. That something is said to be the *kitomwa*, or "what is valued" in the secret.

One way Misimans convey this distinction relates directly to the previous discussion of the Misiman person in this chapter. While the breath, soul, shadow, and heart of a person are readily accessible for others to manipulate, a person's mind is hidden (*wana nuwatu i susumi*), and it is said to be their *kitomwa*, but it is their mind that is the "secret" (*wana nuwatu i pakitomwa*) In analogical terms, Misimans convey this by comparing the mind to two parts of material culture that illustrate the alienability to the mind, but its ultimate opacity from others.

First, Misimans will say that their mind (*wana nuwatu*) *is* their "pocket" or "treasured thing." On Misima, you can easily see why people closely guard their *kalopu* and why the category is such a salient one for a private trust. It is common for Misimans to demand to see another's basket so that they may confirm whether a person has betel nut, 'mustard,' or lime. Both men and women will grab baskets out of each other's hands, demanding to look inside. What they are trying to do is confirm whether you are tricking them, or not, about what you possess. After all, if they can see something, it is wholly within their right to take it. These inspections can be invasive, and many Misimans carry things, or *kitomwa*, that they wish to

conceal from the vision, and thus exchange demands, of others. Because of their desire to conceal something from immediate view, Misimans weave into their baskets hidden compartments or pockets (*kalopu*), where they can keep secret notes, money, or even magical items from the prying eyes of people who inspect their baskets.

It is because of this allusion that Misiman landowners in the MTSA named their private trust funded by mine compensations "The Kalopu Trust." The MTSA was deliberately trying to signify that the trust existed, but like a pocket or hidden compartment, it would be held out of view, and therefore, unavailable for consumption or exchange. Similarly, because Misimans will compare the *kalopu* to a secret (*susumena*) and the item held within the *kalopu* to their mind (*no nuwatu*), a Misiman idiom that "you cannot see my mind; I keep it in my pocket" (*nige u kite no nuwatu, ya susumiwa iya kalopu kaiwena*), has developed as a common refrain from extrapolating the intentionality of speakers (see Pickels, 2013).

The second item of material culture Misimans compare minds and secrets to is the interior of a house (see Young, 2006). Like woven hand baskets, Misiman houses are regularly inspected by visitors. When hosting a visitor, it is common for them to sit on your verandah and to ask you for things (*awanun*). The standard expectation being that if a person can see the thing that they are requesting from their vantage point on the verandah, their request should be honored, and you should freely give up possession of that thing. Like the handbasket, Misimans will gladly demonstrate their lack of requested possessions by inviting a visitor to look inside their home from the verandah to confirm for themselves the lack of their requested items. However, every Misiman knows that some parts of the house are always out of view of anyone sitting on the verandah. Because of the lack of private rooms, most of a home's interior is visible

from the verandah, but there is one prominent part of the house that is always outside of any visitors' view—a large shelf over the front threshold. This shelf, called *elamwana*, is where people will hide (*susumi*) their *kitomwa*, or wealth intended for private use that they cannot hide between the thatching of the house's sago roof.

The *elamwana* shelf derives its name from "growing shoots or new leaves" (*elamwa*), or, in other words, creating new routes of exchange. As containers of their *kitomwa*, Misimans will claim that their *elamwana* and their *kalopu* are the same (*no elamwana ge o kalopu hi maisena*). They will also compare the *elamwana* to their mind, as is found in the common idiom "their eyes went to the *elamwana*" (*mataliya i nok elamwana elana*), to refer to someone who has speculated about the mind of another person (see Young, 2011).

The Value of a Thing

On a more abstract level, the *kitomwa* of a thing might be its "value" or its "purpose." For example, you would say that the *kitomwa* of a pig was whatever labor or trade someone had to do to acquire or raise the pig and what was the destined purpose of the pig. It could be a mortuary feast, the birth of a child, or a hosting of a guest. In other words, the *kitomwa* is both the labor and use-value of a thing because of how those values are thought to be the "content inside" of the pig, what went into it, and its intended use. Because Misimans hold to an essential dogma of the opacity of other minds and taboo any public speculation about the contents of others' minds, the intended use of the pig, its ultimate use-value, or content, is held secret or hidden from others.

In more abstract terms, the "content inside" (*kitomwa*) of a "secret" (*susumena*) is the secret, rather than the existence of a secret itself, which is widely known. The distinction is vital

in Misima because it is common for people to reveal that they have a secret, but much less common for someone to reveal what the contents of that secret are. The opacity around the accounts of the MTSA's Kalopu Trust is a vivid example since many Misimans would like to have a look at the accounting books.

Revealing the "content of a secret" one Gebo, a Meisoga clan elder once told me, would ruin the secret. Doing so would ruin the mystique of the secret, causing it to no longer draw the attention of those who seek it. This attentional pull, Gebo told me, was the purpose of all magic. It tricked them into doing service for you in hopes of uncovering your secrets, even if you have none.

Problems with Building Homes, Killing Pigs, and Feasting

The issue of capturing the attention of others is vital to understanding the etiquette around organizing labor and indirectly persuading others to work with you. When I was first planning on building a home in Liak village, I listened to my host family and friends' advice about what kind of home I should build given time and material constraints. A bush house made of materials gathered from the island's interior made the most sense. This would not only help me fit in with other villagers as white people ('dimdims') rarely lived in homes like typical Misimans, but they were also superior to white people's homes ('dimdim' *wali limi*) because they did not capture heat in corrugated tin roofs or block a breeze with a solid wall. After discussing the merits of the various styles of bush houses, my hosts suggested I think about it some more, and then maybe I could give them some more specific requests for the house design.

A week later, I showed my carefully drafted plans to my friends, with precise measurements, window and door placements, and even the type of verandah. My hosts thanked

me for the plans, and then they never looked at them. I do not believe it was out of disrespect that they never paid any attention to my plans. They ignored my plan because something like my draft was only done in the hypothetical sense and the objectification of my desires where something that seemed both perplexing and inappropriate. When it came to building the home, I soon learned why.

My wife and children were arriving in a few months, so there was a definite timeline for when the home needed to be completed. However, it was not enough to simply make plans, those plans had to be made real (*pamasal*). The problem was that organizing labor on Misima is a profoundly troublesome activity. Forming a working group (*boda*) is a central and necessary part of collective action, whether it is gardening or collaborating in feasting activities. However, it is also held within it the potentiality for terribly problematic social arrangements. A working group can provide commensality through the sharing of mutual sweet and labor, resulting in the making of "unity" (*pamaisena*), or "distributing of our heart together" (*atila gabomgabom pamaisena*), it can also result in "our hearts being cut off" (*atila gokilahayoho)*. Working groups have within them the potential for differentiating people, or setting them apart, just as much as they hold the potential for bringing them together.

Part of the problem lies in the fact that activities like building homes or mortuary feasting require the complex coordination of large groups of people, and it is that coordination that is inherently risky. This coordination is risky because people detest being told what to do. To "give a command" (*bapatanek*) can be transliterated as, "speech (*ba-*)" "that makes" (*pa-*) "ears" (*tan-*) "break up" (*-ek*). This association with hearing being disrupted is particularly meaningful when recognizing that one phrase for obeying is to "hear" (*hago*, cf. "obedience" [*henapu*]). The

significance of this is even more visible after watching a councilor of what of Liak's wards try to organize the village into collectively contributing the labor required for a freshwater development project. Most residents of the ward believed the project was a good idea but resented how they were expected to contribute their labor, saying that the ward councilor had formed a plan in his mind, but that all they were given for their expected labor were harsh words.

During one incredibly long village meeting, I witnessed residents of the village abruptly end the meeting by standing up en masse. They simply walked away as the village councilor yelled after them, commanding them to listen to his words. A woman turned to me and told me her ears hurt, and with that, she too left. The village councilor was putting too much emphasis on his distinction as the one with the plan but neglected the fact that to "rule" (*logugui*) one must first "give" (*guyau*). Thus a good ward councilor, like a chief, is said to be "gift-giving" (*guyau*) personified, as in "he is our leader or gift giver" (*i walila guyau*). Instead, the councilor emphasized his role as the "one with the plan" (*tohenati*), as it were.

Why the councillor's actions were perceived as being in opposition to the spirit of gift giving can be found in the connotations attached to the Pana Misima word for "to prepare" (*henati*). "To prepare" (*henati*) is the same word that means "to talk to someone when you are alone," "to confess, but fear of someone hearing," or "be jealous" (an esoteric meaning). Furthermore, the word "plan" (*nuwatu*) is the same as "the mind" (*nuwatu*). Thus, from what I covered earlier in this chapter about the opacity of others' minds, we can see that preparing and having a plan is a tricky prospect as it requires keeping something hidden from others. It is an act of concealment that contrasts with the revelation expected in gift-giving.

One other aspect of the trickiness of planning is found in the situation the village

councilor faced. Under the Village Councillor's concurrent concealment of his plans and insistence on giving orders, the Village Councillor made rigid and hierarchical distinctions between himself and other villagers that had, until that point, been mostly symbolic. The Village Councillor's stance toward his fellow villagers was problematic because Misiman sociality holds to a strong egalitarian ethos, with social distinctions typically being denied just as quickly as they are made. By voting with their feet, the villagers of Liak were practicing one of the most direct examples of egalitarianism I have ever seen. They simultaneously determined that the best way to deny social distinction, such as the status and authority the Village Councillor demanded, was to simply walk away, or deny his right to their attention. Still, all of this presents another vexing problem. What of the intricate planning that goes into mortuary feasting?

Unsurprisingly, Misimans are well aware of the potential problems of intersubjective coordination and hierarchy that result from mortuary feasting. The consequences of not correctly attending to this threat were admitted to me once while attending an Iwas feast in Gulewa village near Liak. Iwas, the second in a three-part series of mortuary feasts, is a ritual where pigs are publically butchered and displayed on large temporary platforms (*pwasu*) before hosts distribute the cuts of pigs to guests. While watching a pack of dogs fight over the blood dripping from the platform at the Iwas in Gulewa, Mark, one of the men from Liak who had traveled with me, whispered, "You see, this is the origin of witchcraft."

His wife, Vivian, a Guwau woman from Liak, inserted herself into the conversation. "That's right," she said, "Jealousy is how witchcraft starts. You see, they are messing up the butchering of the pig (*bobu lolovena*). The cuts are all wrong. They are distributing (*gabomgabom*) it all wrong."

Mark replied, “Yes, it was because their planning of feasting (*lolohikan*) went all wrong. They couldn’t see the minds of all the contributors to the feast.”

In Mark and Vivian’s conversation, Mark used another word for planning, specific to feasting—*lolohikan*. It is illustrative to look at how that concept differs from the use of “planning” (*henati*) above. *Lolohikan*, literally means “always” (*lolo*-) “holding on” or “taking care” (-*hikan*), which conveys the ideas of prudence, rather than articulated plans with hierarchical rankings of future contributors. After all, telling someone that you expect a specific contribution at a particular time could be perceived as presupposing the mind of others or imposing your will on them. Mark was saying that the proper kind of planning did not happen.

It is no coincidence that this conversation happened during an Iwas feast. The Iwas feast is regularly a site where these kinds of concerns over hierarchy become particularly evident. You can see the concern with rank, the demands of equality, and the appropriate care given to the distribution of pork cuts in the mapping of different cuts of meat distributed at the feast. Technically, the feast is said to be a payment for those women who cried over the deceased’s body during the viewing (*silawa*) before the burial (*teliteli*). This is primarily women’s work, and those women are given special attention during the feast. However, their debts are often overshadowed by the gifts hosts give to male competitors in efforts to entice their future participation. This overshadowing is one reason women will frequently complain that the distribution of pork cuts was not distributed (*gabomgabom*) with care (*lohikan*).

Furthermore, pigs are iconic of differentiated labor and relative ranking in the payments (*maesa*) of debts (*vaga*) incurred through labor. This ranking is contra posed to the contradiction that prestations (*lahi*) must be mutually reciprocal (*pempewa*, lit. “You give; I give). Take, for

example, the table below, where I have provided the ranking of pork cuts typically given during a mortuary feast. Lest attendees become jealous (*matapwalala* or *henati*) of one another there is a demand for equality. Nevertheless, there is also a recognition of difference, and even rank, in the care given to prudently distributing (*gabomgabom*) among the feast attendees, according to the ranked meats they deserve.

Rank	**Name**	**Meaning**	**Description**
1st	*Kaun.*	"The head."	The pork head, minus the jaw and jowl. This gift of meat is a payment given to the principal recipients of the feast, the representatives of the deceased's clan who are being paid for services rendered by the deceased throughout their lifetime.
2nd.	*Ulupuha*.	"The anus's cave."	The rump. The anus, in particular, is widely preferred as excellent meat for frying in pig grease.
3rd	*Awalaglag.*	"Jaw or cheek."	The jaw and jowl, given to a person from whom an equivalent pig is expected in the future. After it is cleaned, the jaw bone may be placed somewhere in or on the house to be latter examined as evidence of the debt (*vaga*). The recipient of the jaw must match the pig's jaw in their reciprocal prestation (*lahi*).
4th	*Sena*/*Vaha*.	"Layers."	A strip of the pig's stomach. The cut is mostly fat, and the grease from the cut can be strained and kept for frying food.
5th	*Levaleva.*	"Paddling."	The front legs. There is a considerable amount of good meat on these cuts.
6th	*Nagil.*	"Jumpy."	The hind legs. There is a considerable amount of good meat on these cuts.
7th	*Lul.*	A dipterocarp tree (*Hopea glabrifolia*).	Ribs. *Salai kenken*. A cut of pork ribs (*lul*) traditionally reserved during the third *bobuton* mortuary feast (Iwas) for those who dug the grave of the deceased.
8th	*Patigelu.*	"Tabooed squash."	Neck strips. These cuts are mostly fat, and the grease is often strained and kept for frying.

9th	*Dagulu ketaltal*	"Feathered vulnerability."	The back. These cuts are mostly fat, and the grease is often strained and kept for frying.
10th	*Sowal*.	"Health."	A strip of the pig's skin and stomach fat. The cut is mostly fat, and the grease from the cut can be strained and kept for frying.
11th	*Elel.*	"Landslide."	The loin. The cut is mostly fat, and the grease from the cut can be strained and kept for frying.
12th	*Nua*.	"Suspicion" or "unease."	The bottom stomach strip. These cuts are mostly fact, and the grease is often strained for frying.
13th	*Kilakila waga.*	"Our [inclusive of addressee] boat."	Undifferentiated slabs of pure fat, usually taken from the lower stomach or lower back. The grease from these cuts can be strained and kept for months.
14th	*Lovilovi.*	"To cut (*lovi*) portions of meat into smaller cuts of meat."	If there are plenty of people, then each of these cuts may be further divided into smaller cuts. However, to receive a smaller portion of a prestigious cut is shameful.
Generalized.	*Bobu kokowana*.	"The pig's head."	A prestation on a large wooden dish (*mwaha*) of yams and raw cuts of pork given at a mortuary feast. For example, this is a generalized gift given to attendees of an Iwas feast by the feast's hosts. The phrase may also denote any attendee or contributor to a feast.

Objectified planning (*henati*) provides the potential of committing yourself to a future that you cannot anticipate because it is impossible to guess the minds of others. Doing so would be imprudent. However, planning is necessary because there is a high potentiality of creating jealousy by incorrectly distributing pork cuts in ways that rank people by giving more or less what was owed. It is rare for anyone to be aware of the feasting plans of anyone else, and even feasting hosts themselves rarely know if anyone they have hoped would participate will show up to contribute. It is even rarer for a host to straightforwardly ask for the assistance of anyone outside of their immediate household.

Instead of planning on contributions and directly requesting help, Misimans will instead employ a strategy called *vevegali*, in which someone will announce attention to work in an indirect way. For example, to signal to others that you are preparing to host a Lobek feast, the last of the *bobuton* mortuary feasts, a person will make new trimmings for their house and kill a pig to share with those who labored in the installation of those trimmings. This pig, called "the escaping pig" (*bobu mwal*), is a promissory pig used to mark their intentions to host the Lobek soon. Those who build canoes or houses will do similarly by signaling in indirect ways their intentions to construct a canoe or house and then entice others to join them in their labor, rather than directly asking them.

Vevegali was in vivid display when I struggled with building my home. After telling people my plans and asking for their help, often with a promise of compensation, no one would join me in working in the bush to gather materials for the home. Frustrated, I went to my adopted brother, Keo, for help. He had been nervous to tell me, but I had been doing everything wrong. He said that what I had done was presented to people an image, or shadow (*kakanun*), of the house, but that would not move anyone to contribute their labor. It looked to them to be too much of an example of objectified planning (*henati*). Instead, he argued, people needed to feel moved by their hearts (*atiliya*) to contribute their labor, they could not just be asked to do so.

The next day Keo demonstrated what an appropriate *vevegali* resembled. Early in the morning, while people were still cooking their morning breakfast from the previous night's leftovers (*bweyu*), Keo sat in front of his home. He was seated right next to where we eventually built my home. There he started loudly chopping down a small tree on the plot of my future house. When he finished felling the tree, he sat down with a giant bushel of betel nut and started

filing his ax and bush knife. Eventually, people started coming to with requests (*awanun*) for betel nut. Sitting down with him to chew, his guests would then ask him, "Where are you going?" To which Keo would respond, "I am going to work in the bush. I am going to start finding building materials for my brother's house." Then he would tell people that I had bought some rice and tin fish and that if they contributed their labor, he was confident that my heart would be moved (*atiloman*) to release my possession of the rice and tin fish to them by making a meal later that night. This strategy of indirectly asking for labor worked like magic. Almost immediately, the entire area around Keo's house and my future house were abuzz with laughter, betel nut, and the clanging of metal files against bush tools. Eventually, the sound itself brought inquisitive people to our area, and our working group (*boda*) grew in number. We had, in effect, captured the attention of passersby. As the days wore on, this became even more true since people grew confident in my ability to feed and entertain a large working group.

When my hosts had told me what resources they could find in the bush to build my home, I did not initially realize that my hosts were not themselves going to go out in the bush to harvest these trees, sago spathes, and sago leaves. They were asking their relations, usually affines and close clan members who lived outside of our hamlet, what they could find. Whatever was presented to them was whatever we had for resources, nothing more. The quality and quantity of our construction materials were subject to the whims of those who collected them and the resource limitations of the forest. For this reason, members of my family and I labored day and night to entertain and feed anyone who assisted us. The happier our helpers were the better construction materials they would give us. One distant affine of a fellow hamlet resident went so far as to hull over a mountain an incredibly dense post he had carved deep in the island interior.

When I asked him why he chose such a massive and sturdy post, he gave the usual gesture to the importance of hospitality towards guests such as myself and my family. However, he also said that our nightly parties of food, music, and laughter and moved his heart to give something special. He laughed at me, put his hand on my thigh (gesture of commodore), and said, "you are a trickster after all."

Debbora Battaglia (1985) has pointed out that this same kind of relationship is found in paternal nurturing in Sabral, southeast of Misima in the Eastern Calvados Chain. Sons and sisters' sons will labor for this fathers and uncles in gardens under grueling conditions with dedicated subservience in the hopes that their fathers and mother's brothers will reveal their *kitom* to them and share with them their secrets, whether it is land boundaries, genealogical knowledge, magic, or other forms of alienable wealth. I observed the same situation on Misima, where young men would laboriously serve their elders in the hopes of extracting favors, and eventually secret. However, what I find most intriguing is the connection routinely observed, but rarely remarked upon by anthropologists of the Milne Bay, that Kula is connected to gardening, not only because hosts must feed Kula partners, but because there is a shared logical thread between gardening and the exchange of valuables in the Kula circuit.

Gardening and Power

Similar to the more famous examples of the Kula circuit and mortuary feasting, there is a robust comparative literature on gardening in the Massim. This is born out in the levels of importance anthropologists have regularly observed Massim people placing on the centrality of gardens and gardening in social life. Malinowski wrote, that "Whatever [the Trobriander] might appear to others, to himself he is first and foremost a gardener... If you want to know him, you

must meet him in his yam gardens, among his palm groves or on his taro fields" (1935: I.ix). This centrality of gardening is an observation that has been found time and time again throughout Milne Bay. For example, Nancy Munn (1986: 30) notes that "Among their daily activities, Gawans give gardening priority over all others," and Miriam Kahn (1986) observed that cultivating gardens and sharing the products of that labor were the chief concern of people in Wamira. Similarly, Reo Fortune describes on man's claim that "gardening is the supreme occupation" of any Dobuan (1963: 201). Linus digim'Rina (1995) also contends that gardening in the central node in the politics of Basima land tenure and mortuary feasting.

In Misima, gardening is not merely about the production of foodstuffs but is a site where Misimans work out the nature of labor and leadership. I believe, we can follow Malinowski's lead in this regard, as he places labor and prestige at the forefront of his analysis in *Coral Gardens and Their Magic* (1935). Malinowski was interested in how Trobriander hierarchies were grounded in everyday practices, like bowing, and one of the most prominent examples for how Trobriander chiefs exercised and accumulated power was through the organizing of labor for the production of surplus yam stocks. He identifies four types of communal gardening labor that a chief or other significant man of prestige may be able to coordinate. The last "type" of communal labor, the *kabutu* system (Malinowski 1922), is what I wish to explore.

The Trobriand labor arrangement of *kabutu* is a loose one where "a headman" invites his fellow villagers to do some for work him in exchange for food at the end of the day. It seems relatively uncomplicated and straight forward. It is not particularly the domain of chiefs, and the arrangement can be replicated across the social spectrum where one senior person calls for and rewards the labor of others. Furthermore, *kabutu*, does not necessarily refer to garden work

alone. *Kabutu* is characteristic of "whenever a number of men are needed by another to help in him some undertaking, such as the construction of a canoe, a storehouse or his dwelling" (Malinowski, 1935: I.158). It is, however, most commonly utilized in the clearing of new gardens and other gardening work that benefits from large groups of people. Operating under principles of reciprocal labor commitments across time (*ta'ula*) and space (*kari'ula*) (Malinowski, 1922), the sponsor's payments in food are never really equivalent to the value of the labor wrought, with the sponsor always receiving more than what he paid for in labor. Rather than canceling inequalities through mutual consumption, food, it would seem, is the glue that makes the relationship's hierarchical status visible and enduring rather than hidden and fleeting (Ibid). When a man works a plot in a new garden, "he often has to subdivide it for different uses." He may have to keep part of the crops for himself, give some to his sister, and some to this mother. For this reason, the boundary poles and squares provide useful visual delineators of the kinds of relational obligations bound within the garden and the gardener's person.

Although Malinowski notes that a great deal of gardening labor is, in fact, individual labor, or that performed by a single male or female gardener at any one point in time, it is what he calls "communal labor" that Malinowski gives special attention. This is even though gardening prowess or the relative productivity of one's gardens is the lynchpin to establishing personal prestige. Fame then is not a reflection of an individual's unique capacities; instead, it is a reflection of the labor that was given and the debts that will be repaid. As the "nucleus or essence of *abutu*" in Goodenough "is literally 'to bump faces' with one's opponent in a personal test of gardening prowess" (Young, 1985: 188; cf. Young, 1971a), gardening is the foundation of how chiefs accumulate prestige and the fuel in which Kula can operate. It is a highly visual

representation of the kinds of actual and potential relations Trobrianders utilize in magic and social intrigue. After all, Malinowski notes, one of the prime activities of a visiting Kula expedition, is inspecting the gardens of Kula partners and potential rivals. All this is to say that Malinowski documents a complex social arrangement of labor, sometimes highly structured according to principles of precedence and hierarchy and sometimes less so, all of which become the basis of personal fame, being both the appearance and operation of potential and actual political power. It is for this reason, Malinowski notes, that a Trobriand gardener "takes due pride in the results of his labour" and "enjoys showing" recently erected garden plots to allies and revivals alike (1935: I.121). This public display of labor is contrasted to the hidden work of garden magic, which is often done in secret by garden magic specialists whose knowledge is not widely shared.

All of this will sound somewhat familiar to a person living in Misima. In Liak village, gardening is the single most important personal and collective activity in which people regularly engage. My fellow residents of Liak told me in no uncertain terms that if I wanted to know anything about Misima, I needed to join them in their gardens. People in Liak often contrast themselves with those who live next to Bwagaoia station or close to the former gold mine's Special Mining Lease areas of Gaibobo and Narian on the South Coast. The contrast is that they, being relatively removed from the direct environmental impacts of the former gold mine and having limited access to the revenue streams found in SML landowner benefits, remember how to garden with the kind of excellence reminiscent of Gere`u and Marita's prowess in garden magic. With steep slopes sliding down two of Misima's largest mountains and a considerably large and dense population, the people of Liak and the neighboring village of Bagalina endure

long vertical climbs up the mountain just to reach their garden. There, they suffer through rain, wind, itchy plants, and bites to build, maintain, and inspect their gardens. They often leave for the garden early in the morning and arrive back in the village just as the sun goes down. However, far from being a source of consternation, people take great pride in their gardening prowess, and people's relative social status is summarized as a person who does or does not regularly work in their gardens. A man ready for marriage is said to be one who "already makes a garden" (*yaka eyowa niginol*), and it is often repeated that a good person can be found in the garden, and a bad person fishes too much at night.

If you ask Misimans how to characterize gardening best, they will almost certainly respond that gardening is "hard work," and a hard-working person is one worthy of respect and attention. Furthermore, while personal labor investments are admirable and undoubtedly necessary if one wishes to utilize magic in this overwhelmingly Christian community secretly, any single person can marshal the labor of others and publicly display those relationships that are most valued. The productive and hardworking gardener is valued, but the gardener who feeds people is valued most.

To underline this fact, Misimans tell a myth about a supremely productive gardener who continually works in the garden. He never sits to chew betel nut, he never eats, and he toils away at this many gardens from dawn till dusk, often sleeping only in his yam house. This bachelor is widely acknowledged as the hardest working Misiman, and his gardens are clear evidence of his personal labor and knowledge of ancient and now forgotten yam magic; however, he is an apparent social pariah. Rather than being a figure of emulation for his work ethic and productivity, he is a repulsive figure, widely considered amoral if not evil, for his mouth is

sowed shut with small snakes or maggots. While he does not selfishly consume products of his labor, he also does not share them. It is not until he marries and his new wife pulls out a snake from the ground soon after joining him for the first time in his garden that, startled by the presence of the snake, the gardener opens his mouth and snakes and maggots come pouring out. Immediately he surveys the snakes that had sowed his mouth shut. He calls out to the village below, " You come, we work, and then we eat. This is your food" (*Ku nem, tuwalali abwe ta anan*. *Owa amwu te*). With the introduction of his new wife into his garden, the gardener is transformed from a selfish productive pariah without extensive relations into a productive social microcosm, in which the capacity to feed people, especially his new affines, is realized. Only once he calls for collective work or *tuwalali* and promises the payment of food is he made a "good" gardener. This is further elaborated in the Liak idiom that a "good man is found in the garden, a bad man fishes too much at night."

This myth of the mute gardener and the idiom about gardening versus fishing draw stark structural oppositions between the visible and hidden, night and day, good and bad, but is the portrayal of the moral character of the gardener and fisher that is most complex. Through work (*tuwalali*), a gardener stores up the potential to cultivate extensive relations across space and time, which is realized in the feeding of others in mortuary feasts. The gardener does this mainly in publicly visible contexts. In contrast, a person who fishes too much neglects the work of spatiotemporal expansion. Gardeners plant sago trees to remember the dead and feed future generations. They plant yams for mortuary obligations to their ancestors and affines. In contrast, fish may bring immediate prestige when you pull up to shore with fish in your boat, but the catch must be consumed nearly immediately. You must even eat smoked fish relatively quickly.

Furthermore, if a person fishes too much at night, they are doubly morally suspect, for they are likely to hide their catch from the gaze of others and consume it in their own homes early in the morning before others wake.

Of course, work (*tuwalali*) is more complicated than the clear and distinct separation Malinowski gives to instrumental or technical labor and ritual magic labor found in *Coral Gardens* (1935). The late Misiman Bishop of the United Church here in Milne Bay, Simone Namunu, once explained how *tuwalali* in Pana Misima is glossed as work. He wrote, "Whether we are clearing forest for new gardens, preparing for a feast, raising pigs, digging the soil, planting crops and caring for them, fishing, or sailing across oceans for trade, we are working." Still, above all, "Working always involves the collaboration with spirits" (Namunu, 2001:261).

It is notable that the ancient forgotten magic that the mythic gardener employs. At the same time, his mouth is still sewn shut by the same magic used by Gere`u and Marita, who left Misima and drowned at the reefs off of Duau. This magic is considered far more productive than the kinds of magic available to present generations. The worker of such magic does not need the work of others. In Misima, yam magic was a highly secret affair and Misiman gardeners always conduct their magic away from the prying eyes of others.

In contrast to the Trobriands, yam magic is utilized not only by specialists. Individual men and women, while clearing, planting, and maintaining gardens, will surreptitiously use gardening magic. When a woman plants a yam, she would quietly mutter a spell while spitting ginger and pouring a mixture of herb leaves, and potentially snake and bird innards, with coconut juice onto the yam, and its hole previously dug by men. Like Trobriander spells, Misiman yam spells are replete with allusions to magical powers, ancestral figures (sometimes only a

generation or two removed), and *totowoho* or the fairies or sprites who are the original landowners. By imploring the very ancestral powers who had given life to generations of seeds, Misimans would beg the *totowoho* for forgiveness for the use of the land and then metonymically map or manipulate the potential image or *kakanun* of the yam to imagine a yam with a large vine reaching across generations past. Most Misimans will tell you that garden magic is firmly a thing of the past, and I have never seen garden magic as I have just described. However, I have seen people bend over their yams in prayer countless times, more often than not, with a plea to Jesus and a recitation of ancestral names through which possession of the yam seeds have passed and sometimes with a bit of ginger for good measure.

My point here is that gardens and their magic are poignant sites in which people produce active and extensive relations. Because garden work can multiply and extend social relations, the garden is valued as a site of meaning-making. Work, especially garden work, is not a haphazard process of producing value through the individual excursion; instead, it is a multiplicative process in which hierarchical relations between kin, laborers, and sponsors are extended throughout the social plane. This is true throughout the Milne Bay, and especially true in the Louisiades, where a sister's son will work in his mother's brother's garden and sago groves throughout his uncle's lifetime as a kind of exchange in the hopes for future support in supplying valuables for exchange and genealogical secrets vital to land tenure (Battaglia, 1985: 431). While this transactional ethic is glossed by the name of this exchange, "give to me, I give to you" (*pempewa*), it is, in fact, not a symmetrical exchange of equivalent things. Instead, it is complementary in its gift of labor for secrets, and this complementarity creates hierarchical rankings between the elder mother's brother and sister's son (e.g., Bateson, 1958).

It should then be no surprise then when I spoke with young men about their relationships with their uncles; they conveyed deeply ambivalent responses. On the one hand, uncles were their paternal authority figures, who provided them the rights and recognition that belonged to becoming a man within the clan. Young men often treated their uncles with the most profound respect. Nevertheless, they would also privately complain about the tyranny of their uncle's labor demands. One young man told me, "I work, and I work all day long. I hear (*ya hago*) from my uncle that one day he will share with me the secrets of his knowledge, but that he's just watching to see if I am obedient (*henapu*). But that how he's tricked me. It's a trick. Does he even know the genealogies or the clan boundaries? Probably not. He has tricked me (*No valehe i kakauwi*)." In other words, it is the *kukula* of the uncle that calls the nephew to his side, under his supervision, for the nephew wants the uncle possesses, and the mother's brother wants his sister's son's labor.

Nancy Munn (1986) shares an example from Gawa, which closely resembles these kinds of hierarchical relations made in the name of equality. She claims that "work (*wotet*) is planned by each person or nuclear family" (Ibid: 30). However, "a person's participating in any wider group arrangements for work depends entirely on individual decision." For Gawan's, the autonomy of each person and their decision making-making powers (*kareiwaga*) are sacrosanct (Ibid: 68). In contrast to the Trobriands, Gawan's insists that among themselves, there is no single *guyaw*, where one person or *dala* may climb above the others (Ibid: 70). Nevertheless, Gawans, like nearly all residents of Milne Bay, spend a considerable amount of time listening to the requests of others, which, in many contexts, includes the connotation of consenting to those requests (Ibid: 109).

"Persuasion and consent," she writes, "are the legitimate means of hierarchization for they entail the recognition of the other's *kareiwaga* as part of the process of attempting to assert one's own *kareiwaga*, and to achieve one's own ends" (Ibid: 71). For example, young men, who in order for their fame to grow, must "listen (*-reg*, *-kabikawra*) to the requests of some senior man on Gawa..., aiding this person and working for him, so that the latter in turn agrees to give him various goods, trees, magic, and so forth" (Ibid: 109).

In Liak, this kind of intersubjective experience of autonomous labor and hierarchical subordination is associated with the making of a *boda*, or group, formed for collective labor, especially garden labor. A man may quietly announce his plans to work to his close relatives, but in the morning, he will call his *boda* by loudly chopping wood and sharpening his ax or bush knife. Soon, perhaps, his sisters' sons, his brothers, or affines may join him, chewing betel nut and smoking, while waiting for a critical mass of supporters to appear. The sponsor does not call for workers, nor directly approach anyone for a request of labor. The men patiently wait as more men gather towards the sponsor. As more are informed of the goal of the day's work, the men wait until the group has reached critical mass. Only then will they go to process sago or clear the garden. Of course, the size of a *boda* a man can marshal vastly varies according to the kinds of relations he has cultivated throughout the years. However, most critical of all is the ability to recruit people of a different clan, who are not your affines and hold no obvious kinship relation to you. A man who can marshall others who have no external obligations to provide their labor and instead give of their labor solely based upon their attraction to the work sponsor's *kukula* and his ability to feed others is a real leader. He is a "person in whom others wish to visit" (*tolobwabwali*). He does not directly participate in the labor he sponsors, but instead views it

from afar while tapping his lime pot and yelling directions, derision, or encouragement to his *boda*. Like a fighting leader, who provides the movements that his fellow warriors imitate, the *boda* leader at once acts as a figure that collapses others' autonomy while simultaneously depending on his *kukula* or ability to attract other men from outside his visible circle of influence.

In many ways, the marshaling of collective labor in gardening is the basis of hierarchical relations in the political form where hierarchies are made in the name of equality—a kind of fetishism of the equality and personal autonomy of persons and their minds. The sister's son gives his labor to his mother's brother. Over time, like the magical molding of the yam's image, the boy begins to resemble his uncle as his gifts of knowledge accumulated within his person. It is a deeply hierarchical relation built on the premise of equality. The same is true of a sponsor of *tuwalali* feeds people and, thus, builds a *boda* in which people willingly submit their intentions on the bases of eating together as equals.

This seems to be the metaphysical basis of leadership through much of the Massim. While the fame gained through the exchange of Kula valuables certainly seems to operate on similar principles, it seems to me that gardens are far more regular sites of people giving and receiving each other's labor, the very genesis of the partible person, but a partible person who is understood in often vertical terms.

Malinowski titled his first monograph *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) as an allusion to Jason and the Argonauts who travel throughout the Mediterranean in search of the golden fleece, a magical object of great value that would help him displace a usurper to the throne that he sought (Forge, 1972). The fleece was a symbol of legitimate political power, of

rightful hierarchy. Anthony Forge points out that it is the seeking of a recognition of equal status between Kula partners in distant places that legitimates local hierarchies between compatriots in the Kula exchange and the commoner who must Kula with the chief rather than a distant equal other. I think it is worth considering that in Melanesia the tacit legitimization of political power, the making of the rightful hierarchy, is made in the explicit pursuit of equality.

Labor in for Gold

Misiman colonial history can quickly be glossed as a history of racial labor relation between almost a hundred years of 'dimdim' owned gold mines and imported laborers from throughout Eastern British Papua. However, it is striking that for the vast majority of the 20th-century Misimans were uninterested in working in the mines. Instead, "the best workmen of Papua" from Goodenough, Duau, and Morima easily outnumbered the indigenous Misimans. Michael Young (1983c) speculates that Goodenough men were eager to participate in this indentured labor, which was, at their time, the lowest paid profession in the world (Nelson, 1976). Young argues the Misima mines provided a means for men to seek adventure and make allies out non-kin. This certainly seems to reflect some of the Misiman participation in early blackbirding, where Misimans testifying to the 1888 royal commission investigating the practice told of seeking partners and goods through labor in Townsville but being tricked when they find that their movement was more restricted than they had anticipated, a bit of an understatement.

When the Misima Gold mine came in the 1980s, Martha Macintyre, the co-author of the mine's social impact study (the first in the nation), insisted that the mine hire Misimans at a significantly higher proportion than workers flown in. The idea was that the most lasting benefit the mine would bring to Misima would be the human resource training it gave to its workers.

When the mine was hiring, it initially found this quota hard to fill because Misimans thought the mine did not really provide the means to seek adventure in Port Moresby and instead focused on the mine's reparations. Then, the mine did just that, it started paying for people's schooling abroad, and almost overnight, there was a big rush to work at the mine. Now that the mine is closed most *bobuton*, or the all-important series of mortuary feasts on Misima, is primarily sponsored by current fly in and fly out mine workers. This is because they have the money available to sponsor a feast for 20 to 60,000 Kina. However, they are also automatically given a place to sit with the men of renown (*tonowakau*) because of their ability to extend their person beyond the spatial confines of Misima and build an accretionary *boda* out of non-kin allies. All of this is to say that labor in Misima is tightly bound to how people convince others that they are a "leader" by displaying their ability to call on the labor of others.

There is a Duau idiom, "it's glorious to be a good worker" with the corollary "to be poor is to be lazy" (Róheim, 1950: 233-234). This idea that "it's glorious to be a good worker" seems to sum up my experience on Misima. A good worker is a person with a large garden that feeds past generations through *bobuton* and future generations as trees come to maturity. With a productive garden, a person's fame grows as they are recognized as someone who feeds others for their labor, a *tolobwabwali*, or a person whom others wish to visit. The garden is the basis of a man's *kukula*, or the ability to get what he wishes from others. To attract them, to make them work for him, and ultimately to subsume them. Today fly-in/fly-out mine workers complicate this picture immensely.

One day, Jack, a fly-in/fly-out mine worker based in Liak, came to me in a near panic. He was sure someone was trying to kill him. Witches (*olal* or *nomnom*) had marked him and his

family out of jealousy for his permanent house and many things. Convinced that a member of his family was, in fact, a witch and had given permission to other witches at Gewai by Motorina to eat his shadow (*kakanun*) while he slept slowly, my friend had promptly resolved to organize garden work for the next day. Jack's thought that if he organized some garden work and feed the men and women who helped in that work, he would be able to make others feel like they are equal with him by giving them things like rice and sugar. Sure, he would be distinguishing himself as some with access to these goods, but the value of commensality would override any of the hierarchy.

The problem was that Jack knew he could not marshal enough people to attract that witch. So, he gave me a proposition. I would call for the labor, but Jack would bankroll it. Jack worked at the Hidden Valley Gold Mine in the Highlands of New Guinea and flew into Misima every other month. Because of this, he rarely worked in the garden. During his downtime in Liak, Jack tended to fish or just relax with his children. People in Liak regarded Jack as a kind person, but, like him, I did hear concerns about his lack of work in the garden and the possibility that he was hoarding the material wealth he gained from his wage labor at the mine.

In contrast to Jack, I worked in people's gardens almost daily, and people knew me as a hard worker who always remembered my friends. Furthermore, Jack surmised, my 'dimdim' *kukula*, or ability to capture the attention of others, was strong enough to entice people to join me in laboring in Jack's garden. By attracting others to labor in Jack's garden, I would be able to uncover the witch who was secretly jealous of Jack's wealth.

The next morning, I sat on my veranda and started a pot of rice and sharpened my ax. This noise announced to passersby that I was up to something unusual. Soon visitors started

flocking to ask for betel nut and question me about where I was going. I informed them that I was planning on working in Jack's garden and that I expected protein from him that night after work. Within hours we had so many people eager to help in the garden that Jack was worried he would not be able to feed all of them. That evening, after we completed our garden work and were able to gather together enough food to feed everyone, we ate as a *boda*. As we were eating, Jack stared at the women who joined our feast. This group of women was laughing over plenty of rice, tea, and tin meats. Jack leaned toward me and said, "Today, I think we captured a witch. Now she is in our debt. The garden always does that. Work makes you strong."

Magic and the Person

Part of what makes garden work and labor so magical is the ability it has to increase the fame of a person. In expectation of the commensality that follows, people will assist in contributing their labor in hopes of obtaining previously concealed wealth, or *kitomwa*, from the garden owner. The public recognition of a person's concealed wealth increases their fame, which attracts others to labor for the person. Thus, on Misima, people will say that the fame of a person causes others to grow. This growth may refer to the increased number of workers within a *boda*, or to the physical bodies of those workers, who consume yams as payment for their labor. Both the collective body of a group, and the yams themselves, are recognized as a kind of "child" (*wawaya*). Hence, the yam is called "the clan's children" (*un wana wawayau*), and the *boda* is called "children of work" (*tuwalali wana wawayau*). I believe both of these identifications of people and yams are because Misimans are recognizing the centrality of natality to the yam and the laborer, they are growing something that is not yet known or determined.

While gardening is the primary means of accruing prestige and cultivating commensality,

I do not want to convey the idea that fishing does not provide a useful avenue for understanding what magic is and how it is thought of as a "trick." One day, while talking to Benjamin from Bagalina, who had become Kula partner of a prominent political actor from Bwanabwana in the southwestern corner of the Massim, Benjamin told me that the fame of Kula masters, politicians, and pastors was dangerous because they had become "fishers of men." While Benjamin was drawing from Christian motifs in his comment, he was also drawing from traditional Misiman understandings of what fishing (*koskos*) is. Benjamin explained:

> When you fish (*koskos*), you tell the fish (*moti*), 'here is a shining this, this hook and lure. Come to it, because it shines and is attractive,' and then that is when you pull on your line and capture the fish. You have tricked it. The name of a person is their lure (*epamwa*). The bodies of young people are their lures. When I hide (*susumi*) my things (at this point Benjamin placed some betel nut in his hand basket), they become my lure (*no kitomwa i paepwamwa*). Already, you are trapped (*Yaka, u kota*). That is magic— I steal your mind, I give you a trick (*Iya kukula, wam nuwatu ya na kaoma, i kakauwi ya na pek*).

What Benjamin is implying in this short comment is that the trick is embodied in the person as they become a kind of lure that shines or attracts others to them. Similarly, Benjamin is admitting that how porous the Misiman person becomes in response to these lures. People find their agency curtailed by the attractive things shinning in front of them.

Once, when I was talking about this very same concept with Joseph, a well-known politician, and orator from Bwagaoia, I suggested that the ability to take over, or "trap" (*kota* or *kula*), the mind of another through rhetoric could be seen in uttering the simple phrase, "Do not think of hunger," after which hearers of the phrase will immediately think of hunger. This is an especially salient possibility on Misima, where hunger is a pervasive and dreaded part of the seasonal oscillations in the food supply. Joseph affirmed that was what was meant by "stealing others' minds" (*waliya nuwatuau i kowma*), and was one reason why some rhetoricians and

politicians were given the invective "thieves" (*tokoama*). The point is that a skilled rhetorician could take over or control the minds of others, even though the contents of a person's mind is always kept secret as their *kitomwa* by their metaphorical pockets (*kalopu*) or shelves (*elamwana*).

The concept of the lure (*epamwa*), and how it is located on the body, is also worth investigating. The word for lure, *epamwa*, is constructed from three separate fragments, *e-* to designate a tool or instrument of something, *pa-* meaning making something happen, and *mwa* for bait. Quite literally, a lure means a tool that becomes bait. However, it is only in comparison to another "tool" for capturing the attention that this composition becomes even more significant.

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned that there are at least five different kinds of magic on Misima. There is *kukula*, sometimes glossed by English speaking Misimas as "sorcery," but there are other forms of magic. I will not be exploring witchcraft (*olal*) in this dissertation. However, it is worth considering that people think of witchcraft as a kind of magic that entraps a person manipulating their shadow (*kakanun*) and, eventually, consuming their breath (*yawalina*). Two other forms of magic widely practiced on Misima are healing magic (*sowalsowal*) and curses (*selam*). While both rely on spells and incantations (*ebaya*), both men and women use curses almost exclusively mark gardens as taboo gardens. By doing so, they ensure that if some unauthorized person steals or consumes food or betel nut from the area tabooed, the thief will be cursed with an illness or physical ailment. In contrast, healing magic is an all-purpose toolkit for restoring the breath (*yawalina*) of a person by manipulating their body (*tuwana*). It is, in effect, the anti-witchcraft, or the exact opposite of witchcraft.

While healing magic complements witchcraft (as its opposite), love magic (*epapabola*)

complements sorcery (*kukula*). Sorcery (*kukula*) is related to the Kula, as it is means, "doing Kula" (*ku-kula*). However, the meaning of love magic, or *epapabola*, is slightly more difficult to discern without considering the above discussion about fishing. Like a fishing lure (*epamwa*), we can see similar composition in the name for love magic (*epapabola*). Consider the following prefixes. First, *e-* for a tool or instrument (often magical), *pa-* for making something happen (in this case *pa-* is doubled to signify continual action), and, lastly, *-bola*, or "stupid," which requires a bit of explaining. Bola does not necessarily mean "stupid" in the same sense it is used in English, although Pana Misima speakers will translate it as "stupid." Instead, *bola* means something like "senseless," "without control," or "being empty" (e.g. *bolabola*, to be empty like a barren tree; *basinabola*, to verbally abuse someone or "give empty exaggeration"; or *logabola*, desolation or famine). This emptiness is in contrast with being "without purpose" (*bwaga*), "unintelligent" (*gegenayata*), or "mentally impaired" (*kabalea*). Similarly, to be inattentive or distracted is to have "senseless" or "empty eyes" (*bolamatana*). Thus, we can see that love magic (*epapabola*) means, quite literally, to empty a person, to take control of them by making them senseless, and it is no mistake that it is often directly compared to fishing. After all, the many-pronged fishing spear used for reef fishing is called "the tool that is an empty fire" (*eginabola*).

One other prominent myth worth sharing at this point is the story of Tolova from Meisoga Tomoka**.** First, this bawdy myth contains several of the same issues relevant to the last chapter. Tomoka is a specific hamlet in eastern Liak, and the mud pool that is mentioned in the myth has a specific name that I have left out of this record on purpose because it is considered a secret. The same is true for the three women, whose identities and places in genealogies are

strongly contested during land disputes. Second, it follows the central theme of this chapter—trickery closely.

I have heard the story of Tolova recounted many times. In a few instances, it happened in the context of a land court dispute in which competing clans told different versions of the myth, mostly differing on the identities of the three women and the names of specific parts of the landscape. Usually, I heard this story late in the evening while people chewed betel nut on a verandah under the moonlight or the faint glow of a fire. What initially surprised me about the story was how even young children were familiar with it and the riotous laughter that would attend almost any telling of it.

It is common for Misiman myths to contain within them a transgressive act that typically embarrasses contemporary Misimans. This is partly true of Tolova, but it is also remarkable how thoroughly that fact does not capture why the story of Tolova is so popular. First and foremost, the story is popular because it is an erotic story, with elements of humiliation, that is, at its core, about trickery. Tolova is said to be the originator of a whole species of love magic (*epababola*) used in Liak. The story of how this form love magic, often found in song, is found in the following:

> Tolova was a foolish and hideous young man who had no luck at all with any young girls in Liak village. He was never noticed and had always been neglected by young girls. Every girl that cam by Tolova's way would say "No" to his advances, whither they were requests for pleasure or friendly leisure.
>
> Due to the negative attitude of the young girls toward Tolova, he decided that he must somehow trick a woman into sleeping with him, as he was still a virgin. Soon he learned where the young women worked and played, and he set about developing a strategy into tricking them by lying in wait at a small creek where they bathed.
>
> While the girls bathed, one of the girls took her uncle's betel nut pestle (*kalidoi*) she had stolen out from her handbasket (*nabwa*). She then told the girls that the pestle was better than a man's penis, and they started pleasuring each

other with the pestle. Tolova watched the girls as he hid from their view, but he started whistling a beautiful bird song that heightened the girls' pleasure.

When they finished masturbating (*banban*) with the pestle, the girls started talking about their plans for the rest of the day, as they still needed to dye some coconut fronds for their skirts (*loba*). When they left, he followed them to a pool of mud in the center of a sago grove in Tomoka, at the far eastern edge of Liak. Tolova watched as the girls soaked the coconut fronds in the dark mud of the pool. Later they would dry the fronds, and the mud would permanently stain them. As Tolova watched the girls work on dying the materials for their skirts (*loba*), he realized that he could hide in the same spot and camouflage himself in the mud without anyone recognizing him.

Realizing that the girls had not finished their day's work, Tolova decided to return to the same spot the next day and hide in the mud and wait for the girls to return. The next day he heard them approach soon after he submerged himself in the mud. He once again started whistling his beautiful bird song, but when the girls arrived, there was a problem. Tolova had become excited, and his erection shot through the mud like a new tree.

One of the girls saw his erection and called to the other girls and said, "oh, look at that. A pestle is growing out of the earth. I know what to do with that." With that, she mounted Tolova. Then she invited the second girl to try, and then the third girl. All three girls had intercourse with him that day without ever seeing his face. After that, Tolova returned to the mud pool every day in anticipation of the girls returning, and the girls did return each day to have intercourse with the mud pestle.

Eventually, Tolova gained confidence and tried to approach the girls in the village, to introduce himself, but his ugly appearance repulsed the girls. Tolova decided that he could not continue in his present state. He asked his cross-cousin what he should do, and his cousin said that the only attractive thing about Tolova's was his singing and whistling abilities. He told Tolova, "whistle and sing as the girls orgasm (*simusimu*), and you will then turn your penis into a love instrument (*epababola*)."

Following his cross-cousin's advice, when the girls would climax, Tolova would sing and whistle bird songs similar to the one he had performed by the bathing creek much earlier. One day, he could hear one of the girls trying to mimic his whistle while she was alone in-home back in Liak. He knew then that he had captured at least one of their minds.

The next day, when the last of the three girls was climaxing, and Tolova was singing his song, he grabbed her with his hands, which shocked and terrified all the girls because they thought his penis was a pestle like twig. The girls screamed and ran from the mud pool, horrified to realize that it had been a person all this time. Still, they could not recognize Tolova because of his mud camouflage.

Later that night, the girls gathered with their families to tell their story, and Tolova joined at the edge of the conversation. The elders of the girls' hamlet

> speculated that the girls had encountered a tree spirit (*totowoho*), with some of the older women telling similar stories of being tricked by tree spirits. At this suggestion, Tolova began quietly whistling his bird song.
>
> At first, the girls only faintly heard his song, but soon they hushed the gathered crowd and said, "the tree-spirit is here," and one of the girls shouted, "marry me tree spirit, I wanted to orgasm all the time." At this Tolova, he jumped into the circle of conversing people and sang his bird song with all of the gusto he could muster.
>
> Hearing the beauty of Tolova's song, the girls were overcome with desire and no longer cared that Tolova had tricked them or that he was ugly. They shouted at one another, "he has my mind," and fought over who would marry him. Tolova, realizing that all three of the girls had seduced by him, answered, "I will marry all three of you."
>
> That evening Tolova became the first polygynist (*towewesala*) in Liak. Tolova and his three wives settled in Tomoka to hear the mud pool, and it was rumored that they had ruckus orgies in the mud late into their old age. This is also the reason why so much of the love magic in Liak centers around the use of betel nut pestles and bird songs. To this day, young people learn that Tolova taught the people how to seduce others through trickery, and people try to mimic his bird songs during sex as a way to ensure their lover's faithfulness.

In this myth, we have an overt concern for beauty, but also with the idea that love magic involves tricking others and even taking possession of their minds.

Love magic is used widely in Misima, and all it takes is the right technical knowledge to manipulate the heart of a person. *Kukula* focuses on the theft and manipulation of minds (*nuwatu*), whereas love magic focuses on the theft or manipulation of hearts (*ati-*). Like all other forms of magic, love magic utilizes spells or incantations (*ebaya*). However, the secret is found in how those spells incorporate and directly mimic other forms of magic. For example, in a love magic spell, a person will chew on substances that they will spit out towards the person they are directing their desires toward (a technique similar to curses); a person will also cause their intended target to consume a part of them, often fingernail shavings or hair that have been bespelled by the magic users breath, a technic that is the exact opposite of that found in healing magic, where the healer will consume a part of the sick person's body; or a person will bath

themselves in a freshwater pool while singing an incantation about how beautiful and "shiny" they are, a technique similar to that used in *kukula* as an attempt to attract "exchange partners" (*heliyam*), "friends" (*heliyam*), or "lovers" (*heliyam*) to you.

The most important work (*tuwalali*) of young people is said to be lovemaking, and most young Misimans covet the art of love magic. In Liak, every night, I saw from my verandah groups (*boda*) of young men roaming the village in the moonlight. Their aim, it was widely acknowledged, was to "trick" (*kakauwi*) a lover (*heliyam*) into sleeping with them that night or hiding one of their bespelled betel nuts (*lehi*) in the handbasket (*nabwa*) of a potential lover. This practice, which is extremely risky since elders are on the constant lookout for young men they do not like prowling around their homes, is called "prying through floorboards" (*lubwala*). The frequency and intensity of young men's prowling are heightened by the fact that when a young man begins to experience puberty, he will be kicked out of his house, especially if he has a sister, and told to find another place to sleep each night. These young men will most often sleep at their uncles or cross-cousin's home if a young woman does not live there, but they cannot find a home to sleep in they will roam through the village throughout the whole night, visiting friends on their verandahs, sleeping on the beach, or go fishing during the night. Because of this, some Misimans will even call prowling (*lubwala*) "young men's fishing" (*hevalau wali koskos*).

Revisiting Sinekalawata and Kaisilisili

I started this chapter with an account of the trick Kaisilisili pulled against Sinekalawata. It may be appropriate to end the chapter with another story of the two, this one supposedly taking place long after Kaisilisili had been cursed. In it, we see another aspect of their relationship highlighted, predation. The concern for how love magic, and other forms of persuasion, are

ultimately predatory in their possession of others' minds is found thought out Misiman myths. However, it is even more prominently displayed in this myth, which also benefits from the perspective of knowing the two's earlier encounters.

> After leaving the four boys who had transformed from *didiko* trees in Liak, Sinekalawata moved to the village of Ebora, on the western end of Misima. While she was there, a man named Boniweniwe would frequently sail from his home at Lagan island to visit his exchange partner (*heliyam*) at Ebora. During his visits, Sinekalawata seduced Boniweniwe with her bright light. Soon, the two fell deeply in love and would sleep together every time Boniweniwe would visit. However, he would not take Sinekalawata with him, nor would he marry her and settle in Ebora. This frustrated Sinekalawata, as she withstood the advances of all the other men in Ebora because she desired only Boniweniwe. One day, she woke up to a man trying to proposition her through the floorboards of her home (*lubwala*). Angry that the Ebora men would not leave her alone, she yelled at him (*loviya*) to scare him away from the place, but it happened to be Boniweniwe trying to surprise her.
>
> Boniweniwe ran from Sinekalawata's home because he was afraid of being caught, and then forced into marrying her. As he reached the shoreline, he leapt into the air and flew back to his island, Lagan. Sinekalawata was distraught by the night's turn of events, so she decided to follow him to Lagan. She put a bundle of coconuts on the sea and sat on them, drifting with the tide to Lagan. When she arrived at Lagan it was still dark, but she found a man standing on the beach who she thought was Boniweniwe, so she slept with him. However, when they were done having sex, he pulled off his second skin (*kamakama*) and revealed that he was Kaisilisili, and he had tricked her.
>
> This revelation drove Sinekalawata into a desperate depression, and she threw herself into the ocean, where she was quickly swallowed by a great fish named Lila. Kaisilisili ran from the ocean, but Boniweiwe heard Sinekalawata's cry.
>
> Even though it was night Boniweiwe called to his relatives, "help, help, I have found Lila the great fish. I am trying to catch her." All of the village came to assist him, and they weaved pandanus fiber fishing nets to catch Lila, although they did not know Sinekalawata was inside Lila.
>
> The next day, the village encircled the rock where Lila lived with sixteen nets. At this moment, Kaisilisili appeared. All the village started splashing by the rocks to frighten Lila. While everyone threw their nets at Lila, Kaisilisili threw a poorly made net far away from the rest of the nets. Lila was so big that the fish burst through all sixteen of the village's nets, but was instead caught in Kaisilisili's despised net.
>
> Boiniweniwe pleaded with the men not to spear the fish, but to bring Lila to him, as the contents inside the fish belonged to him. Kaisilisili protested, "no,

the fish belongs to me. I caught it." Boiniweniwe then took an ax and cut Kaisilisili's throat, killing him.

Taking rightful possession of the contents of Lila's stomach, Boiniweniwe gutted the fish, and Sinekalawata emerged from the giant fish's corpse. The couple was delighted to be finally reunited. But upon this horrific sight, the villagers were afraid. The men said, "Where did this woman come from? We must kill the man and marry the woman." The women said, "Let us kill the woman and marry the man." Thus, every day on Lagan, they fish and hope for visitors.

CONCLUSION

One of my great insecurities about this present work is that there is not more about the Misima Gold Mine in it. I went to Misima to study the longterm impacts of the mine and its effects on Misiman society years after its closure. While it is evident that the mine did impact daily life on Misima, it may have been the tacit knowledge of the mine's impact that caused Misimans to be disinterested in the mine and its history.

Plenty of things had changed on Misima because of the mine; a wage economy, the decreased power of women, and the rise of a new class of elite male landowners all transformed the Misiman landscape. However, what was most significant about the mine was its absence. Few buildings from the mine still existed, and those that did were abandoned shells of what they had been. The pit site was a mostly overgrown forest, and the mine's permanent pockmarking of the landscape is apparent only to those who know how to find it.

I may have persisted more than I did in questioning people about the mine, but I quickly learned that it was an excellent way to cause tensions or at least the fear of social tension. Plenty of people had complaints about how the mine had shortchanged them or had introduced negative features into their society, the most salient example being alcoholism. However, Misimans were generally eager to cut these complaints off as soon as possible if you engaged them in anything more than as a passive listener. Recording these complaints were widely understood as risky.

When I initially arrived in Misima, a group of Misiman men asked me to create a record of all the land claims in Misima, an impossibly gigantic task. When I told them, I was unable to do this, many people in Liak decided that I should instead record the land claims in Liak. I argued this was also neither possible nor prudent. However, a relatively large contingent of

Liak's residents continued to believe this was the intention of my research throughout my fieldwork. To combat this problem, I usually tried to engage people in conversation about the things they regularly talked about amongst each other— adventures in lovemaking, gardening, fishing, or sailing to other islands.

My most significant conservational partners were the women of Panakoloba. They were my adopted sisters, a too close relation in Misima, or my wife's sisters. Being affines, I had substantial obligations to assist them by providing my labor if they needed it, and my adopted sisters were my closest allies (see Berde, 1979b). While men took great interest in shaping my research, it was my sisters who made sure I had food and company.

The sister I was closest to, Diuma, is slightly older than me and lived directly behind my house. Like my sons, Diuma has curly red hair, a trait common in Misima. She is also a single mother, who, at the time of my fieldwork, had only one child still living with her. One of her sons had died of a sudden and unexplained illness, and her other son had disappeared in Alotau as a teenager. He was never to be heard from again.

By the time I got to know Diuma, she had lived an incredibly difficult life. She also was a boisterous joker who liked to buck gender norms in the village. She would participate in the discussions during clan meetings when other women stayed at the periphery and often insisted on eating first, even though it is customary for men to eat first in Misima. If anyone chastised her for her lack of etiquette, she would retort back that she had made the meal and so she would eat first. Other women would gasp at the scandal, but she would often laugh it off.

Diuma's best friend, Dila, was my wife's best friend and adopted sister. She was even more of a joker than Diuma. Her high-pitched laugh could be heard throughout the hamlet every

time my son would approach her house. Almost all my evening meals were with Diuma or Dila, but it was the lessons they taught me how to weed and cultivate gardens that were the most impressionable.

Only after a few months of fieldwork in Liak, I soon realized that I would have a tough time researching if I stayed in the village every day. In the day, men will either leave to go on solitary fishing expeditions or travel into the bush to find building materials. If men stayed in the village, it was to care for small children and being highly attentive caretakers; these men rarely had the time to answer any of my questions. In short, doing fieldwork with men tended to be a one-on-one experience. It was often highly rewarding, but it was also challenging to plan and execute.

In contrast, women traveled to gardens every morning in gardening groups of three to four. These trips to the garden were social affairs that often lasted far longer than what was necessary. The women would sit at boulders halfway up the mountain, chew betel nut, and gossip for hours on end. Joining Diuma and Dila on trips to their gardens was one of the most rewarding parts of my fieldwork. From the moment we set out on our walk, they would start telling stories, gossiping, and laughing so hard it would disturb the birds around us. At the gardens, Diuma and Dila would not instruct me in Misiman culture as much as they would demonstrate it. They would say, “tell us a story or weed the garden, that is your job today,” and then break out into laughter.

The jovial nature of our relationship was its defining feature, and they would often laugh that tricking me was the most fun of all. They would tell me, “touch this caterpillar,” “rub that vine on your face,” or a myriad of other instructions that, if I followed, would inevitably end

with a massive rash. One day they instructed me to eat a seed I could not identify, and after I did, it gave me diarrhea and nausea for several days. More than anyone else on Misima, I felt relatively comfortable in reciprocating their tricks. On several occasions, I crept around their houses late at night, pretending to be a ghost, which would cause their children to burst into tears.

My relationship with Diuma and Dila was the most positive relationship I had on Misima, and this positivity was not despite the mutual tricks we played on each other. It was because of them. However, there was one experience in the garden that I will never forget, where the register in which our relationship was operating under quickly shifted. As usual, Diuma and Dila were telling stories. On this particular day, Diuma was telling a myth about the origin of witchcraft. Throughout Diuma's telling of the story, Dila would interject with a correction or give an elaboration on Diuma's telling.

At one point in their telling of this myth, Diuma was talking about witches' connection to jealousy, and Dila observed that when the mine started operating, there was a marked increase in witchcraft because of the jealousy. Taking advantage of the rare opportunity to talk about the mine, I asked why jealousy had led to increased witchcraft, and they both replied that it was because only some Misimans had received compensation or wages from the mine, but most had not. The new wage economy had led to visible markers of inequality throughout the island, with mine workers being able to buy new clothes, rice, and tin meats for their families. Neither Diuma nor Dila had immediately benefited from this new regime, and neither of them had married mine workers. For a few minutes, Diuma and Dila together decried the selfishness of the new mine workers. The latter used their newfound wealth to increase their personal prestige through

hosting mortuary feasts that were unseemly extravagant. The focus of the feast, they said, had transformed from paying the debts incurred by the labor of the honored dead person, to advancing the prestige of the feast host.

When I challenged Diuma and Dila on this point, saying that my understanding of feasting was that there had always been this prestige element and that the mine must have just intensified the competition between wage earners, Diuma and Dila looked nervously at each other. Diuma then said that part of the problem was that the children of male landowners could now throw feasts with such largesse that they would not be merely paying back the debts they incurred through their father's labor. However, they could now entrap their father's clan through mortuary feasting by giving too much. This entrapment through feasting was technically possible long before the mine. However, the increased wealth brought by the mine made it a far more regular occurrence for mine workers to hold feasts that were so over the top that they shamed their father's clan to such a point that the only recourse the clan had was to gift land rights to the host of the feast. While the commutative amount of land alienated and dispossessed in this manner was minor, the frequency of these feasts had caused severe tensions on the island. Diuma said to me, "it is a trick. It is a bad trick. Now we are different, and there are poor people."

After Diuma identified the feast as a trick, Dila grew quiet and seemed to exhibit a strained concern. It turned out that this was the singular tension usually kept in the background of Diuma and Dila's relationship. Dila's brother, a mine worker, had hosted a similar feast for their dead father and, in doing so, had appropriated a small plot of land from Diuma's subclan, the Meisoga Panakoloba subclan, which had adopted me. Dila and her brother belonged to the subclan my wife had been adopted into, Guwau Pantaval.

After a short period of silence, Dila tried to change the subject, “We don’t want to cause problems between you and your wife,” she said. “This feast. It brings heavy feelings, and we don’t want that here.” She” threw a freshly cut taro stalk at me. “Shut up,” she said, to which Diuma broke out in laughter. The subject was successfully changed.

Later that evening, I went to Dila’s house to talk about our earlier conversation in the garden. She was less reluctant to explain her nervousness with Diuma no longer present. In our conversation, she went on to explain the nature of her relationship with Diuma and their relationship with me. She explained that her relationship with Diuma, as her cross-cousin, and her relationship with me, as her affine, was defined by joking and playful tricks. These jokes, she claimed, helped smooth over tensions, such as the land dispute between Meisoga Panakoloba and Guwau Pantaval, or the difficulties of intercultural and interracial relations between her and me. The problem was that I had transgressed the normative expectations of joking and tricking and had ventured into serious territory.

I asked why telling the myth of the origin of witchcraft, and correcting each other, was not “serious” work. Dila’s explanation was instructive. She explained that interpretation of these myths and even their accounts of the colonial era were okay because they were not the present. The same could not be said of the mine, even though it had closed more than a decade earlier. She said, “the mine is still with us. You saw it. It causes tensions between us because jokes have turned into us eating each other to the point of shame.” She was indicating that the quality of the “tricks” employed in the competitive mortuary feasting of the past had transformed into something new, where inequality had been made real through domination, alienation, and dispossession, all facilitated by the new wage economy. Interpretation of the past was possible

because contestation of it was less threatening; it was removed from the present tensions that lay below the surface of Misiman society.

Understanding Tricks

It is true, the trick (*kakauwi*) on Misima seems to have changed over time. Misiman recollections of the past, and the present affinity towards cultivating relations of jovial trickery, indicate the continued importance of reciprocal trickery as a leveling mechanism on Misima. Whether it was the introduction of Methodist Christian ideas of "the truth" (*tuna hot*), in contrast to "lies" (*kakauwi*), or the influence of modern land courts that seek to reify "the truth" of land claims over the "lies" of land disputes, there is plenty of evidence that finding oneself in a "trick" or seeking the "truth" has become radically revalued over time.

A great deal of the work in this dissertation has been devoted to understanding "the trick" as Misimans think it *ought* to be practiced. Tricking someone through rhetorical flushes, telling stories, love magic, or the daily routines of "showing face" (*awanun*) are the most common ways Misimans engage in trickery. Because of its reciprocal nature, this trickery is highly valued as a form of making and maintaining friendships, whether they are formal exchange partners (*heliyam*) or lovers (*heliyam*). One reason for my focus on the mundane aspects of this trickery, from fishing to reading a story, is to demonstrate that the concern for capturing the attention of others is at the core of Misiman political life. I also want to demonstrate that the "trick" does not necessarily hold the same negative connotations readers may assume it does. Instead, the "trick" is recognized as just a part of how people and other consumable things like fish, relate to one another. Through processes of reciprocal subordination and domination, Misimans make each other equal.

Furthermore, I believe the "trick" demonstrates the difficulty of a central problem in the anthropological literature of the Milne Bay that has previously been a stumbling block for researchers. The importance the people of the Miley Bay place on the necessity of classifying things according to categories of possession has long caused confusion among researchers. This is partly because Milne Bay islanders treat equality through reciprocal exchange as an ultimate value (Forge, 1972; see Robbins, 1994). I believe paying proper attention to "the trick" can help alleviate some of that confusion.

Understanding that trickery involves processes of controlled revelation and concealment of possessions, and that such controlled revelation and concealment is the primary mechanism behind attentional pull, brings us to a place where we can synthesize the Misiman concern for exchange as something that can temporarily instantiate hierarchical difference. In contrast, trickery holds the potential to equalize those differences.

The problem with white people ('dimdims') is that their tricks take much of the same form Diuma found disturbing. They are purely consumptive. They are tricks that reveal the potential affluence of white people, but they do not reciprocate. White people attract the attention of Misimans, without reciprocating that attention.

In the view of most Misimans, this is the characteristic that most closely defines white people. They are more interested in cutting off obligations incurred by attentional pull and entrapment than they are in reciprocating them. In this manner, the changes to the mortuary feasting culture of Misima reflect the same logics of white people. They are more concerned with appropriating land through overwhelming largesse than they are in creating relations of mutual trickery. In the words of Diuma, these feasts have become a "bad trick."

I believe the attraction of many of the cargo cult movements on Misima has been the possibility that they could act as a vehicle for eliciting reciprocal exchanges with white people. A similar dynamic is found in Misimans' reactions to post-colonialism. Misimans believed that independence would bring with it a realization of the long-held promises that if only they completely converted to Christianity and embraced the "mentality" or entrepreneurial spirit of modern capitalism, they too could have the same affluence of white people and would be in an equal relationship of mutual trickery and exchange (Berde, 1979a). Instead, Australia was more interested in cutting off relations with Papua New Guinea than it was in continuing that relationship on an equal footing.

This, Misimans tend to argue, is a paradigmatic example of white people's trickery, and how their trickery differs from the norms of mutual attentional pull on Misima. Attracting and entrapping the attention of others is only accomplished through the revelation of things. If a thing is revealed in Misima, as is the case with betel nut in a basket or a desired item in a house, then it is entirely appropriate to request that thing and expect that your request will be honored. There is always a recognition that something is being held back, that something is being inalienably held, but those things are concealed from view.

In contrast, Misimans see the attentional pull of white people acting in an opposite manner. White people, they will argue, reveal a fraction of their "cargo," just as Misimans will only reveal a fraction of their possessions. However, what is revealed is not available for exchange. Instead, white people will take the thing that was revealed and conceal it once again. By doing so, they increase the entrapment of Misimans' attention by revealing what is denied, rather than what is available. In this way, a new iteration of the "trick" has been introduced by

white people and is increasingly held as the key to white people's wealth, or "cargo. "The anthropology of tricks has a long history, but it lacks a certain coherence. Following Western European norms of trickery as falsity, anthropology has tended to view trickery as the art of deception (Armbrus,t 2019; Jones, 2011; Bailey, 1991). While I think deception has a place to play in considering trickery in Misima, I have been continually struck by Misimans insistence that a trick is not necessarily deceptive. Tricking, or eliciting, the minds of others through revealing a portion of your possessions is not false, but it certainly entraps the mind of another (see Gell, 1996). Furthermore, because of the recognition of the opacity of others' minds, Misimans are reluctant to speak about each other's intentions or declare something a lie. Instead, they are more interested in how tricks can play on their attentions.

Earlier anthropological studies of trickery, such as Paul Radin's (1972 [1956]) famous monograph on Native North American trickster mythology, points to potential avenues for rectifying this overdetermination of trickery as falsity and deception. Radin documented how Native North American mythology identified tricksters as morally ambiguous, but also powerful characters who were responsible for the creation of the world, people, or culture. These creations were, at heart, tricks. Similar sentiments are shared in many of the mythologies of Melanesia, where characters trick cassowaries, women, or sea creatures, and in doing so, they become fully human. In the end, this dissertation has aimed to recapture this creative sense of trickery (e.g. Z`graggen, 1995). I have intended to more accurately reflect the moral ambiguity and complicated dynamics of a central concept that was continually thrust upon me during my fieldwork. Misimans were quick to declare something a trick, but that did not mean the trick was a lie. It is certainly not a lie that while our minds may be inalienable, our minds are also

intersubjectively entangled through mutual acts of eliciting each other's attention.

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