BEING AND BECOMING:
RITUAL AND REPRODUCTION IN AN ISLAND
MELANESIAN SOCIETY

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DISCLAIMER

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any degree or diploma in any university and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person which has not been properly acknowledged and cited.

Deane Fergie
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"Thou has made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou has given me seats in homes not my own. Thou has brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger".

Rabindranath Tagore
Gitanjali, LXIII (Macmillan).

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NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Standard Tok Pisin (Neo Melanesian) orthography is used for vernacular and Tok Pisin words. The latter are indicated by the initials t.p. in parentheses. The following symbols are also used in vernacular words:

- \( z \) - ts/ch
- \( n \) - as in \( \text{going} \)
- \( ae \) - as in \( \text{price or pie} \)
- \( c \) - as in \( \text{tack} \)
- \( iu \) - as in \( \text{new} \)

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS UTILIZED IN THE TEXT

- \( M = \) mother
- \( F = \) father
- \( Z = \) sister
- \( B = \) brother
- \( D = \) daughter
- \( S = \) son

SPECIAL NOTE

I have used pseudonyms and/or concealed identity in this work on occasions when I believed the privacy or reputation of the people referred to could be damaged by the disclosure of their identity.
PART ONE

CONTEXT
Victor Turner introduced the first chapter of his collection *The Forest of Symbols* with the observation that, "Among the Ndembu...the importance of ritual in the lives of the villagers in 1952 was striking. Hardly a week passed in a small neighbourhood, without a ritual drum being heard in one or another of its villages" (1967/70:19). These lines resonate dramatically with my experience during fifteen months fieldwork in the Tabar Islands in 1979 and 80. I was similarly struck by the number of rituals performed, their degree of elaboration and the importance that they assumed in the lives of villagers. It was this recognition which caused me to shift the focus of my study from an examination of the impact of post-Independence political institutions and processes on local level politics to Tabar public ritual.

This thesis focuses on the corpus of public rituals performed in Tabar. This focus has enabled the exploration of a number of important cultural concerns and dynamic social processes.

Mary Douglas has suggested that "no one of us has time or inclination to work out a systematic metaphysics. Our view of the world is arrived at piecemeal" (1966:89).

Ortiz expanded on this point in his article "Ritual Drama and the Pueblo World View". There he wrote,

"In every culture there are certain assumptions made about the nature of reality and the nature of man, his relation to other men, and his place in what he defines as his world...In no society, however, are these assumptions completely explicit" (1972:135).
These points may be related to a recent debate on the nature of Melanesian religions which was sparked by Ron Brunton's provocative article 'Misconstrued Order in Melanesian Religion' (1980). Brunton argued that analyses of Melanesian religions stressed their order and coherence and 'over-systematized' Melanesian beliefs. He suggested "a more important issue is whether people really need to 'see order' at all" (1980:113).

Whilst, with Brunton, I am willing to leave open the question of whether there is a universal need to 'see order', at the same time I would argue that at a basic level there is a 'common core' (underpinning set of principles) to Tabars view of the world. Moreover, I argue that important aspects of the Tabar world view are conveyed to them, and opened up for reflection and creative work, in the context of public ritual. Further, while Douglas may well be correct in arguing that our world view is arrived at piecemeal, public ritual is an important context in which particular views of the world are available for the scrutiny of participants (cf. Kapferer, 1983:3).

The Tabar ritual corpus I examine is an elaborate one. It is composed of three major ritual sequences: the beriberi sequence; the sequence of death festivals; and the malanga sequence. In the broadest terms beriberi festivals celebrate human procreation; the death sequences are concerned, as the gloss suggests, with death; and the malanga sequence (in which sculptures referred to by the same word are reproduced), are concerned with the long dead and formerly could also be a context for male initiation.
In the chapters which follow I examine each sequence in turn. I relate the structure of each sequence to important cultural conceptions of 'reality' which underpin them. I also examine performative media utilized in these rituals. Here I am in accord with Kapferer who argues that

"Ritual as performance...is integral to any understanding of the ritual process and not just in the restricted sense of enactment or as the situated production of a "text", but as a structure of practice" (1983:7).

It is the structure and media of performance which contribute to the 'common core of understanding' which is available to people engaged in ritual and which has an important impact on their world view.

An important feature of my analysis is that I also examine the corpus as a whole. I suggest that whilst each sequence is a rite de passage (after Van Gennep, 1909/1972) in its own terms, the corpus as a whole may also be viewed in these terms. To do so reveals, I argue, underpinning cultural understandings of the nature of persons, the ontological transformations they are subject to in the course of their existence and the dynamic nature of their relations with others. Moreover, the performance of the entire corpus is necessary for the reproduction of the cosmos. As my analysis shows, this is the joint responsibility of men and women.

TABAR: AN ISLAND WORLD

Tabar is a group of four islands which lie off the coast of New Ireland in Papua New Guinea. The Tabar group is a part of the Bismark Archipelago. The three largest islands (see Map Three) are volcanic in origin (see Löffler, 1977). Tabar's climate reflects its proximity to the equator (see Map Three). There is little
variation in temperatures throughout the year. Daily temperatures rarely rose above 35°C or fell overnight below 23°C. Humidity and rainfall are also high. Average rainfall for Tabar appears to be between 3,500-4,000mm per annum. The average relative humidity (at 9am) during my recording period was 82.94%. The lowest relative humidity I recorded was 64%. These high temperatures, levels of humidity and consequent precipitation work together in the context of Tabar's rich volcanic soils to produce lush green growth and the persistent smell of rotting vegetation which characterizes such tropical environments.

Tabar, like most of New Ireland, is subject to two main wind configurations. The South-East Trades blow between mid-May and the end of September, while the North West Monsoon dominates the region between mid-November and the end of March. The pre-monsoonal 'change-over' period tends to be the driest part of the year.

On each of the large islands are rugged mountain peaks which feed numerous rapidly flowing streams. Mapua is the only island in the group without any fresh water streams. Until the early seventies (when the Local Government Council built two two-thousand gallon water tanks) the people of Mapua got their drinking water from seepages (both at the watertable on the beach and from fresh water which rose through cracks in the reef).

Tabar's mountain peaks are generally covered with rainforest, while the coastal fringe is dominated by (swidden) gardens, secondary forest, kunai grass cover and tracts of coconuts. Mangrove swamps appear frequently around the coast, particularly in 'protected' waters.
Most gardens (which with good management can last up to three crops) are planted with sweet potatoes (from cuttings), manioc ('tapioc' in t.p. - also grown from cuttings), which tend to be the staple crops, together with some taro, yams, greens (particularly abika), bananas and some bush tobacco ('brus' in tok pisin (t.p.) the lingua franca of the region).

The Tabar Islands are the stuff of travel advertisements and picture post-cards. Their luxuriantly covered volcanic peaks run down to white beaches. Palm trees sway in the breeze as the sea breaks on a ring of coral reef. At high tide the reef and its life is glimpsed through clear blue-green waters. Swaying palms are silhouetted as the sun sets deep red and orange in the distance. It is the stuff with which Western romantics weave their dreams. For the people of Tabar, it is home, the island environment in which they and their forebears are deeply rooted. It is the everyday world in which they make their lives.

Map 1.1 situates the island group within Papua New Guinea. Geographically, New Ireland Province is at some distance from the nation's capital, Port Moresby, but because of the nature of the early colonial era (which I discuss in some detail in Chapter Two) New Ireland District (and later, Province) has been integral to the nation's economy. This was pointed up during my fieldwork when the local representative of the Provincial Government announced that New Ireland was the second largest producer of copra and cocoa in the country.

Kavieng (see Map 1.2) is the capital of New Ireland. The Provincial Government Assembly (which held its first sitting at the beginning
of 1979, just after I had arrived in the field) and the headquarters of Government Departments (both National and Provincial) are located there. Kavieng is the commercial centre of the Province.

About 100 kilometers south of Kavieng is Konos, a small government enclave of about half a dozen houses, an office, a Council Chamber and a trade store. Konos is the site of the Subdistrict Office which administers central New Ireland and is the headquarters of the central New Ireland Local Government Council, to which the people of Tabar have elected three representatives for the past decade or so.

Since the mid-seventies Tabar has had a resident 'kiap' (Patrol Officer) in the group. The Tabar 'Base Camp' was sited on Mapua (see Map Three) during my fieldwork. The Base Camp was composed of a single permanent building which was the kiap's home and office. During my fieldwork the Department of Primary Industry built a bush materials house on the Base Camp site but their officers visited the group only twice (on short visits) during that time. The kiap was supplied with a two-way radio which (barring equipment failures and given good atmospheric conditions) allowed him to contact his headquarters in Kavieng and other field officers throughout the Province. He was equipped with a 'mon' (long dug out canoe of about 22 ft in length and about 3 ft across her narrow beam) and 25hp outboard motor for travel around Tabar. The kiap on Mapua was the local representative/go-between for the people of Tabar and all other government Departments.

It is important to recognize that with National Self-Government (1972) and Independence (1975) the powers of kiaps have been radically reduced since the heyday of 'Pax Australiana'.
Map 1.2: Northern New Ireland (drawn by Betty Ross)
In March 1979 the first Tabar Village Court Magistrates and 'Peace Officers' were invested with the power to deal with minor local legal disputes. This removed one of the kiaps hitherto most important roles. And while the kiap is still involved in the facilitation of tax collection, it is the Local Government Council which now carries out this function.

Mapua is also the headquarters of the Catholic Mission on Tabar. It maintains a grass airstrip, a primary school, the Health Centre (staffed by two or three Community Health Nurses) and a coconut plantation. The Catholic establishment is much larger than that of the Base Camp. Its compound is composed of about a dozen permanent material buildings. Several of these are residences for teachers, nurses and the priest, but the Health Centre has dispensary, ward and delivery sections under a single roof. Like the kiap, the resident priest has a two-way radio and normally contacts other Catholic Missions in the area each day on a 'sched' (schedule) in the morning and evening. He also has an outboard powered mon and a small workboat - the MV Karl (about 15ft in length with a wide beam of about 6ft).

The location of services in other locations within the group is shown on Map 1.3. It also shows the site of government-recognized villages. The map points up the coastal orientation of Tabar life (an issue I explore more fully in Chapter Three). 'Roads' built in German times (see Chapter Two) run around the coast and link villages to each other. Apart from two tractors (one based at Wang, on Big Tabar and the other at the Catholic Mission on Mapua) Tabars move around their island by foot, outrigger canoe (mi paliu/zombi) and mon.
For many Tabars, (especially young adults), Kavieng represents the modern 'high life'. Tabars visit the mainland of New Ireland in order to market their cash crops (copra, cocoa, green snail shells) to visit relatives and to enjoy the 'high life'. From time to time work boats of some size (30 to 40ft in length) travel to Tabar and take on copra and passengers for Kavieng. The journey normally takes twelve hours (it can take twice this long). The visits of such boats were infrequent during my fieldwork (about one every 10-12 weeks) except in the final month or two when a Kavieng-based company established an agency on Mapua. The agent bought up locally produced copra at set prices and when they had a load would send a boat to carry it to market. Tabars also visit the mainland and Lihir (to the south-east - see Map 1.2) to visit relatives (intermarriage with 'neighbouring' groups is long standing) and take part in ceremonial occasions (particular malanga ceremonies - for the malanga cycle is shared by all on the north-east coast of New Ireland). Indeed it is not unusual for New Irelanders to commission the production of malanga (malangan in tok pisin) by Tabar sculptors.

Visits to the mainland are also made in medical crises. There are two hospitals close to Tabar on the mainland - one at Kimadan (south of Konos) and the other at Lemakot (north of Konos). Neither are staffed by doctors. Thus in cases of serious illness people are taken to Kavieng or the regional 'Base' hospital in the city of Rabaul (see map 1).

Most journeys between Tabar and New Ireland are undertaken by mon or 'speedboat' (open, aluminium skiffs usually powered by 15 or 25 hp outboard engines), which travelled to Konos or the mainland villages
Such journeys take from about 3 to 3½ hours up to seven for the sea voyage. It is usually then necessary to have a P.M.V. (Public Motor Vehicle, usually a light truck) for the journey to Kavieng. Mon can carry only small amounts of copra (3 to 7 bags) and the journey is considered hazardous. As I discuss in Chapter Three it is common for intending travellers to commission a weather magician to 'sing' rain for the night before such a journey for the waters are 'flat' and less threatening after rain. I was surprised that Tabar boatmen seemed ill-at-ease in the open sea. Mons hug the Tabar coast line for as long as possible before turning to make for the New Ireland mainland. This subjects the vessels to more frequent and higher waves. But Tabars consider their proximity to land a comfort, for those aboard would be able to swim to safety if they capsized. Journeys are frequently post-poned because of unfavourable and dangerous weather conditions.

Tabar caution is wellfounded. During my fieldwork three small outboard powered vessels and their passengers were lost at sea. In addition, the Catholic priest based on Mapua, Fr. Franz Karun, survived the capsizing of his 'mon' about half way between New Ireland and Tabar just before I arrived on Tabar. His super-human effort of swimming for nineteen hours and miraculous escape from shark attack were the subject of awed discussion for many months. Concern with safety at sea is also expressed in a new verse some local women made up for a tok pisin song I had just taught them. The standard verse can be (freely) translated:

"Let's shake hands as I leave you
who knows if I'll survive...
the plane flies high above
and I am sore afraid.
I think that I will die"
The Tabar innovation in their new second verse was to change the last three lines as follows:

..."The canoe runs over the reef
I am sore afraid
I think that we'll capsize"

I explore Tabar trepidation in travel over the open sea in Chapter Three.

It is important to recognize however that administrative and mission 'control' on Tabar is loose. The kiap was constantly hampered by the failure of his two-way radio, and shortage of petrol for his generator and outboard motor. The mission too was hampered by equipment failure. The airstrip (which normally had two flights a week as part of a circuit from Kavieng to Rabaul) was closed for two extended periods during my stay because its grass had become overgrown. In recent years the power and authority of these outside 'li'da's' (t.p. leaders) has diminished in favour of local people.

The most important political identities on Tabar during my fieldwork were the newly elected (inaugural) member of the Provincial Assembly and the Vice President of the Local Government Council. The two other Tabar councillors attended few meetings at Konos. It is interesting then to reflect on these two active politicians, for they are both members of the same village, Wang, on the southern tip of Big Tabar (see Map 3).

Wang, with a population of about sixty was, during my fieldwork, the only Seventh Day Adventist (S.D.A.) village in Tabar. The first conversions had taken place there in the mid-fifties. Conversion to Seventh Day Adventism entails the rejection of two important components of the 'Tabar' cosmos - pigs and sharks. Such rejection
was not entailed by conversion to either Methodism (later renamed the United Church) or Catholicism. These mainstream denominations claim the adherence of about 50% of the non-S.D.A. Tabar population each (see Chapter Two). The S.D.A. rejection of pigs and sharks had important implications for the continued participation of its adherents in the Tabar ritual corpus. It is interesting then that the S.D.A. village has tended to monopolize the active political interface between Tabar and the Council, Province and National Government. They also appear to lead the group in their commitment to cash cropping and the ideology of 'Development'. In some senses this village has become 'brokers' in the economic and political interface between Tabar and the wider nation-state.

The major issue at this political level during my fieldwork was the obtaining of a workboat for Tabar to ensure an autonomous and frequent cargo/passenger service between the group and Kavieng (where the copra marketing board's Provincial headquarters is located). At the time of my fieldwork visits by workboats were infrequent and unpredictable. This clearly had an impact on the production of copra and for the viability of trade stores (which would normally aim to sell sugar, tea, rice, tinned meat and fish, kerosene, cigarettes, fizzy drinks, soap, etc.). Few operated at all during my stay, and none of those I know of operated continuously. Their largest problem was getting their goods to Tabar. Whilst obviously the central problem for copra production was (economically viable) transport from Tabar to the mainland and on to Kavieng.

I was based at Wang for the first month of my fieldwork before moving to a community on Mapua with whom I spend my remaining time
There was a stark contrast between these two communities. At Wang the church dominated day-to-day life. Prayer meetings and services were frequent. Outside the Pastor's home was a collection box which enabled women returning from their gardens to donate part of their harvest to the Church's work. The rituals of Wang were essentially Seventh Day Adventist, and whilst one of Tabars most famous contemporary malanga carvers is resident there his sculptures are, for him, 'bisnis' (t.p. business) rather than ritual productions.

By contrast, I was left waiting at Konos almost two weeks because the mission boat I had arranged to travel to Tabar on was idle because its Mapua-based crew were involved in a malanga sequence. When I finally got to Mapua (via my month at Wang) a death sequence began the next day. Within that month I had attended four feasts in the death sequence and my first beriberi festival. It was many months before anyone in that community 'made copra'. Festivals of the ritual corpus I discuss in this thesis were dominating concerns and events in peoples lives.

AN OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

This thesis uses the analysis of ritual to explore some central themes in Tabar 'reality'. It could have been organized so that the themes were allowed to determine chapter divisions. I have, however, allowed the ritual sequences to determine the divisions between chapters. An important consequence of this strategy is that the analysis of themes is at times frustratingly interrupted by chapter divisions.
The major themes addressed in the thesis are as follows:

1. The relationship between the structure and restructuring of ritual on the one hand, and the ontological transformations which human beings undergo in their lives on the other.


3. The involvement of both women and men in the reproduction of this ritual system and through it the reproduction of their cosmos.

4. The dynamic nature of social relatedness and its enactment in the context of ritual.

The thesis is composed of three parts. This chapter and the two which follow form Part One and are context-setting. The next seven chapters focus on the ritual corpus and its performance. Chapters Four, Five and Six focus on the four festivals of the beriberi sequence. Chapters Seven and Eight are concerned with the six festivals of the Death Sequence. Chapter Nine links important aspects of these two sequences. In Chapter Ten I examine the malangga sequence. Chapter Eleven forms Part Three of the thesis where I attempt to link the layers and rings of this 'onion'-like presentation. The present chapter concludes with an outline of the concerns of each chapter.

In Chapter Two I discuss historical developments which have affected the performance of this ritual corpus. I seek to explore the resilience of the corpus. In the first half of the chapter I explore a gap in the performance of beriberi and malangga which my informants suggested began at the beginning of the Second World War and lasted until the beginning of the sixties. I account for this
gap in performance by exploring the impact of dramatic population changes, conversion to Christianity, and the Japanese occupation during the Second World War on Tabar life and ritual. I suggest that population changes were especially important factors contributing to the gap because, given Tabar notions of work and the sexual division of labour, they affected the level of production considered by Tabars to be necessary for the hosting of malanga 'without shame'. At the same time, high levels of sterility had a crucial impact on the performance of beriberi (which celebrate the procreation of first-born children).

I then turn to explore the resilience of this ritual system. I suggest that features of the ritual system itself and the perennial nature of Tabar cash resources (most particularly copra) have enabled Tabars to avoid a direct conflict between ritual and cash-cropping. To put it simply, Tabars with a commitment to ritual have been able to work ritual around cash cropping, and cash cropping around ritual. This is possible because the people of Tabar have maintained a subsistence base to their local economy.

Chapter Three examines the relationship of people and place on Tabar. There I introduce a number of themes which I return to throughout the thesis. Two themes are prominent in this chapter:

1. cultural conceptions of the environment, and;
2. the nature of social relatedness, which I argue is in important ways 'rooted' in land and mediated through food.

There are two important principles of relatedness on Tabar: (a) the procreative substances which were the basis of conception; and (b) the sharing of food grown on land whose fertility was engaged with
the aid of ancestral powers. I return to this theme throughout the thesis, for I argue that these principles allow for one's primary affiliations to change over time. This dynamic process is pointed up and played out in ritual performance.

I elaborate that theme further in Chapter Four, the first of three chapters concerned with the beriberi sequence. Chapter Four relates the structure of the beriberi sequence to Tabar understandings of the process of human procreation. The discussion of procreation is framed by an exploration of why women who have borne more than two children are characterized as 'old'. The discussion allows stages in this culturally understood process to be identified. I then show that the four beriberi festivals celebrate transitions between these stages.

Chapter Five is an analytic description of the performance of the beriberi sequence. It provides a solid descriptive base for themes I explore in detail in later chapters. Firstly, I point up the comic nature of beriberi performance and note that two groups, who distinguish themselves as the 'Mothers' and the 'Fathers', are the participants in this ritual sequence. I also note that the dominant themes of beriberi comedy are food and sex. Secondly, I note that asymmetry characterizes the performative stance of these two groups in beriberi performance. These issues are taken up in Chapter Six. I also point up aspects of performance which relate to the ritual 'manipulation' of 'boundaries'. These 'boundaries' range from the treatment of one's own and others' bodily boundaries; the use of hamlet space and the treatment of its built structures; and the utilization of broader conceptions of the environment and its 'zones'. I take up these issues in Chapter Nine.
Chapter Six is entitled 'The Last Laugh' and it explores beriberi as comic ritual drama. In the first half of the chapter I explore the nature of beriberi comedy. I point up that it is "innovative" comedic moments which are the quintessence of any beriberi performance. In beriberi, comedy produces creative, and innovative ritual. I then go on to relate this creativity to the asymmetry of performances. I link this to the dynamic and fundamentally competitive nature of social relatedness on Tabar. This in turn is used to elucidate the dominant themes of sexuality and food in beriberi comedy. For, the substances through which people share relatedness are on the one hand procreative substances, produced in sexual intercourse, and on the other, food, grown on land nurtured by common ancestral spirits. Such understandings are pointed up and creatively worked with, and on, in beriberi performances. Indeed I suggest that the asymmetry of beriberi performances is related to the competition for relatedness played out in this context. Who will ultimately have the last laugh is not resolved in these rituals (indeed in some cases it may not be resolved until the festivals of the Death Sequence), and it is this dynamic tension which is played out in its performance.

In Chapter Seven I examine cultural understandings of death and outline the sequence of (six) Death festivals. The discussion seeks to elucidate Tabar understandings of the ontological transformations entailed by death and their responses to it. I suggest that the festivals of the Death sequence enact and comment upon the transformations entailed by this process. I then use a number of case-studies to explore Tabar understandings of death and the dead, and the distinction between natural and unnatural deaths. This
discussion allows the experienced reality of the forces which affect
the 'here and now' lives of human beings, to be pointed up.

I push that analysis home in a discussion of wailing. I suggest
that wailing on Tabar is more than the heartrending or cathartic
expression of mourning. Rather, I argue that people wail to the
deceased. I suggest that as talking is a mode of communication
appropriate amongst living human beings, wailing is the mode
appropriate for communication from living persons to the death.
Wailing expresses the ontological transformations that the dead
person is undergoing.

In Chapter Eight I explore standard male feasts (pau). Such feasts
occur in the Death Sequence. I argue that pau should be examined as
sacrifices but argue against the acceptance in its most 'formal'
terms of Hubert and Mauss' 'grammar' of sacrifice. In my
examination of pau I concentrate on transformations. I suggest that
the transformations implied by pau can (crudely) be characterized by
the 'formula':

human beings → coconuts → pigs → shellmoney

This analysis presents an alternative approach to 'economism' which
characterizes many of the existing studies of feasting and
ceremonial exchange in Melanesia.

Chapter Nine attempts to bring together aspects of ritual
performance in both the beriberi and death sequences. My analytic
focus in this chapter is the unusual treatment of various boundaries
in ritual performance. I extend the theme that these sequences are
rites of passage and show that the re-arrangement and transformation
of boundaries in these rituals point to important transformations in
the corporeal, metaphysical and 'here and now' state of the human subjects of the sequences.

That discussion is again extended in Chapter Ten which focuses on the malangga sequence. I argue that malangga sequences celebrate the transformation of proximate named ancestral spirits (of the recently dead) into generalized, unnamed ancestral spirits. I note that, in the past, malangga were also contexts of male initiation. I then go on to suggest that, while the sequences of festivals necessary for the production of different designs vary, there is an underlying structure to all of these sequences. All have festivals which celebrate the commissioning of the sculpture; its adornment (that is, the giving of 'features' to the sculpture); a festival of public presentation at which, as Tabars express, it the sculpture is 'stood up'; and finally a feast of decommissioning after which the sculpture will be destroyed immediately or left in the open to decompose gradually with the action of the elements. I suggest that this structure which underpins all malangga sequences, celebrates the ontological transformations of the sculpted design in the process of its reproduction. In this way the treatment of sculpture is like the ritual treatment of human subjects. Thus I suggest that at their public presentation these sculptures (which symbolize and reproduce social relatedness and the roots of their owning groups in the land) are enlivened and empowered. I push this point home in an analysis of a particular design and its related myths.

I extend the analysis of that design in a consideration of its iconography and the materials of its manufacture. I show in this case that the themes and materials used in the production of the
design are drawn from a variety of environmental zones and juxtaposed. It is, as its 'owner' suggested, both 'of the land and of the sea'. In addition it is said to be both man and bird. Juxtapositions like this are a central feature of every malagga design with which I am familiar. I suggest that any design provides a glimpse of the Tabar cosmos in its composition. Yet none may be said to encapsulate the cosmos. Instead it is the corpus of malagga designs which does so. And it is only with the reproduction of the corpus that the relations of the cosmos itself are maintained and reproduced.
CHAPTER TWO

POPULATION, PRODUCTION AND THE IMPACT OF COLONIALISM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores some general aspects of the impact of colonial expansion on Tabar. The central concern of the chapter is the relationship between population, production and the enactment of the major ritual corpus with which this thesis is concerned. I show that the issue of population is intimately bound up with the impact of the colonial experience on this island group.

This is linked to a recent paper by Roger Keesing where he notes that there are some 'traditionalist' enclaves - "pockets ...[which] remain committed to ancestral ways" (Keesing, 1982a:40) in seaboard Melanesia. Keesing finds this 'cultural conservatism' intriguing precisely because these communities have not been isolated from Western contact, but rather "have been tied into the world economy for a century or more" (Keesing, 1982a:39). He asks a question which is also addressed here: "Why...have some Melanesians kept their commitment to their ancestors and their past, in the face of Christianity, copra and cash, and nowadays, tourists, transistors, and Toyotas?" (ibid). Tabar does not conform to Keesing's strict definition of 'traditionalist' - "an unbroken, continuous enactment of the precolonial social and religious system (as inevitably transformed by pacification, steel tools, and introduced cultigens)" (ibid.:40). His point of departure is those societies he calls 'neotraditional' who after a rejection of their ancestors and their ritual and powers have in the past decade or so become part of a
Melanesian quest to rediscover their roots in 'kastam' (custom). Despite a temporary gap in ritual performance from just before the Second World War until about 1962, Tabar, I argue here, is not 'neotraditional'. It is evident that Tabars maintained their ritual system for many years after contact, and that its 'reactivation' there predated the surge to rekindle lost 'kastam' which has been observed in many Melanesian communities in the period of, and leading up to, independence.

In the first part of the chapter I outline the early 'contact' history of New Guinea with particular reference to those aspects which are relevant to the Tabar experience. In particular I explore the impact of labour recruiters, traders, planters and missionaries.

The second half of the chapter is concerned with some very particular problems which arise from this. I explore, in so far as it is possible with the documentary evidence available, the relationship between the Tabar ritual corpus and the intrusion of the capitalist world into their economy. I examine two puzzles: a) why did many Tabars temporarily abandon the malagga and beriberi sequences for a period of about twenty years between just before the Second World War and the early 1960's; and b) why should my assessment of the 'future' of malagga (in particular) be so much at odds with that of Groves (1930's) and Gunn (1982 and 1984). Both of these researchers (Groves, 1932/3 and Gunn, pers. comm.) suggest that they examined a ritual system which is 'dying'. By contrast, ritual was flourishing during my fieldwork on Tabar in 1979/80. My response to both of these questions is a speculative argument which attempts to come to terms with crucial questions despite the limitations of the available material.
I suggest that three critical factors contributed to the gap in the performance of *malanga* and *beriberi*. Firstly I consider population dynamics and makeup. I then turn to the impact of conversion to Christianity (especially Catholicism), and finally I examine the impact of the Second World War.

There is evidence that the gap in performance coincides with a fairly drastic drop in population. The available figures suggest that the population decreased by about one third between 1914 and 1935 and had halved by 1949. At the same time the resumption of *malanga* appears to have occurred after a four to five year period of relative population stability leading into a steady turnaround.

Turning to the makeup of that population, there has long been a disproportionate number of males to females in Tabar - five men to every four women (Scragg, 1957:121 and Groves, 1934:232). Secondly, in reliable 1953 population data broken down into five year age groups by sex there was a peculiar concave bump (Scragg, 1957). Women aged between 30 and 40 were dramatically under-represented by contrast with the age groupings on either side of them. I show that the beginning of this key group of women's productive gardening lives roughly coincides with the beginning of the gap in ritual performance. I suggest that this had important implications for the 'ability' of this population to produce the amounts considered necessary to sponsor these ritual sequences. This argument does not address the issue of 'under-production' in such subsistence economies which others (notably Sahlins, 1974) have presented. Rather it is premised on Tabar conceptions of work; the amount of produce needed to present such rituals 'without shame'; and the division of labour which they see as appropriate in the process of
production. In Tabar terms, to make a poor showing at such rituals is far worse for the reputation of the sponsor and his group than never to have ever made the attempt. It is such cultural factors rather than 'objective' contentions of productive 'capacity' which I contend were decisive in the Tabar response to this peculiar feature of their population history.

Reference to demographic features and the age structure of the population also suggests why it is malanga for initiation (rather than those following death) which have not been reactivated again. It seems reasonable to suggest that their apparent demise relates to outmigration, early in the century when the relevant age-group were engaged by labour recruiters, and more recently by the disruption entailed by schooling.

In addition I also explore historically two other occurrences which are relevant for an understanding of the gap in performance. The first is the establishment of a European priest on Tabar in 1928 and mass conversions to Catholicism by about half the population of the group in the mid-1930's. This is especially important because my informants said that all Catholics, but only some Methodists, stopped doing malanga and beriberi in this period. Indeed some informants said that the Catholic Mission ordered them to cease making malanga. I suggest that this 'ban' was an additional pressure upon Catholics and heightened their awareness of their gap in performance after conversion.

The other important factor is the decisive impact on Tabar life of the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. Because Tabar labour was co-opted by the Japanese this again had implications for
the ability of the people of Tabar to produce at the level they
consider necessary for the hosting of these rituals.

I then turn to my second major puzzle - that is, why malanga can
appear to outside observers to be dying out at one moment and
flourishing the next. Here I examine the groups' dominant cash crop
- copra, showing that the constant fecundity and harvestability of
coconuts (from which copra is made) give the people constant access
to this cash resource without entailing constant activity. In other
words, coconuts are not a seasonal or demanding crop and this allows
copra production to be spasmodic. Malanga too are not a seasonal
activity. They may be presented at any time of the year and indeed
usually take place a number of years after a death. The flexibility
which this provides is heightened by the fact that a number of dead
may be 'saved up' and commemorated during the same sequence. Thus
there is enormous flexibility and choice in the timing of these
ritual productions.

I observed a periodicity to copra production during my fieldwork.
No one produced copra year round. Production tended to peak in the
weeks preceding the collection of council taxes and school fees but
otherwise production was generally low and there was no observable
pattern. Groves observed a similar periodicity (related to outside
demands) on copra production in the thirties (Groves, 1934:231).
There thus appears to be an alternation between a commitment to
cash cropping, and at other periods a dominant commitment to ritual
performance. It is the timing by individuals and groups of both of
these activities which is important. The fact that neither
necessitates direct competition with the other is, I contend,
decisive. The general low level of production for cash on Tabar,
the enormous flexibility which coconut palms provide for
the timing of copra production coupled with the flexibility in
timing allowed for by the malagga complex has contributed to the
remarkable resilience of this ritual system and its under-pinning
system of beliefs. It is here that I address Keesing's question
about 'traditionalist' enclaves.

Observations of the periodicity of copra production are also
pertinent to the variation between Groves, my and Gunn's views of
the future of this ritual system. That Gunn's prognosis based on
visits within two years of my fieldwork is different from mine, can
thus be explained by the short time he spent on Tabar (a total of
four months in two different field trips) and the particular time
that he was there. It is also important to note that Gunn and
Groves were both on Tabar at a time when there were work boats
available to take Tabar produce to the markets in Kavieng. This was
not the case during my fieldwork when ritual was flourishing.

Underpinning these points is that, despite in Melanesian terms a
long period of contact, the people of Tabar have retained their
subsistence base. Whilst a new National policy of school fees (of
the order of K100 p.a.) is having an impact on cash 'needs', money
except for K10 p.a. 'head tax', is spent on what are considered by
Tabars to be luxuries and not necessities. That is, they have an
important element of choice about how much copra/cocoa they produce
in any season. They are in a position to decide to keep cash crop
production to a minimum, as they largely did during the period of my
fieldwork. They did so articulating the cost-benefits of labour on
cash crops in the context of unreliable and relatively high cost
transport.
These points do not simply account for apparently contradictory views by foreign researchers, and relate to Keesings discussion of traditionalist enclaves in island Melanesia. They also point up important aspects of the logic and structure of Tabar ritual and some of the keys to its resilience since the intrusion of the Western world.

EARLY CONTACT

The Tabar group, by comparison with many Papua New Guinean societies, has had a long 'contact' history. It was first put on the maps of the western world as Visschers and Gardenij (later Fischer and Gardner) Islands in 1616 when Schouten and La Maire 'discovered' New Ireland. Whilst the islands were probably 'visited' sporadically from that time by vessels from the west, their impact until the nineteenth century may not have been as substantial as might at first be supposed. Sharpe gives some impressions of the nature of contact for two of these early visits. During the first there was what he described as a 'skirmish'. In July 1616 Le Maire fired his big guns on men in canoes apparently from Tabar after one of their number had speared one of his men (Sharpe, 1968:211/12). On the other hand in 1641 when Tasman met up with a number of Tabar canoes (off the Tabar coast) their contact was peaceable. Indeed Tasman wrote in his log "these people seemed to be shy, to have Fear for shooting" (Sharpe, 1968:211 - sic). He had earlier noted that three canoes "paddled So close to the ship that [we] let drift to them 2 to 3 pieces of old sailcloth 2 small chains of beads and 2 old nails. They showed no interest in the sailcloth, and also took no or little interest in the other"
We also know that William Dampier (1700), Philip Carteret (1767), Bougainville (1768) and D'Entrecasteau (1793) sailed in the region (Threlfall, 1975:21/2). Whilst it is possible that such vessels occasionally made landings to obtain food and water, the impact of such voyages and landings is uncertain. Presumably most Tabars were aware of these foreigners from the seventeenth century, but because of the nature of the contact it is unlikely that it had any important impact on their lives.

It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that Western commerce took an active interest in the area and colonization followed fairly closely on its heels. Indeed the relationship between commerce and administration was intimate in the early colonial history of New Guinea. New Guinea was claimed by the German Government which initially (1885) turned over responsibility for its administration to a company - the Neu Guinea Compagnie (see Sack and Clark, 1979:x; Griffin, Nelson and Firth, 1979:35 and especially S.G. Firth, 1972). As Wolfer's notes, "Under Bismark, the flag followed trade" (1975:62). The company's control was shortlived, ineffective and less than profitable. The Company relinquished its control in 1899 when the Reich took over and the region became the Protectorate of German New Guinea. Firth sums up the success of the company saying "In concentrating on the mainland [of New Guinea], where opportunities for copra trading were much fewer than in the [Bismark] Archipelago, the New Guinea Company starved its plantations both of local labour and of locally accumulated capital....Equally disastrous was the attempt to engage in an imperialism without rule. By the end of Company 'rule' the coastal peoples of Kaiser Wilhelmsland [New Guinea] still remained independent of the Germans politically and economically, unsubdued
either by force or the attraction of European-trade goods" (S.G. Firth, 1972:377).

Nevertheless, even before the Neu Guinea Compagnie gained its Protectorate in 1885, traders were apparently plying the New Guinea islands with success - particularly New Ireland and New Britain. Hastings (1969/73) suggests that by about 1850 traders and whalers were regularly calling at New Ireland. The traders were interested in coconuts for copra, and various sea products such as beche de mer (sea slugs destined for the Chinese market), pearls and trochus (green snail) and tortoise shells (see Sack and Clark, 1979/219). Whilst they sometimes set up permanently staffed trading stations in some areas of the region, it is not clear if any were set up on Tabar before the end of the 1890's. Lamers suggests that the first planter (trader), a Swede, set up business on Tabar with the help of a half cast Samoan in 1897, and was soon killed by the people of Tabar, who he suggests were still engaged in tribal warfare and cannibalism (Lamers, 1935:172). We may reasonably assume that Tabar was frequently visited by traders well before this time.

The German New Guinea Annual Report of 1900/01 suggests that much trade in those early days was done by barter. Other sources suggested that it could be a highly profitable enterprise. The years 1878-79 are referred to as 'the golden days of the copra trade',

"when a stick of tobacco could be exchanged for up to forty [coco] nuts, when 'axes, knives and firearms would fetch as many nuts as were asked for'... and when copra sold in London for between £16 and £22 a ton ..., his profits were still considerable. A pound of twist tobacco cost about £1/9-2/- f.o.b. in Sydney. With twenty-six sticks to the pound, the 6,000-6,500 nuts to produce one ton of copra would have cost no more than £2. Most traders prepared the copra themselves; if local labour was
required, it could usually be procured for one stick of tobacco a day" (Biskup, ed., 1974:69n).

Some traders also used traditional shell money to buy the produce and labour (Sack and Clark, 1979:219). However, in October 1900 the Imperial German New Guinea Government introduced an Ordinance prohibiting the use of shell money in commercial transactions, and this came into force in April 1902. After that time it was illegal to use traditional currency in trade transactions.

It appears that other traders were not put off by the 'murther' of the Swede (Lamers op.cit.) in 1897. By 1900 the trader and planter Mouton had a trading station on Tabar and there may well have been others there at the time. Mouton cited his operation on Tabar as an example of a station which did not always do well - "we had one [resident trader] on Gardner Island and it did not do well, under one manager it would do well and under another one it would do very badly, in the trading business there was always a chance of striking the wrong one" (sic). He went on to note that "On one occasion when we came to Gardner Island we found the station empty, the manager had disappeared, we found out that he had sold his copra to some vessel and went to Sydney, some of those traders passing by boat would help them just to get the copra cheap also a plausible story would be accepted " (Biskup, ed. 1974:121 cf pp25 and 119 - sic). This passage indicates not only the presence of resident traders but also the fact that vessels certainly did 'pass by' Tabar in that period. Table 2.2 indicates the level of shipping in the area in this period.

It is interesting then that Mouton in his memoirs suggests that the big trading firms (there were three large concerns operating in the region at the time) were more concerned to set up trading stations
for the purpose of labour recruitment rather than the trade in copra and other products. Writing of a German trader he had visited he comments that "by what I could see [he] did not do any good there was not enough copra for him to make a living and could not understand that the plan was not so much the copra but a footing for recruiting labourers for the plantations in Samoa" (Biskup, ed. 1974:87 - sic). Labour recruitment must have made a substantial difference to life on Tabar because it implied more than the introduction of trade goods. Importantly it entailed the removal of labour for long periods from Tabar shores - typically on a three year contract (Biskup, Jinks and Nelson, 1968:26), and some reports suggest that there was a high death and non-return rate. Downs (1948/9:16) cites Hoffman's suggestion that 30% never returned, though this is not necessarily a reliable figure. However, many deaths did occur. Groves noted that "Almost every pedigree I recorded disclosed one or more male natives who had died while working away from the village" (Groves, 1935/6:152).

Labour recruiters certainly visited Tabar shores before the Neu Guinea Compagnie took over. Wawn (1893 in Corris, ed., 1973:333) reports that in Brisbane (Australia) on May first [of either 1883 or 4 - it is not clear in the account] two men were charged and convicted of having "kidnapped six natives at Fischer Island" (i.e. Simberi, the most northerly island in the Tabar group). These men, we assume, had been taken to work in the Queensland canefields. But not all labour recruitment from Tabar shores amounted to kidnapping; many signed up quite willingly. Certainly in the early stages, the impact of traders was not necessarily very destructive of the 'fabric' of Tabar life. Most nineteenth century traders traded
primary products without utilizing local labour for the time consuming tasks of processing (in the case of copra for example).

Recruiters signed local people up for work on plantations across the Pacific (see Hempenstall, 1978:127). Others (e.g. Scarr, 1967; Ralston, 1977; S. Firth, 1982; Corris, 1973; Griffin, Nelson and Firth, 1979; Hempenstall, 1978; and Thompson, 1980) have taken up the issue of conditions for recruited labour. Three important points emerge. Firstly, islanders were taken far from their home communities and lived with labourers from a variety of communities while on contract. In the process they learnt tok pisin (Laycock, 1982:264). Secondly, when they returned two or more years later they returned to their home communities with trade goods. Corris presents an indication of the sorts of things this might have included. Discussing labourers returning in 1886 to the Solomon Islands after contracts in Fiji he states: "some of the men who returned...for example, had four boxes of trade goods. The boxes contained knives, axes, tobacco, matches, mirrors, clothing and cloth, and these men brought back hurricane lamps, cases of kerosene, pineapple plants and dogs" (Corris, 1973:111). Finally, the effects of the removal of these able-bodies constitutes a potentially serious loss of labour for the home community. I shall return to this point later in this chapter.

It is not possible to fully document recruitment from Tabar, especially prior to the establishment of German administration in 1885. However, indications of the extent of recruiting are contained in statistics from the German Administration. In these statistics Tabar figures are submerged in a grouping of the 'islands off the east coast of New Ireland' - presumably Tabar, Lihir, and
Tanga and Anir. Table 2.1 (taken from Stewart Firth, 1982: 177) summarizes the areas of origin of contract labourers registered at Kokopo (New Britain) from 1887-1903. When the low combined population of these four island groups (almost 7,500 based on 1921 Government Figures) is borne in mind the total number of recruits (1,716 between 1887-1903) registered with the government suggests that these small groups of islands were quite heavily recruited in that period. It is important to recognize that recruiting to some significant destinations does not appear in these figures. An example is recruitment for the Queensland (Australia) sugar cane fields. Thompson (1980:56) states that a total of 5,797 people were recruited from New Ireland to work there between 1883 and the end of 1884. Some of this number were from Tabar. Docker, writing of a vessel called the *Fredericka Wilhelmina* (licenced to carry 193) went to the Bismark Archipelelo in 1883. Docker writes that by the time she arrived in July "the cream had been skimmed from the shores of New Britain and New Ireland, but it was ideally placed to participate in the latest recruiting rush to several groups of islands to the north and east of New Ireland - Fisher Island [sic - i.e. Tabar], Gerrit Denys, Abgarris, the Kaan Island and Sir Charles Hardy Island" (Docker, 1970:179). Romilly suggested in 1897 that by then 2,000 New Irelanders had been recruited out of a population then thought to total 50,000. One German official suggested that by the end of the German administration in 1914, 70% of the adult male population of New Ireland had been recruited for service under Europeans (see Hempenstall, 1978:152). Indeed it cannot be assumed that only males were recruited, Lamers (1935) and Groves (1936:152) state that both women and men were recruited from the Tabar Islands, a point which Young (1977:335) makes for New Ireland generally.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE OF RECRUITMENT</th>
<th>PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazelle Peninsula</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere, New Britain</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witu Islands</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern New Ireland</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern N.I. &amp; Nusa Sts</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hanover</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Matthias &amp; Kerue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admiralties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISLANDS EAST OF N.I.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nissan, Pinipel &amp; Cartaret</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bougainville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser Wilhelmsland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.1: Contract Labourers Registered at Kokopo, New Britain, 1887-1903, showing place of origin and place of work. (from S.Firth, 1982:177).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality of Ships</th>
<th>1901/2</th>
<th>1902/3</th>
<th>1903/4</th>
<th>1904/5</th>
<th>1905</th>
<th>1906</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Steamers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Steamers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Motor Schooners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Motor Schooners</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Sailing Ships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sailing Ships</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2.2: Summary of Official German Statistics for Vessels visiting Nusa/Kavieng 1901/2 - 1906.

(Sources: German New Guinea Annual Reports 1902/3; 1904/5 and 1906/7)
Because of growing fears of depopulation the recruitment of women was banned by the German Government in 1910 (ibid:336).

Despite the fact that precise figures for recruitment from Tabar cannot be established, this material certainly indicates that it was considerable. Though we can presume that recruitment on Tabar was like that of the Solomons where "The majority of recruits were unmarried males and were, therefore, mostly in their early twenties or younger" (Corris, 1973:46), the impact of their removal from their villages must have been considerable.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century New Ireland was visited by a large number of vessels most of which can reasonably be assumed to have been traders or recruiting vessels. Table 2.2 presents official German statistics on visits of vessels to Nusa Harbour/Kavieng (northern New Ireland, where the Germans set up an administrative centre in 1900) from 1901/2 to 1906. They give some indication of the number of visits of traders or recruiters to Tabar which might have occurred in this period.

The German New Guinea Annual Reports for 1898/9 and 1899/1900 report the presence of 'resident traders' on Tabar (see Sack and Clark (eds and transl's), 1979:176 and 203). The 1898/9 report lists the presence of three 'trading stations' manned by two Europeans and three Chinese traders. The following year there was a 'native trader' (probably a Samoan or a Tolai), two Chinese and a European trader on Tabar. These three were apparently company stations - one on Tatau belonged to the Neu Guinea Compagnie. E.E.Forsayth in Ralum had one at 'Sors' (sic, presumably Sos) on Tatau and another at Teripax on Big Tabar. Clearly, with the exception of the period
of Japanese occupation 1942-45, there appear to have continued to be such foreign commercial interests operating on Tabar. The draft New Guinea Annual Report for 1913/4 (Sack and Clark, 1980) notes that there were three Europeans in the group. Reports in 1921-2 (Report on the Territory of New Guinea to the League of Nations:19), 1934 (Groves op.cit.), 1948/9 (Downs, 1948/9), and 1953 (Scragg, 1957:16) note the continued presence of traders and planters on Tabar. Indeed Scragg wrote that in 1953 the average number of Europeans living on Tabar since W.W.II was 6 and that prior to the war there had been 8 planters, 2 missionaries and one school teacher on Tabar and that "no native was more than three miles from a European" (Scragg, 1957:16). This picture is not very different from that suggested by Patrol Reports in the late sixties. In 1968 for example, one missionary and seven expatriates associated with plantations were apparently resident on Tabar. This situation has since changed with expatriate reactions to Self-Government (1972) and Independence (1975). During my fieldwork there was a German and a Chinese planter on Big Tabar, and many of the plantations appeared to have been effectively abandoned.

Planters usually operated both as traders and primary producers, buying 'trade copra' (i.e. copra produced by villagers) and maintaining trade stores on their plantations as well as producing on their own account. A memo from Curt Schultz in 1927 points up the importance of the trading base for most of the early planters when he noted that others "should bear in mind that nearly all the plantations in New Ireland are built up from little capital but from the proceeds of trading" (Schultz, 1927).
The German Administration was obviously concerned to encourage New Guineans to work. In 1903 a Government Instruction (Anweisung) "authorized officials to co-opt all able bodied men in the areas of control for up to four weeks a year to assist in the construction and maintenance of roads, or to work on government plantations" (Hempenstall, 1978:142; see also Griffin, Nelson and Firth, 1979:43). In New Ireland a Government Station was set up at Nusa (near Kavieng) in 1900 (see Sack and Clark, 1979:211). The administration seated there soon began a major project - the building of a road from Kavieng to Namatanai. By 1903/4 the road (which is said to have been 6 ms wide) had reached Pinikindu, that is, about 96 miles (see Sack and Clark, 1979: 230, 239, 247). It was not only mainland New Irelaners who were co-opted to work on that project but Tabars too were taken to New Ireland to work on the road (see also Groves 1935/6:152 and the Diaries and Memoires of his wife (D.K.F. Groves, n.d.)). Work apparently was also required on 'roads' around the Tabar Islands. According to the German Annual Reports parts of Tabar had been 'brought under control' by 1906/7 (see Sack and Clark, 1979:266) and by 1911/2 Tabar was declared to have "been brought into the sphere of influence of the Administration" (ibid:337). This presumably had been facilitated by their co-option to build the roads on New Ireland and Tabar. In 1911/2 the Administration noted in the Annual Report that "Tracks also run round the individual islands of the Fischer and Gardner Groups [Tabar], although there are occasional gaps. These roads have been roughly constructed, as it was not possible to provide constant European supervision, but are adequate for present needs" (ibid:351). It would appear that such productive labour was seen by the Germans as fundamental to their civilizing aims. Boluminski, the German Administrator based at Kavieng at the time, saw the roads
as a means of "'enhancing the pacification of the natives and their realization of the power of the government'" (Boluminski, 1904:133, translated and quoted by Young, 1977:336).

Indeed the German government also attempted to encourage New Irelanders to process copra themselves. As the German New Guinea Annual Report 1900/01 states, "The Government attempted to encourage the production of copra by the natives by an Ordinance of 18 October 1900 prohibiting the purchase of whole coconuts from natives. Strong competition in the copra trade has frequently led the traders to purchase whole coconuts. This relieved the natives of the labour of cutting the copra, reinforcing their natural tendency to indolence. The prohibition referred to is intended to put an end to this unsatisfactory state of affairs, which militates against training the natives to habits of work" (Sack and Clark, 1979:217).

W.C. Groves notes that

"In the earliest times, the natives appear to have been recruited willingly enough and freely. Later, at about the time of the construction of the New Ireland road and the laying out of the town of Kavieng, they were rounded up and taken away, with the result that for a time the islands were seriously denuded of their man-power. At that time fathers hid their sons and transferred their families to temporary shacks in the dense bush where the recruiting agents might not readily locate them. The villages along the coast were empty and the gardens neglected. It is from this time of unrestricted recruiting, the older natives say, that the decline in numbers and far-reaching changes in the village life date" (Groves, 1935/6:152).

Whilst I do not doubt that the impact of being conscripted to work for four weeks on Government projects within Tabar and especially outside of it was great, it seems to me that the removal of young men and women for periods of three years or longer ultimately had a
greater effect on perceptions of the productive capacity of their communities.

It is clear however that until the turn of the century New Guineans in 'controlled areas' such as Tabar had become involved in commerce largely by choice. In addition they had a choice between gaining access to European goods through bartering with traders, or signing contracts with recruiters and going to work on plantations in other areas of New Guinea and the Pacific. However the German Government took certain steps which entailed that all adult New Guineans had to earn cash. Three measures I argue were important: the Government Ordinance prohibiting the use of traditional shell money in commercial transactions (1902); the ban on the sale of whole coconuts (1900), both of which have been mentioned above; and the imposition of head tax in 1906.

Initially taxees had a choice between paying their tax directly (with cash) or working the value of it (in 1910/11 - 5 marks) off on Government Projects. Hempenstall argues that this move was designed to push New Guineans into engaging in casual day wage labour at local plantations (1978:142; see also Rowley, 1958:87). Perhaps more important in the long term was that it "started an upsurge in local coconut plantings so that New Guineans might enhance their own trading incomes" (Hempenstall, 1978:159). Many of the large stands of coconuts ('stesin' -tok pisin) exploited for cash today on Tabar were planted around that time. The productivity of these trees is now declining and some replanting is taking place - nevertheless these trees have been the major source of cash income on Tabar for many decades. It is also significant that coconuts are perennial and their harvesting can therefore take place according to demand.
This is important to my later argument for, as Young argues, New Irelanders have the resources which can provide for the standard of living desired by its people and this choice reduces their migration out of the Province. She links this to their coconuts which enable them "to produce copra at any time of the year with little effort" (Young, 1977:339).

As important as their constant harvestability is the fact that once coconut groves are established they do not require any significant labour in their upkeep. Rather, the intensive labour is related to the production of copra - collecting the nuts, removing the flesh and drying it. Malagga, like copra production is, as I will show, also a labour intensive process. But both are periodic activities whose timing is flexible. And, so long as the production of each is not attempted simultaneously by the same group, they are not mutually exclusive activities. Indeed one might reasonably conclude that of all the cash crops available to the people of Tabar, copra is well suited to the retention of their ritual corpus.

The production of copra often coincides with demands for the payment of head tax and, these days, school fees. This is a similar point to that made by Groves after his fieldwork in a Methodist community on Tabar in 1933. He noted that "There is usually a feverish burst of activity in coconut collection and copra production about the time when the government official is due to collect the annual head tax, as well as before the [annual Methodist thanksgiving festival]" (1934:231).

Tabars have been paying taxes to Administrations and Governments since 1910, though these days their tax goes to the Local Government
Council on which they are entitled to elect representatives. Such taxes, and more recently the introduction of (in Tabar terms) substantial school fees entails that Tabars continue to maintain at least a minimal engagement in the cash economy. The important point however is that despite coconut plantings this was not done at a level which threatened the amount available for subsistence gardens. This places Tabar in a different position in modern times by comparison with other parts of the country (see e.g. Epstein, 1968 on the Tolai in East New Britain).

By the thirties many Tabars had worked at some stage in the employ of Europeans or Chinese. Groves wrote in 1935/6 that

"natives have served as members of the constabulary, boat's crews, personal servants, houseworkers, plantation labourers etc. In Tatau today [1933], there are a dozen younger men who have been in the territory police; there are three who were formerly in the government school at Rabaul, including one who spent two years at school in Melbourne and was subsequently employed as an assistant teacher at Rabaul. There are three lads, ex-village teachers under the Methodist mission, who were trained at the Central Institution near Rabaul: and there is a large group of others who have seen service with Europeans or Chinese " (Groves, 1935/6:152).

Groves' material suggests however that by the mid-thirties Tabars were less eager to go away and work. He suggested that at the time that he was at Tatau there were only a small number of Tabars working away, and that he thought the number was rapidly diminishing. He went on to say that it was not only 'outside' work that Tabars were opting out of at the time but also that "Local European enterprises find it impossible to get labour from Tabar to supply their needs....The natives show a definite disinclination to be associated any further with European work" (ibid:153).
It is interesting then that Administration and Patrol Reports concerned with Tabar consistently refer to a pattern of unconcern for development and commerce. The reports do this using phrases such as - "the typical insular attitude" of the people of Tabar (Patrol Report, 1966/7), "the attitude of boredom and disinterest" (Patrol Report, 1968/9), "the general attitude to life outside their own circle is one of nonchalance" (ibid.) or that "the Tabars are too lazy" (ibid), or that they have a "lack of interest in their own affairs" (Patrol Report, 1961/2). This suggests that the people of Tabar were reluctant to embrace the ideology and practises of their colonial 'masta's'.

The reluctance to be involved with European work noted by Groves may well have had something to do with disenchantment at leaving their home or with the colonial experience. Young's (1977) argument about the constant availability of resources (i.e. coconuts) which can be exploited for cash is relevant here. But in addition, and I would argue of critical importance, is the crisis in population and thus home-labour which Tabar faced. The population figures suggest that by the thirties Tabar was experiencing a severe population drop - which I would argue had provoked an important crisis for the management of their subsistence economy. Unlike some areas, the Tabar 'crisis' was provoked by a 'shortage' of labour not of land. If we view production for the cash economy as fundamentally surplus production, then it is clear why it is a production sector which is vulnerable in such a crisis. The first German estimate of the Tabar population (8,000 in 1908 - Hoffman, 1913 cited in Scrugg, 1957:16) is clearly erroneous. But by 1914 it is obvious that the figures were based on an enumeration rather than an estimate. Table 2.3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1908)</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>Hoffman 1913 cited in Scragg 1957:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>3,483</td>
<td>Annual Reports cited in Scragg 1957:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2,769</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>2,489</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2,135</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,952</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944/5</td>
<td>1,748</td>
<td>Kavieng Patrol Report No 3 of 1944/5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>1,491</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1,475</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1,461</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>1,467</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>Scragg, 1957:138</td>
</tr>
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<td>1956</td>
<td>1,536</td>
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<td>1,583</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>1,606</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,606</td>
<td>Reported in Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961/2</td>
<td>1,686</td>
<td>Ibid. (Notes natural inc.=41, immig.=39)</td>
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<td>1963</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>New Ireland Patrol Report No 6 of 1963</td>
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<td>1964/5</td>
<td>1,756</td>
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<td>Kavieng Patrol Report No 10 of 1966/67</td>
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<td>1966/7</td>
<td>1,817</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
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</tbody>
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FIGURE 2.1: Tabar Population curve, 1914 to 1978.
presents the population figures from 1908 to 1971 which were available to me.

I return to the relationship between population and production later in this chapter when I argue that the ritual corpus also entails production above subsistence requirements and in so far as production is ultimately dependent upon labour power and cultural perceptions of work then a population drop also makes the ritual system vulnerable.

Another important consequence of the period of German administration was the demise of taro as the staple crop on Tabar. This is significant especially because of the 'necessity' of taro in a number of ritual sequences. In a report on Tabar agriculture written in 1953, Conroy reported that "It was stated that up until about 60 years ago taro was universally the main crop in the islands...The cultivation of taro was closely connected with the ritual life of the people and various ceremonies were involved in the preparation of gardens and planting, tending, and harvesting of the crop....Mr Hayes enquired at Tatau village as to whether Malagan ceremonies were concerned with taro production and received an affirmative answer" (Conroy, 1953:2). Later in the report he noted that "The oldest men spoken to during this investigation who would be in their sixties stated that the taro beetle had already made an appearance on the islands when they were children but that taro was still flourishing at the time....the people stated that the change over to sweet potato had occurred in late German times" (ibid:3). Whilst some minor amounts of taro sometimes matured during the period of my fieldwork they made only a minor contribution to the Tabar diet. Attempts were often made to grow them for ritual
occasions. This is interesting because Conroy notes,

"It is noteworthy that in all villages visited the people had persisted with efforts to grow the crop over so many years and that small plantings were made from year to year even though virtually no yields were ever obtained" (ibid.).

This indicates the cultural evaluation of this crop. In my experience, while sweet potato, cassava and sago are now the staple crops, some taro is still produced for the appropriate ritual occasions.

Thus far I have dwelt on 'secular' aspects of the early colonial experience. It is also necessary however to outline the impact of Christianity and missionisation on Tabar. The history of Christianity on Tabar is almost as 'long' as that of commerce. There were converts on Tabar before the arrival of the first resident missionaries. It appears from informants comments and Lamers (1929) (the first Catholic priest on Tabar), that a number of those who left as indentured labourers returned with more than trade goods. Some were converted to Christianity. This was especially so for those who worked out their contracts on mission plantations such as the Catholic Mission plantations around Vunapope in East New Britain. In 1965 the Missions magazine 'Our Lady of the Sacred Heart' (O.L.S.H.) stated that "Natives from New Ireland who were working on plantations in New Britain learnt of the religion of the Fathers, and received baptism. After added catechetical instructions, some returned to their villages as the first apostles to New Ireland" (O.L.S.H., 1965:14).

Three Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (M.S.C.) arrived in New Guinea in 1882 and established themselves in New Britain (O.L.S.H., 1965:14). Sometime around the turn of the century, Bishop
Coupe, who headed the Catholic Mission of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (M.S.C.), toured New Ireland and bought land in various places including Tabar. He intended starting missions in these places when he had enough priests to staff them. In 1911 a main station was established at Kavieng and from that base priests occasionally visited the outlying islands like Tabar (O.L.S.H., 1965:14). But Coupe's larger ambitions were interrupted by the First World War. Whilst the M.S.C.'s had French affiliations, in 1919 the Royal Commission on German New Guinea saw the European staff of the mission as 'almost wholly German' (see Rowley, 1958:255). While German missionaries, unlike German planters, were not ejected by the new administration formed after the Australian 'invasion' and German capitulation in September 1914, they were not allowed to expand their numbers after the war. Rowley (1958) suggests that the decade up to 1914 was one of considerable expansion for this mission. "By January 1913 the mission had 31 'main stations' and 99 'subsidiary' ones, 98 schools for some 4,300 pupils..." (Rowley, 1958:255). The numbers of (German) M.S.C. priests were frozen by the Australians until 1927, and it is therefore significant that the first priest to set up residence on Tabar did so in 1928. It is clear that this was a long delayed development for "On the outbreak of war the mission was setting up posts on Manus and in the Gardner Islands [Tabar], and part of the preparation had been to establish copra plantations" (Rowley, 1958:256, emphasis mine).

But despite the special shortage of priests until 1927, the Catholics nevertheless made inroads on Tabar. They did so through trained New Guinean laymen who were called catechists. As well as the establishment of the mission plantation on Mapua a catechist manned the station. It is said (Lamers, 1935:173) that in these
early days, people came from all over Tabar to attend services held by him on Mapua.

The Catholics competed for 'souls' on Tabar with the Methodist (later United) Church. In 1916 the Methodists sent their first teacher to Tabar, and he set himself up on Simberi (To Vutluluk, 1918:1). In the next few years the Methodists sent more teachers to the group, so that by the end of the war the Roman Catholics perceived themselves to have lost a great deal of ground (Lamers, 1935:173). The Methodists however had begun schools and began to initiate changes in Tabar practice, such as insisting that people wear clothes to church. To Vutluluk, who went to Tatau as a teacher in 1918, told the people that men must wear a white laplap, and women a laplap and blouse (To Vutluluk, 1918).

By 1919, there were reported to have been seven Methodist 'stations' with teachers in the Tabar group (Mann, b). The European missionary who was stationed on the mainland at Pinikindu and oversaw the mission's work on Tabar, reported that in addition to villages with a resident teacher the church had a substantial following in other villages. He reports that some villages had built churches and teachers' houses and made gardens, raised money towards a salary for a teacher and so on "because they believe they will then get the lotu [church] to their village" (Mann, b:1). By this time there were already nine Tabars training to be teachers at the Methodist training institution at Omo in New Ireland (ibid:2).

At the same time (just after the end of the First World War) the Catholics had also begun to increase their manpower on Tabar. Around that time they sent thirteen new catechists to Tabar. Most
of these men were Tolais from the area around Rabaul and though they were occasionally visited by priests, they, like their Methodist 'colleagues', were largely on their own.

The church apparently thrived on Tabar, despite the lack of European direction in its day-to-day life. An indication of this is suggested by the fact that in 1921 the annual (Methodist) missionary offering (collected on a single day) from eight villages was £111 (Mann, c:266). It is of course also an indication of the relatively large amount of cash on Tabar at the time.

By the 1920's and early 1930's the Methodists and Catholics claimed the adherence of 50% of the Tabar population each. At one level there was open antagonism between the two denominations. For instance in 1919 the Methodist Missionary responsible for Tabar wrote "About the Tabar section it is sufficiently clear today, that if we had not started God's work there we would have lost the Tabar Islands for our mission. But we acted in the right moment and started with sufficient force, so we hope to save 3 - 4,000 people from Catholicism" (Mann, a).

This is interesting because a similar sentiment can be gleaned from the writings of Fr. Lamers, the first Catholic priest based on Tabar. He believed that the Methodists had been able to take advantage of the fact that the Catholics could not expand their manpower during the war and the years that followed. Thus it became hard for Catholics in the outer areas of Tabar to get to Mapua and they reasoned "'why travel so far to Mapua. God's service is God's service', and the people didn't know any better" (Lamers, 1935:173) an attitude he inferred undercut the Catholic's position.
Fr. Lamers spent about a decade on Tabar, and in that time became fluent in the local language. He and Fathers Krümpel and Hoeverkamp after the 2nd World War produced prayer books in the Tabar language and began an elementary school which taught in tok pisin. The Methodists also took education on as a project, a role which continues to the present.

The Second World War brought massive interruptions to many aspects of life in New Ireland. Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland, was occupied by the first Japanese invasion force to reach Papua New Guinea shores in January 1942. The Japanese drove out or executed almost all Europeans in New Ireland. For some time two ex-planters became coast watchers (examining Japanese shipping movements and reporting them to the allies by radio), but after many months of hiding out in the high ground on Simberi they were captured and executed by the Japanese. The Catholic priest (Murphy, an Irishman) who had only recently replaced Lamers was captured by the Japanese and taken to Nusa where he was executed. New Ireland became an important Japanese stronghold until 1945. The Japanese occupation force depended to a large extent on local food supplies and built enormous gardens to feed their army on mainland New Ireland.

Though Tabar was never occupied in the same way as the mainland of the Province, Tabar labour was conscripted to work in these gardens there. Some gardens (particularly of native tobacco) were actually established on Tabar and the co-option of labour was overseen by local 'agents' of the Japanese. Scragg notes "The Japanese left half-castes to supervise the area and it became a source of food for the mainland" (Scragg, 1952:1). This had important implications for labour available on Tabar, and thus on the ability to produce
the surplus necessary for major ritual sequences. People on Tabar underlined to me in many stories the onerous demands of the Japanese.

In the tok pisin history of the M.S.C.'s in New Ireland (Katolic Nius, 1966/7) it is reported that when the Bishop made an unexpected visit to Tabar just after the war and found the church immaculately clean, with flowers on the altar he concluded "Mi lukim na mi spik aiting bilip bilong ol katolik belong Tabar i bipela, ol i ting long Jesus i stap na ol i lukoutim gut haus belong em" [Seeing this I said that I thought that the Catholics on Tabar had strong faith, they thought that Jesus remained there and they took good care of his house] (Katolik Nius, 1967:23).

Whilst the Catholics lost their priest, the Methodists fared somewhat better. A local minister, the Rev. Hosea Linge was not captured and continued to move throughout New Ireland, even going to Tabar by canoe (Threlfall, 1975:150). Indeed Threlfall suggests that "As the Catholics in central New Ireland were without leaders, Linge suggested that they worship with the Methodists while the war was on, and go back to their own worship after the war. Many gladly accepted this invitation, and the members of the two churches drew together..." (Threlfall, 1975:151). Antagonism between Catholics and Methodists (now called the United Church) is not noticeable on Tabar these days. Indeed, when I first got to Mapua the people in the village invited me to go to church and I responded lamely that I would not because I was not a Catholic. Their response was similar to that which disturbed Father Lamers in the late twenties and was held by Rev. Linge during the Second World War: - 'it does not matter where you go - so long as you do'. Certainly there are a
number of non-Catholics living on Mapua who go to services there. In addition Catholics and Protestants conduct joint services from time to time. When a new United Church was opened in Simberi during my fieldwork, Catholics from Mapua prepared and practiced dances for many weeks to perform at the opening.

If there is denominational antagonism at present it exists between the Seventh Day Adventists (S.D.A.'s), who made their first Tabar conversions in the late 1950's, and the other denominations. During my fieldwork the S.D.A.'s were confined to a single village on the southern tip of Big Tabar. In 1978, there was said to have been a brawl between some S.D.A.'s from that village and some people from another village where it was said they had gone uninvited to build a church. In the S.D.A. village the impact of this denomination's dogma are great. It has undermined that community's participation in Tabar ritual in a far more radical way than is the case elsewhere in the group. This is partly attributable to S.D.A. views on pigs (and pork) and sharks, both of which I shall show are critical elements in the ritual corpus I examine in this thesis. The S.D.A. view of them places its believers in a position of opposition to the world-view held elsewhere in the group. Given this, the people of this village were more committed to development and production for cash than any other village in the group. They had more outboard motors per head of population than any other village. They produced and marketed more copra and cocoa. In addition, the two active sitting elected representatives of Tabar (one a Local Government Councillor, the other the first Member for Tabar in the new Provincial Assembly) were members of this community. Whereas other Tabar communities used their surplus labour power to produce the major ritual sequences, as well as from time to time copra, the
S.D.A. community devoted its surplus labour to 'Development'. This is quite a different choice from that made by most Tabars.

It is clear, as I will discuss in more detail in subsequent chapters, that the Tabar world-view and its ritual corpus has been affected by this long period of western contact, participation in 'commercial enterprises' and Christianity. Present day Tabar is no simple perpetuation of some past 'tradition'. Practices clearly attributable to Christianity are now part of Tabar ritual practices. Its smallest manifestation is the saying of grace before eating at feasts. The making of crosses ('crusa') at, or apparently instead of, mortuary malanga is a more striking case. But in respect of the latter I will argue that the process of producing 'crusa' is structured as a sequence of feasts in a way which conforms to the underlying principles of the structure of the feasts involved in the production of malanga sculptures.

Nor should the 'indigenisation' of the churches (or in respect of the Catholics the effect of Vatican II) on Christian practice be neglected. The Methodists on Tabar have long been Papua New Guineans and except for the final month of my fieldwork the Catholic Mission Station at Tabar had been manned for the previous decade by Papua New Guinean priests. Christian church services these days often consciously 'assimilate' aspects of local traditions with the Judeo-Christian heritage. An example is a special Pentecost Service I went to in 1979. Most members of the congregation decorated themselves in 'traditional' leaves etc. Indeed the priest (a New Irelander himself) hung aromatic leaves, often a part of Tabar rituals, on his chest and back, over his priestly robes.
Thus while there have certainly been some substantial transformations in Tabar life and culture the 'structure and texture' (cf Wolfers, 1975:65) of their culture remains coherent and peculiarly Tabar - tied to their ancestors and their understanding of their practices as it is tied in to the contemporary reality of cash, commodity process, balance of payments deficits and National and Provincial Government.

In the 1930's Groves suggested that

"the place appears to be living in the spirit of the past, while expressing outwardly, to Europeans who do not know the conditions obtaining in the village, their satisfaction with the life of the present. Even many of the younger natives, who have had recent contact with European influences away from the village, seemed to offer allegiance to the spirit of the past. I came to the conclusion...that this... was part of a general reaction against European contact" (1935/6:150).

The people of Tabar appear to have maintained this tradition of passive resistance to Western encroachment into their culture.

I will show that despite a gap in ritual performance Tabars remained committed to their ritual system and its underpinning belief structure. I suggest that the nature of copra production and the 'flexibility' of their ritual system (particularly in the presentation of malagga) have enabled them to maintain this commitment with little conflict between these time- and labour-consuming activities. But it is also clear that the Tabar commitment to their culture has not simply rested on such 'accidents of fate'. Clearly this society has made other decisive choices since the arrival of western administration.

I wish to suggest that many critical cultural structures (which themselves underpin this ritual system) have been retained on Tabar
despite attempts at change by colonial forces. An interesting example is provided by an examination of house styles. I argue throughout the thesis that they fundamentally structure and underpin ritual practice. The Australian Administration attempted to impose different house styles on the people of Tabar in the late 1950's and 60's. This case also entails examination of material which gives some 'feel' for the concerns, style and intensity of that Administration.

There are two house styles which Tabars consider to be indigenous. They are the vanua vavi and the amari. Amari are communal men's houses (sometimes referred to as 'haus boi' in tok pisin). Vanua vavi (or vanua vavavi) are the houses in which women and their children sleep. Their central feature is a vavi or stone oven and the term vanua vavi can literally be translated as 'stone oven house'. They are commonly referred to in tok pisin as 'haus mumu' or 'haus kuk'. I argue later that each of these structures define important groups in Tabar society. Those who eat food cooked in the oven of a single vanua vavi form a domestic group. The domestic groups whose menfolk sleep in a single amari make up a basic co-operative group which I refer to in this thesis as amari-groups. Importantly each of these structures is crucial to ritual performance and each is the site of important rituals. Figure 2.2 is a diagrammatic representation of these two structures, as well as the general shape of the style of house which the Australians attempted to introduce. I refer to the introduced structures as 'haus raun'.

'Haus raun' are quite unlike either of the Tabar structures. They are raised about two foot six above the ground on stilts, whereas
FIGURE 2.2: The three main house styles found on Tabar 1979/80.

VANUA VAVI

AMARI

dormitory

fence

oven

'HAUS RAUN'
both vanua vavi and amari have earth floors. Nowadays haus raun frequently have wrought iron roofs which are set at an angle, rather than a peak as in vanua vavi. In 1965/6 a kiap described them in a patrol report as follows: "built several feet off the ground, on stilts. The walls are usually bamboo and the roofs are made of sago leaf or kunai grass. Kunai is preferred but it is not always available. Floors are made of split bamboo or sawn timber" (Patrol Report, h).

The Australian Administration attempted to replace houses built on the ground with such structures. The first mention in patrol reports that I have found of the measure suggests that a 1959 medical patrol had advised "the natives...to build their houses off the ground for medical reasons" (Patrol Report, a). I am grateful to Ascha Carrier of the University of Papua New Guinea for alerting me to the relationship between these administrative measures and the idea of miasma which ultimately underpinned them. Apparently houses should be built off the ground in order to promote ventilation and thus to counter debilitating endemic diseases like malaria which were often in commonsense fashion associated with 'stagnant' air. In addition the measure was intended to keep domestic animals out of sleeping quarters and thus to reduce the incidence of the 'hygiene'-related diseases like dysentery.

The Patrol Reports document a concerted attempt to replace vanua vavi with haus raun and one, begins to think, a systematic misunderstanding of amari (see over - Patrol Report, b) which it seems many in the Administration appear to have seen as a club house for ceremonies and the occasional accommodation of visitors rather than a regular dormitory for men and older boys. My informants told
me that kiaps (Patrol Officers) required every adult male to build a 
haus raun. Those who had not conformed when the annual patrol came 
to Tabar were put into 'kalabus' (bush prison). There were thus 
important sanctions imposed for non-conformity with the rule. 
Critical to my discussion is both active refusal (which appears to 
have been minor), and conformity with the letter of the law but not 
its spirit. People made haus raun which could be observed and 
inspected by Patrol Officers but they did not abandon their amari or 
vanua vavi. The latter option was possible for the people of Tabar 
precisely because of the degree of Administrative presence - in this 
period usually only a single patrol (from 5 days to a month in 
duration) each year. It also constituted a very effective form of 
resistance.

The following extracts from Patrol Reports between 1961 and 1968 
indicate the variation in assessments of Tabar adherence to the 
decision to impose the stilted 'haus raun' style on them.

Sept. 1961. (Patrol Report, a) 
"Housing construction is...bush timber, split bamboo walls 
and sago thatched roof. 
"During a medical patrol in late 1959 the natives were 
advised to build their houses off the ground for health 
reasons. To a large extent this advice has been taken, 
and the use of the 'haus kuk'[vanua vavi] type dwellings 
have become rare. Older people and widows still are in 
favour of the 'haus kuk' type of dwelling. 
"In most villages housing is adequate and well 
maintained and where this was not the case, owners were 
advised to repair quickly. 
"In Tugitug, 2 young men have refused to build 
themselves houses. Both were reprimanded and advised to 
build immediately."

July/August 1962. (Patrol Report, b) 
"Houses raised on piles are the exception rather than the 
rule" 
"Of some interest is the Tabar practise of building "haus 
bois" [amari] in the village Cemeteries. These are used 
either as feast houses or guest quarters for visiting 
natives and are generally poorly constructed and 
maintained."
Jan. - Feb. 1963. (Patrol Report, c)

"The general housing standard throughout the island group is not particularly good. Many people seem to prefer the traditional lo-slung (sic) huts to houses raised on piles. These traditional houses provide very little ventilation and are built to contain all facets of family life, including the muu-muu [vav] in the centre of the living area.

July-August 1964. (Patrol Report, d)

"Villages in the main are well kept as regards the upkeep of the actual site but the standard of housing in most areas leaves much to be desired."

March-April 1966. (Patrol Report, e)

"The most common type of house in Tabar is built several feet off the ground, on stilts. The walls are usually bamboo and the roofs are made of sago leaf or kunai grass. Kunai grass is preferred but it is not always available. Floors are made of split bamboo (sic - bamboo) or sawn timber.

"Many of the older people still sleep in the "haus kuk" type of dwelling with the earthen floor. The main reasons being that this type of house is warmer and there are no steps to climb."

"The conditions of the houses were generally good and nearly all recommendations made by the previous patrol regarding houses, had been carried out."

"People who have not complied with orders re housing should be listed so that prosecution could be carried out on next patrol by a magistrate."


"Housing...is...quite satisfactory but this I attribute to the influence of C.P.O.'s [Cadet Patrol Officers] Mr Beard and Mr Coles who recently patrolled this group and their instructions re housing were thorough and have in most cases been satisfactorily carried out.

Dec. 1967. (Patrol Report, g)

"The majority of house-holders have not yet accepted the idea of building two separate houses, one above the ground for sleeping and one on the ground for cooking. On Tabar there are still many houses built on the ground for both cooking and sleeping purposes."

From that patrol report the following statistics are given:
**VILLAGE** | **POPULATION** | **NO "HOUSES"** | **NO "KITCHENS"**
--- | --- | --- | ---
Maragon | 85 | 11 | 8
Simberi | 120 | 10 | 8
Bueri | 67 | 4 | 5
Munum | 26 | 5 | 6
Sos | 55 | 12 | 7
Lava | 124 | 21 | 16
Tatau | 148 | 20 | 17
Sanapari | 81 | 14 | 6
Karumbo | 39 | 7 | 2
Titipata | ? | 9 | 6
Kowarmarara | 33 | 7 | 7
Wang | 86 | 17 | 9
Banesa | 67 | 13 | 6
Koko | 64 | 12 | 8
Datava | 102 | 14 | 5
Rakupo | 55 | 17 | 7
Tokara | 77 | 19 | 12
Mapua | 38 | 11 | 3
Mangawur | 65 | 12 | 5
Tugilug | 30 | 6 | 3
Pakinberiu | 53 | 16 | 7
**TOTAL:** | **257** | **153**

* presumably haus raun

** presumably vanua vavi

July - Aug. 1968. (Patrol Report, h)

"Housing was generally good.... I must comment, however, on the lack of assistance given to the older generation. In many instances the very old and infirm were living in virtual hovels".

October 1968. (Patrol Report, i)

"Houses are often sub-standard."

It appears in the early days of this measure that the intention of the government was to REPLACE vanua vavi with the haus raun style. Later, as the 1967/8 Patrol Report shows, the idea was to build "two separate houses, one above the ground for sleeping and one on the ground for cooking" (Patrol Report, g). The same report signals the basic intention - that is, that people should not SLEEP in vanua vavi (ibid.).
There are few direct signals of active resistance in the Patrol Reports except for the 1961 Patrol Report which mentions two young men refusing to accept the edict, mention of old people still sleeping in 'haus kuk' and the suggestion that those who do not comply be prosecuted (Patrol Report, e) and the comment in the 1967/8 report (Patrol Report, g) that "The majority of house-holders have not yet accepted the idea...".

People on Tabar suggested to me however that they resisted passively by generally acceding to the Administration's demand that they build haus raun, but not changing their lifestyle markedly. Many women and children continued to sleep in vanua vavi, where in any case almost all household cooking continued to be done in its central vavi, and men continued to sleep in amari. Haus Raun were generally used as store-rooms, places for drying bush tobacco and were constantly ready to be shown to visiting patrols as 'evidence' of compliance with the rule. That is to say, my informants suggested that while there was little active resistance to this imposition there was certainly a general response which essentially negated the measure. Given the rule that every adult male (judged by the presence of beard and underarm hair) was required to build them and that thus many unmarried men would have been included in this demand, and the fact that many men continued to sleep in amari, then the number of 'kitchens' counted by the 1967/8 patrol supports my informants contention and evidences their particular form of resistance to unwanted outside interference.

By the time of my fieldwork very few haus raun existed, and the majority of houses on Tabar were either vanua vavi or amari. In September 1979 I did a survey of 38 hamlets in Big Tabar and Mapua
and found that only 8% of 'houses' in these hamlets were of the haus raun style. Indeed many of these were built as trade stores or store rooms rather than living quarters. In other words, even where haus raun were present there was still a general pattern of having them in addition to the Tabar styles and not instead of them. Thus I would suggest that the figure of 8% exaggerates the extent to which the local style has been replaced by individuals.

Even so, a further point is pertinent. Today haus raun are often seen as a symbol of a commitment to 'development'. Thus one finds that it is generally those who are associated with development - local entrepreneurs, politicians, government workers (such as aid post orderlies, school teachers) and mission workers who build/live in haus raun. That is, unlike vanua vavi and amari which I will show are important in the definition of domestic and co-operative groups, haus raun form a commentary on individuals and are often evidence of a commitment to development (often in opposition to tradition).

The resistance of the people of Tabar to the imposition of this housing style is important to the section on the gap in ritual performance which follows. There I argue that while the people of Tabar attribute this gap in performance to a mission ban, this does not explain why they accepted it in the first place. As this discussion of house styles demonstrates, the people of Tabar effectively resisted that attempt at the imposition of measures which threatened the coherence of their culture. My argument thus addresses other factors which made this acceptance necessary. I argue that there is a nexus between production and ritual. Ritual sequences like those found on Tabar require a high level of surplus
labour and production. In the next section I examine the population figures available for Tabar and suggest that there was both a population and production crisis on Tabar during the period of the gap which shows that the people of Tabar had very little choice in the matter.

8. THE IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION AND PRODUCTION FOR THE RITUAL CORPUS.

In this section of the chapter I address the issue I have raised already - that is, the relationship between population (and hence, given cultural ideas of the division of labour and production techniques, I would argue, production) and the temporary abandonment of important sequences of this ritual corpus. I have already presented in Table 2.3 and Figure 2.1 data on depopulation. These figures suggest that the population dropped by about a third between 1914 and 1935 and by 1949 was less than fifty percent of its 1914 level.

From this we can see that Tabar was undergoing a severe population crisis. Its low point of 1,461 occurred in 1951, and the curve then flattened out and turned around. There is only marginal difference between the 1951 figure and 1953 (1,466), but the turnaround was established and the figures slowly but surely increased. Not all the increase was due to births. Patrol Report, (a) suggests that the increase of 80 between 1960 and Feb. 1963 was attributed to 41 births and the immigration to Tabar of 39 individuals. This accords with my own knowledge of a number of individuals who originally came to Tabar as contract labourers (mostly for plantations) and nurses
(for example) who came from places like the Sepik, other areas of New Ireland and the Highlands and were invited by Tabar families to stay and often to marry Tabars. People on Tabar express their continued concern for their population level, and say expressly that these immigrants were especially welcome because of this. All immigrants that I know of have gained land rights through their spouses or bought land from local people. The bringing in of outsiders to boost the population was encouraged by the Administration.

People on Tabar also say that they stopped doing the *malanga* and *beriberi* sequences between just before the war (which could mean anywhere between about 1938/9 or 1942 when the Japanese invaded) and took them up again in the early 1960's.

My informants, in response to my questioning, said that they gave these rituals up for this period because the Catholic Mission told them to, and resumed them after they approached an American priest (who was stationed on Tabar in the early 1960's) said he was happy for them to take place again. Whilst other priests on New Ireland insisted that there never was an 'official' church ban, Capell noted in his report on Tabar that "the Roman Catholic Mission...has forbidden the Malagan" (Capell, 1952:13). This provokes an interesting puzzle since, as I have just shown, Tabars 'got around' administrative edicts on housing. That they did so in that case I would argue is related, not simply to the 'constant' presence of the missionaries, but also to the cultural importance of their existing forms. Why then should they acquiesce to a ban on ritual performance when, as I shall show, these ritual sequences are of central cultural importance, and are essentially seen as critical
to the well-being and the reproduction of their world? While Capell (ibid) suggests that the ban was ineffective, informants were adamant that there was a gap in performance. It may be that the reactivation began in the fifties and it was this that Capell noted. However Capell does not include any mention of witnessing such an event in his report.

I suggest here that the gap existed because the people had little choice. They no longer were able to produce the surplus necessary for the production of *malanga* in particular. This was a result of two things: (a) a pre-existing and worsening population crisis and (b) a particular and peculiar shortage of women in age-groups seen (given the Tabar division of labour and conceptions of physical vitality) critical to the process of gardening. It is the latter 'problem' which I would argue was decisive at that point of time. It is interesting then that the rituals were re-activated within ten years of the turnaround beginning, that is, at a time when it would have become apparent that the population crisis was lessening and when younger women would have become more active and effective gardeners.

Before examining the data on this population crisis it is necessary to indicate the level of surplus labour needed for a *malanga* ceremony (for example). I show later in the thesis that a *malanga* is the sequence of feasts and rituals which are performed and culminate in the public presentation of a sculpture also called a *malanga*. It must be stressed that this is a long process which entails for the sponsors between about five and twenty public feasts. This in itself entails absence from subsistence activities for the day preceding such feasts and the day of the feast itself.
Importantly it also entails the establishment of a special garden in which is grown the vegetable foods eaten and given as prestation at feasts. These gardens are large - in one case I observed the garden measured about 60 metres square. That entailed the clearing, burning off, and fencing of the garden which was done by twenty-three men on five or six whole days over a period of about six weeks; a whole day was devoted to planting and involved fifty-one people; and five months of weeding and tending of 'sections' by sixteen women which culminated in an afternoon or day of harvesting before each feast. The area of the garden was divided into sections most of which measured about 10 by 2.5 metres. Each was identified with a particular woman (who had used material from her own garden for planting) and she was then responsible for maintaining that area until harvesting. Thus the preparation, maintenance and harvesting of the garden represented many man and women days of labour. In the five month period it was women's labour which was constantly necessary for tending the garden sections. To it must be added the labour involved in the making of sago, harvesting and ripening (by burying) of bananas, harvesting of coconuts and betal nuts.

In the preparations of the malapga I have used here as an example an enormous amount of labour also went into the construction of new houses at the host hamlet. This involved the construction of five new vanua vavi and one haus raun, as well as the repairing of the fence enclosing the host amari. The house construction involved getting poles for the frame, bamboo for the walls, sago for the thatching of the roof. For many weeks families spent their afternoons and evenings preparing the thatch for the roof. Several whole days were necessary for the actual construction of each
house. I regret that I did not systematically record the amount of time devoted to these activities, however it was clear that it was very high. It is also clear that it is not possible to sponsor a malagga unless one has a community of supporters who are willing to commit a great deal of their time and labour to the venture. The preceding discussion indicates the extent of this commitment.

As one informant put it, malagga are in one sense a competition which shows the strength of their sponsor to activate the accumulation and presentation of plenty, and thus the strength of the host community. There is great shame associated with not having sufficient food, bananas, pigs, betal...to present at the feasts. He made it clear that if one had any doubt about one's ability to come up with these goods then one would not contemplate sponsoring a malagga. I contend that the make up and drop in population which Tabar experienced earlier this century was a context in which there was not sufficient labour to carry out the production necessary for these ritual presentations.

As well as the general population crisis documented in Table 2.3, I contend that Tabar underwent a special crisis around the time of the gap in ritual performance. It was a crisis in the number of women available to work in the gardens necessary for the presentation of malagga. Because of the nature of women's long term and constant contribution to the tending of ritual gardens, this crisis had particular impact on malagga sequences. That these women are also in the childbearing ages suggests at the same time why beriberi, the festival sequence celebrating a woman's first pregnancy and birth, are also said to have been 'abandoned' - for there would have been few of such births in this period.
Table 2.4 is derived from data presented by Scragg (1957:25) collected on June 30th, 1953. It sets out the population distribution of Tabar villagers by sex and separated into five year age cohorts. It shows a dramatic under-representation of women aged between thirty and forty years of age in 1953. These women in the late 1930's and early 1940's (when the gap in ritual performance was beginning) would have been aged between about fifteen and twenty-five to thirty years. This is the period which Tabars consider to be a woman's best gardening years.

Scragg's data collection was obviously done very carefully as he states

"In Lamankua and Solas [two of his other sample populations] the Roman Catholic Mission baptismal records dated back to 1926 and these enabled computation of height and weight for age tables and estimation of the number of teeth erupted according to age....These tables were used to estimate the age of natives in Tabar...where baptismal records had been lost....[The Tabar records were accurate ] from 1937 onwards. Prior to these dates all birth years were approximate. These estimates were made using a combination of physical appearance, dental formula, amount of dental attrition and number of teeth missing, age of parents, siblings and children, the development at and memory for certain memorable events, and village census records. The age estimated can be considered to be accurate to within three to five years, and those over twenty have been classified into five yearly groups" (Scragg, 1957:18).

Thus women who were thirty to thirty-five in 1953 were aged between fifteen and twenty in 1938. That is, they were at the beginning of their childbearing and 'responsible' gardening years. The implications of this for the performance of beriberi are significant, especially when one notes the extent of sterility. These figures suggest that there would have been very few primiparas giving birth in the war years and beyond them. To put it another way, there would have been very few occasions for the performance of
<table>
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<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP (years)</th>
<th>MALES *</th>
<th>FEMALES *</th>
<th>FEMALES CONSIDERED ** COMPLETELY BARREN</th>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>10-14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>15-19</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>(48 (out of 156 women 20-29 yrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>(</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>(21 (out of 69 women 30-39 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(35 (out of 130 women 40-49 yrs)</td>
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<td>45-49</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<td>50-54</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>(11 (out of 45 women 50-59 yrs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>55-59</td>
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<td>60-64</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>(8 (out of 36 women 60+ yrs)</td>
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<td>70-74</td>
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<td>75-79</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2.4: Population Distribution (in five year cohorts), Tabar, June 30th 1953, showing sterility (in ten year cohorts) for women over childbearing age.

Sources: * - Scragg (1957:25); ** - Scragg (1957:62).
When that is viewed in the light of the production crisis it becomes clear why beriberi (whose performance does not require the level of labour input of malanga) suffered a similar fate to that of malanga whose gap can more directly be related to the crisis in subsistence production in this period.

There are two other factors which may have contributed to the situation. The first is the Japanese occupation of New Ireland between 1942 and 45 which I have shown had important implications for village production because of the conscription of local labour to work in gardens made to feed the occupying force. This situation would have exacerbated the already existing crisis.

Secondly, in Catholic villages the bulk of conversions (based on the Mission baptism records, dating from 1928, which I had access to) occurred between 1933 and 1935, only a few years before the 'gap'.

To this point I have suggested that there was a gap in the performance of these ritual sequences. While mortuary malanga are again being performed there does not appear to have been an initiation malanga since 1935 when Groves (1935/6) was at Tatau. Whilst there has been a turnaround in the Tabar population dating from the fifties, the absence of young men from their communities due to labour recruitment from the end of the last century, and more recently because of education, has continued. These facts go a long way towards explaining the abandonment of malanga for male initiation.
I showed in the first half of this chapter that the production of malangga and copra can be seen as complimentary given the constant fecundity of coconuts and the flexibility which exists in the timing of malangga ceremonies. I wish to extend the point about the flexibility which may be exercised in respect of the timing of mortuary malangga here. Not only can malangga be produced at any time of the year but importantly the are not confined to any particular year.

Mortuary malangga can be presented for one or a number of dead. These ceremonies are said to 'finish' the dead, and importantly may be produced 8 months to a decade or more after death. Often many deaths are 'saved up' and finished in a single ceremony. Because of this particular flexibility it can be seen that a lapse of a decade is not unusual, and a lapse of two decades, such as in the period I have characterized as 'the gap' is long but did not spell the end of the ritual practices.

* * * * *

I began this chapter with reference to Keesing's article on 'traditional enclaves' in seaboard Melanesia. Keesing notes that the communities involved generally have not been isolated from Western contact (Keesing, 1982b:39,40). In the first section of the chapter I documented many aspects of the nature of this contact, especially the early contact period, on Tabar. In particular I stressed the extent of labour recruitment, trade, colonial administration and the coming of Christianity, all factors which might have been expected to have caused the demise of major ritual sequences such as those with which this thesis is concerned.
In the second part of the chapter I have examined a 'gap' in the performance of these rituals, and suggested that it was not an abandonment but rather a temporary phenomenon which can be seen to be critically related to a population and production crisis. I contend that ritual sequences such as these on Tabar require a level of surplus production which was vulnerable in the context of depopulation and of the under-representation of women in their prime gardening years. This latter phenomenon was critical, I contend, because of the nature of women's contribution to the production directed to ritual performance. That contribution is constant over a number of months leading up to a malagga sequence.

The fact that the under-represented group was also at the beginning of their child bearing years and that 21 of the total of 69 women aged 30 - 40 in 1953 were considered to be "Completely Barren" (see Table 2.4 and Scragg, 1957:62) indicates that in addition to the labour/production crisis, there would have been few first births to celebrate. This can be related to the perceived gap in the performance of the beriberi sequence.

I also posed the question 'why do outside observers in different periods differ so markedly in their evaluation of the future of these ritual sequences?' at the beginning of the chapter. This may be partly due to a variety of assumptions about the nature of 'tradition' and ritual systems such as found on Tabar. It is possible that some outside observers have carried with them unquestioned taken-for-granted assumptions on these issues which have coloured their evaluations.
At the same time I have suggested that both copra and ritual production require surplus production. Thus I have proposed that in periods of high production in the cash sector one would expect little ritual performance and vice versa. Thus some of the disparity in evaluations may be related to the particular moment at which observations were made. At the same time I have noted that the main cash crop on Tabar is coconuts from which copra is produced. Moreover, while the production of copra is labour intensive, the long-term maintenance of coconut stands (provided there is no concern for optimizing production levels) requires very little labour input at those times when copra is not being produced. This allows the retention of cash potential while surplus labour is being directed to other areas of Tabar life, such as ritual. Similarly, surplus labour and production can be directed at other times towards ritual without threatening future production for cash.

Thus it is clear that these ritual sequences, particularly malanga, are remarkably flexible in their timing. One can produce a malanga for an honoured dead a year or a decade after their death. This effectively means that malanga can be 'put off' to a congenial time. There is no necessity for a clash between cash cropping and malanga. Thus by their nature, and by the nature of the cash resources available to the people of Tabar, their ritual sequences have proved remarkably resilient. Despite obvious evidence of the sort of change one must expect in any society, the people of Tabar, like their counterparts elsewhere in sea-board Melanesia, have "kept their commitment to their ancestors and their past, in the face of Christianity, copra and cash, and nowadays tourists, transitors and Toyotas" (Keesing, 1982b:39). Indeed as I will show throughout the
thesis they have performed the rituals which allow themselves and their island world (now part of a much wider horizon) to be reproduced.

While copra (or resources with similar labour implications) remain the Tabar cash crops I would suggest that the cash economy will not threaten this ritual system. It appears that the maintenance of a subsistence base independent of the cash sector is important in the resilience of this ritual system. The alienation of large tracts of gardening land would threaten this subsistence base, and ultimately the ritual system. Since my fieldwork finished, mineral exploration by a multi-national mining company has begun on Tabar. I would suggest that if large open cut mines were developed in areas which threatened gardening land and in a way which made the people of Tabar dependent on the cash economy, this ritual system would be under considerable threat.

Similarly if there was a large scale conversion to religious cults whose dogma attacks basic elements of the Tabar belief system (pigs and sharks for instance) then the ritual system would also be threatened. The present situation with a single Seventh Day Adventist village proves very adaptable, giving the larger community a pool of people (who are not committed to the demands of this ritual system) to draw upon for the necessary role of politicians in the contemporary government of their electorates.

Yet the resilience demonstrated over more than a century in the face of concerted and varied 'onslaughts' from outside their islands gives room for the hope that this society will maintain its control over the reproduction of its culture and environment.
In the next chapter I examine cultural conceptions of that environment - an analytic exercise which underpins the analysis of the ritual corpus per se, and indeed this view of the cosmos.
"Men as well as money, make Wall Street the entrepôt of the whole civilized world. Despite the claims of both friend and foe, these indigenes are not a breed apart. Qualifying as an actuary does not exempt anyone from the human condition. Hedge-fund operators are mortal; letter-stock specialists have been known to bleed.

"True, even the mightiest of them is dwarfed by his awesome surroundings. Of course, so are the inhabitants of Grundelwald, Denver, and Lima. But mountains have a better reputation than other high rises. Say Everest and Jungfrau, and you conjure up men to match them; say World Trade Centre, and you evoke automatons mistaking profit for enrichment.

"Nothing could be further from the truth. Passions unconnected with negotiated commissions reverberate up and down Wall Street."

(Emma Latham, Sweet and Low, p. 7, Penguin).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, broadly speaking, is concerned with the relationship between people and place on Tabar. It explores cultural conceptions of this island environment. It is not a comprehensive treatment of that environment. Rather, the discussion is directed toward the demands of my analysis of the Tabar ritual corpus. In this chapter I seek to lay foundations for themes taken up in the analysis presented in later chapters.

Because I go on to examine the treatment of hamlet space in ritual performance I focus on hamlet space and its built structures in this chapter. I also present a broader view of the environment which
later is related to particular items constructed in ritual, such as special food bundles and indeed malanga sculptures. Groundwork for the exploration of social relatedness is also laid here in a discussion of the important roots of people in place.

Whilst the chapter is not a comprehensive treatment of 'the environment' per se, it is premised on the assumption that cultural views of the environment, like other cultural ideas, often underpin, and are active constituents of, ritual. I do not see the nexus between ritual and ideas about the environment simply as an issue of 'location'. In my view the relationship between ideas about the environment and aspects of Tabar ritual performance is an active one. Ideas about the environment are not simply presented to ritual participants. Throughout this thesis I demonstrate that these ideas are both worked with, and worked on. Tabar ritual both structures and restructures everyday ideas about the environment and the relationship which human beings have to it. Later I will argue that the process of restructuring these relationships in ritual is empowering. It provides ritual participants with the opportunity to actively engage in the large task of reproducing their cosmos.

The first half of the chapter is concerned with how the people of Tabar move about in and conceive of their environment. I begin with a brief outline of everyday activity and then move on to broad conceptions which people hold about their environment. I extend the everyday aspects of Tabar reality in a discussion of hamlets. Here I focus on the spatial organization of hamlet space and the nature of its built structures. I develop this theme in a consideration of the basic units of hamlets - domestic and amari-groups. I then
develop the issue of social relatedness and show that it is rooted in the land and locality.

**EVERYDAY MOVEMENTS THROUGH THE ENVIRONMENT**

The day begins early on Tabar. Soon after sunrise (about 5.45am) the cocks crow and the community begins to stir. Breakfasting on the now cold remains of the previous evening's meal, people organize themselves for the day's activities. Children are made ready for school and the rest of the community gather baskets, bush knives etc. for the days work. Before leaving, domesticated pigs are fed on the flesh of coconuts, which is often placed in a large shell on the ground. Within 45 minutes most have left the hamlet and gone singly, or in small groups, to their gardens or the site of the day's activities.

They set off along the main tracks around the islands, but sooner or later leave these 'roads' and turn onto the narrow, overgrown and often windy tracks which go through the bush to their gardens. Often they are shielded from continuous direct sunlight as they walk and instead are confronted by occasional shafts of bright sunlight penetrating the subdued and changing light along the path. Around them a deep profusion of tropical plants and insects grow and live.

Gardens contrast with the surrounding area. They are fenced and 'clearer' than the surrounding forest. Whilst some large trees are always left to stand in Tabar gardens, the planted growth never reaches the height of the forest around it. Gardens are 'ordered' growth. The ongoing and most time-consuming task of women is
weeding. They seek to ensure that only cultivated products grow inside the fence.

Whilst the help of relatives and neighbours is enlisted in the hard work of clearing and fencing, primary responsibility for the maintenance of gardens lies with women of the domestic group which plants the garden. After the garden is established, its fenced area (and sometimes the tracks to it) becomes a 'private' place. Only members of that domestic group are entitled to enter it freely. Outsiders are usually hesitant to approach or enter other people's gardens.

Gardens are the most important site of sexual intercourse between spouses. Indeed children borne without a recognized pater are referred to as 'children of the bush'. That expression implies a distinction between the domestic reproductive space of the garden and the 'wild' space of the bush.

In the light of the 'privacy' of gardens it is significant that some of the most significant breaches of hamlet sociability relate to the invasion of gardens by other residents' pigs. Underpinning the claims and counterclaims of protagonists in such disputes are understandings of the intimate connection between gardens, and the identity and nurturance of domestic groups. The right to use land and to freely go into gardens is a defining feature of domestic groups. Pigs are the, albeit uncontrollable, property of domestic groups. Their entry into gardens, and the destruction of crops which they do, is seen as an invasion of 'private' space for which their owners bear responsibility.
Women may spend a large amount of their day time in gardens. They carry out their work with digging sticks and bush knives (machete). They cut weeds off at their base with bush knives and harvest tubers by digging them out with digging sticks. Digging sticks are used to break up the earth for planting.

While women do much of the continuous work of maintaining gardens it is men who 'harvest' and process sago. Sago stands grow in swampy areas. Such stands are inherited. Whilst sago is generally considered to be a food for the 'hungry times' it is also important in some rituals. I discuss this in detail later in the thesis. Sago is 'harvested' by felling a tree, removing the bark on one side and then chopping out the pith with a special wooden mallet whose working side is sharpened. The pith is then washed with water, scooped into long troughs and the sediment obtained with a sieve-like fibrous 'trap'.

Fishing is also a male activity. Today it is generally boys and young men who fish with lines or spears in shallow waters, often in the late afternoon. Fishing in the open sea is rare. Lures for large fish may be cast behind the outboard powered 'mon' on trips between the islands and/or to New Ireland. But I do not know of men going out to sea simply to fish for such deep sea fish.

Occasionally when there are sufficient men at an amari they fish together on the reef. This is possible most frequently when men are gathering for some ritual occasion. The method they use entails making a wide circle around a group of stones and then walking in towards them while slapping the water. This drives the fish into the shelter of the stones, allowing them to be caught by hand,
When the season, moon, and tide is right, some men use pressure lamps to fossick for crayfish at night on the reef. Women catch crabs where they know of clumps of rocks where the crabs take refuge. They use torches made from coconut fronds to smoke them out. Shellfish are also collected by women in the mud of mangrove swamps. They use sticks to penetrate the mud and locate the shells.

In the late afternoons about 4 o'clock women and their children return to the hamlet with produce and firewood. For those living in hamlets without water, women make a special trip to fill their baskets with bottles of water. As the community gathers again, young girls may be seen wandering around the hamlet calling on others, with small babies perched on their hips (an oft enjoyed responsibility which many also take on in the gardens while their mothers are working) while their mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers prepare the evening meal. In the seaside hamlet of which I was a resident, the women peeled the tubers (predominantly sweet potato and cassava) for the evening meal inside the vanua vavi or on the reef. Cassava ('tapiok') is grated, and sometimes mixed with grated coconut flesh, to be made into puddings. Pigs browse on the reef consuming the discarded peelings and other rubbish on the beach adjacent to the vanua vavi. They may also be fed coconut flesh in this period.

About 4-5 o'clock in the afternoon women prepare the vavi. A lattice-work of wood is built up and the oven stones placed on the top layer. After it is lit the pyre burns. The stones heat as the
Figure 3.1: Stages in working vavi
wood is consumed and falls in upon itself. The smoke of the fire builds up and forces those inside to go out. Many go just outside the house, where they sit chatting until the smoke dissipates. Some take the opportunity to bath in the shallow, warm waters of the reef. When the stones of the \textit{vavi} are heated and the fire burnt out the women go inside again and build the oven using long wooden tongs to manipulate the stones. First they place a layer of stones on the ground, and then place the food (usually wrapped in banana leaves) on them. Another layer of hot stones is then moved into position to cover the food. Over them many layers of broad leaves and then old rags and copra sacks are spread to keep the heat in. The finished oven has a dome shape (see Figure 3.1).

Women and girls daily maintain the hamlet plaza. Weeds are removed as soon as they appear, and the area is swept. Each domestic group 'cleans' the area of the plaza adjacent to their \textit{vanua vavi}. The sandy ground becomes close-packed and almost as hard as concrete. It is men (especially young men) who sweep and maintain the enclosed area of \textit{amari}. A consequence of this attention is that the boundaries of settlement space are always clearly defined. Hamlet space stands in contrast to the low bush (slashed every month or so) in the immediate vicinity and the higher growth in the near distance (see Figure 3.2).

As dusk draws on and these chores are done the women and children may stay inside chatting together or go outside the \textit{vanua vavi} to sit talking amongst themselves or to other groups similarly stationed outside their respective houses. As flying foxes and smaller bats leave their day-time perches, jokes are thrown between the small bunches of people on the \textit{ino mono} adjacent to their
houses and stories and gossip are shared. Frequently heads are bent
towards others who gently and affectionately search the scalp for
lice.

The night sets up a wall around the hamlet, its barrier the
surrounding darkness saturated with the invasive sound of chirping
crickets. When darkness falls domestic groups move inside their
houses to eat and spend the evening together. Within a few hours
the community sleeps. If they are not already gathered there, most
men retire to the amari where they may chat on a while longer before
sleeping. The women and children sleep in their vanua vavi.

The rhythm of these days is regularly broken on Mondays when the
Government instituted 'Monday lain' [t.p. 'line'] is held, and on
Sundays for Church. It is also broken when people engage in
'special projects' (such as travel, canoe cutting, copra production,
house building, etc.). Monday Lain is held in the plaza (ino mono)
of certain hamlets designated 'camps' by the Administration (see
below). Formerly lain were used for the organization of labour for
government projects and the meetings were run by 'luluai's' (village
officials appointed first by the Germans and later by the
Australians). Nowadays, 'Monday lain' are run by local 'komiti',
who are elected by their village under the system of Local
Government Councils (of which Tabar has been a part since 1965).
These meetings have become times when disputes (like those about
pigs) are aired, some resolved, and occasionally compensation paid.
They are also a context at which community projects are discussed
and plans announced. Occasionally the komiti will designate work
such as the clearing of undergrowth from the roads which connect
settlements etc. to be done on that day.
Figure 3.2: A Tabar hamlet and its setting
Sundays too contrast with the flow of ordinary working days. In the morning families emerge from their houses dressed in their best clothes. Women usually wear white 'meri blouses' and clean laplaks. Men also put on special dark blue, black or brown laplaks. Some men also wear short (often white) to go to church in. Younger members of the community, especially young unmarried men, are likely to wear patterned and brightly coloured 'laplap cowboi'. Occasionally, as the community sets off the mission station's first 'warning' bell may be heard to chime in the distance. It is followed about half an hour later by another which is rung just before the mass begins. Until the church-goers return in mid-afternoon the hamlet is largely deserted. There are very few who do not attend. After the service, which is attended by members of many communities in the vicinity, most stay to chat with friends and relatives or to go the Health Centre for attention before they return home.

So whilst Sunday church services and Monday lain (to a lesser extent) tend to bring a wider community together for short periods of time it is the hamlet, particularly in the afternoons and evenings, which is the heart of sociability on Tabar. People identify themselves with the community of their hamlet, and most especially with their amari-group (which I discuss below).

This brief sketch of everyday life has pointed up aspects of the division of labour and the gender association of certain work and its products. It has also served to introduce the everyday interactions between people. These points will be taken up in more detail in my discussion of hamlets.
The next section goes on to discuss Tabar conceptions of their wider environment. It introduces the metaphysical beings with whom living Tabars co-exist in this environment. I show that this is an active co-existence. Living people are affected by their relationships to these beings.

CULTURAL CONCEPTIONS OF THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT

The Tabar environment is an Island environment. Its islands are surrounded by a ring of reef except on points of the 'weather' side where the ocean beats against limestone cliff faces. On the sandy soils close to the water, coconut stands have been planted. Much of the remaining landscape is secondary forest and gardening land. The 'interior', often conceived of as the mountains, is the primary forest - buari. The activities of human beings are mostly confined to the 'clear' area of coastal waters and the gardens/secondary forest which I refer to here as the 'coastal fringe'.

The Tabar environment is inhabited by a variety of spirit beings which human beings may come across in their everyday movements through the environment. Some of these beings are related to groups of people, others are 'free' but powerful agents.

Each matambu (matrilineal clan) and most kivavundi (matrilineage - literally 'base of the banana') is associated with particular 'bush spirits' (mi tundar) and species of shark (m'baei'a). Tundar reside in specific places in the landscape but are mobile.
The 'homes' of tundar are specific but varied. Some are located in clumps of rocks, others in special groves or water holes. Some m'baei'a have spirit places on the land or on the reef. M'baei'a move about freely in the ocean as sharks and may cross into the shallows of the coastal waters (aemati). Both tundar and m'baei'a are resources of power available to members of their associated matambu or kivavundi. They can be 'sung' and thereby enlisted to attack members of other groups. Tundar may take on human form and persuade others to do things. They may, with the illusion of human form, seduce or rape women. 'Sung' m'baei'a may be enlisted to attack and consume others at sea. I was told that there is no escape from an attacking m'baei'a. If they are attacking they are even able to overturn a canoe in order to get to their victim.

M'baei'a and tundar may also attack those who go unprotected to their spirit places in the landscape. Soon after I arrived on Tabar, my co-residents pointed out a nearby point which was the home of a tundar. They told me that should I touch any of the permanent trees in the vicinity then the m'baei'a associated with that group would attack me. Should one stumble unprotected onto the locality associated with either a tundar or a m'baei'a then one would die through some application of their powers.

These spirit beings, though quick to anger, are important group resources because they can be persuaded to apply their powers in support of the strategies of human beings who are members of their associated groups.
The spirits of the dead are also 'at large' in the environment. M'tino are the 'contented' spirits of those who have died 'naturally' (see Chapter Seven). Virua are the malcontented spirits of those who have died violently, through murder, sorcery (enabled by the support of tundar) or by some other 'unnatural' means (see Chapter Seven). These spirits may also be enlisted by human beings to aid their plans. Spirits of the dead remain in the proximity of their decaying bodies after death. But as decomposition proceeds they are able to move about more freely, across the environment. Indeed, as the body decays the spirits are forced away.

Eventually, when the body has decayed, they are 'freed' and join other ancestral spirits to whom they are related. They may then be called upon by living 'relatives' in garden magic to engage the fertility of garden lands. They may also be called upon in weather magic to bring rain or sun for the benefit of crop growth.

When people wish to dry out the vegetation cleared from new garden areas weather magicians 'sing' ancestors and enlist their powers to provide sun. Otherwise the vegetation will not burn and the establishment of the garden will be delayed. Weather magicians also 'sing' rain at appropriate times so that the crops develop properly. Weather magic may be used to affect the success of rituals. Hosts 'sing' sun for the days of ritual. Those opposed to them may 'sing' rain in order to spoil such an event. Weather magic is also used to affect the oceans. People say that the seas are at their calmest just after rain. Weather magicians may be paid to bring rain through the night before a canoe or boat journey across the open sea. Such rain 'flattens the waves' and removes much of the hazard of a journey.
The reality of spirits in the Tabar environment is an accepted cultural fact. People discuss their sightings of, and interactions with, such spirits. Sometimes when rain falls people will matter-of-factly announce "that is X's rain", meaning that X commissioned the rain magic which brought the rain. As I show in more detail in Chapter Seven, illness and death provoke discussions about who might harbour ill and have solicited an attack by one or another spirit. Elders council others about going to certain areas because spirit beings or virua reside there. That the environment is inhabited by spirits and that the action of spirits has consequences for the lives of the living is a taken-for-granted aspect of Tabar life which is reinforced in experience.

THE 'CLEAR' AND THE 'DARK'

On Tabar, the land/sea distinction is less important than the distinction between the 'domesticated' area of the 'coastal fringe' on the one hand and the deep forest/open sea on the other. People have claims to territory which includes both parcels of land and of reefs. Secondly, the line between coastal land and waters is a blurry one. The interface between land and sea is epitomized on the one hand by the mobility of tides which in their movement leave the reef covered or dry, and on the other by mangrove swamps which, though affected by tidal action, are also always saturated - neither dry ground nor sea. A clear distinction is made between coastal waters and open sea. Close waters are referred to as aemate ('clear'), open sea as rama mi maketo ('deep and black').
As the ocean waters, the *rama mi maketo*, are deep and black, so too is the deep forest, *buari*, deep and black. Both the *rama mi maketo* and the *buari* are dangerous places for human beings. Together they contrast with the relative safety and 'clearness' of the land and sea of the coastal fringe.

Viewing the environment in this way we see that the deep forest and the open sea are analogous - both are dark and deep, not subject to the sort of ordering imposed by human beings such as the maintenance of definition in hamlet space or in the clearing of land used for gardens. The only way in which the people of Tabar can influence the open sea is through the use of weather magic. But significantly this magic can only induce rain, and has no direct relationship to the seas. Moreover, it's hoped for consequences simply affected the surface of the water, again not its depths. It is clear that the people of Tabar consider the open sea to be a threatening environment, most especially during the North West Monsoon. The darkness and danger of the *buari* and the *rama mi maketo* are analogous.

Figure 3.3 presents a conceptual view of the Tabar world. It takes, as Tabars tend to do, the hamlet as the conceptual centre of this island world, and represents the analogy between the dark 'depths' of both forest (*buari*) and open sea (*rama mi maketo*).
HAMLETS

All settlements which I saw were built on the coastal fringe, many in fact right on the waters edge. Whilst terminologically Tabars distinguish between ekone - 'white sand' (i.e. sea side) hamlets and lambulae or bush hamlets, there are, to my knowledge, no longer any of the latter. In many senses even those hamlets which are not on the waters edge are oriented toward it.

Hamlets are the heart of Tabar social and community life. Ideally a hamlet was composed of two amari with a number of vanua vavi clustered between them. This ideal conception is represented in Figure 3.4.
Figure 3.4: The shape of an 'ideal hamlet'

In everyday life men are oriented toward amari and women (and their children) to vanua vavi and the hamlet plaza. Women and children sleep in vanua vavi, men ordinarily sleep in amari. Women look after vanua vavi and cook there for their domestic group. They sweep and weed the plaza around their vanua vavi. Men sweep and maintain the area of the amari. But the fence around the amari should not be viewed as a barrier in everyday life which keeps women and children out of amari. Women do occasionally enter amari in everyday life, and men are free to enter the vanua vavi of their domestic group. A number of people pointed out to me that the fence around the amari is designed to keep pigs, rather than people, out of the area.

At some rituals, however, the amari becomes the exclusive domain of males, and its fence does indeed act as a barrier. In that sense the everyday orientation of men and women structures ritual performance, and the ritual works 'with' everyday understandings. Other rituals, and phases within them, work 'on' those structures.
In some beriberi rituals women invade the space of the amari and may bodily throw men out of it (see especially Chapter Five). In one of the Death Feasts women enter the amari in order to carry the body on their legs in the dormitory (see Chapter Seven). Similarly, women enter the amari to view the sculpture in the malanga feast, at which the sculpture is publicly 'stood up' (see Chapter Ten). Such instances restructure and work 'on' the taken for granted everyday gender orientation.

Clearly, hamlets and their space are central to Tabar culture and ritual. In Chapter Two I discussed Government attempts to change housing styles and documented Tabar resistance to this unwelcome intervention. Government moves were not simply directed towards built structures, but also to the makeup of residential settlements. Here I touch on changes in settlement patterns imposed by that Administration between the end of the war (after 1948) and the early sixties (cf. Clay, 1977:21 on Pinikindu). My informants state that prior to this time settlements (which I shall refer to as hamlets) were dispersed.

Because the dispersal of hamlets did not suit the Australians' 'civilizing', administrative and census tasks the Administration decided to require hamlets to amalgamate into what Tabars refer to as 'camps', and which officers of the Administration generally refer to as 'villages'. On Tabar hamlets were amalgamated into twenty six of these units. Whilst dispersal has occurred, the Administration continues to treat villages as real entities.

From my informants' statements it again appears that (as they did with housing styles) Tabars did conform with the letter of the
Australians' law by establishing themselves at the designated sites. However some maintained amari at these sites during the period, thus preserving an important organizing principle of their society. There is an important connection between 'bossing' an amari, the ability to sponsor ritual, and status. I return to this issue below.

Since the sixties settlements have again started to disperse, often with the catalyst being disputes between co-residents of a camp. Moves to establish hamlets away from camps have also been political strategies for aspiring kalengo (literally 'man big'). There are, however, still a large number of Tabars who live on sites designated by the Australians as camps. The transitions which my informants presented to me are represented in Figure 3.5.

I happened to live for most of my time on Tabar in a hamlet which had been designated a camp by the Australians. By the time of my arrival it had split into four hamlets dispersed over a distance of about 3 kms. From Catholic Mission census records which I saw on Tabar this process appears to have begun in about 1965 with the first breakaway from the camp. A squabble over damage done by pigs to the gardens of another resident appears to have catalysed the first move. The hamlet in which I lived was one which after the movements of the sixties and seventies had reassumed the shape of the ideal hamlet, with amari at each end of the area.

* * * * *

It may appear that the male space of the amari, ideally placed at each end of a hamlet, mediates the space of women from the environment beyond the hamlet. Similarly it might be argued that men mediate the relationship between women/children and the
Figure 3.5: Representation of changes in settlement patterns
environment more generally. It is, after all, men who maintain the
paths between hamlets, who construct the fences around gardens, and
who build canoes (and control them on voyages across open sea).

It would be easy then to assume that Tabar is like many other
Melanesian societies where men are said to control women and the
resources they produce, and where there is a high level of 'sexual
antagonism' (see Poole and Herdt, 1982 for a general review), both
in mundane and ceremonial contexts. But I found gender relations on
Tabar to be more subtle. Everyday relations between men and women
are easy and women enjoy a large measure of 'autonomy' (cf.
Malinowski's (1922) and Weiner's (1977) view of Trobriand women).
Men do not believe themselves to be endangered or depleted in
everyday and sexual interactions with women. And, as this thesis
shows, both 'male' and 'female' rituals are necessary for the
reproduction of their cosmos.

The primacy of male ritual and male ideology has been noted by other
Melanesian ethnographers. In his analysis of the Ikwaye, Mimica
(1981) argues that there men's houses are symbolic representations
of the cosmos. A detailed examination of the built structures of
Tabar hamlets points up the subtlety and complexity of gender
relations in this Island Melanesian society. I argue that vanua
vavi are microcosms of the hamlets in which they are centrally
located.

Clearly vanua vavi and amari are different structures (see Figure
3.6). Amari dormitories are much smaller than vanua vavi. Amari
dormitories are three sided and sited within a fenced enclosure,
vanua vavi area enclosed by four walls. Amari dormitories have a
Figure 3.6: The shape and layout of amari and vanua vavi
Figure 3.7: Structural relationships between amari, vanua vavi and hamlets
single-faced roof. *Vanua vavi* generally have four faces to their roofs. Two peak in the main roof, two others are set much lower and at right angles on each end of the structure. The low-roof ends of *vanua vavi* are dormitory areas, beds are placed under these low roofs at each end of the house.

It is these sections which hold a key to this analysis for were those sections to be detached from the main body of the *vanua vavi* they would show a remarkable parallel with the shape of *amari* dormitory. Both would then be three sided structures with a single roof, pitched at the same angle (about 45°).

It is interesting then to recall that in an 'ideal hamlet' there are two *amari* - one at each end of the hamlet. Similarly 'proper' *vanua vavi* have a dormitory section at each end of the structure. Thus any *vanua vavi* encapsulates, within its basic structure, the shape of an ideal hamlet. This analysis is presented visually in Figure 3.7).

**RELATEDNESS AND PLACE**

Both *vanua vavi* and *amari* are structures which define important groups in Tabar life. I have noted that adult men normally sleep in *amari*, whilst women and children sleep in *vanua vavi*. Indeed there is a taboo on women lying down and sleeping in front of men. In one case I know a special hut was built for an old and invalid man who could not be cared for by the men in the *amari*. The hut was built right by the *amari*’s fence so that his wife could care for him while he remained close to the other adult men. It is significant however
that he was not cared for in her *vanua vavi* (an arrangement which presumably would have caused a breach of the taboo).

It is the stone oven (*vavi*), the central feature of a *vanua vavi*, which defines domestic groups on Tabar. It is those whose everyday meals are normally cooked in a particular oven who are seen as a domestic group even though men and women do not in general sleep together in the *vanua vavi*. Domestic groups are also those who normally would have their own gardens which would be harvested and maintained by their women.

Men from a number of domestic groups sleep in each *amari*. The *vanua vavi* of these domestic groups are usually those closest to the *amari*. Indeed these domestic groups form a primary co-operative group in Tabar life. They co-operate, for example, in preparations for rituals and feasts, and tend to help each other in major tasks such as house construction, garden clearing, copra production and so on. Though I know of no vernacular term to describe this group, I refer to them as *amari*-groups. The contexts of their co-operation will be elaborated as this thesis progresses. Figure 3.8 shows the layout of an 'ideal' hamlet and distinguishes between its two *amari*-groups.

With the re-establishment of hamlets since the dispersal from centralized 'camps',hamlets vary considerably in size and composition. Men with aspirations to become *kalengo* (literally 'man big') must 'boss' an *amari*. This is two pronged for they need the assistance which an *amari*-group provides, and they need an *amari* in which to hold rituals and welcome visitors.
Figure 3.8: Domestic groups forming an amari-group in a hamlet

The relationship between amari, kalengo and the sponsoring of rituals sheds light on the dispersal of camps dating from the mid-sixties. The dispersal to hamlets roughly coincides with the time at which the performance of rituals was reactivated.

However the composition of amari-groups cannot be understood except by reference to the status attribution kalengo and access to land. Men who 'boss' amari are called kalengo (literally 'man big'). A man can sponsor ritual only if he 'has' an amari - that is if he is the kalengo of an amari. In order to sponsor ritual he must also have the support of his amari-group. The more people he can count on the more chance he has in adequately providing a 'fitting' and successful feast. In other words an effective kalengo is one whose amari-group is large and supportive of his plans.

There is no set residence rule on Tabar. Newly married couples may live where they choose, provided that they are welcome to the
members of the amari-group. Kalengo seek to attract people to their amari-group. One way of doing so is to offer such people land on which to garden. This is possible because whilst one may 'inherit' land in a straightforward manner through matrilineal links one may also 'buy' land, for a token payment of pork and shell money from ones father. This possibility can also be extended, as I show below, to outsiders. As one of my friends with a young family put it 'we usually live with one of our parents. But we go where we want. If land is short in one place we go to the other'.

Many 'new' amari-groups are indeed formed when a middle-aged man leaves his former hamlet and either reclaims an ancestral amari-site or builds a new amari on his land. The initial group is composed of his own domestic group and those of (some of) his married children. Case 3.1 is an example of such an amari-group.

\[Diagram\]

- Domestic group
- Kalengo of amari-group

Case 3.1
- domestic group

△ - kalango of amari - group

Case 3.2

- domestic group

△ - kalango of amari - group

Case 3.3
Case 3.2 is an example of an established amari-group. In this case the amari-group was based on the domestic groups of the siblings and their children. This amari-group had also attracted 'outsiders' - a woman and her adult, but not yet married, son. The kalengo had 'sold' land to the woman and her son.

A final example (case 3.3) is instructive. In this case the kalengo and his wife had a barren marriage. They had adopted a young boy (who was about 5 in 1979/80) but, unlike the kalengo's in the previous cases, had no adult children from which to build the nucleus of a new amari-group. Instead the amari-group was established by attracting outsiders. The kalengo offered land to a New Guinea man who had married a Tabar woman (with an established family). They and the domestic groups of one of the woman's (two) married children formed the amari-group. It is interesting to note that the married daughter had also married a non-Tabar. By offering these 'outsiders' land the kalengo was able to establish a viable amari-group which had potential for growth (as the children of Domestic Group 2 married), without necessitating the support of his close kin.

The fact that competing demands are placed on children when they marry and find their own domestic groups should not be overlooked. Some couples respond to these demands by moving from one to the other. They may well return to the first hamlet some years later. Two factors appear pertinent to these choices: firstly, the availability of land, and secondly, the quality of interpersonal relations. When other viable alternatives exist couples are likely to move in response to conflict in their hamlet of residence.
Once I was talking to a prominent kalengo about ceremonial systems which have been described elsewhere in Melanesia. I spoke of the 'rope' of Moka and the kalengo said 'we do not have ropes we have ubina - roots - they are our bonds'. Social relatedness on Tabar, I argue, is not based simply on procreative substances; relatedness is firmly 'rooted' in the land.

I discuss Tabar ideas about conception in some detail in Chapter Four. There I show that both male and female procreative substances are necessary for conception. After conception the foetus feeds on its mother's blood and post-natally on her breast milk. The mother 'feeds' the child before it is weaned. After weaning a person is fed on food drawn from the wider environment. Most importantly, people are fed on food grown in gardens whose fertility is engaged by ancestral spirits. As Andrew Strathern has argued in respect of other ethnography "food creates substance, just as procreation does" (1973:29). That is, food is an important basis for bonds of social relatedness. On Tabar this is underpinned by the relationship of food to land whose fertility has been engaged both by the work of living human beings and ancestral spirits. Such food relates one not just to those with whom one shares it, but also to the group of ancestors who have enabled its growth, and themselves were nurtured on it, and are now rooted in it.

The notion of rootedness helps to explain an incident during my fieldwork which puzzled me at the time. I had been involved in the clearing of ground for a new garden and after some hours of effort was sitting resting with some under a large permanent tree. It was
a tree whose roots ran along the ground before going under the surface. As I sat chatting I was idly chipping at one of these roots with my bush knife. One of the women reacted with horror and demanded that I stop for, as she explained, it is taboo to cut the roots of the permanent trees in gardening land.

That kalengo attract others to join their amari group by giving them access to land is then significant because it provides a means of building close bonds of relatedness. As well as procreative substances, it is links to the land and the ancestral spirits which make it fecund which relates people. The medium of this relatedness is food. It is not surprising then that the immigrant family referred to in Case 3.3 refer to the founding kalengo as 'mother'. Ultimately they are all 'rooted' in the land which is their common nurturing mother.

Earlier in this chapter I referred to matambu and kivavundi. It is interesting to reflect on a third important kin group. This group is referred to as zotam (or ti-i-ti). A zotam is composed of the children of siblings. Its members are said to be 'one blood'. When the founding sibling set includes cross-sex sibs the zotam is composed of individuals who are, on the face of it, members of different matambu and kivavundi. The zotam is interesting because sibling sets are typically an important nucleus for amari-groups. Co-resident siblings and their children share important links of substance both because of their links through procreative substances, and, as importantly, their links to land.

That the moral and normative imperatives of such relationships - generalized reciprocity and 'free' support in the work of ritual and
other projects requiring assistance (such as the establishment of new gardens, house building, etc.) - 'match' those which exist between amari-group members is also significant.

It might be contended that the zotam is premised on the common relationship between siblingship and co-residence. Further, there is a cultural logic which suggests that 'outsiders' who become co-residents may be encapsulated into a zotam both normatively and within the logic of shared substance.

In his important article 'Kinship, Descent and Locality' Strathern suggests that we should "abandon the pro-genealogy view" (1973:33). This thesis supports that stand. I seek to show that because a significant factor of relatedness is rooted in land (through the medium of food) one's primary affiliations of relatedness may change over time. It is to this that ritual 'tugs of war', which are enacted in the na pinosi, the beriberi festival celebrating weaning, and at times in the Death Sequence, refer.

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The theme of relatedness will be explored and extended throughout the analysis of the Tabar ritual corpus which follows. In the next chapter for example I explore Tabar understandings of the process of procreation in some detail. That chapter is the first of three which focus on the beriberi sequence. Throughout the thesis I will refer again to seeds planted in this chapter.
PART TWO

THE RITUAL CORPUS
CHAPTER FOUR
PROCREATION AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE BERIBERI SEQUENCE

INTRODUCTION TO BERIBERI SEQUENCE

The next three chapters are concerned with the beriberi festivals, a sequence of four festivals which are concerned with the process of human procreation. Beriberi are women's festivals which dramatically celebrate transformations for a child and its mother in her first childbearing period. I argue that the beriberi sequence is a rite of passage for both the child and the primipara.

The first festival of the beriberi sequence is the bula (or zubia) and is often glossed 'the green feast'. That gloss refers to an important ingredient of the special food bundle which is made, and consumed, at the festival. The bula is held as soon as practical after a woman realizes that she is pregnant for the first time. It acts as a public announcement of the woman's pregnancy.

It is followed some months later by the celebration which I gloss the 'delivery festival'. This celebration begins straight after the child has been born. It enacts the beginning of the birthing period whose end is celebrated by the ga niu festival. The ga niu ('green coconut feast') is not celebrated until after the remnants of the umbilicus have finally detached from the child's body and the primipara's post-partum bleeding has ceased.

Up to two or three years later the ga pinoi is held. It takes place after the child is weaned and has begun to walk and talk.
In this chapter I explore Tabar conceptions of the process of human procreation and relate these ideas to the structure of the beriberi sequence. I have organized my exploration of Tabar ideas about procreation around a particular question. I ask why women who have borne more than two children are considered to be old. This question is provoked by Tabar birth order referents. In answering that question I am able to elucidate the major stages in the procreative process. Finally I show how the festivals of this sequence celebrate and enact the transitions between these stages.

This chapter is followed by one which presents an analytic description of the performance of the beriberi sequence. Except for my discussion of the qa pinosi the description is presented as case studies. The discussion of these festivals focuses on the dynamic tension between the two participating groups, the 'line' of the Mother and the 'line' of the Father, in beriberi performances. It also points up the important themes of food and sexuality which dominate these festivals, and explores the use of hamlet space and the treatment of persons and their bodies and property in these festivals.

In Chapter Six I extend the exploration of the dynamic tension between the participating groups. I do this by viewing beriberi as a comic ritual sequence. I argue that the dynamic tension between the two groups is concerned with their active competition for the primary affiliation of the child. Thus that chapter returns us to the issue of social relatedness which was introduced at the end of Chapter Three.
A COMMENTARY ON THE NATURE OF TABAR CORPOREALITY: WHY WOMEN WHO
HAVE BORN CHILDREN ARE 'OLD'

As Kitzinger notes of Jamaica, "childbirth provides ritual entry to
adult state" (1982:184) beriberi does for Tabar primiparas. At the
same time the developing child is also undergoing transitions which
are marked in the same rites de passage as the mother's status
transition.

The coming into being and development of the child, and the
transitions in status and corporeality of its mother are entailed by
each other. Tabars imply this connection linguistically in their
birth-order referents. A first-born child is referred to quite
simply as mi taziki voru - the first child, and the second child as
"the child who follows" - mi taziki vemura. Significant is the fact
that all subsequent children are referred to as "the child(ren)
borne of an old woman" - mi taziki taraziki lambiti vevene.

Young women on Tabar are characterized as having breasts which
'stand up' and skin which is firm and full of vitality. A
first-born child develops in a womb which is tight but each
pregnancy is believed to loosen the uterus. Old women are
categorized as being 'dried up', and having breasts which are
flaccid and fallen and skin which is dull and hangs loosely from
their frames. My informants occasionally noted the still youthful
bodies of sterile women and contrasted their physiques with those of
their age-mates who had borne children. Such comparisons were
presented as 'evidence' of the fact that childbearing causes
premature ageing. The point was sometimes pushed home in a general
comparison of the 'ageing' of women by contrast with men.
In a recent paper Gray suggests that such Melanesian beliefs about premature ageing in women accord with a variety of medical indices of ageing such as patterns of weight loss, skinfold thickness and so on (Gray, 1982 see especially pp. 95-99). She suggests that the appearance of premature ageing with rapid loss of weight and height may well be due to "maternal nutritional depletion" (Gray, 1982:98).

This observation relates broad cultural conceptions to biomedical data (cf. ibid:95) but it does not fully elucidate the culturally understood processes which lead to this conclusion. I explore this issue by first considering how the people of Tabar conceive of the process by which a child comes into being. Through a consideration of this question I am able to relate it to its implications for the mother.

* * * * *

Female informants said that they believe that it is intercourse which brings on the menses by 'opening the way'. This uterine blood is important for the nurturance of a foetus but not for its conception. Both genitor and genetrix provide the procreative substances - semen and vaginal secretions - necessary for the process of conception (cf. Wagner, 1983). Conception - that is the establishment of a substantial form - requires a series of acts of sexual intercourse which entail the production of these sexual secretions. These procreative substances travel up the vagina to the uterus where they lodge and accumulate after subsequent sexual encounters. Over a period of time the accumulating procreative substances gel and transform into a foetal form capable of housing an animating spirit.
Ideally there should not be too much of a time gap between ensuing deposits of procreative substance in the uterus. One female informant told me that should there be a long gap between sexual encounters then the process of foetal formation would be suspended during that time. The procreative substances do not induce growth - form is achieved by the principles of addition (to achieve sufficient quantity) and the gelling of these substances.

It should also be pointed out that it is not necessary that the semen come from a single donor. Indeed the following somewhat idiosyncratic comment of one informant underlies this point. It also suggests an awareness that semen varies in quality and that its 'strength' is important in the determination of the health and vitality of off-spring. My informant suggested that semen varies in colour from white to yellow and that this reflects its strength. Yellow semen she suggested is 'weak' and on its own would produce a weak baby. She went on to point out that when she was trying to conceive she thought that it was a good idea to get as wide a cross-section of available semen as possible so that she had a sufficient quantity of strong semen to ensure a strong and healthy child.

In the initial stage of pregnancy then, the foetus is formed through a process of cumulating and gelling procreative substances. Whilst it is clear that these substances are produced in sexual intercourse and cumulate in the uterus, the process of 'gelling' is not generally elucidated. I found it difficult to get commentary on this process but the following analogy suggested by one informant is instructive. My informant alluded to a relationship between conception and the maturation of coconuts. This is a useful example
because it throws light both on the process of gelling in conception while at the same time pointing up the cultural logic which underpins the significance of coconuts in the na niu. Coconuts have important symbolic value in Tabar ritual and epistemology. In Chapter Eight I point up a clear connection between coconuts and human beings which is established in the myth of the origin of the coconut. Similarly there are taboos on consuming coconuts in particular periods. Pertinent here is the taboo which prevents lactating women from consuming green coconuts. As one informant put it "Coconuts are always bearing fruit, we do not wish to be like them and constantly pregnant". It should also be borne in mind that the lifecycle of coconut palms is seen as being similar to that of human beings - they have long lives.

It is however the way that the juice of the coconut becomes a solid mass inside the nut which informs the process of gelling in human procreation. The nuts develop from flowers which appear on the end of spindly 'hands' growing atop the palm. From these flowers small green fruits appear. They develop into what Tabars refer to as niu (green edible coconuts). The niu is covered by a tough fibrous green husk. Inside, the shell is caramel brown and quite malleable when broken. It encases a refreshing clear juice and a layer of soft yoghurt-like flesh. If left to mature fully the green outer husk changes from lime green through yellow to a dark woody brown. At the same time the malleable caramel-coloured inner shell hardens and darkens. Internally the clear juice becomes cloudy white and subsequently transforms into a pithy inner bulb known in tok pisin as 'krew'. At the same time the soft flesh becomes harder and more substantial. Eventually a sprout grows through the eye of the nut, from the krew inside the nut. It is the clouding of the liquid and
its final transformation into the krew which is the instructive analogy for the way in which procreative substances 'gel' and become a substantial form.

In human reproduction the achievement of a substantial form (the foetus) is indicated by a number of physical changes apparent in the mother. The pregnant woman will cease to menstruate after the foetal form has been achieved. She will develop subtle changes in the glaze of her eyeballs and eventually her belly will swell to accommodate the growing child. These symptoms in Tabar terms, document that the second phase of the child's in utero development is already under way. In this second phase the foetus grows nourished by its mother's substance. It is her provision of this nourishment which causes the sheen in her eyes to change and her menses to cease, both indications of pregnancy.

As soon as the symptoms have been noted and interpreted correctly then intercourse should cease. It is said that the taboo on sexual intercourse after the achievement of a substantial form is important because ejaculated semen is a danger to that newly achieved foetal form. This points up the distinction between procreative and nurturant substances. Several female informants suggested that if ejaculated semen meets the foetal form it damages that form. They suggested that by examining the extent of the indentation of the fontanelle in a new-born babe's head it is possible to see the extent to which the mother engaged in sexual relations after the achievement of foetal form. Those informants said that the skull was dented as ejaculated semen 'struck' it in utero.
This aspect of the nature of semen in particular is further elucidated by reference to the reaction of some Tabar women to the question of whether Tabars engaged in oral sex. My informants said that these days some people may idiosyncratically do so, but that until someone brought some pornographic photographs to the Islands they had not known about the practice. Indeed they went on to ask what happened to the semen produced in this type of sexual intercourse, and most particularly whether the female participants swallow it. The comment 'if they do swallow the semen it must cause extreme stomach pains' was added to the question before I could answer it. That semen would cause problems for the digestive tract points up an important aspect of its nature - it cannot be digested, and would therefore cause pain.

Such comments provide us with important insights into the nature of procreative substances. They are not nurturing substances which can be absorbed by or incorporated (by breaking down) into substances with which they come into contact. It is the fact that their underlying principle is 'form' which defines them as procreative and indeed allows them to carry out this function. Procreative substances can exist in their own terms inside another corporeal form without being absorbed or incorporated by it. This is why if semen 'hits' another corporeal form it dents it rather than becoming a part of it. It is this 'resistance' and indivisibility of form which is I suggest the enabling principle of conception.

If procreative substances could be incorporated into another substance then the substantial formation of any 'new' corporeal form would be impossible. The process of conception is not growth in the Tabar sense. Rather it is the a priori process upon which growth is
contingent. It is only after form has been achieved that the foetus can begin to be 'fed' and nurtured in utero by its mother's substance.

This period of nurturance begins once conception has been achieved. The period entails the child feeding on and 'draining' the substance of its host - that is, its mother. Her bodily substance nurtures the child and thus enables its growth. Her blood and vital bodily substances are conveyed to the child through the umbilical cord - a necessary connection between two bodily forms (mother and child) whose integrity cannot be breached. As it feeds upon her blood the foetus clearly saps the vitality and substance of its host in order to grow. The increasing size of the child is an indication of the extent to which it is dependent on its mother for its development. Fatigue and breathlessness during pregnancy are seen as indications of the extent to which the child's development saps the vitality and very substance of its mother.

Fairly soon after the achievement of substantial form and the commencement of the period of in utero growth, the foetus is animated by its spirit which is then housed in its developing body. Throughout the period of in utero growth the child continues to be nurtured by its mother's blood, and thus to sap her corporeal vitality.

One of my informants suggested that the foetus develops floating in the waters of the uterus, the little finger of each hand closing off its nostrils so that it cannot breathe the waters in and drown before birth. As the period of pregnancy draws to its end, the child turns, head down, in preparation for birth.
These days a large number of children (on Mapua at least) are born in the Health Centre of the Catholic Mission with the assistance of hospital-trained midwives. When access to the mission is difficult or circumstances prevent travel, and certainly prior to the establishment of the Health Centre, babies were delivered in vanua vavi. There assistance is given by women who have already experienced childbirth, and women who have never had a child should not be present, lest they defecate when they themselves give birth.

Informants suggested that after the child is delivered and the umbilical cord cut, the blood and water, which had been nourishing and enclosing the foetus, becomes external bleeding. To stem this flow the mother is seated upon a bamboo bed under which the leaves of the baliu are placed on hot stones so that they begin to smoke. She is then positioned above them so that the smoke enters her vagina. Figure 4.1 makes this arrangement clear. This practice of 'mother roasting' was intended to stem this debilitating flow. Of immediate concern is post-partum bleeding, but it is said that the smoke rising up the woman's vagina dries up the blood and seals the area and thus ideally has the advantage of delaying the reassertion of menstruation.

![Figure 4.1: 'Mother smoking' to stem post-partum bleeding](image-url)
Delivery in a sense liberates both the mother and the child and transforms the nature of the relationship. Firstly, the child is removed from inside its mother and thus ceases to displace her form. Secondly, its mode of nurturance changes to one which is similarly derived from the mother. Previously the child had been nurtured in utero on its mother's blood through the umbilical cord. After delivery the process is one in which the child participates in a more direct fashion, for it suckles at her breast.

It is significant to note that after the cutting of the umbilicus the child's face should be rubbed with the heated baliu leaf. These leaves sprout from the cuttings which are used for the uprights which hold the fence of the amari in place. They are heated on the vavi and a 'big woman' (guzu vevene - literally 'mouth women') rubs them over the babe's face to 'strengthen its features'. Informants said that the rubbing of baliu on the child's face makes the face develop well and strengthens its skin and features. It gives the child an important aspect of individuality.

The significance of the fact that these leaves are taken from the boundary between 'male' and 'female' space should not be lost. In my discussion of the Death Sequence I note that baliu are rubbed on the skin of those who are believed to be dying. Thus I will argue that baliu marks the boundary of an individual's here and now existence as well as that between male- and female-lived space.

It is also said that soon after the birth the mother should have taken some cooked taro into her mouth and fed some of the masticated tuber to the new babe. As I noted in Chapter Two, little taro is successfully grown on Tabar these days because of the decimation of
the taro blight. Until the blight, however, taro was the staple crop of the Islands. When Tabars talk about taro in 'tok pisin' they indicate its conceptual importance in everyday life and ritual by referring to it as 'our bone and strength' (bun belong mipela). Its place in the diet has largely been taken by sweet potato and I was told that this tuber may be given in this manner to a newly delivered babe.

Apart from this important cultural gesture of introducing the babe to 'real' food at birth, the mother remains for some months the sole source of its sustenance through her breast milk. The quality of her milk is important for the child's development, health and vitality. This point can be elucidated by reference to the case of a mentally retarded woman who bore a child which was also retarded. Both have associated deformity in their hands and feet, and bulging eyes. The mother has never been married and her daughter is described as a 'child of the bush'. Women told me that when the daughter was delivered the babe was taken from her mother and given to a wet nurse to feed. It was hoped that the less the child derived its substance from its 'abnormal' mother the more chance she had of being normal. The fact that the child was eventually seen to be similarly afflicted thus was used to explain how important the mother's in utero contribution is to the corporeality of the child.

As a child gets older it is gradually introduced to solid foods, though breast feeding may continue for as long as two or three years. These foods are generally derived from gardens which the mother has planted and harvested. Sexual intercourse should not take place for as long as the mother continues to breast feed her baby for this is said to 'cook the child's brain'.
Like the mother's blood which nurtures the child in utero, breast milk is also the mother's own substance, and, as the child's in utero development sapped its mother's energy because it fed upon her very substance so too does lactation sap her. Until it is weaned a child's growth and development is dependent upon its mother's substance.

When a child is walking and talking it may be weaned. Sometimes this happens without trauma, though I did see one child 'forcibly' weaned. In that case the mother declared that she was fed up with her son who, she said, constantly whined for her breast and never gave her a moments peace. She left the child (then aged about eighteen months) with her mother for several days and went to another hamlet until he 'stopped crying for her breast'.

It is only after the child is weaned that the woman's fertility should be re-engaged and the process of reproduction begun again. This issue is pointed up by reference to the case of a woman who conceived a second child while the first was still a babe in arms. Some women told me that they were scandalized by this but added 'what can be done with young people today, all they think about is sex', and then noted that the woman would 'pay' for this lack of restraint. As the pregnancy progressed older women watched the state of the young mother's health critically and noted from time to time just how 'run down' she was looking since the second pregnancy. There was always the implication that the second child (for whose birth I was not present) would no doubt be a weakling.

The notion that children should be spaced for their own and their mother's sake is one which receives active reinforcement from the
Health Care Services provided by the State and the Missions. While I was at Tabar a Health 'patrol' brought moving pictures about family planning which had Tok Pisin dialogue to the Islands. They were shown at the Mission and in several villages (with the aid of a portable generator). These films provoked much discussion (especially in Catholic villages where the ethics of contraception were actively debated by neighbours).

To summarize, we have found that there are four critical stages in Tabar conceptions of child development. Firstly, I have noted that a substantial form must be established through successive acts of sexual intercourse. The procreative substances accumulate and gel and become the substantial form. In the second stage the child is nurtured _in utero_ by its mother's blood. Her corporeal substance is the basis of this development. The child is then born. The third stage is its _ex utero_ existence in which it initially completely, but progressively less, derives its nurturance from its mother's breast milk. Again it grows on its mother's bodily substance. Finally, the child is weaned and henceforth, is nurtured by food derived from the wider environment. This food is broken down in the digestive tract and becomes blood, bone and tissue.

Figure 4.2 summarizes this process in respect of the establishment of form, important transitions and the primary mode of nurturance.

In the process of this discussion we have resolved the problem of why women who have borne more than two children are considered to be 'old'. They age because they give their bodily substance to their offspring and in the process undermine the vitality of their own corporeality. Thus their flesh loses its firmness, their skin its
STAGE | TRANSITION | CONTINGENT UPON
--- | --- | ---
1. Establishment of substantial form | CONCEPTION (growth) | successive and cumulating deposits of procreative substances in sexual intercourse
2. in utero development | BIRTH | the nurturance of mother's blood
3. ex utero development(a) | | a) the nurturance of mother's breast milk
4. ex utero(b) | WEANING | b) nurturance by food derived from the wider environment

Figure 4.2: Major stages in the process of early child development

sheen, their breasts firmness. The distinction between a sterile woman and her age-mates with offspring is obvious to anyone who looks at them. The sterile woman still retains firm up-turned breasts, she appears 'fatter' and faster. Her age-mates (by the time they have weaned their second child), have developed long pendulous breasts and their bodies have lost the firmness which indicates their vitality. All grow old in Tabar terms because they work, and because ageing is a natural irrevocable process. Women who bear children do so at a rate which is accelerated by the very facts of nurturance, for they are drained in the process by which their offspring grow.

This issue is not however the primary motivation for this chapter. Rather, it has been a catalyst which has allowed the exploration of the phases which Tabars understand are entailed in child development. Now that this process has been explored the larger issue I wish to examine is the relationship of the rituals of child development to this culturally conceived process. I will go on to
show how the major transitions between the phases we have identified are enacted and elucidated in the beriberi sequence.

The beriberi festivals are ordered in the following way:

1. The Bula, known in tok pisin as the 'kaikai kumu' (green vegetable feast) takes place after the woman becomes aware that she is pregnant for the first time.

2. The delivery festival takes place as soon after delivery as possible, usually within the hour.

3. The na niu takes place after the remnants of the umbilicus have finally detached from the child's body. This is also a point after which the mother's postpartum bleeding will, in the normal course of events, have ceased.

4. The na pigosi takes place after the child is walking and talking, that is, in Tabar terms, after it has been weaned.

I argue that these festivals take place at critical points of transition between the phases of child development outlined above. The Bula enacts the transition between the establishment of substantial form and the period during which the foetus develops in utero, nurtured on its mother's blood. The 'Delivery Festival' celebrates the end of the child's in utero development and the beginning of its 'here and now' human existence, and, as I will elaborate below, the beginning of the 'birthing process'. The na niu enacts the ending of the 'birthing process' (and the beginning of the period during which the child will be nurtured on its mother's breast milk) and the na pigosi the transition from nurturance on breast milk to nurturance on everyday foods.
I have foreshadowed a discussion of the 'delivery' and na niu festivals as the two ends of the 'birthing' process. Unlike the other phases in the process mentioned above this issue has not been well preaced in the preceding discussion. Pivotal is the practice of 'mother smoking' mentioned above. This is critical because it points to the cultural concern with post-partum bleeding. It should be coupled with the fact that at birth the child's umbilicus is severed, but that its remnants do not finally detach for some days. It is the umbilicus which connected the form of the mother and child before delivery and which was the avenue through which the child received the nurturance of its mother's blood. The fact that the mother 'continues' to bleed after the birth, and that the child still bears a physical remnant of this in utero process, point to the processual nature of birth in Tabar cultural logic. The fact that there is a festival which takes place quite explicitly after the remnants of this connection have disappeared underlines this point. Birth is an extended process for both the mother and the child. It begins with the labour of delivery and ends when the child loses its direct link with its in utero existence and the mother's womb has sealed and ceased to bleed.

Thus we can now relate the beriberi sequence to the major phases, as they are culturally conceived, of early child development. These are summarized in Figure 4.3.

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In this thesis I will argue that the larger reproduction of the Tabar cosmos is enabled through the enactment of ritual by living members of the community. I will also argue that the cultural understandings of the nature of the world in which they live are made available to participants and elaborated by them in the context
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FESTIVAL GLOSS</th>
<th>CONTINGENT UPON</th>
<th>TRANSITION(S) CELEBRATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. bu la</td>
<td>gelling of procreative substances in utero</td>
<td>conception to enlivened in utero growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. delivery</td>
<td>delivery</td>
<td>beginnings of birthing process (in utero to ex utero; nurturance from mothers blood to mothers milk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ga niu</td>
<td>detachment of umbilicus</td>
<td>end of birthing process; nurturance on mothers milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>though food from wider environment will be gradually introduced and increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ga piposi</td>
<td>weaning</td>
<td>end of direct nurturance by the mother. Child is now nurtured solely on food derived from the wider environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 4.3: The relationship between beriberi festivals and stages in early child development
of the rites. In respect of *beriberi* the next chapter will explore specific aspects of knowledge about their world and the 'facts of life' which are brought into the open for reflection and elaboration in these ritual dramas. Thus far I have sought to establish the direct relationship of the *beriberi* sequence to culturally understood phases in early child development. It is probable that some of the first intimations which young Tabars gain about the nature of this process are received as they first view these ritual dramas and the talk which surrounds them. That the performative themes of these ritual dramas are sexuality (an issue which will be particularly focused upon in our discussion of the sequence as comic ritual dramas) and food, does not escape one in their enactment. It is comedy as the dynamic medium of performance which allows and encourages elaboration of the themes and heightens reflection upon them. Meaning in Tabar ritual, and particularly in the *beriberi* sequence, is actively constituted by the very doing as well as in the underlying structures such as the one I have just pointed to.

The next two chapters examine the 'doing' of these rituals in some detail.
In Chapter Four I related the structure of the four beriberi festivals to cultural understandings of the process of human procreation. In this chapter I look more closely at the four festivals which make up the sequence. The chapter presents an analytic description of each of the festivals. The material for the bula, delivery and na niu festivals is presented through case studies. My discussion of na piposi, the festival which takes place after weaning, is based solely on informants accounts (primarily those of women) because I have never seen one of these festivals myself.

My analysis of the Tabar ritual corpus is a delicate task. Some issues are developed in a cumulating fashion as the thesis progresses. In this chapter for example, I am able to relate the view of the environment, presented in Chapter Three, to aspects of ritual practice. My discussion of the bula for instance, pays particular attention to the composition of the food bundle which is central to that festival. I am able to relate the origins of the bundle's ingredients and their placement within it to the view of the environment presented earlier. Bula as I showed in the previous chapter celebrates the achievement of substantial form and the enlivening of its spirit. It may be considered a decisive festival for the metaphysical and corporeal development of the individual. I
am later able to relate similar food bundles made for decisive festivals in both the Death and Malanga sequence.

In this chapter I also lay important groundwork for other analyses taken up as the thesis unfolds. In my discussion of beriberi here I point up the way in which gender, hamlet space and structures, and the bodies of participants are treated in these festivals. In the beriberi festivals we find that women 'invade' the 'male' space of the amari and may bodily eject men from it. Later, in my discussion of the Death Sequence, I will show that women enter the amari dormitory in order to 'carry' the body there, while men are displaced into the grounds of the enclosure. At malanga festivals the fence of the amari is heightened in order to conceal the making of the sculpture from those outside. Moreover, an additional barrier is constructed inside the enclosure to separate 'inside' and 'outside' men. These barriers stand until ultimately they are each dismantled in turn and the malanga sculpture revealed to 'outside' men and finally women, who then enter the amari. Later in the thesis I will be able to relate the treatment of these boundaries and space to the rites of passage and ontological states of the subjects of the sequences.

The issue of social relatedness, introduced in Chapter Three is also extended in the discussion of the beriberi festivals. Every beriberi performance entails the participation of two groups. They are described as the Mothers 'line' or the Fathers 'line'. In terms of matambu/kivavundi affiliations these 'lines' are heterogeneous. Individuals determine their affiliation for any festival by calculating their links to the primipara and her child. It is not unusual for individuals acting as Fathers (for instance) at one
festival to be members of opposing groups at the festivals for another primipara and her child.

These groups display quite contrasting attitudes in all beriberi festivals, bar the ga pigosi. At the first three festivals of the sequence Fathers mount comic attack on the bodily integrity, property and space of the Mothers 'line'. Mothers by contrast do not respond to these attacks and refuse to recognize their comedy. This gives these festivals a critical dynamic tension. I argue in Chapter Six that this dynamic tension is concerned with the competition between these two groups for the primary affiliation of the child. The fact that the child's affiliation is never a foregone conclusion after weaning is played out in the 'tug of war' which is the highlight of the ga pigosi. The issue of social relatedness is finally extended in my discussion of the 'tug of war' which may arise in the Death Sequence in the battle between groups for the privilege to bury a deceased person.

* * * *

Throughout the account of the beriberi festivals I shall refer to the dance which characterizes these celebrations as the standard beriberi dance. In its standard form this dance is performed upright. The dancer stands with her feet apart, knees bent and thrusts her pelvis back and forth. She may jump forward on both feet at the same time. The tempo of this dance is related to that of the songs which accompany it. Like the dance, the songs are also seen to parody sex and sexual intercourse. There are occasions when these standard forms of the dance and songs are transformed. Those transformations are taken up in detail in Chapter Six. I also take up the comedy which is the pivot upon which all beriberi performances turn. Beriberi is comic ritual. Comic action and
laughter characterize all beriberi festivals. Whilst the comedic nature of beriberi is explored most fully in Chapter Six, it should be constantly borne in mind in the reading of the accounts of the festivals presented here.

One final note is important. In the accounts which follow I generally distinguish between the groups participating by use of the terms 'Mothers' and 'Fathers'. For the most part the actors in beriberi performances are women. Thus unless the terms 'Mothers' and 'Fathers' are qualified to the contrary, they refer to women of the Mothers 'line' or women of the Fathers 'line'.

In this chapter I discuss the festivals through case studies.

1. THE BULA

The 'first' of the beriberi festivals is the bula. It is held after a girl realises that she is pregnant and marks the transition from the process of conception to the period of in utero development during which the child is nurtured on its mother's blood. Female informants suggested to me that the primipara will normally tell her father rather than her husband that she is pregnant and it is the bula given by the Father's group which makes this fact public knowledge.

The preparations commence in advance of the event. In the case of the bula these advanced preparations are not prolonged and they may not commence until the day before the feast when shellfish (pe'u and paro'i) and crabs (raku) are collected by women of the Father's
group. In the case which I will here use as the major example the crabs were collected by the primipara's FZD. The vegetables required for the feast, yams (zazo) and manioc ('tapiok' in tok pisin - this is not an indigenous plant) may be harvested on the afternoon of the preceding day, but more commonly they are gathered from gardens on the morning of the feast when greens (e.g., zamane, kalawi and the introduced abika) are also collected. For the most part these early preparations are done by individuals on their own, and this fact points up a distinction between this stage in the preparations and the preparations which are done with others at the host hamlet.

It is on the day of the feast that women of the Father's group gather together in one or more vanua vavi (hearth houses) of their group in the host hamlet. In the case I take up here the primipara had been brought up by her FB and his wife after the death of her own father when she was young. At the time of this festival the FBW had since died. In this case the host vanua vavi's were those of the primipara's FZ and FZD.

It is in the vanua vavi that the Fathers women peel and slice the tubers which they will later cook in the vavi (stone oven). At this time the back shell of the crabs which have been collected for the purpose are opened and cleaned. The cavity is then crammed with freshly grated coconut flesh. Indeed during this time the vavi itself is prepared and some women sing and dance in the standard beriberi fashion inside the vanua vavi. These preparations are accompanied by the mirth of joking, singing and dancing.
At this Bula the FB (who was the primipara's adoptive 'F' - see Genealogy 5.1) played an important role. Initially he sat in the ino mono (hamlet plaza) adjacent to the two host vanua vavis (which were next to each other) with his ZS (whose mother's house was one of the two 'host' houses).

These two men prepared the broad-leafed gorigori (a tall type of ginger - 'Alpinia') as a wrapper for the festival's food-bundle. To do this they 'sewed' the leaves together using a spine of a coconut frond, pushing the spine through at intervals in a kind of loose tacking stitch and breaking off the spine as each stitch was made. Later the women brought the foods they had prepared together inside the vanua vavi's to him (the FB/F').

Genealogy 5.1: Important participants in bula example
1- vana vavi of F2
2- vana vavi of F3Da
X-area where FB/F packed the bula bundle

Figure 5.1: Layout of relevant hamlet space for bula example

Figure 5.2: A diagramatic representation of the bula-bundle in the example case
In this case the food-bundle was composed of a layer of banana leaves (laid on the gorigori wrapper) and above them a layer of the green abika; a layer of yams (cut lengthwise) the 'greased' crabs and whole fish. Each layer was covered with a sprinkling of scrapped coconut. A stone (wrapped in a banana leaf) was placed in the bundle to ensure that the food cooked evenly. The food was brought to the FB/'F' by his sister and it was he who arranged it and then with the help of his son wrapped and secured it with vines. The bundle was cooked in his ZD house (see Figure 5.1),

There are a number of distinctive features of this episode of the festival. Firstly, I know of no other festival at which men prepare gorigori wrappers in the plaza in front of vanua vavi. At other feasts they do so inside the amari enclosure. Secondly, men do not usually handle uncooked vegetable/tuber foods, let alone arrange them for cooking. At death feasts for example, it is women who 'cross boundaries' and go into the amari enclosure where they arrange a food bundle of greens, yams and fish.

After the primiparas 'F' had packed the bundle it was carried inside the vanua vavi and placed centrally in the vavi (stone oven) in which other food (sweet potato and cakes of manioc) and a turtle was cooked. As the vavi was prepared and the food cooked, women of the Father's group sang, danced and joked in characteristic beriberi fashion. While turtle is not recognized as a bula food it is very commonly cooked at beriberi festivals. Indeed turtles often become the subject of comic drama and joking in these contexts. Such was the case on the day of this particular case. Before it was killed FZD(b) danced with it held in front of her as a phallus and then 'drove' it around the plaza in front of the vanua vavi chanting (in
When I asked my neighbours about this episode they stressed that turtles are not a bula food, as the contents of the food-bundle are. They are however a beriberi 'joke' because they are associated with marathon-like sexual performance. My neighbour told me how turtles stay locked in sexual intercourse for enormous periods of time - certainly many hours, perhaps even two or three days. Often, she told me, they wash up onto the shore locked in their long embrace. So, whilst they are not cooked in the bula-bundle, but rather outside it, the clear connotations of sexual prowess and vigour are played upon when they are brought to such a festival.

As I shall discuss in detail in Chapter Six the vavi becomes a focus of comedic performance at its transformative moments - when the fire is lit, when the odour of the food indicates the food is cooking, and when the food is taken out. This performative focus is clearly present at bula.

When it is cooked the host women dance aggressively carrying the bundle from the vanua vavi, where it has been cooked, to the amari, where men of the Mother's group sit awaiting their feast. In the case I focus on here the primipara's brother opened the bundle and filled his sister's plate with a selection of its contents. At that point she withdrew and took her bowl to where the other women were now sitting just outside the amari fence, and began to eat it.

When she had left the men gathered around the bundle and began eating. Before they had quite finished women of the Father's group came inside, 'stole' the remaining food and attacked the men by hitting them with sticks and pouring water over them.
The primipara's brother and her FBS/'B' were particularly attacked and rubbed by the greasy remains of the bundle; FZD(b) grabbed one of the men from the Mother's group and carried him bodily to the water's edge and threw him into the water. This aggressive action directed at the men is accepted passively by the men. By contrast the women convulse with laughter as they enter the amari and attack the men.

This flurry of activity soon died down, the bula was over and people started moving off.

DISCUSSION

There are several aspects of the bula which can profitably be discussed here. I focus on a) the nature of the bula bundle itself; b) the movement of men and women across hamlet space; and c) the treatment of men by women in the performance of this festival.

(A) The Bula Bundle

In Chapter Three I sought to outline the importance of the relationship between people and place in Tabar. This discussion builds from the culturally constructed ordering of the zones of the environment (see particularly Figure 3.3). Here I relate the ingredients of the bula bundle, and their arrangement within it, to those environmental zones.

Similar bundles are made at festivals in both the Death and Malanga sequences. Thus this analysis contributes to the elucidation of the Tabar ritual corpus both because it is a primary focus in this
particular festival, and because it can be related to festivals in each of the other sequences. I suggest that the ingredients of these bundles, and their arrangement within them, reflect the cultural ordering of the environment, and conceptually cross the 'boundaries' between or within those zones. I then show that they are made in ceremonies at which crucial corporeal and metaphysical transitions in those who are the subject of the ceremonies are being celebrated. I have shown (in Chapter Four) that the bula celebrates the beginning of the process of corporeal growth and the gaining of an enlivening spirit in respect of the foetus.

The ingredients of the bula bundle are normally fish, crabs, shellfish, yam and greens such as abika. Thus the foods can be grouped most crudely according to whether they are of land or marine origin. The fish included in the bundle are caught at the edge of the reef in the margin between the aemate and the deep water of the rama mi maketo. By contrast both crabs and shellfish inhabit the margins between land the sea within the coastal fringe. Crabs are crustaceans which move on the surface between land and sea. Shellfish (which were not part of the bundle described above but, according to informants, should have been) are those associated with mangrove swamp areas. They are found buried in the mud of the swamp, areas which are quintessentially between land and sea.

Greens too are ambiguous for they are both cultivated in gardens and grow 'wild'. In the case I have referred to the greens (abika) were harvested from gardens. I do not know if it is possible to use 'wild' greens in a bula bundle. Nor am I clear whether the yams used were 'wild' or cultivated. It is possible that the fact that both yams and greens are cultivated both in gardens and grow 'wild',
may be important. Of clear significance is the fact that yams are cut, uncharacteristically, lengthwise.

Clearly fish are under water creatures, shellfish are found below the surface and crabs cross the margin between land and sea on the surface. Similarly yam tubers grow under ground, greens sprout above the surface. Thus as well as their locations in reference to the environmental zones represented in Figure 3.3 these ingredients have particular locations above or below the surface.

In Figure 5.3 I have added this dimension to the scheme presented in Figure 3.3. It allows the location of the bula ingredients to be more clearly perceived. Those locations are presented in Figure 5.4.

Thus we can see that the ingredients of the bula bundle take us through important dimensions of the coastal fringe and its margins with both deep waters and deep forest being located both above and below the surface. Indeed in their placement within the bundle itself (refer to Figure 5.2) the ingredient placed on the bottom of the bundle is abika and the top layer fish. Thus we find that as the Figure 5.4 can be read from left to right so it parallels the organization of the bundle itself from bottom to top.

Within the bundle there is a further ingredient which marks the margin of each layer - grated coconuts. Coconut, as I have already indicated and will show in greater detail later, is associated with procreative substances and fecundity. It is mature coconuts (those with hardened flesh) which are used here in grated form. In the process of cooking these gratings 'grease' the food and
simultaneously flavour every other ingredient. Although the use of coconut in this way is a common aspect of everyday cooking, its significance here should not be lost. Coconut marks each layer and when the bundle is cooked, it **transcends** and imbues each layer with its grease and flavour. It may be argued then that each layer is imbued with the fecundity of coconut.

Whilst each ingredient has form before cooking, that form is progressively undermined in the process of cooking. This, I would argue, is the inverse of the process of conception in which substantial form is established. At the same time the process of cooking is like (and a part of) the process of digestion in which the form of food is progressively broken down and can therefore come to nourish another form.

(B) Procession Across Hamlet Space

The movement of people across the space of the hamlet in the course of the festivals is also significant. Of particular importance is the fact that (1) the 'F' 'lays' (prepares) the bundle neither in the **amari** nor in the **vanua vavi** but rather in the **ino mono** (hamlet plaza) adjacent to the **vanua vavi**; (2) after it is cooked (in a **vanua vavi**) the women carry the bundle from the **vanua vavi** into the **amari** enclosure; (3) before the men have finished eating the women as a group invade the **amari** enclosure and steal and eat the remains of the men's feast; (4) that women may usurp men from their space and ultimately throw them across the fence into the bush or sea.

When the festival begins women are in the **vanua vavi**, men in the **amari**. As the festival proceeds this arrangement is altered and transformed as indicated in Figure 5.5.
Figure 5.3: Schematic representation of the Tabar environment

Figure 5.4: Locating the ingredients of the bula-bundle
Figure 5.5: Schematic representation of the spatial organization of men and women in the course of the bula
Thus in the preparations for the festival a man, generally the primipara's father, prepares the bula bundle in the public area of the ino mono adjacent to the host vanua vavi. This is an area of visible domestic space in which men and women may often sit together in the evenings. The father does not enter the vanua vavi in which the bundle will be cooked. Women carry the ingredients to him and later carry away the packed bundle.

By contrast, women enter the male domain of the amari at two major points in the festival. On the first they dance aggressively along the ino mono with the bundle and cross the amari's fence to place it before the men (who sit in front of the mouth of the dormitory). Later, as the men are still eating they enter again to attack and dominate the men and steal the remaining food. Some men, particularly MB's, are bodily lifted by the women and thrown out of the amari area. These men are subject to a dramatic dislocation as they are thrown from the male domain of the amari into the low bush or reef waters on the margins of hamlet space.

(C) The Treatment of Men's Bodies

At bula women of the Father's group attack men of the Mother's group. The bodily boundaries of all the Mother's men are disturbed. Most commonly the women slap their backs and shoulders with sticks, or they pour water over their head and shoulders or slap cold ashes on them. They may also rub their bodies with the greasy remains of their meal. Some men, particularly brothers of the primipara, are picked up and thrown out of the amari into the surrounding bush or the shallow waters of the bush.
Three points are important here. Firstly, the men are attacked before they have finished eating their meal. Indeed the attacking women 'steal' food they may be about to put into their mouths. Thus at a festival at which relatedness is celebrated one group of men is denied full access to an important source of relatedness - food. It is women of the Father's group who steal that food and consume it.

Secondly, in their attacks, the women 'play with' the men's bodily boundaries. They hit their bare skin or they coat them with the remains of food (which would normally be eaten by dogs or thrown away). They may also coat them with other 'cold', non-nurturant substances - water or ashes. Thus on the one hand this comic attention to men's bodies may be seen to be asserting their bodily integrity and to be highlighting their bodily boundaries, on the other hand it is attention which is 'cold' and non-nurturing.

One final point remains. The men passively accept these attacks. They do not fight back. Nor, significantly, do they join in the mirth and laughter of their attackers. This is an aspect of _beriberi_ performance which I take up in detail in Chapter Six. In Chapter Six I address the question: if _beriberi_ is a rite of rebellion (see Gluckman, 1954) who has the last laugh? In the _beriberi_ comedy and comic attacks of the first three _beriberi_ festivals there is always a clear distinction between the laughing, aggressive 'line' of comedians, and the passive, non-reactive 'line' who appear to be the victims of their comedy. The performative stances of these two groups gives each of these _beriberi_ festivals a particular dynamic tension. I shall argue in Chapter Six that this dynamic tension relates to competing bids for the affiliation of the child.
THE DELIVERY FESTIVAL

While it is obvious that some planning goes into the other beriberi festivals the Delivery Celebration is often a more spontaneous event simply because it takes place immediately following delivery, and these come more or less in their own time. The account which follows is based on one such event in which I was involved. It took place following the delivery of the child whose conception was celebrated in the bula discussed above.

The child was born at the Mission Health Centre, delivered by the trained midwives there. For much of the labour the primipara's FZ (see Genealogy 5.1) and FBS/'B'W were present at the Centre. I returned to their hamlet from the Health Centre only a short time before the child was born and did not see the immediate response to the birth. Very soon after it, however, the FZ and FBS/'B'W returned to the hamlet. As they reached the edge of the hamlet space they broke into singing and dancing in the beriberi fashion. They had already rubbed white powder (lime and talcum powder are now interchangeable for these purposes) on their faces and placed aromatic leaves in their hair. This beriberi behaviour signalled to those in the hamlet that the babe had been delivered.

It happened that at this time the primipara's FB/'F' and his son (the husband of one of these women) were preparing sago leaves for thatch and were seated on the hamlet plaza. The two dancing women advanced to where they sat, pausing on the way only to fill bottles with water at the water tank. They doused the FBS/'B' with water, pouring it over his head and rubbing it into his face. He responded with a rather passive smile.
But he was not the only 'victim' of the celebration. The women had already ascertained that the primipara's real brother was off for the day making sago on the next island. Other women had already gone to their home hamlets to fetch their canoes for the journey. These two women had come back for this purpose as well and after they had doused the FBS/B we left to rendezvous with the others. As our canoe sighted them, they began singing and moving in tempo in their canoes. As we drew closer it became obvious that all had gone to some trouble with their decorations. All had white powder on their faces and leaves as well as aromatic flowers were hung from their necks in a sort of wreath and placed in their hair. There was much singing and joking as we paddled. Finally we beached our canoes by those of the sago-working party and proceeded on foot. The 'advance' with its furtive glances, muffled giggles and low-profile stalking walks seemed to me at the time to be some comic take-off of a 'big game hunt'. There was great concern that we surprise the brother and his party and take them unawares, but this concern had merely muffled the mirth and festive attitude of my companions.

As we got within hearing distance of the working party some of the women grabbed for the stems of gorigori to use as spears and 'whips'. Suddenly the women of my party set off whooping loudly. By the time I had gathered myself and crossed the stream which now separated us I missed seeing the women 'fighting' the brother. I did get there in time to see him (still seated where he was pounding out the pith of the sago tree with a mallet) covered in pith which the women had rubbed into his head and shoulders. By this time too, they were singing and dancing enthusiastically 'at' him, whipping him with their gorigori stems, and jumping into the air as they
danced. Some of our 'raiding' party then left to raid the nearby betal grove of a 'MB'. They pillaged his betel nuts and peppers and then returned victoriously to where the sago work was being resumed. Together we raiders returned to our home hamlets.

The trip back was accompanied by more singing and laughing recollections of what had transpired on the 'raid'. I asked the women why they must go and attack the new babe's MB and was told "because this child is his replacement".

It appears that the actual father may also be attacked. In the case discussed here the father of the child was not on the island at the time of the delivery. It is significant however that of the two cases I have heard of when a father (rather than a B/MB) had been 'attacked', were cases where the primipara was not a Tabar woman, and thus her brothers were not around to be attacked. There is no necessity that such cases should be seen as exceptional. In terms of the argument I shall make in respect of social relatedness and beriberi later in this thesis, attacks upon fathers, especially where the woman is living with him on his land, should not be surprising. However it is the joyous celebratory attacks on the man or men who stand in such relationships to the primipara and her child which are the focus and object of this festival.

The Delivery Celebration shares with the bula, and as we will see the na niu, the attacks on the bodily boundaries of significant men (especially MB's) of the primipara's 'line'. Whilst the attacking women often decorate their faces with 'hot' white powder (lime or its substitute) and sexually 'alluring' flowers and aromatic leaves, they coat the men's bodies with 'cold' substances like water or in
this case raw sago pith. Thus it is hot, 'sexually' active women who attack the passive men with cooling substances. The men do not respond to these attacks on their persons and property.

In the week after the birth women who stand in the relationship of FZ may visit the mother and child and give the child a name and a strand of shellmoney (re). This, I would suggest, is highly significant, for while an individual may have more than one name, names are nevertheless highly important personal attributes. In my experience the giver of a name and those closely associated with the donor will call that individual by that name for life. One woman I know who spends time with both her maternal and paternal relatives is known by a different name in each context. This is not at all uncommon. Indeed in addition to the names given by one's relatives at birth, most children are also given a 'christian' name when they are christened. This is often the name used in schools or given to visiting Europeans and government officers. What is significant for this discussion is that each name embodies a relationship with those who gave it and the context in which it was given. Names are not simply the possessions of individuals but they are symbols of important relationships with others and attitudes to the world.

3. THE QA NIU

QA NIU are the festivals which take place after the remnants of the umbilicus have detached from the child's body. They therefore take place up to a month after delivery. Except when noted, all references to the activity of Fathers or Mothers should be read as women from those groups.
This account is drawn from a festival held in a neighbouring village. I came to the festival with a group of Fathers from hamlets other than that hosting the celebration. On the way these women decorated themselves with aromatic leaves and flowers, some made girdles of ginger stems (with the root intact), a couple of women took a pod of a plant containing beads which can be used as red paint and smeared it across their bellies and pubic hair, and some women had come wearing shorts. Some of the women carried men's baskets, and all the while, as these preparations were being made en route, the women sang, danced and joked. When we reached the hamlets of others who came and joined us, the women of my party danced 'at' them in the characteristic beriberi style.

When we approached the host hamlet our party set up a loud and challenging display of dancing and singing at the edge of the hamlet space. Fathers who were residents of the host hamlet and those who had arrived there already took up the challenge and came dancing and singing to meet us. As the two groups got close, the group I was with let go a volley of cocopods and gorigori stem 'spears' which the other Fathers responded to in kind. Then the two groups turned united and moved to the host vanua vavi, continuing as they went with their singing and dancing.

Some of the Fathers then went into the amari where some of the men were sitting. The primipara's brother was there and in addition to the abuse which the women heaped on his fellows, they took cold ashes from the dormitory's fire and rubbed it over his head and shoulders, dancing and singing as they went. They then returned to the area of the host vanua vavi where much of the day's action was focused. This was the only example of women entering the amari at
this stage of a na niu, though we shall see later that this always occurs at a later point in the festival.

In the period which follows this it is only women and children who are in the vicinity of the host vanua vavi's. The women of the Mother's Group prepared the food and the vavi. Those preparing food, which is generally of the 'everyday' variety albeit in larger quantities, peel the sweet potatoes and wrap them in banana leaves for cooking. Other Mothers not involved in these preparations sat outside the vanua vavi on the bench seat which ran its length and passively watched the antics of the Fathers.

During this time the Fathers may dance 'at' each other singly or in groups, and 'at' Mothers. A common sight is for a Father to dance up to a particular Mother, raise her leg and place it on the seat beside the women and thrusting her vagina at her ask her to 'take a look'. Some of the Mothers who have been singled out in this way ignore the gesture, others may lift the laplap and make a disinterested examination. What is significant however is that Mothers at a na niu for the most part adopt a disinterested attitude to the proceedings while the Fathers make merry with great gusto.

Inside the vanua vavi some of the Father's group presented the child with strings of shellmoney, and some, like FZ in the preceding weeks and days, also bestowed on it a name. It is significant that there are no further references to the mother or child in this discussion, for at the end of this period of attention they left the area. This occurred at each performance of the na niu I saw. When the gifts of shellmoney had been made there was no particular focus of activity except in the broad sense that generalized comic dancing/singing and
'skits' took place in and around the host _vanua vavi_ and within this orientation wherever there are any Mothers to be audience or target.

The next focal point occurred when the _vavi_ was lit. I have already mentioned that _periberi_ singing focuses on important transformative moments in the life of a _vavi_, and it is useful to pause here and discuss this process in more detail.

The first stage of the _vavi_ is the building of a latticework of criss-crossing timber on which the _vavi_ stones are piled. The fire is lit and as it burns the stones are heated and eventually fall down. The hot stones are then moved with long wooden tongs. A bottom layer of stones is then laid out and the food is placed upon it. Then it is covered by another layer over which leaves and then cloth/sacks are placed to keep the heat in. All this work is done by women.

As was the case in the _bula_ festival there were three visible points when the _vavi_ became a focus of the performance - when the fire flamed vigorously; when it is obvious, because of its aroma, that the food is cooking; and finally when it is dismantled and the food removed. At such times it is common to see the _vavi_ itself danced 'at' and some informants described this as (to translate idiomatically) "screwing the oven". Women inside the _vanua vavi_ frequently dance naked at this time. As the Fathers continue dancing, singing and engaging in comic behaviour the Mothers continue their work of food preparation with little obvious reference to these antics. This is so even when the Fathers 'attack' them personally. At that point, in this case, some Fathers danced into the faces of seated Mothers and continued the thrusting
motion of their pelvises so that their targets lent further and further back until they were lying down with the father dancing right onto their heads. In this context I saw a number of other incidents which might be described as attacks on the bodies of the others. In one, a woman hung naked from the rafters of the vanua vavi and clutched the head of a seated Mother between her thighs while maintaining the thrusting motion of the dance. Mothers are impassive to such action. As far as possible they go on with their own work and give as little attention as possible to these disruptive antics.

When the burning fire begins to smoke the women move outside to escape its fumes. During this period much joking takes place, with women assuming a variety of comic poses. In this particular case, two women lay naked on the ground with their knees bent but feet grounded in a position which a friend described to me as 'all open', meaning that all of their orifices were open and visible to onlookers. They continued the motion of the beriberi dance from this position and were 'conducted' by the primipara's FZ with a long baton of gorigori stem. FZ's generally take a very prominent role in the comedy of any ga niu and this woman was a case in point. She did a comic 'drama' in which she took up the stance of a hunch-back crab and then a turtle. I look at this skit in detail in Chapter Six and explore what was comic about it.

Attacks on personal property often take place at this time. At this ga niu the Fathers attacked the vanua vavi themselves. They pushed up and off the long lengths of sago thatching of the roof which rippled in wave-like motion as they were dislodged. The Fathers then took paddles and bamboo poles and struck the walls, seats and
beds, jumping on them as they tried to break them. My informants told me that Fathers may also steal any of the Mothers (either male or female) personal property which they find in the houses. Most Mothers thus are careful to remove and/or hide valuables before the ga niu commences. Fathers may also destroy fixtures in the house such as beds and the poles on which food is hung over night to keep them away from rodents. Such action is stunningly dramatic. Yet despite the whoops of the Fathers during such incidents the Mothers, even those whose houses were under attack, remained apparently unconcerned.

About the time that the hosts placed the food into the vavi men of the Mother's group entered the hamlet area with a hopping dance. They carried on their shoulders a long (c 15ft) bamboo pole from which a large bunch of niu (green, unripe coconuts) was suspended. The niu were freshly husked and the men, like many of the women, had spread white powder on their faces. When the Fathers saw them, they gave out a whoop and ran to intercept them. One woman (a 'FZ') grabbed the pole as she got up to it and hoisted her legs around the man facing her, grasping him around the waist with her thighs. The women of the Father's group wrested the pole from these Mother's men and danced triumphantly with it to the plaza outside the host vanua vavi. While the men went inconspicuously to the amari the Fathers danced violently with the pole until the niu dropped off. They then took the nuts and pierced them, holding them at arms length above their heads to drink the juice. It is interesting to note here that this is the way men should drink niu juice when they are inside the amari.
Much was made of the captured niu; they were held up by dancing Fathers and drunk in this 'ceremonious' manner. As with the earlier action it was women of the Father's group who partook in the comedy. This 'attack' on the men to capture the niu took place while the women of the Mother's group continued their work of preparing the feasting food. After the capture of the niu the Fathers continued their dancing, singing and comic action.

Later some Fathers left the area of the hamlet and made for the betel and pepper stands of the MB. Like the women at the Delivery Celebration I described earlier, they mutilated and pillaged these stands and returned triumphantly with their booty. Meanwhile the Fathers who had remained at the hamlet continued to dance, sing, rest and entertain each other with their comedy.

This phase was broken when the smell of cooking returned the focus to the vabi. At this time the vabi appears as a dome shape - there is no special food-bundle made at a ga niu. Rather, the Mothers had prepared this food in the same manner in which they prepare their families' food, but in larger quantities. Peeled sweet potato was cooked in a number of banana leaf packages and manioc as cakes were also in simple banana leaf packages.

As the smell of this cooking became obvious the Fathers danced around the dome of the vabi. Again they 'screwed' the vabi and some urged its vapours between their legs by fanning it as they danced. One FZ lay at the base of the vabi and held her bent knees high over its dome as she fanned its vapours toward her vagina. This was another period in which the bodily space of the Mothers inside was invaded. Again they were danced into and upon.
When the food was judged to be cooked the Mothers opened the vavi and removed the food. The cooked food then became the target of the Father's comedy. They danced at and over it and one woman took a tuber of sweet potato and ringing it with her fingers, rubbed it up and down (a gesture I have seen other Tabars do to symbolize coitus). She also danced right up to a tuber held to her genitals by another woman and thrust her pelvis at it in the motion of dance.

As this activity was going on inside the house, the food baskets of all the Fathers were grouped outside the vanua vavi on the hamlet's plaza. The Mothers carried out food to them, apportioning it and placing it into these baskets. The Fathers watched anxiously to make sure that their share was equitable.

While the women's food was being apportioned, the other half of the cooked food was carried by the Mothers into the amari where 'their' men were waiting. The kalengo (literally "man big") of the hamlet reapportioned the food and watched over its distribution to the other men. On this occasion, a pig had been killed and cooked by the men for the event and it was distributed at the same time. Pigs are not always killed for these occasions and I presume that the perceived importance of the new child for the group and the number of pigs available for slaughter are considerations in the decision of whether or not one will be provided.

Whilst men eat their food on the spot, the food given to the Fathers (women) at this time will be carried home by them and eaten there. When the Father's women are content with the food distributed to them they move off to the amari where the Mother's men are still eating. In this case the FZ entered with the first of the women to
cross into the amari enclosure. Brandishing an axe she and her fellows danced and sang their way to where the men were. They shouted, taunting them with threats and abuse. The Father's women then stole what remained of the Mother's men's meal and took it back with them to their baskets. They then returned to where the men had remained impassively in the amari. Some of the women took with them the stems of plants, with which they struck the men. Some rubbed ashes into their heads and chests of the Mother's men and others poured water over them. Then the men one by one were lifted bodily and carried by the Fathers to the coconut fronds on which the pig had been carved and the food apportioned. The women rubbed them with the greasy remains and upturned the greasy fronds on them. While the men remained impassive in the face of all this, the Father's women stood and danced at each of them as they had finished with them.

At other ga niu I have seen the Mother's men picked up and thrown over the fence of the amari, and at one the MB, who happened to be a local 'Peace Officer', was 'prosecuted'. He was 'charged' with being a 'big head' and interfering in the reasonable conduct of people's lives. His penalty was an unceremonious and clumsy hefting over the fence into the low bush surrounding the back of the amari. I was told that men may be thrown into the sea at ga niu, as we have seen happen at the bula I discussed earlier.

When all of the men had been dealt with, the Fathers suddenly turned and focused their attention upon the Mother's women who remained in the vicinity of the vanua vavi. Having made a patch of mud at the back of the host vanua vavi, the Father's women ripped off the Mothers' lapl laps and laid them in the patch of mud. The Fathers
then smeared the prone Mothers' genitals and stomachs with mud. When the 'medicine' (as some women referred to this process in tok pisin) had been 'painted' on them, the Mothers, who until this moment had been passive and disinterested, reacted. They stood, released, and danced back at the Fathers, joining them in the accompanying song and, at last, in their laughter.

When all the Mothers had been painted and responded the festival was over and its participants dispersed. They returned to their homes laughing, recalling the comedy of the festivals, and discussing its highlights.

* * * *

The ga niu, like the beriberi festivals already discussed, entails the reorganization of the taken-for-granted everyday relations between persons, their property and hamlet space.

Once again Fathers attack the bodily integrity of Mothers. At the ga niu it was men of the Mothers line, and particularly 'siblings' of the primipara, who bore the brunt of those comic attacks. At the ga niu both men and women of the Mothers group are attacked by women of the Mothers 'line'. These attacks would ordinarily be considered outrageous and some, in certain other conditions, would be imbued with shame. In the context of beriberi performance however Fathers are 'without shame' in their actions, and the Mothers, who ignore their actions, thereby absent themselves from the necessity for responding with shame. This passive non-recognition by Mothers is a central aspect of beriberi performance.

Mothers nevertheless are, albeit without 'recognition', the objects of the Fathers attacks. These comic attacks are directed both at
their bodily integrity and more particularly at their person. Fathers in their actions attempt to thwart the nexus between 'person' and body, between 'person' and their property, between 'person' and others, and ultimately between 'person' and basic cultural tenets - such as the appropriate use of hamlet space. Yet for all the taunting attacks of the Fathers' performance, Mothers protect themselves in their passivity. They do not (or at least attempt not to) lose their composure. They do this by not reacting. In this way they deny the Fathers their power to undermine their autonomy as persons or as a group.

The na niu, perhaps the most dramatically forceful beriberi festival, epitomizes the contrasting attitudes of the two groups which participate in the first three beriberi festivals. There is, at the na niu especially, a clear expression of competition - Fathers try to make Mothers react, and Mothers attempt, successfully for the most part, not to react. At the same time, this dynamic tension in the performance is characterized in the refusal of each group to accept the 'attitude' and underlying assumptions of the other group. This is characterized by the passive refusal of Mothers to respond, to be outraged, to give up their autonomy, and most particularly, to laugh. In this sense then, the Mothers render the Fathers their victims. In their passivity they thwart the Fathers strenuous efforts. Their attitude is an attempt at an ultimate veto.

It is thus important to note that the assymetry between the two groups does not continue for the entire duration of this festival. The festival works towards a crescendo when first the Mothers men are attacked in the amari and then the genitals of the women of the
Mothers group are coated with mud behind the host vanua vavi. The pa niu's finale is the triumphant response of these Mothers women who rise and match their stature to the Fathers, dancing back at them. In this moment the competitive stance is maintained, but the women of both groups at last engage in shared action.

The importance of this action can only be understood in the relationship between the competitive aggression/passivity, which characterizes the performative attitudes of Fathers and Mothers, in the first three beriberi festivals and the 'co-operative' competition of the pa pigosi.

4. THE NA PINOSI

This feast, according to my informants, does not take place until the child is walking and weaned. At this feast, the shellmoney which Fathers gave to name the new born infant in the weeks following its birth are reciprocated. Thus some informants referred to this feast as 'the feast to reciprocate the shell money'.

Significantly, both Mothers and Fathers bring and prepare the food for this feast. Indeed my informants said that they eat as equals from a common pool of food placed on a mat of coconut fronds. When the feast was eaten my informants said that each group took up an end of this mat and had a 'tug of war' to see which group was strongest.

The pa pigosi thus marks a significant departure from the previous festivals of the sequence. The first contrast relates to the
festival's food. At all other festivals only one group provides and prepares the food. The second contrast which can be drawn from my informant's characterizations is that there is open and equal competition at the na pigosi. In the previous festivals Fathers were outrageous attackers. Mothers rejected their onslaughts by passive non-recognition and non-reaction. It was only in the final brief moments of the na niu that Mothers 'stood up to them' and actively fought back.

In the next chapter I take this up as a major problem in my analysis of beriberi as comic ritual.
CHAPTER SIX

THE LAST LAUGH: THE POWER AND RELATIONS OF COMEDY IN BERIBERI

"The analysis of comedy can no more be funny than the analysis of water can be wet" (James Feibleman, In Praise of Comedy)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the central performative medium of the beriberi sequence - comedy. I examine the comedy of beriberi and explore the notion that beriberi is a comic ritual. Comedy is a powerful and creative medium, it is also a medium of power. Beriberi is also concerned with creativity and power - the creativity and power of human, and ultimately cosmic, reproduction.

Effective comedy makes reflective demands on its participants (cf. Kapferer, 1983). Comic rituals, like beriberi, place great reflective demands on their participants, targeting their attention to a range of issues and allowing them to think pointedly and creatively about some central cultural assumptions. As it demands reflection upon the cosmos, and is constitutive of it, beriberi is, in Tabar cultural logic, a context not simply for thinking about human and cosmic reproduction but also for enabling it. It is fundamentally involved in the regeneration of both human life and of the cosmos itself. This allows one to 'make sense' of my informants' characteristic response to the question, "why do you do this?". The response generally went along the lines - we do this because we are happy at the birth of this child who is a replacement. The comedy and creative drama of beriberi are, in
their very form as well as in their content, apt mediums for such a task.

Beriberi (following Ortiz, 1972) is ritual drama. Importantly, however, it is a sequence at which the ritual 'frame' (see Bateson, 1972/73 and Handelman, 1979) is co-terminos with a frame of comedy. My experience of references to, and performances of beriberi, made it clear that comedy is the keynote of this ritual sequence. Its comedy is eagerly anticipated, engaged in, and gleefully recalled after the event.

Here I explore the nature of this performative medium and its power to communicate central cultural ideas, and to structure and restructure the relations, actions and experiences of its participants (following Kapferer, 1983:4).

In the first part of the chapter I explore the nature of beriberi comedy. In particular I draw on the work of Mary Douglas to suggest that beriberi comedy is "a play upon form" (Douglas, 1975:96) and Bateson (1972/73) and Kapferer (1983) who suggest that comedy entails reflection upon taken-for-granted views of the world by those who participate in it. With selected examples I explore that nature and form in some comic moments in beriberi performance and show some of the assumptions and associations they are contingent upon and demand reflection of.

I extend this discussion by distinguishing between standard (cf Douglas, 1975:96) and innovative forms of comedy in beriberi performances. Standard beriberi comedy, I suggest, consists of episodes which have precedents and thus, on the whole, make use of,
or reproduce, well recognized and oft-utilized formulas (cf. Wagner, 1972). The standard beriberi dance and the stock of well-known beriberi songs are clear examples of standard comedy in beriberi. Such forms dominate the duration of any performance. But it is the much rarer moments of innovative comedy which are most highly prized. Such moments are characterized by innovation and are often unexpected plays on (or transformations of) standard 'plays on form'. It is such creative moments which are most enthusiastically received and recalled after the performance is over. These creative moments are the quintessence of beriberi comedy and reflect a fundamental concern of beriberi - procreation.

I go on to explore the asymmetrical nature of any beriberi performance. At the first three festivals of the sequence it is the Father's group which is the comedians. For the most part the Mothers are the passive victims of their action. Throughout, Fathers may be seen to be battling to make the Mothers laugh and acknowledge the comedy. For their part, the Mothers fight (especially in the context of effective innovative comedy) to retain their composed disinterest. This critical tension develops throughout the sequence and culminates at the final festival, the na pipsi, in a temporary abandonment of hierarchy (in the pooling of food) which finally turns into a 'tug of war'. I relate this to the 'tug of war' between the two groups for the affiliation of the child, whose relatedness after weaning is 'up for grabs'. This is so because the principles which underpin relatedness are links of substance. They can be established, maintained and developed both through the procreative substances which gelled in conception and/or the eating of food produced on land whose fecundity was facilitated by ancestral aid. The strength of a child's matrilineal affiliation
- established by its mother's procreative substance and particularly by her blood which 'fed' the child in utero - may be cemented and developed, if after weaning it is nurtured on food produced on land associated with that group. On the other hand, the clear matrilineal bias established through nurturance on mother's substance may be overtaken after weaning if its nurturance is thence dominated by food produced on land associated with another group. Thus while beriberi clearly celebrates human reproduction, it is also concerned with which group will ultimately benefit from the new child when it becomes an ancestor.

Discussion of the principles of social relatedness allows the elucidation of the dominant themes of beriberi's comedy - sexuality and eating. It is in the context of sexual intercourse that the procreative substances, upon which conception is contingent, are produced. Similarly it is the process of eating which allows food to be transformed into substance.

THE NATURE OF BERIBERI COMEDY

The comedy of beriberi is created in its songs, dance, dramas and jokes. In each case they entail a 'play upon form' (Douglas, 1975:96), a rearrangement of relations taken-for-granted in the participants' everyday lives. Heib notes that humour is not simply a reversal - for a reversal "may simply lead to a meaningless conglomeration, in short, nonsense. Humour, in contrast, involves an alternative pattern which makes sense to a sufficient degree for it to be entertained momentarily as a new and creative combination of the elements which comprised the original pattern" (Heib,
1972:190). That the new relations must be "entertained momentarily" is critical - for it implies reflection both on what is being presented and on the taken-for-granted form/relations it has reorganized.

Bateson suggested that the metamessage of the play frame is that "all statements which appear within it are untrue" (1972/73:157). Kapferer extended this point by arguing that "the metamessage of drama in a comic frame tells participants to question the truth of all statements appearing within it, that what appears within it has no strict necessity" (Kapferer, 1983:209).

If we take a simple example we can see that Heib's point that comedy must make some sense is a crucial one. I mentioned in Chapter 4 the frequent use of turtles at beriberi festivals, and noted the association of turtles with incredible (inhuman) sexual prowess. I noted one case in which a woman danced with a turtle held in front of her, as if it were a phallus, and then shouted that it was her "taxi". The simple equation of this comic drama can be represented as follows:

\[
\text{tortoise} \rightarrow \text{phallic symbol} \rightarrow \text{female pleasure}
\]

In this case the association of turtles with sexual prowess makes the connection between turtle and phallus 'sensible' - it is an equation which can be entertained and sustained. The connection between phallus and taxis is however 'humorous' because the comedian, who 'hires' the taxi is a woman and not a man (who could not derive such pleasure from 'hiring' a phallus since he has one
already). Thus this part of the equation is contingent on recognizing (1) that a turtle is not a phallus and (2) its holder is a woman (who ordinarily is phallus-less) and not a man (who by definition has a phallus). But in addition it also comments on the attitude women are thought to have toward 'phallus'. For the people of Tabar sexual intercourse is contingent upon a phallus, and women are commonly thought to thoroughly enjoy and constantly desire sex. As one of my female informants put it, sex "is sweet". This understanding of women's 'hunger' for sex then, adds to the equation between phallus and taxi. Not only does one ride in a taxi, but the hirer controls the ride. The taxi driver obeys the hirer's whim. Thus phallus (of woman) = taxi, plays with the assumption that every woman wants a phallus ready for her every demand and 'on call'. Thus the second part of the equation entails reflection upon (1) the nature of sexual intercourse (contingent upon phallus); (2) the desire of women for sex; (3) the relationship of 'rider' to a taxi and the bringing of all these assumptions into conjunction. Each of these associations is 'sensible' in isolation but it is the new way in which they are brought into conjunction which is comic.

Thus the comic equation has proved complex:

**Element**  | **Contingent Association / Achieved Relations**
---|---
TURTLE | Sexual prowess
PHALLUS | Male only attribute
TAXI | Relationship of driver/hire/taxi

[Diagram showing the relationships between turtle, phallus, taxi, and associated associations and achieved relations.]
A simpler case which informs the analysis of the above case is provided by a common 'joke' amongst women. Women on Tabar often refer to their vagina as "my pig". When a group of women are together (without men), one may grab another's crutch and ask "is your pig hungry". Again a contingent association is the perceived sexual appetite of women pointed up above. However the 'joke' rests on people's knowledge of how pigs constantly fossick clumsily and agitatedly for any food. The joke not only implies "are you getting enough" - i.e. is your vagina hungry? - but also implicitly "are you hungry enough to make a pig of yourself?".

![Diagram]

Both these cases point up a frequent aspect of Tabar comedy - it often employs two mediums - in these cases both words and actions. In the hungry pig case the joke is heightened by the comedian actually grabbing the location of the 'hunger'. Similarly, the association between turtle and phallus was established primarily by the comedian's actions - she showed her audience that the turtle 'stood for' a phallus by performing the ('sexual') beriberi dance with the turtle held 'erect' in front of her own genitals.

Some beriberi comedy essentially amounts to a 'play on words'. In one song the play on words is on "see" and "semen" (deri and gari) and the relevant part of the song can be translated:
"Look up - see/(semen)
what sort of cassava is this?
it is 'lan' [a particular type of cassava]."

In the final line intercourse is recalled as the singer cries to her
Husband's Father (a tambu relation)
"You are unaware of me
I shoot it/ejaculate" [These last two lines are sung in 'tok
pisin'].

Here the response to the question "what sort of cassava is this?" is
the name of a particular type of cassava, yet given the ambiguity
between seeing and semen which is often played upon in the
pronunciation of the preceding line the potent implicit possibility
is that the answer could have been "it is phallus". It is the very
building up of this possibility and the denial of it by returning us
so harshly to cassava - which is funny.

There are contexts in which the use of two performative media is
crucial. A particular beriberi song demonstrates this. This song
tells how a couple went and ate a green leafy vegetable (which turns
red when cooked) called sarembé at a wild spirit site. The implicit
message is that they went and copulated (at this site). The song
itself goes:

"We two went to get sarembé
at the spirit place (called) lava kulepe
we went in
got the sarembé
downed it well
touched red
ate power".
It is not the words of the song *per se* which convey the message about copulation; rather, it is the co-incidence of them orchestrating the *beriberi* dance which unambiguously establishes the metaphor as relevant in this context. The connection between eating in a forbidden place and the power of the substance, which significantly is one which is known to 'change' to a colour associated with power, and the power of consumption and illicit sex and orgasm is made by singing and doing the *beriberi* dance simultaneously.

Whilst it is clear that two central themes in *beriberi* comedy are sexuality/sexual intercourse and eating, it is equally clear that the comedy of *beriberi* requires that its participants reflect on a wide variety of other aspects of their culture. This last case for instance entails reflection upon the nature and power of wild spirit places; the everyday 'fact' that sarembe turns red when it is cooked; the association of the colour red with blood; and the belief that green leafy vegetables (like sarembe) "strengthen the blood".

Similarly, appreciation of the comedy of women throwing men out of an *amari* entails reflection upon taken-for-granted assumptions about the nature of an *amari* and its space; the nature of the environment around it; the nature of men and women; the nature of normal personal composure and so on. Indeed, as I will show in greater detail below, all *beriberi* actions entail reflection upon the nature of groups and their relations.
All beriberi comedy is a play on form which entails on those who share it momentary reflection upon relations they ordinarily take for granted. Moreover a distinction can be made between comic action which is expected and takes a standard form (cf. Douglas, 1975:96), and creative moments where the form of the comedy is unexpected and innovative. The standard beriberi dance done in an upright position, and the stock of well-known beriberi songs, are examples of the former, and the turtle = phallus = 'taxi' comic drama is an example of the latter. In the latter case the comedian performed a precededted comic action by dancing with the turtle as phallus. It was the extension of the 'joke' by calling out "taxi" which extended the comedy and its demands of reflection in an unprecedented and innovative way.

Innovative comedy is often such a play on the form of a standard play on form. Two further examples are instructive. The first concerns another well-known beriberi song. The song refers to a tuber of manioc ('tapiok' in tok pisin) and, as one of my informants explained to me, it is 'about' impotence. Three of its lines normally go:

"Stand up, stand up with this rotten (lying down) thing
Who will eat it now?
It is completely rotten"

But on one occasion a singer changed the final line to "there is an oozing fissure on its head" a piece of innovative comedy which both extended and transformed the joke.
Similarly one can be innovative with the form of the beriberi
dance. One way of doing this is to dance 'at' an unusual object
like a saucepan lid, or, in another case I saw, 'at' a long
sharpened stick used to husk coconuts. In both cases it is 'absurd'
to have sexual intercourse with an inanimate object - yet both are
'entertainable' elements in this comedy. A saucepan lid extends the
already dominant sex-food theme and the long stick is appropriate
both because of its phallic shape and because of the association of
cocoons with fertility.

Perhaps the most dramatic and effective play on the form of the
standard beriberi dance which I saw consisted of performing it lying
down, rather than 'on the feet'. This innovative transformation of
the dance was done by two women who lay naked side by side on the
ground with their knees bent and the weight on their shoulders and
feet. They lifted their buttocks off the ground slightly which
enabled them to continue the pelvic thrusting which characterizes
this dance. That is, they maintained all of the main elements of
the standard form and changed only its axis from vertical to
horizontal.

It is interesting that the new axis made this innovative variation
more 'like' the reality of sexual intercourse than its standard
(vertical) form where it is clearly like intercourse but equally
clearly not intercourse. That this apparent 'regression' heightened
rather than diminished the comedy is due to its creative
transformation of the expected form.

Not all innovative comedy is a play on standard form; it may also
entail adding another comedic medium to the context. An example of
this was when a FZ (who is expected to take on the role of prominent innovative comedian) dramatically extended a *beriberi* song in a 'play act'. The song which was the context of her dramatic commentary was again, according to informants, concerned with impotence. It goes:

"You abika [a green leafy vegetable] eating woman
Your food talks
(you) walk around with downcast head
(you are) the crab *tavuru*.

The *tavuru* crab is one which is perceived to have 'hunched' shoulders and lowered head. As the song ended the FZ simply turned and with a moping look, walked up and down with her head down. This evoked great laughter but just as the joke threatened to disintegrate she sprang around and adopted the pose of a European boxer with her fists held in front of her neck, chanting (in English) "boxer, boxer". This pose contrasted directly with the downcast pose she had previously held and conveyed that she was 'unhappy' with the laughter which her previous pose had elicited. This commentary and 'switch' was greeted with delight by other members of her group. I take this comic sequence up in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

The importance of this distinction between standard and innovative comedy is that while standard comedy dominates the duration of any *beriberi* festival it is innovative comedy which is seen as the quintessence of its performance. It is innovative comedy which is most sought and most enthusiastically lauded. It is such often short-lived movements which are talked of and applauded long after the event and sometimes become instances used to remind a listener
of the event - "it was the ga. niu" for instance "at which X was 'the boxer'."

The distinction between standard and innovative comedy derives from the recognition and precededness of a comic form. Handelman and Kapferer analysed the content of joking sequences in terms of their "own emergent form" (1972:484). In that paper they distinguished between two sorts of jokes - 'setting-specific' and 'category-routinized' joking frames. In 'setting-specific' frames, like the hunchback to boxer sequence described above, they suggest that there is a high degree of uncertainty - for the joke follows an indeterminate course and such joking sequences are thus highly fragile and unresilient (1972:485). Such joking frames do not have routinized or established behavioural cues or rules to follow and therefore have a very fragile time-depth. In the hunchback-boxer case the joke was perceptible as joke only in the light of the meanings available in the song which preceded it. The FZ capitalized on the song by, for a moment, embodying aspects of its meaning - that is, by taking up a downcast pose. She was only able to move into the next joke in the sequence because she found a ludic way to respond to the laughter her original joke had provoked. By taking up a boxing stance she not only enabled the joking frame to persist, but also heightened it because by this aggressive-defensive reaction she confronted all with the fact that she had 'not been taken seriously'. By her caricature of being upset at not having been taken seriously, she heightened the comedy of the previous moments and linked them to the next. But she was unable to sustain the sequence beyond that point and the frame of this particular innovative joking sequence disintegrated. At the same time the
sequence apparently inspired others to return to the work of actively sustaining the comic ritual frame.

The other joking frame which Handelman and Kapferer identify they refer to as 'category-routinized' joking. Here "the license to joke [is] anchored in the common recognition that particular categories of persons can joke with one another" (1972:485). In such conditions the jokers can insult and abuse each other without subverting and destroying the joking frame (ibid.). Their classic example of this frame is that which exists between people in a so-called 'joking relationship' where the relationship is inscribed in relations and categories of kinship.

Beriberi conforms to Handelman and Kapferer's conception of category-routinized joking in the sense that it takes place only in the context of two categories of persons - that is, people who compose the Father's and the Mother's groups. In that sense we have a comic frame which explicitly relates to specific categories and groups of people.

But the situation is more complex than Handelman and Kapferer's label apparently allows. Two issues are pertinent here: (1) the category distinction is context-specific and it is not a straightforward joking relationship in Radcliffe-Brown's sense; and more critically (2) beriberi is not a straightforward comedic interaction. Specifically for example, it is only in the final moment of the ga niu and at the ga pigosi that the comedy is explicitly and overtly held in common by both groups. Until then it is Fathers who are the comedians whilst the Mothers are its victims. More importantly, until then it is ideally only Fathers
who should recognize the comedy. Mothers try in the face of the Father's comedy to retain a disinterested composure - not to laugh or react in any way. Thus most beriberi performances, with the notable exception of the na pinozi involve unequal participation in the comedy. Indeed, one could represent the proceedings as the Fathers valiantly trying to make the Mothers join them laughing and celebrating. It is like the game of children in Australia in which one child holds a finger before another child and attempts to force them into laughing by telling them that they must not. At the first three festivals it is the Mothers who should not laugh while the Fathers do all in their power to take advantage of this and to force them to laugh. The Fathers try to make it as difficult as possible for the Mothers to retain their composure. Following from this it might effectively be argued that one of the effects of the Mothers' passivity is to incite the Fathers' to greater attempts at innovative comedy. This asymmetry may thus be critical to the sustaining of the comedy frame over such an extended period of time (about 7 or 8 hours).

At the same time it is important to note that this asymmetry in performance runs counter to a fundamental tenet of Tabar culture. The people of Tabar believe that theirs is an egalitarian society in which intergroup relations are predicated upon, and produce balance. As one kalengo expressed it to me 'With us everything is 'square' [he used the English term]. Exchange is square, marriage is square, everything is square'.

It is useful here to turn to Louis Heib's work on ritual clowns amongst the Zuni (1972). Heib builds on Turner's notion of 'communitas' (Turner, 1969), noting that most work on
'anti-structure' has been related to hierarchically organized societies. To quote him, "But not all societies are structured according to the principle of hierarchy" (1972:167) and he goes on to ask (in relation to societies based on egalitarian principles), "How is a 'communitas' established when it seems dependent upon structural (hierarchical) oppositions and inequalities? He goes on: "The answer would appear to be that while 'communitas' is established in a caste system by means of a symbolic equality, it is achieved in the clan system by means of a symbolic inequality. One solution takes the form of a momentary reversal of opposition, the other the creation of a momentary opposition with which transcends everyday experience" (ibid.). Thus he concludes, "Given Turner's basic insight that 'communitas' involves a reversal of the social structural principle, it is argued here that this sometimes involves a situation in which hierarchy replaces equality" and that Zuni ritual clowns create communitas "through symbols of inequality" (1972:169).

Whilst I do not believe that Heib's point departs from the thrust of Turner's analysis, it does amplify the importance of the hierarchy produced through performative asymmetry of most beriberi performances. The issue of asymmetry may be further elucidated by a brief discussion of laughter.

THE LAST LAUGH

Mary Douglas has noted that "Laughter is a unique bodily eruption which is always to be taken as communication" (1975:86, my emphasis). She stresses that laughter "is normally a social
response" (1975:85) a point which Kapferer takes up in his recent book on ritual performance in Sri Lankan exorcisms (1983). He argues that "laughter...communicates that the members of the ritual gathering share a common and objective attitude towards the world whereby they can recognize the comic" (1983:214 and cf. Handelman and Kapferer, 1972:515). That is, laughter demonstrates that there is a comic recognition that something is ludic and this is predicated upon a shared view of the world and the relations which the comic has played with and/or transformed. Thus we might suggest that the refusal of the Mothers to acknowledge the comedy of the Fathers' performance indicates a refusal to accept their view of the world.

It is not the comedy, and the associations which give it meaning, which I contend the Mothers reject. Rather, I argue that the Fathers make a comic challenge to the primacy of the Mothers' bonds of substance to the child and it is this which the Mothers are rejecting.

In Chapter Three I proposed that social relatedness is understood in terms of links of substance - both procreative and nurturing substances. It is procreative substances produced in sexual intercourse which are the basis of conception - the achievement of substantial form. It is nurturing substances - food - which then build the body and become, like procreative substances, the basis and substance of corporeality.

That the production of food/eating and sexuality are the dominating themes of beriberi comedy points up the festival's central concern with social relatedness. For it is in sexual
intercourse, an act in which sexuality is engaged, that procreative substances are produced and become the foundation of corporeality. It is food which thereafter becomes the basis for the development of corporeality. Both procreative substances and digested food substances are constitutive of corporeality, and, as such, constitutive of relations of shared substances between individuals.

Given these principles of social relatedness it is quite possible for the strengths of a person's bonds of substance to others to change over time. Should a person be brought up on their father's land and their developing corporeality constituted by the substance of food produced on his land, then the strength of that person's link to their mother and her group is correspondingly diminished. Growing up in one's mother's territory increases one's bonds of substance to her. The particular ego-centredness of this system explains the apparently heterogeneous composition of the groups which form for any beriberi ceremony. They also elucidate the dynamic tension of the asymmetry between the groups at any performance. I shall again point up the developing nature of social relatedness in my discussion of the Death Sequence, where I discuss a 'tug of war' between two groups claiming primary affiliation to the deceased and thus the right to perform the burial and mortuary feasts.

Despite the importance of the developing nature of social relatedness on Tabar it is also clear that a person's links to their mother and her relations are most clearly dominant in the period during which one is uniformly nurtured by her substance - both her blood and her breast milk. Put a different way, at conception an individual's corporeal form is constituted equally of their mother's
and their genitor(s') procreative substance. But once a substantial form has been established it grows nurtured only by its mother's blood. At that point the foetus' corporeality becomes increasingly constituted by its mother's substance. Even after birth it is her substance, her breast milk, which nurtures the child's corporeal development.

Thus, given that the bula is celebrated after the child has begun to be nurtured by its mother's substance, it is the mother and her group, rather than the father and his, who are most closely related to the foetus. By the time of its birth the dominance of the Mother's links to the child have been clearly established. The na pinosi, which takes place after weaning, marks the point at which other groups, by providing the child's food, may begin to 'make up ground' and, potentially at least, the Mothers' links to the child may be rendered vulnerable.

It is the final moments of the na niu which celebrates the end of the birthing process and at the na pinosi that Mothers actively engage in beriberi's comic performance. Prior to this, when the Mothers' claims to dominant links of substance to the child's corporeality are clearest it is Fathers who dominate beriberi performance. Indeed, at all the festivals except the na pinosi Mothers and Fathers embody the nature of their links to the child - for it is Mothers who provide the food and after they have cooked it present it as food to the Fathers. On the other hand it is Fathers who parody sexual intercourse and relations in their dancing, singing and comic actions.
The 'battle' for the child then is most clearly pointed up at the pa pigosi, at which both groups bring and pool the feast food only to end it with a 'tug of war' over the coconut frond mat on which that food was presented. Who has the last laugh will only be established once and for all after the person's death, when the decision has been made about which is the appropriate amari for the hosting of the Death Sequence. If the individual has moved often during their lifetime then this final calculation will be problematic and once again two (or more) groups will engage in a 'tug of war'. I describe one such 'tug of war' during a death festival, in Chapter Seven.

TRANSFORMATIONS

It is clear that beriberi celebrates and achieves a number of transformations. In the first place it celebrates and enacts ontological transformations in relation to the primipara and her developing child. The sequence as a whole is a central rite of passage for the primipara and celebrates her transition from pre-productive girl to reproducing adult woman. The establishment and development of the child's corporeality and metaphysical existence as well as its entry into the here and now relations of social life are celebrated in the festivals of the sequence.

In addition, I have suggested above that the child's development entails transformations in its relatedness to others, and that these are determined by the source of the substances which are constitutive of the child's corporeality. It is instructive then to take up the way in which important transformations in the vavi
become foci of performance at all beriberi festivals.

It has been noted that the vavi (stone oven) as a focus of the comedy is a feature of all beriberi festivals I witnessed. It is instructive to note the points at which the vavi is focused upon. They are: (1) when it is a flaming pyre; (2) when the oven is actually filled with produce and the fact that the food is cooking is evidenced by the aroma; and (3) when the cooked food is removed and the vavi dismantled (cf. Figure 3.1). I argue that each of these moments is critically transformative. In the first case, wood is being dramatically burned in a process which produces flames and heat and in the process transforms the form of the fuel. In Tabar, flames are conceived of as wild heat and the transformations associated with heat may themselves be associated with orgasm. In the second case, the aroma of the cooking attests that what was formerly produce has been transformed into food fit for human consumption. In the last context the cooking is completed, the vavi opened and the food removed.

At the most obvious level there are parallels between fire and orgasm, between cooking in a vavi and the in utero development of a foetus, and between the opening of the vavi and birth.

Indeed, I pointed up in Chapter Four that the beriberi festivals in their structural arrangement constitute and enact Tabar understandings of the process of reproduction. To summarize that discussion: the first festival, the bula, marks conception and points up Tabar understandings of how this comes about. That festival also marks the fact that the child will be nurtured in utero by its mother's blood. The next two festivals, the 'delivery'
and ga niu, mark the birthing process and signal the entry of the child into the here and now world of human relations, with the ga
niu pointing up the fact that the child will now be nurtured on its mother's blood. Finally, it was noted that the ga pigospi takes
place after weaning and therefore marks another important change in nurturance and independence for the child. At that basic level
beriberi is already recognized as being 'about reproduction'.

The making of a vavi and the cooking of food is an everyday task
which women do. What happens at a beriberi festival is that the transformations of this everyday process are pointed up and the connection between human reproduction and the process of cooking is available in the performance. The interaction of the sexual caricatures of the dancers and the process of making a vavi at the festival actually point up the connection and do so in relation to a particular product of the reproductive process - the new babe.

Moreover, the vavi also clearly embodies the principles upon which social relatedness is contingent. The points at which it is focused upon are points when Fathers 'screw the vavi': dancing at it, fanning its fumes or flames towards their vaginas and so on. At the same time it is the site where produce is transformed into food. It is able to embody the process whereby produce (grown on land whose fecundity was engaged with the aid of ancestral spirits) developed to maturity; produce (through the medium of the vavi and the process of cooking) became edible food; and food (through the process of digestion) becomes corporeal substance.

The valence of this metaphor is also pointed up when it is recalled that the defining feature of a domestic group is that its members
eat food cooked in a common vavi. Beyond this, at the festivals themselves both hosts, performers and male 'guests' are given food cooked in vavi.

Various aspects of performance focus attention upon the range of meanings which the vavi embodies, both shifting and connecting those meanings.

The vavi is a potent symbol which embodies the central concerns of the beriberi festival. It is not surprising then that it, and its transformations, become such important and unifying foci of attention in beriberi performance. It is the point where the work of the performing Fathers and host Mothers meet and this also underlines its significance.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have centred the analysis on beriberi performance. This has entailed particular attention to comedy as a performative medium. Comedy, I would suggest, is an appropriate medium for beriberi performance because the festivals themselves are centrally concerned with human procreation and comedy as a medium is, in its form and transformations, predicated on a creative rearrangement of form.

Beriberi demands of its participants reflection on a wide range of taken for granted aspects of their world view. In particular it focuses attention upon the nature of sexuality, social relatedness,
and the ontological states of human beings - especially those of the primipara and her child.

It is however not simply communicative. It is a context in which groups are constituted and the relations between them structured and restructured and the tensions between them played out. In doing so it comments upon the social relatedness of the child.

In the next chapter I move from the rituals of birth to those of death. I have suggested in my discussion of beriberi that this sequence enacts the transition to adulthood for the primipara. It was, in former times, the malanga sequence which made boys into men, and I turn to these ceremonies after my discussion of the death sequence.
"man is the sole living being to know that he must die"

"the issue of death throws into relief the most important cultural values by which people live their lives and evaluate their experiences. Life becomes transparent against the background of death, and fundamental social and cultural issues are revealed" Huntington and Metcalf, Celebrations of Death:2.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with death. Through a discussion of Tabar responses to the deaths of 'significant others' (see Landsberg, 1966), which took place during the period of my fieldwork I examine their cultural understandings of death as a phenomena; and explore the rituals they do in response to it.

Here I note that dying is a process which is surrounded by a series of rituals. The Death Sequence is (ideally) made up of six feasts. The first three take place within about 36 hours of each other. The final three feasts usually take place within two to twelve weeks after death.

It is clear that these rituals of death are as concerned with the breach of community caused by the loss of one of their members, as they are with the dying or dead person. The first three feasts deal
with the death and dying in its immediacy. The last three feasts lift taboos which were brought about by death.

The first feast of the sequence is glossed the boro panda (literally 'pig (to) get up'). It takes place, where possible, just before death and is the last feast that the dying person will participate in as an interacting member of the community. As one informant put it, 'This is the person's last feast and it marks the end of their work and their life'.

Upon death, the corpse is washed and then carried into the amari with which they are associated. Preparations for the next feast, the ziko pesi mi pugi, begin almost immediately. At this time the community feasts 'close to' the corpse, and mourn their loss in its presence. Already the corporeal and metaphysical state of the deceased person has been transformed as a consequence of death. The corpse is present, in the amari, but is now the inanimate and already decomposing subject of the feast. This feast is said to wash the 'skin' of the corpse and remove its pollution.

Within twenty-four hours of death the corpse is buried. Burial is marked with a feast referred to as the boro vavazipani. Burial takes place while the food for this feast is cooking. Thus this feast is eaten after the corpse has been removed from the presence of the community. As one informant put it, this feast is done to 'shake hands with the deceased who will go into the ground now'.

The first taboo feast is held some days or weeks after burial. These feasts are usually held about a week apart. The varanda removes the taboo on harvesting/consuming niu (green coconuts). The
zozurotasi removes a taboo on catching/consuming sea-fish. The pa
kitip lifts the taboo on harvesting/consuming the edible products of
large trees - primarily bananas and sago. The taboos on these
products are important, because non-observance (especially by
affines) is seen as an indication that the transgressor was in some
way responsible for the death. In the period before these feasts
those most closely related to the deceased watch neighbours and
other members of the community with some suspicion. These feasts
mark the end of that socially traumatic period.

When someone dies they ideally do so at home in their hamlet, often
surrounded by those who are closest to them. It is relatives,
friends and neighbours who tend the body and prepare it for burial,
and it is these people who participate in the rituals of burial.
Landsberg writes of the experience of the death of someone close to
you as a "decisive experience of death" (ibid:198) and notes that
such experiences have a "peculiar" quality for those who are still
living and relate to the issue of person (ibid). He goes on "Where
there is a question of the person we may reach the possibility of an
ontological relationship to death" (ibid:199).

In Chapter Four I suggested that the festivals of the beriberi
sequence enact important transitions in the development of
children. In this chapter I suggest that the festivals of death
enact important ontological transitions for the deceased and signal
community 'work' which has been necessitated because of the breach
in their ranks.

It is with the nature of person which can be elucidated through a
discussion of death, attitudes towards it and the practices
surrounding it, that this chapter is concerned. Early in the chapter I explore the distinction which Tabars make between 'natural' and 'unnatural' deaths. I do this through discussion of concrete cases, and attempt to elucidate the ideas which underpin the distinction and the way in which people assess particular cases. That discussion leads to a detailed examination of what people believe constitutes death. For the people of Tabar this implies both the cessation of corporeal functions (especially breathing) and the loss of spirit (which hitherto had been housed in the body). Again this analysis is underpinned by discussions of actual cases.

I then turn to the issue of the experience of death. I focus on wailing, an important aspect of the community's response to death. I argue that Tabars wail to the deceased, and that wailing is the form of communication which is appropriate in the context of the corporeal and metaphysical transformations which death has ensured for the dead person. Thus I argue that wailing to the dead on Tabar is more than a cathartic expression of grief. It implies a recognition of important ontological changes which death irrevocably entails and is the form of communication which is appropriate given those changes.

All feasts in the Death Sequence are nau. They entail the killing and cooking of pigs, in the host amari's randu, and payment for the pigs with shell money. In Chapter Eight I examine this standard process and argue that nau are sacrifices. I suggest that these sacrifices are predicated on, and empowered because they entail important, transformations. I do not concentrate simply on the transformations which the pig undergoes in this process. Rather, I look at the chain of 'exchanges' entailed: coconuts are offered and
taken up before the feast to indicate who will exchange what with whom; shell money 'pays' for sacrificed pigs at the feast itself. I also examine the myth of the origin of the coconut and suggest that at nau there is a chain of transformations: human beings - coconuts - pigs - shell money - distributed pieces of pork - human beings. That analysis takes issue with the 'economism' of most analyses of ceremonial exchange in Melanesia.

NATURAL AND UNNATURAL DEATHS

Tabar people assert that there are two sorts of deaths. On the one hand there are those who die from natural causes (most notably what we might call 'old age', that is, at the end of one's natural life) and on the other those who die untimely 'bad', unnatural deaths which are believed to be caused by the intervention of outside forces (including human intervention). This distinction is carried through in the contrast between the term virua, the unhappy spirits of those who have died prematurely, and tano, the spirits of those who died naturally. Obviously critical to this discussion is the indigenous notion of what constitutes a natural life span and what forces can threaten that span. I explore these issues through the examination of particular deaths which occurred during the period of my fieldwork.

The first case I wish to consider is that of Simbes, wife of a kalengo ('man big'). Simbes had, I was told, been ill for many months before her death. My informants told me that she had large sores in her groin and buttocks and was in a great deal of pain. These sores gave off an offensive stench and because of this, she
and her husband had moved to an old disused hamlet site and built a house there away from others. Some months before her death she had been a patient at Lemakot, a Catholic Mission Hospital in Central New Ireland. Many people reported to me that the hospital had told the family that they did not have 'strong enough medicines' to cure Simbes' illness and that they had therefore sent her home so that she might die with her own people. The people of Tabar interpret such statements as confirmation of their view that there are 'natural' illnesses (which are amenable to Western medicine) and illnesses caused by outside forces which they refer to (to outsiders) as 'Tabar illnesses' or 'things of this place'. They are the illnesses which Western medicine cannot cure. This response from the hospital thus confirmed the peoples' conclusion that Simbes was afflicted by malevolent forces.

Both at the time of her death and many months later people told me that a tundar - a wild bush spirit - was responsible for her illness and death. Some time later this issue was expanded in a story about what happened when the men of the community were making a fence around the amari in which her death feasts were held. The story went that a number of men were working on the fence when one of them went into the bush to get more materials. There he 'saw' Paket (Simbes' HB, see Genealogy 7.1) and moreover spoke to him. Later however when the two met again Paket denied any knowledge of the meeting. The people of the community interpreted this incident in the following terms: Paket had indeed not been in the bush, rather the tundar responsible for Simbes' death had taken on his corporeal form and tricked the fence-builder. My impression was that prior to this people had already interpreted Simbes' illness as caused by the malevolent force of a tundar and that this incident served to
reinforce this general judgement.

In the same week an old man from another village, whom I had met and travelled with in the preceding month, died on Big Tabar. The man was extremely old, and because of this, his death might well have been expected to be described as natural. However it was reported to me that the old man had died of 'poison' (t.p.- sorcery) and significantly, that just before death he bled from his ears, nose, mouth and anus. As I shall show it is indications like this and Simbes' stinking sores which are seen by people as evidence of the work of malevolent forces and therefore as justification for the interpretation of these as unnatural deaths. As we shall see they are also available as resources for determining the identity of the malevolent force responsible for the attack.

The following account of a sequence of death and illness provides some further examples. It also allows for a discussion of how interpretations of events form and change over time and enable the identification of some of the considerations which affect interpretation and classification. Two of the 'victims' were related to Simbes, as the following genealogy shows (see Genealogy 7.1). The other was a neighbour, as Figure 7.1 notes.

The sequence of events recounted here occurred some eleven and a half months after Simbes' death but less than three months after her husband, the kalengo Manai, had sponsored the presentation of a malanga in her honour. As others have shown in respect of the mainland New Ireland case (Billings and Peterson, 1967, Lewis, 1969; Wilkinson, 1978; and Lomas, 1979) malanga ceremonies are contexts in which political status and kudos are achieved by sponsors.
My account begins on a Sunday evening towards the beginning of 1979. The day was shattered when the air was rent by agonized wailing. When I went to its source I was told that word had just come that Daimol, a boy of about 13 years, had died while visiting Tatau and that his body was being brought home by canoe. Daimol was a boy I liked and knew well. His death was for me, and more so for those with whom I was living, a 'significant death' (see Landsberg, 1966).

Daimol had spent the weekend with his MMZ (Vevene) and her husband at their home on Tatau Island. I was told (on the evening of his death when his body was brought back to his home village) that earlier that afternoon he had gone fishing on the reef near his MMZ's village with some younger friends. Walking back over the reef about dusk Daimol had suddenly collapsed and died. That night his distraught 'grandparents' brought his body back to his home village and the amari with which his M, MM and MB were associated (Amari A in Figure 7.1). The first inkling that I or others in the hamlet had of his death was the sound of wailing over that of the outboard motor of the canoe which carried his body and mourners from Tatau. They arrived at his home village at about 11pm. Soon after, the story of his death was told to the shocked gathering. There was a great deal of wailing at this time which was apparently addressed to the dead boy. Some wailed 'ah my son you have left us now', 'mother we will soon no longer see your face' and so on. As is the custom his body was carried into the amari with which he and his family were associated.

His body, wrapped in a bed sheet, was laid across the legs of women who sat alternately facing each other with their legs straddling two
FIGURE 7.1: Layout of hamlet referred to in case study

[Note: Bracketed numbers - (4) - refer to the number of the vanua vavi (see Figure 7.1) with which the individual's domestic group is associated]

GENEALOGY 7.1: 'Genealogical' relationships between Melega, Daimol and Simbes
beds (as in Figure 7.2). The community sat up all night with the body, sometimes in silence and sometimes wailing, preparing his body for burial the next day and carrying out the first death feast. During the night some of my friends went over the account of his death and added that he might not have died had someone older been around at the time he collapsed. The young boys I was told, did not know what to do to revive him. Had someone pulled on his digits (fingers and toes) and rubbed his body with the leaf baliu, his spirit may not have left his body, and he might yet have been brought back to life. Within three days I was to see this practice when Daimol's older brother Melega collapsed.

Melega collapsed after returning from a special service at the Mission church which the whole community had attended. Very shortly after, however I was startled by shrieking, screaming and wailing in house 5 (see Figure 7.1). I ran to the house to see in the dim light that Melega had collapsed on the floor and apparently had stopped breathing. My own panic matched that of a number of others, particularly his MZ who stood holding her heads in her hands screaming. Unable to cope with the situation immediately I ran to the house next door to get a hurricane lamp.

In the few moments this took many people had begun 'working' on the prone lad and the house filled with the rest of the community. Others like myself stood shaking and nauseous on the peripheries. I was stunned by the 'violence' of the revival. Some people had grabbed Melega's fingers, others his toes and they were all independently yanking his body convulsively above the ground. Meanwhile some women ran and picked baliu leaves from the fence of the amari and heated them on the embers of the fire. The leaves
were then rubbed on the boy's jerking body to make him gasp. One man pounced on the boy's chest and miraculously it seemed to me he began breathing again, though he did not regain consciousness. For a considerable time after he had begun breathing again his body was rubbed with the warmed baliu leaves and his fingers less violently pulled. Often during the first night of his unconsciousness (which lasted three more days) Melega's body was racked by muscle spasms and during these 'fits' he ground his teeth and sometimes vomited. These spasms, I was told, indicated the battle which was going on in his body for his spirit by the attacking force which was thought most probably to be sorcery.

After Daimol's death there had been some speculation about the cause of death and most were convinced that it was sorcery. His mother recalled seeing a baru bird (probably a Dacula rubicera rubicera), which is thought to be associated with such attacks, flying over the hamlet on the day of his death. Some members of the community privately suggested that the attack on Daimol might have been done by another kalengo who was in some way offended by the malanga which Manai had so recently sponsored in honour of his wife Simbes. After Melega's collapse the feeling that the two brothers were victims of sorcery was reinforced. Melega's collapse however added the alarming possibility that these were not one-off attacks but rather that the boys' kivavundi or amari-group was under concerted attack. Mothers kept their children indoors, out of sight of the baru bird, in order to protect them, and responded hysterically if the children wandered off.

Also significant is the response to my suggestion that Melega be sent to Kavieng hospital for treatment. Most insisted that the lad
was suffering from a 'Tabar illness' (i.e. sorcery) which was, by definition, not responsive to European medicine. The boy would either live or die and if he were to die then he would do so among his own people. My other uncalled-for intervention drew a response which is also significant in the context of this discussion. I arranged for the nurses from the Mission Health Centre to treat the boy in the village and they introduced an intravenous drip of paraldehyde (an anti-convulsant) and quinine. The treatment served to temper the lad's spasms. I was perplexed when the kalengo Manai demanded that the treatment be stopped. It transpired that he believed that the spasms were a positive sign that the boy was indeed fighting for his own life against the forces which were attacking him - he was fighting to retain his spirit in his body.

So far I have drawn my cases from those which were seen as 'unnatural' deaths, that is deaths which deprived individuals of their full life. These people were perceived to have died prematurely, before their time. Their lives were also seen to have been 'taken' from them by forces outside them. It is also significant that each showed signs that they were 'interfered' with. Simbes for instance had sores which stank and ate away at her body and the elderly man on Big Tabar bled from his orifices. Melega had violent spasms. Daimol died suddenly without any warning. None of these occurrences are seen to be 'natural'. Each is an indication of malevolent attack.

I have however suggested that the people of Tabar also recognize that natural deaths occur. The following cases are examples. The first case is particularly useful for I expected it to be connected with those of Daimol and Melega. Firstly, this death occurred seven
days after Daimol's death and four days after Melega was afflicted. Secondly the victim, an old woman called Tinut, was a co-resident of the boys as she lived at the other end of the same hamlet (see Figure 7.1). Thus this woman's death was close both in time and space to the attacks on the boys. It is significant therefore that her death was not interpreted as part of a connected sequence of sorcery attacks.

I believe that there are three main reasons why the community did not connect Tinut's death with the attacks on the boys. Firstly, Tinut was a very old woman at the time of her death. The Mission baptism records show that the priest who baptised her in 1931 placed (guessed?) her birth at a few years before the turn of the century. This most likely means that the priest believed her to be a mature woman at the time that she was baptised. If his speculation was accurate then she was probably in her late seventies or early eighties at the time of her death. In any case she was perceived by the community to be a very old woman. In addition she was no longer a productive member of the community in the sense that she no longer maintained a garden or was an active participant in many of the its activities. She also showed some signs of senility or at least a lack of sustained 'touch' with what was going on around her.

Secondly, she was a member of different kin and amari groups from those of the boys (see Genealogy 7.1 and Figure 7.1). Thus, if the attack on the boys represented a sustained attack on their amari-group/kivavundi, then Tinut was not an appropriate victim. Perhaps this might have been different if, like members of a number
of other spatially close amari-groups, she had actively assisted Manai and his group in sponsoring Simbes' malanga.

Finally, I was told that the weakening Tinut had died peacefully 'like falling asleep'. This is in clear contrast to Simbes' death which was painful and 'offensive', with the suddenness of Daimol's death and the violence and trauma of Meleqa's unconsciousness. To carry the contrast further, Tinut's lack of productive participation in life contrasted with the productive years which Simbes, Daimol and Meleqa should have had ahead of them. Tinut died untraumatically after the close of a long productive life. Her death could not be seen, as the others were, as an unexpected threat to anyone or any group.

When Tinut died members of the community wailed (as I found always to be the practice), and the first three death festivals were held (the significance of the apparent neglect of the other festivals will be returned to later). There was not however any worried speculation about who or what had caused this death nor any concern for the safety of those who remained in the community.

My second example of a 'natural' death is also of a old woman, Sirum, who was no longer significantly productive. Her relationship to the rest of the community was tenuous. The following genealogy sets out this woman's formal relationship with the community. In Figure 7.1 her house is listed as number 9.

It was Sirum's son, Valak, who was seen to have his 'permanent place of residence' at this hamlet, who suggested to me that her only real link with her co-residents was her long divorced ex-husband Papal (house 6). After their divorce Papal had married Manai's sister
Sokova (house 5) and had moved to live with her at her village. During their marriage Sokova had borne two children. By contrast, Sirum was said to have married and divorced often and people said had gotten herself into a position that she was not wanted anywhere in particular. Eventually she and her son had settled in the village with this marginal link. Co-residents frequently showed antagonism to them though generally in 'private' contexts. For some time Sirum had tended her own gardens, but during my stay was no longer gardening. Rather, she survived on gifts of food from others. Her son was generally considered to be delinquent though he was a middle-aged man. He was reputed to move about from amari to amari surviving on the hospitality of others and moving on again when it began to falter. He sometimes participated in activities of the amari-group to which he was nominally attached but with observable lack of commitment or enthusiasm. I was struck by this
(as others were) at a cooperative project to make gardens in preparation for Simbes' malanga festivals. Valak spent a great deal more time sharpening his digging stick than putting it to work. From time to time however he obtained casual (paid) work on a nearby (locally owned) plantation and on the mission station, and purchased food which he and his mother ate.

The point which the above case makes is that, as was the case with Tinut, Sirum's death did not adversely affect the productivity of any group. Also, as was the case with Tinut's death, Sirum's was not characterized by the sort of trauma noted in previous cases. Here it is worth recalling the case of the old man who died on Big Tabar, which I discussed earlier. He, like Sirum and Tinut, had ceased to be a significant contributor to any group's livelihood. In that sense his death, like theirs, might have been expected to have been interpreted as 'natural' for it came at the end of his productive life. The decisive point is however that contra-indications occurred in relation to his death - namely bleeding from his orifices. This became the most significant factor in the interpretation of the type/cause of death.

It is also worth noting that, by contrast with what could have been done or was done to 'pull back life', which we saw in the case of the brothers, nothing was done in either Tinut or Sirum's cases. In this sense it may be said that the community acquiesced in the deaths of these old women.

It is also significant that the talk which surrounded Sirum's death was of a different nature. People implicitly suggested that this woman had chosen to die, and that she had achieved it by starving to
death. Sirum's case will be taken up in detail later because her death was a context for a 'tug of war' over where her body should be buried, and thus which group could claim her ancestral spirit. That she was thought to have died of starvation was a decisive issue in the debate over where she should be buried. That her son had allowed her to die from lack of food was seen, by many, to negate his links of relatedness to her, and thus his right to have a say over what should happen to her body.

Her 'suicide' is also significant because, my informants told me, prior to the imposition of government control, voluntary death was an option for those who believed that they had come to the end of their productive life. The practice, I was told, was called vavazarugi. According to this custom, the old person was able to 'take their life in their own hands' (to use a western formulation which seems applicable here) and propose this course to the kalengo of their amari-group. A feast would be organized which, my informants said, allowed the aged person to 'shake hands' with their community. The old person would attend this feast and then after this public farewell they would be tied to a bed of bamboo, paddled out into deep water adjacent to a reef with which their group was associated, and then tipped overboard. Stones on the 'bed' would ensure that they sank. They were specially decorated so that their bodies would not be eaten by sharks (cf. Groves, 1939:348).

This representation of the past suggests that the sort of acquiescence to death, which I have suggested was the case in respect of Tinut and Sirum, was potentially an active process prior to this imposition of administrative control. Indeed people spoke of vavazarugi as if it were a highly desirable death. It certainly
is relevant to the distinction between 'natural' and 'unnatural' deaths which I have sought to elucidate here. What appears to be the critical element in each of these accounts is the issue of productivity. Once a person has passed their productive lifetime then their death will, unless there are contrary indications, be interpreted as 'natural'.

This provides a useful commentary upon the relationship of individuals to their community and the fact that an unnatural death is, among other things, a death which deprives a group of a productive member and thus undermines the group's vitality and ultimately threatens the social order. We might go on to suggest that the logic of these conceptions is that without the interference of malevolent forces an individual's lifetime should extend until they are 'past' productive work. Death before this time is 'unnatural' because it is caused by outside intervention and interferes with what might be characterized as the 'normal course of events'.

For the most part whether a death, or indeed, as we have seen, an illness, is evaluated as natural or unnatural is usually relatively unproblematic. In the case of unnatural deaths what was the malevolent force which intervened and why it should have done so are questions which may take people some considerable time to resolve. Such perceptions are, I suggest, formed contextually. Indeed, previous perceptions may be reinterpreted in the light of events after the fact. They may be triggered off by culturally meaningful events and connections (such as bleeding orifices, the sighting of a baru bird etc) and are often 'solidified' in the context of community discourse. Seldom is this discourse framed as
Rather, members of the community selectively talk about the issue with those people they trust. The sort of 'signs' mentioned above are sought, questions of why the victim was the target are broached and eminities hinted at. In the cases of the two brothers the interpretations assumed that these two incidents were related. To my knowledge, no-one suggested that the attacks were independent. Rather, their sibling relationship, co-residence and the temporal proximity of the attacks rendered this logical possibility culturally irrelevant.

Some question did arise about whether their attacks were related to that of their MMBW (Simbes', see Genealogy 7.1) death about a year before. My impression was that most members of the community suspected that their attacks were related to the malanga for Simbes sponsored by Manai held just over two months before. Whether they were attacked by sorcery performed by someone who was angered by the performance of the malanga, jealous of the kudos Manai derived from it, or who had some other reason for being angry with Manai and had chosen this time as a good moment to 'bring him down a peg or two', remained open for conjecture.

A significantly less popular possibility was that it was a tundar (wild bush spirit) associated with Manai's kivavundi/matambu which had attacked the boys as punishment for some error in the production of the sculpture or the ceremonies of their presentation. Some believed that the sighting of the baru bird was sound support for the sorcery hypothesis; yet another privately commented that these birds do not only fly about when they are being used as vehicles of sorcery.
DEATH - QUESTIONS OF DEFINITION

The prior question of what constitutes death remains undeveloped here but groundwork for its discussion has been laid in the cases presented. I argue that death in Tabar terms occurs when two things coincide: on the one hand that the person's spirit leaves their body and on the other that they cease to breath. The second implies, as we shall see, a broader reality - the cessation of the processes by which corporeality is maintained. Either of these processes may begin or occur in isolation without death actually occurring. It is understood, for example, that in dreaming one's spirit leaves one's body and travels. Whilst one is clearly very vulnerable to attack in this state, dreaming is clearly not death.

Groves noted similar notions during his fieldwork on Tabar in 1933. Here I draw on his fieldnotes where he cites the case of Lamot, a member of the Tatau community who told him that "he knew his ghost left him at night, and went into the coconuts, because he couldn't sleep and used to get up and walk about when his attention was drawn to the presence of his ghost in the trees" (Groves AL-103,9/55:4). Around this time other members of the community noticed Lamot's roaming and one of them, Groves wrote, "suggested that all boded ill for Lamot - unless something was done to lift the black magic from him" (ibid.). However, whilst a living person's spirit may temporarily absent itself from an individual's body, this is not the normal state of affairs. One's spirit is based in one's body if life is to continue.

Similarly, in exceptional circumstances (which are not understood in the same way as dreaming) one may temporarily, and for a short
period only, cease to breath and yet death will not necessarily ensue. So while Melega was understood to have ceased breathing, this process was reactivated and he remained 'alive'. Thus clearly death is something which, in a limited way at least, is open to intervention. If one is on the spot it is sometimes possible to pull back the life of another, as we have seen.

Similarly, Simbes' sores were signs of corporeal disintegration. In her case she was seen in important ways to have begun to decompose before she had ceased to breath. In another case with which I am familiar a kalengo lost weight dramatically soon after he had sponsored a large malanga sequence. Informants suggested that he was the victim of a sorcery attack and noted with great concern that he had transformed from a well-built man to little more than bones. They spoke of his dramatic weight loss as if his corporeality was being decisively undermined before he actually ceased to breath. He was, in short, they concluded, dying. Much 'bush' medicine was done to thwart the 'attack' and eventually it was seen that this action was successful and the man stopped losing weight.

Whilst in my initial formulation I characterized the elements of spirit and breathing simply it is useful to consider the issues they provoke in greater detail. We might say for instance that the issue could be restated. A person is both a spirit and a body. When a person is alive in the world of normal social discourse (what I shall call their 'here and now existence') the spirit is normally housed in their body. We have seen in our discussion of beriberi that the 'enlivening' of a foetus occurs in utero when it becomes a form which grows and is nurtured and enlivened by the gaining of a spirit. Both spirits and bodies develop throughout a person's
life. The deaths of infants are not as greatly mourned as are those of people who have become personalities, because the nexus between their underdeveloped body and spirit is weak.

Human beings are like plants; they grow and then reach their peak. Human beings, in the normal course of events, grow to maturity and then decline in corporeal vitality (though not necessarily spiritual or metaphysical vitality). As we have already seen, the bearing of children saps the vitality of women. So too does toil. In the very productive process of maintaining one's subsistence and providing for others, one depletes one's corporeal vitality. This is the natural cause of ageing.

It is useful also to pursue the nature of corporeality further. Tabars have a particular concern for bodily wholeness. There was, as I have already mentioned, an abhorrence of Simba's sores. As significant is the treatment of women after their bodily boundaries have been breached in the process of childbirth - especially the practice of 'mother roasting'. Those honoured with death by vavazarugi die by drowning, their breath stopped in a process which retains their bodily boundaries intact and uncorrupted. Informants suggested that the decorations of the honoured victim were supposed to stop sharks from consuming them. Indeed, in the treatment of sacrificial pigs at feasts we find that the pigs are suffocated rather than stabbed, and that they are gutted in a way which least disrupts their bodily boundaries. In everyday contexts I was conscious of this abiding concern. A hunchback was for instance the brunt of much joking and comic imitation and it was his de-formation which was seized upon, as in many ways it is in our own tradition. I have also mentioned attitudes to the visible
debilitation and ageing signalled by the fallen and shrunken breasts of women. Similarly, skin complaints like grille were responded to by revulsion and those afflicted by them with pity.

In this context, then, symptoms such as sores or bleeding orifices are significant because they indicate malevolent attack. They signal that the integrity of corporeal form is being undermined. After death, when breathing has ceased and the spirit has left the body, the process of corporeal disintegration is irrevocable. Without a body the spirit loses its 'home' and thus there is also a metaphysical transformation which is entailed by death. The spirit is in the initial stages both freed and disorientated. I explore this in greater detail in the chapter on malanga. At the same time it is clear that a 'decomposing' body is not a suitable home for a person's spirit.

Tabars believe that the nature of a person's death will generally determine the orientation of the freed spirit to the world. Generally, the spirits of those who had died 'unnatural' deaths (by definition a consequence of malevolent intervention) will in turn have a malevolent orientation after death. The spirits of those who die naturally, by contrast, are thought likely to retain a positive orientation to the world and those who are still engaged in its here and now relations.

My informants distinguished between virua, the spirits of those who were angry - most commonly because they had died unnatural deaths before their time - and tano, the spirits of those who had died happily from natural causes. Virua are often perceived of as 'hot' spirits and, as Groves notes, "whenever trees have suddenly dried in
the leaves, virua have been there and contact with their skins has
dried and killed their leaves". He also notes that these spirits
are associated with the violence of the elements such as the violent
wind storms which sweep Tabar from time to time (Groves,
AL-103,9/55).

Groves records another case which supports my material on attitudes
to the spirits of the newly dead. His notes suggest that a man
murdered his wife and then himself committed suicide. Groves wrote
"The ghosts of Mangeis and Kumo, since their deaths, have had this
place - and Lawa in particular- in absolute fear. The one or other
of the pair has appeared in every house in Lawa, and in the banis
[tok pisin for fence; it is commonly used as a gloss for amari]
....They are all very bold and laugh about it in the daylight - but
many of them I learn, do not sleep at night.... Mangeis has been
heard calling out to Kumo on every point on the road to their house
in the bush, where Kumo committed the fatal assault; and the natives
suggest that she is seeking him" (Groves, AL-103,9/55:3).

THE DEATH SEQUENCE

The boropanda is ideally the first of the Death Sequence. It is
held just before a person's death. Obviously this is not always
possible. Indeed I have never seen one. Most of the deaths I was
privy to during my fieldwork were sudden and unexpected and it was
not logistically possible to hold a boropanda before their deaths.
The boropanda for Simbes was held in a nearby hamlet the day after I
arrived at my main fieldwork site and I was not invited to attend.
As one informant put it, 'this feast is a farewell to the dying person'. Another informant stressed that this a person's last feast and marks the end of their work and life. This comment is significant for it suggests that the boropanda marks the end of a persons active engagement in the 'here and now' life of the community. Later I will suggest that the ziko pesi mi pugi marks the end of the processes which sustain life and the nexus between corporeality and spirit. The boro vavazigani ends the liminal period which might be described as the process of dying. The boro vavazigani takes place after burial when the corpse itself has been physically removed from the presence of the living community.

I return to Sirum's death in order to present the activity which ensues after a person takes their final breath. When Sirum died I was sitting talking with some men in amari B (see Figure 7.1). One of Sokova's daughters (Pokor) came and told us that the old and ailing woman had just died. This contrasts clearly with her response to her nephew Melega's collapse for it was her screams which were among those I heard on that occasion. I went immediately to Sirum's vanua vavi (number 9 in Figure 7.1) and heard women of the hamlet wailing there as I walked.

Sirum lay on a grass mat on the floor of her house, her mouth oddly open in death. Women from both amari-groups moved the body onto one of the house beds where they washed the body with soap and water. The two oldest women (drawn again from different amari-groups) did the actual washing while Pokor poured water for them from a bottle. The process of washing entailed stripping the body and washing it completely. Once washed the body was dried and dressed in clothes her son (Valak) had taken from a trunk. She was clothed in a white
'meri blouse', a long white petticoat, a black laplap and over all of this a long white garment which looked to me like a priest's vestment. A number of members of the community (including children) were present in the house during this process. Indeed members of nearby hamlets had arrived during the process and some, for example, helped dress the body. All those coming into the house wailed when they entered it. The wailing took the form not simply of ritualized and strenuous 'weeping' but as always entailed crying words to the deceased such as those mentioned in the case of Daimol. This is an issue which I will discuss in greater detail later in this section for I wish to show that the sort of wailing which people do when confronted by the death of a significant other in Tabar cannot be dismissed simply as a heartrending expression of grief. It is, I will argue, also to be seen as a mode of communicating with the deceased. Wailing is to the dead what talking is to people who are alive.

While the women were washing and clothing the body, Sirum's son Valak began knocking an old door apart to provide materials for the coffin, or more specifically for the lid of the coffin. After the body was clothed, the kalendo Manai, who was sitting outside the house in the ino mono when I entered it some time before, came in and sat quietly watching the proceedings. The body was then wrapped mummy-like in a large tablecloth. It was noon (about an hour after death) when this initial work of preparing the body was completed and the body was carried from the vanua vavi to amari A (see Figure 7.1). There it was placed across the legs of four women whose outstretched legs bridged the space between two adjacent beds (see Figure 7.2).
The body was carried for many hours in this way, though carriers were replaced and rested by other women from time to time. One of the most interesting aspects of this period of 'sitting close to the body' is the spatial orientation of men and women within the area of the amari. It is women who carry or sit close to the body inside the dormitory of the amari while men, for the most part, remain outside in the amari's compound. Clearly we have another transformation of spatial organization in respect of gender orientations. My experience was that this configuration was the case no matter what was the sex of the deceased. This is represented in Figure 7.3 below.

Some of their number prepare the coffin in which the body will be placed. In my experience coffins were always made from a canoe hull (mi galiu - small outriggers). Each end of the canoe is sawn off and the opening boarded up, and a lid is made from timber. As I have mentioned, in this case the lid was made from an old door. I was told however that, in the old days at least, an alternative was a basket made from taro leaves (mi basaket).3

The community 'sits close' (mongos tarave'a) to the body for many hours. Others join them when they hear the news. As my informants expressed it, these people had come to 'sit close' to the deceased. When I asked who 'should' come on such occasions I was told that it is always a matter of choice and anyone, relative or not, could come if they wished. But one informant added 'according to our practices if someone does not come and later dies then the group of this deceased will not go to their feasts'. Thus whilst there is no compulsion, non-attendance carries significant social consequences and sanctions. Indeed I would suggest that a 'relative' who could
have come but did not, is indicating that they see their allegiances lying elsewhere and are therefore making a statement about a change in their relatedness. As Huntington and Metcalf note in respect of the Nyakyusa, when someone is not advised of a death "he or she will be extremely angry at the affront. On the other side, should anyone
receive the message and then deliberately not attend, this act will be considered a serious breach of the social relationship" (1979:34).

Whenever newcomers arrive wailing begins anew. In most cases wailing takes place in between times as well, although this happened relatively infrequently in this particular case. From time to time other women change with those who are carrying the body. In addition, new clothes (usually brand new laplaps) are brought and placed over the wrapped corpse. In Sirum's case two men brought laplaps to place over the wrapped corpse. Both described themselves as related as 'fathers' to the deceased. Relatedness through substance is not necessary for one to make this gesture to 'decorate' the body. Reciprocity and the assertion of friendship (in one of these cases with the woman's son) are also important. For instance, one of those who brought a laplap told me that Valak had given a laplap when a woman from his hamlet had died and this laplap was reciprocation. I was told that before the advent of cloth, bodies were decorated with leaves and flowers.

During the afternoon, whilst others sat close to his mother's body, Valak paddled to Tatau and walked to his mother's natal village to take news of her death to her natal kin. Other men set off in search of a pig for the death feast which was held during the night. Whilst some men prepared the pig for cooking others prepared the randu (the amari's oven), and yet others sewed together the broad leaves of the gorigori in which the pig was to be wrapped to cook. Women of the host amari-group went to their gardens and harvested vegetables which they cooked in their vanua vavi's for the feast.
At most *ziko pesi mipuqi* the feast is held while the corpse is still in the *amari*. The preparations for the feast begin before the corpse is placed in the coffin, while it is still carried on the women's legs. It is worthwhile outlining the work of a 'normal' feast here. For as we will see Sirum's feast departed from the norm in important ways.

The *ziko pesi mipuqi* is a *gau* which involves the killing of at least one pig. A pig, or pigs, is captured by men for the feast and carried on a bamboo pole or stretcher to the peripheries of the host *amari*. Pigs, in my experience, were always killed just outside the *amari* fence on the sea or bush side (away from the *vanua vavi*). The pigs are asphyxiated either by fastening their snout or in the case of large pigs, tightening a vice of two saplings on their throat. This is important for, as I have noted, it is the nexus between breath and spirit which 'defines' life. Also of significance is the fact that the pigs are killed whole - their bodily boundaries are not breached in the process by which they are killed. I take up this point in some detail in Chapter Eight where I discuss *gau* as sacrifices.

After the pig has been killed, its bristles are removed by subjecting it to the flames of burning (dry) coconut fronds. Only then is the pig's carcass carried into the *amari* enclosure. You will recall that I noted in Chapter Three that some informants argued that the fence around an *amari* is designed to keep pigs out. In other words the only pigs which get inside *amari* are dead and bristle-less.
The pig is then gutted at the front of the enclosure (in line with, but on the opposite side of the enclosure from, the dormitory). The pig is gutted in a manner which involves as little disruption as possible to the pig's external bodily form.

Pigs are cooked in the amari's randu, which is constructed like a vavi. Hot stones are stuffed into the pig's belly; it is then wrapped and covered by hot stones, leaves and sand (to seal in the heat).

While the men prepare and cook the pig, women of the host amari-group prepare and cook vegetables for the feast in their respective vanua vavi.

When the pig(s) is cooked the randu is dismantled and carried to a layer of coconut fronds (pepera) laid in the enclosure just beyond the mouth of the amari. The vegetable foods cooked by the women are carried in and placed on the end of the pepera closest to the hamlets vanua vavi referred to as the tupia pepera (literally 'ass/base' pepera). Pigs are placed at the other end, which is in reality in 'old' amari, and conceptually in new sites, the end closest to the cemetery area in the enclosure. This end of the pepera is referred to as the kova ('head') pepera.

The man who will 'buy' the pig designates a carver who cuts the pigs into standard cuts. Many of these cuts are distributed to guests to eat. They sit just inside the fence on the three sides away from the dormitory. Vegetables are apportioned and also carried to the men.
Then the buyers of the pigs stand and display the shell money which they are giving for the pigs. Where there are several pigs involved the men stand with the strands of shell money held 'looping' between them. The sponsoring kalengo frequently makes a speech which outlines the purpose of the feast. When the guests have eaten their food any undistributed pork is presented by its new 'owner' as reciprocation of previous prestations or to initiate new ones.

At ziko pesi mipugi the corpse is placed in the coffin before the pig(s) or vegetables are removed from their ovens. At this feast for Sirum, women (in particular) had begun to comment on the state of the corpse before it was encoffined. This is a common feature of this period.

They made comments such as 'we should put her in the coffin now before her body swells up and she does not fit' and 'the body will start to smell soon'. Such comments indicate an awareness of the processes of decomposition to which a corpse is subject. I will take this issue up in much greater detail later.

During the preparations for the feast Valak returned with his mother's ZD and that woman's husband. Sirum's corpse had not yet been placed in the coffin. As many others had done before them they wailed to the corpse. Then the ZD brought out a laplap and meri blouse and the body was unwrapped and these items put on underneath the tablecloth but over the clothes in which she had initially been dressed soon after death. The laplaps which others had brought were laid over the tablecloth as they had done before the ZD's items had been brought.
The feast proceeded in the standard manner described above. Manai, the host *kalengo*, stated in his speech that the feast was being done 'close to' the dead woman who lay still with them in the dormitory. It was in the period during which people were eating that there was a significant deviation from standard form.

At this time the public discussion, referred to as a 'tug of war', about where Sirum's body should be buried began. I describe it briefly here, though its full significance will be taken up later. There I link this 'tug of war' to the 'tug of war' of the *na pigosi* and extend my discussion of social relatedness. Debates such as this over Sirum's burial site are not common. For most people the decision about where to bury a body is straightforward, for their closest links of substance are relatively clear at the time of their death. This debate was the invoking of a cultural practice necessary when the deceased's closest links of substance are unclear.

For me the discussion was unheralded though I understand that the issue had been boiling up since Valak had told Sirum's ZD of the death and that the death feasts were to be held in the hamlet in which she had died. The issue was where should Sirum be buried. The public dimension of the dispute began when Valak stood and, facing the dormitory, addressed the gathering. He stated that he wanted his mother to be buried at the Catholic Mission's cemetery on Mapua (which implied that Sirum's death feasts would continue to be held in this *amari*).

Sirum's ZD responded to this statement from the mouth of the dormitory arguing strongly that Sirum be buried in her natal village
on Tatau Island. She argued that though the death feasts had begun in the village in which Sirum had lived before her death she was a woman who had moved around, been married many times and had spent relatively little time living in this village. Given Sirum's lack of attachment in any other place her ZD demanded that she should therefore be buried in her natal village.

As one of my informants said to me the problem in this case was that Sirum had one leg in this hamlet and another in her natal village and they were trying to decide on which foot she had placed most weight.

In essence this debate was about which group Sirum was most closely related to and therefore which group (by sponsoring her feasts and their associated sacrifices) could claim and utilize her as an ancestor. The most critical dimension of the ZD's case seemed to be that she was accusing Valak of neglecting his relationship with his mother by neglecting her, and allowing her to starve to death. This negligence to provide her with food was seen to refute his claim to be her 'next of kin' and therefore the one who could determine where she would be buried. The dispute was described to me as a tug-of-war (using the English expression) and such disputes, I argue, are all about the relative strength of bonds of relatedness. In this case however the ZD prevailed and the next morning Sirum's body was carried to her natal village and buried there.

It is not uncommon for a body to remain in the amari for eighteen to twenty-four hours before burial. Sirum, for example, was buried about twenty hours after death. In that time she was washed, clothed and carried into the amari's dormitory where the women
carried her on their legs, the community sat close to her and pigs were sacrificed and eaten. In Simbes' case the community sat close to her corpse for about eighteen hours before she was buried. In Daimol's case he was brought from the place of death to his home village and buried about fifteen hours after death. In all but Sirum's case, burial took place in the mission cemetery.

Traditionally however, and sometimes in the contemporary context, the deceased is buried in the amari itself. This is significant. For while burials taking place in mission cemeteries make a statement about an individual's Christian affiliation, the fact that the feasts of the burial sequence take place in the amari with which they were most closely associated marks their relationship with that group and renders their spirit a resource which that group would expect to be able to invoke.

Some hours before the actual burial three or four men go and dig the hole. In cases where the deceased is to be buried at the Catholic mission, the community, most of whom will have remained 'close to' the deceased for many hours, go in procession behind the coffin to the church where a service is held. After the service the coffin is carried to the nearby cemetery with the mourners following in procession. Generally the priest, or in his absence the senior catechist, conducts both the church and graveside services. After the body is lowered into the grave those around throw flowers onto the coffin and when this procession is over those who dug the hole fill it in.

The community then returns to the host amari where the burial feast - referred to as the boro vavazigani (or Boro tatari) - is held.
Ideally the pig or pigs for this feast should be placed in the oven before burial and brought out after it. Informants described this feast as that which 'shakes hands' with the deceased, and I argue that it marks the end of the person's here and now existence.

In the context of this feast those who 'served' the corpse are 'paid' for such services. Thus those women who washed the body, those who carried it on their legs, those men who carried the coffin, and those who worked on the grave are offered payment. Frequently those to whom an offer of payment (for these services) is made, refuse payment. Acceptance in my experience is very rare. I would suggest that those who refuse payment are making very particular statements about the closeness of their relationship to the deceased. These statements are about their grief and respect for the deceased, but they are also about the sense of close relatedness which underpins these feelings.

Pigs given for this feast are also paid for with shellmoney and currency. In the context of the burial feast (before the pigs are distributed) payment is also frequently refused for similar reasons as those suggested above. Such pigs are said to be 'free'. During the display of the payment the sponsoring kalengo again tells the gathering the context and significance of the feast - that is that it is the feast marking the burial of a particular (named) person, and where pigs are given free he lists these.

After a death the community of mourners is subject to taboos on drinking coconuts, eating fish and eating the fruit of trees (particularly sago and bananas). These prohibitions are lifted in feasts which take place in succeeding weeks. The feast I refer to
as Varanda (also referred to as tukoikoi niu and unokombe) lifts the taboo on drinking coconuts, the zokurotasi (zuzuranda) lifts the taboo on eating fish and the na kitip lifts the taboo on sago and bananas. These taboo feasts are especially important in the context of deaths which are considered to be unnatural. For affines who may be suspected of sorcery, any contravention of the prohibitions would result in an interpretation of guilt, for only a sorcerer or those responsible for an attack would not be sorry at the death and therefore fail to abide by the taboo.

Indeed it is interesting to note that I talked with a neighbour one day about the amount of labour involved in death feasts. He acknowledged this and said that when one of his co-residents, an old man who could no longer walk and for whose death feasts he would be responsible, died, he would curtail the feasts by dropping the taboo feasts. This was indeed what happened after Tintu's death. I speculate that in the case of natural deaths the dropping of these feasts is not critical precisely because such individuals have passed their productive lives and their deaths are not seen as a threat to the reproduction of the group. Unnatural deaths by contrast are seen as a threat to the reproduction of the group and I suggest that in these circumstances these feasts will always occur. They are, I believe, concerned with reproduction and it is no surprise that the objects which are made the subject of taboo are those essential to reproduction and those which carry heavy symbolic value in this culture.

Here I examine an example in which the ideal trio of feasts was collapsed into a single performance. This festival was held to lift the taboos emplaced on the community after Simbes' death. The
festival extended over two days and was held almost three weeks after her death.

Some preparations began about a week before the festival. Bananas for example were harvested, carried to the host amari where they were buried in a bark lined hole adjacent to the randu (oven, see Figure 7.4). They were removed the day before the feast and the now soft and ripened bananas were hung inside the amari dormitory.

Sago was also prepared in advance of the event. This entailed obtaining pith from a fallen tree and washing it to obtain its 'powdered' starch.7

On the morning of the first day women harvested sweet potato, manioc, yams and greens. They then prepared these in the vanua vavi. A portion were dealt with in the usual way for cooking in the vavi. Some were saved, and I return to these alter. Women from the host amari group were joined by 'sisters' and 'mothers' resident in other hamlets. These 'outsiders' had come to help the community in Simbes' death sequence and to pay 'respect' to her. They helped the women residents most 'closely' related to them with the preparations of food and vavi. Such feasts are an important context in which related but non-resident women get together, and they share both work and talk in this period. Food was also prepared for the vavi of the deceased woman. This is the last food to be cooked there and this final feast is said to 'cool' the oven. Whilst the food cooked in other ovens is distributed 'hot' later that day, the food in Simbes' vavi was left there overnight and the vavi dismantled when both food and stones were well and truly cold.
Men congregated early in the day in Manai's amari. Members of his amari-group collected firewood, mature coconuts and the materials (gorigori and banana leaves, vines) with which the food cooked in the vandu was wrapped.

Then a large 'ball' of drained sago (about 18" by 26" by 18") wrapped in gorigori with a fringed 'skirt' of shredded white was carried into the amari enclosure. It was shouldered, strung to a bamboo pole by two members of the host amari-group, as pigs too are carried to pau. But whereas pigs are taken to the outside of the fence, the sago was carried inside and hung from a breadfruit in one of its 'front' (seaward) corners.

Nearby, but just outside the fence three kalengo - Manai, Simbes' husband and the kalengo of two neighbouring hamlets sat and scraped the flesh of coconuts into canoe shaped 'bowers' of a sago tree (referred to as zombi undu, literally 'canoe sago'). As they worked men of the host amari prepared the gorigori which were used as wrappings for the sago and coconut pudding which was being prepared. Other men from the host amari-group sat at other 'sago canoes'. Into these recepticals was placed scraped coconut and lumps of sago broken off from the large 'ball' which had been carried outside and opened when they were ready to begin this work. The coconut and broken up sago were then mixed gradually together in a process referred to as lakilaki lasiki - turning the sago. As the white coconut and dusky pink sago were blended the men formed them into small balls. As each quantity was blended in this manner it was replaced by raw ingredients until the entire amount was mixed.
Then the gorigori leaves which others had tacked together were placed on the gorund and covered with banana leaves. The turned sago was then spread (about an inch thick) over these wrappings. The gorigori was then folded and the avu lasaki wrapped into long thin packages (about 3' by 9" by 2" thick).

When the sago was prepared, attention turned to the preparation of the greens and seafood bundle (vava kazi or m'bia susu) which would lift the taboo in eating greens and fish, and the killing of a pig for the feast. Women of the host amari-group had harvested 'greens' (abika), sweet potato and yams for this bundle and then had been kept aside from those vavi's in the morning. Simbes' 'son' caught the fish (off the reef) and the octopus (ureta) for the bundle.

Three men from Simbes' and Manai's amari-group who had had particularly 'close' relationship then entered the amari and packed the bundle. Above the gorigori and banana leaf sliced sweet potato were placed. Over them the three women placed a layer of the green abika, and then a layer of chopped up octopus. It in turn was covered with abika, a layer of yams sliced lengthwise, more greens and finally octopus/fish. The placement of the ingredients is presented visually in Figure 7.5.

As it was women of the host amari-group who backed the vava kazi, so too was it women from that group who placed it in the randu which the men had prepared. It was women who positioned the hot stones of the oven around the package. This, significantly, was the only context I am aware of in which women actually work on the randu.
KEY
1 - women cooked vegetables
2 - coconut scraped
3 - sago hung initially
4 - sago moved to / opened here
5 - sago blended with coconut
6 - bananas buried for ripening
7 - ripened bananas hung here
8 - pigs killed / singed here
   (n.b. in this hamlet
    normally at (2)).
9 - pigs butchered here
   (n.b. normally c. 10)
10 - sago wrapped here
11 - women packed vana kasi

Figure 7.4:
Location of activities on the first day of the taboo festival
Their work in the amari done, the women then returned to the vanua vavi in which the vegetables they had left in vavi were cooking. I was surprised to find that the women engaged in typical beriberi horseplay. One woman delighted in showing me the standard beriberi dance, for I had not at that stage seen a beriberi festival. Later when the food in all vavi, bar Simbes', was cooked it was removed and evenly distributed to all the women who were present. Visiting women carried their shares home and consumed it with their domestic groups as the evening meal.

In the amari a second randu was made in which the pig was placed just before dusk. It was not removed until the next day.

The next morning the proceedings began with a food exchange amongst the women in attendance. It took place in front of the vanua vavi.
(see Figure 7.6), and all those women had had helped women of the host amari-group got a share. Manai gave fish, bananas, betal and some of the sago and coconut 'loaf' cooked the previous day in the amari. Yams were also distributed.

Soon after attention moved to the host amari when the women moved and sat in front of the amari between its fence and the sea. The men taking part gathered inside and the 'guests' sat on the three faaces of the fence in front of the dormatory. The pig, sago and vava kazi prepared and cooked the previous day were cut up by the hosts and distributed with bananas and betal to the men in the amari.

The re (shellmoney) 'paid' for the pig was publicly shown and Manai spoke to the gathering about the purpose of this final death feast for his wife Simbes. The women and children outside the fence watched these proceedings.

After the food was eaten the feast was oven and Simbes' vavi was now cold.

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That the death of another entails 'readjustment' is well-recognized in the literature. As Huntington and Metcalf (1979) put it "Each relationship severed by death leaves a living person that much reduced: a social and psychological amputee" (1979:65). It is not only those closest to the deceased (spouses for example) who must go through a period in which their identity is adjusted but, they note, "To a lesser extent, the entire community goes through a period of redefinition" (ibid.). In this section however I am concerned with
Figure 7.6: Locations of activity on the second day of the taboo festival
the death of another as an experience in which the constitution of person is realized by neighbours and friends. As Landsberg suggests, "If we take our point of departure from the experience of the death of the other, we may hope in this way to meet the person as such and the specific relationship it may have to death" (1966:199).

It is clear from the above account that the people of Tabar experience the death of others at close quarters. There is no shielding of small children or loved ones from death. As I showed in my discussion of Malega's attack, the final moments of a person's life may be accompanied by frantic activity as the community fights to save their life. To share an experience such as the fight for Melega's life is a profound experience. It is difficult to convey the trauma of such a scene. It is perhaps most dramatically conveyed by reference to the body as it convulses and jerks under the joint efforts of the many people who pull on the digits from a variety of angles and without co-ordination so that it moves in a totally 'unhuman' way. Not all seemed able to participate in the revival; some onlookers on that occasion were, like me, 'paralysed' by the suddenness of the collapse and the 'violent' energy of the fight for life and stood still screaming or wailing. Young children crying with anxiety were ignored by their parents whose attention was focused on their efforts or their horror and shock. The reality of conceptions of what constitutes death and why pulling on digits and rubbing the body with baliu (which makes one gasp) in order to start the process of breathing again are very real in such contexts. The fight is an urgent one. The reality of a malevolent attack to those present was clear to me as I too looked on in horror and panic.
The cultural ideas which I discussed so dispassionately in the earlier pages of this chapter are compellingly forceful in the context of such a scene. So too was the fear of further attack which people experienced both at this time and for some time after it. While adults discussed the situation of danger and loss with enormous concern, children were aware of the crisis because of the urgent controls to which they were so suddenly subjected. Wandering in and out of the house was no longer a carefree activity, mothers screamed at their children and slapped them in this anxious period—demanding that they too recognize the danger and join in protective activity. Any child who saw the scene of Melega's revival and witnessed how he was tended in his period of unconsciousness, or was subject to new disciplines and so on, experienced some of the basic tenets of Tabar culture. That there are malevolent forces at large in the world, that life is both body and spirit and so on, are not the subject of profound doubt at such times. They are experienced in all their 'reality' and force.

So too are basic realities of life experienced in the context of less dramatic scenes. When an old person simply stops breathing (as Sirum and in a different way Simbes did) all those present experience the reality of death and the confrontation with a corpse. When they witness the final breath of someone in such circumstances they experience a profound awareness of the stillness of the moments after that breath is concluded (before the wailing begins). They experience the sudden absence of the other who was so recently amongst them as a living corporeal being. They find themselves confronted by a corpse which is neither animated, nor has the ability to communicate or interact. It is no longer a living body - the spirit has left the body and the body no longer
lives. It is present as corporeal presence but that corporeal presence is no longer that person. The person now exists in a different form. "There is an existential problem which becomes clear in the painful knowledge that there is no possibility of any further exteriorized communication between us and the dead man, not at any rate through his voice which we knew so well. Those lips will no longer speak to me. Those glazing eyes will no longer see me" (Landsberg, 1966:202/2). Thus they wail to the person who it is thought is still proximate but no longer inhabits the body. They wail because the person is transformed from their embodied presence wherein they could be talked to and respond by speech and bodily gesture, to a formless presence of spirit (tano or virua depending on the nature of death). The very fact of WAILING to the person (who is referred to by kin term rather than by name) is a recognition of this profound transformation.

Landsberg comments that in the moment when "the living being abandons us" pity gives way "to the profound awareness that this being, in all the uniqueness of his person, is no longer there, and can no more return to his body. He will never speak to us again, he will never live again in community with us as he used to do" (ibid.). It is clear to me that those with whom I shared the experience of the death of significant others in this culture would agree with Landsberg that the deceased will never again live in the community as she used to do, nor will they interact with 'me' as they hitherto had, and, most especially, that they can no longer live in their body. But they would not agree that this significant other is no longer close by. It is rather that they are no longer in their body, and that their body is no longer animated by their spirit - the essence of their person. As Landsberg notes "The
living body becomes a corpse. But a corpse is no longer a possible place for the living person to inhabit" (ibid:200). Here he unwittingly makes a statement which is as authentic for the people of Tabar as it was to him in a very different cultural milieu.

Death on Tabar is always a context for wailing. Wailing is not simply a psychologically cathartic activity, nor one which simply expresses the profound grief which people have at a decisive experience of death. It may well serve such purposes, yet it is nevertheless, I argue, a mode of communication in Tabar between living people and the newly deceased person whose spirit has been disembodied. The sound of wailing is evanescent as the person, as spirit, is now by their nature evanescent.

The importance of wailing as a form of communication appropriate for a person who is dead is underlined by a consideration of the forms of communication used for persons at other stages of their life. The most dramatic example is the way in which adults 'talk' with babies and young children. Adults do not simply utilize what we in English refer to as 'baby talk' - which in the Tabar case may actually mean intoning nonsense, a meaningless jumble of sounds - they also change the cadence of their phrases. This is characterized by raising the end of each phrase. It is also interesting to note that kalengo speak in a distinct style when they are addressing a gathering at a feast for instance. A distinct oratorical style for 'big men' has frequently been noted in the literature. I will however argue later in this thesis that kalengo are not simply orators at malanga ceremonies, but rather that they become the mouth of the malanga (sculpture) and it is for this
reason that the *kalengo* who present the sculpture's myth and 'biography' are called *mi nuz* - 'the mouth'.

Needham in his article "Percussion and Transition" (1967) noted a connection between the *sounds* of percussion both in nature (for example he makes a connection between drums and the beat of the heart) and in tempo, and *transition*. Death is a transition which on Tabar is responded to often with shock, horror and suspicion and *always* (in my experience) wailing. Those present *wait* to their kinsman or affines and in their wailing they frequently lament to the deceased person that they they will no longer be with them as they were - 'ah 'mother' soon I shall no longer see your face'.

It is significant that personal names are not used in wailing. Rather, as I have suggested, general kin terms are used. I do not believe that this is chance. Personal names as mode of address are appropriate only for the living. The use of kin terms indicates a new transition - the transition from embodied person who interacted with others in a shared here and now existence to disembodied-person-becoming-ancestor.

You will recall that personal names are given in the week after birth by FZ and at the *na niu* by others standing as close affines. Thus, in important ways, their use begins as the birthing process ends. Whilst personal names are still used to refer to the deceased, for example in speeches at the feasts of the death sequence, the fact that they are not used as modes of address to the deceased in wailing signal, points up the reality of the process of death. Indeed one may only address another by their personal name in the course of their here and now existence.
This process of death is another issue which we must now confront. It has been noted (e.g. Van Gennep, 1909; Huntington and Metcalf, 1979) that "death is a gradual process" (Huntington and Metcalf, 1979:19) and it is certainly understood in this way in Tabar. I have already discussed cases in which dying was an extended process which began many months before the final breath. Simbes' case is a useful example of this. In that case her body began to decompose whilst she was still alive. Yet in the day or so after death people's awareness of decomposition is clear. Comments that the corpse should be placed in the coffin before it swells beyond its capacity make this clear. I was also struck in the case of Daimol's death that people commented to me that they were aware of the stench of his decomposing body in the church, and some maintained that it remained noticeable there for some time.

Indeed there was another case when the process of decomposition was discussed in great detail. In this case a young man died on Tatau after drinking a substance with magical properties in preparation for a dance on the occasion of a malanga. The substance, it transpired, contained the poisonous root of the derus tree (which is sometimes used to poison fish on Tabar and sometimes as a means of suicide). The kiap (patrol officer) went and claimed the body just before it was buried and took it back to Mapua where he had been given to understand by his superiors in Kavieng a post mortem would be held the next day. However, while he believed that a doctor would be flown into the island to perform the operation, the medical service decided instead to send a 'Health Educator' out by the government trawler which arrived some three days later. The body was kept in the Mission Health Centre, though there was no means there for arresting its decomposition. People told me in great
detail about the stench (which I in any case had experienced), about the skin sloughing off and the escape of fluids, and of the swelling and disfigurement of the corpse. Significantly the community was filled with disgust and horror by this situation and it was some considerable time before the Health Centre was used again.

Thus we see that people are aware, or are made aware, of the process of de-corporealization. I have suggested in the chapters on the beriberi sequence that they are also aware, or made aware, of the process of corporealization. Together these sequences and the experience of birth and death are decisive contexts for coming to an understanding of what is the nature of person and transformations in existence which they undergo.

The experience of transformation of person is not confined to the fact of wailing. For though clearly people experience the transformation of death and respond to it expressively in this cultural manner they experience the corpse in other very particular ways. This is especially so for those who wash and dress the corpse, and carry it on their legs in the amari. That those who do so are women is no less significant.

It has been said that those who wash the body, wash away its disease - that they cleanse the skin. But in the very process of achieving this they come into very real bodily contact with the corpse. They perform on the inert corpse a 'personal' duty, one which, were they cleaning themselves would be done with modesty. But for the corpse there is no modesty. Many people witness their nakedness, their other-worldly pose and expression. There is in this process a
particularly intimate contact with the lifeless corpse, both for those who do the washing and for those who witness the task. The reality of death is in this period profoundly experienced by all.

Women who are related as Mothers to the deceased generally perform this service. It is important then to note that it is Mothers who perform such intimate tasks for babies and young children. Like the dead they are accorded no privacy. Babies, as I have implied in my discussion of 'babytalk', are not yet participants in meaningful social intercourse, while the dead have transcended it.

It is also interesting that ultimately the corpse is not simply clothed, but completely encased in cloth. It becomes form without face. It is this faceless form which in-marrying women carry on their legs. It is a faceless form which others add layers of cloth to. It is this faceless form which is taken into the amari and kept there in the company of a wide community for many hours.

It is reasonable to suggest that the period between the final breath and burial is a liminal period. For most of this time the corpse is a veiled and faceless form. After it has been cleansed it is wrapped and does not generally come into direct contact with any person from this time on. But to dismiss the issue on this point is to fail to recognize on the one hand that people clearly recognize that the encased form is irrevocably decomposing, losing form; and on the other that for those who carry the corpse on their legs it is a 'dead weight' which as a group they are only released from when it is put in the coffin.
As it was women classified as 'Fathers' who carried the body on their legs, so too it is 'Fathers' who are the men who carry the coffin to the place of burial. They carry the coffin-encased corpse to a hole which men of the deceased's own group have dug and which they will fill. To summarize this, it is members of the deceased's own group who wash the body and prepare its final resting place; it is members of their 'Fathers' group and those who are their affines who carry both the body and the coffin.

In a very real sense then an important aspect of the experience of death is the experience of relatedness. As it was 'mothers' who dealt with the intimate details of one's body when one was young, so too do 'mothers' perform such tasks for one in death. As the womb in which one's corporeality first developed was a 'mothers', so too it is 'Mothers' who prepare the space in which one's corporeality will decompose. 'Fathers' by contrast carry one to the site of decomposition as in a limited sense one's father carried one to the uterus. And whilst one entered the world between the legs of a single woman (one's mother), one leaves one's here and now existence across the legs of a number of women who have married into the host amari-group. In this way the extent of one's past engagement in social, marriage and exchange relations is indicated and experienced by others.

As Huntington and Metcalf note

"Death is a transition. But it is only the last in a long chain of transitions. The moment of death is related not only to the process of afterlife, but also to the process of living, aging, and producing progeny. Death relates to life...." (1979:93).
I explore the connection between the ontological transformations of person and the rituals of birth (beriberi) and death in some detail in Chapter Nine. That discussion is preceded (in Chapter Eight) by a discussion of 'standard' nau which are central to both the Death and Malanga sequences. I suggest that nau are sacrifices and that they entail a series of transformations. In Chapter Nine I turn to examine the implications of the 'standard deviations' from the basic form of nau.
INTRODUCTION

My aim in this chapter is to explore central aspects of nau - the 'standard' feasts held in amari. Nau are the central feature of the festivals of the Death and malanga sequences. I elucidate nau by viewing them as sacrifices. But in doing so I propose a critique of the general application of the notion of sacrifice in the anthropological literature.

My critique aims at 'deformalizing' the understanding of this phenomenon. Hubert and Mauss' classic work on the subject (1898/1964) has become for many analysts a formal and defining 'grammar' (see for example Evans-Pritchard, 1964:viii) of sacrifice. Two elements of this 'grammar' - 'consecration' and 'immolation' - have tended to become defining features of sacrifice. This formalism may account for the 'economism' of the view of pigs which has hitherto dominated Melanesian literature.

My analysis is premised on the necessity for transformation to take place in sacrifice rather than the witnessing of some formal 'consecration' of the thing which is made sacred. Moreover, I suggest (building from work on Hindu sacrifice) that we should not presume that sacrifices always entail the immolation of living 'blood' victims or objects which 'stand in' for them. I herald here my argument that vegetables may also be transformed and made sacred in Tabar ritual festivals. I explore this in relation to
beriberi more fully in Chapter Nine. Such a position allows women and their ritual work to be more centrally located and elucidated in Melanesian ethnography.

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There has been an unfortunate tendency in the literature on Melanesia to discuss pigs largely as important items of exchange, though some recent works (for example Allen, n.d. and Clark, n.d.) explore their symbolic importance in these cultures. Andrew Strathern's The Rope of Moka (1971) may be seen to epitomise the 'economic' focus in the literature. Yet the earlier work of Vicedom and Tischner (1943-8) on The Hagen people documents practices amongst these people which strongly suggest that Melpa pigs are sacrificed as well as exchanged. I contend that an understanding of the significance of pigs in exchange must take account of what it is that they 'are' at the time they are exchanged. Thus one needs to explore what it is that they have become in the practices leading up to exchange - and to understand this Melanesian ethnographers may need to explore their treatment as sacrifice. This is a point Evans-Pritchard made in his discussion of Nuer cattle, for, he noted,

"When, therefore, we seek to estimate what their cattle are to Nuer and how they see them, we have to recognize that they are... 'the link between the perceptible and the transcendental'" (1956/74:271).

It is easy however to presume too simply that sacrifice consists of just another variety of exchange – a transaction not between other...
mortals but rather between the living and their gods or spirits in
the afterlife. Keesing (one of the few Melanesian ethnographers who
have taken up sacrifice as an important theme), for example,
suggests that:

"In sacrificing, Kwaio are engaging in a transaction - a
prestation in Mauss' sense modelled on those between the
living (in particular, those from subordinates to
superiors): a valued commodity is given to solicit
intangible support, or to compensate for an offence"
(Keesing, 1982a:138).

Here he (implicitly) stresses Hubert and Mauss' contention that
"Fundamentally there is perhaps no sacrifice that has not some
contractual element. The two parties present exchange in their
services and each gets his due" (1964:100). Leach, too, suggests
that one view of sacrifice is that the offering is a gift, a tribute
or a fine paid to the gods and that the performance of sacrifice is
an expression of the principle of reciprocity. He contends that
this view is often held by the sacrificients, but 'qualifies' it
later with the statement that "Gods do not need presents from men:
they require signs of submission" (1976:83). I view the
significance of sacrifice on Tabar neither as transaction nor as
'submission', but rather as an action which both enacts and
symbolizes the processes upon which regeneration is contingent and
which is seen to enable it. This point will become clearer below.

Like Fredrik Barth I am concerned with the meaning of sacrifice and
what it teaches participants about reality (1975:191). More
particularly I am concerned with it as a means of systematically
structuring the experience of this cultural reality (cf. Ortner,

Within the literature two other notions have been central to the
understanding and analysis of the sacrifice - they are the notions
(a) of consecration and (b) the *immolation* of what is sacrificed.
In many senses these notions are more central in the literature than the 'economism' I have drawn attention to above. In their work 'Essai Sur La Nature et La Fonction du Sacrifice' published in L'Annee Sociologique in 1898 (and translated into English in 1964) Hubert and Mauss begin their work of definition with the point that

"The word 'sacrifice' immediately suggests the idea of consecration...sacrifice always implies a consecration; in every sacrifice an object passes from a common into the religious domain; it is consecrated" (Hubert and Mauss, 1898, 1964:9 and cf. ibid: 98).

Following them Beattie (for instance) notes that the word 'sacrifice' in Latin means 'to make holy or sacred' and suggests that such a change can only be accomplished by consecration (1980:29). I make the point in the following pages that it is not so much that consecration is unimportant in sacrifice as that such a transformation may take a variety of forms, some of which are not characterized by the degree of formality which is a feature of examples in the existing literature. This is certainly the case on Tabar. Moreover, it may well be that formal ethnocentric (Judeo-Christian) assumptions about what constitutes 'consecration' have prevented ethnographers of Melanesian societies from recognizing sacrifices when they have seen them.

Evans-Pritchard (1964:viii) referred to Hubert and Mauss' formula as the 'grammar' of sacrifice. Fortes suggests that it focused "on the act of consecration and its climax in the act of immolation" (1980:xiii). Indeed Beattie argues that the central feature of sacrifice is the immolation of a living victim and that it is this which distinguishes sacrifices from other phenomena such as libations and offerings (1980:31). Hubert and Mauss suggest that the unity of the complexity of sacrifices comes
"because, fundamentally, beneath the diverse forms it takes, it always consists in one same procedure, which may be used for the most widely differing purposes. This procedure consists in establishing a means of communication between the sacred and profane worlds through the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of the ceremony is destroyed" (Hubert and Mauss, 1964:97).

Here I argue that the critical point in Tabar pig sacrifices is not their death or, as Hubert and Mauss have expressed it, their destruction, but rather their various transformations in the context of the ritual (a point made by R. Firth (1963/72:326). Here my ethnographic material is in agreement with Barth's understanding of the Baktaman sacrifice, for he argued that the essential act of immolation there is "the burning of the food offering, rather than the taking of life" (1975:196). Similarly, when vegetables are sacrificed on Tabar it is their transformation in the process of cooking (or artificially ripening, in the case of bananas) which is critical. The focus on death as immolation implies a parallel focus on 'blood sacrifices' but as Hayley has noted

"sacrifice as a field of study can be divided into two types. In the first (blood sacrifice), the object made sacred...is a living creature and the central act of the rite is its immolation. In the second, the sacralized object is a vegetable offering rather than an animal victim and no ritual killing is involved" (Hayley, 1980:107).

Whilst the importance of vegetable offerings as sacrifice is generally accepted among scholars of Hindu and other societies it is a possibility which does not appear to have been taken up by ethnographers in many other parts of the world. Moreover there is not, I would suggest, any necessity for seeing sacrificed vegetables merely as substitutes for living victims (as Hayley, 1980, does or such as the host as symbol or trans-substantiated form in the sacrifice of the Eucharist of Christian ritual, the wild cucumber amongst the Nuer (Evans-Pritchard, 1956/74) or in the Melanesian
case, of pigs) but rather as sacrificed objects per se. I return to a consideration of this in Chapter Nine.

TRANSFORMATIONS: COCONUTS/PIGS/SHELLMONEY/ MORTAL HUMANS

I begin the ethnographic exploration of sacrifice on Tabar with a discussion of pig sacrifice and an exploration of their transformations.

The people of Tabar distinguish between an everyday meal (niganigau) and a sacrificial feast (gau). A gau implies the sacrifice of at least one pig. This process is an important focus of any gau and whilst it is clear that feasts vary in important respects, depending on the occasion, the work of sacrificing the pig is always central. Moreover, the process of dealing with the pig is remarkably standard. I will therefore reconstruct that process here.

It is said that the night before a feast the men gather in the host amari, sitting around its fence. Those men who have decided to provide a pig for the feast place a coconut in front of them. Other men indicate that they (or a group of people they represent) will 'buy' that pig at the feast by taking up the coconut. In this context coconuts clearly 'stand for' the pigs which will be sacrificed.

That night, or the next morning, the 'father' of the pig captures and trusses his pig. In the normal course of events he will do this by capturing the pig when it goes to the domestic group's vanua vavi for its daily meal of coconut meat.
The fact that pigs are thought to be domesticated by being fed on coconut is critical in this discussion. Beattie (1980:30-1) makes the point that sacrificial victims are usually or ideally living creatures, and moreover that animals offered are generally domestic animals. His explanation for this general incidence is "Because, it seems, domestic animals are identified with the home, and with the human group that lives there; with man, as against 'nature'. They can therefore most appropriately symbolize the humans on whose behalf the sacrifice is being made" (ibid.:31). I wish to show that such a symbolic relationship exists between men, coconuts, pigs, and shellmoney on Tabar and that this is a very active relationship.

I begin this analysis with my translation of a rendition of the well known myth of the origin of coconuts.

1. One day two brothers went fishing at sea in their canoes.
2. Suddenly a shark began to attack them in their canoe.
3. They started to paddle for home, but the shark pursued them.
4. They were afraid and began to throw their catch to the shark to keep it at bay.
5. The shark continued to pursue them until they had no more fish to throw to it.
6. Then the older brother said to the younger: "You must cut my foot off and throw it to the shark".
7. The younger brother was appalled by this suggestion and declared that he could not do so.
8. Still the elder insisted.
9. The younger brother continued to declare that he could not carry out this task.
10. The shark however continued to attack them.
11. Eventually, when they were in great danger from the shark the younger brother, still protesting, carried out his brother's instruction.
12. He cut off his brother's foot and threw it to the shark as they paddled furiously for shore.
13. The shark was not delayed for long, but began to attack them again.
14. So the older brother instructed his younger brother to cut off his leg at the knee and to throw this portion to the shark.
15. After some protest the younger did as he was asked.
16. Again the shark was not delayed for long.
17. So the older brother told the younger to take his leg off at the thigh.
18. Still the shark pursued them.
The younger brother chopped off his brother's other foot, then knee, then thigh, then one hand and up the arm, then the other arm till his brother was totally limbless - just a head and a torso.

Now the younger brother realised that if they continued this process then his brother would surely die.

The shark continued to pursue them though they were still some distance from land.

When again the younger refused to do as he was asked the older said to him:

"You must do as I ask. You must continue to throw pieces of my body to the shark - all but my head."

My head you must carry to shore and plant in the amari enclosure."

So the younger brother chopped up his brother and threw the pieces to the shark as he paddled furiously to shore.

He only just made it, for the shark continued its pursuit until he reached shore.

Once he was safely on the land the surviving brother took his brother's head and buried it in the amari enclosure as he had been instructed.

The next year a tree began to grow on that very spot.

It grew taller and taller and then bore fruit.

The surviving brother was unsure whether the fruit was edible so he gave some to his dog to eat.

When the dog did not die the survivor himself ate some.

Then he called those from all around to come to a feast.

He gave all those who came a coconut to take home and plant in their own land.

This is how coconuts were spread not only throughout Tabar but through the whole of New Ireland.

And that is why the coconut has the face of a man - two eyes and a mouth.

This is a story told to children as well as adults. The human origin of the coconut is clear. It is epitomised in the final line of the story when the theme already clearly present is pushed home with the assertion: "And that is why the coconut has the face of a man" (line 35). Similarly, the importance of the head as an essential site of the person is established in the story, both because this is the part of the brother which may not be given to the shark, which must be retained by the brother and planted, and as I have just mentioned, it is a human head/face which the coconut is shown to resemble. I will also argue that the themes of transformation and regeneration are the central core of sacrifice. They are epitomised in this myth as new growth - from the death of a man comes not only new growth but in this case an entirely new
species. Moreover this new species becomes an important means of relating men and amari-groups far and wide. From the death of a single man a human head is transformed not simply into a single coconut but an apparently infinite number of fecund and reproducing trees.

The relationship between men and coconuts is pressed home in this myth. At this point we might also refer back to the discussion of the pa niu feast in the beriberi sequence wherein coconuts are a central feature of the action (which surrounded) the ending of 'the birthing process' which enacted the coming into here and now existence of a new human being.

The relationship between coconuts and pigs is similarly pressed home in the practice of using coconuts to establish the exchange relationship between providers and buyers of pigs on the eve of a pau. It is also clear from the very substance by which pigs are domesticated. Whilst for much of the day pigs forage where they can for food, they return to the hamlet in the morning and at night to be fed on coconut meat outside the vanua vavi of the family who is rearing them. It is this which is seen as being the essence of the domestication of pigs. It is this which brings them home. Thus whilst pigs eat the leavings (such as peelings) of the produce which will become human food, the products of the forest, and (where precautions fail) of gardens, a central aspect of their peculiar relationship to the human community and a particular family is established by their consumption of coconut flesh.

I will further contend that a similar relationship is established at pau between pigs and shellmoney. To arrive at this conclusion we
must return to the practices surrounding the treatment of pigs at 
pau. I have mentioned the pre-feast exchange of coconuts which 
represent the morrow's pigs, and the capturing of these pigs by 
their 'fathers' with coconut meat. On the morning of the feast the 
pig is tied to a sturdy bamboo pole (or, for especially large pigs, 
a stretcher made from bamboo) and carried to the host hamlet. As 
preparations for the feast are made, the pigs are left leaned 
against the outside of the host amari's fence (opposite the 
dormitory's open face (see Figure 9.1).

As other men inside the enclosure sew together the gorigori leaves 
in which the pigs will be wrapped for cooking, and others prepare 
the randu, the 'father' of the pig kills his pig. He does so 
outside the amari. This appears as especially significant in the 
context of the literature on sacrifice precisely because that 
literature generally stresses the consecration (making sacred) of 
the victim and its death. This may lead the ethnographer to the easy 
assumption that the act of killing should therefore take place in a 
sacred place - in the Tabar case inside the amari where the dead are 
buried. Why this is not the critical moment of sacrifice in the 
Tabar case will unfold in the course of this discussion.

The mode of killing is critical to my argument. It is always 
accomplished by suffocation. The pig's snout is bound and sometimes 
-especially in the case of very large pigs) a vice of saplings is 
applied to its neck at the same time. What this amounts to is that 
pigs are killed by depriving them of breath. The relationship 
between this practice and the ideas about what constitutes death 
discussed in the previous chapter is clear. It can also be related
to the vava zirani, the most honourable death, where the human 'victim' is ritually drowned (see Chapter Seven).

After the pigs are suffocated their bristles are singed off with the flames from dry coconut fronds while they hang from a supporting formwork which is usually built adjacent to where they were killed. Only then are the pigs carried inside the amari enclosure. As I have noted already, it is only dead pigs which may enter amari. One male informant pointed up the significance of this fact when he commented to me, 'taking pigs inside [the amari] changes their skin'. The pigs are butchered just inside the amari opposite where they were killed (see Figure 8.1). At feasts with more than one pig the work is done side by side. The 'father' (provider) of the pig nominates who will do the work of butchering (he may indeed do it himself) by giving a knife (formerly sharp slithers of bamboo) to the chosen man.

The work of butchering is a delicate and highly skilled job. The Tabar technique contrasts sharply with the method I saw used at Konos (on the mainland of New Ireland) in the week before I arrived on Tabar. There the pig's abdominal cavity was opened as a flap and the innards scooped out. On Tabar the innards are removed from a small hole in the pig's belly. This work requires a skilled, sure and sensitive hand.

Before the innards are removed the pig's legs are cut off. They may be sent out to the women to cook in vanua vavi and eat. Then begins the critical work of removing the innards. The butcher must first push his knife through the pig's hide near the shoulder and sever the oesophagus and trachea; significantly, the pig's head is not
damaged. The butcher then removes the penis, or in the case of a female pig makes an incision where the penis would otherwise have been found. The incision is usually only about five or so inches in length. He then reaches his arm up into the pig right up to the severed oesophagus and trachea and carefully draws them out. They in turn draw with them the lungs and heart and then the liver. These red organs are generally taken as they are brought out and chopped into small pieces and laid on a bed of the leaf zamani or pindi (both small-leafed plants) which have been laid on banana leaves (which becomes the wrapper in which they are cooked). The rest of the alimentary canal is then removed. This is enabled by cutting around the anus from the outside and pushing the colon and bowel through into the abdominal cavity. The stomach and intestines are then brought out. Great care must be taken to ensure that they are not pierced and/or their contents capsized into the abdominal cavity. The intestines are then taken onto the reef and cleaned by men, who rinse them out thoroughly.

To the chopped up red organs on the bed of leaves is added the still warm blood which lies in the abdominal cavity. It is scooped up by hand and added to the leaves. Finally, the mixture is wrapped into a bundle with the encasing banana leaves secured by vines. It will be cooked on the randu (amari's oven) where it cooks more rapidly than the pigs. It is eaten when cooked as a highly symbolic 'appetiser' while the corpse of the pig is as yet being transformed into pork in the oven.

Another special bundle (referred to as the pasa vazinagana) is also frequently made from the kidney fat of the pig. It too is wrapped in banana leaves, but is formed into a long thin shape. I will
return later to describe the practice of its bestowal on another. That account will document its association with procreative substances.

While the work of butchering has proceeded, male members of the host amari-group will have lit the amari's randu. Like vavi, the randu is constructed by building a lattice-work of wood which becomes the pyre on which stones are piled, become hot, and fall down as the fire consumes the fuel (see Figure 3.1). Some of these hot stones are then carried with long wooden tongs and pushed through the incision in the pig's belly to fill the abdomen. Then leaves are used to seal the incision and the hole which remains where the anus had been. At this time the pig(s) have been placed on the sewed-together gorigori leaves close to the randu (see Figure 8.1). The pig (or sometimes up to four pigs side-by-side) is wrapped in the gorigori which is secured by vines. Meanwhile some of the hot stones have been spread as the base of the randu. The bundle of pig(s), and the separate much smaller one of kidney fat, are then placed on this bed of hot stones, covered by more hot stones which in their turn are covered with a substantial layer of leaves and finally of sand. The randu is generally then left to cook for three or four hours (depending on the size and/or number of pigs).

In the meantime, perhaps an hour after the randu has been sealed, the blood and red organ pudding is removed and consumed by the men who are congregated in the amari. This blood pudding is rich in meaning for it contains the organs of breathing (the lungs) and blood whose circulation prior to immolation had supported the animal's corporeal life.
As time draws on the odour of the cooking pig draws more men to the amari. I have discussed the way in which the smell of cooking food in the vavi at a beriberi festival becomes a focus for dramatic action. The attraction of cooking pork at a gau is as significant. Indeed men refer to it as a 'pull'. This is an important point, and it will be necessary to consider the importance of odour in detail later in this chapter. Here I will simply introduce the salient points of that analysis. The importance of the odours of cooking as a focus of performative attention both in respect of the beriberi and the sacrifice of gau is that they indicate that a transformation is occurring. At the crudest level (vegetable) produce is becoming food, pig is becoming pork. I extend this simple point to argue that by their nature odours are transcendental. Whilst they are part of 'here and now' experience, in their very evanescence they are also beyond the normal constraints of the here and now existence of mortals - that is, they are also metaphysical. Thus such odours bridge and transcend the states of existence which humans go through in death. They are both transformed form (in the case of pigs - corporeal form) as well as transformed essence. It is evanescent odour which attests to transformations which are the pivot of Tabar sacrifice, not consecration or immolation. This is why the odours of cooking become a focus of ritual performance, and why they are so crucial in sacrifice. No formal consecration is necessary in these sacrifices because the transformation and the bridge between the here and now existence of mortals and the metaphysical existence of the spirits is actually effected in the rite. Odours of transformation attest to this. They mark the beginning of the transformational process of the sacrifice.
When the pigs are deemed to be cooked they are removed from the randu and carried to an area right in front of the dormitory's mouth where a number of freshly cut coconut fronds (referred to in this context as the pepera) are placed and on which the pigs are laid. The vegetable foods which women have cooked in vanua vavi are also carried in at this point (by men from the host amari-group) and placed on the fronds. The vegetable foods are always placed on the end of the pepera closest to the vanua vavi (known as the tupia pepera - base/ass of the pepera) whilst the pigs are placed at the opposite end (referred to as the kova ('head') pepera) towards that part of the amari enclosure where ancestors are, or would have been, buried (see Figure 8.1).

The pigs are carved where they are placed by the 'buyer' of the pig or a representative that he (or they) designate. Again, carving is an activity which is standardised. First, long belly strips (about one and a half inches wide and about eight to ten inches in length depending on the size of the pig) are cut off the ribs of the underbelly. These cuts are referred to as bamba boro. Later, similar cuts (ziritaru boro) are taken off the back of the ribs and spine. The hindquarters are divided into three parts - a middle cut which includes the tail (pau m'boro), and the shoulders on each side of it (each called kake m'boro). The head and fore-shoulders may be left intact in which case it is referred to as the kova m'boro (the most valuable cut) or the fore-shoulders (karakara m'boro) may be removed leaving only the head, in which case it is referred to as the (ruazakuma).

Each of these cuts has a relative exchange value (Sahlins, 1974). Of least value are the bamba and ziritau which are both the
Figure B.1: Spatial organization of activities in standard nau

**KEY:**
1. pigs killed
2. bristles singed off
3. pigs butchered
4. randu where pigs were cooked
5. vanua vani where vegetables were cooked
6. pepera (coconut fronds) on which (a) pigs carved; (b) vegetables brought
7. place where kalango stands to make explanatory speech
8. area where shell money displayed
9. area where men sit to eat
10. area where women sit while men eat.
Figure 8.2: Standard pork 'cuts' at n'au and their relative 'value'
smallest cuts and the most numerous obtainable of any class from a corpse. They are always distributed as food for the guests at a feast, though they may also be exchanged (as may the karakara). As I have mentioned the most highly valued cut is the head and shoulders (kova m'boro), followed by the head (ruazukuma) and the hind-shoulders (kake m'boro) which appears to be on a par with the tail section (pau). These relative exchange values are set out in Figure 8.2.

As the pigs are being carved, and the vegetable food brought in from where it has been cooked in vanua vavi, bunches of leaves or food baskets (laselase) are placed in front of men as they sit in small clusters on the periphery of the amari fence (see Figure 8.1). One of these 'place mats' serves two to perhaps four men. The number of 'place mats' determines the number of equal portions which must be made. Often a young man walks around the periphery bending almost to breaking point the spine of a coconut frond as he counts. These sections will be broken off and placed in portions as they are worked out on the pepera. This ensures that the apportioning is exact and guards against embarrassment.

With the feast food apportioned but still on the mat, the payments for the pigs are made. Those men (or representatives of groups) who are 'buying' pigs stand in the centre of the amari with lengths of shell-money spanning between them. If six pigs are being 'bought' there will be six men between whom span six (variably sized) lengths of shell-money. Then the sponsoring kalengo makes a speech stating the purpose of the feast (e.g. to bury a named person and so on). The kalengo stands to speak, and while he does so all other men sit or squat. As I have already mentioned, he speaks in a
clearly recognizable oratorical style. When his speech is ended men of his group carry the portions to the waiting clusters of men, who begin to eat the food which has been given to them.

While the men are eating the 'joke' of a feast in an amari may be played. The central feature of the joke is the long, thin bundle of cooked kidney fat (the pasa vaziganana). Generally, the sponsoring kalengo takes this package and goes to a guest kalengo. As the sponsor approaches, the guest kalengo turns his back to the approach where he sits. The sponsor too turns, and bending with his buttocks to the guest, passes the bundle back through his spread legs to the guest kalengo. Often without looking directly at the sponsor, the guest takes the bundle and then stands to undo it. When he has carefully unwrapped the bundle he bends his face to the semi-liquid fat and takes several large bites in succession - 'gorging' himself. He may then be joined by other members of his group who have come to the feast and who similarly take huge bites. The men do not touch the fat with their hands. This causes them to push their faces further and further into the slowly diminishing mass. Soon their grease-coated faces attest to the fact that they have been the butt of this special 'male' joke.

Symbolically they gorge on the sponsor's semen. Again the comedic connection between sexuality/procreation and eating, noted in the context of beriberi, is established in a ritual context. And as was also the case in beriberi, the joker affects a superior stance to the victim. The joker stands while the victim sits, with his back to the joker and his head lowered. This stance is commonly affected in other contexts to express shame. Moreover, another rearrangement of form (see Chapter Six) in this comedic act is the passing of the
Figure 8.3: 'Delivering' the pasa vazigagana.

package backwards through the joker's legs. This action contains a double entendre - for the parcel may be seen to be delivered in both senses of our word. The victims 'turn' the joke back as they gorge on the symbolic procreative substance. They are strong men indeed who can consume it all.

It is useful here to pause and relate the way in which this package is consumed to the way men drink green coconuts inside amari. I have mentioned that those who eat the fat of the pasa vazigagana do so without using their hands. They hold the package wrapping but not (directly) its contents. In amari men drink green coconuts in a similarly unmediated manner. The shell is cracked by pushing in on its surface from the outside. When a fissure is created the drinker then holds the nut at arms length above his up-turned mouth, and applying pressure in the opposite direction to the crack allows the water to fall directly into his mouth. By these particular modes of consumption, men frame the dominant meaning of coconut water (and
the coconut itself) and the pig's kidney fat. They 'present' viewers with the frame of sexuality and fecundity. Coconut and kidney fat are thus rendered unambiguous metaphors of procreative substances.

I have already suggested that there is a connection between coconuts, pigs and humans. To push this point a little further it is worth mentioning the way a friend of mine told me that he was his wife's first lover. He said "It was I who cracked her" alluding to the cracking of a coconut. That is, it was he who opened the way to her procreative power. Less directly, but of some interest, is the way one of my women friends described orgasm - she said in tok pisin 'the waters capsize'.

When the feasting foods have been consumed the exchange of pork takes place. A number of prestations may take place simultaneously. The buyer of each pig exchanges the remaining portions of his pig (generally kake m'boro, pau m'boro, and sometimes karskara m'boro, bamba 'boro and ziritaru 'boro). He holds the cut in the air, names it, calls out the name of the new recipient, and announces the reason for the exchange (reciprocity, recognition of help etc). Then he gives it to another (often a lad from his amari-group) who carries it to the recipient. Immediately he takes up the next piece and repeats the procedure. Several men may be 'giving' pork at the same time and all work at their own speed without heed to pauses in anyone else's calls. It is thus extremely difficult for anyone to keep track of exactly who is giving what cut to whom and why he states he is doing so.
Deference is however paid to the giving of heads of pigs (both kova m'boro and ruazakuma). Indeed a small speech may be made as the donor stands with one foot on the head. This is especially so if a transfer of land or compensation payment is being made using the pig. Except in such circumstances heads of pig (both head and shoulders or without shoulders) are usually given to a kalengo. In the speech which precedes the transactions, the donor (who within that very hour has himself paid the 'father' of the pig for its transfer to him) usually refers to the receiving kalengo by name and hamlet. This is important for the receiver will take his head home and it will be eaten by his amari-group the next day in his amari. Only for transactions of important consequence (land deals, compensation) do heads of pigs go to individuals; usually they are given through a kalengo to his amari-group. I have already established the relationship between the human head and coconuts, and here we find the pig's head is the most highly valued part of the dead pig. As the newly-discovered coconuts were given in the myth to men who took them back and planted them in their own territory, so the pig's head is taken to feed an amari-group in their territory.

The significance of the fact that the pig's head is left intact in butchering and carving, as was the head of the elder brother in the myth of the origin of the coconut, is pointed up by the deference given to transactions of pigs heads. The fact that heads of pigs transact the transfer of land is also important. Similarly, the distribution of "lesser" pork cuts can be related to the treatment of the elder brother's body in the myth. I return to these issues later in the Chapter.
When the exchanges have been made the feast is over, and people move off to their own hamlets. If they are fortunate, they carry with them a booty of pork. Minor cuts will be eaten in vanua vavi as well as amari and thus by both men and women. Often women re-cook the meat. Many prize it fried in dripping. The eating of the head is by contrast not a private domestic act, but rather the act of a group and takes place in the groups amari. I shall return to this point later.

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I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that I intended to argue that one could see a series of important transformations in these feasts. I intimated that in the context of pau one could see the transformations of mortal humans - coconuts - pigs - shellmoney. Some of those relationships have already been elucidated, particularly those between coconuts and pigs and coconuts and human beings. Firstly I discussed the way in which each pig to be sacrificed is represented the night before a feast by a coconut. Secondly, I recounted the myth of the origin of the coconut and showed that there the origin of coconuts is asserted to be the disembodied head of a man. Indeed as I have already pointed up, the final line of the myth explicitly notes the human like form of the nut - with its two eyes and mouth.

In the course of this account I have shown that pigs are killed, transformed by cooking, carved and 'paid for' by the presentation to the 'father' of the pig of a quantity of shellmoney. One might see the shellmoney as simply being the payment side of the transaction - pig for shellmoney. The case is however far more complex than such a formulation suggests. To get to the core of the exchange of
shellmoney for pigs it is necessary to briefly consider shellmoney (re) as material object.

_re_ is not a single shell but rather a span of shell fragments through which a hole has been bored allowing them to be strung. The outside edges of the fragments are smoothed and rounded after stringing. Commonly the width of the string is about one eighth of an inch but some are slightly wider. A typical single span is about fifteen inches in length. Frequently the shells are a light pink-orange in colour though most strands also exhibit some mixture of this colour and white segments. Each short strand is composed of many hundreds of tiny fragments. The people of Tabar do not claim to make these objects themselves but rather suggest that they traded them for pigs with distant peoples (for example groups on New Ireland and Lihir). That is, pigs brought shell money to Tabar in the first place.

An important point for my discussion is that whilst any strand can be viewed as a whole it is nevertheless a large number of independent fragments. The durable and yet 'divisible' nature of any span of shellmoney makes it a perfect object for enacting exchange. Shellmoney joins those enmeshed in here and now existence, for example those who may, for the moments of public display at a nâu, be joined by spans of shellmoney (just before the pork is distributed to guests). It also is joined as the contributions of many were combined for a single payment to be publicly viewed in the _amari_. And beyond these living mortals it has gone from exchange to exchange ultimately across groups and through generations. For it can encapsulate both the exchange of the moment as well as the many exchanges it has enacted in the
past. As the fragments are joined on the string so are those of different generations joined by the exchanges which it again enacts.

Here its very durability of form is important. For while humans live and die, and pigs are killed and become pork for exchange and consumption, a strand of shellmoney survives with its form and integrity intact. Thus we see that shellmoney epitomises the connections of human beings through time and space. It is this fact which brings us to the first part of the connection between shellmoney and men. For while humans mark and enact their here and now relationships with shell money, unlike these durable spans each must die and ultimately decompose. It is shellmoney which remains as an on-going testament to these connections and those many anonymous humans through whose hands each strand has passed. Those many are neatly represented in the hundreds of fragments from which the enduring strand is composed.

At this point it is instructive to take up a theme heralded earlier, that is, the important performative focus on the odour of the cooking pig. I have noted that men say that this smell 'pulls' them to the feast. Indeed it would seem that coconut palms, as well as men, are pulled by the odour of cooking pigs at feasts, as the following statement suggests. It happened that a coconut tree which had grown in an odd corkscrew fashion within an amari enclosure captured my attention at a burial feast. I turned to the man closest to me and asked him what caused some palms to grow in this fashion and was taken aback by his reply. He told me that the tree had smelled a pig cooking at a feast in one direction and been pulled towards it; later it had smelled a pig cooking in the
opposite direction and been pulled to it and so on until it had been pulled into the several twists which I saw. This statement aroused my attention to the issue of smell and odour. The importance of odour was also pointed up to me when the smell of the cooking vavi makes it a performative focus in beriberi. As my fieldwork progressed I came to see it as an important dimension of Tabar life and a meaningful component of ritual.

On a number of occasions Tabar people drew my attention to the significance of smell in their culture. They put aromatic leaves into their personal baskets to attract sexual attentions, and such leaves are also clearly important in beriberi performances where they are worn in the hair or around the neck or chest or back. I was also told that baliu are put inside pig’s carcases before they are cooked to make them smell good. Groves, 1936:238-240 also noted the importance of smell on Tabar. He comments

"No man working on wawara [a particular style of malanga] dares go shark-snaring while he is engaged in the procedure, for the sharks would "smell" him, and cause disaster to befall the expedition" (Groves, 1936:238).

It is clear that smells are highly evocative in most, quite probably all, human societies. One knows from one's own experience of the world that smells can evoke, not just temporally or spatially distant places, people and time, but also a range of sentiments and emotions which were associated with that odour. One can, for example, be transported 'as' a child (not the adult one has since become) to one's mother's bedside in the middle of a chilly night, when one smells again the odour of the nightcream she wore so many years ago when one was indeed a child who went to her bedside in the dark of night. 'Mother's nightcream' may induce the evocation of the past and the experiences of that time and bring them (albeit
fleeting) into the present. Such odour-induced *deja vu* brings the experiences, personalities, emotions and associations of the past to one's experience of the present and, when the evocative moment is past, allows them to be reflected upon both in their own terms and in terms of the present. In this sense smells as evocators bridge time, place and associations. They have a quality which enables the receptor to be transported, to transcend the 'normal' constraints of everyday existence if only for a moment. Odour unifies the external and the internal, and in doing so it makes you internal to it.

This is an important point, for the ability of 'significant' smells to momentarily transport one indicates that they act as a symbolic medium in quite a different way from 'art', or dance or song. The action of a 'significant' odour is more like a reflex action (in which one pulls one's hand away from a heat source before the message 'I am burning' reaches the brain) than a reflection upon association. If I smell my mother's nightcream for example I momentarily have the feelings of myself as child. It is only after the moment has passed that I am able to reflect, as an adult, on my own childhood, the sensation evoked by the smell or any other association connected with the experience. In the instant of recognition I respond with raw, unreflected emotion.

Other senses, such as touch and taste may also act in this way. It may be argued that in our culture we give great significance to taste and this is reflected in the burgeoning of the restaurant industry and recipe books. On Tabar, I argue, odour is regarded as highly significant and is culturally constructed in many important contexts like *nau*, *beriberi* and eroticism.
Smells are also by their very nature and 'form' transcendental, and they may indeed, for fleeting moments, transfer this quality to their receptor. Alfred Gell takes up this point in his stimulating article "Magic, Perfume, Dream..."(1977). Gell contrasts the nature of smell with that of colour. Colour he argues "always remains a prisoner of an enclosing form" while smell is an active principle which always escapes (ibid:27). And in contrast to sound (which he suggests shares the quality of escape from an object), smell

"is distinguished by formlessness, indefinability and lack of clear articulation. Smells are characteristically incomplete. They are completed, in the first place, by their source, which is where they become so highly concentrated that they cease to be smells and become substances. Apart from this a smell is completed, not only by the actual source, but also by the context. Because smells are so intimately bound up with the world, the context of a smell is not other smells (in the sense that the context of a linguistic sign is the rest of language, only in relation to which it outlines its distinctive meaning) - but simply the world. We do not discover the meaning of a certain smell by distinguishing it from other smells (we have no independent means of codifying these distinctions) but by distinguishing contexts within which particular smells have a particular value" (1977:27).

He goes on to argue that the meaning of perfume is a function of context (ibid:30). Because it is always incomplete, disembodied and does not acquire a meaning by contrast with other smells, it acquires meaning by association with the context in which it is typical (ibid). Clearly the smell of cooking pork on Tabar is associated with gau. A joke 'in bad taste' on Tabar is to suggest that someone is waiting for a relative to die because they are hungry for the smell and taste of pork which they will experience in the gau of the death sequence.

Critical for my argument however is Gell's point that "perfume has to do with the transcendent, the transcendence which, while always
inaccessible, can thematise the experienced world" (1977:30). He discusses perfume in the context of Western society and suggests that "because it is perfume (spirit, halfway between thing and idea) it almost partakes of the nature of the transcendence...while still remaining part of the world" (ibid:31- my emphasis). He suggests that perfume opens up a 'channel of communication' between the domains of the real world on the one hand and the transcendence of the ideal he typifies (in respect of perfume in the West) as 'the sweet life' (ibid).

It is the transcendent nature of odour and its ability to bridge the constraints of the reality of 'here and now' experience and the evanescent, transcendent world of spirits which offers us a way in to this critical moment in Tabar sacrifice. This is a time when, by definition, the corpse of the pig and, I would suggest, the metaphysical dimension of the pig, are transformed. It is in these moments that mere mortals experience however evanescently 'the otherside' - they smell and thus experience the spirit of the pig as it leaves the corpse, they smell the process of decomposition. And importantly the smell brings this transformation into their lived experience.

This is reminiscent of Barth's assertion that the basic feature of Baktaman sacrifice is "to make the presence of ancestors in a relationship to man concrete through the consummation of a concrete interaction -viz.: that something passes between them" (Barth, 1975:196). The point I would make however is that odour provides a here and now concrete experience of transcendence and the transformations of the victim, both corporeal and metaphysical. These transformation occur at feasts more quickly than in the
'natural environment' and far more quickly than a human corpse as it decomposes, because of the process of cooking. This allows us in turn to reflect again on the comments of informants in the presence of a human corpse of the 'smell of death' (see Chapter Seven).

Indeed there are many other respects in which the cooking of pigs may be seen as a process of decomposition, albeit (importantly) accelerated decomposition. For example the body juices ooze from the flesh which itself is transformed in both colour and cohesiveness, becoming white, easily fragmented and removed from the bone. The smell of cooking, like the smell of death, proves for those about that this breaking down is occurring. Yet, significantly, all other corporeal transformations brought about in the process of cooking are largely contained within the gorigori wrapper. It is only the odour which escapes.

The smell of cooking pigs thus documents important transformations - the breaking down (decomposition) of the pig as a corpse, and the leaving of its spirit. Moreover in this period, because of the very transcendent nature of smell itself, it can become a 'bridge' which transcends the receptors here and now existence and the evanescent 'other side'. It is this which 'pulls' human beings (and coconut palms indeed) and presents this period as one of focused attention. The process of fragmenting the pig's corpse is completed by carving, exchange (i.e. wide, independent dispersal) and ultimately consumption. In consumption the pig, as pig, is lost and parts of it are transformed into the very substance of a large number of human beings.

* * * * *
In both the myth of the origin of the coconut, and the way in which pigs are treated at pau we find (a) the theme of transformation (head of man becomes coconuts, coconuts stand for pigs, pigs 'become' shellmoney); (b) a theme of increase (e.g. head of man becomes many coconuts); and (c) the theme of regeneration being contingent on fragmentation, de-FORMATION (the elder brother is chopped up and only then does his head become many coconuts; pigs are cooked and chopped into many pieces before shellmoney is transacted).

We also find here a final theme - that is the way in which coconuts, pigs, and shellmoney unite large numbers of (often unrelated) people. Thus in the myth the surviving brother gives a nut to many who come to a feast he hosts. This is how, we are told, coconuts spread throughout New Ireland. Similarly many come to pau where the fragmented corpse of the pig is distributed to many of them and dispersed, as they carry pieces away to consume them in their own homes. Moreover the heads of pig become an important way in which amari-groups unite on their own account to eat them. So too does shellmoney unite and 'relate' large numbers of people, both those who join strands or receive them on a particular occasion, and indeed many people out of that moment who may never have met each other but through whose hands a particular strand has passed.

At pau, sacrificed pigs are condensed symbols encapsulating multiple possibilities. In the structure of ritual action their essential dimensions are explored. Pigs come to pau as domesticated products of the wild. Boars are castrated and it is wild boars which inseminate domesticated sows. Moreover, whilst pigs are domesticated by being fed coconut in hamlets (outside the vanua vavi
by their owners) they leave hamlets during the day and night, to roam in search of food in the buari and coastal fringe. Thus they continually cross environmental zones. It is however only when they are killed that they are brought into the amari, their 'skins changed'. Within the amari they are appropriated by human beings and their being transformed in ways which are structured by the ritual itself. These transformations become a means of connecting and regenerating people and transcending the constraints of 'here and now' reality.

It is the pig's head which becomes the minimal point of unity. Other 'cuts' connect people but do not regenerate. It is the head which holds the pig's regenerative power. This point is made more forceful when we recall that it was the brother's head in the myth which became the coconut, and that those features which are said to make a coconut like a human head (its eyes and mouth) are the coconut's points of germination. New trees grow from these points.

In this chapter we have examined some of the things which 'bind' people on Tabar. We have also seen how the work and elements of a nau transform the natural process of de-COMPOSITION and produce both new and increased form. Decomposition becomes regeneration. This is a theme I take up again in Chapter Ten.

In Chapter Nine I extend my discussion of the transformative power of ritual. The focus of that chapter is the arrangement and re-arrangement of space in the performance and organization of these rituals. I argue that such transformations, internal to the ordering of ritual, given ritual its transformative power. I go on
to suggest that it is the principles of both gender and group which structure the internal ordering of space in this ritual corpus.
"Ritual is transformative" (Victor Turner, 1967:95)

"Ritual moves its participants, it organizes their emotions and experiences, it questions those taken-for-granted elements of cultural life and holds them up for inspection...ritual derives its efficacy and power from its performance and it is in its performance that its work of transformation fails or succeeds" (Kapferer, 1979:6).

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I seek to link important aspects of the sequences in this ritual corpus. The chapter explores the issue of how rituals have the power to effect ontological transitions. I argue with Turner and Kapferer that rituals are transformative. I suggest that the transformative tasks they accomplish beyond themselves are contingent upon and enabled by, the transformations they effect in their own internal organization and performance.

In this chapter I relate my earlier discussions of sacrifice and the media of ritual performance to the transformative power of these rituals. I then turn to the shifting spatial organization of these rituals. I argue that this too has transformative power. I show that two principles - gender and group - underpin the various emergent organizations of the festivals in this ritual corpus. Moreover I suggest that the 'meaning' of these principles is shifted in ritual performance.
ONTLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND THE RITES OF PASSAGE

In this thesis I argue that this corpus of public ritual is, as corpus, a rite de passage. It effects all of the crucial ontological transitions necessary for the reproduction of human beings and the conditions of their existence as human beings. This entails far more than transitions within 'here and now' social existence. It entails also that, as disembodied beings, spirits also undergo crucial ontological transitions.

Human beings begin their existence in utero. They develop with a nexus between body and spirit. Birth brings them into the 'here and now' community of social relations. Throughout their 'here and now' life the nexus between body and spirit is maintained and guarded. Death marks the breach of this nexus. The person's spirit is rendered disembodied, and their inert body is subject to the irrevocible process of decomposition. In the period after death the disembodied spirit is believed to remain in the vicinity of its corpse. Only after the process of decomposition has ended may they be reconciled to their disembodied and purely metaphysical state. Unreconciled and proximate to the community where they were buried, they pose a threat to that community. Reconciled they become a resource to the community when, transformed from a proximate spirit they become a generalized ancestral spirit whose metaphysical powers the community may draw upon to maintain their subsistence. Members of the 'here and now' community can call on such ancestral spirits to aid them in the engagement of the fertility of their land, to bring rain or sun and so on. In this way all these ontological transformations are necessary for the reproduction of human beings.
and for the reproduction of the conditions of their existence as human beings.

I argue that these crucial ontological transformations are effected by ritual means. Thus it is the beriberi sequence which celebrates and enacts human procreation and with it the coming into corporeal, metaphysical and the 'here and now' existence of human beings. At the same time it celebrates the crucial transition from preproductive girl to reproducing woman in respect of the primipara. It is initiatory malangga which were believed to effect the achievement of reproductive potential in men (cf. Allen, 1967 and Herdt, 1982).

The rituals of the death sequence begin in recognition of the break in the body-spirit nexus upon which 'here and now' existence is contingent and which is brought about by death. They seek both to reconcile the spirit to the host community and their new-found disembodiedment, as well as to repair the breach in community brought about by the death.

Malangga effects the final and crucial transformation. It transforms the threatening proximate spirit into an ancestral spirit which becomes a powerful nurturing resource for the community. Malangga transforms the spirit into an ancestral spirit rooted in their territory. It is the power of such ancestors which enables the continued reproduction of human beings and their substantial relatedness. These ontological transformations and the ritual sequences by which they are effected are set out in Figure 9.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival/SEQUENCE</th>
<th>ONTOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bula</td>
<td>- Coming into corporeal being and the imbuing of the body with spirit. The achievement of the corporeal-metaphysical nexus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivery/na niu</td>
<td>- Birthing/entrance into the domain of 'here and now' social relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERIBERI SEQUENCE</td>
<td>- Achievement of reproductive capacity in women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALANGA SEQUENCE</td>
<td>- Achievement of reproductive capacity in men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boro panda/zikopesi</td>
<td>- Dying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mipugi</td>
<td>- End of 'here and now' interactions, breach of nexus between corporeal/metaphysical being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Onset of the irrevocable process of decomposition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boro vavazinani</td>
<td>- Burial/end of 'here and now' presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEATH SEQUENCE</td>
<td>- Reconciliation of the disembodied to their community - testament that there death was not brought about by the denial of their nurturance relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(especially taboo feasts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALANGA SEQUENCE</td>
<td>- Transformation of (potentially threatening) proximate spirit into nurturing generalized ancestral spirit rooted in territory (and thus through it in the community)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9.1: Ritual and ontological transformations
THE MEDIA OF TRANSFORMATION

The question remains, however: what is it about these rituals which effects these transformations so crucial for human reproduction?

In the previous chapter I argued that sacrifice is transformative. Its transformational power resides both in its transformation of that which is sacrificed, and the way in which these transformations encapsulate 'here and now' persons and link them to the cosmos and its forces more broadly. I argued this case in detail in terms of pigs sacrificed in nau. But I would hold that the transformative, encapsulating power of sacrifice is effected also in other food cooked in ritual contexts. This is most clearly the case with the bula-bundle which women prepare to celebrate the achievement of corporeality, the imbuing of spirit and thus the critical corporeal-metaphysical nexus. It is useful here, then, to recall the importance of food in the process of social relatedness. Food is a basis of relatedness because, grown on land whose fecundity has been engaged with ancestral aid, it becomes linked to that land, those ancestors and all those sharing these substantial links. Food is then, in a sense, a gift from the ancestors. Its consumption then, especially in ritual, is highly significant. It links 'here and now' human beings to the nurturance of land and their ancestors.

I have also discussed important performative media of the beriberi and death sequences. These too, I suggest, are transformative. Their transformative nature is most obvious in the case of the comedy which is so central to the performance of beriberi. As I have shown, the essence of comedy is the transformation of form.
This has two critical consequences for my argument. On the one hand it entails the transformation and rearrangement of accepted relations and forms. On the other it entails reflection both on what is taken-for-granted and on what it has become. The reflective gaze of participants in comedy is directed. Moreover the recognition of the ludic asserts that those taken-for-granted relations are shared by all those who recognize the comedy.

I also drew attention in my discussion of the sacrifice of pigs to the transformations evidenced by smell. This again is an experience, shared by all those who breath and are enveloped by the aroma of this transformation. The significance of the experience of smell is not confined to the sacrifice of pigs at nay. Its importance in beriberi is clearly pointed up in the focus of dancers on the wavi at its transformation points, and particularly that induced by the smell of cooking food. Here again the reflective gaze of participants toward the relationship of the transformation of the food and the process of human reproduction, is directed by the theme of the performers actions - sexuality.

Similarly I explored the medium of wailing. I suggested that it is an appropriate medium for communication between 'here and now' people and disembodied spirits. Wailing effects a link between the here and now domain of social relations and the ontological state of the deceased. It both reflects the ontological transformations which the dead has undergone, and effects a link between the 'here and now' domain of embodied people and the metaphysical state of the disembodied spirit.
Thus I suggest that ritual's transformative power is effected in transformations enacted within ritual performance (cf. Turner, 1962, 69; 1967; 1974 and Kapferer, 1979; 1983). In the case of Tabar ritual, I have pointed up such transformations in the sacrifice which is central to Tabar ritual and in the media of ritual performance.

In addition I contend that the organization of space and 'gender domains' in ritual performance shares such transformational characteristics.

GROUP, GENDER AND RITUAL SPACE

As Kapferer has remarked,

"Many rites involve a continual changing in the organization of space and this change can both reflect and produce important transformations in context...space, and the cultural categories and principles which are contained in its ordering, is re-arranged and perhaps transformed in the course of performance" (1979:7).

I have heralded this discussion of the transformative power of movements within ritual space in my discussion of nau. I showed that the carrying of dead pigs into the amari is understood to 'change their skin'. It has also been pointed up in my presentation of ritual performance, for I have taken care to point up movements across, and transformations in space.

Tabar ritual is "marked off" from the routine of everyday life. Its 'frame' (cf. Bateson, 1955, 1973) gives particular meanings to hamlet space. Whereas in everyday life men are able to go without inhibition into the vanua vavi of their domestic groups and women
may unselfconsciously enter their amari, in ritual they do so only when they have "purpose". Thus in ritual vanua vavi, and their immediate area, are structured as the primary domain of women. Amari, in ritual, are structured as the primary domain of men. The entrance of men into the women's domain, or women into that of men is, in ritual, an intentional act which has purpose. It is "purpose" which informants stressed when I asked them about the nature of these domains in ritual and the entrance of members of the opposite sex into them in ritual contexts. As one male informant put it 'women come in [to the amari in ritual] only when they have work to do there'. Thus movements into these domains are perceived as significant both by the ethnographer and for the people of Tabar.

At the same time the relationship of these gender domains to groups should not be overlooked. Ritual is set in particular amari's and particular groups of vanua vavi. That is, ritual is set in the domain of an amari-group, albeit an area which is also itself internally organized by gender divisions of space.

* * * * *

It is important then to outline the sort of transformations entailed in these ritual sequences.

At the bula, the first beriberi festival, which celebrates the achievement of corporeality and the imbuing of that corporeal form with spirit, we find, at one level, that hamlet space is ordered on gender principles in the first stage of ritual. Men are located in the amari, women in vanua vavi. But then a man crosses into female space to pack the bula-bundle and, later, after the transformational process of cooking, women carry that food into the amari. Then the women return to the other side of the fence while the men consume
this food. But, before they have eaten it all, women dramatically invade the amari to steal the food, and to attack and usurp men from that space.

At the na niu, which celebrates the end of the birthing process and the incorporation of the child into the 'here and now' community, the arrangement and rearrangement of space emerges differently. In this festival the distinction between the Mothers and Fathers group, also present in the action of the bula, is highlighted. Whilst, in the initial phase of performance, the gender distinction between the amari and the area of vanua vavi is clear, non-resident Fathers arrive and in their performance invade the hamlet space of the Fathers before, united as a group, they move to the area of the Mothers vanua vavi. Thereafter women of the Fathers group attack women of the Mothers group and invade their domestic space, and at this time may also invade the amari to attack Mothers men. But this initial attack on Mothers men in the amari is a foray, and they soon return to the area of the Mothers vanua vavi. During the period in which the festival's sacrificial food is cooking men of the mothers group themselves invade the area of the vanua vavi carrying niu, the embodiment of procreative substances. But the women aggressively defend their space by attacking the Mothers men and wresting the niu from them. The chastened men then return to their amari and the gender division of space is temporarily restored. Later, as in bula, the festival's food is carried by the Fathers women into the amari. These women withdraw as soon as the food is delivered. They return before the men have finished eating to steal the food from their mouths and to bodily attack the mothers men and usurp them from their amari space. Then they turn to attack the women of the Mothers group and take
them behind their vanua vavi to coat their vulvas with mud.

The emergent performative organization of beriberi is clearly structured in relation to both gender and group. On the one hand women attack men and their spatial domain - the amari, and defend the domain of women from the intrusion of men (except in respect of the bula-bundle which I discuss in more detail below). At the same time however women of a particular group also attack women of the other group. Indeed the identity of all those attacked and repelled is predicated upon their group membership. Fathers attack Mothers, and they do so in Mothers space. The amari and vanua vavi which are the scene of these attacks do not simply obtain their meaning in respect of gender. They also obtain their meaning through their association with an amari-group - they are the location of relatedness.

Victor Turner has suggested that "The structural inferior aspire to symbolic structural superiority in ritual" (1969, 1974:193). I would argue that the stance of Fathers towards Mothers in these beriberi festivals reveals their 'structural' inferiority. That structural inferiority is based in their relationship to the child. It is to the Mothers, rather than to the Fathers, that the child is at that time most closely related. Thus, I suggest beriberi is in a sense a rite of rebellion by one group of relatives toward that group who is, in respect of the child, and at that time, in a position of dominance.

By contrast the prominence of women, as performers in this sequence, relates not to their inferiority, but rather reflects their critical importance in the process of human procreation. For beriberi are
rituals effecting and celebrating human procreative powers. It is women who play the most crucial role in this process of reproduction.

Attack and aggressive defence of space do not characterize the spatial organization of the Death Sequence. Instead when women enter amari space to 'carry' the dead they join men in the amari, the very site which constitutes their amari-group. There, women and men reconstitute that space. They form a gender structured coalition of unity. This is so because not only do they mourn the dead, but they, as a group, seek to reconcile the disembodied spirit to its new ontological state, and, at the same time, to reconcile the spirit to them as a community so that the nurture which was the underpinning nature of their relatedness is not subverted by death.

Clearly gender and group distinctions are present in malanga sequences. At the 'standing up' and public presentation of malanga space, gender and group are structured and restructured in quite different ways from those of the beriberi and death sequences. The reproduction of malanga enacts the transformation of the proximate spirit of the deceased into a generalized ancestral spirit. It aims to root that spirit in the land and affirm the direction of their powers to the nurturance of the community. In the first phase of the festival at which the sculpture is 'stood up' the boundary between male and female space is heightened with coconut fronds. At the same time the amari itself is internally divided by a screen-wall of coconut fronds. Behind that screen the host amari-group put the final touches to the malanga. Outside men remain separated from the host group and malanga by the screen. This arrangement is presented in Figure 9.2.
When the final touches have been made, and the sacrificial pig is cooking in the randu, the internal screen is removed and the host group present their sculpture to those outside men who have joined them in the amari for this reproductive occasion. Later when all the men have consumed the feast's food, the coconut fronds which heightened the amari's fence and formed a barrier/divide between men and women is removed. Women then enter the amari to view the malagga sculpture and to place small payments at its 'feet' for the man who sculpted it.

The burden of responsibility of this ritual corpus is assumed by both men and women. This shared responsibility may be further elucidated by a consideration of the special food-bundles prepared at decisive points of these festivals. Such food bundles, I argue, effect critical metaphysical transformations. The bula-bundle imbues the foetus with spirit. The vava kavi of the death sequence reconciles the disembodied spirit to the community. The
malanga-bundle is important in effecting the transition of proximate spirit of the dead into generalized ancestral spirit. In each case the ingredients of the bundles reflect in their origins and placement important domains of human subsistence. At the same time in each case it is member(s) of one gender who cross into the opposite domain to pack it. The efficaciousness of these food-bundles then, does not reside simply in their ingredients but also the division of labour and boundary crossing entailed in their production. If women cook the bundle, a man packs it in the domain of women. If men cook the bundle, women pack it in the domain of men.

Whereas in beriberi women were structurally superior in performance, in malanga it is men who assume the performative burden. These stances can clearly be related to the dominant role of women in respect of human procreation and the dominance of men in the reproduction of the sculptures. Yet while it is clear that gender structures all ritual performance and its meaning is transformed in the emergent structure of each festival and the corpus as a whole it is also clear that it never stands alone as the structuring principle of ritual. It is always set in the context of social relatedness and group.

For, the reproductive and transformative tasks of this ritual corpus are the responsibility of groups. These tasks are accomplished by a gender based division of ritual labour and responsibility in which primary responsibility shifts from sequence to sequence. Neither men nor women have primary responsibility for the corpus as a whole. They share that responsibility. Women 'dominate' and are primarily responsible for beriberi performances. Men 'dominate' and
are primarily responsible for the reproduction of malanga. Men and women share responsibility, as a community, for the death sequence. Together they are able to effect, in this division of labour, the reproduction of their group through time.

I extend this discussion of the broad responsibilities of reproduction in Chapter Ten which focuses on malanga sculptures and ritual sequences.
"Malangan comprises a cycle of rites which centre around either a piece of wood carved to a set pattern or a variety of circular woven mat (wawara), decorated with a spider's web design and painted. The "patent" rights to the design which is carved upon the piece of wood belong to, or its use is specifically allowed to, the sponsor of the rites and his group...Each of these two types of object is called malangan, as is the actual cycle of rites itself" (Groves, 1935:355).

"New Ireland art is very rich in form. It is a sculptural art which features exuberantly curving filigreed wood-carving, which is painted, along with extraordinary constructivism, i.e., the use of a host of added materials ranging from shells to marine animals to sponges, twigs, feathers, and the like. In subject matter, New Ireland art features men, real and supernatural, in juxtaposition with animals, such as birds, snakes, fish and with plant forms" (Lewis, 1969:11).

INTRODUCTION
The aspect of North-eastern New Ireland's cultural life which is most prominent in the existing literature is the malangga (referred to generally as malangan, malanggan or malaggan in tok pisin). Previous writers have noted that malangan are recognized throughout the region to have their origin on Tabar.

As Lewis has noted:

"Malanggan...is the generic name for both memorial ceremonies for the dead in northern New Ireland and for various sculptured art objects made for these ceremonies. The sculptors display almost incredible virtuosity of technique and surrealistic imagery" (Lewis, 1972:675).

Clearly malangga are primarily performed as memorials to the dead. The ceremonies may normally be initiated between one and ten years after the individual's death. They are often a context for
honouring a number of deaths, though deceased individuals are each celebrated by at least one sculpture. I argue here that malanga as memorials enact two important ontological transformations. Firstly, they mark the completion of the process of decomposition - that is, the end of the individual's corporeal existence. Secondly, they enact a crucial metaphysical transformation - a proximate named spirit becomes a generalized ancestral spirit.

Some malanga, according to my informants, were occasionally done to mark future mi guz. The subjects of these ceremonies were often young children. Mi guz means literally 'the mouth'. It is not simply such designated and celebrated children who are referred to as mi guz. Importantly kalengo ('man big') become mi guz when they sponsor these ceremonial sequences. In this chapter I argue that kalengo, who cause the sculptures to be made, the ceremonies to occur and, importantly, recite the sculptures' myths and stories, indeed become the sculptures' mouths and voices of the malanga at those ceremonies.

Malanga were also contexts for the initiation of young boys. On Tabar the last presentation of a malanga as initiation is said to have occurred at Tatau during Groves' fieldwork in the mid-thirties. It should be noted however that it appears that even when malanga were the context for male circumcision and initiation this always occurred as part of a memorial sequence. As Lewis noted, "When a person dies, his clan loses one of its members and the combined memorial-initiation honours him and replaces him with an adolescent boy of the same clan" (ibid). Clearly, as a context of initiation, malanga enacts ontological transitions for the
initiates. Like women in beriberi, boys are made into men in malanga ceremonies.

Whilst it is clear that malanga enact transitions in the existence of individuals, I will contend that the sculptures themselves are also the subject of the sequence's rite de passage - their conception, development, maturation, 'death' and decomposition are celebrated in the ceremonies which make up their particular sequence.

Every malanga sculpture is unique and has its own particular name, peculiar appearance (design features), narratives, and has its own particular sequence of festivals. An indication of the diversity of styles is suggested by the classifications which Western scholars have identified in their discussions. Lewis (1969:146-7) summarizes these classes, which have generally related to the form of the sculptures. Classes such as "doll type", statues and columns, friezes, sun malanga (or wowara), masks and modelled skulls have been utilized. Tabar classifications are based on the grouping of styles and designs which are seen to be 'related'. Like human beings, malanga designs are related to other designs and styles. Relatedness is indicated by the sharing of generic style or design names, and of similarity in design. But each reproduction has its own particular name and particular feature of design. At the same time it should be recognized that particular reproductions are associated with particular groups of people who themselves are able to express their relatedness through the production, presentation and handing on of rights in reproduction of the design.
In the first half of the chapter I discuss some general aspects of *malagga*. On the one hand I suggest that *malagga* are perceived of as *reproductions* while noting that because *malagga* are either destroyed, left to rot, or these days sold to collectors, there is never a pristine piece to copy from. Thus I suggest that any *malagga* is a *reproduction of an idea*. Secondly I note that *malagga* assert relatedness between people and their roots in territory.

I then turn to examine three particular reproductions presented in a *malagga* ceremony in 1979. Three masks were presented in that sequence - each a member of the *vanis* family of masks. I explore the design of those masks, the mythic narratives associated with them and their ceremonial presentation.

I use this discussion to elucidate both the particular designs presented in those ceremonies and, through them, *malagga* more generally. Because these sculptures are masks, the discussion also takes a departure from a paper Handelman presented in 1983 on Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland (Handelman, n.d.). In that paper Handelman looked at costuming and related it to the concealment and revelation of person. I argue that when *vanis* are worn as masks the performance is primarily concerned with the enlivening and animation of the persona of the mask and the concealment/revelation of the personhood of the wearer is of little or no relevance at these ceremonies.

In the last part of the chapter I examine the structure of *malagga* sequences. I point up the fact that the production and presentation of each design entails its own particular festival sequence. Despite the fact that there is thus no 'set' *malagga* sequence (as
there is with the beriberi and Death sequence) I will argue that a common structure underpins all malanga sequences. This underpinning structure I argue is crucial because it becomes a sequence of rites de passage for the sculptures themselves. The festivals of malanga celebrate and enact the coming into being, development, maturation and 'death' of the sculpture while ensuring that it will be reproduced again in the future.

I go on to argue that malanga are crucial for the reproduction of the Tabar cosmos. I suggest that any particular design encapsulates a particular cross-sectional view of the cosmos. No design presents the cosmos as a whole, yet, I hypothesize, the entire corpus of designs does so, at least conceptually.

It is, I argue, the encapsulation of cosmological ideas in the malanga which is a critical aspect of their importance in Tabar culture. As the sculptures are reproduced, and as this reproduction is 'enlivened' in ritual, so too I would argue is the cosmos itself constituted and reproduced. It is a failure to explore the relationship between malanga and both the cosmos and rest of the public ritual corpus which is a crucial limitation of the existing literature. Most of the earlier analyses were done by scholars of 'primitive art'. They appear constrained from transcending Eurocentric assumptions about the nature and function of art per se.

Phillip Lewis in his monograph "The Social Context of Art in Northern New Ireland" (1969) is the obvious major exception. Yet he largely sees 'the social context' as the social system (1969:9) and the contexts of talk, action with the preparation for and execution of the ceremonies, feasts and exchanges (ibid:18). Similarly,
Billings and Petersen (1971) and Lomas (1979) examined the way in which the ceremonies are socially utilized in the assertion or attainment of leadership positions. In a more recent paper G.N. Wilkinson has explored variations in design on Tabar and concludes that they "have been utilized to express the divisions by which the society was organized" (Wilkinson, 1978:241).

This chapter seeks to show that discussions which focus on the sociological function of human action without scrutinizing the cultural order and cosmological conceptions underpinning it do not critically extend our knowledge of the phenomena of malanga or the societies who do them. Similarly, I suggest that understandings of malanga are impoverished if they do not relate them to the rest of the Tabar ritual corpus.

MALANGA REPRODUCTIONS AND RELATEDNESS

Most malanga myths suggest that someone died and was found by a named ancestor who adorned the spirit/body in some way and made it their malanga. The particular design has, it is believed, been passed down from possessor to possessor each of whom must ensure that the design is faithfully recreated. Indeed there is a general belief that those responsible for an unfaithful copy will die either by sorcery (kontumbu), at the hands of a wild spirit (tandoro), or be attacked by a shark (m'bae'ya) (see Chapter Three).

There is however rarely something to copy directly. One is ceded copyright over a design in the context of the performance of its malanga ceremonial. One may be given it by one's mother's brother
or in certain circumstances (where he and his group have been crucial in one's nurturance and growth) 'buy' one from one's father for a token payment. The design is then yours to commission again at some later date when you are sponsor of the ceremonials. One may receive rights in more than one design. However it is critical to note that, while one learns what the design is by seeing it, by the context of its being ceded to you and by instruction from the individual who has ceded their rights in the design to you, one will probably commission the reproduction many years later without anything tangible to copy from. Also, one may not sculpt one's own design - one must engage a sculptor from another clan. As Wilkinson notes, one carver told him that he "had never before seen a crayfish on a malanggan, but it was part of the pattern demanded. He thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of working out how to make an effective malanggan interpretation of a crayfish" (Wilkinson, 1978:237).

It is also important to note that at the end of each sequence the sculptures are 'decommissioned'. With some designs this entails that they be burnt, with others that they be left in sea caves to disintegrate by the action of sea and air, in others that they be left to rot in the bush.

When a sculpture is to be made there is thus no pristine object to copy - but often, rather, simply the ideas of what the design entails (cf. Lewis 1969). Nevertheless there is a strong notion that the design is a reproduction of a reproduction - whose features were originally created by an ancestor from the spirit/body of someone (generally unrelated) who had died and been "found". The
myths of malanga thus assert such origins, the continuity of the design and its movement through time and space.

Beyond this it must be noted that because to be commissioned designs must be owned (because of the transference of rights from someone related to you) their reproduction is an assertion of relatedness to the body of people who in the past have commissioned a reproduction of the specific design. But further, a malanga series is usually also a context for the transference of rights of reproduction, and so any reproduction, while enacting relatedness in the past, is also asserting present relationships which enable an on-going trajectory to the bonds of relatedness which are encapsulated in any reproduction of the design. Moreover the roots of relatedness are asserted in the myths recited at the public presentation of sculptures.

Basically one does malanga for those one is nurturing or has nurtured (especially where malanga is performed in the context of circumcision) or for those who have nurtured you (especially in the case of mortuary ceremonials).

In the case of malanga as mortuary ceremonials, where one does them in honour of the dead, as one informant put it 'you repay them for their help', you 'render to the dead the food, clothes, help that has been given to you', and should you fail to do so you lose any claims to the deceased's land.

Thus any malanga mortuary series is reciprocation for nurturance - which at the same time asserts relatedness on such grounds and thus substantiates claims to land and other resources.
Also it is significant that any particular series is a context for the assertion of links with living people beyond the group of hosts and commissioners - for malanga are contexts for major exchanges between individuals and groups.

The feast at which the sculpture is publicly presented is the context for the largest exchanges which take place on Tabar. The primary exchange items are pigs/pork and shellmoney. I have seen up to twenty pigs killed and exchanged on such occasions...but some informants boast that some malanga attract hundreds!

As I showed in Chapter Eight, every pig sacrificed is 'bought' by members of another group with shellmoney (and commonly these days also PNG currency). The shellmoney used to buy pigs in such contexts is never derived from a single person. Groups of persons (usually based on close 'relatedness' and co-residence) pool their shell money and currency to pay for pigs. Thus all such payments articulate broader relationships. Further, the pigs bought with shellmoney are themselves cut up and the differentially-valued cuts are 'given' in a public context to others. Some of these portions reciprocate previous gifts from other feasts, others initiate such exchanges.

The preceeding comments serve to amplify the comments of one informant who said that 'malanga link us to those we live with and to our ancestors'.
"Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes"  
(William Shakespeare: The Tempest, Act I, Scene II).

In this section I explore a particular memorial sequence and its associated sculptures presented in 1979.

This _malanga_ was sponsored by Mekeu, a Zizombi man living at Navalus Hamlet, Tokara village (Mapua Island) and was concerned with 'sealing' the graves of two 'MB's of Mekeu - Givit who died in 1969, and Waket, who died in 1974, Waket's real sister, Namo, (died 1974) and Namo's husband, Langiri (of Pirivot clan), who died in 1976. At the _malanga_ two small crosses were presented in memory of two infant grandchildren of Namo [see Genealogy 10.1 for all but Givit].

The sculptures presented at the _malanga_ were three _vanis_ - a _gas_ (warrior), a _zirazirap_ (a _kalengo_ - 'man big') and a _taringa ramba_ (big eared paddler). The presentational platform of these _malanga_ - itself a part of the _malanga_ - was a canoe(_zombi_). See Figure 10.1 for a schematic representation. When publicly presented, the three _vanis_ masks were shouldered on 'bodies' made from the trunks of banana trees, clothed and adorned and seated in a canoe (_zombi_). In front of them were placed the crosses, newly made and painted for the dead infants.

My concern here is not with the festivals of the sequence leading to the reproductions - but rather with the last two feasts, one called _zuku vavatori_ in which men covered their bodies and ran with the _vanis_ on their heads 'attacking' the area of beach and bush around
Figure 10.1: Layout of host hamlet in example
**Genealogy 10.1:** 'Genealogical' relationships between Mekeo, Maket, Namo and Langiri

**Figure 10.1:** Malanga in case study
the host amari and the other, called the nau pop zozo monomono, when the malangga was publicly presented. This feast was the context for the major exchanges of pork and shellmoney associated with this sequence.

Outsiders do not hear the myths of the malangga until the feast of public presentation (in this case the nau pop zozo monomono) where the sponsoring kalengo recites them, after the opening of the randu when the cooked pigs are removed, and before the food is eaten (see Table 10.1). As Jorgensen has noted, "the narration of myth is exegesis" (1981:472).

I know of four of the myths associated with this set of related malangga. Each critically elucidates the origins, development, 'nature' and dispersement of this design or its family. I begin the discussion with Myth A which Mekeu, the sponsor of this malangga, recited at the feast of public presentation.

**MYTH A (Mekeu the sponsor, is speaking)**

1. This kind of malangga is of the ocean - it is not of the beach.
2. This line of men went to sea in their canoe to catch a shark.
3. They went to sea to catch sharks.
4. But while they were at sea a strong wind arose which wrecked their canoes.
5. They had to swim for it.
6. They swam and swam but eventually they drowned.
7. They drifted and were washed up on the beach at Tiripaz.
8. They came ashore right there at the place called Kapitae.
9. Well their eyes had dropped right out but they had taken kamapuliz (cats' eyes) and exchanged them for their eyes.
11. They put them in their eyes.
12. Well they were afraid of the sea and so went up to the mountain and stayed at the place called Lanuaz up there on the mountain.
13. Then a man from the bush, Rorotuna, came across them, delighted at this find.
14. He proclaimed them his malanga and sang.
15. All sorts of men from the bush came and celebrated with Rorotuna.
16. They remained and sang near the malanga.
17. Rorotuna raised these malanga.
18. He took its head and proclaimed it "my head" and put it over his own.
19. Then he said "here is your hair" and implanted a cordyline he had broken off in the head saying "Come on. You come now - come to the village".
20. Well the malanga walked towards the village but a vine entangled him.
21. So Rorotuna said to the malanga "hold up" - wait - the cordyline and hair I implanted in your head must not come out".
22. So Rorotuna cut the vine and freed the malanga this allowed it to continue to the village.
23. Well, today you can see that its head is round and it has hair and cordyline in its head.
24. All these things Rorotuna did.
25. But the (cat's eye) kamapuliz - its eye, that derives only from the ocean. Their origin is the ocean. If you see it holding a sea shell it is an ocean thing, and came with it when it came from the sea.
35. If you see the vine waum from the bush then Rorotuna put it there.
36. These are all things with which Rorotuna adorned the malanga.
37. Alright, if you see the vanis style 'gas' - men of the bush, they are of common stock.
38. If you see 'betar' - man of the bush - they share a common name.
39. But if you see zirazirap it is Rorotuna.
40. Alright. This malanga remained at Lanuaz.
41. From Lanuaz it arose and went to Abatunia and then onto Burumbura where it remained.
42. Then it arose and went on a long journey to Ratuzi and then to Minino and then to Sararamba to my father.
43. Then it went to my place Yunapizu.
44. Then it arose again and went to Tiripaz and then it returned to the place it had come ashore - Kapitae.

While each of these three designs are recognized as of the vanis style, each design is a family of vanis - gas, zirazirap and betar. Their specific names are presented in Myth C.

In this myth we are told that the vanis were once men who went to sea in order to catch a shark. This was for them a mortal choice because their canoe broke up after they were hit by a strong wind and they eventually drowned. Before continuing it is worth recalling points made in Chapter Three. Firstly, sharks are for Tabar not any ordinary member of the 'kingdom of living things'. Every matambu and kivavundi is associated with a particular named species of shark. Traditionally Tabars brought such related sharks
to feasts as they did, and indeed continue to do, with pigs. Unlike pigs, sharks are not domesticated or captured in quite the same way. Until quite recently 'related' sharks were caught in shark calling expeditions, where they were lured by a small bespelled bait-fish and the frenzy caused by shaking a loop of coconut shells in the water, so that they swam through a vine noose attached to a piece of wood shaped like a propeller. The object was to pull the noose tight behind the shark's gills to prevent it from shaking free of it - then the propeller would turn, bashing the shark. When the shark was exhausted it would be pulled into the canoe and clubbed to death. The catcher would then paddle to shore blowing a conch shell as he approached announcing the catch. The shark would then be cooked for a feast and 'paid' for by guests at the feast drawn from another group (see Platten, 1954).

One can also induce the shark species related to one's group to attack others. These attacks may be for general wrongs but are most particularly for wrongs against the clan and its sacred resources. Thus sharks are not simply a natural species inhabiting the Tabar environment - they are embodied supernatural forces, related species by species to particular groups. As such they are one of a group's sacred resources. There is however in this myth no suggestion that these sharks bore any relationship to Zizombi - nor for that matter that there is any relationship between Zizombi and the men.

Secondly, in this myth the men had ventured into a 'wild' domain (see Chapter Three), the open sea, to catch these supernaturals. You will recall that this domain is regarded by Tabars as one where humans are particularly vulnerable.
In this case their vulnerability was realized - for they were hit by a violent wind. This too is a significant event, for Tabars associate such wind storms with *virtua* - malevolent human spirits. So we see that the impetus of their deaths - a wind storm - was one which Tabars are likely to associate with the supernatural, in this case human spirits. Yet at the same time they died by drowning - with their breath (the source of their here and now existence) being displaced by the ocean waters (see Chapter Seven). Their bodies drifted and drifted and during this period their eyes had dropped out and they had got kamapuliz - 'cats' eyes', the values of seashells - in their stead. Is Simmel (1959, 1965:281) right that "the eye epitomizes the achievement of the face in mirroring the soul"? It is an interesting question, for whilst later these men, as *malanga*, are adorned with land materials the myth stressed that "the cat's eye...derives only from the ocean - their origin is the sea" (line 31/2) and our myth-teller Mekeu introduced us to the story saying "This kind of *malanga* is of the ocean - it is not of the beach" (line 1). This is an interesting question for these men washed up [line 7/8] at a named place in the Tabar environment - Kapitae, and despite death they were mobile - animate and had feelings and emotions - "they feared the sea and so went up into the mountain and stayed at...Lanuaz" (lines 12/3).

Then we find that they were found in the mountain by Rorotuna, a man from the bush. He appropriated and created them firstly by proclaiming them "his *malanga*" (line 15/16) and singing. Rorotuna brought others to celebrate with him. Then he took the *malanga*'s head, proclaiming it to be his own, (line 19) and put it over his own. Then he gave it hair and implanted a cordyline (line 21) before taking it to the village.
Thus we see that in their initial appropriation the malanga (as men) did not appear as ancestors - it is Rorotuna who appropriated those beings from the sea and made them his malanga. Then, proclaiming it to be his own head, he put it over his so that he was inside of it - a being who has no central features in the story except for its eyes which were of sea origin. It was then that Rorotuna gave the malanga features - hair and cordyline. It is important to realize that the Tabar term for cordyline (mi ziri) is also the word for bone. Rorotuna thus gave the vanis human features - which in this malanga are derived from the land. In the vanis Medeu had noted that the yellow hair of the nas is made from a river weed called buru buru bide. The black hair of the betara similarly is a fresh water weed (purupuruvindi), whilst the yellow hair of the nas is made from a particular bark. The significance of the origin of these materials will be returned to later, in a more general discussion of the composition of the masks and the nature of the cosmos.

Adorned, with eyes from the sea and hair and powerful decorations from the land (and its waters) the malanga set off for the village. On the way the malanga became entangled by a vine and its progress was marred (line 14/5). It was Rorotuna who freed the malanga and allowed it to continue to human settlement (line 27/8). While cutting the vine Rorotuna remarked that the hair and cordyline he had implanted - that is those features he himself had imbued the malanga with and which marked a connection between them - must not come out. It was Rorotuna who had appropriated the malanga and adorned it, who brought the malanga into the society of men - both by bringing them to where it was to celebrate it and by taking it to the village. Rorotuna adorned it with bush materials - but also
freed it from them. Thus the myth stresses that the malanga derives both from the sea and from Rorotuna who adorned it with bush materials (lines 29-35). The teller notes that the gas and betar malanga are both 'of the bush'. But the 'zira zirap' (literally 'bone of bone') - the central figure kalengo - is Rorotuna (38-9).

The final stages of this myth tells where this malanga went to/from Rorotuna's place - Lanuaz (40-46). Significantly it finally returned, adorned by Rorotuna with things of the bush, to Kapitae where it originally washed up with features of the ocean only.

The next myth, myth B, relates to the same malanga and is part of its story.

**MYTH B**

1. I must clarify the following points about this malanga.
2. You must pay attention and be clear.
3. At the time the malanga arose the men concealed it inside the amari enclosure.
4. Rorotuna's followers took the malanga and carefully concealed it inside the enclosure. No women had viewed this sort of malanga.
5. Alright. This man - a salt water fish known as borbor (a fish with the strong/thick skin and big teeth)
6. saw how the malanga was treated.
7. He thought "what sort of malanga is this that they hide it away behind the (amari) fence? No women or 'outside' men can view this malanga.
8. All kinds of malanga have arisen and all are hidden within enclosures and they never go outside - why? This malanga has
12. come into being and they are treating it the same. They make all these vanis, all sorts of this malanga, and they keep them inside the enclosure.
13. They enter these vanis and they run (animate) them inside the enclosure, but they never go outside".
14. Borbor contemplated these wrongs.
15. When he saw the men go to the bush to work Borbor entered a vanis and covered his whole body with adornments and clothes.
16. Then he took all these vanis and went outside (the amari) into the village and ran to other villages.
17. Nobody had seen this sort of malanga and so he revealed it to them all.
18. Borbor ran inside it in the village.
19. This malanga had come to the villages and thus there was no longer a prohibition on seeing it.
20. This fish brought it out of concealment and revealed it to all men and women.
21. Until then it had been revealed only to the group which possessed it -
22. other groups had never seen and when Borbor revealed it men and women from all over saw it.
23. Alright. This fish is now prohibited inside the enclosures of the people who possess this malanga. If they kill this fish they can no longer take it inside this malanga's enclosure because it was he who took the malanga from its concealment inside the enclosure and revealed it.

Here we are told that once at Rorotuna's hamlet the malanga was concealed inside his amari enclosure (line 3-5). Women had never seen it. It was a 'man', a deep water fish, who liberated the
malanga. This man-fish borbor went inside the vanis and, covering his whole body, then went out and revealed the vanis not just to the women of that hamlet but to men and women all over. As our narrator said "This fish brought it out of concealment and revealed it to all men and women" (line 25). It is interesting then that it is not a man who generally revealed the vanis but a fish - moreover a deep sea fish which is 'like' human beings in that it has (leathery) skin rather than scales, distinct teeth and is carnivorous. These particular aspects of the nature of borbor make it anomalous and may be related to Mary Douglas' discussion of the pangolin (Douglas, 1966, 1976:199ff). This may account for the oscillation in the myth between referring to the borbor as both man and fish.

Myth C is an interesting one in that it points up very clearly how there are specific and critical variations within a single design which are associated with particular places and lines of people and how design variants are mythically accounted for. My informant, Mekeu, the sponsor of these malanga, said to me after he had told me this myth, that this story was metaphoric - the canoes mentioned were not real but a metaphoric account of how the malanga came to his and other places.

MYTH C

1. Alright another side of this malanga is as follows.
2. This concerns the canoe I made [the presentational structure].
3. The start of it is like this.
4. That sort of canoe derives from the base place of this malanga
5. - at Lanauz.
6. The canoe left Lanauz and went and went until it came to Burumbura.
7. One canoe went ashore at Burumbura with the kalengo -
8. a vanis - called Rurugi and stayed there with his line.
9. Alright. The canoes left them and paddled till they arrived
10. at Ratuzi.
11. All the canoes paddled on again and came to Monino.
12. One canoe beached at Munino with the kalengo called
13. Biribiri matazac. He came ashore and stayed with his line at
    Monino.
14. The other canoes paddled on and beached at Sararamba
15. where the kalengo called Matarara'u, who was also a vanis, came
16. ashore with his line. They came and stayed at that enclosure
17. at Sararamba.
18. Alright the other canoe paddled on and on and went ashore at
19. Vunapizu. They came and stayed with the kalengo whose
20. name is Koriguz and he and his line went ashore there and
    remained.
21. Alright. There was another canoe. It left Koriguz at
22. Vunapizu and paddled to the place he had originally come ashore
23. at - Kapitae. I don't know his name anymore - he went and came
24. with his line at Kapitae. He put his canoe with his line and
    stayed.
25. I have completely lost the name of this vanis which is at

This myth points up the important relationship between malanga
designs on the one hand, and between groups of people (and their
founding kalengo), and location on the other (see Chapter Three).
The place names mentioned are the names of hamlet sites.
Thus we find that the kalengo who brought his line and canoe ashore at Vunapizu was called Kiriguz. Vunapizu is Mekeu's (see Myth A) place and the 'inside' name of the ziripzirip mask - the kalengo of the malanga which Mekeu sponsored is Kiriguz. In this sense these particular vanis are those derived from Kiriguz's canoe and line who went to Vunapizu.

In a sense this myth presents us with a family tree of the zirazirap design. The corpus of malanga sculptures is made up of a number of styles (such as vanis (to which style belong the three sculptures discussed here) malagazac, wowara etc.), variants of a single style, which I refer to as designs (e.g., gas, zirazirap and taringa ramba are design variants of the vanis style) and 'lines' (thus Koriquz is the particular 'line' of a zirazirap vanis). Figure 10.1 clarifies these relationships, following through with Mekeu's zirazirap Korigusi).

It is also interesting to note the relationship of this 'style' of malanga to the land and sea. Firstly the malanga originated when land-based men went to the sea and were drowned in its waters, which imbued their corpses with eyes. They were animated and decorated on the land. After they were revealed the design was taken to other places by canoe. Though Mekeu announced the canoes to be metaphoric, it is interesting to note two facts. Firstly, the name of Mekeu's matambu is zizombi which literally means canoe. Secondly, it is the composition of the canoe - and most particularly the materials for making the canoe frame - which is the 'inside' secret peculiarity of this malanga. I was, Mekeu told me (and as I observed), the only outsider who was allowed to examine (and photograph) the inside of the canoe. In a taped interview in which
Table 10.1: Relations between Malagga following through example case.

STYLE

MALAGGA ZAC

VANIS

WOWORA ETC.

DESIGN

DAS

ZIKAZIRAP
(Rorotuna at Lanuak)

TARINGA RAMBA ETC.

'LINE'

Rarugi
(at Burumbura)

Biribiri Matazac
(at Ratuizi)

Matarara'yu
(at Munino)

Keriguere
(at Yunapi)

(?)

(at Kapatae)

EXAMPLE CASE

[Mekeu, sponsor of this reproduction at Navalus]
he was explaining the materials from which these malangga were made, Mekeu insisted on secrecy on this sculpture's particular differences from others in the vanis style. Indeed, I used a different tape to record this information - which he said should be disclosed only to Tabars who were members of Zizombi.

These mythic narratives do not simply relate these malangga to kalengo and through them to lines of people. Significantly the myths constantly relate both those groups and the malangga to specific named locations. Indeed, though it is not stated specifically in the myths, it relates them to particular amari where specific designs are thought to have first been presented.

This is a crucial point, overlooked in many discussions of malangga. There is a clearly held idea that malangga link human beings within, and across, time. The sponsor of a malangga asserts his relations to those who in the past have reproduced that particular design, and to those who are involved in the 'here and now' celebration he has organized. But as I outlined in Chapter Three people are associated with place on Tabar. Of relevance in this discussion are two aspects of the relationship between people and location: (i) the relationship between land and food which is relevant to the discussion of social relatedness which has been developed in this thesis; and (ii) the relationship of a line of ancestors and their relationship to place and to the design which again has been reproduced. Moreover, in this particular case it is significant that the remarkable feature of the design is encapsulated in the construction of its presentational structure - the canoe - for it is canoes which were the medium in which the ancestors got from place
to place, and thus which in addition both unites and differentiates them.

Myth D is the final myth which will be related to this series. It is a critical one for it provides a basis for discussing the relationship of men to malanga. Its particular 'subject' is however the gas (warrior) vanis, and again it elaborates on a particular aspect of this malanga 'owned' by its sponsor and his group.

**MYTH D**

1 Alright. There is more about this canoe.
2 Alright. This vanis which sits in the front [Gas/be'apo]
3 he began something in this malanga which we from Vunapizu possess.
4 He adorned himself in the morning and went outside.
5 His legalen [shells - olives] 'cried' (made a noise) and a woman hearing this berated him saying "You often make those things cry".
6 OK that woman was the real sister of the man who was moving in this malanga.
7 After he had heard her out he went and got the spear this vanis holds because he is a warrior.
8 So he heard her out and then turned and went back into the enclosure.
9 Inside the vanis he did not feel sympathetic towards his sister which would have prevented him from killing her.
10 None of that for since he is part of the malanga he couldn't let it pass.
11 Since she had bad mouthed the malanga he had to kill her.
12 So he returned and speared his sister killing her.
Dead she lay in her house.
He ran back into the enclosure and addressed the men who were there then we went off to other amari. He went to Sararamba, to my father's enclosure and he told them "A woman insulted me because when I went out the lenaleg made a noise. I'm sick of being told that the lenaleg are noisy so I turned on my sister and speared her without remorse. Alright you adorn yourselves with your vanis and let's go and cut this woman".
Then he ran and went to another amari at Vikuri - it was not the enclosure of this kind of malangga. No it was the amari of another kind of malangga but they did make some sorts of vanis which were housed in this enclosure.
He told them and so they adorned themselves and donned those vanis from Vikuri.
They joined with Sararamba and vinapizu as well and they went and broke the dead woman's house and took her and cut her into pieces so that all the men had a piece.
Then all these vanis went inside the enclosure and threw all the bits onto the fire.
Then they took off their vanis and the adornments with which they had covered their bodies.
Then those real men ate the woman.

Here we have a man wearing the nas mask. He adorned himself, which, if we can infer from contemporary representations and from lines 35 and 36, means that he covered his body completely with clothes (formerly tapa cloth) and decorations (leaves etc.). The nas, informants told me, carries lega len in his left hand - lega len are shells (olives). In the myth the lega len made a noise which disturbed the woman. This is of critical importance and will be
returned to later. For the moment let us concentrate on three points.

1. someone insulted the vanis
2. the vanis who had inside it the brother of that woman did not have the 'natural' feelings of a man for his sister;
3. the vanis killed her with a spear.

What is the significance of someone insulting a malagga? Informants told me that the wages of such a transgression are death, as they are for those who incorrectly produce a malagga or violate other sacred clan resources - generally sometime later by sorcery, etc.

What I find most significant in this myth however is that the man inside the vanis no longer had the feelings of a man and that this is clearly stressed in the myth - see line 11/12 "Inside the vanis he did not feel sympathetic towards his sister which would have prevented him from killing her" and again in line 22/3 "I turned on my sister and speared her without remorse".

I argue that the significance of this is pointed up in the final lines of the myth (36-38): "Then they took off their vanis and the adornments with which they had covered their bodies. Then those real men ate the woman". The final line in conjunction with such comments as "all these vanis went inside" (line 34) and especially line 11 "Inside the vanis he did not feel sympathetic to his sister" are significant. Nowadays, the day before the public presentation of these malagga men go inside the vanis and run with them. The clear implication of this myth is that one is subsumed by the persona of the vanis when one is inside it. This point is important because it suggests that the 'putting on' of a malagga mask is not an act which focuses on the concealment and revelation
of the persona of the wearer (as Handelman, n.d. argues of Newfoundland Mumming). Rather, this myth suggests that in a mask a man loses the particularity of his own persona and is subsumed by the 'personality' of the mask. It suggests that the wearing of a malanga mask is not 'costuming' or 'masking' in that sense - rather, in this cultural context it is part of the process through which living men enliven their physical entities which link them through time to their relatives and to the locations on which those groups have grown and become associated.

In the next section I elucidate the process by which malanga are animated in more detail by examining the underpinning structure of malanga sequences.

REPRODUCING MALANGA

I have noted that there is no standard sequence of malanga ceremonies and that any sequence, it appears, is long and complex. Figure 10.2, taken from Lewis, 1969:74/5 summarizes the sequences presented by Kramer (1925), Peekel (1928), Powdermaker (1933) and Lewis (1969). Those examples point up the complexity and long duration of the process which is involved in the production of a malanga and its ceremonies.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two malanga entail the making of a special garden especially for the ceremonies. Such gardens must be large. Taro magic is considered critical for the success of the gardens and this in turn is critical for the success of the malanga. Normally a feast is held in the garden when the planting of the garden is
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KAHNER 1907</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>What is the event being documented?</em></td>
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<td><strong>PEEKEL 1851-57</strong></td>
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<td><em>What is the event being documented?</em></td>
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<td><strong>POWDERMAKER 1859-60</strong></td>
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<td><em>What is the event being documented?</em></td>
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<td><strong>LEWIS 1863-64</strong></td>
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<td><em>What is the event being documented?</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10.2: Malangar sequences documented in the literature (from Lewis 1969:75)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Almost 3 Months Later</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10, 1960</td>
<td>Feast in enclosure for reception of red paint from cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife</td>
<td>Moves into house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20, 1960</td>
<td>Feast in enclosure for reception of red paint from cloth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife</td>
<td>Moves into house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- *Almost 3 Months Later*: Feast in enclosure for reception of red paint from cloth. Husband and wife move into house.
- *November 10, 1960*: Feast in enclosure for reception of red paint from cloth. Husband and wife move into house.
- *December 20, 1960*: Feast in enclosure for reception of red paint from cloth. Husband and wife move into house.
completed and is attended by those who have invested their labour in
the work. The magician is paid for his services in that context.

Some time later the work on the sculpture begins. It is normally
also marked by a feast, this time in the sponsor's amari. It is
worth briefly describing one such event. At this festival the
sponsor of the malanga and men of his group went with the carvers
into the bush to cut down the tree from which the malanga was to be
carved. They made the expedition immediately after the pig for the
feast was put in the amari's randu. When they returned an hour or
two later they carried in on their shoulders a log decorated with
ferns. As they passed through the ino mono women gave small amounts
of money to the axemen. The entrance of the party into the amari
was heralded by the playing of a slit gong which played out the
malanga's myth in a duet on either side of the drum - the log was
carried around to the side of the amari furthest from the vanua vavi
where it lay while the food was removed from the oven and served to
those present. Later that day the carver made the first cuts in the
log in the making of the malanga. We see here the celebration of
the beginning of the work of reproduction.

This occasion I witnessed parallels the observations of Kramer,
1907, on New Ireland. Here I quote from Lewis' translation of
Krämer's comments on this first stage of the work:

"1. tilmunei "we cut wood". Men from the neighbouring
villages come together with their axes to fell a tree.
They cut off the needed lengths and carry them on litters
to the beach, singing and cutting down everything that is
in the way. Many people await the logs, they (the people)
are decorated with powdered lime and with ornamental
leaves. There is drumming while the logs are carried to
the workyard and laid down there. If payment with shell
money does not soon follow, the carriers try to destroy
their load..." (Kramer, 1925:79).
Sculptors work in the side areas of amari or in specially enclosed work areas immediately adjacent to amari. From time to time, while they work, the sponsor and his group feed him and present him with small amounts of money.

Each malagga design has particular points in the development of the reproduction which are celebrated with special feasts. These usually relate to a decisive point in the work on the form of the sculpture, usually to the painting and 'decorating' of the form and often, when the sculpture has eyes, to their setting into that form. Indeed we may view these feasts as marking decisive points in the development of the sculpture as corporeal form. I extend this point later.

The uniqueness of the sequences of particular designs are most evident in such feasts. Firstly, what are considered the decisive accomplishments in the sculpture's reproduction varies from design to design. Secondly, the entailments of such feasts may be peculiar to that design. This can be demonstrated with a simple contrast. I have noted that the entrance to the amari of the axe men and bearers of the log (mentioned above) was heralded by the playing of a slit gong. By contrast, the vanis I have discussed in detail earlier were heralded by a chorus of trumpeted nautilus shells and the shout "Whoa!". It is appropriate to herald the 'marine' vanis with trumpeted shells but it is entirely inappropriate to drum their entrance.

I also mentioned that a particular 'tune' was played on the slit gong. That tuneful rhythm was peculiar to that design. Indeed, the tune was a story, which the man I was sitting beside at
the time was able to 'narrate' for me. As the drummer on one side of the drum played a rhythm with little variation, his partner on the other side varied his beat, and by hitting his stick on different parts of the drum gave it melody. At points my informant said "There! that is the sound of pigs running...that is a stream..." Thus, even where two sculptures entail heralding by a slit gong, they will no doubt entail different rhythms, melodies and 'story' to be played upon them.

Indeed, the sculptures do not stand on their own. In all cases of which I am aware they entail the construction of a particular presentational structure. In the vanis discussed here that presentational structure was a canoe, in which all three sculptures were sat. Others are small open-faced 'houses' which are built straight onto the ground, and others I have seen built on stilts so that they tower over the heads of the people. I have also seen frameworks of various shapes which sit behind the sculpture itself. Indeed it is misleading to conceive of the presentational structures as a different work from the malanga as they are part of the same entity and process.

In the case of the vanis I have discussed in detail in this chapter the masks were worn and ran amok as part of the festival (zuku vavatu) at which they were set in that presentational structure. The gas myth reveals that this malanga killed and cut up its everyday-life sister who had wronged and insulted it. My informants suggested that before 'pacification' one had to kill and eat one or more enemy (virua) for each gas produced. From their accounts it appears that the last occasion for such an attack was the mid-to-late 1920's. Whilst not all malanga entail that they be
animated in the extreme way in which this gas is, it is important to note that it is not until the sculpture is set in its relation to the presentational structure that the design is complete - its public form achieved. Informants described this as the malanga being "raised and stood up" (zuku vavatori).

When the malanga is raised and 'stands' on its own it is publicly viewed and ultimately women, particularly those of the sponsoring group, enter the amari, view the sculpture and place small amounts of shellmoney and currency beside it as 'payment' for the sculptor.

The festival for making the presentational structure is called rota lili (also puka lambiriti or zuku vavatura). For this festival the fence around the amari is heightened with freshly cut coconut fronds so that the 8-10 foot barrier prevents women from seeing the activity going on within. Within the amari itself a second barrier is made and the work of making the presentational structure takes place behind it. These heightened fences are called bamba or ba. It is generally affines and those who are 'fathers' to the sponsor and his group who prepare the structure. Thus it is the sponsor's group and those working on the structure who may go behind this internal divide; 'outsiders' remain in front of it unable to see the work involved in construction.

Thus, at the final feast involved in the production of the sculpture hamlet space is highly constructed. Male space is screened off from women's space and itself internally divides 'inside' and 'outside' areas.
This structuring of space entails important transformations. In everyday life the amari's fence is a marker of the spatial orientations of men, women and children. At this festival, the orienting 'marker' becomes a barrier whose intention is to separate and to conceal. Moreover, whilst in everyday life the amari is orientated towards men, there is no visible distinction made between men who live there, their close relations and 'outsiders'. Yet at this festival a barrier separates 'insiders' and 'outsiders' and conceals from outsiders the inside work of constructing the malagga's presentational structure - an important part of the sculpture itself. Figure 10.3 depicts the divisions constructed in the hamlet for the work of making the presentation structure. Divisions constructed to act as barriers to conceal the work are represented by double lines.

Figure 10.3: Divisions of amari at rota lili

These distinctions can succinctly be represented in the 'formula'-

\[
\text{[Men ('insiders'/ 'outsiders')]} // \text{[Women]}
\]

It is men's relationship to the malanga and its sponsor which defines their spatial orientation on this day.
While the presentational structure is erected behind the *bamba*, the women of the sponsor's group prepare a special food pack which is placed in the *vavi* in the late afternoon but not removed until the next day - at the *Rota lengo* ('big cook') when the completed *malangga* is 'stood up' and revealed to all who wish to view it. A pig (or two) may also be killed and placed in the oven in the late evening, though they too are not removed from the 'hot' oven until the next day when the oven has cooled. Guests at the feast are fed the red organ, blood and *pindi* ('green leafy plant') 'pudding' cooked at most feasts where they are generally served before the pork and vegetables as a sort of appetizer.

Sometimes the *malangga* is 'stood up' (*zuku vavatori*) on the day of the *rota lili* (small cook). This was the case with the three *vanis* discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Other *malangga* entail the 'standing up' on the day of the *rota lengo* (big cook) which is the context for the largest presentations and exchanges which take place on Tabar. This was so at the presentation of a different 'line' of *nas* which I was present for in 1980.

The *rota lengo* is always the context for the public presentation of the completed *malangga*, and for the great exchanges and presentations. Long beds of bamboo, constructed in the preceding days, are covered with taro, yams and other tubers grown in the special *malangga* garden. Early in the day women of the sponsoring group give quantities of the tubers to visiting women in the *ino mono*. Women often give yams in the sexual/food idiom which dominates *beriberi* performances and indeed at one *rota lengo* I attended performed the *beriberi* dance accompanied by *beriberi* songs holding large yams or hanging them about their necks on vines. One
of the women danced innovatively with a large piece of polystyrene
which had washed up, hanging around her neck. Some of the dancing
women 'asked' visiting women to view their 'pigs' as a standard joke
performed at beriberi. I take up the issue of why this sort of
comedy is appropriate at this festival later in this chapter.

Early in the morning pigs to be cooked for the feast and for
exchange are carried by their 'fathers' to the host hamlet. There
they are killed and butchered. Those to be cooked are then placed
in the randu. The others, which are given raw in exchange, usually
because there is insufficient oven space, are placed off the ground
on bamboo 'beds'.

When the malanga is completed it (they) is first presented to the
many men gathered inside the amari to view it. 'Standing' at last,
they are revealed when theamba, which has concealed the final
moments of its construction from outsiders, is dismantled.

In view of the malanga but still screened from the women the
men begin to eat. As well as pork, bananas are an important part of
these feasts. Men harvest them some days before therota lengo and
ripen them buried in bark lined pits within the amari enclosure.
They are presented, with quantities of betal nuts and peppers and
niu, to the men attending the feast.

During the feast the sponsor reminds the gathering which dead the
malanga 'finishes' by 'sealing' their graves. He then narrates the
malanga's myth. The myths which relate the malanga's origins and
its dispersal are always presented in these contexts. They document
the present sponsor's entitlement to reproduce the design, his
relationship to it and those who have reproduced it before him and the places with which it is associated. The sponsor may name the individual to whom he passes the rights of reproduction.

When the malagga's myth has been narrated the coconut fronds which heightened the amari's fence are removed and women and children file in to view the design. At its base they leave small amounts of money (generally 10-20t but up to K1) which is said to be payment to the sculptor for his work.

The major exchanges of pork and shellmoney may then take place. Sometimes this is preceded by a festival of singing and dancing (aro aro). Visiting groups perform these in the ino mono to celebrate the malagga. On some occasions aro aro (and the pork distributions) take place the next day. The exchanges provide a context for reciprocating past presentations, and initiating new ones. Some presentations also reciprocate aid, such as the loan of a canoe, help in collecting firewood for the feast or in hunting. Many of these entail minor cuts. Important transactions - such as the transference of land - entail the presentation of money and shell money but also always necessitate the giving of a head of pig. Heads of pigs are often given by the sponsor to visiting kalengo. The sponsor stands with one foot on the head and announces that the head goes to X for the graves of those in 'Y amari'. The significance of the exchange of pigs head was discussed in Chapter Eight.

Most malagga are taken down the next day. Each style has a specific mode of disposal. In the case of the three vanis, and indeed most (if not all) gas, they are immediately burned. Some designs are
disposed of by placing them on the reef or in the sea caves to rot and disintegrate over time with the action of the sea and elements. Other designs require that they be left in the bush to rot. These days some sculptures are sold (or kept for selling) to foreigners. A small feast is held to mark the dismantling and disposal of the sculpture.

It is clear from the work of Groves (AL-103, Bos 9 File 56) and Lewis (1969) that when boys were initiated during a malanga sequence they were circumcised about the time or just before the work on the sculpture was begun. Significantly however they, their wounds healed, were released from their seclusion and revealed as men on the same day as the malanga were publicly revealed at the rota lengo.

Thus it is clear that the transformation of the boys into men was framed by, and related to, the process of the production of the malanga. Malanga are clearly produced to honour and 'finish' the dead, yet they may also be a context for celebrating the replacement of deceased persons with those 'made' into men during the sequence (cf Lewis 1972:675). I take this issue up in more detail later.

CRUSA

As well as malanga it is common for cement crosses ('crusa') to be publicly 'stood up' at rota lengo. Sometimes they may be produced instead of a malanga, but more frequently these days they are produced with malanga.
Like malanga, 'crusa' are produced over a period of time and decisive points in their production are marked with feasts (gau). To elucidate this process I will briefly describe the process by which a crusa for Simbes, wife of the kalengo Manai was produced. It was presented at a rota lengo with a gas design.

About three weeks before the rota lengo a feast was held at the sponsor's amari. To it was brought a bag of cement. The cement was carried, suspended (like a pig or the sago for a lasi lasi lasaki) from a long bamboo pole and decorated with green leaves. Affines and 'fathers' of the sponsor made a formwork for a cross, pegging the planks into the ground. They mixed the cement and then poured it into the formwork. A pig was cooked and eaten in the amari to mark this work.

About two weeks later a feast, referred to as tambari mi plank, was held when the now solid cross was removed from the formwork. On the day before the rota lili at which both gas and crusa were presented the cross was painted and inscribed with Simbes name and the date of her death.

At the rota lili the crusa was planted in the ground of Manai amari behind theamba in the area where the gas was 'stood up'. They were both publicly revealed at the rota lengo. There Manai noted that the malanga and the crusa had been produced and presented to 'finish' Simbes' name and to seal her grave so that she would no longer be mourned. Whenever crusa were presented such public explanation was given by the sponsor to those who had gathered for the feast.
THE STRUCTURE OF MALANGA SEQUENCES

It is interesting that the production of crusa, like the production of malanga, entails a sequence of feasts which mark decisive points in the development of the work. Whilst the sequence entailed in the production of crusa appears to be standard it is clear that every design entails a unique ceremonial sequence. Despite this remarkable heterogeneity I contend that all sequences share an underpinning logic and structure.

Four phases are involved in the reproduction of malanga. I will refer to the first phase as 'The Commissioning'. It relates to the commencement of the work of reproduction and it is always celebrated and facilitated by a gau. The next phase is a development phase in which the sculptor works to produce form and to adorn that form. It is within this phase that most of the heterogeneity between sequences can be noted, and in which most of the gau of any particular sequence take place. These gau often mark the achievement of particular form, the enplacement of eyes and other features, and the painting of the malanga. Clearly they are related to the development of a design's particular corporeal features. I use the gloss 'Adornment of Features' for this phase in the production of a reproduction.

The next developmental stage is the most public stage. It involves the achievement of the developed form, its standing up and its public presentation. The rota's lili and lengo (small and grand 'cooks') and where appropriate, the celebrations of singing and dancing (aro aro) occur here. This is the phase where, like the phase of commissioning, the greatest homogeneity is displayed in the
various ceremonial sequences - for all malanga must be stood up and publicly presented for the reproduction to be achieved.

The final phase of the reproduction is its disposal which I will refer to as 'The Decommissioning'. Whether a design is destroyed immediately (by burning for example) or left on land or by the sea to disintegrate slowly it is 'finished' like the deceased person for whom the malanga was reproduced as a memorial.

There are important parallels then between the production of a crusa and the reproduction of a malanga. My informants suggested that this process of 'standing up' a crusa as memorial to the deceased developed during the gap in the reproduction of malanga which I discussed in Chapter Two. The production of a crusa entails three nau which may be seen to correspond to (a) the commissioning - the making of the formwork and pouring of cement; (b) the adornment of features - the feast at which the formwork is removed and the cross painted; and (c) the nau at which the finished cross is 'stood up'. The phase which a crusa does not share with a malanga is the 'decommissioning'. While a malanga is conceptually an ongoing conception which is reproduced and given form from time to time, a crusa is conceptually at least a permanently standing form - though all realize that over time its adornment (paint) fades because of the effect of the elements.

Nevertheless, like malanga, a crusa 'stood up', as memorial to a deceased, is an icon which embodies important understandings of the nature of person within the cosmos and their relationships to others. That this culture sees no contradiction between crusa and malanga, and moreover often produces them both to the memory of
deceased individuals demonstrates the largely unproblematic relationship between introduced Christian ideas of the cosmos and the cosmos of their forebears embodied in malanga.

Both malanga and crusa mark transformations in human states of existence. Both are 'stood up' long after the individual's death and burial and mark both decomposition and the important metaphysical transformation from proximate named spirit to dispersed generalized ancestral spirit. Thus both 'finish' the period of mourning and the deceased as an individual whose specific existence must be taken into account in the day to day affairs of the living.

In addition, both relate the deceased individual to on-going groups: the crusa to the large body of Christians; the malanga to those who have sponsored or been celebrated by the particular design in the past, and those who will do so in the future.

Clearly there is also an important relationship between the phases involved in the reproduction of a malanga and those which enact the ontological transformations of human beings in the beriberi and death sequences.

There is however a crucial difference between malanga and crusa. The crux of this difference is, I argue, that a crusa is a symbolic monument 'marking' as well as 'finishing' the dead. Malanga by contrast are also given voice and 'enlivened' in the festivals at which they are 'stood up'. Mekeu's three vanis subsumed those who wore them at the zuku vavatori. There the vanis, as is the nature of their persona, ran amok slashing the area around the amari where they were publicly presented. Whilst only some malanga designs are
animated in this way, all are given voice by the kalengo who as narrators of their stories become mi nuz, the mouths of the malango. In this way all malango are 'enlivened' at the zuku vavatori and rota lengo at which they are presented to Tabars' here and now social reality. It is mi nuz who complete the reproduction of a malango by organizing their corporeal formation and development, and, importantly, giving voice to their story and the myths which reveal the nature of their being, and their relationship to those who reproduced them in the past and to the land on which those people were nurtured and through which they established their relations to other men and this malango.

Like real human beings, malango are conceived, develop and mature as individuals. Like human beings they are removed from 'here and now' existence and decompose until they become a 'conception' of memory without form. Malango are always (ideally) reformed and reproduced. Importantly, the decisive points in the reproduction of malango are celebrated in ritual festivals as are the important points and phases of human beings: The festivals which are rites de passage for human beings (including malango) and those which are rites de passage for malango sculptures can thus be related. Malango sequences embody malango sculptures in their phases a parallel with the sequences for human beings. Figure 10.4 presents the relationship between beriberi, Death and Malango sequences which mark decisive stages in human beings; and the malango sequence in respect of the reproduction and being of malango.
### Metaphysical Existence

#### Relationship to States of Existence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIMING X LIFE CYCLE (approximate)</th>
<th>birth - 6 months</th>
<th>birth - 1 month</th>
<th>birth + 2 years</th>
<th>Puberty Plus</th>
<th>On verge of death</th>
<th>death</th>
<th>death +/- 24 hours</th>
<th>succeeding weeks/months</th>
<th>Death plus 1-10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Other Processes Implied

- **Gelling of procreative substances**
  - In utero
  - Ex utero
- **Nurturance of foetus by mothers blood**
  - Milk
  - Solid foods (garden)
- **Reproduction of a sculpture from an idea**
- **As a 'sealing of grave' implies decomposition of deceased is accomplished**
- **Deceased's spirit 'freed' becomes generalized ancestral spirit**

#### Transformation Enacted

- **Achievement of foetal form**
  - Delivery
  - Detachment of umbilicus
- **Mentorship by motherhood**
  - Circumcision
  - 'Shaking hands'
- **Death by burial**
- **Commissioning of a sculpture - first work**
  - Painting or adorning sculpture
  - Public presentation of finished work
  - (The beginning of the process of destruction)

#### Marking

- **Festival Episode**
  - Bula
  - Birth
  - Na niu
  - Na pinogi
- **Special Notes**
  - Relates to child of primipara (see over for significance x mother)
  - Sequence varies according to sculpture (a number of sculptures may be presented simultaneously)

#### Sequence of Events:

- **Beriberi**
- **Malanga (sisi)**
- **Death**
- **Malanga**
COSMOS AND REPRODUCTION

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested that the reproduction of malanga is important both for the reproduction of groups of people and the cosmos itself. In this section of the chapter I briefly explore the iconographic composition incorporated in designs and the origins of the materials from which they are produced. I suggest that any design juxtaposes elements and representations from different domains of the cosmos. This is also reflected in the materials from which they are made. Thus any particular malanga offers a particular perspective on the relations between domains in the environment and cosmos. At the same time it must be noted that no design encapsulates a total representation of the cosmos. Rather, there is a part:whole relationship between a design and its style and 'family' and ultimately to the entire malanga corpus. As a corpus, malanga present the entire cosmos, and thus are necessary for its reproduction. This suggestion is consonant with the broad argument of the thesis that any ritual event must be related to its particular sequence and that every sequence must be related to the larger corpus.

In the final part of the section I examine the cultural logic of 'reproduction'. I suggest that human reproduction is contingent upon the transcendence of control within a cultural perspective of appropriate 'time and place'.

Clearly, given the extent of museum collections of malanga, it is possible to analyse the iconographic composition and structure of a large number of malanga designs. Such an analysis I predict would demonstrate that there is an overwhelming tendency for compositions
to juxtapose elements from different environmental domains. As Lewis noted "in subject matter, New Ireland art features men, real and supernatural, in juxtaposition with animals, such as birds, snakes, fish and with plant forms" (1969:11). This point can be demonstrated by reference to a malangazac called kinkasi. That design may crudely be described as a small carved 'statuette'. The top half of the sculpture is a representation of the head and shoulders of a kalengo (identifiable because of the kapkap he wears on his chest); at the same time the mask is also a human face. The effect is like that some psychologists have produced in designs which looked at in one way are x, but may easily 'flip' to a representation of y and then back again. The effect here is dramatic; the malangga is both man, and bird, as well as bird-man. For example, like a man, the mask has a nose, yet this nose is also a representation of the beano's tail feathers. The mask is clearly a face, yet it is yellow like the beano and the markings on the face are said to be the distinctive markings of the bird.

Thus the nas beano has the appearance of a man and the persona of a wild warrior spirit - but at the same time the malangga is a brightly coloured bird who is associated with the bush - and yet takes to the air and crosses the boundaries of deep forest and coastal fringe. In addition, at Mekeu's malangga the nas beano was presented in the context of the zirazirap korigusi and the tarangi ramba beta. The nas beano, the wild man warrior - bird of the bush is juxtaposed to the kalengo korigusi who is 'of the sea' not of the land. The tarangi ramba betar is the workman-paddler who hears directions quickly because of his large ears. Like the beano, betar is associated with a bird - the feathers on his ears are from the long necked sea-bird ko. Both beano and betar are 'wild' not sociable.
The kalengo korigusi by contrast is the epitome of responsible sociability. Korigusi is made from materials from a variety of domains - his eyes are kamapuliz, the valves of sea shells; his beard is buruburu bida, a fresh-water weed; his hair is sosos, a grass which grows in swamps.

It is important that gas and betar are considererd to be particular sorts of wild spirits. They are not tandaro, wild spirits associated with particular groups and sites, but rather 'free' spirits which roam the deep bush and who may take on human form from time to time and attack, even rape, the human victims they meet in their roamings. Here then, the wild 'human-like' spirits of the environment are juxtaposed with 'domesticated' human spirits like the socially responsible kalengo Korigusi.

From this superficial and brief discussion it can thus be seen that each design brings into conjunction and juxtaposes elements and forms from a variety of domains. As an achieved form they can each be related to those with which they are presented - here the gas, zirazirap and betar. The importance of relating the parts to the whole in the analysis of art is a point well made by Levi-Strauss (see especially 1982) and here I would suggest that as well as the analysis of the part:whole relationship in any design, analysis must also relate particular designs to others of their kind and style, and beyond this to the entire corpus of malanga.
REPRODUCTION

I have suggested that the reproduction of malanga effect important ontological relations for the individuals they are produced to celebrate. I have also argued that the structure which underpins a malanga sequence can be related to the ritual sequences which are concerned with transformations in the states of existence of human beings. Beyond this I suggest that malanga come into being themselves and transform in the process of their reproduction and that, like human beings, the decisive moments in this process are celebrated and enacted ritually. Malanga are tangible objects which connect individuals and groups through time and place. Indeed they are necessary for the reproduction of groups. Further, I contend that the reproduction of particular designs and the corpus as a whole are critical to the reproduction of the cosmos which underpins them.

Here I wish to explore the cultural logic of reproduction. To do so it is worth returning to beriberi for a moment. Beriberi is concerned with human reproduction. Its comedy, as I pointed out in Chapters Five and Six, is concerned in important ways with sexuality and food. I bring this issue up to suggest that as one 'loses oneself in the act of sex', which is an act of reproduction, so in the act of being the malanga (which is also reproductive), one is subsumed by it. Two comments made to me elucidate this in relation to sex. One day I was sitting in the hamlet at a hearing of the Village Court when two dogs began copulating in the hamlet compound in front of us. The young man sitting next to me said "that's the difference between men and dogs - dogs have no notion of time and place" - that is, dogs do it whenever they like wherever they are.
Human beings, however, as I argued in Chapter Three, have a clear sense of the appropriate cultural times and places.

Sex should take place in gardens. This is an interesting point for again a conjunction is made between the production of food (in gardens) and the production of procreative substances (in sex). It also elucidates why the children of unmarried mothers, and more particularly those of whom no father is known or reasonably surmised, are referred to as 'children of the bush'. Gardens are at one level areas which have been claimed and subdued from the bush and contained within a fenced area. In gardens human beings clear, plant, protect from encroachment (by weeding) and harvest and thus control and guide growth. Bush is uncontrolled and uncontained growth. Yet, in their practice of shifting cultivation humans appropriate and subdue the wild as they make gardens. The fertility of the bush is seen as a process of the rotting fertilizing the growing. In gardens one removes the wild growing things and engages with ancestral assistance the fertility of rot (loss of form) in the production of food.

I propose that there are parallels between this loss of form in the growth of vegetables, and orgasm in human procreation. I once asked a small group of women friends what they did to make sexual intercourse in the gardens comfortable. One replied 'when men want it they have no concern. They get into a frenzy and are not concerned with such things nor are we for that matter'. Sex is 'constrained' culturally to particular places and thus times - but in the act the actors 'lose' themselves - they are in those moments no longer controlled cultural beings. It is the transcendence of the cultural definitions of appropriate context, the subsuming of
self in the very doing of the act of intercourse which may hold a key to the cultural logic of reproduction in Tabar culture.

This discussion may be extended by a brief reference to pigs and where the domesticated pigs eaten at feasts (and the basis of exchange) come from. As I mentioned in Chapter Eight, domesticated male pigs are castrated. Village sows are inseminated only by wild boars. That is to say, a condition of the reproduction of domesticated pigs, who have such a crucial role in mediating the relations of living men and ancestors, is the conjoining of beings from contrasting domains of the environment - the wild with the domesticated.

Similarly, human reproduction is contingent upon the interaction of male and female in a culturally defined context but it is an act in which control is lost - for the moment both the culture's control over the actors and at another level the actor's control over themselves is transcended - orgasm is a 'wild' uncontrolled moment upon which human reproduction is contingent. We should not lose sight for instance that two critical cultural 'powers' in this culture are wild bush spirits (tandoro) and sharks (in'baeya) who dwell in the open sea and may visit, sometimes to attack human victims, the coastal waters.

Again we may reflect upon beriberi, where in some sense we find in its 'communitas' the Father's women similarly presenting a performance which at times, at least, is 'wild', frenzied and uncontrolled in its celebration of fecundity and the reproduction and 'replacement' of living human beings. It is a celebration in which 'shame' (mamanari) is lost. Dogs, chickens and other animals
never develop shame. Human beings can sometimes, fleetingly, be shameless.

It is important to note that malanga were represented as times of sexual promiscuity by some of my informants. One in particular suggested that women of the sponsoring group could have sexual relations with men, actively encouraged by their husbands who would receive shellmoney for this sanctioned access to their wives. Lewis (1969:73) and Gunn (pers.comm.) have also noted this connection between sex and malanga. It is an important connection for it points up their 'reproductive' importance in this culture.

I suggest that in Tabar cultural logic reproduction is contingent upon the cultural appropriation and/or 'containment' of 'wildness'. It is this that malanga achieve in their composition. The designs always encapsulate undomesticated or 'wild' creatures or things which are produced as man-made sculptures. The work of reproduction takes place in amari and they represent the spirits of people who have died – whose corporeal and metaphysical state is dissipating and is losing or has lost form. This loss of form is celebrated in the very production of form in the being of the malanga itself. Ancestral spirits must not become wild, uncontrolled power; rather, they must be transformed and socialized so that their powers can be used to engage the fecundity of the land and sea and to enable the ongoing reproduction of human beings and the cosmic order in which they live. It is this which makes the production of malanga, especially for those like kalengo, engage the powers of their group and the cosmos in their here and now existence.

The Tabar ritual corpus attempts to order men, groups and the world
in which they live so that each may be reproduced in a way which allows the social and cultural order to persist.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have explored the cultural importance of malanga. I have suggested that they are reproduced as a memorial to the dead. Such sequences take place after the corpse has decomposed and it transforms their spirit from a proximate named spirit to a dispersed and generalized ancestral spirit. I have also noted that malanga were also the context for initiation in the past and that as such were seen to be celebrating (as beriberi did) 'replacement' of personnel. In beriberi Mothers are attacked because their 'replacement' has been born. In initiatory malanga the replacement of a deceased person by a newly mature man is celebrated as a boy is made into a man.

In exploring a particular example I was able to elucidate the relationship between the particularities of ceremonial sequences, myth and origins. This elaborated the crucial importance of malanga in the relatedness of human beings to designs, to place and to each other.

Beyond this I suggested that malanga reproduction and ceremonies are not simply concerned with human conditions. Importantly the sculptures themselves are brought into being, transformed and enlivened before the particular sculpture decomposes and these transformations are produced and celebrated in the rituals of the sequence. Malanga do not truly 'die' unless the group who has
rights to reproduction fails to reproduce the design again (for example if they themselves die out). Instead the malangga becomes a conception in the mind of a new holder of the rights, as they were before the previous reproduction.

I went on to suggest that malangga encapsulate perspectives on cosmological relations. I argued that the elements of any sculpture must be related as parts to whole, and extended this suggestion from particular designs to the styles which they are part of and to the cosmos as a whole. I suggested then that the ensemble of designs forms a corpus whose reproduction encapsulates ideas about the nature and relations of cosmological domains and indeed was necessary for the reproduction of the cosmos in a way which enables human beings and their culture to be reproduced.

Malangga therefore have been elucidated as a complex cultural phenomenon which, in their enlivening, helps to reproduce the cultural order and the cosmos in which it exists.
PART THREE

CONCLUSION
In this thesis I have examined the corpus of public ritual performed on Tabar. In Chapter Two I explored the resilience of this ritual system. It is a resilience which is remarkable in the face of the extent of Tabar exposure to the West and in view of the demands which ritual production places on its participants. In the first weeks of my fieldwork I went on a tour of this island electorate with the newly elected Member for Tabar in the Provincial Assembly. Speaking to meetings of his electors he spoke of the need for a commitment to Development, and he remarked in one speech:

'If you continue to hold festivals you will not have time to spend developing our place. Our school's, already delapidated, will fall down; our children will not pass the high school entrance exam; aid posts will stop working...People on Tabar spend too much time and energy on feasts'.

In this thesis I have sought to elucidate the importance of ritual in the lives of the people of Tabar. Ritual indeed is essential work in this society. For many people ritual is as necessary in their lives as gardening and the work of subsistence. Thus, whilst I argued in Chapter Two that the key to this ritual system's resilience lay in the flexibility of both copra and ritual production, it is important also to stress that the resilience is critically predicated on a high level of commitment to the premises which underlie the rituals themselves.

The base line is that the production and reproduction of this ritual corpus enables the reproduction of a cosmic order in which people can live and reproduce themselves as human beings, distinct from other animal beings. As it is, the impact of the taro blight, since
contact, is ascribed to the loss of taro magic. People see the arrival of Christianity as a positive development, on the whole, for it has curtailed (but not wiped out) the harmful utilization of supernatural powers in, for example, sorcery. Christianity and pacification are perceived to have made relations between people safer. As a neighbour once remarked,

'in the old days my son [then aged 7 years] would never have gone to a feast. The power and maliciousness of all those kalango would have threatened him - anything could have happened to him. But now sorcery and malicious attacks have been reduced so I don't worry if he goes'.

Yet at the same time, as I have shown, sudden death or illness remain phenomena which are related to these very forces.

Such associations are predicated, as is this ritual system, on a particular understanding of the world and how (in general terms) it works. In that view human beings help to reproduce themselves and that world. They engage in this process not simply as embodied participants in the 'here and now' realm of mortal existence. After death the body may corrupt, but the metaphysical aspect of person survives to become an ancestor who can be engaged in the process of reproducing the material preconditions of human subsistence. Ancestral spirits and their nurturing powers are not lost at death, rather they are gained in the long and complex rituals I have referred to as the Death and Malanga sequences. They become one of the important resources which mortal people can tap in their lives to bring sun and rain, to help them engage the fertility of their land and the fertility of their bodies.

Whilst certain ritual experts (weather magicians etc.) may have clearer and more detailed conceptions of the nature of the cosmos and the forces at work within it, most Tabars view their world as
one in which a number of powers exist and have real consequences on their lives. The particular relationships between these forces is not precisely known by most people. The Tabar cosmos is not, it appeared to me, a hierarchically organized one - except perhaps that, for many, the Christian God is God over all. Yet even he (for many), is seen as lord over a world of wild bush, shark, and ancestral spirits.

In my exploration of this ritual corpus I have given prominence to a number of themes. Here I wish to draw together important aspects in my discussion of these themes.

I have argued that each of the sequences in this ritual corpus is a rite of passage. At the most basic level beriberi is concerned with the coming into being of children. At the same time I have suggested that it is a rite of passage for the primipara, whose transition from preproductive to reproducing woman it celebrates and enacts. Adult, and reproductive, status was effected, for men, in the context of malanga ceremonies. The death sequence, I argued, is a rite of passage for the dead who are later also celebrated and transformed in malanga sequences. My view of the corpus as rite de passage was broader than this characterization suggests. I sought to examine the ontological transformations which these rituals effected. Thus I suggested that three broad states of existence were important. I suggested that in the 'here and now' realm of human interaction people live because of a critical nexus between their corporeality and metaphysical being. The beriberi festivals, among other things, celebrate the coming into corporeal and metaphysical being of the person. That sequence also celebrates and enacts their entry into the 'here and now' domain of human social interaction.
Death, I suggested, breaks the nexus between the metaphysical and corporeal aspect of person, and thus the basis of their 'here and now' existence. This nexus broken, the body decomposes and the person's spirit is thus disembodied and freed. The Death sequence is not just concerned with the community work of repairing the breach in their ranks. It is also concerned with reconciling the dead person to the community and to their own disembodied metaphysical state. This is important because the spirits of the newly dead often remain in the vicinity of their corrupting body and the community. If unreconciled, they pose an implicit threat to the community. Yet, at the same time, ultimately the community needs their nurturant powers. It is the malangga, held after decomposition is finally achieved, which transforms these proximate named spirits into generalized ancestral spirits who will enable the community to engage the fertility of the land which has nurtured them all. Importantly, I showed that it is ritual which effects these crucial ontological transformations (upon which the reproduction of people and the cosmos are also contingent).

I suggested that the power of these rituals resides in their transformative nature. On the one hand these transformations are achieved in sacrifice. The crux of sacrifice, I suggested, exists in its transformations of the things which are sacrificed. What is crucial as well is the way in which such transformations encapsulate the 'here and now' domain and link them, in the context of sacrifice, to the cosmos and its forces more broadly. At the same time I examined the structure of ritual itself. I suggested that the structuring and restructuring of elements and relations within the ritual frame are powerfully engaged in the transformative task.
This can also be related to my second prominent theme: the media of performance and the ideas which dominate performance. For the ideas which dominate ritual performance are often presented through the organization of the ritual, in its form and re-formation. At the same time I related the media of ritual performance to the transformative task. I noted for example that comedy as the performative medium of beriberi, contingent as it is on the creative rearrangement of form, is an apt medium for the task of human procreation. Comedy in its form expresses the very transformative work that beriberi does.

Similarly, I examined both wailing and sacrifice in my discussion of the performance of the Death sequence. Wailing, I suggested, is expressive of the ontological transformations of the deceased person. At the same time it is a communicative medium between the living and the newly dead which is perceived to work. I also examined the media of malanga. In my discussion of malanga I went beyond the examination of these sculptures as 'plastic' forms. I suggested that they were reproductions which had reproductive power. Moreover I suggested that malanga are enlivened in ritual performance. Their 'sponsor' stands them up and gives them voice. The kalengo becomes 'the mouth' (mi puz) and he and other performers animate these sculpted reproductions.

The success of all these ritual sequences is contingent on the performative involvement of both men and women. Tabar ritual is not the preserve of men, nor an area of life which men dominate. The transformative power of ritual is engaged only through the participation of both men and women. This is not to say that gender
disappears in ritual. On the contrary gender is critical in the structure and relations of ritual. Ritual and the engagement of its transformative powers are contingent on gender. In this work I have sought to elucidate how gender both structures and is structured in ritual. In addition I have sought to reveal how, in its form, media and concerns, Tabar ritual entails reflection upon the nature of gender and the cooperative nature of the reproductive and transformative roles women and men play in the cosmological scheme of things.

This theme is in turn related to my exploration of the dynamic principles of social relatedness on Tabar. I have shown that social relatedness is established by two principal means. Procreative substances, on which conception is contingent, relate people. But at the same time relatedness is also 'rooted' in the land whose fecundity is engaged by ancestral spirits. It is food, produced on such land, which is a basis for the links of 'substance' which relate people to others. These two principles of social relatedness underpin a central dynamic of Tabar life. Until weaning, a persons closest links of substance are with their mother and her group. For, whilst conception was achieved by both male and female procreative substances, it is ones mother's own bodily substance which feeds ones growth from conception until weaning. This is why, say Tabars, at birth one becomes a member of matambu and kivavundi on matrilineal grounds. But should one be nurtured by food grown on ones father's land (or any other group) after weaning then one will, in time, become more closely related to them than to ones mother's group. It is under such circumstances that people may exercise their 'options' to the resources of ones father's group - to their ancestors, land, magic and malagga.
This dynamic tension is played out in ritual performance. In the beriberi sequence it is played out in the tug of war of the na pynos. It is hardly surprising then that the na pynos celebrates weaning. In other words this ritual tug of war takes place at precisely the time that the competition for relatedness begins. I showed that this competition for primary affiliation may persist until death. In Chapter Seven I discussed a 'tug of war' at the first feast in the death sequence of a woman who had never settled down for long anywhere. Her primary links of substance were thus not seen as clear cut. The 'tug of war' sought to resolve the issue of which group she was most closely related to. Underpinning the dispute was the larger issue of for which group would she become an ancestor and resource of power.

Thus though relatedness is a dynamic process for the duration of one's 'here and now' life, it must be finally reckoned at death. In malagga ceremonies one's ongoing relatedness to that group is reaffirmed in the reproduction of a sculpture which links one to the territory and people with which it is associated and reproduces.

The dynamic of these principles of relatedness has an impact both on everyday as well as ritual life. Kalengo for instance compete with others for co-residents. Their most important resource of attraction is land. Moreover, in ritual, changing calculations of relatedness are played out in performance. When a beriberi is held in one's 'neighbourhood' one must decide whether one is not (sufficiently) related to the primipara and her child; or related to them as 'Mother'; or as 'Father'. These calculations will determine whether one attends at all, and if one does, whether one cooks or decorates oneself to sing, dance and engage in its comedy.
Thus, whilst clearly gender structures everyday and ritual relations so too do distinctions of relatedness. Every Tabar ritual is predicated both on distinctions of gender and group affiliation. Thus this central dynamic of Tabar life is a prominent and dynamic aspect of the structure and performance of ritual.

I have sought through this analysis to elucidate central aspects of Tabar life. This has been contingent, I would argue, on the examination of the complete corpus of public ritual. Insofar as ritual, and the ideas it structures, stand in dialectical relation to the ideas and structures of everyday life, so too does any ritual and any sequence stand in dialectical relationship to all other rituals and sequences.

And whilst, as I noted at the beginning of this thesis, one's view of the world is arrived at piecemeal, ritual is a context in which one's gaze is directed through the emergent structure of the ritual, through its performative medium and through one's own engagement in it. As ethnographers cast their analytic gaze on ritual like light through a prism in order to elucidate broader aspects of cultural and human existence, so too are those engaged in ritual directed in particular ways to explore the multi-faceted prism of their culture and its world.
FOOTNOTES

1 Black painted on their head, red on their eyes, with lailai shells on their arms through which red pandanus leaves would be threaded.

2 It is 'in-marrying' women who should 'carry' the body in this fashion.

3 Both of these containers are interesting for taro was traditionally the staple crop of Tabar. More significant however is that I was told when the taro basket was used then burial took place at sea in an area just off the reef associated with the deceased. When canoe hulls are used for the coffin, burial takes place on the land. The terrestrial-marine combinations and juxtapositions here point again the critical relationship between land and sea in Tabar culture and again the importance of the COASTAL FRINGE as sight of human sociability.

4 Goriqori (a large broad leaved relation of ginger) are first heated, usually on the burning randu to make them pliable. Then the thin spine of a concoconut frond is pushed down and through the edge of the leaf and broken off on the other side so that they form a sort of sewed staple. Depending on the size of the pig or the number of pigs several goriqori leaves are joined in this manner.

5 It was not until a visiting 'holyman' (a Tolai who toured Tabar with a message from God which he claimed to have received when he was taken on a tour of heaven and hell during a period in which he was dead. God, he said, gave him back his life so that he could deliver the message all over Papua New Guinea) 'exorcised' the man's spirit from the place that for example the delivery room was used for births. I was told that women giving birth during the intervening period did so in the nurses home rather than in the Center.

6 I use this case as an example because it is the best documented of my cases. My trauma at the deaths of Daimol and Tinut is reflected in extremely poor fieldnotes for that period. Here I discuss the taboo feasts following Simbes' death, a death which occurred within days of my arrival at Mapua.

7 Sago is harvested and processed in the following manner:
   a. the tree is felled;
   b. the bark on the top of the fallen tree is trimmed off leaving the inner pith exposed;
   c. the pith is extracted by pounding it with a bamboo mallet (valo);
   d. the broken up pith is then carried to the zombi undu (sago canoe) which is positioned by a water source;
   e. sago pith is placed in the top 'canoe' behind a 'gauze' trap (mi koi) which is 'sprung' on the spine of a sago bowers;
f. the man processing the sago adds water to the sago and 'washes' it so that the fibre remains behind the trap whilst the starch flows under it and via another set of 'seives' to the lower canoe where it accumulates behind a solid wood trap.

For example, in the erection of a center post in men's houses they note that "It is held up by the men of the clan and anointed by the owner of the men's house with the fat of the slaughtered pigs and soot" (n.d.:31). Indeed "the uterus of a pig is wrapped around the bottom end of the post, that is, the end which is to be put in the ground so that it may contribute to the increase and growth of pigs...The whole purpose of the ceremony is to gain wealth for the chief and his clan and to give him power over his people" (ibid:31-2). They suggest that a 'sacrificial prayer' is said at the 'consecration of a men's house which they render as follows:

In case you, our fathers, are here, enter!
In case you, our brothers are present, enter!
In case you, our sisters, are here, enter!
In case you, our mothers, are here, enter!
You whom we called, move close together!
Climb the post and settle down there!
Fetch our pearlshells and cowrie shells and the Nassa shells
and the green shells and the cymbium shells, and
the hatchets and the pigs and all goods
from the people and bring them into the house!
If you do this, the house will fill up
like a river that cararies down rubble!
Then we shall take the goods and make MOKA with them!

(ibid:34/5).

It is after this 'prayer' is said they note that the pigs are slaughtered and one part of the meat is steamed on the dance ground in front of the men's house and the other part is taken into the newly built mens house and steamed in the cooking pit. They go on "Soon the smell of the steaming meat is rising in the men's house too and the spirits, attracted by it, move in and settle on the post" (ibid:35).
It has occurred to me since returning from my fieldwork that kidney fat may actually be understood as the body's storehouse of semen (procreative substances) - for the kidneys are 'attached' to the penis via the urethera.
GLOSSARY

aemati  shallow/coastal waters
amari    'mens house' often glossed in tok pisin as 'haus boi'
arasia   the green leafy vegetable abika
baliu     shrub whose cuttings are used as uprights for the amari fence. Its leaves are rubbed on babies' faces soon after birth and when someone, it is feared, is dying
baru      a bird - possibly the Dacula rubicera rubicera
basaket, mi burial basket made from taro leaves
beriberi  ritual sequence celebrating human procreation
boro panda literally 'pig [to] get up' - the first festival in the Death sequence
boro vavazigani 'burial feast'
buari     primary forest
bula      first festival in the beriberi sequence - celebrates conception
deri       to see
ekone     white sand/beach
gorigori  broad leafed plant (Alpinia - related to ginger). Its leaves are 'sewed' together and used to wrap food for cooking
'hau ku ku' (t.p.) 'kitchen house' - on Tabar generally refers to vanua vavi
'hau raun' (t.p.) introduced houses built on stilts above the ground
ino mono  hamlet plaza
kalawai  type of green leafed vegetable
kalengo

literally 'man big'

kiva vundi

literally 'base/ass of the banana' - matrilineage

kova

head

lakilaki lasaki

turning/blending the sago (generally with coconut)

lambulae

bush hamlets

laselase

food baskets

malagga

sculptures reproduced for ritual sequences of the same name. Thus, (1) sculptures, (2) ritual sequence

matambu

exogamous clan

m'baei'a

shark, also shark spirit

mi

the definite article

mon

(t.p.) long, narrow sea going canoe

monqos tarave'a

the practise of 'sitting close' to the corpse before burial

na kitip

Taboo feast lists the taboo on catching/consuming products derived from large trees emplaced in response to the death of a member of the community canoe

galiu, mi

literally 'feast coconut' - beriberi festival

which takes place after the remnants of the umbilicus have detached from a new-born's body

final festival in the beriberi sequence. Takes place after weaning

gari

semen

gau

(sacrificial) feast

ni'naninau

eating/food
niu
nuzu vevene
kus, mi
paro'ì
pasa vasigagana
pepera
pe'ù
pindi
raku
rama mi meketo
randu
re
rota lili
sarembe
'stesin'
tambu
tano
tavaru
taziki
taziki taziki lambiti vevene
taziki vemura
taziki voru
tundar
tupia
ubina
green coconuts
literally 'mouth woman'
literally 'the mouth' - also refers to kalengo who have hosted malanga
type of shellfish
special bundle of cooked (pork) kidney fat
mat of coconuts on which food is prepared for serving (especially at a feast)
type of shellfish
small edible leaf
crab
literally 'deep and black' - open sea
oven, especially in amari
shell money
literally 'cook little', especially small malapga feast
edible green leaf (turns red when cooking)
(t.p.) - plantation
 taboo
spirits of those who died naturally
a type of crab
child
literally child(ren) of an old woman. Birth order referent for third and subsequent children
literally child [who] follows - second born
first born child
wild bush spirit
ass/base
roots
ureta  octopus
vanua vavi  literally 'house oven' or hearth house in which women and children sleep and where the domestic group's food is cooked
varanda  Taboo feast. Lifts taboo on drinking niu which was emplaced in response to a death in the community
vava kazi  special food-bundle, especially in death sequence
vavazarugi  former custom which allowed an old person to chose to be ritually drowned
vavi  stone oven (see figure 3.1)
virua  (malcontented) spirits of those who have died unnaturally
zamane  type of edible green
zazo  yams
ziko pesi mi puqi  the feast at which the community mourns 'close to' the corpse before burial
zombi  canoe
zombi undu  literally sago canoe
zotam  group based on the children of siblings
zozurotasi  Taboo feast. Lifts the taboo on catching/consuming (saltwater) fish emplaced in response to the death of a member of the community
zubia  sometimes used instead of bula to refer to the first beriberi festival
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